



belonging, believing,  
*becoming in Christ*  
Pertencer, Crer,  
*Tornar-se em Cristo*

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## From the Editor

Shortly after I came to Central, I had lunch with Ron Watts at Swiss Chalet - the Baptist restaurant as he called it! I was disturbed over what I perceived as widespread self righteous attitudes and hypocrisy of some religious leaders and I sought Ron's opinions on some of this. He spoke quietly and assuredly the words that define our mission: *"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" and "Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven"*. The words sprang to life! Of course I had read and heard these words many times before, but wonderful teacher that he was, when spoken so simply, so clearly and so assuredly they took on new meaning, new significance and my unease evaporated. I also learned that when he asked how I was doing, he "already knew that I was good" he wanted to know "if I was well"!

For many months last year, I hesitated to ask Ron to write or to be the subject of the main article for our church newsletter. I finally asked him in December and he readily agreed. I had hoped that his, would be the lead article in the January or February Newsletter. Then he left for Edmonton to spend some time with his son, David. Ron passed away on January 16, in Edmonton. He who hesitates is lost!

I take some liberty with a few lines from Michael Josephson's poem - "What will matter".

"What will matter is not what you bought but what you built; not what you got but what you gave, not your success but your significance, not what you learned but what you taught. Not your competence but your character.

Not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone. Not your memories but the memories that live in those who loved you. What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice."

Ron's life mattered! This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to his memory. In it you will read the Obituary that appeared in the Edmonton Journal. From his Memorial service you will read the Homily by Rev. Michel Belzile, the eulogy by Rev. Jack Anderson and tributes from two friends who shared his life in different arenas – with Amnesty International and at his Retirement residence respectively. You will read tributes from Rev. Richard Root and from Warren and June McBurney that were written for this Newsletter. You will also read selected tributes from other public sources.

I have deferred other news of happenings at "Central" until our March issue. This issue of our Newsletter celebrates the life of a great servant, a great leader, a great teacher, a great man, a great follower of Christ!

Yours in Christ!

*Errol Anderson*

## To our visitors

Welcome to the joy of worship and the warmth of our congregation! If you are searching for a local church home, we invite you to make your home with us. If you are a newcomer, please include your name, address, e-mail address and telephone number on the Contact Cards. We're glad you're here! We encourage you to feel free to participate in any church activities you read about in this bulletin. If you have any questions, please speak with an usher.

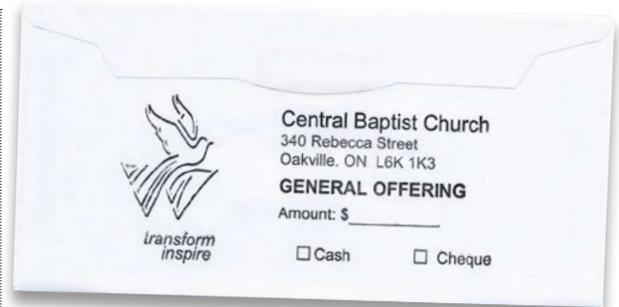


*Highlights from*

## Board of Ministry and Outreach

- Names were suggested to serve on Central Baptist's 60th Anniversary Committee and it is hoped that affirmative replies will allow us to be planning by mid February. Thanks in advance to those willing to serve. Audrey, Deolinda and Pat will oversee the food preparation for the Newcomers Luncheon on February 17th.
- We hope to once again support the work projects at Camp Kwasind and Artur Simoes is looking to identify suitable dates. By the time you read this newsletter Pastor Michel's Induction (January 27th) will be behind us and we, as a Board, pray God's blessing on his ministry among us.
- The date for our Annual Meeting was chosen and committee chairpersons are encouraged to get reports written and into the church office as soon as possible.
- The Portuguese speaking congregation is looking forward to their couples retreat in Niagara Falls from February 22-24.
- We look forward to the March communion service when we will welcome new members. Pastors Michel and Dine are also planning baptismal classes prior to Easter.

*Pat Nowlan, Board of Ministry and Outreach*



## Offering Envelopes Explained

Do you know all about offering envelopes at Central Baptist Church?

*Here are some of the facts:*

Charitable donations are gifts to the Church for the purposes outlined in its constitution. Official **tax receipts** are issued annually by the Envelope Secretary for all charitable donations to the Church – General, Sunday school, Benevolent, Capital Projects, etc. Persons wishing an official tax receipt must provide, with every donation, their name and address or the offering envelope number assigned to them. Be assured that donation details are held in confidence, and amounts contributed by individual donors are known to no-one except the Envelope Secretary.

In addition to identifying donors, we need to identify funds. Central Baptist Church has two bank accounts, one for **benevolence** and one for all other general purposes combined. Offerings identified as “Benevolent” (in the gold-coloured envelopes usually received on communion Sunday) are deposited in the benevolent account and used to assist those facing financial emergencies related to food, shelter, medical care, etc.

All other offerings (in pre-numbered white envelopes, “Welcome” envelopes, etc.) not specifically identified as benevolence are deposited in the **general** account and used as specified each year in the unified budget adopted by members. You are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in business meetings where such decisions are being made.

If you have any **questions** with regard to offering envelopes or would like to have pre-numbered envelopes for yourself or your children, please speak to Mary Coggins, the Envelope Secretary.

*Mary Coggins, Envelope Secretary*

## The Benevolent Fund

The purpose of the Benevolent Fund is to provide assistance for an individual or family facing an immediate basic need. The Benevolent Fund is not intended to meet ongoing needs. The Fund is operated in accordance with the provision of the Church Constitution and within Revenue Canada regulations. Donations are receipted for tax purposes and generally collected on the first Sunday of the month.



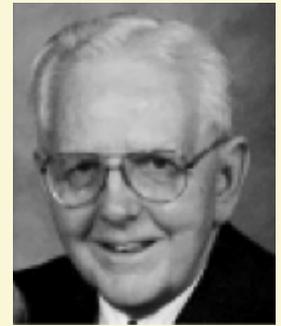
The gold coloured envelopes found at the beginning of each month are for Benevolent Fund donations only, and should not be used for any other type of donation. The funds are kept in a separate bank account and the books are audited each year. The current treasurer (Murray Wilson) has signing authority along with two other signing officers, Dwight Nowlan and Winnie Spencer.

All expenditures originate with one of our pastors, are approved by either Chair of BMO or Chair of Trustees or by the Board of Ministry and Outreach.

*Murray Wilson, Board of Ministry and Outreach*

*Remembering:*

## Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts



**OBITUARY** (Published in "The Edmonton Journal" on January 18, 2013)

**WATTS, RONALD FRANCIS**, August 21, 1918 - January 16, 2013, In Edmonton after a short illness, Born in Calgary, only son of Avis (Greer) and AFC (Frank) Watts of the RCMP. In his first year the family moved to Vancouver where Ron attended elementary and junior high school.

Reestablishment of the RCMP as Alberta's police led to the family's move to Edmonton's RCMP barracks at the top of Grierson Hill, where Ron attended Alex Taylor School and was confirmed in Christ Church (Anglican). Having learned Morse as an amateur radio operator, Ron worked a few months with the Marine Division (RCMP ship Macdonald) out of Halifax before returning to Edmonton to complete high school. Here his amateur radio and the invitation of a friend led him to Macdonald Baptist Church where he joined a radio operators' group, was baptized and mentored by Rev. Harold Stibbards and made the decision to enter Christian ministry.

He attended St. Stephen's College, Edmonton, for his BA degree and the first year of theological (BD) studies. During this time he served as student pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church and later at Bonnie Doon Baptist Church where he met his future life partner Fanshun Taddy who led the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) group. Ron and Fanshun moved to Hamilton Ontario for two years at McMaster University where Fanshun worked in the University Library and Ron completed his BD degree while serving as Assistant (student) pastor at James Street Baptist Church. In 1944 they accepted the call to Calvary Baptist Church, Weyburn, Sask, Ron's only full pastoral charge, before moving to Calgary to found and lead the Baptist Leadership Training School in 1949.

Three sons were born: David in Weyburn, and Jonathan and Peter in Calgary. In 1960 McMaster University conferred an honorary Doctorate of Divinity (DD) degree on Ronald in recognition of the work at BLTS. In 1971 Ron and Fanshun moved to Ontario and settled in Oakville. Ron served as General Secretary of the Baptist

Convention of Ontario and Quebec while Fanshun served as National Secretary of CGIT.

Ron retired from BCOQ in 1984 but remained active in his local Central Baptist Church in Oakville where he was named a Pastor Emeritus.

He was also a local Vice President and member of Amnesty International. Predeceased by his parents Frank and Avis, by his spouse Fanshun and by his son Jonathan, he is survived by sons David of Edmonton and Peter (spouse Caitlin) of Toronto. An open house will be held at David's home in Edmonton on Saturday, January 19. Please contact [ronwattsmemorial16@gmail.com](mailto:ronwattsmemorial16@gmail.com) in Edmonton to request details.

A memorial service will be held later in Oakville.

**From the Memorial Service**  
January 26th, 2013

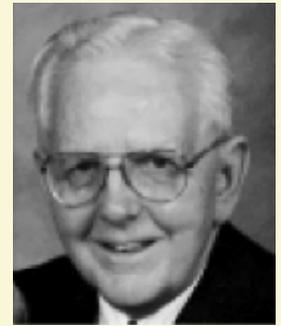
**HOMILY— Ronald F. Watts; Hebrew 11:1-2**

**Prayer of Induction** - God of all compassion, author of life and life eternal, draw us ever closer to you this day as we grieve the loss of Ron, a father, a mentor, a leader, a teacher, a friend. And yet, let us grieve with a hope that is rooted in the crucified and risen one, Jesus Christ. God of all blessings, draw near to us as we celebrate a life lived to your glory. Comfort us, inspire us, and reveal yourself anew to us as we remember, as we grieve, and as we heal in your presence Oh Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Homily** - I first met Ron during my days at seminary over 22 years ago back in the Fall of 1989. Fanshun had been my Peer Group Supervisor the year before and this time around, I was student pastor here under the able supervision of Jack Anderson. It was then that Ron and Fanshun invested their time and wisdom in our lives and became grandparents and mentors to Mary Ellen and myself (us expats from Montreal). They were there to hold our children and babies and our paths would cross periodically during the next 20 yrs.

*Remembering:*

# Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts



We were “Baptists by choice”. We had not been born into the tribe but rather had chosen it. Imagine my surprise some 20 years later when Ron was on the pulpit committee. He was of great encouragement to me through the process. What I remember most, was after I accepted the call on July 8th, 2012, I had plans to begin Jan 6th. That night Ron wrote to me to say how happy he was at the church’s decision to extend a call yet saddened that he might no longer be among the living by the time I arrived in January 2013. I prayed about it and that Tuesday I asked if I could begin Nov 12th. That gave me 2 months as his pastor not to mention a wonderful visit with David and Ron just before they made the trek to Edmonton for Christmas. Had I waited until January 6th, I would never have seen him nor had the privilege of being his pastor for at least a few months.

For me, Ron was a man of faith and a mentor. I admired him. He was a man we enjoyed to being with.

A man whose name I liked to be associated with: A man of faith, who in my eyes, could do no wrong.

And yet, deep down inside, I know such men do not exist. We are all flawed in some sense. And it is those flaws that make it impossible for us to live this life without regrets and failings.

Now I’m sure Ron had his share of regrets, failings that left others disappointed and hurt from time to time. But I never noticed, and that’s probably because, such flaws are never more evident than to those closest to us. But you see a life without regrets and failing is not what defines a faithful life. Hebrews 11: 1-2 defines faith as follows:

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”

It’s a list which includes Abraham, Moses, Rahab, David, Samson and others. Each one deeply flawed. Each one lifted up before us as men and women of faith. That’s because, faithfulness is a measure of our desire to be in relationship with God: Our desire to keep striving forward in God’s presence. It is not flawlessness that

drew me to Ron but faithfulness - a desire to serve God in Christ, and to strive for better!

As we grieve and as we celebrate, let us not memorialize a man who stood head and shoulder above us. But rather let us celebrate and grieve the loss of a faithful saint who refused to allow human frailty to take his eye of the prize. Ron reminds us that the Christian faith is not for the pious but the persevering. Not for the sinless but the flawed faithful.

We remember and commend Ron because like the ancients before him, he modeled what it was to be a man of faith one with a confidence in his hope and an assurance in what was yet to be seen. Yes indeed, a faithful man. I guess there is hope for us all.

*Pastor Michel Belzile*

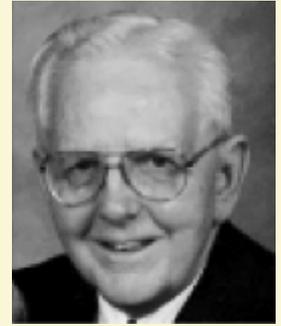
## **EULOGY - Rev. Jack Anderson**

### **The Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts 1918 -2013**

“He left an indelible mark on my life.” “He taught me to have confidence in God and what God could do with my life.” “The year at B.L.T.S. was a critically important year in my biography, for it instilled in me an appreciation for mind as well as heart, stirring my intellect and emancipating me to use my head in the pursuit of truth.” “Such a synthesis of mind and heart has ever since been both a valued goal and a source of joy.” (Words of Reg Bibby, researcher and author of “Fragmented Gods”)

“The example of his humble and tireless work for the young people of the school and of the whole constituency of the Baptist Union of Western Canada was inspiring and encouraging to old and young alike”.

These are a very few of the tributes to Ron Watts related to his role as Principal of the Baptist Leadership Training School – B.L.T.S. More than 60 years ago I met Ron Watts as the Principal of BLTS and he has been

*Remembering:***Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts**

a mentor of mine since that time. The trouble I have had over the last several days is to keep within a reasonable time frame all of the thoughts and memories and thankfulness for Ron which have flooded my mind and heart. And then when I began to do just a little research about Ron's life and work, it became even more difficult.

However, two main threads kept coming to the fore as I read and recalled: one was his personal concern for each person he met, and the other was for his vision of the larger picture of what God was doing in the local church or the school or the denomination or the church universal.

Let me go back to the beginning of B.L.T.S. Ron was hired as Principal before there were any students, before the board of the school had any place for him and his family to live, before there was a location for the classes to be held and before a course of study had been prepared. That was September 1948. By October 1949 all the above were in place, plus many other matters had been looked after by the hard work and insight of the new principal and the board. And the first class of 17 full time students and 13 evening or part-time students began their studies at Olivet Baptist Church in Calgary, Alberta. My brother, Orton, was a member of that class.

It had always been the intention of the board to have a residential school and this was accomplished in 1951 in time for the 3rd class in October. My mother and father became members of the staff as cook, custodian and house parents. During the Christmas break my mother was hospitalized and passed away March 6, 1952. Ron's personal concern for us as a family was part of his pastoral heart of caring!

About 15 years ago Ron was cleaning out some of his files and came across some correspondence which he gave to me. It contained three letters written in 1952. The first one was from Ron to the Honourable T.C. Douglas, Premier of Saskatchewan. It gave a brief history of Minard and Rosella Anderson, their years in Saskatchewan and recent move to Alberta. Because the health insurance from Saskatchewan only lasted 3 months after leaving and the health insurance for Alberta

only started after 6 months of residency, the Andersons were caught in the middle. Ron asked Tommy Douglas, former pastor of Weyburn Baptist Church before Ron Watts, if Saskatchewan could cover the hospital costs for Rosella Anderson

The second letter was from the Honourable T.C. Douglas saying, Saskatchewan would cover the costs.

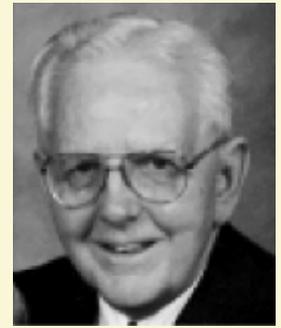
The third letter was from Ron to thank Tommy Douglas for his assistance. Another example of the characteristic personal care and concern of Ron Watts for each individual!

The small book, "Emergence of a rather special school", on the 40th anniversary of B.L.T.S. is replete with anecdotes of Ron's personal care for individuals. It is also replete with ample evidence of Ron's vision for the school and its place in giving strength to the local churches throughout the 4 western provinces. The school also influenced people and churches in Ontario and Quebec, from which many students came; as well as the Maritimes and even other places in the world.

The one year of training at B.L.T.S. gradually infused the churches of the Baptist Union with lay leaders, able and willing to give leadership as Sunday school teachers; youth group leaders, camp staff, and board and committee members. After ten years there were 258 alumni of B.L.T.S. From Fanshun Watts' memoirs recorded in the aforementioned book, "Emergence of a rather special school", we find the following paragraph:

"From the alumni about 24 percent have felt called into church vocations. These include 2 ordained ministers, 22 in some stage of training for ministry, 8 in Christian education work, 5 on the mission field, and 14 minister's wives. Add a surprising number who have found their life partners through the school and felt their greatest service to God will be through establishing Christian homes and families and strengthening the lay work of our local churches."

Ron and Fanshun spent 22 years at B.L.T.S.



## Remembering:

# Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts

From 1971 to 1984 Ron Watts was the General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. His gifts of caring for individuals while keeping a vision of the larger work of the churches, the denomination, and the church universal were evidenced during his tenure.

As a member of Central Baptist Church, Oakville he was a wise and available counsel to the pastors and boards and committees of the church. He served on the search committee for our present lead pastor.

At the retirement residence he used his considerable music skills to provide entertainment and add enjoyment to the lives of the residents. He also conducted a weekly bible study for residents.

Many members of Central Baptist Church were caught off guard by his sense of humour when he asked “how are you today”? If they answered “I’m good”, he would quickly respond, “I know you are good, but how do you feel”?

His involvement with Amnesty International was a part of his concern for the large picture of human dignity in our world. He had travelled widely in Africa, China, Russia and India which gave a unique perspective to his global concerns.

I have been very blessed by having Ron Watts as a mentor.

I am challenged by his example of service in the church and in the denomination and in the world at large.

His friendship has been supportive and encouraging and I will miss him.

*Rev. Jack Anderson*

## **Tribute – Ernie Kuechmeister (Amnesty International)**

The association between Amnesty International and Ron Watts goes back a long time. It all began with a request from Jack and Ruth Renpenning (both now deceased) for some literature for one of their friends

who were getting ready for retirement. I was told that he was a clergyman who wanted to become more involved in advocating for prisoners of conscience. Pamphlets and newsletter were assembled and dispatched. I heard nothing more for over a year.

Eventually, some months after retirement and reallocation activities were completed I met Ron by the “book table” at the Amnesty Super Sale which was then held annually at Central Baptist Church. As sales activity was, for lack of a word, lethargic, we speculated on how we might use the unsold books in a subversive activity to assist the prisoners of conscience. As I recall, Ron was not short on imagination. I had to wonder if, in a previous life, he might have served some time as “secret agent 008”. When I observed that some of the strategies to get the books past the guards and censors to the prisoners could be considered illegal, he was quick to point out that there was an important difference between “illegal” and “immoral”. I could see that the scholar was ever underpinning the activist and that AI would continue to succeed in obtaining the release of prisoners of conscience.

Another service he rendered was chairing an AI work group charged with the responsibility of producing a handbook for clergy and other members of faith communities. Although there was material available, of a general nature, for AI members and supporters, there was nothing specifically directed to groups who wished to engage repressive governments who had made a practice of attacking citizens of different religious persuasions. Ron’s work continues to be used by AI in the ongoing battle against oppression.

Over time, Ron concentrated his activities in the Urgent Action Network. As the name implies, this AI initiative focuses on prisoners who are in imminent danger of execution. Members of the Urgent Action team are mobilized to send a barrage of letters to the official representatives of the offending government and to Canadian diplomats and politicians who are encouraged

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to register concern and objections. Where appropriate, assistance is also enlisted from international and other not-for-profit organizations.

I'm sure, that if Ron were to send us a message, he would remind us that Oakville Chapter 75 of Amnesty International is now somewhat shorthanded and that new recruits are needed.

### **Tribute – Dr. Noel Hamilton (Retirement Residence)**

Friends, for some six years, our dear friend Ron Watts was one of the best known figures in Queens Avenue Retirement Residence. That very tall, gentle man, imbued with spiritual strength, brought his many years of good works and his devotion to the service of Jesus Christ and God the Father to assist others, both healthy and handicapped, assisted at the residence's special services and Holy Communion, and joined others outside our residence by ministering spiritually to congregations in nearby churches.

Without doubt, Ron never seriously considered the word "retirement". In the past month of December, at the last two meetings of our weekly Bible Class, he told us that after the Christmas holidays he might be unable to resume guiding our meetings in January, but that he would, through prayer, find the right answer. Again, he did not mention the word "retire" – his devotion to others was extraordinary.

I would like to speak briefly about two of Ron's special interests in our residence: The first was the experiences of those attending his Bible classes; the second, his entertainment of all the residents who gathered in the lounge areas before 5:30 dinner, as well as his special appearances when his piano playing accompanied soloists like Dennis Hollingdale and sing-songs by the assembled residents.

I distinctly remember my reaction to the first of his Bible classes I attended: the special relationship, the friendship shared by those who were gathered in the Library of the residence. As a former teacher, I realized it

had developed from the manner of Ron Watt's leadership.

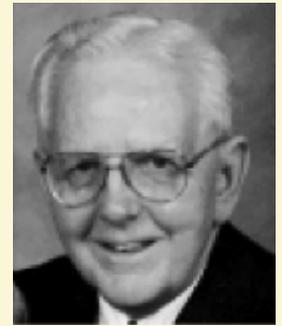
When he showed his slides of the Holy Land and described his several visits there, I realized the depths of his knowledge of the history, sociology, and the religious impact of the early Biblical times, both Jewish and Christian. His later exposition of the Bible itself and his narrative of the many books of the New Testament and, in particular, those of St. Paul, disclosed he was a first class scholar; yet, he so retained the common touch in his teaching that it hid his title, Doctor of Divinity, which had been bestowed upon him, an honour which he richly deserved. He never once referred to that title in any way, a sincere humility that was his golden hallmark. No meeting of his classes was dull; indeed, they were lively, varied, and often provoked laughter, with Ron on occasion adding his quiet humour, knowing grin, and chuckle.

A valuable contribution for the entertainment of the residents was his excellent playing of our grand piano without reading the music from the printed pages. It seemed so natural and easy for him to play the popular music of decades ago, that of the youthful years of the residents. He occasionally interspersed the popular music with classical music melodies that his audience knew; but he presented them with technical interpretations of his own, not the standard copy written by the composers themselves. As my wife Ruth remarked from time to time: "Ron plays with the golden touch of Frankie Carl in Horace Heit's band." It was a delight.

Night after night as I listened to Ron's playing, I realized he was not playing the same arrangements over and over again from memory; he would change his left hand's chords, runs, and arpeggios; as well, he sometimes changed the delivery of the notes of his right hand without disturbing the melody. After a few weeks, I praised his talent when speaking to him privately. In reply, he said, "it isn't talent, it's a gift." We all realize that Ron attributed that gift to The Great Creator of the Universe.

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## Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts



Last month, Ron was very happy when he told us that he was going away with his son David to spend some time in Alberta where he had held several ecclesiastical positions. It was indeed a blessing that he was with David when his soul passed from this world. I am sure my variation of the words that Shakespeare used regarding Prince Hamlet applied to The Reverend Dr. Ronald F. Watts: Choirs of angels hymned our friend to his final rest.

*H. Noel Hamilton, Jr., Ph.D.*

### SPECIAL TRIBUTES

#### From Rev. Richard Root

The Rev. Dr. Ronald F. Watts... I knew the name before I knew the man: a highly esteemed and respected leader; the former General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec; a revered Christian statesman and the voice of a generation. Dr. R.F. Watts, as he signed his writings, literally wrote the book (actually several) on Canadian Baptist identity, belief and practice. He was the author of my textbooks before he was my friend and colleague.

Actually, I knew Ron's wife Fanshun first. She had been involved in a variety of projects with the Canadian Baptist family and in later years with McMaster Divinity College. Fanshun was the feisty, endearing, self-proclaimed "voice-from-the-pew" who did so much to keep a generation of seminary students, myself included, grounded in their faith. Whenever we would fly off into the theoretical, the impractical, or the frivolous it was Fanshun who brought us back to earth.

In 1990 I was called to Central Baptist and for two decades I had the privilege of sharing in leadership Ron and Fanshun. Ron was CBC's *Pastor Emeritus* and it was a source of great amusement to us that this author of my textbooks was now the unfortunate victim of my preaching and pastoral care. Still, any anxiety I might have felt about the relationship was quickly removed by Ron's generosity and gentle humour. His encyclopedic

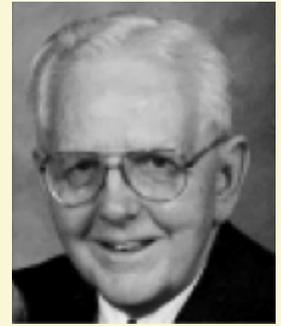
knowledge was clothed in humility and conveyed with a lightness of spirit that kept it lively and unassuming. To share in a bible study or a conversation with Ron was to be exposed to the deep waters of thought and reflection without ever feeling that you might drown. Among his many gifts was the ability to break down the barriers that keep us from engaging with the depth of the gospel. With one foot in the academy and one in the church he straddled worlds.

Ron read widely. His apartment was littered with books of all genres—never the trite, easy-going "chicken soup" style fare, but vast monographs on theology, history, archaeology and science. From the dawn of the internet, Ron was a lively participant in the exchange of ideas. Challenging any idea that technology was the domain of the young, he was active from the earliest days of newsgroups and mailing lists to the later days of online forums and web-based resources. His life-long love of learning was equaled by his appreciation of music—particularly the great hymns penned by his namesake Isaac Watts—and a passion for issues of justice. It was here that Ron's academic knowledge of the faith intersected with the crying needs of the world. Social justice was the gospel in motion, the faith made real in the face of the world. He had a long affiliation with Amnesty International and other ministries promoting advocacy and justice.

The Christian church has sometimes been accused of having "a hole" in its gospel, an indication that the message we preach does not always intersect with the lives we lead. I, for one, am grateful that God sends into His church those who bridge the gap. When I stare into that hole I can picture Ron looking back at me and hear the triumphant refrain: "*Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.*" — Isaac Watts, 1707

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# Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts



**From Warren and June McBurney**

Among the many books that Ron Watts had in his collection is a slim paper back: "Isaac Watts, The Singer of New Songs", a tribute to one of our greatest English hymn writers. There are almost twenty of them in our Hymnary. But what caught my eye was a letter that was included from Sussex in England, 29th September: 1948.

*"My dear Ron, I ordered this booklet for myself and one for you at the same time as I thought it might interest you. Dr. Isaac Watts (who wrote "O God our Help in Ages Past", "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun" and many other hymns) was our collateral ancestor: he has never married himself, but had three younger brothers who were, and I suppose we came from one of them. They are celebrating the bi-bicentenary of his death (25th Nov., 1748) by a big united service in St. Paul's Cathedral....Alice and I hope to go to it....I hope you are all well and flourishing - and that David sported another and even bigger birthday cake for his 2nd birthday (last April?) - and that Fanshun is not doing too much. Much love to you all, from Helen."*

If he was asked, Ron would admit that there was a relationship to Isaac Watts, but he never bragged about it. It is no surprise, then, that his name should appear in the preface of our Hymnary as a member of the Convention Committee that produced it in 1973, that he sang in our choir at Central, that he often played the organ when Grace Collett was away, and that he could suggest a hymn on any theme presented to him. What a musical treasure he was at Central.

Ron and I went to Massey Hall in Toronto once and sat in the balcony to hear Van Cliburn - a classical pianist from the sixties. With the Toronto Symphony accompanying him that evening, Cliburn was the darling of the Toronto music scene. Ron loved his music.

Ron also loved his fellowship at Central. Having served on many committees during his time with us, he was honoured as our Pastor Emeritus in his later years - a fitting title for one who had contributed so much to our

congregation. Mary Coggins was his faithful chauffeur for years.

I asked her recently how long she had given him rides. She said she had thought about it herself, and that probably it was three years or so. Then she checked, and found that it had been more than six years. What a loving help this had been to Ron. Ron passed on help; too, you have probably seen him with Mike, the Chinese fellow who worships with us. With sign language, Mike's computer/translator and Ron's knowledge, sermons were discussed and understood week after week. When I emailed Mike about Ron's death, he said he would do overtime at work in order to attend Ron's memorial. In his email to me he wrote, "Ron give me a lot of Bible knowledge. I miss Ron very much. Anytime and anywhere Ron help me." What a tribute from a young seeker to an elderly scholar, meeting around the Word of God.

Warren McBurney

**PUBLIC TRIBUTES**

As a member of Central Baptist Church, Ron was an inspiration to all who knew him. Our chats were warm and kind and always gave a sense that God was indeed with him. Ron we will miss you.

~ Paul & Ellen Kaye, Oakville, Ontario

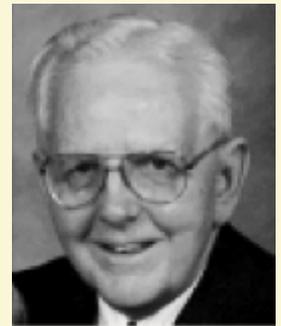
I had the privilege of being a colleague when he was the General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, as well as being a partner in camp activities such as Camp Katepwa, and associated in other ways. He was a loyal friend, a dedicated servant of the Lord, and was known for his intellect and fairness. May God richly bless the family even as He will bless Ron's legacy.

~ Philip Karpetz, Etobicoke, Ontario

Dr. Watts will be sorely missed by so many of us. He is someone who years later I am still quoting. He was a

*Remembering:*

## Rev. Dr. Ronald Francis Watts



man of compassion and ahead of his years in dealing with classes of teenagers. He will be remembered by all of us who attended BLTS. Blessings to his family during this difficult time!

~ *Vivian (Shears) King, Kaleden, British Columbia*

Ron was a lovely and gracious man who I had the privilege of serving alongside on a church committee recently. We all benefited from his wisdom, experience and love for the Lord. He will be greatly missed by many. I cannot begin to say how much my life was touched by "Doc" Watts. His imprint was gigantic - something I had the great privilege of being able to convey to him over the past two or three years, both in person and in print. I will never forget the wonderful extended visit we had in Oakville at the end of last May - exactly 50 years after our memorable year together at BLTS. Thanks be to God for his life...and his profound influence on so many of us!

~ *Reginald Bibby, Lethbridge, Alberta*

Dr. Watts, colleague and McMaster alumnus along with my father, Dick Standerwick, was a family friend, valued mentor in my own experience at BLTS in '62/63, gifted musician, scholar, warm, genuine and unpretentious but always in my memories Dr. Watts. I have fond memories of travelling B.C and Alberta in the spring of '63 with the BLTS tour team with Dr. Watts at the wheel of the International harvester van. A brave man!!!

*Ken Standerwick.*

It is hard to imagine our church in Oakville without Ron's presence. Ron exemplified that "Christ-like" quality throughout his life. He was a kind and thoughtful friend, an amazing teacher, a gifted speaker and true servant of God. All who knew him were blessed in some way. We will continue to think of David and Peter in the months to come.

*Dave and Ann Laing, Oakville, Ontario*

I have had the pleasure of knowing Ron for the last four and a half years. He has helped with the monthly ecumenical communion services at the Queens Avenue Retirement Residence in Oakville, Ontario. I have appreciated his kind and faithful presence, and the words he used when sharing the bread with the people. I know that his fellow residents at Queens will miss his goodhearted manner, his thoughtful Bible studies, and his wonderful piano music. He used to play for the other residents for 15 minutes before supper, every evening. He has inspired me as a minister who remained open to opportunities to serve, and to share the Good News. On behalf of the pastoral care team of Trinity Church, and myself, I extend our condolences, and prayers to Ron's family, friends, and colleagues in ministry. Peace,

~ *Rev. Darrow Woods, Oakville, Ontario*

I first met Dr. & Mrs. Watts when I worked in the office of the Baptist Training Institute in Brantford, ON. Later he became General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec and as Clerk of the Oxford-Brant Association I work more closely with him then. I always admired him for his thoughtfulness and the way that he would help with anything that needed to be looked after. I feel I have lost a good friend with his passing but at 94 he has lived a good life and I know that he is rejoicing in heaven with his family members as well as colleagues who have gone on before him. We are remembering his family in prayer at this time praying that each member will know God's peace and comfort as they travel this journey. Blessings,

*Ellen Tree*