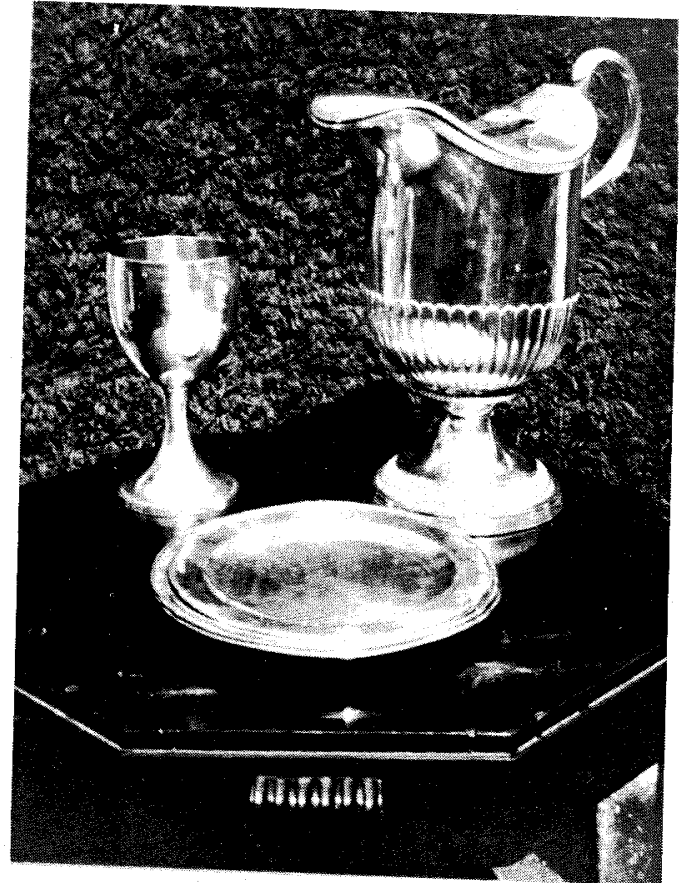


FROM THE LIBRARY OF
Rev. John E. Boyd

BULLETIN
of
The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

February, 1983



"Do this in remembrance of me."

The Communion Set, pictured above, is in the Carey Baptist Church, Calcutta, India. It is believed it was used by William Carey, and has been used in the church through the many years since Carey's time. The picture was taken by Robert Rushton who, at that time, was a seventeen-year-old boy living in India with his missionary parents, Vincent and Jean Rushton.

Editorial Comment

The first impression that one may have in examining this issue of the Bulletin will be that it is "heavy" perhaps too much so. A number of very important matters are dealt with, no one of which can be dealt with briefly, and no one is simple.

Considerable attention is being given to reporting on the Fall Conference, in which the main emphasis was on evangelism. This was done in other than the usual and traditional way. The thought-provoking lectures by the Rev. Hedley Hopkins deserve careful attention. While the lectures could not be reproduced in full, a summary has been attempted — and, when dealing with such thoughts, even a summary can be shortened only so far. More must be said along this line again and before too long. May this summary stimulate your interest.

Two other matters of great urgency are discussed in these pages. The article, "Does it matter?" by Dr. Andrew MacRae opens up some major issues that no church can afford to ignore. The other article "Creationism Versus Evolution" by Dr. T. B. McDormand raises an issue that many of us thought was dead years ago. But here it is again. We had better be prepared to know the issue and how to deal with it. It is hoped that these articles will be read with great care.

It is customary in each Bulletin issue to present one of our churches through a brief historical sketch and picture. This time it is the Pereaux Church which has been a member and supporter of the ABF from its (ABF) beginning.

Other matters dealt with are, more or less, routine — something about ecumenism in Canada which remains one of the prime concerns of the ABF — and, along with this, some "bits and pieces."

May the coming Lenten and Easter seasons be a time of great spiritual uplift in all our churches.

The next issue of the Bulletin will be in May, 1983.

I. Judson Levy
Editor

A LENTEN PRAYER

Almighty God, who givest us our quiet moments of thought and prayer, help us now and at all times to find in thee our true peace. Save us in the hour of trial, deliver us from evil thoughts and desires, and from the tyranny of outward things. May we learn of Christ to be strong and brave in the struggles with temptation, and to overcome evil as he overcame. AMEN.

(Devotional Services)

ABF Fall Conference Report

The Fall Conference of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was held in the First Baptist Church, Amherst, N.S. on October 22 and 23, 1982. The president, Rev. Gordon Gower of Hantsport, N.S., presided over the sessions, with Dr. Frank Sinnott acting as secretary in the absence of the secretary, Rev. Philip Griffin-Allwood, who was attending a conference on "Baptist Identity" at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario. The Conference theme was "My View of Evangelism" which was presented in two lectures, followed by discussion periods. More will be said about this later in this report.

As has become traditional in ABF conferences, a strong emphasis on worship was made through services carefully prepared and reverently conducted. The session of Friday evening was closed with a service of Holy Communion, conducted by the host pastor, Rev. John Boyd, assisted by the organist and deacons of the Amherst church. Once again this was a service in which scripture, prayer, meditation and music were carefully blended in such a way as to make this a helpful and memorable experience for all who attended.

At the opening of the Saturday morning session, we were privileged to have Dr. Patterson Lee, senior minister of the First Baptist Church, Moncton, N.B., conduct the morning worship. Dr. Lee, in the spirit of the conference theme, stressed evangelism in terms of the attitude and motive of the evangelist whoever he or she may be. After the singing of the hymn "Teach me, thy way, O Lord," and prayer, attention was called to the scripture passage selected for the meditation, Romans 10:1-10. The speaker used as his lead question, "What makes an evangelist tick? — that is, what makes an evangelist truly effective? Answers came from the attitude of the Apostle Paul as gleaned from the scripture passage. It was noted that Paul's words and acts were marked with a deep concern and sincerity. Paul really meant what he was saying, his wish and prayer that they, the ones about whom he was speaking and others, be saved. This deep sincerity and loving concern should be the hallmark of all who seek to be Christian evangelists. This must be the primary motive in evangelism.

Dr. Lee continued by pointing out the centrality of the message given to the evangelist to proclaim, namely, the fact of the resurrection of Christ. Only the persons who believe this deeply can be real evangelists. "No one will willingly die for a lie." It is essential that we, as evangelists, be deeply committed to the truth as made plain in Jesus Christ — sharing his loving compassion for people of all classes and conditions, and, most importantly, follow the Christ way of undying devotion and self-sacrifice to whatever extent that may be demanded.

Dr. Less not only inspired us through the devotional message, but also by staying with us, entering fully into the discussions, and by sharing his gracious personality, all of which added much to the whole conference. As a group, the ABF is most appreciative of his contribution, and to him, we say a hearty "thank you!"

Another period of rich devotion opened the Saturday afternoon session, in a worship service conducted jointly by the pastor, Rev. John Boyd, and James Stanley, Chairman of the deacons. Through a period of responsive reading, made up of a selected scripture verses, the thought of a sense of mission was clearly presented. This was followed with the reading of Michel Quoist's prayer-meditation, "Lord, why did you tell me to love?". The thought of this devotional period, and, to a large degree, of the entire conference, was summed up in the singing of the closing hymn, "Where cross the crowded ways of life."

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THE THEME PRESENTATION

The theme "My View of Evangelism," as noted in the last bulletin, was selected in order to present a concept of evangelism that is bigger than any one method, with an attempt to understand evangelism at its deepest level and in its widest scope. To this end, the conference was most fortunate in the selection of the theme speaker, the Rev. Hedley Hopkins, pastor of the Faith United Baptist Church, Lower Sackville, N.S. Mr. Hopkins brought to the conference the result of much study, biblical and otherwise, on this important subject, and, for the purpose of presentation, divided the subject into two parts, "The Scope of Evangelism" and "The Task of Evangelism." The following is a summary of the addresses which, like all summaries, falls short of getting across the fulness of Mr. Hopkins' thinking, but, in the space at our disposal, this is the best we can do.



Rev. Hedley Hopkins

THE SCOPE OF EVANGELISM — Based on a study of the root word "evangel," by dictionary definition and from its use in the New Testament, evangelism is understood to mean: "the preaching or zealous spreading of some kind of good news." What in the Christian use of the term, is the "good news" or "gospel"? From the study of the New Testament texts, coupled with some observations from recent biblical studies, Mr. Hopkins drew the conclusion that the content of the good news is two inseparable elements — **Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God**. The message of evangelism must include both to be biblical evangelism. This raises two key questions: Which Christ do we preach? And, what is the Kingdom of God?

Four possible answers to the first question are mentioned: First, the Christ of the two swords, presented as endorsing the current regio-socio-economic system. 2. The Jesus who is the supporter of a violent solution to social ills. 3. The Christ who flees all contacts with society, although the adherents of this view gain economically from their dealings with society. 4. There is the Christ of the one sword. This tends to be the Baptist Christ, a compromisor who rules only the so-called "spiritual" dimensions of life. No one of these is a whole picture of Jesus. For that we have to turn to bible study in depth. Our search must be for the authentic Jesus of history. He needs to be seen as vividly as possible in all his original reality. In this quest we are aided by the many tools and insights into the bible and its times that are available to us today.

This will take a lot of love, patience and courage because the unchaining of the Bible is probably number one pastoral problem in the Atlantic United Baptist Convention. For example, such areas as these need to be freshly studied in the light of modern biblical scholarship: Jesus and women in the Church, the nature and mission of the Church, Jesus and local church freedom and Jesus and evolution. While accepting the idea that we cannot entirely get behind the Christ of faith to the historical Jesus, we can nevertheless be strongly assured that the Bible is an authentic record of Jesus' life and teachings in history.

From the pages of the New Testament at least four significant factors are revealed about Jesus. 1. He was a Jew with a tremendous sense of monotheism — that there is but one God and he is the creator of all things. This also means that he had an absolute confidence in the power of God to deliver his people. 2. Jesus is portrayed as harmonizing his living with his teaching. He really loved and served the least, the poorest and most despised. He regally exercised authority over evil, disease, natural law, sin, the sabbath and death. He sacrificed his all for others.

Thirdly, the Bible presents Jesus as being truly human. Yet as his followers came to know him they discovered him to be more other humans. Finally, they were led to perceive that he is really the Messiah, God's anointed, God With Us. Fourthly, and what is of supreme importance, they came to know Jesus as Saviour. By this they realized that conversion to Jesus and faith in him ushered them into the Kingdom of God. Referring to Jesus as the Paschal lamb they learned that by his sacrificial death a new Exodus was begun.

Who then is this Jesus? He is so truly Real Man, that is, in the image of God, that he reveals both man and God to us definitively and forever. Therefore he is Lord, not subject to our domestications, but judging them all. He is who is the centre of all things, things in heaven and on earth. This is the Christ we are to proclaim to the world.

The second element in the evangelism is the **Kingdom of God**, which is the central theme in the teaching of Jesus, and it involves his whole understanding of his own person and work. The term kingdom suggests a kingly reign, authority and dominion. The key word is authority. The Kingdom of God means the authority of God. He demonstrated to mankind that life can be lived out under the very authority of God. In his parables he taught how this awareness and dependence on God's authority grows to fruition. He sacrificed himself to enable others to be free to live under that authority. And by his resurrection he confirmed that life under the authority of God is ultimately victorious.

The Kingdom of God may be thought of as the kingdom or rule of right relations (Matthew 6:33). This consists of a right relationship with God through Christ who by his death makes it possible. It includes a right relationship to self, through Christ who can handle even our own personal evil. It incorporates right relationships to others, in whose faces is seen the Christ of the least of these. And finally it encompasses a right relationship to the whole created order — land, air, water, the community of man, the animals and all life — because he is the creator and has entrusted all to our careful use.

The good news then is of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. Evangelism is the act of extending the authority of God in and through Jesus Christ. It is the spreading of the good news that in Jesus Christ life can be lived under God's benevolent authority now and forevermore.

THE TASK OF EVANGELISM — Evangelism is essentially a conflict of authority, a freeing of people from the domination of alien authorities and their coming home to God's authority. Sometimes as believers our confidence in God's authority wavers. We forget the concrete historical expressions of his power. At moments like that we run to the Bible. We praise the Lord that he willed that we should have a record of his mighty deeds.

In presenting the task of evangelism, Mr. Hopkins focussed on the story of Moses as set forth in the Old Testament book of Exodus. This was a very thorough and penetrating study which unfortunately cannot be presented here, even in outline, in the space available for this report. The story is of a people in

agony under an alien authority. God hears their groaning and wills to liberate them, to bring them under his own benevolent authority. For this purpose God needs a human point of entry into situation. He needs to incarnate himself in and by means of a man. Moses was chosen to be that man. Moses balks at the magnitude of the task, and makes excuses to avoid coming under God's authority. A long dialogue between Moses and God is set forth in Exodus, chapters 3 and 4. In spite of his protests, Moses finally submitted to God's authority, thus fulfilling the first requirement for evangelism, namely, a person under God's authority willing to those oppressed by alien powers. The fear of the Lord is a requisite for evangelism.

The second step in the task of evangelism is proclamation. This means not only to the oppressed, but God's message must be delivered, as well, to the alien dominating power. This is made plain in the Moses story. In rusty and accented Egyptian, Moses says with authority: "Your majesty, these Hebrew slaves are not really yours. They belong to YHWH (God) and, YHWH says, 'Let my people go!'" This is prophetic step in the task of evangelism. For us it involves proclaiming God's authority in Christ and the call for repentance and faith in him. It means perceiving the geographical areas in which we serve as parishes. God is the final authority over every thing and every one in that area. We are not to see them as economic blocks, political districts or social conformities. They are parishes over which God has placed his Church, all believers of whatever denomination, as pastors and stewards together!

The third step in evangelism is to stay with it: persevere in presence and proclamation as God orders. This involves a stepping back and watching God overcome alien powers. This involves seeing oneself consistently as God's instrument, not his employee. It involves the possibility of suffering and death. It involves self-sacrifice. It never involves our strategy, methods and violence. In the story of Moses the Hebrew writers take great joy in describing how Pharaoh learned who God was and what he could do.

These three steps are to be followed in evangelism which, in practical terms means we have to discover where the oppressed are and to whom God wishes to send us. Assessing the needs in the area of one's church will uncover great needs that will give anyone an ample challenge for biblical evangelism.

The speaker concluded his splendid addresses on evangelism with these thoughts: One of the greatest blessings we have here in Canada is freedom to evangelize. Let's not take it for granted. The task of evangelism is not ever completed in this world. Because its scope is the extension of God's authority in and through Jesus Christ, it is a task to occupy and nourish the Church until Jesus returns.

The ABF should like to express appreciation to all, whose combined efforts, made this fall conference such a joyful and worthwhile experience — the guest speaker, the devotional leaders, the minister and officers of the host church, and, last but not least, the ladies of the church for their gracious hospitality in providing coffee breaks, and, most of all, for the lovely dinner served at noon on Saturday. Thanks to all!

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

THE SPRING CONFERENCE OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP
WILL BE HELD AT CHESTER, N.S. — JUNE 17-18, 1983

CONFERENCE THEME — CONTEMPORARY MEDICAL ETHICS
THE SPEAKER — DR. JOHN THOMAS, McMASTER UNIVERSITY,
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

(Full details will be given in the May Bulletin. Watch for it.)



The ABF Council, meeting at First Baptist Church, Halifax, N.S., November 12, 1983.

Christian Co-operation in Canada

(The following article is made up of selected paragraphs taken from an article in a recent issue of *Canadian Ecumenical News*. At the beginning is a brief historical reference to the founding of The Canadian Council of Churches in 1956. This is followed by a longer reference to the current beginning of the new Inter-Church committee, now in process of formation. This is being published here so that our readers can know of the real meaning of these ecumenical ventures and, most of all, of their serious spiritual contents, aims and purposes. It is hoped that this will help to show the real meaning of the old council and the new committee. Editor)

On June 7th, 1956 The Canadian Council of Churches was incorporated on the consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada.

The basis of the Council is: "A fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

The purposes and functions of the Council shall be to serve God in His mission to the world, to give expression to the unity which is offered to the world through Jesus Christ, to witness to the continuing renewal of the Church by the Holy Spirit, to promote the growth of ecumenical and missionary obedience among all Christians, and to facilitate common action by the member churches.

New 'ICC' Being Formed

A yet unnamed "inter-church committee" has received general approval from an expanded number of Christian Churches in Canada including the Roman Catholic Church.

Its guidelines, at this stage, state as its purpose:

To respond more fully to the call and prayer of Jesus that his disciples be one, "Father, may they be one in us . . . so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (John 17:21), the Christian Churches of Canada hereby commit themselves to establish together a simple and functional organization which will facilitate an authentic expression of Christian unity through prayer, dialogue, and action. The Churches renew their commitment to expressing visible unity in order to seek a greater obedience to God's will and a fuller realization of God's kingdom, in harmony with Christ's will "that all things might be restored to the glory of God." (cf. Ro. 8:9-26; Eph. 1:9-10; Col. 1:18-20).

In its concern for truth and love, the (N . . .) shall always be mindful of the diversity within its membership, affirming and accepting the denominational integrity of all, and respecting their history, practice and doctrine.

This renewed commitment to realizing Christian unity must be accompanied by the education of all members of our Churches in spiritual, doctrinal and practical concerns with an ecumenical motivation in all our pastoral priorities.

Its Goals are "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit sought in prayer, and in the light of the Gospel and of Canadian ecumenical experience, the (N . . .) shall facilitate:

- 1) Renewal, Spiritual Growth and Fellowship
- 2) Consultation and Dialogue
- 3) Joint Action

Membership in the (N . . .) is open to organized ecclesial bodies (known variously as "Churches," "Communities," "Conventions," "Denominations," or "Federations of Churches") which confess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of God, Father, son and Holy Spirit.

A category of associate membership entitling participation in discussions and activities, but without voting power on the Co-ordinating Committee, is open to other ecclesial bodies which accept the above statement of purpose and confession of faith but which are not yet prepared to become full members.

CANADIAN ECUMENICAL NEWS

One thing that brought me back to the church was asking simply: What are the alternatives to the church? Where are the communities that sanction the pursuit of meaning and truth as a legitimate enterprise? that have material and personal resources to assist in this search? that renew and inspire? that provide a setting where children are nurtured? where social issues can be debated? There are a number of institutions that deal with one or several of these questions, but historically the church has demonstrated its ability to energize all of these activities.

Donald E. Miller

Creationism and Evolution

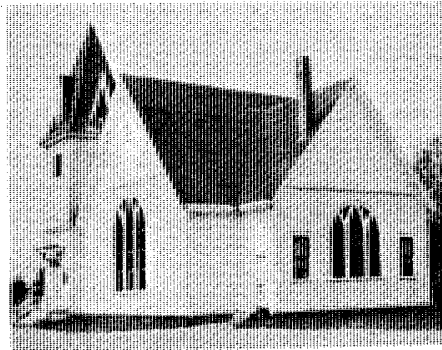
It seems almost past belief that the issues of the famous Scopes trial in Tennessee a generation ago should be raised again. In that trial a one-time candidate for the American presidency, William Jennings Bryan, was matched with a famous Chicago criminal lawyer, Clarence Darrow. Mr. Darrow defended a schoolteacher named Scopes who had, in his classroom, supported the Darwinian theory of "natural selection" or evolution, while Mr. Bryan represented a large section of the population, who interpreting Genesis I as teaching the instant creation of the human species, demanded that Scopes be dismissed from his teaching position. Mr. Darrow argued that scientific data supported the concept of the gradual development of human life over a very long prehistoric period. Mr. Bryan, arguing that science did not have all the answers to life's mysteries, made a statement which will long be remembered: "I am more interested in the Rock of Ages than in the age of rocks" (geology and archaeology).

Mr. Darrow won that case, but his victory did not end the debate between biblical literalism and scientific groping. The battle rages at this moment in several Southern States of the USA. The pro-creationists, who believe that the Bible teaches instant ("fiat") creation are now demanding that State legislatures provide in the school curricula equal time for creationism and evolution. Such government action has been taken, I believe, in at least one State of the Union and other States are still faced with the demand.

To me this contentious matter is a non-issue. The Bible opens with the majestic statement, "In the beginning God created . . ." Whether God took one week or millions of years to create man, the method and the time-frame were decided by Him. Whether "the beginning" was about 6000 years ago, as Bishop Ussher proposed years ago, or scores of millions of years ago, it was still God's time. Whether the first chapter of Genesis is to be taken as literal history, or as a magnificent affirmation in pictorial language of the splendour, majesty and power of God, offers an alternative which, for me, has no faith-shattering elements. However, it was done, it was God who did it; however long it took, it was still God who did it!

Both creationism and evolution raise complex questions. Bryan's "age of rocks" cannot deny the "Rock of Ages." His proper due, and evolution, or the so-called "descent of man," cannot bridge the impassive gulf between the mind of man and the mind of the smartest ape ever known! If it were possible to bridge that gulf, the divine miracle would seem even greater to me than the "instant creation" of the "creationists." Job of the Old Testament, tried to account for the strange ways of the Almighty, and ended up by saying: I have uttered what I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (42:3). And Isaiah wrote, "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed Him?" (Chapter 40). It is that Spirit of humility which alone is appropriate as we humans face the wonder of God's doings. Geology, paleontology and theology should continue to wrestle with the mystery of it all, but, in the end, each must realize that faith goes beyond reason, and revelation beyond scientific formulae. And, after all, evolution is only a hypothesis to this very day; and creationism may miss the deeper meanings of Genesis I by attempting to make the limitations of human words contain the Divine "Word" in all its fulness.

Dr. T. B. McDORMAND
Amherst, N.S.



Pereaux Baptist Church

In 1807 the First Cornwallis Church at Canard was formed under the leadership of Edward Manning which begins the history of the Pereaux United Baptist Church, written by Dr. Frank Sinnott. Settlers of Rhode Island and Connecticut took up grants of land in this section about 1768. They were old Puritan stock and were Congregationalists or Independents. It is probable that they heard the gospel from Henry Aline, the evangelist who travelled throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick on horseback. As most of his followers later became Baptists, the Baptist fathers later visited the community and preached in the homes.

The first Cornwallis Baptist Church spread its influence throughout Kings County and was instrumental in organizing five daughter churches. Berwick, 1828, Billtown, 1835, Pereaux, 1862, Canning, 1870, Port Williams, 1918.

From 1844 until 1862 Pereaux was an outstation of the Canard Church? In 1862 it was organized into an independent preaching station extending from Canning to Scott's Bay with Pereaux as the centre. From 1874 the Canning people supported a separate pastor, but in 1924 the two again united as one pastorate. Since that time Scott's Bay area has become a separate pastorate.

The first pastor of the newly organized field was David Freeman who was pastor at Canard and came to the Canning, Scott's Bay areas when time permitted. He remained in Kings Co. until 1875 then resigned to begin a new Church in New Glasgow, N.S.

Many changes in pastoral arrangements have taken place since 1862 but through it all Pereaux has experienced slow but steady growth.

A few highlights that come to mind are the "blessed revival" that took place in 1863 when 34 persons were baptized. Then again in 1972 when 33 were baptized in the Church's own baptismal fount which was installed when the present Church was built in 1898 and had gone unused and forgotten by most for many a year.

The ordination of Rev. John Porter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Porter of Blomidon, grew up in that community and was baptized and received into the Pereaux Church by Rev. Austin MacPherson, was in 1952. The dedication of Sunday School classrooms was about 1969, and the new kitchen was added in 1977.

An indication of the continued growth of the entire field was markedly noted in 1978 when Pereaux and Canning divided, each to call a minister, after many years of sharing one pastorate. Rev. Gary Manthorne was the first minister of the Pereaux church after the division.

The work of the Lord in Pereaux continues to grow with a good sized congregation and faithful workers. The present pastor, Rev. David Shaw, extends an invitation to all, and especially members of the ABF, to drop in for a visit whenever they are in the area.

"Does it matter?"

Does anything really matter in the light of eternity? There is a brand of evangelicalism which believes it has taken seriously the Biblical injunction, to "set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"; that it has heeded the words of Peter, when he pointed to the undated future as the goal of Christian fulfilment, when he said, "When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that fades not away."

From the perspective of such thinking, nothing in this passing age matters very much. Even the world itself seems transient. Did not the writer to the Hebrews say, "In the beginning, oh Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

There are, however, anomalies. Isn't it interesting that the modern media presentations which lay great emphasis on doom that lies ahead, and the glory that awaits the Church, seem to feel no embarrassment in appealing for money with all kinds of persuasiveness, offering little badges and charms (presumably not lucky ones — that would hardly seem fitting). Maybe they have not discovered that little word of Jesus, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break through and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Some of them (it's always easiest to pin the responsibility on someone else), and some of us, seem to have concluded that it is perfectly possible to do both, to anticipate the glories of our indescribable future, without forfeiting the blessings of the Lord materially here and now. Indeed, I hear it being said now more and more in North America that God intends to make his people a financial as well as a spiritual success, and that great prosperity may be a sign of great favour. It's just a trifle difficult to square all that with "the Son of Man, who had nowhere to lay His head."

It even seems to be acceptable to believe, that though, of course, we are responsible to give to meet the needs of the suffering in Somalia or Ethiopia, there is no need for us to take a cut in our own luxurious standard of living to do so. Was Jesus simply indulging in a bit of exaggeration when He said, "If any man will be my disciple, let him DENY himself . . . ?"

Heaven, and the expectation of it, really is great news, but, in the meantime, before we get there, maybe we should be thinking a bit more about whether this old world matters all that much.

When you think of it, it matters to God. Why else would He take all the trouble, accept all the humiliation, and bear all the shame, consequent upon becoming man in the incarnation of Jesus Christ? At least it mattered to Him then. Presumably it still does. In fact Jesus said He had come specifically "to preach good news to the poor." Oh, I know there are those who insist that means the spiritually poor, but that too is a bit difficult to square with the observable fact that Jesus spent an inordinate amount of His time keeping company with the physically, psychologically, and materially poor, and reaching out to them in love and healing. If He was only concerned about their souls, why did He spend so much time fixing their broken bodies? Strange, don't you think?

Now, of course, the question "Does it matter?" with reference to the world, and the nations of the world, raises other issues. Does it matter whether committed Christians get involved in the issues of the day, and engage in the concerns that discernibly shape the destiny of individuals, economies, nations, and empires?

I believe it matters very much indeed. If we ever make the mistake of withdrawing from the issues of the day so that we, to all intents and purposes, stand by while the secular world pursues its materialistic, selfish way towards one crisis after another, and refuse to become engaged in the pain and the struggle of it all, we better know that this is not conforming to the apostle James' injunction to keep ourselves "unspotted by the world." Indeed, it is abandoning the world "for which Christ died."

On the other hand, if we make the mistake of thinking that the work of the kingdom is to be found exclusively in social, political, racial, or economic reform, we shall have lost touch with the Christ of God who came, not only to identify with humanity in its struggles, as some recent "theologians" have held, but who came as the Son of Man, "... not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Moreover, what about the implications of that devastating, though much neglected image Jesus used when He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

To the Church as God's primary agent of the Kingdom that simply has to be a challenge, calling for a ministry whereby the rule and reign of God (which is what 'the kingdom' means) impinge penetratingly, disturbingly, and transformingly, on the life of the world. "Yeast" is a pretty powerful image. Incidentally, like yeast, the kingdom of heaven through the people of God changes things, not by compromising with the environment it enters, and not by losing its distinctives, but by releasing them where they make a difference.

In this article, I will take the risk of applying such a concern in one direction only, on the assumption that the Christian reader will agree that it matters. I am thinking specifically of the whole question of human survival in the face of the nuclear threat. For many years I honestly assumed that the only way to effect adequate protection of our lands and lives from potential aggression by malevolent and powerful nuclear powers was by building up an adequate nuclear deterrent, which would prevent any likely attack. One book and two facts above others have changed my mind, and have persuaded me that Christians had better start expressing their concern, and wielding their influence, wherever they can, as their responsibility in representing Him whose Kingdom they say, and pray, will come on earth.

The book, "The Fate of the Earth," by Jonathan Schell, which is now readily available in a cheap paper-back edition, is horrifying, logical, compelling, and challenging. In a word he says that for 36 years, since Hiroshima, the world has been bent on destruction, and now lives with the second-by-second threat of instant extinction. The book should be required (though not bedtime) reading for concerned Christians everywhere!

The two facts which have altered my perspective are these: first, that this is no longer an issue between two super-powers only. There are already too many fingers near too many buttons, and in the next 20 years there will be many more. The risk factor increases continually; and second, that I am convinced that a nuclear outbreak would not mean damage to our national, economic, international or political systems: it would mean, inevitably, the death of civilization as we know it, and, as Schell rightly argues, "the murder of the future."

Of course Christians like myself will argue that God won't let it happen. However, Christians like myself had better realize that God intends us to be the agents of His Kingdom, and thus of His will, in the world, and we dare not bury our real heads in idealistic sand if we do not want them to end up in a nuclear cloud.

If I were to argue for the protection of our environment, and say that Christians should be voicing their concern about the ecological damage to Nova Scotia's lakes and rivers, from American-originated acid rain, I suppose I could count on a good deal of support from concerned evangelicals. I might also find it in arguing for the protection of our forests, or the global defence of the ozone layer. But the moment I say as a Christian that the destruction of Nova Scotia's lakes or New Brunswick's trees, are trivia compared with the threat to the future of our unborn children daily increased by the clamour for bigger and "better" nuclear weaponry in the face of potential attack, I am likely to be told not to dabble in matters that are not the business of the Church, but of politicians.

Is this God's world, or not? Does it matter? If the answer is yes to both, we better say so. I have never been involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, as such. As a Christian, and an Evangelical, however, I have no option but to say loud and clear, that the Gospel of God's redeeming love is inalienably opposed to the wanton destruction of a single human life. He who, as I understand Him, holds the unborn foetus sacred, also holds the survival of the race sacred, and any attempt to justify an arms buildup in the supposed interests of saving America or Western civilization, or any other system, however dearly loved, when it can only lead, inevitably, if we pursue such a course, to the destruction of the present and the murder of tomorrow, is a denial of His Lordship of love. Morgan Derham points out, in another connection, that you do not wean a child from lead-painted toys, which can harm him. You put the toys in the garbage!

If God is to be honoured by those who bear His name in the world, we better, while offering men the only hope there is for life, death and the beyond, the saving love of Christ, at the same time be heard calling on the leaders of our day, to do the only responsible thing we can do with our nuclear toys. That will mean, not burying them in the Nevada Desert, or some other "safe" place from which they can be called to wreak destruction on God's world. It will mean, putting them in the garbage! Does it matter? I believe it does.

Dr. Andrew D. MacRae
Acadia Divinity College.

Pride is the architect of walls and fences that separate us from the discovery of additional truths, from the achievement of new friendships, from the establishment of deeper understandings and finally from the attainment of world peace.

William Arthur Ward

Church News

Coming Events

THE ATLANTIC SEMINAR IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION will be held at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, N.S. June 5-10. The theme this year is: "SHARING THE GOSPEL: MAKING DISCIPLES TODAY". The three lecturers and their subjects are:

The Very Rev. Lois Wilson, immediate past moderator of the United Church of Canada" will discuss such questions as: "How do we share the gospel as Christian Community" and "What kind of a world is it in which we share the gospel."

Rev. Dr. George Docherty, former minister of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., now retired and living in Scotland. Topics: "What is the Gospel we preachers preach..." and "How can preachers best preach the Gospel..."

Rev. Father John O'Brien, S.J., Director of Communications, Studies, Concordia University, Montreal. He will deal with "The Media of Evangelism."

During the past fifteen years, this seminar has brought to our area some of the leading religious leaders of our day. The international and interdenomination team for this year promises that this year will be one of the best. Here, in a truly ecumenical fellowship, is offered a unique opportunity for honest thinking and free discussion. It is open for both clergy and lay persons. For further information, contact the Seminar Chairman, The Rev. John Boyd, P.O. Box 637, Amherst, N.S. B4H 4B8.

THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP Spring Conference will be at Chester, N.S., June 17-18, 1983. Full details in the May Bulletin.

THE ATLANTIC ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE — Wolfville, N.S., September 6-8, 1983. More details in the next bulletin. This is another opportunity for interdenominational worship, discussion and fellowship. Mark the dates, and keep it in mind.

Two leaflets of interest and value to all Baptists have recently been written by Dr. Ronald F. Watts, General Secretary of The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. The titles are "The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and the Ecumenical Movement" (this should be read by all Canadian Baptists) and "Baptist Distinctives." For further information regarding these leaflets, write: Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 217 St. George St., Toronto, Ontario, M5R 2M2.

In one sense the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches could come to Vancouver next summer, hold its 3 weeks of meetings, and go home with few Canadians being any the wiser. But it would be a shame if the religious community of Canada allowed that to happen.

The World Council is a unique creature and it has a fascinating, challenging story to tell. Reflecting on its origins, its first General Secretary, Willem Visser 't Hooft, observes that history records many instances of Christians separating from one another. There are, he says, a very few incidents of them uniting together. In the World Council, however, there is a new creation — churches agreeing to disagree on aspects of the faith but committed to seeking its fullness together.

Next summer the most representative gathering of world Christians will happen and it will happen on Canadian soil, from July 24 to August 10, 1983 representatives from more than 300 different churches will gather in Vancouver to explore together the theme: "Jesus Christ, the life of the World."

Canadian Ecumenical News

Canadian Ecumenical News

We are happy to announce that Rev. John Boyd, immediate past president of the ABF, has been accepted as an official observer at the Vancouver WCC Assembly. He will represent both the ABF and The Atlantic Ecumenical Council. Let us support John with our prayers and in whatever way, and to what degree, it is possible.

The Editor

A World Council of Churches visitation was recently made to member churches located in the Soviet Union.

The team, headed by former United Church of Canada moderator Lois Wilson, went to generate interest in next summer's sixth world assembly, scheduled for Vancouver in July and August.

During the 14-day visit, the WCC delegation met officials of the Armenian Apostolic, Georgian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, and Evangelical Lutheran churches, as well as the all-union council of the Evangelical Christian Baptist.

The visitors were received by Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia, and Vazgen, supreme patriarch-catholicos of all Armenians.

In a communique following the visit, the WCC team expressed the wish that the Vancouver assembly show the world unity of Christian striving for peaceful development.

The Canadian Churchmen

New Chinese Hymnal

China's Protestants plan to publish a new hymnal in early 1983, and if all goes according to plan, at least one-fourth of the hymns included will be original Chinese songs. Shen Derong, secretary general of the Three-Self Church, China's official Protestant group, said recently in Peking that "while assimilating popular hymns of different sects, we will collect more hymns composed and written by our own Protestants."

The hymns will stress the church's three-self philosophy: "adherence to the principles of self-administration, self-support and self-propagation." Shen also announced that China has published 1 million Bibles to date. He also condemned foreign Bible smugglers, stating that last year some anti-chinese organizations tried to smuggle Bibles into China.

The Christian Century

Church Surveys U.S.A.

A recent National Council of Churches survey of ten selected denominations indicated that their membership declined in 1981; at the same time, church members in the ten denominations donated more money that year, thus putting giving ahead of inflation. Registering a total confirmed membership of 24,819,519 in 1980, these denominations had a total of 24,674,239 in 1981 (the most recent year for which statistics are available) — a loss of .58 per cent. Statistics reported in 1981 showed a gain of less than 1 per cent from 1979 to 1980.

Offsetting the 1981 loss in membership was a sharp rise in the average per capita giving to the ten denominations. Per capita giving went up 13.2 per cent, yielding an overall giving of 12.5 per cent — well ahead of the inflation rate for 1981 of 8.9 per cent. Average per capita giving was \$203.70 in 1980 and \$230.51 in 1981.

The Christian Century

JUDAS — Who Betrayed His Leader

“And Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him” — this is how Judas is named among the disciples, and how he lives in the memory of the Christian Church. It is a serious thing to be remembered as a betrayer. There is an odium attached to betrayal that is almost singular in its repulsiveness. Betrayal is a violation of trust. To be a betrayer, one must first of all be a trusted friend or associate. A friend can hurt one as no enemy can. Judas was that kind of a friend turned betrayer.

We pick up the New Testament story in an upper room in Jerusalem the evening prior to Jesus' crucifixion. How inexpressibly sad are his words spoken in that “family” atmosphere: “I tell you this: one of you will betray me.” One of you, my friends! No wonder that, in shocked surprise, the murmur went up from one and all — “is it I?” The voice of Judas mingles with the others: “Rabbi, can you mean me?” Jesus turned it back on him: “the words are yours.” The Gospel writer continues his story: “Judas went out and it was night.” How dark the night when one who is trusted betrays a friend!

The next scene is in the Garden of Gethsemane. How quiet, peaceful and secure seems this place! But here comes a soldier band led by — by Judas. “The one I kiss is the man” — and so saying, he stepped forward and kissed Jesus, who looked up and called him “friend.” What a place, and what an act, for a friend!

This is the picture we have of Judas — of him who was one of the original disciple band. How did this man ever become one of the disciples? Or, in other words, why did Jesus call him? Who dares ask this question? I just did, and you probably are thinking it. We ask it because we are shocked that a disciple should betray his Lord. But, in all honesty, we know that Judas does not stand alone in this respect. All through the ages, men and women have heard the call of Christ, have responded with enthusiasm and sincerity — and many of them later, under various pressures and temptations, have betrayed what they were called to be and do. Have not you and I?

In her play, “A Man Born to be King,” Dorothy Sayers has Judas saying to Caiphas: “I have done so hideous a thing that Hell itself is ashamed. Do you know what hell-fire is? It is the light of God's unbearable innocence that sears and shrivels like flame — Priest, it is a fearful thing to see oneself, for a moment, as one is.”

Judas could not stand it. Here he made his last and greatest mistake. Taking it all in his own hands, he took his life. For one dreadful moment, he glimpsed truth, but only a part of it. He knew the reality of guilt, but not the cure for guilt. He knew the burning condemnation that comes when one's life is shot through with the light of God; but he did not know its cleansing quality. He knew the judgment of love, but failed to see that beyond judgment, or through judgment, love forgives. Love becomes condemnation only at the point where it is rejected. Here we leave this tragic figure, but let us leave him with love — a love that offers forgiveness to all who, in repentance and humility, will accept it — even to betrayers like Judas and all of us!