

## Chapter 13

### *THE APPLICATION*

The second year at Toronto French School was a good one. My salary was raised to \$17,000, enough to live on now that the major expenses of the first year in a new country were past. For this, however, I was expected to stay at school until 7pm, two nights a week, being available to students needing extra 'coaching' in Maths and Physics. Also, I was responsible to arrange all 'extra-curricula' activities for the students. This included music and dance competitions, chess tournaments, car rallies and the like. Keith, my friend from Wales, had been appointed as Principal of the school, and I represented the teachers in meeting some of the parents to seek better working conditions.

As the school year was coming to an end, I began to study the newspapers to see what teaching posts were being advertised in the Canadian public school system. There were two that caught my attention. Upper Canada College is a historic private school in the centre of Toronto, with an excellent record of achievement, both scholastic and in sport. They were looking for a senior Physics teacher. The other post advertised also looked interesting but was obviously not for me. There is a large Jewish community in Toronto and they support several junior schools and one large secondary school. This school, Toronto Hebrew Academy, was seeking someone to be Head of the Science Dept. "Specialist, Type A required" said the advertisement. When one is applying for new positions, it is important to apply for all those advertised. In this way, your name becomes known and, often, the names and qualities of unsuccessful candidates are passed on to other schools. So I sent off my application to both schools.

I was short-listed for the position at Upper Canada College - which pleased me - but was also invited for interview at the Hebrew Academy. This surprised me as it was evident from my application that I was not a Jew.

The interview was on a Monday, before the Principal of the school and the senior Rabbi. They questioned me for an hour and then asked if I had any questions. At the time I had none to ask but did say to them,

"You realise I am not a Jew ? I am, in fact, a 'born-again' Christian. Of course, I will only teach Physics in my lab, but, if I am asked by a student, why I do or do not believe something, I will find it difficult not to answer." I thought it would not harm saying this as I had no hope of getting the post anyway, even though the men had seemed interested in my application! The Principal, Gary Diamond, replied, "Yes, we understand. We think it might be good for our students to be challenged by someone of another faith"!!

I drove the twenty miles home across the city in a state of wonderment. Was it possible that I should teach at an orthodox Jewish Academy? I had always loved the Jewish people from the time Anne's father had introduced me to the "Shepherd of Israel", a magazine he received regularly from America. I used to say that 'if I were not Welsh, I would like to have been born a Jew'!

The following Friday at noon, Keith called me into his office to tell me that the Hebrew Academy had called to check if my credentials were authentic. I think it noteworthy that, the only person in Toronto who really knew, was Keith himself! That evening I received a telephone call. It was from Mr. Diamond inviting me to take the position of Head of the Science Dept. at Toronto Hebrew Academy, starting in September with a salary of \$33 000! I mumbled my acceptance and, having replaced the receiver, began to tell Anne.

We were overwhelmed. As we regained our senses, we began to praise the Lord for His wonderful ways. Was this to be the reason why He had closed the door in Germany so long ago so that He might prove Himself to me in bringing us to Canada, providing a 'Type A' diploma in the unheard-of time of one year, and now,

opening a door to His chosen people? What had I done to deserve this - except pray alongside the Brewery Field in Bridgend?

I later discovered that seven others had applied for the same post, all with specialist diplomas and all Jewish. Indeed, two of them were already at the school, both with Type A in two subjects. It is to their credit that both Andy and Marty became good friends with me as I settled into life in a Hebrew community. There were 50 teachers at the school, only two of us being non Jews, but they went out of their way to make sure I knew I belonged.