

The Bulletin

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MEMORIAL WINDOW - WOLFVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

WINTER 2019

Editorial: The Golden Calf

Recall the story of the Golden Calf where the Israelites lost faith in Moses and possibly God, whilst Moses was on Mount Sinai in God's presence. They were constructing their idol when their leader communed and received God's Commandments.

There is no question that Christians are devoted to God, but what of our own private devotions at home, or even as a congregation? Christmas has come and gone as a festival but have we received any deeper insight into the Incarnation from these celebrations? Have we, as individuals, moved beyond St. Matthew and St. Luke to the 'inner Bethlehem' of our soul?

We might also wonder if our church 'services' actually prepare us devotionally in Advent for the Christmas season. Have we almost totally forgotten the message of the Second Coming and what that means?

'Focus' is so important for worship. The focus is upon God in Christ, not us, not how we enjoy the annual Christmas pageant, the choir's music, and any other entertaining element presented on Sunday morning. There is nothing wrong with these, of course, but they rarely focus the individual's commitment to our Lord. These entertaining productions have an honourable place at another time other than our services of worship.

Are we beginning to build our own golden calf by selling out our worship to the desire to attract people back to our churches? In olden days, the Evangelists had it right: their presentations were made in the marketplace. One might think of St. Paul in Athens (Acts 17: 17). Some of our churches are developing devotional booklets for Advent like the splendid one by the Port Williams Baptist Church, or the very attractive one by Henri J.M. Nouwen that Wolfville Baptist provides.

Roger H. Prentice—Editor

Touching the Past: Worshiping in the Seasons of Faith

The Rev'd Bert Radford

Several Protestant denominations have, of late, re-discovered the liturgical calendar, the cycle of the Christian year. It has been observed in Catholic churches through the centuries but was rejected by some reformers and specially by non-conformists, our Baptist ancestors. The principle seasons in the cycle are Advent, Christmas and Epiphany that celebrate the birth of Christ, Lent and Holy Week that mark Christ's death, and Easter, the celebration of Christ's resurrection. I



was raised and began my ministry in the Baptist tradition of observing only “special days”, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Easter Day. Many Baptist churches continue this minimal observance of the Christian calendar. I was strongly influenced by several ministers who followed the lectionary and the church year meticulously and, like them, I adopted that practice. Sometimes I wonder what we have gained by moving away from our non-conformist roots and reverting to pre-reformation traditions.

At a basic level, I realize that following the church year organizes our

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The colour cover was donated by a friend of CAFE.

worship and gives us ready-made themes for planning our preaching. The minister does not start from scratch in deciding the central subject of sermon and worship. Advent and Lent also provide a time of preparation, of extended focus, on the basic truths of Christmas and Easter so that the Holy Days are more than a sudden and short-lived focus on these central themes of our faith. Further, I have found that congregations readily accept this approach and enthusiastically appoint the sanctuary with the proper colours, light the Advent candles, shroud the cross and make the sanctuary festive with banners and lilies on Easter morning. All these visual symbols stimulate our worship and enhance our connections with the historic events that are the source of our faith.

But those immersed in this approach believe the significance to be deeper. Some believe that by observing these seasons the modern church actually relives the temporal life of Christ, as ministers are fond of saying, “Journeying to Bethlehem to worship the new-born babe,” or “Walking with Christ on the road to the cross”. But the question haunts me, “Can we really do this?” Can we bridge the chasm of time and take part in those dramatic events, Christ’s birth, death and resurrection? When I think about it, I inevitably conclude that our faith began in events bound by the chains of time. We can not actually re-live them; they can not re-occur again and again. But, the impact of those distant events on human lives, miraculously, has not diminished over the centuries but continues to change lives as the worship of the church touches our spirits and inspires new perceptions and new acceptance of the Christ. I think that the celebration of the Christian year has a sacramental efficacy for congregations that diligently and sincerely enter into the symbolism and worship appropriate to the season. As we worship in the forms and traditions of old “we touch and handle things unseen” and “grasp with firmer hands, the eternal grace”.

The Rev'd Bert Radford lives with his wife Mae and are members of the Burlington Baptist Church, Ontario.

The Art of Pastoral Listening and Preaching

By the Reverend Scott Kindred-Barnes, PhD
Senior Minister of Wolfville Baptist Church, Nova Scotia

The Reverend Dr. R. Maurice Boyd once wrote: “to be a biblical preacher in the deepest sense is not to expound a text but to present a Person.” And among believers the Person of Jesus Christ is alive and working in the local Christian fellowship through the Holy Spirit. I was reminded of this essential truth this summer when my family moved from Ottawa, Ontario to Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Moving back to Nova



Scotia after living in Ontario for sixteen years was not easy for my family. Not only did we have to say good bye to our church family at First Baptist Ottawa, whom we have grown to love and cherish, but we also underestimated how difficult it would be to up-root our lives, change provinces and enter into a new community of faith. Thus, these early months of pastoral ministry here in Wolfville have been a time of listening to both God and to the community.

On September 2, 2018 I led worship and preached for the first time as Wolfville Baptist’s Senior Minister. In my first sermon, I used the following illustration:

There’s a story (probably apocryphal) about a young new pastor who came to a small town in Georgia right out of seminary. He was energetic and full of enthusiasm; he couldn’t wait to get started. Before the moving van was even unpacked, he walked across the street to get a glimpse of his new Methodist Church. It was a beautiful church, rich with history, and it looked warm and inviting. But the first thing he noticed was an old, gnarled tree that blocked the side doors of the

building. He thought to himself “This tree is ugly and it’s a fire hazard. Why hasn’t someone done something about it?” Then he thought that a great way to take initiative would be to cut down the tree as a surprise for his members on Sunday morning. Before long the tree was down. Unfortunately, he had not realized that the tree was supposed to have been planted by John Wesley himself, the man who inspired Methodism, hundreds of years earlier. Apparently, this young pastor never had to unpack his boxes; he never even made it to Sunday morning.



While I am yet to unpack all my boxes, I am pleased to say that I have made it to the Christmas season without cutting down any major trees so to speak! My point of course is that new ministers are obligated to be good listeners. This means that we need to be listening for what the inner witness of the Holy Spirit is speaking in and through the community and the Scriptures. Change may very well be in order; but a congregation is not called to change for the sake of change itself. Thus, a wise pastor needs to survey the land so to speak in order to speak to the needs of the particular community of faith who has called him/her to leadership.

About a decade ago I attended a church service in rural Ontario with some friends. The central focus of the service was the sermon which happened to be wired in from a much larger church in Toronto. The sermon itself was engaging and relevant but unfortunately something

pastoral was missing. The week prior to the service the rural community had tragically lost a prominent and influential member. Naturally, the community was grieving and in need of pastoral care. The sermon, while biblically based and appealing, seemed to miss the community's specific pastoral needs; precisely because it was written for a context literally hundred of miles away. This experience reminded me that the preaching pastor has an important shepherding role to honour. Not only is she called to preach each Sunday from the Bible, but equally important, the pastor is called to shepherd her people in the ways of Christian discipleship. This means the pastor is called to be a translator of sorts. Not just the biblical languages into the vernacular, but rather, a translator who enter into that space of prayerful struggle and reward where the needs of the community and the message of the Scriptures come together. This often looks different each week but it is a place where the preacher must go in order to equip the saints for kingdom living.

Dr. Scott Kindred-Barnes was inducted last autumn as Minister of Wolfville Baptist Church.

Canadian Council of Churches Report

Now in its seventy-fourth year of existence, the co-operative nature of the Canadian Council of Churches is something of a miracle of the Holy Spirit with its 26 member churches as diverse as Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Free Church, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, and Historic Protestant. The CABF is committed to the mission of the CCC which responds to Christ's call for unity and peace, seeks



Christ's truth with affection for diversity, and acts in love through prayer, dialogue and witness to the gospel.

The meeting of the Governors in November was memorable for the quality of the presentations to the Board. Major Helen Hastie of the Salvation Army, our representative to the Chaplaincy Committee of the Correctional Service, vividly portrayed for us the difficulties of advocating for a group of individuals who are despised not only by society in general, but also by some in the organization charged to care for them.

We heard also from the Major-General Guy Chapdelaine and Commander Bonita Mason of the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service, who work in an environment in which great respect is shown to the "Padre" by all members of the Armed Forces. Sister Eileen Schuller was one of an outstanding panel that helped us reflect on the possibility of further Christian Jewish Dialogue. The Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group presented a very thought-provoking panel on the ethical implications of genetic biomodification and the development of autonomous weapons systems.

Watch for Canada-wide events next year to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the CCC.

Ed Colquhoun is the CABF Representative to the Board

Little Church at the Crossroads: A new book of Baptist history

Gary L. Nelson has brought us a new book almost prophetically entitled, *Little Church at the Crossroads*. It is an engaging yet scholarly history of the Falmouth Baptist Church. This is of importance to Canadian Baptists because Falmouth was the place where the Alline family settled as Planters, and Henry Alline was converted and became a powerful force in establishing the New Light movement in the Maritimes in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century.

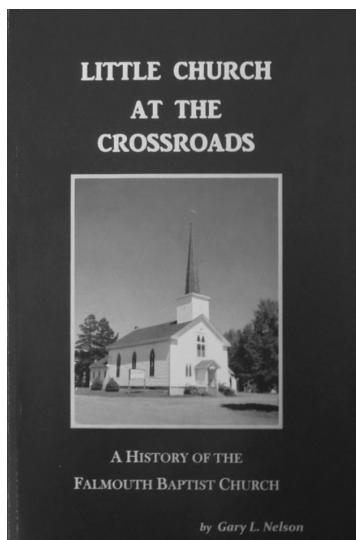
With prolific photographs illustrating his text, Mr. Nelson allows the story of the congregation to unfold. The extensive text of 266 pages

has been augmented with seven Appendices (pp. 268-363), a Bibliography of published and unpublished sources (pp. 365-370), Genealogical chart (pp. 371-380), and an extensive Index (pp. 381-401). All of these will be of immense help to both the casual and scholarly readers.

The congregation was formally founded in 1830 and has been served by many well-known Baptist ministers. Of particular value are the 'Biographical Notes on Pastors' (pp. 309-346) accompanied with their portraits. Another interesting little-known history is of the African Baptist Church in Falmouth (pp. 210-212).

Superbly written and illustrated, Mr. Nelson, long a loyal member of the congregation, has done a great service for the Baptist denomination. The church became a full member of the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms (then known as the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship) in February 2012 (v. pp. 152, 157). This book was published in 2018. Certainly the title is farther seeing than just for Falmouth congregation as we are conscious of the debilitating spiritual environment of today's society.

The first edition has been sold out but there is a possibility of a second printing through the original printers, Gaspereau Press of Kentville, N. S. The volume is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Ralph Loomer and the Rev'd Donald I. McClare. We encourage prospective purchasers to contact Mr. Gary Nelson personally.



There's Nothing Ordinary About It

David M. Csinos

The term 'ordination' may share its root with ordinary, but there's very little that's ordinary about it. These days, even regular churchgoers rarely attend services of ordination, let alone folks who don't consider themselves part of the church.

On 13 October 2018, I was privileged to be ordained to Christian ministry by Port Williams United Baptist Church.

As much as I learned about the perils and pitfalls of “worlds colliding” from George Constanza, my ordination was an opportunity to cast the nets wide and invite many people from my life to share this important moment with me. Of course, members of PWUBC were present and participated in the service. And my parents made the journey from Ontario for the special day. We were joined by many others among the wider Christian community in the Maritimes, including faculty, students, formation directors, Senators, and members of the Board of Governors at Atlantic School of Theology, where I serve as a professor. Added into this mix were friends from Nova Scotia, some members of my wife's family from PEI, and my former pastor from my days in Richmond, Virginia, who made it to town after a delayed flight from her home in North Carolina left her stranded in New Jersey overnight (an authentic Maritime travel experience).

So when we gathered into that quaint church on the banks of the Bay of Fundy, this ad hoc community certainly embodied what the Rev. Dr. Don Flowers said they were: a stand-in representation of the worldwide church. There were Baptist and Anglicans, Roman Catholics and members of the United Church of Canada, and even friends who showed



their support while not being part of any church, all together as one community of faith.

Whenever an ecumenical community like this gathers together, there are bound to be things that, while normal among some traditions, seem unusual for others. And since we Baptists tend to do things differently than many of our brothers and sisters from other branches of our common Christian tree, the family, friends, and colleagues from other traditions were struck by how the Baptist community in Port Williams practice ordination.

In particular, many told me how touched they were by how we practiced the laying on of hands. In some of their traditions, bishops, priests, and ministers are the ones who lay hands on the ordained; but at PWUBC, in keeping with Baptist theology and polity, all who were present at my ordination were invited to lay hands on me and offer me a blessing. After all, that diverse little community was the living representation of the church universal. And so after a group of clergy laid hands on me, followed by my parents, and before my wife and then finally our minister had their turns, everyone else formed a line in order to take their turn conferring a blessing on me that day.

As a person whose faith has been shaped by many Christian traditions, I found this moment to be particularly touching. I was not only ordained by my Baptist church in Port Williams, but by members of the Roman Catholic church, the United Church of Canada, and the worldwide Anglican communion, and even celebrated with those who don't consider themselves Christian. This moment symbolized the ecumenism of my own faith. But more than this, it also reminded me of my present and future calling: to join God in ministering to the church universal and to the wider world that God so loves. This, in fact, is not simply the calling of clergy, but the duty of all who count themselves disciples of Jesus. But that's the subject of another article.

The Rev'd Dr. David Csinos is a member of the Port Williams United Baptist Church and is a professor at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax.

'The Full-Orbed Gospel'

The Ministry of Henry Fish Waring

An interesting former Maritime Baptist minister was Henry Fish Waring (1870-1936). Not only was his middle name unusual, but he was exceptionally bright and articulate about learning and growth in the faith.

Waring was born at Milford, just outside Saint John, N.B., on 15 June 1870 and studied at Acadia University where he was awarded a BA in 1890 at his tender age of almost 20 years. This prodigy immediately went on to Rochester Theological Seminary where the 'Father of the Social Gospel,' Walter Rauschenbusch, was in his earlier years of teaching and whom Waring must have known and likely was one of his students. Waring eventually graduated from Rochester in 1894 with a BD degree (forerunner of the M.Div.). From that point, now married to Ella Durkee, he engaged in more graduate studies, this time at the University of Chicago. A discerning reader will note that these places of study were early incubators of the Social Gospel. Their influence was most noticeable at Acadia University from the 1920's to the 1970's.

Returning to the Maritimes, Waring was called to Immanuel Baptist Church, Truro (1897-1900), and Brussels Street Baptist in Saint John (1900-1903). His social gospel seemed to take flight in this ministry for he began a weekly newsletter called 'The People's Church' and insisted that a pew was left free from 'rent' for visiting commercial visitors. This was Pew 90. Nonetheless, it is possible to assume this might have been at the back.

Whilst in Saint John, Waring began a 'Chinese Class' to teach newcomers the English language. He also built a baptistery 'with his own hands' within the sanctuary at the end of 1902. Along with these achievements, Waring encouraged his young people to use the Revised Version (1881 NT, 1885 OT, 1894 Apocrypha) instead of the usual King James' Version of the Bible. This advice obviously turned some heads, not the least the people of First Baptist Church Halifax.

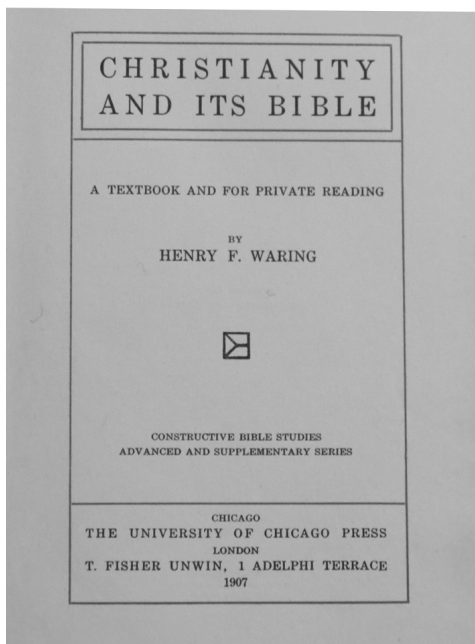
In 1903 the Warings were called to First Baptist, Halifax. This would

be the place where Waring would gain an increasing reputation for his liberal theology and stance for the social gospel. Even more significantly, this is the congregation that significantly supported the foundation and support of Acadia University. Within the congregation, there were wealthy and influential leaders who were also members of the Acadia Board of Governors and retired clergy who were formally attached to the College. Even before Waring's call to Halifax, in 1897,

he had written a theologically fascinating article in the *Messenger and Visitor*, stating, 'The certainty of Jesus' Resurrection does not rest in the last issue of His isolated appearance during the forty days; it rests on His life for thirty-three years.'

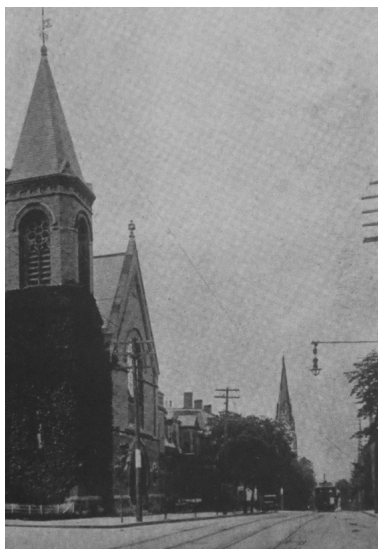
Whilst in Halifax Waring wrote his classic, *Christianity and Its Bible*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1907. This book caused much discussion. Speaking to an inter-denomination group of Halifax ministers and mentioning the emphasis in his soon-to-be-published book of the rising tide of Higher Criticism, *The Maritime Baptist* (27 February 1907) reported, '...commended itself to the judgement of those who heard it, and called forth highly appreciative comments.' One of his 1908 Halifax sermons, reported by the local press, was entitled 'Was Jesus Socially a Revolutionary?' People flocked to hear Waring preach and his sermons were frequently reported by the Halifax daily newspapers.

Not all were so appreciative. Critical letters arrived from more conservative Baptist ministers that he politely answered. Fortunately, *The Maritime Baptist* later commented, 'Our knowledge of Mr. Waring



– the breadth of his scholarship, the vigor of his thought and the thoroughness of his method – has us to entertain very favorable [sic] anticipation concerning his book.’ In a good sense, Waring was a pioneer for Higher Critical methods for understanding the Scriptures, and for the Social Gospel within the Maritime Convention.

Waring would, in 1910, positively answer the call from Fourth Avenue Baptist Church, Vancouver (1910-1916), Berwyn Baptist church, Chicago (1916-1924) and eventually became Professor of Biblical Literature at Wheaton College, Norton,



First Baptist Church Halifax at the time of Waring's ministry.

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Massachusetts. He died in Boston on 10 July 1936, a month after he turned 66 years of age.

It was clergy such as Waring who brought the Baptist churches to the forefront of addressing the social conditions of the day, filled the pews and proclaimed the Gospel as a relevant and progressive message. It was a needy society who were facing a financial depression at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, and who were unknowingly lurching into the devastating Great War of 1914-1918. Waring's courage, thoughtfulness and fulsome faith helped to proclaim a relevant Gospel to the yearning Maritimers and beyond. He was the minister who wished to proclaim, as he declared, a 'full-orbed Gospel.'

The Way, The Truth, The Life: *In Memory of a Faithful Christian*

On the day after Epiphany, 7 January 2019, Gene Trites, as she was lovingly and universally known, passed away at the Valley Regional Hospital, Kentville. She was married to Dr. Alison Trites and had two sons, Jonathan and Ian. She also had a multitude of friends and was a very active member of the Wolfville Baptist Church and the Wolfville Inter-Church Council.

People were invited to visit the family at the White's funeral home in Kentville on Sunday evening, 13 January, and the service was held in Wolfville Baptist Church on Monday, 14 January at 2 p.m. It was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Scott Kindred-Barnes.

St. John 14 is a favourite passage in times like this and verse 6 records the words of Jesus, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' These words came alive through the life of Gene.

The CABF extends its sincere sympathy to Allison, Jonathan, Ian, and the rest of their family and knows that the love of God was manifested to them through the life and faith of Gene.

Christmas Nativity Scene

Wolfville Baptist Church this past Christmas placed a beautiful Nativity Scene on their front lawn. Constructed and painted by artists and carpenters from the congregation and community, the church situated it at one of the vibrant street corners of the Town. It was also directly across the street from the Town Clock Park where the community met for their tree lighting ceremony. The town cooperated by providing the power for lighting the display that presented the story of the first Christmas to the public.

