

Church of Jesus Christ was intended to be *one* body, *one* group, not many, sometimes warring, factions.

The scriptures make this clear. Jesus prayed that his followers should be one (John 17.11). Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their divisions (1 Corinthians 1), and taught that Christians are members of what he called "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12).

And again, we should be concerned about unity, for we need the powerful, persuasive power of the whole Church to nurture every believing Christian from a partial to a complete dedication to Jesus our Lord.

And still further, we should be concerned about unity because without it the Church in its struggles for the souls of men and women has a much more difficult task to perform. When each denomination "does its own thing" there is duplication of effort, wastage of funds and loss of efficiency. Efficient evangelism demands the co-ordinating of the activities of the various branches of the Church.

### III. How can We Work for Unity among Christians?

I should like to offer a few practical suggestions:

- 1) you might consider joining the *Atlantic Baptist Fellowship*, a group of ministers and lay folk within our Convention who are interested in promoting, as *Baptists*, Christian Unity.
- 2) before your group, or board, or committee, launches some new project ask first, "Can we do this better in co-operation with other Christians?"
- 3) we should refrain from talking about our divisions in the presence of non-Christians. Let us show a united front to the world whenever possible. I am not suggesting that there are no differences or that they are not important. The place to discuss differences among Christians is within the fellowship of believers in a spirit of loving respect.
- 4) we should not exaggerate our divisions ... and we should not ignore them as unimportant. We must strive to have a clear, objective, balanced view in all things. And we must always remember we already have a bond with all those who confess Jesus is Lord, no matter how much they differ from us in other respects.
- 5) And, of course, we must pray, that all who truly call Jesus Lord might be one.

**Editor's note.** The Reverend Mark G. McKim is a native of New Brunswick. He holds the BA degree with distinction from the University of New Brunswick and the MDiv (Honours) degree from Acadia University. He has served the Germain Street United Baptist Church, Saint John, New Brunswick, since January 1991. As a guest preacher, he delivered the above sermon on the Sunday beginning the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the Forest Hills United Baptist Church, Saint John, New Brunswick, 21 January 1990. He is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Theology degree at Boston University.

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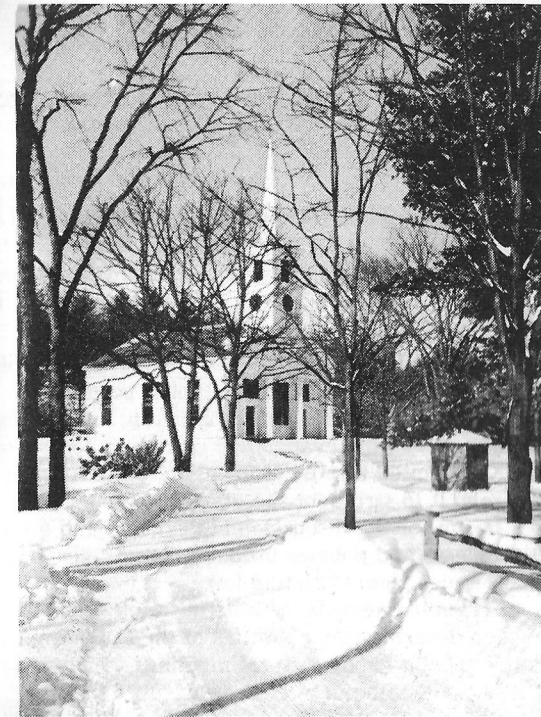
*Biblical revelation does not require the rejection of the historical method in biblical criticism nor resistance to the scientific method of natural science. A pre-biblical and pre-scientific fundamentalism is not required in defense of a Christian theology based on biblical revelation.*

- Dale Moody, 1915 - 1992

# BULLETIN

## Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

### February 1992



*O ye Frost and Cold, bless ye the Lord:  
O ye Ice and Snow, bless ye the Lord:  
praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

## SPRING ASSEMBLY 1992

29-30 May 1992

First United Baptist Church  
Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia

Theme: "Baptist Theological Education: Is There a Crisis in Canada?"

Special Speaker: Rev'd Dr. Raymond Hobbs,  
Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Interpretation,  
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

Full particulars in May 1992 Bulletin



## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### THE OFFICERS OF THE ABF ARE:

President: Rev'd Byron D. Corkum, P.O. Box 637, Amherst, N.S. B4H 4B8.  
 Vice-President: Rev'd David H. Shaw, P.O. Box 237, Hantsport, N.S. B0P 1P0.  
 Secretary: Mr. Edward A. Colquhoun, 1 Durley Street, Amherst, N.S. B4H 2B2.  
 Treasurer: Dr. John R.E. Churchill, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S. B0P 1T0.  
 Public Relations: Rev'd Vincent V. Rushton, 1026 Evergreen Crescent, New Minas, N.S., B4N 4L6. Tel: 902-681-1121.  
 Secretary for the Friends of the ABF: Dr. Dorothy M. Lovesey, P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0.

### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP (approved by the Spring Session, Wolfville, June 14-15, 1985)

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is a community of Baptist churches, laypersons and ordained ministers. It is supported by voluntary contributions made by persons and churches sympathetic to its aims, which are:

- (1) to witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion which is the essence of the traditional Baptist position;
- (2) to affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to the whole, visible, catholic and evangelical church of Jesus Christ;
- (3) to strengthen the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces and to encourage it to strive for the above;
- (4) to provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social problems and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love;
- (5) to publish, at regular intervals, a Bulletin which seeks to further these aims and which describes the activities of the Fellowship and announces the agenda for its general meetings which will be held in the spring and in the autumn of each year.

**THE BULLETIN OF THE ABF** is published by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, Editor — the Rev. Dr. M.R.B. Lovesey, P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0. Telephone 902-542-5264.

The Bulletin is mailed to interested churches and individuals. Those wishing to receive the Bulletin, and all details of changes of address, are to be sent to the distribution organizer: Mrs. Isobel Horton, P.O. Box 586, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0.

While the Bulletin is mailed free of charge; donations to help pay the ever-increasing costs of publication and mailing are gratefully received and should be mailed to the treasurer (address above). Receipts for income tax purposes will be mailed.

*Unless the truth of the Bible is lifted out of the literalistic framework that captured it some two thousand years ago, that truth can have for modern women and men no meaning, no credibility, and no appeal.*

-Bp. John Shelby Spong, 1931-

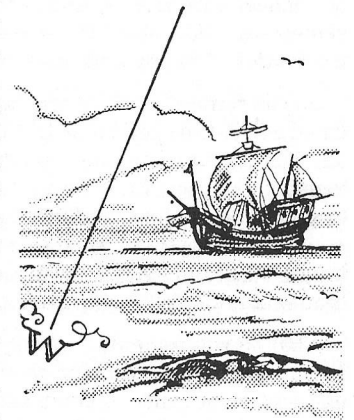
Welcome to this the first of four editions of the Bulletin which we propose issuing in 1992. We have wanted to do this for some while but up to this time lack of funds have made it impossible. It will only be possible now if friends continue to support us at the old rate (plus 10% extra to cover additional costs). Without the legacy we have received from our late dear departed friend, Dr. Marion Grant, the hope of printing an additional edition per year would still be but a dream. We remember her, and all our dear friends now with the Lord, with the greatest affection.

We do hope that you, too, dear friend, will write the ABF into your will, and, at the very least, will sign up as a "Friend" and send in your 1992 minimum annual subscription of \$10.00. Forgive me, but I must remind all old "Friends" that their annual dues are now payable. Please make your cheque payable to the "Atlantic Baptist Fellowship" and mail it to the Friends' Secretary as soon as possible.

What a year 1991 has been, with earth-shattering events occurring at regular intervals! We have seen the end of Soviet communism, the Gulf War, fighting in Yugoslavia, physical disasters in many parts of the world, economic recession and unemployment in Canada. It is with relief that we leave 1991 to the historians and look with as much hope as we can muster to the opportunities of 1992. The future of Canada as a political entity is uncertain . . . we must hope and pray and work for betterment.

This edition of the Bulletin initiates a new series of articles on the living religions of the world today. The first, on Judaism, ably prepared by Timothy Ashley, of the Acadia Divinity College, will be followed by essays on Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, and so on. We hope readers will find the series interesting and instructive.

The media have reminded us that this year is the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus. This has caused a heated debate between those who see Columbus as a hero and those who, including an ever-growing number of aboriginal peoples, see him as a villain who brought to the New World only disease and death, pain and anguish. Some argue that the destruction of the early American cultures was due to Christianity's inherent commitment to evangelism. This ideological justification they claim, produced one of the most horrible events in human history, namely, the extermination of entire Indian societies. Your editor would very much like to know how you think Christian leaders should respond to this very serious charge.



We close on a more hopeful note. Let us remind ourselves that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans 5.20)." The last word, in this world, we most sincerely believe, is not *sin*, it is and will always be *grace*. Hallelujah!



# THE 1991 AUGUST ASSEMBLY — MORE THAN JUST A STICKY RESIDUE?

by David H. Shaw

A university professor once remarked to his class that students tend to retain only a "stocky residue" of course material. With that pessimistic attitude in mind, I ask the question, what do you remember of the 145th annual Assembly of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces?

Some will remember the surprise and frustration you felt when your car was towed away. Many will remember the stress of getting registered and the anxiety of map-reading and the following of verbal directions designed to help you find your bed. You may remember the fighting with that bed and looking at your bill and wondering if perhaps a motel would have been a better deal. But then, the promise of fellowship will surely outweigh everything else.

Having conquered the first hurdle, do you have any recollection of sitting through the sessions? Remember how the doors at the rear were constantly swinging in and out allowing the noise and the buzz of "non participant" conversation to drown out an already inadequate sound system? Can you experience again the emotions generated triggered by the amendments? By the way, did you know that a good way to learn what the delegates *really* feel is to spend a little while in a stall in the washroom during a break?

Do you remember how good it felt to have made it through the day and to take that cooling after supper break? But then, as the dining hall food was taking over your digestive system, you found yourself in the evening service. You settled back to be inspired, stimulated and encouraged by a relaxing programme. What do you remember? Was it relaxing or was it too long? Was it encouraging or was it overwhelming? What was *said* in those sessions? Do you remember where you put the tapes?

Now the evening session is over and you have a choice. You can seek out the narrow little bed in the hot little room and try and get some sleep, or you can go out with friends for a time of fellowship. Let's say you were fortunate enough to connect with friends and actually get a seat in a restaurant. What do you remember? How about the stress of the restaurant staff as they tried to handle the hordes of happy and boisterous Baptists?

Do you remember the name cards with the little red dot? I was told they indicated a first-time person to the Convention. I didn't make a point of seeking them out. Did you? I remember vividly my first time in another Convention and how lonely and cut off I felt with all those people laughing and carrying-on while I stood on the sidelines and then retreated to the narrow dormitory bed. Did you notice how happy everyone seemed, not only at the restaurants, but during the breaks? But not everybody at Convention is happy! Many are hurting and all that exuberant fellowship stuff can leave them lonely in their own Convention.

What do you remember about the last August Assembly? I hope you remember that being alive is being *open* and *honest* with one another ... and that differences of personality, opinion and theology must never be allowed to sabotage the saving of souls and the call of Christ to serve others.

**Editor's note.** The Reverend David H. Shaw, BTh, MDiv (Acadia) is pastor of the Hantsport United Baptist Church, Nova Scotia, and V.P. of the ABF.

## COMMENT

Some years back now I worshipped in the Manning Memorial Chapel on the campus of Acadia University and heard the best sermon I have ever heard delivered there by any preacher. I have listened to many good sermons there over the years preached by the various University chaplains as they have succeeded one another, by members of the Acadia faculty and by visiting clergy and lay people. I would rate a few of them at straight A, but the one I recall with the greatest pleasure and profit must be given A+. It was a superb oration, convincing all worshippers beyond all questioning of the entire relevance of Christianity for modern life and stimulating them to do their utmost for his highest. It was given by the Chancellor of Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, the Reverend Doctor Angus James MacQueen.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I have just read the two volumes of autobiography, written in his forceful, inimitable style, by this gifted son of a Cape Breton coal miner. In a moment of candor and with great accuracy he describes himself as "a sometimes impatient, opinionated and abrasive" man. Without fear or favour he writes of his instructors at both Mount A. and the Pine Hill Divinity College, most of whom he found wanting. He tells of sitting in a lecture hall at Pine Hill one day and listening to a lecture without taking any notes. This annoyed the instructor. On being asked why he was not taking notes, he blithely replied that he would take notes when he heard anything worth writing down! No wonder this Cape Bretoner gained the reputation of always speaking his mind and of dividing up people into two camps, those who loved him and those who found him, to say the least, somewhat trying.

One of the finest preachers of the United Church of Canada, Angus MacQueen has served churches in Saint John, Edmonton, London and Toronto. In 1958, at the early age of 46, he was elected Moderator of the United Church of Canada. He was for years chair of the United Church *Observer* and headed the Board of Evangelism and Social Service during the eventful Mutchmor era. He served as Chancellor of Mount Allison University (recently rated as among the very best of Canadian universities), 1977-1985. "Dull would he be of soul" who cannot find Angus' account of his life entertaining, educational, inspiring and completely absorbing.

To give the reader a little taste of this delightful work I will conclude by referring to what Angus has to say about the exclusivist approach to Christianity. He is at pains to show that the exclusivist approach, held by far too many in the Church today, is totally wrong. He writes:

The pluralist has a point when he accuses Christians of being haughty and exclusive towards other religions, as though they were 'a pack of lies,' fairy tales or a hodge-podge of superstitions and rules. Oftentimes we have gone scalp hunting in far away lands in an aggressive and holier-than-thou attitude. Our Scripture warns against that, and affirms that God has not left His people without a witness to Himself (Acts 14.17) . . . . But we claim a unique and supreme revelation in Jesus Christ and his liberating and reconciling gospel, death and resurrection.

Needless to say, Angus is totally opposed to the pluralist view!

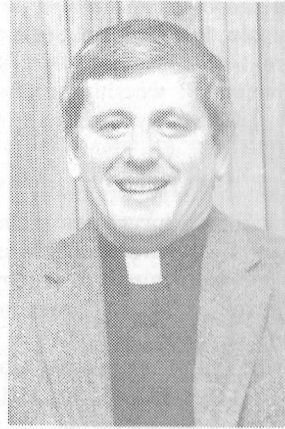
**Editor's note.** Vol. 1 of *Memory is My Diary* was published by the Lancelot Press, Hantsport, N.S. in 1990; Vol. 2 in 1991. No indices, such a pity!

# REPORT OF THE ATLANTIC SEMINAR IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, 1991

## “The Relevance of the Church for the 21st Century”

by Douglas Hergett

The 23rd Atlantic Seminar in Theological Education was held at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, in June 1991. This Seminar is organized annually by a steering committee of lay persons and clergy in co-operation with the Acadia Divinity College and the Atlantic School of Theology. The theme last June, “The Relevance of the Church for the 21st Century,” was developed by three resource persons, the Doctors Dorcas Gordon, Clifford Elliott and Don Thompson. The Seminar wrestled with such questions as whether the Church of today and tomorrow will be able to influence and change the world as the Early Church did? Will it make a difference in people's lives? Will it provide an alternative to the materialism and consumerism of our times? Will it help people address the problems of today? Will it be able to turn nominal Christians into committed Christians?



Douglas Hergett

### I

Dr. J. Dorcas Gordon is an ordained minister of St. Davis' Presbyterian Church, Scarborough, Ontario, and is a lecturer in New Testament at Knox College, Toronto School of Theology. Dr. Gordon presented four lectures, from a biblical perspective, on the relevance of the Church for the next century.

She began by reminding us that “biblical faith and the church must not be viewed through rose coloured glasses.” In the midst of current troubles we are tempted to be infatuated with the past. The reality of the Early Church was far from idyllic, it was one of struggle, conflict and compromise. Many Hellenists and Hebrew Christians were at odds about theology and mission strategy. Paul contended sharply with Peter. There was the perennial struggle of conservative and liberal. Today we must use the past but not try to reproduce it in every detail. Christianity has always been a living, developing diversity. For the Church to have relevance in the coming century, it must show it can honour diversity within its own house.

The experience of the Pauline church at Corinth, as seen in the pages of the New Testament, has much to teach us today and illustrates many of the principles hinted at above. The Christians there reflect a wide variety of religious experience, social status and psychological makeup. Their conflicts reflect their cultural differences. The issues were resolved with Paul calling them to live with some ambiguity.

Quoting Hans Küng, Dr. Gordon asserted that the Church today must be one of renovation and innovation. It must hold tradition and creation in tension. The challenge for the Church in the 21st century is to learn to assess critically what has been given us in the tradition.

### II

Dr. Clifford Elliott, lecturer and professor, has served many important charges in the United Church of Canada. He writes, broadcasts and lectures extensively.

Dr. Elliott began by addressing his remarks to “a church and a world at the end of the century at the end of its tether.” In the last 30 to 40 years the Church has almost lost the transcendence of God and strayed into adopting the gods and the goals of the culture. He said the way forward is to recover the image of humankind as made in the image of God as found in Genesis. This view is a faith, a gift, Good News we have to proclaim.

The Church going into the next century is a sinful and imperfect creation yet this is not a reason for despair. Grace and forgiveness are still available. Christians must be partners with God in the redemption of the world. We must learn again to “turn the world upside down (Acts 17.6).”

### III

The Reverend Dr. Don Thompson, an Anglican priest, teaches theology at the centre for Christian Studies at St. Michael's College, Toronto. He has been a member of the Canadian Anglican and Roman Catholic Dialogue and the Faith and Order Commission of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Dr. Thompson responded to the theme of the Seminar with an examination of the word “relevant,” which suggests “connection with or bearing upon the matter in hand.” This involves a relationship between the historic church and the history of the world. It involves the struggle to remain relevant to our faith tradition and the issues with which we live.

He went on to examine the relationship of faith to belief. Faith is an intensely personal experience; belief is somehow somewhat external to us, controlled to a large extent by our cultural context. When what we feel and what people are saying are at odds we experience irrelevance.

Next, our lecturer examined the relationship of good and evil. In distinguishing the individual's good from the community's good, matters of judgment are involved. One's group good must be balanced against that of other groups, this is done through law. But something has gone wrong with humankind, the structure of evil has become ingrained. This structure of evil gets established when one or both of love and understanding are missing.

Bernard Lonagan says decline begins the moment that we cease to live by faith. There is a failure of love and understanding, and the result is suffering. If an evil structure is not opposed it can become established, as in Nazi Germany. This leads to such disvalues as sexism, racism, the absurd. However, God is at work de-constructing the structures of evil. This is God's activity of redemption. Our task as a Christian community, the Church, is to bear witness to the structure of redemption.

In concluding, Dr. Thompson addressed the issue of the relationship of culture to faith, a relationship with which Christians must continue to grapple in the 21st century.

**Editor's note.** The Reverend H. Douglas Hergett was reared in the Annapolis Valley and the South Shore of Nova Scotia. He is the holder of the following degrees: BComm (Dalhousie), BST (Univ. of King's Coll.), MTh (Atlan. Sch. Theol.). An ordained Anglican priest, he is rector of the Parish of Horton since 1972, and an Archdeacon of the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia. He is the author of *Visible Faith: the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council and the Inter-Church Housing Society, 1970-1990*. Copies are available from the author, price C\$8.95, postage extra.



# NEWS OF THE CHURCH FROM FAR AND NEAR

## SBC CONFLICTS

The Southern Baptists' annual convention in the summer of 1991 proceeded somewhat calmly for the first time in over a decade, mainly because there was no moderate candidate running for the presidency. As expected, yet another fundamentalist was elected to that powerful position. However, tensions between fundamentalists and moderates continued at state conventions (which moderates control in many states) and at denominational seminaries and colleges. At Baylor and Furman universities the administrations continue their disputes with state convention appointed trustees. Prominent professors at Southern and Southeastern Baptist Theological seminaries, pressured to conform to conservative guidelines, left for other pastures. The Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board cut funds to the Baptist Seminary at Rüschnikon, Switzerland, in protest for its perceived liberal policies and the use of such professors as Dr. E. Glenn Hinson.

At their annual meetings last year, two moderate groups, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Alliance, separated themselves further from the SBC conservatives by calling on churches and individuals to fund a rival mission board and seminary. Both claim not to be schismatic, but to be committed to the SBC — they are not prepared to create an independent denomination.

Financial issues have muted some of the fierce rhetoric of fundamentalist/conservatist national leaders as monies have gone to support these rival groups. The Convention cancelled its financial support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington lobby group representing 10 Baptist bodies. This Joint Committee had been receiving annually US\$400,000.00 from SBC funds.

## THE SWAGGARTS AND TAXES

It was reported in the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, press that the United States Internal Revenue Service had filed Court documents on January 6th of this year placing liens on Jimmy Swaggart's earnings and those of his family gained from two of their most profitable years, 1985 and 1986. They owe US\$417,000.00 to the government. The taxes may now have been paid but at the time of the news item the liens had not been removed.

Swaggart, once a leading Pentecostal TV evangelist, was disgraced in 1988 after a prostitute claimed he had performed sexual improprieties with her. Last October, he was discovered by the police in a car with a prostitute in Indio, California.

## THE ATLANTIC BIENNIAL ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE 1991

The first AEC conference was held at Mount Allison University in 1951. There has been no break in these conferences since then. The 21st Conference, held in the 40th anniversary year of the AEC, was the first to be held in Prince Edward Island. Some 55 gathered at the University of P.E.I. in Charlottetown, 26-28 August 1991.

The theme of the conference was a report on the Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia, 7-21 February 1991. The Reverends Philip and Ruth Jefferson (Anglicans from Halifax) and the Reverend Dr. Roy Wilson (United Church, Toronto, husband of Lois Wilson) attended the Assembly and were the theme speakers at Charlottetown.

The theme of the Canberra Assembly was the Holy Spirit — "Come, Holy Spirit — Renew the Whole Creation." The theme was subdivided as follows:

Giver of Life — Sustain Your Creation!

Spirit of Truth — Set Us Free!

Spirit of Unity — Reconcile Your People!

Holy Spirit — Transform and Sanctify Us!

It has been said there are four great movements affecting the Church in our century: the Biblical, the Liturgical, the Ecumenical and the Charismatic. All four were reflected at the Seventh Assembly of the WCC.

The theme speakers made several points with great emphasis. One was the need for the members of the Church world-wide to monitor the media and express their opposition vigorously whenever they see truth distorted, negative stereotypes reinforced or violent behavior sanctioned. Another was that during the 500th anniversary year of Columbus' arrival in the Americas, the Church should witness against all forms of exploitation and oppression of native peoples. And still another was the need for all to support the WCC's Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women.

The conference held three workshops each lasting an hour. The first, on Liturgical Renewal, was led by the Reverend Roland Hutchinson of the Alberton, P.E.I. United Church. The chair of the second, on Personal Transformation, was the Reverend Paul Vavasour of the Montague United Church. The third workshop, on Experience in Unity, was conducted by members from Island local churches.

## AN ECUMENICAL STALWART

We salute the Reverend Archdeacon William Moore, who for many years has served the Atlantic Ecumenical Council, particularly as Assistant Secretary responsible for the Friends' organization and the composition of newsletters. These newsletters, so full of useful information, have done much to keep the ecumenical vision alive in the Atlantic provinces.

Bill was born and educated in Codroy, Newfoundland. He graduated in 1953 from the University of King's College, Halifax, and was ordained to the Anglican priesthood. He served the following parishes: Liscombe, 1953-1958; Eastern Passage, 1958-1968; St. Margaret of Scotland, Halifax, 1968-1986; Crapaud, P.E.I., from 1986 until retirement in 1991. In 1986 he was appointed Archdeacon and Regional Dean of Prince Edward Island.

Bill's life long list of services to the ecumenical movement in the Atlantic provinces is impressive. He has attended twelve of the biennial conferences of the Atlantic Ecumenical Council. For over twenty years he has served the Halifax-Dartmouth Council of Churches. For a decade he has been the Ecumenical Officer of the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia. He attended the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Vancouver, 1983. His wife, Greta, comes from P.E.I. The Moores have four sons.

## THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE OF CANADA

Many well informed people are saying that in the not too distant future the province of Quebec will separate from the Canadian Federation and become an independent state in its own right; and that, following that event, the remainder of the country will split into three groups (the Atlantic provinces, Ontario and central Canada, the West and the North) and become three new states in the United States of America. Every Canadian Christian cannot avoid having an opinion about this — hopefully, an *informed* opinion — and cannot dodge his responsibility. Like it or not, he has to serve both Christ and Caesar!

# REPORT ON THE CHURCH IN CHINA

by Douglas Allen

Religion is undoubtedly growing by leaps and bounds in China. Students ask questions, the Protestant church here is overflowing with the devout and the Roman Catholic Church is adapting slowly to the need for a Chinese liturgy. My part in this is to

support the Protestant (Three-Self Movement) church by my attendance and material contributions. While in Hong Kong in February, it was part of my purpose to purchase thirty much need books of biblical exegesis for the Anhui Theological Seminary attached to the church. This was done in consultation with Pastor Pan (see photograph), the senior pastor of both the



*Douglas Allen and Pastor Pan*

church and Anhui province. Later I hope to be able to visit some of the churches in the smaller centres of Anhui with Pastor Pan.

There are problems in the religious scene here. Aren't there everywhere? While religion is officially sanctioned, the government is suspicious about the destabilizing effects of religious activity. On the one hand, there is not nearly enough space in churches like the one here in Hefei to accommodate worshippers; therefore, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of "meeting points" exist for home worship. The government can't monitor these as it can the churches. You have to understand that no organization of any kind is without its government agent who reports on the organization's activities. That agent and his/her reports can have dramatic effects on the organization. To complicate the situation, there are foreign fundamentalist Christians who feel called by God to personal evangelization in contradiction to both government and church policy. For the most part they preach in the house churches, so both of them are regarded as dangerous to the social order. Jim M. is one of those and has now found he is "on a blacklist," but will defy those authorities to do God's will. He is not afraid of a police raid, but doesn't seem to realize that he is not the one who will be arrested. Like others, I confess my faith openly when asked, have also given a Bible and New Testament to my students on request, and have discussed the relevance of Christianity to me and to literature. This isn't a problem, but proselytizing is.

**Editor's note.** Douglas Allen is an Amity English teacher working in Hefei, Anhui Province, People's Republic of China. His "report to his friends," about his observations of the religious scene in China will be of interest to many readers of our Bulletin, especially those deeply interested in and committed to the support of the world mission of Christianity. It is printed here as it appeared in the September 1991 edition of *China and Ourselves*, the Newsletter of the Canada-China Programme of the Canadian Council of Churches, with the kind permission of the editor of the Newsletter and the director of the CCP, Cynthia K. McLean.

If perchance any readers would like to go to mainland China to teach English for a two year stint of service to the world-wide Church of Christ, they are invited to contact their church's overseas missions organization or the Canada-China Programme for details. Applications for the 1992-1994 Amity teaching term are now being

received. The address of the Canada-China Programme is: The Director of the Canada-China Programme, Canadian Council of Churches, Suite 201, 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M9 (Tel: 416-921-4152)



The Newsletter of the Canada-China Programme reports events involving Canada and China, and promotes understanding of China informed by Christian faith. Material published in it should not be construed as representing policies of the Canadian Council of Churches, or any churches and organizations which support the Canada-China Programme. This most delightful and informative magazine is published four times a year and is mailed to subscribers for the ridiculously low price of C\$8 per annum (C\$10 for USA and overseas.)

A brief survey of the contents of the September 1991 issue should convince the reader of the worth of the publication. Space is given to a report on the terrible floods that swept across eastern and central China this past summer. Thanks to the quick and efficient response of the Chinese government and the assistance of thousands of volunteer relief workers, very few people actually drowned. But the damage to property was enormous. It is estimated that the homes, harvests and livelihoods of eighty million people perished. It will take years to rebuild entire villages and reclaim agricultural land poisoned by the flood waters. Chinese communities throughout the world sent monies and relief supplies. The Amity Foundation through the World Council of Churches initially appealed for \$300,000, a sum that was quickly met. Amity is now asking for one million dollars for rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. Donations can be sent through Church organizations earmarked "China Floods-Amity."

Again, an encouraging report is given of "floods" of new Christians in Southern Zhejiang. The Zhejiang Christian Council reports over 2,000 Christian home churches. Church membership is increasing rapidly; 30,000 new believers were baptized last year. The Church is alive and well!



# LIVING RELIGIONS I — JUDAISM

by Timothy R. Ashley

Religion is a way of relating ourselves, individually and socially, to God, ourselves and other people and the physical world. Judaism is one way of seeing this web of relationships. Jews are convinced that the Living God (Yahweh) has encountered them. This encounter is witnessed to in the *Torah* ("teaching," "Law"), the *Prophets* and the *Writings*, what the Jews call the TaNaK (Law+Prophets+Writings) and most Christians call the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible.



Timothy Ashley

The basic affirmation of Judaism is that the God who created the world chose the Hebrews as a special people by making a *covenant* with Abraham (Genesis 15, 17) and the other patriarchs. This covenant became national at Mount Sinai (e.g. Exodus 20 24), and included a divinely sanctioned ruler in David and his successors (e.g. 2 Samuel 7). The king of David's line became the model for the *messiah* who would rule forever in peace and justice. The constant need for reconciliation between humans and God was recognized in a complex *sacrificial system* (e.g. Leviticus 1-7). Jerusalem, God's Holy City, was to be the centre of the divine rule (e.g. Psalm 48.)

The fact is, however, that Jerusalem was conquered more than once and the Jewish Temple laid in ruins (586 BC and AD 70). The clash between what seemed like sure divine promises and harsh reality spawned new theology and forms of worship such as the *synagogue*. It is obvious that Christians and Jews face this clash between what the Bible is thought to be teaching and the facts of experience. Consequently, there arose amongst Judaism and Christianity ways of resolving these tensions and making sense of the world. In the years before the time of Jesus these different ways became not only theological but political parties. A major conflict was between the Pharisees ("separate ones") and the Sadducees ("righteous ones"). The Pharisees were concerned to make the Torah into real teaching for the people, and to apply it in ever more comprehensive ways. They considered the interpretation of the scholars to be authoritative, while the Sadducees claimed only the Bible without these oral traditions as authoritative for them. More significant than the theological differences was the way these two parties related to the power of Rome and the Jewish priesthood. The Pharisees were more moderate politically, while the Sadducees identified with the elite priesthood and aristocracy. Thus, when the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, the Sadducees lost their power base and passed into oblivion. Pharisaism saved Judaism.

Beginning with the exile of 586 BC, the Jews outside Palestine were forced into the *diaspora* — Jewish communities scattered throughout the known world. The writings of the rabbis, scribes and sages began to be collected. The Talmud ("learning") was produced in two different communities, one in Palestine (*Jerusalem Talmud*) and one in Babylon (*Babylonian Talmud*). These comments on the Torah were put into writing between the third and fifth Christian centuries, although both depended on earlier oral traditions. The Talmud is made up of early rabbinic reflections on the Torah called the *Mishnah* ("repetition") plus later rabbinic comments on the Mishnah called the *Gemara* ("completion"). The Talmud became authoritative in Judaism. In conflicts between the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmuds, the latter was often preferred.

In later times Jewish communities were affected by their relationships with other people. The *Ashkenazic* communities of France and Germany were affected by their contact with Christians. These communities produced many fine Talmudic scholars. The *Sephardic* communities in the Near East, North Africa and Spain/Portugal were affected by their contact with Islam. These communities were noted for their philosophy, poetry and grammatical study of biblical texts from the ninth century on.

Jews have been persecuted from ancient times and have dreamed of a restored Jewish state in which they might live free from the fear of persecution. Many times this has been but a messianic dream. People such as Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) determined to make the dream a political reality. The movement was called *Zionism*. Hopes of a Jewish state, shattered by the Holocaust in which six million Jews in Europe were annihilated by the Nazis, did begin to be realized with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.



In modern times Jewish people have continued to relate their faith to their lives in different ways. The strictest way is that of *Orthodox Judaism*. These Jews observe the laws of the Hebrew Bible (interpreted by the Talmud) rigorously. They have strict limits to their contacts with Gentiles. They follow the *Kashrut* (dietary laws for Kosher food), and observe the Sabbath carefully. The most conservative Orthodox Jews, called *Hasidic Jews*, preserve a sixteenth century European mode of dress. *Conservative Jews* observe the laws mentioned above but less strictly. *Reform Judaism* is more lax yet, and is more concerned to come to terms with the Enlightenment and modern science. The emphasis is more on ethics and less on ritual. *Reconstructionist Jews* seek to find what it means to be a Jew in a modern, secular world. Many of them are more philosophical than religious. All of these groups are considered Jews by all but the strictest Orthodox. It is estimated there are about sixteen billion Jews in the world today, about half of them living in North America.

**Editor's note.** The Reverend Dr. Timothy R. Ashley, BA MA PhD, is Associate Professor of Old Testament, Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

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*All through the ages the Jews have had to contend with wrong notions about their life and faith: e.g. Jews are not a race, Pharisees were not hypocrites, God's name never was Jehovah.*

— Rabbi Dr. R. Brasch.

**Friends  
of the  
Atlantic Baptist  
Fellowship**

FRIENDS are sympathetic to the aims of the ABF, which are:

- (1) To witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion which is the essence of the traditional Baptist position;
- (2) To affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to the whole, visible, catholic and evangelical church of Jesus Christ;
- (3) To strengthen the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces and to encourage it to strive for the above;
- (4) To provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social problems and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love;
- (5) To publish, at regular intervals, a Bulletin which seeks to further these aims and which describes the activities of the Fellowship and announces the agenda for its general meetings which will be held in the spring and in the autumn of each year.

FRIENDS undertake:

- (1) To pray for the life and work of the Convention and the Fellowship;
- (2) To seek other committed Christians to join the Fellowship;
- (3) To become better informed about current ethical and theological issues;
- (4) To pay an annual subscription, minimum \$10.00;
- (5) To respond, as circumstances permit, to requests for financial support.

Please cut off along this line and mail to:

Dr. Dorothy M. Lovesey  
P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0  
Tel.: 902-542-5264

Please enrol me as a FRIEND:

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**FRIENDS OF THE  
ABF — UPDATE**

by Dorothy M. Lovesey

Greetings to all Friends across Canada, in sunny Hawaii and in the "sceptred isle." We are very pleased to report to you that in 1991, the year of the 20th anniversary of the ABF, we have welcomed our 200th Friend. The membership roll now stands at 203. Looking at the figures over the years, since the inception of the Friends in 1987, we take heart and have set our new target for 1992 at 240. Please help us reach this goal!

Since the beginning, many fine people have rallied to our side. In this edition of the *Bulletin* we wish to salute two good Friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kendall J. Kenney of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. Mr. Kenney, Q.C., is a well known lawyer and was the first president of the ABF, but in early 1972 was forced to resign on the grounds of ill-health.



Mrs. Evelyn Kenney served as Treasurer of the ABF for the period 1977-1982.

Thank you for many encouraging letters received recently. One wrote concerning the Friends, "This is one commitment I would like to make." Another said, "I felt it was time I contributed (to the cause)."

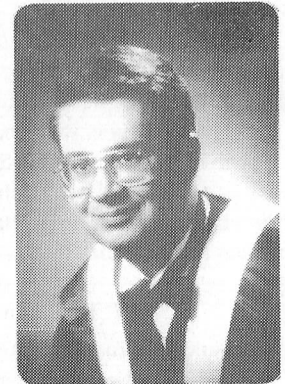
Subscriptions for 1992 are now due, \$10.00 minimum per member. Please mail yours to me as soon as possible.

**PLEASE JOIN US  
WE NEED YOU — YOU NEED US**

**THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF  
CHRISTIAN UNITY**

A Sermon by Mark G. McKim

Two experiences stand out in my memory of a visit to Europe. The first took place in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, England, where I was shocked by the behaviour of some tourists who went on with their chattering and viewing of the monuments despite the fact that a service was in progress for the peace of the world. The second occurred in a Roman Catholic church in a small village in Austria where, despite the fact that I was a Protestant and had trouble with the German tongue, I felt strangely at home. There was, it seemed to me, more real Christianity in that village church than in grand St. Paul's . . . which prompts me to ask three questions as we here begin this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



Mark McKim

I. What is the Basis for Unity Among Christians?

What is there in common between a Canadian Baptist and some Austrian Roman Catholics? Surely it is the shared confession that Jesus Christ is Lord! Whoever truly and honestly acknowledges that Jesus is Lord is bound together with everyone else for whom Jesus is also Lord.

But what does the oft-used phrase, "Jesus is Lord," really mean? Those that claim Jesus is their Lord must submit, surrender, give up all choices and decisions in life, all possessions, all relationships with others, absolutely everything to Jesus. The apostle Paul captures this meaning when he calls himself and other Christians "slaves of Christ." This does not mean, of course, that a Christian is some kind of servile, beaten, degraded, mistaken person. It simply means that a Christian is one who has turned all of life over to Jesus. Or, at least, he is trying to do this — for no one succeeds completely.

The Swiss theologian, Emil Brunner, puts it this way. He wrote, in his book *Revelation and Reason*, that the centre of Christianity is the recognition that it is not good for a human being to be his own master, but that it is right to have God as master. True Christianity means the abandonment of self without any reserve into the hands of Jesus.

At this point I can understand that some of my hearers will be saying: "What you are saying is alright, *but* . . . How can we (Presbyterians, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and the like) who have differing teachings about many matters have any unity among ourselves?" I would respond to this with an illustration. Teachings are like a telescope which we use to focus on Jesus. The crucial point is the person towards which the teachings point. Is this person truly Lord or not? That is not to say that the telescope, the teachings, is not important. We need the telescope to be pointed in the right direction and it must be in good working order. I am not suggesting that we can have a Christian bond with people whose telescope is so far out of order that they cannot really acknowledge him as their Lord. But those who do call him Master and Lord are most certainly our brothers and sisters.

II. Why should We be Concerned about Unity?

We should be concerned about unity among Christians because we believe the