



ABF Spring Meeting in Port Williams Photo Session: - Rev. Tim & Rev. Maxine Ashley - speakers... Centre: Susan Colquhoun, Sheldon & Marjorie Fountain with Rev. John Boyd.... Bottom: Rev. Philip Griffin-Allwood, Lois Tingley, Vincent Leung, and Shirley Jackson...



# ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN

June 1994



The "Hand of Friendship" was extended to the ABF by the Alliance of Baptists at Greenville, South Carolina, during the March Convocation. Pictured above with Stan Hastey, executive director of the Alliance (centre) are ABF representatives Elaine Anne MacGregor and Ed Colquhoun. See pages 6 & 7.

### Also, in this Issue

Highlights - ABF Spring Conference

Ecumenical Amnesia by Roger Cann  
page 8

Why I Remained a Baptist - Reg Dunn  
page 9

Plus ... much more

## EXECUTIVE ELECTED AT SPRING SESSION

**President:** Elaine Anne MacGregor  
**Vice-Pres:** Philip Griffin-Allwood  
**Secretary:** Derrick Marshall  
**Treasurer:** John Churchill  
**Past-President:** Edward Colquhoun  
**Programme:** Adele Crowell

**Bulletin Editor - Terry Tingley**  
**Bulletin Distribution:**  
Isobel Horton

**FRIENDS of ABF Sec'y:**  
Dorothy Lovesey



## SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

The ABF Assembly appointed Terry Tingley to a part-time position as PR Coordinator beginning August 1st. The ABF Bulletin Editor retires as a teacher/administrator with the Halifax County School Board the end of July.

## ABF FALL CONFERENCE SEPT. 30 - OCT. 1

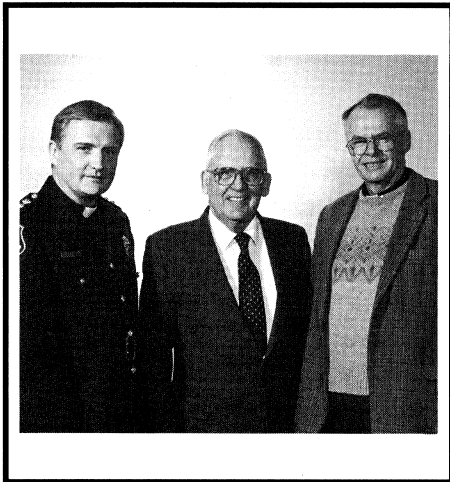
**Mahone Bay United Baptist Church**  
Theme:

“Building or Breaking...Religion  
and Our Mental Health”

Topics:

Psychological Coercion:

Religious Addictions; Pastors and  
Power; Toxic or Healthy Systems



**Provincial Police Chaplaincy Executive: l-r: vp  
Rev. Sandy McDonald; sec'y Rev. Neil G. Price;  
pres. - Fr. Lloyd O'Neill (See page 10)**

## NEXT ISSUE ABF BULLETIN SEPTEMBER '94

**(Deadline for submissions:  
August 15th)**

### PHOTO CREDIT:

Cover  
Jack Harwell - Alliance

### COMMENT...

Vicki Brown

Having had an opportunity to be led in worship over the past five months by several candidates for the ministry from Acadia Divinity College, I observed each one is warm, gracious, and friendly while conducting the service.

There are various age groups in our church who meet following worship for coffee 'n' conversation. I am appalled at the lack of social skills many “Licentiates” exhibit. Some are unapproachable.

I have attempted to converse with each one and have yet to receive a cordial response. There has to be an emphasis in regards to communication skills at ADC.

Jesus spoke to everyone and learned from His conversations with them. Where is the “person” in our future pastors?

(Vicki Brown, is Church School Superintendent, Bayside U.B. Church)

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Rev. Roger Prentice



Roger Prentice

There is challenge facing the ABF. The Church is entering an exciting but difficult future, one that will place new demands on the training of our clergy. Many United Baptist Churches are turning “to the right” for answers to this challenge. Some of us believe that this is the wrong direction.

Fewer and fewer of our younger clergy have any exposure to the ecumenical movement, its riches, its heritage, its mission. Not many more are up-to-date in their theological development. Lack of knowledge in ways of worship and liturgical expression plagues most of our congregations. Even fundamental information about the beginnings of the Baptists and our heritage is lost to many of our clergy and people, a problem reaching almost crisis proportions.

### A Suggestion to Consider

Most of our clergy, happily, are trained at Acadia Divinity College. What we might provide as an auxiliary is a Hall of Residence where up to a half dozen theology students could live in community. A house near the campus, the chapel, the library, and the Baptist (and other) churches, would be ideal.

The residents dine together, share a spiritual discipline, and hold informal discussions with visiting speakers on topics of academic and ecclesiastical interest. Examples include the Canadian Council of Churches and the Canadian Bible Society for these have much to offer to people interested in ministry. With Acadia University near-by, arrangements could be made for special seminars on theology, philosophy, and other important topics.

If the residents paid fees equal to (or even less than) the University residence fees, the project would have a major source of funding. The initial investment of purchasing a suitable house would be the greatest single financial challenge. An endowment could be established to enrich the programme as it grew in the future.

During summer, the Hall would be a wonderful location for spiritual retreat or study programmes. The University and the Town of Wolfville are beautiful in summer, and offer many other resources for visitors and residents.

### A Personal Reflection

The ABF has contributed much to our Convention. We may have reached an important turning point for the Fellowship. If our tradition is going to survive, we need to make serious investments in opportunities for people to think and pray with the Twenty-first Century in mind. Baptist churches need to be ‘on the edge’ of modern theological thinking, serious about personal and corporate worship, and active in important social projects.

We cannot continue to shuffle along, and still remain a dynamic, energetic stimulus within our Convention. We need to give this whole topic some powerful thinking and prayer. There must be something that we can do.

## EDITORIAL COMMENT Teen Vice of the '90's

The number of teen gamblers is rising at an alarming rate...and they are starting to gamble at younger and younger ages. Most begin with lottery tickets. Most children, regardless of age, can buy a lottery ticket. Ask your MLA why.

And governments are making betting more accessible to our young people. Casinos in N.S. High Stakes Bingo in N.B. How will they screen underage gamblers? Is there any ironclad way to deny entry? Let your MLA tell you how.

The more available gambling is, the more young people will get harmfully involved. Remind your MLA. What about that dream in the TV commercial? Many will describe it only as a nightmare...

## PRIORITY POST

### ...Watchful Concern...

In a letter to Association Moderators dated April 21st, 1994, Rev. Douglas R. Kellough, Principal Baptist Chaplain, Halifax Baptist Chaplaincy, Victoria General Hospital, wrote: (in part) - ,

"...I am extremely pleased to report to you that the previous recommendations to phase-out our U.I.M. grant and to terminate our bookkeeping services **have been reversed**. Our presentation of the history of hospital chaplaincy and Convention participation and a careful analysis of the impact of these recommendations served to indicate the "cost" to these ministries, to Atlantic Baptist patients and to Convention itself. As a result, funding levels from the U.I.M. budget and the provision of bookkeeping services will remain the same for 1995.

**HOWEVER**, there were two new recommendations that do merit our watchful concern. First, the Budget Committee has recommended that a cost analysis audit of the costs of bookkeeping services and interest charges (when we are in deficit position) for chaplaincies be done. This information will lead to a discussion about the amount of support being provided to chaplaincies by the Convention. Second, the Council has made its own recommendation which established a committee to examine the relationship of chaplaincies to Convention. We are pleased to have the additional time for such serious issues to be studied and to have the opportunity to participate in discussions about these issues. We hope that **all agencies and departments** funded through the U.I.M. budget will be so scrutinized. This is where your help will continue to be important as will your input to the study on the relationship issues. Please present these concerns to your Association!..."

## IN SUPPORT OF PROFESSIONAL BAPTIST CHAPLAINCY

A strong supporter of professional chaplaincy, Mr. A.M. (Bert) Chipman, president of the N.B. Pastoral Institute, wrote letters on April 15th to Rev. Fred Smith, president, AUBC, and Mr. John Ferguson, chairman, budget committee, AUBC, supporting a chaplaincy "foundation".

Mr. Chipman, a member of Lancaster Baptist Church stated: (in part)

"...Now indeed is the time for Convention to set up a Convention Chaplaincy Function and Foundation with the prime directive to establish professional Chaplaincy not only at Saint John and Halifax but also in the other major or regional Hospitals in the Atlantic area.

Furthermore, Convention's Directive should empower establishment of a Convention Chaplaincy Foundation to finance the extended Chaplaincy Service from Interest Income from the Foundation's investments, and to authorize a modern, professionally-planned and staffed, and effective fund raising campaign, Convention-wide, to establish the Fund. This Fund would be up-graded, as needed, by separate, Convention-wide, periodic campaigns. The appeals to give can, of course, be made very powerful and spiritual as well.

Now indeed is the time for all Baptists in Atlantic Region,...active...and currently dormant... to face the challenge of funding a Christian Outreach Service in professional Chaplaincy in which every one of us sooner or later has a most personal and vital interest.

The big challenge of Christian opportunity is present. We can in Faith and Prayer meet that challenge... Can we in Faith do any less...!"

## -ASHLEY'S ADDRESS ABF ASSEMBLY-

"The Family - a Biblical Understanding" was the topic of Dr. Tim Ashley's address at ABF Spring Sessions. He stressed the family in Old and New Testament times was culturally different in comparison to ours. "It's not our job to recreate Biblical culture and call it Christian". In summary, he said: "...Men and women together are made in the image of God. Humans are not made for isolation, but community. Females and males are created to be partners - the unit of partnership is the basic family. God gives children as a blessing - and this blessing is "on loan" from God. We don't own our children. Family members are to be loved, protected, and nurtured by one another. A prime nurturing function of families is spiritual education. To teach faith we must have it. We teach by what we do. If our life matches our words then our children will ask ..."

## "THE FAMILY- THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE"

Presentation - Rev. Maxine Ashley

While the particulars of the Biblical culture are very different from our own, the Biblical principles are timeless. It is the church's role to teach and apply Biblical principles to the Family of God, the community, and that of blood relationships.

Biblical principles to be applied:

- 1) Family is a series of relationships.
- 2) Mutual respect for all. Ephesians 5:21 should be the motto: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." In a family all members are owed respect. The selfishness of our age is due to loss of respect for the rights and needs of others. Self-giving love is the nature of family living.
- 3) A Family must nurture all of its members. Everyone has something to learn and something to teach. We must teach, model, and show others what we know.

The church must approach the issues facing modern families by identifying the problems, applying the above principles to the problems, and work together to solve the problems.

(Synopsis by Rev. Derrick Marshall)

## THE TALK-BACK PERIOD

Rev. Andrew Crowell

The presentations by the Rev'd's Tim and Maxine Ashley was followed by the much looked forward to talk-back period. As is characteristic of most of our A.B.F. discussion periods, this session both demonstrated sensitivity to issues while not compromising our aspiration for truth. The phrase, "shifting gears", was expressed a number of times, by those who contributed, reflecting the many issues which arose during our discussions.

Chief among issues was the question of our definition of family, particularly in the wake of 'same sex' relationships which all-too-quickly is eliminated from even the discussion of, "What is Family?" It was discussed here with feeling, with thought, and with no delusions as to its importance and controversy.

Upmost in the ABF feeling on this or other issues relating to the family, is the church's response. Without shying away from the need to face and address such issues as political "hot-potatoes" ...the discussion's response raised the importance of addressing both this and all issues of family, **pastorally**. This forum of discussion at the ABF Assembly is a valued and helpful medium through which to discuss the most difficult of topics.

An Aim of ABF

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.

## ALLIANCE EXTENDS "HAND OF FRIENDSHIP" TO ABF

Elaine Anne MacGregor

The Alliance of Baptists ("Alliance") (formerly the Southern Baptist Alliance ["SBA"]) was most recently introduced to the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship ("ABF") in 1991 when Dr. Stan Hastey addressed our Fall meeting. In his address entitled "Historical Perspectives on the Southern Baptist Alliance" (printed in the December 1991 ABF Bulletin) he described the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention. This takeover affected Southern Baptist seminaries, missionaries and that Convention's traditional Baptist defense of the division of Church and State.

In reaction to this takeover the SBA was organized in February 1987 by 21 Southern Baptists. The Covenant of Principles drawn up by those people remains the Covenant of the Alliance (see the March 1994 Bulletin). In brief the Covenant commits the Alliance to 1) the freedom of the individual 2) the freedom of the local church 3) the larger body of Christ 4) the servant role of leadership within the church 5) theological education in congregations, colleges and seminaries 6) the proclamation of the Good News in Jesus Christ and the calling of God to all peoples and 7) the principle of a free church in a free state.

At its inception the SBA adopted the following as its statement of purpose: The SBA is an alliance of individuals and churches dedicated to the preservation of historic Baptist principles, freedoms, and traditions, and to the expression of our ministry and mission through cooperative relationship with other Baptist bodies and the larger Christian community.

The similarities between Alliance and the ABF become apparent when the Alliance Covenant and statement of purpose are compared with the ABF objectives. Although the Alliance membership may number in the 60,000 - 70,000's and ours in the 100's, the concerns, aims and need for support of like-minded Baptists is the same for both groups.

Since the Fall of 1991 the Alliance and the ABF have kept one another informed of respective developments and concerns. It has become apparent that the Alliance has experienced many valuable lessons from which the ABF can learn, especially as our concerns mount regarding an unduly strong conservative influence on the Atlantic Baptist Convention and the Acadia Divinity College.

In an effort to strengthen the relationship between the Alliance and the ABF an invitation was extended by the Alliance for the ABF to send representatives to the Alliance's Convocation held March 3, 4 and 5, 1994 in Greenville, South Carolina. Ed Colquhoun and I attended on behalf of the ABF and took greetings to the Convocation. We received a warm, sincere welcome. Despite the small size of the ABF, the Alliance was delighted to extend to us "the hand of friendship". In return, on behalf of the ABF we accepted that hand. I am enthused by the promise of this relationship. The ABF is no longer isolated by location, size, or concerns, for we have found a sibling who will be our companion as we work to fulfill our ABF objectives.

## A HEAD AND HEART PEOPLE

Ed Colquhoun

"A head and heart people" - that is how Ralph Elliott named the best of what the Alliance of Baptists inherited from their Southern Baptist roots. Speaking in Greenville to the 8th Annual Convocation of the Alliance, his words resonated to participants from the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. Elliott called for Baptists to claim our roots and pursue an inclusive and liberating vision of the Faith.

The address by Elliott, who was hounded from his position as an Old Testament scholar at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary because of his moderate book *The Meaning of Genesis*, was itself some of the "head," the thinking part of the Convocation. So too were the excellent workshops - 24 in all - with titles like these:

- Spirituality and Peacemaking or "Why Should We Work for Peace When Folks Just Need to Get Saved?"
- The Rightful Exercise of Power in Church Life: Pastor - Lay Relationships and Women in Ministry
- "Gospel" from the Old Testament
- Reclaiming the Believers Church Tradition: Defining Ourselves as Baptists Beyond the SBC

The biggest problem was to choose a workshop.

Perhaps the most exciting "thinking" initiative is the establishment and continuing support of new independent centres for theological study by the Alliance - the Baptist Studies Program at Candler School of Theology, Emory University; the Baptist House of Studies at Duke Divinity School; and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, now in its fifth year. First Baptist Church in Greenville, site of the Convocation, was where decisions were made to found both the Southern Baptist Seminary and, in very different circumstances, the Richmond Seminary. "New things I now declare" was the Convocation theme - new thinking was certainly in evidence.

Worship and fellowship were at the heart of the Alliance Convocation. Music was both from established composers sung by the Furman Singers and from the folk idiom with the entire assembly singing "Keep your eye on the prize, hold on." Groups, ministries, and ventures affirmed and supported by the Alliance took part in discussion and worship - Southern Baptist Women in Ministry, the Baptist Peace Fellowship, the ABF, and eight others. We of the ABF greeted the Convocation immediately before Adalberto Cuellar and his interpreter from the Cuban Baptist churches. One cannot adequately describe the moving experience that was the Alliance Convocation. In order to understand it fully, I encourage you to join me for the 9th Convocation of the Alliance of Baptists at the Vienna Baptist Church, Vienna, Virginia, on March 3, 4, and 5, 1995.

# ECUMENICAL AMNESIA

Roger Cann

Lesslie Newbigin in a recent article raised fundamental issues about the direction of the ecumenical movement under what he calls, "Ecumenical Amnesia". He asked two questions:

1. What is the unity we seek? Can we be content with the current patterns of local, regional, and national councils of churches? Have we forgotten the vision of unity which prompted ecumenism in our generation?

I respond with an adaption of a document entitled "Stages on the Way to Unity" produced at a conference in Venice in 1982.

**Co-existence:** We will call the lack of ecumenical involvement "co-existence", that is a phase where a congregation begins to acknowledge that Christ can also be known in other churches, yet it still takes no initiative to enter into structured relationships. The transition from this phase of non-involvement is marked by joining in a council of churches, or beginning bilateral conversations.

**Co-operation:** One style of ecumenical involvement is co-operation, where a congregation recognizes the other churches with sufficient warmth to be able to undertake certain tasks together, to engage with them in a real if limited partnership. Councils of churches are instruments to facilitate this style of involvement.

**Commitment:** The state where it is felt that partnership in particular projects no longer corresponds to the degree of mutual recognition between congregations and parishes, we can call commitment. At this point, the partners conclude a lasting and deliberately open-ended agreement, under God, to do much of what they do as if they were limbs of the same body.

**Communion:** It is expected that these provision styles of ecumenical involvement will lead to a state of communion where it no longer makes sense to think of the fellowship as consisting of separate entities, but where all separation can be overcome in the appropriate wholeness and singleness of the body of Christ.

The implication is that councils of churches will undergo radical transformation or replacement as churches deepen their involvement in the ecumenical process. Councils are service organizations, and foster co-operation. They could solidify the present divisions in the Body of Christ by their success at the co-operation stage.

2. Was it a mistake to bring the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches (1951)? Are we in danger within the ecumenical movement of forgetting about the missionary and evangelistic work of the churches?

The key emphasis of the ecumenical movement since Edinburgh in 1910 was fostering ecumenism in the context of reaching out in mission. It was affirmed early in the life of the World Council of Churches,

"The obligation to take the Gospel to the whole world (mission), and the obligation to draw all Christ's people together (unity), both rest upon Christ's whole work, and are indissolubly connected. Every attempt to separate these two tasks violates the wholeness of Christ's ministry to the world. Both of them are, in the strictest sense of the word, essential to the being of the Church and the fulfillment of its function as the Body of Christ." (Central Committee minutes Rolle, 1951)

Satisfaction with what has been accomplished in the ecumenical movement to date, may be a cause for a loss of emphasis on mission and evangelism. Most Christians remain equally indifferent to the call to mission as they do to the call of unity in Christ. Disunity has become an accepted state for many of us. It has been comfortable, and hallowed over time. We need an inordinate amount of spiritual energy to move out of our denominational womb to challenge the structures of injustice, to proclaim the Word of the Lord, and to embrace our fellow Christians on the way.

# ON THE BAPTIST CONCEPT OF THE MINISTRY

Gerry Harrop

In March, 1948, the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland issued a statement on "The Doctrine of the Church." Concerning the ministry it said:

It is the church which preaches the Word and celebrates the sacraments, and it is the church which, through pastoral oversight, feeds the flock and ministers to the world. It normally does these things through the person of its minister, but not solely through the minister. Any member of the church may be authorized by it, on occasion, to exercise the functions of the ministry in accordance with the priesthood of all believers, to preach the Word, to administer baptism, to preside at the Lord's table, to visit, and comfort or rebuke the members of the fellowship.

We need very much to recover this concept of the whole church as ministry. Our ordination service does not in any way change the candidate's role and function as a priest of God. She or he has no access to the divine presence as suppliant, intercessor or mediator that was not a reality before the laying on of hands. Ordination is the church's recognition and celebration that this person has been gifted, called and trained to serve the fellowship on a full-time basis and is worthy to be supported spiritually and materially by the whole fellowship while ministering.

Now for my heresies! It seems to me that the logical outcome of this conception of the ministry would be that ordination is for a specific task about to be undertaken, and perhaps should be repeated at the beginning of a new task and responsibility. And I think our use of the title "Reverend" should be examined in the light of this doctrine of the ministry.

I know this is debatable and I welcome debate. It seems to me that as the chasm between the church and the world narrows, the gulf between the "ministry" and the "laity" is widening. Surely it should be the other way about.

(The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, or the editor of the *Bulletin*.)

## WHY I REMAINED A BAPTIST

Reg Dunn

I did not become a Baptist; I was born one. Later, much later, I became a Christian. I thought at the time that I had a lot to do with that; as it turned out, I discovered (some humility here) that I had very little to do with the choosing; I must have been chosen to be one. The same with the ministry: at some point, the Lord of Hosts pointed a Holy finger (figuratively of course) at me and said, "You there, what's-your-name, try being a minister for Me." I often have thought it was a case of mistaken identity, but we were stuck with it, both the Lord of Hosts and me - and countless other bemused people.

The Baptist ministry - that doesn't make me any lesser a Christian though at times it certainly hasn't made it any easier. It wasn't until it dawned on me that my denomination was fallible, human, even sinful - just like me - and if the Lord God could put up with me, I could put up with my denomination.

So, God bless the denomination which for over sixty years has put up with me.

I've remained a Baptist because I think Baptists are on the right track - even though we make different and confusing tracks from time to time. Yet we stand by our principles - "autonomy", "priesthood", "liberty" - all of which include the freedom to study and interpret Holy Scriptures as guided by the Spirit. I see these "principles" in other denominations as well and I like to believe they are gifts from us. We always have to be alert though, for its so easy to get off the track. But when push comes to shove we get there somehow.

Another reason why I have remained a Baptist: some of my best friends are Baptists! Most of them are not like me, but I like them. Many of them have ministered to me: forgiving me, holding me steady, opening up visions, and praying madly and lovingly.

I salute you, Baptists. May the Lord keep your eyes open and your feet on the ground, as persons and as Baptist persons.

**Editor's Note:** Rev. Dr. Reg. Dunn, well known to Atlantic Baptists, is retired and living in the Pictou area.

## PROVINCIAL POLICE CHAPLAINCY

(Contributed)

Most people are aware of military chaplains, prison chaplains, hospital chaplains, but it comes as a surprise for some to hear that Nova Scotia has a Police Chaplains' Association and that 7 municipal police departments have a volunteer police chaplain.

Police Chaplain? Why do the police need a chaplain? This question reflects the 'macho' image many people have of our police.

Few other professions face the stress under which our police live with the unexpected from day to day; "crowd control" (in the legislature), emergency calls for help, murders, suicides and "routine" accidents. The life span of a police officer in one study was estimated at nearly 20 years shorter than the "average." The demands for split second decisions, public complaints and public inquiries are always hanging over their heads.

How did the Provincial Police Chaplaincy come about? In 1990 Rev. Neil Price presented an outline of a proposed provincial police chaplaincy program to the Chiefs of Police Association meeting in Sydney, N.S. This opportunity arose out of his membership in the Nova Scotia Police Commission with which he had served for six years, which made it possible for him to meet many of the police personnel throughout the province.

In April 1991 the Chiefs of Police Association appointed Mr. Price as "Provincial Police Chaplaincy Co-ordinator" with a view to encouraging the municipal police communities to appoint police chaplains in addition to the police chaplains serving Halifax and Dartmouth.

The program has been warmly endorsed by the Chiefs of Police, many members of the police community, the Nova Scotia Police Commission. To date 7 out of 26 police departments have a local police chaplain serving on a volunteer basis. It is expected that more police chaplains will be "installed" in the coming year.

Provincial Police Chaplains' Association, N.S.

President: Fr. Lloyd O'Neill (Halifax)

Vice-Pres.: Rev. Sandy McDonald (Dartmouth)

Rev. Elroy McKillop (Springhill)

Rev. Bill MacDougall (Middleton)

Rev. Clair MacLeod (Truro)

Rev. David Shaw (Hantsport)

Rev. Bruce Morrison (New Glasgow)

Secretary: Rev. Neil G. Price

The police chaplaincy program is ecumenical in practice and seeks members of the clergy who are qualified to provide the skills of counselling and communication which merit the full confidence and trust of the police and the public.

"Community policing" has emphasized the place and importance of education in public relations, having regard to the police, the victims, the offenders and their families.

Rev. Neil Price says: "The Police Chaplaincy program recognizes the spiritual dimension in life for the police and for the public."

## BOOK REVIEW

by M.R.B. Lovesey

Timothy R. Ashley. *The Book of Numbers*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993. Hard covers, xvi + 667 pp.; US\$34.95.

The Reverend Dr. Timothy Ashley, professor of biblical studies and vice-chairperson of the Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, has given us a valuable commentary on the Book of Numbers, the fruit of over eight years' wrestling with its Hebrew text. This fourth book of the Pentateuch tells the epic story of the Israelite sojourn in the Wilderness of Sinai, from the time of the Sinai census until the deaths of both the Exodus rebellious generation and of Moses the Lawgiver, immediately before the invasion of Canaan from the east. This reviewer is particularly pleased the author acknowledges his indebtedness to the treatment of the book in the *International Critical Commentary* series, written by George Buchanan Gray, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Mansfield College, Oxford, and published as long ago as 1902. It is good to discover that evangelical scholars publishing in 1993 are wise enough to study the works of their eminent predecessors of nearly a century ago. Dr. Ashley's work is published in the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* series, which has R.K. Harrison as its general editor. The publishing firm of W.B Eerdmans has produced a well printed, handsome volume of some 683 pages, of which the author can be justifiably proud. There are remarkably few typographical errors.

Sceptical about the possibility of achieving solid results from redaction criticism, the author sees his primary task as explaining the final form of the text as the main task of a commentary for the Church. He says: "the reason is not that such matters are unimportant, but that I am quite sure that no one knows these things nor really can know them." Before plunging into the report of his investigations of the Hebrew text, Ashley gives us an *Introduction* to his work in seven sections: 1) title and contents, 2) structure, 3) authorship and composition, 4) theological themes, 5) text and versions, 6) analysis of contents, 7) select bibliography. Here the author demonstrates his awareness of the history of pentateuchal criticism. He confesses: "it is unlikely that most scholars will return to the traditional position [of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch]"; most will adhere to a refined and modified Wellhausenian view. Nonetheless "the text itself is undeniably connected to Moses and this, too, must be taken into account." Timothy's belief is that "through all the complexities of the transmission of the text of Numbers, God was at work to bring his people the final form of the text." This sounds to the present reviewer analogous to the modern understanding of Homer's relation to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and to *canonical criticism*, developed by Brevard S. Childs and James A. Sanders, which seeks to bridge "the gap between critical historical study and the tradition of faith." The section on texts and versions is particularly valuable - Ashley says his English translation is based on the Masoretic



(...cont. on Page 12)



## VI. Canaanites must be Expelled (35.50-56).

Yahweh instructs Moses to tell his covenant people that when they enter Canaan they are to drive out the Canaanites and destroy places and objects, and all signs of their religion. They are warned that if they fail to do this, the Canaanites that remain shall be "as splinters in your eyes and thorns in your sides. And they will trouble you in the land in which you dwell." Ashley comments: "Again and again the Pentateuch (not only in Numbers) stresses the importance of obedience to God. God will repay disobedience, as he has in the past ... here God promises to punish Israel with what he had intended for the Canaanites--expulsion from the land." This reviewer feels the modern reader would like to know how to understand this command of Yahweh to expel the Canaanites, especially in the light of modern Israeli-Palestinian conflicts.

### Concluding Remarks

Dr. Ashley is to be congratulated for a massive work that demonstrates his thorough grasp of the ancient, biblical Hebrew in general and his meticulous understanding of the Hebrew text of the Book of Numbers in particular. His work is prolegomenon, quite basic, to the understanding of the message of the book. Within the parameters he has set himself, or had set for him by the demands of the series of commentaries in which his work is published, dealing primarily with the exegesis of the final form of the text, he has produced a work of erudition that will prove most useful for theological students who study Hebrew [what a pity so very few do!] and preachers who either have kept up with their Hebrew or retain some smattering of it. Influenced by modern literary criticism, one could wish perhaps that our author had entered more into the field of exposition than he has done. Krister Stendahl of Harvard used to teach that we must distinguish between *what the text meant* and *what it means*: Dr. Ashley has majored on the former and only minored on the latter. The distinction used in the *Interpreter's Bible*, between exegesis and exposition has still much to offer to modern readers of biblical commentaries. Interpretation is surely a dialogue between two contexts--the context of the ancient writer(s) and editor(s) and the very different context of modern readers. One hopes Dr. Ashley's work will receive wide acceptance, as it deserves, and that some time in the future he will help us more completely to see how exactly the Book of Numbers may be used in contemporary theology, apologetics and preaching. If Bernard of Clairvaux could write eighty-six sermons on the *Song of Songs*, it is surely not too much to ask Dr. Ashley to give us a volume of sermons based on the Book of Numbers!

**Editor's note:** The Reverend Timothy R. Ashley, BA (Sioux Falls College), MA (American Baptist Seminary of the West), PhD (St. Andrew's, in Hebrew and Old Testament), is Professor of Biblical Studies and Vice-chairperson of the Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, N.S. Born in Wheaton, Illinois, a son of the Manse, he grew up in Illinois, Wisconsin, Idaho and Wyoming. Ordained in 1972, he is married to the former Maxine F. Clark.

### ABF BULLETIN

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## FRIENDS OF THE ABF — UPDATE

By Dorothy M. Lovesey

We are very happy to report that a very successful Rally of "Friends of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship" was held from noon until 2:00 p.m. in the Manning Memorial Chapel on the campus of Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, on Saturday, 30 April 1994.



Thanks to the University chaplain, the Reverend Roger Prentice, the 28 of us who gathered enjoyed the facilities of the chapel and a delicious luncheon supplied by the catering services of the University. The speaker was Dr. Rodger Forsman, of the departments of Comparative Religion and Philosophy of Acadia University; his topic, "Problems Facing the Church Today." Rodger's thoughtful address provoked a good discussion in which many took part. We were especially pleased to have with us our good "Friends," Dr. and Mrs. Earle Hawkesworth, from Edmonton, Alberta.

Some statistics will help us to estimate the "state of the union" with respect to our individual support of the ABF as a "Friend." Since the beginning of our organization (June, 1988) we have raised a sizeable amount of money for the work of the Fellowship: the average per year over the past five years is approximately \$2,500.00. Our support this year (1994), paid by 102 "Friends" (40% of our membership) totals to date \$1,729.99 (or 69% of the average yearly support we expect).

We regret to report the death of a loyal "Friend," the Reverend E. Gideon Corey, of Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia, who died in the Valley Regional Hospital, Kentville, Nova Scotia, on the 8th of May, 1994, at the age of 86. Gideon was born in New Canaan, N.B., and graduated from Acadia University with a BA(Th) and a BD in 1940. He served several pastorates in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and was pastor emeritus of the Lawrencetown UBC. A veteran of WW2 Gideon was active in many church and social organizations. He served on the boards of the Baptist Convention, Acadia University and the Acadia Divinity College.

