

ABF FALL ASSEMBLY

Sept. 30 - Oct. 1, 1994

Mahone Bay United Baptist Church

Theme: "Religion and Mental Health"

- Are we building or breaking?
- Religious Addiction
- Psychological Coercion
- Pastors and Power

Speaker: Rev. Henry Sharam
Jungian Psychotherapist

— PROGRAMME —

Friday

- 6:30 P.M. Registration
7:00 P.M. Devotions: Rev. Brian Keezer
7:20 P.M. Lecture I: Rev. Henry Sharam
8:30 P.M. The Service of Holy Communion
9:00 P.M. Reception

Saturday

- 9:00 A.M. Devotions
9:30 A.M. Lecture II:
10:30 A.M. Coffee Break
10:45 A.M. Panel Response
General Discussion
12:00 noon Lunch at the Church
1:15 P.M. Business Meeting



**Mahone Bay United
Baptist Church**

ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN

September 1994



Adele Crowell

Rev. Adele Crowell, ABF programme organizer, has announced that Rev. Henry Sharam, Jungian psychotherapist will speak at the ABF Fall Conference September 30 - October 1, 1994, at the Mahone Bay United Baptist Church. Theme: "Religion and Mental Health". (see page 16 for details)



Maxine and Tim Ashley

Rev. Maxine and Rev. Tim Ashley were speakers at the ABF Spring Sessions. A condensation of their lectures on "The Family in the Bible" and "The Church's Response to the Family" is found on pages 8 and 9.



Donna Myers & Vin Rushton

Rev. Vin Rushton has retired as ABF PR Director, a position he held for more than 20 years. He is pictured here with Donna Myers during a recent ABF meeting.

ABF EXECUTIVE

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Past-President: Edward Colquhoun
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ABF BULLETIN

Next Issue - Dec. 1994

Deadline for submissions - Nov. 1st

Editor: Terry Tingley - 852-4405

Box 10 Site 23 Armdale RR4, N.S. B3L 4J4

Wish to receive the **BULLETIN**? Contact: Mrs. Isobel Horton, P.O. Box 586, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0.

The **BULLETIN** is mailed free of charge. However, donations towards costs are gratefully received and should be mailed to: ABF Treasurer, Box 56, Port Williams, N.S. B0P 1T0.

ABF FALL ASSEMBLY HOST MINISTER



Rev. Andy Crowell
Mahone Bay United Baptist Church

INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL

In 1974, the churches of Mahone Bay formed the Mahone Bay Inter-Church Council. The purpose of this council is to foster the inherent unity of all Christians in Christ, and to provide opportunity for a common witness and service to the community among member churches.

"Perspectives," a devotional presented at the ABF Spring Session by Rev. Stan Hastey, executive director of the Alliance of Baptists, is found on page 10. Rev. Hastey is pictured here with Rev. M.R. Cherry (left).



EDITORIAL COMMENT Independence of the Local Church

Our local church is a company of believers organized to perpetuate the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our elements of church organization are found in the New Testament. We believe in the soul's individual relationship to God and the priesthood of all believers. Therefore, our church is an absolute democracy. Our church is an organization but has no authority save for its own preservation.

No organized body has ever been permitted to usurp authority over our local church. There are hundreds of churches in our Convention but they do not constitute **THE** Baptist Church.

The local church as a spiritual democracy must be maintained regardless of the cost!

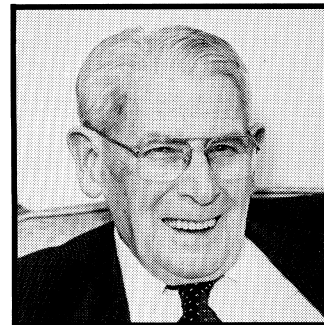
FAULTY NOMINATING PROCEDURE

In the July-August issue of the **ATLANTIC BAPTIST**, editor Rev. Michael Lipe takes aim at Convention's faulty nominating procedure. He calls attention to the tendency to slight women; to select nominees from congregations giving little if any support to the United in Missions Fund; to nominate persons to serve in areas where they lack expertise, experience, or even interest; and multiple members in leadership from certain congregations.

Included in his remedy, Rev. Lipe suggests: **involve** far more women in leadership...more people under 30 years of age...more members of small, rural congregations...and, more lay persons; and **ensure**: that no person holds more than one leadership position; those nominated come from churches actively supporting Convention, and, replacement of inactive members.

This editorial by Rev. Lipe has confronted a problem needing immediate consideration by Convention officials.

Too few have been doing too much for too long. The time has come for a change!



Bert Chipman

THE CANADA AWARD MEDAL and CERTIFICATE OF HONOUR

Bert Chipman is President of the N.B. Pastoral Institute. In 1993 he was awarded the Canada Award Medal and Certificate of Honour by National Health and Welfare Canada. The citation, in part, reads,

Adelbert M. Chipman

"Adelbert Chipman has served as President of the New Brunswick Pastoral Institute since its inception in 1979. Nurses, physicians, social workers, pastoral care workers, and families throughout the province have been inspired and encouraged by the 80 educational workshops that he implemented on such topics as coping with grief, caregivers and families, suicide, prison ministry, drugs, AIDS, and music, laughter and tears.

Mr. Chipman has put his many talents to use as a tireless community supporter, increasing awareness of the great need to comfort the sick through pastoral care..."

Mr. Chipman is advocating a Convention Chaplaincy Foundation, the details of which are found on page 4.

CHAPLAINCY FOUNDATION

Bert Chipman

A.M. Bert Chipman, president of the N.B. Pastoral Institute, is proposing a Convention Chaplaincy Foundation. Hopefully, the following analytical concepts will be presented to the Council of Convention this month. - Editor

1. This Foundation could be an incorporated 'wing' of Convention.
 2. Its governing Board could include representatives (a) from Convention Council; (b) a significant number from among the outstanding Baptist Members of the business community, including several effectively knowledgeable in major fundraising; (c) one or two from the Pastoral Care teaching staff of Acadia Divinity College; and (d) possible representation from the present Convention Foundation for specialized and trust monies.
 3. Provisions would need to be made for the Chaplaincy Foundation's investment and funds management functions;
 4. The Board would be responsible for organizing contributing sources of funds while the Endowment Fund is being built up to the required levels for adequate income generation.
 5. During the buildup of the Endowment Fund to the required level, no disbursements therefrom for the operating purposes of the Fund would be possible.
 6. The Board of The Chaplaincy Foundation would organize and oversee Fund Raising Campaigns to build up the continuing Chaplaincy Endowment Fund to the level required for the necessary income production.
- To be noted is that long periods of prevailing low interest rates can depress average interest income yield from the Fund, necessitating step-ups in the total Investment Fund and supplementary Fund Raising campaigns.
7. The Foundation would co-ordinate the timing of its fund raising campaigns with those of other Baptist agencies to avoid damaging competition.
 8. The Board would have the responsibility of maintaining the Endowment Fund at the required levels to fund Chaplaincy charges from the investment incomes, through additional fund raising whenever necessary.
 9. First claim on Chaplaincy Endowment Fund income at all times would be the amounts required for Chaplain salaries and related priority expenditures.
 10. The Foundation could also be empowered, subject always to its priorities on behalf of its Professional Chaplaincy Services, to -

(a) Fund specialized and recognized Professional Training in Chaplaincy via earned scholarships, Fellowships, Research Fellowships, etc.

(b) Fund special educational events to enhance capabilities in Chaplaincy Outreach - as warranted - when the Income Position and prospects of the Fund permit.

11. Primary emphasis in the Fund Raising would be directed not only to active Baptists; but also to the seeming "dormant" and "inactive" Baptists - no disrespect intended - who also will quite probably be ministered to by this service in due course.

12. The concept of "Memorial Gifts" to the Chaplaincy Foundation Trust Fund should be evaluated.

13. Funds raised in some instances would be received in large amounts, 'capital' in nature; and in others in smaller amounts, often more regular in nature.

Legacies or dispositions from estates would also be a significant source, as well perhaps as sizeable gifts from public spirited, Baptist-owned businesses.

14. When the Chaplaincy Foundation's Endowment Fund reached its target level, these donations could be suspended or reduced very substantially, at least. This would then permit the present support giving through Associations etc. to be diverted to other Outreach or other Convention purposes.

(...cont. on Page 5)

THE CHURCH - MY BLESSING AND/OR BANE

Reg Dunn

This time I want to say something about the church, my blessing and/or my bane. It is, I think, advisable for me to beat the Editor to the punch and say that neither the Editor nor this publication is to take any responsibility for anything that follows. Too bad.

"Blessing"? yes; were it not for Christ-like people in the church I'm sure I'd have been the prodigal son - who didn't come home.

"Bane"? yes; and I looked up the word - I choose one of the three or so meanings: "the cause of harm or death". Extravagant you say? Of course; but maybe it will hold your attention for the next couple of paragraphs.

You see, I think we (the church, I) gradually, almost imperceptibly, certainly practically unnoticed by most church members, have gone the way of the Israelites, and we'll pay for it in "the end", as they did. In short, we have been - we are - unfaithful. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been too much for us - we've not been able to "stomach" it. Just think now: who would choose to be the servant of everyone, including the chronic alcoholic, the person with AIDs, the psychopath, the "ordinary joe" whose whole life has been one long mistake? Not me. Who would give up everything (and I mean **everything**), he/she has for "the sake of Christ"? Not me. Who would rather be poor than rich? Not me. Who would rather be anonymous, than acclaimed? Not me. Who would rather be one against many? Not me. Who would accept suffering as the way of life? Not me.

When I say "Not Me" I think this is what the church is saying and most (though not all) church members I know - "saying" not in words but in style of discipleship.

So you see how far we have drifted - not intentionally, but drifted just the same. This can't go on forever.

Now, don't just sit there wringing your hands in despair or feeling unjustly attacked. There may be time to turn things around. The "bane" may become "the blessing" - I hope.

You know what's holding the church together even now? The "Remnant", hidden within the church.

In any case, as in ancient days, a "Remnant" will survive. I'm not sure who is or will be "Remnant". God knows!

CHAPLAINCY FOUNDATION

(...cont. from Page 4)

15. Dynamic changes, we know, have occurred and doubtless are afoot in the Health Care Field which can affect concepts of Chaplaincy Care and Outreach. More hospitals, for instance, may become - or be even now rated - as major referral institutions. Opportunities for The Chaplaincy Foundation to adjust could perhaps be built into its potentials.

The foregoing will initially - and respectfully - outline the concept and some aspects of its organization and management reactions. Down the road, specialized, professional advice may well be necessary.

I am strong in the view that the foregoing conception in the overall is sound, of significant Christian worth and benefit. Indeed the opportunities for Chaplaincy Education, and Pastoral Compassionate Outreach training, in my opinion constitute decidedly beneficial, Christian Outreaches...in all of which our Baptists may indeed be happy to be stake holder supporters...even eventually sharing participants!

I will indeed be happy to continue to contribute to the structuring and prayerfully to the courageous advancement and vigorous ongoing of this potentially great venture of Christian Outreach in Christ's tradition...to those in need.

TAKING PART IN LOCAL ECUMENICAL GROUPS

Roger Cann

Baptists in the Atlantic Provinces continue to play an important role in the life and ministry of local councils of churches. There are almost as many local councils in the Atlantic region as there are in the rest of Canada. In addition the Atlantic Ecumenical Council is the only one of its kind, a regional council, in the country. These ecumenical councils have spawned, and in turn they have been nourished, by issue-specific or project-specific local ecumenical groups. Baptists provide more leaders for these groups than you would expect based on church membership. Maybe that is where God is leading us. Canadian Baptists may not have a collective voice in ecumenical affairs nationally, but they find themselves able to participate in local ecumenical groups. They participate with the vigour that comes from commitment and freedom, outside the constraints of the denomination. They are able to apply a Baptist approach in a welcoming environment.

A pragmatic value of these local ecumenical groups is that they can be pioneers for the Christian fellowship in that locale. They can experiment with new approaches to mission, and respond to specifics without the risk of offending or experiencing hinderances from some congregational members. At present there are so many concerns and issues facing congregations and parishes that they need the flexibility of ecumenical groups to even begin to respond to the challenges.

There is a theological justification for such groups, on the basis of particular callings, the "differentia of missions", identified by Newbigin⁽¹⁾. It is not a higher calling, or a deeper commitment on the part of group members over against that of other Christians not so involved. Due to their gifts, opportunities, and the current stage in their pilgrimage of faith, those participating in an ecumenical group have a particular calling to mission which they carry out within the healthy functioning of the Fellowship of Believers in That Place.

That does not mean that the local congregation must appoint such individuals. They do not need the burden of representing the partial views of the congregation in the joint mission task. Rather those participating must have a calling so that they are taking part because God wants them to. The constraint would be accountability to all the congregations and parishes as the mission task belongs to the whole fellowship.

Basic precepts which a believer carries into such a local ecumenical group would include the following:

- a. Each individual believer is gifted by the Spirit of Christ. Each individual is a source of insight as to what are God's purposes in the specific context, and therefore participates in all aspects of the group's activities.
- b. The individual believer is a fully integrated member of the Fellowship of Believers. The ecumenical group is one context in which there are no hyphenated Christians. Lay and clergy are in a peer relationship. The divisive elements have been removed by the works of Christ, and the activity of the Spirit of Christ.
- c. The believer shares in the responsibility of the Church, its ministry and mission in the world. The roles and function will differ between individuals and according to the context, but there is no distinction as to status. There are no second class Christians.
- d. Each is obliged to minister to other members of the fellowship and to seek their welfare.
- e. Believers will submit to the correction of the fellowship, learning from others in the fellowship, and supporting their ministry.

(1) Newbigin, Lesslie, "Integration - Some Personal Reflection 1981", in *International Review of Missions*, Vol. LXX, No. 280, October 1981, (Geneva: WCC), p. 253.

ON MODESTY IN RELIGION

Gerry Harrop

The Jewish theologian, Richard Rubenstein, in describing the similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity, put it this way: "Only God knows who, if anyone, ultimately dwells in His truth."

This statement may seem strange to some Christians who want to believe that the knowledge of God's truth is as certain as the conviction that sea water is salty, once it has been tasted! But, as St. Paul put it, we do indeed, "walk by faith and not by sight" (II Cor 5:7). In a more familiar passage he says: "now we see through a glass darkly." (Literally the Greek text states that our present vision is *en ainigmati*, that is "enigmatic" or "like a riddle.") For a more distinct vision of God we must wait beyond the sunset of our little day--"then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known." (I Cor 13:12)

When we claim that Jesus Christ is the way to the knowledge of God, we should do so with a conviction that is tempered by modesty; we must not "over-claim" certainty. An ancient Hebrew wise-man tells us that God does not want the dice of destiny loaded in his favor.

Will you speak falsely for God
and speak deceitfully for him?
Will you show partiality toward him,
will you plead the case for God?
Will it be well with you when he searches you out?
Or can you deceive him, as one deceives a man?
He will surely rebuke you,
if in secret you show partiality. (Job 13:7-10).

Another ancient wise person put it so: "...God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

Let us share our faith with our fellow-travellers along life's way in quiet modesty for in the quaint words of a familiar hymn: "It is seemly so to do."

WORTH REMEMBERING

Rev. Mel Scott

Wilfred was an 87 year old resident at the nursing home where I served as Chaplain for thirteen years. Vocationally he had been a civil engineer and spoke often of highways and bridges whose construction he had designed and supervised. Spiritually he was a profound mystic. He enjoyed discussing the similarities between the language of the mystic and the modern physicist. My experience of Wilfred and other older men inspired me to express my feelings in the following lines. When I allowed him to read them, Wilfred remarked, "That describes me perfectly!"

WHO WAS I?

I talk too much...or so they say...
and spin to captive ears my story o'er and o'er again
like a broken record.
I see them sigh and sink into their chairs resigned to listen;
"for after all, he's ninety odd, has lived a strenuous life
and patience is the least that we can offer."
Too bad they think
that all I wish to do is talk.
Talk there is, but much, much more;
My story makes me what I am...
or so I have been taught by all the expectations
of those with whom I've lived.
"What do you do?"
was always asked by every new acquaintance,
and I could always tell them proudly how I laboured,
contributed
and earned my way as a man among men.
But now that I am old, and time has spent my energy,
WHO AM I?
And what is there to say to those whose values tell me
that I am what I do?
Since I do nothing and am no one
It is important to remind them
WHO I WAS!

THE FAMILY IN THE BIBLE

Dr. Timothy R. Ashley

The following is a précis of a one-hour lecture that was already a condensation from at least four times that much material. The reader will kindly realize the limitations made necessary by such a condensation. Most of what I present here comes from the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. In matters of the family the New Testament assumes the Old and adapts what the Old says for a new day. The New Testament applies much that the Old Testament says about family to the Church as the Family of God.

It is difficult to speak to the subject from the Old Testament because of the sheer size and complexity of the volume. There are 39 books in English Old Testaments as used in most Protestant Churches. In these 39 books are many different kinds of literature, written, edited and collected over many hundreds of years. The most modern culture of the Old Testament is between 2,200 and 2,500 years old today. The Old Testament also comes to us in an ancient language very different from English. In short, we must never underestimate the foreignness of much we find in the Old Testament or mistake the culture for anything like modern life in maritime Canada. During some periods the Old Testament reflects a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Even city life was agriculturally based and from our standpoint, different from life today. It is important to realize that, although God spoke to that ancient culture in terms it could understand it is not ancient culture that is inspired. It is no part of the Christian task to recreate any one of the biblical cultures. It is our task as Christians to understand the principles of the Bible and apply them to our culture today.

There is no one Hebrew word that is always and everywhere translated as "family". The reason for this is that what we today call family (mother, father, siblings) is not all that common in the world of the Old Testament. The simplest biblical definition of "family" is "those who dwell under one roof or within four walls." This included many people not related "by blood". The simplest word for such a grouping is the word **bayith**, "house(hold)." The most common word translated as family by the KJV and the RSV is **mishpachah**. This word does not refer to what we think of as the nuclear family, but to that wider group of people living together, and is better translated as "clan." Ancient families were quite large and included the father, mother, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters (until marriage), grandparents, other kinfolk, servants, concubines, and visitors (called sojourners). All these people, whether related by blood or not, belonged together under the watchcare of the father. The family was an important political unit in ancient Israel.

This extended family was the basic building block of Hebrew society. The family itself begins in the union of a man and woman. Genesis chapters 1-2 contain important principles for our understanding this union. First, it is important to remember that men and women together are made in the image of God (1:27-28). Together man and woman form humankind. 2:18-25 also gives us some principles concerning families. Since humankind is made up of the two kinds (male and female), humans are not made for isolation but for community (2:18.) No (other) animal was suitable to be a partner for the Man than the Woman (2:19-20). Females and males are created to be partners (Hebrew **kenegdo**) (2:20b). It is vitally important to grasp that the family is formed by this basic unit of partnership between a man and a woman (2:22-24). A family is **not** formed when children are added. Children are always in a second circle. Again, the family is formed by the partnership between a man and a woman.

When (or if) children come into a family, there are other principles that apply. Children are seen as a blessing (e.g. Genesis 12:2), "on loan" from God. Children are not the personal property of parents (nor are parents personal property of children). The whole world is, rather, the personal possession of God (Psalm 104:24). Family members are to be loved, protected and nurtured by one another (see e.g. Psalm 103:13). One of the important nurturing functions of the family is education of children by parents (see Deuteronomy 6). It is true that most parents today do not have the technical skills and information to fit children with what they will need to live in the world. But parents do have a role in teaching and modelling faith and practice of faith for their children.

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE FAMILY

Rev'd. Maxine F. Ashley

This article is the second part of the summary of presentations made at the June ABF meeting held in Port Williams United Baptist Church. The first presentation examined some biblical principles for family life. The purpose of the present session is to consider the implications of these principles for life in the Church today. It is not difficult to recognize that present-day life is vastly different from life in any of the cultures of biblical times. We must do as the biblical writers themselves did, and interpret the principles found in scripture for the present.

A biblical example of this updating of earlier tradition is found in Deuteronomy. The Israelites stood on the threshold of a new day in the new land. Rather than simply reciting the old law again, just as it was, Moses reminds the Hebrews that God made the covenant with **them** and not only with those who went before. God's word for the people was constant, but the people's life was about to change radically. The new life was going to demand new and creative applications of the old biblical principles. We follow good biblical precedent, therefore, in setting out to understand what biblical principles for family life mean for the Church today.

A most important biblical principle is that the family is, at the core, a series of relationships rather than a set number of people in certain fixed roles. In biblical times families were, by definition, extended families—everyone was part of such a "household" and "clan." Grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, servants and sojourners were all in the family. In contemporary mobile society, where extended families are often separated by great distances and, sometimes, broken relationships, this inclusive definition of family could be of help to many. Within such a definition, all are part of a family, and all fulfill multiple roles in that family. In this way, support may be given to the nuclear family, to the single parent family and to single persons in our congregations. All are included in the family or household of God.

A second principle of family-life is mutual respect for all family members. This principle is found in many places in the Bible. Ephesians 5:21 puts it tersely: "Be subject to **one another** out of reverence for Christ." In our day, when we are bombarded by self-centredness and individualism at every point, **mutual** submission is an important principle, although it is not easy to accomplish. Let me be very clear that mutual submission does not mean that family members are required by God to tolerate physical or other kinds of abuse at the hands of a spouse or partner. Another term, for what I am driving at is **self-giving love** (I Corinthians 13). Whether our family is large or small, nuclear or extended, we are all to look out for one another, to consider the needs of others as quickly as we consider our own. Jesus said, "Give and it will be given to you."

A third principle describes a primary function of the family: mutual nurture. Families nurture all family members. Family is a place where people are meant to grow in and through all stages of life. Within families (including church families) this means that family members must teach. Parents have a primary teaching role for children, but other members of the extended family also have the teaching role. Such teaching includes both the content of our faith as well as ways to live that faith. Therefore, we need to help persons to develop a capacity for thinking and reflecting about their faith. We need to help persons to consider the implications of their faith and to put that faith together with life in the real world.

Each church will need to consider these principles and how much such principles are to be put into practice. **There is no one program or set of programs which can be put into place which will automatically accomplish this task.** Two guidelines may help us put some principles in place.

(1) Recognize that we are all in this together. Parents, for example, cannot accomplish the teaching of children alone, but they don't have to. That is what the rest of the family of God is for. Together we form a family of persons who can rely on one another.

(2) Put people before programs. At the core of all our "family-talk" is the matter of relationships. Programs "guaranteed" to draw a crowd and solve our problems are on sale everywhere. Beware! Relationships do not come in program-packages. Programs need to be developed to meet the needs of our own local people, rather than selecting a program with a view to squeezing people into the program's (or programmer's) mould.

We are called to be the people of God, pulling alongside of other people of God, growing together into the People we are called by God to be.

“PERSPECTIVES ON THINGS OLD AND NEW”

A Meditation by Stan Hastey

Texts: Isaiah 43:14-21; Matthew 3:1-10

In the spring of 1983, our typical family of four found itself in our first significant transition. Like millions of other high school seniors that year, our daughter Lisa was anxiously awaiting news about college admission. Her parents, I should say, shared her anxiety, not because we doubted she would be admitted to a good school, but because she was anxious. During those days of heightened expectancy, the daily trip to the mail box was filled with apprehension.

Finally the word came. And yes, our aspiring young university student was admitted to her school of choice; the venerable College of William & Mary in Virginia, the second oldest institution of higher education in the United States. Like all parents who see their children's fondest dreams realized, we were thrilled almost beyond description, first and foremost for her sake, but bursting with pride of our own as well.

As it turned out, waiting for that fateful letter from the registrar's office was not the only hard part in this family transition. The next hard part came a few months later, in August, when we took our Lisa to Williamsburg to leave her there. Life is full of such bittersweet experiences, isn't it? There we were on one of the most lovely college campuses anywhere, along with hundreds of other parents of first-year students, carrying load after armload of precious belongings up several flights of stairs to the room in Barrett Hall where she would live that first year.

What was hard was the drive home -- and the first few days thereafter. With a suddenness that surprised me, even after all the sense of expectation and seemingly endless preparation, came the realization that our lives never would be the same again. Suddenly there was a new sense of perspective on all of life, a perspective, we might say, on things old and new.

That's the way life seems to be. Just as we seem to have a fix on things, things change and we have to adjust. Some of these passages, despite the ambivalence we feel going through them, we wouldn't change for anything, such as child's departure for school. That's the way life is supposed to be, we tell ourselves, and proceed to make the necessary adjustments.

Other transitions are forced upon us, sometimes with breathtaking suddenness. We are utterly unprepared. We are forced to make changes we never would have chosen. A small child inexplicably dies. A mate of many years takes leave of his senses -- and leaves the one he professed to love forever. This phone rings in the deadly still of the night with the terrible news of tragedy.

Other passages, though expected, are nonetheless difficult as well. About the time the education loans finally are repaid, we face the reality of aging parents. We watch and empathize with their physical decline. Eventually we stand with them during the passage from this life to the next. Yes, we know these transitions are coming, but that doesn't mean they are easy or simple.

God's ancient people Israel knew about transition. Their entire existence seemed to have been that of passage from one state of insecurity to the next. In their earliest history, following deliverance from centuries of bondage in Egypt, they were a nomadic people, wandering in a wilderness for a full generation. Later, finally in a country they could call their own, they knew little but more insecurity as they were threatened by a succession of powerful foes. Eventually, the kingdom of Israel divided into two parts, each of which was overrun by a powerful foe. What followed was enforced exile.

This is the context for our reading in Isaiah's prophecy. And I would say, this reading is a perfect example of why the Bible cannot always be read literally. "Do not remember the former things," the Lord instructed Israel, "or consider the things of old." Yet we know that on many occasions the same Lord instructed the Israelites faithfully and regularly to do just that -- to remind their children of God's mighty acts of old. The Jews were to tell their children how God delivered their ancestors from Pharaoh's clutches and from his pursuing army and made of them a nation in the wilderness. They were to recite again and again the thrilling story of Moses and Aaron and Miriam and Joshua.

(...con't. on Page 11)

In fact, if we were to turn over a very few pages in Isaiah's book, we would read these words:

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the Lord.
Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.
Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.
(Isa. 51:1-2)

Clearly, therefore, our text in Isaiah 43 is not to be read literally. How, then, are we to read these words?

Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
(Isa. 43:18-19a)

Like Israel of old, God's people in the church face the same dilemma. Like they, we are on a journey of faith, always adjusting to changing circumstances. At least, that's the way the church functions when it is going forward.

Certainly we Baptists are in a transitional phase in our often noble, if sometimes ignoble, history. Some of us who have been in the eye of the Southern Baptist storm over the last decade or longer, long since have declared our mother church dead and gone. We've been through the funeral and at least most of the grief that followed it.

We long ago stopped being surprised at the shabby treatment received by faithful denominational servants cast aside in the mad rush toward doctrinal purity.

Yes, some of us have given up the Southern Baptist Convention, not easily, to be sure, but given her up just the same, just as surely as one looks into the open grave of a loved one whose earthly remains have to be left in the cemetery. But I also know there are many others who haven't made their trips to that cemetery, who cannot bring themselves to admit that death has invaded our seemingly safe and sacred precinct, our presumably inviolable Zion of the South. Some will never acknowledge what has happened. But others will, and even now are in the beginning stages of their own grief process.

Here, in the briefest summary, is what I believe went wrong with the Southern Baptist Convention. We Southern Baptists, in the course of building up the biggest and most powerful ecclesiastical machine in the history of Protestantism, came to believe we could not live without it. Even more damning, we came to believe God's work on earth could not be finished without it, or without us.

This extreme and idolatrous form of denominationalism perhaps has been analyzed best by my friend Bill Leonard, whose brilliant work, **God's Last and Only Hope** (William B. Eerdmans, 1990), is so aptly titled. Here is how he has summarized the exaggerated form of denominationalism that churches only now are beginning to reexamine:

Southern Baptist denominational unity has always been precarious, based on a fragile compromise of diverse local groups. As a protective environment of southern culture and the programmatic unity of denominational organization became more pluralistic, the time was ripe for a takeover by those long disturbed by what they saw as the ambiguity of Southern Baptist theology. Theological disputes, while significant, are merely symptoms of a broader cultural and denominational identity crisis. The old denominational coalition could not last forever. Fundamentalism merely hastened its demise...

(...cont. on Page 12)

...Moderates continue to believe that the old denominational coalition will prevail, that the pendulum will swing to the conservative center, and schism will be avoided. Many continue to act as if they can regain their rightful place and restore the Grand Compromise ... Fundamentalists ... believe that they can maintain the old denominational triumphalism and success, that they can control the Southern Baptist coalition after having destroyed it.

In fact, Leonard concludes, both sides are wrong. Of both positions he says, "nothing could be further from the truth."

Some of us so-called "moderates," however, no longer "believe that the old denominational coalition will prevail" -- nor do we intend to invest any more energy seeking such an outcome. What we seek to do instead is to restate the best of our Baptist heritage and move on. We seek, not the recovery of a flawed "Grand Compromise" -- to use another of Bill Leonard's terms -- but a renewal of commitment to Christian freedom so that we may embark on a new journey of faithfulness to the Christ who has set us free.

Like Israel of old, we are an exodus people seeking to discern the new thing God is doing. And like the wandering Hebrew nation, we are admonished to forget former things even as we remember the rock from which we were hewn.

That's how I think of the Alliance of Baptists. Yet we dare not trust our own judgment during this critical time between times. Indeed, to do so would ensure that like that first generation of freed Hebrews, we too would wander in a wilderness of our own making. Thus the prayer I find myself praying most often concerning our Alliance is that the God of all sojourners will grant us wisdom and courage beyond our own.

Perhaps no figure in the whole of Scripture better embodies one who knew how to live between the times than John the Baptist. Who, better than he, understood what it means to live in the gap between what has been and what is yet to be?

Here is the Christian prototype of one who knew he must decrease so that the One who came after him might have the increase. And here is one whose wisdom was such that he discerned the new thing God was beginning to accomplish already in his own ministry, one whose courage was such that he boldly proclaimed judgment against the entrenched religious establishment of his day and the end of the corrupt age they represented.

In the aftermath of one of the numerous denominational disasters we have endured in recent years, Julian Pentecost, editor of the Virginia Baptist newspaper, the **Religious Herald**, printed in an editorial an inscription found in the chapel at Stanton Harold in England. It tells of a man who endeavored in the days of Cromwellian turmoil to live in obedience to the highest and best he knew. That inscription reads:

**IN THE YEAR 1653
WHEN ALL THINGS SACRED WERE
THROUGHOUT THE NATION
EITHER DEMOLISHED OR PROFANED
SIR ROBERT SHIRLEY BARONET
FOUNDED THIS CHURCH:
WHOSE SINGULAR PRAISE IT IS
TO HAVE DONE THE BEST THINGS
IN THE WORST TIMES AND
HOPED THEM IN THE MOST CALAMITOUS.**

If some day something like that can be said of the efforts of us late 20th century Baptists in the worst of our own times, perhaps our own children might well conclude that we maintained a perspective on things old and new that was worthy of our moment in history. They might even rise up and call us blessed. Amen.

Editor's note: Stan Haste is executive director of the Alliance of Baptists, Washington, D.C. This Meditation was presented at the ABF Assembly in June '94.

BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

by M.R.B. Lovesey

According to the witness of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus, having arrived in Jerusalem in the last year of his earthly life, entered the Temple on Mount Moriah and drove out the money-changers who carried on their very profitable and nefarious business there. This violent act drove the authorities to approach Jesus with the famous question, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" Representatives of the Sanhedrin, the body responsible for the affairs of the Temple - the chief priests, the scribes and the elders - came with their question, the purpose of which was to demonstrate that Jesus had no authority for what he was saying and doing. Jesus' reply, in the form of a further question was in line with current rabbinic practice. His interlocutors, however, refused to be impaled on the horns of a dilemma and said they could give no answer. We can appreciate how this story must have encouraged the early Church by Jesus' ability to out-wit and out-argue the trained experts of Judaism. But, according to Dennis Nineham, however, Jesus did give an answer to the question, the meaning of which can be expressed thus: "John the Baptist is a man who can point to no human authorization; but you accept him in the belief that he is a prophet sent from God. His ministry and mine are in many ways similar, why should not I too not have authority direct from God?"

Many of the common people of Jesus' own day recognized that Jesus' authority came from God. They were astonished at his teaching and the power of his healings and exorcisms for he was clearly a peasant from Galilee without formal training as a rabbi.

The problem of authority in religion is very much with us in our day. Our friends in the United Church of Canada have been struggling with it for years as we well know. What anguish and bitterness it has caused; what secession of churches from the body! Their discussions first informed me about what is called the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral," a phrase that should be a part of the well-understood vocabulary of our Baptist people. In the Wesleyan tradition the debate about the Bible has circled around the so-called "quadrilateral" - a term that refers to the four elements John Wesley viewed as the basis for theological method - scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

Wesley re-interpreted the Reformation slogan of *scriptura sola* in the phrase *scriptura prima*. The Bible is the "primary" rather than the "exclusive" authority for the Christian Faith. It is claimed that this is not a denial of the Reformation principle that the Bible is the sole source for matters of belief and practice but a justifiable and necessary amplification of it. In effect Wesley integrated tradition, reason and experience as legitimate sources of authority along with the basic revelation of God given in the scriptures. The primacy of the scriptural authority is fully affirmed.

The "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" is a model of the way in which John Wesley conceived the task of theology. He neither coined the term nor used it; it does, however, summarize for us today the fourfold set of guidelines he used in reflecting on theology. The term was first used by the American A.C. Outler in the late 1960's while serving on the committee on doctrine and doctrinal standards of the United Methodist Church. He used the quadrilateral as analogous to the already familiar term used by Anglican churches, the "Lambeth Quadrilateral." This "Lambeth Quadrilateral" is a revision of the four articles agreed on at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church held in Chicago in 1886. Its substance is quite different from the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, but Outler thought the term would serve as a helpful way to refer to the complex interaction among the four sources of Wesley's theology.

Many of us today would agree that the fullest support must be given to **all** the four dimensions of authority - scripture, tradition (or Church authority), reason (with all its humanness and fallibility), experience (in all its diversity) and not to any one or any combination of two or three. When what we teach or practise has behind it the authority of scripture (which chronicles the experiences of our forefathers in faith, necessarily expressed not in the language of heaven but in the language and culture of their day), the authority of the doctors of the Church (despite their disagreements), the authority of reason (which God gave us to use) and the authority of experience (conscience, inner conviction, intuition, the inner witness of the Holy Spirit), we can feel fairly sure that we are on, or fairly near, the King's Highway, the right path. Theology is, after all, an ongoing process never a completed system!

For further reading:

McKim, Donald K., article "Authority" in Donald K. Musser & Joseph L. Price, eds., **A New Handbook of Christian Theology**, Abingdon Press, 1992.

Thorsen, Donald A.D., **The Wesleyan Quadrilateral**, Zondervan, 1990.



50th Wedding Anniversary
Rev. Don & Leota Quigg
Best Wishes

-Basic Baptist Beliefs

"Baptists believe in the independence of the local church...In the conduct of its own internal affairs it is absolutely independent."

by Gordon C. Warren
former Dean of the Theological
Faculty of Acadia University

Covenant of Principles

The Alliance of Baptists (Washington, D.C.) adopted a Covenant of principles to guide its movement. One principle of relevance to the ABF at this time is noted here: THE FREEDOM OF THE LOCAL CHURCH UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST TO SHAPE ITS OWN LIFE AND MISSION, CALL ITS OWN LEADERSHIP, AND ORDAIN WHOM IT PERCEIVES AS GIFTED FOR MINISTRY, MALE OR FEMALE...

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FRIENDS OF THE ABF — UPDATE

By Dorothy M. Lovesey

Dear "Friends":

Greetings to you all in this hot summer of 1994. We trust you will be refreshed and renewed in this holiday season.

Many thanks to those who have sent in their subscriptions for 1994; and a gentle reminder of the passage of time to those who have not done so yet!

On this occasion we would like to highlight the contribution of one of our good "Friends" and fellow-workers, Rita Isobel Mader Horton.

Educated at Acadia University, Isobel received her BA in 1936 and quickly followed this with a BLS from McGill in 1937. Appointed to the Acadia University library, she served from 1938 until her marriage to the Reverend Sydney Rowland Horton in September 1941. Thirteen years of life in a Baptist manse with all its attendant joys and difficulties were succeeded by a return to Wolfville and by Isobel's restoration to the University library. For six of the twenty-eight years that she laboured there prior to her retirement in 1982, she was Head Librarian. Since that time she has continued to cheerfully aid countless students and researchers in her part-time, volunteer position in the Esther Clark Wright section of the Archives.



Other concerns have also absorbed her attention and talents. The possessor of a fine voice, she has been a choir-member of the Wolfville United Baptist Church since the late fifties. Twice president, and secretary more than that, of the Wolfville and Area Council of Churches, she also serves faithfully as secretary of the "Meals-on-Wheels" commission. A staunch member of the local branch of the Canadian Federation of University Women, she has held every office in that body, except that of treasurer. The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is also in her debt as she organizes so capably the distribution of the Bulletin of the organization.

Remember always WE NEED YOU! ...

...Perhaps YOU TOO NEED US!

FRIENDS are sympathetic to the aims of the ABF, which are:

- (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 United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces 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;
(5) To publish, at regular intervals, a Bulletin which seeks to further these aims and which describes the activities of the Fellowship and announces the agenda for its general meetings which will be held in the spring and in the autumn of each year.

FRIENDS undertake:

- (1) To pray for the life and work of the Convention and the Fellowship;
(2) To seek other committed Christians to join the Fellowship;
(3) To become better informed about current ethical and theological issues;
(4) To pay an annual subscription, minimum \$10.00;
(5) To respond, as circumstances permit, to requests for financial support.

Please cut off along this line and mail to:

Dr. Dorothy M. Lovesey:
P.O. Box 68, Wolfville,
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