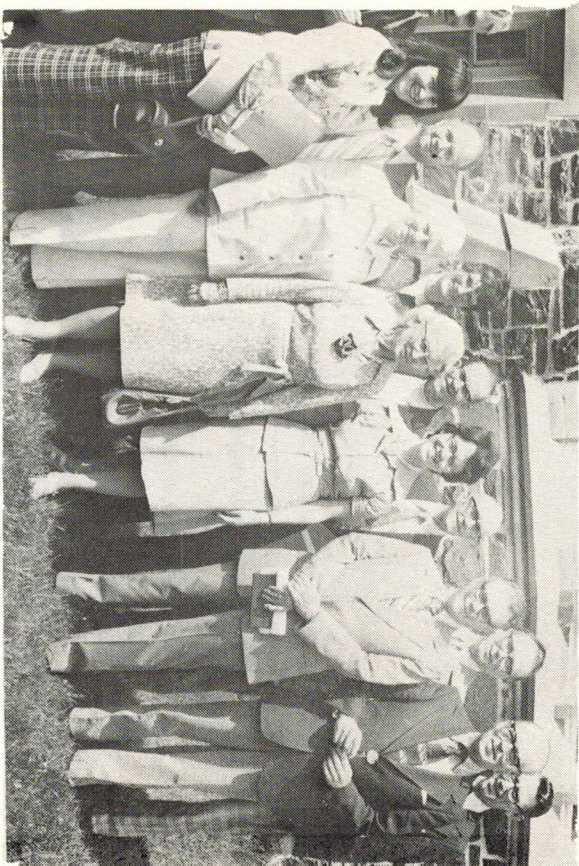


## NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS



**PRESIDENT:** *Dr. R. S. Dunn*  
**VICE PRESIDENT:** *Rev. Vincent Rushton*  
**SECRETARY:** *Dr. Frank Sinnott*  
**TREASURER:** *Mr. J. W. Miles*

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Rev. Robert Matthews	Rev. Allan Jorgenson
Mr. Kendall Kenny	Mrs. Gwen Atherton
Mrs. Althea Colpitts	Mr. Hilyard Nason
Rev. Alder Colpitts	Mr. Jack Matthews
Dr. Marion Grant	Miss Susan Lavery
Miss Mary Miles	Mrs. Anne Lidstone

### '76 FALL GENERAL MEETING

The Fall General Meeting of the ABF will take the form of a retreat at which time the purpose and function of ABF will be reviewed with an eye to the future.

It is hoped that the facilities of the Atlantic Christian Training Center in Taramagouche will be available for this meeting. Tentative dates are November 5th and 6th. Possible alternative dates are October 23rd and 24th.

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND ALL ABF MEETINGS**

EDITED BY:

Vin and Jean Rushton & Mary Miles

## Report Of The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship Meetings

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH – HALIFAX

May 28th and 29th. 1976



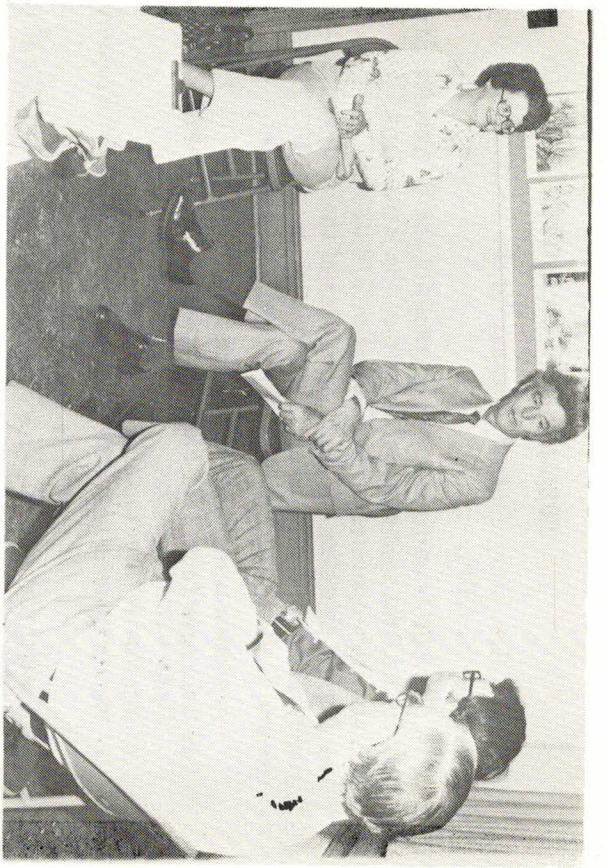
ED COLCLOUGHOUN SPEAKS DURING DISCUSSION PERIOD

THEME: "Freedom and Authority in Religion"

GUEST SPEAKER:

**Dr. Russell Aldwinckle**  
 Professor of Christian  
 Interpretation  
 McMaster Divinity College  
 Hamilton, Ontario.





Discussion Group led by Rev. Mel Scott



Discussion Group led by Dr. Dorothy Lovesey

The Fellowship expresses appreciation to Dr. Aldwinckle for his excellent, thought-provoking lectures. Equally appreciated were the warmth and graciousness of Dr. Aldwinckle who made himself so available to people in discussion groups and individually over coffee.

Friday evening's program closed with a Service of Holy Communion led by Dr. Wm. Carey Harvey and the Deacons of First Baptist Church, Halifax.

The noon meal Saturday was a lovely buffet luncheon prepared by the ladies of the host church. Following the meal devotions were led by the Rev. Mel Scott and Dr. R. S. Dunn.

Saturday afternoon was given to the business of the Fellowship. Dr. Dunn, president of the ABF, chaired the business session which concluded promptly at 3.00 p.m. as planned.



Discussion Group led by Rev. Alton Alexander



It is, therefore, very unwise for associations and conventions to try to take unto themselves the power to decide the conditions of membership in the local church. This can only be done by developing a more authoritative church structure to which the local church must conform. This, however, is alien to the Baptist tradition.

### **BAPTISTS AND OTHER CHRISTIANS**

Most Baptists from the 17th. century onwards have practiced only one form of baptism, believers' baptism by immersion. A few in the early 17th. century used aspersion or sprinkling of believers and John Bunyan's church in Bedford retained both infant and believers' baptism.

In deciding their attitude towards members of other churches today, Baptists have to clarify their view as to what makes a believer. They are not contending merely for much or little water. Where infant baptism plus confirmation and personal experience results in what Baptists call a born-again Christian, should we insist upon the form of immersion as a condition of transfer to a Baptist church? This is a decision which in our polity can only be taken by the local congregation of believers and cannot be imposed by any higher authority above the local church. Baptists must learn to live with the diversity which our emphasis upon local autonomy involves. In the last analysis, love and charity more than strict logic should determine our actions in this area of inter-church relationships.



**DR. RUSSELL ALDWINCKLE**  
Professor of Christian Interpretation  
McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

### **BAPTISTS AND AUTHORITY**

by

**DR. R. F. ALDWINCKLE**

The attitude of Christians to the church has been greatly influenced by the present reaction against authority in all its forms. There are basically two types of authority. External authority involves the imposition of law, whether in church or state, upon the individual who is compelled to conform by threat of punishment. Internal authority is freely accepted by the individual who recognizes the truth for his own mind and conscience.

### **EXTERNAL VERSUS INTERNAL AUTHORITY**

In the past, many people feared the external authority of church and state. The church could and did excommunicate the disobedient. Few people today fear this.

Before truth can become authoritative for us, it has to be accepted by us in the light of a sincere conscience and honest thought. Baptists have tended to stress the church as a Spirit-created fellowship and to play down the importance of church structures and institutions as such. History and experience prove, however, that both are needed and spirit and organization are not necessarily antagonistic.

For Christians, God alone is the ultimate source of authority since all truth comes from **Him**. All churches acknowledge this in principle. They differ as to how God mediates this truth to men.



## **TRADITION VERSUS THE SPIRIT AND THE SCRIPTURES**

Some churches have felt that tradition was more important than the Scriptures as a means of revealing God. Other churches did not entirely repudiate tradition.

Ana-Baptists, Congregationalists, Puritans and others tried to break with the traditional concept of authority in the church.

The authority of the Word of God was set over against the traditions of the church by Baptists. From the 17th century on Baptists were influenced by Calvinism with its emphases on the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and its literalism, but the inner witness of the Holy Spirit was also strongly emphasised and acted as a modifying force.

If we take a broad view of our Baptist history we will see great differences in regard to the various views of the nature of Biblical inspiration.

We must trust the Holy Spirit to bring men and women who search the Scriptures to the central Person — Christ Jesus.

## **ADULT BAPTISM VERSUS INFANT BAPTISM**

Baptists modified the traditional principal of authority by making a clean break with the age old traditional practice of infant baptism, practicing believers' baptism and developing a doctrine of the church as a fellowship of believers on a congregational basis.

## **AUTHORITARIAN VERSUS CONGREGATIONAL POLITY**

With regard to church polity Baptists vested authority in the local congregation of believers under the Headship of Christ. This meant freedom to appoint its officers, call and ordain its ministers, decide the conditions of membership in the local churches, and exercise whatever discipline it considered proper over its members.

## **CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS**

Historically, Baptists have repudiated creeds as theological tests for church membership. This does not mean that they have despised the great creeds of the early church or that they believe nothing at all. However, they have preferred simply to affirm the sufficiency of Scripture for faith and practice and leave the individual free to work out his own theology. This involves risks but Baptists have thought the risk worth taking in the cause of spiritual liberty within the church.

## **BAPTISTS AND FREEDOM**

by  
**DR. R. F. ALDWINCKLE**

Freedom is hard to define. The man in the street says it's the freedom to act without the restraint of others (the freedom to do one's own thing).

In religious language, it means the liberation of the individual from the power of sin. This means, then, that we are not free when we have the power to choose between good and evil. The more Christian we become the less able we are to do certain things, (to choose evil). It is a freedom to live on the basis of trust and love toward God in Christ. This type of freedom cannot be legislated by religious authorities.

## **BAPTISM**

If faith involves such responsible commitment to God in Christ then one cannot be physically born into the faith. One is reborn into the fellowship of Christ. Our loyalty to Believers Baptism expresses this clearly.

## **A FREE CHURCH**

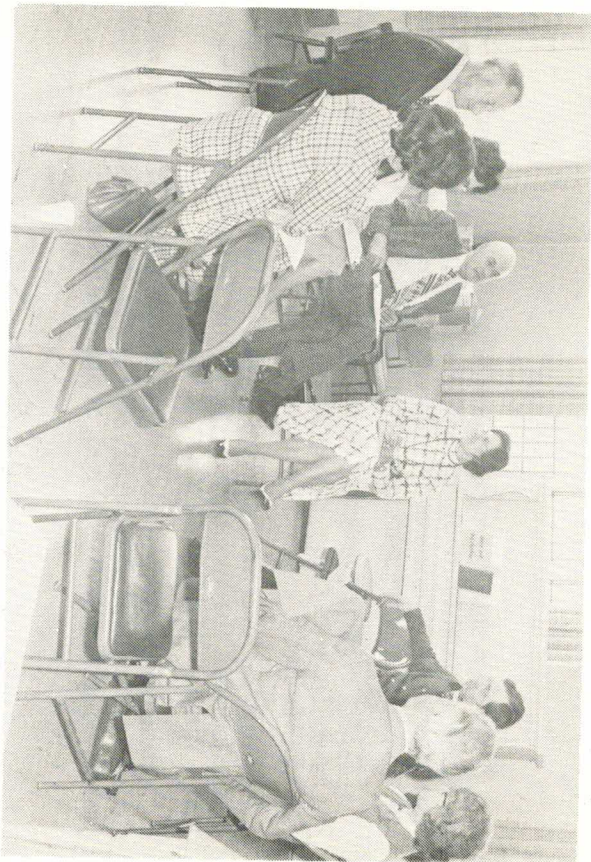
The practical consequence of this is that the church cannot allow its membership to be decided by any external body, such as the state. In Germany at the time of the Reformation, if a prince became a Protestant so did all his people. In England, if one was born an Englishman, one was an Anglican. We stand, as Baptists, in a heritage which insists on a free Church in a Free Society. When the state starts to interfere in the internal workings of the church, then we must be alert.

## **A DEMOCRATIC CHURCH**

Baptists have vested final authority in the local congregation of believers under the Headship of Christ.

However, the New Testament uses the word 'ecclesia' to denote not only the local church but the church throughout a certain region, e.g. Galatia. Baptists have refused, however, to extend the word church to associations, unions or conventions. These latter bodies have emerged to further fellowship and co-operation among the local churches, not to dictate to them.





Discussion Group led by Rev. Robert Matthews



Discussion Group led by Dr. Wm. Carey Harvey

## SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The Rev. Terry Tingley reported for the Social Action Committee of the ABF.

The ABF is particularly concerned for the Ecumenical Ministry to the Deaf under the leadership of the Rev. Frank Gyle. This ministry operates with a budget of \$20,000 a year. Presently two Baptist churches which are members of the ABF contribute jointly \$350. to this ministry. Convention gives \$100. The Anglican and United churches together contribute \$16,000.

A motion was passed requesting:

- a) that a letter be sent to Convention commending this ministry and asking for increased support.*
- b) that the ABF contribute \$100.*
- c) that the churches be asked to give a special offering for this ministry.*

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A letter just in from Rev. Frank Gyle, Chaplain of the Ecumenical Ministry to the Deaf says:

*"Thanks for the ABF offer to help promote our cause".*

There are about 705 deaf people in the Atlantic Provinces. Out of the 424 whose denominational affiliation is known. 39 are Baptists.

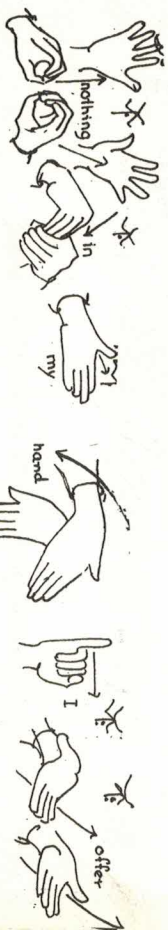
The task undertaken by Mr. Gyle and his staff is to travel about the Atlantic Provinces to work among the deaf people. EMO was chartered in October, 1972, in Halifax as a religious corporation to work among deaf persons in the Maritimes. Newfoundland has since been added.

The Chaplain and the New Brunswick Parish Worker serve any deaf person or group with religious services as requested.

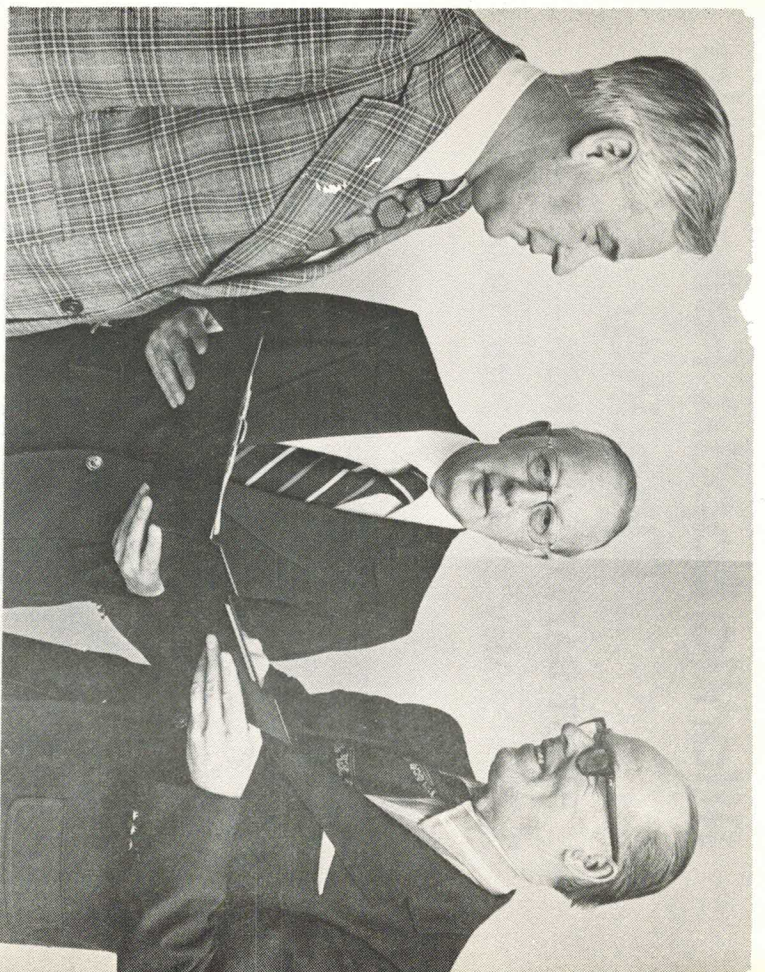
They first of all must find these people, then they must help them develop a sense of community, security and identity. They also help provide opportunities for hearing parents to participate in programs with deaf people.

They also counsel the deaf. Perhaps the following will speak to us and challenge us — — —

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Dr. R. F. Aldwinckle, professor of Christian Interpretation, McMaster Divinity College, who was special speaker, talks with Dr. Reginald Dunn, President of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship and minister of the 1st Baptist Church, Amherst, and Dr. Carey Harvey, minister of the entertaining Church, 1st Baptist, Halifax.

The Spring General Meeting of the ABF was hosted by First Baptist Church in Halifax, May 28th-29th, 1976.

We were privileged to have as our guest lecturer, Dr. Russell Aldwinckle from McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario.

Friday evening, Dr. Aldwinckle addressed the gathering on the topic, **Baptists and Authority**. Saturday morning his subject was **Baptists and Freedom**. Printed outlines of Dr. Aldwinckle's lectures and topics for discussion were distributed to the delegates and visitors.

Discussion groups met following each lecture. These were led by Dr. Wm. Carey Harvey, Rev. Alton Alexander, Rev. Robert Matthews, Rev. Mel Scott and Dr. Dorothy Lovesey.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

During the Business Session a proposal was received and accepted that the ABF institute a Theological Commission which shall have as its objectives:

- (a) *The promotion of the serious study of contemporary theological problems and issues.*
- (b) *the provision of opportunities for theological thinking and expression.*
- (c) *the promotion of theological study groups in local areas.*
- (d) *the publication of a series of ABF Study Guides for local church groups, dealing with such matters as the meaning of theology, the purpose and place of creeds and confessions in the life of the church, authority in religion, the interpretation of the Bible, and the like.*

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### QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

The ABF will publish a quarterly newsletter or journal starting with a Fall issue. Dr. I. Judson Levy has agreed to serve as editor of this publication. As yet a name for this publication has not been chosen.

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### CONCERNS COST

Dollars and cents are needed to support the ministry to the deaf, a quarterly publication and the work of a theological commission. If you share these concerns, perhaps you would like to demonstrate your interest with a gift to the ABF. Send your gift to the treasurer, Mr. J. W. Miles, R. R. No. 2, Marion Bridge, N.S. B0A 1P0.

### PURPOSE OF A.B.F.

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is a group of churches and individual members who meet regularly for the purpose of studying the Scriptures and examining the present and the Historical Baptist Positions regarding Faith and Practice, under the leadership of Devoted and Scholarly Church Leaders, in order that they may more wisely face the tasks and problems of the church today.