

AUBC TO SELL SHARE IN CAMP WEGESEGUM?

In December 1992, the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces opened discussions with the Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada with the intent to sell the Baptist share of Camp Wegesegum. The Outdoor Recreational Ministry Unit of the Christian Development Committee of the United Church is studying the possibility of changing the shared ownership of Camp Wegesegum.

M.R.E.C. BEGINNINGS

Camp Wegesegum, located near Chipman, N.B., had its beginnings back around 1915 when some Y.M.C.A. people from Saint John discovered an abandoned farm on the banks of the Salmon River. The Y people used this site until 1923 when it was acquired for church camping under the direction of the Maritime Religious Education Council.

In 1967, an agreement was drawn up entrusting the site to be held by the Executive Board of the Atlantic Baptist Convention, the property to be held by the Executive Board in Trust for the United Church Camp Committee and the Baptist Camp Committee. From these two denominations the Wegesegum Committee was formed and administered interdenominational camping on the site for the next few years. In 1972, when the life of the camp appeared to be sadly faltering under that administration, a number of dedicated alumni came forward and formed a 'Blueprint for the Future' Committee. Out of this committee came Camp Wegesegum Incorporated, a legally formed corporation which now leases the site and facilities for the purpose of providing interdenominational Christian camping.

The Board of Directors of Camp Wegesegum Inc. consists of 12 members. Maritime Conference, United Church of Canada, appoints two members to the Board as does the Atlantic Baptist Convention. The other eight members are elected annually at the annual corporation meeting. Camp Wegesegum Inc. assumes full responsibility for property maintenance, insurance and programs. Rental requests for the camp by outside groups are submitted to the Executive of Council of the Atlantic Baptist Convention for approval. Camp Wegesegum Inc. has operated camps since 1972 without financial support from either Maritime Conference or Baptist Convention and is a member of the Camping Association of Canada.

All Board sponsored camps are open to all denominations and all have a Christian emphasis.

Why is the AUBC discussing the selling of its share in a camp that has, over the years, influenced the lives of hundreds of children and teenagers, and adults?

Hopefully, there will be answers for the May edition of the ABF Bulletin.

MAY ISSUE

The next ABF *Bulletin* will be mailed by May 1. Deadline for articles is April 1.

An article in the May *Bulletin* by Rev. Roger H. Prentice, Chaplain, Acadia University, will look at the contemporary student. It is sure to be an eye-opener!

The full particulars for the Spring Assembly May 21-22 will be in the next issue, as well as many other relevant articles.

RIGHT TO FREEDOM

"Our right to freedom is not our right to do what we want to do. It is the right to do what we ought to do."

— Jerome Toner

ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN

REV. DR. MARTIN RUMSCHEIDT
TO ADDRESS ABF MAY 21-22



"The Resurgence of the Radical Right in Our Time" will be the theme of addresses to be given by Rev. Dr. Martin Rumscheidt, B.A., B.D., S.T.M., Ph.D. (McGill) at the Spring Assembly of ABF, May 21-22 at the Wolfville United Baptist Church. Professor of Historical and Systematic Studies, and Director of the Master of Theological Studies Program at the Atlantic School of Theology, Dr. Rumscheidt's recent professional associations include the American Academy of Religion and the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion.

Ordained by the United Baptist Church of Canada in 1961, Dr. Rumscheidt is an author, editor, translator, and contributor to various publications.

IN THIS ISSUE ...

ARTICLES ON

- * The absence of editorials in the *Atlantic Baptist*.
- * Is the Baptist share in Camp Wegesegum for sale?
- * plus much more ...

March 1993



THE OFFICERS OF THE ABF ARE:



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THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

(approved by the Spring Session, Wolfville, June 14-15, 1985)

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is a community of Baptist churches, laypersons and ordained ministers. It is supported by voluntary contributions made by persons and churches sympathetic to its aims, which are:

- (1) to witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion which is the essence of the traditional Baptist position;
- (2) to affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to the whole, visible, catholic and evangelical church of Jesus Christ;
- (3) to strengthen the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces and to encourage it to strive for the above;
- (4) to provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social problems and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love;
- (5) to publish, at regular intervals, a Bulletin which seeks to further these aims and which describes the activities of the Fellowship and announces the agenda for its general meetings which will be held in the spring and in the autumn of each year.

ABF BULLETIN

The Bulletin is mailed to interested churches and individuals. Those wishing to receive the Bulletin, and all details of changes of address, are to be sent to the distribution organizer: Mrs. Isobel Horton, P.O. Box 586, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0.

While the Bulletin is mailed free of charge; donations to help pay the costs of publication and mailing are gratefully received and should be mailed to the treasurer (address above). Receipts for income tax purpose will be mailed.

"Fundamentalist Christians distort the Bible by taking it literally. Liberal Christians distort the Bible by not taking it seriously".

— Bishop John Shelby Spong, 1931

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Gambling in the Atlantic Provinces has become a monstrous problem — and governments are promoting the behaviour. There is an alarming increase in the number of young people — some as young as 11 — consumed by gambling addictions.

Betting is more accessible to vulnerable youths. And specialists warn that more than 90 percent of compulsive adult gamblers began betting in junior high schools. Besides video gambling machines, teens try sports betting, cards, scratch tabs, dice games, flipped coins and lotteries. And a percentage of youth who experiment with gambling will become hooked.

Legal age for gambling is 19 — but just as minors obtain alcohol and tobacco, they find ways to beat the system.

As a teenager becomes harmfully involved with games of chance, it becomes necessary for most to support their addiction by begging, borrowing or stealing. Morals and values disappear. Gambling fever may lead to serious crimes as well as self destruction.

Little is being done to prevent teen gambling. More money must be invested by our governments in dealing with what could become the adolescent vice of the '90s.

Editor's note. Jack Shields of Enfield, N.S., has been in the sign business for 50 years. He is also an artist, musician and poet. He was pleased to be asked to design the masthead for the cover page of the ABF Bulletin as well as contribute "Childhood" for your new editor's first issue.

CHILDHOOD

by Jack Shields

Before I knew life
Though it bubbled over.
Before it was she,
True female gender.

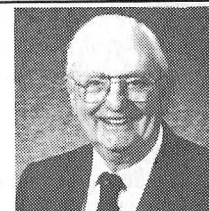
Before Schemes, advantage
I knew naught about.
Through rose coloured glasses
Prompted gleeful Shouts.

Before there were sunsets
And dawn realized.
Always mom and dad then
Before anything died.

Before love, hate, greed,
With everything right.
Wrong couldn't be
In darkest night.

Before toast burned
And love spurned.
When wonder of caterpillar
Could never be learned.

A young beginning
No thought of the end.
There was only now
Forever, no end.



DEFENDER OF THE GOOD NEWS

This new year was the time for a passing of the torch at the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. Dr. M.R.B. Lovesey retired after serving as editor of the ABF Bulletin since 1985. The bulletin numbers which he edited reflect Dr. Lovesey's wide-ranging curiosity, his scholarship, his integrity, and his persistence with procrastinating writers. Above all else, however, they mirror his passionate defence of the Good News. For

him, Paul's word to the Galatians is a central theme of that Gospel, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Using another source, he often reminds us that the price of our liberty is eternal vigilance. The members of the ABF are grateful for his leadership as our editor.

We are fortunate that Dr. Lovesey continues as an active member of our Fellowship. The threats to Christian freedom that he saw so clearly, and spoke out against so forcefully, continue to arise in our Convention. It is very worrying that many would want our denominational paper to become a house organ, publishing only the party line and discouraging criticism of our institutions and officers. (They must not read Paul!) It is very disheartening to the women of Convention who are called to leadership positions that their suitability continues to be questioned on the basis of their sex. Attitudes like these mean that the Bulletin which Dr. Lovesey served so well will continue to have an important function among Atlantic Baptists.

— Ed Colquhoun, President, ABF

RECLAIMING A HERITAGE AND A TITLE

by Gerry Harrop

One evening, years ago, I was leading a Bible study in a Baptist church in Ontario. The subject was the familiar "suffering servant" poem of Isaiah 52:13-53:12. I tried to explain the ancient Hebrew concept of "corporate personality." For instance, the name "Jacob" can stand for the family and nation that is descended from him or it can signify the individual patriarch of that name. In the same way the suffering servant could be Israel, or the faithful remnant in Israel, or an individual person — past, present or future. Or it could, at the same time, carry both meanings. The church, from very early days (Acts 8:35) saw in this prophetic figure a sign pointing to Jesus Christ.

When I had delivered myself of this exposition, one of the group asked:

"But what do evangelical scholars say?"

I hastened to reply that, while it would be presumptuous of me to claim to be a scholar, I certainly am an evangelical, for an evangelical is simply one who believes the Gospel.

In our day, because the term "fundamentalist" has become pejorative, implying hostile militancy, those who formerly called themselves "fundamentalists" now style themselves as "evangelicals" or "conservative evangelicals."

This term "evangelical" has a long history in the Church and has meant different things to different people. For Roman Catholics, it refers to texts from the canonical Gospels. For Anglicans, at one time, it denoted "low" church Calvinists. For Germanic peoples it is equivalent to Protestant. *Die evangelische Kirche* is the reformed, or Protestant, Church.

The word, in whatever context, really signifies faithfulness to the Gospel. We should refuse to concede that, as an adjective, "evangelical" means "conservative" (whatever that may mean!) or fundamentalist or quasi-fundamentalist. In our ABF statement of objectives, we claim that we support carrying the Baptist witness (to the voluntary principle in religion) to "the whole catholic and evangelical Church of Jesus Christ." Let us not concede a noble, if somehow imprecise, word and concept to be the exclusive possession of Christians, Baptist of otherwise, who define faithfulness as credal adherence.

CONVENTION CONCERNED ABOUT GAMBLING

Rev. Dr. Eugene Thompson, Convention's Executive Minister, wrote the Premier of New Brunswick on Jan. 23 encouraging consideration of the following proposals:

- 1) Place restrictions on the location of video gambling machines, such as is about to be done in Nova Scotia.
- 2) Conduct a province-wide study of the effects and influence of video gambling on the citizens of the province (especially the youth).
- 3) Publish educational materials for youth and parents on the subject of gambling, its capacity to become a compulsive addiction and the socio-economic consequences.
- 4) Provide a treatment program for addicted youth and adults.

A similar letter, dated Jan. 22, was sent to the Premier of Nova Scotia.

LIVING RELIGIONS V — BUDDHISM

by Bruce Matthews

Buddhism is the world's fourth largest religion (following Christianity, Islam and Hinduism), with over 300 million devotees. The religion takes its name from the Sanskrit verb 'to be awake'. As a noun, a *buddha* is one who is 'awake' to the nature of reality, particularly to causality (how things come to pass), including human painfulness and suffering. Traditionally, there have been several *buddhas*, but it was the last one who gave his name and stature to the religion. This was the Indian prince, Gautama Sakyamuni, who lived five centuries before Christ in northern India. Gautama came from an upper-caste Hindu family. Not unexpectedly he embraced many Hindu cosmological ideas. His new *dharma* or 'law' was thus very much a 'daughter' of Hinduism. At the same time, he radically departed from Hindu belief in god, and completely rejected Hindu caste customs. The *Buddha dharma* (which we in the West gracelessly call "Buddhism") is, then, fundamentally an Indian religion. Nonetheless it quickly underwent major metamorphosis as it adapted itself to various Oriental cultures. Today it is found in two important forms, the Theravada and the Mahayana. Although they share the same founder, there are marked differences between these two branches. The Theravada ("Way of The Elders"), found in South and Southeast Asia, acknowledge Gautama as a great teacher, but not as a god. Further, they maintain that salvation depends entirely upon self-effort, not on the grace of some celestial force or being. On the other hand, the Mahayana (now found largely in the far east) have elevated Gautama (and other 'cosmic' buddhas to what amounts to divine status. In both forms of Buddhism, Gautama's teachings form the basis of the ethical life. But important philosophical issues divide the two into distinct expressions of the one faith.



Just what is it that the Buddha taught? He focussed only on the human condition, professing a disregard for questions about such things as life after death, or the work of the gods. He rejected the notion that the gods could help, arguing that willed ignorance persuaded people to wrongly believe in the efficacy of divine grace. In this regard, his celebrated Four Noble Truths were offered as a guide to life, a 'raft' to help devotees cross the turbulent river of existence. The Buddha preferred his followers to build their own rafts or work out their own salvation (as reflected in his famous teaching, "wander lonely like the rhinoceros"). But for those who found the Noble Truths to be sufficient, here was a concise description of reality and what to do about it. First, the Buddha

maintained that much of life is painful, 'hollow', filled with fear or anxiety. Some of this is beyond individual responsibility, but most of it he found to be self-induced. Second, the Buddha argued that people have to carefully trace out why there is painfulness, to look for the roots of human distress in a causal sequence of factors, such as in ignorance and in craving. This Second Noble Truth is the heart of the religion, providing as it does a kind of psychoanalysis of an individual's actions, emotions and thoughts. A third truth maintains that there is a state where there is no painfulness. This is *nirvana*, where the ego has been completely tamed, and where equilibrium and calm are the hall-marks of one's disposition. Because *nirvana* is also a condition of absolute awareness in 'being awake' to reality, it

is salvation. Thus to be 'saved' (at least in Theravada Buddhism) is to experience a state of psychological balance, ethical wholesomeness and complete absence of self-centredness here and now, in this life. A fourth truth sets down a way to achieve *nirvana*. This is the so-called 'eight-fold path', which commences with certain ethical teachings and evolves to include meditation, scientific investigation (partly to get rid of superstition and inherited religious and cultural prejudices), and the ability to "see things as they really are".

For a number of complex reasons, Buddhism is virtually dead in India, the land of its birth. Nonetheless, initially it spread peacefully over a period of a millennia to the farthest corners of Asia. Wherever it went, it took with it a little piece of Indian history and tradition. At the same time, Buddhism adapted itself marvellously to various cultures. Today, it has an ordained clergy, but it is widely assumed that the religious life is a personal matter. Thus going to the temple is often something done alone, as is meditation and building up an inner life.

Despite a benevolent historical record, from time to time Buddhism has been politicized. In the modern world, Buddhism's association with nationalism and cultural chauvinism (for example, in Sri Lanka) continues to bring distress to those who maintain that the *Buddha dharma* should have nothing to do with politics. In general, however, Buddhism remains the gentle, tolerant spiritual guide its founder meant it to be. At a basic level, its teachings are simple, straightforward, pragmatic and logical. Scratch the surface, however, and what emerges in Buddhism is a vast panorama of psychological and philosophical wisdom that would engage a lifetime to even remotely understand.

BRIEFLY

* 64 percent of our Convention's churches showed no numerical growth in 1991. Concern continues to be expressed about the increasing numbers "dropping out" of church attendance or participation. But not just with our AUBC. Church attendance figures across Canada indicate all-time low levels. The level of confidence in religious leaders continues to decline.

Public schools have been dealing with their drop-out problem with stay-in-school initiatives (SISI). Perhaps an analysis of the reasons members "drop-out" will help church leaders develop and promote Stay-In-Church Initiatives (SICI).

* A "Snowbird" returned recently with "The Vision 2000 Committee Report" of the Englewood United Methodist Church (Florida) — planning for ministry into the next century. The report begins: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18).

A packet of "visions" being considered includes programs and services to be initiated immediately, as well as goals leading to the 21st Century.

* Rev. I.G. Perkins, known as Canada's "marrying minister" for officiating at more than 5,000 weddings died recently at the age of 92. Serving United churches in Ontario, Rev. Perkins recalled:

- one bride — and 12 grooms — who fainted at the altar.
- borrowing an organist's ring several times after the best man misplaced the real item.

* Upon hearing about a 22 minute complete worship service being advertised in the USA, one Atlantic Baptist member was overheard saying to another: "Good grief! My pastor spends that much time on announcements every Sunday morning!"

MEDITATING ON CAMPING

by Athena Colpitts

(Written by a veteran camper who loved living under canvas and swimming in lakes and the sea).

It was James Russell Lowell who wrote: 'New occasions teach new duties, Time makes ancient good uncouth'.

Sometimes when reading the reports of Camp Trustees and meditating on their plans for future buildings, I am convinced that for them Lowell's words are significant. And yet, as I recall the past, and see again camps from Bay Chaleur to Lake Bras d'Or, from Pinehurst to Camp Augustine, I wonder. In the eyes of present day trustees those camp sites were extremely primitive, even dangerous, but I do not recall any major disasters in any of them.

Today, when we plan camp facilities ideal for senior citizens, what are we doing to the spirit of adventure and love of untrodden ways characteristic of youth? What fresh experience in living are they going to have, when even a weeks camping program is to be arranged under conditions comparable to three star hotels? Travel abroad is more broadening when we leave luxurious hotels behind and venture into the actual life of the countries we visit. Perhaps "upward still and onward" should make us more adaptable instead of providing us with all the comforts of home.

Camping and camp programs have always been wholesome and inspirational, regardless of such amenities as swimming pools and hot showers.

Ben, on the Miramichi, paid a high tribute to the spiritual side of life. A cook in winter lumber camps. Ben, a French Canadian Catholic, had been persuaded to cook at Camp Elmtree for the summer. When the whistle blew for Morning Watch, and as each girl sought her particular place alone with her Bible and Morning Watch booklet, Ben in his chef's cap, emerged from his kitchen, and sat quietly on the steps of the lodge. Other cooks, faithful souls in other camps, continued their kitchen duties. Not Ben, devout Catholic, "I always come out so there will not be noise to disturb the girls in worship". Ben left after supper, so he was absent when the girls moved to their Chapel in the woods, greeted as they were approached by their choir singing "The Lord is in His Holy Temple." There were hymns of adoration, hymns challenging one to service and comradeship, and a short talk with a message for building for the future. Teach us to build upon the solid Rock

There were no personal appeals directed to each camper by leaders or counsellors, no urgent calls to make hasty decisions, but many girls went home from camp having reached a stage where away from the ideals of camp, (mountain top experience) they would fulfill their purpose to "seek truth, know God and serve others".

The strongest plants are not forced; under normal conditions of development they may grow more slowly but sturdier than plants under hot-house pressure, and better able to survive vicissitude. I have known many younger women who have determined their future aided by camp influences, but not through intense emotional pressure exerted on them by camp counsellors.

What is meaningful about camp programs? The whole experience adjustment to physical conditions, new friendships, a wider tolerance toward change, awareness of the natural environment and a responsibility to maintain its beauty — a deepening faith in God's presence through Morning Watch, thoughtful vespers, campfire fun and camaraderie, greater understanding of the Bible through discussions in Bible groups — in short the rounding into a personality — to become "the girl God would have me be".

"And God fulfils Himself in many ways Lest one good custom should corrupt another".

Editor's note. Athena Colpitts, Indian Harbour, N.S. — living for those around her and the good that she can do.

SOMALIA ...

by Dr. Joni Guptill, M.D.

The international Red Cross recently declared Somalia "The worst humanitarian disaster in the world at this time." 4.5 out of 8 million face starvation and 1/3 to 1/2 of the children under the age of five have already died of starvation and disease.

How can we in Canada comprehend the extent of the misery and how can we understand the complexities that have led to this situation. I am still struggling with these questions.

Two years ago in Somalia there was a civil war that ousted the dictator Siad Barre. Since then, numerous clan leaders, called warlords, have been struggling to gain control, each equipped with a small army and heavy weaponry. In their bid for power, these armies have travelled to and fro across the country, looting food supplies, vandalizing every standing building, knocking out utilities and even pillaging the grain stored for planting.

The indiscriminate killing and wholesale terror combined with the worst drought in Somali memory led to the mass exodus of the population — off the land to towns and out of the capital of Mogadishu. More than one million Somalis have fled to the bordering countries of Kenya and Ethiopia.

It's difficult for us to conceive of a country with no government, no police force, no schools, no hospitals, no electricity and no water supply but this is what has happened to Somalia in the past two years. To make matters worse, the country is flooded with heavy weaponry left from the days of President Siad Barre. It's a land of anarchy where might is right, the biggest gun rules and human misery abounds.

Unfortunately, the world was slow to recognize and act on the tragedy of Somalia — the lag time has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of its people.

The Organization I have worked for is *Medicins Sans Frontier* — it's French name — as it is known Internationally, MSF for short or Doctors Without Borders in English.

MSF

MSF is a non profit, humanitarian relief organization ... now the world's largest non-governmental medical relief agency ... It has a budget of several hundred million dollars and sends 1,500 volunteers to over 60 countries each year ... I became involved 2 1/2 years ago while studying in London, England for a Diploma Course in Tropical Medicine and since then have co-ordinated the Atlantic Canada operation ...

MSF was present in Somalia since the civil war. The project expanded to the area of Baidoa only 10 days before my arrival in September of this past year.

When I arrived there were 200 people dying per day in Baidoa and many more in the surrounding villages. Agencies providing food relief included Care, International Red Cross, World Vision, Irish Care and Concern as well as others — all struggling to put a dent in the sea of misery that surrounded us.

Local Somali staff although very bright and willing had minimal medical training and had to be trained about everything from antiseptics to antibiotics. Of 90 staff I interviewed — only one was a qualified nurse and no doctors were available.

With no trained staff, empty shells for buildings, no lab facilities, and the constant threat of random violence, the task of providing medical care seemed overwhelming.

However, during my month there, I was able to train local staff to operate with supervision four outpatient facilities. Tents were erected or buildings repaired, guards were employed, staff trained and we opened each facility with a great sense of accomplishment. Each clinic sees 100-200 patients per day treating a wide range of diseases from malaria to respiratory disease to diarrhea — all complicated by malnutrition. My work involved training local staff, treating patients, and overseeing the many difficulties that arose in our facilities.

After I left, Dr. James Orbinsky from Ontario took my place — some of you may have heard his diary on *As It Happens* on CBC radio. They have since constructed and opened another four outpatient facilities and an in-patient hospital.

I have often been asked by friends and the media why I have an interest in this work. Why leave the comforts of home, and travel to these dangerous places.

This question has always been difficult to answer — and, yes, I like travel and adventure but beyond these superficial answers I have a deep belief that — from those to whom much is given, much is expected. A belief that goes back to basic Christian principles that I had the good fortune to grow up with.

I was taught by the example of my parents that ... I am my brother's keeper, that we might look beyond our own needs to those who need our assistance.

To quote Scripture:

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it." Mark 8:35.

From these early teachings, the desire to help others came naturally and I have been fortunate to find my way and to reap un-measurable spiritual rewards from my small contribution to this work. There can be no greater reward than to see a child return from the brink of death and witness the rejoicing of parents.

I've also been asked about coping with the constant threat of violence in Somalia. What better example could there be than the teachings of Christ — His love and His courage in his ministering to the oppressed has given me inspiration when I have faltered.

In my worst moments in Somalia I also found comfort in the 23rd Psalm. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul ...

Not all of us can or need to go to Somalia. We all have responsibilities at home, and I myself feel the call to other possible challenges in life.

However, we all can have a part to play in humanitarian work, and I know that the Atlantic Baptist Convention is involved in relief work with Somali refugees in Kenya. In fact, I visited a refugee camp in Kenya where the hospital and clinic facilities had all been constructed by Canadian Baptists.

Locally there is a great need for volunteer staff and financial assistance for community services like the Red Cross, Big Brothers and Sisters, Adsum House and many others.

Internationally, the need is vast. Individuals can involve themselves in organizations like MSF as fund raisers, administrators or simply raising the consciousness of those around us and showing our friends and families that these causes are worthy of our time, consideration and effort.

The media presents a picture of overwhelming gloom and doom in the developing world, but I know that this is not the case. Progress is being made and it's individuals that make the difference.

I would like to end with a quote from Peyton Conway March: "There is a wonderful mythical law of nature that three things we crave most in life — happiness, freedom, and peace of mind — are always attained by giving them to someone else."

Editor's note. Dr. Joni Guptill received the YMCA Peace Medal for her work in Somalia. The above address was delivered at a union service of the Seabright Baptist Pastorate on Jan. 31.

FOR PROMOTION OR A FORUM

by Rev. Dr. Philip G.A. Griffin-Allwood

The recent absence of editorials in the *Atlantic Baptist* by the editor has again raised the question of whether the *Atlantic Baptist* exists for the promotion of denominational projects or as an independent forum for discussion and dialogue within the denomination. While the resumption of editorials in the March 1993 issue will defuse tensions, the question which sparked concern remain.

Complicating the issue is the fact that the *Atlantic Baptist* is the publication of a company, the Maritime Baptist Publishing Company. This company is wholly owned by the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces. It was bought in 1942 after 10 years of subsidies from the convention. Its origin lay in the creation of the *Missionary Magazine* in 1827. Through the years the periodical went through a variety of mergers and changes.

In all its forms prior to 1942 the paper was both independent of and intimately related to the denomination. The change which came in 1942 was that the paper was now wholly the denomination's. Since then there has been a debate about whether the exclusive purpose of the paper was to promote the denomination's work or to serve as a forum, or both.

To manage the company, in 1942, the Board of Publication was created. One responsibility was publication of the *Atlantic Baptist*. Curiously, while the company is still incorporated, the current Convention constitution only gives the Board of Publication responsibility for publication of a periodical. No reference is made to the company which owns the paper. This may be the source for tensions about whether the paper should solely promote the denomination or should be a forum.

Current discussion over the periodical role stems from a series of issues which culminated in an April 1992 editorial. In it Michael Lipe questioned, in the light of United in Mission funding, financial and other practices of the Canadian Baptist International Ministries. The conclusion of the article was, since CBIM now held a special offering in May, that its share of United in Mission should decrease.

The tone of the editorial, in my opinion, has tended to obscure the main point of the editorial: "What should be the level of funding for ministries/agencies which do additional fund raising within the denomination?" Subsequent debate about the *Atlantic Baptist* has avoided that question. But, we were assured during the presentation of the Budget at the 1992 Convention assembly that the matter was being examined. At least three other convention ministries/agencies have raised similar questions about United in Mission proportioning in recent years.

In response to the editorial the Spring 1992 meeting of the Convention Council passed a motion of confidence in CBIM and also requested the Board of Publication to review the appropriateness of the editorial. CBIM responded to the editorial with a detailed explanation of the matters raised, which was circulated to churches and published in the *Atlantic Baptist*. The Board of Publication decided that Board's Editorial Committee would be more active with reference to editorials and controversial matters. The editor interpreted the Board's decision to mean that "all editorials now must be approved by an Editorial Committee prior to publication" (*Atlantic Baptist*, November 1992, p. 28). The Board considered itself to be seeking to define the Editorial Committee's role. In response to this "censorship," the editor has not published editorials by himself.

In reponse to Michael Lipe's comment in the Letter to the Editor section of the November 1992 magazine, a number of letters were written and sent to the paper dealing with editorial freedom. Not wanting the *Atlantic Baptist* to become the focus of controversy, the Board of Publication suspended publication of all letters to the editor, after they were received, until the Board's annual meeting, Feb. 8. At that meeting the decision was made that the Board's editorial committee would be consultative concerning "sensitive" matters. More details are in the March 1993 issue.

Two responses have greeted the actions of the Board of Publication. Those who see the *Atlantic Baptist* as a forum for the exchange of ideas in the denomination are upset that one of the places for the exchange of ideas, the letters to the editor, was removed. This is viewed as intolerable censorship and un-Baptistic suppression of religious liberty.

On the other side are those who view the role of the periodical as promotional of the denomination's interests. Questioning of denominational actions is not considered to be within the paper's mandate.

This conflict is not new. I know of at least two occasions since the Second World War that this same question has been raised. The current debate, though, is more public than any previous. A choice may have to be made between having the *Atlantic Baptist* as promotional paper or as a forum. For me personally that decision has to be informed by the following questions:

At the last Convention reorganization, a conscious decision was made that the independence of the publishing company would remain and the Board of Publication would not become a Commission of the Convention. Is this *status quo* to be maintained?

The current editorial style is confrontational. It is well within the practice of other Baptist papers, particularly among Southern Baptists. Has this style contributed to their growth? This style has also been found in the history of Canadian Baptist periodicals, usually in periods of our growth. Is the desire of some for a promotional periodical a symptom of our decay? As Canadian journalism as a whole becomes more confrontational, will our denomination be healthier with an open forum which challenges our *status quos*?

Can supporters of the periodical as promoter of the denomination justify their position when the Convention only subsidizes the *Atlantic Baptist*? The majority of funding for the company comes from subscribers and advertisers. As a periodical does not the *Atlantic Baptist* serve those who pay the bills?

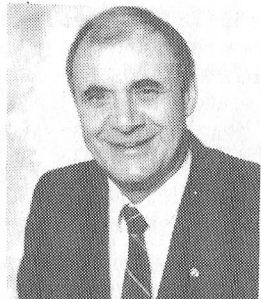
Throughout the discussions, the Board of Publication has operated with the premise that it does not want the periodical to be the focus of debate. But, did not the Spring 1992 actions of the Convention Council not make it that?

BRIEFLY

* "The ordination of women to the priesthood alters not a word in the creeds, the Scriptures, or the faith of our church", said Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, the spiritual head of the Church of England, when the General Synod voted in favour of the move in November 1992.

Archbishop Carey stated the Church risked losing its credibility if women are exercising leadership in every area of our society's life, save the ordained priesthood".

There are 70 million Anglicans in the world.



NEW EDITOR

Rev. Terry Tingley is the new editor of the ABF Bulletin. Rev. Tingley, an Acadia Divinity graduate was ordained in 1958, and ministered to Baptist churches on the Seabright pastorate; Hammonds Plains — Sackville; and Birch Cove, before becoming Convention's youth director, 1961-67. In 1967, he began a teaching career with the Halifax County School Board, and he has co-ordinated the Board's Student and Employee Assistance programs since 1983.

He experienced a bi-vocational ministry at St. Margaret's Bay and, as Minister of Christian Education at First Baptist Church, Halifax (1970-78).

The Tingley's (Lois and Terry) reside in Bayside (10 miles from Peggy's Cove) and are active in the church there.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor,
Atlantic Baptist Fellowship Bulletin

I have just been reading your *Bulletin* and sorting out who it represents. Having been away from the Maritimes for 35 years, I am not knowledgeable re: Baptist organization, but it appears to me that "The Fellowship" is serving a real need.

Ron and I are now members of the Port Williams Baptist Church. He graduated from Acadia 1957. I was Carol Chipman and left Acadia in '57 and graduated the summer of 1959. Our church background has been formed and tempered by I.V.C.F. so we appreciate a move on the part of Baptists to be Christian with a large "C" and Baptist with a small "b"!!

My reason for delving into the *Bulletin* was to find an address in relation to your upcoming assembly. Ron is "early retired" and we are renovating an old house to open as a "Bed and Breakfast" by May 1. Perhaps you might include a note in your *Bulletin* advertising our accommodation — we are just beyond Church Street on the highway to Canning and Blomodin. For May, our rates will be \$45 for room and breakfast for two people and \$50 with private 1/2 bath. (We will have three rooms available).

Ron and Carol Buckley
Old Rectory Bed and Breakfast
R.R. 1, Port Williams, N.S.
B0P 1T0
Phone: (902) 542-1815.

In the meantime, will talk to Ron, and will probably take out membership in the Fellowship. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Carol Buckley

BRIEFLY

* The choir of First Baptist Church, Halifax, has recorded a new album, "Sing Lullaby" — a collection of Christmas carols with contemporary arrangements. The choir is directed by David MacDonald.

"IMAGE OF GOD", THEME OF JUNE THEOLOGICAL SEMINAR

"Fully Alive as Persons in the image of God" is the intriguing title of the Atlantic Seminar in Theological Education to be held in June. The 25th ASTE will be held from June 6-11 at the N.S. Agricultural College, Truro, N.S.

The seminar will seek to answer questions such as "What is the Divine Image?" "How do we exhibit the Divine Image?" "Are both genders equally the carriers of the image of God?" "What does it mean to be 'fully alive' in God's image in the decisions of everyday life, in our work, in our leisure activities, in our relationships and in our struggles?"

These and other questions will be discussed by three scholars who will be in residence for the seminar. The scholars will include: Dr. Walter Vogels, Professor of Old Testament at St. Paul University, Ottawa who will give four lectures on these issues, from a Biblical perspective. Dr. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen is Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Department of Philosophy, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. Van Leeuwen will give four lectures dealing with the praxis of the seminar theme. Dr. Terrance Roy Anderson is Professor of Christian Social Ethics, Vancouver School of Theology. Dr. Anderson will address the topic from a theological perspective.

The Seminar is sponsored by the ASTE Steering Committee composed of lay persons, clergy, university faculty from the Atlantic Provinces in association with the Atlantic School of Theology and Acadia Divinity College. For further information, contact the ASTE Registrar, Joanne MacIntosh, Box 123, Truro, N.S. B2N 5B6.

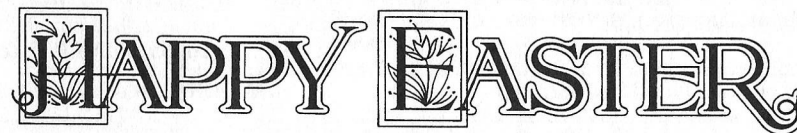
BRIEFLY

"We have no choice but to apply the hisorico-critical method so as to discover what can be said with scholarly certainty or the greatest possible probability about the Jesus of History."

— Hans Küng, 1928

ABF EXECUTIVE MEETS

The Executive of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship met on Thursday, Feb. 25 at First Baptist Church, Halifax. The agenda included a request regarding support for a newsletter to women in the Baptist ministry. Plans were also made for the ABF Spring Assembly May 21-22 at the Wolfville United Baptist Church. Details will be in the May issue of the ABF Bulletin.



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

It is the purpose of this article to deal with what is perhaps the most distinctive belief of Baptists — the principle of religious liberty. Baptists hold that since we are free moral beings made in the divine image we are morally responsible to God alone for our eternal destiny. Therefore, Baptists have maintained consistently and have defended on occasions, that in matters concerning a person's relation to God, conscience must not be restrained or constrained by force. No Church or State has any right to interfere with the religious beliefs and practices of individuals or Congregations. Each individual must be left free to believe in God or to disbelieve in Him, to worship or not to worship Him, according to the dictates of one's own conscience. We must also be free to instruct and pass on our beliefs — but in turn, be tolerant toward those who differ with us, in religious affairs.

From the beginning of their history, Baptists have persistently contended for this principle of freedom of conscience-unlimited freedom of mind.

SEPARATION: CHURCH AND STATE

The logical corollary of the doctrine of religious liberty is the principle of the separation of Church and State. By this is meant that the State has no right to interfere with the religious beliefs and practices of individuals or congregations; and that the church has no right to interfere with the state.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. Dr. Philip G.A. Griffin-Allwood is minister of the Lawrencetown United Baptist Church. "For Promotion or a Forum."

Rev. Dr. Gerry Harrop is a former faculty member of McMaster University now living in Halifax. "Claiming a Heritage and a Title."

Rev. Dr. Bruce Matthews is Head of the Department of Comparative Religion, Acadia University. "Living Religions — Buddhism."

2 COR: 3:17

"... and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

RSV

A THOUGHT FOR THE LENTEN SEASON

"The plea to come down from the Cross will come not from one's enemies but from one's friends, from those who share one's faith, but who lack the courage to die for it. And the crowds will go away, and leave the victim, desolate and alone, upon the hill."

— Edwin McNeill Poteat

Friends of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

FRIENDS are sympathetic to the aims of the ABF, which are:

- (1) To witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion which is the essence of the traditional Baptist position;
 - (2) To affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to the whole, visible, catholic and evangelical church of Jesus Christ;
 - (3) To strengthen the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces and to encourage it to strive for the above;
 - (4) To provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social problems and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love.
 - (5) To publish, at regular intervals, a Bulletin which seeks to further these aims and which describes the activities of the Fellowship and announces the agenda for its general meetings which will be held in the spring and in the autumn of each year.
- FRIENDS undertake:
- (1) To pray for the life and work of the Convention and the Fellowship;
 - (2) To seek other committed Christians to join the Fellowship;
 - (3) To become better informed about current ethical and theological issues;
 - (4) To pay an annual subscription, minimum \$10.00;
 - (5) To respond, as circumstances permit, to requests for financial support.

Please cut off along this line and mail to:

Dr. Dorothy Lovesey
P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0

Tel.: 902-542-5264

Please enrol me as a FRIEND.

Name and Title

Address

Date..... Tel.:

Subscription

FRIENDS OF THE ABF — UPDATE

by Dorothy M. Lovesey

We are happy to report that 1992 statistics show that we have had a good year during which 33 new "Friends" have been enrolled. Regrettably we have lost some through death. At the end of the year the roll stood at 232. The target for 1993 will be 250. Let's reach it.

Dues paid by 150 members (two-thirds of the whole) amounted to \$2,712; an average of \$11.69 per member. Since the formation of the "Friends" organization in 1988, it has raised \$9,714.26 net for ABF funds. We thank you all for your interest and continuing encouragement. Our main support comes from N.S. (156 Friends), Ontario (32) and N.B. (31).

This month we salute two more loyal "Friends," Harold and Zoa Stultz, of Wolfville, N.S.



Zoa Janette MacCabe graduated BA from Acadia University in 1926, where she met Harold T. Stultz who received his B.Sc. there in 1928. The couple married in 1929. Zoa proceeded to the MA in English, taught at the Grande Ligne Mission in Quebec for a year and at the Windsor High School for 15 years. A keen church worker she has been heavily involved with the missionary and benevolent societies of the Wolfville UBC.

Harold studied entomology at Yale and took his MSc in zoology at McGill. Until his retirement in 1967 he worked at the experimental farm in Kentville. Active in local affairs he has served the School Board, the V.O.N., the King's County Family and Children's Services and the Wolfville Historical Society. Last December Harold was a recipient of a special medal awarded by the Government of Canada to mark its 125th birthday for "community minded pioneers." Tireless in his support of the Church, Harold is Deacon Emeritus of the Wolfville United Baptist Church.

**PLEASE JOIN US
WE NEED YOU — YOU NEED US**