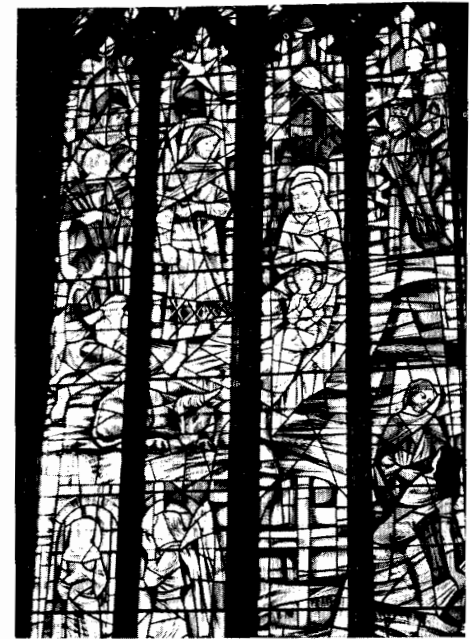


BULLETIN
of
The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship
February, 1982



A Window
in
First Baptist Church, Halifax, N.S.

**“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts:
the whole earth is full of His glory.”**

Isaiah 6:3

Editorial Comment

THIS ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN is largely filled with a report of the ABF Fall Conference, somewhat more than usual. This particular conference, in the opinion of the editor, was very significant in a number of ways. We invited "disabled" people to speak to us, and, by our conference theme, we committed ourselves to listen. This we did! Since many of our readers were not present to listen, we present this material that you, by reading, may get the same message.

This conference, in another way, was of special importance, in that it marked the tenth anniversary of the ABF. The historical sketch, prepared and read by the Rev. Philip Allwood, is being repeated in its entirety. Many people, both within the Fellowship and outside, continue to ask about the "what" and the "why" of the ABF. Anyone who notes what has been happening during these ten years will surely find some answers. While the ABF began as a protest movement — and this is being kept in mind — it is much more in a constructive way, and through conferences and this Bulletin, is a voice calling attention to certain issues that might otherwise be overlooked.

Since we have recently entered a new year, and are now moving into the sacred Lenten Season, it is a good time to urge our churches to be concerned about the really big issues of faith and practice, and so to strive toward that "something better" which is in God's plan.

The next issue of the ABF Bulletin will be in May, 1982.

I. Judson Levy, Editor

A Lenten Prayer

O LORD MOST HOLY, GOD MOST MIGHTY, who hath found us wanting and yet hast not forsaken us, deliver us in these days of Lenten devotion from all the luxuries and comforts of a smug private righteousness, and impel us by the love of our fellow men to set our faces steadfastly toward that great city of the world where power and pride corrupt and waste human life, turning the hope of God to no account. Lift up our hearts as we recall the labour of our Lord and grant us his grace to take upon ourselves the burden of that sin which darkens our time and will not be lightened except by the cross of suffering. AMEN

Samuel Miller (Prayers for Daily Use)

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ABF 10TH ANNIVERSARY BIRTHDAY PARTY

ABF Fall Conference Report

First Baptist Church, Halifax, was the meeting place for the Fall Conference of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship on Friday evening and Saturday, October 30 and 31. In the keeping with the international emphasis for 1981, the theme chosen for the conference was "The Church and the Disabled: a Time to Listen" — thus following up on the social service emphasis made at the Spring conference. (See ABF Bulletin, October, 1981). The president of the ABF, the Rev. John Boyd, presided at all sessions of the conference, with the Rev. Philip Allwood as secretary.

The Friday evening session was opened with prayer by the chairman. Greetings and a welcome were extended by the minister of the host church, the Rev. Dr. Carey Harvey. Following the custom, now established in ABF conference, the opening lecture gave a biblical background relative to the conference theme. This lecture was given by the Rev. Dr. Gerald Harrop, of Hubbards, formerly professor of Old Testament at the McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario. Dr. Harrop's lecture, titled "The Whole and the Sick," gave a wide ranging outline of various attitudes, both Old Testament and New, to the whole as well as disabled and disfigured. The lecture was interesting, instructive and challenging, so much so that it is not possible to convey its message in a few brief paragraphs. The lecture, not quite in its entirety but almost, is in the Bulletin immediately following this report. A discussion period, in which many participated, followed the lecture.

Following the lecture and discussion, the conference moved to the church sanctuary for a communion service conducted by the minister, Dr. Harvey, assisted by the church deacons and Allen Fraser, church organist. The beauty of this lovely church and of the music, coupled with the reverent and orderly conduct of the service, made this a most significant and uplifting occasion. Our thanks to Dr. Harvey, Mr. Fraser and the deacons who served.

A delightful period of fellowship and refreshments, in the church parlor, closed the Friday evening session.

The Saturday morning session began with a quiet and meditative devotional period conducted by the Rev. Henry Sharam, chaplain at the Abbie Lane Hos-

pital. During the morning we were privileged to have as our guests a number of "the disabled" who, through circumstances of birth or accident, live their lives under difficult conditions that most of the rest of us cannot understand. Our conference theme "A Time to Listen" proved to be most appropriate. We listened, we learned, we were challenged and humbled, all of which should mean a new attitude of thoughtfulness on the part of both our churches and ourselves, as individuals, and so will it be unless we, once more, forget.

The first address, "From Where I Sit," was given by Mr. Manley Bennett, a young school teacher who, as the result of a car accident several years ago, is confined to a wheelchair. It is hard to summarize Mr. Bennett's remarks, and impossible to record one's feelings in listening to these remarks. What was said was so thought-provoking and challenging that this address is being recorded in this Bulletin (page) that all our readers may be able to read the message, and, we hope, catch the spirit in which it was given and received by those who were present. Be sure to turn to it and read thoughtfully and prayerfully.

After the coffee break, which followed the address and discussion, a panel discussion took place with the following participating: Mary MacLennan (League for Equal Opportunities); Wanda Hall (Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded and Recreation Council for the Disabled); Don Cuerren (Canadian Paraplegic Association); and Philip Taylor, Pastor Co-ordinator (Ecumenical Ministry of the Deaf).



The President and members of the Panel.

All of these persons have one thing in common — all have a physical handicap, but who, in spite of this, carry on useful occupations that, to our limited range of thought, would seem to be impossible, and again in spite of their disabilities (or, is it because of them!) have a buoyant, and even joyful, outlook on life that puts to shame the attitude of many others of us who, in outer circumstances at least, seem more favoured.

What did they say? It is not possible here to give an accurate summary of what was said, and so we shall not attempt to do so. One remembers the impres-

sion made, and will remember when the words are forgotten. So, what of the impressions? These representatives of that class of our citizens whom we speak of collectively as "the disabled" made no plea for pity — indeed far from it! They presented themselves not as those who want to be thought of as "different," desiring simply to be accepted in society, and take their places in useful professions, to find jobs that they can do and a chance to do it. Some words are remembered — one said "having a disability does not mean having no ability!" Above all they are not looking for special favours, but do want a fair chance in life. This can happen in many ways that we, too often and too long, have neglected to do. It sounds so simple — wheelchair ramps in our churches and public buildings, facilities that they can use, and so on and on. In the panel discussion, one word was repeated over and over — accessibility. "We want things made accessible to us." They seem to ask for so little and yet, much to our shame, little things which we, to a large extent, have failed to supply.

The whole program of the conference pointed to one fact — that we, of the Church, are being called upon to do more than we have done in this area of Christian service. Those of us who attended this conference, following as it did on the social service emphasis of the Spring conference, must take the lead in promoting future action. Here is a role for the ABF to accept, and which I am sure they can and will accept. As an item of business, this whole matter was referred to the ABF Council — not as a means of side-stepping the issue! — but rather that, as a result to careful thinking and planning, some constructive action may follow. In the meantime, we of the ABF sincerely thank those splendid people who ministered to us in this conference.



ABF TENTH ANNIVERSARY — This particular conference was of special significance in that it marked the tenth anniversary of the beginning of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship — an event that was fittingly observed at the noon luncheon which was graciously provided by the ladies of First Baptist Church. Since every birthday party should have a cake, there was a birthday cake fittingly decorated with candles. The cake was provided by Mrs. Evelyn Denton. The act of cutting the cake was performed by the first and present president of the ABF — Mr. Kendal Kenny of Bridgewater and Rev. John Boyd of Mahone Bay. Following the luncheon, as the conference continued, the Rev. Philip Allwood presented a brief historical sketch of the ABF during the ten years of its existence. The title of the address caught the essential spirit of the ABF: "Pilgrimage for Identity — to be Free and Ecumenical." In order that all of our readers — those who were in at the beginning of the ABF and those who joined the ranks since then — may better understand what the ABF is, has been doing and plans to continue doing, this historical address is published in this Bulletin (Page 10).

The conference closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the minister and boards of First Baptist Church, Halifax, for the use of their building, for the communion service, and, last but not least, to the ladies for generous hospitality expressed in the social periods and in the birthday luncheon Saturday noon. Special thanks was given to Mrs. Evelyn Denton for donating the birthday cake.

The Whole and the Sick

An address given at the ABFF Fall conference by Dr. Gerald Harrop. There are two texts from the OT on which I want to focus our attention. The first comes from deep in antiquity, perhaps nearly a millennium B.C. It describes the youthful David:

"a man cunning in playing (the harp), a man of substance, accustomed to warfare, prudent in speech, and a comely person and the Lord is with him." (1 Sam. 16:18)

The second text is perhaps eight hundred years later; it comes from the Greek period. It describes Daniel and his Hebrew companions.

"Youths without blemish, handsome, and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them letters and language of the Chaldeans." (Daniel 1:4)

The first text, from ancient Israel, celebrates the ideal youth from ancient Israel. His skills and virtues pertained to life in the fields, to the army, to nomadic life. He could entertain on his lyre (guitar). He had some property, a young man of substance. He was comfortable at war. He was a good speaker — the oral tradition still dominated society. He was good looking, comely — captured in Michelangelo's "David." A sound mind in a sound body. The emphasis here is on the body.

The emphasis in Daniel is upon the mind, learning. We have the new ideal of Greek civilization. The ideal youth here is wise, learned, skilled in diplomacy and teaching, inclined to linguistic skills — the ideals of the court and the academy. The Lord is with him.

But one thing is common to these widely separated descriptions: David is "comely," Daniel and company are "without blemish, handsome." There is still an emphasis on good appearance, which means a whole, sound, healthy body. The test of Daniel's ascetic, vegetarian "kosher" diet was the healthy appearance of the boys at the end of the test when it was found that "they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youth who ate the king's rich food."

This continuing emphasis on male beauty may puzzle us who do not have Mr. Apple Blossom or Mr. Grey Cup festivals, but in a society which cried not "here comes the bride" but "behold the bridegroom cometh" it can be understood.

The OT is not entirely disinterested in female beauty — Sarah, Rachel, Tamar, Bathsheba, Vashti, Esther are all described as "good to look upon." In some ways their standards of female beauty were different than ours. They esteemed fatness and hated suntan.

The Hebrew ideal then was a sound mind in a sound body. The earliest emphasis, in the nomadic period and the early years on the land, was on the sound body, the physical expression. As Israel moved into urban civilization, and finally under the influence of Hellenistic culture, the emphasis shifted to the mind. But still a sound, whole body was important and of any person it was a sign that "the Lord is with him" or, in a subordinate manner "with her."

There is another side to this. There is a shadow in the law over them that are blemished. Who are not whole. They are barred forever, for example, from the priesthood, even if they stand in priestly succession.

"Say to Aaron, none of your descendants throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, or a man who has an injured

foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback, or a dwarf, or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles; no man of the descendants of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near . . . to offer the bread of his God . . . he shall not come near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries; for I am the Lord who sanctify them. (Leviticus 21:17,ff)

Physical infirmity, diseased appearance were marks of the Lord's favor withdrawn. There is the cloud of religious rejection over the ill-favoured, a cloud still hanging low at the time of Jesus, but a cloud was lifted by the Gospel. The Leper, the woman with a continuous issue of blood, the paralyzed, the blind (who did sin?) are all removed from the congregation of Israel which still focused upon soundness, health. But the disabled were shoved aside. You could not come near to touch them, and so help them. They were from birth, or from the time of their deformity, removed from the grace that flows through the covenant community. We piously recoil in horror from this cruelty. But how do we, you and I, react in the presence of say a grand mal epileptic seizure, or a severe retarded and handicapped child? Do they become loved persons whom we want to be near, to touch, to hold, to offer the kiss of friendship? Are we entirely different from the ancient Israelites? Or is it possible that they are simply more straightforward, more honest?

How Jesus shocked the religious community! The leper, the bleeding woman, the blind — Jesus drew near and healed them. He touched them. Also the morally shunned. "If he were a prophet he would know who, and of what sort, is this woman who is weeping, wetting his feet with her tears, wiping them with her hair." Sin and sickness, these go together. Jesus associates with those whom the Torah says God has cut off. He eats with publicans and sinners and when he is accused about this he says: They that are whole have no need of a physician, but the sick!!

The servant of the Lord himself was not recognized, men hid their faces from him — he was no David, no Daniel: (see Isaiah, Chapter 53)

We still honor the ancient ideal. We try to make our Davids and our Daniels, our Rachels and our Esthers. This is education — a sound mind in a sound body. And there is nothing wrong with that. But the gospel speaks of a level of need that education cannot reach and brings into being a community of acceptance, in which we accept one another, with all our blemishes. For the shadow lifted by the Gospel is not just a shadow that was over hunchbacked men, epileptic children and bleeding women. It was over all of us. If we believe ourselves whole, if we pray the prayer of self-congratulation, the Physician has nothing to do with us. He came for the sick, not for the whole.

The fellowship of the church, the presence of the Gospel in word and sacrament, should remind us that the shadow is lifted, the terrible shadow over the blemished and retarded, and over all of us, what David is there, what Daniel what Rebekka or Hannah, or Mary Magdalene, yes even Mary the wife of Joseph, who is without blemish?

And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling and falling down before Him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched Him — this woman with the issue of blood, denied access to the altar and access to the community of the faithful, from her people and from the means of grace — she touched the hem of Messiah's garment — she who could not approach the altar, or live closely, touchingly within the congregation of the convenient because she was sick and deformed and unclean — she touched Him and she heard the word, the word all hear and believe:

"Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace."

From Where I Sit

(This address was given by Mr. Manley Bennett, a young man, who through a car accident, has become a paraplegic. A few of the more technical paragraphs are omitted — otherwise, word for word, this is the message as it was given — a message that church people, pastors and others, need to ponder with great care. The Editor)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN . . .

I would like to thank Dr. Harrop and the Rev. Mr. John Boyd for this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts and experiences.

Five years ago last month I became a paraplegic. Up until September 18, 1976, I had never heard of a paraplegic and in fact I can't remember ever seeing an occupied wheelchair in public. In the months of hospitalization, rehabilitation and subsequent home and work adjustment, I was to learn what being a paraplegic was really all about — something much more than being in a wheelchair.

I was very fortunate to have been a member of an indoor and somewhat desk-bound profession — teaching. I returned to teaching, not with misgivings about my ability to teach, but a genuine fear that I couldn't do it because I was in a wheelchair. I was brought to realize that I could, by a quadruplegic who had been teaching at the high school level for many years, and by my superintendent Dr. Charles Uhlman, who expected me to return and pick up where I had left off.

It has never been quite the same teaching from a wheelchair. Being paralyzed is like being inside another person's body waiting for your own to be returned from the cleaners. Of course the delivery man never comes and you gradually learn to cope with the day to day realities of earning a living. Students adapted very quickly but fellow teachers were quite some time making an adjustment and taking seriously anything a person in a wheelchair said.

During my four months in the V. G. I had been sustained by my faith and by the constant support of my family, friends, and most especially my minister — Dr. M. Allen Gibson. He was with me from the very first hour and continues to be. He did much more than make perfunctory visits — he came because he was fulfilling a genuine need, because he was wanted, not because he was my minister, but because he was a friend, a true Christian and an uplifting influence beyond measure. He did not offer sympathy or pity — he was himself — he was a unique support who stood apart from all of the many other clergy of many denominations who visited. I do not want you to think I did not appreciate their visits, but my minister played a vital part in my recovery.

During Easter, 1977, I returned to the congregation at Chester where I had been a member for some 8 years. I was carried in on that gray, overcast Sunday that seems to always set the somber mood for that special Easter service. I received a special welcome and felt, really for the first time that I was on the road back to being a normal human being. It soon became apparent in my day-to-day duties and my Sunday appearances at church, that being lifted up steps everywhere was less than an ideal way to exist. Being dependent on someone else was abhorrent in the extreme — independence is the goal of every disabled person — and I was no exception. There is nothing more "demeaning" than to have to call everywhere before going to a restaurant, etc. or to have to always have someone with you to get mail or to get you in.

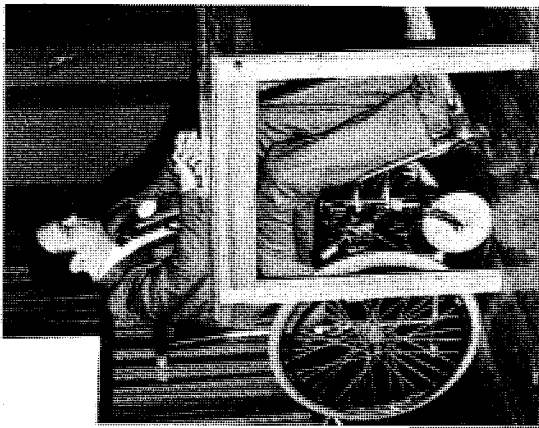
I was very fortunate in my attempts to gain access to various places — my school, my superintendent's office, my church, the post office, two restaurants, etc. A shopping center opened in my area shortly after I came home and this made many formerly inaccessible places of business now easily accessible. At one time I had to wait in my car outside the drug store and hope that someone I knew would come along and get my prescription for me.

I am sure that some of you may have noticed that where a ramp is built for access to a building, many able-bodied people prefer to use it rather than the steps. It is a much more convenient and less hazardous way of entering a building, not only for those of us confined to wheelchairs, but also for those people with heart conditions and many others who find stairs impossible.

As I said, I have been fortunate in my community — others are not so lucky. Some churches do not build ramps because they say they don't have members in wheelchairs. Perhaps if they did have ramps, they would soon discover new members who are disabled. I can see no reason why I cannot take part in my churches' activities simply because I cannot climb five steps. Some people expect a disabled person to suddenly and miraculously overcome obstacles, such as stairs — "to take up thy wheelchair and walk . . .". Many people are uncomfortable around those of us in wheelchairs. There have been many Sundays when the long pew next to me is empty, while those in front and behind are full. Many avoid the disabled in public places, but this is becoming less so as public awareness increases and a greater understanding is achieved.

I desire to live my life quietly and with dignity and independence. I support myself and my family, my church and my community. I wish only to be accorded that which is my due. I do not want sympathy or pity, but I do most earnestly seek your understanding of the condition in which I find myself, and that you help me in my journey by providing me and those like me with such things as: buildings that are accessible; equal opportunity at employment; and above all with a change of attitude toward the disabled, an attitude which isolates the disabled from the main stream of life and all it has to offer. Quoting the United Church Observer of January, 1981. "In practice, integrating the disabled into modern society involves the same kind of wrench in our thinking, the same upsetting of existing attitudes, as the recognition that women were not just afterthoughts to men. It means re-thinking who we are, as well as who they are. It means realizing that what's right for us isn't necessarily right, period."

"Because what's right for able-bodied people may be discrimination against the disabled. Even if it's unintentional. It can keep them dependent, helpless, undervalued." and finally from the same article, "Gail Christy of Kanata, Ont., who has had a mobility handicap all her life, writes: 'Unless the able-bodied are aware that the disabled are equal and contributing members of society, then all the special facilities in the world won't help.'"



"The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, 1971-1981; A Pilgrimage for Identity To be Free and Ecumenical"

Historical Sketch by The Rev. Philip Allwood

This meeting marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. For many the past ten years are the story of the organization of a fellowship that predates the 1971 Convention. For others, who in 1971 were just beginning to enter denominational life, ABF has been an agent of formation.

The Pilgrimage in Genesis

At our Fall Conference in 1979, Athena Colpitts traced the events which led to our formation.

At the annual Convention in Sackville, N.B. in 1971, two motions were passed which changed the nature of our denomination's life. By a majority of 61 (242/181), a motion was passed which stated that no appointments were to be made by UBCAP to the Canadian Council of Churches and that no funding direct or indirect would be made to the CCC.

The second motion, accepted by a majority of 244 (359/115), changed the constitution of the Convention to read that churches could only appoint delegates who had been baptized by immersion.

Reaction against the motions by those who would form the ABF was immediate. Winston Miles moved that the UBCAP withdraw fellowship from the Sydney United Baptist Church, which practiced both openness of membership and participated in ecumenical councils. This was defeated by an overwhelming majority.

Response to the above events continued after the Convention had dispersed. An ad hoc meeting was held in the Anglican Diocesan Centre in Halifax on September 15, 1971. At it plans were made for the organizational meeting of the ABF which was held in First Baptist Church, Truro on October 14.

Churches and individuals were invited to join the ABF upon the following resolution:

Being led as we believe by the Holy Spirit, who in our day is moving with renewing power among Christians of all denominational traditions;

And, as Baptists subjected to increasing pressure to control and limit our Christian liberty;

We therefore would associate ourselves in an Atlantic Baptist Fellowship which would seek to experience and express, both personally and in the corporate life of our churches, that freedom with which Christ makes us free.

It is our intention to remain within the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces; and, maintaining our distinctively historic tradition, the Fellowship would promote co-operation with other Christian bodies at all levels.

Initially the organization was done with a small council and several action committees (Christian Education, Ecumenical Relations, Convention Attendance, Public Relations, Social Service, and Convention Affairs). Eventually the Council size expanded and committees were appointed as needed.

The Pilgrimage in Purpose

Using the five purposes of the ABF, the following shall attempt to illustrate how we have carried our resolve into action.

* To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through the full ministry of preaching.

teaching, and healing for the whole man;

The place of the devotional and the Lord's Supper at our Conference does not need to be dwelt on.

The holding of the Conferences themselves have been a vehicle of carrying out this purpose.

Not to be overlooked are the Newsletter and its successor the Bulletin. These two publications, under the editorship of Roger Prentice and I. Judson Levy, respectively, have served as the mouthpiece for the ABF and as disseminators of information on the "full ministry."

Other publications have aided us in carrying out this purpose; *Discovery From Discussion*, a series of papers, *Scriptures Then and Now* by J. R. C. Perkin, and the Theological Commission Study Paper "The Nature of Theology."

* To preserve religious and soul liberty;

* To preserve the autonomy of the local churches;

These two purposes can be summed up in the catch-word freedom. This has been the topic of discussion at many conferences under the leadership of such men as Dale Moody, Emyln Davies, M. R. Cherry, and Russell Aldwinckle.

Our early years were marked by repeated attempts to have the 1971 decisions overturned (except of course the one about the Sydney Church). Attempts which made our view known even in defeat.

We have provided a place for churches such as the Sydney Church. This church has a standing resolution against it by the Cape Breton Association, which states that the Association disapproves of the faith and practice of the Sydney Church.

We have sought to promote individual freedom by giving no special status to ministers. All delegates have to have local church approval to the ABF meetings.

* To promote co-operation among Baptist Churches, and maintaining our historic traditions, to co-operate with other Christian bodies at all levels;

* To promote the well-being and unity of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces.

The ABF has maintained fraternal relations with the Convention leadership. We have promoted Convention projects such as the work in East Wolfville.

In the early years of conflict, we sat down face to face meetings with the Evangelical Baptist Fellowship, to try and reach an understanding.

When Convention nominating committee reports have seemed to be unjust, we have taken action from the floor.

We have joined the Atlantic Ecumenical Council and have maintained correspondence with the Canadian Council of Churches. We have sent financial support to the Canadian Girls in Training and the Ecumenical Ministry for the Deaf. Ecumenism has been a repeated Conference study topic.

The Pilgrimage in the Imperfect

The pilgrimage of the ABF can be summed up under the catch-words freedom and ecumenical obedience; the freedom to seek what it means to be part of a Baptized Church of Christ and obedience to Christ's ecumenical directive.

The early years of the ABF saw us lobbying with respect to the authority of the local church. Although we did not succeed in obtaining a reversal about the constitution, we did achieve the recognition that the Convention does not have the authority to enforce the regulation.

In the mid-1970's and later, our major emphasis has been focused upon the ecumenical, particularly as the discussion about the Wider Ecumenical Fellowship took place. This continues to be a concern.

Vin Rushton in his period as President identified the ABF as an instrument for discussion. In the present calm of denominational turmoil, this discussion has focused increasingly on the issue of social justice.

LECTURES AND DISCUSSION THEMES

The scope of the interests and activities of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is indicated by the list of matters discussed at the semi-annual conferences. The list with the names of the lecturers follows:

"Baptist Practice Regarding Baptism" (Rev. H. S. Hartlin); "Baptism" (Rev. Austin MacPherson); "Open Membership — Open Open Membership — Open Communion" (Dr. M. R. B. Lovesey); "A Re-examination of the Church's Ministry" and "Is the Church Geared to Radical Change?" (Dr. Emlyn Davies); "The Meaning of Baptism" and "The Mode of Baptism" (Dr. Dale Moody); "Freedom" (Dr. M. R. Cherry); "Scripture Then and Now" (Dr. J. R. C. Perkins); "Freedom and Authority in Religion" (Dr. Russel Aldwinckle); "Facing the Future — Direction Finding" (Open Discussion); "Education at Acadia Divinity College; Toward a Philosophy of Theological Education" (Dr. M. R. Cherry); "Baptist Contributions to Christian Unity" (Dr. I. Judson Levy); "Atlantic Baptist Roots and Trends" (Dr. M. Allen Gibson and Dr. Frank Sinnott); "Ministering with Prisoners" (Dr. Charles Taylor); "Our Christian Witness and Cultural Identity" (Dr. Max DeWolfe); "The Shape of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship for the 1980's" (Open Discussion); "The Church Visible and Catholic" (Dr. Gerald Harrop); "The Canadian Council of Churches" (Dr. Lois Wilson, Moderator of The United Church of Canada); "The Gospel and Social Concerns" (Dr. Andrew MacRae and Dr. Maurice Tugwell); "The Church and the Disabled: A Time to Listen" (Dr. Gerald Harrop, Mr. Manley Bennett and others.)

Church News

End Separate Church

Addressing the fifth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, Robert Runcie, archbishop of Canterbury, called for the end of the worldwide Anglican Communion which he heads. "It is our vocation as Anglicans to seek for our own extinction by working for the restoration of one great universal church," he said. He stressed that "we have never claimed to be the one true church to the exclusion of every other Christian church." He also referred to what he called the "astonishing progress" of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission in the past 12 years and said that this was "a sign that we have not entirely forgotten our vocation."

The Christian Century

(The above is a new concept of denominationalism. It does sound "new" — but why should it? Did not our Lord say: "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it?" Is this for individuals only, or could it apply to our churches as well? Something to think about! — The Editor)

DR. HAROLD VAUGHAN, a valued member of the Canadian Institute of Religion and Gerontology, and PROF. MURRAY J. S. FORD of McMaster Divinity College, have worked together to produce a three month Diary of Daily

Devotions in large print, available at The Book Room, 85 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto.

Insight

Women in the Ministry

Enrollment of women in seminaries of the nine mainline Protestant denominations surveyed increased from 3,500 in 1972 to 10,800 in 1978 — a gain seven times greater than the increase for men. Women now make up some 22 per cent of the clergy population.

As of December 1980, the 9.6-million-member United Methodist Church had about 1,100 women among its 36,000 ordained clergy, the largest number among the nine denominations. The 1.7-million-member United Church of Christ had about 600 women among its 9,700 clergy, the largest proportion of any denomination.

American Baptists, with 1.2 million members and 7,300 clergy, and United Presbyterians, with 2.4 million members and 14,000 clergy, had about 500 women clergy each. Other rough figures for 1980 were Disciples of Christ with 1.2 million members and 6,600 clergy, 350 women; Episcopal Church, 2.8 million members and 12,600 clergy, about 300 women; Lutheran Church in America, 2.9 million members and 7,900 clergy, 150 women; Presbyterian Church in the U.S., 852,000 members and 5,400 clergy, 125 women; and the American Lutheran Church, 2.3 million members and 6,900 clergy, 75 women.

The Christian Century

Last year the Canadian Bible Society distributed in Canada 12 million scriptures in 96 languages and provided — \$2,000,000 for the translation, publication and distribution of the scriptures in 150 other countries.

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada rejoices in the gifts of worship shared by our Christian sisters of the International World Day of Prayer movement.

We believe that our common faith in Jesus Christ, our diverse traditions and our shared understanding of biblical teaching give us the authority to invite the participation of Canadian women in the ecumenical World Day of Prayer service.

We believe that exploring spiritual insights of Christians from different cultures and experiences contributes to the growth of Christian faith and understanding.

We reaffirm our commitment to enable Christian women across Canada to live in love and fellowship so that all people may find fullness of life in Christ and affirm our calling to be an ecumenical movement through which Christians may express their unity by prayer, fellowship, study and action.

The Canadian Churchman

The Ecumenical Forum of Canada recently celebrated 60 years of achievement. The Master of Ceremonies for this gala occasion was PROF. CRANFORD PRATT. This anniversary celebration took place on the actual date of the beginning of the Canadian School of Missions, the first title for the present day forum. One of the former Directors, CANON H. R. PUXLEY, cut the anniversary cake.

Insight

British Merger

Some 4,000 British Churches of Christ (Disciples) members joined former Congregationalists and Presbyterians to become the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom at services in the Methodist church hall in Birmingham, England, on September 26. The new denomination, 12 years in the union process, officially united by Parliament approval the Re-Formed Association of Churches of Christ (Disciples) and the United Reformed Church in England and Wales, the latter a product of earlier mergers by Congregational and Presbyterian churches.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Rev. Vincent Rushton who received the Master in Education degree at the Fall Convocation of Acadia University last October. This alone is a fit occasion for congratulations, but there is more to it than that. This is the sixth academic degree that Vin has received from Acadia which, as far as the records show, is an all time record. Most sincere congratulations!



Rev. Vincent Rushton

A Coming Event

THE FOURTEENTH ATLANTIC SEMINAR IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION will be held at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, N.S., June 6-11, 1982. The theme of this year's seminar is: "SPIRITUAL FORMATION: GROWING IN THE SPIRIT, LIVING IN THE WORLD." This theme will be dealt with under various headings with lectures by four able scholars, both international and interdenominational. The sub-headings with the names of the scholars are as follows: "Biblical Basis of Spiritual Formation" by Rev. Canon Anthony Capon, Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College; "Historical Development of Spiritual Formation" by Father Richard Smith S.J., Chairman of the Faculty of Theology, Fordham University, New York; "Theology of Spiritual Formation" Principal Michael Taylor, Northern Baptist College, Great Britain; "Practice of Spiritual Formation" by The Rev. William Moremen, Minister First Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, D.C.

For the past thirteen years, this conference in Theological Education has been a source of inspiration and practical help for many persons, both

lay and clerical. This year's conference, with the leadership just mentioned, and a timely topic, promises to be one of the best. In addition to the lectures and discussions, there will be a number of other interesting happenings, giving opportunities for education, inspiration and fellowship in a truly ecumenical atmosphere. Readers of ABF Bulletin are invited, and urged not to miss this unique ecumenical study group. For further information, get in touch with the Rev. John Boyd of Mahone Bay, N.S., Chairman of the Steering Committee.

Just as the Bulletin goes to the printer, we have learned of the appointment of Dr. J. R. C. Perkin as the 12th president of Acadia University. The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship extends sincere congratulations and good wishes. Having been Acting-President for the past eleven months, Dr. Perkin has shown his love for and interest in Acadia, and has demonstrated his ability to give wise and able leadership. We covet for him the prayers of all us as he officially assumes the responsibility that goes with this important office.

Bible-smuggling Hurts

(The following is another news item from China — one that should be of interest to our readers.)

Leading Chinese Christians have accused American evangelicals who recently smuggled millions of Bibles into China of damaging the nation's Christian churches. Bishop K. H. Ting, president of the China Christian Council and Nanking Union Theological Seminary, referred to a *Time* magazine report that last June Brother Andrew, leader of a Bible-smuggling group called Open Doors, had 1 million "executed with military precision" an operation to smuggle 1 million Bibles into mainland China. The venture cost \$6 million and took three months.

"Brother Andrew operates with the philosophy that the end justifies the means. But in China, smuggling arouses minds to opium and drugs. Many Chinese see such a smuggling operation and think Bibles are dangerous. They will regard Western Christianity as something very threatening," Bishop Ting said. "It discredits religion. And we have to live with that. It's humiliating."

Repeating reports to him from within China since the smuggling operation was publicized, Bishop Ting said: "We were told that many of the Bibles were swept away by the tide. Others were burned up." Chinese Christians have no problems receiving books, even Bibles, Bishop Ting said, when they are sent into the country through legitimate means. "Last year, we printed 135,000 copies of the Bible. We hope to print at least a million next year," he said. "We are printing our own Bibles in an attempt to make Christians."

The Christian Century

(The Bible Society reports that it has no difficulty sending Bibles to China through legitimate channels. In fact, many are being set regularly. The Editor)

"In the face of man-made calamity that every war is, one must learn to reaffirm, again and again, that the waging of war is not inevitable or unchangeable. Humanity is not destined to self destruction."

Pope John Paul II at Hiroshima

God's Plan — Something Better

"God has foreseen something better for us . . ." (Hebrews 11:40) This is an encouraging word. This is good news. In the midst of all the bad news to which we, in our day, have become accustomed, this comes to us as fresh and exciting as the first burst of Spring after a long, cold Winter. We see our world as it is, our churches as they are and our lives so often bogged down in despair, only to ask: Is this all we can expect? Or, more daringly: Is this God's plan for His world? Then comes the answer from this ancient writer: No! God has planned something better for us. Before we allow ourselves to become carried away with this hope, we need to look at the context out of which it comes, which is the eleventh chapter of the epistle of the Hebrews.

The hope is a matter of faith and, apart from faith, it may be quite groundless. But, what is faith? So asks the writer, and we do well to ask the same question. The word faith, as commonly used, may mean a variety of things, even, in some cases, contradictory. Faith, as here set forth, is not a clinging to the past, but a bold thrust into the future. Through faith, something new is envisioned and attempted. Furthermore, faith gives the confidence that this "something better" will come to pass. "Faith gives assurance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see" (11:1). So, by faith we sit back and wait for it? Indeed quite otherwise! Faith compels us to go out, and go after that to which it points. Faith does not take us to a well-worn road, but rather leads us to an unmarked trail. Faith sent Abraham out "not knowing where he was to go," but knowing Him who called him. As with Abraham, so it should be with us!

Faith assigns difficult tasks that are done only at a price. Read again the stories of the heroes of faith as given in this chapter, especially at verse 32 and following. Why did these people endure all of this? Obviously it was for a purpose. They were of that company who, in every age, "receive promises." True, they did not receive what was promised, but, even more gloriously true, they did not give up or turn back. They "died in faith" still facing in the direction of the long-sought goal. "This is why God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has a city ready for them." (11:16)

That city! That something better! When does it come? We cannot avoid these questions, nor could these others. The plan of God for them, as for us, is for something better that thus far has been, or is. What of the Church? Surely what we know of the Church, in spite of all that is good, cannot be the fulfillment of God's plan for His Church. As with the Church, so with the world — there must be something better in God's plan.

The question persists — but when? Perhaps our only clue is in this: "that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (11:40). We, in our day, must share the hope and strive for its realization. No one generation, no one person, can catch up with God's plan for His world and His Church. To come to rest with any one statement of doctrine, or to feel that, at any one point, the Church has reached its final form is not faith, but the denial of faith. For those believers who embrace the faith, as spoken of in this chapter, it is an on-going pilgrimage. One generation, or one person, can go only so far. The test of faith, at the end, is not how far each has gone, but in which direction he or she is facing at the end.