

BULLETIN

of the
Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

December 1988



*To You is born this day in the city of David
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*

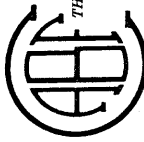
MERRY CHRISTMAS • HAPPY NEW YEAR

SPRING ASSEMBLY 1989

16-17 June 1989

Pereaux United Baptist Church, Nova Scotia
Theme: *Inclusive Language in Bible and Church*

Full details in next edition of the Bulletin



THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP WITHIN THE ATLANTIC UNITED BAPTIST CONVENTION

THE OFFICERS OF THE ABF ARE:

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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.

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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, Mrs. Evelyn Smith (address above). Receipts for income tax purposes will be mailed.

“Controversy and discussion between Christians, provided it be of the right kind and in the proper spirit, is an element in that love which we are bidden to exercise toward one another.” — Nathaniel Micklem, CH DD, 1888-1977, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, 1931-1953.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Regular readers of the *Bulletin* will soon see that this edition lacks such familiar features as the “Comment” page and the feature “News of the Church from Far and Near.” Regrettably there was no space for these items this time since all available space had to be given to Dr. Walter Shurden’s valuable material on the Southern Baptist Alliance. It was a great treat to have the Callaway Professor of Christianity at Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, with us as the theme speaker at the Fall 1988 Assembly of the Fellowship along with his wife, Dr. Kay Shurden, who teaches in the Medical School of Mercer University.



Dr. & Mrs. Walter Shurden

Dr. Kay led us most helpfully in a devotional which focussed on the transmission of faith to the next generation.

Dr. Gerald Ward’s reasons for not agreeing with the Baptist Union of Western Canada’s decision to join the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, printed on page 12, support and complement Dr. Shurden’s message and warnings. One cannot but believe that if this material is carefully and prayerfully considered and digested it will lead many to apply for membership in the “Friends of A.B.F.” organization. Fundamentalism has to be opposed, not in a militant or abusive way but with a truly Christian spirit, for if it is not we shall all wake up one day in the not too distant future to find ourselves bound up tightly in the fundamentalist theological straight-jacket.

The “Friends of the A.B.F.” organization has made a steady and promising beginning, with a membership to date of 71. It is interesting to note that this number includes several from outside the Atlantic provinces which indicates the need for the A.B.F. kind of witness across Canada.



Dr. Gerald Ward

The Manning Memorial Chapel of the Acadia University campus was full on the Sunday evening of 16 October 1988 when the 25th anniversary of its founding was celebrated. For an abstract of Dr. Mitton’s sermon see pp. 13-15.

This edition of the *Bulletin* comes to all our friends and supporters as a Christmas and New Year card of greetings. Let us all rejoice in the birth of the Christ Child and look to the future with hope and joy because He has come to save and bless us all. The front page reminds us of the Incarnation and the last page, containing Dr. Watson Kirkconnell’s beautiful poem, “The Road to Bethlehem,” is a prayer that we all may be given the triumph of faith over doubt in the Christian mysteries.

In his concluding and most moving remarks to the Fall Assembly 1988, Dr. Shurden said, “We all need theological diversity and we all need genuine tolerance. Unfortunately fundamentalists seem only to understand power; love to them is interpreted as weakness. We don’t want to kill off fundamentalists, but we do need to have freedom.”

ATLANTIC UNITED BAPTIST CONVENTION, 1988: A PERSONAL REPORT

by Roger H. Prentice

The annual Assembly met August 24-28 in an atmosphere of anticipation and concern since controversial matters, in particular the motion concerning Convention joining the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the matter of the proposed changes in the Rules Concerning the Ministry (one specifically excluding practising homosexuals from the ordained ministry), would have to be decided. Such matters had received coverage in the *Atlantic Baptist* and had been discussed in many local churches with the result there was intelligent debate in Wolfville.

The special speakers, Dr. Andrew MacRae and Dr. Robert Roberts, were well received, and Dr. Allison A. Trites made an excellent chairperson.

The best debate was on the issue of the Convention joining the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Prior to the taking of the vote, Dr. Richard Coffin, Secretary of the Canadian Baptist Federation, appealed for national Baptist unity. He claimed this would voice sufficiently in public Baptist opinion on matters of ethics and politics without the need of joining any other special brand of witness. The vote was conclusive: 83.9% of the total (secret) ballots cast said "No!" to the motion. The wisdom of having a secret ballot on such a controversial matter should be noted.

The debate on the changing of ordination rules, including the prohibition of practising homosexuals applying for the ordained ministry, was far less prepared for. It is difficult to understand why the issue of permitting practising homosexuals appearing before the Examining Council was ever allowed to come before the Convention. Last year the Assembly, as the president pointed out, passed a motion which disapproved of homosexuality as an acceptable style of living for a Christian. Almost missed in the skirmish was a Notice of Motion regarding the Convention's "Recognition of Ministry." On the surface this would have the Convention abandon the traditional "Licence to Preach" for a vague "Recognition of Gifts for Ministry" and a revised section on "Ordination." This almost slipped by as a "house-keeping" item. Happily it was not allowed to and was referred back to the committee for report next year. It deserves a much closer look by the churches before it is allowed to stand.

This motion, which was passed, was poorly prepared and presented by the committee responsible. Conformity with other Canadian Baptist Conventions' practices has never been a convincing argument for delegates to the Atlantic Convention. It was not explained why mere recognition needed to be given to those who serve in a multitude of ways in our congregations.

As usual, many evenings had excellent programmes but with too many events in too few hours. People called on to offer greetings took longer than necessary. An interesting evening discussion at the end of a long day between three heads of educational institutions on the future of Education and the Church had to be terminated abruptly due to the lateness of the hour.

Many were moved when ladies from Chester entered Convocation Hall re-enacting the walk years ago of the group of women demanding an educational institution for Baptists in order that the churches might have educated ministers. Dr. Trites' presidential address calling for ecumenical activity was a highlight of the Assembly.

Editor's Note: The Reverend Roger H. Prentice, BA MDIV, is the chaplain of Acadia University and the president of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship.

ABF FALL ASSEMBLY 1988

The theme of the Fall Assembly of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, which met in the first Baptist Church, Halifax, on September 30 and October 1, was "The Southern Baptist Alliance: Origins and Objectives." The theme speaker was Dr. Walter B. Schurden, Callaway Professor of Christianity, and Chairman of the Department of Christianity, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia. The meeting opened with a devotional led by Dr. Kay Schurden, Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Mercer Medical School.

Dr. Schurden's first lecture, "The Southern Baptist Alliance: Why?" described the Southern Baptist synthesis which, since 1963, has been breaking down. He described Southern Baptists as a blend of the Regular Baptist and Separate Baptist heritage. The Regular Baptist heritage is one of theological education, religious freedom, denominational organization and mission support, which expressed itself in a semi-presbyterial worship style. The Separate Baptist heritage is one of revivalism, anti-confessionalism, literalism and religious liberty, which expressed itself in an informal and emotional, semi-pentecostal worship with leadership roles for women. From 1821 to 1891 the Baptist synthesis "southernized" through the slave debate, the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Civil War and Reconstruction. From 1891 until 1963 Southern Baptists "denominationalized" through the Sunday School Board, the Cooperative Program for fund raising, organization of the Executive Committee, writing of a Confession ("The Baptist Faith and Message"), and fundamentalist dissent.

Dr. Schurden noted that since 1963 Southern Baptists have experienced fragmentation in doctrine, about ethics, and organizationally. Newspapers and organizations have been started by Southern Baptists within the denomination which are independent of Southern Baptist Convention structures. The current controversy began in 1979 when fundamentalists decided that they would seek to control the Southern Baptist Convention through the election of fundamentalist presidents. In their political campaign for the office they made the claim that there was "systemic heresy" in the denomination, although they generally refused to name names. Control of the presidency was important because the president appoints the Committee on Committees which, through the Committee on Boards, nominates all trustees of all agencies in the Southern Baptist Convention. The successful election of fundamentalist presidents since 1979, although most recently with only a narrow margin of victory, has meant that all agencies, with the exception of one seminary, are now controlled by fundamentalist trustees.

Friday evening concluded with a communion service conducted by the host minister, the Reverend John Boyd, and deacons of the First Baptist Church, Halifax. Saturday morning began with a devotional by the Reverend Willard Clayton of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Hammonds Plains.

Dr. Schurden in his second lecture of the Assem-



Dr. Kay Schurden



Dr. Clayton

SCENES FROM THE FALL ASSEMBLY 1988

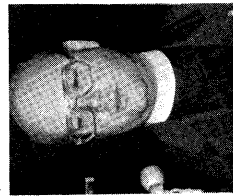
Photographs by Vincent Rushton and Philip Griffin-Altwood



Singing



Listening



Presiding



Sharing a Joke.



Recruiting "Friends"



Table Fellowship



Worshipping

bly, "The Southern Baptist Alliance: What and Where To?" described the issues in the controversy. Theologically, biblical inerrancy has become a test for acceptability. This is a product of fear of both open inquiry into scripture and the possibility of having to change what one believes. Politically, the issue has been the domination of the denomination with exclusion of non-fundamentalists as a goal. Other issues include control of financial support, questions about the purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention, use of creedal statements, ethical concerns about the role of women and prayer in schools, and discomfort about styles of worship and pastoral authority.

Dr. Schurden stated that the fundamentalist success has created a tradition of normalcy which contradicts the original synthesis. Moderates, adherents of the synthesis, were slow to react, but now the battle for control has shifted to state convention level where fundamentalists have failed to gain control. In 1987 the Southern Baptist Alliance was formed as home for those who felt excluded from their denomination. It is a regional support group, drawing most of its members from the Old South. It is a ministry support group supporting women in ministry, Habitat for Humanity, and the Baptist Peace Fellowship. It supports open inquiry in theological education and has begun a publication series. Dr. Schurden listed several lessons gained from the controversy: victory goes to the passionate; truth-oriented people are often the most passionate; and intimidation is an ingredient for victory.

Following a coffee break, the Reverend Dr. Allison A. Trites, Professor of New Testament at the Acadia Divinity College and the immediate Past President of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, responded to the lectures. He noted that Atlantic United Baptists share common principles and problems with Southern Baptists including the priesthood of believers and concerns over openness to freedom of inquiry. Procedures of the Atlantic United Baptists are more democratic thus preventing one group from gaining exclusivist control over the convention. Following a general discussion, dinner was served at the church.

On the Saturday afternoon a business session was held in which minutes were checked, finances were looked at, and all things necessary for the life and work of the ABF considered. Notice should be taken of the following:

- (1) The Spring 1989 Assembly of the Fellowship will be held at the Pereaux United Baptist Church, 16-17 June 1989; theme, "Inclusive Language in Bible and Church." Full details will be given in the May 1989 edition of the *Fraternal*.
- (2) Satisfaction was expressed that the August Convention voted by 83.9% (secret ballot) that AUBC not join the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. However several felt that the resolution passed on homosexuals and the ministry was a mistake since now there is a specific in the rules for ordination rather than generalities. The importance of a close study of the Document on the Ministry, which will be debated at the 1989 August Convention, was stressed.
- (3) Dr. Dorothy Lovesey reported that a steady and encouraging beginning had been made in the recruitment of "Friends of the A.B.F."
- (4) The Executive of the A.B.F. will hold its annual meeting with the Secretary of the A.U.B.C. in Saint John, N.B., on 2 December 1988.
- (5) The A.B.F. Treasurer gave an interim financial report showing that the finances of the Fellowship are in reasonably good shape.
- (6) The next Council meeting of the A.B.F. will be held in March 1989, when the Nominating Committee will also meet. Full details later.
- (7) The Reverend Allan Jorgensen requested A.B.F. support for his appeal to the A.U.B.C. that a Convention representative be appointed to the N.S. District Committee of the Canadian Bible Society.

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST ALLIANCE: ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES

by Walter B. Shurden

The controversy currently raging in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) began in 1979 and brought about the formation of the Southern Baptist Alliance (SBA) in 1987. To understand this controversy it is necessary to begin by sketching briefly the story of the Baptist people in the Southern United States over the past three centuries and in particular the story of the SBC.

A. BAPTIST BEGINNINGS IN THE SOUTH, 1682-1755

1. The Regular Baptist (Charleston, S.C.) tradition began in 1682. Calvinist in theology it stressed the importance of theological education for the clergy, religious freedom, missions, denominational organization, a semi-presbyterian style of worship.
2. The General Baptist or Free-will tradition (Arminian) planted a few churches but were not significant.



Walter B. Shurden

B. THE BAPTIFICATION OF THE SOUTH, 1755-1821

Separate Baptists came to the South out of New England Congregational revivalism. From Maine the tradition settled in Sandy Creek, N.C. So different from the Charleston tradition it stressed revivalism, emotionalism, anti-confessionalism (they came out of New England Congregationalism where they felt a creed had been forced on them), literal interpretation of the Bible, religious liberty, informal and emotional worship, women's role in church life, semi-pentecostalism. 1821 - formation of the first state convention of the South (in S.C.) out of the Charleston tradition.

A merging of these two traditions (Regular/Separate; Charleston/Sandy Creek) led to the shaping of the Southern Baptist synthesis. This synthesis has broken down in the last few years.

C. THE SOUTHERNIZATION OF BAPTIST LIFE IN THE SOUTH, 1821-1891

A crucial period in which culture shaped Baptist life. Note four momentous events:

1. The slavery debate of the 1830's.
 2. The formation of the SBC, Augusta, Georgia, 1845. Formed because of slavery. SBC came into existence as a cultural expression of religion, in defense of a "Southern way of life." The churches did not come together to adopt creeds and tell other people what they believed. In fact their creed was the Bible, *simpliciter*. No creeds were adopted until 1925. Now fundamentalists want to impose a creed, "The Baptist Faith and Message (BFM)."
 3. The Civil War, 1861-1865.
 4. Reconstruction, 1865-1877.
- In the major part of the 19th cent. Baptists in the South became "Southernized". In 1891 the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, one of the main causes of standardization in the South, was formed. The process increased

from 1891 to 1963 (when the revised BFM was adopted) - the period in which Southern Baptists became the Southern Baptist Convention.

D. THE DENOMINATIONALIZING OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, 1891-1963

Some even refer to the Southern Baptist "Church"! Factors leading to this: 1. Most importantly, the formation of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee, 1891, with its "standard" Sunday School material. This board also published the *Baptist Hymnal*, which further standardized things.

2. The Cooperation Program of 1925 for the channeling of funds. This did much to unify the churches and the state conventions.
3. "A Statement of the Baptist Faith and Mission" (BFM), adopted in the historical context of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy of the 1920's. Little attention was paid to this until the late 60's and 70's.
4. Formation of an Executive Committee in 1927.
5. The whole period witnessed the Fundamentalist Dissent. The early leaders were J. Frank Norris, W.D. Riley and the Canadian T.T. Shields. Recently the leaders have been Judge Paul Cressler, Page Patterson and Adrian Rogers. Question - why could not the early leaders do what the later ones have done? Answer - because since 1963 (date of adoption of revised BFM) there has been the fragmentation of Southern Baptists.

E. THE FRAGMENTATION (OR, FUNDAMENTALIZING) OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, 1963-PRESENT

The recent period has seen the breakdown of the synthesis between the Charleston and the Sandy Creek traditions and the increasing denominationalizing of Southern Baptist life. The causes of this:

1. Doctrinal Fragmentation.
 - a. The Elliott Controversy of the 1960's. Dr. Ralph Elliott, professor at Mid-Western Seminary, dismissed for his book *The Message of Genesis*.
 - b. The Broadman Controversy of the 1970's. Volume I (Henton Davies on Genesis) withdrawn and a second, conservative Volume I substituted.
 - c. The Inerrancy Controversy of the 1980's.
 - d. The Statement on Baptist Faith and Mission (BFM), 1925, revised 1963, has become the fundamentalists' way of controlling the thinking of Southern Baptists.
2. Ethical Fragmentation. Southern Baptists have a wide variety of views on social issues - role of women, women as deacons and ministers, prayer in public schools, etc. We should note that Foy Valentine, who for 20 years tried without success to force Southern Baptists to face up to racism in the South, has at last been fired and replaced by the Academic Dean of the Criswell Bible College as the chairman and executive secretary of the Christian Life Commission of the SBC.
3. Denominational or Organizational Fragmentation.
 - a. The Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, formed in 1973, in Criswell's First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas; purpose, to bring Southern Baptists into a theological position of inerrancy.
 - b. Recent formation of the Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee, at Bellevue Baptist Church, under the care of Adrian Roberts, the patriarch of the fundamentalist coup d'etat. Although not a SBC seminary, it is a thriving concern, supported by the right wing of Southern Baptist life.
 - c. Another school is the Criswell Bible College, associated with the First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas.

4. Publications. Five years ago Southern Baptist fundamentalists began publishing the *Southern Baptist Journal* and the *Southern Baptist Advocate*. In response the Moderates now publish *SBC Today* which is the mouthpiece of the Southern Baptist Alliance.

F. BRIEF HISTORY OF CURRENT CONTROVERSY, 1979-PRESENT

The present fundamentalist drive for power among Southern Baptists was planned by Judge Paul Cressler (architect of it all), Page Patterson (President of Criswell Bible College) plus Adrian Rogers, the charismatic personality who added the power to the movement. From 1979, Cressler and Patterson lobbied Conventions and Ministers' conferences saying, "There's heresy in Southern Baptist life - we have a plan to defeat it." Cressler's plan was one of genius, it was simply to exclude moderates from the establishment, in particular from the presidency. Why from the presidency? Because the president is very powerful in the system - he appoints the SBC Committee on Committees including the Committee on Boards (a nominating committee that nominates to the SBC all trustees of all agencies and institutions). They gave no names; they simply said heresy was systemic in Southern Baptist life; the right kind of president would eliminate it! Though challenged to reveal names they refused. When names were inadvertently brought up, they always failed. They kept on repeating their charge that there is heresy in Southern Baptist life, and many began to believe them. Through their efforts, six fundamentalist presidents have been elected since 1979 to the present. What was done was legal, but it was not ethical!

G. THE ISSUES

1. Theological Issue of the Inerrancy of the Bible (the matter of biblical interpretation).

Moderates must speak out against such bibliolatry. Fundamentalism fears any inquiry into scripture that reinterprets what they have always believed. The issue is not the *authority* of scripture, the issue is about the *interpretation* of scripture. Moderates must not allow the fundamentalists to take the Bible from them.

2. Political Issue: the Domination of the Denomination.

Fundamentalists worked to take over the SBC, and they have done it by the exclusion-control policy. Lutherans (Missouri Synod) went through a similar crisis a few years ago. Moderates tend to play defensive ball rather than offensive ball - if they do not change their strategy they will lose out as the liberal Lutherans have done in the North.

3. Stewardship Issue. Moderates fund SBC programs - fundamentalists do to a much lesser degree. Moderates tend to be loyal to the SBC and pay their dues, and resent fundamentalists who want power without paying for it.

4. Creedal Issue. The purpose of the SBC since 1845 has been missiological, funeral, ministry-oriented. Since 1979 the BFM has become increasingly a creed. A few years ago the SBC Peace Committee (fundamentalist dominated) issued a Report saying Adam was a real man and Genesis 1-11 is literal history. These two documents have become the norm for evaluating orthodoxy.

5. Ethical Issues: defining the Denomination in terms of ethical and moral issues. Fundamentalists and Moderates often differ widely on such matters: for example, the role of women, women in the ordained ministry, prayer in public schools, abortion.

6. Stylistic Issues. Wide differences exist on such matters as the quality of Church music and hymody, pastoral authority, the concept of the priesthood of all believers.

H. THE RESULTS OF THE CONTROVERSY TO DATE, THE MOST SERIOUS AND DESTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY IN THE HISTORY OF THE SBC

1. Fundamentalist Successes. Most importantly, the election of six successive fundamentalist presidents. Other successes have been the domination of committee structures for the past decade, control of all major SBC agencies except the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (5 out of 6 SBC-recognized seminaries are dominated by fundamentalist boards of trustees), adoption of fundamentalist resolutions at SBC (on biblical interpretation, role of women, priesthood of believers), thus creating a tradition of normalcy and a reference point for the future.

2. Response of the Moderates;

- Early efforts, 1980-1983, led by a few pastors but not effective.
- Next move, seminary presidents led the resistance to the fundamentalists. It is surprising to some that people in denominational positions did not respond sooner and with more vigor! If they had, we should not be in the colossal mess we are in now! There is a tendency for denominational people to keep the peace... but this may well lead to the leadership being taken from them.
- The struggle going on in the SBC is now going on at State Baptist Conventions. Moderates have been winning at the state level, while at the National level they have been losing.
- The major response to fundamentalism has been the formation of the Southern Baptist Alliance, 1987.

I. THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST ALLIANCE: WHAT? AND WHERE TO?

1. The SBA Covenant spells out what the organization is and what it stands for, viz., the priesthood of all believers, autonomy of the local church, open inquiry in theological education, right of the church to ordain people it wants, freedom to ordain women, servant-leadership rather than authoritarian leadership, mission of the church in both evangelism and social justice, etc.

2. The SBA is a support group for those who no longer feel at home in the SBC. Currently it is supported by 55 churches and has 34,000 members.

3. The SBA is a ministry group. It supports women in ministry, Habitat for Humanity, the Peace movement, etc. There is no intention to form a new denomination. Support for proper theological education comes through its support of a Baptist residence hall at Duke University. Publications, books and pamphlets and Sunday School materials are beginning to roll off the press.

4. What of the future of the Alliance? Four groups are now identifiable in the SBA: (i) Conservative Moderates who only want to elect a non-fundamentalist president; (ii) Those who want to work within the SBC but who will bypass the funding level at the National level; (iii) Those wishing to unite with the American Baptist Churches (our original home) — not much support for this; (iv) Those wanting to form a new denomination - not enough for this!

J. WHAT LESSONS CAN WE DRAW FROM ALL THIS?

Victory often goes to the passionate who shout and threaten — Truth-oriented people are most often the passionate — Moderates have often been naive about what fundamentalists can and will do — Traditions are so very important.

RESULTS OF JOINING THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA

by Gerald M. Ward

Although I voted against the Baptist Union of Western Canada (BUWC) joining the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), my Union decided to do so. Developments during the past two years find me even more convinced of the folly of our decision. My reasons, based on personal experience and reflection are five-fold.

(1) There has been the creation of a divisiveness within the BUWC which we as Baptists can very well do without. The simple creed, "Jesus is Lord" has been replaced by a much more rigid creed which has resulted in a divisiveness the like of which I have not seen in 55 years of ministry across Canada.

(2) Sharp denominational lines are giving way to a polarization around the conservative theological position as opposed to a more liberal stance. We have become part of that process. The western decision has within two short years contributed to destroying the happy, open-minded atmosphere in which liberal-minded and conservatively inclined Baptists could dwell amicably with each other and link hands in outreach endeavours. Our denomination is the poorer.

(3) People seem bemused, hypnotised by the word "evangelical." One can and should be "evangelical" without necessarily joining the EFC. Affiliation with that body is unnecessary to maintaining an evangelical stance.

(4) One feels that the theological stance of the EFC is too close to that of the TV Evangelists for comfort. I refer to the theological position which features a rigid interpretation of the Gospel, biblical literalism, charismatic extremes and an excessive imbalance in emotional appeal, and an obvious disregard of church direction and control which is a vital tenet in Baptist policy. We have witnessed the breakdown of credibility and the ensuing spread of skepticism and cynicism within the populace. Of course, I am not denouncing the EFC on the basis of the TV Evangelists' scandals, but I am suggesting that an examination of the respective dynamics may raise concerns for us.

(5) We must learn from the recent decade of experience of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) which is presently in the throes of schism with increasing tensions between the fundamentalists and the moderates. A succession of fundamentalist presidents has deeply entrenched the fundamentalist position in Southern Baptist life. This has resulted in such matters as the resignation of the Southeastern Baptist Seminary president W. Randall Lolley who refused to adopt the biblical inerrancy stance and require the signing of a fundamentalist creed by all seminary and missionary personnel. And again, last June, the Director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission was compelled to resign after two years' incessant conflict with his very conservative trustees. The SBC said his successor must be "an avowed inerrantist." He must be opposed to abortion and in favor of the death penalty. No woman would be considered. Where has Baptist freedom gone?

Editor's Note: The Reverend Gerald W. Ward, B.A.B.D.D., ministered in Baptist churches across Canada for 55 years until his retirement. From 1959 to 1962 he served as president of the Baptist Federation of Canada. Since retirement he has enjoyed to the full his skill in cycling. The above is an abstract of an article published in the *Atlantic Baptist* issue of September 1988, page 18 (434) f. The article is used here by kind permission of both the Editor of the *Atlantic Baptist* and Dr. Ward.

SERMON

by Harold Logan Mitton,
preached in the Manning Memorial Chapel, 7:00 p.m. Sunday,
16 October 1988, celebrating the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of
the Opening of the Chapel

THE MARKS OF AN EDUCATED PERSON

The university, like all our institutions, is under strong attack from some quarters in our society. Many people are beginning to question if modern universities are capable of turning out educated people. Allan Bloom, the author of the best-seller, *The Closing of the American Mind*, has his doubts. And so does Linda Frum. In a recent article which appeared in the *Saturday Night* magazine she charged that most Canadian universities are soulless and alienating.

What, then, does it mean to be educated? Dr. Robert H. Mounts, Dean of Arts at Western Kentucky University, contends that there are at least three marks of an educated person. I would like to consider them with you.

I

THE FIRST MARK OF AN EDUCATED PERSON IS THE ATTITUDE OF INQUIRY

Plato once said that the mark of a philosopher is "wonder," the sense of wonder. James Watt wondered about a kettle boiling, Newton about an apple falling, and Archimedes about the body's displacement of water in a bath - and in each case science leaped forward.

The intellectual life is, basically, curiosity overcoming inertia. It is a professor's major obligation to develop in the student an inquiring mind. A teacher worthy of the name is not simply a dispenser of knowledge. If all we want from the universities is information, public libraries might suffice. The skilled teacher awakens students to engage in independent thinking, constantly broadening their horizons, and instilling in them a sense of wonder, of discovery. T.H. Huxley on one occasion was examining a moss-cup on a Scottish moor, using a powerful magnifying glass. A shepherd drew near and asked if he could take a look. As the shepherd beheld the beauty and intricacy of the design, his eyes widened with astonishment and wonder, and he exclaimed, "Can this be a moss-cup? Why, I walk on thousands of them every day of my life, and I never knew!" For him, it was a moment of discovery.

This is the first mark of an educated person; the sense of wonder, of discovery, growing out of the attitude of inquiry.



Harold L. Mitton

II

THE SECOND MARK OF AN EDUCATED PERSON IS THE POWER OF DISCERNMENT

We live in an atmosphere where truth and falsehood constantly intermingles. We seem to be in one of the great upheaval periods of history, in an age of revolution in which nearly everything is up for grabs. In the midst of such

chaos and bewilderment we need to be able to discern, to evaluate, to weigh the evidence, to choose. Discernment is one of our most critical needs, and is this not the function of education?

An educated person should be able to distinguish between the good and the bad in literature, religion, philosophy, politics, economics, and so on. He should be able to sift the chaff from the wheat. He should be able to engage in independent thinking.

This means that the student may be well exposed to a formidable array of ideologies. Even his faith must sometimes pass through the traumatic experience of doubt. At times the teacher must be a troubler of the waters, not simply a beacon giving direction.

This does not mean, however, that the ideal academic situation is characterized by some sort of neutrality, free from all presuppositions. If I have learned anything in academe, it is this: complete objectivity is largely a myth. All of us have our presuppositions. The great presumption now in circulation is that all truth is relative. Wide-openness is in vogue. Commitment to principles is suspect. Yet Allan Bloom contends that this untrained and thoughtless pursuit of openness has rendered education meaningless. An open mind can be a vacant mind. The historian, Carl Becker agrees. He says that a genuinely detached mind is like unmagnetized steel among iron filings — no synthesis ever developing.

The mark of an educated person is the power of discernment.

III

THE THIRD MARK OF AN EDUCATED PERSON IS WHAT ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD CALLED "THE HABITUAL VISION OF GREATNESS"

In a university there must be a constant elevation of great ideals. The student must be introduced to ideas that have benefited the human race. It is said that when we walk in the company of great persons, we seek almost unconsciously to match their stride.

It is in this connection that many universities fail. They offer students specialized competence and the promise of material success, but no vision of greatness. Patrick O'Flaherty goes so far as to say that "people who are wholly ingnorant of art, philosophy, literature, music, and history (he might have added "ethics"), seem to do very well at university today."

We have to ask, why? Is it because one element of primary learning has almost disappeared from the university curriculum, namely, the Christian perspective on life? How, it may be asked, can students catch a vision of greatness if they have no knowledge of the Bible and of the Judeo-Christian tradition? At the present time that tradition has almost vanished from the scene.

The tragic result is disintegration. We suffer from the loss of moral values, the loss of ritual or worship, the loss of direction. When old gods go, new ones, of course, inevitably take their place. Hence the rise of new mythologies, cults and superstitions, many of them securing a foothold on the university campus.

To return to the proposition: if an educated person is one who is moulded by the habitual vision of greatness, how can Jesus Christ be ignored? To deny Him a place in the university community is perilous and spiritually crippling. After all, our greatest need is to be, not simply to do or to have.

No sermon is complete without a Scripture text. Mine is found in Colossians, chapter two, verse eight. "See to it," the apostle says in a sharp reminder, "see to it that no one makes a prey of you - that no one captures or kidnaps you - by philosophy or vain deceit." The term "philosophy," I hasten to add, was not meant by Paul to refer to the noble quest for understanding life, as the earlier Greek philosophers had used it. The term was used to refer to the gnostic mixture of magic, superstition, and false religion that was being passed off in Colossae as a new and better Christianity. Incidentally, it is this weird mixture of gnosticism that is erupting in our time, taking many people captive. Here, then, is a Scripture that we need to heed. It is rendered thus in the New English Bible translation, "Be on your guard; do not let your minds be captured by hollow and delusive speculations, based on traditions of man-made teaching and centered on the elemental spirits of the world, and not on Christ."

On this, the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the erection of the Manning Memorial Chapel, and the 150th anniversary of the founding of Acadia with its noble traditions, it is my prayer that what is happening on many university campuses in the Western World will not happen here, namely, the loss of the university's soul.

Long may this chapel continue making a greater and greater impact. And long may students who come to Acadia - your grandchildren and mine - receive a complete education. The marks of an educated person are these: the sense of wonder, of discovery, the power of discernment, and the habitual vision of greatness.

Editor's Note:

The Reverend Harold L. Mitton, RA BDD D (Acadia) is a former principal and dean of the Acadia Divinity College (1975-1985) and has been styled professor emeritus of practical theology. Now living in active retirement in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, he continues to serve as the Acadia Divinity College's Director of Supervised Field Education.

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"In the roll-call of fame are names like Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon. There are names like Plato and Kant, Newton and Darwin, Dante and Goethe, and on the history and mind of our race each of these has left a great and enduring mark. They have left their mark; their name and their influence is still a power. But which of them has done a work, has left an influence or a name like the village Carpenter, unlettered and unnamed, who dreamed that God would redeem the world through Him, and died to make the dream come true?"

- Burnett Hillman Streeter, 1974-1937

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*"Along with her example of faith and devotion,
She taught me the necessity of asking honest questions."*

Dedication of Dewey M. Beegle's book, Moses, The Servant of Yahweh (1979), in memory of his mother.

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

Above the road to Bethlehem
When I was very young,
A twilight sky of tender blue
With golden stars was hung;
And kneeling at the stable door,
I happily confessed
My humble worship of the Child
Who slept at Mary's breast.
But now the road to Bethlehem
Seems cold and steep and far;
It wanders through a wilderness
Unlit by any star.
The earth I tread is frozen hard;
The winter chills my breath;
On either side rise evil shapes
From valleys dark with death.
The air is tense with moans of pain,
Mingled with cries of hate,
Where bloodstained hills and shattered stones
Lie black and desolate.
How can the sacred heart of God
Heal all this guilt and grief?
Lord, I believe. And yet this night,
Help Thou mine unbelief!
Purge Thou mine eyes, that they may see
Thy star across the gloom!
Touch Thou my heart, that it may lose
These agonies of doom!
Now in the darkness guide my feet,
Give holy strength to them
To walk with childlike faith once more
The road to Bethlehem!

*The above poem was written by Watson Kirkconnell in 1944,
in the dark days of World War II,
and is reproduced here in kind permission of
his daughter Janet, his literary executrix.
Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, 1895-1977, was the first lay president
of Acadia University, 1948-1964*