

September of 1980 this building was officially opened and there was a service of dedication. My Dad, Loyal Brace, as President that year, spoke at the opening. I don't know what he said but I know what was on the cover of the program that day, 'New Baptist Office Building – Together We Will Open Doors in the 80's'.

This building, I know, was and is a gift. Worried over, prayed over, sweated over, and sacrificed for so that the mission and ministry of Canadian Baptists here in Atlantic Canada could be facilitated. So many people worked and prayed, passionately lived out their calling, dreamed big, planned for a future in this place. Mundane and ordinary tasks enacted out of obedience shaped and impacted people, everyone who works here – who has worked here included. Ministries were birthed, or nurtured from here. People were listened to in this place. Lives changed.

But in the middle of the night, when no one is present, this is just a building.

We understand, perhaps more than anyone else, that a building is not a people, or a mission, or a purpose, or a vision. Even when this building was, to a certain extent, those things for Canadian Baptist of Atlantic Canada, we know this place is not the reason for Atlantic Baptists.

Let me read Hebrews 3:1-6

So, my dear Christian friends, companions in following this call to the heights, take a good hard look at Jesus. He's the centerpiece of everything we believe, faithful in everything God gave him to do. Moses was also faithful, but Jesus gets far more honor. A builder is more valuable than a **building** any day. Every house has a builder, but the Builder behind them all is God. Moses did a good job in God's house, but it was all servant work, getting things ready for what was to come. Christ as Son is in charge of the house.

I Peter 2:4-7 says:

Welcome to the living Stone, the source of life. The workmen took one look and threw it out; God set it in the place of honor. Present yourselfs as **building** stones for the construction of a sanctuary vibrant with life, in which you'll serve as holy priests offering Christ-approved lives up to God. The Scriptures provide precedent: Look! I'm setting a stone in Zion, a cornerstone in the place of honor. Whoever trusts in this stone as a foundation will never have cause to regret it.

For almost 40 years this building has provided the CBAC with opportunities to make Jesus known in Atlantic Canada. But the brick and mortar, steel and wood of this place, though useful, requires the presence of The Living Stone to animate it – needs the work of those who offer their 'Christ-approved lives' as Peter says to help construct a 'sanctuary vibrant with life' that in all these years has affected lives around Atlantic Canada and the world.

Christ as The Living Stone and each of us as we continue to present ourselves to God in His ongoing building project are grateful for this space and the memories represented here. But we are confident that our ministry does not wane just because we are now being led on from here. Every bit as much as the vision was that this building in 1980 would open new doors for ministry for the 1980's and beyond, so today we look to this move as positioning ourselves for new open doors for ministry that God has yet for us ... not only as we conclude this decade and for the 2020's, but for every decade that God in his mercy gives us life and the privileged opportunity to continue to serve Him.

Let me conclude by reading this poem by Marianne Musgrove called Living Stones

Living Stones*

We are
river stones
tumbled and polished, burnished
by living water

We are
unearthed fossils
revived
by the warm breath of God

We are
stalagmite and stalactite
reaching out to one other –
God and Adam in the Sistine Chapel

We are
skimming stones
skipping over translucent water
fuelled by joy

We are
meteors blazing
trailing tails like wedding veils
eager to answer God's call

We are
rough cut stones
hewn to form a highway
the master builder placing us just so

We are
stones and dust and clay

divine spark-animated –
created and loved by God

And with Jesus as our cornerstone
we're built into a spiritual house.
We are stones
we are living stones.

*<http://www.faithintersectinglife.org.au/2017/05/30/living-stones-a-poem/>