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Canadian Baptists

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There are no Area Superintendents in New Zealand or Australia. I asked the Treasurer of one church, who happened to be our host, how he and his colleagues had set about a recent settlement in their church. His answer was quite simple. They examined the list of ministers and noted those who had the longest pastorates. These were the first to come under consideration. In this particular case the system worked, and what appeared to be a happy settlement had resulted.

Ministers in the Dominion greatly value contacts with ministers at home, and an interchange of church magazines with a friendly note added, sometimes, would be appreciated.

THEO. M. BAMBER.

BAPTISTS OF CANADA

CANADIAN Baptists are not a large body numerically. Enrolled members of their Churches number about 150,000. The Canadian Baptist constituency is estimated to be about 450,000. They are a minority compared with the leading Protestant communions of the country. Baptist Churches are found from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a distance of more than three thousand miles. The geography of Canada naturally divides them into three distinct areas. There are those of the Maritime Provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—united in the Maritime United Baptist Convention. Then there is the central area—the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario—having a Convention bearing the names of these two Provinces. These two divisions are nearly four hundred miles apart. Finally, there is the large section of Canada lying between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Ocean—the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia—united in the Baptist Union of Western Canada.

This large territory, with the consequent problem of distances and the resulting expense of coming together, has hindered the Baptists of Canada in attaining the desirable measure of unity and co-operation. While the need of a closer co-ordination of their work had long been felt by their leaders in the various Conventions, it was only in 1944 that efforts to this end came to fruition in the organisation of the Baptist Federation of Canada, whose Council meets annually and its Assembly triannually. The Federation has already made its influence felt as a verifying force and a medium of co-operative endeavour.

Canadian Baptists have been missionary in spirit. Indeed, their organising for foreign mission work ante dates the organisation of their Convention, having begun nearly a century ago. For nearly forty years Canadian Baptists have been united under one Board in this work. They have missions among the Telegus in India and among the Spanish and Indians in Bolivia, South

America. In Canada, for some hundred and fourteen years they have, through the Grande Ligne Mission, carried on work among the French Roman Catholics, chiefly in the Province of Quebec.

The work of Christian education has been a prominent feature of Canadian Baptist life. Circumstances in the early history of the Maritime Provinces drove the Baptists to establish their own college, Acadia University, which has carried on with increasing strength for a hundred and eleven years. McMaster University at Hamilton, Ontario, has, for several decades, filled a useful place among Baptists of Central Canada. Both are beautifully located and well equipped. Both have theological faculties and confer degrees in theology. The high quality of academic training given by these universities has been attested by the record of their graduates in post-graduate courses in Canadian and American Universities.

Much use is made in Canada of the radio ministry by the Churches. In the leading centres the services are broadcast every Sunday. In these broadcasts the Baptists regularly share, the writer's Church having participated in this ministry for the past fifteen years. Each Sunday, also, there is broadcast a half-hour's religious service over the Dominion network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the time being freely given by the Corporation. Month by month Baptists have their regular turn with the other three leading communions in these services. In this way their service and message are extended far beyond their own circle. One of the results of this radio ministry has been to disabuse the minds of many non-Baptists of misconceptions as to who Baptists are and what they stand for.

Canadian Baptists are co-operating Baptists. There is in Canada a Canadian Council of Churches. Canadian Baptists have been a constituent member of the Federation from its inception. The Federation's second President was Chancellor Geo. P. Gilmour, of McMaster University, who served in this capacity for two years with great acceptance. Through the Council; Baptists are able to add their influence to that of other Christian bodies in promoting the moral and spiritual welfare of the nation. It is no exaggeration to say that for their numbers they exercise at least as great an influence proportionately as do the other communions. Canadian Baptists have not yet become affiliated with the World Council of Churches, but it is the belief of many of their number that they should and ultimately will do so.

Canadian Baptists have had a lively interest in the life and work of the World Baptist Federation, which has once held its World Congress meeting within their territory, and was again invited to do so. One of their number, the late Honourable Albert Matthews, was for several years a treasurer of the Federation. To appeals by the World Federation for help in the service of relief and rehabilitation it is rendering in Europe, Canadian Baptists have made generous response.

At the present time Canadian Baptists are majoring on two phases of Kingdom work. The first is Evangelism. At the first meeting of the Assembly of the Federation in 1947, a three-year special programme of evangelism was adopted. In this the various Conventions have been co-operating. The method most favoured is that of personal or visitation evangelism, supplemented in some instances by mass evangelism. The latter method is not as effective in Canadian life as it formerly was. The other major effort is that of increasing the giving by the members, in order to make possible greater expansion of the work of the Kingdom at home and abroad. The result of this effort has been encouraging. Substantial increase in annual contributions has resulted.

Canadian Baptists salute their brethren of other lands, especially of those lands within the Commonwealth, and will extend the hand of welcome to any who join their ranks from the Motherland or Sister Dominions.

M. F. McCUTCHEON.

PAKISTAN PROBLEMS

I WAS very pleased to hear about the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship. I am delighted to know that you have formed such an excellent ministers' association, but it is a very sad thing that very few ordained ministers are to be found amongst most of the churches of East Bengal (Pakistan). I have been engaged for the past twenty-seven years as an evangelist of the Baptist Mission in the preaching of the Gospel and in the teaching of the churches, so I have some experience of the work of the churches. Therefore I wish to let you know in the *Fraternal* something about the work of the Church in Pakistan.

First of all I think it necessary to say something about Pakistan. Before the establishment of Pakistan many of us thought that this country would become a completely free Dominion for all communities and sects of the country, but now we realise that it will not be like this. It has become in every respect a free Dominion only for Muslims, and all the affairs of the country will be managed according to their wish and their ideas of freedom. The Pakistan Government is in every respect an independent Muslim Government. They have changed the language of the country; they have commenced to observe Friday instead of Sunday as the weekly holiday, and have ordered the other (minority) communities to do likewise; so it is becoming very inconvenient for those who study in schools and colleges or work in offices, especially for the Christians, because they are not getting holidays on Sundays for worship, etc. The Pakistan Government is giving the greatest opportunities of employment to Muslims, and it has become difficult for Christian and other minority communities to obtain employment, and I feel that in future Christians will be subject to even greater inconveniences.