

# *The Bulletin*

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
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# Editorial

BY SCOTT KINDRED-BARNES

¶ Henry Cook's book, *What Baptists Stand For* (1947) was a formative text for many Baptists in the years following the Second World War. Cook begins his book by suggesting that a new day had dawned for the Church, a "re-formation" on the scale of what happened in sixteenth-century Europe. He suggested that Baptists had an important contribution to make in upholding the liberty amidst of rapid change: "All we know for certain is that the world as it was is dying, and something new, and, please God, something better is struggling to be born in its place." I thought of Cook's prayer when Dr. Geoffrey Hinton, the so-called "godfather of AI," resigned from Google earlier this year and went public about the potential dangers of Artificial Intelligence. The kind of changes we are now facing were not easily imagined by Cook's generation.

Here are the first and last stanzas of a poem written about the CABF by the Artificial Intelligence language model, ChatGPT:

*In Canada's embrace, where freedoms intertwine,  
The CABF stands strong, a beacon that shines,  
Baptist hearts united, diverse voices in song,  
a fellowship of souls, where beliefs belong.*

*Oh, CABF, your legacy endures,  
A tapestry of faith, where hope ensures,  
In Canada's heart, your fellowship thrives,  
A testament to freedom, where faith survives.*

Well, not exactly Shakespeare or Milton, but I have heard worse poetry. In fact, I have written worse poetry. My point is that the church in every era faces changes and challenges that are completely foreign to previous generations. As we struggle through these changes, we are called to be interpreters of both the Scrip-

tures and of our world. Somehow in our struggle to be faithful, the Spirit shows up and offers wisdom, guidance and comfort. I hope the articles in this edition will help us to welcome the Spirit, as together we seek to be faithful interpreters of both the biblical world and our own. Shalom.

*The Rev. Dr. Scott Kindred-Barnes is the Senior Minister at Wolfville Baptist Church in Nova Scotia.*

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## *The Fire and The Flood*

BY AARON KENNY

*Penye wengi pana Mungu*

[Where there are many people, there God is]

SWAHILI PROVERB

¶ The historic wildfires and torrential rains that have caused so much destruction within Nova Scotia this past summer connected me with vivid memories of life and ministry in Africa. The deluge of 300 mm's of rain that fell in a single day in our community, brought back scenes of our Canadian Baptist team scrambling to rescue people from villages in Kenya's arid lands swept away by flash floods that turned the desert into a raging river. The unprecedented wildfires were not unlike the drought that ignited central mountain forests into an inferno. Our experience of increased fire and floods in Canada is part of a global phenomenon that has been impacting the people of Africa for decades. In March 2023, a study based on twenty years of water data from a pair of satellites known as GRACE (Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment) have shown how both the intensity and the frequency of extreme drought and rainfall sharply increased globally over the years since NASA first launched the GRACE mission in 2002. The highest rates of extreme drought and rainfall events have been witnessed



throughout sub-Saharan Africa, but this is certainly a global reality that is already affecting life in Canada. Climatologists refer to the drastic swing between these two extremes as “weather whiplash”. How will the church respond, as we live in a new era of fire and flood? The reality of drought and flood were lived experiences for the ancient Hebrew people. The stories of Genesis give an account of God leading Joseph and the children of Israel into Egypt to survive such a period of drought-induced crop failure and devastation. God formed within his people an understanding of the importance of being generous toward those in crisis as there is a basic interdependence among all people - “whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered” (Proverbs 11:25). Within the beautiful diversity of Canadian Baptists, we have shared a common commitment to partnership both locally and globally beyond our “Baptist” tribe. As my Acadia Divinity College professor and friend, Dr. Barry Morrison, would often remind us, “The story of all of us is the story of us all.” God calls his people to live in unity through our common identity in Christ Jesus. According to Him, the way we demonstrate our love for God is manifest in the way we show love for others. At a local level, it has been encouraging to witness in Nova Scotia the love

of Christ embodied through the cooperation and collaboration of people from across the denominational spectrum working together in providing shelter, food relief, and support for people directly impacted by fire and flood. The inter-church and ecumenical networks within our province have been tested in times of crisis to be the hands and feet of Jesus in tangible ways bringing hope and healing. There will be an increased need for our Baptist congregations to work together across denominational identities and to transcend divisions of progressive/traditional, liberal/conservative, and all the ways we seek to construct boundary lines. This has been my experience at the international level as well where our Canadian Baptist model of partnership has shifted dramatically becoming far more about interdependence, mutual respect, and diversity among larger ecumenical networks. In the weather-whiplashed regions of Northeastern Kenya, we had the joy of participating in peace-building and food security efforts that drew together a multiplicity of faith-based organizations, churches, and mosques: People driven together by a crisis to care for the most vulnerable among them. It was in such a gathering along the muddy Tana River that I first heard the Swahili proverb “Penye wengi pana Mungu/Where there are many people, there God is”. The beautiful thing is that I still cannot remember if the wise saying was explained to me by one of the Christian pastors or Muslim Imams - all of whom participated in the meeting. Perhaps this is a form of grace that the Canadian Church might newly embrace in the fire and the flood - The reality that God is moving through diverse communities of people seeking to meet periods of hardship with self-giving compassion and generosity. In the words of missiologist Christopher Wright, “What other kind of church is there than the one that God created for mission? ... ‘It’s not that God has a mission for his church in the world; but that God has a church for his mission in the world.’” (Christopher Wright, “The Whole Gospel, the Whole Church, The Whole World” *The Global Conversation*. Published by Christianity Today International and the Lausanne Movement, 2010). As we, the Church, join in both local and global responses to environmental crises, may we be encouraged to know that these are opportunities to step into the very place where God is already moving. And may we carry with

us the true hope that by God's transforming love all things will be made new.

*The Rev. Dr. Aaron Kenny serves as the lead pastor of the Bridgewater Baptist Church in Nova Scotia. Prior to this, he and his wife Erica Kenny, served as Africa Team Leaders for Canadian Baptist Ministries where they ministered for over thirteen years among indigenous church partners in East and Central Africa, and directed relief, sustainable community development, and peace-building programs. They are members of both the CABF and the CBAC.*

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## *Remembering Paul*

BY DORA CROSBY

¶ Sometimes you get the sense that there's a story to be told. Such was the case, an awareness over many years that I was to write that story.

At the age of 24, my son Paul Evan Crosby, received the diagnosis of aggressive brain cancer. At the time he was with YWAM (Youth With A Mission) at the Cambridge, Ontario base with the School of Creative Ministry. His first surgery was in September 1987 at the Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital. Following treatments and additional surgeries occurred at Halifax and Montreal. So he moved home to be with me in Wolfville. He had one "good year" and attended the local community College in Kentville. That's the background to this story.

The main theme I want to share was Paul's deep faith and devotion to a life of prayer and a faithful study of Holy Scripture. In the book, I listed references to selected Psalms and New Testament passages that offered Paul comfort, encouragement and the assurance of God's faithful presence throughout it all. I invited family members, friends from youth group days at Bromley Road Baptist Church, Ottawa, and others who journeyed with Paul in his last

days, to contribute to the book. The responses were amazing and made for a touching story about a young man of faith.

Days prior to his death in July 1990, he selected the following verse to be inscribed on his grave marker. “In His presence is fullness of Joy” Psalm 16:11.

The book entitled *Remembering Paul: Faith When Illness Strikes* was launched on Friday, May 19, 2023 at Wolfville Baptist Church. On that date Paul would have celebrated his 60th Birthday. 63 guests were present, and generous donations made to a fund to assist kids going to summer camp. It was a wonderful afternoon.

Paul would have loved the party!

*Dora (Jeffery) Crosby grew up in Kemptville, Nova Scotia. While living in Ottawa (1975–1984) she was a member of Bromley Road Baptist Church. In 1984 she moved back to Nova Scotia. Dora worked at Acadia Divinity College from 1984 retiring as registrar in 2005. She is a member of Wolfville Baptist Church.*

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## *Back to the Future: Reflections on the Canadian Council of Churches Spring Meeting*

BY THE REV. HUGH KIRKEGAARD

¶ As a young seminarian I spent a summer in Montreal working for an Anglican parish on the West Island. It was 1988 and what I came to know as the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s had led to what I experienced then as both a deep suspicion of organized religion and a genuine openness to spirituality in many forms. I visited a thousand homes in the local suburban community that summer



sharing about the work that the Anglican parish was doing and inviting people to come and join us if they were interested. My experience then opened a small window of understanding into the complex cultural and religious history of Quebec. A few years later I returned to the province to spend part of a summer working as a prison chaplain and since then have returned periodically for visits with friends and for my work. I remain intrigued by Quebec, its language, art and culture. And the religious landscape in Quebec society continues to unfold in complex and fascinating ways.

This year the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) decided to hold their spring meeting in Quebec City to gain more of an understanding of the current religious landscape in Quebec. As the new representative for the CABF to the Governing Board of the CCC I was excited to return to the province and hear from Quebecers their own perspectives on their lived experience.

To anyone who has followed politics and religion in Quebec for the last twenty years: the focus of the Bouchard Taylor Commission on “Reasonable Accommodation”, and several attempts to legislate a kind of religious ‘toleration’, most recently in the form of Bill 21, banning public servants from wearing religious symbols on their clothing; Quebec must appear as somewhat of a Rubik’s Cube. Presenters at the CCC meetings: academics and religious leaders from the province, helped to ‘click’ us into these recent developments by reaching into the much earlier history of the province when the Roman Catholic church cast a long shadow over Quebecois culture, language and the state. The focus of their presentations was: Secularism, Laicity and Pluralism in Quebec.

Fr. Gilles Routhier, Professor of Theology at Laval University, outlined some of the demographic challenges in contemporary Quebec and described how these realities have shaped the present dialogue about religious pluralism.

Dr. Solange LeFebvre, a Religious Studies professor at the University of Montreal, offered a richly textured historical perspective. She described the unique flavour of Quebec secularism known as “laicity” as imported to Quebec from a very different cultural context in France, in the 1990s. It was enshrined in Quebec law in 2019. “Laicity is viewed as the independence of the state from religions as well as the autonomy of religion from politics”, according to a

2004 report by Sophie Therrien. LeFebvre argued that Bill 21 does not meet the highest standard of the separation of church and state. She also commented on the political controversy around the imposition of “laicity” in the province, observing wryly, “if you need to qualify laicity as ‘open laicity’ you have a problem”.

Jean Francois Simard, a sitting Member of the National Assembly in Quebec, was invited to speak about the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) government’s perspective on the topic of laicity and Bill 21. Quebecois religious leaders present for his remarks expressed concern about Bill 21, suggesting that it is viewed as a response based in fear, and it relegates religious expression solely to the private sphere. This dialogue on laicity was robust, respectful and informed but clearly remains an open question for many.

On the final morning of the gathering the topic was “Synodality and the church of Quebec today”. Jean Yves Cossette, a pastoral theologian at Laval University, and self-identified “evangelical”, indicated that he was not familiar with the concept of “synodality” when he was invited to speak on the panel about it. He described the word as a ‘working together in the life of the church’. I was pleased to discover from Cossette, and his co-presenters, the Roman Catholic Cardinal Gerald LaCroix, and United Church Minister, Rev. Dr. Darla Sloan, a fascinating convergence in their descriptions of the work being done together across very different Christian traditions in contemporary Quebec. The Anglican Bishop of Quebec, Bruce Myers, in his closing comments about the panel also spoke of the unique collaborations taking place in the city and the province amongst various churches. Cossette described the ‘intersection’ in which they are working today in Quebec as defined by the four (sign) posts of “post-modernity; post-secularization; post-colonization and post-christianity”. He said, “We have these four posts when we speak of (Christian) mission today”. These contemporary challenges he so aptly described have contributed to a significant and unprecedented level of Christian solidarity across a wide spectrum of churches in Quebec.

In many ways Quebec was ahead of the religious curve in Canada when I first spent time there as a student. People were experimenting with a new kind of ‘religious freedom’ brought on by the quiet revolution and a rapidly evolving secularization in Quebec society.

My recent experience at the CCC meetings suggests that Quebec remains ahead of the curve today for other reasons. In the rest of Canada I would suggest that we have a lot to learn from the contemporary religious and spiritual experience in Quebec. It is both a cautionary tale of legislative overreach in the religious sphere, and an inspiring model of Christian unity in the “four post world” in which we find ourselves in the 21st century.

*The Rev. Hugh Kirkegaard is Regional Chaplain for the Atlantic Region of the Correction Service of Canada. He is a member of First Baptist Church, Halifax. Recently, Hugh became the CABF representative on the Board of Governors for the Canadian Council of Churches.*

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## *Extend the Site of Your Tent: Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Church*

BY ALLAN EFFA

*The following article is a condensed version of the Vin Rushton Luncheon and Lecture held on Saturday, June 3, 2023, at Port Williams United Baptist Church:*

¶ When bad weather keeps me from riding my bike, I take public transit to go to church. The train takes me within a few steps of First Baptist, Edmonton. I marvel at the diversity of people that share the car with me. If I were to take a picture of the passengers and post it on social media asking, “In which country do you think this picture was taken?” nobody would be able to guess. It is a true hodgepodge of nationalities, ages, and socioeconomic statuses. But when I walk into my church, I am struck by how little our congregation reflects the reality of our increasingly diverse Canada.

My congregation looks more like a night at the opera than a group of passengers on a mass transit car. Brian McLaren has called Christianity a “Sinking, Shrinking Ship of Wrinkling People.”

Shrinking homogenous churches in a rapidly growing diverse nation should be a matter of concern for all of us who long to see the church prosper and thrive. Isaiah 54:2 invites us to “Enlarge the site of your tent and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.”

The image of the church as a tent is evocative: an expansive, but not homogeneous dwelling, offering a place of safety and home to all of humanity. Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for greater diversity.

Canada is taking steps to enlarge our national tent, welcoming close to half a million immigrants per year. While most European and some Asian countries experience population decline, Canada continues to grow, largely fueled by immigration. Relative to its population size, Canada is the largest importer of human capital in the Group of Seven countries.

Immigration is important to Canada because we have an aging work force, a low fertility rate (1.6 per mother), and because our nation is committed to humanitarian ideals and compassion.

Nearly 25% of Canadians are foreign born (2021 census). By 2036 immigrants will make up 30% of our population. Because most of these immigrants are coming from Asia, we are experiencing a de-Europeanization of Canadian society and a steady increase in visible minorities. Even in the prairie cowboy city of Calgary, 41% of the population consists of visible minorities. Because 43% of newcomers identify themselves as Christians, every urban church that genuinely welcomes new people should be growing!

Many churches have offered support through settlement programs, ESL, and providing space for non-English worshipers to gather in their buildings, but few have successfully integrated diaspora Christians into their worship and leadership structures. Few Protestant churches have become multicultural, inclusive communities; this requires a sharing of power and a willingness to give up some of our preferred ways. Nadia Bolz-Weber reminds us that we should not expect others to change in order to fit under

our tent. Our job is to extend the roof so they can fit. The tent is not ours; it's God's.

There's an enormous difference between "offering hospitality" and "providing a home." When we welcome friends to our homes, we might tell them to "make yourself at home" as a way of helping them relax. But we don't mean what we say: we still expect them to perform the roles appropriate to a guest while we remain the hosts. We want guests to enjoy our company, the comforts of our house, the food we offer, but we don't want them to adjust the thermostat, re-arrange our furniture, or suggest how to improve our décor. We would not take kindly to advice on how to manage our household finances or how to improve our diet.

Most churches love the idea of offering hospitality to those who are different, but we want to preserve the distinction between hosts and guests. Even in the warmest welcome, there are issues of power. The one who welcomes has the power to decide whether to extend welcome and to set the ground rules of the welcome.

As churches commit to becoming intercultural, they need to contemplate a more radical notion of welcome. We must move beyond the notion of hospitality to one of providing home. Rather than being always on the side of welcoming the other, we might want to seek ways in which we can be welcomed into the lives of the other. How might our churches instead of saying, "you are welcome at our house" say, "I must stay at your house today?"

**DIVERSITY** is measured by who is present: varieties of ethnicities, ages, abilities, socioeconomic status, gender identities and sexual orientations. A longing for diversity is an important first step.

**EQUITY** is measured by who has access to a community's resources and on what terms. Who are the leaders? Whose dreams for the community set the agenda? Who are those who hold power and influence?

**INCLUSION** speaks to the sense of welcome and belonging extended to each person or group.

Robert Sellers compares diversity, equity, and inclusion to a dance. He says, "Diversity is where everyone is invited to the party.

Equity means that everyone gets to contribute to the playlist. Inclusion means that everyone has the opportunity to dance.”

Diversity does not automatically produce inclusion. Hospitality does not always lead to providing home. Extending the tent requires a certain *kenosis*, or self-emptying for the sake of the other.

Jonathan Schmidt, the Associate Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, reflects on the gift of the newcomer in the story of John the Baptist:

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’” (Matthew 3:13–14). Imagine if churches saw visitors in this way. The welcome would not be, “Come be part of us and accept what we have to offer,” it would be “Your arrival is a gift. Come share what you have to offer us. Come, change us.”

*After completing seminary, Dr. Allan Effa served eight years as a Baptist missionary in a remote part of Nigeria where he was involved in theological education and outreach to a least-reached Muslim people group. He went on to complete a MTh in Missiology and a PhD in Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary and then joined the faculty at Taylor Seminary in Edmonton, where he taught courses in intercultural studies and spiritual formation. He has recently retired from Taylor Seminary and is an active member of First Baptist Edmonton.*

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## *CABF News*

**BC CHURCHES JOIN CABF:** Welcome to Kitsilano Christian Community Church, the most recent congregation to join CABF! On May 3 Council approved the recommendation of the Membership Committee to admit this vibrant community of faith in greater Vancouver. They join with the Church at Southpoint in Surrey, BC, accepted as a new member congregation during the March Council meeting, as our second BC congregation.

THE CABF FALL ASSEMBLY will take place on September 29–30 at Wolfville Baptist Church. We are delighted to announce our speaker for the fall will be Dr. Scott M. Gibson. Dr. Gibson’s theme for the CABF will be ‘Christ the Common Connection.’ Dr. Gibson holds the David E. Garland Endowed Chair in Preaching and serves as the Director of the Doctor of Philosophy in Preaching program at the George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University. Prior to coming to Truett in 2018, Dr. Gibson served for 27 years at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA, teaching preaching and directing various programs in preaching. At Gordon-Conwell he was the Haddon W. Robinson Professor of Preaching. Dr. Gibson holds the degrees from University of Oxford, University of Toronto, Princeton Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Pennsylvania State University. He has written or edited numerous books on preaching, including *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* and *Preaching with a Plan*.

The finale of our time together will be the presentation of the book prepared in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Roger H. Prentice, which will be available for those who ordered a copy.

To register please contact David Allen (cabftreasurer@gmail.com). Fees payable by etransfer (same address) or at the door. \$30 for Friday and Saturday (includes lunch); \$10 for Friday only; \$25 for Saturday only.

#### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Friday	7:00	Annual General Meeting
	8:15	Worship: communion service
Saturday	12:00	Lunch
	1:15	Lecture
	2:30	Worship
	3:00	Lecture
	4:00	Book Launch: <i>Keeping the Faith: Essays in Memory of Roger H. Prentice</i> , edited by Paul Harris and Karen Smith. & refreshments



## CABF MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Please use this form to become a member or renew your membership*

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Annual Membership Fee: \$20

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