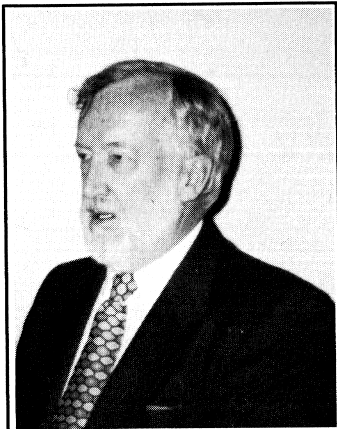


**ABF Spring Conference
June 7 and 8, 1996
First United Baptist Church
Amherst, Nova Scotia**

**Theme:
Ecumenical Models for the Local Church**



Speaker: Rev. Dr. Roger Cann

Programme

Friday Evening June 7th

6:30 p.m. - Registration
7:15 p.m. Lecture I - Roger Cann
8:45 p.m. - The Service of Holy Communion
9:15 p.m. - Reception

Saturday, June 8th

9:00 a.m. Devotions - Rev. Byron Corkum (host minister)
9:30 a.m. Lecture II - Roger Cann
10:30 a.m. - Coffee 'n' Conversation
10:45 a.m. - Talk-Back Session
Noon - Lunch at Church
1:00 p.m. - ABF Business Meeting
3:00 p.m. - Dismissal

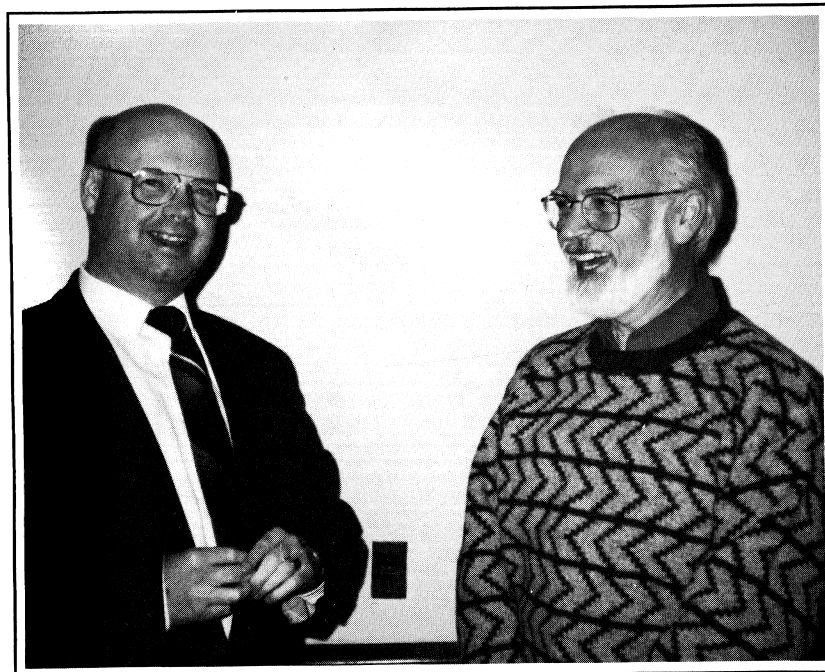
Accommodations

Comfort Inn - 143 South Albion St.
toll free 1-800-668-4200
1 person \$50. + tax
2 persons \$58. + tax

(please request corporate discount)

Wandlyn Inn - West Amherst
902-667-3331
1 person \$59. + tax
2 persons \$69. + tax
(indicate ABF Conference:
cut-off date May 17th)

**ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP
BULLETIN**



Roger Prentice and Frank McGill
ABF "enthusiasts"

ABF RETREAT

First Baptist Church Halifax
Saturday - April 13th - 1996
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

SPRING 1996

Rebirth to a Lively Hope

Elaine Ann MacGregor

Margo MacDougall, Jeffrey White and I attended the Alliance of Baptists' Annual Convocation held March 14-16th in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Convocation's theme was Rebirth to a Lively Hope - Listening to the Spirit. Margo and Jeffrey attended the Convocation as a result of the special project undertaken by the ABF to broaden the experience of our divinity students and recent graduates. I refer you to their article [page 12] regarding their experiences at the Convocation.

As President, I brought ABF greetings to the Alliance. The Alliance - ABF friendship was reaffirmed on an organizational and, perhaps most importantly, on a personal level, as time and time again we were welcomed and thanked for our presence and our interest in the Alliance.

The theme of Rebirth to a Lively Hope is one that we need to reflect on in terms of the ABF. What do we do as a fellowship that makes us hopeful? My continuing experience of Alliance Convocations: the worship programs, the workshops, and the new and continuing friendships is a cause for hope. Through the ABF's relationship with the Alliance kindred spirits are found, joys and sorrows shared, and Baptist beliefs we have in common are upheld and caused to flourish. The more I learn, the more I value the power and energy that relationships with like-minded folk provide. Our relationship with the Alliance gives us hope: hope of being revitalized, of expanding our horizons, and of being catalysts for Christian Action.

The ABF Retreat scheduled for Saturday, April 13th at First Baptist Church Halifax, is an opportunity to express our dreams and hopes. Our upcoming 25th anniversary this Fall is a time for rebirth. Listen to God's Spirit, reflect on it and consider how we can be renewed in purpose and in action. Attend the Retreat and share your reflections and visions. Through God our potential is limitless. Let us too be reborn to a lively hope.



Rev. Geri Downey was ordained at First Baptist Church Halifax on January 3, 1996. Pictured above she is being congratulated, following the service by Elaine Anne MacGregor, ABF President

Invitation for a Christian Community

Roger Prentice

In 1935, Dietrich Bonhoeffer moved his clandestine seminary to Finkenwalde, Germany, to avoid the Nazis and to share "the common life" with 25 seminarians. There he wrote his little book *Life Together*, describing this fellowship. It was published in 1938, a year before World War II, and only seven years before his martyrdom. At this same time Bonhoeffer also wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*.

One can hardly read *Life Together* and fail to see Bonhoeffer's desire for a greater communion with Christians where faith, devotion, and work might prosper. It may not be possible for us to live together as they did in Finkenwalde, but it would be good if we had a place where some of this might be experienced.

Over and over again, people who attend the A.B.F. conferences speak about the "friendliness" and the freedom of Christian fellowship which pervades our meetings. We relish the liberty of opinion which we have with each other, and the uniting of minds and hearts for Christ. This is something which we might pass on to others, and encourage its growth.

Is it possible for us to give our fellowship a "visible witness" so that "Christian community" may have a larger reality? Perhaps now is the time to build on what we have, not for ourselves, but to share the principles which we feel are so important within the Christian Church. If so, can we obtain a house as a place of residence for university students in the winter, and a retreat centre in the summer, and a centre for some of our activities? It need not be ostentatious, but worthy of our organization. It will mean investment, but it will grant to us a mission and a ministry

May I be so bold to suggest that a large home in Wolfville, near Acadia University, might suit these purposes? It would be a great addition to the Christian witness to the university if we could have a common community of five or six students living there, with a house leader, taking Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* seriously. How great it would be if, outside of term, there would be rooms available for clergy and others to stay over-night, week-ends, or a longer term, where we could live in quiet surroundings, read, reflect, join small discussion groups, go to the University Library, go for walks on the dykes, and enjoy the pleasantries of Wolfville, and read, think and pray.

A great need for our Baptist clergy is to have an opportunity to "go off to a lonely place," as our Lord did, where they might cultivate their spiritual lives, read without interruption, write, reflect, worship and renew themselves. If this is true of clergy, then it is also true for lay people. I hope that there would be a chapel, and a dining room, where the community might share both spiritual and physical nourishment.

An initial investment for buying a house would need to be raised, but room and board fees would help sustain the on-going venture. It should be a coöperative household, where people might volunteer to help with duties. A very good starting guide to such a *koinonia* would be Bonhoeffer's little book. It is a pity that our clergy do not have this experience, even for a little while, when attending seminary. It is a tragedy that our clergy do not have a proper retreat house in which they may consider the great issues of life and faith. Bonhoeffer wrote, "and that ... clarifies the goal of all Christian community: they meet one another as bringers of the message of salvation." He also said that Christ opened up the way to God and to each other, which is the foundation stone of Christian community. Perhaps this is an ideal issue for us to study at an A.B.F. conference programme.

They met constantly to hear the apostles teach and to share the common life, to break bread, and to pray.
Acts 2: 42 (REB)



ABF Retreat

Where: First Baptist Church Halifax

1300 Oxford Street, Halifax

When: Saturday, April 13, 1996 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Sandwich Lunch Provided

It seems that our best ideas at ABF Assemblies start to flow during the business sessions, only to be cut short by the conclusion of our meeting time. In order to provide a forum in which we can discuss our ideas for ABF uncrowded by business items, an ABF Retreat will be held Saturday, April 13th, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church Halifax.

This is an opportunity to reflect on the past 25 years of ABF activity and look ahead to the next 25 years. What are the goals and ideals of the past that we wish to maintain? Are there new directions or areas of interest that we want to pursue and develop? Are there things we are presently doing that we could do better?

Please think about what you would like to discuss at the Retreat and come prepared for an informal time of fellowship, sharing and dreaming aloud.

- Elaine Anne MacGregor, President ABF

Marginal Notes

Grammateus

The emergence of Patrick Buchanan as a serious force in the United States political scene signifies the power of the "Christian Coalition" aka the "religious right." This self-styled evangelical community has found in Buchanan a candidate who seems to reflect its values. He is indeed a new kind of candidate who has forsaken a media-honed type of presentation for preacher-like rhetoric — at the same time declarative and denunciatory. He probably will not be nominated, but the eventual nominee of the Republican establishment will ignore the Buchanan-Christian Coalition combination at its peril.

In this hemisphere there is another religious political movement, 180 degrees away from the America religious right, which believes it speaks too from a Biblical perspective. Liberation theology believes deeply that the exodus-motif of the Bible shows that with God there is a "preferential option for the poor" and other marginalized folk. It identifies in our day the foe as transnational, corporate capitalism and its political professors.

In Canada we express our socio-political convictions somewhat more quietly than in the USA or Latin America. The closest we seem to be to the religious right is the Reform Party of Canada. In its November, 1995, issue the *Canadian Baptist* featured the leader of the Reform Party, Preston Manning, with a colour-photo on the front cover and a main article almost hagiographic in its eulogy of this politician who was said to represent a "gospel of reconciliation" on the political scene. This article and photo resulted in a barrage of letters in the next two issues, almost all of them negative.



Surely our task is to express our political convictions with sincere force but with humility, realizing that it is God alone who knows who, if anyone, "ultimately dwells in his [sic] truth." This is as true in politics as it is in theology.

Editorial Comment ...

The Path to Reform

It is evident that Rev. Harry Gardner, new executive minister of the AUBC, is on the path of reform. Believe it or not, Convention reform is finally underway.

It appears Baptists are more than ready to confront the loss of the old and commit themselves to creative solutions concerning restructuring process re-design.

Hopefully, the task of our "reformers" will carry on with open access to meetings and rotation of membership. It is most important to keep all Associations/Churches informed during the transitional stage.

Convention Reform. . . now is the time.

Divinity Students to the Alliance



Margo MacDougall and Jeff White

A special fund raising effort is underway to finance the transportation costs of having sent Jeff White and Margo MacDougall to the Alliance of Baptists Convocation held March 14 to 16th in Charlotte, North Carolina. Please read their article in this Bulletin regarding the trip. This project is a way for the ABF to take action in broadening the experience of our future Ministers. It is a project to be excited about. If you are able, a financial contribution for this project is requested above and beyond your usual ABF contribution. Please note on the envelope of your contribution "Student Project" and mail it to : John Churchill, Treasurer ABF, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S., B0P 1T0.



Atlantic Baptist
Fellowship



within
Convention



ABF BULLETIN

The **ABF Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship.

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Opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the ABF or the Editor.

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Mrs. Isobel Horton, P.O. Box 586, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0.

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John Churchill, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S., B0P 1T0.

Receipts for income tax purposes will be mailed.

Next Issue:
SUMMER BULLETIN 1996

Deadline for submissions:
May 20, 1996

ABF BULLETIN EDITOR
Terry Tingley
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B3L 4J4
(902) 852-4405

Measuring Our (Baptist) Gift

A Devotional Message

Stan Haste

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.
Ephesians 4:1-7

What Paul clearly intended as instructions for congregations, I ask that we apply to our denomination.

From the perspective of the Baptist denomination, these instructions are particularly needed because of our own peculiar tendency as Baptists to go it alone, all the while convinced of our innate superiority over all other denominations.

This is, to be sure, a harsh judgment. Yet it is rendered by one whose own particularly peculiar variety of Baptists is disproportionately responsible for such nonsense. Tragically, and to the everlasting discredit of Southern Baptists, we exported this insupportable sense of superiority to many other parts of the Baptist world.

Many if not all of you know what I refer to. Landmarkism, a spurious theory that Baptists — and Southern Baptists most especially — can trace their history in unbroken succession all the way back to Jesus and John the Baptist, even found its way into Canada, particularly in the fiery rhetoric of fundamentalist Baptists in the 1920's.

As Baptist historian H. Leon McBeth concludes in *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*: "Fundamentalism made deep inroads into Canadian Baptist life in the 1920's, particularly in Ontario and the Western Provinces Canadian Baptists (still) find themselves divided over doctrine, methods, and affiliation. They continue to bear the scars of the Fundamentalist movement, and modern ecumenism and social issues have provided additional tensions."

In his invaluable little volume, *Not a Silent People: Controversies That Have Shaped Southern Baptists*, a work updated and reprinted just this year, Walter B. Shurden devotes two of his eight chapters to questions related to Baptist origins and sectarianism. Baptist sectarianism, he rightly concludes, is premised on Landmarkism.

Taken to its logical extreme, Southern Baptist Landmarkism became characterized by such a sense of sectarian superiority that not even the Roman Catholic notion of apostolic succession could match it. Here's how one Southern Baptist leader put it in 1948:

I am more tremendously convinced than ever that the last hope, the fairest hope, the only hope for evangelizing the world on New Testament principles is the Southern Baptist people represented in that Convention. I mean no unkindness to anybody on earth, but if you call that bigotry then make the most of it.



Little wonder that more than a half century later and drunk with the new

wine of denominational conquest, the Southern Baptist leader arguably most responsible for the fundamentalist takeover of the convention, Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tennessee, would declare in a newspaper interview:

This is going to sound almost like megalomania, but I believe that the hope of the world lies in the West. I believe the hope of the West lies in America. I believe the hope of America is in Judeo-Christian ethics. I believe that the backbone of that Judeo-Christian ethic is evangelical Christianity. I believe that the bellwether of evangelical Christianity is the Southern Baptist Convention. So I believe in a sense, that as the Southern Baptist Convention goes, so goes the world.

Contrast such self-ascribed megalomania with the magnanimity Paul advocates in Ephesians 4, the parts about humility and gentleness, patience and forbearance. More than that, contrast the arrogant exclusivity of that piece of our Baptist heritage with Paul's absolute inclusivity, "one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

Referring to this same set of contrasts, Professor Alan Neely of Princeton Seminary has lamented that "this persistent exclusivism has been buttressed by a selective reading of the Bible that ignores or distorts the repeated emphasis on Christian unity found in the New Testament. If we had only Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-21 — 'may they all be one' — and the epistle to the Ephesians — that matchless plea for unity — we would be hard put to dismiss as inconsequential or unrelated to us the theological and practical need for Christians to know each other and work together whenever and wherever possible."

Neely's observations just quoted were made in a commentary on Principle No. 3 in the Covenant of the Alliance of Baptists, a statement that follows on the heels of declarations of commitment to the freedom of the individual conscience and that of the local church, and reads: "... we commit ourselves to ... the larger body of Jesus Christ, expressed in various Christian traditions, and to a cooperation with believers everywhere in giving full expression to the Gospel...."

With that statement as background, Neely concluded his exposition thus: "Being alienated and excluded from our own historic Baptist family has proved to be a blessing for us in the Alliance. We have discovered the larger Baptist family of sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles and cousins galore.

"Others have reached out to us and we have reached out to them. Our growing awareness of and contact with the larger body of Christ has resulted both in a new sense of who is the family of God and in the forging of new bonds with members of that family."

Recently, in a book titled *The 'Genesis Controversy' and Continuity in Southern Baptist Chaos* (Mercer University Press, 1992) Ralph H. Elliott wrote: "My life has been singularly blessed in the belated discovery that ecumenical oneness is the given nature of the church. I am pleased with the circumstances that delivered me from an isolationist and isolating Christianity into the richness of cooperative Christianity."

Elliott's first-person narrative of his 1962 firing from the faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for alleged heresy in a commentary on the book of Genesis is in part a lament. Indeed, the subtitle to his new book, *A Eulogy for a Great Tradition*, betrays a lingering sense of grief over the lost potential of a body that once was referred to as the "sleeping giant" of American Protestantism.

But lament and grief are not the main themes of his sometimes brutally honest reflections on the events that interrupted, and then redirected, his



career and ministry more than three decades ago. Instead, in his own words, Elliott recalled: "I made a wonderful discovery. Forced to live as a pilgrim in exile circumstances, I discovered that the new situation liberated me to clarify who I was and who I ought to be. I would covet for all exiles, that having made the discovery, they can praise God and celebrate the journey...."

Like Ralph Elliott, we in the Alliance of Baptists are being "singularly blessed in the belated discovery" that Christ's church is one. To say that is at once a confession of sin and an act of praise.

For in seeking to flesh out our commitment to "the larger body of Jesus Christ," God has blessed the Alliance beyond all expectations with new relationships which span the great divides of region, race and nationality. As I posed the question to our membership during my 1995 annual report, "Who could have anticipated the sense of kinship we have discovered and enjoyed with American Baptists, Progressive National Baptists, Maritime Canadian Baptists and Cuban Baptists? Did we dare imagine ourselves welcome as official observers of the National Council of the Churches of Christ (USA)?"

Throughout the nearly seven years of my current assignment, I have become ever more convinced that God is beginning to do a new thing among groups of Baptist Christians, in widely diverse places, Baptists who are committed to the preservation of their first principles as a distinctive people yet open to the Spirit's movement in our time toward the greater unity of the whole people of God.

While I claim neither clairvoyant nor prophetic power, I find myself more and more leaning into the future with a sense, not of dread, but of confidence at what God is doing in the church today. Never before have I sensed the exhilaration I am sensing now of being on the edge of a new frontier.

Although the signs of denominational deteriorations are becoming clearer and clearer, with denominational lines more blurred than ever before, we are being reminded that, of itself, denominationalism is a less than worthy endeavor.

In Baptist churches everywhere, churches to be found all along the theological spectrum from liberal to fundamentalist, the sense of what it means to be Baptist is weak and growing weaker. More and more non-Baptists are finding their way into Baptist congregations of all types, just as more and more Baptists are finding their way into every other denomination.

While on one level, to be sure, such an unmistakable loss of identity is to be lamented, the potential for cooperative Christianity has never been greater, surely a fact to be celebrated. Indeed, it is a gift to be gratefully received.

This is perhaps the largest lesson for us proud Baptists to learn during a time of massive transition in our denomination. Yet learn it we must if we are to be where God is leading us to be. The spirit we need, that of Jesus and Paul, is reflected in a statement made 15 years ago by the murdered archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Romero:

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts. It is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that should be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No

confession brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set goals and objectives include everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future that is not our own.

Delivered at the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship Fall Conference
Canning United Baptist Church, September 23, 1995

A Christian Education Proposal

Carol Anne Janzen

I would like to introduce you to a project of mine which should be of interest to ABF members in western Nova Scotia. My goal is to establish a staffed Christian Education Resource Centre, in the Annapolis Valley, to provide training and resources in all areas of Christian education.

Through the proposed centre, churches would receive: guidance in evaluating and selecting curricula and study materials for church schools and mid-week programs, training for leaders and workers in the educational ministries of the church, and a lending library of Christian education resources (such as curricula samples and books and magazines on Christian life and teaching). Materials would be chosen for their sound theological and pedagogical bases. Although such a resource centre would be interdenominational in appeal (as well as in support), it would be Baptist in denominational affiliation; part of my mandate would be to encourage Baptists to recover their historical foundations, and to become more aware and supportive of the work we do together.

This proposal was presented publicly to the Eastern Valley United Baptist Association a year ago, where it was warmly received in principle; many concerned church members recognize the urgent need for informed Christian education leadership and training, especially in small and medium-sized churches which cannot afford a Christian Education specialist on staff. However, the challenge is to find adequate funding, for both the library resources and the staff member.

Please think and pray about this project; hopefully, we will have the opportunity to consider it in greater detail at the ABF retreat in Halifax on April 13th.



History of Quebec Nationalism

Roger Cann

Just when you think the debate on Quebec might take a rational turn, the war of words heats up again. Now there is talk of violence, using force to maintain borders, etc. It would be well for both sides in the debate to stop labeling their opponents, and stop attributing motives, and stop making unalterable "final" declarations. At least that is what we were advised in "Conflict Management" workshops.

A better way is to state what we know and feel about the issue, and then hear what others know and feel about the issue. Take the matter of the borders of Quebec. The Canadian Press published a set of maps to show that Quebec did not include the north until 1898 or 1912. That is a ROC (rest of Canada) position. But that is not the way Quebec sees it. Now we need to hear what Quebec feels about it.

A slim volume, *A History of Quebec Nationalism*, is essential reading for those on the side of reconciliation, and want to hear how Quebec feels. Written by Gilles Gougeon, translated by Blair, Chodos, and Ubertino, this book was published by James Lorimer, Toronto, in 1994. The 110 pages contain the translation of the edited audio track of television programs broadcast by Radio-Canada in January 1992. The television series was the fruit of painstaking archival research. We hear the evidence given by seven specialists in Quebec and Canadian history.

The evidence is there, in French, that *les Canadiens* considered themselves different from the French, the British and the Americans. They were in an impossible position in 1760, with only 70,000 *les Canadiens* in New France, and blocking the westward move of a million and a half settlers in the British colonies. The result was a truncated country, and *les Canadiens* were placed in a minority position in their own country, called Canada, which became the colony of Quebec in 1763. Their side of the story needs to be heard.

We who operate in English, and seek to hear Quebec, need to empathize with that sense of national identity. Studying *a History of Quebec Nationalism* is an important step in that direction.

Wolfville's New Minister

On January 7th, the Rev. Dr. Das Sydney was inducted as the senior minister of the Wolfville United Baptist Church. Dr. Sydney is a native of India. His parents were educators in the Church of South India in the state of Tamil Nadu. Subsequently his parents taught in Ethiopia, Ghana, and then after 1969 in Toronto.

In 1972 Dr. Sydney graduated from the University of Toronto. He received: Master of Divinity from McMaster, Master of Theology from Knox College (University of Toronto), and Doctor of Ministry from Northern Baptist in Chicago. He served in four churches in Ontario; Acton, Yorkminster Park in Toronto, Aylmer, and Blythwood Road in Toronto.

Dr. Sydney chaired the Task Force on Racism of the Canadian Council of Churches. He served on a number of Baptist committees, and was the President of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.

Associate Inducted

On Sunday, March 24th., Rev. Timothy McFarland was inducted as Associate Minister: Christian Education, First Baptist Church Halifax. Guest preacher for the occasion was Rev. Derrick Marshall.



Tim was minister of the Lower Granville pastorate in Nova Scotia until he and his wife Anne began their ministry in Halifax March 1st. Tim will be the devotional speaker at the ABF Retreat at First Baptist Church Halifax, April 13th.

Prophetic Voices ... Theme of ASTE '96

H. Miriam Ross

"Who and where are the prophets in today's church?" My question to friends was pointed and urgent as I pondered the theme for the 1996 Atlantic Seminar in Theological Education. Most responses were a disquieting pause followed by a disappointing retort: "Are there prophets today?" Other members of the Steering Committee of ASTE recounted similar reactions. Nevertheless, reflecting upon life in the modern world, we concluded there is something profoundly wrong — a sickness in the soul that brings poverty to the person, the community, and the environment. We determined to pursue traces of prophetic voices in the world today.

Most Old Testament prophets were visionaries and voices of conscience who spoke out against abuses perpetrated upon people within and without the Abrahamic covenant. Though frequently subjected to persecution, they continued to proclaim God's laws and promises. In the New Testament the centre of Jesus' mission was forgiving grace offered by God. The church was commissioned to communicate God's grace to others and to inspire people to extend that grace to one another. Surely in today's chaotic world, we need prophets who have experienced God's grace and are prepared to carry it to hurting and distressed people.

Slowly the theme for the 1996 Seminar took shape: "Prophetic Voices: Prophecy and Hope for the Church Today." Dr. Susan Slater Kuzak, Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Atlantic School of Theology, agreed to address our theme from a biblical/theological perspective. Dr. Max Stackhouse, presenter at the 1989 Seminar, has agreed to address our 1996 theme from a theological/praxis viewpoint. As Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Stackhouse has been deeply involved in issues of theological education in Europe and in the Third World. From their special backgrounds, both resource persons bring unique insights and deep concern for the relevance of the Christian faith and the opportunities for the Christian church to provide prophetic ministry in today's world.

In addition, on Tuesday evening, Dr. Maurice Tugwell, economist, Acting Vice-President (Academic) at Acadia University, and active United Church layman, will address the Dr. I. Judson Levy Forum on prophetic responses that go beyond the problems of poverty and affluence which threaten to submerge our society. The following evening under the title "God's Voice or Last Night's Pizza?", the Rev'd Henry Sharam, Baptist clergyman and practising psychotherapist, will discuss the form and function of some of the dreams recorded in Scripture and pose the question "Can some dreams today contain prophetic overtones?"

Since 1969, ASTE has brought together from various denominations resource persons and concerned clergy and laypersons to reflect on some of the most pertinent and troubling questions facing the church and society today. The 1996 Seminar promises to do the same. Will you join us for some or all sessions at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro from June 9 - 14, 1996? Further information is available from the Registrar, Mrs. Joanne MacIntosh, Box 123, Truro, N.S. B2N 5B6, Phone (902) 893-3392.

(H. Miriam Ross, is Professor Emeritus, Acadia University)



Listening to the Spirit in North Carolina

Jeffrey G. White and Margo MacDougall

Many thanks are extended to the ABF and the Alliance of Baptists for making our participation in the 1996 Convocation possible. In North Carolina we have been given many opportunities to listen to the Spirit of God in the varied stories within this vital community of God's people.

We have experienced a variety of worship, music, drama, prayer and spoken meditations with the common theme of Listening to the Spirit. We have listened in ourselves, our daily lives, our churches, and our world; determining to position ourselves with "one ear listening to the heart cries of the world, and one ear listening to the heart beat of God."

The closing service of communion culminated this listening theme, with individual testimonies and tokens of anticipation, joy, pain, and hope being laid on the altar and lifted in prayer. Then, this varied and vital community come together, even closer, in sharing the Lord's Supper and the benediction of peace.

Another great experience we had was fellowship and conversation with some American university students. Our first opportunity came with our visit to Duke University, hosted by Dr. Furman Hewitt, director of the Baptist House within the Duke Divinity School. We had much in common with the students, but certain differences also were obvious. Church leadership issues were found to be of great importance, including the roles of women in the church and the pastor's role in shaping congregational theology. Common concerns for preaching and communicating faith clearly led to a fruitful discussion about listening and speaking to people with whom one does not agree — a vital Christian skill!

Unfortunately, many Alliance members, including students, no longer feel at home in the Southern Baptist Convention, their home denomination. Gladly, we in Atlantic Canada do not see anything quite like the animosities sometimes present between the Baptist factions that have developed within the South, either qualitatively or quantitatively.

Like ADC students, young Alliance Baptists wonder where they shall find a church in which to minister. Yet, for them it is much more of a search for compatibility, with concerns for finding a "moderate" or "liberal" congregation, rather than a "conservative one."

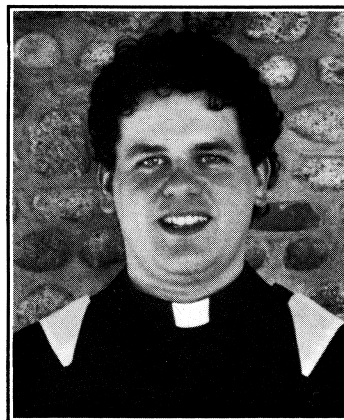
Many worthwhile workshops were offered at the Convocation, touching issues of gender, Christian-Jewish relations, peace and justice, Christian education and personal spirituality. Jeff attended "A Theology of the Earth." Ecological problems are not just scientific issues but are also theological, ethical and ecclesiastical issues. The question was raised: How should we be active in contributing to the solutions and the healing that is needed? We who are Atlantic Baptists also are drawn into this question. As in some Baptist life south of the border, not enough Christian education and Christian initiatives related to the creation exist in our churches. What can Convention do? What could the ABF do? What is the Spirit calling us all to do? We must keep these questions before us.



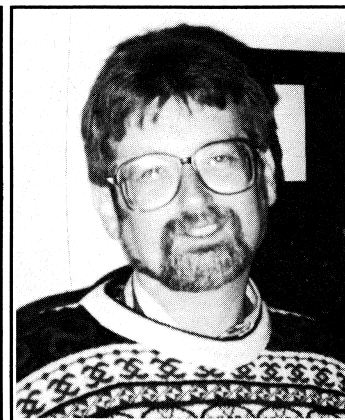
Much more could be said about our experience. In the end we must simply conclude with gratitude for the refreshing time of fellowship and education we have had. Thanks be to God; may we Listen to God's Spirit!

ABF Photo Album . . .

Timothy McFarland

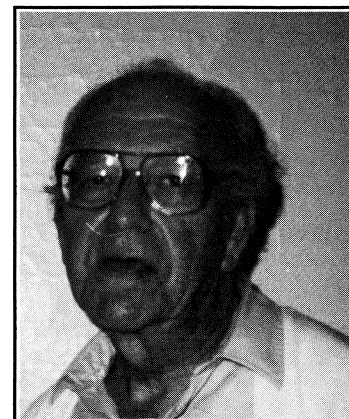


Byron Corkum



Don Myers

Howard Taylor



Debbie Boyd, Fern Levy, Lois Tingley



Updating William Barclay

M.R.B. Lovesey

William Barclay (1907-1978), "Willie" to his friends, is widely recognised as the greatest twentieth-century *vulgarisateur* of the New Testament in the English-speaking world. A preacher serving a dock-side church for fourteen years in Scotland, Willie became aware that his sermons had to be lightened by the use of helpful and interesting illustrations, in search of which he culled stories from history, literature, theological and devotional writings. Few of the older clerical readers of this essay will not have gratefully used Willie's help in this regard in their search for illustrative material for their otherwise somewhat boring excursions into biblical theology. A theological teacher for many years at Glasgow University, Willie, despite his extreme deafness, helped his students to understand the Bible. In particular, he helped them to see that a questioning and positively critical attitude to the Scriptures, so far from being a hindrance, was in fact a necessity, if the Bible's central message is to be grasped and put into practice.

Near the end of his writing career, Willie was asked by both the BRF (the Anglican *Bible Reading Fellowship*) and the IBRA (the non-conformists, Protestant *International Bible Reading Association*) to write a book to help modern readers of the ancient writings to understand them and to interpret them better. Willie delighted to point out the vast differences between *reading* and *studying* the Bible. The Bible is a difficult book, written in several languages very different from English, coming from an ancient culture and civilization, talking about difficult things, and therefore it must be studied, or it will be grievously misunderstood.

So Willie's book, *Introducing the Bible*, first saw the light of day in 1972. It has helped thousands of Christian believers to what Hans Küng has called a "reasonable faith." One ecstatic reader of it wrote: "he [Barclay] rolled back the stone from the tomb of my ignorance, allowing me to ascend to the threshold of Christian understanding."

Since the early years of the seventies, scholarly opinion about the Bible has changed somewhat, as is inevitable in the "progress of dogma," and when it was decided to update Willie's book the task was entrusted to Professor John W. Rogerson, Head of the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield. The professor decided to do this by scrapping the first chapter, "The Ancient Book," and replacing it with an Introduction in which he sketched the changes in the scholarly theological climate since Barclay's day. The remaining chapters were only altered to a very minimal extent. The book, published in 1992, entitled *William Barclay Introduces the Bible*, preserves 90% of Barclay's original script.

Some of the changes in theological opinion that Rogerson refers to may be mentioned here. The severe grammatico-historical critical approach to the Bible, espoused by Barclay, has been tempered somewhat by the realisation that an imaginative approach is both possible and legitimate. Willie thought that Ephesians was Pauline but modern opinion generally takes it to be Deutero-Pauline. It is realised now that an ancient writer can say profoundly true things without knowing what he was doing. "We can affirm both that the writer of Isaiah 52.13-53.12 was not writing about Jesus and that it is appropriate for Christians to read the passage with Jesus in mind." The Old Testament is more than merely an introduction to the New: it is God's Word to us in and of itself.



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.

Friends of the ABF - Update

Dorothy M. Lovesey

A happy and memorable Easter to one and all! May you experience in full measure the sense of hope, triumph renewal and peace that this season brings.

Our financial year, ending 31st December 1995, makes satisfactory reading, and thanks are due to all those who faithfully paid their dues and contributed in any way. Our accounts have been audited and approved by our good friend and neighbour Glen Tillotson. These indicate that at the end of 1995 our membership was 265. Dues paid for 1995 amounted to \$2,414.45. This amount was raised by 51% of the membership. Since the inception of the Friends' organization in 1988, \$18,361.13 has been given for ongoing work of the ABF.

We are pleased to announce a special FRIENDS' RALLY to be held Saturday, 27 April 1996, in the Manning Memorial Chapel of Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S. It will be held from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Luncheon will be available at \$9.50 per person. The speaker will be our good friend and colleague Dr. G. G. Harrop, a former professor of biblical studies at the McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario. He will address a topic of concern to us all: "Canadian Baptists Today." We do hope you will be able to attend what promises to be a lively and interesting occasion. Please let us know of your intention to come. But come even though you don't reply! Bring a friend!

We regret to record the passing of a loyal 'Friend,' the Reverend Donald M. Quigg, respected pastor and effective local secretary of the Canadian Bible Society, who died 25 November 1995, aged 75.

Please cut off along this line and mail to:

Dr. Dorothy M. Lovesey:
P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S. B0P1X0
Tel.: 902-542-5264

Please enrol me as a FRIEND:

Name & title.....
Address.....
Date..... Tel.
Subscription.....

PLEASE JOIN US

YOU NEED US -
WE NEED YOU

