

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

of

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

February, 1981



"Do this in remembrance of me."

"The cup we use in the Lord's Supper and for which we give thanks to God: when we drink from it, we are sharing in the blood of Christ. And the bread we break: when we eat it, we are sharing in the body of Christ. Because there is one loaf of bread, all of us, though many, are one body, for we all share the same loaf."

Editorial Comment

This issue of the ABF Bulletin contains three reports that should be of interest and value to our readers.

The first is a report of the ABF Fall conference that was held in Lawrence-town, N.S. on November 1. This proved to be a very worthwhile conference, and it is hoped that this report will help our readers to share with those who were there regarding what was said and done.

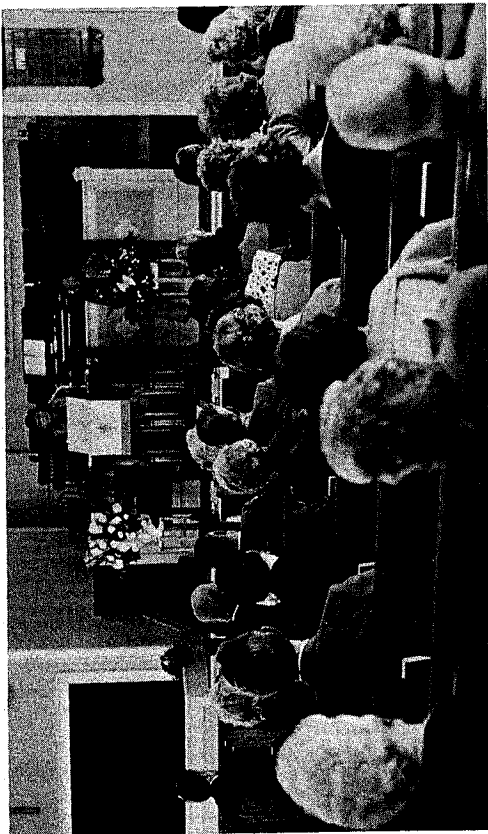
The second report is that of the meeting of the Heads of various denominations that was sponsored by the Atlantic Ecumenical Council. The ABF president, the Rev. Donald Jackson, was present, along with several others of our fellowship. Our thanks to Mr. Jackson for this insight into what happened.

Mrs. I. J. Levy, one of the vice-presidents of the United Bible Societies, attended the meeting of the Council in Thailand, September 28-October 5. I have asked her to share with us something of the scope and workings of the Bible Societies world-wide, and also something of what was said and planned at that significant gathering.

All pictures in the Bulletin, as in other issues, are supplied by the Rev. Vincent Rushton, to whom we say thanks.

Along with these reports, we have the usual assortment of news and other items. The Bulletin extends greetings to our readers, and the wish that the Lenten season may be a time of great spiritual blessing in all our churches.

I. Judson Levy
Editor



The Rt. Rev. Lois Wilson addressing the conference

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The ABF Fall Conference

The Fall Conference of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was held in the Baptist Church at Lawrence town, N.S., on Saturday, November 1, with morning and afternoon sessions. The entertaining church, under the leadership of their minister, the Rev. Byron Corkum, were very generous in their hospitality, providing coffee breaks in the morning and at the conclusion of the afternoon session, as well as providing a dinner at noon. The ABF, at the close of the meeting, enthusiastically voted thanks to Mr. Corkum and his people.

The morning devotional period was conducted by the Rev. Gary Fillmore, minister of the Digby Baptist Church. Mr. Fillmore, basing his remarks on Mark 2:1-12, in a very sensitive manner, spoke of Jesus healing the sick man not only of his physical infirmity, but was able to meet his greater need in granting him forgiveness of his sins. The story, telling as it does of the effort of the friends of the sick man to put him in the presence of Jesus, helps us to understand that our love for, and desire to help, each other, opens an avenue for the Grace of God to reach the wounded and weary of this world.

The Rev. Sue Lavery, associate minister of the Amherst Baptist Church, led in the worship period that opened the afternoon session. Ms. Lavery, using the thoughts expressed in Hebrews 11:11; 16, stressed the Church's need of faith — a faith that means going out, as Abraham of old, not really knowing where, but under the compulsion of the leading of the Holy Spirit. Christians are called to be a pilgrim people, for to settle down to any set form of life is to lose the faith. Faith ever points to new challenges and new ventures, out beyond the fringes of what already has been accomplished. There are many areas of life that are demanding the response of such a faith — high on the list is the discovery and recognition of the place of women in society, and, not least of all, in the church.

Both of the devotional periods did much to set the tone of the meeting, and were much appreciated by those who were present.

The main theme of this conference centred around "the ecumenical fact" which has become so much a part of the Church's life in recent years, and, in particular, the part to be taken by Baptists in all of this. Members of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship have deep convictions on this matter, and regret the misunderstanding that results from a lack of accurate knowledge as to what ecumenism really is. With this in mind, the Council sought a theme speaker who would help to break down this misunderstanding of ecumenism and, more specifically, give accurate information regarding the



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workings of the Canadian Council of Churches in which Baptists have taken an active part, and from which the Baptist Federation of Canada has voted to withdraw as from the last of December, 1980.

The speaker chosen to lead in this discussion was the Right Rev. Dr. Lois Wilson, the immediate past president of the CCC, and, more recently, elected moderator of the United Church of Canada. The choice of speaker proved to be a happy one.

Dr. Wilson, following introduction, greeted the gathering "in the name of Jesus Christ who is the source of our meeting and the source of our strength." She began her address by speaking of the real meaning of ecumenism, and stressed that it means something different from, and bigger than, the fact of two or more churches coming together for a particular act of worship or service. This is one expression of ecumenism, on a limited scale, but there is much more to it than that. Ecumenism represents the whole and, within Christian circles, it has reference to the Whole Church, the whole household of faith. The normal pattern for the Church is the recognition of this essential oneness. The abnormal, the departure from the real, is seen in our divisions, not the other way around as so often is thought. There is a vital connection between the Church's mission and ecumenism. The church's mission demands some expression of ecumenism, for the real mission of the Church cannot be performed by any one branch of the Church working alone. "To be low in ecumenism is to be low in mission."

Moving on from this background, Dr. Wilson discussed ecumenism in Canada, with particular reference to the CCC which, perhaps more than anything else, represents the Canadian thrust toward unity. The CCC was organized September 26-28, 1944.

(Worthy of note for us is the fact that this organization meeting was held in a Baptist Church, the Yorkminster Baptist Church in Toronto, thus is symbolized the active participation of Baptists in the Council from the very beginning — Editor's note.)

The Council across the years, as is inevitable in any organization, has seen many changes in structure and program. There are, at present, twelve national church bodies working together as members of the Council — three of these are from Orthodox churches, and the other nine are Protestant. The Roman Catholic Church has not been, and is not now, a member of the CCC, but, in various areas of activity, there is a close working relationship. The Council is not a union of these churches, but is a fellowship for sharing matters of the faith, and a working partnership for discussion, and action, on matters of mutual concern.

In addition to the CCC, there are, across the country, many regional and local councils of churches, giving a more immediate visibility to ecumenism. It should be noted, and stressed, that the councils are completely independent of each other. No council is a member of another council, for the councils are, in fact as in name, councils of churches. This applies to the World Council of Churches as to others. There is, for instance, no direct connection between the Canadian and World Councils of Churches except in as much as some churches are members of both. Dr. Wilson commented that, in many cases, the councils are weak because "councils are not high on any church's list of priorities."

The CCC works along the lines of three main concerns — Canadian, World and Faith and Order. Canadian concerns embrace such matters as relate to life in our own country, and, in particular, in the matter of making representation to Government, this being much more effective than any number of approaches by the denominations acting separately. World concerns include all matters of wider outreach, for example, dealing with the problems of refugees. This is but one example of the many problems facing the depressed people of today in many parts of the world. The Church is being challenged, not only to give immediate help in some emergency situation — this, of course, is always necessary, but beyond that, the Church must face up to the basic disorder in society in an effort to remove the all-too-evident injustices that abound.

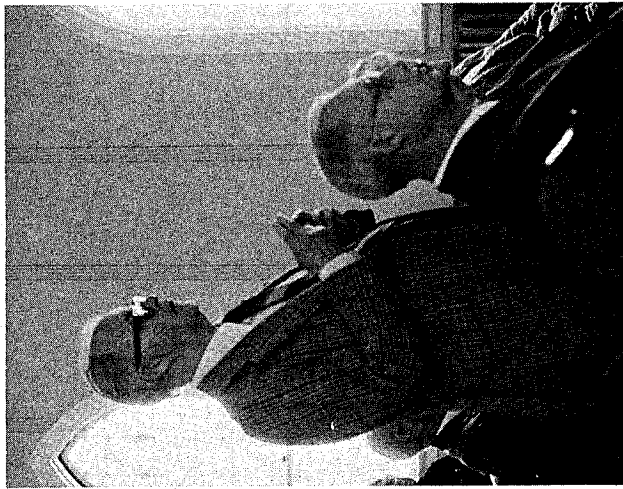
Faith and Order, in earlier discussions, was largely a matter of doctrinal discussions, and has played a very large part in helping the various church traditions to talk to each other, and has resulted in a greater understanding of each other. This is good, and this must go on, but a new dimension is being added in this time. The present challenge is for a united effort to discover how to relate the faith of the Church to the world's life, thus seeking to answer today's questions which, in many ways, are different from the questions asked in an earlier day.

All through her interesting and informative address, Dr. Wilson made plain, either directly or by implication, that the faith of the Church is too big to be guarded by any one denomination as its private preserve, and that the problems facing today's world are too all-inclusive and pressing to be dealt with by any one unit of the Church working by itself alone. There is an indication, in these days, that the Holy Spirit is leading the Church out beyond any set boundaries into new areas of witness and mission. Dr. Wilson closed her address by saying that the task before us is both theological and educational, and that these two are always related.

The remainder of the morning, both during the coffee break, and in the formal session of the conferences, was filled with a discussion of many of the issues raised in the address.

The second phase of the conference that of the place of Baptists in ecumenical activity, and, more specifically, in the CCC, was dealt with in the afternoon session. A panel, chaired by I. J. Levy, presented various aspects of the subject. Dr. R. S. Dunn, a past president of the CCC, gave an account of the part Baptists have taken in the CCC since its beginning. Many Baptists have given leadership, some as staff members, some as chairmen of the various departments of the Council, many as members of the general board and various committees, and three Baptists have served as presidents of the Council. This Baptist participation, vigorous at the beginning and for some years, has been considerably weakened of late, due to the adverse attitude taken by a large part of the Canadian Baptist constituency, and has resulted in the withdrawal of the Baptist Federation.

Dr. Dorothy Lovesey, of Wolfville, stressed reasons why Baptists should share in ecumenical activity — because they have much to give to, and receive



from, their association with other church traditions. Baptists should share their concept of freedom, both ecclesiastical and political, while, on the other hand, Baptists need to receive to themselves some of the emphases that have been preserved in other church traditions.

The Rev. John Boyd, of Mahone Bay, in responding to a request, sought to seek out, and present, some of the reasons why some Baptists are opposed to Baptist participation in ecumenical activity with particular reference to the CCC. Mr. Boyd mentioned fear of association with some other theological positions, a view of some Bible passages interpreted as being against ecumenism, a false understanding of the social concern that is more evident in some other denominations and a general mistrust of other denominations, and, along with these, a misconception of what ecumenism is and seeks to do.

The Rev. Roger Cann, an associate secretary of the CCC, part time, and also consultant of the Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board, was the fourth member of the panel. He pointed out that the CCC was not designed as an administrative or authoritarian body, but is essentially a fellowship of those churches that have agreed to consult and work with each other on matters of common concern. Mr. Cann was very helpful in giving some information on the present consultation going on toward the forming of a new wider ecumenical fellowship. These discussions are currently in progress, and the Baptist Federation of Canada is taking part in these discussions.

Mr. Cann and Dr. Wilson were very helpful in the discussion that followed and in the other discussions of the day. The ABF extends sincere thanks to both. Most of the business of the ABF is conducted at the annual meeting which takes place at the time of the Spring conference, and so a minimum of time was

devoted to business at this session. The Conference renewed its support for ecumenical activities, and noted, with satisfaction, that the Baptist Fellowship of Canada continues to take part in the negotiations looking to the possible formation of a wider ecumenical fellowship. It was agreed to request of the Convention Council that a representative of our convention serve on that committee. The ABF will watch further developments in this matter, and through the bulletin will keep our members informed. Another item of business was the dismissal, at its own request, of the theological commission as having fulfilled its usefulness for the present at least.

THE ABF SPRING CONFERENCE WILL BE ON JUNE 12-13 AT WOLFVILLE NEXT. DETAILS AS TO PROGRAM ETC. WILL BE IN THE NEXT BULLETIN.
I.J.L.

Who are the Evangelicals?

One answer is suggested in the article that appears below, and which appeared in a recent issue of the bulletin of the First Baptist Church of Bristol, Virginia, where the Rev. Thomas R. McKibben is the minister. Some of our readers will recall Mr. McKibben as the 1979 lecturer in the Gerald K. Simpson lectures on preaching at the Acadia Divinity College.

The Editor

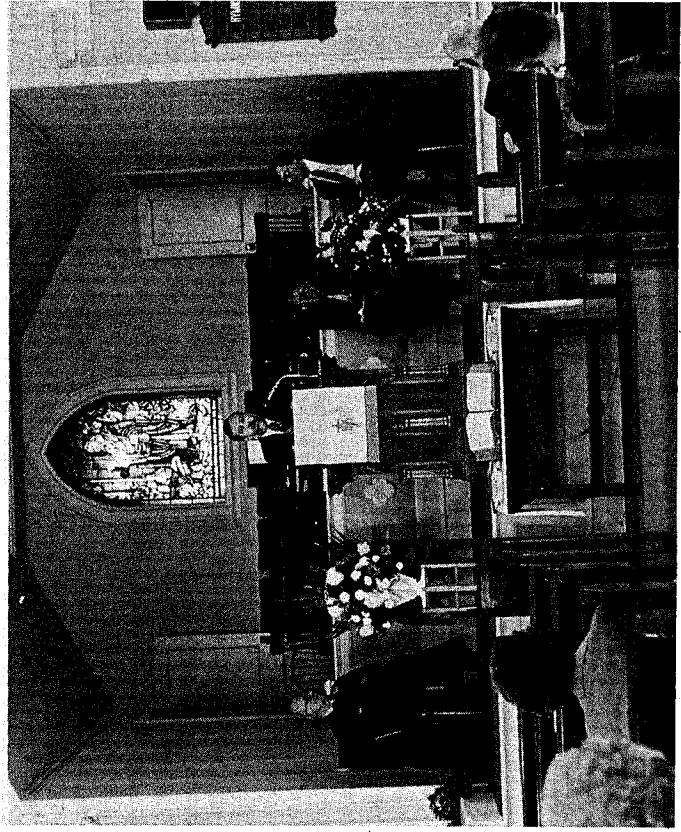
"The swelling religious movement which TIME magazine once labeled "The Evangelical Empire" has the strange ability to hop denominational boundaries and break down walls built to stand for centuries. Some have toyed with the idea that this movement is a new "Great Awakening" comparable to the two sweeping revival movements of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries.

This groundswell of religious fervor is surely part of the national reaction to an emotionless approach to religion in many parts of this country, and who can doubt that the reaction was inevitable and is genuine? Yet it needs to be said that a large portion of the "new evangelicals" may be wrongly named: theirs is not "evangelical," but what P. T. Forsyth called "romantic" religion. Romantic religion lives in the sentiments and sympathies, while true evangelical faith lives in repentance, forgiveness, trust, and loyalty to the Redeemer.

When Paul had a vision of the "seventh heaven" and heard things not to be spoken, it was a romantic, mystic moment in his life. Yet he did not boast of that, but of Jesus Christ and his Cross, which still proves to be a stumbling block for many.

A searching evangelical realism will refuse to be caught up in "romantic" religion. If you are curious about where you stand, take a look at the Cross. If what you feel is mere pity, keep on staring until something more profound overwhelms you: a genuine repentance and a surrender to follow him. Only then can we honestly claim the name "evangelical."

THOMAS R. McKIBBENS, JR."



Rev. Roger Cann — Panel Discussion

Ecumenical Probes in the Maritime Provinces

At a recent meeting of leaders of denominations, sponsored by the Atlantic Ecumenical Council, held at the Renewal Centre, Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax, plans were made to increase the effectiveness of the Ecumenical Council and also to promote consideration by the churches of a Covenant for a Visible Church Unity.

The meetings brought together representatives of 7 major denominations in the Maritime Provinces, guided in the discussions by Dr. Roy DeMarsh of Trinity United Church, New Glasgow, N.S., and Dr. M. R. B. Lovesey of Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, N.S. The delegates represented the Anglican, Baptist, United, Christian Reformed, Christian (Disciples of Christ), Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches.

The main business of the meeting was to give consideration to the idea of a Covenant for Visible Unity of the church, to study the propositions of one such covenant and to ask if such a covenant should be promoted in our churches by the Atlantic Ecumenical Council. The opening statements of such a covenant are that a visible unity of the church in life and mission is God's will for His church and should be actively sought by the participating churches, both locally and nationally.

The heart of this covenant for unity is the acceptance by the churches of each other's members, welcoming them as true members of the Body of Christ and accepting them at Holy Communion agreeing that initiation in the covenanting churches shall be by mutually acceptable rites and that leadership shall be by mutually recognized ministries leading eventually to acceptance of a common ordinal incorporating episcopal presbyterial and lay roles in ordination.

Other statements stress the need to respect freedom of conscience and thought within the membership of the churches, agreement to encourage local ecumenical projects and to explore any further steps that might make more clearly visible the unity of the church. Each of the 10 propositions in this covenant for visible unity required considerable discussion, indeed the idea itself of presenting to participating churches such a covenant to consider, to discuss and eventually to subscribe to is startling; we are far from having widespread interest among our churches in any definite ecumenical commitment.

This somewhat lethargic attitude to the cause of ecumenism brings up the other concern of the conference: how to promote a greater interest in the Atlantic Ecumenical Council and increase the effectiveness of that body. Several proposals were brought out; some emphasized the need for better communication with the churches with local ecumenical councils and the A.E.C.; that is the matter of public relations. The possibility of an Executive Secretary to promote the A.E.C. and its work was given considerable thought and will be a subject of future meetings.

Recently the Atlantic Ecumenical Council has promoted seminars on topics of social concern such as: Justice Today, and Christian Faith and Social Responsibility; Outstanding speakers were invited; there was an emphasis on participation by local or district councils of churches and their representatives. These seminars have attracted a wide interest and have helped to promote not only the concerns for which they were called but also the reputation of the A.E.C.

Eventually the promotion of ecumenical concerns and spirit falls to the local churches; it is here that there must be a build-up of interest and a willingness to consider ways for expression of a more visible unity. It is in the local church that added support for the A.E.C. and its projects must be sought and it is here also that the most surprising ventures in church co-operation — and even unity — may be found already and may be encouraged even further.

Rev. Donald Jackson, President
of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

God's Word . . . Open for All

The United Bible Societies was organized in 1946. It is composed of 66 National Bible Societies and 33 National offices, making a total of 99 units affiliated with the UBS. There is a Council which meets every eight or ten years and a General Committee which meets every four years. Dr. Kenneth McMillan, General Secretary of the Canadian Bible Society, has just completed a term as President of the General Committee. There is also an Executive Committee which usually meets each year.

The President of the UBS is Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffman, who for the past twenty-five years has been Speaker of the Lutheran Hour. There are eight Vice-Presidents. The General Secretary is Dr. Uli Fick and the UBS offices are located in Stuttgart, Germany. The work on the continents is carried on from four Regional Centres: Mexico City, London, Nairobi and Hong Kong.

The United Bible Societies is a unique organization. National bodies are independent, but co-operate in various aspects of the work, which eliminates waste and enables each one to share in resources. This is a fine example of Christian co-operation. The Bible Society exists for a very simple purpose, to make the scriptures available to all people in the language they speak and at a price they can afford to pay. Through all the years since it was first organized in 1804, the purpose and aim of the Bible Society has not changed. It remains the same — to translate, publish and distribute the Word of God.

In the first week of October the Council of the UBS met in Chiang Mai, Thailand. There were 220 representatives present from over 80 countries. The Council was composed of staff from the General office, global officers, personnel from regional centres, Bible Society secretaries and representatives from all affiliated Bible Societies and national offices. In addition, there were fraternal delegates, including the official liaison with the UBS from the Vatican and the General Secretary of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate.

The theme of the Council was: **GOD'S WORD . . . OPEN FOR ALL**. It was an event of far reaching consequence for the Bible Societies of the world and the churches as a whole. It was a marvellous experience to be involved in a conference so widely ecumenical and of such spiritual significance. In a brief article it is difficult to give more than a synopsis of what was accomplished during this very busy week.

A special feature of the Council program was the Biblical meditations each

morning. These were given by the Right Rev., the Lord, Dr. Donald Coggan, former Archbishop of Canterbury. For twenty years Dr. Coggan was the President of the UBS and is now the Honorary President. His messages, which were deeply inspirational, reflected the basic aspects of the theme of the Council.

The fact that the scriptures are now translated into 1685 languages and last year the UBS distributed 500 million copies, one might think God's Word is open to all, but this is not so. There are thousands of languages and dialects in which no portion of the scriptures is available. There are areas of the world where scripture distribution is not permitted, or where most people cannot read or scriptures are not available or for many other reasons. As we listened to messages and reports and thought of the millions of people who are still unreached by God's Word, we realized that we must work harder, pray harder and give more generously than ever before to make this come true . . . GOD'S WORD . . . OPEN TO ALL.

Almost every denomination you might mention was represented. I can name but a few: Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Mennonite, Church of God, Reformed Church in many countries, Open Brethren, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Moravian, Seventh Day Adventist, Evangelical, Coptic, Salvation Army, Disciples of Christ, Churches of North and South India, Greek, Serbian and Syrian Orthodox and many others.

We were deeply conscious of those who could not be present — our representatives from Poland, Burma, Congo, Iran and Mozambique.

There was instantaneous translation in French and Spanish. All sessions were in English and while many of the delegates could speak and understand English to a certain degree, many could not.

Many important matters were discussed at the plenary sessions, such as scripture distribution, scriptures for children, funding for Bible Society work, production, translation and many other areas related specifically to Bible Society work.

Everyone was involved in a Working Group, which met several times during the week. Discussion in these groups centred around presentations which had been made in plenary sessions. The reports from these groups were drawn together and the results co-ordinated.

The Council was an opportunity for representatives from the various regions to meet. There were also special sessions for Committees, such as Fund raising, Translations and other areas of concern such as People's Republic of China and Western Europe.

At the end of the week a message to the churches was formulated. I would like to give a brief outline of this very important message.

"You already know why the Bible Societies exist. Our ministry is to make the Word of God available and accessible for all. Looking ahead into the eighties we realize the immensity of our task. There are millions of people whose spiritual hunger is even greater than their physical needs. There are unreached people, looking for a light on their path. The Bible Societies are ready to produce editions of the scriptures that will support the spiritual life and mission of all branches of the Christian Church. We, the Bible Societies, pledge our openness to assist every Christian church with scripture publications that support, deepen and intensify the church's life and mission. The work to which we are committed is not the special concern of just a few. It is the responsibility of all Christians and of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. The Bible Society is there to serve you with this Word through which God reaches and saves His people."

Fernetta G. Levy

Making Disciples

The Atlantic United Baptist Convention at the annual assembly last Summer, defined its purpose for the coming year(s) in these words: "To be fruitful in making disciples as Christ commanded every believer. We commit ourselves to this discipleship ministry which not only will result in personal spiritual growth, but also in an increased resident membership in each church." This is a worthy purpose, one quite in harmony with what our Lord expects from his Church, and is to be commended to our churches for serious consideration and action.

There is much more to the understanding, and carrying out, of such a purpose than is grasped at first thought. Two general observations should be made at once. In the first place, we must understand that, strictly speaking, we do not make disciples. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. We are but the human instruments. This, of course is always implied and readily acknowledged, but we need to be reminded lest we over estimate our own part. The Holy Spirit sometimes make disciples through our efforts, and sometimes in spite of what we say and do. It is imperative that we think less of what we are and do, that, in humility, we may be guided by the Holy Spirit.

The second observation is that, while the statement of purpose couples the making of disciples with an increased membership in our churches, the two are not always identical. True, in our concept of the Church, these two belong together, but, at the same time, honesty compels us to admit that, in actuality, the two are not necessarily the same. The true disciple, as we see it, will be a church member, but unfortunately all church members are not true disciples. To judge the success or failure of the working out of this purpose by the counting of church additions may well defeat the whole purpose. Against this temptation we must ever be on guard. The work of the Holy Spirit rarely, if ever, is to be measured by statistics.

By dictionary definition, a disciple is "one who attends upon another for purposes of learning from him." There are many kinds of disciples as there are many leaders. We quickly narrow the definition to the New Testament concept of the disciples as followers of Jesus. The pattern set there is to be our guide as we strive to enlist disciples in this day.

Note how it all began. Jesus called some disciples directly, and some seem to have come through the word of another. It is difficult if not impossible, to separate these. To certain fishermen, Jesus said "come with me" . . . "They left their nets and followed him" (Matthew 4:19). John (Chapter 1) tells it in a different way. Andrew tells his brother, Simon, that he has found the Messiah, as did Philip tell Nathaniel. The human agent is in our Lord's plan, and has an important part to play in enlisting disciples.

However it happens, the initial decision is to "follow him". I stress the initial decision, for this is only the beginning. What comes next? Recall the definition that a disciple follows, first of all, to learn. Basically a disciple is a learner. This concept of discipleship is strongly supported in the New Testament. Jesus called followers that they "might be with him". His word is "learn of me." He instructed his disciples (Matthew 11:1). When he called upon his followers "to make disciples of all nations", he added "and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20)

The Church is often criticized for its lethargy in enlisting disciples, and rightly so. But, even more glaring, is the Church's failure to teach those who have

made the initial decision When one decides to follow Jesus Christ, the process of disciple-making has begun, but only begun! When the early disciples joined themselves to Jesus, they must have had some idea of what it meant, but certainly that idea was seen to be incomplete, and was changed, the more they were with him. So it is with modern disciples if they stay "with him". To be with him — really with him — is to learn to love as he loved, to serve as he served and to sacrifice as he sacrificed. This calls for careful examination not only in the case of the new disciple, but, above all, in the would-be 'disciple maker.' How much have we learned from being with him? How can we teach others to be disciples when so much of our own discipleship is open to questions? To commit one's self to the ministry of discipleship is a very serious matter. Let no one regard this call too lightly, or respond too quickly!

The learning disciple on his (her) way to becoming a true disciple must ask, and answer, some very searching questions, as to who this Jesus is, and what he demands of his disciples. One of these questions is the same as was asked by John: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect some other?" (Matthew 11:3). John had been so sure, that he had announced Jesus as the long-expected One. Why now the doubt? Just this — Jesus, in what he said and did, was not what John had expected. So it may be with any disciple who "joins up" with a certain expectation — but who, through close association with him, may discover that all of this is not as expected. The Lord may well be pointing to a new way of life, and demanding of the disciple more than he (she) wants to give. Then the question: is this really the one I want to follow? No one is a true disciple until this question is faced and answered.

All of this is important, but the truly crucial question is yet to come. To understand this, read John 6: 66-71. Here we see a group of disciples who are sorely troubled about this matter of what to expect. Jesus was different from what they expected, and, even worse, he was leading them along a dangerous road. "Many of the disciples withdrew and no longer went about with him." There always are those who turn back when the road of discipleship becomes too costly and too dangerous. At no time is this more true than when the Cross appears on the pathway. Jesus, sensing this fear, addressed this question to those who, up to that time, were still following: "Do you also want to leave me?" The one who has never heard that question has an all too superficial idea of what discipleship really means. This is a question that can only be answered by another question: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Your words are eternal life. We have faith and know that your words are eternal life." One does not come to this conclusion on the spur of the moment. But now, after many questions and much doubt, a true disciple at last — one who knows that it is dangerous to go on, but at the same time, impossible to turn back!

I.J.L.

"Monasticism's ideal is to create a race of people who not only can live with the mystery, but who will love it and preserve it. It is the task of that race to show the way of poverty to a world sick with affluence, the way of simplicity to a world suffocated by complexities, the way of faith to a world drowning in its own solutions, the way of contemplation of eternal truth to a world lost in the shadows."

— James T. Baker (Christian Century)

Church News

Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury and Pope John Paul II met, for the first time, in an informal setting in Accra, Ghana. At the close of their conversations, the two leaders agreed to meet again on a date to be announced, and before separating issued a joint statement which contained this sentence: "The time is too short, and the need too pressing, to waste Christian energy pursuing old rivalries."

The John Milton Society for the Blind in Canada, this year, is observing its tenth anniversary as an autonomous inter-denominational ministry in Canada. One of the main services of the society is the publication and distribution, to persons needing this service, of three publications — INSIGHT, a large print magazine for those with impaired vision; INSOUND, a bi-monthly audio cassette magazine and INTOUCH, a 24-page quarterly in Braille. All of these, as well as many other services, are available free of charge to any blind, or partially blind, person whose name has been sent to the central office, address — 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M9. For sending in names, or asking for any other information, please write to the office, or, if more convenient, write the editor of this bulletin.

CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

More than 200 leading Canadian religionists representing Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and Zoroastrians met in Toronto recently for a conference on "War or Peace: The Peril and Promise of the Present Global Age."

Three plenary sessions and ten workshops under the leadership of conference president Edward H. Johnston, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, heard a variety of speakers.

In a communique issued at the end of the conference, participants declared that the religious community in Canada must work for peace and justice and be aware at all times of the anguish of the younger generation which lives under the cloud of a possible third world war.

AN ITEM OF INTEREST — Marjorie Matthews was elected a bishop of the United Methodist Church (U.S.A.), and thus became the first woman bishop of any major denomination. Bishop Matthews, now 63, did not enter the ministry of the Church until she was 47, and then as a part-time lay pastor without seminary training. From that time on, while carrying a full pastoral load, she managed to earn the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts in religion, and finally, in 1976, a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Florida State University — truly a remarkable story!

The Christian Century



The Conference on World Missions and Evangelism, meeting at the Acadia Divinity College, last November, brought together many leaders in the Church and a wide representation of clergy, missionaries and lay people. Among those who came from a great distance were our veteran missionaries, Dr. Ben and Evelyn Gullison, all the way from Vancouver. It was a great joy to their many friends in this area to see them again, looking so well, and still very much in "the front line" of Christian service. The above picture shows Dr. Ben, sharing information with a number of his fellow missionaries and others, at a gathering in the Canning Baptist Church.

"If there were no Council of Churches we would have to create one, for the issues we face are too great to be dealt with by congregations and denominations working separately. There must be co-operation and united action if the Church is to meet the challenge of these days." — This conviction was expressed by Rev. Dr. Donald Ray, General Secretary of the General Council of the United Church of Canada, in a recent address in Vancouver.

The number of refugees in the world is now growing at a rate of 2,000 a day, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan.

Official estimates suggest there is a total of 10,000,000 refugees — 4,000,000 of them in Africa alone — but Dr. Frances D'Souza, director of the International Disaster Institute, believes the real figure is between 14,000,000 and 18,000,000. Dr. D'Souza is the author of a report on refugees just published by the London-based Minority Rights Group.

A SOBERING THOUGHT: A 20-year survey of attitudes toward war reveals that Christians in the U.S., Canada and West Germany tend to look upon war more favorably than do non-Christians. The survey findings were presented to a recent meeting of French-speaking Swiss members of the International Movement for Reconciliation by Richard Friedli, professor of missiology at the University of Fribourg.

According to the study, within the Christian community those who regard themselves as strict followers of the Christian faith are more inclined to an attitude approving war than are those of a more liberal attitude . . . Atheists are least likely to support nuclear war.

The Christian Century

THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT OF CANADA will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 1981. National and local committees are beginning to plan events to celebrate the fullness of the last 60 years in the SCM and to look forward to the years ahead — their challenge and promise. The movement is interested in contacting SCM'ers with whom it has lost touch so that they may be included in the anniversary activities. Please send your name, address and telephone number to the national SCM Office, 736 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R5.

A DANGEROUS DISPUTE — The biblical-inerrancy that is currently upsetting the Southern Baptist Convention is the most dangerous controversy the denomination has ever faced, according to Walter Shurden, professor of church history and dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

"The unique thing," said Shurden, "and the most dangerous thing, is that we now have for the first time . . . a highly organized, apparently well-funded, partisan political party going not only for the minds of Southern Baptist people, but for the machinery of the Southern Baptist Convention. He charged that the Southern Baptist inerrantists are a part both of the new religious and political 'right wing,' and that they have been promoting a 'fundamental ecumenism' and a 'new non-denominationalism' by co-operating with other biblical-inerrancy advocates than other Southern Baptists.

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COMING EVENTS

The 13th Atlantic Seminary in Theological Education will be held in Truro, June 7-12. The theme for this year is "Cross Cultural Communication" and focuses on how the 20th century preacher can make the ancient story of the Gospel relevant to today. Strong leadership has been secured, and many interesting events are being planned. Programs will be available soon. For further information, contact John Boyd or Jud Levy.

THE SPRING CONFERENCE OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP WILL TAKE PLACE JUNE 12-13 AT THE WOLFVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Great Loneliness

"Wisdom can be found only from far out in the great loneliness" — so states an ancient Eskimo proverb. Whatever may be its religious inspiration, this proverb presents a truth that can be learned from our religion, both Christian and its Jewish background.

Moses came to his great religious experience at the burning bush as he was "leading the flock along the side of the wilderness." Amos, that prophet of scorching judgment, was "one of the sheep-farmers of Tekoa." And in the New Testament: Paul tells us that, after his life-changing experience on the Damascus road — "Without consulting any human being — I went off at once to Arabia." And, climaxing all of these experiences, is that of our Lord who, following His baptism, was "led away by the Spirit into the wilderness."

All of this comes to us from the past. What of the present? Alongside of the ancient proverb, quoted above, consider this word from a modern religious thinker and writer (Loran Eseley): "The man seeking visions and insights must go apart from his fellows for a time in the wilderness. If he is the right sort, he will return with a message." Our troubled world is waiting for a messenger. Whence will it come? Who will be the messenger? Is the Church that messenger? If not, what is lacking?

Perhaps nothing is more lacking in our religious life, both as individuals and as churches, than, what has been called "a devotion to contemplative prayer." In the rush of much activity, the time for prayerful meditation is the exception rather than the rule. Even worse, we seem to have little place for it in our public worship. How unusual is a period of meditative silence in most of our worship services! The fact is we tend to avoid the wilderness where we are alone with God. Why? Are we afraid of what God may say to us?

We just now are entering the period in the church year known as Lent — that period of forty days that corresponds with the time of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness. Make no mistake — it was no accident that He was there, for He was "led away by the Spirit into the wilderness." This experience came from God's planning, as something necessary at the beginning of His ministry. The life of service and sacrifice that followed was nurtured in the wilderness. How much more is such a wilderness experience necessary for us!

So the Church, in its many expressions, once more observes Lent. It is a time when, in most churches, some special activity is planned. It may be that the very thought of "activity" is leading us away from the real meaning, and proper observance, of this sacred season. Activity suggests that which we do, and which can be seen as happening, something that makes news and can be reported by way of statistics. The wilderness is something quite different.

The true Lenten call is a call to go with our Lord into the wilderness, and, with Him, to experience the great loneliness. It is not something we seek. We do not go there by choice, but by the leading of the Holy Spirit. The individual, or the church, that heeds this call "if of the right sort, will return with a message."