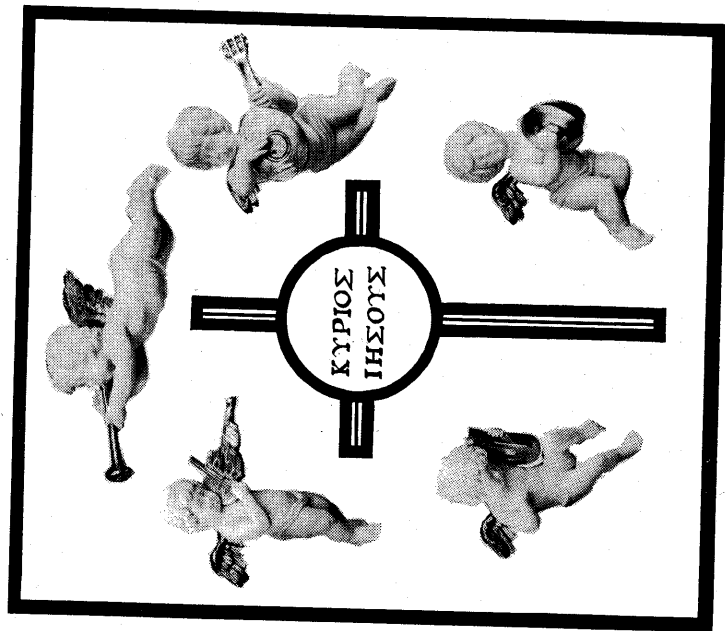


BULLETIN

of the

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

May 1988

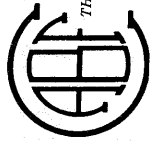


Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

SPRING ASSEMBLY 1988

10-11 June 1988
Lancaster Baptist Church, Saint John, N.B.
Theme: "The Theory and Practice of Worship"
Special Speaker:
Dr. J.R.C. Perkin, President, Acadia University

For full particulars see Page 16



THE OFFICERS OF THE ABF ARE:

President: Mrs. E. Gwendolyn Atherton, Comp. 4, Site 19, Sandy Point Road, R.R. #1, Saint John, N.B., E2L 3W2
Vice-President: Rev. Roger H. Prentice, Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0
Secretary: Rev. Dr. Philip G. A. Griffin-Allwood, 1300 Oxford Street, Halifax, N.S., B3H 3Y8
Treasurer: Mrs. Evelyn Smith, 1021 Cole Harbour Road, Bldg. 2, Apt. 247, Dartmouth, N.S., B2V 1E8
Public Relations: Rev. Vincent V. Rushton, 1026 Evergreen Crescent, New Minas, N.S. B4N 4L6
Secretary for the Friends of the ABF, Dr. Dorothy M. Lovesey, P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

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

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

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

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

The Bulletin is mailed to interested churches and individuals. Those wishing to receive the Bulletin, and all details of changes of address, are to be sent to the distribution organizer: The Rev. Byron Corkum, P.O. Box 68, Lawrencetown, N.S., B0S 1M0.

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.

"Evangelicals need to purge their faith from a species of idolatry and from a form of heresy. They must abandon both Bibliolatry and Apollinarianism."

— Bishop E. W. Barnes (1874-1953)

EDITORIAL COMMENT

In the last edition of the *Bulletin* your editor had the unpleasant task of asking for your financial support to meet a financial crisis. It is his happy task here to report that the response was magnificent, that the crisis was dealt with and all the bills paid. The sincere thanks of the Fellowship is extended to all who so wonderfully met the Christmas appeal.

The fellowship has wrestled with the problem of fund-raising for its work and has come up with the idea of inaugurating a "Friends" organization which it is sincerely hoped will be welcomed by all in sympathy with the published aims of the ABF. A full statement about the "Friends of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship" is given on page 5. It will be noted that the organization will be officially inaugurated at the Spring Assembly, 10-11 June 1988, to be held at the Lancaster Baptist Church, Saint John, New Brunswick. This assembly will have as its lecturer Dr. J.R.C. Perkin, President of Acadia University, who will lecture on the theory and practice of worship. A very good attendance is looked for.

The matter of the Convention joining the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada will be debated at next August's Convention Assembly. The ABF has not committed itself to a stand either way and has left it to the individual consciences of its supporters to study the issue and make up their own minds about it. Several well-known ABF personalities have published their views in the pages of recent issues of the *Atlantic Baptist*.

Three pages of this issue are devoted to the "News of the Church from Far and Near." One recalls a slogan, used by Edith Shore of the Canadian Council of Churches before her resignation from that body, a slogan that is too good to be forgotten — "Think Globally: Act Locally." What a great slogan that is, saying so much so succinctly! Would that all of us would *Think* in global terms about the fortunes of the Christian Church on the world stage! And would that all of us would *Act* ecumenically in our local situations, putting Christ and his Church absolutely first in our list of priorities!

The sermon in this edition was preached at the Baptist Heritage Conference held at Acadia last October by the Reverend Dr. William H. Brackney, the Vice-President and Dean of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Those who heard it were powerfully impressed by it, for it was a fine statement of our commitment to religious liberty. It is such a pity that owing to severe space limitations only a very brief summary of the sermon can be printed in our *Bulletin*. But sufficient will be given for readers to catch the "punch" the sermon had. Doubtless a tape is available on application to the Acadia Divinity College, the hearing of which might be a most rewarding experience.

A new feature in this edition is the printing of a couple of brief book reviews. One is of Reginald Bibby's important *Fragmented Gods*, a comprehensive portrait of religion in contemporary Canada. Another is the autobiography, entitled *A Diversified Ministry*, of Tom MacDormand. It is hoped that all our gentle readers will find something of interest and challenge in the pages of this edition.

At the foot of page 2 readers will find a quotation from the pen of the redoubtable Anglican Bishop E. W. Barnes. Another quotation from his pungent writings closes off this column:

"A short time ago I heard it said that Evangelism had three enemies: literary criticism, natural science and philosophy. I maintain that its three most powerful allies are literary criticism, natural science and philosophy: its enemies are the forces of worldly indifference, superstition, ignorance and fear."

FRIENDS OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

by Dorothy M. Lovesey

In order to meet the need of a regular cash flow into the treasury of the Fellowship, eliminate the need for special appeals for funds to meet financial crises and to diminish the load of anxiety carried by those responsible for the leadership, it has been decided to set up a "Friends" organization as is done by many other groups. The "Friends" of any organization act as a kind of "supporters' club" to turn out at games and cheer on the team and to provide all the help required to make the organization viable and successful.

Such an organization is also required to retain the interest of many whose relations with the Fellowship, once strong, have become weakened due to removal to other places of residence, increasing age, or other similar reasons. And, further, it would meet the need of those living outside the region who like the ideals for which the Fellowship stands and, lacking such a movement in their area, would like to associate themselves with the ABF. Several in the latter group have suggested that the Fellowship should extend its operations outside the Atlantic region, but this has been ruled out as beyond the capacity of the ABF to accomplish, certainly at the moment. Hopefully the "Friends" organization will meet the need expressed above.

Those who request membership as a "Friend" indicate their sense of the importance of the objectives of the Fellowship. These are listed on page 2 of this *Bulletin* and need not be repeated here. They are also asked to make certain commitments, the first of which is to pray for the life and work of the Fellowship and the Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces. But they commit themselves to be more than just card-carrying members of a political party — they will endeavour to persuade other committed Christians to join the Fellowship and become a "Friend." Further, they undertake to make and keep themselves informed about the pressing and disturbing theological and ethical problems and issues that engage the concern of all responsible members of the Church of Jesus Christ in the modern world.

A minimum annual subscription, of at least \$10.00, is required of "Friends". We are printing one thousand bookmark/enrolment cards at the moment, which means that if nearly all are used, involving about 1% of current Convention membership, the finances of the Fellowship would be in a much more stabilized condition than they have been in the last year or so. Further, "Friends" undertake, as their circumstances permit, to support special appeals for funds to meet special needs, occurring in the future (which, hopefully will never happen if the "Friends" organization is well supported). It should perhaps be added that it is hoped the founding of this organization will not detract in any way from the magnificent financial support given so generously in the past by those who attend in person the twice-a-year Assemblies. Such support, we trust, will be continued; becoming a "Friend" should merely be seen as buttressing this.

The "Friends" organization will be formally and officially inaugurated at the Spring Assembly of the ABF to be held at the Lancaster Baptist Church, Saint John, New Brunswick. It is to be hoped that this Assembly, dealing with the important topic of the Worship of God, will draw together a goodly number of supporters of the Fellowship's work, and that most of these will sign-on as "Friends."

For further information, requests for enrolment/bookmark cards, requests for membership, please write to the author of this article, at her address given on page 2 of this *Bulletin*.

ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP FINANCIAL STATEMENT: 1 JANUARY 1987 to 31 DECEMBER 1987

1 January 1987 Balance on hand	\$2,177.10
RECEIPTS:	
Churches	4235.00
Personal Donations	5927.01
Interest on Bonds	120.00
Offerings	186.26
Colpitts Memorial Fund	740.00
Total Receipts	\$11,208.27
	13,385.37

EXPENDITURES:

Bulletins and honoraria	\$6,709.00
Postage on above	14.68
Church Outreach	2,000.00
Speakers' honoraria and expenses	535.63
Receipt books	51.74
Secretary's honorarium	150.00
Promotion and telephone	736.01
A.E.C. dues	30.00
A.E.C. Delegate's expenses	121.00
President's expenses	434.00
Secretary's expenses	29.06
Bank charges	2.35
Total Expended	\$10,813.47
31 DECEMBER 1987 Balance on hand	\$2,571.90

CHURCH DONATIONS

Amherst	\$525.00
Annapolis Royal	150.00
Avonport	25.00
Bayside	30.00
Berwick	25.00
Billtown	25.00
Bridgewater	52.00
Burlington, Ontario	10.00
Canning	120.00
Cornwallis First	100.00
Halifax First	600.00
Hantsport	50.00
Lawrencetown	100.00
Lockhartville	15.00
New Ross	35.00
Northwest	100.00
Parrsboro	25.00
Pereaux	125.00
Seabright	60.00
Springhill	243.00
Sydney	1,250.00
West Lane	115.00
Wolfville	455.00
Total	4,235.00

INTERIM REPORT:

1/1/88-25/3/88	2,571.90
1/1/88 Balance on hand	2,571.90
RECEIPTS:	
Churches:	
Canning	20.00
Cornwallis	100.00
Halifax	100.00
Parrsboro	25.00
Total	245.00
Personal	3,300.00
Interest on bond	40.00
Total receipts	6,156.90
EXPENDITURES:	
Bulletin	1,921.04
Church Outreach	3,000.00
Total	4,921.04
25/3/88 Balance on hand	1,235.86

COMMENT

Public Worship Today: A Cri de Coeur

I wonder how many weary worshippers on their way to church echo the words of the disconsolate Henri-Frederic Amiel in his *Journal Intime*: "Ah! when will the church to which I belong in heart rise into being?" And what do they have in mind as to the conduct of public worship as they so repine?

One thing, no doubt, is the need for the recognition of the differences that exist in people themselves. There is no one stamp, labelled "Baptist Christian" that makes all people the same. Just as there are obvious physical differences, so there are psychological, cultural and spiritual differences; differences that go far beyond the simplistic extravert/introvert category or the Way of Martha/Way of Mary delineation. Some attempt needs to be made to accommodate to the variety of persons in attendance at Church so that they, too, can feel at home in the house of God. Some of these are easily accomplished practical matters: others require careful consideration, investigation, reconstruction and a re-ordering of things. In and out of the church. Some prefer to enter quietly, make their peace with God, and depart. There should always be a place for the quiet worshipper who wants to slip into a back pew and disappear unobtrusively without any well-meant attempt to "draw him out." A friendly church, if this is a desirable end, is not achieved by noisy demonstrations of public affection but rather by a true respect for the feelings of others.

Again, not everyone finds the humour of the children's address, and indeed an over indulgence in humour generally, irresistible. There are some who feel that the presence of the children should rather be used as an opportunity for teaching quiet and reverence, something quite different from the rough and tumble of every day. The "Switchback" formula of entertainment is a poor model for the children's address, and the impulse to entertain the congregation through the "cuteness" of the children best resisted, despite its popular appeal. Children should be encouraged to fit into the worship service, not the service to divagate to the children's level.

An orderly progression is also desirable in the conduct of the public worship service, with all the required elements being included so that it becomes clear to everyone where the thought is leading. It should follow the progress of the Christian Year and not be altered to suit the vagaries of local appeal. This would also ensure that no elements are lost, that the whole range of biblical doctrines are covered, and that pet themes and topics are not repeated. The type of extravaganza, beloved of the television evangelists, with specially selected sentimental hymns and deliberately planned, noisy, emotional responses is not a model appropriate to a public worship service. Nor is the heterogeneous grouping of unrelated items, familiar and appealing to youth groups, camp-revivalist meetings or mission hall-type services, worthy of emulation. To many these are not merely a distraction from worship but a destroyer of it. It is not in any way conducive to "pure religion and undefiled" which issues in a steady growth in grace and truth.

There are some, clearly, to whom emotionalism is all, and in the main they are well catered for. But for others who value rationality and order and precision it can never be enough. A public worship service needs to make some attempt to appeal to all comers, all varieties, all ages, so that no one is excluded.

It is only thus that it might happen some day that the church service to which we can all give our whole heart will come into being.

THE ATLANTIC SEMINAR IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

by Douglas Irving MacEachern



Douglas MacEachern

In August, 1967, clergy attending a Chaplains' Conference at the Institut de Memramcook found themselves concerned with the need and opportunity of Continued Theological Education in the Atlantic region. The group consisted of Donald Trivett of Dalhousie University; Howard Mills of Mount Allison; James Kelly of St. Dunstan's; Douglas MacEachern of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College; and Judson Levy of Acadia University.

The discussion concentrated upon the confusion over theology, ethics, identity and authority which then seemed prevalent within the Church. Plainly some very basic thinking had to be done if individuals within the Christian community were not to be left at the mercy of every wind of change. This thinking, it was felt, should be done by the ministers and lay people seeking together to understand and to interpret the message of Scripture among the ambiguities and crises of contemporary life.

With this goal in mind, assisted by contributions from lay persons, congregations and the business community in the Atlantic area, plus a substantial gift from the Rockefeller Foundation, June 1969 saw a dream become a reality as the First Atlantic Seminar in Theological Education was held on the campus of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro.

Considerable interest in the Seminar was shown by the Faculty of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, and two members of that Faculty — Roger Shinn and James Saunders — joined Pat Kerans of St. Mary's University and Eldon Hay of Mount Allison in the presentation of lectures on the theme "New — Old — Yesterday — Tomorrow."

The Seminar met with such a favorable response from those present that a steering committee was formed to plan another event.

II

Seminars have been held annually since 1969, covering a wide variety of themes and drawing together scholars from the Atlantic region and from further afield in Canada and the United States.

The Second Seminar in 1970 had as resource personnel Paul Lehman and Walter Wink from Union, Jim Perkin of Acadia and Tom Mabey of the Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax; and dealt with the theme, "Is change reached by revelation or revolution?" It became plain during the Second Seminar that a vital matter in theological discussion was language, and consequently it was agreed to plan a Third Seminar on the subject, "God-Talk (The Language of God)." Resource personnel for the Third Seminar included Ruben Alves and Louis Martyn, both of Union, and Barry Wheaton, head of the Department of Graduate Studies at Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax.

It would be impossible, owing to space limitations, to list the speakers and comment upon the themes, lectures and discussions of all the nineteen Seminars that have been held since 1969. Suffice it to say here that each Seminar has been written up very fully in a series of excellent reports.

BOOK REVIEW BY JERRY HARROP

Reginald W. Bibby. *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987, pp. 271, \$14.95.

This book is "must" reading for anyone seriously concerned about the state of organized religion in Canada. The "blurbs" on the back cover are most extravagant in their praise, a University of California saying, "There is nothing in the literature of religion in any other society to match it." This reviewer is not familiar enough with such literature to evaluate such a judgement. But it is indeed a good book. We all have much to learn from it.

What Bibby finds, in short, is that a decline in church attendance and support does not mean that people have turned from religion *per se* but from the way in which the spiritual dimension is communicated by institutional Christianity. People still turn to the Church for the "rites of passage" — baptism, confirmation, marriage, burial — and they expect the Church to be there for them at these crucial moments. They have not become atheists or even agnostics. Dr. Bibby's surveys shows that 83 out of 100 Canadians believe in God, 78% in the divinity of Jesus, 65% in life after death. Private prayer is practised by 53%; 42% claim to have had "experiences" of God's presence, and 54% have enough spiritual knowledge to identify the disciple who denied Jesus. But only 20% are positive on all five of these questions.

There has been, as we all know, an ever-increasing diminution in the number of regular church attenders. In 1965, 83% of Roman Catholics attended mass at least once a month. In 1985 that percentage is 43. In 1946, some 60% of Protestants claimed to have attended church in the previous seven days. By the mid-1950's the figure is 45%, becoming 30% in the mid-60's, and stabilizing now around 25%. Between 1950 and 1970 membership in the churches of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec declined in absolute numbers from 53,000 to 48,000. At the same time the population of the two provinces, especially Ontario where the great majority of the churches are located, increased dramatically.

In this study Baptists are included in the category "Conservative Protestants". It may be true that the majority of Baptists are "conservative" (whatever that may mean!) in theological outlook, but our "high ecclesiology", it would seem to me, makes us more akin to the "mainline" denominations than such bodies as the Christian and Missionary Alliance or the various Pentecostal assemblies and associations. Of course, the title "Baptist" can be, and often is, adopted by many preachers whose congregations are far from "regular Baptist" in their polity.

It is often assumed that what are called "conservative evangelical" churches are growing rapidly at the expense of the mainline denominations. Dr. Bibby's studies, surveys and questionnaires do not support this assumption. "Conservative Protestants" numbered about 8% of the population in 1921; in 1981 the figure stood at 7%. Some individual assemblies grow, not by evangelizing outsiders so much as by what has been called "the circulation of the saints" — people transferring from one congregation to another. Another myth is that church attendance has been adversely affected by the "electronic church." Bibby shows that the great majority of viewers are church attenders.

These reports have been very much sought after by libraries and theological institutions across North America. Acknowledgements should, however, be made to the impressive list of scholars who have contributed so much to theological opinion in the Atlantic region. The list to date includes 72 names which are all to be found in the series of reports.

We might conclude this section with a brief reference to the 19th Seminar held last year which had as its theme the very crucial and important one of Christology — "Who do You say that I Am?" The registration numbered 53. The Seminar was guided most ably in rediscovering the Biblical Christ, the Eternal Christ and the Contemporary Christ, through the leadership of Dan O. Via, Jr., of Duke University, William Crockett of the Vancouver School of Theology, and Mark Link of Texas. The report of this Seminar amounts to 229 pages.

III

The letterhead of the Seminar's stationary points out that the Seminar, founded 1969, is organized in association with the Atlantic School of Theology, the Acadia Divinity College and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. The letterhead also lists the current Committee or Steering Committee, which is chosen by the participants at the previous Seminar and charged with the responsibility of planning the next Seminar, on the theme agreed to. The current list has eighteen names.

The 20th Seminar will be held as usual at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, 5-10 June 1988. The theme will be "New Directions in Biblical Studies." One lecturer will be Dr. Leander E. Keek, Dean and Winkler Professor of Biblical Theology, Yale Divinity School. Dr. Keek is the author or editor of fifteen books and is widely recognized as an outstanding scholar and lecturer. He will offer four lectures on the New Testament, based on the Seminar theme. A second lecturer will be Dr. Richard Lischer, Associate Professor of Homiletics and Chairperson of the Ministerial Division of the Duke University Divinity School, who will give four lectures on the "How To" of preaching. A third lecturer will be Dr. Eileen Schuller, of the Atlantic School of Theology, a member of the Ursuline Sisters of Chatham, who will give four lectures centred on the Old Testament and New Directions in Biblical Studies. Details about the Seminar, costs, etc., may be obtained from the author of this article at Box 550, Truro, N.S. B2N 5E3.

Editor's Note: Douglas MacEachern was born in Trenton, Nova Scotia, and educated at the Trenton High School, Mount Allison University (BA) and graduated MDiv from the Pine Hill Divinity College in 1956.

Following ordination in 1956 by the Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada, and marriage to a Mount Allison Alumna, June Bowman, he served several pastoral charges in Nova Scotia, and since 1967 he has been Chaplain, Dean of Students and Associate Professor of Sociology at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro.

Douglas has given himself unstintingly to the service of the Institutions that educated him, the college that he serves, his Church and his community. Well-known for his work at the Berwick Camp, he was honoured by his denomination to be elected the Moderator of the Maritime Conference of the United Church, 1984-85. He is in much demand as a preacher, workshop leader, author and editor. There can be little doubt that the success of the Atlantic Seminars in Theological Education are in large part due to the constant nurturing given so loyally over the years to them by Douglas MacEachern.



Jerry Harrop

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FROM FAR AND NEAR

TOP RESIGNATIONS SHAKE CCC

Archbishop Ted Scott, president of the Canadian Council of Churches, has announced the resignations of the General Secretary, the Reverend Dr. Donald Anderson, and the Associate Secretary for Canadian Affairs, Edith Shore, effective 30 April 1988. Anderson, general secretary for twelve years, resigned on the grounds of an ever-increasing administrative workload; Shore, after seven years, for health reasons. Last Fall, Denise Robillard, associate secretary for ecumenical education and communication, left after a short spell in office. These resignations are painful in view of the Triennial Assembly, to be held from May 7 in Montreal, when important issues have to be addressed; in particular, the new structure of the CCC, the entry of the CCCB (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) as associate members, the need to take the francophone situation seriously.

THE AFRICAN BROTHERHOOD CHURCH

This Church in Kenya has shown phenomenal growth since its beginnings following World War II. By 1980 the membership was 100,000; by the end of 1987 it was 133,000. In obedience to Christ's command (Matthew 28: 18-20) 400 local churches have now been established.

In 1951 Nathan Ngala became leader and guided the Church in developing a hierarchical system of government with a bishop, an archdeacon, three canons, pastors and evangelists. Since then Ngala has been the bishop of this fast-growing Church which has a unique blend of establishment and nonconformity, an Anglican hierarchy and Baptist doctrine. Women have leadership opportunity through the positions of deaconess and sister.

The need for trained leadership has been met by the Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board who have sent missionaries. One of these now serving in Africa is Marilyn Smith of Dartmouth, the daughter of Evelyn Smith, the Treasurer of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. Marilyn is training teachers in the areas of Christian Education, nutrition, health and baby care, and cooking. They in turn teach others; thus the way is being prepared for the work of the church to be carried out when foreign, Canadian missionaries have finished their task.

CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA TODAY

In an important speech, given in 1987 to the joint executive meeting of the National Committees of the Chinese Protestant Three-Self Movement and the China Christian Council, a leading Chinese Christian, Han Wenzao, said that Chinese Christians wish to keep contacts alive with Christians in other parts of the world, but at the same time they wanted to oppose overseas anti-Chinese forces that infiltrate China in disregard of the three-

There is a great deal more in this fascinating book. Dr. Bibby writes well, avoiding professional sociological jargon for the most part. The title of the book was suggested by the finding that very few people are unbelievers. But they are fragmented in their response to the religious dimension of life. They do not, in great numbers, respond by attending services. They expect the Church to be there to serve them at times of crisis and of "rites of passage." Some turn to "new religions" and to superstitious practices. Bibby's conclusions are not without a note of hope for those of us who care — who see that the progress of the gospel depends on the health of the churches.

The last two paragraphs of the book read as follows:

"Robertson Davies suggests another possible root from which the word "religion" is derived — *religare*, meaning to reconnect. If religion in Canada and elsewhere is to move beyond its current state of impoverishment, the numinous, self, and society must be linked in the manner historically insisted upon by religion.

The gods are currently fragmented. They lie dismantled, in pieces. But the recognition of religion's poverty can lead to the rediscovery of its potential. Reconnection is not beyond the realm of possibility."

BOOK REVIEW BY THE EDITOR

Thomas B. MacDormand: *A Diversified Ministry: An Autobiography*. Printed by Lancelot Press Limited, Hantsport, N.S. 1987, pp. 151.

The many friends and admirers of "Uncle Tom," born 1904 in Bear River, Nova Scotia, of Planter stock, will be delighted that he has published his memoirs of a long and distinguished life of service to the Baptist cause in North America. C. Howard Bentall, president of the Baptist Federation of Canada, in his introduction, points out that the book is "a valuable commentary of Canadian Baptist history in the middle half of the twentieth century."

Dr. MacDormand's career has been long and exceedingly varied. Following graduation he pastored three churches before becoming Director of Education for the Baptist Union of Western Canada. Then he became Editor of the *Canadian Baptist*, General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Canada, Executive Vice-President of Acadia University, President of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. On leaving Eastern he served as General Secretary of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces. Author of many books, composer of many hymns, regular columnist to newspapers, prolific writer and producer of articles galore, his pen has been busily employed in the service of the Kingdom.

This reviewer has been particularly interested in the part Dr. MacDormand played in the Sideyite Controversy in Kingston, Nova Scotia, in the early 1930's; also in the instances he gives of the gracious way in which he handled those theological conservatives who from time to time took it upon themselves to test his orthodoxy. His fine scholarship is reflected in what this reviewer considers his best book *Understanding the Bible Today*. Who can fault his oft-repeated list of Baptist Distinctives — the Lordship of Christ, Regenerate Church membership, local autonomy, separation of church and state?

The book reveals one who is Baptist to the core, and proud of it; but it also shows one of a truly ecumenical spirit who recognizes the existence of Christians of other persuasions, who believes in co-operation among the denominations and the Christian objective of a proper unity of believers.



Marilyn Smith



Evelyn Smith

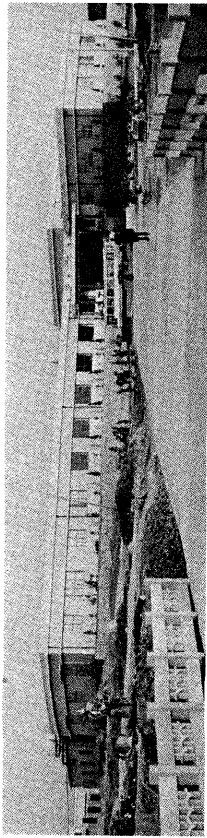
self principle (namely that Chinese Christians alone will take full responsibility for governing and ordering their Church, for paying the bills and for propagating the faith). See *Newsletter of the Canada China Programme*, winter 1987.

Since 1979 international relations have greatly expanded. Apart from mainline Churches, contacts have been increased with Evangelical Christianity: the Southern Baptist Convention in the U.S., the Fuller Theological Seminary, etc. The post-denominational character of Chinese Christianity is now widely recognized in the world. Some churches have committed themselves not to carry on any activity aimed at the revival of denominationalism in China; others have agreed not to do anything in China without the approval of the China Christian Council. Bible-smuggling is now generally disapproved.

However, new strategies and new forms of infiltration by anti-China forces abroad have come into action. Under the banners of "Evangelization" and/or "China Ministries," personnel are being trained in Hong Kong to infiltrate the mainland and set up "underground seminaries," organize preachers into networks, support self-nominated preachers, and plot "house church movements." Such movements seek to split the Chinese Church, destroy the unity between Christians and the rest of the people, instigate hatred against the people and hostility towards the government and the Chinese Communist Party.

PRINTING PRESS DEDICATED IN CHINA

On 5 December, 1987, Barbara Walkden, Information Services Director of the Canadian Bible society, was present at the official dedication ceremony of the Amity Printing Press in Nanjing, People's Republic of China.



Less than two years from the signing of the original agreement between the Amity Foundation of China and the United Bible societies of the World to provide for the printing of Bibles and other Christian literature in China, presses were rolling and Bibles were being printed and bound. By the end of February, 1988, over 200,000 Bibles were ready for distribution throughout China. Canada has contributed over US\$600,000.00 towards the total US\$7,000,000.00 needed to complete the project.

ECUMENISM IN THE BRITISH ISLES

The British Council of Churches goes out of existence 21 August 1990, but will be immediately replaced by a successor body which is in process of formation. An important conference on the future of the ecumenical movement in Great Britain was held at Swanwick, Derbyshire, in 1987, attended by some 350 representatives of 33 denominations. This issued a 600-word affirmation of future intent, the "Swanwick Declaration," which was read widely in the churches and which affirmed: "It is now our conviction that, as a matter of policy at all levels and in all places, our churches must now move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other..."

DR. DONALD MACLEAN SINCLAIR, 88, DIES

The ABF salutes the passing of a leading Maritime churchman, the Reverend Donald Sinclair. A graduate of Dalhousie University and Pine Hill Divinity College, Dr. Sinclair will long be remembered for his fine pastorates especially the 21 years he spent as minister of the Fort Massey United Church, Halifax. During World War II he served as chaplain in the RCN. The recipient of many honours, he was President of the Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada. A great supporter of the ecumenical movement, he served two terms as Treasurer of the Atlantic Ecumenical Council and could always be relied upon for his annual contribution as a loyal "Friend" of the Council.

SBA UPDATE

The March 1988 edition of the *SBC Today: Southern Baptist Alliance Edition*, reports that as of 20 January, 1988 the Alliance had 1,958 individual members, and 26 churches with a total of 11,680 members, making a total membership of 16,282.

Currently the SBA is sponsoring two mission causes: 1) Women in Ministry and 2) Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's faculty efforts to keep the seminary free and responsible.

The Hominy Church, Candler, N.C., has declared that in joining the SBA it has not withdrawn from the Southern Baptist Convention; on the contrary, it represents the Church's commitment to serve and preserve a heritage that is deeply valued.

SWAGGART RESIGNS AFTER DEFROCKING

At the time of writing (April 1988) it has been announced that TV Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart has resigned from the Assemblies of God shortly after that Pentecostal Group said it was ejecting him from its ministry. The Church said Swaggart was dismissed because he refused to accept its punishment (not preaching for a year) for "moral failure." Swaggart said his silence for a year would destroy his Bible College and his US \$140 million-a-year worldwide ministry.

COLLAPSE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CAMELOT

John Warren Steen, Assistant Editor of the *International Christian Digest* laments that Southern Baptist people have in recent years "lost their historical continuity." Their Camelot — a legendary fellowship built around a noble ideal — flourished and reached a high in the fifties, but then human frailty entered and the castle in the air collapsed.

On two occasions Southern Baptist national conventions voted down biblical commentaries on Genesis and required the denominational publishing house to withdraw them from sale shelves. The early sixties produced a statement of faith that some began to use as a creed, "a stick to beat heretics with," erosion of the freedom of the local church to make its own decisions, of the freedom of the believer to interpret the scripture as he felt led by the Holy Spirit, began and rapidly increased in intensity.

Last Fall, a local association in Memphis expelled a member church for extending a call to a woman to be its pastor. An Oklahoma association expelled a church for having a pastor who is divorced and remarried. Ultraconservativists (inerrantists) have gained control of a seminary in North Carolina. Such actions move the denomination further from the spirit of Jesus and closer to the mentality of the Pharisees!

The Church has never really been a Camelot! Hounded by legalists and worried by disputes in the Church, Paul could write: "Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (Romans 14:19).

THEN AND NOW: THE BAPTIST VISION REDIVIVUS

A Sermon by William H. Brackney



William H. Brackney
patterns and goals for the future.

Two texts which may be regarded as hallmarks for both early and later Baptists are 2 Corinthians 3:17 ("Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom") and Galatians 5:1 ("Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has set you free"). Much of our Baptist heritage turns on the issue of freedom: freedom of conscience, free churches in a free state.

Historians, such as myself, love to talk about the past. And sometimes we get so hung up in the past that we forget that we survive by some means in the present and we must look to the future. We forget that it is part of the historian's task to call forth something of value, both positive and negative, from the past, to inform where we are in the present and hopefully to get some patterns and goals for the future.

I

Let me share with you some broad strokes of what Baptists have been in the nearly four centuries of our heritage — what has been important to us.

Of primary importance to Baptists has been *religious liberty*. Our insistence that all people should enjoy religious liberty has got us into a lot of trouble, for not all Christians have agreed with us. The religious liberty sought in seventeenth century England and America was not merely a liberty for those who believed what was right, but a liberty, in the words of Helwys and Murton, Bunyan and Williams, John Clarke and a host of others, to believe what one's conscience directed. It was not to be religious liberty just for the Kingdom of God, as those in New England would have it. It was to be a full-blown liberty of conscience, the right to believe . . . nothing at all!

When our forbears looked at the Church, the Church took on a different shape. Rather than a hierarchical system, the Church of the New Testament was one of completely voluntary impulse. It was not shaped by either parishes or parents. It was shaped by one's voluntary commitment to the ideals of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his mission in the world. Historians have rightly observed that it is a believer's Church. A second broad stroke then is *voluntarism*.

Third, our forefathers were a *biblically literate* people — the Bible is important to Baptists. It is the way in which we have understood the Bible, or misunderstood it among ourselves recently, that has caused us so much trouble. From the seventeenth century on the Bible was every Baptist's textbook, the sole guide of faith and practice.

Fourth, *missionary involvement*. From the first we have felt an obligation to share the Gospel with people around the globe. William Carey, Adoniram Judson and a host of others are honored names among us.

II

In our present circumstances, our emphases — religious liberty, voluntarism, Biblical literacy, missionary urgency — have been translated in some very interesting, and sometimes troublesome ways.

Voluntary religious experience and the missionary impulse have been translated into a *church growth syndrome*. We have become too much interested with numbers. We must be careful not to run faster than the Spirit of God directs.

A popular biblical literacy has been translated into a retreat from Biblical Christianity. Those who once took pride in the scriptures are in many cases worried now about taking any stand because they are not sure of the foundation on which that stand may be taken. There are still too many proof-texters in the Baptist family. There is a growing timidity among some as they retreat into commentaries and historical critical interpretations that confound their hearers if not themselves. Significantly there has not been a major Baptist systematic theology written for almost 75 years. Religious liberty is, I think, in trouble in our family. It has been turned into a shrill fundamentalism.

III

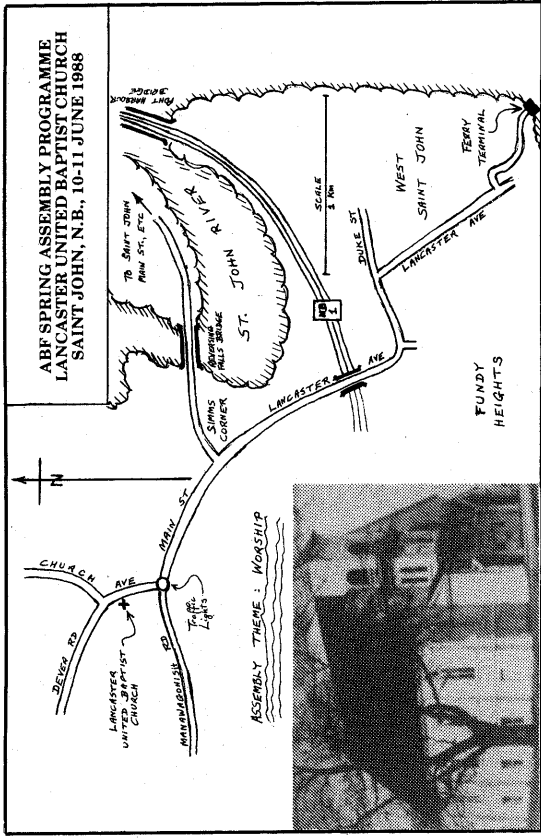
I have three suggestions about our future. First, I think the Baptist family needs a *new Biblical hermeneutic*. We have to learn to take the context in which the ancient words were written very seriously indeed. We have to do our homework on this lest we be embarrassed with simplistic notions of how the ancient words relate to the world in which we live. Our hermeneutic has to be historically reliable. We cannot argue about scientific details in a pre-scientific culture. We have to understand how the books of the Bible came into being.

Second, we have to reinvest ourselves in a *qualitative, rather than a quantitative Christianity*. Numbers, institutions, organizations are clearly important, but they are secondary to the cultivation of a quality of life that is truly Biblical and after the example of Jesus Christ.

Third, and most important of all, we need to renew our *commitment to religious liberty*. We must promote religious liberty for all people in all parts of the world. The General Committee of the Baptist World Alliance met recently in Amman, Jordan, and issued a statement affirming religious liberty for all peoples of the earth. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty . . . Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set you free . . .!"

Editor's Note: The above sermon was preached in the Wolfville United Baptist Church during the *Baptist Heritage Conference*, 19-23 October 1987, arranged by the Acadia Divinity College and sponsored also by Acadia University, the Baptist Federation of Canada and the Baptist Historical Committee of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces. The conference marked the centenary of the founding of McMaster University (1887), the Sesquicentennial of the founding of Acadia University (1838), and the 20th anniversary of the incorporation of the Acadia Divinity College (1968) as the seminary of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces. The general theme of the conference was "Baptists in Canadian Society."

The Reverend William H. Brackney, BA, MA, PhD, is the Professor of the History of Christianity, Vice-President and Dean of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Educated at the University of Maryland, the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Temple University, Dr. Brackney has specialized in Church History and has published extensively in the field. His ordination (1971) is recognized by the American Baptist Churches of Monroe, New York Association. Since 1986 he has been the chairperson of the Baptist World Alliance's Study Commission on Baptist Heritage.



ABE SPRING ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME
LANCASTER UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH
SAINT JOHN, N.B., 10-11 JUNE 1988

FUNDY HEIGHTS

ASSEMBLY THERE: WORSHIP

Friday

- 6:30 p.m. Registration
- 7:00 p.m. President's welcome and opening remarks
- 7:15 p.m. Devotions — Rev. Philip Crowell (Germain Street, Saint John)
- 7:30 p.m. Lecture I — Dr. Perkin, "The Theory of Worship"
- 8:30 p.m. The Service of Holy Communion, conducted by the Minister and the Deacons of the host church
- 9:00 p.m. Fellowship — refreshments will be served

Saturday

- 9:00 a.m. Devotions — Rev. William Bresnahan (West Lane, Moncton)
- 9:15 a.m. Lecture II — Dr. Perkin, "The Practice of Worship"
- 10:15 a.m. Coffee break
- 10:45 a.m. Response to Lectures (Revs. Robert Matthews and Roger Prentice) and general discussion

Noon

- 1:00 p.m. Dinner at church, \$8.00
- 3:00 p.m. Annual business meeting
- Dismiss

Hospitality

	Single	Double	Telephone
Fairport Motel and Restaurant			
1360 Manawagonish Road	36.00	50.00	672.9700
Howard Johnson's			
400 Main Street, one night, single or double	53.00		
two nights, single or double	74.00		642.2622
Island View Motel			
1726 Manawagonish Road	25.00	35.00	672.1381
Journey's End Motel			
1155 Fairville Blvd.	40.88	47.88	674.1873
Keddy's			
Main Street (completely booked for dates)	59.00	—	657.7320