

The Life and Ministry of Archibald (Archie) James MacLachlan Canadian SPE Founder in Ontario, and a co-founder of SPE in Canada.

*This introduction to Archie is prepared by Don Misener with reference to biographical information from **Ruth and Archie: Brandon and Brandon College 1932 -34** edited by Joann MacLachlan and published in 2009. Permission has been received from Joann MacLachlan to include this biographical background information and two quotes from the book.

Archie was born in 1907 at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, the third child of an itinerant Canadian factory worker who 5 years later moved with his family to Alberta to farm northeast of Calgary. In 1997 Archie died in his 90th year in Toronto.

The family were Baptists and throughout his life Archie remained faithful to his Baptist roots even though his denomination left him at times frustrated and disappointed. As a young person Archie saw himself becoming a medical missionary. After a year of normal school in Calgary Archie taught for three years in one room rural schools in Alberta. In 1930 he enrolled in Brandon College, a Baptist College in Manitoba affiliated with McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario. It was during his years at Brandon College that Archie completed summer student ministry placements in remote rural Alberta in which he tested a call to pastoral ministry (in his first and second summer ministries in Peace River country he rode horseback to complete pastoral calls and lived in a tent).

His early experiences in ministry are wonderfully recalled in the context of love letters between Archie and Ruth while he was completing three summer student ministries in a book titled **Ruth and Archie: Brandon and Brandon College 1932-34** edited by their daughter Joann MacLachlan and published in 2009. (ISBN 978-0-9813216-1-5).

Following graduation from Brandon College Archie and his wife Ruth, who grew up in Brandon, graduated from Brandon College and married Archie in 1934, moved to Hamilton Ontario where in 1937 Archie completed his theology degree at McMaster University. After his ordination Archie, Ruth and their first child Joann moved to North Bay, Ontario, where Archie served for 4 years in pastoral ministry. During World War II Archie was a congregation minister for six years in Vancouver and it was here that two more children, Archibald James and Lachlan Wade were born.

During the war Archie was greatly distressed by the treatment of the Japanese in their displacement to internment camps, confiscation of their property and then the threat of their being returned to Japan after the war. The voicing of his outrage about this injustice did not endear him to his congregation or his denomination and after the war he decided it was time to move on. Archie enrolled in post-graduate study in psychology in Boston Massachusetts in part to upgrade the pastoral counselling skills in which he felt

pastorally weak and in part to work his way through the pain arising from the reaction from his family and his denomination to his growing liberalism in theology and the distress he felt concerning the racist reactions within “born again” Christians toward their Japanese neighbors during the war.

In 1946 Archie left his family in Brandon so he could begin his studies at Andover-Newton Theological School and find employment in a congregation in the US that would enable him to support his family. With some additional financial support from his father-in-law, Ruth and the children were able to join him the next year in Penacook, New Hampshire where Archie was serving a congregation while commuting during the week to complete his studies. After graduating with a Masters of Sacred Theology degree from Andover-Newton, Archie entered doctoral studies in psychology at Harvard. This required additional financial support which his father refused so Archie was forced to settle for another Masters degree and returned to Canada with the vision of introducing the clinical model of pastoral education he had found so helpful during his studies.

Archie found pastoral employment in Toronto in 1950 where he began the long journey of inspiring interest, recruiting support and soliciting financial backing for the introduction of a clinical model of pastoral education. After two years in Toronto, he accepted a full-time pastorate in Winnipeg and it was from here that he began a long distance commute each summer to Hamilton where, provided he raised his own funding, McMaster allowed him to conduct a pastoral education course under their name. He began the first course in the spring of 1952 in association with co-supervisor Rev. Jack Breckenridge whom he first met while resident in North Bay and who since that first meeting had also undertaken clinical training in the US. His daughter Joann comments, “So a man who... did not really enjoy or do well studying, who preferred to be doing pastoral work, completed in under six years the requirements for two Masters degree; a man who liked comfort and order moved house five times...: a man who was really rather shy went out and begged first from his parents to fund his studies, then from institutions to fund his dream of pastoral education in Canada.. Six years. Amazing!” (from **Ruth and Archie**, page 368).

In 1955 Archie moved from Winnipeg to Hamilton Ontario where he became minister of Dundas Baptist Church and following that in 1960 Chaplain at the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital. Now he was able to concentrate more of his attention on the development of CPE in Hamilton area and invest in the creation of a national organization. Together with other visionary religious leaders in Ontario, including Charles Fielding in Toronto, and in the Maritimes, Earle McKnight and Charles Taylor who also launched a SPE program in 1952, Archie set out to spread the transforming and empowering pastoral education dream elsewhere in Canada. Three national conferences were held in 1963, 64 and 65. These steps to organize a national body came to fruition in 1965 when 62 church leaders and educators from across Canada created a national association named

The Canadian Council for Supervised Pastoral Education (CCSPE). This name was revised in 1974 to Canadian Association of Pastoral Education (CAPE). Archie was elected in 1965 as the first President of this organization. In his presidential letter to the membership Archie began: "December 16, 1965 will become a very important date in the history of the church in Canada for on that date the Canadian Council for Supervised Pastoral Education was born after more than two years of gestation and many years of maturation, flirtation and married life." (reference Peter Tink's 1975 D.Min. paper **À History of the Supervised Education Movement in Canada and an Examination of Its Effect Upon the Pastoral Ministry** page 129)

When he retired from Hamilton in 1972 at age 65 Archie took up the challenge of becoming the founding director of the Kingston Institute of Pastoral Care at Queen's Theological College. Here he began the development of a multi-site pastoral education program – in congregations, the psychiatric hospital, a federal prison and with a vision for eventual expansion into the general hospitals and the military. After his retirement from this position in 1978 he continued teaching CPE in the Toronto area.

Despite the long-term effects of arsenic poisoning (including the loss of all body hair) that occurred during a summer student pastorate where he was boarding with a family who was deliberately poisoned by a disgruntled relative (arsenic laced porridge to start the day) and the onset of adult diabetes Archie was active well into his 80's. He learned computer skills which he used to prepare a family genealogy as well as to carry on his prophetic ministry of confronting the principalities and powers within the church and government. An apology to and reparations for the Japanese in Canada for the injustices they suffered during World War II was a high priority. "Financial sloppiness in Parliament and narrow self-interest on social matters also called forth reams of paper from his computer." (**Ruth and Archie**, page 368) Had Archie known about email it is interesting to ponder how much more fully the prophetic witness that did so much to bring comfort to the afflicted could have afflicted the comfortable!

Alongside Archie's visionary pioneering leadership and extensive investment in the development of a national professional organization CAPPE and now CASC has the continuing blessing of his life by means of the legacy of \$100,000 he included in his will for the establishment of The Foundation for Spiritual Care. Each year the proceeds from this legacy provides financial support to SPE students and to pastoral care and education researchers. And so it is Archie continues to live on in our midst and to bless spiritual care education and research with his generous self-giving spirit.