

# THE BULLETIN

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F

*Atlantic Baptist Fellowship*

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*Manning Memorial Chapel  
Acadia University*

LOCATION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ABF LUNCHEON,  
AND THE RUSHTON MEMORIAL LECTURE,  
BY DR JONATHAN WILSON  
8 APRIL, 2006

Atlantic Baptist  
Fellowship



within  
Convention

THE ABF BULLETIN IS PUBLISHED  
quarterly by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship  
and is mailed to interested churches and  
individuals free of charge. To receive a copy,  
or to change or correct a mailing address,  
please notify the distribution organizer:

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Vancouver BC, V6K 4K1

Opinions and views expressed in this  
publication do not necessarily reflect those  
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Donations towards the cost of production  
are gratefully received and should be sent to:

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P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, NS, B0P 1T0

#### SUBMISSIONS

Articles should be between  
500 and 1000 words in length.

*The Bulletin* is edited by Rodger Forsman  
and set in New Baskerville types at  
Gaspereau Press, Kentville, NS.

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## *In this issue ...*

RODGER FORSMAN, EDITOR

Although not explicitly asserted in the classical creeds of the Church, it is a fundamental Christian conviction that God is at work in the world in ways that touch each and every creature. What kind of interaction there might be between divine creativity and things like flecks of dust, or massive stars, is beyond our ken. But we believe that rational creatures like ourselves are capable of grasping the work of God in our experience, and that we can respond to it in worship, and take up its saving effects into our own lives.

We should not expect to trace the hand of God in a way that would turn theology into a natural science, and the life of faith into a business transaction. But we can understand something of how we take up Divine Grace into our lives by thinking of the way in which we take up into ourselves the influences of other people: our parents, friends, and teachers. It is from this point of view that we think of two stalwart friends, Ruth MacPherson and Isobel Horton, whose recent passing we notice in the following pages. We read what is said about them and acknowledge with gratitude that we have been blessed by their lives. This experience goes back and back in time, as is evidenced by an article on Alvah Chipman by his granddaughter. Here again we find testimony to the way in which a person's actions for what is good and right have far-flung consequences in others' lives. It is hardly too much to say that in these ways we see not only how important good role models are, but also understand how we make ourselves like them by our own actions. This is the value of saints, in some Christian communions, and certainly one of the purposes of the Christian Story with which we identify ourselves in worship.

Also we have an update on our website, a good review by regular contributor Ed Colquhoun of a book on the making of the King James Version of the Bible, and a notice of the forthcoming *Friends'* Luncheon in connection with the Vincent Rushton Memorial Lecture.

That's it for this time!

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# *My Grandfather: Alvah Hovey Chipman*

BY CAROL CHIPMAN BUCKLEY



*Editor's Note: Baptist ecclesiology, with its emphasis on the autonomy of the local congregation, simultaneously raises questions about the nature and extent of the authority which wider associations of churches may legitimately exercise over individual congregations. To explore the roots of the tension between local autonomy and collective control is to go to the heart of Baptist theory of the church and the Christian life. Many learned books have been written on this subject. But perhaps it is in individual*

*lives lived that we find the best models of freedom which is not chaos, and control which is not coerced. Carol Chipman Buckley, a resident of Port Williams, NS, and member of Port Williams Baptist Church, writes about her grandfather: "Last spring, while sorting books prior to a move, I was struck by the current relevance of passages he had pencil marked and initialed in several of his books which had been passed on to me." She goes on to reflect on her grandfather's life, from her own memories, and as revealed in the books he read.*

**M**y grandfather died in 1955, at age 88. His life spanned the Victorian era, the First Great War, the time between the Wars and the Second World War. He saw the advent of the automobile, electricity, the telephone, television, and flight.

My childhood recollections of him are of a tall, old man who was gentle and soft spoken, who loved his garden of flowers, vegetables, and raspberries, who always listened to the 8 a.m. news, and took time to read to us children. I recall "Aesop's Fables," and "The Walrus and the Carpenter." I never knew him to raise his voice in anger.

Alvah, the middle of three boys, was born into a minister's home at Stewiacke. His parents were deeply committed to education as evidenced by the fact that his mother left the home a year after Alvah's birth to be Principal of the re-established Female Department of the New Brunswick Seminary at Fredericton. Alvah studied at Colby College in Waterville ME, graduating in 1896. That same year he married Mabel DeWitt of Berwick. Mabel had attended St. Martin's Ladies Seminary and the Provincial Normal College in New Brunswick. They lived most of their lives in Hampton, NB, where they raised four children. Alvah was employed with the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation. I have a newspaper clipping of his, *The Insurance Man's Creed*, indicative of his high work ethic.

Alvah and Mabel gave their children lots of freedom to hike and bicycle, and they were encouraged to earn their own way, which included picking and selling strawberries. When my father showed little inclination to study in Grade 12 (a college preparation year following graduation) his father suggested that he may as well accept a job at the bank.

The Baptist church in Hampton was very much a focus of their lives. Alvah was a Deacon, Mabel taught Sunday School and daughter Carol sang in the choir. Singing around the piano at home was a part of family life.

From the marked passages in my grandfather's books I have garnered much. The following passages from *The Impatience of a Parson* (H.R.L. Sheppard, 1927) show something of his theology and views of the Church.

It is infinitely easier to receive the theology of a church, to obey its rules and to shout its battle cries than to undertake its awe-full task of accepting and living out in life the values which Jesus Christ ascribed to God, accepted for himself, and asks from those who would be his disciples. Yet this and nothing else is Christianity. p. 91

It is high time that some theologians remembered that it is definitely immoral to declaim, "Thus saith the Lord" when it would be truer to say, "This is my opinion and the opinion of those who think with me." p. 87

There is nothing more central to the mind of Christ than that you can only love God in fellowship. p. 31

I do not want to importune any man into any church unless it will keep him close to his Lord and will not make him contemptuous towards those who are following sincerely by another path. p. 83

A church ceases to be Christian the moment it begins to judge mankind either intellectually or morally. p. 159

I want the prevailing oppression of religion removed and the liberating freedom of Christ's religion with its summons to the fullest possible human life emphasized for all its worth. p. 187

From *Remember Jesus Christ* (Robert Speer, 1899):

My friends,—we were sent, not to be satisfied, but to serve—I will be among men as one who serves.” p. 154 [Here my grandfather wrote, “Amen,” with his initials AHC] This was the way of Jesus, and we are to remember Him, and remembering Him, to be like Him, first of all and last of all, in His love, and His loving. p. 220

From *What Christ Means To Me* (Wilfred Grenfell, 1927):

Christ helps by setting the highest possible standards in Himself, by actually challenging us to look at Him, and daring us to follow Him. That is the way to inspire mankind. That is what Christ has done for me a thousand times. Were I to hear him say to the fallen woman, or to the traitor Judas, “Go to Hell with your sins” or threaten punishment to his weakest follower, then it would be all different.

It seems that my grandfather was deeply concerned about a shift towards legalism, which has probably throughout history posed more of a threat to the church than evil itself.

From markings in Grenfell’s book it is evident that Alvah did not want to be counted among those who railed against the “sins” of the day—inside or outside the church. Instead, he thought that it is God’s love, lived out in fellowship, which will draw people to Christ and to the church. He was an active church member and committed to the work of the Convention.

Alvah strove to serve his Lord. A letter he wrote to his brother of his experience when in Halifax the day of the explosion (Dec. 6, 1917) expressed his hope that he had been of service. Another time he was on the roof of a burning house in an effort to save it. These are of the extraordinary. But it has become evident that it was in the ordinary daily activities and relationships of life that Alvah lived out Christ’s call to love and to serve.

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## *Ruth Layton Porter Macpherson*

*3 May 1912–3 January 2006*

BY NEAL MACPHERSON

*Editor’s Note: Long a resident of Wolfville and member of Wolfville Baptist Church, Ruth MacPherson was born and brought up in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She attended the University of New Brunswick for two years, then entered the registered nurses’ program at the Montreal General Hospital. She practiced her nursing vocation at various times throughout her life. She and the Reverend Austin MacPherson were married in 1936. They served churches in Canning, Fredericton, Middleton, Wolfville, Overton, and Amherst. She was a faithful and energetic supporter of the ABF. The following is part of the memorial address given by her son, the Reverend Neal MacPherson at Wolfville United Baptist Church on Saturday, January 7, 2006.*

**W**e her children, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren, and the members of her extended family loved her. She was a feisty woman, stubborn at times, gentle at times, opinionated,

intelligent, well read, humorous, teasing, loving, caring. Her favorite situation comedy was *Keeping Up Appearances*. She liked it, I think, because it gave her an opportunity to laugh at the “proper” culture in which she grew up and which continued to influence her throughout her life.

Mother was the bearer of our family history. She knew the history of her own family—all those Baptist ministers of her past (nine of them from her side alone, she used to remind me) not counting the three MacPhersons who were also preachers. I make preacher number thirteen. She also knew the history of Dad’s family, not just the facts but also the stories, stories which she succeeded in implanting in our minds and imaginations. During these past days, we have been recalling those stories as we have looked through old photographs, all as a way of remembering our mother, “membering her,” making her a part of us once again.

Mother had her own way of doing justice and loving kindness and walking humbly with her God, as God requires, according to the prophet Micah. In those days of our childhood and youth, itinerant hobos used to travel up and down the valley looking for work. They had maps of their own making that indicated where every parsonage in each of the valley towns was located. Every time Mother saw one of these hobos approaching she would groan and express just a little irritation that her day would be interrupted by the knock on the kitchen door and the inevitable request for food. At the same time, knowing what God requires, she would prepare a meal for each and every one of them, either what we were eating for dinner (they always arrived at mealtime, it seemed) or hot soup, homemade brown bread, cheese, apple pie—whatever was on hand. They didn’t eat with us, I recall, but Mother would always invite them to eat in the warmth of an entry way. Doing justice, loving kindness, walking humbly with her God—Mother did her best to fulfill the requirements.

She was a woman of faith, a mature faith willing to entertain doubt. She grew in faith over the years—how could she do anything but that? After all, we regularly talked and debated theology around the table when we all sat down together for our meals.

Her devotion to God was expressed not in the conventional way of quoting scripture and practicing the outward expressions of piety, but rather in maintaining and nurturing the human



relationships that were important to her—the relationships she cherished with us in her family, and the relationships she had with her close friends, and with the members of the congregations that Dad served. Even in her 90's, when she moved to the Manning Retirement Center, she had the capacity to make friends and enter into new relationships.

She understood that human life is not to be lived independently but inter-dependently. “Being with” rather than “being apart” defines human life as God intends. She understood well, along with St. Paul, that our lives are to be defined by love. Not *cogito ergo sum*—“I think, therefore I am,” as Descartes once declared, but *amo, ergo sum*—“I love, therefore I am.” From this love, she understood how we come to be blessed, through a poverty of spirit, and the experience of grief (really an expression of love), and lowliness, and righteousness, and mercy, and purity of heart, and the making of peace.

There is a sense in which she will be with us as long as we live. We have surely felt the presence of her life and spirit during the days before and after her dying, these days of sorrow and grateful remembrance. Someone has written, “the presence of that absence is everywhere.” That is surely true for us. One of my favorite poems expresses metaphorically and in a poignant way this presence of those who have gone before us. The poem is called *The Dead* and it is written by Billy Collins. It goes like this:

*The dead are always looking down on us, they say,  
while we are putting on our shoes or making a sandwich,  
they are looking down through the glass-bottom boats  
of heaven as they row themselves slowly through eternity.*

*They watch the tops of our heads moving below on earth,  
and when we lie down in a field or on a couch,  
drugged perhaps by the hum of a warm afternoon,  
they think we are looking back at them,*

*which makes them lift their oars and fall silent  
and wait, like parents, for us to close our eyes.*

So the dead are always and will always be with us. They are the

saints surrounding us, watching over us, strengthening us, waiting for us to close our eyes, and encouraging us as we travel the paths of our own life journeys. Mother will be in our hearts and our memories as long as we live. And she will live on in the eternal, loving memory of God, forever. Thanks be to God. Amen

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## *Rita Isobel Horton*

*1917–2006*

Isobel Horton was born on 10 May 1917, daughter of Howard and Etta Mader of Barss Corner, NS, and died at the Valley Regional Hospital in Kentville, NS, on 24 January 2006. She was predeceased by husband Sydney Rowland Horton in 1988. Isobel graduated from Acadia (BA 1936) and McGill (BLSc 1937).

With her husband Isobel served Baptist churches in South Ohio, Barss Corner, Scotch Village, Jemseg, Pokiok and Springfield. After moving to Wolfville in 1954 she began employment in the University Library, ultimately becoming Head Librarian in 1976. She retired in 1982. She played a significant role in the building of the present library building in 1965. She also volunteered daily work at the library until about two weeks before her death.

Isobel was honoured by the Baptist Convention in 2001 for her work in the library's Baptist Archives, a project which took 20,000 volunteer hours. She was a loyal member of the Canadian Federation of University Women and was their President 1968–70 and 1983–85. She held many other executive offices with this group, and for a number of years coordinated the popular and very successful annual book sale run by the Wolfville branch of the CFUW to fund local, national and international scholarships for women. She was secretary of the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council for 25 years, and secretary of Meals on Wheels (Wolfville). In the Wolfville United Baptist Church she served on many committees and sang in the church choir. She was a faithful member of the University Chapel congregation, and a member of the Minas Potters' Guild. She was a loyal friend and strong supporter of the Atlantic Baptist

Fellowship, serving as circulation manager for the *Bulletin* for many years. Isobel was a world traveler, and a New York Crossword puzzle master. She also entertained her family at any opportunity. She will be greatly missed by her family and the host of friends she acquired through her involvement in many organizations.

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## *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible*

BY ADAM NICOLSON  
*HarperCollins, 2003, 281 pages*

From the vantage point of the 21st century, the authorised or King James Version of 1611, a revision of the so-called Bishop's Bible drawing on the work of William Tyndale and others, seems to be the culmination of English efforts to translate the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Despite its somewhat archaic language, it has remained popular because of its literary excellence. This is in the face of many newer translations that have benefited from significant developments in scholarly understanding of the original languages and from the discovery of manuscripts better than those available to the Translators (so titled for undertaking the great work). Another serious revision was not attempted until 1881. It is therefore surprising to discover that the King James Version was used neither by the Free Church nor by lay Anglicans for many decades. Even the chief Translator, Lancelot Andrewes, continued to take his sermon texts from another version. This other version was the Geneva Bible, which King James' version was supposed to replace. Adam Nicholson's lively popular account of the Translators takes us through the intrigue that led to this unlikely end and then to the final triumph of the authorised version.

Baptist beginnings are just a sidebar to this story; however, we cannot help noting that the expulsion of Separatists from England to the Low Countries and subsequent establishment of the first congregation of English Baptists parallels exactly the period of the

translation. King James' hostility to the radical Puritans/Separatists corresponds to his hostility to the Geneva Bible and to its copious notes which explain how true Protestants did not hold the king superior in matters of religion. Because the Geneva Bible was so popular, James was determined to replace it with one that would express a more fitting attitude towards the "powers that be" and would have no marginal notes at all. Although we Baptists come to this story late, in fact, our spiritual forebears were part of the impetus for a translation that the king saw as a tool to help keep us in our place.

Two stories in which Translators were involved demonstrate other ways that the English monarch and Church enforced "true religion." Nicholson takes us inside the prison cell of Henry Barrow, whom we may see as a proto-Baptist, and who had spent three years in the Fleet prison for the horrible crime of leading a congregation that worshipped separately from the King's establishment. Andrewes is one of his interrogators. Barrow, who was accused of heresy, claimed that he acted in the spirit of the apostles. In a very cruel way, Andrewes, later to become the great Translator, implies that Barrow should be enjoying his contemplative circumstances. After three more years in prison, Barrow was executed for denying the authority of bishops and of the monarch over the English Church. The brutal execution in 1606 of Henry Garnet, the saintly, pacific Superior of the Jesuit order, is only slightly mitigated by the hysteria in England following the plot to blow up Parliament. Nicholson notes that Garnet was attended by two of the Translators, waiting in vain to convert him to the true faith.

Because Nicholson's title alludes to Calvin's reference to the apostles as the "*amanuenses* of the Holy Spirit," one might conclude that this is a book of theological controversy; however, "God's secretaries" does not imply any theory of verbal inspiration. Nonetheless, the Translators were not authors, but six companies of scholars approaching the text in a mood of humility and service, searching for the best that had been done or might be done with the ancient scriptures. Their accomplishment, eventually driving the Geneva Bible and all other competition from the field for 300 years, makes a compelling story. Nicholson shows how a diverse and very human group of English churchmen brought the King James Version into being. His deep appreciation of its literary and spiritual richness

makes a strong case for its continued value and popularity with a broad spectrum of literate English speakers—both within and without the Church.

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## *ABF Website Launch*

RODGER FORSMAN, EDITOR

**B**ack in December we said: “By the time the next issue of *The Bulletin* reaches you the ABF will have a fully operational web site.” Well, we won’t *quite* make it, but it will be close! On Saturday morning, April 8 at 10:00 a.m. there will be an official launching of the new ABF website at Wolfville Baptist Church. On hand to introduce us to the site and demonstrate its features will be its creator, the Rev. Craig Hiebert. Internet access and several computers will be made available, affording attendees a hands-on opportunity to put the new site through its paces and to learn how to use some valuable new communications tools.

A website is essentially a tool for communication and connection. Properly used it will enable the ABF to communicate its message to a greatly expanded audience, and do so very efficiently in terms of costs. It also becomes very easy to monitor public response to our efforts, and this will help us evaluate the effectiveness of our content. Evaluation of time, money and effort expended on our activities, in terms of the degree to which desired outcomes have been achieved, has not, on the whole, been a central element in our planning. This new communications tool offers us the resources for finding out quickly and continuously who is interested in what we are doing. In turn, this information can guide our planning by helping us shape our goals.

Your executive committee believes that the launch of the website will be a significant turning-point in the life of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, providing new ways of pursuing our aims, extending our outreach, promoting informed discussions of current issues, and stimulating us to think clearly about what the best role the ABF might have in Baptist life. We’ll keep you “posted”!

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# 2006 Vincent Rushton Memorial Lecture & Luncheon

DATE	Saturday, April 8, 2006
TIME	12:00 Noon
PLACE	Manning Memorial Chapel Hall, Acadia University, Wolfville, NS
SPEAKER	The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Wilson, Professor of Theology and Ethics, Acadia Divinity College
TOPIC	<i>“Holy Week and Holy Justice”</i>
COST	\$12.00

Keith Churchill, Friends’ secretary, writes: “I first came to know Jonathan when he was a student at Carey /Regent College in Vancouver and pastor at Edmonds Baptist Church in Burnaby. From there he went on to do a Ph.D. at Duke Divinity School. He taught for several years at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California before joining the faculty at ADC. It also happens that his wife, Marti (Crosby), was a member of my youth group when I was Youth Pastor at First Baptist, Amherst.

The nature of Jonathan’s lecture will be to take the events of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday as the basis for our pursuit of justice in society. This will be most appropriate since the day after our luncheon and lecture is Palm Sunday.

I would strongly encourage you to register in advance. To assist you with that I have enclosed a reply form and a self-addressed envelope. (I’m sorry, but the ABF budget doesn’t allow me to supply the postage!)

You will find the luncheon an excellent opportunity to enjoy good fellowship. The lecturer will stimulate and challenge your thinking and discipleship. It is an occasion not to be missed! Be sure to mark the date on your calendar and invite a friend to join you.”

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**A** news item from the Reverend David Ogilvie, minister of Port Williams Baptist Church: “Saturday morning, April 8 at 10:00 a.m. there will be an official “launching” of the new ABF website at Wolfville Baptist Church. On hand to introduce us to the site and its features will be its creator, Rev. Craig Hiebert. Craig has designed this website to help us build a stronger sense of connection and community within the existing ABF family, and to help facilitate communication and outreach beyond our present circle of fellowship. The ABF Executive hopes the launching of the website will do all this and more, proving in time to be a watershed moment in this transformative time in Baptist life. Come for the launching and stay for the Friends’ Luncheon and the Vincent Rushton Memorial Lecture at Manning Chapel. It promises to be a great day. See you there!”

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**FRIENDS OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**

Friends are sympathetic to the aims of the ABF,  
and support its work by an annual subscription fee of \$10.

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Please enroll me as a  
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## *What is the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship?*

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was formed about thirty years ago by a group of Baptist lay people and ministers who conceived it as a way of pursuing certain converging interests. First, they wanted to witness to historical Baptist principles. They also wanted to be involved with non-Baptist communions in joint worship, social action and ecumenical discussions of the nature of the Church. Finally, they wished to create a safe and welcoming environment where Baptists can share concerns and points of view with out fear of being marginalized. The ABF is not an executive body, carrying out programs, and advocating positions. It is a consultative body with the following aims:

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 Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches 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.

In pursuit of these aims the ABF publishes the *Bulletin*, and meets semiannually for worship, fellowship, and study of an issue of contemporary interest. Everyone is welcome to attend.