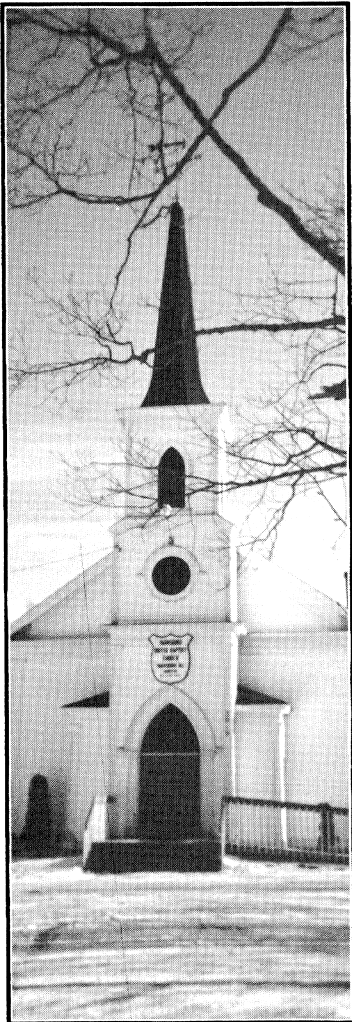


ABF SPRING ASSEMBLY

May 26 and 27, 2000



United Baptist Church
Parrsboro, Nova Scotia



Friday - May 26

6:30 pm Registration
7:00 pm Address
Willis Henderson
Minister, Sydney, UBC
Holy Communion
Pastor and Deacons, host church
Fellowship - continued



Saturday - May 27

8:30 am Devotions
Harriet McCready
9:00 am Business Meeting
10:00 am Break
10:10 am Address
"Evangelism and Discipleship
For the Third Millennium"
Roger Prentice
Chaplain, Acadia University
Panelists
Wilma Janzen - Kentville
Mark McKim - Saint John
12:00 noon Lunch
Parrsboro UBC
1:00 pm Homeward Bound



A Quarterly Publication of the

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

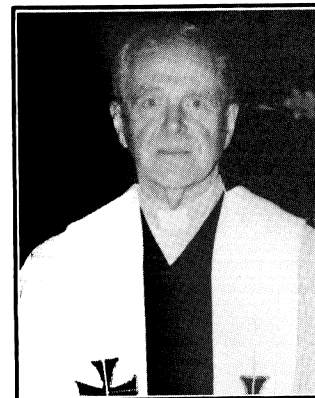
the Bulletin

ABF SPRING ASSEMBLY

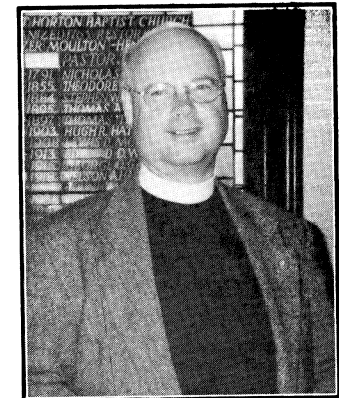
PARRSBORO - NOVA SCOTIA

May 26th and 27th, 2000

Speakers



Willis Henderson
Minister
Sydney UB Church



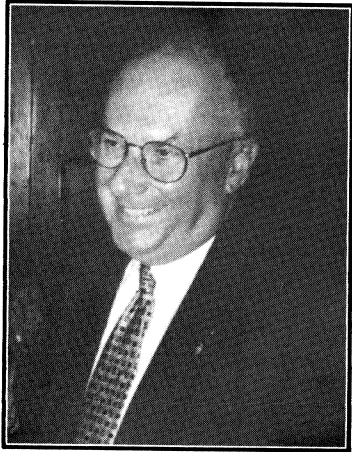
Roger Prentice
Chaplain
Acadia University

For Details See Back Cover

Spring 2000

President's Message

Paul Burden, President ABF



Paul Burden

A while ago I received an e-mail from The Gathering in Ontario. This is a part of that mail.

"Please remember Mike Agres in prayer. Mike was forced out of his job as Southern Baptist Chaplain at Princeton in late October as a result of all to familiar fundamentalist machinations."

"A crisis was caused by the exclusion of four Northern California churches from their region of American Baptist Churches of the West."

What is going on in our denomination? Why is there so much ill will and polarization in the church? What has happened to the tenets of the Baptist Faith that allow individual congregations to choose their own path? I talk to women pastors in our region who are not being called to ministry because of their gender.

They feel ostracized from their own faith communities and the convention and area assemblies that ordained them and giving no support to their needs. On one hand these bodies are trying to exert more control over congregations and individuals, but on the other hand are not assisting those in pain and need of support.

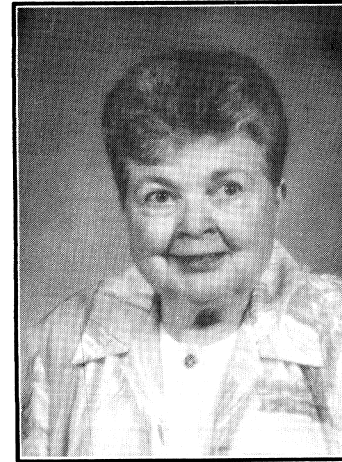
Some Baptist Churches and members of same are becoming very judgmental of those in society who are in need of comfort and support. I see and hear people in my own area, which I always thought was very open, harshly judging those who do not fall within the confines of their own narrow views.

I am not a biblical scholar and I am the first to admit that I am a sinner and have struggled all my life to be a better person in the eyes of Christ and my fellow man, but I feel that our Lord must be very unhappy with many of his children in the Baptist denomination. I grew up a Baptist under the guidance of such leaders as Jud Levy, Abner Langley and Millard Cherry, to name a few. They have given leadership that professes tolerance, love and expression of what it is to be a Baptist. I am afraid that many in the Baptist Church today have not had the opportunity to learn of the hard won tenets that separate us from other faiths. I find this particularly true among people in their twenties and thirties. I think that some leaders in our churches today are not teaching us about the history of our faith, which I think is all a part of our path to finding God.

I thank God every day for organizations like ABF which was my saving grace, The Alliance of Baptists who in their country have brought new hope to thousands who suffered real persecution, and to The Gathering who have done the same in Ontario. I hope that we in the ABF can provide help in bringing factions together through loving and caring for anyone, whatever "side" they might be on, and be a forum for open discussion on matters of faith. There are, however, many, many individuals throughout the Baptist world who are providing wise and thoughtful leadership and I am grateful for them all.

Dignity and Equality - At What Price?

Nita M. Irvine



Nita M. Irvine

It was most encouraging to read in the December issue of the "Atlantic Baptist" that the Chester Basin United Baptist Church when adding its extension also made improvements to the entrance to the sanctuary which included the installation of a handicap lift. Nova Scotia has a disability rate of over 23 % with over half of those having a physical or mobility disability and at least 50% of those are under the age of 40. Yet most of our churches do not provide accessibility to full participation in the life of the Church for this segment of our population.

In recent years many of our churches have installed ramps which have provided some access to the main floor of the church building but in many buildings these ramps lead to a door which is rarely used and is therefore not unlocked. Once in the buildings, if one is that lucky, further access is usually very restricted. We pay a great price when we exclude persons with outstanding gifts they could offer to the Lord's work in our churches when they can't access meeting rooms and other facilities. Efforts are often made to try to accommodate an individual church member by providing a key to a door but this, in no way, prevents the systemic discrimination which exists.

There are many frustrations which constantly face persons with disabilities in our churches such as an inability to pass the elements of Communion; lack of handrails to access the pulpit platform; Sunday School classes and meeting rooms for Board meetings which are being moved around to accommodate a VCR which can't leave the main floor. These are just a few that I experience on a regular basis.

Yes, upgrading our facilities in our churches will be expensive! But the human cost can be even greater! We have to stop ignoring the fact that there are people in our communities who might like to join us and participate in the full life of our churches if they could only access them. There are also many who are faithful in our churches who struggle valiantly each Sunday with the barriers to accessibility which exist.

The insensitivity to the needs of persons with disabilities is evident in all areas of our society, but shouldn't we as God's people be ever conscious of the needs of all of His people; it is what our Lord demands of us.

For me it is not only a matter of love and respect; it is a matter of DIGNITY!

Nita Irvine is a person with multiple physical disabilities who is an active member of Wolfville United Baptist Church and Moderator of the Eastern Valley Baptist Association. She also serves on the Program Committee of the ABF.

Vincent Rushton

We didn't think of him as "Vincent". He was not a formal sort of person. "Vin" suited him better. He was the friend and colleague you could count on to be there, and to be interested in what is happening, and to back you up when you seemed determined to put your neck in a noose.

Being a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was more than a calling to Vin, it was his life. As a minister in Nova Scotia Churches and a missionary in India, Vin was a pastor who sorrowed with those who sorrowed, and laughed with others in their joy.

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was dear to him. He served the Fellowship well, as an officer, spokesperson, editor and photographer. His caring for the Fellowship and its churches led him to visit and exhort and comfort. The set backs and the lost votes bothered him, but he would bounce back as cheerful and confident as ever

There is a gap in our ranks.



Reverend Vincent Rushton

1920 — 1999

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship



within
Convention

ABF BULLETIN

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Editorial Comment . . .

Death is Swallowed Up in Victory

Death is probably one of the least used words in our vocabulary. We prefer to use "passing away", "departure", "decease", "parting", or "exit". Why is "death" treated like a dirty word? Parental guidance is not required to see the agony of dying, the tragedy of death, the unexpectedness of the end of this earthly life. It is portrayed on television, in daily newspapers, magazines and books, and in the community.

We talk and teach freely of many other subjects. Why exclude death? Death education is necessary as an aid to help us face death. Avoiding the subject deprives us of the preparation necessary to cope with death when it happens.

Much research has been conducted recently into the emotions and behaviour surrounding death. Data indicates people must be encouraged to work through a progression of normal feelings. Unfortunately, many do not know how to seek out support of how to give support. It is time our christian educators gave young people an opportunity to discuss the topic. Too many evade the reality and inevitability of death.

It was almost 5,000 years ago that the Egyptians believed that a soul could not pass into the next world without the body in which it had lived. They found a way of caring for the bodies of the dead, placing the "mummy" in a coffin and putting in each tomb articles or objects the dead person would need in that next world.

It is not uncommon for people to be buried today with jewellery or gifts placed in the coffin with the "remains".

Is not undue concern about the body a pagan emphasis? Most church leaders will agree that costly devices to restore a life-like appearance to the body is not Christian. Any costly method or paraphernalia to camouflage death is heathen.

Perhaps it is the lack of awareness pertaining to death that allows such practices to continue. Actually, it is our custom of disguising death that is mainly responsible for the high cost of dying. As one person stated, "I'm too poor to die." Another has said, "I can't afford to live and I can't afford to die."

In recent years, there has been a rapid spread of memorial societies - citizens groups aimed at creating a general climate of opinion in which simple dignity and modest expense in funerals will be acceptable.

Living memorials in which donations are made to charitable organizations are encouraged. (It is evident by examining the obituary column that people are looking for tributes more enduring than flowers.)

Pre-arranged funerals make sense. People suffering from grief are not in the right frame of mind to handle details.

Talking about death is generally the best way to accept it. The language of the living designed to soften the blow of death only tends to prolong its agony.

Sooner or later, death comes close to each of us. There is nothing for Christians to worry about in death. We are in God's hands - both now and forever.

The message of Easter speaks to us: "All thanks to God, then, who gives us the victory over these things through our Lord Jesus Christ." (The First Letter to the Christians at Corinth, Ch. 15:57 - The New Testament in Modern English - J. B. Phillips)

Biblical Perspectives on Baptism

Pauline Allsop

Our understanding of the sacrament of baptism comes from our reading of the New Testament, principally the letters of Paul. But how did the Biblical writers understand baptism? And from where do the imagery and symbolism of baptism come? This short essay will try to answer some of these questions.

The Greek word from which our word "baptize" comes, *baptizein*, comes from *baptein* ("dip"), and means "dip frequently, plunge, immerse." Rites of immersion were quite common in the religious world in which Christianity developed, being found in religions such as Eleusis, Mithras and Isis. There is also evidence that baptism of proselytes was practised in Judaism in the first century. The symbolism of these various rites differed: some symbolized purification from sin; some functioned as rites of initiation or rites of passage, symbolizing the leaving behind of the old life and the rebirth into a new life. The ritual of Christian baptism held many symbolic meanings, some of which will be discussed briefly later.

The Imagery of Baptism:

Water: In the Hebrew Scriptures, water is used as an image or symbol of many things: life-threatening chaos (Gen 1: 1-10) and at the same time a necessity of life (Gen 2); the agent of destruction and death (Gen 6:11-19) and at the same time the agent of new life (Ez 36, 47:1-14). The Psalms frequently use water as a symbol of the life given by God to the people of the earth (e.g. Ps65:9-10). In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that he will give "living water" which will ensure that the one who believes in his word will never again be thirsty (4:13-14); and later he portrays himself as the living water, the water of life: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink." (7:37-38) Water, then, brings both death and life.

Regeneration: A person who is converted to belief in Christ undergoes so radical a change that it is referred to as being born anew (in John 3:3 the Greek word *anōthen* often translated "from above," also means "anew" or "again."). Those who come to Christ are re-born or "re-generated," and their new life or regeneration is like a cleansing or washing that is brought about through the agency of the Holy Spirit. In baptism, they are born anew by "water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:6), born into a new life that death cannot destroy. Baptism, then, is the act of passing through the waters of death into life. The image of passing through water is also linked to passing through the waters of physical birth, from which we emerge into a world of relationships. In the waters of baptism we die to our old existence and way of life, and are brought into a new covenantal kind of relationship.

Adoption and Incorporation: Although the language of new birth might suggest a purely personal and individual change in the believer, the images of baptism also include the idea of new relationships. At baptism we are brought first of all into a new relationship with God, a relationship that Paul has pictured by means of the image of "adoption." Before baptism, Paul likens us to slaves to sin and death; when we are baptized we become children of God, and heirs to God's promises (Gal 4:7). Secondly, in addition to the image of adoption as children and heirs of God, Paul also uses the image of "incorporation" for the other relationships into which we enter through baptism. "Incorporation" means "being made part of a body," and when we are baptized, we are incorporated into Christ, or made part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). So we are related not only to God, but also to all other Christians; this relationship is so close that Paul frequently refers to the church as "the body of Christ" (e.g. Rom 12:4-9; 1 Cor 12:12-20).

How did the Early Church Understand Baptism?

The earliest written Christian documents that have come down to us are the letters of Paul. Written in the 50's, these letters present us with Paul's view of the symbolism of baptism and its effect on the one baptized. Given the great diversity of Christianity in the first century and the often unique character of Paul's thought, it is impossible to say whether Paul's views reflected the views of the majority of Christian leaders. Many of the communities that were made up largely of Jewish Christians, such as the one for whom Matthew wrote his Gospel, may have had slightly different understandings of baptism. However, as the church became increasingly Gentile, Paul's views in large measure shaped its beliefs, and by the end of the first century it seems likely that they were fairly universally accepted.

Paul does not tell us anything about how people were baptized in his day; he was clearly more concerned with the theological meaning of the act than with its mechanics. The two passages from Paul's letters most often cited are Romans 6 and Galatians 3.

Romans 6: ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

In this passage Paul connects baptism with the death of Jesus; for him baptism signifies the fact that in Christ the believer shares in the death of Jesus, which he describes as a death to sin (Rom 6: 10). Those who in baptism share this death will themselves die to sin. The Christian in baptism has shared in the death of Christ; therefore Paul considers that, once baptized, sin no longer has absolute rule over us. Having been buried with Christ in baptism, we are now to consider ourselves dead as far as the power of sin is concerned. For the first time, we can choose not to sin, but choose to follow exhortations to good.

However, that is only half of Paul's story of baptism: Christ died, but he also rose from the dead. So if by dying Christ conquered sin, by rising he conquered death. If by baptism we have shared in that death, we shall also share in that overcoming of death, not in the "now" but in the future, in the resurrection that is to come. We shall take possession of our new life at the final resurrection, but until that time, the new life we have, we have by reason of Christ. It is important to note that Paul makes this distinction of times by his use of the past tense for our sharing in Christ's death, and the future tense for our sharing in Christ's resurrection. Why is this important? It is because if, as seems likely, descent into the water symbolized entering the grave, then coming up out of the water should symbolize rising from the grave. Yet, obvious as that parallel was, Paul did not draw it. For him, our participation in the resurrection, of which Christ was the first example, will involve a total transformation of reality, including the transformation of our bodies of flesh into bodies of spirit (Rom 8:21, 1 Cor 15:42-44, 49). This will only take place in the future, at the resurrection that marks the return of Christ in glory at the end of the age. For that reason, Paul is clear that we do not share in Christ's resurrection in the way that we share in his death. But if we do not yet share the glory of Christ's resurrection, the share in his death is enough for now: it has broken the enslaving power of sin over us.

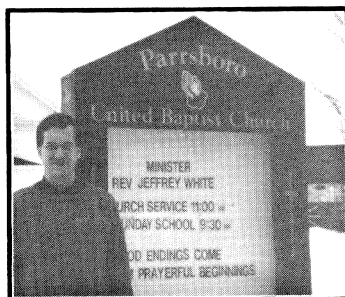
Galatians 3 ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Here Paul views baptism as "clothing yourselves with Christ" (Gal 3:27) or

"putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 13:14), implying that at baptism we are immersed in Christ, and so put on the character of Christ. Baptism is a moment when Christ, like a garment, envelops the believer. This concept of being spiritually "clothed" is found in several texts in the Hebrew Scriptures, e.g. God "has clothed me with the garments of salvation, covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Is 6 1: 10). It seems certain that Paul, although he does not use the words, is alluding to this and other similar passages to describe the righteousness (i.e. being put right with God) conferred on the believer at baptism. Paul also sees baptism as the point at which God's grace changes our perception of the order of things in our world. He uses the example of the pairs of unequal opposites that constituted for the people of antiquity "the way the world was organized" - you were either Jew or Gentile, a free person or a slave, a man or a woman (Gal 3:28). Their world view was based on these "pillars" or cosmic elements, paired, as we can see, in relationships of dominance/submission or superior/inferior. Now, Paul says, these things have been swept away for the Christian. In Christ, these things are no longer of any importance, because all are "one in Christ" - all are equal before Christ, and no one is superior or dominant over another.

So in baptism we go through the water from death to life, symbolizing new birth or regeneration. In baptism we become children of God and part of the body of Christ. In baptism we die to the absolute power of sin and we are given a share in the future resurrection. In baptism we are clothed with Christ and returned to right relationship with God. Now we see the world through new eyes, rejecting its concept of dominance and submission, since we are all united in Christ. In the moment of passing through the waters of baptism, our whole world is changed through God's grace, and we are empowered to begin a life of ministry and mission.

Dr. Pauline Allsop is a lecturer at the Atlantic School of Theology.

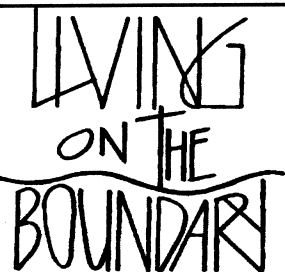


Jeff White

ABF Spring Assembly
May 26th and 27th

Accommodations: Bed & Breakfast, Inns
Call NS Toll Free Info: 1-800-565-0000

Billets: Please check with host minister
Jeff White no later than May 12th
902-254-2558



Alliance of Baptists
Convocation 2000
University Baptist Church
Austin, Texas
April 27th — 29th

beginning with a reception at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday
and worship at 7:15 p.m.

I Believe... Stuart Frayne

Belief is a personal matter; so it is proper that the so-called Apostles Creed should begin with the words, 'I believe....'

But belief is also a communal matter; it is not by accident that the creeds are recited in Church, in unison.

My beliefs have been shaped by my participation in the corporate life of the Church.

It is customary to begin affirmations of faith by saying, 'I believe in God.' But what this fundamental claim means stretches the imagination beyond its limits.

I believe in the God of the biblical story-but cannot believe all that the Bible says about God. To believe in the God of the biblical story means that I believe God has purpose in history.

In more abstract language than the Bible prefers, I believe God is the supreme reality, the ultimate ground of existence, giving meaning to the transient world of the senses.

I know why Christians came to believe in the Trinity. Although I believe much of what trinitarianism affirms, I also believe that most creedal expansions of the New Testament language do not help me.

I believe in Jesus Christ: that he was a real man, that God was uniquely present in him, and that by his words and deeds he 'speaks' for the Father. I call him Son of God: akin to God. Beneath the overlays of history and of faith, I believe I can hear the echo of his voice in the Bible. I believe I can see a life that is full of grace and truth: a healing, compassionate life, immersed in God.

I believe in Christ crucified. His death is crucial to my understanding of him. But the traditional theories of the atonement have worn thin and now resemble broken signposts. It helps me to come to the cross as Jesus did: from the life that led to it. That helps me to sense how complete were his love, his courage, his commitment and his obedience to the Father. These qualities make the cross more real to me than substitutionary and transactional ideas.

It helps me to appreciate that religious language is not literal but rather it is poetic, metaphorical and evocative.

I believe we are expected to realize God's Kingdom in our own lives and in the lives of other people-particularly the poor and powerless.

To believe in the Holy Spirit means that God is at hand: continually active in the world and in my own life, worship and work: in thinking and feeling (the rational side and that which transcends my best thoughts). I believe that 'the heart has reasons that reason knows not of'. I anticipate moments of mysticism and even ecstasy. There is joy in believing! However, I am suspicious of mere unthinking, exuberant, flamboyant distortions of the holy.

Creation, for me, is the ongoing work of God. The world exists because of God and not by chance. Beyond that, I have little interest in evolution versus creationism. I am convinced that this is God's world and that I am privileged to be God's guest here. The universe calls forth in me reverence and a profound sense of responsibility.

It is obvious that my best thinking often reaches an impasse! That fact does not worry me. How could it be otherwise? I value mystery, wonder and awe. For me, to 'fear (reverence) the Lord' really is 'the beginning of wisdom'. My life is enriched by the numinous; the holy is not just an idea.

(continued on page 10)

For me the resurrection is more than an event in the past. It is the culminating climax of the Gospel drama in which I am invited to participate.

I believe that for Christians life is sacramental because it has deep significance and meaning beyond what we see and touch. In a specific way this applies to baptism and to the eucharist. I affirm that baptism and the eucharist are both intended for those who are able to understand and embrace their inner meaning.

My most immediate experience of the Church is, of course, in its local expression; so the Church, for me, is primarily the fellowship of believers, the company of the committed, the locus of learning, and growth in grace and knowledge of God's ways. It is also the home of worship, which is, for me, centred in the worth of Jesus Christ and what he signifies. I think of the Church Universal as the extension of all such companies of believers. I find delight in the ecumenical Church and in encounters with other denominations and cultures.

The Bible, for me, is a very human book. Although I believe it is inspired by God and ought to be treated with the utmost seriousness, I believe it can only be called infallible by those who have not read it intelligently. Or who change the definition of the word 'infallible' in order to accommodate the difficulties presented by many problematic biblical texts. The Bible's central theme is God. Its intention is to create and sustain faith. It is the Church's most treasured resource. And it should be studied thoughtfully with historical and cultural awareness.

As for existence after death, I am content to leave my future in the hands of the God I have come to know in Jesus Christ. I cannot believe that countless millions who have not known Jesus Christ will be damned to eternal flames.

I am aware that I have been influenced by knowledge which was not of concern for my parents and grandparents. But I believe that I must be open to truth from many sources. My faith must be sufficient for such challenges.

The growth of historical knowledge has affected the way I understand the Bible and Christian beliefs generally.

The growth of scientific knowledge has made me re-think how God acts in the world.

The growth of sociological awareness makes me alert to ways in which culture and history have interacted with religion in the formation of the scriptures, the creeds and my own beliefs. It is, for me, an exciting challenge to make sense of what it means to be a believer living in modernity. My faith has to be adequate for a changing world; it cannot remain static.

I see that I have not mentioned the Virgin Birth — but then neither did Paul.

Programme Change

Theme of the ABF Spring Assembly — May 26 and 27 is "Evangelism and Discipleship for the Third Millennium." (see back cover for details)

An important change in format is noted on the agenda for Saturday morning. The BUSINESS SESSION follows opening devotions, and the Assembly dismisses right after lunch.

Reports to be presented at the business meeting include recommendations from the special committee studying development of the ABF, and, proposals from the nominating committee.

THE NOMA PRINCIPLE

M. R. B. Lovesey

In a fascinating book, entitled Rock of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fulness of Life (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), Stephen Jay Gould, the Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology and Professor of Geology at Harvard University, spells out what he calls the Noma Principle (for non-overlapping magisteria). He feels it is high time for science and religion to coexist peacefully in a position of respectful non-interference. Why is this necessary? For two good reasons: first, because the two activities of the human mind deal with different areas of experience (science defines the natural world, religion the moral world); second, because the history of the warfare is thoroughly disgraceful and an insult to the intelligence God has given humanity.

The unedifying story of the conflict between religion and science has been told magisterially and fully by Andrew Dickson White, a former principal of Cornell University, in his two-volume, 889 pages, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom (published at the end of the 19th century). In the Introduction to the work White states that it was his conviction that "science, though it has evidently conquered Dogmatic Theology based on biblical texts and ancient modes of thought, will go hand in hand with Religion; and that, although theological control will continue to diminish, as seen in the recognition of 'a Power in the universe, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness', and in the love of God and of our neighbour, will steadily grow stronger and stronger, not only in the American institutions of learning but in the world at large." White's hope and prophecy, now over a hundred years old, is perhaps a little over-optimistic but there is some truth in it.

Throughout his distinguished career Gould has been a doughty supporter of Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution. It is ironic that he is the Agassiz Professor of Zoology at Harvard, since in his day Agassiz argued against the doctrine of evolution. Gould, like T.H.Huxley in England, is Darwin's bulldog in North America, growling and fighting all his life for the truth of evolution. It is difficult not to come to the conclusion that Agassiz was wrong and that Gould is right!

Science and Religion met in head-on collision in the second half of the 19th century, when it became clear to intelligent observers that one has to choose between a six-day creation (as Genesis has it) and some fifteen billion years for the age of the universe. Was it Genesis or Geology? Does one believe in God or the "Big Bang"?

Gould argues that both science and religion must stay in their own fields and not intrude into the domain of the other. The two areas must not overlap. Each has its teaching authority, its magisterium. In seeking answers to how the universe came about recourse must be made to the scientists; in reply to questions about why the universe exists the wisdom of the religionists must be sought.

Gould uses the term magisterium, a Latin word that Protestants do not use much. Roman Catholics are, of course, very familiar with it. The word is related to magister, which may be rendered in English as master, chief, head, director, superintendent. The Church's magisterium is the Church's teaching office or teaching authority. Modernist Roman Catholics maintain that the Papacy has tried to corral all teaching power within itself. The Church, the Papacy, is the exclusive magisterium or teacher. This is said to be a modern development. Thomas Aquinas, it should be noted, never called the Vatican the magisterium; rather he referred to all theologians as the magisterium.

The task of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of

(continued on page 12)

the Faith is to determine what precisely is the doctrine of the Church. Prior to 1908 this body was simply called the Holy Office; from 1908 to 1968 it was called the Holy Office of the Sacred Inquisition; since 1968 it has been termed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Church, with Ratzinger as its General. This body labelled the controversial Matthew Fox's books as "far from the doctrine of the Magisterium," which brought about his expulsion from the Dominican Order.

What is the moral of the above reflections for those of us living at the beginning of the third millennium? Surely it must be that we should heed the advice of our forefathers in faith like Galileo and Newton that we should read and study the two books God has given us, the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture. It is not a case of either/or, but of both/and! And let us meditate on the dictum of Albert Einstein:

Religion without Science is blind;

Science without Religion is lame.

P.S. For interesting comment on the above matter see the article "Debating Evolution: the God who would intervene," published in the Christian Century, 27 October 1999, p.1026f. The authors make it clear that Stephen Gould supports what they call a "separation" model of mutual respect between science and religion, rather than a "dialogue and engagement" model.

VINCENT RUSHTON MEMORIAL LUNCHEON

Saturday, April 8, 2000

11:45 a.m. for 12:15 p.m. with speaker to follow at 1:00 p.m.
at the Manning Memorial Chapel
Acadia University in Wolfville

Guest Speaker:

Dr. Raymond Hobbs,

Professor of Old Testament studies for 26 years at
McMaster Divinity College and University

Topic: **"Community and Structure in a Baptist Context"**

Vincent Rushton Memorial Fund

Friends of the ABF are encouraged to contribute to the Vincent Rushton Memorial Fund, to commemorate his life and ministry. The Fund will be used to contribute to the costs of an annual gathering of Friends of the ABF and their guests.

Contributions may be sent to the Treasurer of the ABF, Dr. John Churchill, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams N.S., B0P 1T0. Please make cheques payable to the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship and indicate on the cheque "for the Vincent Rushton Fund".

Editor's Note:- Roger Cann — the Secretary of the Friends of the ABF — wrote the tribute to Vincent Rushton which appears in this issue.



Stan Haste, Executive Director

Connections, March 2000

Perspectives

Alliance Associate Director Jeanette Holt deserves the credit for imagining that the Austin Convocation would be a propitious time to take a fresh look at the fragile relationship between church and state. She reasoned that in our 13 years we had yet to focus on religious liberty as a convocation theme.

Furthermore, she said back then, by the time we met in the capital city of Texas, the 2000 presidential season would be in full swing, with the prospect of a lively discussion of the church-state equation among the candidates. The Lone Star State, she argued, would be a good place to take up the subject, given the pivotal role Texas Baptists have played in the long and ongoing struggle for the preservation of religious freedom. On all counts, Jeanette was right.

So next month, with a potentially watershed election ahead, we are going to Austin for what will be an intensive seminar in the proper relationship between church and state in the nation that two centuries ago undertook a radical experiment in statecraft by creating a healthy distance between these two foundational institutions of society.

Several years ago, the Alliance board of directors made the wise decision to focus our collective attention on one of the seven principles in the Alliance Covenant at each convocation. Then two years ago, with a new Mission statement in place to supplement the Covenant, directors expanded that mandate to include the new document as well. Together, these actions give needed guidance to the board and its convocation committees to highlight our key commitments and mandates for action year after year.

What can we expect in Austin? First, in keeping with our Mission statement's pledge to "make the worship of God primary in all our gatherings," Alliance people will gather to worship God. This year's Convocation Committee has worked hard to create worship experiences that will highlight the breadth of Baptist worship practices.

As always, we go to convocation to be together. In the Alliance, this rich fellowship is far more than a back-slapping, hugging and kissing good time. It is all that, yes, and more. Our Mission statement also vows to "create places of refuge and renewal for those who are wounded or ignored by the church." There are lots of wounds to heal and ignorance to address.

Finally, we'll be in Austin to learn about our chosen subject, what William Lee Miller calls our nation's "first freedom" --religious liberty. In so doing, we'll be living into our commitment to "honor wisdom and lifelong learning." And, yes, we all have a lot of wisdom and learning yet to assimilate.

Merely writing down these thoughts makes me realize I can't wait to get to Austin. Here's hoping you feel the same way.

Editor's Note:-

Connections is the newsletter of The Alliance of Baptists Washington, D.C.

UBCAP CONVENTION — Assembly 2000

Assembly 2000, August 6 - 13 : UBCAP Convention, August 10 - 12
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Registration prior to March 31st \$99.00; after March 31st \$125.00
One day registration \$35.00

As part of the restructuring proposals, **Notice of Motion** has been given to change Article I as follows:

Current

This Convention shall be known as the **"United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces"** and shall be composed of those bodies which have agreed to work together upon the basis of the historic Baptist position that the Bible is the all-sufficient ground of faith and practice.

Proposed

The **"United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces"** (hereinafter referred to as **"The Convention"**) shall be composed of those bodies which have covenanted together, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; to accept the authority of the Bible as the all-sufficient ground of faith and practice; and to affirm the principles of doctrine and polity of the "1905/06 Basis of Union".

ABF Editorial Comment:-

Should this motion be approved by Convention delegates, it would make a fundamental change in the nature of our Convention by requiring all participating bodies (Congregations, Associations) to affirm the 1905/06 Basis of Union in order to be members of Convention. All new churches could be asked to adopt the doctrine before being accepted into an Association or the Convention. All potential clergy could be asked to "sign on" to this doctrinal statement. This would make us a creedal church, rather than one based on a relationship of faith in Jesus Christ. All of this was debated in 1971 when it was last tried to put the Basis of Union in the Constitution. It was soundly defeated.

The Spring 2000 Meeting of the Gathering

April 29, 2000 at
Martin Grove
Baptist Church,
Toronto
Pastor:
Rick Maxwell

Speaker:
Ray Hobbs

Theme:

**"Conscientious
Objections:
Thoughts on Living
as a Baptist in the
21st Century"**

9:00 a.m. Registration,
Fellowship & Coffee
9:30 a.m. Worship

If attending please call
Merle Caldwell before
April 20, so lunch can be
provided.

519-647-3504
caldwell@cujo2.icom.ca

2464 Concession Road
West, R.R. #1

Friends of the ABF

Hobbs to Speak on Baptist Organization

Dr. Raymond Hobbs will be the guest speaker at the ABF Friends luncheon on Saturday the 8th of April, at the Acadia University Chapel, Wolfville. The annual spring gathering has been renamed the Vincent Rushton Memorial Luncheon. Dr. Hobbs will speak on "Community and Structure in a Baptist Context", a topic of current interest among Atlantic Baptists and one which would have been of special interest to Vincent Rushton.

Dr. Hobbs is a graduate of London University (BD, PhD) and the International Theological Seminary, Ruschlikon, (MTh), and has taught Old Testament studies in Canada for 26 years at McMaster Divinity College and University, and for three years at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague.

He is an active member of MacNeill Baptist Church, Hamilton, as a Deacon, and director of the MacNeill Lay School of Theology. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Gathering of Baptists, and Editor of the Gathering Newsletter. After early retirement, he is still deeply involved in writing and lecturing on Biblical and related subjects.

A special Vincent Rushton Memorial Fund has been established to contribute towards the costs of bringing outstanding speakers to the spring luncheon at Wolfville. During the luncheon there will be a short tribute to Vincent Rushton and a celebration of his life and ministry, especially the contribution he made to the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship.

Newbigin: A Visible Fellowship

We can all call to mind movements which have begun as pure upsurges of fresh spiritual vitality, breaking through and revolting against the hardened structure of the older body, and claiming, in the name of the Spirit, liberty from outward forms and institutions. And we have seen how rapidly they develop their own forms, their own structures of thought, of language, and of organisation. It would surely be a very unbiblical view of human nature and history to think -- as we so often, in our pagan way, do -- that this is just an example of the tendency of all things to slide down from a golden age to an age of iron, to identify the spiritual with the disembodied, and to regard visible structure as equivalent to sin. We must rather recognise here a testimony to the fact that Christianity is, in its very heart and essence, not a disembodied spirituality, but life in a visible fellowship, a life which makes such total claim upon us, and so engages our total powers, that nothing less than the closest and most binding association of persons with one another can serve its purpose. ...Lesslie Newbigin, The Household of God [1953]

To:
Rev. Dr. Roger Cann
P.O. Box 354
Wolfville, N. S.
B0P 1X0

Please enroll me as a Friend

Name _____

Address _____

Date _____ 'Phone # _____ Subscription _____