

Bingham Academy

Beyond The Gate

1946 – 2017



By Stephany Evans Steggall

Bingham Academy 1946-2017

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PREFACE

The school is called Bingham Academy, but Rowland Bingham was not its founder. Its biggest, newest classroom block is called the Gowans Center, but Walter Gowans was not the founder of the school either. The school is located in the Kolfe district of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, yet this was not its original location. Nor was it called Bingham Academy at the beginning.

Graham and Mildred Hay, the couple who came to Addis Ababa to establish the school for the Sudan Interior Mission, had never been in charge of a school, although they had worked as house parents at the Gowans Home for Missionaries' Children in Collingwood, Ontario, Canada.

Sudan Interior Mission (SIM)¹ had been operating in Ethiopia since 1928; however, its continued presence was threatened when the Italians invaded the country in 1935, took possession of the Mission's buildings and compelled the evacuation of all the SIM workers. The story of the Italian warfare and its effect on the missionaries became known as the 'Eclipse in Ethiopia'.²

Nevertheless, ten years later, a school was opened in the Kachene district of Addis Ababa.³ By the early 1950s, the school had relocated to its present location. The main building, which features in so many photographs, is ageless and plain, a solid presence over many years as the changes go on around and within it. Its identity is carved in white letters on a plank of cedar wood over the main entrance: Bingham Academy. Beyond its gate is a teeming city, so close, yet far removed from life in the peaceful compound.

¹ The organisation has had various name changes, including Soudan Interior Mission, Africa Industrial Mission, Africa Evangelistic Mission, Sudan United Mission (when SIM merged for a year from 1906-07), Sudan Interior Mission, SIM International, and SIM (trade names being Society for International Ministries from 1990-2000, and Serving in Mission from 2000-present for those countries that wish to use them).

²² The story of the Italian invasion is told in *Seven Sevens of Years and A Jubilee: The Story of the Sudan Inland Mission*, by Rowland Bingham, pp 94-105.

³ Early students at the school also referred to 'Kechane' and 'Kachiney': email from Godfrey Dawkins, 10 October 2016.

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CHAPTER 1

‘ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD . . .’

‘Any other hardships incidental to missionary life are insignificant compared to that which demands the breaking of the dearest, tenderest ties of earth. No one can stand unmoved, who knows aught of real human love, when the crucial moment of separation comes, and parents have to unclasp the little clinging arms and give the last kiss and hug of years – to go back to the land where perishing souls call for someone to save. . . .’

These were the words spoken by Rowland Bingham, founder of SIM, at the opening of the Gowans Home for Missionary Children in 1923.⁴ He spoke from firsthand experience, as he and his wife Helen had two daughters, Winifred and Meredith, and separations from them were long and difficult. Harsh conditions, including the toll exacted by malaria and other tropical diseases, were experienced by missionaries in Africa, including Bingham. SIM had decided to establish a home for their children to protect them from the deadly pestilences. The home would not be just for SIM families, but for all evangelical missionaries. Gowans Home was situated on the shores of Georgian Bay in the town of Collingwood, Ontario, Canada.

The Home was named for Walter Gowans, who set out with Rowland Bingham and Thomas Kent in 1893 to start missionary work in Sudan.⁵ Gowans and Kent, weakened by malaria, died during that first heroic endeavour, but Bingham went on to establish the work as the three men had intended. Their correspondence stamp was inscribed: ‘The Soudan Interior Mission. “Go ye therefore” (Matthew 28:19)’.⁶ In January 2017, there were 1554 active missionaries serving with SIM around the world, a testament to the faithful ministry of Bingham, whose hero was William Carey, and whose life motto he had taken for his own: ‘Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.’⁷

For hundreds of missionaries’ children, Gowans Home became *in loco parentis*, as J.H. Hunter said in *Flame of Fire*, his biography of Bingham. Nevertheless, the distance between

⁴ Quoted in *A Flame of Fire* by J.H. Hunter, p. 290.

⁵ Hunter, *Ibid*, p 51. "Soudan", literally "land of the blacks", was the name generally given at that time to the vast belt stretching from west to east right across Africa, between the equator and the Sahara Desert—a geographical term that embraced all countries in that area. The term, now spelled "Sudan", still applies but is not as widely used as in the past. The term is not to be confused with the country now called Sudan, formerly the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

⁶ A picture of the stamp is included in *A Flame of Fire* by J.H. Hunter, Portfolio I, and facing p. 48.

⁷ Hunter, *Ibid*, p. 31. Carey was a missionary in India for 41 years. Figure for current number of SIM missionaries from Tim Geysbeck, 19 January 2017.

the children and their parents in Africa was great, and families suffered during the long years of separation.

Mildred Hodges, who began missionary service in Ethiopia with her husband Manley in 1945, summed it up:

The hardest part of a missionary life *by far* was having to send your kids away to school. But it was much worse in the years before we came to Ethiopia, so we sure didn't want to complain. Missionaries used to have to leave their children back in Canada, not seeing them for five whole years, because there was no school in Ethiopia for them.⁸

This situation was about to change, although separations for young children sent away from country mission stations to school in the city would still be traumatic. All fifteen SIM stations in Ethiopia had been closed during the Italian occupation, and the last missionary had left the country in 1938. Emperor Haile Selassie returned triumphantly in 1941 to reclaim his country from the Italians. No sooner was Ethiopia free again, than Haile Selassie invited all former missionaries to return. The door was wide open for Christians to preach the Gospel.

It was not always straightforward. Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black recalled that there was great opposition to Haile Selassie's invitation from some quarters of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). She wrote in her memoir:

We soon discovered that all visa applications for missionaries were being put at the bottom of the pile by authorities faithful to the EOC. When the Emperor realized this, he ordered all applications to be sent directly to him. So the Emperor himself signed the visa application for my family to join the work of God in the land of Ethiopia.⁹

As the number of missionaries on the field increased, the need for a local school for their children became increasingly apparent. Graham and Mildred Hay, who were serving as house parents at Gowans Home, volunteered to take on the task of establishing a missionary school in Addis Ababa for the children of any evangelical missionaries working in Ethiopia, the Sudan or other neighbouring countries.¹⁰ The Hays' offer was accepted. At the time, C. Gordon Beacham was in Ethiopia supervising the reopening of SIM's work there.¹¹

⁸ Quoted in *Under an African Sky: The Unusual Life of a Missionaries' Kid in Ethiopia* by Julene Hodges Schroeder, pp. 36-37.

⁹ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black. 'Strengthened Through Hardship: Growing up in Ethiopia'. *Simroots* 31. 1, 2014, pp.6-8.

¹⁰ Until 1960, when the Good Shepherd School was established by four missions: Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Mennonite.

¹¹ Detail from Paul Balisky 5 February 2017.

Before travelling to Ethiopia, Graham Hay had gone to Khartoum with Betty Chenault, Mildred's older daughter from a previous marriage. Mildred and her younger daughter, Virginia, would meet them in Addis Ababa, where the Hays' son, James, was born. Graham and Betty made the journey by train, leaving Khartoum on 1 January 1946. The train followed the Blue Nile for nearly 200 miles.

Malcolm Forsberg, an SIM missionary who met Graham in Khartoum, described him as 'in his forties, and lean and active. A former businessman from Waterloo, Iowa, he had been appointed secretary of the Toronto branch of the Mission [SIM]. But children's work had been the Hays' first love.'¹²

Malcolm's eight-year-old son, Leigh Forsberg, travelled with Graham and Betty. His parents, who worked in Chali (southwest of Khartoum in Sudan), had decided to enrol him at the new school. While in Khartoum, Graham spent a lot of time getting acquainted with Leigh, but the parting from his parents at the Khartoum railway station was very hard. Malcolm wrote: 'Above all we wanted Leigh to know that we loved him and that we were sending him away from us because we really did love him . . . Leigh would come back to us in eleven and a half months, but it seemed as if we were looking into eternity itself.'¹³

Graham wrote to Malcolm to tell him how his son was faring as he travelled to Ethiopia: 'If left to himself his heart was back home and the tears came readily. He asked several times how long a year was and how many days it was and did the days go by more quickly in Africa than at home.'¹⁴

Bob and Hazel Thompson, with their daughters Grace and Alice (who attended the school in its earliest years), had left for Ethiopia from New York on board a Portuguese ship. Because their time of travel, in early 1944, was during the Second World War, the ship was blacked out at night to avoid being hit by enemy ships or submarines. The seas were rough and many passengers were ill. The family disembarked at Lisbon and, after travelling by another Portuguese ship to Cairo, went on to Khartoum.

Their adventurous journey was not over. Alf Roke, pioneer SIM missionary, travelled with the Thompsons to Asmara, then to Addis Ababa. 'We had to enquire around to find a transport "camion" as they were called,' Alf recalled. '[They were] huge vehicles on which

¹² Malcolm Forsberg. *Land Beyond the Nile*, p. 210.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

we would be able to hire a seat somewhere on top of the cargo. We were able to find a suitable one that was to travel as part of a convoy which was still a safer way.¹⁵

Grace said:

The trip to Addis was very nerve racking, as the native people thought we were Italians and wanted to shoot us! To them all white folk were Italians, but after convincing them we were not Italians we travelled on to Addis. Sleeping on hard seats of a huge truck was not comfortable and, as we were eating army type food, it was amazing we didn't get sick. Alice developed dysentery after arriving in Ethiopia and was a very sick girl for a long time, but with a lot of prayer and God's intervention she recovered.¹⁶

When the Hays finally reached Addis Ababa, they saw a place that 'nestles attractively among the foothills of the Entoto Range, which semi-circles the city at an altitude of some 10,000 ft.'¹⁷ Betty and Virginia and Leigh were enrolled, along with a handful of other children, in the little school that later became Bingham Academy. This early model was called the School for Missionaries' Children (SMC) and it opened on 29 April 1946.

The school was located in what had been the residence of Ras Emiru, a prime minister of Ethiopia during Haile Selassie's reign.¹⁸ The house was near His Majesty's Old Palace in the Kachene district of Addis Ababa. Alf Roke, who travelled with the Thompson family to Addis Ababa, arrived in the city in late 1944, with his wife and sons, to work at headquarters; however, as accommodation there was limited, the Rokes lived in the house that would become the SMC.

Alf wrote:

We undertook the tedious task of cleaning up and preparing this property while still living in the place, We continued in this job until Mr Hay and his wife arrived in Ethiopia and took over the task of organising the new school...Our son Don became one of the first pupils. We then moved out of the school building and were able to find a small flat in the headquarters building which served us quite well and by this time John [our second son] was able to join Don at the school.¹⁹

The school house was strongly built in the Italian style, made of concrete blocks with marble steps at the front leading up to the polished granite porch, complete with four pillars. The

¹⁵ Alf Roke. *They Went Forth: Trials and Triumphs of a Pioneer SIM Missionary in Ethiopia*, pp. 249-50.

¹⁶ Email from Grace Brunner 18 October 2016.

¹⁷ Helen Willmott. *The Doors Were Opened*, p.13.

¹⁸ An alternative version heard was that Ras Emiru was an Ambassador to the United States of America. Perhaps he had been both.

¹⁹ Alf Roke, op.cit., pp.298-99.

windows were shuttered, and the big airy rooms inside featured high ceilings and solid wooden floors. In the lounge room, where the children gathered for prayers and stories, a big fireplace provided warmth and comfort on chilly nights. Another front room was dominated by a Ping-Pong table.

Bob Ratzliff, one of the students who attended the school, called it ‘Kachiney’, meaning ‘my thin place’.²⁰ Back then it seemed that they lived in the countryside as the property was surrounded by bushland. Another student recalled that the property was within Addis city proper ‘as we could take Mr Hay’s wagon, pulled by his DeSoto car, to church each Sunday and go down to the Piatza area for church.’²¹

Just how many children could fit into that wagon was a matter of conjecture, but on at least one occasion, a wheel came off. The wagon resembled a horse box in which benches were fitted for small children, while the older ones stood, crammed in. The wagon was covered, which probably prevented more serious injury when the wheel came off.

The property at Kachene was about four to six acres in size, walled in with a gate at the front. It had a lovely garden, tended by a gardener, and the school also employed a cook. At the back was a building, which may have been an aide’s house, which Graham Hay used as a workshop.

David Wallace said:

As best I know, the whole place was built during the Italian Occupation, probably for an officer. SIM covered over the [central] courtyard of the main house with roofing to make a dining hall. I used to be sent by *garry* [two-wheeled cart pulled by a horse] to the dentist, so the school could not have been too far out of Addis. The last few hundred yards of the road were not paved, but we had electricity and city water.²²

Helen Jones, daughter of Graham and Mildred, has remembered that Haile Selassie had relatives just next door to that school and he would visit them. ‘Dad told me once that he was standing on the school porch watching the house where the Emperor had gone in...The Emperor saw Dad as he came out of his relatives’ house and came over and chatted with Dad! My dad loved that memory.’²³ Alice Miller (née Thompson), who started Grade One at

²⁰ Quoted in email from Godfrey Dawkins 10 October 2016.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. A *garry*, sometimes spelt as *gharry* or *gary*, was pulled by a horse and could carry three people. They were the taxis in use then.

²³ Email from Helen Jones (née Hay) 23 September 2016.

the school in 1948, said it was very exciting when the Emperor visited. ‘I am not sure how many times his motorcade would come through our compound.’²⁴

This was a special memory shared by others. David Wallace: ‘We would all go to the front gate to catch a glimpse of H.I.M.’ Godfrey Dawkins:

We also climbed up onto the back wall in the hopes of seeing the Emperor going into the house. . . . It’s a wonder we didn’t fall off the way we were bowing, but the scraping was done by a very high-ranking army officer trying to get the mud off the Emperor’s shoes before he could get back into his Cadillac with its white-walled tyres. My brother Michael says we children were all in our dressing gowns!²⁵

The first teacher was Evadena Alberda²⁶ and her classroom, for children across several grades, was an enclosed verandah with glass windows. This arrangement changed, as Alice Miller (née Thompson) remembered: ‘When I came for grade one, the glassed verandah was the dorm for the older girls, like Janice Sensing, Betty and Virginia Chenault, Miriam Barlow, Margaret Meyerhoff and Naomi Cain. Naomi Cain was my big sister when I arrived at SMC.’²⁷

At the end of the first year, the enrolment had doubled, so a small mud building with a thatched roof and a wooden floor was erected in the grounds. Mary MacDonald joined the staff to teach Grades 1 – 4 and Lucile Wickstrom arrived to take over Grades 5 – 8. Grace Brunner (née Thompson), who was in the first grade in the first year, has memories of Anne Beharrell too. ‘They were wonderful teachers who taught us well.’²⁸

Dave Pitman, whose parents relieved the Hays during their furlough in 1951, has recalled that Miss Alberda included him in physical education and art activities with the Grade 1–4 classroom in this small building. ‘The roof was known to leak water on the desks.’ Dave was four years old at the time.²⁹

The long rainy season in Addis Ababa, responsible for leaking roofs and impassable roads, meant that the first school years ran from March to December, with a long break at Christmas and the New Year. There was no airstrip at that stage. Classes were conducted between 8.30

²⁴ Email from Alice Miller 28 September 2016.

²⁵ Email from Godfrey Dawkins 10 October 2016.

²⁶ Some of her first students remember her as Miss Alberta; however, in *Simroots* 25.2, 2008, p. 17, Letters to the Editor. Evadena Alberda Farmer identified herself. She was then 93 years old.

²⁷ Alice Miller, op. cit.

²⁸ Grace Brunner, op. cit.

²⁹ Email from Dave Pitman 7 October 2016.

and 2.30, with an hour's break at noon for lunch and rest time. The school year was divided into three terms. Fees for boarders were set at \$360 per year and for day students, \$108.

The boarders lived at the school house in Kachene with the Hays, whose family increased in 1950 with the birth of their daughter, Helen. The Hays occupied a small apartment at the front of the house, comprising a bedroom and living room. Grace Brunner said that Graham and Mildred Hay were very special 'parents'. 'I felt we were treated like we were their own children.'³⁰ Mrs Hay taught music. Boys and girls each had their separate 'dorm rooms' where they slept on bunk beds and everyone ate their meals in a common dining room. The older girls enjoyed baking cookies and they were also expected to help with laundry and minding the younger children.

According to an article published in *Simroots* in 1998 (dedicated to Graham and Mildred Hay), children coming to board were advised to pack the usual linen and toiletry needs, as well as 'three table napkins, a napkin ring and coat hangers. Name tags and a good stock of mending materials, especially pieces to match dresses and suits... They were also told to pack clothing for each season separately and divided by paper or towels.'³¹

This article also listed the names of the first students: Don and John Roke (New Zealand)³², Ewan McKenzie and Samuel Simpson (England), Miriam and Robert Barlow, Betty and Virginia Chenault, Leigh Forsberg, Margaret Meyerhoff, Daniel Modricker, Paul Sieglaff and David Speedy (USA). The names of Naomi Cain, Tom Graham, Janice Sensenig, Ruth Stokes and Grace Thompson were added in square brackets. Naomi Cain starred in the school's first operetta, *Little Red Riding Hood*, presented at the end of 1947. Betty Chenault was Grandmother, David Speedy, the wolf, and Paul Sieglaff, the woodsman.

Memories of early students include being given a metal cup with hot boiled water to clean teeth before bed. Eva Stott (née Dawkins, SMC 1951) said that one of her worst memories of the SMC was its single lavatory. There was a long line after lunch waiting to use it, and there was no door and very little paper. 'I remember some poor Ethiopian waist high in the filth of the cess pit immediately outside having to empty it. I couldn't believe he had to do that. Why wasn't he given adequate tools?'

³⁰ Grace Brunner, op.cit.

³¹ 'Bingham Academy Roots', *Simroots* 15.2, 1998, pp. 1-3. The name of the author is not given.

³² The article listed the Roke brothers as Australian, but this was incorrect. The Rokes were not at the SMC for very long, because the family returned to New Zealand in November 1946.

Eva commented:

But what matters most? We went to church (a sort of big hall up some steps in Addis Ababa) and Mr Strong was the minister. After he had been preaching for half an hour or so he would say, ‘Now that is just the beginning’, and people would laugh, I am not sure about wholeheartedly, but I loved it, fascinated by the stream of words!³³

At the Sunday services, held in ‘the Piatza church’, there was a wonderful character called Mr Borlass [probably Howard Borlase]. He held the children spellbound with his wartime stories, recounting the horror of being shipwrecked. Godfrey Dawkins reflected,

I don’t think they used the term Children’s Church in those days, so it must have been Sunday School. His sweet wife would crochet cross bookmarks either in pink or blue which were presented to any of us who had had a birthday the week before. Mine is treasured to this day.³⁴

The children’s games included climbing trees and playing until dark in the grounds. Their evangelistic endeavours involved lining up the logs in the woodshed as pews and having ‘meetings’. They all joined in and responded enthusiastically. Godfrey Dawkins came to the full assurance of salvation in the woodshed, and Jerry Cremer prayed for him.³⁵ Given the school’s purpose, to care for the children of missionaries spiritually as well as physically, it is not surprising that the first building erected on the new school property was a chapel.

³³ Eva Stott, née Dawkins, quoted in email from Godfrey Dawkins 10 October 2016.

³⁴ Godfrey Dawkins, *op.cit.*

³⁵ A photograph of Bingham Academy students, *Simroots* 16.1, 1999, p. 21, refers to Jimmy Cremer, not Jerry Cremer. Some sources have also referred to him as Kramer.

CHAPTER 2

MUD AND STICKS

‘The three miles from the heart of Addis Ababa goes quickly as the car bounces along the cobblestone road to the Campus of Bingham. As we travel up this ancient road bordered by groves of stately eucalyptus trees, a small chapel comes into sight. Passing the chapel we come to a gate which swings open and we enter.’³⁶

Rowland Bingham had great respect for Emperor Haile Selassie. He described Haile Selassie as a man who was ‘God-fearing, loved the Bible and concerned for the welfare of his people. Before the war, he was establishing schools and insisted that the Gospel of John and the Psalms of David be part of the daily curriculum.’³⁷

His Imperial Majesty was also an answer to prayer for SIM when the Mission needed more adequate facilities than the Kachene premises could provide. Foreigners were not permitted to purchase or own land outright in Ethiopia but, by order of Haile Selassie, eight acres of wooded land in Kolfe were provided at a nominal cost for a 99-year lease. The block of land was as irregular in shape as the unexpected bequest from Haile Selassie, who was influenced, perhaps, by his encounters with Graham Hay and his young charges at Kachene. SIM was able to pay the rental in one lump sum. Kolfe – otherwise known over the years as Kolfie, Kulfe, Kwolfe or Kwulfe – was then an outer district beyond Addis Ababa, where a large open market operated. Some sources refer to it as a separate village.³⁸

The Gospel Chapel was the first building to be erected at the new property, close to the entrance. There were two reasons for the priority, according to an article in the issue of *Simroots* dedicated to Graham and Mildred Hay: ‘because a substantial gift designated for this purpose was received and because it was determined from the beginning that a ministry of evangelism to the neighbouring Ethiopians would become a regular part of the work of the staff conducting the Home. Thus it was used for weekly services in Amharic and yearly for DVBS’ [Daily Vacation Bible School].³⁹

Roy Wallace, who became principal in the late 1950s, said that at one stage half the chapel formed his older grades’ classroom and it was also used for special meetings. ‘Great fun in a

³⁶ ‘A Stroll Around Bingham’, *Bingham Beacon* 1964-64, no page numbering.

³⁷ Rowland Bingham. *Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee*, p. 103.

³⁸ A surveyor’s map of the block of land, dated 28 November 1947, is kept in the Bingham Academy archives.

³⁹ ‘Bingham Academy Roots’, *Simroots* 15.2, 1998, pp. 1-3.

hail storm when shouting could not be heard by the person next to you! DVBS was sometimes conducted in the “old” dining room as well as in the chapel.’⁴⁰

The school was called Bingham Academy, although it is not known on whose authority this choice was made. It was referred to as Bingham Academy, the School for Missionaries’ Children, in 1957, as letters in May that year gave the name to enquirers.⁴¹ Graham Hay supervised the building at the Kolfe site from the home in Kachene, where his staff at that time included Lucy Cowie (New Zealand), Anne Beharrell (England), and Marion Scott (Minnesota).

Julene Hodges Schroeder and her siblings were among the children who attended the new school in its earliest years. She has described the pleasant aspect of the place:

The land overlooked the small Kolfe River, with eucalyptus forests all around and vast open areas where the children would be able to play. Bill Schmidt was the missionary builder. He built a big, two-storey building, with boys’ and girls’ dormitories on each end, a large kitchen and dining room at the back and a big living room and library, plus apartments for staff at the front. He added a building with three classrooms next to this one.

In front of the building ran a wide driveway, bordered by a stone wall with stone steps that led up to a huge field. Here children could play every kind of ball game. Surrounding the building were hundreds of eucalyptus trees to climb and play in. It was much better than the SMC’s small land in the middle of Addis Ababa.⁴²

The building, designed by Harold Dancy, was built of red cedar wood as a precaution against termites. Bill Schmidt also relied on the local building materials, which were mainly mud and eucalyptus poles used for the support beams. In their recollections, many past students have included the childhood smell of clay and wattle walls, which were cool to the touch. Workmen tramped straw into mud until it was the right consistency for plaster. The Amharic word for the mixture is *chicka*, and the donkeys that staggered up the streets were laden with haystacks of fine straw called *chidd*. The dormitories always smelled of this clean earth.⁴³

⁴⁰ Email from Roy Wallace 20 October 2016.

⁴¹ SIM Archives: Ethiopia Stations: Bingham Academy. Box 3f, p.28. Letter to Missions Office, Ministry of Education [Ethiopia], 9 May 1957 from Arthur S. Rashleigh signing as Missionary in Charge of the School for Missionaries’ Children. Page 26: A letter dated 24 May, signed by Glen Cain, SIM Field Director, referred to the school as Bingham Academy. Note: all future references will be to: SIM Archives with box and page number.

⁴² Julene Hodges Schroeder. *Under an African Sky: The Unusual Life of a Missionaries’ Kid in Ethiopia*, pp. 51-52.

⁴³ Daniel Coleman. *The Scent of Eucalyptus: A Missionary Childhood in Ethiopia*, p. 15.

Roy Wallace said he and his wife were very surprised to find flush toilets when they first arrived at the school and remarked on the water supply.

Graham Hay told me he was responsible. When they first got the property, the water line must have just been recently installed right through the unfenced future playing field. One day Graham decided Bingham Academy could have water. He told me he drilled into the main line forgetting it was under pressure. He had everything in place except a water metre. He drilled the hole and had a rather difficult time stopping the flow, but somehow must have managed. BA had abundant water! Years later, the link wire fence was erected. The line for the City of Addis was being doubled. Bill Schmidt was then on site as the builder. The water foreman told him they were planning to cut the fence right behind where the swings are [to the left as you come out the main building]. Bill said, ‘You cut that fence and it will cost you one thousand dollars.’ The foreman backtracked. He put the line UNDER the fence and it remained intact.⁴⁴

Keith Pitman, who relieved the Hays at Kechane in 1951 while they went on furlough, hewed a solid cedar plank with an adze, a sharp hoe-like tool, to give a rustic appearance and carved ‘Bingham Academy’ on it. The sign was moved to the new site and hung over the front porch of the main building where it still plainly declares the school’s name.

The school’s opening does not seem to have been attended by any fanfare. It would have been appropriate, perhaps, for Haile Selassie to officially open the school. The main building at Bingham Academy was completed in 1952 and the classrooms two years later in 1954.

Dave Pitman, son of Keith and his wife Betty, had a memorable vacation in the new building while it was still under construction.

My dad built two sailboats in what became the dining room for use at Bishoftu [where SIM’s vacation home—at Lake Babogaya, a crater lake—was located, about sixty kilometres southeast of Addis Ababa]. I learned to sail them when I was about ten and taught vacationing missionaries how to sail.

One day Bill Schmidt found a dead *gary* horse in town, tied a chain around its neck, and dragged it to the front steps of the new building with his red pickup truck. That night, while my sister Kathy and I were sound asleep in the room right next to all the action, thirty-five hyenas came and cleaned the horse up. While the hyenas were at it, Bill shot two or three of them for general display the next day. That attracted a local medicine man who took various body parts for his potions. The next night the thirty-two surviving hyenas came back and cleaned up their brothers. What always disappointed me was that my father

⁴⁴ Email from Roy Wallace 29 January 2017.

didn't wake us up either night to enjoy the whooping, laughing and bone crunching!⁴⁵

Russ Schmidt, who was at the school in the 1950s, revisited it and the Babogaya guesthouse at Bishoftu—'an idyllic place in a crazy world'—in 1996 and hoped to see *jibs* (hyenas). He was unsuccessful, 'even though there was a dead horse just up the road and a dead donkey just a few metres from the front gate'.⁴⁶

Not all students had such graphic memories, but some have reported being very unhappy at both schools—SMC and Bingham Academy. This unhappiness may in part be attributed to the hard separations between school holidays from their homes and families, 'a particular sorrow common to MKs [missionaries' kids]', as one source described it.⁴⁷ Some children were shy and sensitive by nature and consequently lonely. They would not have adjusted well to any boarding school.

Others have spoken of harsh disciplinary measures which still come back to haunt them. Godfrey Dawkins, who had recently accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, confessed to scraping his initials on the leg of an aluminium chair (after denying his guilt at first) and was severely punished. A eucalyptus switch was cut off with a pen-knife, and Godfrey was given 'the thrashing of my life with welts up and down my legs!'

I think it was the worst beating I had ever had although my mother's disciplinary attentions came a close second! That seemed to be sufficient as I was not given the standard punishment for telling lies which meant having my mouth washed out with soap....

The girls, including my sisters, Eva and Christina, had their hair washed with petrol for suspected lice. Heaven help you if you wet your bed. I once came to my brother Michael's rescue to cover up the evidence. I wonder how I did that? Then there were the padiwacks, and I shudder to remember [one boy] crawling pathetically through the tunnel of our legs, with some of us simply patting his bottom, knowing it could be our turn next, but others took a savage delight in venting their own pent up anger and whacking the little fellow really hard.'⁴⁸

Carolee Hodges Harlow said that it was more acceptable in those days to have strict discipline.

⁴⁵ Email from Dave Pitman 16 October 2016.

⁴⁶ Russ Schmidt. 'BA Revisited'. *Simroots* 15.2, 1998, pp. 6 and 8.

⁴⁷ Book blurb, *Under an African Sky: The Unusual Life of a Missionaries' Kid in Ethiopia*.

⁴⁸ Email from Godfrey Dawkins 13 October 2016. The name of the boy who crawled through the 'tunnel' and the person who administered punishment withheld.

The Hays were very strict, but I always felt they were fair, and in an environment where there was never any loving interaction between staff and students, to perceive someone as fair went a long way. I was afraid of Mrs. Hay, but I loved her from a distance, and I felt safe when they were there. The Wallaces were also strict, but more approachable, although I had very little interaction with Mrs. Wallace. My sister Julene's experience with the loving attention of Helen Schmidt [whom Julene called Auntie Helen] was highly unusual. I was very lonely at Bingham, and I was glad for my little sister that she had that experience.

The Hays seemed to take their job seriously. I never got the impression from them that we (the students) were a bunch of inconvenient brats. I felt any discipline they handed out was applied equally across the board, and never based on emotion. Miss MacDonald, Miss Wollman, Miss Willey and Mr. Wallace seemed to be of the same mindset. Two or three other staff members I had contact with gave me the impression that they would rather be anywhere else than Bingham, and their discipline was applied erratically and often out of their anger at the moment.⁴⁹

Carolee's brother, Murray, had always found Mr. Hay to be reasonable and he never felt afraid of him.

'Mrs. Hay could strike a jab of panic if ever you were the object of her nonsense unsmiling discipline. He was as fatherly as you could expect, while she was essentially a school marm who did her job efficiently....I just kept my distance and followed her directives. The year we were on furlough someone else was in charge of Bingham—that was a police state that kept the peace through terror. When we returned, so did the Hays and sanity was restored. Arthur Rashleigh was instantly a warm person as was his wife.'⁵⁰

During Murray's school days, there was a big rebellion problem among some of the older boys, led by one boy in particular. 'Things got so bad,' Julene Hodges Schroeder said, 'that I'm sure word got out and the SIMers of the day started to pray (I used to find things like that in my mother's "prayer book" decades later). But after he graduated and went back to his home country, the atmosphere changed for the better. He eventually became a missionary.'⁵¹

Other instances of mistreatment over the years have inevitably surfaced and must be addressed. At least one MK, reviewing her attitude to enforced separations and the ensuing pain, said that for a long time she regarded herself as 'the victim of my parents' choices'. She has since tried to put herself in her parents' shoes and imagined their hurts and losses too.

⁴⁹ Email to Brad Adams from Carolee Hodges Harlow 25 July 2014.

⁵⁰ Ibid. from Murray Hodges.

⁵¹ Ibid. from Julene Hodges Schroeder.

‘Tabitha’ admitted that she had not been subject to abuse and in no way dismissed the pain of those who had.⁵²

The memories of Bingham Academy alumni have been, for the most part, positive. The school’s philosophy was simple and affirmative: ‘To lead our students to become children of God and yielded disciples of Christ and to thoroughly train them by well-rounded academic instruction and loving discipline to serve God to His glory and man to his enrichment.’⁵³ Taking responsibility for many children, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in a different cultural setting, was an unrealistically high expectation. In every school, in every land, there will always be those leaders who will be remembered fondly as kind and giving, but also those not best suited or trained for the task, or unable to cope with the relentless demands. ‘Every now and then everyone knew of something very, very harsh and way too abusive happening,’ said Julene Hodges Schroeder. ‘At times like that the whole school hated the staff member responsible.’⁵⁴

The staff were often overworked and worn out. Frances Wallace, who arrived at the school in 1956 with her husband Roy, was teaching as well as caring for two full dormitories of girls, all grades and ages. She noted in her diary: ‘This caring for missionaries’ children is strenuous work! Surprisingly enough they do not seem to appreciate the efforts the staff makes to give them the best possible training, but take it in the attitude that it is their due, and our responsibility. This is a bit disconcerting.’⁵⁵

Missionaries then had the attitude of doing what was needed most, and administrators expected to be able to assign them where needed most at short notice. Keith and Betty Pitman were in language school at Woliso (110 kilometres southwest of Addis Ababa) when the mail brought them word of an immediate change of assignment. They were to look after the new school while the Hays took furlough. The family travelled by truck, leaving at 6.00 a.m: Betty and the two children in the cab and Keith perched on top of the load at the back. In later years, Dave Pitman commented on the huge task they had taken on. ‘I did hear them say how tired they eventually got with no breaks for nine months straight.’⁵⁶

⁵² ‘Tabitha’. ‘Letter to My Brothers’. Reprinted from a blog in *Simroots* 33.1, 2016, with permission. She was not a BA student. More details about separation and adult missionaries’ problems are provided in Chapter 8.

⁵³ ‘School Philosophy’. *Bingham Beacon* 1966-67. No page numbers.

⁵⁴ Email to Brad Adams from Julene Hodges Schroeder 25 July 2014.

⁵⁵ Frances Wallace. *Shaping of a Saint: Frances Kerr Wallace*, p. 55.

⁵⁶ Email from Dave Pitman 21 October 2016.

Carolee Hodges had begun her schooling at the age of five and a half. To get there, she and her father, Manley, left their mission station mounted on mules, riding to a place where they could catch a bus to Addis Ababa. After a short while at the school, she went to Mildred Hay and said, ‘I’ve had a very nice time here but now it’s time for me to go back home.’ That was not to be, and by the time she was in the graduating class, Carolee was studying 1000 verses, which she recited to Graham Hay in three hours and ten minutes. She was allowed only three mistakes. She was given a Scofield Study Bible with her name engraved on the front. Her name went on a wall plaque with the names of the other students who had said 500 or 1000 verses.⁵⁷

Doug Koop has written an unpublished memoir, *Somehow Broken*, in which he recalled ‘Verse Group’ at Bingham Academy, 1962:

Miss MacDonald [known behind her back as Mackie] peered at me across the expanse of her schoolteacher clutter. A thick wooden ruler lay handy at her right hand; a leather strap lingered menacingly on the small pump organ beside the desk. I shuffled nervously foot-to-foot as I stumbled over the words in my failing attempt to recite the Bible memory verses for the week....In Grade 2 this meant reciting two or three new Bible verses from memory every week, along with a recitation of the previous two weeks’ verses, and a monthly review—four weekly golden stars in a row on the chart in the main building, capped by red at the end of the month.... For twenty minutes each weekday morning we sat with our Bibles and focused as best we could on the weekly quota.⁵⁸

That may seem extreme by any standard, but students like Nancy Zabel, who attended Bingham Academy in the 1950s, could later appreciate the benefits. ‘The hundreds of Bible verses we were required to learn have come back to me at times I have needed them most. Many times in Bible quizzes, Sunday School and in my personal witnessing to my school friends these verses come to me as a source of help.’⁵⁹ Harold Jongeward, a student between 1953 and 1962, considered the ‘Scripture Memory Program one of the main pluses of my time at Bingham.’⁶⁰

Eva Stott (née Dawkins) remembered paddy-whacks and then Christian music to go to sleep by! She had to learn the Bible verses and was never able to get them word perfect. ‘Mrs. Hay was very uncompromising on this, and she and Dr. Margaret Fitzherbert were role models

⁵⁷ Hodges Schroeder, pp. 61 and 139.

⁵⁸ Doug Koop. *Somehow Broken*. Excerpt from Chapter 1, August 2012. Published as ‘Verse Group’ in *Simroots* 29.2, 2012, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Nancy Zabel. ‘What Bingham Has Meant to Me’. *Bingham Beacon* 1964-65. No page numbers.

⁶⁰ Email from Harold Jongeward 20 November 2016.

doing many laps around the field testing each other on their memory verses.’ Eva’s brother Michael remembered with gratitude the early morning quiet-time groups upstairs around tables at Kolfe where these verses were first appointed and practised.⁶¹

Students memorised Scriptures from Grade 1, a system that the Hays firmly enforced. ‘Bingham was founded and is continuing on the strong foundation of Scripture memory,’ said Roy Wallace.⁶² Sunday afternoon meetings of Loyal Ambassadors for Christ (LAC) were also instituted. All the children, dressed in their Sunday best, assembled at four o’clock in their different groups: Christian Soldiers, Loyalists, Crusaders, and Gideons. Then they marched behind their flags to the Gospel Chapel. Each week a different class conducted the entire programme, and none was excused from that public speaking exercise. ‘Since we had to speak in front of people so often and for so many years,’ reflected Julene Hodges Schroeder, ‘we lost all nervousness.’⁶³ LAC had a theme song readily remembered by those who sang it many times. Poignantly the first two lines read: ‘I am a stranger here / Within a foreign land.’⁶⁴

A daily routine was soon put into effect at Bingham Academy, starting at 6.30 a.m. In their dormitories, at each end of the main building, children climbed out of the metal bunks which were pushed up against the whitewashed mud and straw walls. At 7 o’clock, before breakfast, they had devotions.

Everyone met in the living room, in the main building, a whitewashed adobe structure roofed with tin. This building has been described as a crossroads for meals, piano practice and dormitories. The living room featured a fireplace set in black and white tiles with a picture of Jesus above it. Connected to this room was the library, separated by a long wall of accordion doors. There was a piano in each room and doors leading to the hall and out to the front porch. Ethiopian cooks and outdoor staff sat on chairs along the opening to the library. Mr Hay read scripture and asked all students to say the Lord’s Prayer in Amharic with the Ethiopians.

Then verse learning groups met. Over the years, a reward system was gradually implemented: a gold star was given for each verse memorised correctly, and as time progressed the best

⁶¹ Quoted in email from Godfrey Dawkins 10 October 1916.

⁶² Roy Wallace. Untitled article. *Simroots* 15.2, 1998, p. 4.

⁶³ Hodges Schroeder. *op. cit.* p. 111.

⁶⁴ For all the words of the theme song, refer to ‘Bingham Academy’s L.A.C. (Loyal Ambassadors for Christ)’, *Simroots* 15.2, 1998, p. 3. Submitted by Jeanette Entz Shubert.

students were taken to the Wabeshebele Hotel for a meal of lasagne or to eat at the Addis airport where they watched, perhaps longingly, the planes take off. Those who recited 500 verses all at once were treated to an overnight trip to Bishoftu. Harold Jongeward could still recall huge Italian dinners at the Ras Hotel. ‘You had a whole plate of spaghetti for the appetizer, then still had a full meal entrée and dessert. We really came home stuffed.’⁶⁵

The worst meal memories at Bingham, back in the day, included the spoonful of cod liver oil that had to be swallowed at breakfast, the food recalled as ‘oatmeal mush, with lumpy dried milk and a spoonful of sugar’. Gristle on meat was despised but could not be left on the plates; it was held in the mouth and spat out later in the toilet. Supper might be the favourite: boiled eggs in a white sauce, served on what the English and Australians called scones and the Americans, biscuits. On Sundays the diners were treated to fried battered chicken.

‘Food was often a topic at BA,’ according to Dave Pitman, a student in the 1950s, ‘and what to give the students to drink at breakfast was one of the unique quirks at BA.’

Life in Ethiopia in the 40s and 50s was spartan for all missionaries. Hot chocolate was the favourite of the students, but I guess it was considered an extravagance for daily consumption, so it was alternated with a concoction called ‘sindy boona’, wheat coffee. I think it was supposed to be something like a breakfast drink called *postum*, a hot non-caffeinated breakfast drink. It was made by roasting wheat quite dark, grinding it up and mixing it with hot milk. It was not a favourite of anybody I knew, but we got it down.

When I was in Grade five I was assigned to Ora Jane Brixey’s table for meals. She was school nurse and was doubling as cook for a short while. One week the latest batch of *sindy boona* was just awful, and I was driven to action. I remember the exact wording of my question to Miss Brixey to this day because it was so effective. I asked her, ‘Miss Brixey, do you know why we drink this *sindy boona*?’ She replied, ‘No. Why?’ And I said, ‘Because you have never tasted it.’ Well, she was a good sport and took what must have indeed been her first sip of this breakfast economy from my cup. As head cook and school nurse in charge of the health of the students, she stood up and announced to the whole dining room that no one had to drink the *sindy boona*. And with that a decade of *sindy boona* passed into history. I guess the standard of living of missionaries must have risen because we always had hot chocolate after that.⁶⁶

There was a short recess each morning, when each child was given two calcium tablets and carrot sticks or peanuts or raisins. Many did not like the tablets and hid them in the dirt.

⁶⁵ Harold Jongeward, op.cit.

⁶⁶ Email from Dave Pitman 15 November 2016.

Apparently the mission pharmacist thought the youngsters did not get enough calcium in their diet and made hundreds of calcium tablets each week at the SIM headquarters' pharmacy.

The school's first dining room was across the hall from the living room – long tables with about seven children either side. A new dining room was built in 1959, when the older one became too cramped. The 'new' one was in use for Grades 1 and 2 classrooms in later years.

Arthur Rashleigh, who took over from the Hays at the end of 1956, had a little bell at his table to quieten the noisy diners. Tim Bascom, in his memoir *Chameleon Days: An American Boyhood in Ethiopia*, remembered the napkin rings, which were aluminium or plastic. His table 'head', however, a rather sharp girl, had a carved ring with a cheetah on it. 'Napkins in your lap. No elbows on the table,' she instructed her young charges. 'Don't speak while chewing. Eat everything.'⁶⁷

Eating everything was not so hard if 'klim' was on the menu. This was a white, creamy, bubbly and thick milk substitute. Another treat was the homemade peanut butter. Frances Wallace noted in her diary in 1958 that 'we bake sixteen loaves of bread a day'.⁶⁸

She remarked that 'one routine we adults appreciated having each day, and especially on the Lord's Day, was that of "rest hour" (known in some places as "restless hour"). A quiet island in the hurry of the daily rounds.' Rest hour was after lunch when no books or toys were allowed. The children found this irksome, and for them it was especially hard on Saturday or Sunday.

Eva Stott has often wondered about the contents of the fruit bowl that was passed around the table at the end of supper each night. If she were first, she had a choice; if last, she would have to take what was left: an Italian apple which was egg-shaped, pale green with black or dark maroon vertical stripes around it and flesh with the consistency of a plum. The fruit was insipid, but juicy. She has not seen the same fruit since she left Bingham Academy.⁶⁹

Lessons were held in the morning from 8.30 and after rest hour until four o'clock. The first staff at Bingham Academy included Mary MacDonald, Mary Wollman and Edith Willey. Miss Willey was a favourite, with her ready laugh and engaging smile. Tim Bascom said that

⁶⁷ Tim Bascom, p. 94.

⁶⁸ Frances Wallace. op. cit. Diary reference 22 October 1958.

⁶⁹ Godfrey Dawkins. op. cit.

‘she began each day as if it might hold a surprise.’⁷⁰ Christina Langton (née Dawkins) loved Miss MacDonald and has never forgotten her kindness. ‘I have told my own sons how “nice” she was. I don’t resent my childhood at all and would not swap it for the world.’⁷¹

After school, it was time for games outside; swings, monkey bars and teeter-totters, otherwise known as seesaws. The boys made the most of the thick mud to build wonderful houses and underground garages. Michael and Godfrey Dawkins constructed a house using the scraps of wood left over around the new building. Their father, who worked for the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society (a Church of England organisation), provided them with nails for the project.⁷²

After supper, the children assembled in the living room for story time. Sometimes a missionary or *Reader’s Digest* story was read. Then it was back to the dormitories and the bathrooms, where teeth were cleaned with boiled water kept in white metal barrels. No talking was permitted after lights out. It had been a long day.

⁷⁰ Godfrey Dawkins. op. cit.

⁷¹ Godfrey Dawkins. op. cit.

⁷² Godfrey Dawkins. op.cit.

CHAPTER 3

‘MOULDING CHARACTER AND LIFE’

‘Bingham, last but not least, should be appreciated as a place where each boy and girl along with academic studies is given Christian teaching which we trust is moulding character and life. Bingham Academy staff with your parents, and the entire Mission’s prayers long that each boy and girl should come to know the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour.’⁷³

The school ethos has always emphasised spiritual teaching in its day-to-day existence. Bingham Academy was also intended to be a home away from home, a hope expressed by Walter Ohman who wrote the statement used for the heading of this chapter. He also wrote:

To be sure B.A. could never replace your own home, but it should be appreciated as being second only to your own home. It should be a place where all attending should know that each member of the staff is vitally interested in the welfare of each of you, and that they seek to the best of their ability to be a mother and father to you.⁷⁴

As the previous chapter has shown, this emphasis often seemed to be in conflict with disciplinary measures. Marilyn Kliewer, the editor of the 1966–67 *Bingham Beacon* (the 20th anniversary issue of the school yearbook) observed: ‘Basically Bingham has not changed since you were here. We still have a dedicated staff determined “to train up each child in the way he should go”. Rules and discipline are here to stay.’

Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black wrote about the transition from home to Bingham Academy in a memoir. She experienced a deep pain, which she described in ‘Strengthened Through Hardship: Growing Up in Ethiopia’:

Although I was cared for physically, there was little emotional support and almost no love. Gone was the nurture and protection of parents. The school ran like clockwork: gettin’ up time, mealtimes, class times, bedtimes. For me, the worst day of the week was Saturday, when other students were gone to their homes nearby and there was no timetable for activity. The loneliness became overwhelming.⁷⁵

Yet the Hays and their staff did their best to include ‘family fun’ for the children, including baseball games on the playing field, outdoor meals and camp-outs in the forest. There was a Boy Scouts group which went on hikes and camps. Keith Pitman taught woodwork skills to the boys, showing them how to make a photograph album with varnished plywood covers

⁷³ Walter Ohman. ‘What Bingham Should Mean to Every Boy and Girl’. *Bingham Beacon* 1964-65. No page numbers. Walter Ohman was an early SIM pioneer in Wolayta. In the mid-1950s he became SIM East Africa Field Director.

⁷⁴ Ohman. op. cit.

⁷⁵ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black. ‘Strengthened Through Hardship: Growing Up in Ethiopia’. *Simroots* 31. 1, 2014, pp.6-8.

and pig skin hinges, etched with an eagle on the front. The class also made leaf-shaped wooden candleholders, proudly presented to parents.

Several times a year, birthday parties were given for all those who had celebrated birthdays in the previous months. Graham Hay and later, Keith Pitman, went off to fetch a huge block of ice from somewhere, breaking it up and putting it in a churn. Then Mrs Hay made ice cream, enlisting two of the outside workers to work the churn. She and Mrs Wallace made devil's chocolate cake and white angel cake as well as doughnuts for special occasions. At Halloween a large masquerade party was organised with games such as bobbing for apples. The children received rare treats such as candy and chocolate.

The boys constructed dams in the river and caught toads and frogs. One boy carved a boat out of wood, and a frog was put on the front and sent across the water. The river flooded sometimes in the rainy season and was 'out of bounds'. Tim Bascom and his friends made bows and arrows to hunt doves; the girls skipped rope, chanting weird poems. They made houses in the woods and furnished them with rocks and logs, or they tended imaginary stews made of grass and leaves and acorns.

Tim also described the 'cave' at Bingham, reached by a tunnel dug by some of the high school boys in the clay soil at the farthest end of the playing field. The tunnel connected to 'a round hole, like the open mouth of a fifty-gallon barrel, opened into the hillside.... We could hear the stream burbling below us and the sharp laughter of Ethiopian women slapping river rocks with their wet laundry.'⁷⁶

The bag swing in the forest was a great favourite. Its predecessor was made at the SMC: a gunnysack filled with straw and attached to poles in an A-shaped frame. The children climbed a ladder laid against a tree and jumped onto the bag and enjoyed a great swing. At BA, the bag swing wore out so many gunny sacks that at last one of the staff, Kermit Freeman, made a seat out of a piece of tire. 'Even our adult visitors like to play on this, for it is about fifty feet high or more, and you get almost twenty feet off the ground.'

Kermit also made a set of tall swings from a water pipe, chain and hard seats. 'They should last a good long time. Now we have to keep the kids from swinging too high, for a couple of girls fell out when pumping together, but only bruised themselves a little.'⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Tim Bascom, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

⁷⁷ 'Letter from: Kermit Freeman (BA Staff). *Simroots* 33.1, 2016, p. 6.

Accidents and illnesses were always a worry at the school. In 1956 there was an epidemic of measles, then mumps and a smallpox scare. Frances Wallace wrote in her diary:

‘There is no central heating in this huge building. It is getting up in the night that wears me out. With the fevers they [the children] have bad dreams and wake up crying. I go around with the barn lantern, wake them up, and let them go back to sleep again.’⁷⁸

One student, remembered as Mary by Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black, contracted polio. ‘She was airlifted to America and placed in an iron lung. It shocked the school, as we realised the fragility of life. Suddenly this beautiful, sweet girl who loved to sing was gone, stricken to the core of her being. That experience sobered me greatly.’⁷⁹

The school nurse was also kept busy when there was an outbreak of illness. At one time, when the children were being bitten in the night, the staff feared rats or bats, and the sufferers were given rabies shots. A big table in the kitchen was spread with blankets and a sheet, then the vaccine was injected in the stomach, causing huge ‘goose egg’ bumps; then a penicillin injection was jabbed in the child’s bottom. This treatment continued for ten nights.⁸⁰

Needless to say, the members of the staff were not immune from illness either. Frances Wallace recorded that her husband Roy was ill with malaria soon after their arrival in Ethiopia. Daughter Carol was dangerously ill during their service at Bingham and had to be hospitalised. Frances also recorded other instances of staff sickness: Miss Douglas, who had made such a good start as a music teacher, left due to a viral infection and strained heart muscle. ‘Mr Schneider is still not well. He is the member of staff who had hepatitis for nearly the whole school year....The rigours of Bingham are just too much to allow for a complete recovery.’ She added: ‘Do pray for Missionaries’ children, especially pre-schoolers. Sickness is a deep drain on missionary strength.’⁸¹

Frances was kept busy in many different ways, apart from caring for her own young family. She was responsible for the flowers every Friday, arranging as many as fifty or sixty vases. The weekly flower decoration was a tradition long established before the Wallaces arrived in

⁷⁸ Frances Wallace, *op.cit.* p. 57.

⁷⁹ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black, *op.cit.*

⁸⁰ Julene Hodges Schroeder, *op.cit.* p. 107.

⁸¹ Frances Wallace, *op.cit.* pp. 89 and 91-92.

1956: flowers were placed in every dormitory, on every dining room table. ‘Here, there and everywhere,’ Roy said.⁸²

The children had their chores to do too. Eva Stott remembered cleaning the courtyard with water and sand.⁸³ As a new girl, Julene Hodges’ job was to collect shoes from a little shelf that hung down from the foot of each bunk bed, dust them and put them back. Harold Jongeward, who attended Bingham for nine years as a student and returned in the 1970s to work on the staff for another sixteen years, described the daily duties:

We made our own beds each morning when we got up. Once a week we changed our sheets. Sometimes we all picked up our own clothes from the laundry; other times someone was assigned to bring clean clothes from the laundry and then we each picked up our own from the pile. We all had to keep our stuff put away—clothes in clothes drawer, toys in the toy cupboard.

Right after breakfast we had assigned chores. Younger kids had simple household jobs like dusting, sweeping, cleaning. Older kids had jobs with more responsibility: filling generator with gas and check oil (until BA got electricity). A job I had in my older years was hair cutting. In those days, boys needed haircuts about once every two weeks. Two or three of us older boys did haircuts for all the boy students. We were always looking out for shaggy ones. When we saw them we told them to come see us after breakfast the next morning. We generally each did two or three haircuts every day—maybe a few more on Saturdays as necessary.

On Saturday mornings, right after doing their usual jobs, all boys (except first- and maybe second-graders) did shoe polishing of all staff and students’ shoes. Everyone dropped off their shoes at a certain location. The boys cleaned, polished, and shined all shoes, then left them in pairs in rows for everyone to pick up.⁸⁴

Harold could not remember anyone not doing his or her job, but the most likely punishment for failing to do so would have been a spanking ‘because that was the usual punishment for anything’. Another punishment for older boys was to cut or saw wood to keep the water heaters going. One boy who tried to run away from the school was punished by having to do a month’s labour in the woodpile, plus a strapping every evening for five days. One night Murray Hodges turned off the generator while the staff was having a meeting and was strapped. Generally, transgressions at school meant the leather strap. Julene Hodges was hit ten times with a thick ruler for being rude.

⁸² Email from Roy Wallace 18 October 2016.

⁸³ Quoted in email from Godfrey Dawkins 10 October 2016.

⁸⁴ Email from Harold Jongeward 27 October 2016.

These were the negatives of school life, in an era when corporal punishment was regarded as necessary and acceptable. Generally the children recognised that it was part of life, as it would have been in most homes, regardless of the home country. After a while, it seemed, they all shared a common way of life and a common accent, observable throughout the school's history.

Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black has described one vivid memory:

When I was eight or nine years old, a horde of locusts came. I distinctly remember the thick black cloud travelling towards our school. As the number of locusts became more numerous, we ran for the shelter of our dorm and closed the door securely. We could hear them hitting the door and windows outside, but we didn't dare open the door even for a small peek; we knew we would be overwhelmed by the horde. After some time, we ventured outside to find all foliage stripped! No leaf stood on a tree, no blade of grass remained; no plants were in the flower garden. All gone, just as if God were replaying the plagues against Pharaoh. It was a dramatic event, and it showed me again the power of the God who had created me.⁸⁵

The children had many shared experiences, including dormitory routines. After bedtime, lights were turned out in the dorms, but a small kerosene lamp burned all night in the bathrooms to serve as night lights. The boarding arrangements varied from year to year. Sometimes older children were in the same dorm rooms with younger ones and sometimes they were divided up by ages. Bedtimes happened in two instalments. The younger ones went to bed after their 7.00 – 7.30 story time. The older ones went to bed after 7.00 – 8.30 study hall. To keep from waking up the sleeping children on their return, they changed into pyjamas, bathrobes and slippers before going to study hall. Then when they were back in the dorms, they were supposed to move quietly, without talking, go to the bathroom, hang up bathrobes, take off slippers, and go to bed. This rarely happened unless there was an adult around to see that it happened.

In a letter sent to the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Ethiopian Imperial Government, dated 24 May 1957, Glen Cain (then SIM Field Director) explained the school's enrolment and policy:

This school was founded in 1946 by the SIM exclusively for the education of the children of the various missionary societies operating in Ethiopia and the Sudan. In this current school term which commenced in August, 1956 there are seventy-eight European children ranging in age from six to fifteen years.

⁸⁵ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black. op.cit. *Simroots* 31.2 2014 pp. 9-10.

Four of the children are from Australia, two from England and the remaining seventy-two from North America. The parents of the children attending the Academy in the present term represent the following missions: United Presbyterian Mission, Mennonite Mission, Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, Baptist General Conference Mission and the Sudan Interior Mission.

The School teaches no secondary subjects and can, therefore, be classified as elementary. The Curriculum is that of schools in North America. The present school facilities include three rooms. In the first room are Grades 1 and 2, including 30 students and taught by Miss Mary MacDonald. The second room has Grades 3 and 4 with 22 children, taught by Miss Edith Willey. In the third room are Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 totalling 26 students and taught by Mr. Roy Wallace. The class periods are 8.30 am to 12 noon, 2 pm – 4 pm five days weekly. All the missionaries' children attending the school are boarders and pay a monthly tuition fee of \$100 which covers board, room, text books, health supervision etc. It is the policy of Bingham Academy not to accept any child whose parents are not engaged full time in missionary work.⁸⁶

Two years later, another letter of explanation was sent to Ministry of Education and Fine Arts: 'The present school facilities include four rooms: In the first room are Grades 1 and part of Grade 2, taught by Miss Mary MacDonald. The second room has the remainder of Grade 2 and Grade 3, taught by Miss Mary Wollman. In the third room are Grades 4 and 5, taught by Miss Edith Willey. The fourth room has Grades 6, 7 and 8, taught by Mr. Roy Wallace.'⁸⁷ The school was growing, room by room.

Almost all of the children took piano lessons and at the end of the year, the school held a big piano recital. Concerts in the living room were popular, with various instruments played. Michael Dawkins will always remember when and where he first heard the hymn, 'I Come to the Garden Alone': it was his friend Jerry Cremer playing it on his trumpet in the living room at Bingham Academy.

Eva Stott also remembered being taken to a radio station and singing there. Her brother Godfrey, on the same occasion, in 1953, saw bulletins on street hoardings [billboards] about Joseph Stalin being seriously ill and 'we children were all being urged to pray for him to be saved, but he died.'⁸⁸

They enjoyed outings to the Ghion Pool, a big, blue pool surrounded by eucalyptus trees, near the King's palace. The pool was naturally heated; in fact that was reputedly the reason for moving the capital of Ethiopia from Ankober. The Empress enjoyed the health-giving

⁸⁶ SIM Archives Box 3f, p. 26.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 22.

⁸⁸ Godfrey Dawkins. op.cit.

properties of the heated mineral pools. When the Wallaces first went to Bingham, Wes and Anne Kruger were among the teachers at the Haile Selassie Secondary School (located on the outskirts of Addis on the highway to Dessie) that had a swimming pool. ‘That pool was large but definitely not heated,’ Roy said. ‘Wes obtained permission to take some of our older boys there for Saturday afternoon swims.’⁸⁹

In the trees surrounding the Ghion pool, the King’s colobus monkeys swung back and forth by their beautiful long black and white tails. The other association the children had with the species was in the living room at the school, where they listened to stories sitting on colobus monkey skin rugs. The killing of the black and white colobus monkeys was forbidden by law, yet in the streets of Addis Ababa the vendors had plenty of rugs made from them.

The Bingham ‘buggy’, a mini-bus, most often a VW, was in popular demand at holiday time. It was one of a few vehicles the Wallaces could reserve for family travel. Roy told of the time when he was on the road to Dilla (in southern Ethiopia) with five of his six children on board. After passing a highway camp, the mini-bus refused to move. ‘A couple of chaps from the camp came, opened the engine compartment located at the back and started pulling wires, and stripping them with their teeth. Frances queried them and they replied, “Maytee, if this does not work we will run behind you all the way to Dilla and make sure you get there.”’⁹⁰

The staff looked forward to holidays at Bishoftu, although it has been said that in the early days, the journey of thirty miles from Addis to Bishoftu took all day. The Mission’s beautiful vacation home was near a crater lake where they swam, picked citrus fruit fresh from the trees and rested, till the next busy term began. In the ten-day break, mid-year 1951, Keith Pitman and his wife Betty took the children who could not go home for a week’s holiday at Bishoftu. This was a first and a great success. Haile Selassie, who was in the habit of driving around and talking to people, had a residence in Bishoftu. He stopped to talk to Keith one day when he was out near the SIM property. ‘This compound had little cottages that comfortably housed visiting mission families,’ wrote Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black.

Some relaxing sports activities were available. Meals were prepared for everyone, and we had devotions all together before eating. This place was

⁸⁹ Email from Roy Wallace 30 November 2016.

⁹⁰ Roy Wallace 18 October 2016.

paradise to me because I got my parents all to myself and no ministry pulled them away from me. We went there usually two or three weeks a year and I was always happy there. There were times out in the row boat on the lake, going through the reeds looking for duck nests with my father. There were times in the wading pool with my mother. There were times playing shuffleboard or ping pong.⁹¹

Some families were reunited at the SIM headquarters in the heart of Addis Ababa, when missionary parents were visiting from ‘up country’ or ‘down country’. At times the parents were working in the city and their children could visit regularly. For many years it was Mission policy that all the children of SIM missionaries be in the school boarding programme so it would be fair for families who could not be with their children. The children whose parents were at HQ were allowed to go home on weekends. ‘My mom always made it a policy to bring other kids from BA home so they were not always at Bingham,’ Beth Long (née Stilwell) wrote. ‘By the time I was at Bingham [1970s], they had dropped the requirement that Addis-based families must have their kids in the boarding programme.’⁹²

The apartments at headquarters provided a pleasant interlude and a chance to meet old friends in the dining/living room. When more roads opened and Ethiopian Air offered more flights, travel was much easier. At the end of 1958, a change was made in the school year: there would be four weeks at Christmas instead of twelve and a longer break mid-year.

⁹¹ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black. *Simroots* 31. 1, 2014, pp.6-8.

⁹² Email from Beth Long 5 November 2016. Her father had set up a pharmacy at SIM HQ to supply all medical supplies and medications for down country hospitals and clinics.

CHAPTER 4

‘EVERY JOB IS A VITAL PART OF THE WHOLE’

‘Perhaps the most significant feature Bingham children have in common is that they are the children of missionaries. They share the burden their parents have accepted from the Lord: the burden of living in a land not their own, the burden of being “different”, the burden of family separation with its toll of loneliness. But they share too, the blessings their parents enjoy: that of learning another culture, that of wondering at the Lord’s provision, of knowing and doing His will in service. They have their faults, their rebellions and their selfishness. Their lives are as subject as any other to temptation and failure. But on the whole, they are as decent and considerate, as reasonable and thoughtful a group of children as you could find anywhere.’⁹³

The new decade of the 1960s began happily and ended dramatically. Evangelist Billy Graham visited Addis Ababa in March 1960. Students in Grades 6–8 (as well as some of the younger children) and most of the Ethiopian helpers went to the first meeting at the sports stadium, which was only partially built. The speakers were seated on the elevated part, and some of the audience sat on chairs or benches in the open; most, including the students, stood behind them for the entire session.

The eighth grade graduating class of four was given the chance to take the training programme designed to counsel people who responded to the appeal at the end of each session. Training was conducted at the Baptist Mission, and the Bingham students were the only youth among the adults. ‘It was quite an honour,’ Dave Pitman said, ‘because it happened on weekday evenings and meant that we had to be out long after the usual bedtime. At the crusade I counselled one student. I was not completely sure of his understanding or commitment but he was anxious to get the literature.’⁹⁴

There was only one back door on the ground level of the stadium. Roy Wallace had the temerity to take his carload of MKs and line them up to intercept Billy when he finished speaking. He assessed the situation easily as he came out and shook hands with them. ‘Missionary kids, huh?’⁹⁵ Cliff Barrows, long-time music and programme director for the

⁹³ Chapter heading and quote by Lloyd Stinson, Bingham Director, *Bingham Beacon* 1969-70.

⁹⁴ Email from Dave Pitman 31 October 2016.

⁹⁵ Email from Roy Wallace 30 October 2016.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, was also there and expressed his delight at meeting MKs.⁹⁶

Emperor Haile Selassie met Billy Graham during that visit, and rumour had it that they drank out of pure gold vessels.⁹⁷ The Emperor's faith and fortitude were tested several months later in December 1960. While he was out of the country, his Imperial Bodyguard took over Addis Ababa. It was dangerous to leave the city, which meant that SIM headquarters was full of parents, children and the Mission's council members in town for meetings. Those who tried to leave were stopped, searched and questioned by soldiers.

'I was in a convoy of two cars trying to leave the city,' recalled Harold Jongeward. 'We were stopped (I don't remember being searched—maybe we were), but we were not allowed to leave the city.'⁹⁸ The headquarters was next to a police station and therefore in the line of gunfire if the situation escalated. When shooting did break out, everyone went to the basement, remembered by Julene Hodges Schroeder as 'a dark dusty storage room with musty mud walls and small dirty windows'.

Julene described the scene: 'Mattresses were stacked in front of the windows in the dining/living area and others put on the floor to sleep on. Shooting continued all night, then quiet.' The residents were evacuated to Bingham Academy, with twenty-three vehicles of every description used for transport. An eerie silence hung over the city. At the school, men and boys were making big American and British flags on the playing field out of painted rocks and material so that planes flying overhead would not bomb the compound. Everyone had to stay inside all day and turn out every light at night.⁹⁹

Kermit Freeman had a portable battery radio, which allowed the staff to tune in to the BBC, hoping to hear reports of what was happening beyond the compound gates. The British Embassy promised to evacuate the residents if the situation worsened. Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black was one of a small handful of students at the school, waiting for holiday travel arrangements to be made. She remembered many adults weeping with stress and fear.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Frances Wallace. *The Shaping of a Saint*, p. 78.

⁹⁷ Haile Selassie and Billy Graham met again in 1966 at a World Congress on Evangelism held in Berlin. Haile Selassie addressed the gathering, expressing some thoughts on his own Christian faith <http://www.ccel.us/billy.ch25.html> accessed 26 October 2016.

⁹⁸ Email from Harold Jongeward 29 December 2016.

⁹⁹ Julene (Hodge) Schroeder. *Under an African Sky*, pp. 113-115.

¹⁰⁰ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black. 'Strengthened Through Hardship: Growing Up in Ethiopia'. *Simroots* 31. 1, 2014, pp.6-8.

Frances Wallace noted in her diary that there were 160 people present for breakfast and for the next three days, but ‘through it all the Ethiopian staff was most faithful’. Children found many spent bullets the next day on the playground.¹⁰¹

By 17 December 1960, loyalists had regained control of Addis Ababa, and the conspirators had either been killed or had fled the capital. The experience and the potential danger to the school prompted improved security measures. Desmond Meed, who was a dorm supervisor and maintenance man at Bingham in the second half of the 1960s, had worked in Toronto with the volunteer fire department during his years at Bible College (1956–61). While in Toronto, he was also involved with emergency preparedness in its incipient stages. When he and his wife Lillian arrived at the school, he saw the need for a place of safety.¹⁰²

A tunnel was constructed under the main building, then known as Gowans Hall. The secret place was located behind the basement workshop, with a tool shelf concealing the entrance. Over the years students and staff became familiar with ‘riot drill’ at different times of the day and night. Tim Bascom remembers that the first attempts took twelve minutes. Everyone huddled in the long underground tunnel, which was like a damp cave, beneath the dining hall, along which a line of light bulbs dangled.¹⁰³ There was a very loud siren on the main house, and when it was rung (at a non-meal hour) it was understood that everyone needed to get to the tunnels under the main house. ‘Most boarding students lived in the main house,’ explained Beth Long, ‘and there were actually trap doors in the floor where students could drop directly into the tunnels. The tunnels connected directly to the food pantry so that in the event we needed to stay for an extended time we would have access to food and water.’¹⁰⁴

With the help of Warren Daniels and Don Ricker, Desmond Meed enlarged the tunnel chambers as the school grew. The need for such a contingency plan became more pressing in the 1970s when Ethiopia was under communist leadership. Despite the warning signs of political instability and potential trouble in the country and its capital, building went on apace at Bingham Academy during the 1960s.

An aerial photograph of the campus, included in the school’s 20th anniversary edition of the *Bingham Beacon*, 1966–67, showed the expansion that had occurred. Two new classroom blocks had been built. One was a three-room structure with a basement beside the main

¹⁰¹ Frances Wallace. op. cit. pp. 81-82.

¹⁰² Email from Lillian Meed 3 October 2016.

¹⁰³ Tim Bascom. *Chameleon Days*, p. 179.

¹⁰⁴ Email from Beth (Stilwell) Long 5 November 2016.

building, made entirely of sun-dried mud brick. The other was reached by going ‘down the hill to a modern double-story building which provides living quarters for teachers and classrooms for the lower grades. This building overlooks a vast woods with a beautiful river flowing past the campus.’ At some stage it was named Oromia.¹⁰⁵

Bill Schmidt had returned to build a new dormitory block, completed in 1965. This was ‘a long, two-storey building behind the main building, with staff apartments on the lower floor. Two long ramps went up to the girls’ dorm on the right and the boys’ dorm on the left. Downstairs in the centre was a living room where the students could lounge or have special events. Right behind the building the eucalyptus forest stretched to the fence.’¹⁰⁶

The gymnasium, built in 1963, was beyond the main building. It had an asphalt floor, and its huge galvanised iron roof was supported by telephone-pole-sized *bahir-zaff* (eucalyptus) timbers. It was not completely enclosed, which meant that during the wet season, anyone venturing out to fetch a ball was quickly drenched. The noise of heavy rain on the roof was deafening. The wood pile and the laundry lines were located behind the gymnasium. At one time, the older boys kept pigeons in a large walk-in cage strapped to the east wall, but their pets had to be released in the forest after a serious infection amongst the students was traced to the pigeons.

In 1967 the school’s library was relocated from the main building to the lower level of the classroom block made of sun-dried mud bricks. Under the direction of Roy Wallace, shelves were built and students assisted with moving, filing and shelving the books. The library was dedicated on 6 June 1967 to Graham Hay, who had left Bingham with Mildred and the family at Christmas 1956. He started working at the Northern Leprosarium in Dessie, northern Ethiopia, but made a return visit to the school in October 1958. Then, in the summer of 1966, he was reappointed to the school as station head.

His new term of service was cut short when he suffered a subarachnoid haemorrhage and was in a coma for about six weeks. He died on 22 October 1966. A Thanksgiving service was held at the SIM chapel, followed by a memorial service in the school chapel, conducted in

¹⁰⁵ ‘A Stroll Around Bingham’. *Bingham Beacon* 1964-65.

¹⁰⁶ Julene (Hodges) Schroeder. op. cit. p. 163.

both Amharic and English. Ato Girma, the cook, said that the national staff cried loudly at the service, deeply distressed by the founder's unexpected death.¹⁰⁷

The library has been relocated at various times. The first move was to the building known affectionately as 'the horse barn' (used for that purpose originally), below the classroom block. The building is now called the Hub. Then all the books were moved again to the upper regions of the new gymnasium, which was completed in 2000. The last move to date was made back to the first block of mudbrick classrooms, where all three classrooms have been opened up to make one long library room.

The library would always be a haven for children seeking a quiet place away from the constant company of others and the daily demands of an institution. Daniel Coleman remembered that one librarian, Mrs Ricker, had hidden reading chairs among the book stacks where he liked to enjoy solitude and the smell of 'old paper, binding glue, the vinyl of new encyclopaedia spines and floor wax'.¹⁰⁸

Horse riding was another popular recreation. When the Wallaces arrived in March 1956, Bingham had two horses.

A summer or two later we had the loan of two more from the Krugers [Canadian secondary teachers at Haile Selassie Secondary School] who made an overland trip to the Belgian Congo in a VW Beetle with two small children, through desert and rain forest. They had close relatives there. They made it back safely and collected their horses.¹⁰⁹

The boarders had various outlets for fun and games. They could play tennis, volleyball and basketball. The basement playroom (also located on the lower level of the mud brick block) was often full of cement dust from roller skating. On sunny days some children played jacks and knucklebones on the front porch. Kermit Freeman was remembered as a 'fun' teacher who did his best to make free time enjoyable. 'When Mr Freeman came,' Julene (Hodges) Schroeder wrote, 'he had so many new ideas on how to liven things up. Best of all, he was a great storyteller. After a party, we would beg him to tell a story, and our request was always the same: "Tell us a ghost story!"'¹¹⁰

Kermit wrote home to his family, describing the activities:

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Ato Girma 14 February 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Coleman. *The Scent of Eucalyptus*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Roy Wallace. *op.cit.*

¹¹⁰ Julene (Hodges) Schroeder. *op. cit.* p. 104.

Our two horses are better trained now and will gallop with the kids (or maybe the kids are better riders) so they get ridden more . . . the tetherball fad has worn off, but it may be because the rope has broken, and the new rope makes the ball touch the ground.

About the distance of three blocks through the eucalyptus woods from our compound is a little hill that has thorn trees on it and un-kept young fruit trees at the feet of it. We took a walk up there last Thursday to see birds, and we saw about twelve kinds including three or four new ones. We are now trying to learn to identify birds by their calls, and it makes a walk so much more interesting. Usually on a walk you have a bunch of national kids following you, but even when I took twenty kids for a walk there and beyond yesterday, we only saw two adults and no kids. It is a very pretty place with a big green pasture along one side of the hill.¹¹¹

Tim Bascom liked to climb trees in the cedar forest by the school entrance, where he could watch the world outside: Fiat lorries, peasants clambering off overloaded buses, boys herding goats, women murmuring under bundles of sticks strapped to their backs. He also described a fierce hailstorm that lasted for thirty minutes, turning the playing field white. ‘We ran out and popped the icy marbles into our mouths. . . . we packed them into hail balls and thwacked each other.’¹¹²

The 1964–65 *Bingham Beacon* included a page titled ‘Highlights of the Year’. These included progressive meals, Christmas and Halloween parties as well as a party for the older grades at Good Shepherd School (which opened in 1960); the visit by Queen Elizabeth to Addis Ababa in February 1965; field trips and field days. One field day was a combined event with Good Shepherd School. Kermit Freeman, describing the 1961 field day, said that it took a full day to put each competitor through ten events and to give prize ribbons, candy and money. ‘The hurdles I made were flimsy but fun; our sand keeps leaving the jumping pit, and the sawdust keeps shrinking so that it no longer fills the pole vaulting pit.’¹¹³ Schoolhouse leagues or houses were named after Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent.

The end of year was always an exciting time. Recital and graduation days were big events. The first graduation dinner was held in 1957, and photographs of the era show very mature graduates, although they were still so young. The girls had their hair ‘set’, and they pinned corsages on the bodices of their pretty full-skirted frocks. Nadine Freeman, Kermit’s wife, was a dorm parent in the girls’ section. She helped the girls achieve a grown-up look by styling their hair with Toni perms.

¹¹¹ Kermit Freeman. ‘Remember When’. Letter dated 14 April 1961. *Simroots* 33.1, 2016, p. 6.

¹¹² Tim Bascom. op. cit. pp. 205 and 183.

¹¹³ Kermit Freeman. op.cit.

This activity was all beyond the classroom. On school days, the bell, a short length of train rail hanging outside the kitchen, was whacked by a kitchen worker and summoned teachers and students to lessons. The Bingham Teachers' Christmas Report 1963 read:

We have four full-time teachers. Miss Wollman with 28 beginners in Grade 1; Miss Martin with 32 in Grades 2 & 3; Miss Willey with 25 in Grades 4 & 5; and Mr Wallace with 35 in Grades 6 through 9. Mr Freeman has been teaching science and Mrs Wallace the Art programme Grades 6 to 9.¹¹⁴

Roy Wallace, who took over as principal when the Hays left at the end of 1956, has explained that new subjects were gradually added. In one example, he said that two SIM elders approached him in the chapel and asked 'if I would mind if Grade Nine would be added to BA. Why ask? Their mind was already made up. French was added to the BA curriculum at that juncture. I really can't remember when typing was added, but I do remember in New York on the way back to Ethiopia on a charter flight, I was approached and told we had twenty or so typewriters on the way. We eventually had a typing classroom.'¹¹⁵

From the recollections of past students, it seems that this era brought many changes to the campus. Daniel Coleman's older brother had told him in its early days:

The school had been run after the severe fashion of a military academy, with inspections for shiny shoes and cleanliness of hands and faces, and with rules forbidding parents from visiting their children for the first six weeks until the kids – and the parents – had 'toughened up'. A big change occurred when a principal named Roy Wallace and a school manager named Rollin Reimer arrived in the 1960s. These two and their wives, John says, did a lot to create a family atmosphere. This gentler ethos was in place by the time I arrived [1967].¹¹⁶

Roy was credited with starting the library, the first band and orchestra; with preparing tapes and earphones for French classes; and for initiating the *Bingham Beacon* yearbook, which supplemented *Bingham Briefs*, a monthly newsheet to parents, which was started in March 1960. The first issue of *Bingham Beacon*, 1964–65, was dedicated to Rev Graham Hay 'for his many years of devoted service, faithful prayers, fervent love and consistent example.' The 1973–74 issue was dedicated to the Wallace family.

Julene (Hodges) Schroeder described Roy Wallace as 'a no-nonsense teacher with excellent control'. During the June exams he put on a large reel-to-reel tape of Haydn's Trumpet

¹¹⁴ Frances Wallace. op. cit., p.87.

¹¹⁵ Email from Roy Wallace 20 October 2016.

¹¹⁶ Daniel Coleman. op. cit. pp. 26-27.

Concerto as the students wrote. As the new academic year began at the start of the 1970s, he was homeroom teacher for Grade 8, teaching Bible, English, French and History in the upper grades. He had also outlined a course in industrial arts for the boys of Grade 7 and 8. That year, 1970, the school had about 140 boarders, 20 fewer than the previous year.

The 1969–70 yearbook was dedicated to Miss Mary MacDonald ‘who, since 1947, has taught the primary grades of what used to be the School for Missionaries’ Children and now is Bingham Academy, and who has given them a good educational start. She has been well appreciated by the Bingham Students.’ Roy Wallace described ‘Mary Mac’ as an institution in her own right. She initiated Loyal Ambassadors for Christ (LAC) and numerous drama presentations. Because of her short stature, the beginners at BA measured their height in comparison to her.¹¹⁷

When Dave Pitman was in fifth grade, the LAC series

. . . followed Pilgrim through his Progress for an interminable string of Sunday afternoons. During rehearsal for one performance for Pilgrim’s downer in the Slough of Despond, Jonathon Bonk took issue with Mary Mac’s pronunciation of the word, ‘slough’. I didn’t know the word anyway, but it was common parlance in Saskatchewan, where Jonathon was from. He insisted it should sound like *slew*.

Mary Mac, who didn’t lightly accept challenges to her authority, countered as strongly that it should rhyme with *sow*, a female pig, and to prove her point she reached for the dictionary. To our great delight the dictionary agreed with Jonathon, to which Mary Mac huffed, ‘Well, Webster isn’t the only authority.’ We considered it to be a victory, but didn’t realise just how great until the next weekend at Bishoftu, where we retold the event to the vacationing adults who were all acquainted with Mary Mac’s authority. The sustained hilarity of their reaction gave us a new appreciation of our victory.¹¹⁸

The teaching staff has always been an interesting mix of nationalities. Among the many music teachers who came and went in the 1960s was Mme. de Sula, a Russian married to a French diplomat and a former concert pianist. Five students went to her house every week and ate the candies in a bowl on her coffee table.

Kermit Freeman wrote that when the students left Bingham, they were usually ahead of their peers in the home country, about half a grade or more. Kermit taught science and described his class’s study of the digestive system. ‘We are going to finish off by cutting up a sheep

¹¹⁷ Email from Roy Wallace 1 November 2016.

¹¹⁸ Email from Dave Pitman 15 November 2016. Dave was MC in 1975 for Miss Mac’s retirement party.

next Wednesday. You can buy a sheep for about \$2. And sell the hide for 75 cents, or maybe just 40 cents.’¹¹⁹

The science room was eventually located in the basement where the children had roller-skated. With expansion, another classroom was made there, with tiled floors and green blackboards (imported at some expense from New Zealand), which someone in his wisdom, Roy Wallace said, had later painted black. Ernie Giles, another science teacher, successfully introduced taxidermy to the school, and some of his collection of stuffed animals was still, in 2017, on display at the school.

By the end of the 1950s the teachers had the bonus of city power and fluorescent lights in the main living room and dining room, but from time to time the school, and the Mission, were affected by the country’s hardships. In early July 1965, Frances Wallace recorded in her diary: ‘The rains have been very slow in starting this year. The water shortage is serious. We have water here at Bingham but HQ have had to haul water from here. They have limited drinking water to one-half a glass per person per meal.’¹²⁰

At other times, too much heavy rain caused problems. Charlie Bonk, who built the lower classrooms down the hill from the playing field, had another job on his hands when boulders went rumbling down the river and threatened a collapse of the banks. At the curve in the river behind the building called the triplex (built later in the 1970s), he laid out the foundation for shoring up the sweep of the river. He had discovered when the water level receded that boulders of all sizes and shapes had lodged at the curve. All Charlie had to do was dig them into the curve and plaster them in place.¹²¹

Roy Wallace said:

We used to have regular earthquake drills. I remember being in the new dining room and seeing the power wires shaking. I knew it was a mini and asked the diners to all go outside. Senait Khalil, the Egyptian architect of the new dorm, claimed Addis had an average of 300 per year. One occurred when Frances and I were getting ready to leave for our first furlough in 1961. The main building was made of cedar, but in the middle of the night I heard what I imagined were kids running up and down the second story hall: ripples and ripples of noise. Then felt the movement and I was able to go back to sleep since kids were not involved.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Kermit Freeman. op.cit.

¹²⁰ Frances Wallace. *The Shaping of a Saint*. 9 July 1965.

¹²¹ Email from Roy Wallace 2 November 2016.

¹²² Ibid. 4 March 2017.

Students in the academic year 1964–65 had come from eight different countries. Apart from their lessons, they attended sessions presented by outside speakers including Dr McClure’s messages on ‘The Lamb of God’, Captain Tew’s talk about his experiences in flying, and Mr Kiedel’s comments on literature work and news of the Congo. Every year there was a Spiritual Life Conference. That year, in September, Manley Hodges spoke to the students about the book of Joshua.¹²³

LAC continued on Sunday afternoons, accompanied by the sound of the younger students constantly dropping their copper coin offering. Doug Koop wrote:

Scrubbed clean in our church clothes we waited to enter and take our preordained places. One of the older boys stood with an old candy tin full of centimes, plunking one of the ten-cent coins into the palm of each worshiper as we filed by. We were learning how to give. It was our offering, money collected for some good purpose determined by the scrupulously advised executive of the club. But before relinquishing our centimes to the offering bowl, we’d often burnish the coins with our thumbs and rub them between our palms till they shed their street grime and shone like doubloons.¹²⁴

‘Practice for LAC did mean time away from schoolwork,’ conceded Ray Jones, who wrote about the weekly custom for *Simroots*.

The downside was [that] practice for LAC also meant an increase in tension and a marked increase in potential for verbal or physical discipline. There were times when a strap or stout ruler was visible. One missed cue, partial inattention, or overheard comment could result in hurtful verbal or physical consequences.

From our student outlook, the teachers seemed to develop a competition as to who could get their team to put on the most challenging and best performance. For staff members, I guess, LAC was seen as spiritual growth in action. For parents, it was an opportunity to see little Johnny or Sally perform. For older students, you may be seated so you had a good view of your girlfriend or boyfriend. For us students, it was all a waste of time. We would have preferred being able to spend the time talking and playing with our friends. As an adult, I came to the conclusion that the LAC experience helped in becoming a good public speaker. As far as spiritual growth from LAC – none.¹²⁵

In the *Beacon*’s issue celebrating the school’s 20th anniversary (1966–67), a section was devoted to ‘Former Students News & Views’. Leigh Forsberg, the boy who had made the long trip with Graham Hay from Khartoum to Addis Ababa, had become a medical doctor,

¹²³ ‘Highlights of the Year’. *Bingham Beacon* 1964-65.

¹²⁴ Doug Koop. *Simroots* 31.2, 2014, pp. 7-8.

¹²⁵ Ray Jones. ‘Remembering Bingham LAC’. *Simroots* 31.2, 2014, p. 7.

Resident in Radiology at Stanford University. His comment was that Bingham Academy had taken ‘a very well-rounded aggressive approach’ to the education of its young charges. Helen Hay, who graduated in 1965 and went on to the French Lycée, Addis Ababa, wrote this evaluation: ‘Schooling at Bingham was the foundation of preparation for the Lord’s service. It was a great privilege and a good start to life.’

Virginia Chenault, daughter of Mildred and step-daughter of Graham Hay, had married. As Mrs McDougal, living in La Mirada, California, with her husband and three young children, she said: ‘Through our family devotions, Scripture memorisation, and the testimony by life and lip of many dedicated missionaries, a victorious walk with Christ in my day by day living was impressed on me. I greatly appreciated the vital spiritual emphasis of both home and school.’¹²⁶

Many students were ambivalent, given the long separations from home and family, the problems associated with living in an enclosed community and the absence of home life. Daniel Coleman, who had some traumatic experiences in the 1970s, had this to say:

I have very little memory of severity here and retain instead many images of the story times, outings, long hours of play in the eucalyptus woods, and after-school sports and drama clubs that made our days alive. Some MKs sustained deep wounds from having to leave their families and live in the dormitories, but I never knew any different. Sharon and John had gone to Bingham in grade one, and I just assumed it was the way the world worked. When you were six, you left your family and went away to school.¹²⁷

Tim Bascom expressed the feelings of longing and loneliness, common to MKs, when he wanted to write home to his parents: ‘Sometimes, even when I am playing, I get a strange feeling, like I have fallen in the middle of a lake and no one knows. . . . At night I wonder if you are still alive. Are you still there? . . . Please come and get me.’¹²⁸ He lived for the day when the Land Rover would come through the gates of the compound and his parents would whisk him away to enjoy their company and the simple pleasures of home life.

¹²⁶ ‘Former Students News & Views’. *Bingham Beacon* 1966-67.

¹²⁷ Daniel Coleman, *op.cit.* pp. 26-27.

¹²⁸ Tim Bascom, *op.cit.* pp. 104-05.

CHAPTER 5 ‘GREAT SHALL BE THE PEACE OF THY CHILDREN’

‘Not that I hated my childhood, just that it got complicated by the usual suspects: politics, race and religion – especially politics. Life had been fairly peaceful until 1974, when junior army officers overthrew their superiors and deposed King Haile Selassie and his government. The revolution changed everything.’¹²⁹

The 1970s started normally, with the school celebrating its 25th anniversary in 1971. That year the largest class so far to enter Bingham (in 1965) was also the largest to graduate. Amongst the sixteen graduates, nine had been born in Ethiopia.¹³⁰ Bingham had reached a peak enrolment from 1969 to ‘73, consistently having around 170 students. By the time they all left the school, its theme song, ‘Building, Daily Building’ with its closing chorus line, ‘We are building for Eternity’, would be very familiar.

Two Bible verses have been closely associated with the school from its founding onwards: ‘All thy children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children’ (Isaiah 54: 13) and ‘Looking unto Jesus’ (Hebrews 12: 2). The Isaiah verse was at the centre of the school crest, imprinted on a cross and surrounded by scholastic and sporting emblems.¹³¹ ‘The peace of thy children’ would be disturbed in the 1970s, and staff at the school and SIM would be ‘looking unto Jesus’ anxiously.

The time of trouble was far from the school’s thinking as it celebrated a major milestone in its history. In a report dated October 1971, written by Roy Wallace to his staff, he told them that ‘staff and students formed a core of family life at Quecheni [sic] that has been a hallmark of Bingham from its inception.’ He reminded them that ‘Jubilee is a time of forward-looking’ and he was happy to report that ‘facilities have almost kept pace with the increase [in student numbers]. These include improved library space, new science equipment; greater emphasis in sports and music.’¹³²

The 1971–72 *Bingham Beacon* included pages dedicated to Project Bingham: ‘To make Jubilee Year memorable’. One of the ambitious Silver Jubilee projects undertaken by the Grade 7 children was to publish a tri-weekly school paper, the *Silver Beaconette*. The second

¹²⁹ Daniel Coleman. *The Scent of Eucalyptus*, pp. 9-10.

¹³⁰ *Bingham Beacon* 1971-72. The names and details of the students, pp. 10-14.

¹³¹ SIM Archives. Box 5e 1971-78: Copy of ‘The Chime’ February 1976. A picture of the school crest is in *Bingham Beacon* 1971-72, p. 33.

¹³² SIM Archives. Box 5i 1971-78. ‘Quecheni’ was Kachene, where the SMC was located.

issue, dated 22 October 1971—a ‘Silver Jubilee at Bingham’ special—gave a detailed report of the activities of Loyal Ambassadors for Christ (LAC) which was still meeting every Sunday afternoon. The ninth and tenth graders presented a play titled ‘No Greater Love’, the story of Barabbas and his blind son, ‘Johnny’. Grade 8 held a youth meeting with Roy and Frances Wallace to discuss the topic HTGAWP or, in other words, How To Get Along With Parents! Major Ian Thomas (Capernwray Missionary Fellowship), in Addis Ababa for a series of lectures, was scheduled to address the LAC on 24 October.

Silver Beaconette also reported on sporting activities and a game called Goofball, otherwise known as Gobbleball or Creamball. Grade 9 and 10 students had been to the British Council premises to watch the film *Great Expectations*. Piano and instrumental students were expected to keep count of the number of minutes they practised each day, recording their times on a chart kept in the Jubilee Corner of the typing room.¹³³ Project Grade Eight in Jubilee year was to colourfully paint the junior playground in memory of Loren Bishop, a student who died from cancer. Pictures in the *Bingham Beacon* showed equipment that was still in use when the school reached its 70th anniversary, including a very steep and narrow slippery slide.

Another Project Bingham Academy was to institute the Bar and Letter System, an award scheme to supplement the Graham Hay Annual Memorial Award. The idea was to get students involved and visible in different disciplines. Points were given in all three areas of Bingham life and activity: cultural, academic and athletic. Even cheerleaders could earn points. When the student had sixty points, he or she earned a letter; ninety points were awarded with a pin. The bars were printed in black on gold felt; similarly, ‘Special Award’ ribbons were given, black on gold.¹³⁴

Changes in 1973 included a farewell to Roy and Frances Wallace who had served the school well for seventeen years. Roy was known affectionately as ‘Unkie’. They were replaced by Birdell Emmel and his wife Lois, although a letter to parents dated 31 January 1974 stated that they had left to take charge of the Bishoftu Guest House. ‘We covet your prayers that we as staff may continue to have a harmonious working together for the furtherance of your

¹³³ *Ib.id.* Copy of *Silver Beaconette* No. 2, October 22, 1971. The typing room was in the room that, in 2017, housed the Grade 2 classroom, closest to the elementary playground.

¹³⁴ SIM Archives. Box 5f, p. 2. Order for supplies of bars and ribbons from Baldwin Sales, Uxbridge, Ontario, 27 January 1976.

children's education.' The letter was signed by Albert Erion, Director.¹³⁵ Dave Pitman managed the business affairs of the school, supervised workers, looked after the older boys' dorm, and relinquished his teaching load, except for choir and band and wood working. His wife Winnie took over the kitchen duties from Lois Emmel.

Concerns at Bingham followed Birdell to Bishoftu. John Cumbers, then Director of SIM in Ethiopia, wrote to him:

I have had some indications over the last few days that things are very far from being right at Bingham. Some of the complaints seem to be: The teaching and dorm staff do not seem to accommodate themselves to non-U.S. students. Some even appear to be anti-British in their presentation of Social Studies, etc. There is a complaint that even in the curriculum there is not much accommodation to non-U.S. students. The complaints have come from senior students and not the younger ones who may not be fit to judge... [This letter was dated 6 May 1974.]¹³⁶

Birdell's reply has not been located; however, administration records identify that the concerns originated with a letter from Dr. Peter Cotterell (an Englishman, known for his pioneering literacy work in Ethiopia and later, pastor of the International Church which met at SIM HQ in Addis Ababa) which was tabled at a meeting of the Bingham Academy Committee on 11 May 1974.¹³⁷ Dave Pitman and Don Ricker pointed out in response that

The student body at BA is 66% North American (44% American, 22% Canadian), 12% Australian, 6% British with 16% from other countries. They also stated that BA has always done its best to meet the needs of all its students by adjusting curriculum, broadening the spectrum of the library books and magazines, and by seeking to make the school as international as possible in its emphasis. In the teaching of history and geography the emphasis is as broad as possible.¹³⁸

Forty years later Dave Pitman said that patriotism was encouraged at BA, although not overt nationalism.

We were all taught the national anthems of Ethiopia, Canada, UK and US. We all sang these at various school assemblies during the year. . . . For a few years in the early 50s we celebrated the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot by hanging and burning the effigy of its leader, Guy Fawkes, at BA. . . . They stopped the annual observance when it was explained to us that, like decorating Christmas trees, which SIM missionaries generally didn't do, it was a custom that might be easily misunderstood by local people.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ SIM Archives. Box 5i, p. 15.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 2.

¹³⁷ Peter Cotterell was never on BA staff. Email from Dave Pitman 14 November 2016.

¹³⁸ SIM Archives. Box 5g, pp. 23-24.

¹³⁹ Email from Dave Pitman 7 November 2016.

There was another plot of serious proportions happening in Ethiopia in 1974, and John Cumbers soon had more urgent matters claiming his attention. In his book, *Living with the Red Terror: Missionary Experiences in Communist Ethiopia*, he explained the origins of widespread discontent in Ethiopia. For generations famine had been accepted as ‘a way of life for many Ethiopians, but this did not excuse the government’s callous disregard.’¹⁴⁰

During severe famine in the early 1970s, SIM initiated a drought relief programme, and Don Stilwell took responsibility for the relief work. Don was a pharmacist who had worked in SIM Ethiopia’s most remote station, Afabet, in what is now Eritrea and then set up a pharmacy in Addis Ababa at SIM Headquarters to supply all medical supplies for SIM’s down-country hospitals and clinics. In early 1974 students and boarding staff at Bingham gave up desserts for one week each month over a period of eight months, saving \$1,320, which was donated to the SIM Famine Relief and Rehabilitation Programme. A graphic picture of starving children was included in the *Bingham Beacon*.¹⁴¹

As 1974 progressed, strikes and unrest in Addis Ababa became more widespread. Don Stilwell had his car pelted with stones by an angry mob. He was not hurt, but the incident was a sign of things to come. Prime Minister Aklilu Habtewold’s government was forced to resign. The new Prime Minister, Endelkatchew Mekonnen, asked Christian missions to support his moves to remake the country by continuing medical assistance, literacy and community development, but he had problems controlling army leaders.

By the end of February 1974, the army had taken over all important installations in the city, and the country was effectively under military control. Rebels formed the Derg (‘a committee of equals’), which evolved into a Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), and became the Marxist-Leninist government of Mengistu Hailemariam. Endelkatchew Mekonnen was forced to resign.

John Cumbers has detailed the next dramatic turn in events:

A Volkswagen ‘Bug’ pulled up outside the gates of the Imperial Palace in Addis Ababa. Three army officers entered the Emperor’s study and told him that he was to accompany them. As they approached the little car, one of them tipped up the front seat and motioned to the Emperor. Haile Selassie, the First, King of Kings and Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, accustomed to

¹⁴⁰ Cumbers, p. 6.

¹⁴¹ *Bingham Beacon* 1975-76, p. 3.

Rolls Royce treatment, climbed into the back seat of the bug and began his journey into ignominy.

The date: 12 September 1974, New Year's Day in Ethiopia. The Derg waited until that evening to make a statement to the whole world: Emperor Haile Selassie had been deposed and a new era had begun.¹⁴² Before another year had passed, the Emperor was dead, the circumstances suspicious.

In November, Mengistu sent troops to the home of his opponent, General Aman Andom, to arrest him, but he resisted and was killed. That night fifty-nine imprisoned imperial officials were executed. 'This bloody turn of events came as a great shock to the Ethiopian public,' wrote Paul Henze. 'Once blood began to flow, it never ceased during the subsequent sixteen and a half years of Derg rule.'¹⁴³ The hopes of those who had agitated for a more open society along democratic lines and the end of 'feudal oppression' would not be realised under the dictatorship of Mengistu. In December 1974, Ethiopia was declared a socialist state.

There were many reports of violence. SIM Headquarters was opposite the Black Lion Hospital, and staff witnessed a constant stream of vehicles carrying dead and wounded. The new government suspected the missionaries of being politically opposed to their communist platform and their official atheism, but they could not afford to demand the expulsion of all the missions. Money was being poured into wars in Somalia and Eritrea, and the government needed its schools and hospitals maintained.

The events had an impact at Bingham Academy during the years of communist rule, and the school's survival was seriously in doubt. Dave Pitman, Assistant Director, put forward this proposal at the Bingham Academy Committee meeting held at SIM Headquarters on 5 May 1975:

I would like to propose that Bingham Academy be closed this vacation and that our students attend Good Shepherd School next year. In support of this proposal I point out the following: 1) our enrolment decrease is going to mean combining of classes which is less than ideal for most pupils and very hard on the slower ones. Classes at G.S.S. are not combined; and, therefore, our children would receive better instruction. 2) G.S.S. is experiencing a similar drop in enrolment and could not only accommodate our students but badly needs them. I do not see much justification for trying to operate two such schools, neither of which can really make a go of it, and which if they were both combined, could do a better job. 3) G.S.S. costs are much higher than

¹⁴² Cumbers, p. 14.

¹⁴³ Paul Henze. *Ethiopia in Mengistu's final years: The Derg in Decline*, p. 20.

ours, but this could be brought into line for the first year by using the substantial balance that Bingham has at present to subsidise fees. In years to come we could provide staff for the school, and thereby reduce the fees SIMers would have to pay. 4) With the staffing problems that the SIM now has, with the difficulty of administration of any institution; and should it be decided [and with the possibility] that we actually could get along by sending our children to G.S.S, then why saddle the mission with another institution?¹⁴⁴

Don Ricker, then principal of BA, considered such a move to be premature and other staff agreed. Dave then proposed that ‘the closure of Bingham Academy at the end of 1975/76 be considered.’¹⁴⁵ Don gave his estimate to the meeting of student enrolment. ‘It looks like our enrolment will be out approximately one-third. This year [1974–75] we started with over 160. Next year we may reach 120.’¹⁴⁶

One of the reasons for Dave Pitman’s original proposal about closing the school was ‘the serious and continually deteriorating labour situation at the school’. Don Ricker had also expressed concern about the area in which the school is located: ‘it is not a salubrious one’. The external and internal situation was such that he was now beginning to feel some concern for the security of the students.¹⁴⁷

Don’s successor, Harold Jongeward, explained that under the new socialist labour laws, employees had many rights.

For instance it was virtually impossible to fire any employees no matter what they did or didn’t do. Further, we foreigners were portrayed as the bad guys (imperialists, CIA agents, exploiters of the masses, etc.). BA didn’t have it as bad as some places, but we still had plenty of employee problems.¹⁴⁸

Bingham has always relied on guards, or watchmen, on duty day and night, to patrol the grounds and keep the residents safe. The *Bingham Beacon*, in its Silver Jubilee edition, acknowledged Ato Abeba Welde Yohannes, the main gate guard who had been on staff since 1947, when the school was still operating at Kachene. Ginabo Gaga had worked at the school as a day guard since 1959.¹⁴⁹ Dave Pitman explained that the night duty was divided into three watches:

A team of one staff member and two of the older boys punched the time clock on the normal rounds each shift. We even fired the shot gun, as was the

¹⁴⁴ SIM Archives. Box 4g, p. 26.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 25: Bingham Academy Committee Report.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 21: Bingham Academy Committee Meeting.

¹⁴⁸ Email from Harold Jongeward 16 November 2016.

¹⁴⁹ *Bingham Beacon* 1971-72, pp. 30-31.

custom of many Ethiopian security guards, just as a reminder that we were well protected. The BA students all participated cheerfully and were reminded of the value of the workers.¹⁵⁰

Dave and Winnie supervised the thirty or so Ethiopian workers at the school. They felt the effects of the revolution in labour relations immediately. Workers were urged to form labour unions, and the school staff joined other SIM staff in doing so, demanding higher wages and improved benefits. This was new territory for SIM and the organisation felt threatened, wondering where it might end. Then one missionary gave his opinion that the wages SIM was paying the workers were too low and they deserved better.

Fairly soon we came to an agreement that raised mission-wide wages by 33%. We also released the kitchen workers about an hour earlier by starting a new programme of washing up and cleaning up by the older students. They took to it readily (it was a co-ed programme!) and the kitchen workers thanked us for the change.¹⁵¹

A few weeks later a one-day work stoppage was announced in the city: no one was to go to work anywhere. Retaliation against anyone who did not comply was feared. On the day before the scheduled stoppage, Dave told the school workers that he was concerned for their safety, but they were not in favour of the strike and intended coming to work as usual. Early the next morning they came to the compound gate, ready for work. Dave met them there, explaining that all their work would be covered by staff and students and that they would be paid as usual. The workers left reluctantly.¹⁵²

National staff benefits at that stage included laundry rights, grazing of cattle in the wet season on the school property, and clothing, such as a coat and trousers for each watchman and matching shirt and trousers for kitchen staff. They also received double daily wages on public holidays.¹⁵³ Bingham had many faithful employees, including Ato Girma, who had started working as a cook in 1952 under the Hays' administration. Carole Anne Griffith (née Reimer) especially remembers the cinnamon rolls that Girma made every Saturday.¹⁵⁴ As time went on, he was entrusted with doing the grocery shopping and drove one of the school

¹⁵⁰ Email from Dave Pitman 16 October 2016.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ SIM Archives. Box 5a, p 38.

¹⁵⁴ Email from Carol Anne Griffith 3 December 2016.

vehicles. He bought flour and sugar wholesale so the kitchen could provide the residents with fresh bread.¹⁵⁵

Dave Pitman was also involved in another potentially threatening situation. A man strode up to the school gate with a court order demanding that the school hand over the whole property. The order was based on a claim that the ninety-nine-year lease had been given improperly and that the man at the gate had a prior right to the land. Howard Borlase, then SIM's Assistant Field Director, protested to the Provisional Military Administrative Council, Western Zone Municipality. He said that the school authorities had improved the land, built buildings and paid the land tax. He suggested that the matter be taken to court: he had the original copy of the original contract, and the school was ready to contest the accuser's claims.¹⁵⁶

This did not happen, but not before Ato Lakew, SIM's 'man-for-all-government matters', guided Dave Pitman to the right office in City Hall where they explained the predicament. They were asked to produce permits and floor plans for all the buildings. Building permits had not been required back in 1951, and now eight floor plans were required.

Dave remembered:

After some head scratching, it fell to me as junior member of the Bingham management, to reproduce the floor plans. . . . My only preparation for the job was a few weeks of mechanical drawing in high school shop class. After some late nights I finished the required drawings and headed for the SIM office to go with Ato Lakew back to City Hall. He greeted me with the news, 'You don't need these any more', and with a dramatic flourish dumped them in the waste basket. 'Don't you remember, last week the government nationalised all private property leaving only one residence per household.' We never did find out whether there was any validity to the court order or whether it was merely an opportunistic adventure during a period of government disfavour for anything foreign, western, or religious.'¹⁵⁷

The school was in a precarious position as the 1970s progressed. There were indications that it would not survive the changes in Ethiopia. In a letter to SIM administration, dated 7 October 1978, Harold Jongeward expressed his concern about reports from several sources that John Cumbers had said, 'The present Bingham year is the last.'¹⁵⁸ His Principal's Report,

¹⁵⁵ SIM Archives 5b, pp. 33-35: report on Conversation with Ato Girma, signed by Murray Coleman.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, Box 5h, 1971-78, p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ Email from Dave Pitman 16 October 2016.

¹⁵⁸ SIM Archives op. cit., p. 39.

two months later, included the detail that school enrolment was down to 44 students and the boarding section had been closed.¹⁵⁹

John Cumbers explained in *Living with the Red Terror* that Bingham Academy had been in prolonged discussions with the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, which was demanding that the school accept Ethiopian students. ‘For many years we had been receiving any Ethiopian who could afford the modest fees and subsidising several more,’ John wrote.

After the communists came to power they determined that if we enrolled Ethiopians we must also teach the communist curriculum. . . . My colleagues and I maintaining our conviction that God and the Bible would admit no compromise. Eventually I was obliged to tell the Minister of Education that SIM would close the school before we would agree to teaching the communist curriculum. Praise God, BA continued to operate on a Christian curriculum throughout all the years of Marxist-Leninist rule.¹⁶⁰

There was also the problem of work permits for staff, an annual ongoing difficulty for SIM administration, aggravated by the refusal of the Ministry of Labour to renew work permits. Colonel Goshu, the Minister of Education, summoned John Cumbers and warned him: “‘You understand that we will grant permits only for those teaching at Bingham Academy.’” I waited for the next question: “‘When are you going to open the school to Ethiopians?’” But it never came and I thanked the Lord.’¹⁶¹

In December 1979, the Minister of Education had allotted a quota of eight work permits to Bingham Academy, but was not so generous to other ministries. He would have been in trouble with the Foreign Office if they had restricted BA, which by then was meeting the educational needs of many diplomats’ children.

There was one year the Ministry of Education refused to renew any BA teacher work permits. Bingham tried all year long to get them with no success. By law they had one year to renew a work permit before the person had to leave the country. When it looked like the teachers were going to start leaving the country, parents were informed of the situation. The ones in the diplomatic community joined forces and went to the government about it.

Harold Jongeward explained what happened next.

¹⁵⁹ SIM Archives. Box 8 BA 5a, p. 30. Principal’s Report 7 December 1978.

¹⁶⁰ Cumbers. op.cit., pp. 155-56.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 170-71.

Under their pressure the government said ‘OK, we’ll give work permits for one more year to allow you to make other plans for your kids’ education. But after that, no more work permits for BA teachers. Don’t even ask for them.’ A few families did move their kids to others schools the next year, but the rest stayed. And of course, more families joined the school.

When it came time to renew the first work permit, we sent Ato Lakew. He went to the Ministry of Labor to get it renewed. They told him ‘No way. It can’t be renewed.’ He pleaded and they finally said, ‘You’ll have to talk to the Ministry of Education’. So he went to the Ministry of Education and told them that the Ministry of Labor had sent him about this work permit. They kept the work permit for a while and as Ato Lakew kept coming by from time to time to check on it, one time they handed it to him. It was renewed. They renewed all other permits as necessary and we never again, as long as I was there (till 1992) had problems renewing work permits.¹⁶²

Sometimes the desire to flee the country anyway was hard to resist. SIM workers had witnessed murders in the streets of Addis Ababa, and the students were not spared scenes of violence. They heard gunfire echoing off the metal roofs in the neighbourhood, and the next day they saw bodies beside the road. Signs on the bodies read, ‘This is what Red Terror does to her enemies.’ Carpool vehicles for students were often stopped at checkpoints. A member of a kebele (a local patrol of armed civilians), once prepared to shoot at a Bingham vehicle, before forcing the occupants out, lining them up and checking bags and the inside of the vehicle.¹⁶³

John Cumbers said that the kebeles often went beyond the bounds of acceptability. The bodies on the street would have been those who had violated ‘one or other doctrine of the revolutionary code’. By the beginning of 1978, ‘the worst days of the Red Terror were upon us. . . . There was no way that we could ever become reconciled to the sight of dead bodies in the streets at all hours of the day and night’.¹⁶⁴ A sundown curfew was in place.

Les Groce, a student at the school (1979–87), remembered the day when a large crowd blocked the road where five people had been shot. They were disabled people who had worked at the Battery and Umbrella Factory in Mekanesa, an enterprise started by Haile Selassie. People in that area were accustomed to seeing the workers in wheelchairs or on crutches. It was unthinkable that they could be numbered among the ‘anti-revolutionary’,

¹⁶² Email from Harold Jongeward 16 November 2016.

¹⁶³ Daniel Coleman op.cit. p. 34.

¹⁶⁴ John Cumbers, op.cit. pp. 110-11 and p. 165.

whose names were supplied to authorities by informers. Fear and suspicion reigned in Addis Ababa.¹⁶⁵

Beth Long's mother, Muriel Stilwell, was the school nurse in the 1969–70 school year, and the family lived in the lower left side of the 'new' dorm. The nurse's apartment took up almost half of the lower part of the building because of extra rooms there for children too ill to stay in their dorms. Later, in 1977–78, the Stilwell family lived in one of the apartments at the bottom of the hill beyond the playing field. Beth explained:

The reason we lived at Bingham then was a direct result of the Derg and the Red Terror. SIM in about a one-year period was reduced from around 300 missionaries to thirty. All of the down-country stations were closed, many taken over by the government. Because there was available housing at Bingham and the Press Compound, all families living within the Addis communities were required to move to these compounds. It was considered a security measure to not have people spread out.

I can remember spending a good number of nights sleeping in the hallway of our home at Bingham because of the shooting that was happening just outside. Hearing gunfire at night was a regular part of life during my last year and a half [1977–78]. At that time there was a citywide curfew and none of us in SIM travelled after dark. There were check points around the city and often those would be moved without notice so it just wasn't safe to travel after dark. If you missed a check point you risked being shot at. It was probably a good thing that we moved to BA the last year as my father often saw bodies on the streets on his drive to work. I did experience seeing bodies on several occasions and it was frightening.¹⁶⁶

When the tunnels were used, Deborah (Goss) Turner wrote that she could remember the smell of the dark.

. . . or perhaps it was the smell of the fear in the dark as nearly 200 children and adults huddled silently. . . . This was the third time that day we'd all made this trip to the tunnel. . . . It was now two in the morning . . . the night guards had spotted a group of men and boys assembling on the other side of the river – which was easily fordable as this was the dry season and the river was very low. . . .

I had heard that the mob on the other bank had torches and had come to burn our compound. What would happen to us if the building collapsed? Would we be crushed? Or would the tunnel ceilings hold? Some of the men from the school had braved the outdoors, negotiating with the mob. It seemed like forever before we were allowed out of the tunnel and back to our dorms. The mob had dispersed without hurting anyone.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Les Groce 28 January 2017.

¹⁶⁶ Email from Beth Long 5 November 2016.

¹⁶⁷ Deborah (Goss) Turner. 'A Shelter to Trust'. *Simroots* 20.2, 2003, p. 9.

The school had real need of its surrounding fences. The first barbed wire barrier was stretched around the campus in the 1950s. Then Director Art Rashleigh decided that a fence was necessary for safety. All the children could think of was the confinement it imposed. There would be only one way off the compound, with no access to the river. ‘High Watling Street, named for a road near Nottingham Forest in the book of *Robin Hood*, and a favourite foot path for bike riding, would be just on the *other* side of the fence. Our carefree access to all that the Kulfie had to offer would be cut off.’¹⁶⁸

In the 1970s much of the barbed wire fence had been upgraded to chain link fence. In some areas around the playground and buildings, corrugated roofing sheets had been added to the chain link for privacy. In a symbolic way, the city had crept right up to the fence in most places. As time went on, the fences were gradually upgraded to stone walls.

¹⁶⁸ Email from Dave Pitman 7 November 2016.

CHAPTER 6

'WE ARE HERE FOR THE REVOLUTION'

*'Proposed Closure of BA—It was felt unnecessary to pursue the matter further.'*¹⁶⁹

On Monday 3 September 1979, classes began at Bingham Academy for sixteen weeks until the Christmas break. School would then resume for twenty weeks, with a mid-semester break, finishing on 3 June 1980. For several years it had seemed likely that Bingham Academy would close before the decade ended, but it had survived and was prepared to confront whatever lay ahead. The school was obliged to recognise the Popular Revolution Commemoration Day on 13 September with a holiday, but otherwise the staff were doing their best to make it business as usual.

The Student-Parent Handbook for the year ahead stated:

The curriculum is basically North American. Experience has shown that our curriculum is adequate for all English speaking countries. The social studies course is more international in scope. All students are required to take Bible, English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education. Bingham Academy is open to non-SIM children if facilities and staff are adequate. A child must be competent in English before application will be considered.¹⁷⁰

Good Shepherd, another school for MKs run by a consortium of missions, had high school up to 12th grade. In 1976, when Bingham dropped grades 9 and 10 and missionary numbers were declining, there was living space at Bingham. It was decided that about twenty-five children of SIM workers would live in the 'new' dormitory behind the main building (completed in 1965) and commute daily to Good Shepherd School (GSS) to complete Grades 9–12. About seventy-five other students in Grades 1–8 would be at Bingham.¹⁷¹ Jack and Peggy Maxson were the Hostel parents.

Prior to this arrangement, SIM had operated a hostel in town for older students who attended GSS. Dave and Winnie Pitman supervised that hostel during their last year in Ethiopia, 1975-76. 'We started that in a rented residence near Mexico Square, not far from GSS,' Dave recalled. 'During that year the government confiscated private property leaving each owner

¹⁶⁹ SIM Archives Box 5f, p.3: Bingham Academy Committee Meeting, Headquarters - 28th November, 1975. The chapter title is from a letter to SIM Administration from SIM Workers Union, dated 9 June 1977. Translated copy in Box 5d, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Box 4f, pp. 16-19: Bingham Academy Student-Parent Handbook 1979-1980.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Box 5e, p. 18: Principal's Report Bingham Committee, May 17, 1976.

with only one house. The hostel then moved to the Mekane Yesus/Lutheran residential compound very near GSS. It was an ideal location.¹⁷² When Good Shepherd closed in 1977 – because of labour problems, shortage of staff, and fewer students – it was later appropriated by the government as a hospital for war veterans. The older high school students had to go to Rift Valley Academy in Kenya or work out other options.

The staff at Bingham slowly adjusted to the changing nature of the school. When the military government first took over, it was not obviously a communist regime. It was only as time went on that it moved from socialist to communist. So it is hard to say that all of the problems during the era were because of the communist government; however, they certainly existed because of a government that was headed towards communism. Harold Jongeward had taken on the role of principal, after Don Ricker left. He and his wife Becky stayed for sixteen years.

Becky, like her predecessors, was always busy. She described herself as ‘gofer girl’, which included working as hostess for visitors, dorm parent for children and occasional teacher of Home Economics.

My other jobs included clearing books and supplies out of airport customs. This required twenty-five signatures and in the process I was blessed with learning how to be patient. I did shopping for the school. One time I bought so many rolls of toilet paper that they could not fit in the car, so Harold had to bring a van to help me get it all home. Due to communism we just had to buy stuff when we saw it on the shelf.¹⁷³

Staff joked that when they heard something was available in the city they would be quick to get it before all the hoarders did, but it was really no joking matter. Harold had problems with the short supply of gas, which was rationed. It was hard to find a gas station open, so scarce fuel supplies were used up trying to find one.

Paper supplies were also a problem. Harold remembered:

One time when the school supply of A4 paper was getting very low, I checked all my usual sources and couldn’t find any. Someone told me since we were a school for diplomats we should be able to apply directly to the government for paper. So I tried. It took me the better part of two days visiting different government offices, filling forms, waiting for and talking to officials. In the end I got paper, but alas, it was only a small box of about ten reams of paper.

¹⁷² Email from Dave Pitman 7 November 2016.

¹⁷³ Email from Becky Jongeward 2 October 2016.

From then on I told teachers they should go as easy on paper as possible. Both sides had to be used before a paper could be thrown away.¹⁷⁴

Some staff left because of the government upheaval. Several missionaries taught or worked part-time at Bingham because it was possible to obtain work permits for them, enabling them to stay in the country and continue their ministry. All staff had to raise support, and everyone from the director to the newest missionary received the same allowance. The average monthly salary allowance required for a single adult in Ethiopia in 1978 would have been 360 birr. At an exchange rate of 2.05 Birr/US\$, the US equivalent would have been about \$176.¹⁷⁵

In the 1977–78 school year, Bingham had a small boarding facility for Grades 1–8 students who needed it, while most were day students living off campus. For the next six years, Bingham had no official boarding students, although Harold and Becky provided a home for individual students whose parents were stationed outside of Addis Ababa. Mina Moen, who taught there part-time, wrote to her supporters in January 1979:

There are now only thirty-nine SIM missionaries in Ethiopia, with ten SIM children at Bingham. The rest of our family, from five continents and fourteen countries, are mostly children of African diplomats, but some are from Asia too.¹⁷⁶

Carol Anne Griffith (née Reimer), who taught music at the school during the years of the Terror, acknowledged that it was difficult in some ways. ‘Many stations were closed during those years and we always had evacuation plans in place and a bag packed.’ Her classroom was the end room, nearest the forest, of the building beside the field. ‘It was great having my own room.’¹⁷⁷ Carol Anne was one of the first staff members to occupy the residential triplex, built below the field. The building of the new dwelling was supervised by Ato Beraso, maintenance man at Bingham, always in demand. Pictures of the ‘Teachers Triplex’ were featured in the 1975–76 *Beacon*, beside pictures of the new tennis court and a brick playhouse for the younger girls.¹⁷⁸

School nurse Jean Sokvitne also settled into one section of the triplex ‘among the cedars and eucalyptus trees’. Her responsibilities to the students, as she described them in a letter home in December 1979, were

¹⁷⁴ Email from Harold Jongeward 16 November 2016.

¹⁷⁵ Email from Brian Clark, Deputy Director of Finance, SIM International Leadership and Services, USA, 5 January 2017.

¹⁷⁶ SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 5a, p. 28.

¹⁷⁷ Email from Carol Anne Griffith, 7 November 2016.

¹⁷⁸ *Beacon* 1975-76, pp. 46-47.

. . . curing headaches, tummy aches, scrapes, and itches—nothing that a little tender loving care won't cure! So far we have had no serious injuries and I would appreciate your prayers for continued safety for the children. I also am the 'medic' for our national employees for Bingham, Headquarters and Press compounds here in Addis as well as for our 34 SIM missionaries. Even though we have no doctor on whom we can call at any time, the Lord has opened doors and brought along helpful people when we needed them.¹⁷⁹

School administration was the responsibility of the Bingham Board. At a meeting of the Bingham Board on 1 June 1976, John Cumbers stated that

. . . the Bingham Board was a new body approved by the Area Council and empowered by them to make all necessary decisions that affect Bingham Academy. The Bingham Board will assist the school in overall planning and the regular functioning of the school. The Board will exercise careful control over the school and be the final authority in all matters concerning Bingham Academy and the High School Hostel.¹⁸⁰

This was reiterated in the Student-Parent Handbooks. The 1979–80 edition added that the Board consisted of one member from SIM Administration, the SIM Media Director, and the principal and director (station manager) of Bingham Academy. That handbook also set out the following details: tuition fees were due in three instalments on or before October 4, January 31, and April 30; and report cards would be retained until outstanding accounts were paid; tuition fees for Grades 1–7 were 1700 birr to be paid in instalments of 650 birr, 550 birr and 500 birr; school lunch cost 1.7 birr per noon meal with meal charges appearing on each term bill; music fees were 130 birr for the entire school year. The charge appeared on the third term (April) statement. Children whose parents were missionaries received a discount on tuition and music fees. Bingham Academy supplied all necessary textbooks and workbooks.¹⁸¹

The student body at the start of the 1979–80 academic year comprised fifty-six students in Grades 1–7. Ten were SIM children; seven were from other mission families; and thirty-nine were from non-mission backgrounds. The figures represented an increase of twenty-five percent on the previous year.¹⁸² With MKs leaving, places were available, so the school started accepting non-mission students. At first only a few applied and were accepted, but as they told others about Bingham, more were enrolled.

Harold Jongeward said

¹⁷⁹ SIM Archives. op. cit. Box 5a, p. 25: Letter home to SIM Scarborough, Ontario.

¹⁸⁰ SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 5e, p.7.

¹⁸¹ SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 4f, pp. 16-19.

¹⁸² SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 4e, p. 41: Principal's Report 15 October 1979.

We started having fairly strict academic requirements for acceptance. We always accepted any mission kids who wanted to come, even if they spoke no English. Students came mostly from the diplomatic community. We generally had a little over thirty nationalities in the school from all over the world including communist and Muslim countries.

In 1977 we discontinued enrolment of Ethiopian students because the government told us they had to be taught the new socialist curriculum. Our previous experience in Ethiopian schools [prior to Bingham, Harold had been teaching for two years at Durami, Kambatta where SIM had a 7–10 grade school for Ethiopians] showed us the problems with teaching the socialist curriculum. We had no Ethiopian students until about 1985 when one Ethiopian family asked me what was needed for BA to accept Ethiopian students. I said they had to bring a letter from the Ministry of Education exempting BA from having to teach the Ethiopian curriculum to their child. I don't know how they got the letter, but they did, so we accepted their child. Immediately other Ethiopians asked how/why we allowed in the one. We told them and soon others were getting letters and being accepted.¹⁸³

With Ethiopian students and ancillary staff, the teaching of the Amharic language at Bingham was on the agenda. In 1974 John Cumbers gave his opinion that 'the study of Amharic has been treated rather as a joke and this is obviously no way to prepare students for any subject, let alone the one which is going to help them most in their relationships with the people of the country they are living in.' Plans to teach the subject were made for the following school year 1974 – 75.¹⁸⁴

The Bingham Academy Committee reported in May 1975 that

Ato Seyoume from the Education Office comes every Tuesday and Thursday and has fifteen or twenty minute periods with every class. Primary grades have oral work only, while intermediate and upper grades are learning some fidel [the language is written (left-to-right) using a version of the Ge'ez script known as *Fidel*]. Ato Seyoume enjoys teaching at Bingham. At first he had difficulty with the Ethiopian children.¹⁸⁵

At the Bingham Board Meeting on 1 June 1976, the teaching of Amharic was reviewed and agreement was reached that it should be taught by a missionary teacher using the new abbreviated Amharic Course developed by Dr. Peter Cotterell.¹⁸⁶ The list of staff in the 1975–76 *Beacon* included Asfa Wossen, teacher of Amharic Years 1–10.

¹⁸³ Email from Harold Jongeward. op.cit.

¹⁸⁴ SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 5i, p. 2: John Cumbers' note to Birdell Emmel, 6 May 1974. P. 6: Memo to Cumbers, signature indecipherable, 28 May 1974.

¹⁸⁵ SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 5g, p. 25.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. Box 5e, p. 7.

While the revolution was gathering momentum in Ethiopia, a different kind of revolution was happening in Western countries. Young people were exposed to a counterculture of hippies, rock music, anti-war demonstrations and women's liberation. At schools around the world boys were wearing their hair longer, and the girls were wearing their skirts shorter. Photographs in the *Beacon* documented the changes, and correspondence indicates that some of the 'old guard' were having trouble observing the different standards.

On 20 October 1976 John Cumbers wrote a brisk note to Al Schneider, then Station Manager:

Since I came back from furlough some of the Bingham girls are wearing slacks or pant suits to meetings in the Chapel. Maybe this was the custom last year, but I didn't notice it. I would be grateful if you would please ask all the girls and young ladies to wear a dress or skirt when they attend H.Q. Chapel on Sundays.¹⁸⁷

A new ruling had been made in John's absence allowing girls to wear pant suits to Sunday evening services. It was noted at a Bingham Academy Committee meeting in November 1975:

Although it was obvious that most members preferred dresses to pant suits, they agreed that this was not a 'crucial' issue. It was stressed, however, that the rule must not be abused (i.e. jeans and other untidy dress should not be allowed). The dress code in place stated: 'No school dress uniform is required; students are expected to dress neatly and modestly. Extravagant dress of any nature will not be permitted. Boys' hair style is to be neat...'¹⁸⁸

The same committee meeting talked at length about a clause in the school handbook that agreed to relaxing of dorm rules to allow physical contact. This was considered a 'crucial' issue, and the committee was unanimous in its decision that the new relaxed rule should be rescinded. The minutes of the meeting also included a note that 'the staff had problems with rule breakers. It was agreed that rule breakers and trouble makers should be given suitable warnings and then sent home.'¹⁸⁹

Another issue concerned 'Undesirable Music'. An earlier committee meeting made it clear that those present were 'not in favour of certain kinds of music being played in the dorms. It was decided that parents should censor tapes and books before being taken to school'.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. Box 5d, p. 37.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. Box 4f, pp. 16-19: Bingham Academy Student-Parent Handbook 1979-1980.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Box 5f, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Box 5f, p. 4.

School policy then decreed that parents must sign permission forms for tapes and cassettes taken to the school.¹⁹¹

The playing of music was having a detrimental effect on students who wanted to observe devotional ‘quiet time’. They could no longer find a suitable opportunity because of noise and late ‘lights out’ in the dorms. The Bingham Academy Committee, which included parent representatives, requested that music should be turned off at a definite hour (9:30 was suggested), and the majority were in favour of earlier bedtimes.

The school’s previously strict programme for devotions was under threat as the 1970s progressed. At a meeting of the Committee, in November 1975, parents expressed concern that older students no longer attended LAC, ‘but more particularly that they were not doing any activity in its place.’ The response from staff was that an unnamed Christian educator had recommended ‘some activities be made optional for older students and that this had been agreed to by the Committee and the Council.’ LAC and dorm devotions were no longer obligatory. The Committee urged the inclusion of regular devotions in the dorms and encouraged staff not to be intimidated by student opinion. It was regretted that students would not take a lead in praying openly, etc. A Thursday morning assembly was instituted, with devotions for the whole school.¹⁹²

Don Stilwell made the following observations to the Board in September 1977:

. . . if I had a chance to do it over again I would have to request, for the spiritual welfare of my children, that mandatory memorisation be limited at least to the lower grades. I believe the problem starts with parents who expect the school to turn out a certain quality of spiritual product. They feel that a dedicated staff should produce students with a certain level of competency in academics and that they should likewise produce good Christians. . . .

There is the temptation to argue from the case histories of the products of the school who are most visible, those who returned as missionaries. We tend to forget the spiritual shipwrecks. If we did a survey, many of them could not be found or would not bother to answer about the spiritual impact of enforced memorization. . . . I would like to suggest that any large amount of scripture memorization be made elective after about grade 6.¹⁹³

The subject was regularly raised. Harold Jongeward could remember that when he arrived at BA in 1976 the Scripture memory programme was in place only for boarding students, who

¹⁹¹ Ibid. Box 5e, p. 8: BA Committee Meeting 17 May 1976.

¹⁹² Ibid. Box 5f, pp. 3-4: BA Committee Meeting 28 November 1975.

¹⁹³ Ibid. Box 5c, p. 17: Letter to Bingham Board from Don Stilwell, 6 September 1977.

received prizes for their efforts, but then in his second year, 1977, the number of day students had increased.

The boarding prize getters went for their special outings and the other day students went to regular classes. Of course many day students asked why the others got to go for a prize and they couldn't. The standard answer was, they memorised verses and you didn't. But one time, several of the students said, we want to learn verses and be able to go. We discussed it as staff and decided that it would be good to let the others also learn verses. So Scripture Memory Programme became part of the Bible curriculum for each grade. Kids still learned new verses each week and said them along with verses learned from previous weeks. And we had a prize each term for those who said all their verses.¹⁹⁴

Harold also told the story of a Muslim from Northern Sudan who wanted to enrol his four children.

That was back in the days when we were taking just about anyone, so I said 'OK, but do you realise we are a Christian school?' He said Muslims believe the Bible too so he was happy for his kids to learn about the Bible. So we admitted them. About two weeks into the school year, he came to me and said, 'This isn't working.' I asked, 'What's not working?' He said, 'My kids are asking me questions that I don't know the answer to.' I said, 'I'll be glad to meet with you, we can study the Bible, and I'll help you find the answers for your kids.' He said, 'No, that wouldn't work.' He withdrew his kids and we parted amicably. We even gave him a full refund of his money.

The King James Bible had been replaced by the NIV Bible and each student was given one to keep. Such measures were positive moves to counter the intrusion of undesirable trends. A further sign of changing standards was evident in the student/parent handbook: 'Students are expected to refrain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and improper language. . . . Bingham Academy holds the right to dismiss a student without giving specific reasons.' Despite the changes occurring beyond Ethiopia, 'corporal punishment is given as necessary'. There was no mention of punishment for six Grade nine boys whose Halloween prank was to lift Dave Pitman's tiny Fiat 600 up the steps onto the front porch.

Concessions were being made to move with the times. 'From September 1976 when I first came to BA through to June 1978,' observed Harold Jongeward, 'Bingham changed so drastically that it was really a much different school.'¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ Email from Harold Jongeward 20 November 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 29 December 2016.

A Student Council had begun in 1975, with the purpose of developing student leadership and responsibility with Christian standards, and of facilitating better understanding and cooperation between staff and students. The third purpose was ‘to endeavour to solve problems that confront us’. The Council had a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and one additional representative from each grade, seven to ten. There was one staff adviser, having ‘no voting power, who shall be chosen by the Council and ratified by the Principal, who shall be a non-voting member of the council ex-officio.’ Photographs in the 1975–76 *Beacon* show the first council, with Stephen Maret as President.¹⁹⁶

That issue of the *Beacon* also recorded pictorially the various clubs operating at the school: drama, photography, and crafts. Students were also involved in producing the *Talon* paper—an issue every three weeks—which supplemented the *Beacon* yearbook for a while. The 1975–76 issue was the last *Beacon* until 1997. Harold Jongeward explained that the school did not have anyone with the time or inclination to do it. ‘Then when the school grew, we somehow never got around to starting it up again.’¹⁹⁷ The *Talon* was the topic at a Committee Meeting in November 1975, at which it was agreed that ‘the Principal must censor this paper before publishing, as it was not acceptable in its present form. Or, alternatively, the paper could be allowed to lapse.’¹⁹⁸

Music has always been important at Bingham, although staff members living in the main building were not always thankful when they were woken by students getting in their early morning piano practice. At one stage Carol Anne Griffith had forty-four piano students whom she taught in a small room near the school office. Her music classes were taught in the chapel, and she had several choirs to train. ‘The big highlight of those years was the production of *Pirates of Penzance*. A huge success!’¹⁹⁹

On the sporting field, boys and girls played basketball and volleyball, competing against other schools. A cross country race became a regular event. The all-male team trained beyond the school gates, while the locals mockingly called out names of their famous Ethiopian runners: Abebe Bekele or Mammo Woldé. The Bingham team entered a 5,000-metre race against older boys from Good Shepherd School (GSS) and the American Community School

¹⁹⁶ SIM Archives Box 5f, pp. 5-10: Constitution of the BA Student Council. *Beacon* photographs, p. 40.

¹⁹⁷ Email from Harold Jongeward 7 October 2016.

¹⁹⁸ SIM Archives Box 5f, pp. 3-4: BA Committee Meeting 28 November 1975.

¹⁹⁹ Email from Carol Anne Griffith 7 November 2016.

(ACS).²⁰⁰ They also raced against competitors from General Wingate and St Joseph's, Addis Ababa's schools for children of the Ethiopian elite. Daniel Coleman recalled that the Bingham boys' training runs on city streets and back roads ended after an incident with a local man who stole from the runners.²⁰¹

Daniel also recalled that the older students could go beyond the compound on Saturdays. A sign-out sheet was placed in the main dining room where Grade 9 and 10 students could indicate if they were taking a taxi downtown or hiking up Entoto Mountain on the edge of the city. Staff arranged outings to 'Crewcut & Baldie', mountains near the city. Usually the last trip of the year was a day at the Hilton Hotel swimming pool. Movies were special and these were provided by the British Consulate or one of the other embassies.

The older classes also had the opportunity to camp at favourite Ethiopian beauty spots such as Langanu and Arba Minch. 'If you see pictures of kids with huge fish,' Beth Long said, 'it would be at Arba Minch and those would be Nile Perch. My last year at Bingham they did a week-long retreat at Bishoftu for Grades 7 and 8. We still did some class things but it was mostly fun.'²⁰²

Yet the fun was often overshadowed by security anxieties, and the outings were switched to Lake Babogaya for an indefinite period. 'I have been thinking more about the proposed trip to Langanu by your senior students,' John Cumbers wrote to Harold Jongeward on 13 February 1978. 'Owing to the present tensions in the country, I have some reservations about this trip. . . . Sorry to sound so old-fashioned; I am trying not to spoil the students' pleasure, but at the same time must be sensitive to the conditions that exist around us.'²⁰³ Similar concerns about the effect of political tensions on school activities would be raised in the years ahead, right up to the compiling of this history in 2016–17.

²⁰⁰ The school was called ACS until the US Information Service and other American government agencies were closed due to the Ethiopian government's swing to socialism. The school changed its name to International Community School and continued to operate.

²⁰¹ Daniel Coleman. *The Scent of Eucalyptus*, pp.223-225.

²⁰² Email from Beth Long 4 November 2016.

²⁰³ SIM Archives Box 5b, p. 38.

CHAPTER 7 'IT IS EVIDENT THAT GOD HAS KEPT THIS DOOR OPEN'

*'Bingham Academy has been established as a private school for the purpose of giving a satisfactory education to children whose parents are missionaries. As facilities and staff are available, Bingham Academy accepts students without discrimination of race, sex or religion.'*²⁰⁴

This was the Purpose Statement of Bingham Academy in the Handbook for 1980–81. The policy had changed markedly from a 1957 letter, which stated firmly that the school was 'exclusively for the education of the children of the various missionary societies operating in Ethiopia and the Sudan . . . It is the policy of Bingham Academy not to accept any child whose parents are not engaged full time in missionary work'.²⁰⁵

Since Bingham had to re-evaluate its reasons for continuing in the 1970s, it had become very much an internationally non-exclusive school. The previous chapter has explained the extenuating circumstances that led Bingham to accept a large contingent of non-mission children. In 1980–81 there were 88 students; 103 the following year; and in 1982–83 enrolment reached 120. The first group of students (1980–81) came from twenty-six countries, but only eleven came from SIM families and eleven were classified as 'other mission children'. Most of the rest were from families of diplomats and officials from other countries working in Ethiopia. Some of them were from Christian homes but many were not. There were even several from Eastern Bloc countries and from Muslim homes.²⁰⁶

The staff had recognised that this provided opportunities for outreach ministry. John Cumbers, in a 1980 article for *Contact*, pointed out that 'Bingham Academy has been a fertile mission field for the last two years since the time when non-mission children outnumbered MKs.'²⁰⁷ The school was maintaining a regular programme of Friday chapel, Bible classes and memory and a Sunday afternoon programme (Grades 6, 7 and 8) which presented the message of salvation.

In his 1981 Principal's Report, Harold Jongeward included comments on 'Spiritual Progress':

²⁰⁴ SIM Archives. Box 4e, p. 22. Chapter title from letter to Harold Jongeward from Murray Coleman, SIM, 24 April 1980. Chapter heading quote: p. 27. Minutes of Bingham Board Meeting, 10 April 1980.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Box 3f, p. 26, quoted in Chapter 3.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. Box 3f, p. 12. Letter to Charles Anderson, Morganton, NC, who requested prayer points. Signature indecipherable.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. Box 3d, p. 7. John Cumbers quoted in a report to the Bingham Academy Board submitted by Lila Balisky 4 June 1984.

Several students have accepted the Lord so far this year. Jane Williams, Carol Anne Reimer and Harold Jongeward are having discipleship classes with the 7th and 8th grade students. These classes are during free time and for those who wish to attend; all but one of the 7th and 8th grade students are attending. Sunday Programmes continue to provide an opportunity of presenting the Gospel to the parents. More personal contacts with the parents would be good, but they are very difficult to fit in.²⁰⁸

Subsequent reports from the principal noted that some children had accepted Christ as their Saviour and were attending discipleship classes.

With many non-Christian kids joining the school, we had many of them coming to personal relationships with the Lord. Many new Christians. Bible classes were fun to teach because it was new material to most of them. Questions – wow, how the questions did flow!²⁰⁹

Another correspondent reported that many of the young people were showing genuine interest in God.

There is evidence of much growth in their spiritual lives. We just continue to praise the Lord for this opportunity that we have with this group of people. Some of the parents come to us and talk of how their child has changed and of the tremendous improvement there has been in the child, during the time he has been at B.A. Even though they may not give God the glory for it, we realise it is Christ written in the lives of the young people who have made these changes that have impressed these parents so much. We do believe that this contact is going to also reach to the hearts of the parents so that many of them will come to know Christ as well.²¹⁰

In the past, when the parents were missionaries out on various stations, it was not possible for them to have much involvement in the school. In the next phase of its life, Bingham was in reality a day school. In June 1984, Lila Balisky submitted a report to her colleagues on the Bingham Board titled ‘Parent Involvement at Bingham Academy’. Lila recalled that several years before, the school had potluck, sit-down meals to which parents were invited and also Mothers’ Teas. She acknowledged that the annual Open House in October was a good way of getting to know parents, but she was keen to see more ministry opportunities planned with the parent body.

‘We trust that Bingham Academy will energetically move into a new era with a sense of divine mission to reach 85% of its students AND THEIR PARENTS with the greatest

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Box 4a, p. 19. Report dated 7 December 1981.

²⁰⁹ Email from Harold Jongeward 18 November 2016.

²¹⁰ SIM Archives. Box 3f, p. 12. Letter to Charles Anderson, Morganton, NC, who requested prayer points. Signature indecipherable.

possible degree of effectiveness.²¹¹ An immediate outcome of Lila's submission was the appointment of one SIM Bingham Academy parent, but a non-staff member, to the Board. Bill Harding was appointed for a period of two years.²¹²

Norma Spahr recalled that the monthly Sunday programmes provided opportunities to connect with the wider community. 'We became good friends with many of the diplomats at the programme in which their children participated. While the children got ready we put on a tea for the parents. They invited us to their homes and to their National Day celebrations also.'²¹³

Although it was now a school for day students, with no official boarding facilities, Harold and Becky Jongeward and other staff members still cared for some students whose parents lived beyond Addis Ababa. The students lived in the teachers' homes and were treated as part of the family. The question was often raised at administration level, 'When do we go from private home boarding to actual school boarding?' The answer was 'Not yet. One day at a time'.²¹⁴

The problems associated with staffing the school were perennial. Records of the era referred to overworked teachers, urgent needs for teachers, problems with obtaining enough work permits, teachers carrying extra loads, and always the difficulty of attracting new staff. A letter outlining staff needs in 1985 told prospective applicants that based upon the small size of the school, all teachers had to be willing to teach out of their specialised area or areas.

Grades 1–4 are self-contained, grades 5–6 are partially self-contained, and there is usually one free period per day. Teachers in the upper grades teach approximately 30–35 periods per week or six to seven 43-minute periods a day. Our daily schedule contains 8 periods, from 8.30 to 3.45, with a morning tea time and a one-hour noon break.²¹⁵

SIM also had the task of employing suitable station managers for the school, which was called the Bingham Academy Station then. The manager and his wife carried a heavy workload and many responsibilities. Dick and Norma Spahr were appointed in 1977 and stayed for a few years. According to Dick's job description, he would be in charge of all maintenance of buildings in the compound and all outside workers and guards, care of

²¹¹ Ibid. Box 3d, p. 7 – 19. Report to the Bingham Academy Board submitted by Lila Balisky 4 June 1984.

²¹² Ibid. Box 3c, p. 45. Memo from Board to Don Ricker and Dan Scheel, 16 June 1984.

²¹³ Email from Norma Spahr 3 December 2016.

²¹⁴ SIM Archives Box 3d, p. 19. Station Manager's Report, November 1983.

²¹⁵ Ibid. Box 3f, p. 21. Bingham Academy Staff Needs, September, 1985.

vehicles, conducting prayer and business meetings and teaching Bible classes and physical education. There was a long list of etceteras.²¹⁶ Norma was in charge of the kitchen and acted as hostess for visitors and functions. Correspondence of the time indicates that they had their share of problems with staff, but they did a difficult job well.

When they left, one supporter wrote to Harold Jongeward:

Dick and Norma have a unique gift for getting to really know people of different backgrounds and cultures. They also have the gift of being very welcoming and hospitable. They, through these gifts, enabled those of us who do not have the same gifts to learn to know and appreciate one another. We regret that SIM has chosen to use their talents in another way, and feel that Bingham has lost much in its outreach and witness because of this choice.²¹⁷

The Spahrs, replaced by Dan and Kimberly Scheel, went on furlough and then went to SIM HQ. Dick was Station Manager and Norma was Guest House hostess—similar jobs to what they had at Bingham Academy.

For Harold Jongeward, the work of a principal and many other demanding duties combined to make the 1980–82 years stressful.

When I first arrived at Bingham in 1976, the principal duties were not all that much. All the teachers were career missionaries, and most had been at Bingham for many years. They told me how things were done and we all did our jobs. The school just kind of ran on autopilot.

But then staff numbers started going down. Student numbers did too, but still all the classes needed covering so the work load became pretty heavy. I generally taught 6–7 periods per day, was sports director, and principal. Then enrolments started increasing and we had our first retirement. We got a short term teacher and suddenly realised that we had no orientation system in place, no written records of how things worked and why. As more new staff came, and enrolment increased, my principal duties increased, but for a few years there I still had a heavy teaching load. Life was crazy. There were times I walked into my Maths classes without having even thought about them since the previous class. I just had to wing it. I could do that fairly well for Maths. I also winged many PE and typing classes. But Science, Bible, English, and Literature—I had to do some preparation however brief.²¹⁸

Harold had many other issues to contend with as well, including the question of furlough for staff. The USA policy had been a gruelling thirty months on the field, followed by six months at home. If teachers could fund their return trip, they were permitted to work twenty-one

²¹⁶ Ibid. Box 5d, p. 22: Job Description for Station Manager, 1977.

²¹⁷ Ibid. Box 3f, p. 2. Edith Bliese to Harold Jongeward, 13 April 1982.

²¹⁸ Email from Harold Jongeward 18 November 2016.

months on the field with three months at home. This was preferable, both for personal well-being and for easing the problem of replacements during six-month absences. John Cumbers recommended that the school pay for the return trips so that all teachers could have the shorter term option, and this was put to the Bingham Academy Board; however, the proposal was rejected.²¹⁹

Harold took a year's furlough for the 1982–83 academic year, and Don and Mary Ricker, who had gone on to serve at the Rift Valley Academy, returned. Don was again principal, with Harold assisting with administration at SIM HQ. In 1987 Harold was reappointed as principal until 1992.

Teachers, referred to as missionaries, always had to raise their own support. The minimum amount for single teachers in the early 1980s was ETB500 per month, and they paid extra for meals in the dining hall, laundry and cleaning. The Rickers' support was about 90,000 birr for 1982 and expected to increase by 10,000 birr per year.²²⁰ With non-mission families paying higher tuition than mission families and with non-existent teachers' salaries, Bingham was in good financial shape. In the 1983–84 budget, expected income from non-SIM tuition was ETB 240,000, compared to SIM tuition, ETB 1600.²²¹ Non-mission fees were still below those of other international schools, one of the attractions of Bingham; the other was the high academic standard on which the school prided itself.

The school was able to provide some Special Education, thanks to the Baptist Mission of Ethiopia appointing Mary Lou Jackson, who was qualified in the field. She went to Bingham Academy on a weekly basis to help a couple of older students with learning difficulties and also Grade 2 children with reading problems. Her classroom was upstairs in the main building.²²²

Music has always been an important part of school life. The weekly LAC programmes had become monthly programmes with the classrooms taking turns. As music teacher, Carol Anne Reimer was involved with these and helped to put on many musicals.

I always invited students who were performing for a lunch with their parents beforehand. I loved this ministry of hospitality! During the rainy season

²¹⁹ SIM Archives Box 3e. Cumbers' recommendation: p. 31; Ricker's memo: p. 29.

²²⁰ Ibid. Box 3e, p. 39. Rickers to John Cumbers 5 October 1982; p. 37: Cumbers to Eldon Howard 15 October 1982; p. 26: Principal's Report, November 1982; p. 4: Principal's Report, May 1983.

²²¹ Ibid. Box 3e, p. 13. Bingham Academy Budget for 1983-84.

²²² Ibid. Box 3d, p. 26. Principal's Report, November 1973.

summer months, I began what I called “Evenings with the Classics”. It was fun having these concerts, which included local musicians, at Bingham.²²³

The school’s sporting programme continued to grow. Harold Jongeward recalled the sporting activities:

We had boys’ soccer/football matches with ACS/ICS (American Community School until the US Information Service and other American government agencies were closed due to the Ethiopian government’s swing to socialism. However, the school changed its name to International Community School and carried on). We also played St Joseph, British Community School (later Sandford), Norwegian School, and Lycée Francais. We played at least some of these schools every year. I remember a game or two with the German school and maybe one or two with the Greek community school. We had both boys’ and girls’ basketball games with ACS and I think Sandford; and the same for volleyball. Sometime during the 1980s, Sandford started hosting a track meet for international schools. We went to all of those.²²⁴

These schools were entering a new technological age. Staff at Bingham had been relying on typewriters for general administrative work and for teaching typewriting classes, a gestetner machine for copying material and an overhead projector for some instruction. There was also an alcohol duplicator, and most teachers used that for preparing class material.

In 1981 Harold requested a new overhead projector. ‘The school does have one now,’ he explained in a letter to the Finance Committee at SIM, ‘but it is a homemade contraption which the staff have quit trying to use.’²²⁵ The purchase was approved, and later, a small Canon photocopier was obtained, which meant the school did not have to rely on the large photocopier at SIM HQ for all documents. Don Ricker was also pleased with the advent of a 3-system JVC video player and a 20-inch colour television. On the third Friday of every month, the school hosted a video night to which parents were invited.²²⁶

Don Ricker, writing about progress at the school in 1984, said he was ‘very impressed with the computer programme that has begun at Rift Valley Academy this past year. Some Apple computers have been ordered [for Bingham], and hopefully our computer programme will get started this year.’²²⁷ Harold was interested in computers, and that year he purchased one Apple IIc computer for himself and one for the office. Then more were ordered and set up in the room next to the typing classroom. Students would rotate out of his Grades 7 and 8 typing

²²³ Email from Carol Anne Griffith 7 November 2016.

²²⁴ Email from Harold Jongeward 1 December 2016.

²²⁵ SIM Archives Box 4a, p. 46: Jongeward to SIM Finance Committee, 31 March 1981.

²²⁶ Ibid. Box 3c, p. 29. Principal’s Report, October 1984.

²²⁷ Ibid. Box 3c, p. 43. Don Ricker to Bob Blaschke, 3 August 1984.

class two at a time to work on the computers. By the end of another year, the school had a laboratory of six computers upstairs in the main house, where it was still located in 2017.

We started having younger students come half a class at a time to have computer training. There would be two students per computer. Before having one 6th grade class in, I'd given basic instructions on how to work the computer and care for it. I'd emphasised that liquid was very dangerous to computers; therefore no drinks were allowed in the computer lab. Anyway, the time came for that class to come to the lab. They were very excited. As they started working on the computers I noticed that one student, Tony, was covering his mouth and nose with one hand and he kept on doing it. I finally asked him what was wrong. He said he was keeping his mouth and nose covered in case he sneezed. He didn't want any liquid to get on the computer!²²⁸

In those early days, the Ethiopian government did not charge duty on bringing computers into the country, because they wanted to encourage the inflow of technology. Sometimes customs agents would try to charge for computers, but Harold would give a firm refusal: there was no duty on computers. If they did not believe him, he told them to ask their supervisor to verify.

Being subject to the socialist Ethiopian government still presented challenges, however. In 1979, for example, Dick Spahr was confronted with an unusual problem. When he was absent from the campus on two occasions, government officials arrived demanding that the school's gymnasium be used for grain storage. Harold was able to defer the issue, claiming that the station manager was away, and nothing came of it.²²⁹

On a more serious note, there was anxiety at SIM headquarters that the Ministry of Health might act on a threat to take over its compound. Bingham Academy had vacant apartments that could be used to accommodate SIM staff if necessary. There was the added concern, noted by John Cumbers, who seemed to keep a close eye on everything, that heating water in the apartments could pose a problem. Fuel supplies, like everything else, were not always readily available.²³⁰

Students and staff were still following regular drills for safety and going to the tunnel. Les Groce said that the practices were regarded as an adventure by the older students, who were

²²⁸ Email from Harold Jongeward 18 November 2016.

²²⁹ SIM Archives Box 4e, p. 35. Spahr to SIM Administration, 17 December 1979.

²³⁰ Ibid. Box 4b, p. 25. Cumbers to Dick Spahr, 14 January 1981.

paired with younger children to keep them occupied and amused.²³¹ Occasionally the tunnel had been used as a haunted house at Halloween, but sometimes the threat was real.

John Cumbers had to be reassured that the guards at the school were alert and watchful. In July 1980 he wrote to Dick Spahr:

Having observed that one or two of the guards at Bingham Academy are slow-moving, deaf, and having difficulty in seeing, I checked up on our records. I find that two of the Bingham Academy guards are quite advanced in years. Ato Genabo Gaga, born 1881 – 91 years old. Ato Kassa Agado, born 1899 – 73 years old. Are these men efficient? Under the terms of the Collective Agreement, they may be released after age 60 if they are unable to perform their work satisfactorily. In view of the large number of partially employed personnel at BA, it would be good to examine their overall efficiency.²³²

John was Director at SIM in Ethiopia at a very difficult time for missions, taking the brunt of the employee problems that SIM had. Given the close watch he kept on what was happening at the school, he would have been concerned to hear that the local kebele was using the playing field for soccer practice. The teachers were certainly upset, and ten of them signed a letter stating that they had not been consulted on the matter and were anxious about security and safety. The agreement made by Dick Spahr with the kebele was cancelled, but the players were reluctant to leave.²³³ Three years later, Don Ricker informed SIM administration that the school's finance committee had decided to donate ETB500 to purchase sporting equipment for the local kebele.²³⁴

Life in the compound went on, just as it might in a large family. Don Ricker sent out a special letter to parents:

We are very concerned about a potential accident at the gate. Cars come in very fast and drivers cannot see if anyone is near the gate area. Our gate zebunyas [guards] have been instructed to keep the gate partially closed until the approaching car is going less than ten kilometres per hour. Then he will open the gate. Please help us keep a safe place for all of our children and if necessary inform your chauffeurs or taxi drivers of this change, Thank you.²³⁵

A few months later he had to report to the school community: 'Unfortunately it was necessary to expel a student – [name withheld] of grade 6. A parent conference, then a letter

²³¹ Interview with Les Groce 28 January 2017.

²³² SIM Archives Box 4e, p. 8. Cumbers to Spahr, 25 July 1980.

²³³ Ibid. Box 4b, pp. 17-18. Letters dated 13 and 17 February 1981.

²³⁴ Ibid. Box 4b, p. 35. Ricker to Doris Lacy, 13 September 1984.

²³⁵ Ibid. Box 3e, p. 14. Ricker to parents, 21 January 1983.



The School for Missionaries' Children, Kachene



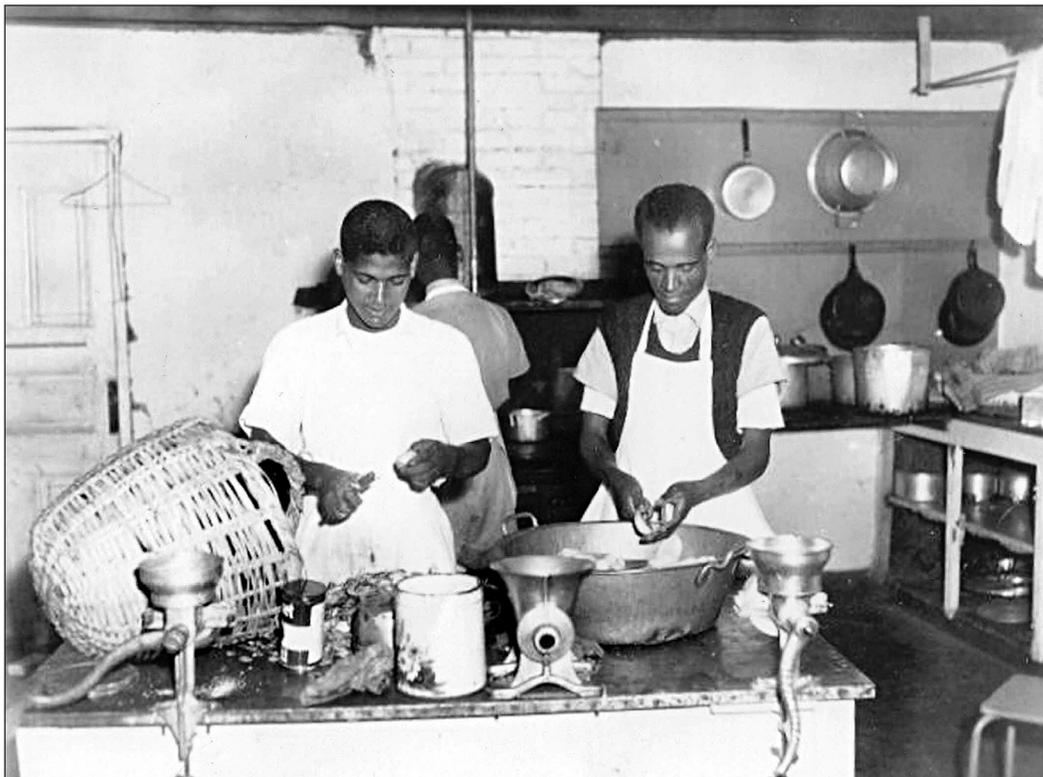
The Hay Family: *Virginia (Ginny) Chenault, Graham Hay holding James Hay, Mildred Hay and Elizabeth (Betty) Chenault, 1947.*



Children, Grades 1-4, 1948, at Kachene



The new school, Bingham Academy, in Kolfe, 1952



In the kitchen: Ato Girma (L) and Karabo, ca. 1957



In the laundry: Marion Bonk with laundresses, ca. late 1950s



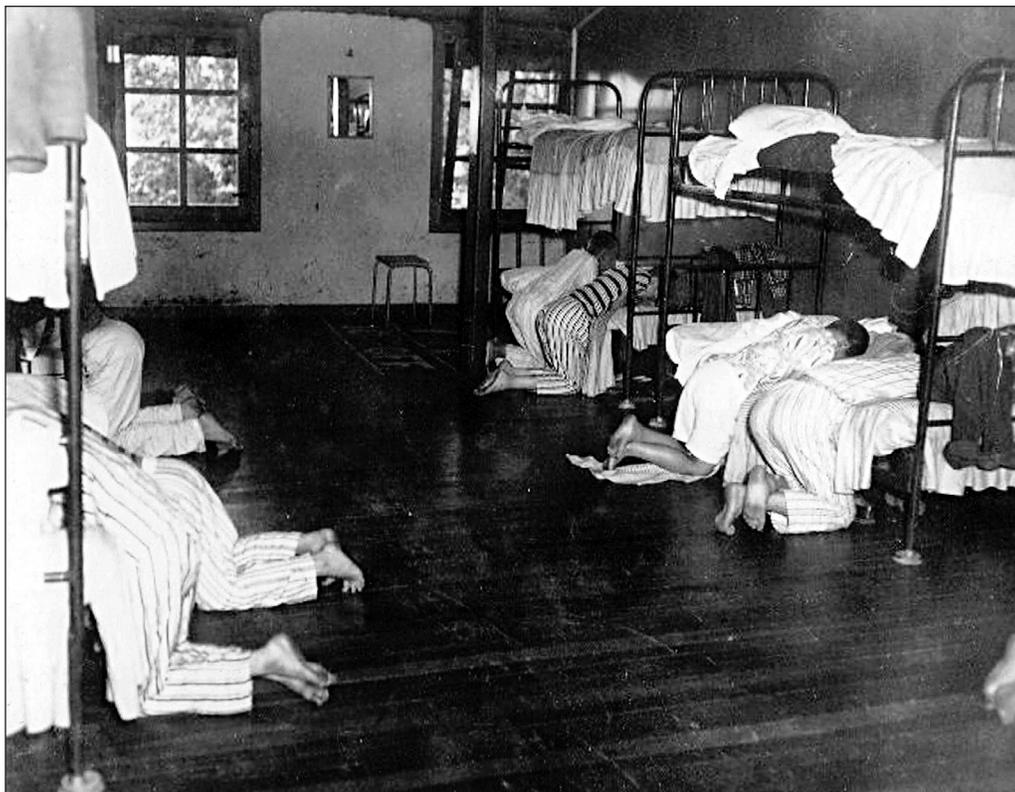
Nurse Edith Cole and patient Mary Nash



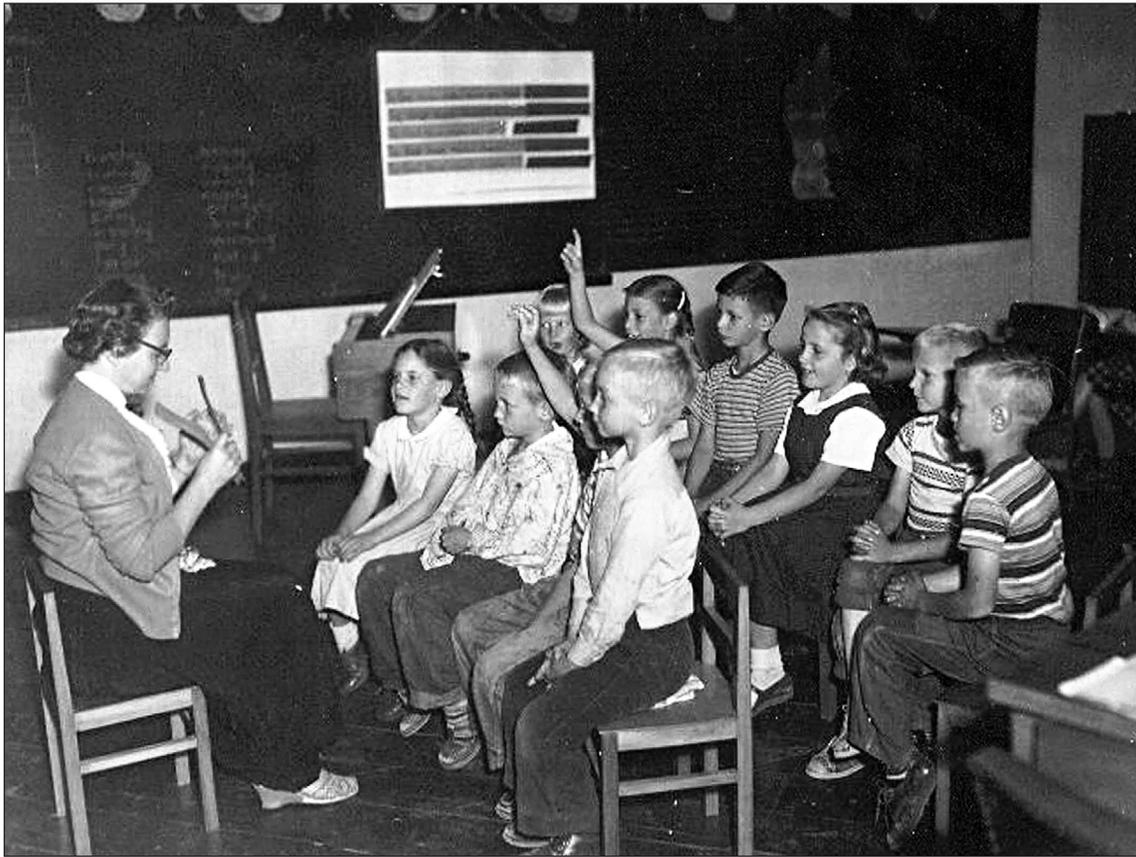
*Teacher Mary MacDonald and student,
ca. late 1950s / early 1960s*



Band & Orchestra, ca. late 1960s



In the senior boys' dormitory, in which 16 boys slept, ca. 1957



Teacher Mary Wollman with class



Graduate class 1967. Fred Ely, John Modricker, Jackie Konnerup, Joy Modricker, Marilyn Kliewer, Chuckie Anderson, Duane Ediger. All students from the USA, except Marilyn (Canadian)



The class of 1971, Silver Jubilee year, with teacher Miss Jean Bevington



Dave & Winnie Pitman with son, Stephen, 1975



Roy & Frances Wallace, ca. 1997



Bedtime Story



Building the Wall



The Tunnel Builders



Lani Geddes, from Australia, on the bag swing, which had become a tyre swing



Looking at one of the first computers: Vela Pumpalova (Bulgaria), Steve Bossler (SIM Germany), Rachel Jongeward (SIM USA), Drew Harding (SIM USA, boarding with Jongewards), Judy Soares (Goa, India), and Kapesa Mzumara (Malawi)



The Jongewards with boarders: Front: Ryan Harding, Amy Scheel, Kara Harding, Andrea Scheel. Middle: Becky Jongeward, Drew Harding. Back: Harold Jongeward



The Trophy Winners, 1992



Brad & Krisha Adams 2017



The Overton family: Murray, Tim, Jacqui, Hannah, ca. 2007-8



David Hicks greeting Ethiopian visitors. ca. 2003



The school community, staff and students, 2016

of warning, followed by a one-week suspension, and then expulsion over a period of about two months.²³⁶ Principals have rarely found it necessary to suspend or expel students.

Most administrative work was ordinary, with reports typically giving details of purchases and replacements: in November 1983, new lawn mowers, fire extinguishers and a bright yellow Toyota Corolla to replace the Pony—a small red Hyundai sedan—purchased so that women on staff had a vehicle that was easier to drive when they went out shopping or for other activities. As in any family, the residents disagreed about the colour choice. The staff voted, equally divided between white and yellow. Harold cast the deciding vote in favour of yellow.

The school kept on going, attending to the mundane and the important, the chores and the challenges, ‘for the work of the Lord, for God’s glory, and for others’.²³⁷ Alex Fellows, the blustery, outspoken Australian who took over as Director of SIM in Ethiopia after John Cumbers, summed up the situation at Bingham Academy as the 1980s progressed: ‘Things seem to be alright here with the usual rumours afloat and the testings here and there so one wonders what or where next, but our God is faithful’.²³⁸

²³⁶ Ibid. Box 3e, p. 4. Principal’s Report, May 1983.

²³⁷ Ibid. Box 3d, p. 19. Station Manager’s Report November 1983.

²³⁸ Ibid. Box 3d, p. 34: Alex Fellows to Bark and Carleen Fahnestock 26 August 1983.

CHAPTER 8 RECONNECTING, HEALING AND REMEMBERING

*SIM works VERY HARD to recruit teachers and caregivers that feel called to work with MKs.*²³⁹

This chapter is dedicated to the issues that emerged during the 1980s and gathered momentum in the 1990s. MKs (Missionaries' Kids), TCKs (Third Culture Kids) and AMKs (Adult Missionary Kids) started to speak up about the problems and pain that many of them suffered while at African boarding schools, including Bingham Academy in Ethiopia, Rift Valley Academy in Kenya and Kent Academy in Nigeria. They engaged in a long, and at times heated, debate through the pages of *Simroots*, a magazine dedicated to SIM MKS.

Some of the hurt began at Gowans Home, Canada, mentioned in Chapter 1. Estelle (Morris) McLellan wrote:

I was one of those who fell through the cracks. This was mainly the result of my experience at Gowans Home. I have always had the feeling that I was floating in some never-never-land not belonging anywhere. . . . Am I the only one struggling with this internal enemy, not quite belonging anywhere? I had three experiences with boarding school. I was at Gowans Home from 1941 when I was four until I was eight. In 1946 I went to K.A. [Kent Academy] from the age of 9 – 13. From the ages of 14 – 19 I was back at Gowans Home.

My first memories are of seeing my father's car driving down that long Gowans Home driveway and the brake lights disappearing into the street. I remember feeling abandoned and crying for hours rocking in my little rocking chair. I can remember being put up in the attic when I was 'bad', and I can still feel those squealing little bats in my hair. It was there that I started feeling that I was a very bad person and that's why he left me and not my brothers. I never did get over the feeling that my father didn't love me, and I always felt that my brothers and sister were special people and I wasn't.

'They' say you should put the past behind you and forget all those things. Well, tell me how. Does it take a special kind of medication? Is there a needle I could be injected with so that my thoughts of the past are a blank? If there were, believe me, I would be the first in line. I can't forget and I never will.²⁴⁰

Estelle was responding to a letter published in the previous edition of *Simroots* (6.1, 1990), submitted by David Weese, whose parents had served in Niger, while he boarded at Kent Academy.

²³⁹ Steve & Beaj Beacham. 'SIM Prevention Policy'. *Simroots* 20.1, 2003, pp. 13-14. The chapter of the title is taken from an interview with Karen (Seeger) Keegan by Dan Elyea published in *Simroots* 21.1, 2004, p. 4.

²⁴⁰ Estelle McLellan. 'To All the other Lost MKs Out There', *Simroots* 6.3, 1990, p. 8.

My stay there was a very unpleasant one. I did not adjust very well to being separated from my parents. . . . Please understand that I am not looking for sympathy, nor do I believe that my stay at K.A. ruined my life or any other such nonsense. People are absolutely right when they say that we are totally responsible for how we deal with the problems life sends our way. Who and what I am now is totally up to me, and me alone.

David wrote about his experiences (including his dorm parents calling him ‘Leaky Plumbing’ for his chronic bed wetting and being teased mercilessly by other children) because he had taken the stance, as an adult, that many other AMKs adopted. He believed that children of early grade school age did not belong in mission boarding schools. Parents’ decisions to serve the Lord in other lands were noble and self-sacrificing, but their priorities should have been their young children, who were their first responsibility.

I understand how my parents saw no contradiction. That was what the mission told them to do; everybody else was doing it; they thought they were doing what the Lord wanted them to do. . . . You cannot leave your young children in the hands of others for nine months out of the year and say you are doing your best to raise them, especially if you are unable to hand pick these people who will care for them. The title ‘dorm parent’ is a sad one. Others simply cannot love and nurture your child the way you can. It’s no one’s fault; it’s just nature. And how well are their backgrounds checked?

Granted, most children who go through mission boarding schools do just fine. But what about the ones who slip through the cracks? Will it be your child? How will you explain to him that your commitment to people in another land was exercised at his expense? He made no such commitment. He will not understand. Children are a fragile commodity. There is no shame in putting them first.²⁴¹

The debate revolved around three big issues: the parents’ culpability in ‘deserting’ their children; the pain and long-term repercussions for some of those children; and the more sinister revelations of abuse. SIM entered the fray, anxious to defend its policies, but also willing to listen and act upon what was being said.

‘SIM has a long-standing concern for her children,’ assured Ian Hay, General Director in the 1990s. His comments were published in an ‘Open Letter to SIM MKs’ in *Simroots*.

The original minute book for Gowans Home, hidden away in our archives, shows this concern goes back a long time. The first minutes dated February 1923 were handwritten by SIM pioneer Andrew P. Stirrett. The meeting was held in Cleveland, Ohio to consider the care and education of the missionary children in Nigeria.

²⁴¹ David Weese. ‘Open Dialogue’. *Simroots* 6.1, 1990, pp. 5-6.

Ian's parents had been missionaries, and he claimed that the deciding factor for them, when it came to the choice of a boarding school for their children's education, was a combination of love and dedication to Christ and love for him.

Their desire was that we have the health care and education we needed while they worked in what was then called the 'White Man's Grave', even though that meant heart-wrenching pain for them. A lifetime of good health and an excellent educational background make me grateful for that sacrifice on their part. This pinpoints what is perhaps the greatest burden a missionary parent faces – being torn between two duties.

Arising out of the conflict are two streams of reason. One stream views the hard saying of Jesus in regard to the cost of discipleship as meaning that the true missionary will put God's work first. By doing this, the missionary may then be assured that God will take care of the children. This is the thinking to which the majority of yesterday's missionaries adhered.

The other stream followed David Weese's thinking that children were the parents' personal responsibility, which should not be transferred to others. More modern missionaries generally followed this thinking, especially as the trend in evangelical circles was to emphasise the importance of the family.

Ian did not pronounce judgement on either line of reasoning, but he reassured MKs that SIM was taking them seriously. Beginning in the 1984 General Council, when it was obvious that the Mission was once again in a growth pattern that would see new families go to the African mission field, action was taken to provide education for MKs 'suitable to the times in which we live'. SIM's Ministry of MK Care and Education was established, and Bob Blaschke was appointed MK Education Coordinator, and each national office had someone appointed to the role of MK Care who was encouraged to keep up-to-date with educational developments in home countries.

They were also asked to refine the MK education staff selection process to ensure that only those qualified would be deployed at SIM MK education facilities. The International Council mandated each area administration to review its policies and programme for MK education in light of current needs.²⁴² Other schools also began to review policies. 'The issue of separation is absolutely central to any discussion of MK education and MK emotional and psychological

²⁴² Ian Hay. 'Open Letter to SIM MKs'. *Simroots* 11.1, 1994, pp. 1-2.

health,' declared Phil Dow in *"School in the Clouds": The Rift Valley Academy Story*.²⁴³ After Grade 8, many Bingham Academy students completed their schooling at RVA.

Ruth Meed's contribution to the MK experiences was published in *Simroots* in 2004, long after she had left Bingham.

First let me say that I am honoured to have been an MK. I think it is a rich heritage to have been born to parents who gave up their easy life in Canada to serve the Lord in foreign missions. My missions experience for the first nine years is one I remember with pleasure. . . . As I look back over those years, I always cringe a little in the back of my mind when I think of Grade Four in Ontario. It was during that year that I went from fun-loving, happy-go-lucky Ruth to sullen, introverted, bitter bear. Because I was from another country, I was weird to the North American (NA) kids. I got a nickname right off the bat: 'Rutheopia.' I hated it with a passion. I think in time I could have grown used to it had it not been for all the other things piled on top of that that made it a burden to me.

As is so often true of children, they liked to find someone to pick on. I became the target! After all, I was strange. I talked, thought, acted, and dressed differently. Words and phrases like 'fruit, screw, nuts and bolts, play, gay,' and 'have fun' did not mean what I had always thought they did. You had to be careful what you said to whom and when or you got laughed at – or worse, made someone very angry. I remember a couple of occasions where the picking went too far. One cold winter day at school I remember being jumped in the back field by a group of kids and kicked and punched and knocked down in the snow. I have no idea where the teacher was. Another time I was running away from them, and I fell, tearing my fingers open, and I had to go to the doctor to have them repaired.

The real killer for me was that I was separated from my twin sister at school. As twins go, we were close and had been in the same classes in Ethiopia. I think I may have fared better had I been able to stay in the same class with Rose for support. We never saw each other at school except maybe at recess because we ate lunch in our rooms and never had any classes together.

[At another school in New Brunswick, Ruth would] watch a kid next to me throw his entire fresh ham sandwich with fresh fruit and juice in the garbage because he wanted fries and a coke from the cafeteria. Seeing this just after I had left famine-starved Ethiopia, where we had voted not to eat desserts so that the money could go to famine relief, was horrifying. I got in my fair share of arguments with kids when they tossed their lunches.

Ruth was helped by a woman who was 'a priceless source of stability in a very dark part of my life from age 9 – 19'.²⁴⁴ As the long story of MKs unfolded in *Simroots*, advertisements in its pages drew the attention of readers to numerous counsellors and psychologists,

²⁴³ Phil Dow, p. 270.

²⁴⁴ Ruth Meed. 'Re-Entry Story'. *Simroots* 21.2, 2004, pp. 4-5.

conferences and seminars, all anxious to address the questions being asked by MKs. In 1984 Don Ricker attended an International Conference on Missionary Kids (ICMK), held in Manila, as a 'resource person' for SIM's MK Education Committee. 'We think MK kids are the neatest in the world, although we are a little prejudiced. The agenda for ICMK looks challenging and rewarding as we seek solutions to the MK problems of the 80s.'²⁴⁵ The solutions would not be found in one conference, but similar conferences were subsequently convened.

Dave Pollock, co-chairman of ICMK, took a team to Bingham Academy, to conduct a weekend seminar about TCKs on March 2–4, 1985. 'Dave is committed to TCKs and especially the re-entry problem of MKs returning to the homelands,' explained Don Ricker. 'These men are coming under Interaction, of which Dave is the Executive Secretary.'²⁴⁶ Bingham staff, missionaries working in Ethiopia and the wider international school community attended the sessions. Don reported that most people were very pleased with the mini-seminar.²⁴⁷

School reunions also offered opportunities for students to reconnect and to address the concerns. One held in Wheaton, Illinois (1992) included a psychologist, Doris Walters, who was available for consultation and counsel. The reunion at Gowans Home (1993) drew mixed responses from participants. One said,

We each view the world from the centre of our own universe and sometimes our lenses are distorted for whatever reason, each valid in its own way. Growing up away from Mom and Dad was truly a heavy-duty sacrifice on the part of those who were involuntary conscripts, not volunteers for the task of world evangelism.

Jo-Ann Brant's observations included such comments, and were published in *Simroots*. She noted that for some, memories were almost too painful and private to verbalise: 'This is the closet where I hid to cry when my parents left for their missionary work. . . . I can still see the fading headlights as my parents pulled out of the driveway and left for another four years on the mission field.' Howie Brant was a student at Bingham Academy in its early years and afterwards went to Gowans Home. 'Again, a really difficult time in my life,' he said. 'I was an only child with no relatives near me and in a pretty tough environment. It made people like me strong as we had to fight against all odds to survive. I didn't breathe easy until I left

²⁴⁵ SIM Archives Box 3c, p. 43. Don Ricker to Bob Blaschke, 3 August 1984.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 18. Ricker to Finance Committee, 8 February 1985.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 9. Principal's Report, May 1985.

Gowans Home and went to Prairie Bible Institute.²⁴⁸ At the Home's reunion, he spoke of the results of God's faithfulness: 'A living, vibrant church in Africa (specifically Nigeria), and to the future, a church aggressively seeking to minister beyond the confines of its national borders.' He also paid tribute to the sacrifices made by the children so that the church could be established.²⁴⁹

It was Bingham's turn in 1996 to host a 50th Anniversary Reunion in the wake of the most intense MK debate. There had been voices heard from the school on the subject of long-term emotional trauma. Dave Rogers wrote in 1986.

I find my background as an M.K. to have been excellent preparation for understanding the needs and strategies of people. I believe everyone grows up developing a strategy, a way of relating to others, that is designed to meet his personal identity needs. When our strategies fail, we experience emotional pain. I believe that strategies we learn as kids are mostly based on myths.

Those of us MKs that attended boarding schools learned our myths from how we related to our peers, dorm parents, and teachers, in that order, just like if we had been at home we would have learned them mostly from our parents and siblings. Some believe that most of our learning occurs before age six, but I think I learned myths about myself and believed them based on relationships at Bingham after the age of six . . . what I wish to communicate to fellow MKs is that dependence on myths concerning our personal identities will produce emotional pain. If you are experiencing emotional pain other than grief, you are depending on a strategy that is not faith in your relationship with God. Each person can blame no one but himself for the strategy he has learned.²⁵⁰

The invitation to Bingham's reunion was issued by Judy Neil, then principal at the school:

The main house still looks much the same as most former students will remember it. The infamous bag swing is still there. The big tree still stands, taller than ever, neighbourhood hang-out for the vulture community. Ato Girma is still in the kitchen.

However, there have been many changes at Bingham Academy over the past fifty years. The enrolment profile is different now, there are a few new buildings, the library has expanded, and there is a new IBM computer lab. The majority of students go home every night. Those who board live in a family setting with no more than ten children per household. Progress is being made

²⁴⁸ Email from Howie Brant 28 September 2016.

²⁴⁹ Jo-Ann Brant. 'Two Voices Signal a New Beginning': Return to Gowans Home Reunion. *Simroots* 10.1, 1993, p. 4.

²⁵⁰ Dave Rogers. 'Reflections'. *Simroots* 3.4, 1986, p. 6.

in curriculum development and the updating of policies. The call goes out to Bingham alumni and former teachers to come and see for themselves.²⁵¹

A relatively small number of past staff and students responded, but they enjoyed a full and happy programme. For some, however, it was a difficult time. Alice Miller (née Thompson) attended and remembered how it affected her:

At the time of the 50th Reunion, the school was so changed – no more a boarding school. The two girls’ rooms were classrooms. The whole experience was very stressful. I just wanted to leave the whole reunion celebrations and never come back again. I wanted to see more information about SMC and those that attended. . . . I really never knew my parents very well because I was always in a boarding school in Addis and then in Prairie High School in Three Hills, Alberta. I believe that is why so many of the early group of students did not go to the 50th Reunion.²⁵²

Nevertheless, since the 50th anniversary reunion, Alice did return many times to Ethiopia, to see the country and its people. This was another common occurrence: despite grief and grievances, many MKs returned to the African country that had been home in their childhood. Lois (Barlow) Merritt, after she attended Bingham Academy between 1948 and 1954, stayed ‘home’ at Soddo, in southern Ethiopia, for a couple of years, then finished ninth grade by correspondence and left Ethiopia in 1956. She returned for a visit in 1992.

Some of you will understand the intense longing which I had for many years, just to see Ethiopia once more. When we arrived in Addis Ababa I wanted to stare and stare at the people. Ethiopians are slim and very beautiful. They are the handsomest people in the world, I think, and I always recognise them when I see any who are living in America. Their features are so distinctive. But to see a multitude of Ethiopians’ faces again, what a moving experience. . . .

If I could choose a place to live in the millennium, it would be southern Ethiopia. But for now I am definitely an outsider, a foreigner. I had forgotten quite how foreign I am, and how much curiosity is aroused by a blonde woman out for a walk. . . . This trip caused me to reflect on what I am like, how I think, and how it all fits in with the circumstances under which I was raised. I consider myself a patriotic American, and yet I think that I see things from a little different viewpoint than most Americans. So do you, probably, and that is not so strange . . .²⁵³

Others returned to Africa and wrote published accounts of the whole MK experience, including Daniel Coleman, whose book, *The Scent of Eucalyptus: A Missionary Childhood in*

²⁵¹ Judy Neil. Bingham Academy's Golden Anniversary Reunion November 6-12, 1996. *Simroots* 13.2 1996, p. 7.

²⁵² Email from Alice Miller 28 September 2016.

²⁵³ Lois Merritt. ‘Pause for Reflection’. *Simroots* 8.1 1992, pp. 11-12.

Ethiopia, recounted his years at Bingham Academy and beyond. Other past students also wrote books. Among these were Julene (Hodges) Schroeder (*Under an African Sky: The Unusual Life of a Missionaries' Kid in Ethiopia*) and Tim Bascom (*Chameleon Days: An American Boyhood in Ethiopia*).

Ruth Van Reken (not a Bingham student) was raised for thirteen years in Nigeria, and her father and children were also TCKs. At the age of thirty-nine, she began journaling, trying to understand the full impact of her childhood. Eventually this journaling became *Letters I Never Wrote*, later re-published as [Letters Never Sent](#). Through the book, Ruth met and interacted with many TCKs and ATCKs of all backgrounds and nationalities. Some of them expressed their appreciation of the book, which was all about emotional healing, in *Simroots* during the 1980s.

While reunions, return visits and written accounts were all therapeutic measures, there was a darker side to the experience of some MKs. As they heard the stories of others, they felt enabled to speak up about various kinds of abuse. Sue Clay and her brother were abused, physically and mentally, at Kent Academy, during the tenure of 'a certain person'; Sue claimed they were not the only ones.²⁵⁴

Bingham Academy had also harboured 'a certain person', a teacher and dorm parent who shamed the school and betrayed the trust placed in him by SIM, other staff, and parents; but more critically and destructively, he abused and seriously harmed children under his care. One of his victims, Minna Kayser, has said,

There were quite a few victims. Some have no memory of the events and deny anything happened. But I was a witness, so I can testify to it. They are not ready to lean into it yet. He was there when I returned from a three-year furlough in 1969. He was still there when I left Ethiopia in 1973. SIM records have him there for eight years. so he could have arrived in 1966 or 1967 and left in 1974/1975. I am not sure of exact dates.²⁵⁵

Minna has not identified the perpetrator by name; instead, in *Diamond Fractal*, the book she has co-written with Karen Keegan, about the prolonged sexual (as well as physical and verbal) abuse, she has referred to him as 'Mr Ahab'. Now deceased, he was from the U.S.

Mr. Ahab was a cruel man who got pleasure out of other people's pain. . . . People always ask me: How could people around you not know what happened to you? First of all, I was not about to tell. It was too dangerous. I

²⁵⁴ *Simroots* 5.4 1989, p.11.

²⁵⁵ Email from Minna Kayser 2 November 2016.

had been threatened in the midst of torture that if I told anyone, I would be killed or further tortured, or my family would be harmed or kicked off the mission field. Perpetrators fed lies such as: ‘This is your fault; you deserve this; no one will believe you if you tell.’ Fear is a powerful motivator for keeping silent.

Second, Satan, the master deceiver, wants to keep this sort of thing secret, and he knows how to hide it. And third, some people who hear this type of story don’t want to know the truth. Once (as an adult) when I shared about my abuse with one of the staff members, she told me, ‘I didn’t want to see that there was a problem because it’s too horrifying to admit that a so-called missionary could be capable of such a thing.’

It was easy for Mr. Ahab to get by with it because he would take us off campus by inviting us to go on a motorcycle ride with him. It wasn’t hard to keep things secret from the other staff because there weren’t enough of them to keep up with all of us. For example, if we timed it right, we could slip over the fence and make it to town and back without being missed. The kids had an unspoken pact with each other not to tell; if we were to survive, we had to keep our mouths shut.²⁵⁶

Minna’s trauma resulted in her suffering from Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly termed M.P.D. (Multiple Personality Disorder). Her recovery was assisted by an open letter of apology from Larry Fehl, SIM Director, USA, written for *Simroots* after he had convened a special consultation of Adult MKs, Administration, and Board members on May 8 and 9, 1998. He admitted that he had not been as vocal and visible as he should have been as an advocate for AMK concerns.

From now on I intend to be more aggressive in rebuilding broken relationships between AMKs and SIM and Parents. I understand that in many instances, we have been partially responsible for your pain and suffering when you were on the field. . . . During that May meeting I felt your pain and wept openly during the recounting of stories, and so I am asking you to please forgive me, past SIM administrations, SIM dorm parents, and your parents when we have not demonstrated grace and love. I want to open the doors of reconciliation and healing.²⁵⁷

An Adult Missionary Kid Task Force (AMKTF) was formed in October 1999 to investigate the level of need and to better reach out to all Mission AMKs. The Task Force recognised the urgent need for protective policies in the boarding schools, where caregivers would be more closely monitored, parents informed on their stations, and abusers removed.²⁵⁸ In the years ahead, staff for Bingham Academy would be vigilantly screened.

²⁵⁶ Minna Kayser. *Diamond Fractal* pp. 58 and 67.

²⁵⁷ Larry Fehl. ‘Open Letter of Apology’. *Simroots* 15.2, 1998, p. 15.

²⁵⁸ Minna Kayser was a member of the AMK Task Force. See *Simroots* 17.1, 2000, pp. 2-3.

Rather poignantly, Larry's apology was published in an issue of *Simroots* dedicated to Graham and Mildred Hay, founders of Bingham Academy. They would have been very shocked and distressed to know that Bingham, in common with other boarding schools, could be a haven for perpetrators of abuse.

'I was on staff when this [Minna's abuse] occurred,' wrote Roy Wallace, one of Graham's successors, 'but I was then totally unaware of such. We both, he and I, attended early morning and weekly prayer. . . . Often of a Saturday morning, he took girls on his motor bike.'²⁵⁹

Roy also offered an apology published in *Simroots*:

Having twice read through *Diamond Fractal—A Story of a Shattered Mind Made Whole*, I want to offer my sincere apologies to any and all students of Bingham in attendance second half of 1956 to final graduation of 1973 and seek forgiveness for my blind naivety. I knew punishment takes many forms, but I did not see my need to interfere. I ask forgiveness for any punishment I administered as well.²⁶⁰

'Mr Ahab' and his kind did much damage, but it would be unjust to leave the topic with the impression that there were many dorm parents and teachers like him. Estelle (Morris) McLellan, who had awful memories of Gowans Home, went on to Kent Academy when she was nine and was treated kindly by her boarding house parents, Gerry and Paul Craig. 'I will always love them for the way they dealt with us and the love they showed us. . . . I believe the Craigs were placed at Kent Academy because they had so much love to give us all and we truly loved them back.'²⁶¹

The risk of further damage, by house parents at least, was minimised at Bingham Academy because the old boarding system was not restored. The last year for that style of boarding was 1977–78. Then in 1984 boarding officially restarted, but it was family-style boarding. Harold Jongeward explained:

All kids lived with us like a big family. We had both boys and girls. At first we had just Drew Harding living with us and we still had our two daughters living at home with us. A year later, Amy Scheel joined; a year later, Ryan Harding; then Kara Harding, Andrea Scheel, and Peter Rowlands. Our

²⁵⁹ Email from Roy Wallace 15 November 2016.

²⁶⁰ Roy Wallace. 'To Bingham Academy Students—an open letter of apology, contrition, and of seeking forgiveness'. *Simroots* 32.2, 2015, p. 19.

²⁶¹ Estelle McLellan. op.cit.

daughters went off to RVA in 1986 and 1988. But we still had all the other kids.²⁶²

Children now benefit from the safety measures put in place by SIM and the school, both members of the Child Safety & Protection Network (CSPN), a consortium of fifty-one mission agencies and overseas international schools that share a commitment to very high standards of response to child safety reports. Prevention, intervention, and follow-up care are the key issues. SIM has developed a thorough Child Safety and Response Policy to guide the investigative (verification) process from initial report to final outcomes. ‘In every case SIM desires to honour the Lord by pursuing justice for the victims and seeking redemptive outcomes through professional follow-up care for those involved...’²⁶³

Child Safety Code of Conduct Agreements must be signed by all staff, and they are obliged to undergo screening: criminal record checks and ‘Working with Children’ safety checks in their home countries before acceptance at the school. The Staff Handbook 2016–17 devoted seven pages to Child Safety Policy, and new staff must attend a child safety seminar during their orientation.

The healing process continues for those hurt by their MK experience. Dr Joshua Bogunjoko, SIM International Director in 2017, wrote an ‘Open Letter’ to all MKs, published in *Simroots*:

. . . We acknowledge your own commitment and contributions to the work that was done or is being done by your parents. . . . You may be one who has experienced suffering or adversity, perhaps from separation from your parents at an early age. Some have had close encounters with diseases, natural disasters, civil unrest, or other hazards. We acknowledge the price that you may have paid so that the gospel of Christ’s saving grace can be preached to a dying world. We celebrate your victories. . . . We celebrate your contributions, your resilience, your grace, your hope. Your unique experiences are almost impossible to explain to those who never walked in your shoes. You are often misunderstood in both your host culture and in your parents’ home culture. Yet this you have endured with determination, a sense of humor, and ultimately with renewed grace. We celebrate you today as one of ‘our’ MKs, as one of our masterpieces created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for you to do. I want to personally thank you for the blessings that you and your family have been to many . . .²⁶⁴

²⁶² Email from Harold Jongeward 15 December 2016.

²⁶³ ‘SIM and Child Safety’. *Simroots* 29.1, 2012, p. 3.

²⁶⁴ Joshua Bogunjoko. ‘An Open Letter from Joshua Bogunjoko’. *Simroots* 34.1, 2017, pp. 1-2.

CHAPTER 9

'YOURS FOR DIPLOMATIC AND MISSIONARY CHILDREN'

*'The months following March 1984 were the most terrible Ethiopia has ever seen. Two successive harvests had failed for much of the country, leaving one-sixth of the population on the brink of death.'*²⁶⁵

Bingham Academy was managing to survive under a socialist government, yet its problems were relatively insignificant in a country where Mengistu's Marxist policies were clearly not effective. In 1984 thousands of Ethiopians died of starvation and related diseases and many more were in dire need of food. The final death toll was estimated to be one million people. Bingham Academy donated ETB70,000 to the SIM drought relief programme in July 1985.²⁶⁶ In the 1974 famine, 200,000 people had died. Emperor Haile Selassie had been accused of hiding that famine—a major factor in his downfall.

Mengistu seemed likely to go the same way, especially as he denied the extent of the suffering; rebellion and passive resistance made it clear that the people were not behind him. Yet in September 1984 the lavish tenth anniversary celebrations of his victory over Haile Selassie went ahead in the midst of the famine. About 70,000 students, peasants and troops marched in the streets of Addis Ababa, shouting slogans: 'Long live the revolution'; 'Down with imperialism'; and 'Revolutionary motherland or death'. Hundreds of Soviet-made tanks, armoured personnel carriers, rocket launchers and artillery rumbled through Revolution Square.

The government refused permission for journalists to visit drought-affected areas during or after the celebrations. Travel permits for relief workers were denied, ostensibly for security reasons. Mengistu defiantly appealed for international aid and announced the formation of his communist party, which took over government from the ruling Provisional Military Council formed after the 1974 revolution.²⁶⁷ Although the Red Terror caused thousands of deaths, it was Mengistu's dismissive response to events in 1984 that culminated in his being found guilty of genocide in 2006.

²⁶⁵ Dawit Wolde Giorgis. *Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia*, p. 143. Chapter title: these were the words with which Don Ricker typically signed letters in the 1980s.

²⁶⁶ SIM Archives. Box 3b, p. 59. Memo from Harold Jongeward to Alex [Fellows], 22 July 1985.

²⁶⁷ Details from <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/18/world/famine-engulfs-ethiopia-again-death-toll-rises.html> and <http://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/09/12/Ethiopians-mark-10th-anniversary-of-socialist-revolution/3677463809600/> accessed 21 December 2016.

Back in the 1980s, Mengistu's reign continued in Ethiopia and everyone, including residents at the school, suffered the consequences. During the Communist years, *ferengis*, or foreigners, were generally not allowed to travel outside of Addis Ababa. If permission was granted, the traveller had to be accompanied by a 'minder' (an Ethiopian to keep watch). At one point the new government banned the driving of private cars on Sundays, which meant that the school's Sunday programmes were changed to Friday evenings.

Bill Broers, station manager at the school from 1988 to 2001, had the responsibility of renewing Sunday travel permits each month.

In order to drive on Sundays, you needed special permission. We were able to only get permission to drive one van on Sundays, so we would make multiple trips to the International Evangelical Church (IEC), shuttling people back and forth to church. Once a month I had to go to a government office to renew our Sunday travel permit. Each month I received a small piece of paper to put in the front window of the van. This document was valid for the month and indicated that we had permission to drive that vehicle on Sundays.²⁶⁸

One year, when water in Lake Awash was low, different parts of the city would be without power for a few hours to conserve electricity. These outages could happen at any time.

Harold Jongeward recalled:

After the disaster of trying to do a programme by candle light, I wrote a letter and went to the Power Authority. I explained that we were a school with many diplomats' children and we had programmes on some Friday evenings. I said it was very embarrassing when we had to conduct them without power. I asked if we could provide a list of dates when we were having programmes; they could turn off the power any other time they liked, just not during those times. They were very willing to cooperate and we never had another programme without electricity.²⁶⁹

Thieves broke into the compound on three occasions in 1985. The walls were reinforced and extra sheets of tin added in places, making it too high to climb over.²⁷⁰ Another thief, able to defy the wall, eluded capture for some time: a monkey roamed the compound for several months, stealing food and messing up houses if windows were left open. No one could get near enough to hit him with a stick or rock. Staff tried unsuccessfully to persuade the kebele to shoot him, as they were the only ones with guns. Traps were set and poisoned bananas offered, but the monkey spat them out. He was finally caught, although no one remembers how.

²⁶⁸ Email from Bill Broers 26 December 2016.

²⁶⁹ Email from Harold Jongeward 20 November 2016.

²⁷⁰ SIM Archives. Box 3c, p. 11. Station Manager's Report, 30 April 1985.

In earlier days, before fences were erected, hyenas were still prevalent in the district and the school had two guard dogs, Bing and Cello. Sometimes at night the dogs and the hyenas could be heard fighting, and the dogs appeared the next morning, licking their wounds. Harold Jongeward could remember seeing a hyena on the field when he was playing there with some of the children after dark.²⁷¹

Another unusual happening on the field occurred in 1985 when a big dead tree fell on the back-stop and soccer goal after being chopped down by a contracted tree-cutter. ‘A new cross-bar was reinforced and installed to repair the soccer goal,’ reported Daniel Scheel, station manager.

However, the back-stop is still in need of repair. It may be of interest to know that the dead tree was one of the two which has supported the bag swing all these years. Since that time a new chain was purchased and secured to another tree, putting the old swing back in working order. Several trees were cut down to make a new path for safe swinging.²⁷²

Students over the years have fond memories of the swing. Amanda Davis (née Rosenberger), a student in the 1990s, said that the ‘Flat Tire Swing’ was a favourite activity for the students.

I really hope it is still there! I have such great memories of this. It was located just past the soccer field if you head straight into the woods. It was attached to a massive tree, and there was a gentle slope you would swing over. It was called the “Flat Tire Swing” because the tire was cut off and left just enough room to either sit on it, or place one foot on each side. During school hours only one kid per swing was allowed. After hours all the kids who lived on the school compound would all pile on. I’m sure we got seven kids on one time! Normally though we would just swing two at a time.²⁷³

The bag swing and the tunnels the children built in the forested surroundings made way for a new classroom block in 2014.

Despite the challenges, teachers also spoke positively of their terms at Bingham. Carol Anne Griffith (née Reimer), who served as a music teacher 1971–73, 1976–78, and 1981–84, resigned from SIM and married Steve Griffith (whom she met in Addis Ababa) in September 1984. ‘We returned with his work in 1986–88 and it was fun to reconnect with BA and SIM.

²⁷¹ Email from Harold Jongeward 22 November 2016.

²⁷² SIM Archives. op.cit. Box 3c.

²⁷³ Email from Amanda Davis 20 December 2016.

Since then we have visited Ethiopia at least four times . . . it was wonderful to relive sweet memories of the years at my beloved Bingham.²⁷⁴

Bingham Academy became a member of the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA) in July 1984. Its annual conference was held in Nairobi later that year, attended by Harold Jongeward; Don Ricker represented Bingham the following year.²⁷⁵ The school was in a healthy position, despite the external problems, with 140 students in Grades 1–8, most of them from the large international community. Addis Ababa had the largest group of African diplomats on the continent because of the presence of the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), many embassies, and smaller international groups. Most MK graduates of Bingham went on to Rift Valley Academy, starting there in Grade 9.

‘The international community kids are third culture kids just like MKs,’ explained Don Ricker. ‘Their parents have a real problem finding a satisfactory high school. Some attend the International Community School here in Addis, while others seek boarding in Nairobi, England, or their home countries.’²⁷⁶

Don was having trouble recruiting staff, in common with his predecessors and successors. He had sent an SOS letter to Bingham alumni in September 1984:

We are in need of many teachers for September 1985, and would like very much to have some Bingham alumni join our staff. Ruth Cumbers is teaching Grade 4 this year. Dan Scheel is station head and Harold Jongeward has been here for eight years now. All are Bingham grads.

The letter was written when Addis Ababa was in the midst of an ambitious beautification project, in preparation for the tenth anniversary of the Revolution on September 12.

Presently we are a day school only, but with five young SIM families, all with young children, we expect to open boarding in September 1987. . . . Addis Ababa is a fascinating place to live. The government is committed to a Marxist/Leninist philosophy, but also wants to keep the door open to the West for economic reasons. . . . Pray with us regarding our teacher needs. We trust some of you may be led of the Lord to come to Bingham Academy.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Email from Carol Anne Griffith 7 November 2016.

²⁷⁵ SIM Archives. Box 3c, p. 42. Don Ricker to SIM Finance Committee, 3 August 1984; p. 48. Don Ricker to SIM Finance Committee, 10 September 1985.

²⁷⁶ SIM Archives. Box 3c, p. 46. Don Ricker to David Pollock 12 June 1984.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 34. Don Ricker to Bingham Alumni, September 1984.

There was little response, possibly because potential teachers were anxious about the country's politics, and hopes of the boarding house reopening faded. There was talk of relieving Harold from his classroom teaching and placing him full-time in administration. He remembered that he was in administration at SIM HQ and then went on furlough for the 1985–86 school year.

When I came back I had more time in Administration. Then it was decided I should return to Bingham and I think also at the same time that I should be principal. So it was probably September 1987 that I went back to Bingham full time and as principal. I continued as the chairman of the SIM Labour Committee until I left in 1992. Alas, this involved many appearances at court in the negotiations with the SIM employee representatives over the new collective agreement.²⁷⁸

The collective agreement was between SIM and all the SIM employees. Labour law stipulated that employees were allowed to have labour unions and a collective agreement, negotiated between employee and mission representatives, and had to agree upon obligations of employees and mission.

Don protested when Harold was moved to administrative work. He wrote in a March 1985 letter to Bruce Adams, at SIM HQ in Addis:

We needed four teachers at Bingham in September. Now it goes up to five. We have four (Schoepf, Cumbers, Gibson, and Ricker). At the moment (except for the music teacher that Clarence Ely told me about last week) there is not one potential teacher in the normal SIM recruitment pipe-line that I have been informed about.

This is probably the most serious teacher crisis in the existence of Bingham. It used to be that teachers were brought in from down country if there was a need. Now there is no source for teachers. There needs to be a rather serious meeting (Bingham Board and Adm???) thinking of September 1985 and the future. If SIM doesn't have teachers here what do we do? How do we hire locally? (This has always been rejected for many reasons). Maybe we will have to. What must SIM International do to improve recruitment of teachers? I don't know.²⁷⁹

One answer was to employ short term and 'special' short term staff, as distinct from 'career missionaries', with the offer of possible financial assistance to those who agreed to come. Rose Sprunger provided one 'special', as a French teacher, when her husband John was

²⁷⁸ Email from Harold Jongeward 4 February 2017.

²⁷⁹ SIM Archives. Box 3c, p. 16: Don Ricker to Bruce Adams 16 March 1985. Clarence Ely was General Secretary for SIM Ethiopia (which at that time was second position under the Ethiopia Director.) His wife Sarah taught Grades 5 and 7 plus 8 English at BA during the Elys' term in Ethiopia.

stationed in Ethiopia with Helimission. The school wanted to offer French in 1985–86, as its absence in the subject list was the biggest curriculum weakness. Parents had asked constantly about it; especially those from the OAU, as its employment of staff required proficiency in two of the three official OAU languages (Arabic, French, and English). French would be introduced with two periods per week for each class.²⁸⁰ Roy Wallace returned to the school to teach French in the 1989–90 academic year.

Somehow, as always, the staff needs were met, and Don Ricker wrote to parents in August 1985, assuring them that the school was ready

We have six new teachers this year. Mr and Mrs Malcolm McGregor are replacing the Scheels. He is station head and will teach industrial arts to the boys in grades 7 and 8, and she will teach music. Miss Mary Allia from Australia and Miss Betty Jane Kemp from Canada will teach grades 1 and 2 respectively. Mrs Rose Sprunger is starting a French programme and will be teaching everyone in the school two days a week. Mrs Pearl Hershelman will be replacing Mrs Ely in grade 5 until the middle of November . . . Looking forward to another excellent school year, I am yours for diplomatic and missionary children, Donald F. Ricker, Principal.²⁸¹

At the next Bingham Board meeting, however, it was agreed that the

. . . September '86 picture was very bleak indeed. It was recommended and accepted that a memo be sent to Council expressing the Board's anxiety regarding the needs for next September. Mr. Ricker requested approval to contact directly all home offices regarding these needs. Mr. Jongeward stated he would first have to obtain the approval of the SIM overall personnel coordinator, Mr. H. Waldock in Cedar Grove for this action. The Board requested that this be done as soon as possible. On the matter of promotion it was agreed that a video of Bingham should be made before the end of 1985 for circulation to all home offices. It was agreed that this would be a real stimulus to a promotion drive and should be handled by Mr. Ricker and Mr. McGregor . . .

Mr. Harding raised the matter of how much pressure the staff was under at Bingham due to the workload and asked if there were any ways this load could be cut back on. Mr. Harding reported that a member of the newer staff had raised this matter with him. Mr. Ricker sought to defend the present status quo stating that acclimatisation was probably the biggest problem. Mr. Ricker did state he had counsel with one of the staff regarding this situation and was endeavouring to try to alleviate the situation. Mr. Harding encouraged the principal to have regular counsel with his staff on an individual basis. This

²⁸⁰ Ibid. Box 3b, p. 56. Don Ricker to Finance Committee, 23 July 1985.

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 53. Don Ricker to Parents, 20 August 1985.

might not entirely solve problems but will help share them and foster a deeper understanding.²⁸²

Malcolm McGregor, station head, sought clarification from Bruce Adams, SIM Area Director, on financing teachers. Bruce replied:

All missionaries, whether SST [special short term] or career, involved in that ministry are expected to raise their full support which involves travel and home country administrative costs. In an unusual teacher/administrative staff shortage situation which may be defined as 'emergency', Bingham is authorised to pay the travel and home country administrative costs of an individual missionary. In order that this SIM ministry is carried on in a consistent God-honouring manner, the Bingham Board may recommend that travel/home administrative assistance be given to an individual Bingham staff member. The SIM Finance Committee will make the final decision as to what constitutes an 'emergency'.²⁸³

There were no easy solutions. Another suggestion was the reintroduction of the Yearbook, which had lapsed since the last one produced for the 1975–76 academic year. The purpose would be twofold: as a remembrance of the school year for students and staff; and as a promotional book for SIM to advertise the school to potential staff and students. The suggestion was put to the Finance Committee: 'The books will be published by the School Annual Publishing Company in Ohio. The mailing department in Cedar Grove would send some to Ethiopia, some to the different SIM home offices, etc. We would like to purchase 1000 copies of a 32-page book, with a cost of 4400 birr.'²⁸⁴

However, due to the staff's heavy workload, the Board decided that there was no one available to take on another major commitment. A promotional leaflet to attract teachers was produced for the 1989–90 school year. It invited them to consider a school dedicated to

. . . reaching tomorrow's leaders for Christ, run by SIM as one of its regular ministries in Ethiopia. It is an international, interdenominational school blessed with a beautiful eight acre campus in western Addis Ababa. In addition to classrooms and staff housing, the campus has a covered area for basketball and volleyball, a soccer field, a tennis court, playgrounds, and wooded areas.

²⁸² Ibid. p. 29-31. Bingham Board Meeting 7 November 1985.

²⁸³ Ibid. p. 17. Bruce Adams to Malcolm McGregor 3 December 1985.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. Box 3c, p. 8. Memo to Finance Committee from Bingham Academy Board and Principal 8 May 1985.

The school's Philosophy stated that 'through qualified instruction and loving discipline, Bingham Academy endeavours to lead her students to become children of God and dedicated followers of Christ and to serve God to His glory and man to his enrichment.'²⁸⁵

SIM also distributed its own advertisement under the heading, 'Teachers, Where Are You? Make a Real Impact. Ethiopia is the Place You Can Make a Real Impact!' The educational impact: 'Whether you teach kindergarten, 8th grade, or any class in between, at Bingham Academy you will creatively work with your individual students to provide intellectual, spiritual, and physical development. Our 10,000 volume library, international curriculum resources, and audio-visual centre are all at your fingertips to use as you see fit!' Worldwide impact: 'At Bingham Academy you will be part of an international staff that teaches 170+ students from over 30 different countries. Many of these children are from homes of diplomats and international leaders. Your impact here extends around the world!'

There was also the opportunity to make 'a spiritual impact on the life of each student through daily Bible lessons, Scripture memory, musical programmes, and weekly chapels. At Bingham Academy you will provide spiritual nourishment for both Christian and non-Christian students.'²⁸⁶

The pages of *Simroots* testify to the realisation of Bingham's long-term intention to make a spiritual impact. *Simroots* dedicates a section of each issue to following the whereabouts of past students and staff; and the school has, over the years, fostered many MKs who went on to serve in Christian missionary endeavours.

There are too many to list, but a couple of names now familiar to readers included Dave Pitman. In 1988, he was church-planting with SIM in northern Ghana, and he was later appointed SIM Ghana Director; in 1987 Dan Scheel was asked by SIM to open a new work with the Banna people in the southernmost part of Ethiopia; in 1988 Paul Cumbers (son of John) and his wife Tracy started teaching in the Carachipampa Christian School in Bolivia. They were working not only with MKs but also with the children of upper-class Bolivians, in a situation similar to Bingham.

After three-year terms in Ethiopia, missionaries returning to their home countries realised that they had become too accustomed to using the horn constantly as they drove; were suspicious

²⁸⁵ Ibid. Box 1, pp. 5-6. Bingham Academy Leaflet.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 3-4: 'Where Can You Teach With...?'

of tap water; and unwilling to throw away even a can, bottle, jar, newspaper, or piece of aluminium foil that surely must be of use to someone. They had also become accustomed to bowing slightly in greeting and giving or receiving things with both hands rather than with just one.

Bingham's first building, the little chapel which was the venue for many LAC meetings and Christian testimonies, was given to the Kolfe branch of the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (KHC), a church which SIM had founded. SIM made this decision in 1981 when it seemed likely that the entire school complex would be seized by the Derg. It was unfortunate that no formal agreement of property use was drawn up, because in 1983 the local Kolfe kebele expropriated the Kolfe KHC.²⁸⁷

Harold Jongeward remembered the dramatic event:

The local kebele militia marched into a meeting, stopped the service, and ordered everyone outside. They were lined up on the BA driveway, told to produce their IDs and then they were all marched across the road and up the hill to the kebele headquarters. They were all held prisoner for three days; the leaders for two weeks.²⁸⁸

Meanwhile the chapel was officially closed. 'As we would drive in and out of the Bingham compound,' wrote Bill Broers, 'we could see the big padlock that had been placed on the door of the church by a government official.'²⁸⁹ The special little building was not used for anything until 1991 when the Derg fell and the new government allowed Kolfe KHC to use the building again.

'In 1983, the church had 300 members. When it reopened it had 800 members. During those intervening years, Christians had to meet illegally, because any meeting of more than five people anywhere had to be registered with the kebele. Of course Christians would not have been allowed to meet so they met secretly and illegally. By 1992, the church had grown to 1,000 members. And it continued to grow thereafter.'²⁹⁰ Bingham Academy's survival was tenuous, but like the KHC, it persevered into the 1990s.

²⁸⁷ Bingham Academy Archives. 'Bingham Academy and Kolfe KHC: A Brief Review of the Past Twenty Years'. Presented by Paul Balisky, Area Director, SIM Ethiopia, 2 March 2001.

²⁸⁸ Email from Harold Jongeward 15 December 2016.

²⁸⁹ Email from Bill Broers 26 December 2016.

²⁹⁰ Email from Harold Jongeward op.cit.

CHAPTER 10

‘STICKIN’ TOGETHER’

‘An early impression of Bingham was how it really did feel like we were joining a family. The atmosphere on the compound was positive and everyone was welcoming.’

These were the words of Bill Broers, who became Station Manager in 1988. He went on to say that Harold Jongeward was very gracious. ‘Although a newcomer to the country as well as to Bingham,’ Bill explained, ‘as the Station Manager I was technically “over” the Principal. At one of the first chapel services of the 1988 school year, Harold introduced the staff to the students. When he introduced me he said, “This is Mr. Broers. He’s my boss.” There was a quiet but audible gasp from the students as if they were thinking, “Wow, the Principal’s boss!”’²⁹¹

Bill and his wife, Elizabeth, who was the school’s hostess for most of their time on staff, as well as the nurse for a short time, stayed until 2001. That was a long time of service. Harold, who had been a student at Bingham Academy from 1953 to 1962, and a staff member since 1976, left in 1992. The Wallaces, the Rickers, and the Jongewards were all long-term dedicated missionary teachers who made a big contribution to the school. ‘Life in Ethiopia,’ Becky Jongeward reflected in 2016, ‘was full of many blessings! We really enjoyed working there.’²⁹²

Harold and Becky Jongeward had an especially positive relationship with the national staff and a good grasp of the Amharic language to support that. ‘I’m sure there were many pressures but Harold never seemed to be stressed,’ said Judy Neil, Harold’s successor as principal. ‘He always had time to listen and encourage. His experience as an MK in Ethiopia gave him an insight and understanding of both the national and the mission culture that stood him in good stead. I personally appreciated his wisdom and support.’²⁹³

Don and Mary Ricker were acknowledged as a team who helped the school grow. ‘This couple has been at Bingham Academy for twenty-eight years, during which time they have served the Lord both in and out of the classroom.’²⁹⁴ Until they left, the Rickers had also

²⁹¹ Email from Bill Broers 26 December 2016. The title of the chapter, *Stickin’ Together*, was the title given to the 1997-98 yearbook.

²⁹² Email from Becky Jongeward 2 October 2016.

²⁹³ Email from Judy Neil 11 January 2017.

²⁹⁴ Dedication to the Rickers, Bingham Academy Yearbook 1998-99.

maintained their practice of boarding students in their home—sometimes as many as three or four boys.

Most importantly, the many years of commitment by those experienced couples provided stability in a troubled country that was never free of poverty, political tensions and places of unrest. At about the same time as the Tiananmen Square protests and massacre in China, the first attempted coup against Mengistu since he emerged as leader of the rigidly Marxist-Leninist state in 1974 took place in Ethiopia. It was May 1989. The rebellion was quashed and Mengistu declared that his revolutionary army had liquidated the traitors.²⁹⁵

The event did not go unnoticed at the school. Bill Broers said:

Towards the end of the school day, a number of fighter aircraft were flying over the city, including over Bingham. Later that day we learned that it was because of a coup attempt. At Bingham we were not close to the action, but apparently at SIM HQ things were very tense. I believe we closed the school early that day and sat tight, waiting to see what would happen. School wasn't closed long since the regime was able to quickly squash the attempted coup.

Midway through the 1990–91 school year things were getting tense. There was a lot of talk of the rebel forces getting steadily closer to Addis Ababa. Early in 1991 we could at times hear the sound of artillery from outside the city. Various embassies had been advising their people to leave Ethiopia for several months, but SIM did not officially evacuate everyone. We were told that anyone wanting to leave was free to do so. . . . Bingham closed early that year.²⁹⁶

One of the students, Cara (Strauss) Contreras, recalled the revolutionary time:

I was evacuated with my two younger brothers (Mark and David) and my Mom, while my Dad stayed through the overthrow of the government. I remember the day before we got evacuated my Mom and Dad sat us down and explained that my brothers and I would be leaving with my mom while my dad stayed. Most nights we could hear random gunshots over the city, but that night we could see tracer missiles flying across the sky. My brothers and I slept on the floor of our parents' room, not necessarily because we were scared, but we were excited and wanted to share that with each other. We were on the last plane out of Addis before the tanks rolled in to shut down the airport. When we came back, there were still a few burned out tanks near our compound, and at school we would often search in the woods behind the soccer field for bullets (and found a few).²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/05/19/world/ethiopia-leader-tells-of-execution-of-coup-figure.html> accessed 8 January 2017.

²⁹⁶ Email from Bill Broers 7 January 2017.

²⁹⁷ Emails from Cara (Strauss) Contreras 19 and 25 January 2017.

In 1991, the [Mengistu](#) government was finally toppled by its own officials, and a coalition of rebel forces, the [Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front](#) (EPRDF), took over. There was some fear that Mengistu would fight to the bitter end for the capital, but after diplomatic intervention by the [United States](#), he fled to asylum in [Zimbabwe](#). The EPRDF immediately disbanded the [Workers' Party of Ethiopia](#) (the political arm of the Derg) and arrested many of the prominent Derg officials shortly afterwards.²⁹⁸

The events captured the attention of the world press. The *New York Times* reported:

Here in the Ethiopian capital, a valley of ramshackle iron-roofed houses and some dilapidated high-rises, the most obvious difference since the fall of Colonel Mengistu is government-sanctioned debate in coffee shops, on television and in the newspapers. After a 17-year era of Stalinesque fear, people are talking and grumbling, often on ethnic grounds. The previously dormant university is abuzz with students. But against this backdrop of new-found expression, there is increased banditry in the city and countryside, mostly by destitute members of the demobilised, 500,000-member Mengistu army.²⁹⁹

Harold Jongeward wrote a long, detailed account of events (20 May to 2 June 1991) for his family living in the U.S. He told them that the Ethiopian employees were very happy with the news that Mengistu had been deposed. On a drive to SIM HQ, he saw hundreds of soldiers walking into the city.

We had been told that that they were being stopped outside the city and their guns and ammunition taken away, but at least half the ones I saw were armed. . . . Becky [Harold's wife] called to say that soldiers were causing a riot in the market right outside the Bingham gate . . . by Thursday and Friday the retreating soldiers had been selling their guns and ammunition to people who were all trying out their newly acquired weapons. It sounded like a battle but it was just people shooting at targets or up in the air.

Beyond Addis Ababa, John Dakin (who worked at Babogaya) had been captured by members of the EPRDF on his way home from a funeral. They treated him well but held him overnight because they claimed there was going to be a war and he would be hurt. Steve and Terry Early, long-term missionaries with SIM, were on their way to Bishoftu to look for him when they drove right into the middle of a battle. They were hustled out of their car, but later taken to Bishoftu. Just outside SIM HQ in the city, a big tree and a light pole had been knocked

²⁹⁸ Details from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_Civil_War, accessed 5 January 2017.

²⁹⁹ Jane Perlez. 'Coalition Rule in Ethiopia Is Facing Growing Fears of Collapse'. January 10, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/10/world/coalition-rule-in-ethiopia-is-facing-growing-fears-of-collapse.html> accessed 5 January 2017.

down by a tank, and cars were similarly flattened. News was received that the Sandford School had been trashed by looters. A tank battle raged around the SIM Press compound, and the homes of Bingham families were damaged in other parts of the city. A 7.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. curfew was in place and violators were shot on the spot.

The men at Bingham helped the regular night guards patrol the compound and defend the gate. Harold wrote:

We each carried a baseball bat and whistle. It was such a nice night that I got out the school telescope. The electricity was off so viewing conditions were ideal. . . . Friday morning early some EPRDF men came to the gate which was still barred and chained. They offered to give our guards some guns but we didn't really want that. They said they were close by and would come if we sent for them. We left it at that. They must have been 18–20 years old. Just kids, but very nice and polite.³⁰⁰

Barry Hicks, who would later teach at the school, was working as a surgeon in the Black Lion Hospital, Addis Ababa, at the time of the upheaval. He recalled in his memoir *Have Scalpel – Will Travel!* that the advancing, liberating troops had made

. . . an art form of shooting the fleeing young soldiers. . . . There was a curfew on in the evenings and every night one heard considerable shooting. We often saw results of it the next day but the local undertakers saw even more. The city was strewn with wrecked war vehicles. The ammunition dump in the centre of the city had been blown up by the retreating forces. There had been massive fires with many dead, and many severely injured – particularly with extensive horrible burns.³⁰¹

Most reputable accounts have taken the view that Haile Selassie, deposed to make way for Mengistu, had been murdered. His remains were uncovered in 1992. He had been buried in a cement casket, beneath a kitchen and a bathroom, across from the window of Mengistu's office. Haile Selassie's remains were temporarily entombed in a crypt of the church of Bata Maryam, 'hidden among the olive trees'. Plans were made to make Haile Selassie's final burial place in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, on 23 July 1992, 100 years since his birth; however, the ceremony did not take place until November 2000.³⁰² Haile Selassie had been a patron of Bingham Academy in its earliest years and, despite conflicting interpretations of his reign, he would always be remembered appreciatively by many past teachers and staff.

³⁰⁰ Harold Jongeward. 'May- June 1991 Happenings'. Private Archive.

³⁰¹ Barry Hicks. *Have Scalpel – Will Travel!* pp.136-37.

³⁰² Angelo Del Boca. *The Negus: The Life and Death of the Last King of Kings*, pp. 26-27.

As the dangerous situation in 1991 escalated, many of the 150 students departed as their parents had been advised to leave the country. The staff managed to provide a smaller version of celebrations for the graduating students, including a breakfast at the Hilton Hotel. Those students would never forget the circumstances surrounding their graduation.

The diversity of students in the 1990s was a hallmark of the school. There were Americans, Australians, New Zealanders and British, as always, and Europeans such as Finnish and German; however, a growing number gave their nationality as Ethio-British, Ethio-Egyptian, Ethio-Bermudan, Indian, Malawian, Nigerian, etc.

Just before Harold Jongeward's last year at Bingham (1991–92), the director of the Norwegian School came to see him. Harold explained:

They had eight kids in 7th and 8th grade and they were struggling to provide a broad education for them. We discussed the situation and came up with the plan that the kids would come to Bingham for afternoon classes with our students. They would join in our extracurricular activities as well. The rough part was the Literature class three times a week. I was the teacher and gave the Norwegians as much leeway as possible, but still we proceeded with our regular curriculum. We even did our unit on Shakespeare. It was very hard for the kids since English was their second language. There were a few tears sometimes, but they worked hard. By the end of the year, I believe all agreed that it had been great for their English.³⁰³

Bingham had reason to be glad of their Ghanaian and other West African students, who were very athletic, including five children in the Atiase family. Sandford School (now Sandford International School) had started hosting a track meet for international schools. 'We started winning the track meet year after year,' Harold Jongeward said. 'Some schools were all boys or all girls and it was considered unfair for them. How could they win the trophy since it was for overall boys and girls? So they changed to having three cups: one for best for boys, one best for girls, and one for best overall.' Bingham won all three in 1992, during Harold's last year.³⁰⁴

On 11 September 1996, 'Regulations to Provide for the Establishment and Issuance of Licences to Community Schools and Schools run by Foreign Organisations' came into force. In 1997, the school obtained a Community School Licence through the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. The licence was given with the sponsorship of the Canadian Embassy, which meant that the Embassy had to regularly provide written support for applications from the

³⁰³ Email from Harold Jongeward 4 February 2017.

³⁰⁴ Email from Harold Jongeward 22 December 2016.

school to renew the licence. The most recent licence, issued by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Ministry of Education, is titled ‘Community School’s Provisional Licence’ enabling the school to operate from June 2015 to May 2018.

At the time of applying in 1997, the curriculum was described as ‘expanded Canadian’, catering for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. The student population comprised 41 Ethiopian and 151 foreign nationals, making a total of 192. The highest percentage, 25%, was American, followed by 21% Ethiopian. The complete list, of thirty nationalities, resembled a version of the United Nations, while the majority of the teachers were from the United States and Canada.³⁰⁵

Judy Neil was one of these. She and her husband Ray had served with a famine relief team under SIM in the Wollo province in 1974–75, and their two oldest children, Sharon and Alan, had been boarding students at Bingham. The Neils maintained their connections with SIM Ethiopia while back in Canada, where they worked with the Canadian Sunday School Mission. Judy also taught in the school on Pender Island where they were caretaking the Bible camp. As she was completing a university degree, she was impressed with the back page of an *SIM Now* magazine that proclaimed in bold letters: ‘SIM needs teachers’. By then the Neil children had all grown up, and Judy and Ray believed the Lord was leading them back to Ethiopia. Judy taught Social Studies, Maths, Home Economics, Music, and Grade 5 at Bingham until Harold Jongeward left at the end of 1992, after which she became principal. Ray took on responsibility in maintenance of the school property.

Judy’s successor, Pat Ring, had been a teacher for many years in the United States and answered God’s call to serve overseas. She went to Liberia in the 1970s, with SIM, at the Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) Academy and returned to Liberia with her family in 1989, as serving in Africa never left their hearts. The Rings went to Ethiopia with SIM in 1991, with Pat serving as a teacher at Bingham, and her husband Mike serving as the Project Manager for the construction of the International Evangelical Church and Evangelical Theological College (IEC/ETC).

After one year back in the U.S., Mike and Pat returned to Addis Ababa. Pat was the assistant principal and curriculum director during the 1996–97 school year; then the principal during the 1997–98 school year. She took on the difficult task of compiling a standards-based

³⁰⁵ Bingham Academy Archives. Documents relating to the school’s status as a Community School.

curriculum for an international staff, as all the teachers came with their own instructional methods and curricula from their home countries. Pat said in retrospect,

More professional development should have been provided in its roll-out. Knowing that we were sending students back to various countries, the new curriculum was written with the purpose of making transition to their home countries' educational systems easier. I synthesised the UK National Curriculum, the Australian Curriculum, the Canadian Curriculum and the curriculum from Connecticut (USA). At that time the US did not have a Core Curriculum used nationally. So I created a curriculum that incorporated the standards from these various areas that represented the core of our student body. It was an exciting time.³⁰⁶

Pat also introduced a Spiritual Life Emphasis Week, an event on the school calendar that has been continued by later administrators. Marshall Key, music teacher at Bingham Academy, had visited Rosslyn Academy in Nairobi and heard about what became known as Spiritual Emphasis Week (SEW) taking place at that school. 'Marshall believed this event, which would utilise extra time across one particular week for Bible teaching, could help promote the Lord as the centre of all we do at Bingham,' explained Brett Flippence, who organised the event in 2015 and 2016. 'Therefore one week was designated for this, starting in 2010, with interested staff visiting classes to share gospel messages. Rob Handicott remembers visiting and speaking at a middle school class. He took a booklet to hand out for those interested. The booklet was based on "Knowing, Growing and Showing I'm a Christian". Every student wanted one.'

It was decided the week should be close to the start of the school year, establishing a positive tone, showing that the spiritual life and foundation of the school and everything that occurred over the coming year was based on Jesus Christ and the Bible. The first invited speaker at this time was Greg Speck from the USA, whose engaging and humorous style was enjoyed by the students. SEW has expanded with the elementary, middle and high schools each having its own programme. Youth Night is always a highlight, with games, food, and activities, culminating in worship and Bible teaching. Over the years many students have made a commitment to follow Jesus, or found help in their faith.³⁰⁷

The yearbook was resurrected during Pat's year as principal. She was used to seeing the regular production of a yearbook at ELWA. According to the 2007–08 issue, the yearbook was revived when a student, Jeff Coleman, proposed a yearbook elective. Teachers Lorna

³⁰⁶ Email from Pat Ring 14 January 2017.

³⁰⁷ Details from Brett Flippence 6 February 2017.

Jacobson, Sharon Piruzza, Rob Reimer, and John and Trudy Rose worked with students on Friday afternoons to revive the publication. The first issue, in 1997–98, was given the title, *Stickin' Together*.

The traditions of the school were still in evidence: Langanu and Bishoftu retreats, swimming at the Ghion pool, field days, and memory verse groups. In Judy Neil's time as principal, a variety of field trips was introduced, including the northern tour for junior high students, an all-school day trip by train, visits to the sugar refinery, a game park, a pulp mill, a power plant, and a visit to the prime minister. 'Travel restrictions were eased during these years,' Judy explained, 'making it possible to allow students to see first-hand many of the interesting people and places in the country.'³⁰⁸

Many of the boys recalled their enjoyment of basketball. One of the big events in the 1998–99 year was the demolition of the old gym and the construction of the new one. When the yearbook (with its old title, *Beacon*, restored) went to print for the 1999–2000 year, the structure was nearing completion. During much of this era, the government did not permit new buildings to be erected in the compound; the gym was allowed because it was on the same site as the original one and was described as a 'renovation', not a new project. One exception to the ruling was the 'quadplex', a two-storey apartment block on the southeast corner of the compound, built in the early 1990s.

Teachers were accommodated in apartments around the campus. Bill and Elizabeth Broers lived in the upper floor apartment of Oromia, down the hill from the playing field. They lived there for nearly ten years; below them were the classrooms for Grades 1 and 2. While the fully occupied boarding house was now a thing of the past, another way of providing education for children on distant stations had become acceptable. This was the home school programme.

For years missionary parents and their adult offspring wrestled with the long-term effects of separation and deprivation. Many of them expressed their feelings in *Simroots*, including an anonymous contribution titled 'A Parent's Perspective'. The author wrote:

Whenever I look back to the day we left our children at boarding school and drove off to our assignment at another station, I am conscience-stricken. How could we possibly have done such a heartless, unfeeling thing? Like teenagers, I suppose, we bowed to the common practice of our peers.

³⁰⁸ Email from Judy Neil 9 January 2017.

As SIMers we assumed it must be the right thing to do; after all, everyone took or sent their kids to KA, BA, Hillcrest, or wherever. So if everyone does it and the kids all seem to be getting on quite well, it must be the acceptable thing to do. It certainly was the expected thing. That was made very clear, and if one opted to home school their children, as we ultimately did, one had to be prepared for the not-so-subtle remarks and the stares of disapproval.

Today on the field, home schooling is somewhat the norm, and I applaud it. If we had it to do all over again, would we go to the mission field? Definitely, yes. Would we send our kids to boarding school? Definitely, no. If we lived in Jos, or somewhere such as Nairobi, or Niamey, or any number of other places where the children could be “townies,” yes. Our kids came through the few years they had at boarding school relatively unscathed. And our daughter, with a real sense of calling, went back there to teach. Some of the staff and faculty in times past did not want to be there and had no calling to that work and no real heart for children. What a travesty.³⁰⁹

Bingham Academy introduced the home schooling option with a dedicated coordinator in the 1990s. The first coordinator was Wendy Creighton, whose parents had been with SIM Ethiopia when she was a child and she attended Bingham in 1972 and 1973, a boarding student for Grades 2 and 3. It was not a happy experience for her. Her parents decided to home school Wendy and her brother, using the Alberta Correspondence course for a year before they had to leave the country in 1974. Wendy explained:

At that time it was against Mission policy to home school, as it could take away from your ministry. I went through university and became a teacher with the intention of coming back to Ethiopia to teach and hopefully have more empathy than some of the teachers who had taught me.

I arrived in August of 1991. I thought I would be teaching Grade 2 but was asked to teach Grade 1. At that time there were not many home schoolers. I had a ‘home schooler’ attached to my class. I was to give enough work for the student to take down country and then evaluate the child on that work and give a report card. This child was never in my class and yet I was responsible for grading him. I found this very difficult as a grade one teacher as most of our learning experiences happened in class.

There was no internet and I was left to dig in an old cupboard to come up with workbooks that I was not even using in my class. I did not feel that we were providing any kind of education for this child. Harold Jongeward was principal and could see that the situation was not ideal and was open to options. I continued to teach Grade 1 for three years and then Bingham sent me to a course at SIL in Dallas on ‘Teaching In Non-Traditional Settings’ with the intention of coming back to set up a home school programme for the school. It was there that I was able to look at different curriculums and get advice from others in similar situations. The Sonlight curriculum was chosen because families could pass it on to others and there were not as many

³⁰⁹ *Simroots* 26.1, 2009, p. 6.

consumables involved. Families were responsible for providing their own resources.

The other aspects that Wendy wanted to include in the programme at Bingham were a home school library for parents to access resources; an opportunity for children to join in the classroom or sports days when they were in Addis Ababa; access to standardised tests; access to an itinerant teacher who would visit to teach specific projects or lessons, provide assessment, give advice or direction to parents regarding a child's learning (families were responsible for paying for or providing the transportation for the teacher); and a home school network for families. Over the years that have followed the start of the home school programme, all these objectives have been achieved.

Wendy continued,

It was a slow start as Bingham was short of teachers so I had to continue to fill in. I remember being very frustrated that I was covering 'Typing 10' when I should have been out supporting the home school families. The first year was tough as I felt that people didn't really understand what I did, so they assumed I was always available. I could be down country with a family for a week and take local transport back to Addis. I would have a few days to wash clothes and prepare for the next trip to the next family. There were times when I went to Bingham to copy things or get resources and someone would say, 'Wendy, you aren't doing anything—can you go cover that class?' Thankfully, my neighbour, a fellow teacher, was more aware of my schedule and advocated for me.

Wendy travelled by local bus to families in Dilla, Jimma, Shishenda, and Awano. The bus would leave her by the roadside, and the family picked her up from there. She caught rides with people to visit families in Soddo, Arba Minch, and Alduba, as well as another SIM station beyond Jinka. She flew to Dembi Dolo and south to Maki (with the Mursi tribe).

Visiting these families and getting to know their kids more than made up for the hassles I faced back in Addis. To this day—it's my favourite 'job' of all time. I was in the role for about two and a half years. . . . It wasn't an easy time for me as a young teacher but being involved with the home school families and feeling like I could in some way support them in their ministry was a highlight.³¹⁰

Patricia Rollins was another home school coordinator in the 1990s. She has recalled home school retreats at Babogaya, usually in May. She also visited families down country, and sometimes when they were in Addis, they came to her and she worked with them in the

³¹⁰ Email from Wendy Creighton-Awele 10 January 2017. At the time of writing about her experience as home school coordinator, Wendy was teaching at the International Community School in Addis Ababa.

resource centre. ‘They used materials from their own countries—the USA, Australia, the UK, and New Zealand,’ Patricia said. ‘Some of the students from non-USA countries used American materials (particularly Sonlight) and supplemented them; for example, the Germans and Koreans.’³¹¹ The home school room featured a large map, with pieces of coloured wool radiating out from Addis Ababa to all the locations where the home schoolers lived.

Pages in the yearbooks were allocated to Home School. In the 1997–98 issue the students wrote:

We are thirty-six home schooled students living in ten different places and our families are working with different missions. Yes, we love being home schooled – most of the time. We finish early and have lots of time to play outside in the beautiful countryside with our Ethiopian friends. But guess what! We also enjoy very much being part of Bingham’s classes. Thank you for being our friends when we are in your classes, thank you for being interested in our lives far away from the big city, and thank you for praying for us.³¹²

In the next yearbook, the group was described as coming from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Holland, Germany and England. They were home schooled in eleven different places in Ethiopia, and they acknowledged that there were always changes in their lives. ‘These happen when we visit Bingham, when we go on home assignment, or when friends leave our station.’³¹³ The big difference to the children on distant stations in the earlier decades was that they did not have to be separated from their parents and homes.

The Van Gorkom family started home schooling in 1994 while living at Alduba, an SIM station in southwest Ethiopia, and continued until 2002 when they moved to Addis Ababa. The children then attended Bingham as day students. Vicki Van Gorkom remembered a variety of materials when they started home schooling, so she was pleased when Sonlight became the standard curriculum. The Van Gorkoms’ home schooling experience was a happy one. They were able to carry on when home on furloughs, ‘doing school’ as they drove around the U.S. In 2000 they were in forty-two of the fifty states.

‘With all four of our kids,’ Vicki explained, ‘we used the kindergarten programme from Bingham, taught by Fran Eager. That was a great start for them all! Then we started using

³¹¹ Email from Patricia Rollins 10 January 2017.

³¹² *Stickin’ Together* p. 26.

³¹³ *Bingham Academy 1998-99*, p. 21.

Sonlight in Grade 1. We loved the read-alouds from Sonlight; even today they're some of our children's favourite books. Bingham Library was very cooperative about home school families checking out boxes of books and returning them as we were able.³¹⁴

The lapsed Amharic programme was reintroduced at Bingham in the 1990s, pioneered by Barbara Entz, a veteran SIM worker. Wondimu Haile taught it for several years and then Mehary Stafford took over. Ato Mehari Tadesse was listed as the Amharic teacher in the 1998–99 and 1999–2000 yearbooks. This continues to be an important component of the Bingham curriculum, as it is the language of the host country, Ethiopia. The number of Ethiopian students steadily increased in the 1990s, and there was also the presence on campus of a growing national support staff to take into consideration. Amharic was a two-year course for the older students, with the first year being solely oral, second year *Fidel* (written).

'I always thought there should have been more of an emphasis on teaching kids Amharic,' observed Jonathan Ring, a student during the 1990s. 'They can learn it so easily and are in school every day. It would have been really cool to have all the SIM kids fluent in Amharic.'³¹⁵ In 2017 elementary students in Grades 1 to 6 were learning the language.

Some of the expatriate staff also undertook to learn Amharic, but time for language study was limited, and they were kept busy with their own classes. 'During that era,' Wendy Creighton recalled, 'it seemed we were always short of teachers or getting people in to cover who were not teachers. There were always short termers coming and going. However, we also had a good group of young singles who socialised together, supported each other, travelled together, and celebrated birthdays, engagements, answers to prayer, and strange ailments. We were good friends and many of us continue to be until this day.'³¹⁶

Bingham Academy was still in business as the new millennium began. 'At the time we left in 1992,' Harold Jongeward asserted, 'we were fairly confident that the school would continue. The Communist time was past. Missionary numbers were increasing . . .'³¹⁷ The school has been obliged to defer to political tensions of the time; for example, it was closed for two or three days in 2005 due to elections. David Hicks, Director then, was away in Tanzania and Brad Adams was responsible for the closure.

³¹⁴ Email from Vicki Van Gorkom 13 January 2017.

³¹⁵ Email from Jonathan Ring 14 January 2017.

³¹⁶ Email from Wendy Creighton-Awele 10 January 2017.

³¹⁷ Email from Harold Jongeward 22 December 2016.

Elizabeth (Ricker) Kabernick's 6th grade class buried a time capsule, a metal box, down by the tennis courts. Unlike the school the contents did not survive. When the box was dug up in the 2001–02 school year, it was a soggy mess. Another one was buried in 2007, to mark the new millennium according to the Ethiopian calendar. It is under a slab of cement near the small room called Awash, opposite the gymnasium.

CHAPTER 11

'THERE WOULD BE NO BINGHAM ACADEMY WITHOUT THEM'

The yearbook of 2001–2002 is lovingly dedicated to the Ethiopian staff at Bingham Academy for putting so much effort into making Bingham a better place for us.

The dedication continued: 'Whether it's working in the kitchen, fixing things around the school, or cleaning up after us, they have done this school a huge service, and we appreciate them greatly. Some of the staff have been here for at least twenty years and have done an excellent job in keeping our school in top condition.'

Some of the earliest students at the school already had strong familial ties with the Ethiopian people, because they knew them from an early age on mission stations. Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black lived with her family 'down country' at the Bobitcho mission station in the Hadiya area of Ethiopia, outside of Hosanna Town. She wrote in her memoir:

As the years passed, I became more Ethiopian than American. My rhythm was the rhythm of Ethiopia. Rainy seasons found me drinking in the sound of water on the tin roof and slopping through mud puddles in my galoshes. Dry seasons found me with the Ethiopian children out in the fields. Everyone knew me; everyone loved me. I was one of them.³¹⁸

Many staff members have also made close friendships with the Ethiopian people, and in a few cases they have married into Ethiopian families and adopted Ethiopian children. Over the years, relationships with the national staff were not always harmonious, but many of those who worked closely with them, like Judy Neil's husband, Ray, got on well with the *zebenyas* (guards) and maintenance workers with whom he had daily contact. Correspondents have remembered many of them fondly: Lemma Bekele, Ato Girma, Dawit Endrias, Ghion Mekonnen, Tihete, Sophie Mulu, and Mehary Stafford. 'There are many, many more,' said Pat Ring. 'They are incredibly great people. There would be no Bingham Academy without them all.'³¹⁹

Students in the earlier years of Bingham's life sometimes seemed to take the presence of the stalwart workers rather for granted. The Ethiopian staff were 'a backdrop I ignored as I lived out my days at the school,' wrote Tim Bascom in *Chameleon Days*, for whom they were

³¹⁸ 'Strengthened Through Hardship: Growing Up in Ethiopia' *Simroots* 31.1, 2014, pp.6-8.

³¹⁹ Email from Pat Ring 14 January 2017.

usually just reduced to their roles—clothes washer, guard, driver, grass cutter.³²⁰ Other students, making return visits to the school after many years, were impressed to see that some of the national staff was still working there. Duane Ediger, a student in 1970, was ‘shocked’ that three of the same cooks were still on staff in 2005.³²¹

One of those cooks would have been Ato Girma, who retired at the end of that year. He worked at Bingham Academy for fifty-two years, and although he said that many people would come and go at the school and he found it hard to remember them all, he could recall how he started working at Bingham Academy. At the age of sixteen, he was delivering milk to the School for Missionaries’ Children in Kachene, sometimes on foot, sometimes by horse-drawn *garry*. He got to know Graham Hay who said, ‘I have a job for you!’

Ato Girma arrived at the new school in Kolfe when it was all forest and there was no fence. He gradually learnt his culinary skills from successive directors’ wives: he could remember Mildred Hay and Frances Wallace in particular. ‘It was very hard work,’ he said. ‘I had to bake everything and have the wood stoves prepared. We would get a truck load of wood for 100 birr. We used charcoal too.’

Ato Girma’s wife also worked at the school, washing clothes for the staff and boarders. Ato Girma said that the children of missionaries were very respectful, and he liked cooking their favourite foods, including roasted meats and cinnamon rolls. After his retirement, Ato Girma never returned to the school, but he worked for twelve more years as a cook at the Korean Hospital. In 2017, he was living quietly with his family, within walking distance of the school. He was crippled with arthritis and confined to a wheelchair.³²²

Murray Overton, who started work as the school’s director in 2006–7, made special mention of the support staff in the yearbook, which was titled *Bingham Bir’tat* that year. ‘There are many things that they do that help our school to run smoothly,’ he wrote, ‘and we greatly appreciate their assistance and hard work.’ During his time working with Murray, Ezra Kifle, Resource and Relations Manager, played an important role in improving national staff morale and conditions at Bingham.

Murray has been remembered for his special rapport with the Ethiopian staff. ‘Murray was an exceptional and compassionate person,’ explained Zewdu Kifle, who started teaching

³²⁰ Tim Bascom, p.156.

³²¹ ‘News Updates’. *Simroots* 22.1 2005, p.18.

³²² Interview with Ato Girma 14 February 2017.

Amharic at the school in 2000. ‘His door was opened always and he was the one willing to bring changes, especially for Ethiopian staff. He was the one who has tried to narrow the difference and treatment of expat and Ethiopian staff.’³²³

Murray wrote:

We loved our time in Ethiopia. To have the opportunity to lead an international school that went from pre-KG to the end of High School was a tremendous opportunity. The mix of teaching and support staff, amazing students and families and the wonderful Ethiopian staff was the most incredible combination. In particular Jacqui [Murray’s wife] and I loved the opportunity to get to know and work with the Ethiopian staff of around eighty. Knowing them and their families, and doing what we could to recognise and value their contribution to the overall mission and running of the school were high priorities.³²⁴

The night guards, in their heavy coats, each one plodding around with a *dula* (staff) in hand, deserve special mention. Lemma Bekele, head guard in 2017 and nearing retirement after thirty years at the school, said the nights were long, hard and cold.³²⁵ The guards’ presence has always been necessary. When David Hicks was Director (2001–05), razor wire was added to the top of the stone walls surrounding the compound. He also recommended that the guards carry tasers, as he knew Al Qaeda insurgents were once present on site.³²⁶

Doug Kopp, who attended the school in the 1960s and early 1970s, could remember that the first chapel was also used by Ethiopian believers. Reflecting on their presence, he wrote:

Gospel outreach to the neighbouring Ethiopians was embedded in the Bingham mandate from the very beginning. But the white boys and girls standing in their Sunday afternoon lines rarely thought about the Amharic congregation that filled the chapel on Sunday mornings. If we did, it was to mention the ‘Ethie service.’³²⁷

Some missionary families had a close association with the wider congregation. The Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2004. *Simroots* reported that the Harding family (whose children attended Bingham) were among those rejoicing: ‘One reason their hearts are so full of joy and gladness is that between Bill’s Mom and Dad, Joe and Kay,

³²³ Email from Zewdu Kifle 10 January 2017.

³²⁴ Murray Overton. ‘Thoughts on our time at Bingham Academy’, 18 February 2017.

³²⁵ Discussion with Lemma Bekele 15 January 2017.

³²⁶ Email from David Hicks 9 February 2017.

³²⁷ Doug Koop. ‘Remembering My Stint as a Loyal Ambassador for Christ’. *Simroots* 31.2, 2014, pp. 7-8.

and Bill and Grace, they have invested a combined eighty years of service in Ethiopia with the EKHC.³²⁸

In 2001, SIM signed an agreement with the Kolfe KHC granting it an additional triangular-shaped piece of Bingham Academy land on which to construct a new building. The church agreed to ensure that the facility would be ‘sound sealed’ with three panes of glass on the eastern side of the structure facing the school. Although the church agreed to minimise the noise level, this has been an ongoing concern for compound residents living in close proximity to the church, as its services are long and loud, extending beyond Sundays.³²⁹

The national workers at Bingham Academy have their own chapel on campus, where they meet for worship on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Some of them are elders in their own churches and are respected for their powerful preaching. A very spiritual people, the Ethiopians have been known to pray and fast in supplication for staff needed year by year at the school. Zeritu Endiro, head cook in 2017, started work here in 2007 when Ato Mekbib, friend and neighbour of Ato Girma, was in charge of the kitchen. Zeritu said she loved her work in a Christian environment among fellow believers. She had eight staff working in the kitchen.³³⁰

It is hard to imagine Bingham Academy operating efficiently without the national staff, which numbered about thirty in 2001–02, including Amharic teachers, a computer assistant and an office manager. In 2016–17 the number had increased to more than ninety workers, employed in many ways, including administration, property maintenance, gardening and information technology assistance. The expatriates on campus are accustomed to the reassuring presence of the guards, who patrol day and night, around the boundaries that are now protected by high walls, topped with razor wire and, in places, broken glass embedded in the cement.

Most of the staff benefit from the service provided by *seratenyas* (home helpers), who clean the apartments, wash clothes, shop for groceries and cook meals. These women receive a very modest wage, between 15 and 20 birr an hour (in 2016–17), and it has only been in recent years that they have been permitted to use the toilets in the apartments rather than traipse some distance (depending on where they are working) to the facilities designated for

³²⁸ *Simroots* 21.2, 2004, p. 2.

³²⁹ Bingham Academy Archives. Agreement between SIM and KKHC, 7 March 2001.

³³⁰ Interview with Zeritu Endiro, 1 March 2017.

their use. It is perhaps hard to reconcile with the Christian ethos of the school that they are searched at the gate before they leave the compound (obliged to carry a note to say that some items that they carry were gifts from their employer) and that they receive no severance pay.

Some of the *seratenyas* become very attached to the compound residents for whom they work. They are very hospitable and invite them to their homes to celebrate their special events, like New Year and Christmas, using the money they have been paid for the holiday to provide a traditional feast for their guests.

Etanish was first hired by the Wallace family when she was a teenager and Roy Wallace was principal. The Wallaces lived in the only stand-alone house ('the principal's house') down from the classrooms later occupied by 1st and 2nd grades. Etanish had always been well thought of for her sweet disposition, total trustworthiness, honesty and her skills in the kitchen, so if work was available, she usually was at the top of the list for setting up in a home to work. 'My mom was the school nurse the 1969–70 schoolyear there at Bingham when the school was at its height with boarding students,' remembered Beth Long. 'We lived in the lower left apartment of the "new dorm" building, the building beside the parking lot with the two ramps leading to the upstairs. Etanish worked for us there.'

Etanish continued to work for the Stilwell family over many years. She was also married by this time and having babies, so often she would work with a baby on her back. At one time Etanish was pregnant and very ill with a combination of typhoid and typhus. The good ending to the story was the birth of her daughter, Meseret, who became another faithful Bingham worker. Etanish was acknowledged with the presentation of a bunch of flowers when she reluctantly retired from Bingham in 2015. She has continued to work for Dan and Beth Long, who value her greatly.

She has worked for more people than she or I can count or remember because of the nature of the turnover at Bingham, but she has always been a favourite of many. I think we forget that we missionaries are not the only ones who go through frequent transitions but our dear Ethiopian staff do as well as they see people come and go.³³¹

Seratenyas are considered to be personal workers rather than Bingham Academy staff and are not entitled to the benefits enjoyed by other staff members. During a regular staff member's time at Bingham a portion of his or her pay is placed into a provident or pension fund. Employees retire at the age of sixty-five and do receive some severance pay apart from their

³³¹ Email from Beth Long 3 February 2017.

provident fund. Employees who have worked more than five years are given a small gold necklace as a gift for their service when they retire or resign.

David Hicks paid a tribute shared by many expatriate staff:

I loved the national staff. I grew up in Ethiopia and never really understood the divide between missionaries and nationals. When we first arrived at Bingham this divide was wide and well settled. But these men and women were just wonderful to serve with. We laughed together, ate together, prayed together. Not as missionary and national but as family.

I still remember the day that one of the old gardeners came into my office. He was in his 60s and had little English; he was at the bottom of the rung professionally. Our family had him over for meals and he had had us to his place. After bowing to me as the Director he removed his hat and asked if he could speak as a Christian elder rather than a gardener. He then took me to task for the way I had treated another worker that morning. He said I was correct in what I said but wrong in my tone. He made me come and apologise to the other worker; he made me pray with him. He then returned me to my office, put his hat back on, called me *Gashey* [a respectful term for an older man] and left. So much to love and appreciate.³³²

³³² Email from David Hicks 9 February 2017.

CHAPTER 12 'CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LIFE'

*Our international qualifications are recognised by the world's best universities and employers, giving students a wide range of options in their education and career. As a not-for-profit organisation, we devote our resources to delivering high-quality educational programmes that can unlock learners' potential. Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.*³³³

The national staff members were witnesses to the major changes that occurred at Bingham Academy, starting in July 2000, when the school became an inter-mission school. While SIM still retained its 'Owner' mission status, several others joined as Sustaining Missions: Assemblies of God World Mission, the International Mission Board (or the Baptist Mission of Ethiopia) and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. In 2008 the Norwegian Lutheran Mission also joined.

The other major change was in curriculum. As far back as the 1970s, there had been complaints that the school did not seem to cater as well as it should for non-U.S. students. At the time [see Chapter 5], Dave Pitman and Don Ricker pointed out that the student body was 66% North American (44% American, 22% Canadian), 12% Australian, 6% British with 16% from other countries. Bingham Academy, they asserted, had always done its best to meet the needs of all its students by adjusting curriculum. The school's student profile had changed a lot since then.

Transitions rarely happen smoothly, and the early years of the 21st century were stressful at Bingham Academy. School administrators were increasingly concerned with the need for the students to be ahead academically when they returned to their home countries for further education. They would have many adjustments to make; if they had an edge scholastically, then they started with at least one advantage. Gradually decisions were made to change the BA curriculum, primarily to meet the needs of students intending to pursue further study at

³³³ <http://www.cie.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/> accessed 10 February 2017.

university level in a variety of countries. The Cambridge International Examinations Curriculum was chosen.³³⁴

David Hicks was the Director who implemented the new system.

The decision was made after discussion and evaluation of many options by the school board. I had a voice but no vote. It was also by the Mission after a meeting I spoke at. After the presentation I had no voice and no vote except to answer questions. At various meetings both teachers and parents agreed with the move—these decisions had no official weight and were more to get a sense of what people thought.

On the other hand, I did push for this as the best way to meet our aims as an international school where all kids could go back to their home countries and succeed. I prepared and sold it. I answered the questions from research and so for many, it was my decision. I accept that and own it. It was the best course for the school. I believed it then, and still believe it.³³⁵

Bingham Academy's instructional programme is based on the Cambridge Primary, Cambridge Secondary 1 and 2 (includes International General Certificate of Secondary Education or IGCSE) and Cambridge Advanced (includes AS and A levels). Students in Grades 5 and 8 sit for Checkpoint examinations; students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 take the Cambridge International Examinations. The first IGCSE exams were sat by students in 2003. AS and A Level courses were added in subsequent years to the High School. After the successful implementation of Cambridge courses in the High School, Cambridge Primary was added during the 2007–8 school year and Cambridge Checkpoint the following year. The student outcomes and assessment provided by these programmes form the basis of BA's curriculum, standards and measures of student progress.

Students are assessed externally at different grade levels against the overall CIE outcomes and compared with other international students. In-school assessments prescribed by CIE are called progressions tests and data is uploaded to CIE for tracking. These results are used by the school for analysis, specifically to identify areas of strength and weakness. At specific grade levels students sit externally assessed tests. These occur at grade 5, grade 8 and then grade 10, 11 and 12. These tests/examinations are marked externally by CIE and results returned to the school with analysis and markers' comments for the school to review and analyse. After analysis teachers make adjustments to their teaching.

The BA curriculum, following the CIE syllabi, is primarily designed for students intending to pursue further study at university level in a variety of countries, and is one of the major reasons the academically rigorous CIE

³³⁴ Bingham Academy Self Study Report for ACSI / MSA Accreditation 2011, p. 21.

³³⁵ Email from David Hicks 9 February 2017.

curriculum was chosen, being one of the most widely recognised and accepted curriculums available for university entrance around the world.³³⁶

David Hicks faced opposition from some quarters, and reactions to the syllabus change were mixed. One parent, Gary Ifft, wrote about his displeasure in a memoir, *I'm Just An Illinois Farm Boy: My Missionary Journey*. During his son Sam's Grade 8 year, 'a new school director arrived at Bingham Academy, David Hicks from Australia. At a meeting of high school parents he announced that the following year BA was going to switch to the British IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) system.'

Gary claimed that when 9th grade began to unfold under the new British system, 'we found ourselves totally unprepared for its effect on Sam. Our son, who had always gotten As and Bs, was now getting Cs and praying to avoid the Ds. . . . All aspects of school felt unfamiliar to him . . . parents started pulling their kids out of Bingham and enrolling them in other schools . . .' Sam went to Rift Valley Academy.³³⁷

David's father, Barry Hicks, taught French at the school during the era. He remembered that one mother was antagonistic and accused David of nepotism in appointing Barry. She did not like her sons being assessed with a British marking system instead of getting all high As or Bs.³³⁸ 'I don't know what advantage there was to me as I was paying my own way!' Barry said. 'In the Grade 10 Cambridge exams, in both years I was there, 50%+ of the kids got A or A+. I think that they were bright kids rather than that reflecting my teaching ability!'³³⁹

Reactions to the syllabus change were mixed. Johanna Madany, a student at the school between 1998 and 2005, wrote: 'I was part of the first class to switch over to the IGCSEs and the AS levels. I personally loved them and they made the transition to American college extremely easy.'³⁴⁰ Some simply did not like the emphasis on external examinations to which the syllabus was geared, arguing that such a restrictive system did not encourage 'true learning'.

Joan Smith, who had started teaching in the primary school in 1997, admired the way in which David Hicks forged ahead, determined that the school was moving in the right

³³⁶ 'Bingham Academy: Midterm Accreditation Report for ACSI Global and MSA', March 2016, p. 12.

³³⁷ Gary Ifft. pp.177-78.

³³⁸ Barry Hicks. *Have Scalpel – Will Travel*, p.175.

³³⁹ Email from Barry Hicks 2 February 2017.

³⁴⁰ Email from Johanna Madany 17 January 2017.

direction.³⁴¹ Brad Adams, who started teaching at the school in 2003 for a couple of years and returned in 2009, could remember David—with one personal assistant and one financial administrator—working very long hours in the office.³⁴² He was directing, recruiting, teaching, and making changes apart from the introduction of Grades 8–12. In his years as Director, new classrooms were built, some were modified to residences, and car parks became classrooms. He supervised the building of the bleachers for the sporting field and had it levelled. The older students took Moore Theological College (Sydney) exams for their Bible subject. Another project was the workers’ chapel.

In March 2006, before Murray Overton took over as Director, a meeting was called by the Bingham Academy Board to discuss curriculum and recruitment issues. Dick Ackley, then SIM Regional Director in South Central USA, and an educator who had once attended Bingham as a student, was in a delegation that came to the school to discuss issues. ‘I interviewed some teachers,’ Dick recalled, ‘and the general opinion was, “If you’re a good teacher, you’re a good teacher regardless of the curriculum.”’ One of the issues I remember discussing was that there were more and more SIM MKs who were choosing Rift Valley Academy (RVA) over Bingham. The meetings were very meaningful, congenial, and I believe helpful.’³⁴³

For some time students from Bingham Academy had been finishing their education at RVA after Grade 8 at Bingham. Hannele Secchia (née Gutt), a student in the 1980s, said that the mission kids often flew together to RVA for the next round of schooling, while her non-mission friends went to Sandford or ICS in Addis Ababa.³⁴⁴

Gradually the school community made the adjustments, although voices of dissent were still heard for several years. Brad Adams, who became Director in 2013, said that it has only been during the last few years (up to 2017) that the Cambridge system has gained acceptance by staff and students. ‘I would say the final acceptance of CIE at BA occurred in Murray’s time, especially through the efforts of Jenn Sims, who was a maths teacher and guidance counsellor who loved teaching Cambridge. Having an American teacher espouse the benefits of Cambridge, I think, turned the tide.’ Brad acknowledged that not all students are the

³⁴¹ Interview with Joan Smith 24 January 2017.

³⁴² Discussion with Brad Adams 9 February 2017.

³⁴³ Email from Dick Ackley 25 January 2017.

³⁴⁴ Interview with Hannele Secchia 12 January 2017.

‘academics’ for which CIE is ideally suited; however, the common, objective benchmark of the curriculum is the right one for an international school.³⁴⁵

Bingham Academy is certainly an international school, with an enrolment in the 2016–17 academic year of 327 students. Many Ethiopian students studying at the school are Ethiopian by ethnicity, but hold passports from other, largely Western countries. In the following years many Diaspora Ethiopians returning to their home country have chosen to place their children at Bingham.

The school has made a policy of welcoming students outside of the mission community and ‘to accept students from families that seek to have a long term kingdom impact in the country and then to reach out to strategic urban families in Addis Ababa’.³⁴⁶ The legal requirements of the Ethiopian government at the time of writing this book still do not allow the school to accept Ethiopian nationals holding an Ethiopian passport, except in cases where the Ethiopian Ministry of Education grants an exemption.

The School now uses a ‘Carver Policy Governance’ model, introduced when David Hicks was Director. This draws a clear line between governance, which is the responsibility of the Bingham Academy Board, and management, which is the responsibility of the school administration. There are ten voting members on the Board: six from SIM and four other seats held by the Sustaining Missions who distribute the seats by mutual agreement; although usually each of the four Sustaining Missions has its own appointee. There were also three non-voting board members (the Director, a parent representative and a staff representative); however, the role of staff representative was removed in 2016, so now only the Director and parent representative remain as non-voting participants in Board meetings. The Board oversees the Director in his role of pursuing the Board’s policies. The Director has an administrative team that manages various aspects of the school.³⁴⁷

One of the greatest challenges facing Bingham Academy is the need, as always, to ensure a long-term committed staff and to stabilise staff turnover. Teacher burnout has been a very real threat. Despite his anxieties as Director, David Hicks said that he loved the staff.

When I started we had trouble keeping teachers, some left early and most finished their term and then left. The only ones who stayed were the long-term

³⁴⁵ Interview with Brad Adams 25 January 2017; email 26 March 2017.

³⁴⁶ ‘Bingham Academy: Midterm Accreditation Report...’ *op. cit.* pp. 2-3.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 4. Jason Polk, Chairman of the Board in 2017, explained that some slight alterations have been made to the details in the Accreditation Report.

staff (mainly administration) who set the direction and tone. But the teachers we got we believed were sent by God; so many different people (personality, age and nationality). Loving these people as God's gifts meant finding ways to work with them and for them. They became friends, confidants, brothers, sisters . . . they became family. Even the ones I didn't really like. They stayed, they returned, they extended their terms. We had fun.³⁴⁸

There have been regular calls for staff advertised in *Simroots* and other potential sources of staff. In 2013 this advertisement appeared on the *Simroots* Bulletin Board:

The Academy provides furnished, rent-free housing, paid utilities, access to school vehicles, internet and email, language classes, and medical clinic services. Join our school with students from over 35 nationalities and teaching staff from all around the world. Our vision is to provide quality Christian education, within a multicultural community, developing students of integrity who can change the world for God's glory . . .³⁴⁹

There was much ahead, including accreditation with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The process commenced in 2009 and the school was granted accreditation in 2011. It also achieved accreditation with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. 'ACSI and MSA accreditation provide a set of standards by which the school is compared against (and to improve towards),' explained Brad Adams.

Tertiary institutions in the USA more easily accept students from accredited schools; while teachers from accredited schools are recognised for their teaching due to accreditation. Generally other parts of the world do not recognise the accreditation standards as they are USA specific.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Email from David Hicks 9 February 2017.

³⁴⁹ *Simroots* 30.1, 2013, p. 16.

³⁵⁰ Email from Brad Adams 26 March 2017.

CHAPTER 13 'A WHOLE NEW ATMOSPHERE ON CAMPUS'³⁵¹

Never give up and be strong. It has been a fantastic year. God bless you all!

This was the exhortation from the 2007–8 yearbook staff on the dedication page of the *Beacon*. Murray Overton had settled in as Director, although he admitted that coming in after a year of interim leadership for the Director and Secondary Principal roles was challenging. Judy Neil, retiring Elementary Principal, helped him and shared her knowledge.

Murray recalled,

Within a week of arriving in Addis Ababa, the BA Board interviewed me for the Director position and appointed me to it. Our intention was to be at BA for a year but we were open to staying longer. The one year term ended up being a six year term. . . . For the first year several of the teachers—Cathy Michler, Barbara Borsley, Theresa Edwards and Erica Carson—generously gave of their time and expertise to form a leadership team supporting me as I aimed to fill the roles of Director, High School Principal and Elementary Principal. For the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 school years Cathy and Barbara took on the High School Principal and Elementary Principal roles respectively. Following this time Brad Adams and Malcolm Pirie arrived to work in those roles. I was very fortunate to have great assistance and support from all of those I worked with in the leadership team.³⁵²

The 2007–8 yearbook was dedicated to the Big Bingham tortoise, with a message from *Aesop's Fable*: 'Slow but steady wins the race.' Successive generations of students have become familiar with the large creatures lumbering around the compound, with vague stories of one being brought from Langano, another from Babogaya. They sometimes get their stubby 'feet' caught in the soccer nets on the playing field, and one was nearly buried alive when repairs were being made on the western wall in 2016.

Dan Long, Director in 1999–2000, wrote about the tortoises for *Simroots*:

Bullet the tortoise is our new Bingham pet. He weighs in somewhere around one hundred pounds, and estimates on his age range from 80 to 100 years old. Don and Mary Ricker sent me a message about Bingham's past history with tortoises. Some thirty years ago, Don got fed up with the then resident tortoise after it demolished his lettuce patch just one too many times. According to Mary, he heaved the big fellow over the wall and thought his worries were

³⁵¹ Dick Ackley. 'Return to Ethiopia and Bingham Academy'. *Simroots* 23.1, 2006, p. 3.

³⁵² Murray Overton. 'Thoughts on Our Time at Bingham Academy', 18 February 2017. Stewart Rowe was elementary principal from August to December 2009, before Malcolm Pirie took over.

over. Unfortunately for Don, although not the tortoise, one of the zebanyas was seen wheelbarrowing the big beast back in the gate on the next day.³⁵³

Like many of the national staff, the tortoises have been around for a long time, and the school's history may be likened to their determined resolve to get from one place to the next, with occasional impediments. In 2004 Bullet the Tortoise was found dead in the school grounds. Fred Van Gorkam (a veterinarian who had worked down country) was asked by Wayne Kelly, science teacher at the time, to dissect Bullet in front of a class. 'Fred was eager and though it took some time to break through the shell, for the next two hours students were mesmerised as Fred talked through the inner workings of tortoises. Bullet's shell was polished and has been kept in the Science laboratory ever since.'³⁵⁴

Dissecting the life of the school in the most recent years has revealed that some things have stayed the same, but much has changed. The sporting endeavours have continued with enthusiasm. In February 2016 Bingham Academy hosted the inaugural International Christian Schools of Africa (ICSA) basketball tournament, played at Varsity (U19) level. Students from schools in Burundi, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda participated. Bingham won the boys' competition and came second in the girls'. In 2017, teams travelled to the Heritage International School in Uganda to compete in the next tournament; both teams were placed second.

The field days, held over two days early in second semester, are eagerly anticipated. The compound takes on a carnival atmosphere as the community comes together to enjoy the track and field events and to meet friends and family. In the 1990s, the school houses were the Lions, Leopards, Panthers and Cheetahs. In 2007 the Bingham sports teams became known collectively as the Lions. There are three houses: Carey, represented by the colour yellow, the Gondar Cross and the Abyssinian Roller bird as its mascot; Scott, which has the colour green, the Lalibela Cross and Menelik's Bushbuck; and Taylor, in red, with the emblematic Axum Cross and the Ethiopian Wolf. Taylor was victorious at the 2016–17 field days, for the first time in many years.

Home school students come from far and wide, some by plane from remote places in Ethiopia, to attend the field days. The ultimate goal of the Home School programme,

³⁵³ Dan Long. 'Bingham Memories'. *Simroots* 17.2, 2000, p. 14.

³⁵⁴ Email from Brad Adams 6 March 2017.

according to the 2004–5 yearbook, is ‘to assist SIM, Sustaining and Sister Missions’ parents in meeting the educational needs of their children outside of the traditional school setting.’³⁵⁵

Jennifer Fehl was the home school coordinator at Bingham for three years between 2011 and 2014, and she made the following observations in 2017:

We, as a home school family, were a part of the Bingham programme for fourteen years. We lived in a rural village and it took us two days to drive in or out of our station. We felt very remote, so Bingham’s programme allowed our kids to interact with other kids when we came to Addis, as well as have interaction with other adults and teachers. Being able to supplement our schooling with library books and other resources was also a huge benefit.

It worked well for our family. It’s the one thing that remained consistent and constant for our kids through eighteen years . . . whether we were in the village, in Addis, on home assignment, etc. When we joined the home school programme, it was very active under the leadership of Patricia Rollins. When she left, the programme declined as a new coordinator took on the role, but only stayed a year at a time. This was too much turnover and did not allow for programme growth or momentum.

I volunteered to take on the role part-time, while teaching my four kids at home, to communicate to the school and community that this was a needed and wanted programme for home school families. The programme grew from around twenty-five families to forty-five families during the three years I was leading. I brought back the home school retreat, started a Wednesday lunch/educational session in the hopes of developing it to an official co-op programme through the school (but that never happened), monthly fellowship times/activities for families, increased the communication to families, and started weekly prayer for families among Bingham staff and HS families.

I think most of the community and many teachers at BA are in support of the HS programme. However, there are (and always will be) some teachers, administration, and community members who look down on home schooling and don’t think it’s as ‘good’ an option as attending a full-time school. I disagree with this opinion. I think that encouragement, testing, accountability, conferences, etc. should be available for home school families as these are needed and beneficial for the mothers who are teaching and the students. Part of my role as coordinator was to be an advocate for these families and to educate BA staff on the needs/situations of home school families and the benefits of home school learning. More administrative support would be needed to further grow the programme from where it is today.³⁵⁶

It could be argued that the home school programme is one of the key services that Bingham Academy, which started as a school for missionaries’ children, still provides for Christian

³⁵⁵ *Beacon* p. 43.

³⁵⁶ Email from Jennifer Fehl 25 January 2017.

families in various Ethiopian locations. Instead of the children leaving home and attending the school as boarders, Bingham goes to them and enables their parents to continue their ministry. Advanced technology has made this distance education possible. Andrew Steggall-Lewis took over from Jennifer in 2014 and has maintained her programme of home school conferences, social gatherings and retreats. Home School children attend ‘regular’ school on campus for a few days at a time and join in class activities.

Having access to the home school’s library is a bonus for the home school children. The Graham Hay Memorial Library has also grown considerably since its earliest years, during which Mary Ricker was a much loved librarian. It was moved from the ‘horse barn’ building (now the Hub) to the mezzanine floor of the gym building in July–August 2003. Marat Seifu (an assistant librarian) and Muriel Teusink (librarian) did most of the work of shifting the books to the new location, which was supposed to be temporary. However, the library stayed in that place for twelve years before being moved to its current location by the sports field, an undertaking completed in five days in June 2015 with the assistance of many people. Sherri Ardill was responsible for the library from 2000 to 2002; Muriel Teusink from 2002 to 2014; and Gretchen Heaton from 2014 to the present.³⁵⁷

Some students were library assistants, which was their school club activity. Others were computer lab or audio-visual assistants, while others joined the worship team. A Friday afternoon electives programme was put in place for a while, with students choosing sports, cooking, calligraphy, Ping-Pong, radio building, woodworking, art or the creating of stained glass windows. Clubs more recently have included debating, dancing, rock climbing, music and language clubs. Annual fun days include Crazy Hats, Twins, Beach Party and Crazy Hair. ‘Learning Comes Alive’ Week is a special time when staff and students in the elementary school dress up as characters from their favourite books.

Graduating students enjoy trips to other countries; the first one to Tanzania in 2005 was organised by David Hicks. These have become an annual tradition with students visiting such places as Thailand, Turkey, Spain and Zanzibar. The senior geography class travelled to the Seychelles, an archipelago off the coast of East Africa, in 2015. ‘We were blessed to stay on the main island, Mahé, also known as paradise,’ reported one of the participants for the yearbook. ‘You might be surprised to hear that the geography class actually had a lot to do, from hiking in the National Park, examining the nature reserves to snorkelling in the sea,

³⁵⁷ Email from Muriel Teusink 13 December 2016.

studying the condition of the coral reefs.³⁵⁸ During the following year, thirty students were able to go on a history trip to European cities, tracing significant sites relevant to the study of Nazi Germany, including a visit to Auschwitz.³⁵⁹

Students in their final year at the school look forward to their graduation ceremony in June. They wear academic caps and gowns for a formal procession, after which they receive diplomas and Bibles. In 2015–16, twenty-three students graduated—a record number. One student each year receives the Sylvia Hicks Award for Academic Excellence. They then disperse, mostly to universities all around the world, while some choose to take a ‘gap’ year.

Many have already sent ‘Common Application’ essays to their preferred universities, explaining their interesting background and hoping to obtain places. Lillian Tsegaye, a student finishing at Bingham in 2017 after twelve years at the school, was born and raised in the U.S. for four years before returning to Ethiopia. Frequently she has had to explain to others when she visits the U.S. that Africa, and in particular, Ethiopia, is a diverse continent in which the spirit, culture and the dynamics of daily life are far more substantial than the GDP and poverty figures indicate.

In her ‘Common Application’ essay she wrote:

A street boy to whom I had been teaching English once said to me: ‘For a *ferenji* (foreigner) you are very Ethiopian.’ His cheeky observation was a signal that I was welcome into his world. I am not the typical Ethiopian and yet our differences brought us together because of our blood. Our socio-economic classes, as different as they were, became a bridge for us to share our skills from English to soccer, instead of a barrier. In many ways my life is that chance remark, a foreigner in a land that I call home and identify with, yet not entirely mine. I have a funny accent. I am not good at soccer. I do not come from the countryside. How could I create such an unfeigned relationship with a country and its people? Ethiopia is not just a nation, it’s a home in which its people are a community that connect far more than poverty figures portray. I smile back at him. ‘Yes, I am very Ethiopian,’ I reply. ‘And I always will be.’³⁶⁰

One of Lillian’s classmates, Wihib Daniel, wrote:

For years, living in Addis Ababa within the fence of family, friends and school, has made me unaware of what life is like for those who do not share the same privileges I do. Then two years ago, a friend of mine named

³⁵⁸ *Beacon* 2014-15.

³⁵⁹ Dan Long: revision of school history 23 April 2017. Seppo Lahdeahdo took a group of students to an international track meet in Cairo, ca 1999-2000.

³⁶⁰ Reprinted with permission from Lillian Tsegaye.

Lydia left Ethiopia to go to Saudi Arabia as a maid in a wealthy home. She was only eighteen. Three months after leaving, she returned with the skin on her entire back peeled; her employer had spilled boiling water on her as reparation for breaking the coffee grinding machine.

Lydia had been recruited by brokers who convinced her parents that the money earned from working in a wealthy home was the pathway to changing the lives of her poor family. Wihib discovered that such experiences were common among such girls. Some of her country cousins fill their days working in the kitchen, herding the cattle, or taking care of younger siblings.

Education has no vital role in their lives. Their friends who go to local schools mostly give up on education after eighth grade with the idea that it holds no future for them. I feel obligated to ensure that my chance at a good education in an international school does not go to waste. I cannot blind myself to these girls' situation. I must fight to use whatever success comes my way in education to demonstrate an alternative: that education can indeed offer a brighter future for Ethiopian girls. This is my responsibility.³⁶¹

These serious responses reflect the maturity of the students and also the encouragement given by the school to go beyond its gate and engage with the community. Middle and high school students in recent years have participated in outreach programmes to help them appreciate the 'real' lives of Ethiopians. The Activities Week has grade groups travelling to different parts of the country to participate in community service and retreats, usually alongside mission organisations.

The focus is to have students engage with Ethiopians they would not normally communicate with and to expand the students' knowledge of issues in the community. Students have been involved in working with street boys, blind students, youth groups, soil conservation projects, self-help groups, orphanages and wildlife conservation organisations to name a few. The students look forward to these activities and return to the school with changed perspectives on Ethiopia and themselves.³⁶²

In 2005, for example, Dr Barry Hicks, who was fitting in some surgical work around his teaching at Bingham, took a group of students to the hospital in Nazareth (or Adama, south of Addis Ababa). 'The hospital in Adama was disgusting,' Barry said. 'The group worked with several of the school staff to paint the operating area, clean the grounds, and install several pieces of equipment in the wash up area outside the operating rooms. It was good for the kids

³⁶¹ Reprinted with permission from Wihib Daniel.

³⁶² 'Bingham Academy: Midterm Accreditation Report for ACSI Global and MSA', March 2016, p. 10.

and much appreciated by the hospital.’³⁶³ In 2017, the Year 12 students engaged with the Addis Ababa branch of ‘Retrak’, an organisation dedicated ‘to a world where no child is forced to live on the street’.³⁶⁴

Mindi Aleme, the school’s Community Engagement Coordinator in 2016–17, explained:

We hope that each trip builds upon the last to slowly broaden the students’ understanding of the diverse community in which they live, the complexities of the challenges these communities face, as well as the inherent strengths of the people and resources in each. By the final year of high school, we want each student to have developed a deep sense of respect for those they serve and a deeper sense of appreciation for Christ as the ultimate servant leader.³⁶⁵

The school has limited scope to offer specialised instructional programmes given the staff turnover each year, but it does have a Learning Support Programme which offers help to students with learning difficulties. The school also offers English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Language Learner (ELL) support for students identified with ESL/ELL needs. The school also has an informal partnership with the UK-based Anchor team of educational specialists that offers assessment, learning support guidance and teacher and family support for students with learning difficulties. The Anchor team visits annually to assess students.

The campus has been enhanced by the Gowans Center, the new school building completed in 2014–15, and the new teacher apartment block in the southeast corner of the campus. The old apartments are spacious and comfortable, but a complete redevelopment of the existing school site is envisaged for students of the future.

In June/July 2015 the playing field was levelled. It was just under two metres higher on one side than the other, with an interesting dip in one corner. ‘We were able to get parents to donate machinery, equipment and expertise to level off the top of the field and then to lower the field,’ explained Brad Adams, the Director that year.

This included bulldozing the top soil through the entrance gate in the bleachers. A consultant company redressed the field with a layer of red ash, chicken manure and a layer of soil. A team of labourers then proceeded to plant individual grass runners across the field. As this was watered during the

³⁶³ Email from Barry Hicks 2 February 2017.

³⁶⁴ <https://www.retrak.org/> accessed 1 February 2017.

³⁶⁵ Email from Mindi Aleme 1 February 2017.

rainy season and over the next few months, the grass grew to be a generous grass covering across the whole field.³⁶⁶

The school regularly turns away over one hundred applicants each year as many parents want to access quality Christian education for their children. Bingham has a strict and fair policy for admissions that involves keeping to enrolment priorities. Despite the presence of a large parent body, efforts to realise Lila Balisky's hopes of the 1980s have not happened. She wished for increased parent involvement at Bingham Academy. Brad Adams hoped to see a Parents' Association put in place, but the idea has needed that elusive 'someone' to be the driving force.

The Director hosts a parent forum each term. This is an opportunity for parents to hear from the Director and ask any questions they may have or raise issues they may have. The school administration has encouraged the parents at the forums to consider starting a parent association, but there has generally not been sufficient interest for this to get established. Currently a number of parents are beginning to establish a Parent Association, but it remains a low profile group at the moment.³⁶⁷

The old days have passed and with them some of the aspirations of those who have worked hard to establish Bingham Academy. As Dick Ackley observed, 'a whole new atmosphere exists on campus'. His four and a half years at the school in its earlier form were difficult, but he maintained that they had shaped his character and given him a passion to love and serve MKs.³⁶⁸ Similar comments have been made repeatedly by past students.

³⁶⁶ Email from Brad Adams 9 March 2017.

³⁶⁷ 'Bingham Academy: Midterm Accreditation Report...' op. cit. p. 12.

³⁶⁸ Dick Ackley. op.cit.

CHAPTER 14

'BINGHAM ACADEMY IS A SPECIAL PLACE'

*As we celebrated the Reunion/Homecoming this December it was a great moment to reflect on how God was able to impact the lives of the students and the families connected to the school. We have inherited a special school and community for the short time we are here and I pray that God will continue to use the staff, parents and students of our school community to encourage each other in our understanding of God, and in looking at how we can impact the world with God's grace both now and in the future wherever in the world that may be.*³⁶⁹

The Homecoming at the school was held in December 2014. Like all reunions, it was an opportunity for staff and students from all over the world to reconnect. A similar event was planned for December 2016 to celebrate the school's 70th anniversary; however, a couple of months earlier the government declared a six-month State of Emergency following prolonged, violent anti-government protests. Protests began in the central Oromo region before spreading to Amhara in the north. Human rights groups claimed that at least 500 people had been killed. This upheaval followed reports of serious food shortages after Ethiopia suffered its worst drought in decades.³⁷⁰

The school has weathered many political storms, but it is finding it increasingly difficult to obtain government approval of work permits for its teachers. Most recently (in 2016) the administrative staff was advised that, as from the start of the next academic year, visas will not be issued to those over sixty. This decision means that several teachers who have worked at the school for a considerable time will not be permitted to return, including Rob Handicott, Stafford and Rae Cowling. Their combined experience, dedication and stabilising influence will be missed at the school.

Many other teachers will also leave at the end of the 2016–17 year, including the Director, Brad Adams. He and his wife Krisha have invested a lot in the school and regard it as a special place and a home where they have raised their family. In announcing his resignation, Brad said that he had worked with many teachers 'who embody what a previous Headmaster of mine would say about education, "that the heart of education is the education of the heart"'.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Brad Adams. 'Director's Message'. Chapter title and quote. Yearbook, *Uproar* 2014-15.

³⁷⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13351397> accessed 30 January 2017.

³⁷¹ Brad Adams. 'To the School Community'. 7 December 2016.

Jason Polk, chairman of the Bingham Academy Board, responded:

The Board wants to say thank you to Brad and Krisha for their faithful service to Bingham Academy over their ten years at the school. They have filled many roles during their time here, and have grown to occupy a special place in our hearts. We know they will continue to labour with all their love, energy, and dedication until their final day of service, and will leave Bingham Academy in the strongest condition possible for moving into the future.³⁷²

Brad made the following comments about the situation:

Staffing of the school, as in the previous years, continues to be an issue that the Bingham leadership, the Bingham Board and the Owner and Sustaining missions wrestle with. The appeal of the mission and vision of the school continue to attract a range of teachers, but every year there seems to be gaps in the teaching staff team. This calls for flexibility in the staff as they take on extra roles in the school; necessitates team work amongst staff as they cover for each other when sickness occurs or when professional development opportunities arise; and requires an understanding and love of the students they serve in the school.

Recently a stipend was discussed as many other Christian schools in Africa and Europe have adopted this model. However, this was not adopted and the school continues to attempt to attract missional Christian teachers through messages and advertisements on its up to date website, through partner missions (of whom there are many), and through staff and school family networks.³⁷³

Many and various advertisements for teachers at Bingham make similar claims to the one that was published in *Simroots* in 2010:

The rich diversity in experience, background, and culture among our staff is vital to the accomplishment of our vision. Teaching at Bingham is more than just a job; our teachers are called to the mission field. Our staff are committed to loving God, professional excellence, working and living cross-culturally, and have a passion for embracing a life lived to the fullest for God's glory.³⁷⁴

It is not only Brad Adams, but also associates in the wider school community, who contend that mission service as a teacher in a third world country is not incompatible with a base salary. The school is in a healthy financial position, it has slowly but inevitably grown beyond its original charter, and its student population includes the families of those associated with a diverse international population. The school is an educational facility of first choice for many parents whose presence in Addis Ababa is explained by their work with the African Union (AU), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA),

³⁷² Email from Jason Polk to Bingham Academy Staff 9 December 2017.

³⁷³ Statement from Brad Adams 15 April 2017.

³⁷⁴ *Simroots* 2.27, 2010, p. 12.

several regional headquarters for other agencies of the United Nations, over eighty embassies, and numerous non-governmental organisations and international corporations.

The professional excellence of the school's teachers and its uncompromising Christian standards have never been in doubt. Perhaps the time has come to ensure long-term staff commitment by offering a stipend. This would immediately relieve the burden of their having to raise support. Support levels are set by the mission organisation, not by Bingham Academy, so they vary widely between individuals. Raising the necessary money is also increasingly difficult given the many demands on Christians' resources and the fact that teachers are no longer seeking financial assistance to work at a needy under-resourced school catering fairly exclusively for the children of missionaries. Bingham Academy offers quality Christian education and has an excellent reputation. It may be appropriate to ensure its future with changes to the way it attracts and retains its teaching staff.

Recent directors at the school have been aware of how the school has continued to evolve. Murray Overton said:

Working in a multi-mission international setting is not without its cross-cultural misunderstandings. The unique demands of BA were/are not always understood by others on the field. A mission that has around 340 students, 20+ home school families, 120 staff, at least 2–300 parents and operates an international curriculum sending students to multiple passport countries when they graduate and is governed by an owner mission and sister missions and has staff turnover of sometimes up to 35–40 % each year is very, very challenging. And that doesn't describe all the dynamics! In the time we were at BA there was never a break where something from the school didn't need attending to and our longest home assignment in New Zealand over the six years was about six weeks.

I believe strongly in the ministry of schools like BA. I also believe that in order for BA to thrive into the future the delineation and expectations of SIM as the owner mission need to be fully discussed and resolved. To provide high quality education you need qualified, committed staff who also believe in, and are committed to the school's ministry. You have to be able to recruit internationally and get staff there in a timely manner. Looking at the international direction of Christian education and using the resources of organisations like ACSI are crucial components in accessing the school based knowledge and expertise needed for this vital ministry.³⁷⁵

During his years as Director, David Hicks was frustrated by the financial expectations he felt were placed upon the school by SIM.

³⁷⁵ Murray Overton. 'Thoughts on Our Time at Bingham Academy'. 18 February 2017.

My responsibilities included making the school inter-mission (not just SIM) and this meant removing a percentage of SIM's income and using the money for upgrading the school. This did not go down well and upset many. I lost my voice in various arenas and some people stopped talking to me or my family. Some of the parents of children were high up in the Missions. After some disciplining of children for bad behaviour I had parents walk out of church if I was speaking or if I attended.

The compensation for David was his love for the children, although he was strict about truancy and defiance.

I loved being able to pray with kids. I loved having coffee with the grade 10–12 students. I loved school trips. I loved watching them exceed their expectations (and mine). I loved the interactions between grades. Laughing through joys and crying through pain. Watching kids cope with hell at home and yet seeing them grow into wonderful resilient adults. I loved the environment for my kids. They are better people.³⁷⁶

Jason Polk, chairman of the Bingham Academy Board in 2017, spoke on behalf of its members when asked what concerns have created friction in the smooth functioning of the school:

As with any organisation, Bingham Academy has its tension points. Despite its relatively small size, Bingham is a complex organisation with numerous levels of governance and organisational authority that must interact regularly to keep the school running well (the school is owned by SIM, governed by a multi-mission Board, and run by the school Director—all of whom have significant investment and strong opinions about the best path for the school).

Add to this the often uncertain legal and regulatory environment in which Bingham functions, and there are numerous opportunities for challenge. Some of the issues in the recent past which have required significant debate would be: 1) external pressures to change the school's government registration; 2) finding the best model for recruiting and retaining teachers; 3) clarifying lines of communication and authority between SIM, the Board, and the school's Director; 4) how best to maintain the school's core commitment to educating the children of missionaries while also serving the wider community; and 5) appropriate methods and levels of fundraising for the redevelopment of a rapidly aging campus.

It could be said that most of these issues are those that sit at a high level within the organisation. It has not primarily been the internal administrative or operational details, but rather the larger issues of strategy and overall organisational/governance structure which have produced tension.

Leaders at all levels would agree that the school's strong Christian identity and its unique community are its strengths. The school administration has been working during the past

³⁷⁶ Email from David Hicks 9 February 2017.

couple of years to more fully integrate a Christian worldview into the larger curriculum. While there is always room for improvement, the Board has been encouraged with the progress. ‘Our recent evaluation by ACSI, the school’s accrediting body,’ the Board stated, ‘was very positive on the gains made in Christian identity and worldview integration throughout the school.’

The Board also believes that one of Bingham Academy’s greatest strengths is the society which it helps create.

As with any school which serves the international expatriate community, many of the school’s teachers, students, and parents live at a distance from their extended family and countries/cultures of origin. As a result, many people look to Bingham Academy as a centering point for their social, emotional, and even spiritual lives. The people making up Bingham Academy genuinely care for one another, and give deeply of themselves to serve the larger community. Serving at Bingham Academy is not simply a job, but a calling, and it shows in the passion and generosity with which people approach their work and ministry at the school.³⁷⁷

Among the many considerations for the school’s future is the fact that the indigenous Protestant churches, including the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC), founded by SIM, are fast approaching the stage in their development when they will be wholly autonomous. They still appreciate financial support for certain projects and the contribution of missionary educators to the higher levels of theological training for its leaders; but the churches have now taken over many ministries started and formerly run by missionaries. They are already sending out missionaries of their own. As international missions encourage this desirable viability and independence of the national church, their presence will decrease and the need for a school for missionary children may diminish. Perhaps the time will come when Bingham Academy is an international school independent of mission ownership.

Regardless of the ultimate shape of the school, its leaders have always had to expect much from their staff, who are kept exceptionally busy, with a full Faculty Calendar to refer to each day. The administration has scheduled weekly meetings and regular professional development sessions. Teachers have the opportunity to attend professional development (PD) training, courses and conferences at overseas locations, with a maximum annual allowance of US\$1800. Each full-time teacher is also allowed four ‘personal’ days a year, to be used for a variety of reasons, including business and recreation.

³⁷⁷ Jason Polk. Statement of the Bingham Academy Board. 14 February 2017.

Despite these and other attractive incentives, staffing has always been the biggest challenge.

Murray Overton explained:

The school has a unique mission in that it requires able, trained staff capable of delivering an international curriculum through a biblical lens. BA has to run in a way that ensures it is open for the proper number of days and the curriculum is delivered to a high standard. Obviously the spiritual and emotional welfare of the students is a key to this too and there are many staff who work many hours to do the very best they can for the students. Our goal was always to find staff who loved being with the students and saw their work at BA as their primary ministry, recognising its importance in supporting missionaries on the field and also the opportunity presented through providing high quality Christian education for all the students who were part of the school.³⁷⁸

Teachers of yesteryear would find all the current amenities and concessions very generous, compared to the heavy loads they carried and the limited leave they were granted. They would be amazed at the use of technology, with most expatriate and national staff referring frequently to their ‘smart’ phones and most daily communication in the community done by email: endless requests, reprimands, reminders and trivia. Yet many of these ‘old’ teachers have maintained an interest in the school and are concerned for its welfare.

These predecessors experienced similar stresses and sadnesses, happy occasions and lasting friendships. ‘As far as conflicts with others, I don’t remember anything beyond differences of opinion that happen between independent minded missionaries!’ observed Harold Jongeward.³⁷⁹ ‘Every year there are different dynamics in the compound community,’ said Andrew Steggall-Lewis in 2016.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Murray Overton op.cit.

³⁷⁹ Email from Harold Jongeward 22 December 2016.

³⁸⁰ Conversation with Andrew Steggall-Lewis. Start of Semester 1, 2016.

*'We love Bingham and pray daily for its staff, students, and outreach.'*³⁸²

Pat Ring, who wrote these words, was principal in 1997–98. In the yearbook she said that 'wonderful memories flood my mind as I think of the year.'³⁸³ Murray Overton has described Bingham Academy as an amazing place that has had the input of many wonderful people.

While I might be the one people saw as leading the school it would not have been possible without the amazing support, encouragement and hard work of my wife, Jacqui, in all the roles that she undertook to keep things ticking over behind the scenes. As a family we look back at **OUR** time at the school with grateful hearts and special memories for all that we learned and were part of.³⁸⁴

The principals, directors and station managers throughout the school's history have valued the help of their wives, who were also working hard to keep the school functioning at all levels. The couples included Arthur and Lorna Rashleigh, Birdell and Lois Emmel, Dave and Winnie Pitman, Lloyd and Muriel Stinson, Dan and Kimberly Scheel, Dick and Norma Spahr, Bill and Elizabeth Broers, and Malcolm and Liz McGregor.

Harold Jongeward and his wife Becky, after years of service beyond Bingham Academy—including SIM HQ in Addis Ababa for a few years—have been living at the SIM Retirement Village in Sebring, Florida. Harold, who has provided many details for his era at Bingham Academy, said that reading the chapters brought back some memories that he had entirely forgotten about.³⁸⁵ Many past students have the best memories of him. Les Groce remembers how Harold taught his 6th grade Bible class and impressed upon them the importance of the advice in Proverbs for a young man to find wisdom. That teaching has stayed with Les and guided his Christian life.

Les also remembered Harold's artificial eye. Harold explained:

Every year as part of our Bishoftu retreat for 7th & 8th grade, I would tell the kids the story of how I lost my eye and how God used it to keep me from being drafted into the military and thus not having to go fight in Vietnam. I told the kids what to expect, then when I took it out I let them pass my eye

³⁸¹ Jason Polk. Statement of the Bingham Academy Board 14 February 2017.

³⁸² Email from Pat Ring 14 January 2017.

³⁸³ *Stickin' Together* p. 25.

³⁸⁴ Murray Overton. 'Thoughts on Our Time at Bingham Academy'. 18 February 2017.

³⁸⁵ Comment from Harold Jongeward 5 February 2017.

around and look closely at it. I also let any who wished look up close at what it looked like without my eye. Then I'd wash my eye off and put it back in. It seemed to be quite an experience for the kids. It was fun doing it for them.³⁸⁶

Don and Mary Ricker celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2014. Don and his family are held in high esteem at Bingham where they were involved in many major changes and the playing field is called the Ricker Field. Judy Neil's daughter Sharon has often said that the only maths teacher who ever helped her to understand the subject was Don Ricker. She always appreciated him.³⁸⁷ In January 2017 Don's daughter, Elizabeth Kabernick, wrote to say that 'unfortunately, my father now is in the latter stages of severe dementia.'³⁸⁸ Don died on 13 April 2017, and a memorial service was held on the school playing field that is named after him.

Roy and Frances Wallace did not quite make it to their 50th wedding anniversary. Frances died in London, Ontario, in her own home surrounded by her children. Roy paid special tribute to his wife in a book, *Shaping a Saint: A Brief History of the Life of Frances Kerr Wallace*. In 2017, Roy was very involved with PanAfric Academy, Hawassa, Ethiopia. Apart from detailed answers to questions about the school, he has provided many snippets such as this one: 'I remember clearly the day the cattle designated for slaughter got loose and the car was stolen. . . . Mr Heeley [station head] and I tracked down the missing BA vehicle . . .'³⁸⁹

Mildred (Hay) Ladd died on 18 October, 2006 in Northbrook, Illinois, at the Covenant Village. In 2017 her daughter Helen Jones was working in Malawi with Emmanuel International Malawi, an affiliate of Emmanuel International. Her husband Paul, its Country Director, started Emmanuel International's work in Malawi in January 1987. The couple works with churches and communities in improving livelihoods and food security for the rural poor in Malawi. Helen's brother Jim Hay, in 2017, was teaching literature to students at Yorba Linda High School in Yorba Linda, California.³⁹⁰

Evadena Alberda Farmer, the first teacher at the SMC with the Hays, wrote to the editor of *Simroots* in 2008:

Thank you for sending *Simroots* to me. I enjoyed reading it. The only person's name I recognized was Howard Brant. He was a little boy, four years old,

³⁸⁶ Email from Harold Jongeward 30 January 2017.

³⁸⁷ Email from Judy Neil 11 January 2017.

³⁸⁸ Email from Elizabeth Kabernick 16 January 2017.

³⁸⁹ Email from Roy Wallace 3 March 2017.

³⁹⁰ Email from Helen Jones 4 February 2017.

when Charlotte Northey and I were in the city of Addis Ababa. I wish I could turn time backwards and live the days again. However, my song is now, ‘This World is not my home . . . and I don’t feel at home in this world any more. . . .’ Thank you again for the news of Ethiopia. I pray our God will bless you and your families with you. And of course Bingham Academy. I will soon be 93 years old. I think I went to Ethiopia when I was 32 years old. It’s a beautiful country—almost as beautiful as Montana. [Evadena died in 2011.]³⁹¹

The diminutive Mary MacDonald was a proud passenger in a plane piloted by a past student, Dennis Hoekstra, who was an MAF pilot for many years. When she retired in Toronto, Canada, Mary worked with the Mrs. G Ministries—Bible stories on tape and CD, with accompanying books, particularly for children of all ages. Recently the ministry started translation into Amharic. Mary died on 19 July, 1979.³⁹²

There are many more past teachers who are very interested in the ongoing life of the school. They would all applaud one daily ritual that a more recent family, the Farrells (Tom was one of the secondary principals) enjoyed: morning tea, an English tradition of long standing. ‘Every day we are on campus we head to the teachers’ tea time at 10.25. We get to have tea [or coffee] with all our teacher friends and eat homemade snacks every morning. Seriously this is a tradition that should be embraced everywhere!’³⁹³ A main meal is also provided for teachers at lunch time.

Another advantage that the school enjoys is a doctor in residence. Phil Griffin, an SIM member, works here on a voluntary basis. His base is SIM HQ, and he provides medical care for all SIM ex-patriates and their families, all SIM Ethiopian employees at HQ, Bingham Academy and the Press compound and their spouses and children up to the age of 25. ‘In total I think that’s around 800 to 1000 people.’³⁹⁴

In years gone by, the school had relied heavily on its resident nurses. Deborah (Goss) Turner remembered them with gratitude.

Thanks, too, to our hard-working nurses, Mrs. Davidson and Mrs. Meed. They were always there night or day, if we were sick. I remember one night being terribly ill. Mrs. Davidson was there at all hours of the night to take my pulse or cool me down with a damp cloth. Mrs. Meed gave me a bed in the infirmary in the middle of the night and never showed the least concern that I’d woken her up.

³⁹¹ *Simroots* 25.2, 2008, p. 17. Death notice: 28.2, 2011, p. 30.

³⁹² Email from Eleanor Thompson, 24 May 2017.

³⁹³ http://thefarrellfamilyinafrica.blogspot.com/2014_10_01_archive.html accessed 30 January 2017.

³⁹⁴ Email from Phil Griffin 30 January 2017.

I'm an Emergency Medical Technician and know that it's not easy to pull oneself out of bed at O Dark Thirty. Thanks to both of them for their dedication. As I have grown older, I have been able to see the hard work put into being staff to over 200 kids. It wasn't an easy job. I want to say how much I appreciate what you all did. We took for granted much of what you gave, and our thanks were sparing. Thank you.³⁹⁵

It would be interesting to know what the 'old' teachers would make of the 'new' students who arrive at school by taxis, vans and chauffeured cars. On any given day there could be as many as seventy-five vehicles making their way in or out of the car parks. The observers could only feel bemused at the excuses students have for being late, recorded on late slips: traffic jam, the driver came late, car broke down, got out of the house late, didn't hear the bell, went to the bathroom, no good reason . . . Today's students are all wired for sound and social media with iPhones, iPads, and iPods. They do not wear a uniform, like their predecessors, although they have a sports uniform.

Bible teaching is an integral part of every day, but gone are the days of intense memorization. Doug Koop wrote:

In the 1960s, Bingham Academy was a God-fearing hothouse. Our indoctrination wasn't just a Sunday thing by any means. Student spiritual formation was a top priority, and we all got more than a full dose of religious instruction. In addition to Bible verse memorization group gatherings first thing every weekday morning, classroom sessions also began with a devotional time. Later in the day we'd have a Bible class, which provided a more systematic study of Scripture. And always there was prayer. Prayer permeated every routine, from early morning to early bedtime and at every gathering in between.³⁹⁶

Students subjected to the rigorous learning of Bible verses have expressed mixed feelings. Alice Miller, one of the first students, said her best recollections are of memorizing the Bible verses. 'I could accomplish that with no trouble. The rest I would like to forget.'³⁹⁷ Dodie Forsberg agreed. 'Scripture memory was a good part, too, though not everyone was glad for it in later years. One of my brothers complained that it ran through his brain like a cassette!'³⁹⁸ Judy Neil's son, Alan, had very negative memories of Bingham for some time, 'especially coloured by the time he was spanked for not learning his memory verses. He visited Bingham

³⁹⁵ Deborah (Goss) Turner. *Simroots* 19.1, 2002, p. 12.

³⁹⁶ Doug Koop. 'Remembering My Stint as a Loyal Ambassador for Christ'. *Simroots* 31.2, 2014, pp. 7-8.

³⁹⁷ Email from Alice Miller 10 September 2016.

³⁹⁸ Dodi Forsberg. 'My Bingham Experience'. *Simroots* 27.2, 2010, p. 4.

at Christmas 1996 while we were there and his attitude was quite changed when he saw how different things were by then.³⁹⁹

Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black wrote:

Another joy at boarding school was the Bible memory programme. Each week we were assigned passages (not verses, but passages) to memorize. In the central hall was a large chart with the name of each student. As we recited our verses, a beautiful shiny star appeared by our name. At the end of the school year, first, second, and third prizes were awarded to those who had earned them. These prizes were coveted by me—an opportunity to swim in the swimming pool of the royal family, a campout in the woods, a trip to an Ethiopian restaurant. Although I worked hard for the prizes, I was gaining a better prize of which I was not aware. The Holy Scriptures were being planted in my mind and heart, and from these plantings would sprout a solid foundation for the trials to come.⁴⁰⁰

Past students looking back have been appreciative of many people at the school, just as adult offspring are often more grateful to their parents than when they were teenagers. ‘Thank you for the opportunity to say, “Thank you”, many years later to those who had so much to do with our little lives,’ wrote Julene (Hodges) Schroeder.

I want to especially mention my dorm mothers, Mrs. Rashleigh and Mrs. Freeman: You were the ones who first cared for me when I was a frightened little newcomer to Bingham. I often think of our two dorms, filled with no fewer than about thirty girls, that you looked after day and night, seemingly without a break. At the same time you were having your own babies. I don’t know how you did it, but thank you very much. Auntie Val Neuman and Auntie Martha Epp: I always remember you both as being soft-spoken and kind. Because of you, our dorm life was peaceful, which was a real blessing.

Thank you, Mrs. Meed: You were my dorm mother my last year at Bingham. You were more like a sister and a friend than a dorm mother, and I always loved you. Thank you. Auntie Helen Schmidt: Thank you, above all, for loving us, for putting yourself in our shoes and understanding how we must have felt as kids away from parents. The times when you were my dorm mom stand out in my memory as heaven-on-earth, and of all my caregivers, I feel like you had the biggest effect my life. I love and thank you so much!⁴⁰¹

Others have humorous memories. Mimi (Rogers) Reznicek wrote:

Sixth grade was also the first year that I had Mr. Wallace for a French teacher. I’d say he was the most feared at the time, but is much respected today. I’ll

³⁹⁹ Email from Judy Neil 12 January 2017.

⁴⁰⁰ Becky Lynn (Lapsley) Black. ‘Strengthened through Hardship: Growing Up in Ethiopia’ *Simroots* 31.1, 2014, pp.6-8.

⁴⁰¹ Julene (Hodges) Schroeder. *Simroots* 19.1, 2002, p. 10.

never forget the time he tried to teach us girls how to sit like ladies and kept us after school when we failed! I guess that's just one of the many responsibilities required by boarding school teachers who are caring for girls growing up without mothers around to train them!⁴⁰²

Minna Kayser, who suffered terrible abuse at the school, could write positively in later years.

As I look back on my days at Bingham, I see the place as neutral and the people as a dynamic influence that flavours my life. I have both good and bad memories from that era. For years I was unable to pull my focus away from the bad memories. Today, as a result of the Lord's working in my life, I find joy in discovering the gems that were planted in my life by some special staff members. I wish to thank them all for the sacrifices they made for us and for their dedicated service. God has used them to mould me and make me who I am today.

I remember the day the ceiling fell in on us in Miss Wollman's class. We were all busy writing a test. As usual I was having difficulty keeping my focus on what I was supposed to be doing. I was watching the ceiling as a wet spot formed and got bigger and bigger. When it began to bulge, I knew someone was going to have a desk full of mud. Sure enough, halfway through the test, a section of the ceiling fell in and landed two desks up from me. What I remember most about this incident was the way Miss Wollman handled the situation. She was calm and matter-of-fact and quickly took control. My admiration and respect for her grew that day. I decided then and there that I wanted to be able to handle life with that kind of calm dignity and control. Thank you, Miss Wollman, for being real and for pouring your heart into us.⁴⁰³

Simroots records the whereabouts of many Bingham Academy students. It is remarkable how many have gone on to missionary service after the school years. Their parents went beyond the gates or boundaries of home to live in another land and sent their children to a school in Addis Ababa. The children longed to be back inside the fence of the family home with the gate securely fastened, yet often followed in their parents' footsteps later.

Students of 2017 have also expressed a desire to serve as missionaries; to go beyond the gate of Bingham Academy to minister. One Grade 12 girl has lived in Ethiopia since she was five years old. Before she met children at a school in rural Ethiopia, she was very bitter and unhappy about having to receive an education in Ethiopia.

I had no thought in coming back to the mission field after graduating high school. But through this experience, I saw that there are many children who do not have a chance to learn. With this in mind, I decided that after graduating college, when I am fully equipped with skills and knowledge, I

⁴⁰² Mimi (Rogers) Reznicek *Simroots* 19.1, 2002, p. 10.

⁴⁰³ Minna Kayser. *Simroots* 19.1, 2002, p. 6

will go out to countries like Ethiopia and help those children who do not have opportunities, by aiding them in health and in their relationships with Jesus.⁴⁰⁴

Although there are many challenges ahead, the Bingham Academy Board is hopeful for the future.

Our focus for the upcoming couple of years will be the leadership transition of the school, but we hope to use this time to also continue refining our vision for the school's future. If we can successfully navigate and meet the challenges, Bingham Academy will be well positioned for an enduring mission and legacy into the future. Bringing definition and clarity to any issues is the task before us, and one for which we trust God will continue to guide us.⁴⁰⁵

Brad Adams expressed his thoughts on the school's history, past, present and future:

Christ has been central to the lives of staff at the school and core to the mission of the school. God has been faithful in providing resources, personnel and protection when the school community has been vulnerable. The spirit of God has been seen moving in the lives of students and staff at [Bingham] and after Bingham to raise up some amazing alumni, serving God and impacting their area of commitment. The story of Bingham is the story of God's faithfulness to a small school in the heart of Addis Ababa. God is good.

The school is currently in an incredible position. The demand for quality Christian education in the expatriate community is high; the school could potentially double in enrolment overnight. Parents and students are devoted to the school. Staff members are staying longer and are committed to the vision of the school. The school's educational and extra-curricular programmes continue to grow and develop. Graduating students are regularly being accepted into Ivy League colleges in the USA.

The future years are crucial for setting the vision and making the best of the opportunities that are before the school. The window of opportunity to reach many people will not last long. With financial support to improve the old and fading school infrastructure and buildings and with key staff, the possibilities are amazing: to continue to serve the mission community; to support the booming church in the country; and to reach and disciple the expatriate and diaspora community in Addis Ababa and in other urban areas. It is an exciting time to be a part of Bingham Academy. Readers of this book are invited to connect with the school through the website, pray for the school and anticipate the next seventy years.⁴⁰⁶

The welfare of its young charges is the school's priority. Today's students will have their own memories to talk about in years to come. Perhaps they will remember the huge hail storm in the first semester of 2016–17, which caused extensive damage to the Gowans Center

⁴⁰⁴ Name withheld on request. 'Common Application'. 1 February 2017.

⁴⁰⁵ Jason Polk. Statement of the Bingham Academy Board 14 February 2017. This statement about the school's future was endorsed by Trent Cox, SIM Ethiopia, Country Director, email 10 March 2017.

⁴⁰⁶ Statement from Brad Adams 15 April 2017.

and the collapse of part of the big wall on the northwest corner of the campus. Perhaps they will remember the other students they saw every day in Vertical Tutor Groups, designed to strengthen the relationship across grades and provide leadership opportunities for older students. Many will have vivid memories of excellent musical productions, including *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat* that was performed in front of a combined audience of over 1000 people in December 2015. Equally memorable was the whole school singing the *Hallelujah Chorus* the following year.

Inside the gate at Bingham Academy there is a pleasant compound of well-spaced buildings, tall trees, flower beds, and *tukuls* (small, round, mud and straw huts): a mix of old and new surrounded by a high wall with razor wire and shards of glass that shuts out the world. There used to be a wire mesh gate, on which a clear sign was attached: ‘Bingham Academy. Sudan Interior Mission’. Now there is a high, sturdy, private gate without the sign. Beyond it is Addis Ababa, a city of many sights and sounds in stark contrast to life inside: streets pitted and potholed, beggars and *bajajs*, donkeys and drab dwellings, goats and garbage, dusty shuffling feet and battered taxi vans. There are also gates to various other compounds—shutting in and shutting out.

Many of the students and staff at Bingham Academy call the city home, but most of the expatriates return to their countries after a short stay, secure again in their own places, while life goes on in a school that temporarily claimed their attention and affection. They will think of the children out on the playing field, the mass of dark and fair heads bent over their work or studying their screens, the tortoises trundling along, the big birds wheeling in the sky, the tins of flowers left by gardeners at the doors, the Ethiopian hug and the fleet of white vans in which they went shopping or visiting. If they call Australia home, like the author of this book, the smell of eucalyptus leaves and wood smoke will always be especially evocative.

EPILOGUE

Dorothy (Russell) Hanson, one of the first students at the School for Missionaries' Children, walks around the old house in Kachene, remembering what it was like in the late 1940s. She is visiting the premises on Monday, 30 January 2017, almost seventy years since she started boarding at the SMC. From the outside, little has changed except that it is now surrounded by narrow dusty streets, vehicles and miscellaneous dwellings. Some of the old trees that the children climbed are there, but the classroom with the thatched roof is gone. The windows are still shuttered and the front entrance with its pillars and marble steps is just as impressive as it would have been when newly built.

Inside, all the memories come back: the Hays' apartment at the front of the house, the porch that was enclosed to make more room, the central courtyard, the lounge room with the fireplace. Dorothy has a scar on the side of her face to remind her of the day she skipped into the front room and tripped, hitting her head against the edge of the Ping-Pong table. She remembers baby Helen Hay in the household, her own important place as one of the bigger girls and also her 'boyfriend' of yesteryear.

The house is now occupied by the offices of the Public Servant Social Security Agency, Addis Ababa Region Office. The flag of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia flies at the front of the building. The office workers are somewhat bemused at the presence of this tall, fair *farenji* in their midst. Dorothy, a nurse, has worked in Addis Ababa for the past twelve years and talks to them easily.

At the gate an elderly man explains that the Derg appropriated the house and it was never returned to its rightful owners. Yet there it is, still standing, a reminder of that small school that began in its rooms in 1946. When the gate closed on it for the last time in 1952, and its occupants, including Dorothy, were relocated to the new school in Kolfe, no one knew what lay ahead.

It is probable that the dilapidated main building at Bingham Academy will be pulled down soon to make way for a modern structure. That will be sad, but beyond many high gates and squalid streets and ramshackle buildings, there is a plain house, without any sign to say what it once was, but a quiet testimony of the school's humble beginnings. It may still be there for the school's 100th anniversary in 2046.

| Years | Principal Head of the academic side: teachers, curriculum, students | Station Manager / Head In charge of physical plant, employees and business operation | Comments |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
| 1946–1956 | Graham Hay | Graham Hay | Graham & Mildred Hay were the founders. They left in December 1956. |
| 1951 | Keith Pitman | Keith Pitman | Relieved the Hays while they were on furlough. |
| 1957 | Arthur Rashleigh | Arthur Rashleigh | In May 1957, AR signed letters as ‘Missionary in Charge of the School for Missionaries’ Children’. |
| 1957–1973 | Roy Wallace | Arthur Rashleigh until [1963]. Fred Zabel may have also been a SH before Birdell Emmel. | Rev. C.T. (Travis) McDonald was relieving Principal when RW was on furlough (1961-1962). RW has stated that he was SH when the Dec 1960 coup occurred. |
| 1962–1963 | Travis McDonald | Birdell Emmel | RW in language school and country postings Sept 1962–June 1963. BE’s family state that he was SH from June 1963. |
| 1963–1973 | Roy Wallace | Birdell Emmel | Birdell Emmel had a couple of ‘breaks’ in his term as SH; for example, Elwyn Heeley, at some stage; Graham Hay was SH briefly in 1966 before his death on 22 October 1966. John & Marjory Koop: Feb–June 1967. Also Lloyd Stinson signed as ‘Director’ in 1969–1970 yearbook. |
| 1973–1977 | Don Ricker | Alan Schneider 1976–1977 | DR was Acting Principal in 1974 according to correspondence. Albert Erion signed letters as Director; Dave Pitman was Assistant Director in charge of business affairs. DR was Principal in 1975. Harold Jongeward was Acting Principal in 1976–1977 when DR was on furlough. |
| 1977/78–1982 | Harold Jongeward | Dick Spahr | Some early correspondence, ca. 1970s, referred to the SH as Director to whom all staff, including the Principal, deferred. |
| 1982–1983 | Don Ricker | Dan Scheel | 1982–83 HJ on furlough. |
| 1983–1987 | Don Ricker/Harold Jongeward | Malcolm McGregor | 1985–1986 H.J. not at BA, but working in SIM administration as Acting General Secretary for Ethiopia; then furlough; then more admin. He estimated his return as Principal was in Sept. 1987. |
| 1987–1992 | Harold Jongeward | Bill Broers until 2001 | BB not in Ethiopia May 1991–July 1993. Ray Neil was Acting SH for much of that time. |
| 1992–1993 | Judy Neil (Acting) | | |
| 1993–1994 | Judy Neil | | |
| 1994–1996 | Judy Neil | | Pat Ring was Acting Principal in 2 nd half of 1994 while JN was on home assignment. |
| 1996–1997 | Judy Neil | | PR was Assistant Principal this year. |
| 1997–1998 | Pat Ring | | Seppo Lahdeahdo: Acting SH during BB’s home assignment July 1997–June 1998. |
| 1998–1999 | Judy Neil & Stan Paulson | | |
| 1999 | Don Ricker, Dan Long & Dale Linton | | ‘The D Team’: Shared Director role for a few weeks while JN on sick leave. |
| 1999–2000 | Dan Long | | |
| March 2001–2005 | David Hicks | From this year, Director is both Head of School and Manager of compound | 2004–2006: JN had the role of elementary principal; from this time the school appointed elementary and secondary principals, as well as Director.* |
| 2005–2006 | Steve Mosman | | |
| 2006–2012 | Murray Overton | | |
| 2012–2013 | Al King | | |
| 2013–2017 | Brad Adams | | |

DIRECTORS AND STATION MANAGERS OF BINGHAM ACADEMY 1946–2017

| Elementary School Principal | Middle/Secondary School Principal |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 2004–2006 | Judy Neil | 2004–2005 | Brad Adams |
| 2007–2009 | Barbara Borsley | 2005–2006 | Ray Thornton |
| 2009 | Stewart Rowe | 2007–2009 | Cathy Michler |
| 2010–2015 | Malcolm Pirie | 2009–2013 | Brad Adams |
| 2015–2017 | Kathy Flippence | 2013–2015 | Tom Farrell |
| | | 2015–2017 | Christy Johnson |



The old school house in Kachene, 2017

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Archival References

Quotes from Bingham Academy yearbooks and archives are referenced in the endnotes for each chapter.

Quotes and details from *Simroots* journal articles and SIM (USA) Archives are also referenced in the endnotes for each chapter.

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Bingham Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, opened in 1946. Its first name was the School for Missionaries' Children and its purpose was to provide a boarding school for the children of missionaries (mostly SIM) working in Ethiopia. Its history is a colourful, compelling story of seventy years in a country whose past and present reveal much poverty and political turmoil. The two histories intersect, with the school's survival often dependent on the favour of the government. Bingham Academy's leaders and advisers have been godly men and women dedicated to Christian service, who worked tirelessly to keep the school open, to care for the children and to employ like-minded teachers. Their vision, in an increasingly international community, has always been to provide a good Biblically-based education for young people and to send them out equipped to face the secular world 'Beyond the Gate'.

Author: Stephany Evans Steggall (1952 -) was awarded a PhD in Australian Literature at the University of Queensland, Australia in 2005. She is a professional writer of literary biography, family and institutional histories. She and her husband Bob have four children and nine grandchildren. Their eldest son, Andrew Steggall-Lewis, with his wife Liz and two children, has worked at Bingham Academy for three years as coordinator of the home school programme. Stephany and Bob, who had retired from his career as an agricultural engineer, joined the compound residents at Bingham Academy during the 2016-17 academic year. During this time Stephany taught two senior classes and wrote the school history. Her home is in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.