



ERNEST MANNING

Fell

Manning: the program
that changed his life

By BERNIE GOEDHART Of The Journal

Canada's National Back to the Bible Hour isn't . . .

Canadian it is, and back to the Bible aptly indicates its content. But an hour long it isn't.

The program, now in its 45th year and being carried over about 40 stations throughout the country, adopted a shorter format about two months ago, changing from one hour to 30 minutes.

And judging from feedback which has been received since then, many listeners are in favor of the change, reports Ernest C. Manning, director of the program.

"Everybody today is sort of Readers' Digest oriented," he quipped. "We like things in an abbreviated form."

Mr. Manning, former premier of Alberta, gave two reasons for the change — difficulty in obtaining good radio time for a one-hour program and the financial burden of such a program.

Time slots

"We've always tried not to have our radio time conflict with times of Sunday services.

"With the half-hour program we've been able to get far better time (slots)." The program is not carried at a uniform time throughout the country, Mr. Manning pointed out. In the majority of cases it is run some time between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Sundays. In Edmonton, the program is carried over CFRN at 8:05 a.m. Sunday.

"The financial cost was always a burden.

"From the inception, the program has been voluntary work on the part of the people involved. The only salaries we pay are to the secretarial staff which answers the mail.

"The program is not financed by any source except by the donations of people who listen and enjoy it.

Numbers vary

"Our policy has always been such that if we are a few dollars ahead, we add another station. If we go behind, we simply cut one station off.

"So the numbers vary.

"The saving we made through the change to a half-hour program has enabled us to increase our outlets."

With the number of stations carrying the National Back to the Bible Hour fluctuating, the number of listeners correspondingly changes — and is therefore difficult to state.

Estimates, however, place the program's listening audience between 250,000 and 400,000 people.

The program has come a long way since it was started by 1925 by the late William Aberhart, also a former premier of Alberta.

"When Mr. Aberhart came west to Calgary about 1910 he was quite active in Christian work. He was a Bible teacher at a Presbyterian church in Calgary and formed the Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference, a Bible class and discussion group which concentrated on the prophetic Scriptures.

Few radios

"It was this Bible conference, which involved interested laymen, that sponsored the radio program.

"Radio was just coming in at that time and there were very few radios in this part of the country."

The program originated over CFCN in Calgary. "It's still on that station," said Mr. Manning. "It's the longest period, I believe, that any such program has been carried over one station."

Originally, the program ran for two hours on Sunday afternoons. "In those days there was no commercial broadcasting on Sunday and there was a lot of time to fill.

"It was a live audience program from the old Palace theatre. And only the local station carried it."

Mr. Manning however, had no difficulty in picking up the program at his home in Saskatchewan. He began listening to it in 1926, when he was 18 years old, and "it was that radio program that changed the course of my life."

General way

"I had been a so-called nominal Christian — accepting Christianity in a general way but not realizing that it is a reality." Mr. Manning explained that Mr. Aberhart's broadcasts helped show him the realities of the Scriptures.

"Stemming from my interests, I went to Calgary and entered the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute when it opened in 1927.

"When I graduated in 1930, I stayed on the staff, working as a lecturer at the institute when it was in session and handling the radio correspondence (during the remainder of the year)."

When the Bible institute opened in 1927, the radio program moved from the theatre to the institute's auditorium.

"In the late 1930s it was reduced to 1½ hours. By then

there were more things put on Sunday radio and radio time became less abundant.

"In the 1940s it was changed to an hour."

By then, both Mr. Aberhart and Mr. Manning had entered the field of politics. In 1935, they came to Edmonton to take up positions in the government — Mr. Aberhart as premier and Mr. Manning as minister of trade and industry and as provincial secretary.

Asked what kind of connection there was between the fact that both he and Mr. Aberhart were engaged in radio ministry and both became premier of Alberta, Mr. Manning said it lay with a concern to do something for the young people of the Depression.

Mr. Aberhart was a school principal. He saw the trouble young people had finding their place in society.

"Those years of the 1930s were grim. You have no idea how grim.

"More than anything else it was Mr. Aberhart's concern for young people that prompted him to think there must be something that could be done.

Single term

"That's what took us into the political field."

Mr. Manning indicated that Mr. Aberhart had no interest in politics other than as a vehicle to "try and do something" to better the situation during the Depression period.

He brought Mr. Manning in with him. "I went into public life with the full intention of staying only one term."

But there were always things still to be finished or done, said Mr. Manning and the outcome was that he served the Alberta government for more than 30 years.

Following their move to Edmonton in 1935, Mr. Aberhart and Mr. Manning alternated on trips to Calgary for the radio program.

Mr. Aberhart died in 1943 and in 1948 Mr. Manning assumed full responsibility for directing the program with his wife Muriel directing the musical portion.

It was also the year "that we made the major change," said Mr. Manning. "We decided to extend the program across the country.

"For a couple of years Mrs. Manning and I drove to Calgary every weekend but it became physically impossible to keep up the travelling involved.

"So in the early 1950s we transferred the program to Edmonton. We used the Paramount theatre and originated from there with a live audi-

"So in the early 1950s we transferred the program to Edmonton. We used the Paramount theatre and originated from there with a live audience until about four years ago."

Available radio time created a somewhat confusing situation, Mr. Manning said with a grin.

In Edmonton, the program was broadcast Sunday at 9:30 a.m. "which was no good for a live audience."

The situation was remedied by conducting the program live at 2:30 p.m. — the time slot which the National Back to the Bible Hour had occupied on the Calgary station — and broadcasting it live to Calgary, over a telephone line, direct, from the theatre.

Confusion

Confusion arose in that, because of the time slot, Edmonton audiences heard the boardcast a week late.

"It used to create some interesting confusion. People would attend the service in Edmonton and hear themselves over the air a week later."

About four years ago the

program was moved to a studio.

The musical group meets about once a month and tapes a number of selections, said Mr. Manning. "I put the program together in the studio. The message can be done anytime (really)."

Despite the fact that the program has decreased in air time, Mr. Manning said he cannot foresee it being eliminated entirely.

Need greater

"Public acceptance of it is excellent. And the need for it is greater as time goes on.

"I appreciate that there is a group of people who have no interest in anything spiritual," he said thoughtfully. "and they're not listening.

"But there is another group which recognizes today's social problems and sees that a wholly material approach is not the way to solve those problems," he continued.

"Those people are interested."

Commenting on current trends in religion, Mr. Manning said: "I have felt for many years that religious work is becoming too generalized.

"I don't like the term 'religious,'" he qualified. "It encompasses everything, including such things as Buddhism." He indicated he was referring to Christian religions.

"There is no need for the consideration of the spiritual to be vague.

"You could spend your life in the Scriptures and still find something new and fascinating."

Mr. Manning said there is a need to "give people something they can sink their teeth into" — that generalities and "nice platitudes" don't fulfil the need.

When the platitudes are "all over, people go merrily on their way precisely as before.

"Basically, Christianity is a personal relationship between the individual and the living person of Jesus Christ.

"Unless that relationship is there, all the philosophizing is meaningless."

Mere philosophizing may make for interesting discussion, "but it won't change anybody's life," said Mr. Manning.

GETTING THROUGH TO YOUTH

GORIZIA, Italy (AP) — The idol of soccer fans in this north Italian town is a goal-getting priest who thinks that soccer can be a good means of communication among young people.

On Sunday, Don Sergio Ambrosi, playing as centre forward on the local Audax amateur team, is the nightmare of opponent defenders and goalies.

Last season he was the top scorer with 17 goals in the first division of the league in which his team played.

But soccer is not just a recreation for him.

"I had the first true contacts with the youth of my church parish by playing soccer with them," he said.

The 27-year-old priest is not considering any possible career in soccer.

"I play out of pure passion, and for my teammates. We never think of prizes. Money collected for our games is used for parish activities.

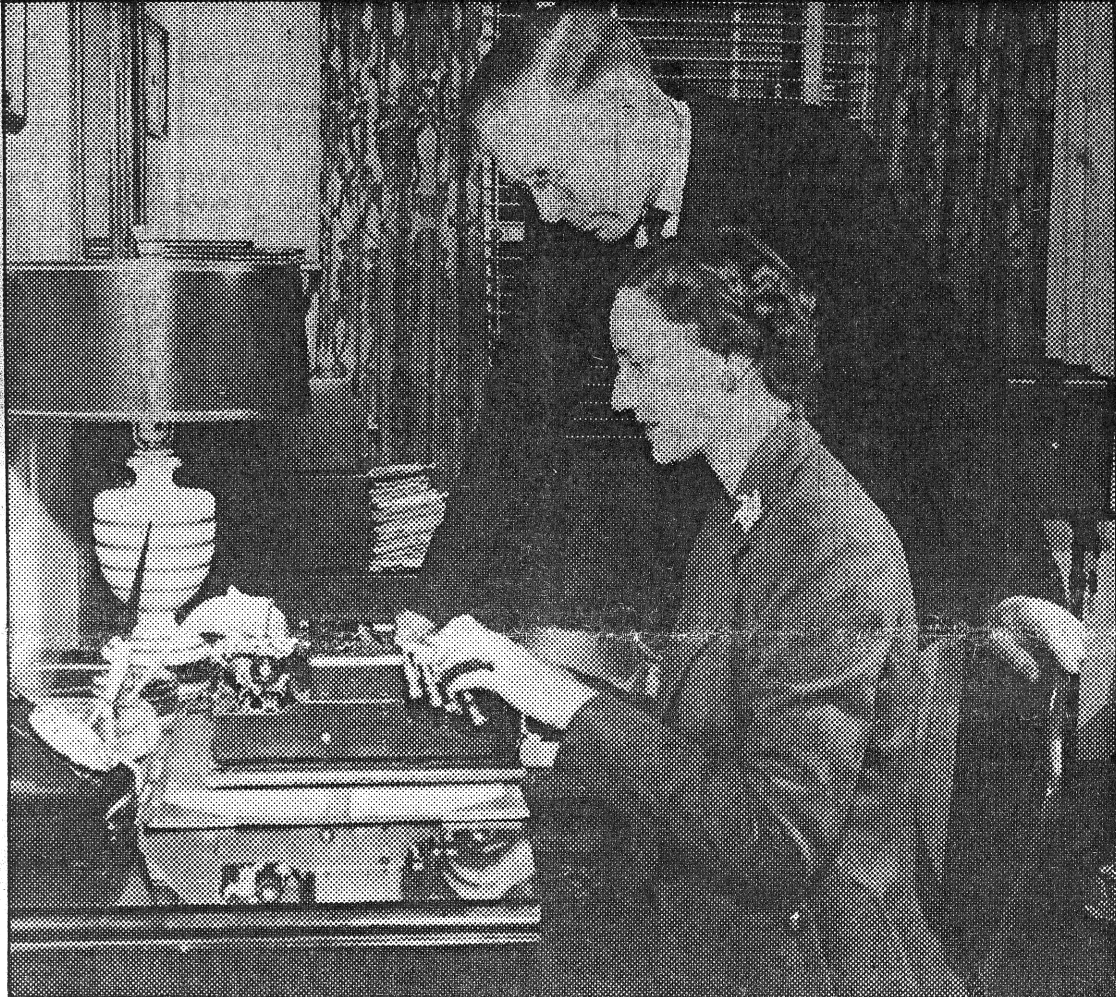
Many clubs in nearby towns have sought to hire him, but he has refused all offers.

1979

Manning looks back,

sees the future

**Socred who ran province for 25 years
says 'I never had an unlisted number'**



Former Premier Ernest Manning prepares regular Sunday religious broadcast in mid-1950s. The program, which started 59 years ago, is still on the air.

By ROBERT SHEPPARD

Globe and Mail Reporter

EDMONTON — "And that's the history of Alberta. When people get really angry with a government, it takes them only 48 hours to make up their minds to change."

The speaker is a man who knows his subject well, having served that constituency for a remarkable 48 years in public life, 25 of these at the helm of one of the country's greatest populist political dynasties.

In many ways the father of modern-day Alberta, he is still a man of vigorous views and political savvy, someone even the current Premier, Peter Lougheed, turns to occasionally for advice.

Some even say he is the model after whom Mr. Lougheed patterned himself — which would make the Premier a pupil of one of the most successful political students of all times.

Senator Ernest C. Manning — the title is an honorific since he retired from the Upper House a few months ago at 75 — was only a teen-aged farm boy in a Saskatchewan homesteading community when he heard the call that changed his life.

As for many in those days, it came on the airwaves; over the radio bought from the mail order with saved-up harvesting money, the hundred-foot-long antenna wire strung in freezing winds on Christmas Day, 1924.

But unlike those who were drawn to the bright lights of Broadway or Hollywood, 19-year-old Ernest Manning followed the call to Calgary and the opening of the Prophetic Bible Institute. The call came from a huge bear of a man with a fundamentalist outlook, a classic radio voice and a showman's talent: William "Bible Bill" Aberhart. He became the surrogate father to the young, restless farm boy and now Senator Manning calls him "one of the most outstanding teachers this country has had."

In his office at Manning Consultants, in time out from a still demanding work schedule, the Senator looks back on the unexpected 36-year success of the Social Credit dynasty and the secret of his own 25 years as Premier of Alberta, the second longest in Canadian history after Nova Scotia's George Murray at the turn of the century.

"My door was always open and I never had an unlisted number in my life," the Senator says, in a sly dig at the Lougheed regime.

"The other thing I can honestly say is I had not wanted to be in public life. There were dozens of other things I could have done.

"The prestige of office — while I respected it and think it ought to be respected because of the office and not the people — it never meant anything. I didn't have to be Premier and I think this showed . . . and the public rather liked it."

The lure into politics came from two sources — Mr. Aberhart, the irrepressible showman, and the Depression.

By 1930, the two men had become almost inseparable. Mr. Manning, the first graduate of Mr. Aberhart's Institute, had become its secretary and moved into his mentor's home. The two, 32 years apart in age, often stayed up late talking and writing sermons — almost until sunrise, one historian has noted.

"We thought a lot alike, and I found him invaluable as a young man," Senator Manning says. "Remember I had just come off the farm in Saskatchewan with no background in these things at all. I learned so much from him."

By 1932, with the Depression in

full swing, Mr. Aberhart had embraced the radical monetary ideas of British engineer and thinker Major C. H. Douglas, incorporating them rather liberally into his weekly Bible broadcasts, where they caught on like prairie fire.

With Mr. Manning as his chauffeur, political secretary and crowd warmer, Mr. Aberhart toured the province, selecting candidates and trying to put his ideas into action.

In the 1935 provincial election, Social Credit turfed out the ruling United Farmers of Alberta, winning 56 of 63 seats; every member of the UFA was defeated.

"You've got to remember that

Alberta is politically unique in Canada," Senator Manning says, noting that only four different party governments have ruled the province in its 78-year history. "It's always been a province of big majorities, but when the people reach a stage when they decide to change, it's just as clearcut."

The new 1935 Social Government was politically raw but relatively well educated; there were doctors, lawyers and teachers among the MLAs. None had ever been in a legislature before.

At 26, Ernest Manning was made Provincial Secretary and Deputy Premier; he was then

the youngest Cabinet minister in Canadian history. A few months later, he was made Minister of Trade and Industry and put in charge of the Aberhart Government's "New Deal" legislation, a vigorous intervention into the market system.

Eight years later, worn out by his political trials, Mr. Aberhart died while vacationing in Vancouver, and Mr. Manning, at 36, was picked to be the new Premier. He kept the position for the next 25 years until he retired in 1968, and two years later accepted an unexpected appointment to the Senate, serving there with his customary diligence but an increasing lack of enthusiasm, particularly for the Trudeau

Government.

More than one observer has pointed out similarities in style between the modest but energetic Mr. Manning and Mr. Lougheed, who destroyed the Socred dynasty in 1971, taking over from Mr. Manning's successor Harry Strom.

Even Senator Manning himself says he never regarded the Lougheed Tories as much of a political threat in his time, because they were so much alike in philosophy. When the change came, "it was like someone who had always driven a General Motors car, probably a Chevy, and now he was trading it in for a differ-

ent model. But it was still a GM car."

Mr. Manning and Mr. Lougheed were masters of their respective media: the trained radio voice and the television personality.

Both were shrewd political operators who isolated their political opposition (even within party ranks) and took great pains (at least in their earlier days in power) to build a consensus before acting.

But most important, they shared the same basic philosophy on developing Alberta's oil potential and plowing the money back into provincial projects.

Senator Manning says that Mr. Lougheed's Heritage Trust Fund

is an extension of the Socred policy of replacing the depleting of assets with other provincial amenities like schools and hospitals.

During the 1950s under Mr. Manning (as in the 1970s under Mr. Lougheed), Alberta was the biggest per capita spender of all provincial governments, constructing, among other things, a chain of superb senior citizens' houses across the province, a commitment Premier Lougheed has continued.

Both premiers used the burgeoning oil funds to lay the basis for a first-class welfare state, the difference being, according to Senator Manning, that his successor has built too much of an already high level of service and has bitten off more than he can chew.

Despite a difference in age, the two men are good friends. Senator Manning says he lunched with "Peter" a couple of times a year and that while he never exactly tried to recruit Mr. Lougheed in the mid-1960s, he often sounded him out privately because "we're not the right one to be fighting each other."

And while Senator Manning supports Premier Lougheed on a host of issues — including his stance on the medicare dispute — Mr. Manning having been a leader of the provincial fight against what he felt was the Pearson government's extravagant and political scheme in the early 1960s — he is also sharply critical on many points.

The Lougheed Government has become difficult to reach and out of touch with its grass roots, the Senator notes, saying he hears this criticism repeated from the business community and elsewhere.

It is serious, he says, because there is no effective alternative to the present Government, and so the same kind of political vacuum exists as in 1935 when the untried Socreds swept to power. But a vacuum is always dangerous "because it can suck in the worst elements too."

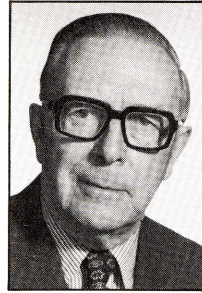
Historians such as Socred chronicler John Barr have noted that the reforms and progress of the Manning years laid the basis for a fast-paced secular climate that became increasingly foreign to Mr. Manning's own values, producing the kind of rootless society to which Social Credit could no longer appeal.

Looking back over a political turf that he has given him sustenance for nearly 50 years, Senator Manning seems to be making the same warning for the post-Lougheed era: The ruling Conservatives have set standards they can no longer maintain without considerable social unrest.

"Alberta's history is that when you get to that stage, some new movement emerges," says the Senator, a disciple of third party politics. "My only hope is that we see this on the national stage as well, because there's a great need for a breath of fresh air and a whole new approach to the dynamics of governing this country."



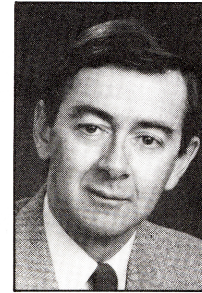
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E.C. MANNING



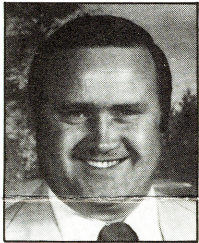
MRS. E.C. MANNING



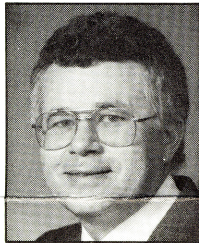
PRESTON MANNING



ORVIS KENNEDY



ARTHUR QUERENGESSER



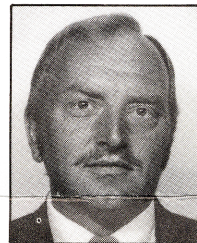
JIM MABBOTT



GORDON BEAVIS



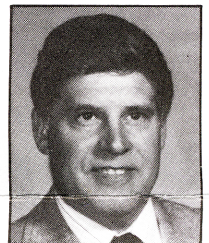
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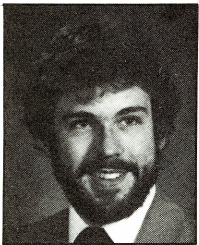
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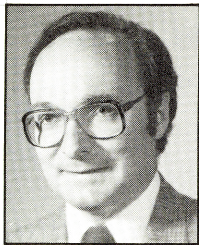
IAN SMITH



GARTH WORTHINGTON



TRENT WORTHINGTON



GEORGE TRAYNOR



MARY SHORTT



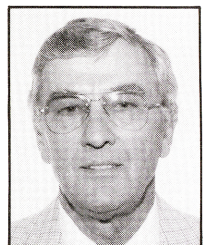
MARION SMITH



JUNE HUNT



SAM HOSHIZAKI



LEN ANDERSON



JACKIE WAGSTAFF



AILEEN EDWARDS

The Cast and Staff
of
CANADA'S NATIONAL BIBLE HOUR

UPDATE MEMO FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Radio Friends:

Pictured above are those involved in bringing you Canada's National Bible Hour. You may wish to retain this memento of our Diamond Jubilee year which ended August 31, 1985.

This memo is to update you on the ministry you have helped make possible. You enabled us to sustain over 90 stations throughout the year. Our revenue was \$373,354.24 and our expenses were \$451,556.76. We made up the short fall from our contingency reserve. Until the fund is replenished we will have to drop stations if income fails to equal costs. We hope this won't be necessary.

Your letters tell us the broadcasts are filling a national need. Many are being helped and encouraged. Many are gaining a better understanding of the scriptures and the trends of the times. Some have received Christ as their Saviour for which we thank God. We have heard from many new listeners.

Our goal during our 61st radio year is to encourage all our listeners who profess faith in Christ and the Bible to make their homes spiritual oasis from which their influence will radiate throughout the community where they live. Put another way, we want their homes to be Christian lighthouses whose light will assist others in charting a safe course through the storms and darkness of today's world. There are thousands of listener's homes across Canada in which some or all family members share our belief in the Lordship of Christ, the infallibility of the Bible and the responsibility of Christians to demonstrate their concern for others. If they will make their influence felt in a meaningful way their impact on the lives of friends and neighbours, on community moral standards and on the course this nation follows will be immeasurable.

Ernest C. Manning - Director

Muriel A. Manning - Pianist and Musical Director

E. Preston Manning - Assistant Director

O. A. Kennedy - Chairman of Board

Marion Smith - Soprano Soloist

June Hunt - Contralto Soloist

Arthur Querengesser - Tenor Soloist

Ian Smith - Baritone Soloist

Dr. Jim Mabbott - Tenor

Garth Worthington - Baritone

Gordon Beavis - Tenor

Trent Worthington - Baritone

Ross Blatchford - Tenor

George Traynor - Bass

Henry Hiebert - Tenor

Dr. Sam Hoshizaki - Bass

Len Anderson - Bass

Mary Shortt - Violinist

Aileen Edwards - Radio Sunday School

Jackie Wagstaff - Executive Secretary

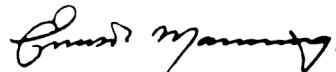
To that end this memo is an appeal to you and all in your home who profess faith in Jesus Christ and in the Bible as the Word of God to:

1. Make a commitment to demonstrate by what you say and do and by your lifestyle the realism of your Christian profession.
2. Use every opportunity to share your faith in Christ and the Bible with others in a positive and inoffensive way.
3. Make the salvation and spiritual health of friends and acquaintances a matter of daily prayer.
4. Exert your influence for God and righteousness through involvement in the affairs of your community, province and nation.
5. Unite with a local Bible believing church and actively support its ministry and outreach.
6. Encourage friends and acquaintances to become regular radio listeners and do everything possible to win them for Christ.

We will deeply appreciate your reaction to this appeal and an indication of your personal and/or family response to the goals set out in this memo.

May we hear from you soon, and meanwhile please continue to pray for the broadcast, our nation, its leaders and its people.

Very sincerely yours



Ernest C. Manning
Director

ECM/jw

P.S. Can you help enlarge our radio Sunday School? Please send us the names and addresses and ages of children between the ages of 5 and 16 and we will mail them invitations to enrol. (The lessons are free to all children).



Canada's National
BACK TO THE
BIBLE HOUR

THE HON. ERNEST C.
AND MRS. MANNING

**"HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE".
PHIL. 2:16**



**CANADA'S NATIONAL BACK TO THE BIBLE HOUR
BOX 2350, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA**

ERIE, PENN.

Dear Radio Friend:

Many enquiries have reached our office requesting information on the history and objectives of Canada's National Back to the Bible Hour. Briefly, the story is as follows:

The broadcast was originated on Radio Station CFCN — Calgary, in the fall of 1925 by the late William Aberhart, who sensed the possibilities offered by radio for spreading the Gospel and helping people become familiar with the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God. Through the broadcast, I was one of a vast number led into a personal knowledge of Christ. I became associated with Mr. Aberhart in the radio ministry in 1930 and assumed the directorship of the broadcast, following Mr. Aberhart's death, in 1943. In 1948, the decision was made to extend the program across Canada. Additional stations were added, as God made possible, until today the Hour is carried on 35 Canadian stations with one outlet in the United States.

The musical part of the Hour, which is one of its highlights, is arranged and directed by Mrs. Manning, assisted by a dedicated group of Gospel soloists and musicians, who bring to the nation the finest in sacred music and song.

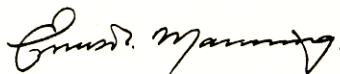
The primary emphasis of the Hour is on reaching those who otherwise are not being reached with the pure, unadulterated message of Scripture and on helping them discover the relevancy of biblical truths to the individual and national problems of our times.

In recent years we have felt a special burden to emphasize the present need for genuine individual and national spiritual revival through the restoration of Jesus Christ to his rightful place of pre-eminence in our individual lives and in the national affairs of our nation. Convinced of God's power and willingness to intervene in the affairs of men, we are urging Christians, who share this conviction to unite in claiming Canada for Christ, through personal rededication and intercessory prayer.

Canada's National Back to the Bible Hour is a voluntary, Christian laymen's ministry and wholly a work of faith. The free will support of listeners, who share our concern for the spiritual needs of the nation and feel the Hour is helping to meet those needs, is the sole source of funds which makes the broadcast possible.

Now that I am free from the heavy responsibilities of public office, both Mrs. Manning and I will be able to increase the time and effort we so gladly give to this unique ministry. We earnestly ask the constant and faithful prayer support of our thousands of radio listeners that Canada's National Back to the Bible Hour will continue to be used of God as a dynamic force in the spiritual life of the Canadian people. May this little memento remind you daily of this sincere request.

God bless you.



Ernest C. Manning,
Director.