1983

Objectives and involvement in dance and physically active games in the Christian Reformed Denomination and in its congregations in Chatham, Ontario, 1926-1981.

John. Byl

University of Windsor

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RECUE
OBJECTIVES AND INVOLVEMENT IN DANCE AND PHYSICALLY ACTIVE GAMES

IN

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED DENOMINATION

AND IN

ITS CONGREGATIONS IN CHATHAM, ONTARIO, 1926 - 1981

by

John Byl

A Thesis

submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of
Human Kinetics in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Human Kinetics at
The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1983
ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES AND INVOLVEMENT IN DANCE AND PHYSICALLY ACTIVE GAMES IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED DENOMINATION AND IN ITS CONGREGATIONS IN CHATHAM, ONTARIO, 1926 - 1981

by

John Byl

Over the years the Christian Reformed Church, a Calvinistic denomination with its roots in the Netherlands, established objectives regarding, and has involved itself in, various forms of dance and physically active games. The immediate question is, what changes in objectives and practices occurred? Then in the process of change, was it objectives that came first and shaped peoples' actions? Or did actions come first, which in turn were rationalized by new objectives? The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between objectives and actions regarding involvement in dance and physically active games in the Christian Reformed Church.

To assist in further understanding the relationships involved, this study examines not only the denomination, but also a specific Christian Reformed community, the congregations of Chatham, Ontario.
The data was gathered from three sources, namely the Christian Reformed Denomination's official reports, literature disseminated in the Christian Reformed community, and personal interviews.

The thesis examines principles from the seminal denominational report of 1928 on "Worldly Amusements". Its headings were as follows:

i. The honour of God,
ii. The welfare of man,
iii. Christian separation from the world,
iv. Christian liberty, and
v. The role of the church.

From 1926-1981, there emerged no change in the above nomenclature but there was decided change in their interpretation, typically in a more liberal direction.

With regard to the form of involvement, the changes neither preceded nor followed a change in objectives consistently. Many Christian Reformed people danced before the denomination placed a stamp of approval on certain forms. But the reverse is also true: a positive view of involvement in physically active games was held in Chatham before this principle could be actualized. By and large, changes occurred slowly and simultaneously. Furthermore, in terms of involvement, the Chatham congregations lagged approximately twenty years behind the denomination.
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The writing of a thesis is like so many other projects. One person is responsible for its production but it is not completed without the support of a community of people. Though many people deserve thank yous, and in some cases apologies, a few should have special mention.

I wish to thank my committee members, Drs. Culliton, Duthie and Metcalfe for their help. I would particularly like to thank Alan Metcalfe for making my time as an M.H.K. student so worthwhile. I will always remember his dedication to his work and students, and thank him for his assistance to me in my study and his concern with me as a person.

I also wish to thank Paul Walker for his editorial assistance in preparing the final draft. I thank a good friend, Corrie Kamphof, for typing the final manuscript.

Above all I want to thank my wife Catherine for all the support she gave me. I hope that from now on she, and our children, Hannah and Judith, will live with a husband and daddy who not only writes about dance and play, but also does it with them.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the problem

Ecclesiastical institutions which express objectives on involvement in dance and physically active games may see their members act in various manners. Parallel development could be the case, or the institution could well see its members not acting in accord with its objectives. A lack in similarity may be evidenced in members lagging behind the institution, advancing before it, or perhaps travelling a completely different course. The Christian Reformed Church generally, and specifically its members in Chatham, Ontario, 1926 – 1981, will be used as a case study towards determining the relationship between its objectives and its actions at the denominational and congregational level, regarding dance and physically active games.

B. Sub-problems

i. Within the Christian Reformed Church in general and also specifically its members in Chatham, Ontario, 1926 – 1981, regarding dance and physically active games:

   a. What were the objectives and practices?

   b. What was the nature of the relationship between objectives and actions?

ii. What was the relationship between the objectives and practices of the Christian Reformed denomination and those of its members in
Chatham, Ontario?

C. Hypotheses

i. The objectives and practices of the Christian Reformed denomination with respect to dance and physically active games were approximately parallel to those held by members of the Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, Ontario.

ii. The practices of the Christian Reformed denomination and the congregations in Chatham, with some variation, reflected their stated objectives regarding dance and physically active games.

iii. Changes in the Christian Reformed Churches practices regarding dance and physically active games typically preceded formal changes in its objectives.

D. Justification for this study

The rationale for studying the type of problem chosen is largely based on the lack of research precisely in the area delineated in the preceding sections. The selection of the Christian Reformed Church is also based on the lack of research of this nature with regard to this institution. Furthermore, the development of the Christian Reformed Church is of personal interest to this writer.

With regard to the first point, writers in the field of "sport and Religion" have tended to focus on theoreticsians, academicians and confessional statements made by ecclesiastical institutions, in efforts to define a "religious" position on sport. Little work has been devoted to determining whether the views of the above were ever actualized, or consistently maintained throughout the various levels of the appropriate organization.
Ballou's dissertation on the writings of selected church fathers is an early example of a study focusing on the writings and communications of church leaders. Swanson, Bennett, Conner, VanderPool, Zingale, Dahl, Ogden, and the most recent thesis on the subject, by Hiebert, are all works which find their focus in the views of church leadership. The notion that the views of church leaders are representative of the laity, is an assumption this writer deems worthy of examining, an endeavor this study provides some preliminary insights.

From a content point of view, Calvin and Calvinism, in which the Christian Reformed Church finds its roots, have often been of interest to historians. However, with the exception of studies regarding sports and the Puritans, little study has been devoted to sports and other branches of Calvinism. Because the Christian Reformed community in Chatham is predominantly rooted in the Netherlands, not only ideologically but also through ancestry, it is in large part both an ecclesiastical and ethnic community. A perusal of the Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, the International Review of Sport Sociology, the Journal of Sport History, the Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, and the Completed Research in Health, Physical Education and Recreation, uncovered no completed research under the terms Calvin, Dutch, Netherlands, and Protestantism. The terms religion, culture and ethnic groups provided some information. While the journals listed above were of some general use, they further indicated the lack of any comprehensive work in the proposed area of inquiry.

A historical approach was used, as it provides greater depth to an understanding of the relationship between objectives and actions, than a cross-sectional, more static approach, would have provided. A static
comparison would have been helpful in measuring the extent of similarity in objectives and actions. A historical study adds the dimension of time, allowing one to look at the changing form of objectives and actions, and further providing data to suggest what kind of relationship exists between the two.

E. Methodology

Dealing with the main problem necessitated responding basically to two questions at two levels. The two questions are:

i. What is the substance of the fundamental principles regarding involvement in dance and physically active games?

ii. What is the form of the people's involvement in dance and physically active games?

The two levels at which data is evidenced:

i. The Christian Reformed Church as a denomination from 1926 - 1981.


At the denominational level, only published material was used. This meant any document, periodical, book, or other pieces of writing, officially produced by the church, or whose readership was predominantly directed towards the Christian Reformed people.

With regards to documents, the bulk of this material came from synodical meetings, and the overtures and reports that were heeded or disregarded. As each *Acts of Synod* was indexed, and various reports invariably referred to past relevant reports, a thorough search was readily possible. The main confessions and creeds of the church were easily accessible as they are included in the *Psalter Hymnal*, the official church song book.
The appropriate English periodicals received a page by page review and any article making reference to dance or physically active games was photocopied, placed on a retrieval system and catalogued. A delimitation was the exclusion of the official Christian Reformed Dutch weekly entitled De Wachter. As an official journal its views were closely reflected in the official Christian Reformed English weekly entitled the Banner. A review of the De Wachter would have been rather time consuming, and of little additional profit for purposes of this study.

Those periodicals which were reviewed are shown on Tables I and II. Table I illustrates the longevity of journals reviewed in this study. Table II shows the circulation of the journals which is of particular significance in understanding the level of influence and acceptance each journal had. For example, the official church papers, the Banner and Insight, have spanned the entire period, while Credo and Vanguard both ceased publication, unable to gather the support necessary to keep producing.

A quantitative analysis was applied to the periodicals, measuring percentage coverage of dance and physically active games per issue per journal. Articles dealing with dance and physically active games were sporadic at best, with the exception of dance, which received increased coverage surrounding Synods which dealt with it.

Books and other writings were uncovered from three areas. The first was Calvin College, the second was Christian Schools International, and the last was a variety of materials this writer had previously come in contact with or was referred to in other writings.

Calvin College is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan and is sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church. Its Physical Education Handbook for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>36</th>
<th>41</th>
<th>46</th>
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<td>Insight (Young Calvinist) - m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlook (Torch and Trumpet) - m</td>
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w = weekly publication  
m = monthly publication  
bm = bi-monthly publication


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Banner T</th>
<th>Calvinist Contact C</th>
<th>Christian Educators Journal T</th>
<th>Christian Home and School C</th>
<th>Credo T</th>
<th>Federation Messenger C</th>
<th>Insight - Young Calvinist C</th>
<th>Outlook - Torch &amp; Trumpet C</th>
<th>Reformed Journal T</th>
<th>Vanguard C</th>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>10000 N/A</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
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<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>2000 N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
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<td>1943</td>
<td>27000 N/A</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>21000 N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>37200 N/A</td>
<td>N/A 175</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>*2400 N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>1900 N/A</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>42500 N/A</td>
<td>N/A 200</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>13000 N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>21950 N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>1900 N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>46900 210</td>
<td>9500 210</td>
<td>3200 21</td>
<td>16000 16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3000**50</td>
<td>20574 N/A</td>
<td>5200 N/A</td>
<td>2660 3</td>
<td>1100 N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T - Total circulation
C - Total circulation in Chatham
N/A - Data not available

* - This was Credo's largest printing - usual publication consisted of 2000 copies.
** - This figure represents the total circulation through all of Canada.
freshman was reviewed as were two other writings, one on play, the other on sport.

Christian Schools International is a totally separate institution from the Christian Reformed Church. Reformed theology insisted upon the sphere of sovereignty of each institution. The church is directly responsible to God and has its own area of jurisdiction. Though both have an obligation to interact with one another, they are totally separate institutions neither of which is ultimate, or has more power over the other. The Christian Reformed support for these Christian schools is evidenced in Chatham, where approximately eighty-five percent of the membership of the Calvin Christian School Society is Christian Reformed.

Christian Schools International acts somewhat as an umbrella organization for Christian schools like the one in Chatham. Its general curriculum writings as it related to Physical Education and the specific writings on Physical Education has also been reviewed.

The second level, namely the Chatham Christian Reformed congregations, required data collection from more varied sources. Interviews for the pre-World War II era and printed material for the post-World War II era, provided most of the information used.

Of the twenty-five to thirty families of Christian Reformed persuasion living in Chatham in the pre-World War II era, thirteen representatives living at that time permitted a taped interview. They were Cora and Jack Donald, Frank Flack, Bill and Lena Gilhuis, H. Horlings, Cora Israels, Goodie Koning, Herman Koning, Rhena Koning, Pete Lugtigheid, Elsie Malthuis, and Elsey Snee. In addition, there was one minute book from a young men's society, and a general work on some of these years by Ray Koning,

50 Years Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, Ontario.
The minutes of consistory, or church council, were referred to only when the researcher knew consistory had dealt with a relevant matter as it was referred to in a bulletin or other source. As they are confidential, this writer could not personally examine them, but the clerks would provide specific information when requested.

Young Peoples' societies also had minutes. Outside of a Recreation Committee Minute Book, which began in 1966 and stopped in 1973, and a minute book from the South West Ontario Young Peoples' League, dated 1960 - 1974, most of the minutes remaining include only the last few years. In addition, the South West Ontario Young Peoples' League published a monthly bulletin entitled the South Wester. Copies were made available to this writer dating 1973 - 1981.

The Calvin Christian School Society also kept minutes, which were reviewed from 1955 - 1981. Elsey Sneep has since the school's inception kept several scrap books of newspaper clippings, and cut out any articles in the Chatham Daily News which referred to the Calvin Christian School Society.

There is also the Chatham Christian Hockey League. This league was formed in 1972 and still continues to operate, consisting of five teams, four of which are made up of members of the Christian Reformed Church. Their minutes, yearbooks and constitutions were examined. In addition, Jenny Wolting, the wife of one of the players, had several scrap books with newspaper clippings from the Chatham Daily News, as it covered the league's activities.

F. Definitions

1. Congregation: An organization formed for providing church activities, a local church society.
ii. Denomination: A religious group, including many local churches.

iii. Game: Any activity that possesses rules structured so as to produce an unequal outcome between opposing forces.\footnote{16}


v. Objective: A goal toward which effort is directed.

vi. Physically active: Involving more gross-motor movement than fine-motor movement.

G. Periodization

Periodization is a tool to simplify what might otherwise be a complicated and disorienting collage of data. At the same time in this simplifying process, one must realize that it is a somewhat artificial imposition on a reality where society is fluid. Nevertheless, permit the writer to present a tentative outline for two major periods, an outline to be expanded upon in the following sections.

1926 was selected because that year marks the first overtures to Synod regarding "Worldly Amusements".\footnote{17} It set the stage for a 52-page "Report of the Committee on Worldly Amusements" adopted by Synod in 1928.\footnote{18} Both the overtures of 1926 and the report of 1928 are in fact crucial to this study, and would be for almost any study of the C.R.C. at play. This being the first time the C.R.C. as an institution dealt with this topic, in so doing it organized its views and concerns and set a precedent for all subsequent reports and discussions on the subject because that was the date the first C.R.C. was established in Chatham.

1951 marks what appears to be the birth of another era conceived only a few years earlier. The Synod of 1949 received four overtures and
one request in a report, towards clarification of the 1928 report. This resulted in the formation of another study committee which reported as a split committee when it presented its findings in 1951 as a majority report (five men) and a minority report (four men). The latter report was by and large adopted; for instance, the idea was accepted that dance was not necessarily evil, a position the majority report felt was expressed in the 1928 report.

1951 is further significant with regards to publications. Somewhat representative of both the content and members of the majority and minority report, two new journals were formed. They were respectively, the Torch and Trumpet, later to be called the Outlook, and the Reformed Journal. A Dutch-Canadian monthly, very quickly turned into a weekly and called the Calvinist Contact, was also formed in 1951. A year later, Christian Schools International, known then as the National Union of Christian Schools, published its first book on Physical Education.

1951 was also important due to the dramatic expansion of the C.R.C. in Chatham and Canada, though the date is less definite. Growth in the membership of the C.R.C. in the U.S.A., Canada and Chatham is shown on Table III. For the Chatham C.R.C., 1951 saw a 538.5% increase in membership over the last decade. For the Canadian C.R.C., it was to mark the beginning of a decade, culminating in 1961 with a 1,582.4% increase in membership.

1971 might be considered the beginning of a third period, though the establishment of this date is in some ways more ambiguous than the previous two dates. It is therefore used only to subdivide the second major period. At the Synodical level, 1971 saw an overture which requested a positive evaluation of some forms of dance. Three years later, Christian Schools International published its second book on Physical
### TABLE III

**Growth in the Christian Reformed Church**

**In the U.S.A., Canada and Chatham**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade ending</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Chatham</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of congregations</td>
<td>Number of members</td>
<td>% Increase in members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>101710</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>110758</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>120874</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>151571</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>184988</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>209643</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>217921</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
December 31, 1981, the date ending the study is perhaps the most artificial, chosen primarily because it provided a good calendar break which was as near to the time of writing as seemed desirable. The date has been maintained with one exception: the 1982 Synod adopted a report on dance that was in part sparked by the 1971 overture, and therefore provided a more fitting place to conclude.

In summation, the years 1926 and of the 1928 Synods were crucial in the life of the C.R.C. in relation to its views on dance and physically active games. 1951 marks the beginning of a new era. It was the year of another major synodical report on the topic at hand, and saw the birth of three periodicals, providing opportunity for a greater diversification of expression made possible in part by increasing numbers, predominantly Dutch immigrants arriving in Canada.

H. Thesis Format

Using the two major time periods as outlined above, the second chapter will outline the objectives of the C.R.C. denomination and its members in Chatham, and compare them over the time periods delineated. The third chapter, adopting similar format, will focus on the churches' actions in relation to their stated objectives. The fourth and concluding chapter will synthesize and highlight the findings evidenced in the preceding chapters.
FOOTNOTES


6. Statistical information are estimates only and have been provided by the circulation managers of each of the periodicals. For the years 1928 and 1943, data was recorded in The Young Calvinist, October 1948, 29 (10), 26 - 27.


11. Calculated using the membership list of the Calvin Christian School Society.

12. *Notulenboek van de Jongelings Vereeniging "Daniel" Chatham: October 12, 1929 - January 10, 1932, Volume II.*


14. Apart from the isolated bulletin which was missing, the following major omissions should be noted: For the First C.R.C.; September 1974 - December 1975 and the entire run on the years 1979 and 1980. For Grace C.R.C.; June 1970 - May 23, 1971.


CHAPTER II

SUBSTANCE OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The need to uncover the basic principles regarding involvement in
dance and physically active games is imperative to this study. The
focus for the research, being dictated by the problems previously esta-
blished, is a historical comparison of principles held by the C.R.C.
denomination with those held by the Chatham congregations.

In organizing this chapter, the 1928 synodical report on "Worldly
Amusements" proved helpful in several ways. Obviously its content was
important, due to Synod's authoritative and representative character. It
being the first document of its kind in the C.R.C., its content was also
precedent-setting. Furthermore it was an embracive document, consoli-
dating a variety of fundamental principles into one piece of writing.
As a consequence of its scope and depth, few areas regarding the topic at
hand were left uncovered. Therefore, the organization of the synodical
report has also been used to structure this presentation.

The Synod of 1928 established five basic principles, outlined
in summary form they are:

1. God must be honoured.
2. Consideration must be given to the welfare of man.
3. The Christian must spiritually separate himself from the world.
4. Christian liberty must be used, within the law of love, to
discern the nature of involvement in activities not directly dealt
with in the Bible.
5. Christ did not call His church to provide amusement for its members.

A. 1926 - 1950

1. The C.R.C. denomination.

Though the 1928 Synod provides precedent setting principles, a simple listing, such as the above, would be inadequate in describing the objectives of the denomination from 1926 to 1950. An adequate framework is provided by the above, but two significant points still need to be addressed. The first point concerns the clarity of the principles, and the second concerns their development.

With regard to clarity, it is readily apparent that a blank statement such as "God must be honoured" is too platitudinous to permit meaningful understanding without further clarification. Therefore within each section, the content of these principles needs to be further developed.

With regard to the second point, principles are continually being influenced by various forces. Observing this influence over time permits one to realize more fully directional flow within the principle. When these processes are understood, an accurate summary of the C.R.C.'s principles can then be provided.

a. **God must be honoured**

It is of some significance that this principle came first. As a Calvinistic denomination, the C.R.C. held that the honour of God was preeminent above other concerns. It is, however, an awkward subtitle as each of the principles must be to the honour of God. What in the end fell under the section "God must be honoured" is somewhat artificial.

In the case of the Synod of 1928, they adopted the following two sub-
points:

i. amusements should at the very least not conflict with any commandments of God; and

ii. involvement in amusements must not further the interests of an institution which is manifestly an instrument of Satan.  

With regards to the first sub-point, concerns were expressed over the use of Sunday and the committing of adultery. With regard to the second sub-point, it received little discussion, and what discussion it did receive is better analyzed in section c. "Christian separation from the world".

The tone was set in the Synodical report, and the view of a non-physically active Sunday was basically maintained from 1926 - 1950. Fishing or golfing on Sunday, even if one was the president of the U.S.A., was considered wrong. Walking or driving for pleasure was also disapproved of.  

The use of vacations provided the most challenge to the idea of a restful, physically inactive, Sunday, but the C.R.C. was unwavering in its stand. Summer camps typically advertised 100% Sunday observance, which meant going to church twice, a quiet afternoon, and no swimming. People were warned not to make holidays out of holy days, and not to make of "weekends a weak end". To those who felt that a man who is cooped up in an office during the week must have some recreation, H.J. Kuiper, editor of the Banner, unhesitantly criticized the assertion. Kuiper felt that it was incorrectly stating the issue; it was simply desecrating the Sabbath, and "he who puts man first and God second is not worthy of the kingdom of God."  

Professional sports also came under attack on these grounds.
Because many baseball games were held on Sunday, being a Christian player on such a team was made more difficult, as one writer in the Banner wrote: "every real Christian on such a ball team ought and will refuse to give his services on the Lord's Day."\(^{11}\) Even the baseball fan who wished to listen to radio broadcasts or reports of the games was frowned upon for so doing, if he did it on a Sunday. This was seen as "nothing but privately and more or less clandestinely giving our support to such desecration and sharing in sin."\(^{12}\)

The unswerving views of this period regarding the use of Sunday are perhaps best summarized in one article where it was written:

Those who use the Lord's day as a day of riotous pleasure, of fun and frivolity, are not keeping it as they should. If it goes without saying that the world's trinity of speed, sport and shekels has done more than anything else to rob the Sunday of its holy character.

The amusements of a wide-open Sunday, not only wear out the body, but lead to dissipation. It is safe to say that God is a truer friend of the labourer than movie operators, baseball-club owners, and pleasure resort proprietors are.

On that day we should direct our attention to the great necessity of life of bringing our souls into contact with God.\(^{13}\)

The only break from this line of argument was found in an article written by D.H. Kromminga in 1936. In discussing the comment that John Knox once observed John Calvin bowling on a Sunday afternoon, he comments that the Sabbath was meant for "worship and refreshment." To which he adds, "We can be sure that he did not allow his recreation to interfere with his proper meditations, nor with any other Sunday duty."\(^{14}\)

Committing adultery was also one of God's laws that could potentially be broken. It was felt that the potential greatly increased if one became involved with dancing. The Synod of 1928 for example, felt the "modern
dances" were "suggestive... promiscuous... accompanied with immodest
exposure of certain parts of the body." 15 Furthermore it "can and does
entice men to unchaste thoughts and desires if not impure actions." 16

Similar thoughts were also expressed in the periodicals. Even dances,
such as folk or the aesthetic dance, were seen as stepping stones to
the dance hall, where the promiscuous dance (partner dances) being per-
formed in godless places caused the ruin of many a person and incited
lust in a sex-crazy society. 17 It was not that dance could not be
redeemed, but the path to adultery seemed inevitable, so the avoidance
of all dancing was perceived as the best remedy.

Several important points regarding the views on breaking Sabbath
laws and the committing of adultery need to be reemphasized. First of
all, the extent and intensity of the discussion on these topics leads
one to realize that not all people within the C.R.C. thought the same way.
If the principles were not differently perceived by a sufficient number
of people, the editors and other writers would not have devoted the time
and space these concerns received. Secondly, though the ideas were being
challenged, the prevailing position remained relatively constant throughout
this time period: Sunday was not to be a day of physical activity for
one's own pleasure, and the dance must be avoided in all its forms as
it provided too great a temptation for adultery.

B. Consideration must be given to the welfare of man

Having so dealt with the glory of God, the "Report on Worldly Amusements"
then proceeded to considering the welfare of man. For purposes of this
thesis this section is extremely important in that it offered a rationale
for involvement in physically active games. But this rationale also
raises the issue of limitations. If one may play, what are the immediate constraints that would prevent one from trespassing the boundary from recreational activity to that which is destructive?

Within the above context, the Synod of 1928 adopted three sub-points within this principle, as follows:

i. There is a legitimate place in life for such amusements which are recreative for body and mind.

ii. No physical recreation or mental diversion should be tolerated which is in any way or degree subversive of our spiritual and moral well-being.

iii. Amusements should not be allowed to occupy more than a secondary, subordinate place in our life.\(^{18}\)

Concerning the first sub-point, the Synod of 1928, took a supportive stand on recreation, but not without qualification. In developing the positive side of recreation, it pointed out that "God has equipped man with the play instinct and with the need of physical and mental diversion." Interestingly, it supported this with a cliche rather than Scripture in the statement that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." However, it added I Timothy 4:8 where it described "bodily exercise as being profitable for a little," and furthermore gave account of festivities in the Bible that were not condemned, but in fact occasionally participated in by Jesus himself.\(^{19}\)

Synod's qualification, began with the statement that all amusements "should be truly recreative, not dissipative." With regards to dissipative activity, it was stated that "all sports and games which are inherently dangerous to life or limb conflict with the principle of the sixth commandment and must be condemned."\(^{20}\)

The periodicals indicated a similar position, though more explicitly demarcating what was wholesome recreation and what was dissipation.
Table IV indicates in brief outline form the main concepts appropriate to each section.

The need for an individual to take time to recreate was clearly supported by the writers. Encouragement of active physical participation was much in evidence. However, the concerns were much broader than this. The concept of "recreation" received considerable attention. The focus of the articles typically encouraged man to re-create physically and psychologically, to relax, to be reinvigorated in one's entirety. H.J. Kuiper went so far as stating that "Any position on the subject of amusements which fails to reckon with the need of coming apart from time to time to rest awhile, is not truly Christian." Conversely, the views on illegitimate involvement were concerned with destruction of body or mind. Both over-exertion and being passive were criticized as damaging to one's body. Therefore, long distance runners and the spectator, though not condemned for their activity, were certainly frowned upon. Activities which had a high degree of potential for physical injury, such as swimming the English Channel, auto racing and boxing were also discouraged. Activities which increased tension were considered undesirable, but so was a vacation where all ordinary activity ceased. One author felt that this latter case would perhaps be the closest one could get to a living death.

With regard to the second sub-point, the Synod report states that, "It is man's duty to seek his own welfare, but the welfare of his soul is of far greater importance than that of his body." Consequently, any activity which hinders or "stifles true spirituality," was to be condemned. This principle was also used to challenge the rightness of participation in games on Sunday, and was further used...
### TABLE IV

**CONCEPTS REGARDING WHOLESOME AND DISSIPATIVE INVOLVEMENT IN GAMES AS PERCEIVED BY THE C.R.C.: 1926 - 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Dissipation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy body</td>
<td>Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- exercising</td>
<td>- violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>Vocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>Life skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- respect rules</td>
<td>- disrespect for rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- sportsmanship</td>
<td>- lack of sportsmanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- team work</td>
<td>- individualism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
wherever it seemed Christian responsibilities appeared to wane under the pressures of involvement in games.\footnote{33}

One area of such concern and a fundamental criterion often used to determine the legitimacy of a game, was whether the game depended upon skill or chance. Games depending on skill found approval, games depending on chance were condemned.\footnote{34}

It was also felt that respect for rules, teamwork and sportsmanship were essential ingredients to pursue and display in a game situation. It was argued that games must be played according to the rules, and that no advantage ought to be sought in using them.\footnote{35} With regard to teamwork, two writers felt it was an important concept in helping a player realize that there is something more important than himself.\footnote{36} Games were viewed as tremendous opportunities to develop good sports, which implied that a player would not cheat, would win modestly and lose graciously.\footnote{37}

It is of some significance to note that although concepts such as recreation and skill were discussed throughout the time period, these latter three values were only discussed from 1937 on.

The third sub-point shares similarities with both of the previous two. If amusements are to remain secondary, then faithful living in light of the commandments and a subordinate position of amusements with regard to one's "spiritual" life are consistent positions. Synod made the point that the very words "amusements," "recreations," and "diversions" characterize the secondary nature of these activities. To the question of what their function might be, Synod replies with a significant statement, "to keep us fit for the joyful and restful performance of our task."\footnote{38} Articles indicated that one's task was to glorify God
and to work.

Articles further indicated that recreation was especially important in helping one to perform one's task well, and ought not become work or of primary importance to one's life. When might one be over involved in physically active games? The general rule of thumb was not more than once a week.

As a consequence of the above, the idea of a Christian professional athlete appeared incompatible to some. Several writers felt that making a vocation out of play was questionable as to its rightness. While one author outrightly condemned it. Those that questioned it, did not necessarily label professional athletics as evil, but questioned, apart from Sunday playing, the rightness of an individual spending so much time on play, and receiving the kind of prestige and money that came along with the job. Furthermore, the interest in active participation conflicted with the passive spectator orientation of professional sport.

In essence, the principle with regard to giving consideration to the welfare of man gave both positive and negative advice. The idea of skillful recreational physical activity, developing all of man and particularly his body, found encouragement. The idea of passive, vacation, or over-active participation which increased the likelihood of physical or other injuries, or made a job of play was discouraged. These views were basically maintained consistently throughout the period, though the concepts of teamwork, respect for rules and sportsmanship only came to the fore towards the end of the first period.

C. Christian separation from the world

Having established the principle that recreation can be a legitimate
medium of enhancing the welfare of man, with the pre-condition that the
activity does not dishonour God, the Synod of 1928 proceeds to this
third principle. The committee composing the "Report on Worldly
Amusements" evidently could not leave it with the above. Surely one
could play, assuming it was truly recreative and not transgressing God's
laws, but one also needed to be careful with whom one played.
Though the concerns regarding Christian separation from the world are
not central to the report, they are certainly significant.

Once again the sub-points of the synodical report are used in
organizing the presentation. The principle was further divided as
follows:

i. Separation does not mean forming separate communities.
ii. Friendship with evil men is forbidden.
iii. Shunning all evil in the world is required.
iv. A weaning of the heart from transient things is demanded. 43

Here the report was dealing with the text, John 17:15, concerned
with being in the world but not of it.

Concerning the formation of separate communities the report
devoted a considerable amount of space to the question of common or
general grace. Common grace was defined as the grace God provides to
unbelievers and believers alike, such as seasons. The thrust of this
section is that spiritually, Christian people are separate from unbelievers
and must not participate in evil activity. Nevertheless there are
activities that are not by themselves evil, and therefore Christians may,
with certain qualifications and warnings of course, participate in those
activities with unbelievers. 44

The conclusion of this section applied the above to the area of
amusements:
In His general grace God has (1) given certain joys, diversions, pleasures to men. There are no amusements in hell! By that same general grace He (2) restrains sin in the hearts of the ungodly, so that the diversions and amusements which they devise are not always and necessarily tainted with sin. Even their manner of participation in them may not be so manifestly sinful that a Christian cannot join in with them. Is it not possible for Christians to play a game of ball with non-christians without denying their Christian principles? We do not advise Christians to seek their amusements in mixed company. This is often dangerous. But the mere fact that they meet on a common ground is no proof that the Christian is on forbidden ground.

This cautious approach is also evidenced in later synodical literature of the period. When the decisions of the 1928 Synod were being questioned in the late forties, one of the overtures in 1949 directed in support of the 1928 decisions, quoted in the above context the texts John 17:15 and Psalm 1:1. The latter text is well known, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." A similar isolationist approach is exhibited in the periodicals with bowling and pool halls particularly being singled out as bad with regard to mixing with evil men. Theoretically playing with worldly men is not denied the Christian, but the practical advice strongly warned against such mixing.

The second section dealing with forbidding friendship with evil men is also concerned with relationships amongst members in a mixed association. Synod eventually left the decision of what determines "legitimate fellowship and sinful friendship" to the individual's conscience. But that was after some discussion and the quoting of James 4:4 "Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." The periodicals again reflect these same sentiments.

The third point, regarding the shunning of all evil, was quickly
dealt with in the 1928 Synod. The report basically quoted from the apostle John who spoke of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life," something Christians were to hate.  

Closely aligned with this is the last sub-point, "the weaning away of the heart from the transient things of this present earthly sphere." The basic argument was that the corruptible things of earth, such as food, clothing, riches, honour and pleasure, are too tangible and not worth the strenuous pursuit with which worldly men seek them.

Once again the 1926 - 1950 gives evidence of a lack of change in this third principle as well as the previous two. As a theoretical principle the formation of separate communities could not be supported, but in advising its members, the report in fact encouraged an isolationistic position. When it comes right down to it, the concept of being a salt to the earth, a leavening agent, or a light to the world, was concealed by a protective basket of "do not touch" and "do not acquaint yourself with the ways and the people of the world." "When you play, play with your own people," was the position of the C.R.C. from 1926 - 1950.

d. Christian liberty

Though the synodical report goes into some detail with regards to this concept, a few brief comments should suffice for this present study. This section was included by the Synod of 1928 because nowhere in the Bible does it directly state the legitimacy or otherwise of participating in soccer, football or most other physically active games.

Christian liberty was described as the "freedom with which Christ has made one free." More specifically, this consisted of freedom from the power of sin, freedom from the law, the "liberty of conscience with
reference to human ordinances and things neither prescribed nor condemned, either directly or indirectly, in the Word of God.  

Though it was described as freedom, the freedom was certainly not unconditional or unlimited. The preceding sections gave evidence of that. Furthermore, within this section itself it was noted that Christian liberty:

is limited in its exercise by the law of love. (1 Corinthians 8:9, 13), the law of self-preservation (Matthew 10:8, 9), and the law of self-denial, which often requires the renunciation of things in themselves lawful (Matthew 16:24).

The concept of Christian liberty, certainly appeared to leave the believer with a good deal of freedom. This openness appears somewhat out of line with the cautious approach of the previous sections which often had strict stipulations of what was right or wrong. Though in theory this principle suggested a great deal of liberty, it will be necessary to wait till the following chapter to see whether such was really the case.

e. Role of the church

The role of the church in view of its members' involvement in dance and physically active games was perceived as one of giving principal directions, but not getting involved in any form of practical recreational programming. The study committee appointed by the 1926 Synod had, as part of its mandate, the task of suggesting ways and means to provide the churches' young people with wholesome recreation. The committee's response was that this was not the business of the church, and consequently not of the committee either. It further argued that Christ did not call His church for those ends, and therefore

no practical considerations, whatever their nature or apparent urgency may be, should lead us to follow in the path of the "institutional" churches which maintain
expensive equipment for the physical recreation of their members, while neglecting the spiritual work to which they are divinely called. Is it not rather the task of Christian parents to provide safe and wholesome recreation for their children and for themselves in so far as they need it? This perspective met with favour at Synod, and was adopted with the rest of the report.

The years following the report saw articles encouraging the synodical decisions and the establishment of independent organizations for athletics and recreation. They urged avoiding what was termed "an unjustifiable alliance between the Church and secular activities." Nevertheless, other articles indicated that this view was not unanimously held, as some people, especially the young, began asking the church to do more than criticize forms of recreation, and to begin actively promoting and providing opportunity for involvement in positive forms of recreation. The typical response, however, remained a firm "no!"

f. Conclusion

Two generalizations may be made with regard to these principles of the C.R.C. during the period 1926 – 1950. The first is that the ideas were all subject to an extremely cautious and an isolationistic approach. The second is that there was a lack of change during this time period.

This cautious and isolationistic approach is evident throughout this first period. Sunday was seen as a rest day free from any physical activity that even hinted at being done for one's own pleasure. Dances, even if they themselves did not have sexual overtones, might be a stepping stone to dances that had such overtones, and therefore all dances were prohibited. It was readily acknowledged that "all work and no play make Jack a dull boy," but little attention was devoted to how one could positively actualize
that principle. The weight of the principle focused on avoiding over-exertion, under-exertion, and risks of injury to one's physical and spiritual/moral development. The same tendency was also observed in the discussion on a Christian's relationship with the world. Consideration of this principle began with the theory that separate communities were not what Christ wished, but for the sake of purity, and that was where the weight of the discussion lay, isolation was more expedient. The role of the church, though providing principal directions, was a refusal to provide practical, positive assistance to its people.

A lack of change also prevailed regarding almost all of the principles. There were only two small but not insignificant exceptions. The concepts of respect for rules, teamwork and sportsmanship only began to enter into discussion in the late thirties. It was as if these concerns were not previously important and were now being used to rationalize increased involvement. A second shift occurred towards the end of this period: the request by some for the Church to provide greater practical assistance in the area of recreation. Nevertheless, the prevailing idea of "hands off" was not to be moved.

2. The Chatham Congregation

Oral history dating back 55 years is difficult at best, particularly when one needs to recall theoretical objectives. To recall what one did is asking a lot, but to recall what one thought about what one did and did not do, is in some ways shooting for the stars.

Being the long shot that it is, this section is necessarily brief and embryonic. To add to the difficulty of discerning the objectives held, the Chatham C.R.C. was a small group of poor, recently immigrated
people who laboured long hours, neither having nor taking the time to dance or engage in physically active games. Though it is brief, it is not empty, as the interviewees independently interviewed, all reflected the above view of their situation. In fact, each separate interview, without exception, supported and added credibility to the others, each saying roughly the same thing. The discussion which follows is therefore not footnoted but is in fact the combined voice of those interviewed. Where an individual's comments have been used, footnoting has also been avoided, in this case to protect the privacy of the interviewees. A discussion of their comments follows.

The Chatham congregation was also examined in terms of the same five principles developed in the 1928 report. Their attitudes to these concepts will now be presented.

a. God must be honoured.

Sunday was seen as a day of rest and worship. If anything the Chatham congregation may have been more liberal than the denomination, with respect to this point. Walking for pleasure apparently was not frowned on at all. Biking and playing games were a bit of a different story. As one of the old timers said, "the Canadian church people thought it fine to ride their bike on Sunday, but disagreed with playing games; the Dutch immigrants thought it fine to play games, but disagreed with riding their bikes on Sunday." As several of the single young men were to marry women from other denominations, certain compromises needed to be made. It consequently varied from family to family as to what was considered permissible. With but few exceptions, bike riding for pleasure on Sundays was considered acceptable. The same could be said of playing games, provided they were
more back yard in nature, and were played quietly. Organized games were not to be played on Sundays, and the games were mostly played by the children. One interviewee recalls how one of their children was kicking a can along the street on his way home from church, and received quite a talking to from one of the elderly members of the congregation: "that was not to be done on Sunday!"

Dancing was not done as it too was perceived as being "forbidden by the church." If asked why it was forbidden, the inevitable answer, expressed in one form or another, was its violation of the seventh commandment.

b. **Consideration must be given to the welfare of man.**

All of those interviewed spoke of a need to get away and play, but vacations and holidays were times without earnings and could be ill afforded. It should be noted that physical diversion was perceived as unnecessary on account of the members' tie to farms and their engagement in the physically demanding work they were involved in as farm hands. Therefore, discussion of the need to get away was typically founded in a social-psychological framework, rather than in concern for physical fitness.

c. **Christian separation from the world.**

Their separation from the world, or their isolationism, was perhaps narrower than the denomination's. They played together at church picnics but did not otherwise increase their participation in physically active games during this period. The forties were a period of economic growth and over 500% increase in the number of members in the C.R.C. in Chatham. When an oldtimer was asked, "Why did you not join city leagues when the
economy picked up?" The answer was a strong, "No way! We stuck together then." Thus what in fact was encouraged by the denomination, was very much the prevailing ideology of these people in Chatham.

d. Christian liberty.

The concept of Christian liberty was in some ways irrelevant for this period. They could have had and understood all the Christian liberty in the world, but enjoyed neither the time, equipment nor facilities to put it into practice. However, judging by the statements made in the context of Sunday sport or dancing, a resounding "It is forbidden by the church," suggested little Christian liberty in these areas. Though it ran counter to reformed theology each individual being directly responsible to God, the church seemed to play a strong role in telling the people what was right and wrong. Certainly the people's perceptions of the role of the church were often expressed in "the church forbids...", or "the church says..."

e. Role of the church.

The church stated that its role was to be uninvolved in physically active games, like that of the denomination. This is indicated by the fact that the only church event which included such activities was the church picnic. However, even that was organized not by the consistory but by an informal committee. Consequently, the governing body of the church would never have been permitted by the church members to organize activities such as a bowling or baseball league.

f. Conclusion.

Because of the small sample of people, and the difficulty in recalling ideas 50 years back, a definitive comparison of the denomination
and the Chatham congregation is not possible. However, the data does provide some material for some comparison.

As with the denomination, this period, 1926 - 1950, appears marked in the Chatham congregation by caution and a lack of change in objectives. Views on Sunday rest and play and the sexual impropriety of dance were similarly viewed, with the congregation slightly freer on the former and stricter on the latter. Recreation as a topic received little attention in the congregation; if anything, the C.R.C. people of Chatham wished to remain more isolated than the denomination and extended a narrower sense of Christian liberty. The evidence on the views regarding the role of the church exhibited similarity to that of the denomination.

B. 1951 - 1981

1. The C.R.C. denomination

This is a period of change and diversification for the denomination. The outlined principles of the 1928 Synod will again provide the framework to be used in organizing a comparative analysis of change.

A number of critical elements within the denomination marked this period. The first is that four major reports were submitted to Synod concerning the topic at hand. The latter two reports were specifically concerned with dance. Furthermore, new journals were created, providing media with which divergent voices could express their views. Lastly, as an indicator of growth during this period, Illustration I offers one example of the kind of growth which took place during the period in the C.R.C. Though the schools used in Illustration I are not formally tied to the C.R.C. many of the C.R.C. people supported these schools.
ILLUSTRATION I

NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOLS
AFFILIATED WITH CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL

Number of schools

0  10  20  30  40  50  60

26 31 41 51 61 71 81

Years

U.S.A. -
Canada -
Christian elementary schools were first established, and the Christian high schools naturally grew out of this.

a. God must be honoured

Under the above heading, once again the focus will concern views on Sunday rest and dancing. Both topics will receive more space than they did in the previous sections. This is due in large part to an increase in diverging opinions being expressed. What follows is an account of change, an account of a denomination which is switching the content of its objectives regarding involvement in dance and physically active games. No process of change, outside of revolutionary change, occurs overnight, and no revolution occurred within the C.R.C. Diverging opinions to the denominational norms began to be expressed in this period and inevitably created tension and evoked a response from the old guard. It will be argued that the old guard was losing, be it for better or worse. What will be pointed out is that the conception of what it means to honour God in the eighties was seen in the twenties as straying from the truth, but yet the people at both times thought they were honouring God.

The relation between Sunday and physically active games appears to have undergone a change somewhere in the mid-sixties. Prior to that, playing games on Sunday was considered wrong. Following the mid-sixties, people tended to think it was all right, though with some hesitation.

Two of the official church papers consistently maintained the quiet, no activity, Sunday approach up to the late-sixties. Some articles even expressed that Saturday evening was an improper night to engage in such activities as bowling, as it made one too tired and unprepared for
worship the day after. 62

Sports on Sunday were seen as a challenge to worship, 63 a desecration of the day, 64 exhausting a person rather than giving him rest, 65 and generally breaking the fourth commandment. It was added, however, that sleeping most of the day might also be improper and "no one among us would contend that it is wicked to throw a ball on Sunday." 66 By throwing a ball, non-organized play was implied.

The *Young Calvinist*, the official church youth magazine, took a rather strong position in 1964. The contents of a particular article were more reminiscent of pre-1951 period than the present. The article was told in story form, of a moon-man examining the earth on a sunny Sunday morning.

"These earth people are nature worshippers," he wrote. "One day a week they stream out of doors to carry out their religious ritual, weather permitting. Their religious practices differ in form but have much basically in common. They all seem to involve some form of dress, require open air, and gather large crowds. Most of the ceremonies include a bell and variously shaped instruments of wood. Others prefer to worship alone, but use the same wooden instruments and a smaller, bell with which they commune on large green pastures. Still others, stripping themselves almost naked, hurl their bodies into the waves of the sea with frenzied cries of ecstasy. After this ceremonial baptizing, they anoint themselves with holy oils, and stretch themselves out with eyes closed, to surrender fully to the nature deity."

There is a small group, however, who do not join these religious rites. They clothe themselves soberly and go indoors to follow their practices. They are undoubtedly heretics who have been excommunicated from nature worship. But it is noteworthy that their faces display serenity, joy, and contentment, and show none of the frenzy, nor the hectic, rattled look of the nature worshippers. 67

The Canadian journal, *Calvinist-Contact*, takes a similar approach over a similar time period. It begins the period by referring to
Sunday as a holy day, a day of seeking God’s pleasure, as opposed to a holiday, which would be for one’s own pleasure. The journal continues; also recommending Saturday evening preparation and condemning sports on Sundays. One of the writers who had immigrated in the fifties found Canada “heerlijk rustig” (delightfully restful) for which he was thankful.

But Sunday as a Canadian rest day went to defeat in a referendum held in many communities in 1961, and it was expressed that it was further eroded when the Grey Cup game switched to Sunday afternoon.

However, the seeds of change were evident in 1968, as one writer, a minister in the C.R.C., felt that the day should be a day of rest and recreation for as many people as possible. When in the following year an article argued against watching televised sports on Sunday, the argument proved interesting. It was not argued on the grounds that this was wrong or evil, but that the time might better be spent in activity with one’s children or friends. By 1977, traditional C.R.C. views were questioned as being legalistic and even professional sports on Sunday was seen as being not necessarily bad.

Two other journals speaking on this subject are the Torch and Trumpet and Christian Educators Journal. The former was more conservative and wished to preserve a day of rest and worship, the latter provided an example, recommending an outdoor recreation weekend, where organized activity was participated in on Sundays.

Returning to the Banner and Insight for the seventies, one reads of a Christian film producer who, only ten years previously, thought that a professional football player playing on Sunday was a contradiction in
terms. But in 1971 he did not feel the same. 80

In 1975, a reader asked, "What can we do on Sunday? Ought it not to be more of a fun day?" 81 The responses were varied. Two writers felt that a fun day would grieve the Holy Spirit, as the day was intended to be a day of worship, a day set aside for the Lord. 82 On the other hand another response suggested that only the individual could decide whether bicycling or playing tennis on Sunday were the best ways of honouring the Lord.

A story in a 1980 issue of the Banner appears to be a good indication of where the C.R.C. currently was at the end of this period with respect to the issue at hand. It is about a boy who made it to the hockey finals, but they were going to be played on Sunday. The father reluctantly acquiesced and took his boy to the rink. At the rink, the father barely watched the game as his mind was in turmoil wondering if he had done the right thing. 84

Views regarding the seventh commandment, sexuality and the dance, appeared to take a similar shift at the same time.

1951 marked the year two reports were submitted to Synod, as a review of what the Synod of 1928 had really meant. With regard to the dance, the majority report felt that the Synod of 1928 stated that the modern dance, or the promiscuous pairs dancing, catered to sex appeal and was a violation of the seventh commandment. 85 The minority report submitted that the Synod of 1928 condemned worldliness which was often manifested in the modern dance. The position of the minority report was the one the 1951 Synod basically adopted. 86 Both reports were somewhat critical of the dance, though the accepted report did not condemn all dance outright as the majority report had done.
When Calvin College was challenged at the Synod of 1964 regarding square dancing held on campus, it responded by arguing that the challenge offered no evidence that this was contrary to the scriptures or Synod's decisions. In light of the 1951 synodical decisions no further actions against the college were taken at the time.

Classis Hamilton approached Synod in 1971 with an extensive report, asking for a study into "the feasibility of developing acceptable ways for Christians to express their joy in rhythmic movements to musical accompaniment;..." With regard to sexuality, it took an about turn from previous writings. The report suggested that the main objection against dancing was that it "stimulates the sexual impulse leading to all sorts of problems such as adultery, illegitimate sexual contact, illegitimate pregnancies, worldliness, etc." It argued then that sexuality is a gift of God, created "not only for the sake of reproduction, but also for companionship." Though sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage, sexual interaction needs to be responsibly handled. The report felt that "simply telling young people to repress all feelings of sexual stimulation is not the answer." Furthermore, "if we expect our young people to grow in their ability to treat one another as human beings, they must learn through experiencing human sexuality with members of the opposite sex in peer-group relationship."

The idea of further study was not supported by Synod. Instead it referred Classis Hamilton to the conclusion of the Church and Film Arts report, accepted by Synod in 1966, particularly the sections dealing with the Christian's relationship with the world and the exercise of Christian liberty. In addition, the Synod of 1971 also urged Christian
writers to serve the church with articles on dance in light of the 1966 conclusions. 90

Calvin College took the above decisions as an indication that social dancing can be a legitimate and wholesome Christian activity. 91 It then set about to provide a rationale, to bring above board an activity which had been going on for some time. 92 The committee that was working on this issue for Calvin College realized that some people thought social dancing carried too great a potential for evil for those participating. The committee disagreed, coming from a different perspective; they stated:

We view man (and our youth), not from the perspective of total depravity but as new persons in Christ. Although we believe them to be by nature totally depraved, we also believe that they have been redeemed by the grace of God and that this grace is operative toward sanctification. 93

They also mentioned that dances were more mixer oriented than pairing, off and with regards to its implementation Christian discretion in the selection of music and lyrics must be used. 94

Calvin College's report met with more resistance than anticipated. Having asked for responses to its report, it received letters from 159 churches, of which 135 expressed disapproval. Calvin College also received letters from ninety-five individuals, of which ninety-three expressed disapproval. 95 One of the largest areas of concern as expressed in the letters was apparently the area of improper sexual stimulation as a consequence of dance. The Calvin College Board of Trustees still maintained that their institution had a partial responsibility in teaching "a wholesome interchange between the sexes which recognizes the God-given uniqueness of each without violating the sanctity of that which is
reserved for the marriage relationship. We believe a properly controlled
dance form can make a positive contribution here. 96 In addition to
letters Calvin College received, Synod also received several communi-
cations and overtures, some also questioning dance on the grounds that
it was in conflict with the Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer, 109,
dealing with adultery. 97 As a consequence of all this it was decided to
form a committee to further study the dance in light of scripture. 98

An embrace report was submitted to Synod in 1980. 99 It concluded
that some forms of dance were legitimate, and in fact liturgical dance
was recommended as a good place to begin the redeeming of dance. With
regards to social dances, it was suggested that each community assess
its own level of maturity in incorporating social dance into it. A
critical look at current dance forms, music and environment was recommended,
as was the expression of the need for qualified people to give leader-
ship in this area. 100

With regard to the seventh commandment and sexuality, the report
stated out that:

God made us sexual beings, and we neither can nor ought to
leave our sexuality behind when we are singing or dancing.
Far from being embarrassed about it we must accept our
sexuality as God's gift to us and channel its potential
along the ways God has designed for it. 101

However, it certainly qualified this by describing North American
culture at the time as being a sexual wilderness. 102 It further
denounced such contemporary dances such as disco, with its "blatant
sexual suggestiveness, a narcissistic orientation, and a use of musical
themes that flout Christian values." 103

Synod sent this report to the churches for further study and the
committee was to report back in 1982. Though 1982 takes the discussion past the dates earlier delineated for purposes of this study, it is significant to note that an essentially similar report, most of it word for word the same as the 1980 report, was accepted in 1982, with the exception of the section on liturgy, which went to a liturgical committee for further study.

The periodicals and other literature closely paralleled these developments at Synod. A negative view was predominantly held into the late sixties, and a more positive view was adopted into the seventies, with some exceptions to be noted.

The articles continued to attack dance for its sexual exploitation. One author writing that he knew many girls who had "completely lost the blush of modesty because of it (dance)." Others began quoting statistics, saying that "two-thirds of the girls who are ruined, fall through the influence of dance. In New York, three-quarters of the immoral girls are ruined by dancing and of the 2,500 very immoral women in San Francisco, at least three-quarters of these women were led to sin through the dance." Others asked: "Can you really put your arm around a girl scantily dressed - the dress that goes with the dance - and experience no change in your feelings?" This is well summed up in one article that suggested the physical closeness of dance had "a most exciting effect," and therefore "front-to-front, cheek-to-cheek dancing, by male and female is not socially graceful nor virtuous." A further review of the periodicals indicates these views were not isolated or atypical.

More atypical were those that supported dancing, and their
proclamation of it brought almost certain criticism. One writer's comments in 1956 were also atypical in that his critique was directed at the individual's maturity, rather than the dance itself. He wrote: "We shall be much stronger if we admit that we are spiritually too poor to dance in the right way, but cease to condemn dancing as such."\(^{113}\)

The beginnings of positive writings on dance first appeared in 1969 in Credo, the most artsy of the periodicals reviewed. It should be added that the front cover of this magazine showed a dancer involved in choreographics already in 1966 and 1967.\(^ {114}\) In a series of articles on dance, the basic question centred around why Christians were not dancing. It answered that dancing "has been pulled out of its legitimate place and prostituted by a sex-crazy society." The articles continued, however, by inviting people to pull it apart, and put it back together in new, faith-ful ways, be that as a part of liturgy or in the form of communal social dancing.\(^ {115}\)

The number of invitations to reshape dance increased into the seventies. It was argued that square dancing provided opportunity for physically active self-expression, social interaction and an opportunity for young people to relate physically with each other in a non-sexual way.\(^ {116}\) Others supported this argument,\(^ {117}\) and Insight in 1980 had a picture of square dancing on the front cover.\(^ {118}\)

When Synod dealt with reports on dancing in 1977, 1978, and 1980 these evoked considerable discussion. Synod eventually took the road of those who supported dancing.\(^ {119}\) Their views were perhaps best represented by Dr. Sidney De Waal, Dean of King's College in Edmonton, who wrote:
We must distinguish between dance forms which are sexually
toned, that is, those that have an "erotic dimension." from dance forms which are sexually aggressive... It is
possible to express legitimate sexual feelings through
dancing in a way that leaves no room for immoral
sexual passion.\textsuperscript{120}

However, there were others that were critical of the reports.\textsuperscript{121}

Articles predominantly in the \textit{Outlook} took this position, a position
they consistently held throughout the period, which led several to con-
sider whether Calvin College was worthy of financial support.\textsuperscript{122}

It ought to be remembered that the number of subscribers to the \textit{Outlook}
is less than thirteen percent, in relation to the \textit{Banner}, the official
church publication, which was by and large supportive of the reports
on dance.

To conclude, with regard to the perceptions of what was meant by
Sunday rest, the tide had shifted by the end of 1981. Specifically it
was in the late sixties that the previous objectives were beginning to
be challenged. The fourth commandment began to be perceived more and
more as less restrictive to one's involvement in organized games on
Sunday. In an effort to state precisely what the position of the C.R.C.
as a denomination was in 1981, it would be best to say it was in a state of
flux, some people having no problem with organized games on Sunday, and
some vehemently opposed, with most sliding just off the middle to the
non-active side of the pendulum. Even that was a major shift from
what one previously read, particularly in the pre-1951 period.

Dance took a stronger turn. The 1928 position was that some dance,
\textit{ie.} folk dance, might be acceptable in itself, but inevitably led to
the ball rooms and beyond, and the sexual improprieties that were a
consequence of that. 1981 saw a more positive picture, with the church-
supported college, Calvin College, and the synodical reports and Reformed periodicals, generally not just acquiescing, but encouraging certain forms of involvement in dance.

Thus it has been illustrated that regarding Sunday rest and dancing, the principle of honouring God was central to most of the arguments, right through to 1981. However, the reins were loosened with regard to Sunday rest and were bravely given freedom with regard to dance. The caution of the previous era was less evident, though certainly still present towards the end of this second period. Furthermore, though the principle of honouring God maintained its central role, its content shifted significantly. What was thought to be honouring God in 1981 was certainly thought to be dishonouring in 1928.

b. Consideration must be given to the welfare of man.

It has already been noted that the 1928 synodical report on "Worldly Amusements" further divided this principle into three areas: the legitimacy of amusements which are recreative, the illegitimacy of amusements which are subversive to one's spiritual and moral well-being, and the qualification, that amusements must remain secondary in one's life. The pre-1951 era saw writings which cautiously justified and encouraged low-key involvement in physically active games. The period which follows is marked with less writing providing cautious justifications, but more writing assuming the goodness of involvement and arguing or presenting various interpretations as to the profitability of certain aspects of various activities.

Proper care of the body and interest in the general area of recreation were of less concern to Synod in the post-1951 time period.
This came as a result of a narrowing of focus, with synodical reports narrowing down to dance as opposed to the broader issue of "worldly amusements" dealt with in 1928. Within the 1980 Synod report, one finds a brief discussion on recreation which is worthy of note. Even though the topic of recreation was dealt with only once during this time period by Synod, its comment was embracive and telling with regards to its concerns.

The Christian community ought to take a hard look at the passivity that dominates not only our culture but our own lives as well. There is a need to call for a truly recreative use of leisure, one which replaces degrading diversions with the kind of play that restores joy and vitality by involving the whole person, with all his wit, muscle, deftness and rhythm. The spirit is different from that in 1928. Though the earlier report affirmed the positive role of amusements, the 1980 Synod invited, called the Christian community, to a serious consideration of the positive role of amusements. Though the difference is subtle, it is nevertheless significant, as recreation was no longer perceived as secular, but an activity that must be brought under the Lordship of Christ.

Within the periodicals and other writings, this period was marked by consistently exposing the profits of exercise. Only one writer questioned going to a gymnasium for exercises, though he did not question the need for exercise. What makes this period slightly different is that discussions usually focused on the benefits of exercise and avoided the "buts". The concept of fitness was sufficiently important that it provided a framework for school curriculum material, elucidated in Self-Respect through Health Fitness.
Perhaps that which is the most striking about the concept of recreation during this time period is the amount of coverage devoted to it. In 1951, Henry Schultz ran a series of articles in the Banner on the topic: "The Christian family and recreation." This series went twenty-two installments in length.¹²⁷ ¹⁹⁶⁰ saw the churches' men's societies gather at a convention to discuss "challenges of our aspiring youth in recreation and sports."¹²⁸ The books of the period emphasized the need for a positive Christian response to leisure time,¹²⁹ as did the articles in the periodicals, which besides Schultz's articles numbered no less than thirty-five.¹³⁰ The comment by Synod, though written in 1980, was typical of much of the writings throughout this time period. Time was a gift of God, not to be wasted, but actively and creatively used.

Vacationing was very much a part of the above writings. An increased interest in vacationing was further noticed by the creation of an annual Vacation Banner, begun in 1974,¹³¹ and a vacation issue in the Calvinist-Contact beginning in 1980.¹³² Each of these issues focusing its meditations and articles on vacationing.

There were only two major areas regarding the welfare of man where negative criticism was given. One area of criticism involved the area of violence, the other area concerned the passivity of a spectator.

With regard to violence and injuries in physically active games, the amount of coverage was increased. Football took the brunt of it. In general, the principle appeared to be summed up well by Barney Steen: "Uncaring about maiming an opponent physically or psychologically is
never to be condoned or encouraged." Dr. De Boer, the health editor for
the Christian Home and School was the first to attack football. He
began by arguing on the grounds that the playing of football has caused
many permanent injuries, and is a form of physical violence, hardly a
Christian concept to be taught in Christian schools. Others rebutted,
but he persisted and finally argued that football violated the sixth
commandment, "thou shalt not kill." Some did disagree, arguing
that the gains outweighed the costs. Another writer once asked a
professional football player, who was a Christian, how he felt about
violence in the game. The player replied that there were two types,
constructive and destructive, the former being when he hit the quarter-
back, and in so doing he did his job. The writer made it clear in his
article that he was not impressed with this response. Others shared
the same view, with one writing, "Football at its most graceful and
refined is still choreographed violence."

The concept of passive spectators evoked a similar response.
One writer felt that America was afflicted with a disease called
"spectatoritis," and many agreed.

The second sub-point, the concept of the welfare of man's soul, or
his spiritual/moral character, received renewed emphasis. Discussion
on skill and chance, the former legitimizing involvement, the latter
making participation illegitimate, was the only concept in this area
that received less discussion than in the previous period. Concepts regarding rules, teamwork, sportsmanship and competition were given
greater attention.

There was no question in the writings that one must play according
to the rules. One author felt that a "man who will cheat in so trivial a thing as a golf game can hardly be trusted in more important matters." Another article, written later in the period, noted "a good hockey player knows when he has been checked within the rules... He realizes it was a good play."

Teamwork was also considered important as a teacher of self-sacrifice. It made the player recognize the need of putting the team ahead of oneself. Further articles mentioned such things as there being no better teacher of teamwork than football. Another writer recognized that some people believed this, but he questioned if it was really so. Furthermore, the promotion of teamwork by cheerleaders was also discussed, along with an article suggesting that if one were to pray for a game, teamwork was a value worthy of mention.

The concept of sportsmanship was also encouraged, and sports and athletics were seen as a good builder of this. This meant remembering when a player himself was inexperienced, and playing a rookie accordingly, and of course, "turning the other shoulder pad." Though one author suggested that any relationship between good sportsmanship and competition was purely coincidental, most felt there was a positive relationship.

The concept of competition was barely discussed prior to 1951, but received considerable attention in the post-1951 period. Primarily it was viewed as a part of life, a part of sport, being an ingredient which encouraged higher levels of performance, and was therefore good. This pragmatic approach, though most popular, did not find unanimous support amongst all the writers.

The concept regarding the secondary nature of physically active
games also experienced a changing emphasis. Evidence of this is found in the changing perceptions of when an activity is played too much. It was difficult to pin down exactly how much time spent on games would be excessive. Though it certainly appeared that Kuiper's recommendation in the forties of involving oneself no more than once a week, was not the rule during the post-1951 period.

In view of the above, it is important to note that the concept of playing full-time did not receive the same negative appraisal as the previous period. This is not to say that there were no negative criticisms, but it was argued differently and there were more positive assessments of the full-time athlete than previous.

Insight took the most positive approach to this area. On different occasions it encouraged watching the professionals, had stories about them, and in one article recommended Sports Illustrated to its readers. This is not to say they did not offer criticisms, but by and large it was rather supportive of the "pro", somewhat of a contradiction to prevailing ideas on spectators. Other periodicals expressed both sides, though on a more sporadic basis.

The only journal that consistently took a negative stand was the Vanguard. From satirical articles on players and events alike, it questioned full-time athletics on the grounds that the play element was being removed from games and that specialization and commercialization created a mass of inactive spectators, caring more about "the king-of-the-castle ceremonies" at the end, than the actual game. Illustration II is a good reflection of what they thought of Olympics and professional sports in general. The Vanguard stopped publishing at the end of 1981,
which may suggest that its views were not typically supported by C.R.C. members.

To summarize this principle of the welfare of man, by comparison with the previous period one can observe some interesting elements of stability and change. Fundamentally, both periods held a positive view of involvement in physically active games. However, the latter period saw a more emphatic calling of people to active Christian involvement. This change was apparent in a number of different ways. Though a small indicator, there was very little mention of the concept of skill as a legitimizing criterion for involvement in physically active games. Legitimizing involvement appeared to be no longer necessary in the post-1951 period. There were also fewer presentations dealing with what not to do and an increase in the amount of writing advising positive forms of play, recreation, exercise and vacationing. Perhaps as a consequence of these more positive perceptions of involvement, the concept of playing as a vocation found greater acceptance.

The main thread tying together the two periods is a positive view of involvement in physically active games. The concept of respecting rules, the benefits of teamwork and the value of good sportsmanship remained basically intact throughout both periods. The notion of being a passive spectator was discouraged in both periods, though less consistently in the latter period which saw a greater acceptance of professional/commercial sport.

C. Christian separation from the world.

The striking element with regard to this section is the little amount of writing devoted to it, particularly evident in comparison to
the increase in coverage to other concepts, and in view of the space devoted to it in the pre-1951 period. One of the first articles, quite different from those of the previous periods encouraged Christian people to be involved in the recreation world beyond one's own community as a leavening influence. This article was, however, atypical, as the pre-1951 isolationistic views were usually expressed. The few other comments stated that one should seek his friends from his own people, and therefore places such as pool halls were no place to be. This type of isolationistic comment was more typical of the fifties. There were only a few articles on this principle beyond the fifties, and they often dealt with such things as foul language or elements of the dance, particularly in the case of the Outlook.

This change from considerable attention to scant coverage again supports the position that the C.R.C. was adopting a less cautious approach to "the world". Though the principle was viewed similarly in both periods, this change in perceived significance is telling.

d. **Christian liberty.**

This concept was developed in a report on the film arts, which was adopted by Synod in 1966 and referred to in subsequent Synodical reports dealing with dance. There is essentially little difference in how this concept was written about in both periods of study.

e. **Role of the church.**

As before, the view was maintained that providing recreation for its members was something that was beyond the province of the church. The church was called to be a guide and prophet, not a community recreation
centre. 170 Though some writing was devoted to encouraging the churches' involvement, 171 more typical was the encouragement of church members organizing activities totally separate from the church institution. 172 As with Christian liberty the concept would appear not to have undergone much change.

F. Conclusions.

The post-1951 period was marked by several significant changes. The basic principles were maintained, but their content significantly altered in several cases. With regard to the honour of God there was an increase in the acceptance of physically active games being played on Sunday, and from an avoidance and condemnation of dance, the period ended with the condemnation of some forms of dance, and encouragement to participate in other forms. The change towards the Sunday revolved around a new understanding of rest. The change regarding dance, arose out of a more positive view of sexual expression.

Views on the welfare of man were in essence unchanged. Positive views of exercise, concern for the well-being of the whole man and the position that involvement in amusements must be of secondary importance, were central throughout the entire period under study. There was, however, a shift in emphasis on involvement in dance and physically active games, and less emphasis on providing a rationale for legitimate forms of involvement.

Isolation remained as the typical response to the relation of the Christian to the world. There was, however, a greater acceptance of professional/commercial sport, both as something to be observed and in which to participate.
The concept of Christian liberty in its principled form remained unchanged. However, the post-1951 era, with an increase in different types of periodicals, provided for greater opportunity for the expression of divergent opinions. This does not mean that the concept of Christian liberty was necessarily larger in theory or in practice. But in reality this writer feels that this increase in a variety of periodicals created a spirit of, "I work it out in my way, you work it out in yours." Both sides may have felt the other was wrong, yet each had an avenue to express and maintain its views. Consequently the denomination in general developed a less narrow ideology.

The role of the church as an institution remained that of giving directions in principle, and avoiding practical assistance.

To summarize this section and the changes occurring in it, three points may be made. One: the five principles were central throughout both periods. Two: changes which did occur, concerned how the principles were understood, and there were several such significant changes. Three: the direction of the changes basically inclined towards a less cautious approach to "the world."

2. The Chatham congregations

Local church congregations are rarely in the habit of spelling out an embracive ideology on involvement in dance and physically active games. Chatham was no exception. As will be pointed out in the following chapter, there was a great increase in involvement, but still no articulated ideology. The gleanings of information are exactly that, the reaping of isolated parts, fragments for constructing a skeleton of thought on dance and physically active games.
a. God must be honoured.

This principle embraces two areas: Sunday rest and dance. The former received considerable attention, while the latter received less attention. The amount of attention given was in part a reflection of a prevailing difference with regard to views on the Sunday, and a lack of difference with regard to dance.

With regard to Sundays, the prevailing spirit of this period was to keep it as a day of rest free from organized sports. This found expression in a number of ways. The topic was regularly discussed at 'young peoples' meetings, and people were reminded from time to time through church bulletins to keep Sunday as a day of rest and worship, including when it came time for vacations. But there were two other sources of data which are more convincing.

The first event revolved around the 1961 municipal elections and the referendum regarding the opening of movie theatres and permitting the playing of commercial sports on Sundays. The young people became actively involved in this campaign along with other young people from various Chatham churches. The campaign included bumper stickers, radio and newspaper announcements, as well as holding an open air service downtown, which was led by Herman Vellinga, one of the C.R.C. young people, with the C.R.C. minister Rev. L. Mulder, being one of the main speakers. See Illustration III which is a copy of the Sunday bulletin of the congregation at that time, and Illustration IV, a copy of an advertisement sponsored by the Chatham Churches in the Chatham Daily News.

The other group which actively worked against organizing Sunday
1. 800 car bumper stickers have been printed and distributed to the above mentioned churches. We trust that the bumper stickers which were placed in your car last Sunday are now being displayed on your car bumper.

2. This coming week we will use the media of the radio at the following times and trust that you will tune in and listen to as many of the programs as possible: C.F.G.O. - 630 on your dial.

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3. We will also use the medium of the newspaper and advertisement will be appearing in the Chatham Daily News on Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday. Our biggest ad will appear on Saturday in the size of a half page or full page. In this ad will be set forth the reasons why we oppose Sunday movies and sports.

4. On Thursday night of this week pamphlets will be delivered to every home in Chatham and Harwich Township. This pamphlet was written by our pastor Rev. L. Mulder and Mr. John Vriesinga.

5. 100 Store window cards have been printed and delivered and are now on display in the stores of this city.

   To wind up this campaign there will be a gigantic OPEN AIR SERVICE and HYP SING on Friday Dec. 1, starting at 7:10 am at the Congregational Church. At this service there will be guest speakers. We strongly urge every young person in this congregation to attend this service and use your talents in the form of singing. Even your presence will be a tremendous witness. The theme of this campaign is "The Voice of Christian Youth in Chatham and District". Our next meeting will be held on Monday Nov. 27, in the Pentecostal Holiness Church on College St. at 7:45 pm.

   We strongly urge every young person in this church who would like to take an active part to attend.
ILLUSTRATION IV

VOTE NO

On Monday, December 4th

Vote NO

on both

• SUNDAY MOVIES
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"The Voice of Christian Youth of Chatham & District"
play was the Chatham Christian Hockey League. Various people informed this writer that in part this league was created so their boys could play hockey, since many of the other leagues in town played some of their games on Sundays. This concern over Sunday was included in the league's constitution, stating that "people involved in organized Sunday hockey are automatically ineligible for C.C.H.L. play."\textsuperscript{178}

With regard to professional/commercial sports being played on Sundays, the data suggests this did not have the support of most of the C.R.C. members in Chatham. In 1963 a bulletin announcement condemned watching commercial sports on television on Sunday.\textsuperscript{179} Consistory applied pressure towards Sunday rest as well. In an interview with Fred Colenbrander, a member of Grace C.R.C., who purchased the Chatham Maroons in 1976, he pointed out that he eventually decided to sell the team on account of pressures from consistory, because the Maroons played some of their games on Sunday.

Though the prevailing view was against involvement in organized games on Sunday,\textsuperscript{180} there were some inklings of change surfacing in the seventies. For one, just the fact that the Chatham Christian Hockey League needed to institute the ruling it did, tells something. Furthermore, at one executive meeting where the rule was questioned and voted on, the result was a tie vote, almost enough to rescind it.\textsuperscript{181} With regard to the young people's society, there was discussion in 1977 at reserving McNaughton Avenue School one Sunday evening, every two months to engage in games in the gymnasium.\textsuperscript{182} In 1979, the idea was suggested to organize games between the three Chatham C.R.C.'s on Sunday. This latter idea was decided against, not because it was right or wrong, good
or evil, but "because this could cause some friction."\textsuperscript{183}

Though a violation of the seventh commandment was the context for criticising dance, it is difficult to argue this case with respect to Chatham. For one, there was little talk of dance, and as will be pointed out in the next chapter, there was little involvement in it. There was a report in the minutes of 1963 of the young people's society, that dancing was a questionable entertainment, becoming an increasingly strong temptation.\textsuperscript{184} More recently it again came to the fore.

Rhythmics was used in girls' physical education classes in the Christian high school, but was removed from the curriculum in 1976 on the recommendation of a "Creative Arts Report".\textsuperscript{185} When a gymnasium was built in 1978, a stipulation for using the facility for personal use required the person not to use the building for dancing.\textsuperscript{186} To the attempt to understand why rhythmics was removed, the following explanation was offered: "All types of rhythmics which contain steps or movements indicating the dance are offensive to a number of our members and for that reason will be removed from any part of the curriculum."\textsuperscript{187} What was offensive about rhythmics was not specifically spelled out, though one might accurately surmise that in their opinion dance might lead to improper sexual activity. However, earlier in the report it was argued by some that there were both good and bad dances,\textsuperscript{188} and as a committee they felt that Christians should claim dance for the Lord.\textsuperscript{189} The removal of rhythmics from the curriculum was in reality a purely political maneuver to appease some dissenting members.

b. Consideration must be given to the welfare of man.

The denomination's positive concern for man recreating, the concern
for man's spiritual/moral character, and the secondary nature of amusements, were in large part echoed, though in a more limited way, by C.R.C. members in Chatham.

The legitimacy of taking time to recreate, and the need to care for one's body found considerable support during the time period. As a concept, recreation often came up for discussion at various meetings, both as a topic for study and for purposes of planning and participating in recreational activities. In 1970, the Board of Trustees from First C.R.C. opened the church hall up on Thursday evenings. Since no meetings were being held then, they thought it a good opportunity for people to come and play together. Furthermore, by 1975, the consistory at Grace C.R.C., being sufficiently convinced of the positive potential of recreation when it was well done, expressed what they perceived as a need for a building for youth recreation. In addition, by 1976, the young people's society at Grace C.R.C. decided that if they were to have good weekly meetings, they needed to get to know each other more on a social basis. Consequently they decided that one of their evenings per month would be of a social, recreational nature. First C.R.C. young people followed their example the following year. There was also the Chatham Christian Hockey League, which was established in 1972 to provide a positive form of recreation.

Views on the human body were a little more difficult to ascertain, though what was said always presented the body in a positive fashion. Early in this period, Rev. Van Weelden commented in a church bulletin, that it was "important that we keep in good physical condition." One also reads in a young people's minute book the conclusions of a discussion on the body: "the body is the temple of the Spirit... we must honour God
with our bodies. The *Christian Education Newsletter* also made reference to the role of physical activity to the body. One teacher in describing the schools' athletic program stated: "We purposefully strive to achieve new levels of physical coordination, to maximize the fitness of our hearts, lungs and other muscles, to create grace and confidence as the awareness of our wonderful complexity grows." Another teacher later stated that in remaining physically active, "we develop and maintain the 'temples' of the Lord." In addition the local P.T.A. sponsored an evening on the concept of fitness.

These positive affirmations of recreation and the body were not without qualifications, however. For instance, an article in the *South Waster*, the young people's newsletter, contained an article in 1976 on recreation. The author encouraged young people to avoid limiting the recreational choices to only one activity, but instead diversifying their interests, and so making better use of the seasons and circumstances.

Injuries and violence in sports were also of concern. These concerns were expressed both in church bulletins and by the Chatham Christian Hockey League. Fighting in a hockey game was not perceived in a positive fashion, as evidenced by the C.C.H.L.'s ruling that anyone fighting in a game would receive a game misconduct and a $5.00 fine. But the very fact that such a rule needed to be instituted, would suggest that a negative view of fighting was not unanimously held. On the other side of this rule, there were some who thought this ruling did not even go far enough and questioned the very structure of C.C.H.L. play. The Calvary C.R.C. consistory, for example, wrote a letter to the C.C.H.L. asking: "Would non-contact hockey not be a means of improving hockey skills, while at the same time not inciting as many grudges and tempers?"
In response, the C.C.H.L. neither returned a letter or changed any of its structure of play.

Even with the concern over people's physical health, the physically passive involvement of a spectator was nevertheless encouraged. Spectators were usually perceived as being an asset to the team's playing. Bulletin announcements advertising games often included one of the following three requests to spectators: "Come out and cheer for our boys," "Cheer our boys on to victory," or "Come out for a good evening of family entertainment." 206

With regard to man's spiritual/moral well being one finds little discussion. The lack of discussion on concepts such as teamwork and respect for rules is, however, not due to a lack of interest in these concerns, but is largely due to the lack of a forum for discussing these concepts. What little was said about the importance of skills 207 and sportsmanship 208 being developed and expressed in a game was very much in line with the expressed denominational position of this period. However, insufficient data precludes conclusive remarks in this area.

Regarding the concept of recreation's secondary nature, no data was found to indicate a view on what was considered excessive or insufficient involvement.

Thus with regard to the welfare of man the evidence on the Chatham C.R.C. community is unfortunately rather thin. Realizing the above limitations, several conclusions, though tentative in nature, will nevertheless be given. Both Chatham and the denomination appear to have a marked similarity in perspective. Both expressed positive support to recreational activity that enhanced physical attributes and generally disapproved of destructive acts. Views on the need for skill and sportsman-
ship as legitimizing involvement in play were also perceived similarly by congregations and denomination. The concepts of teamwork, respect of rules, and recreation being of a secondary nature, were insufficiently addressed to warrant even the most tentative conclusions.

In conclusion, with regard to the welfare of man, the views of the Chatham C.R.C. community appears fairly representative of the denomination.

c. Christian separation from the world.

With regard to being in the world and not of it, the direction in Chatham seemed to go towards group isolation and the removal of worldly practices. However, what is worldly practice was not clear. The Chatham Christian Hockey League, modeling itself in large part after the National Hockey League, with an exception such as a swearing penalty, was a case in point.

The idea of being in the world but not of it, or not forming separate communities, was not much in evidence from the data used. Though it was a fine line between fellowshipping with one's own people and isolating oneself from others, both Lakewood Christian Conference Grounds and the Chatham Christian Hockey League tended to be examples of the latter. With regards to Lakewood, the constitution stipulated that to be a director one needed to be from a church of one of the founding members, i.e. C.R.C. churches in South West Ontario. If one wished to be a member, one needed to agree with the constitution and be accepted by the board of directors. This was an effective way of keeping undesirables out, i.e. non-C.R.C. In 1980, when a new constitution was proposed, a new name was also recommended, that being Lakewood Christian Reformed
Camping and Conference Grounds. This was an isolationistic move that was not accepted by the membership, though the results were close. 210

The Chatham Christian Hockey League only permitted players who were in good standing with their church and restricted the churches to the three C.R.C.'s in Chatham plus one other Reformed Church. 211

Even though there was an isolationistic mentality inclining towards playing with their own, the nature of play is often modeled after "the world." Worthy of note was the indirect influence of professional sport, particularly on the Chatham Christian Hockey League. Not only did two of the teams take N.H.L. team names, the Northstars and Canadians, but the league's paraphernalia was very similar. Players were "the property of" teams, there were "imports," "protests," "release forms," and "showdowns." 212

There were ten trophies awarded for such things as "Playoff Champions" and "Most Valuable Player." 213 Statistics were tabulated, calculated and compared for such things as goals, assists and even shots on goal. A review of this league's annual yearbooks of some forty pages in length averaged as much as twenty-five percent of the books being devoted to statistics. 214

The C.R.C. people were also to avoid the evils of the world. One of the evils dealt with was that of foul language. This too concerned the C.C.H.L. One reads of it in 1976 when the executive informs the teams that "referees do not like to be called names, sworn at or being made out as a fool." Misconducts would be the penalty for such an injunction. 215

In June 1978 the problem was still present, as the board received a letter stating a spectator's displeasure at the "swearing and foul language used and apparently permitted." 217 By the fall of that year, stricter means were employed, as a notice to the teams read that an infringement of
the swearing rule would be penalized as follows:

"2 minute penalty to be served by a team mate on the ice at the time of the infraction, plus, for the first offence, benched for 20 minutes plus a $5.00 fine, for the second offence, benched for 40 minutes plus a $5.00 fine. STOP SWERING." 219

Once again this was an illustration of a governing body imposing a rule to a principle evidently not shared by all C.R.C. members in Chatham.

As was the case at the denominational level, an isolationistic attitude, though still the norm, tended to break down, if not with regard to who one played with, certainly in view of how one played. The C.C.H.L. is a good case in point, its very structure being a secular one, with a few "Christian rules" added. Had there been a unanimity in perspective, rules such as penalties for foul language would not have been necessary.

d. Christian liberty

The concept of Christian liberty is difficult to pin down with the methodology used in this study. The previously mentioned consistorial pressures on Fred Colenbrander may be taken as an illustration of the lack of Christian liberty, but where the line was generally drawn for individual liberty on moral choices can not be discerned here.

e. Role of the church.

The boundary was theoretically kept between church and play. Though the hockey teams were basically representative of the churches they were named after, they were not officially sponsored by the church. Activities engaged in by various societies from the church were secondary to the purpose of the society. For example, there were few church sponsored groups that were responsible for organizing recreation. An exception to
this was a short lived "Rainy Night's Club."

The churches' facilities permitted some involvement in physically active games, but again as an extra activity for its societies. First C.R.C. was best suited for physically active games, with a large enough hall to play some improvised volleyball. Grace C.R.C. had a large room with two shuffleboards placed in the tiles on the floor and Calvary C.R.C. purchased "Andy's place," a restaurant that went out of business, for a church building which was occasionally used for floor hockey when the chairs were removed from the sanctuary.

The church once again took the position of leadership via the proclamation of principles and stepping into a situation where they felt an individual or group was in transgression of such principles. Practical input was kept to a minimum.

f. Conclusion

Though the data presents but a thin skeleton, it does take a certain shape. Certainly a more definite shape can be seen than was possible in the pre-1951 period.

With regard to the honour of God, the perception of what rest meant on Sunday changed and views on dance remained fairly firm. The beginning of this period gave evidence of a strong unified response against organized sports on Sunday; the period ended with subtle suggestions indicating breaks in the previous firm and unified position. A similar development occurred in dance, with the "Creative Arts Report" seeing the need for positive development of dance, but politically eliminating it from the curriculum to appease a small group who objected.

Views on the welfare of man remained basically unchanged. Positive
views regarding active involvement were expressed. Concern over violence was spelled out in the rules of the Chatham Christian Hockey League, suggesting that some players were not as sensitive to the concerns over violence as compared to the mean position.

The relation to the world remained one of isolation. They wished to provide activities for their own people, by their own people, and for no one beside. The structure of activities such as the Chatham Christian Hockey League did not always indicate an isolation with regard to the form of play. The Chatham Christian Hockey League in many ways was modelled after the National Hockey League.

C. **Comparison of the substance of fundamental principles**

The purpose of this chapter was to determine and compare the substance of fundamental principles held by the C.R.C. denomination with those of C.R.C. persuasion in Chatham, through the two time periods delineated. It was found that though the principles remained the same, their understanding in several cases changed significantly from 1926 to 1981. It also became evident that generally speaking, the views held by the C.R.C. and by those of C.R.C. persuasion in Chatham were essentially reflective of each other.

As has been pointed out in this chapter, the general principles as they were listed by the Synod of 1928, remained central to the discussion throughout the time period studied. The honour of God was important in 1928, and it was still important in 1981. What changed was the content given to some of these principles, particularly as this concerned the honour of God, the welfare of man, and separation from the world. The principles of Christian liberty and the role of the church shifted less
Without specifically addressing the changes that occurred, the following pattern seemed apparent. The period 1926–1950 was typically marked by a lack of change. Significant changes which did occur, took place in the 1951–1981 era, with particularly active change taking place in the years surrounding 1951 and 1970.

The nature of the changes which took place might best be described as going from a cautious, legitimizing kind of mentality in the first period, to a period being less cautious, and less concerned with legitimizing involvement than discussing how one ought to play.

It seems to this writer that central to an understanding of a less cautious approach is the concept of Christian liberty. Though this principle appeared to change little in theory, there were other variables at work to make this theory broader in practice. Two variables of importance in this respect were the increased media of communication at the denominational level (see Table I), and a numerical increase in the members of the C.R.C. in Chatham. Both of these variables were post-1951 phenomena.

Specifically the effects of the above can be seen in various principles. The cautious to less cautious approach can perhaps best be seen in the changing views on sport on Sunday, and dance. There was increased acquiescence to Sunday sport and approval of proper sexual expression through various forms of dance. Furthermore, with regard to legitimizing involvement, the pre-1951 data tended to focus on just that. Towards the end of this period and moving into the post-1951 frame, one observes an increase in the concerns dealing with how one ought to play. For example, such concepts as worldliness and skill received greater attention in the pre-1951 period than such concepts as competition, recreation and sports-
manship. The inverse was true for the period following it.

In part, the first hypothesis, established in this paper, suggested that the views of the C.R.C. denomination and the views of the Chatham C.R.C. would parallel each other. The findings of this chapter would support that hypothesis. However, the validity of the hypothesis is in part dependent on the two hypotheses which followed it and therefore a look at the C.R.C.'s practical, active involvement is necessary before this hypothesis can be more conclusively verified.
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2 Acta Synodi 1928, 9 - 10.


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188 Slofstra, Creative arts, 3.
189 Slofstra, Creative arts, 6.
192 GB, April 20, 1975.
196 FB, September 5, 1969.
197 Minutes of the Calvary C.R.C. Young Peoples' Society, November 16, 1980.


200 To be or not to be... Fit, Christian Education Newsletter, 7 (4), March 1980, 5.

201 Peter Slofstra, About that leisure time, South Wester, May 1977, 7 & 24.

202 FB, August 12, 1956; October 1, November 5, December 24, 1967; June 9, April 23, 1978; and GB, January 29, 1978.


209 Lakewood Christian Conference Grounds Constitution and By-Laws.

210 This writer was a member of the board of directors of Lakewood and was present at the membership meeting April 19, 1980, held at Grace C.R.C. in Chatham, Ontario.


215 Report on meeting of referees affiliated with the Church Hockey League, 1976/77.


218 GB, November 21, 1976.
CHAPTER III

THE FORMS OF INVOLVEMENT

It is one thing to state objectives; it is another to act consistently with one's objectives. The question of concern in this chapter is what was the relationship of the forms of involvement in dance and physically active games, with the substance of fundamental principles. That is, in terms of the second and third hypotheses, to what extent were the objectives of the denomination and the Chatham congregations actualized in their practices regarding dance and physically active games; and, when changes occurred, did the involvement in actual practices precede or follow changes in the objectives? Furthermore, regarding the first hypothesis, how did these objectives, practices and their changes compare between the C.R.C. denomination and the congregations in Chatham?

The format of the previous chapter will also be followed in this one, using the same time periods of 1926 - 1950 and 1951 - 1981, and following the five principles of the 1928 report to Synod.

A. 1926 - 1950

1. The C.R.C. denomination

This period was summarized in the last chapter as one with little change in thinking. Not only did views barely change, but as will be argued here they were largely adhered to during the pre-1951 time period.
a. **Honor of God.**

The content for this section, as discussed in the previous chapter, falls under the concerns regarding resting on Sunday and adultery encouraged by dancing. The objectives generally stated that one should not involve oneself in sports on Sunday, nor should one dance. These objectives were generally acted upon, though not unanimously or without some tensions.

With regard to the use of Sunday, only a few concrete illustrations were found in the data. The one positive example concerns Johnny Roukema, a U.S. nationally ranked speed skater, and a member of the C.R.C., who refused to participate in the tryouts on January the 19th, 1947, because that day was a Sunday.¹

Negative examples were more readily available, as an infringement of this concept was sure to receive criticism. Of those involved in professional/commercial sport one reads only of a Vander Meer, who played professional baseball on Sundays during the thirties.² Certainly during the early part of the period, Vander Meer was the exception, though he was not alone in his thinking. The number of articles concerning the use of Sunday is of significance, as pointed out in the previous chapter these articles were not written in a vacuum, but as a response to questions and concerns. The number of articles on this topic would certainly indicate that there was a sufficiently large group of people who played on Sundays, or surely wished to. That people did, is only really evidence in the forties, when one reads such a comment as "Young people who work during the week often go to the cottage on Saturday and stay until Sunday night or early Monday morning. This is quite prevalent among us..."
They go swimming, boating and fishing on Sunday because they feel like it, and then rationalize their conduct by saying that it's restful. 3

Involvement in dance ran a somewhat similar course as that of Sunday rest. The fact that people danced and others perhaps desired to, is also in part evidenced by the continuous warnings against doing so. The Banner alone devoted no less than forty-five articles to the topic during this period. An overture to the 1926 Synod stated that "worldly amusements, such as ... dancing... are increasingly indulged in, especially by the youthful members of the church in the larger cities." This concern was also voiced in the 1928 synodical report. 4 According to a teenager during the early thirties, even with the warning against dancing, "the more daring blades and their girl friends failed not to discover hospitable inns for their swing around the floor." 5

It seems that towards the end of the thirties, dancing had also found a place in the rural areas. H.J. Kuiper stated that he was "greatly surprised to learn,... that in some of our Western churches certain of our young people engage in this old-fashioned type of dancing, square dancing and two step, at social parties." He added, "we hope wherever this custom has been permitted to creep in, it will be discontinued." 6 His words did not appear to have the effect he desired as five years later, another writer noted: "It seems that some of our rural sections are rather much afflicted with what an elder describes to me as the square skip, the square dance, and similar games, which require embracing, some more or less." 7 Though evidence regarding involvement in dance was recorded, how much of the above actually led to adultery was not recorded.
Though the stated objectives remained rather unchanged during this period, one observes two threads when comparing stated objectives with what actually occurred. The first is that though the tendency was toward physically inactive Sundays and remaining off the dance floor, these objectives were by no means upheld unanimously. Second, there appeared to be an increasing shift away from these principles as the period moved closer to 1951. It should be added, though that by no means, even by 1951, was the C.R.C. by and large participating in physically active games on Sundays or engaging in dance. There was always a minority of dissidents, but their numbers were growing.

b. Welfare of man.

This principle was further subdivided into three sections. The first of these concerned the legitimacy of physical activity which was recreative for body and mind. The second dealt with the concern over possible negative repercussions an activity might have on a person's spiritual and moral well-being. The third section concerned the need for such activities as physically active games maintaining a secondary position in one's life.

The concerns of this time period, in view of the first sub-point, were largely concerned with legitimizing involvement. The concepts that were valued were people's physical development and the need to relax. Conversely, there were concerns over sport injuries and the passive participation of the spectator.

With regard to the above considerations there were a number of sports that C.R.C. people participated in, and for which they were not criticized on the above ground. The nature of involvement in these sports will be
discussed in a rough descending order of their popularity. They were as follows: baseball (by far the most popular), bowling, golf, basketball, volleyball, tennis, archery, ping pong, and pool. In addition there were several sports that were mentioned but appeared to find little or no involvement during this time period. They were soccer, football and ice hockey.

But the discussion must go beyond a description of legitimate and illegitimate involvement if one is to deal adequately with one of the hypotheses, that a change in action preceded a change in thinking. If that were the case, then a change in involvement should have occurred towards the end of this period or the beginning of the next.

Baseball was the king of sports during the 1926-1950 period and is consequently an extremely useful indicator. Baseball was played throughout this period, at a low organizational level. When a group of C.R.C. men established a summer camp in 1928 for the church's youth, Baseball was apparently one of the most popular sports. In subsequent years, with the inclusion of intercamp competitions with camps at Atwood and Ellsworth, Michigan, baseball continued to be enjoyed as part of the camp experience. There were annual games for men which were held on the evenings of school field days. Sand-lot baseball was played, and one also reads of young people trying to raise money during the thirties for baseball equipment. In 1946 a change occurred. The first young people's leagues were set up for C.R.C. boys in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. This was a significant shift from what previously was a low level of organization to an organization which consisted of two leagues of fourteen teams, complete with playoffs and trophies, a system
which has continued and expanded to the present day.14

Bowling, though much less popular than baseball, was still the
next most popular sport, and had a history which unfolded like baseball.
In 1926, according to a synodical report, members of the C.R.C. were
already bowling.15 Furthermore, it was reported in 1929 that some of
the young people were receiving bowling instruction at school, that some
churches sponsored and "properly supervised" weekly bowling, and the
author of this report encouraged more churches to do the same.16 H.J.
Kuiper even encouraged participation in the game.17 By the mid-forties,
bowling received renewed discussion, as did baseball, with reports of
more church-sponsored bowling leagues 18 and individuals bowling on their
own.19 Towards the end of the period one reads of a young men's society
which reserved a bowling alley for two nights a week, one night for
league play, the other night to prepare and practice.20

Golf, also appeared to be relatively popular throughout the period,
though unlike the previous two activities its level of involvement
appeared more constant. Golf was usually listed as one of the attractions
for the boys' summer camp.21 In 1927, a group of C.R.C. men sufficiently
enjoyed the sport that they purchased the Pine Hills Country Club, a
course near Grand Rapids, Michigan.22 Beyond this one also reads the
occasional reference to C.R.C. men playing the game as a form of recreation23
or as one of vacation's pleasures.24

Basketball, unlike baseball, did not appear to be participated in
to any large extent till the forties.26 Like baseball, it experienced
increased involvement and structuring in the forties, 1941 being the first
time one reads of C.R.C. members being involved in the game. Young men's
church teams appear to have begun in 1946 when gym time was secured and
and teams played one night a week.\(^\text{26}\) By 1947 a league was established and by 1949 one reads of trophies and playoffs with the final game being played in a neutral gym.\(^\text{27}\) 1948 also saw Calvin College come into the picture, when it launched its new name for its basketball team, "the Knights".\(^\text{28}\)

Of those activities appearing to be somewhat less popular, three general divisions could be made. Volleyball,\(^\text{29}\) archery and tennis\(^\text{30}\) were by and large camp activities, tennis was also played at schools\(^\text{31}\) and other places,\(^\text{32}\) and pool was played in houses and pool halls. With regard to pool and pool halls there was support for the former and concern over the latter.\(^\text{33}\) Soccer, football, and ice hockey, were all activities that found few C.R.C. participants. In the data reviewed soccer was only evidence as a label on a field at a camp;\(^\text{34}\) football was the same with the addition of a picture of a football field behind a Christian high school in 1948.\(^\text{35}\) Ice hockey was only referred to once, as a winter activity in western Michigan. The article gave no indication as to C.R.C. members being involved.\(^\text{36}\)

Not only was involvement evidenced in hands-on participation, but it was also evident in the acquiring of facilities on which to play. The majority of the facilities were either free or rented, but some notable acquisitions were made by C.R.C. people and are listed on Table V.

### Table V

**Significant Acquisitions and Purchases: 1926 – 1950**

1. A golf course - Pine Hills Country Club - bought in 1927 - located near Grand Rapids, Michigan.\(^\text{37}\)

2. Camp - Camp Roger - bought in 1940 - located near Kalamazoo, Michigan.\(^\text{38}\)

3. Eight acre plot - Baseball diamonds and picnic site and parking - Grand Rapids Christian Youth Center - bought in 1950 - located in Grand Rapids, Michigan.\(^\text{39}\)
The sports activities mentioned appear to be consistent with the denomination's concern that recreative activities ought to be physically upbuilding, relaxing, and requiring skill. The popularity of the sports, however, does not appear to correlate directly with the level of physical exertion. Soccer would demand more cardio-vascular fitness than baseball, yet baseball is much more popular. It would appear then that there was no precision as to practically and consistently working out their ideological objectives. Beyond a general categorization of which sports were good and which were bad, the actualization of objectives provides little evidence to suggest the objectives were applied beyond the general level. Activities considered detrimental to one's physiological well-being seem to have been avoided in practice. Notably the martial arts, particularly boxing, are conspicuous by their absence.

Excessive involvement in physically active games was defined in the pre-1951 period as more than once a week. Though there are only a few examples which indicate "excessive" involvement, one gets a sense that these examples were not atypical. H.J. Kuiper wrote in the forties that he knew of "some of our churches, young people and older ones... who spend two or three evenings a week in the bowling alley." Also in the forties, as previously referred to there was a young men's society bowling on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Earlier it was noted that principal change did not seem to occur during this period, and that if practice preceded objectives, change in actions should have occurred just prior to the fifties. Though the methodology used permits but a tentative conclusion, the above statement does appear to find support. A brief review of some of the findings.
indicated inter-church baseball leagues beginning in 1946, bowling's popularity rising in the forties, basketball coming to the fore during this decade and two major recreational facilities being purchased. The indications are certainly there that the C.R.C. moved from irregular low-level organization of play to a higher level of play with an increased level in participants and participation.

The passive participation of spectators tended to be discouraged in the literature. However, careful reading indicates a discrepancy here between what was desired, and what was actually being done. Baseball in particular, and later on also basketball, made a willing spectator out of many a C.R.C. person. Discussions in the periodicals indicated that being a baseball spectator was something a good many C.R.C. people were. When a reader asked if "a minister of the gospel should attend or play in a public ball game," H.J. Kuiper, a conservative editor of the Banner, simply stated that "there is no sin in a ball game as such."41 Ralph Stob, a professor at Calvin College at the time, begins an article on baseball as follows: "'Play Ball!' Breathes there a man in America who has not felt thrilled when these words come from the mouth of the umpire at the beginning of the game? Yes, many of them. And some are among my acquaintances and friends."42

Debates continued over the propriety of being a spectator at baseball games. But by the very fact that there was so much discussion,43 and comments such as, "Personally, I cannot see that baseball as a recreation, either for those who play or for the spectator, is to be condemned on Christian principle,"44 written by editors of the Banner, indicated both the acceptance and participation of C.R.C. people as spectators.
By 1941, it was remarked about basketball that, "in not a few of our churches, basketball games enjoy full attendance."\(^{45}\) By 1941, the Grand Rapids Christian High School had entered a city basketball league, and drew many fans "showing their loyalty" to their team.\(^{46}\)

It should also be mentioned that though the welfare of man was not so narrow as to exclude women, engagement in physically active games tended to incline itself to men. The summer camp begun in the twenties was for young men. The baseball leagues that were set up were for boys, and only later were some girls' teams formed. Ralph Stob asked, "breathes there a man in America who has not felt thrilled" (underlining added). A change occurred in the forties when one reads such reports as the one below from a young men's society reporting on its twice a week bowling nights.

You may wonder why Wednesday night and Saturday night were chosen when we as young men usually date? Well, the girls come along and bowl in the spare alleys. We'll send you a picture some time.

Though society included women in their bowling, they certainly relegated them to an inferior position.

It would be well to reemphasize the changes that took place in the forties. First, play became more organized into league structures, and there was an accompanying increase in the number of spectators. Second, though sport was predominantly for males, females became more involved during the decade than before.

The objectives concerning the welfare of man were by and large consistently actualized, with some exceptions to be noted. If physiological well-being was of importance, why play baseball over soccer? The answer to that lay not in the objectives, but in the American culture they were
a part of. The objectives did not give direction as much as they provided
boundaries between good and bad. The fact that males had more opportunity
than females was not on account of stated objectives, but conformity to
American culture. Where the culture and objectives conflicted was the
idea of spectators, and as with female non-participation, the objectives
lost.

c. Christian separation from the world.

This principle was rooted in John 17:15, the notion of being in
the world and not of it. The theory was not meant to be isolationistic,
but did wish the church's members to avoid contact with evil. As this
theory was developed, it did encourage isolationism, and what in fact
happened was typically isolationistic.

Pool and pool halls perhaps best illustrate this point. The game
itself was encouraged. But when it was to be played in pool-halls, where
all sorts of evil fellows committed all sorts of evil deeds, that was dis-
couraged. Nevertheless, some church members continued to play in pool
halls. It was of sufficient concern to Classis Wisconsin that they pointed
out to the 1926 Synod, that there were church members who participated
in the Lord's Supper and also visited poolrooms. H. J. Kuiper pointed
out in that same year that "some of our young people, perhaps some of our
older members too, frequent poolrooms and that the poolroom is not a whit
less dangerous than the movie!" In 1941, another article indicated
little change as far as young people attending the pool halls. The
point in all of this was to play a good game but not in bad company.
Though generally adhered to, the view did not find unanimous support.

Bowling was very similar to pool. As a game it was encouraged, but
not in "mixed company", and though some did, it was certainly frowned upon and was the exception rather than the rule. The concerns about playing with "worldly people" was also evidenced in a synodical report where Calvin College's basketball team was discussed. In defense of the activity, Calvin playing basketball with secular colleges, it was pointed out that all games were watched with a careful eye, listened to with a sensitive ear, and any improper conduct would immediately be protested. 52

Baseball was the one sport where the concern over being a spectator at a "worldly" event was not much in evidence. Concerns over being in "mixed company" were expressed, but as an activity it appeared to find wide support among the C.R.C. It could be speculated that this evidences an acceptance of an American institution, but to discover exactly why this was so would go beyond the purposes of this present study.

In reality, the above were exceptions to the prevailing objectives and actions. Isolation was so important that Calvin needed to defend its basketball program, and pool halls and bowling alleys do not generally appear to be places C.R.C. people frequented in the pre-1951 period. Furthermore, it should be remembered how C.R.C. people bought their own recreational areas, and formed leagues in baseball, basketball, and bowling for their own people.

d. Christian liberty.

Beyond the area of dance, one does not read of any concrete disciplinary stand being taken. Some efforts to this end were made in the 1926 Synod. A motion was made that those playing in pool halls and bowling alleys be disallowed from participating in the Lord's Supper, but this
was not adopted. The data is insufficient to permit ascertaining the extent Christian liberty was actually practiced.

e. Role of the Church.

With regard to the Churches' role in promoting participation in physically active games, there seemed in the previous chapters to be a gradual movement through this period, of non-involvement to increased involvement. However, this cannot be as clearly seen in the actions of the C.R.C. One may ask about the golf course that was purchased in 1927, or the summer camps that were operated in the summers and the purchase of Camp Roger in 1940. But in all three of these cases, the church as such had no official involvement with these activities and acquisitions. Each of the three cases were established and organized by individual C.R.C. men, independent from the C.R.C. proper. They were for C.R.C. people, run by C.R.C. people, but not an official part of the C.R.C.

f. Summary and conclusion

Although the objectives of this time period, 1926 – 1950, remained basically unchanged, the same cannot be said for the actions of C.R.C. members. Sunday began as a day of physical rest, a view increasingly challenged by the actions of some, as the period developed. Dance too appeared to find more adherents as the period drew to a close. The need for physically active recreation was actualized to some extent for males, to a lesser extent for females, and to a larger extent for both sexes in the forties. The selection of which types of games to be involved in seemed to be determined more by American culture than by a consistent application of stated objectives. Isolation was the norm, though being a
baseball spectator appeared to find sufficient numerical support to be a legitimate exception to the above norm.

2. The Chatham congregation

Outside of an annual church picnic, involvement in dance or physically active games was virtually non-existent for the C.R.C. members in Chatham from 1926 - 1950. Having just immigrated in 1926, they had hardly settled in as farmhands when the "Dirty Thirties" hit. The times were tough and people worked long hard days to eke out a meagre existence, never mind being able to play ball. But occasionally they did play; what and how they played will be evident in the following sections.

a. Honour of God.

The Sunday rest was generally adhered to as described in the previous chapter, with only one exception to be noted. It was mentioned by several of those interviewed that a hot, muggy summer day in Chatham invited some of the teenaged boys for a swim in the Thames River, something they knew was "forbidden by the church," but enjoyed on occasion nevertheless.

Regarding dancing, from a previous position of such an activity being "forbidden by the church", there came a gradual acceptance of some dance forms. The public high schools provided the opportunity for students to participate in dance. Prior to, the forties, there were only a few families that could afford having their teenagers in school. However, in the forties, with more teenagers going to high school, dance infiltrated into the congregation, where such an activity was "forbidden," "not done," "out of the question!" But folk dance was done in the school, and although
some refused participation, some saw folk dance more as a game than a
dance, and fell in step.

The shift in participation was very similar to that of the denomi-
nation. There was more involvement in physically active games and dance,
particularly folk dance, by a growing minority. This growth was parti-
cularly noticeable in the forties, in Chatham due to teenagers continuing
into high schools for their education.

b. Consideration must be given to the welfare of man.

The members of the Chatham C.R.C. predominantly worked the fields,
and worked them hard from dawn to dusk. It was not the protestant
work ethic that kept them at work so long, though that may have been part
of it, but it was their initial poverty, the subsequent depression and
the need to feed themselves and their family that kept them at their work
with the intensity they devoted to it. With a single voice the inter-
viewees said, "You needed to live through those times to understand how
little money there really was."

They all spoke of a need to get away and play, but vacations were
times without earnings and could be ill afforded. With long tiresome
hours of work and lack of money for travel, the times of involvement in
physically active games might well be counted on two hands. It was not
until the economy picked up, and when in the late forties many of them
went down to a 55-hour work week over five and a half days, that the
possibility for playing together was becoming a reality. As soon as
people had Saturdays or half Saturdays off and as soon as they received
paid vacations, they were off to the beach or to a campground. Their
level of involvement appearing to be directly correlated to increased
financial well-being and time off work.

The church picnic was an event, held throughout the period, with the first one being held in 1926. It was held at Rondeau Park on Dominion Day, and was a highlight of the year for the congregation. Since the church community was roughly 125 members it meant being taxied to and from the park with the one or two cars available, carrying up to twenty people per trip. The owners of the cars participated little in the activities of the day, which consisted of such events as the three-legged, wheelbarrow, and sack races, kicking your shoe the furthest, and of course a tug-of-war. Such a warm July day would not be complete without a swim, renting the parks' bathing suits for 10 cents a day as shown in Illustration V, the 1926 church picnic at Rondeau Park.

There were no volleyball or soccer games; they could not afford to buy the ball, they were one family, classless, all being poor. Twenty families, thirty single men, three or four single girls, with few other Dutch immigrants for miles around. Apart from Sundays, there were precious few other times to meet. The church picnic was one of the few times they could not only meet, but also frolic together, a time they treasured, and an event to which ninety-five per cent of the people would go.

c. Christian separation from the world.

As a church community they not only tried to separate themselves from "worldly ways" in their play, but to a great extent they isolated themselves from those outside their church community. They stuck together, even though they were dispersed throughout Kent County. The precious few times they did play, they did it together. Thus their actualization of this principle lay in remaining isolated from other
1926 Church picnic at Rondeau Park
(Courtesy of Bill and Lena Gillhuis)
people, and in this respect was negative.

d. **Christian liberty.**

    If anything, one gets a stronger sense of limitations being placed on the people than is evident at the denominational level. The number of times that one hears such comments as, "It was forbidden by the church," "No way, it was not allowed," "We were not allowed, and therefore did not involve ourselves," gives one a feeling that the people were much more governed by do's and don'ts than was evidenced at the denominational level.

e. **Role of the Church.**

    The ironic statistic is that the church, through the church picnic, basically provided all of the organized play for the people. That is, the C.R.C. members in Chatham did little more in the way of play. But it would be misleading to suggest this was contrary to the denomination, as there is insufficient data from this period to draw such a conclusion, and the oldtimers would be quick to add, it was not really the Church that organized the picnic but a committee.

f. **Summary and conclusion.**

    This period can best be described as an economically difficult one, particularly for those members of the C.R.C. in Chatham. For those people, off the boat and into depression, they clung to each other around the church, worked hard and played extremely little.
B. 1951 - 1981

1. The C.R.C. denomination

As outlined in the previous chapter, this is a period of marked changes in the substance of fundamental objectives, changes in what may be described as a more liberal direction. There appeared to be greater diversification in perspective, and an accompanying increase in journals to express these opinions.

The form of involvement, as will be pointed out in this coming section, also diversified both in terms of the type of activities and the way they were played.

a. God must be honoured.

The previous period saw an increase in people being involved in physically active games on Sunday, and participating in various forms of dance. In both cases it appeared to be a minority; most people typically operated within the stated objectives. The previous chapter indicated that there was a change in objectives for the 1951 - 1981 time period, involvement in physically active games on Sundays was seen more and more as legitimate, and dance was dissected so that such dances as disco were labelled bad whereas most folk type dances were labelled good.

There is little concrete evidence to indicate if they involved themselves in physically active games on Sunday other than the mention of an outdoor recreation weekend. The discussions in the literature generally did not say, "They do this on Sundays", or "I do that on Sundays." But judging by the direction of the comments, it does not seem too much to suggest that as this period progressed, more and more C.R.C. people took time to play on Sundays, though like the father at his son's hockey game,
they did so with a certain sense of uneasiness.

Evidence regarding dance is more readily available. One could say with a good deal of validity that participation in dance also increased during this period. Through the synodical literature one reads of square dancing being permitted at Calvin College, beginning in 1964.56 When an overture came to Synod in 1971, requesting Synod to appoint a committee to study the whole area of dance, one of its grounds was, "Many of our young people are already participating in modern dances."57 In fact, a survey they had completed of six churches in the Hamilton area indicated that fifty-five percent of their young people dance.58 In 1977, a report on dancing at Calvin College pointed out that parties with dancing were held in the dorms, much as people might hold them in their recreation rooms, and they were well attended. According to this report, "the euphemism, 'party with music' was coined to avoid possible offense to people outside the college community."59 Illustrations VI and VII show the means by which these parties were advertised on Calvin's campus. The word "dance" was carefully avoided but the students' message was clear.

Outside of the fact that the issues surrounding dance were heatedly debated in the periodicals throughout the time period, evidence of actual involvement is not found there as easily. Nevertheless, the periodicals do provide evidence of greater positive involvement toward the end of the period, very much paralleling the evidence in the documents of Synod.

In this period, a writer to Insight, describing his participation in square dancing on Saturday nights, was one of the first evidences in the periodicals of involvement in dancing during this period.60 His comments evoked rebuttal, such as referring to him as being sincere but
ILLUSTRATION VI

Social Gathering

with

Physically

Recreational Activity

Saturday

March 22

9:00 → 11:59.59

L.e. D * 11.27

another Vanderweld/Dornbush production

with the Gruppen Light Show

[Signature]
ILLUSTRATION VII

DANCE

Are you bored?
Are you looking for things to do?
Got a date Saturday night?

Well, if you are looking for something to do, Saturday, January 26, you can let your feet have fun. Bring them along to the Van Dellen basement and let them relax or get some exercise any time after 8:30.

And it's open to the whole campus!
Be there! You'll be glad you came!
misled, while others sided with him, also confessing they had danced. A questionnaire taken at the 1969 Young Calvinist Convention, indicated fifty percent of the young people danced.

There were yet other evidences of C.R.C. people being involved in dance. In 1975, Calvinist Contact ran a series of pictures of "Klompen dancers" at a tulip festival in Drayton, Ontario. In 1975, the Christian Educators Journal published an article on the benefits of dance education for children, and Insight in 1980 had a picture of square dancing on the front cover. In 1981, approximately 500 people were folk dancing at a conference near Niagara Falls, Ontario, sponsored by the Association for the Advancement for Christian Scholarship, made up largely of C.R.C. people. On the negative side, it should be noted that 1981 also saw the predominantly C.R.C. community of Lynden, Washington, ban dance from its city.

In sum, involvement in physically active games on Sunday appeared to have shifted from the beginning to the end of this period. More people saw nothing wrong with a physically active game on Sunday, and actively did so. Dance changed even more significantly. By the seventies, more than half of the young people in some churches actually danced. It is of interest to note that with as many as fifty percent of young people dancing, it was not till 1982 that a definitive position was taken on "which dances were in and which were out." This is a clear example of changing objectives following a change in practices.

b. Consideration must be given to the welfare of man.

The previous chapter indicated that the substance of this principle experienced subtle but not insignificant changes. A brief generalization
of these changes would be that involvement in physically active games received increasingly positive encouragement through the 1951-1981 time period. In comparing actions with objectives the sub-points in the 1928 synodical report will once again be used. They were: i. the legitimate place for truly recreative activity, ii. caution over possible negative repercussions an activity may have on an individual's spiritual and moral well-being, and iii. the secondary role recreation must place in one's life.

With regard to understanding how the first sub-point was actualized, the immediate question is, in which activities did they participate? Furthermore, as was discussed in the previous period, what changes were taking place with regard to the nature of involvement throughout these thirty years?

In view of the activities participated in, basketball and baseball were by far the most popular, the former being the most popular by the end of this period. Bowling, golf and volleyball retained their popularity while soccer, ice hockey, football and track and field found increased participation. Other physically active games participated in but on a more limited and less general level were badminton, wrestling, team handball, archery, tennis, ping pong and pool.

At the Christian high schools, a recent survey generally substantiated the above. Forty-three schools from a possible seventy-seven responded, and a rank order of the five most popular sports indicated the following:
TABLE VI

FIVE MOST OFFERED SPORTS

IN

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS: 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Basketball</td>
<td>1. Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Track and Field</td>
<td>2. Volleyball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Soccer</td>
<td>3. Track and Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Baseball</td>
<td>5. Softball</td>
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</table>

Basketball, now overtaking baseball as the king of sports at the denominational level, was included as part of the C.S.I. school curriculum, from grade four to college throughout the time period. It was included in C.S.I. schools' intramural and extracurricular athletic programs. If proficiency and enthusiasm were to be measured in city and state championships, then a good number of Christian high schools were proficient and enthusiastic. Not only was this game played by boys, but in the mid-fifties girls also began to enter into extracurricular competition. The enthusiasm for basketball carried into the Reformed colleges, and pictures of basketball games were used in the colleges' advertising campaigns for new students, though a more recent Christian Canadian college advertised playing ball with friends or with a growing child.

There were reports, particularly in the early sixties, of C.R.C. sponsored basketball leagues which received the approval of almost all the congregations. Occasionally basketball pictures were found on the front cover of an issue of one of the church's periodicals, and profiles
were done with some of the "greats" that made the game their profession. If there was any concern about basketball, it was that it was played too much. Or someone person recently commented concerning the Christian high schools, "basketball is definitely King." Baseball, like basketball, was also still found in the schools' curriculum, and was encouraged as an intramural and extracurricular sport. It was unlike basketball, which appeared to have peaked in the fifties and slowly given way to a new king of C.R.C. sports.

In 1951, the new C.R.C. Youth Center in Grand Rapids was in full swing, having 750 participants in its summer baseball program, consisting of three church leagues, a young men's league, a boys league and a seven team girls' league. From August 16 - 20 of that year, the center played host to the first annual Michigan Christian Reformed Softball Tournament, including thirty teams which played to capacity crowds of 1,500 people. However, baseball received little coverage in the church periodicals. One reads in 1956 of a group of Cadets, a young boys club, going to Detroit to watch the Tigers play. 1958 marks the first one reads about extracurricular baseball for boys and softball for girls, apparently a time when this sport was very popular at schools.

There was less mention of baseball following the fifties. One is reminded that churches still sponsored teams and that the game was foremost in the minds of some. The seventies saw a plea for the good old-time baseball of Babe Ruth days, and suggestions were made to assist watching baseball on television in a more Christian manner. Though this writer is aware that there is still an extensive C.R.C. baseball league in Grand Rapids and other area, the literature appears to take
less of an interest in the sport as the period drew to an end. Nevertheless, by 1981 it was ranked number five, for both boys and girls, in terms of the extracurricular sports most offered in Christian high schools. Bowling and golf continued to remain relatively popular, with church leagues in the former and independent play in the latter. Both were included as part of Calvin College's Physical Education program, and were often participated in on other occasions.

Volleyball was played primarily in the school system. It was found in the C.S.I. curriculum guides, and was also played at various conferences. As an extracurricular activity volleyball was played exclusively by girls, in the U.S. schools, something they began in the fifties, but was played by both sexes north of the border.

Soccer seemed to be an up and coming game in the C.R.C. It was noted earlier that a labelled soccer field on a camp map was the only evidence of soccer prior to 1951. By 1952 it was included in a school curriculum book, and remained in subsequent books. It was promoted as an intramural and extracurricular sport in the sixties and began to flourish in the seventies.

Outside of the school, it was played at conventions. There were also a few C.R.C. members who played it as a profession, and in 1980, when a new editor was appointed for the Banner, he entitled the opening section of the journal, "Corner Kick."

Ice hockey is similar to soccer in that its development in the C.R.C. occurred during the period under study, especially during the last thirteen years of this period. The first event recorded was a hockey tournament held November 10, 1968, in Guelph, Ontario, being sponsored by a Christian Reformed Hockey Association in Georgetown.
development of ice hockey was also significantly different from that of soccer, in that the coverage devoted to the former was approximately ninety percent Canadian.  

Football was also included in all the curriculum guides, but quite opposite to volleyball, as an extra-curricular sport it was played exclusively by boys and not at all in Canadian C.S.I. schools. The expenses involved in suiting up a football team seemed to have been a contributing factor for only a few schools becoming involved in this sport. Bellflower, California, was the first to become involved, in 1947, and by 1965 one reads of three other schools which had also joined in. Though there were a considerable number of articles devoted to the sport in the mid-sixties, when other Christian high schools were apparently considering football as an extracurricular activity, there were only a few articles which gave evidence of C.R.C. members being involved in this sport, and those that were involved were primarily in the United States.  

There also appeared to be an increasing involvement in track and field during this time period. 1959 is the first one hears of track and field as an extracurricular activity at a Christian high school. From 1965 on, one occasionally reads of a track team or athlete, some of Olympic calibre and by the end of the period it was one of the most offered activities, for both boys and girls, at Christian high schools. 

The less popular activities, badminton, wrestling and team handball, have all been recent additions. They have all been only recently included in the C.S.I. school curriculm. With regard to archery, tennis and ping pong, there
appeared to be little change in the nature of C.R.C. involvement. Each of these sports was occasionally incorporated in such places as camps, schools and in the home.

During the fifties, some C.R.C. members were still going to the pool halls, but that is the last one reads of that. However, pool was apparently kept up in recreation rooms in the home, church and other facilities.

Many physical active games were perceived as being legitimate forms of recreation. The activities once again were a reflection of broadly categorized principles, without being specific about which sport would be preferable to another. Generally, the shift in the popularity of certain sports does not appear to be a consequence of objectives, but a reflection of the American society of which much of the C.R.C. is a part. Not only did this period have greater diversification in ideas and the means to express them, but there was also an increase in the diversity of games being played. The institution of more Christian schools, especially high schools, played a large role in this.

As in the previous period, evidence of increasing involvement in providing opportunity to play was also evidence in the acquiring of facilities on which to play. Some notable acquisitions and additions are listed on Table VII.

With regard to the means chosen to play in a manner not contradictory to the stated objectives, there is both a similarity and difference in view of the previous period. The similarity lies in the idea that the ideological objectives gave little guidance beyond the general categorization of which sports were good, and which were bad. The selection of an activity to involve oneself in did not appear to be based so much on
TABLE VII

SIGNIFICANT ACQUISITIONS AND PURCHASES: 1951 - 1981

i. A conference ground - Christian Reform ed Conference Grounds - bought in 1951 - located approximately 50 miles N.W. of Grand Rapids, Michigan. 128

ii 1,500 seat bleachers and lighting added Christian Youth Center - 1951. 129

iii Eight new high school gymnasiums built - various schools between 1957 - 1959. 130

iv New gym built - Calvin College - 1964. 131
which sports were best or better, but which was not bad, and therefore
good. Boxing and the martial arts were once again not participated in;
they were bad. It is again the suggestion that basketball's and
baseball's popularity was more a reflection of cultural assimilation,
than a systematic organization of stated objectives, the objectives
being too embryonic.

The difference is in some ways not a difference. There was an
increase in the number of activities participated in, for example, soccer
and ice hockey. Though they were additional activities, they were a part
of the process of differentiation, a process also in evidence during
the previous period. The point to be made, however, is that this process
of differentiation greatly increased in the latter period. There were
more activities, more ways of participating, and more people taking part.

Consistent with the previous period, the literature of the present
period tended to discourage the possible involvement of a spectator, but
the actions spoke otherwise. One might remember the 1,500 people who
watched a baseball tournament in 1951,\textsuperscript{132} or the Cadets who went to watch
a professional ball game.\textsuperscript{133} Furthermore, those who reminisced about
Babe Ruth could hardly have done so without having watched him. When
Grand Rapids Christian High School built a new gym, it was equipped with
bleachers to seat 1,800 people, and from what has been told to this writer,
such a facility is not atypical in the Christian high schools in the
United States. One could further add a report to Synod in 1952 which
made the comment that when Calvin College participated in an intercolle-
giate sport, almost every student participated as a spectator.\textsuperscript{134} This
last comment certainly was not being added as a criticism.
The second sub-point concerned possible negative repercussions an activity might have on a person's spiritual/moral well-being. Once again the data is lacking in illustrations of C.R.C. people subverting their spiritual/moral well-being in the way they played.

In determining what was excessive involvement, the literature of this period was much less precise than the previous period. The period 1926 - 1951 saw a gradual increase in involvement from once a week to about twice a week in many cases, and so remained relatively consistent with its objectives. The level of involvement was often increased in the latter period. The recent survey of Christian high schools not only shows this difference from the previous period, but also illustrates national differences within the denomination. In the survey it was noted that Canadian coaches spent one-third as much time on coaching as their American counterparts. Some coaches in the United States spent as much as 600 hours per season on all the related functions of coaching one basketball team per season. Statistics aside, one Canadian teacher, born and raised in the United States, perhaps summed it up best: "'Canucks' don't go bonkers over high school sports like many Yankees do."\(^{135}\)

As in the previous period, the actualization of the principle concerning the welfare of man shows the principles' embryonic character. Activities were rated in the general category of good and then were culturally selected. For example, basketball and baseball, being big in the United States were also big in the C.R.C. denomination there. Baseball, soccer and ice hockey were more popular in Canada and were so reflected in the C.R.C. denomination, ice hockey being played almost exclusively by the Canadian members of the C.R.C.

The conflict between spectatorship and active involvement was also
present in this period. It should be remembered, however, that there was greater ideological acceptance of one being a spectator than was evidenced in the first period, so the spread between objectives and actions narrowed here because the substance of the objectives had changed.

The changes that occurred, relatively consistently between objectives and actions, appeared to hinge upon one significant move. This move was especially evident within the school system, but also apparent in the "church games" and in the increased acceptance of the professional athlete. This hinge was the increased movement into the acceptance of league play. Once a group of people joined a league playing an acceptable game, more time needed to be spent practicing. If one practiced and put on a game, spectators could support the team and be entertained by observing a wholesome activity. If there were two things that stand out in both periods they were: One, increasing involvement and acceptance of physically active games from 1926 - 1981, and two, the vast increase in leagues from the first era through the second.

c. Christian separation from the world.

The actualization of concerns embodied in this principle saw a continuation of the behaviour present in the previous period. Calvin College played secular teams, and a few more C.R.C. people played professionally, but there was also an increase in the size of the church membership, so that the increase in number of players did not necessarily mean a percentage increase. Generally, the C.R.C. people still isolated themselves and played together.
d. Christian liberty.

As in the previous period, there is insufficient data to discuss accurately and fully the extent and nature of the actualization of this principle. It can be pointed out that Synod, beyond the issue of dance, did not deal directly with issues involving which games could be played and in which manner. The same could generally be said of the periodicals.

However, there were indications that the boundaries set on a Christian's liberties were wider than previously permitted. The acceptance of a C.R.C. person playing on a professional team was one such example. The toleration of people playing games on Sunday was another. Football was another illustration of an activity vehemently attacked by some, yet played and encouraged by others. But perhaps this was not so much the extension of Christian liberties but an indication of an increase in ambiguity with regard to what the Lord wants in the area of "amusements."

e. Role of the church.

Overall, the church continued to avoid practical hands-on involvement, though some members did not see this as clearly. The naming of the conference grounds, "Christian Reformed Conference Grounds," was not an act of the official C.R.C. but of some of its members. Some of the leagues were referred to as church leagues, with teams made up of members from specific churches. Once again these were not church teams in the sense that they were governed or sponsored officially by the church body. But some members felt it was better to divide up teams by churches than by getting a group of Christians together and dividing them into non-congregational affiliated teams. Though the theory and official
position was practical hands-off, the practices of the laity were not always consistent with the official position.

f. Summary & Conclusions.

As with the previous period, the relationship between objectives and actions was a relatively close one, with increasing diversification of actions usually slightly ahead of objectives. Also in view of the 1926-1951 period, some of the trends continued through to 1981. Involvement in physically active games on Sunday and participation in dance both found more adherents towards 1981. There was also an increase in the number of activities played, the number of participants and the amount of time an individual devoted to an activity. The movement into leagues was of considerable significance with regard to the last point. Even though there appeared to be more males than females involved as active participants, there was an increase in the opportunities and the level of involvement by females towards the end of the second period. Also consistently with the previous period, the selection of which types of games C.R.C. people were involved in appeared to be determined more by their national culture than by a consistent application of stated objectives. Isolation was once again the norm, with the exception of being a spectator, or at levels where it was difficult to schedule games if one stayed with one's own people. There was also a movement towards the church providing increased practical support; though this position was contrary to the official position, it was not officially discouraged.
2. The Chatham Congregations

To understand the different levels of involvement in Chatham, it is important to remember the immense growth during the forties and fifties, completely changing the face of the C.R.C. community in Chatham. From a small group of approximately 125 people in 1926, it grew to 1686 by 1961. It was also during this period that the other two congregations began in Chatham. Grace and Calvary were respectively organized in 1967 and 1975. The format for discussion will again be as in previous sections, using the headings of the 1928 synodical report. The economic conditions were also markedly different, the first period being dominated by the depression, the latter period thriving under the post-World War II development. The people, a larger body, and economically better off, began to involve themselves in physically active games and occasionally in dance, in a manner unknown to C.R.C. members living in Chatham before the post-World War II immigration.

a. Honour of God.

The involvement in physically active games on Sunday and participation in dance occurred more during this period than the previous one. In relation to the denomination, C.R.C. members in Chatham appeared to be going in the same direction, but lagging somewhat behind in actualizing the above changes.

The strong stand taken in 1961 was significant with regards to the position taken and also the general support the campaign had amongst the Chatham C.R.C. members. This position "forced" them to set up their own hockey league, as other leagues began to play on Sundays. Some players, however, did play on Sunday and were consequently debarred from
participation in the Chatham Christian Hockey League. Not only were they disallowed from playing, but also from coaching. In 1975 when First C.R.C. needed an interim coach, Mark Waddock was considered ineligible because he was playing Sunday hockey. With but few exceptions, organized games were not played on Sunday. It has been this writer's experience however, living amongst C.R.C. members in Chatham, that non-organized games on Sunday were widely participated in, particularly among the young people. The renting of gymnasiums for playing in on Sunday evenings was considered all right. However, when the suggestion was made to organize competition on Sunday evenings, that was not carried through. Nevertheless, even participation in non-organized games on Sunday, was a big step from what was done, or rather not done, in the previous period, but yet a small step behind the denomination's actions.

Involvement in dance seems to be a small step removed from the 1926-1951 period, and a large one behind the denomination's. Rhythmics were used in a girls' physical education class in the Christian High School, but were removed from the curriculum in 1976 upon the recommendation of a Creative Arts Report. When a gymnasium was built in 1978, a stipulation for using the facility for personal use required the person not to use the building for dancing. There was one slip though in 1980, when the Young Dutch Norfolk Group, from the Netherlands, put on a program which included, as advertised, "Klompen dansen." This went over without a word of complaint. Furthermore, through the interviews with some of the "oldtimers" it was revealed that there was dancing at some recent weddings. Though the dancing was not appreciated by them, their feelings did not appear to be shared by all young married couples.
While both the views and types of involvement in physically active games on Sundays changed somewhat simultaneously in Chatham and the denomination, the views and types of involvement in dance lagged somewhat behind the denomination. With regard to the former the tendency was towards increased activity being permitted and engaged in, though with a degree of hesitancy. With regard to the latter it seemed more a case of the older members trying to put their foot down, while the young people tried to lift them.

b. Welfare of man.

It should be pointed out again that the objectives with regard to this principal were viewed quite similarly within the Chatham C.R.C. community in comparison to the C.R.C. denomination. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Chatham community favoured the sub-point concerning the legitimacy of involvement in games that were truly recreational. Furthermore, with respect to an individual’s spiritual/moral well-being, the need for involvement to require skill and sportsmanship was perceived as important. Finally, the concepts of respect for rules, teamwork, and the need for recreational activities not to become more than secondary in one's life were insufficiently addressed to provide accurate conclusions worthy of comparison.

With respect to actualizing their objectives regarding the positive influences of involvement in physically active games, the selection of activities and the nature of the involvement is again of significance. The period 1926 - 1950 saw the members of the C.R.C. in Chatham involve themselves in an annual church picnic, but little else. Significant changes occurred in this respect in the period which followed. Apart from church
picnics, the first event one reads about is in 1953 with the formation of "The Christian Reformed Recreation Centre of Chatham, Ontario." Other activities were subsequently organized so that in 1981, there were approximately 20 different events involving physically active games of varying length, offered to and for the Chatham C.R.C. members. Illustrations VIII, IX, X and XI which follow, provide an outline of which activities were offered when, and to whom they were available.

One characteristic readily apparent in the Illustrations VIII - XI is the growth in the number of organized activities of which C.R.C. members availed themselves. This growth was also apparent at the denominational level, but the growth came earlier and less suddenly there than in the Chatham situation. How intense the involvement was and what was the nature of play need to be further fleshed out in making the comparisons between the objectives and actions, and between the community itself and the denomination.

There were four activities which received significant attention by the members of the C.R.C. in Chatham, namely, the church picnics, volleyball, baseball and ice hockey. Furthermore, there were a number of activities which were occasionally participated in by certain groups of people. They were badminton, basketball, bowling, football, golf, ping pong, soccer and sports days. Two additional activities, broomball, kaatsen were only participated in by a small segment of the people.

The church picnics at one point were the highlight of the year with almost everyone attending. Their popularity seemed to flutter during the sixties, experience a certain amount of resurrection in the seventies though even then only a portion of the congregation attended, and death in
Illustration VIII
Organized Physically Active Games for Chatham C.R.C. Females and Males

Year
1926 29 31 33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47 49 51
First Church
Church Picnics
### Illustration IX

**Organized Physically Active Games for Chatham C.R.C. Females and Males**

1951 - 1981

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>57</th>
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<td>Soccer</td>
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ILLUSTRATION X

Organized Physically Active Games for Chatham C.R.C. Males Exclusively:

1951 - 1981

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ILLUSTRATION XI

Organized Physically Active Games for Chatham C.R.C. Females Exclusively:

1951 - 1981

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Badminton</th>
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<td>81</td>
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two of the three churches in 1981. By and large it seemed its days were
numbered and it had certainly lost the popularity it once had. Communal
frolicking of young and old had seen better days in the Chatham C.R.C.'s.
Volleyball was not only one of the earliest activities, but one that in
an organized fashion was present for most of the period. By 1981, next to
ice hockey, it was the most popular activity. There was league play
from 1967 - 1969; fifty players, representing about six teams, were
typical attendance for an evening. 143 Besides the league play, it was
certain to be played if there was a picnic 144 or other events, 145 and
there was time and room for volleyball.

Furthermore, with the building of a gymnasium at the Christian high
school in 1978, an average of twenty or so ladies gathered each week
during the winter season for informal play. The relatively prominent
position volleyball enjoyed in Chatham was certainly not the case at
the denominational level.

Baseball was also popular throughout the period, though interest
dropped through the latter part of the seventies. Apart from the men's
league, it was also played on occasion at field days for young people's
societies 146 and other events for various groups. 147 When the men's
league disbanded in 1976, it was revived three years later, only this time
in the form of an annual tournament. 148 Baseball's decline in Chatham
was different from its development in the denomination in two ways.
First, at the denominational level baseball retained its level of involvement,
which was certainly not the case in Chatham. Second, baseball's removal
also meant that for the summer months there were no organized physically
active games to be participated in as a C.R.C. community.
With regard to hockey, it became the most popular sport amongst the Chatham C.R.C. members in the seventies, with usually 200\(^{149}\) and as many as 400 spectators coming out per game,\(^{150}\) and with each season running from September through to April. It should be noted that its existence predated 1972 as indicated on Illustration X. During the late sixties several young men played informal hockey once a week during the winter months.\(^{151}\) In addition to the hockey league, these men helped establish a tradition, starting in 1965,\(^{152}\) of a New Year's Day hockey game. Traditionally it was usually a team of young players challenging the "Oldtimers."\(^{153}\) With weekly games, length of season and the number of spectators who attend the games, its importance can hardly be over-emphasized. Church meetings were rarely scheduled for Thursday nights, as "Hockey Night in Chatham" would inevitably take priority.

Hockey in one way illustrates a difference from baseball, but in another way illustrates a unique similarity. The difference lay in baseball's decline in popularity and hockey's increase. But this shift in popularity adds support to the earlier argument that the selection of activities participated in was not based on a logical consistent application of the principles espoused. In fact the principles created only broad categories of good and bad games, and selection tended towards activities that were nationally popular. In the U.S. it was baseball and basketball; in Canada it was ice hockey.

Of the less popular games, badminton only started in 1979. It began in the high school with a badminton team,\(^{154}\) but was also included as part of a ladies' keep fit program\(^ {155}\) and a men's gym night.\(^ {156}\)

Basketball, though briefly played in 1961 and 1962,\(^ {157}\) only recently became of increasing interest. By the end of the period its popularity
was still rather limited, having found a place in the Christian high school, but receiving little participation outside of that. The game's level of popularity was certainly far less in Chatham than in the denomination.

Bowling is only recorded as a young people's tournament on Illustration IX. It was played more often, though on a sporadic basis. Bowling parties for young people occurred about once or twice a year in the sixties. Toward the end of the sixties and into the seventies, other groups also began to participate. 1974 - 1981 saw an increase in the number of times bowling events were held. It was particularly common in 1976 when bowling was recorded for nine different occasions.

Football was not recorded on the Illustration, a good indication of how little it was played. It was only referred to once as an intra-mural activity in the high school, and two times in the context of a young people's retreat. Once again, even though the game received some limited involvement in the U.S., it received only minimal involvement at the congregational level in this Canadian city.

Of the remaining less popular activities, golf was introduced in 1972 and several groups hosted annual tournaments in this sport. Ping pong was occasionally participated in at conferences, by young people in the church and at school. Soccer was basically a school activity and was relatively popular at that level. 1980 saw the formation of two girls' teams which together were made up of 27 girls, approximately half the female population in the school. Sports days were also held as noted on Illustration IX.

There were two other activities, broomball and kaatsen. The former
was participated in annually by a girls' team from the Christian high school in the United Way Red Feather weekend. The latter, an old game originating in Friesland in the Netherlands, was recently taken up again and was played by several Chatham C.R.C. members in a southwest Ontario League. 168

Not only did people actively involve themselves in these activities, but they also organized themselves into groups and acquired certain facilities which could be used for participating in physically active games. With regard to groups, there was of course the Chatham Christian Hockey League, and others previously mentioned. One group worthy of note and not yet discussed was the "Rainy Nights Club." It was formed when an outdoor volleyball evening was rained out, and those present decided to meet once a week on Saturday nights for purposes of playing games together in the church basement. It lasted from the summer of 1960 to the following year, 169 but like so many things did not retain the organization and enthusiasm necessary for its continuation.

Furthermore, as at the denominational level, involvement in and the promotion of physically active games went beyond playing and organizing groups. Facilities were also acquired. Some notable acquisitions and additions are listed on Table VIII.

In this area regarding the "welfare of man", there were several changes. The most significant was the marked increase in participation and the number of opportunities to engage in physically active games. This process was mirrored, at the denominational level, though in a more gradual manner. The Chatham people went from a church picnic to at least twenty different activities, many consisting of weekly games for con-
**TABLE VIII**

**SIGNIFICANT ACQUISITIONS AND PURCHASES IN CHATHAM: 1951 - 1971.**

i. Calvin Christian elementary school in Chatham
   - land purchased - 1955\(^{170}\)
   - school built and classes started 1957\(^{171}\)
   - general purpose room built - 1965\(^{172}\)

ii. Chatham District Christian High School
    - building purchased - 1966\(^{173}\)
    - classes begun 1970\(^{174}\)
    - gymnasium built - 1978\(^{175}\)

iii. Lakewood Christian Conference Grounds - purchased in 1970 - located near Sarnia, Ontario.\(^{179}\)
siderable time periods.

Each group and time period appeared to have an activity which was especially popular. In Chatham, the most popular activity during the sixties was baseball, but that shifted to ice hockey in the seventies. During these same years, at the denominational level basketball was most popular. The suggestion is, that both were a reflection of the prevailing culture they were a part of, Chatham being in Canada, and the C.R.C. denomination having more than seventy percent of its membership in the United States.

A sense of caring for the body through participating in a game was not always shared by all C.R.C. players. The very fact that the Chatham Christian Hockey League needed to institute a rule concerning fighting and give players involved a $5.00 fine is sufficiently telling. The treasurer's accounts show that even time in the penalty box and a $5.00 fine were insufficient deterrents. Before looking at the record of fines it should be noted that a $5.00 fine was also given for use of foul language and teams not sending a representative to an executive meeting. However, the League treasurer informed this writer that the majority of fines were for fighting. With that in mind, a review of the treasurer's book proved interesting. The results of that search are presented in Table IX, which indicates that violent incidents were not infrequent.

The Calvary C.R.C. consistory was sufficiently concerned about violence in the Chatham Christian Hockey League that it wrote a letter to the league stating: "Would non-contact hockey not be a means of improving hockey skills, while at the same time not inciting as many grudges and tempers?" Their request for a response went unheeded in terms of a
TABLE IX


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>$ in fines</th>
<th># of incidents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973/74</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974/75</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975/76</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976/77</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977/78</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978/79</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-12</td>
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<td>1979/80</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980/81</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
letter or action. However, when attendance was down during the 1979–80 season, the executive felt that rough play was a strong contributing factor, but made no structural changes to counteract this. 179.

There was acceptance of the idea of spectatorship, though the view was not unanimously held. It has already been noted how the Chatham Christian Hockey League had as many as 400 spectators observe their games. 180 Other activities, such as baseball in the sixties, also saw spectators responding to the call to cheer on their favourite team. 181

The Christian high school provided a contrary example. In 1981, when the junior boys' basketball team won the Kent County title for "A" schools, it played its next game for the S.W.C.S.S.A. title in its own gymnasium. The gate receipt for that game was, at 50¢ per person, $21.00. In other words there were forty-two spectators of which half were from other schools. 182 The gymnasium itself was not built with spectators in mind. It had a set of bleachers on the stage at one end of the basketball court, but they were donated to the school by Ursuline College, and were capable of seating only 150 people. 183 1982 saw little change; when the senior team won the Kent "A" title in Tilbury, there were certainly no more than thirty spectators from the Chatham school community. 184

Why the difference? In part, the hockey and baseball leagues encouraged spectators, the school did not. Baseball and later hockey provided a place to socialize, and as spectators have told this writer, they came in good numbers as much to enjoy an evening with friends as they did to watch the game. In the school there was no tradition of Friday night games. In fact it decided not to go that route, choosing to be more concerned with the play and players than with the social aspect of potential spectators. The staff, in part responsible for this direction,
mainly came to Chatham from other communities. It is therefore the suggestion of this writer that their approach was atypical of what the Chatham community wished to promote regarding spectators. If 400 out of 1600 C.R.C. folk went to watch their boys play, it would seem that response was more accurate as to their desired involvement and their perception of the desirability of having and being spectators.

The participation of spectator's suggests both a similarity and a unique difference between Chatham and the larger C.R.C. denomination. For community events such as baseball, basketball and ice hockey, each level drew a goodly number of spectators. However, in the school situation one reads of Grand Rapids Christian High School building a gymnasium in 1957 at a cost of $450,000 having a seating capacity for 1,800 spectators. Twenty-one years later, Chatham District Christian High School had a gymnasium built at a cost of approximately $150,000 with no seating arrangements for spectators. Once again the suggestion is made that high school sports typically received greater spectator support in the U.S. than in Canada, and this was mirrored in the C.R.C. at both levels.

With regard to Illustrations VIII, IX, X, and XI, several points should still be noted. 'First of all is the numerical increase in the number of activities available, from one in 1951, to twenty in 1981. This diversification and increase far outdid the denomination in terms of the rate of growth. Of some significance to this increase was the opening of the Christian high school in 1970, which provided opportunity for students to become involved in several sports at an organized level. With regard to activities exclusively played by males and females, the activities for males were both more and organized prior to activities for
females. In fact, if school teams were removed from the Illustrations
the females would only be left with five years of volleyball and three years
of badminton, while the males could still choose from eight different
activities occurring in different times.

The actualization of this portion of the principle regarding the
welfare of man is not nearly as precise and as consistent with stated
objectives as was the case in any of the previous sections. A positive
view towards games is certainly evidenced by the increased levels of
participation in a greater variety of activities. Though boxing and the
martial arts were not participated in as sports, the nature of play in
the Chatham Christian Hockey League does not provide evidence of a well
accepted view on the prevention of injuries and the building up of "the
temples of the Lord". There was also a greater acceptance of spectators
than the denominational literature expressed, though not significantly
different from what members of the C.R.C. in Chatham stated as their
objectives. Beyond the criticism of Sunday players, professional/commercial
sport was not criticized. Fred Colenbrander's purchase of the Maroons
and Don Vander Sluis signing up with the Chatham Royals were not
criticized on any other grounds.

Perhaps most telling of a people's commitment to physically active
games was the 1978 fund-raising project for the two new gymnasiums, one
for the Christian high school, and one for the Christian elementary
school. The cost was $150,000. Through pledges and donations, this
community of 1,600 people, with an average family income of approximately
$17,000 a year, had it paid for before the gymnasiums were built.

The concern over activities not being to the detriment of one's
spiritual/moral well-being was applicable to the Chatham situation with,
regard to respecting rules. The methodology used made it difficult to ascertain at which level the concepts of sportsmanship and teamwork were actualized. Even with regard to rules the data is limited.

Some of the activities, such as ladies' volleyball, never used referees. In part this was because a deliberate breaking of the rules was not a problem with them. It was also due in part to the fact that their level of play was at such a level that if a referee were to call every infraction, the games would not have gone much further than a service.

Within the C.C.H.L. one gains some further insights into the respect for rules players had. One wonders about those seven players in the Chatham Christian Hockey League who had more than fifty minutes in penalties during a twenty game season, and the nine players who had over 120 minutes in penalties during their playing lifetime, and the yearbook committee for devoting space in their yearbook to acknowledge the above. At the same time the official acceptance of such players by the league, without any further disciplinary action, is telling. This writer suspects that if the people concerned were questioned about this, the response would be, "That is the way hockey is played," which of course means, "Keep Christianity in the church building, keep it off the ice."

The actualization regarding the welfare of man was by and large consistent with stated objectives. It should be noted though, that the increased diversification with respect to the forms of involvement and the growth of involvement both in terms of numbers participating and regularity of participation, are actualizations of a principle previously held. This growth did not occur because of a change in the substance of
a principle, but was illustrative of a process in which a principle is finally facilitated by historical circumstances. Beyond a comparison of the Chatham C. R.C. community within itself, its activities in relationship to the denomination indicated differences such as the level of popularity of a specific sport or the role of spectators. These differences support the view that the principles were extremely embryonic and therefore the differences were a reflection of national cultural differences more than differences in principles per se.

Concerning the secondary nature of recreational activities there was a significant shift from the previous period, but a shift that was a reflection of what had also occurred at the denominational level. As was evidenced in previous discussion, this period was marked with greater diversification in terms of the numbers of activities participated in and by increased intensity of involvement, both in terms of the numbers of people and the regularity of engagements. The move, as with the denomination, was in the direction of league; complete with practices. Though members of the C.R.C. in Chatham became much more involved in physically active games, the level which was considered over-involvement was not stated.

In this respect, even Fred Colenbrander’s purchase of the Chatham Maroons and Don Vander Sluis signing up with the Chatham Royals were not criticized. They were criticized for playing on Sundays, but not for making a vocation out of play. This was a more conservative view of Sunday than at the denominational level, but it was certainly in line with the denomination’s prevailing view on making a vocation out of play.
c. Christian separation from the world.

The tendency all along was to play with one's own people. This isolationist attitude generally held up until recently. This writer is aware of more C.R.C. people joining the local Y.M.C.A., the Wheels Fitness and Racquet Club, local teams and recreational activities for children. It would be misleading to suggest this involvement was a significant change. It seems to this writer that because both the structure and nature of play within certain groups such as the Chatham Christian Hockey League were modelled after secular institutions, the logical consequence was, if we play like them, why not play with them?

d. Christian liberty.

It is difficult to ascertain which action is motivated by a sense of Christian liberty and which is caused by ignorance or a lack of perspective. The curtain was drawn for Fred Colenbrander for owning a team which played on Sundays. The Chatham Christian Hockey League disallowed people who engaged in Sunday hockey to participate in their League. The schools disallowed dancing, and a participant was fined $5.00 for fighting or swearing in the Chatham Christian Hockey League. Even though there was a great deal of room for variance with regard to how one expressed one's faith, the boundaries were legislated more tightly at the congregational level than at the denominational level.

e. Role of the church.

As was described in the previous chapter, there was a theoretically kept boundary between church and play. However, the actualization of this principle was ambiguous at best, with the majority of laity seeing teams as
church teams complete with church rivalries - hardly a hands-off approach.

C. Comparison of the forms of involvement.

The period 1951 - 1961 in the history of the C.R.C. in Chatham was markedly different from the earlier period. There was a phenomenal increase in the number of members, there was an increase in economic prosperity and there was greater participation in physically active games. Not only was there a quantitative difference in participation, but there was also a qualitative difference.

Increased involvement in games on Sunday is an illustration of a change in thinking. The previous period gave evidence of a day of rest, which meant no playing games; the latter period saw increasing involvement. As noted earlier, the level of involvement, though increasing and remaining consistent with changing objectives, still appeared to be slightly less than at the denominational level.

Dance followed a similar pattern, though involvement by C.R.C. members in Chatham appeared to be very recent, and very limited. The difference from this pattern to the one above was that it was but a step away from the 1926 - 1951 period, but several behind the denomination's level of involvement.

With regard to the welfare of man, four conclusions could be made.

The first is that there was a vast increase in the diversity of activities as well as the level of involvement, from the first period to the second period. The second is that the actions generally reflected the objectives held by the C.R.C. community in Chatham. Thirdly, with regard to the form of involvement, the Chatham C.R.C. community lagged somewhat behind the denomination. Finally, due to the embryonic nature of the principles
established and the strength of a nation's culture, it was evidenced that
certain forms of involvement were more popular in the predominantly
U.S. denomination than in Chatham.

Several times it was mentioned that the Chatham congregations lagged
behind the denomination. The nature of this lag can more clearly be
seen if key dates are compared for the two groups. The results are shown
on Table X, which compares significant beginnings and purchases at the
denominational level and at Chatham in the present field of study.
The Table basically indicates that Chatham lagged approximately twenty
years behind the denomination. Not only was this so on individual items,
but the chronology of events was remarkably 'similar.

The views on "Christian separation from the world" also went through
change. Playing with one's own people remained the main theme for both
periods at both levels. Recently, however, the Chatham members strayed
from this as did members in the larger denomination. But even then, any
"mixing with the world", was often not done alone, but as a team or a
group of people, still playing together, but in a "worldly" institution.
However, particularly in the latter period, the structure and the nature
of play experiences were often modelled after secular organizations.
What often occurred was that they played in a worldly way among their own
people, "not in the world, but of it."

With regard to "Christian liberty" little more need be said
other than to re-emphasize two points. The first is what appears to be
an increase in tolerance between divergent expressions of faith. "You
do your thing, I'll do mine". The second is, the Chatham C.R.C. members
appeared to take less tolerant positions than the C.R.C. denomination.

The Chatham congregations during the later period, as in the earlier
## TABLE X

**Significant Beginnings and Purchases: A Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.R.C. denominational level</th>
<th>Activity begun or facility acquired</th>
<th>C.R.C. Chatham level</th>
<th>Difference in years</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Golf course purchased</td>
<td>----</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>First church sponsored event</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>- 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>School field days begun</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>- 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Inter-church leagues begun</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>- 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conference/recreation grounds purchased</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Camp Roger</td>
<td></td>
<td>- 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>C.R. Youth Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>- 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>C.R. Conference Grounds</td>
<td></td>
<td>- 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Inter-high school leagues begun</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>- 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957 - 1959</td>
<td>High school gymnasiums built</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>- 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
one, and in the C.R.C. denomination for both periods, tried to maintain a separation of church and the organization of physically active games. Officially this was largely upheld. The general members, however, did not always see this principle as clearly and made efforts to increase the church's direct involvement.

By the end of 1981, people were still concerned with the honour of God, the welfare of man, and other principles as they were related to involvement in dance and physically active games. However, the substance of these principles changed significantly for both the C.R.C. denomination as a whole, and that part of the denomination living in Chatham. With regard to their thinking the members of the C.R.C. in Chatham tended to be somewhat more conservative than the denomination. Chatham, with regard to its actions, though it maintained some unique differences from the larger denomination, lagged approximately twenty years behind it.
FOOTNOTES


2 W.H. Rutgers, Recreation on sunday, Banner, September 22, 1938, 869.

3 Constance, Summer recreations, Young Calvinist, 27 (7), July 1946, 9.


5 Harry R. Boer, First Tango at Calvin, Banner, 112 (47), December 9, 1977.


7 D.H. Kromminga, The square skip, Banner, 78 (2420), October 8, 1943, 521.

8 E.R. Post, Our young men's vacation camp, Young Calvinist, 1928, 19.


10 Field day, Banner, 72 (2099), July 1, 1937, 643.


12 H.J. Kuiper, A wrong way, Banner, 69 (1946), July 6, 1934, 606.

13 Christian boys' club sport news, Young Calvinist, 27 (9), September 1946, 15.

14 For purposes of the time period under a study see Young Calvinist, 29 (9), September 1948, 29. Boys clubs wind up basketball season, Young Calvinist, 30 (6), June 1949, 48. "Hurray" for Oakdale, Young Calvinist 31 (1), October 1950, 32.

Hessel Bouma, Our societies and recreation, Young Calvinist, 10 (8), August 1929, 208.

17. H. J. Kuiper, Games of skill, Banner, 65 (1826), March 21, 1930, 269 and H. J. Kuiper, Pool and bowling on public places, Banner, 67 (1827), March 11, 1932, 245.

18. Three musketeers, Christian recreation, Young Calvinist, and A sincere friend, Recreational centers, Young Calvinist, 26 (9), September 1945, 5.


20. Henry Rozema, The east is active, Young Calvinist, 31 (2), February 1950, 2.


22. E. J. Tanis, Our own golf course, Banner, 62 (1608), December 9, 9, 1927, 875.


25. Gerald Key, Is there an amusement problem? Young Calvinist, 22 (3), March 1941, 14 and Remember the sabbath day, Young Calvinist, 33 (12), December 1952, 440.


27. Boys clubs wind up basketball season, Young Calvinist.


32. Constance, Modern amusements, Young Calvinist, 26 (7), July 1945, 5. Also, Boys clubs wind up basketball season, Young Calvinist.

33. W. H. Rutgers, Our young men and the pool hall, Banner, 76 (2313), September 19, 1941, 869 and John Driebke, part of a panel discussing, recreation in the lives of children, Christian Home and School, 20 (11), May 1942, 7. Kuiper, Games of skill, Banner. Nicholas J. Monsma, Playing pool and bowling, Banner, 83 (2676), October 1, 1948, 1157 and Rutgers, Our young men and the pool hall, Banner.

34. Summer camp, Young Calvinist, 16 (5), May/June 1935, 19.

35. Summer camp, Young Calvinist and Van Vuren, Ripon Christian school, Christian Home and School.

36. Winter sports in Western Michigan, Young Calvinist, 13 (2), February 1932, 10.

37. Tanis, Our own golf course, Banner, and Christian boys' clubs sport news, Young Calvinist.

38. Camp Roger, Banner, 76 (2296), May 16, 1941, 467. Anthony Hoekema, A camp of our own, Banner, 76, 1941, 474 and G. Goris, A camp for our boys and girls, Banner, 76 (2299), June 6, 1941, 542.


41. H. J. Kuiper, Ministers at ball games, Banner, 68 (1916), December 8, 1933, 997.

42. Ralph Stob, Play ball, Banner, 72 (2091), May 7, 1937, 14.

44 Rutgers, Concerning baseball, Banner.
45 Sabbath day, Young Calvinist.
46 Key, Amusement problem? Young Calvinist.
47 Rozema, East is active, Young Calvinist.
48 Artikel 57, Acta Synodi 1926.
49 H.J. Kuiper, The overture of classis Grand Rapids West in regard to worldliness, Banner, 61 (1528), May 28, 1926, 331.
50 Rutgers; Our young men and the pool hall, Banner.
52 Worldly amusements, Acta Synodi 1928, 22.
53 Artikel 57, Acta Synodi 1926.
55 E.J. Huizenga, The fray of the silver cord, Banner, 115 (35), September 15, 1980, 18 – 19.
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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The C.R.C. generally, and specifically its members in Chatham, Ontario, 1926 - 1981, have been used as a preliminary case study towards determining the relationship between its objectives and its actions at both levels, with regard to involvement in dance and physically active games. In analyzing the conclusions and commenting on possible implications and questions for further study, two levels need to be explored. The first: the C.R.C., and second: the hypotheses offered in Chapter I.

With regard to the C.R.C. there are four basic conclusions, each to be expanded upon following the list below.

1. There was an increase in active involvement, at both levels, through the time period studied.

2. The basic principles remained unchanged; the understanding and application of these principles changed considerably.

3. Both levels, the denomination and the Chatham congregations, held basically similar objectives at approximately the same time periods.

4. Chatham lagged approximately twenty years behind the denomination with respect to the forms of involvement.

With regard to the first conclusion, the increase in involvement was evident in terms of the number of participants, the regularity of involvement and an increase in the diversity of activities pursued. The decade following 1941 was a time of conception for the growth which followed. The denomination up to 1951 was almost completely based in
the United States, and had been established there for almost a century.
C.R.C. people had made their home in the United States, were established, and had begun playing their nation's games. Following World War II their involvement again increased. The situation in Chatham was markedly different. Chatham had only a handful of C.R.C. members till after the war when immigration boomed. Illustrations XII and XIII graphically demonstrate, in numbers and percentages respectively, the phenomenal growth in the forties for Chatham and in the fifties for the Canadian C.R.C. It was during this time that participation, in games particularly, became a reality, especially as the immigrants became economically independent and began to understand the ways of their new land. They played the games of their new country, but did not forget the games of their old country, so soccer was played and later kaatsen was revived. Though the data does not permit numerical preciseness concerning the level of involvement, it is this writer's opinion that if it could be done, a graph depicting involvement would closely approximate Illustration XII, with an even greater vertical slope.

Concerning the second conclusion, it should be emphasized that there was never a question about the rightness of principles such as the honour of God and the welfare of man. They were basic principles, the honour of God being important throughout. But what did change was the understanding of these principles, in a direction the oldtimers would have considered as more liberal. It should be pointed out that it did not appear that the people who were proposing or supporting change were doing so to be more liberal. On the contrary, they sought out what they felt would be honouring God. That meant going in a more liberal direction was not the main concern. The fundamental principles stayed intact but
ILLUSTRATION XII
MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
IN U.S.A., CHATHAM, AND CANADA

U.S.A.  — —
Chatham  — — (drop last two zeros, e.g., 15,000 = 150)
Canada  — —

Year
1926  31  41  51  61  71  81

Members
0  15,000  30,000  45,000  60,000  75,000  90,000  105,000  120,000  135,000  150,000  165,000  180,000  195,000  210,000  225,000  235,000
ILLUSTRATION XIII

PERCENTAGE GROWTH IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

IN THE U.S.A., CHATHAM AND CANADA

U.S.A.  
Chatham 
Canada
the understanding of their application changed considerably. As important as basic principles are, an analysis of them would be incomplete without understanding in fact what they really meant, how they were really understood, and how they were applied.

The third conclusion, the similarity of objectives held by the congregations and denomination, adds support to the findings of other researchers on religious objectives in sport who have used only the literature at the denominational level. However, it should be emphasized that this study was preliminary in character, and a future study in further verifying the above would need a larger sample for comparison and would further need to assess the laity's understanding at a more individual level.

The twenty year time lag referred to in the fourth conclusion indicated a difference in form large enough almost to suggest a difference in principles between the C.R.C denomination and its congregation in Chatham. This was not the case, as it has already been argued that the substance of fundamental principles were similarly held at both levels. The difference was due to a large extent to the different historical context of the two levels. The Chatham congregation was poor, few in numbers, and was getting settled during the "Dirty Thirties", the people having neither the money nor time to gather to play. Their counterpart, predominantly in the United States, was larger in number, and had been settled previous to the Thirties. Their recreational objectives could consequently be fulfilled earlier than those held by the members of the C.R.C. in Chatham.

This lag raises several questions. If this cultural lag is evident
in the area of dance and physically active games, could the same be said
of other areas, such as music, art, or the building of old age homes?
Furthermore, as evidenced in this study, an analysis of the form of invol-
vement may well be useful in affirming the actualization of an objective,
but may not necessarily be a reliable or valid indicator of what the
actual objectives are at that time.

Still on the C.R.C., there are many questions which remain unanswered,
as they are either beyond the purposes of this thesis or require a great
deal of study.

1. Though this study indicates a parallel in the objectives held
by the denomination and congregation, the samples chosen were not necessarily
representative. Therefore this remains an area requiring further study.

2. As a member of a United States-Canadian church body, the Chatam
congregations showed some unique differences from the prevailing C.R.C.
involvement in dance and physically active games. The sample is again
inadequately representative to suggest this as being true of all or most
such church bodies. Further study would again be necessary.

3. Both the form and substance of fundamental principles regarding
the role of the high school in the area of dance and physically active
games appeared in this study as being different in the United States and
Canada. This is another area which requires additional study, both in
assessing the nature of the difference and explaining why it is so.

4. It would be of considerable interest to study the question of
why, within the C.R.C., females became involved later and to less of an
extent than males.

5. Further study should also be made with regard to the role of
Physical Education Departments at the Reformed Christian colleges. In
the present study, with the exception of M. Zuidema, R. Steen and F. Caldebeek, little leadership was offered by any of the other staff members via the literature reviewed.

We now turn to the hypotheses with which this study began. The first hypothesis was, that objectives and practices of the C.R.C. denomination with respect to dance and physically active games are approximately parallel to those held by members of the C.R.C. in Chatham. This hypothesis was substantiated in terms of objectives. As for the practices, the hypothesis could not be upheld as formulated, because of Chatham's twenty year time lag behind the denomination as a whole. In addition, the practices evidenced different cultural forms.

The second hypothesis was, that practices, with some variation, reflect stated objectives. The present study gives a qualified support to this. It needs to be qualified because within any institution, the objectives can be beautiful platitudes dishonestly covering up an empty program, or they can be ideals far removed from reality, or they can in fact be realistic goals met by an actual activity. Generally speaking, the C.R.C. falls between the last two types. It held ideals, some of which were actualized, and some of which were not, either because they were not fully understood or consistently applied, such as the violence in ice hockey or football. Therefore the Hypothesis cannot be supported standing alone; it always needs a context to be investigated.

The third hypothesis was, that changes in practices typically precede changes in objectives. This was found to be neither true nor false. In the case of Chatham, the objectives regarding involvement in physically active games was positively viewed well before participation became a reality. On the other hand, in the case of dance in the C.R.C. denomination, a lot of people danced before the objective was
changed.

What strikes one as a straightforward hypothesis becomes neither right nor wrong, and when thought about, it becomes extremely complex. Why does an institution's behaviour change over time? Is it because intellectually, people alter their objectives and then try to actualize them concretely? Or is it because when people act in a new manner they need to rationalize their conduct by creating new objectives? In the end it becomes a question of why people act the way they do, and why they think the way they do. Though established as a hypothesis in this paper, it can be neither satisfactorily supported nor denied, for in fact it has been shown that sometimes actions preceded objectives, and sometimes actions were shaped by objectives.
APPENDIX I

Overture of Classis Illinois*

I. Preamble

1. It is the belief of Classis Illinois that the indulgence in worldly amusements, such as theater-and movie-attendance, dancing and card-playing is becoming a serious problem in the life of the Church. It is an incontrovertible fact that these worldly amusements are increasingly indulged in, especially by the youthful members of the church in the larger cities. That this indulgence is detrimental to spiritual development, impedes religious progress, undermines individual piety and devotion, and of necessity jeopardizes the spiritual life of the church, needs no argument.

2. How to deal effectively with this deplorable situation baffles many a consistory. Although traditionally the Reformed Churches have always been opposed to the above named amusements, they have never taken an official stand or formulated a definite policy by which the consistories might be guided in combatting this evil.

3. Classis believes that the time has arrived that this problem of worldly amusements should be thoroughly investigated and intelligently studied, in order that the Church may come to a clear and definite policy as to proper methods to be employed to cope with this situation as may with God’s blessing stem the tide of worldliness which is sweeping over the Church.

4. It is furthermore the opinion of Classis that the object of this investigation and study should not only be of a negative character, but also of a positive nature. Namely, that also ways and means should be found whereby wholesome amusements and recreation may be provided for our young people.

II. Classis, therefore, overtures Synod to appoint a competent Committee which will have the time and opportunity to make:

a. The necessary study and investigation of the above named amusements in order to determine their true nature and character in the light of Scripture;

b. To advise whether habitual indulgence in these amusements becomes a disciplinary matter.

c. To outline principles of policy which the Church may adopt to combat this particular spirit of worldliness;

d. To find ways and means whereby our young people may be provided with wholesome amusements;

e. To submit its findings and recommendations to the Synod of 1928.
APPENDIX II

Article 96

The report of the Committee of Preaching on Amusements and Unions is now read by the reporter, Rev. R.B. Kuiper, and accepted as information. Synod decides to discuss it seriatim.

Amusements


Recommendations:

A. Your Committee recommends that Synod thank the Committee on Worldly Amusements for its work.

Adopted.

B. Your Committee suggests that Synod adopt the following resolutions in harmony with the recommendations which conclude the report of the Committee on Worldly Amusements (Agendum, Part I, pp. 55, 56).

I. Synod reminds our people of the doctrinal and ethical principles which should guide the Christian in his relation to the world in general and in the matter of amusements in particular, and urges all our professors, ministers, elders, and Bible-teachers to emphasize these principles in this age of prevailing worldliness.

Some of the most important of these principles follow:

1. The honor of God requires:
   a. That the Christian's amusements should at the very least not conflict with any commandments of God;
   b. That we and our children should be keenly aware, also in our amusements, of our covenant relation to God as His peculiar people.

c. That the Christian shall deem it a matter of loyalty to God not to further the interests of an institution which is manifestly an instrument of Satan for attack on the Kingdom of God.

2. From the consideration of the welfare of man we conclude:
   a. That there is a legitimate place in life for such amusements as are recreative for body and mind.
   b. That no physical recreation or mental diversion should be tolerated which is in any way or in any degree subversive of our spiritual and moral well-being.
   c. That, even, when our amusements are not spiritually or morally harmful, they should not be allowed to occupy more than a secondary, subordinate, place in life.

3. The principle of spiritual separation from the world:
   a. Does not imply that Christian's should form separate communities or should shun all associations with ungodly men (1 Cor. 5:9 ff);
   b. Forbids friendship, in distinction from fellowship, with evil men (James 4:4);
   c. Requires that we shun all evil in the world;
   d. Demands a weaning away of the Heart from the transient things of this present earthly sphere (Colossians 3:1, 2).

4. Christian Liberty:
   a. Consists in freedom from the power of sin; in freedom from the law; its curse, its demands as a condition for earning eternal life, its oppressive yoke; and in liberty of conscience with reference to human ordinances and things neither prescribed nor condemned, either directly or indirectly, in the Word of God;
   b. Is limited in its exercise by the law of love (1 Cor. 8:9, 13), the law of self-preservation (Matt. 19:8, 9), and the law of self-denial, which often requires the renunciation of things in themselves lawful (Matt. 16:24).

Adopted.

II. While several practices are found in our circles which cannot pass the muster of these principles, and while all our amusements, not only theatre-attendance, dancing, and card-playing, should be judged in the light of these principles, yet Synod feels constrained, in
pursuance of the decisions of the Synod of 1926 in the matter of amusements, to call particular attention to this familiar trio. It greatly deplores the increasing prevalence among us of these forms of amusement, urgently warns our members against them, and further refers our people to the material on the subject given in the report of the Committee on Worldly Amusements (Agendum, Part I, pp. 31 - 47).

Adopted.

III. Synod urges all our leaders and all our people to pray and labour for the awakening and deepening of spiritual life in general, and to be keenly aware of the absolute indispensibility of keeping our religious life vital and powerful, through daily prayer, the earnest searching of the Scriptures, and through engaging in practical Christian works, which are the best antidote against worldliness.

Adopted.

IV. Synod exhorts all our leaders to warn unceasingly against the prevailing spirit and forms of worldliness in order that our Reformed principles in these matters may be re-emphasized; insists that these warnings shall be given not only in the preaching, but also in our Catechism and Sunday School classes, in family-visitation, and in personal contact whenever occasion presents itself; and urges that these warnings shall be given also in our school-rooms.

Adopted.

V. Synod reminds consistories that in nominations for or appointments to positions of responsibility in our churches, careful attention should be paid to conduct in the matter of amusements; and suggests that also other bodies, such as Board of Christian Schools, City Missions, etc. heed this same matter in their appointments.

Adopted.

VI. Synod urges consistories to deal in the spirit of love, yet also, in view of the strong tide of worldliness which is threatening our churches, very firmly with all cases of misdemeanor and offensive conduct in the matter of amusements; and, where repeated admonitions by the consistory are left unheeded, to apply discipline as a last resort.

Adopted.

VII. Synod instructs consistories to inquire of those who ask to be examined previous to making public profession of their faith and partaking of the Lord's Supper as to their stand and conduct in the matter of worldly amusements, and if, if it appears that they are not minded to lead the life of Christian separation and consecration, not to permit their public profession.

Adopted.
C. Your Committee is of the opinion that the ground on which the Committee on Worldly Amusements declined to carry out the instruction to suggest ways and means whereby our young people may be provided with wholesome amusements, are valid, and recommends that Synod so express itself (Agenda, Part I, pp. 56)

Adopted.

D. Your Committee suggests that Synod instruct the Publication Committee to publish the whole report of the Committee on Worldly Amusements (Agenda, Part I, pp. 4 - 56) in De Wachter and The Banner in as many installments as may be convenient.

Adopted.

Synod further decides that the report shall also be published in pamphlet form for distribution, at cost price.
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ABBREVIATIONS USED:

CB  
    Calvary C.R.C. Bulletins

C.C.H.I.  
    Chatham Christian Hockey League

C.R.C.  
    Christian Reformed Church

C.S.I.  
    Christian Schools International

FB  
    First C.R.C. Bulletins

GB  
    Grace C.R.C. Bulletins
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