

The Bulletin

A PUBLICATION OF THE
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAPTIST FREEDOMS



Fall 2022



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

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ON THE COVER

Friends gather for the 50th Anniversary Lunch on
Saturday, 4 June 2022 at Wolfville Baptist Church.

Editorial

BY SCOTT KINDRED-BARNES

¶ What a privilege it was to participate in the 50th Anniversary celebration held in Wolfville on June 3-4, 2022. Of the many questions raised over the course of the weekend, the one that has left the greatest impression upon me, is “who are we as baptists among the denominations?” Some may see this as an irrelevant question given that we are living in a “post-denominational” world. While I can understand why people say this, I do not share this view, and believe it remains a relevant question; especially as the local church works to share the good news and love of Jesus Christ. Burt Radford’s excellent presentation on the Saturday morning, left me wondering if we are best described as a mainline or an evangelical denomination? My research on the past fifty years has found that many Canadian Baptists have tried to uphold both the mainline and evangelical trajectories of our heritage. Indeed, the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was founded in 1971 because some within our ranks tried to define The United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces according to a more narrowly defined evangelicalism. Many Baptists today prefer to define evangelicals according to the categories laid out by Professor David Bebbington; no mean authority among Baptist church historians. But even this exercise, can soon dissolve into the unappealing question of ‘who’s in’ and ‘who’s out?’ That’s why the Baptist teaching known as ‘soul liberty’ matters. It seems perfectly possible to me to both celebrate and practice regenerate church membership, without rejecting the tools of higher criticism when reading the Scriptures. Otherwise, celebrated Baptists such as Tommy Douglas, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jimmy Carter, to name but a few, might have been pushed out of our family simply because they didn’t check the correct doctrinal boxes.



The articles presented in this edition all relate to the 50th anni-

versary weekend. Each piece testifies to the fact that the weekend was a success.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Kindred-Barnes is the Senior Minister at Wolfville Baptist Church in Nova Scotia.

Reflections on the 50th Anniversary Weekend

BY J. ADAM BOYD

¶ It was wonderful to experience our “long-expected party” after several years of planning. The theme “Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow” was our framework. I found Scott Kindred-Barnes’ “Yesterday” program particularly interesting with his depiction of the drama and politics surrounding ABF’s founding, and I look forward to reading his completed the CABF history book.



Bert Radford explored “Today” by sharing results of his qualitative survey of Canadian clergy and lay leaders. We got a fascinating glimpse of how respondents perceive CABF with respect to issues like tolerance and inclusivity of culture, gender, and sexuality; worship style; and the growth of the church. The panel discussion further explored the question of the church’s relevance to modern society and the associated importance of increased church action in social justice initiatives like food banks and supporting unhoused people.

I was working at 4 p.m. Friday so I attended the communion service online afterwards. Ed Colquhoun described the “great cloud of witnesses” that are with us in spirit, and even through a screen I felt the presence of one such witness, Roger Prentice who crafted the service. The ABF tradition of Friday night communion was im-

portant to Roger. The “Tomorrow” presentation by Lydia Hood and Dave Csinos prompted us to think carefully about how traditions evolve over time. Traditions connect us to our past, and each generation decides which traditions to continue, and which ones to transform.

I feel energized after gathering and getting to know each other in person again. Considering the growing membership across Canada it is crucial to maintain high standards of accessibility for events by expanding digital attendance and hybrid participation. I am encouraged by the events of the weekend as we explored our past and our present, and considered the opportunities and challenges in our future.

Adam Boyd is a lifelong Baptist (First Baptist Church, Halifax) and a public school teacher in Nova Scotia. He serves on the CABF Publications Committee.

Impressions of the CABF

BY MICHAEL JEFFERY

¶ The 50th Anniversary Celebration was a rapid and intensive immersion into the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms for someone like me who had little prior knowledge of it. My experience is apparently consistent with the reported data from one speaker who indicated that CABF is not well known or understood outside the association. It was fascinating to learn how many of the founders and early members of CABF I have known, although I had not associated them with CABF.



The label, freedom, has been somewhat maligned of late, but I think I heard the implied distinction between freedom of person

and church and licence to interfere with the freedom of other individuals and groups.

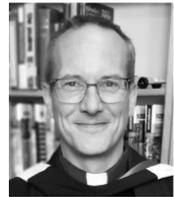
CABF consists of both clergy and laity, is deeply rooted in Christianity, values and learns from the history, welcomes diversity, fosters ecumenism and is striving to engage those who might be new to Christianity. However, as was mentioned in one presentation, while the intention is to be welcoming to other cultures, races and orientations, many struggle with how to navigate the intricacies of the cultures of other groups.

Michael Jeffrey is currently Chair, Board of Deacons and an active member of the choir and the Worship Stream Team at Wolfville Baptist Church. Michael retired from the Nova Scotia Department of Education as Director, Learning Resources and Technology Services, and was a parttime instructor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Reflections on the Anniversary

BY THE REV. JEFFERY WHITE

¶ It is a pleasure to reflect upon the celebration of our CABF fiftieth anniversary, but how does one review such a time? Like Ed Colquhoun said in his reflective sermon at our anniversary service, the pandemic precautions gave us extra time to plan, and re-plan, and alter our plans for this gathering in June. Of course, we came together, and it was great to see faces from our past, and ‘new recruits’ among us. We who were present shared the decorative features, festive food, and special tokens like pins and pens. Remembering our past – the people of our shared past – was a significant thread that ran throughout our assembly. Hearty thanks to the planning commit-



tee, headed by David Allen, and our host congregation, Wolfville Baptist!

Since we met, I reviewed the four presentations that are conveniently available on our Youtube channel, and appreciated the balanced emphasis upon past, present and future. Ed Colquhoun's message in our Anniversary Service reflected upon the changes that have come, especially in the last decade or so. His considerations of our name change when we incorporated led to thoughts on freedom. I found Ed's mention of negative freedom (freedom from) and positive freedom (freedom for) helpful. I believe he is right in seeing that the CABF has moved towards the 'positive freedom' pole.

Scott Kindred-Barnes' presentation on the theme of our PAST brought out just some of his ongoing research into our whole history. For me, he simply whetted my appetite to know more, and we await the publication of the ABF/CABF history he is preparing. The details he gave about the special interest groups of a half century ago piqued my interest: the Concerned Pastors, the Association of Evangelical Baptists, the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, and the Evangelical Baptist Fellowship. The stories we call 'history' inform our life now and can instruct us, lest we forget the lessons of the past.

I appreciated Bert Radford's presentation, PRESENT: the Least of the Apostles, for its personal research in Canada. His insights were coloured by the many conversations he had with leaders inside and outside Baptist churches. As always, I was particularly interested in what was shared about worship. I continue to wonder how our CABF sense of worship diversity may develop, having been for most of our decades a quite traditional, liturgical, 'high church' fellowship.

At last, we came to consider directly the FUTURE, with the presentation by Lydia Hood and David Csinos. Their four Paradoxes, or Contra-Positions, were clear and challenging. I want now to hear so much more about these: *We move farther into our faith by entering the faith of others. We learn more about ourselves by learning more about others. We become more Baptist by becoming less Baptist. We honour tra-*

dition by continuously renewing tradition. I want to discover how we follow these paths at the grass-roots level.

Our conversations with our presenters, and our closing panel discussion, opened up the meaning of this fellowship we name the CABF. Our past, present, and future all lead us to live today in certain ways. Let us be inspired together. I think the scripture quotation Bert Radford left with us can be a good theme for the living of these days:

*Unknown and yet well known,
Poor, yet making many rich,
Having nothing,
And yet possessing all things.*

II CORINTHIANS 6:9, 10

Jeffery White is Senior Minister of First Baptist Amherst in Nova Scotia. Before moving to Amherst this year, Jeff served in Baptist churches in Digby, Windsor and Parrsboro. Jeff holds degrees from Acadia University and is an amateur naturalist with a particular interest in vascular plants. Jeff is married to (Lic.) Sharon White.

Connecting Chaplains across the CABF

BY SARAH SCOTT

¶ Working as a Spiritual Care Clinician in the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the upside of being “a department of one” is that while all the other nursing, physicians, and health staff are arguing about seniority in February as the battle for peak summer vacation is fought... I just wave my hand and say “I’ll figure it out in June.”



However, the dark side to this solo experience is a profound sense of loneliness and a real danger of ingesting the deep sorrows and stresses that is the everyday work of Chaplaincy.

So, imagine my deep gratitude as I looked to my computer screen one Wednesday night and saw dozens of professional chaplains under the banner of the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms—in locations stretching from coast to coast. The meeting was organized by Chaplain Hugh Kirkegaard as part of the 50th Anniversary meetings. There was representation of chaplaincy work in our prison systems, hospitals, long term care facilities, along with those working in the context of the military, a university, hospice, or the broader community.

We shared about the difficulties of being embedded in institutional ministry during COVID, especially in restricted access communities like health care and prisons. We shared about the concerns of our own isolation and the dangers of compassion fatigue. We talked a lot about our own faith identity and how we've moved away, often, from our original communities of commissioning into "unknown waters" of faith. We especially welcomed and supported our colleagues from out West who are receiving such a "soft landing" in the CABF after a turbulent time of disconnection.

Our family, the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms, was founded with a distinct emphasis and understanding of chaplaincy. While many denominations are pulling out of funding work inside secular institutions, Baptists consistently recognize that this work is not ministry to "the fringe" as some persist in calling it, but actually ministry to the majority. It is outside the walls of the Church, that God's Spirit has called us.

And while we work there, it's good to know, we are no longer "a department of one" but of many.

The Rev. Sarah Scott is the Spiritual Care Clinician for Valley Hospice, and the Pastor for Arlington Church. She is a Member of the CABF and the Canadian Association of Spiritual Care. Sarah lives in Woodville, Nova Scotia with her husband John, and her two daughters.

The CABF Today

*A Summary of the Talk Presented on June 4, 2022 at
the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the CABF*

BY BERT RADFORD

¶ As part of the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms' (CABF) Fiftieth Anniversary celebration I presented an analysis of perceptions of Baptists today based on a telephone survey of 26 people across Canada. This article is an edited version of the presentation to the CABF.



The wider religious scene was tabulated by a recent Angus Reid poll, *Canada across the religious spectrum: A portrait of the nation's inter-faith perspectives during Holy Week*. 65% of Canadians identify themselves as either non-believers or uncertain. Only 18% are religiously committed belonging to a religious group. Of the 18% committed Canadians only 9% of mainline protestants professed to be actively committed to their faith. On the other hand, 74 % of those identified as evangelicals were committed.

The low level of commitment of mainline protestants causes concern particularly in contrast with the evangelicals. It may be that evangelicals who self-identify by personal beliefs: "I am a Bible believing Christian" stop identifying themselves as evangelicals when they are no longer committed and so don't show up in the count.

The poll points out an essential difference between liberal and evangelical churches. Liberals teach our children to be creative, to think for themselves and to make up their own mind on spiritual matters. When they do, they often do not choose the faith of their parents.

BAPTIST BELIEFS There is general agreement that most Baptists are theologically “conservative and evangelical”. Most use the terms “liberal” or “progressive” to distinguish mainline Baptist churches from evangelical Baptists. Many felt that liberal or even moderate Baptist churches are few in number and are located mainly in urban settings. Most non-Baptists perceived Baptists to be conservative in belief and practice, although one or two thought us to be quite liberal.

TOLERANCE We scored well in tolerance as many suggested the majority of Baptists are accepting of other races and cultures. Two responded that this is a complex issue and Baptists do not really understand what it means to welcome someone of a different culture.

INCLUSIVENESS The jury was virtually unanimous that, with the exception of a few churches, Baptists are not welcoming and affirming of LGBTQ 2+. Several Baptists said we were at least welcoming but that we are usually quiet about it. Another said that we are changing, but slowly.

WORSHIP STYLE The general perception is that contemporary worship is used in the majority of Baptist Churches and that conservative churches tend to use it more than liberal churches. One observed that small Baptist churches would like to use contemporary worship but have more difficulty mounting a praise band.

THE RELATION OF WORSHIP STYLE TO GROWTH I asked, “Are contemporary worshipping churches growing more than traditional?” Six respondents said “Yes” but I was surprised that five said “No”. Peter Noteboom, Executive Minister of the Canadian Council of Churches, said, “Twenty years ago, I would have said yes, now I say no”. Several expressed the view that there are factors other than worship style involved in church growth. For instance, focus on specific needs and specialized ministries and the quality of worship. One minister sees youth trickling back to traditional worship because they want to be different from their parents who are into contemporary worship styles. The results show that no

style of worship is a panacea to grow our churches. The quality of worship and the relevance of programs are big factors.

RELEVANCE OF WORSHIP When asked, “Is worship relevant to modern culture?” many said yes, some no. From their comments I perceive two different criteria for relevance operating in the answers. Some answered that the worship is relevant because it speaks to me individually, and meets personal, spiritual needs. These people tended to judge our worship to be relevant. Others defined relevance as furthering social justice and speaking to cultural needs. Most using this definition thought that we are not relevant. Some felt that worship is not relevant if it does not speak the language of modern people. These respondents tended to think contemporary worship more relevant than traditional. On the other hand, those familiar with strong social ministries in several urban Baptist churches judged the church to be more relevant to modern culture. The question remains, “Does relevance lie in meeting the spiritual needs of participants or in meeting wider social needs?” Most CABF responders perceive that we are changing and becoming more relevant. Others said, “No, we are not changing; we have become irrelevant in modern society”. I note increasing involvement by churches in social help such as food banks, clothing provision and the socialization of isolated seniors. Surely this is relevant ministry, answering an immediate social need, although such ministry does not change the causes of the needs.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES AND FAITHS Many Baptists experience difficulties relating to other churches because of the schisms that divide us. They feel we are victims of the press coverage of the antics of Baptists that are not like us at all. One or two mentioned that their church has considered removing “Baptist” from their name. Non-Baptists, however, tended to give us marks for social action in ecumenical settings. The responses of non-Baptists were affected by the type of Baptist they had met and worked with. Those who had met only conservative Baptists categorized us as conservative. Respondents from both the east and the west made positive comments about our relationship with indigenous

people through study groups, shared worship and on-going conversations. Many thought that Baptists shared worship with other Christian churches particularly in special observances like Remembrance Day and World Day of Prayer. Most agreed, however, that we do not often share worship with other religions. Perhaps our residual belief in Christian uniqueness is the determining factor.

FEELINGS OF ALIENATION FROM SECULAR CULTURE There is a general perception that conservatives feel isolated and alienated from our culture: one said “they see Satan under every rock”. Some observed that we feel a sense of deprivation, of loss of “rights” and long for the good old days when this was a “Christian nation”.

On the other hand, other Baptists were alienated by the injustices they see in secular society and are frustrated that the church can not do more to change this.

It is apparent that a sense of alienation arises from two opposite desires, one that wants society to be more explicitly Christian and the other that wants society to be more just and caring.

BAPTISTS’ POSITIONS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES I asked for perceptions of the stances Baptists take on several contentious social issues. Half the respondents felt Baptists generally support abortion rights, birth control, combating climate change and Medical Assistance in Dying. The other half mostly did not know. I included gambling because of the current introduction and promotion of on-line betting. Only two felt we support greater control of gambling. Our opposition to gambling used to be strong but we Baptists seem to have lost our interest in this issue.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAPTIST FREEDOMS CABF respondents identify ourselves by the founding principles and core beliefs that brought us into being; openness, ecumenical relations, freedom and church autonomy. Only one respondent mentioned inclusiveness. The representatives from CBAC did not express a clear understanding of CABF. One person from the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ) complained that we are not orthodox, pointing to our inclusiveness in marriage and ordina-

tion. One representative from the west knew about us and defined us with approval for our stance on retaining Baptist distinctives. Non-Baptists, understandably, did not know us.

The underlying truth is that outside our own membership we are not well known and those who do know us often have a negative perception. One who is not a member of CABF said, "We are viewed as heretics."

CONCLUSION Right now, what CABF deems to be a negative and restrictive view of Christian life dominates our churches. CABF swims against the current. We stand apart from Baptists who are succumbing to the lure of easy dogmatic faith which mirrors our culture and politics.

Among all those who profess to be Baptist, CABF is "The Least of the Apostles". We are not large; we are not widely known; we do not have all the trappings of a successful church. And yet we have the priceless gift of our Baptist heritage of freedom in Christ. Paul's description of the early church is an apt description of the CABF: "Unknown yet well known, poor yet making many rich, having nothing, yet possessing all things." (2 Corinthians 6: 9,10)

The Rev. Bert Radford and his spouse Mae have long been supporters of the CABF. They are members of Burlington Baptist Church, Ontario. Bert represents the CABF on the Canadian Council of Churches.

CABF MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership Fee: \$20. Tax receipts will be issued for any donations of \$10.00 or more. Please make cheques payable to the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms or CABF and mail with this form to:

Joyce Allen
P.O. Box 217, 308 Main Street, Mahone Bay, NS, B0J 2E0

CABF News

☛ *Errata:* It is with embarrassment and a chuckle that I correct the typo accompanying the cover photo for the Spring 2022 edition of *The Bulletin*. The late Roger H. Prentice was not born in “1843” but 1943. As a historian and knowledgeable liturgist, Roger loved spending time in the nineteenth century. I’m sure he would have smiled at that one!

☛ An Induction Service for the REV. JEFFERY WHITE as Senior Minister of First Baptist Church, Amherst will be held at 3:00 pm Sunday, September 18.

☛ This year’s VINCENT RUSHTON MEMORIAL LECTURE takes place at Port Williams United Baptist Church on Saturday, 1 October at 1 pm. Guests Lecturers, Tamsin Robson and Rev. Rick Gunn, will address the theme *A Queer Invitation*. More details are available on the CABF Website. As we get closer to the date we will know if the Lecture will be preceded by a Luncheon, and how to register.

☛ We offer our sincere sympathy and love to Rev. John Dickinson and family in the loss of his beloved wife, EVELYN HARVEY (DENTON) DICKINSON who died on July 23, 2022. Evelyn had deep roots in the Baptist community in Nova Scotia and together with John served Christ faithfully and lovingly.

☛ The REV. DR. DAN GREEN was unanimously elected Vice President of the CABF at a special meeting of the Council held on June 16. The election was necessitated by the resignation of the Rev. Dr. Don Flowers who recently moved home to Tennessee. Dr. Green will complete the remaining months of Dr. Flowers’ term which ends in October 2023.



At the 50th anniversary we shared in Holy Communion together late Friday afternoon. This tradition was started by Charlie Taylor at the ABF's first General Assembly on 26 May, 1972, at First Baptist Church, Halifax.



Bert Radford shares his thoughts on the CABF today while panel moderator Jeffery White listens with interest.



Friends gather around the necktie table to receive yet another gift from the late Roger Prentice.