

The Bulletin

A PUBLICATION OF THE
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAPTIST FREEDOMS
FORMERLY THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP



*The Rev'd John Tonks, the Rev'd Fred Demaray, the Rev'd Dr. Scott Barnes:
Three leaders: CABF, The Gathering, First Baptist Ottawa at the
first combined meeting of the CABF and The Gathering.*

SPRING 2017

Editorial: Spring Cleaning

In Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* we find 'Spring' and in the middle section of the concerto, where the goatherd is sleeping, suddenly a barking dog is heard in the viola section. This Spring we might pay some attention to any 'barking dog,' as we awake from Winter's lethargy and hopefully think of 'planting crops.'

Over the winter we heard of closing churches and possibly even an Association of churches. This might be a 'barking dog' awakening us this Spring. We also know of a number of large congregations finally recognizing how difficult it is to find a competent Minister. Could this be another 'barking dog'? Young adults seem to know nothing of theology and spirituality as an integral part of their living and considerations. Woof, woof?

This Spring might be time for some ecclesiastical house-cleaning of dusty pews and cobwebbed classrooms. The CABF has great resources at hand, and it might be time for our Council to rally them. A spiritual retreat for our clergy might revive their theological lives. A Christian Education workshop could sharpen teaching skills of church school instructors. A Church Music festival might enrich and produce more profound congregational worship. A Lenten lay school of theology might awaken church members' thinking and beliefs. The list is limited only by our imagination.

'Christians, awake! Salute the happy morn whereon the Saviour of the world was born.' Perhaps we should be singing these lines of John Byrom more meaningfully this Easter.

Roger H. Prentice—Editor

The Bulletin is published three times a year by the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms. It is meant to be an informative magazine about Baptist concerns and news of the Church in the world.

Editor is Roger Prentice—5 Grandview Drive, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B4P 1W5.

The colour cover was donated by a friend of CABF.

*No Body Knows the Troubles
I've Seen: Difficulties, Real and
Imagined in a Minister's Life*

The Rev'd Bert Radford



Returning to ministry as an Interim after several years in hibernation, or rather, retirement, I have a fresh perspective on the difficulties faced by a minister in daily work. My memory was merciful and healing, remembering the many mountain-top experiences in past ministry, but, now that I have taken up the plough again, a few dark valley experiences are coming back to my mind. The good news is that I am also able to remember skills and attitudes that got me through and, I trust, will see me through again. Perhaps my musing about them will bring them to your mind too.

People in any church have opinions and beliefs that are not always in agreement with the minister's. We must remember that these people are the people of God, the church, and they have as much right as the people who agree with us to express their ideas and to have them taken seriously. The attitude of non-judgemental acceptance which is so important to ministry will enable us to receive ideas and suggestions about our ministry and, perhaps, find an idea that we can adopt. Were it not for the "loyal opposition" we may well miss an opportunity to serve Christ in a new way.

We must keep our perspective. The imagination can make an incident of a moment's concern seem to be like a run-away train roaring down the track to calamity. With immediate and thoughtful attention the doomsday scenario may well be changed into a positive learning experience. "Go placidly amid the noise and haste", is still wise advice.

Humility is an oft used word among clergy and I am vaguely suspicious of people who explain at great length how humble they are. Can one take pride in humility without destroying it? But one manifestation of true humility is surely the realization that in any judgement or

decision we might be wrong. Many disasters in many fields of human endeavour might have been avoided if a leader had once thought, “Wait a minute! I may be wrong about this.” The ministry is a complex task involving highly subjective ideas and strong passions. We cannot be right all the time. Even Jesus acknowledged there were things that he did not know and the servant is not greater than the master.

Paul might be called the archetype of ministers, the standard to which we all aspire. He had some difficulties and disagreements with some of the churches he founded and served. But the final criteria for Paul was not his own beliefs and feelings, nor the will of the loudest voice in the church, it was the guidance of the Spirit. If we are uncertain of the nature of the spirits moving in our church then we need to remember the test that Paul used, “. . .the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” I might add that this is also an excellent standard for self-evaluation.

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



Intentional Interim Ministry

by the Rev'd John E. Boyd

PART 4—THE WORK OF A TRANSITION
TEAM

The final piece of our Intentional Interim Ministry puzzle is the work of a Transition Team.

Rationale: With the plethora of committees in most Churches, why appoint another one? A key to a successful transition is the realization that more than “business as usual” is required. Appointing a Transition Team not only confirms that change is coming, but that it will be led by trusted people. Team members can focus on the Church’s transition issues and opportunities while existing boards and committees continue their own ongoing, important work.

Recruitment: Transition begins as soon as a Church receives news that its current pastor will leave, so a Transition Team should be appointed ASAP. The Team should have a minimum of 5 members (more in a large church) so that key constituencies can be represented, with diversity in age, gender and length of time as a church member. Recruits must be willing to invest their time and abilities in the future of the congregation, accept the principles of intentional interim ministry, be creative, open to change and able to keep confidences. The senior Board would develop clear objectives and authority for the Team's work, recruit its members and seek the approval of the congregation for it to begin.

Responsibilities: There are 3 stages to the Transition Team's work, and they overlap.

The first stage begins with the news that the current pastor will leave and lasts until the arrival of the Intentional Interim Minister. The Team will facilitate a healthy closure to the current ministry. There could be retirement (or dismissal) issues to settle, a celebration to plan or challenges to manage arising out of pastoral misbehavior or serious conflict in the congregation. A sensitively conducted "exit interview" of the leaving minister could provide crucial insights for the future. The Transition Team would lead the search for the Intentional Interim Minister, developing the criteria and eventually placing a nominee before the Church.

The second stage spans the Intentional Interim Minister's incumbency. The Team will meet regularly with this specialist and help give oversight to the process described in previous articles. A major role is communication, making sure the congregation is regularly involved in and updated on the activities that will set their future direction. The Team will send members to regular committee meetings, both to update them and to report "the pulse" to the rest of the Team. They will help identify areas of concern to be addressed during the interim period and collect data that can be used for future planning. The Team will present a comprehensive report of its findings and recommendations to the Church, a signal that the formal search for the new Minister can begin.

The final stage covers the remaining interim period up to the arrival of the new Minister. During this time the Team will prepare a "job

description” for both the new Minister and the Search Team. The latter will include guidelines for a successful search and the recommendations arising out of the second stage of their work. All of this should be presented for approval by the congregation after receiving input from appropriate boards and committees. The Team could also nominate the Search Team for approval. During the search they will continue to support the work of the Intentional Interim Minister. When a new Minister arrives, the Team will be “debriefed” so they can personally offer their advice and guidance before disbanding.

A successful period of transition requires the hard work, intense study and consistent prayers of the whole congregation, led by an Intentional Interim Minister trained in transition dynamics and a committed Transition Team. What a foundation upon which a Church and its new Minister can build!

The Rev'd John E. Boyd is the former Minister of First Baptist Church Halifax.

Surprises! A New Vision

The Rev'd Andrew Crowell



My name is Andy Crowell and am the Ecumenical Chaplain to McMaster University. I am also the Minister of Westdale United Church in Hamilton, Ontario and a 4th generation minister steeped in a Baptist heritage. What do all three of these have to do with each other? Everything.

Before departing the Atlantic Baptist Convention in 2011, I worked and served in communities throughout Nova Scotia for 25 years. While my reasons for departing had to do with not wishing to be complicit to my denominations position on issues such as the treatment of LGBTQ people, the spirit of “soul liberty” that led me to speak my convictions in that context, continues to be the one that shapes my voice today.

Throughout my life as a minister in Baptist and United churches, I have modeled my work with churches on a “chaplaincy model” of spiritual care, and not an “ecclesial model”. Ecclesial models are parochial, or proselytizing. Chaplaincy (spiritual care) is about being pastoral and prophetic. The purpose of chaplaincy in any institutional setting, is to “humanize” the tendency to “dehumanize”.

There are few things that surprise me anymore but the thing that surprised me most about immersing into the Chaplaincy at McMaster is how natural the practice of spiritual care felt in an institutional environment, when compared to the church. People pine for chaplaincy’s non-judgemental, inclusive and holistic ideals, even (if not especially) in a post-modern, post-Christian, post-religious generation of young adults and it dawned on me, that the church can become as “institutionalized” as any other organization.

Is there any wonder that support for chaplaincy across the board, never mind in places of higher learning, is on decline, when the communities who envisioned sustaining them begin to lose sight of why we even exist, never mind why chaplaincy exists? This is why I remain a minister within my church while serving as a Chaplain to the University so that the “soul” of my faith-community will not lose sight of why we exist in the first place. If we don’t know why (or care), then how can those who seek out the solace of a chaplaincy ever know!?

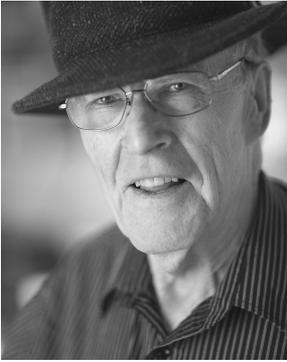
Here’s something else that might surprise you.

Despite the romanticized, false impression that universities are places of entitlement, universities include the highest percentage of those who seek out food banks, couch-surf (are homeless) and commit suicide. Not so romantic sounding now, is it? Yet, this is precisely what gospel-truth invites us to care about, along with the plethora of social and discriminatory issues that dominate campus life, as a microcosm of the world.

I am invigorated each week by the demands of university life, and grounded on weekends by my faith-community life. Being true to both is a surprise I wouldn’t change for the world.

The Rev’d Andrew Crowell is the Minister of the Westdale United Church, Hamilton, Ontario, and the Ecumenical Chaplain of McMaster University.

Between Friends:
An Early Ecumenical Friendship in Amherst



The Rev'd Dr. Eldon Hay

When English-born Rev. David A. Steele came to Amherst in 1867 to be minister of Amherst Baptist Church, he was 29 years old, and destined to have a long and distinguished career in the town. A much older clergyman, Rev. Alexander Clarke, Irish-born, took a liking to the young colleague. Clarke, then 73, had come much earlier to Amherst, in 1827; he was in the twilight of his ministry at the Amherst Covenanter church (and other mission stations in the Chignecto region).

Steele and Clarke became friends. Natural, on the one hand, both were clergy. But they served very different congregations, and they were personally locked in the deep hoary difference between the two traditions over infant baptism.

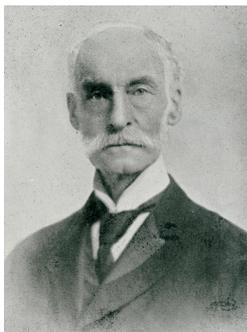
The depth of that relationship became clear when Clarke died in 1874. A Covenanter colleague and friend from New York State, Rev. Nevin Woodside came by train to officiate at the funeral, largely attended, including an array of local and regional clergy. Woodside was given a letter by Rev. David Steele, who shared it with the grieving congregation. The letter reads:

Dr. Clarke was long past his prime when I first saw him, a little more than six years ago, not that he was bowed by age. He was as erect as a soldier, and able, as he then expressed himself 'to thrash seven days in the week; six days in my barn,' said he, 'and,' he added, in his own inimitable manner, 'I thrash sinners on Sabbath.' I could readily discover that age was doing its work, and that he must have been in his best days a powerful man. He was a type of the minister required in this Province fifty years ago: a hard-handed,

broad-shouldered, clear-headed, warm-hearted Irishman. He never took hold of a subject with white gloves; but he handled his themes as he dealt with the trees of his forest—he cut them down, he uprooted them, and chopped them small. Yet his roughness was largely outward. He had a way of speaking that repelled some. Perhaps he did not manifest enough of the gentleness which becometh the pastor. But I know that gentleness was there. I have heard him mourn the low state of religion in the community; I and mine have had his tender consolations in time of sorrow, and I have seen the strong rugged nature break into tears as he contemplated the probability that soon his children would be orphans. I have seldom had the privilege of listening to the public discourse of our departed friend. Once only did I hear any thing like a sermon from him. But that was richly evangelical, and was delivered with an unction. It was a funeral occasion at the Head of Amherst, and I well remember it drew forth special remark from the Baptists who were present.

Of Dr. Clarke's literary attainments, I cannot speak with any certainty. I presume he had become somewhat disused to regular and varied studies. But I greatly admired his respect for exact thought, and especially his earnest regard for the principles of Biblical interpretation. Once or twice I submitted to his judgment a free translation or paraphrase of some portion of Scripture; and I remember with what zest he listened, and gave his own interpretation, at once commending and amending my poor effort. Almost the last time I visited him, in company with one of my deacons, he entertained us at length with a discourse which showed his acquaintance with physical geography.

As a theologian the Dr. was remarkably clear and strong. His view would be regarded as sound in accordance with Calvinism as interpreted by Calvin himself. He had a horror of the liberal theology, which robs Christ of so much of His glory, and which takes from His cross so much of its power.



*D.A. Steele,
Grace McLeod
Rogers, One
Hundred Years
with the Baptists
of Amherst, 1810-
1910 (Amherst, N.
S. 1911).*

'The saving efficacy of the blood of Christ was the comprehensive theme of his ministry.

As every one who knows any thing of Dr. Clarke, he did not obtrude his religious experiences upon the public. I can make more allowance for this than most of our people. I knew, too, that his phraseology differed from ours, and that, therefore, he was misunderstood. But if a shadow of doubt should linger in any mind in regard to Dr. Clarke's experience, permit me to say that as far as I am concerned, there is the same evidence for his experience as there is for that of the best of us. From his own lips, years ago, I have learned of a rich experience of Divine things; and during his late illness, in answer to a question as to his state of mind, he said to

me, 'I am on the rock where I always was.'

For reasons I cannot analyze, perhaps because we were so unlike, we were drawn together from the first of my ministry here. It is no figure of speech to say that he leaned upon me, and I looked up to him. I learned to respect him and to revere him, and shall long feel my loss. I make these remarks, not for the purpose of glorifying the departed, but of 'glorifying God in him.' It is useless to say he had his failings, but they were of such a nature that they were readily observable. Taking him in the completeness of his character, and summing up his long life and labors of love, it will be long before we look upon his life again. It is difficult for me to realize that I shall no more see his venerable form, and receive his cheerful greeting. 'The pitcher is broken,' the old man is gone! 'He rests from his labors, and his works do follow him.'

Dr. Clarke was buried in West Amherst Cemetery. Rev. Dr. David

Allan Steele retired from the Amherst ministry in 1896, but remained as Pastor Emeritus until he died 19 January 1931, in Amherst.

Dr. Eldon Hay is a Minister of the United Church of Canada and former professor at Mount Allison University, Sackville, N. B. and author of The Covenanters in Canada (McGill-Queen's, 2012).

Dozens and Ups

Joe Foy



Of course I was the last person to figure it out.

I had had an exhilarating winter, involved up to my earlobes in a project that I cared about passionately. Meetings, late night writings, organizing, running around, 24/7.... This went on for four months, and I was thoroughly enjoying myself. “Just like the old days!” I thought.

Of course, I had no clue just how deep was my fatigue. Came June, the project went up in flames. To my surprise, I didn't get that upset (a first for me). Had a nice June, a nice July. So I thought. Then I started waking up at night, bug-eyed, for hours. Getting cranky, although I was not as aware of it as others. Short fuse. Over-reacting. Then, to top it off, bored. Bored out of my skull.

One boring day I went downstairs to my book-cave, where sat two shelves of handpicked books I really want to read. Picked up one: boring. Another: boring. After 30 minutes of this, the light finally came on: something is wrong with me! I've never been too bored to read a good book in my life.

I mentioned it to my wife, who calmly said, “Perhaps it time for you to see your doctor.” Why? said I. “Just tell him you are overly tired, and see what happens.”

Then a happy accident occurred just days before my appointment. I showed up early for a meeting at a local Baptist church. The pastor was making coffee, and directed me over to the meeting room. There were

pamphlets on the table. One was titled, “Are You Depressed?” I turned it over: Who published this? The U.S. Army. Interesting. So I ‘borrowed’ it. (Sorry, padre.)

Then I read it. Much too much of it looked pretty familiar. Now more focused, I met with my doctor. After some pointed questions, he looked me straight in the eye and said, “You have many of the classic signs of depression.”

Really! Me? I was taken aback, but sobered. And so we began 8 or 9 months of work. Well I did, anyway. Walking. Exercising. Letting go of some of the too-many oranges I was juggling. Watching entertaining movies. Meeting with friends. Holding hands. Petting the dog. Going to bed early. Basically, following Doctor’s orders. And, yes, taking medications for about 3 months to get my shuteye.

Nine months went by. I felt better. Insomnia became rare. My friends keep saying things like, “You seem so much better!” Which was a bit humorous, because I didn’t really know exactly what they were talking about. But they did. And you have to trust your family and your friends.

Bottom line: after downs, sometimes there are ups.

PS: It has occurred to me that my ‘happy accident’ with the US Army pamphlet might have been the quiet work of a perceptive pastor. Well, either way, I am grateful, and I call it grace.

Joseph Foy is an active member of St. Francis Roman Catholic Church, Wolfville, NS and a former President of the Canning Area Inter-Church Council. He resides in Hantsport with his wife, Rosanne.

Bearing witness:

Kairos Marathons in Springhill Prison

Sheila MacCrimmon

I’ve learned a lot in prison. In that dark, desperate place, I’ve seen hope, compassion, courage, wisdom. Some ask, “How can you do it? How can you work with those men?” I expect the question is sparked by curiosity.

Or fear. All I can say is that God is more real for me there in prison than in almost anywhere else I know. It's hard to describe, but in the "Kairos Marathon" circle, sinfulness is a given. So is grace.

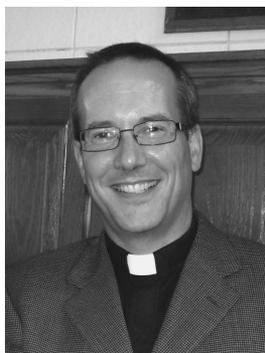
I've been going inside for 30 years, mostly to the four federal men's prisons in the Maritimes. I'm a volunteer with Concilio Prison Ministry, formerly Christian Council for Reconciliation, a non-profit group founded decades ago by The Rev'd Dr. Charles (Charlie) Taylor. The Kairos Marathon program is longstanding. Started in 1969 in Dorchester prison, it moved to Springhill prison in the 70's. Just Charlie, a handful of prisoners, and a few dedicated volunteers who felt called to support Charlie's vision. Over the years, the Marathon circle has grown in both size and reputation. Now, six times a year for two days, 40 people gather in the Springhill prison chapel. Some volunteers are from 'outside' and some prisoners from 'inside'. Each is there voluntarily, likely having heard about "the circle" through word of mouth. There are no guards present, no notes taken. The circle is confidential, safe. Quickly the group becomes a close community during the two days. A process-oriented group, the leadership comes from within, and the methods of inquiry are both spiritual and psychological. While faith-based and grounded in Christianity, the group is inclusive of all, regardless of faith or religion. What is important is the desire to change. At the core, Love is what heals.

There is no way to know what will happen in a circle. Once, a prisoner serving time for dealing drugs was speaking with deep remorse about "all the lives ruined" by his drug sales. He felt utterly responsible. The volunteer sitting next to me, a man well respected in community and in his profession, began to fidget. Eventually he spoke, his voice quavering. "I remember you. You sold to me many years ago." He shared some of his story. The circle fell silent as the two men looked across at each other. Then, as if cued, both stood, walked towards each other, and embraced, weeping in each others' arms. A reconciliation—to self, to others, and to God.



Lives are changed in the circle: lives of inmates, lives of volunteers. We grow to listen deeply, suspend judgement, honour boundaries. We focus not on the actions, but on the common humanity. Beneath any act of hatred and desperation is a person, wounded and vulnerable. The circle bears witness to the majestic and mysterious work of God.

Sheila MacCrimmon has been in prison work for 30 years, a core participant in Kairos Marathons and strong advocate for the work of Concilio Prison Ministry. For information, contact Sheila.maccrimmon@gmail.com



God in Your Garden

The Rev'd Jeffrey White

Spring has sprung. Even the persistently returning cold, ice and snow back in March in Nova Scotia did not discourage me. I saw signs of spring and was patient. Right on schedule, my personal love of nature and horticulture was getting heightened to the point of 'spring fever.' I was drawn to the online seed catalogues, gardening blogs, and lists of upcoming field trips for the Bird Society, Wild Flora Society and Hike Nova Scotia.

From where does one's joy and interest arise, be it for some aspect of nature, or sport, a genre of music, certain literature, automobiles, or local politics? Especially over the past year I have wondered how my enjoyment of nature works within me. Why does it fascinate me?

I am not yet sure.

I do know that I must confess to being somewhat a panentheist, considering God to be present in all of creation and beyond. I hope I am simply one tiny, fruitful branch rooted in the richness of Celtic Christianity, Francis of Assisi, and so forth. 'Does the hawk fly by your wisdom?' asked God of Job. 'Consider the lilies,' said Christ, and contemporary authors who write of the Divine found in the leaf, the insect, quantum physics or the story of evolution inspire me.

This is not to say that I am spiritually minded at all when I am hiking,

gardening, botanizing or birding. I am not. As much as it appeals to me, I have yet to find a way into ‘practicing the presence of God’ when out in the woods. I can wander for enjoyable hours upon hours without one thought of the Creator or Christ.

*One is nearer God’s heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth,*

Wrote Dorothy Frances Gurney, yet my mind stays busy with everything but God when my hands are in the soil. Only a handful of times have I tried Frank Laubach’s ‘Game with Minutes’ while on a field trip, and with little success... whatever success means in this kind of spiritual practice!

I continue to look for ways to incorporate my focus on the natural world and my interest in the spiritual disciplines. Perhaps a ‘game with plants’ will one day work for me, and I will know ‘God in the room’ with each and every plant I notice over the course of an hour. I assure you I notice every plant.

Perhaps you have also wondered about your inner life with God and how your most consuming hobbies play a part. Intention has its place and yet I have a hopeful faith that even without intending to, my enjoyment of the natural world is a door for transformation. My seeking of a rare plant in the province is training to seek other things, such as the wellbeing of the environment, or of people who need my compassion. Awareness of God may be overrated. Awareness—period—could simply be greater.

The Rev’d Jeffrey White is the Minister of the Digby Baptist Church, and lives there with his wife, Sharon.

Membership Dues

Individual Membership dues are requested annually. Annual CABF membership for individuals is \$20 per annum. They may be paid when attending the Rushton Lecture or sent to Mr. David Allen, PO Box 217, 308 Main St., Mahone Bay, NS B0J 2E0

The Annual Rushton Lecture and Luncheon



Plan to attend the annual Vincent Rushton Lecture and luncheon which will be held:

Port Williams United Baptist Church
Saturday, 3 June 2017, Registration begins at 10 a.m.

Speaker: The Rev'd Lynn Uzans,
Transitional Minister of First Baptist Church Halifax

Topic: **An Anglican in Baptist Circles**

Please pre-register: Lana Churchill (902) 542-2186
Lana.Churchill@bellaliant.net

Registration at the door: \$25

A Recommended Book

The Acadia Centre for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies (ACBAS) has available a new volume of papers presented at the Old First Church Conference held at Acadia University.

***Maritime Baptist Old First Churches:
Narratives and Perspectives***

Price: \$20

Copies will be available at the Rushton Lecture or contact the Acadia Divinity College

