

Rev. Andrew Crowell Inducted - Canning United Baptist Church.



Pictured above are participants in the Induction Service at the Canning United Baptist Church. April 30th: Merrit Gibson, Moderator; Shirley Ells, chair, Board of Deacons; and Rev. Andrew Crowell.

In attendance at the Induction Service at Canning were: Rev. Roger Prentice, chaplain, Acadia University; Dr. Rodger Forsman, deacon, Wolfville United Baptist Church; and Rev. Dr. Roger Cann, moderator of the Valley Association.

ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN



ABF Spring Assembly - First Baptist Church Halifax - June 2nd & 3rd: Theme: "The Baptist Identity" Photo - ABF President Elaine Anne MacGregor, Programme Co-ordinator Adele Crowell and Dr. Walter B. Shurden, Guest Speaker.



Participants: Margo MacDougall, Jeff White and Jane Moir.

JUNE 1995



within
Convention

ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Since 1971
Promoting Historic Baptist Principles
Within the
Atlantic United Baptist Convention

President

Mrs. Elaine Anne MacGregor
6327 Liverpool St,
Halifax, N.S.
B3L 1Y1

Secretary

Rev. Derrick Marshall
P.O. Box 272
Annapolis Royal
B0S 1A0

1st Vice-President

Dr. Philip Griffin-Allwood
P.O. Box 68
Lawrencetown, N.S.
B0S 1M0

Treasurer

Dr. John Churchill
P.O. Box 56
Port Williams, N.S.
B0P 1T0

2nd Vice-President

Rev. Adele Crowell
820 Herring Cove Rd.
Halifax, N.S.
B3R 1J2

Friends Secretary

Dr. Dorothy Lovesey
P.O. Box 68
Wolfville, N.S.
B0P 1X0

Bulletin Editor and Public Relations

Rev. Terry Tingley
Box 10 Site 23
RR#4 Armdale, N.S.
B3L 4J4

ABF... a Community

Elaine Anne MacGregor, President

I write this message as the Spring Assembly of the ABF, held at First Baptist Church, Halifax, has concluded. For those of you who attended, thank you for your participation and presence. For those of you who were unable to attend you missed a time of warm fellowship, the opportunity to make new friends, and to reconnect with old acquaintances. You missed sharing in the kinship of freedom loving Baptists who worshipped and broke bread together, and exchanged ideas. We also learned. Each one of us came to understand something new.

We each gained a new insight as Dr. Walter Shurden so ably addressed our Assembly about the Baptist vision of the individual and the Baptist vision of community. Through Dr. Shurden's genuineness, thoughtfulness, and learned reflection we were given cause to re-examine ourselves and our church community.

Opportunities for reflection and fellowship are rare as we lead our busy lives. An ABF meeting can provide such an opportunity. I encourage you to plan to attend our Fall Assembly tentatively set for September 22nd and 23rd at the Canning United Baptist Church. If you are unable to attend the ABF Assemblies, do stay in touch through the BULLETIN: read it, discuss it, share it, and contribute articles.

The ABF can and does provide a community for each one of us as we work on being intentional about our faith and discerning for ourselves the will of God.

Rescuing the Leadership

Roger H. Prentice,
Chaplain, Acadia University

Universities are places where the Church has sought much of her leadership. University chaplains today will identify a very serious problem for the Church in the next 20 years. There will be a crisis in church leadership, both pastoral and lay. Overall church attendance will drop, probably dramatically, and there is likely to be a more serious drop in well-educated leadership.

What are the signs? Fewer university students have any appreciable spiritual background. Large numbers have not even attended Church School. Their public schools have given them little or no training in resolving spiritual questions. When they arrive at universities, they are surprised to find chaplains and chapels for worship. Since most have never worshipped in their lives, we should not be in wonder.

Universities themselves are changing drastically. A disturbing 'client/customer' commercial attitude is dominating university administrators' minds. The deplorable idea that a university is a place where faculty pour facts from an academic teapot into the minds of youthful mugs, for a price, is taking over. The vision that a university is a place for enquiring minds meeting with thoughtful and informed masters is quickly slipping away.

Universities are now often seen as 'vocational schools' rather than as communities of thinkers and enquirers. The dignity of scholarship and its proud tradition is being quickly stripped from students, who are reduced to being nothing more than 'customers.' Universities are in danger of no longer producing leaders, but consumers. Prof. Jack Wendt, retiring from the Acadia School of Education, says, 'We are becoming dependent learners, rather than becoming critical thinkers. There is danger when students give up the power of analysing questions and being free to discover true answers for accepting the lecturer's words at face value.'

In the churches, the educated, well-trained, experienced leadership which we have had is in danger of leaving without heirs. The best minds at university are rarely entering the Church because they see her as anachronistic, slow to become engaged in recent scholarship, maybe even prehistoric in its expression of theology. There is grave danger that a vacuum thus will be created within the church's leadership.

Congregations will be aghast to find new ministers who have not read formative or recent theological books, let alone understand them. Many cannot offer a prayer or sermon in the Queen's English. Tragically many new clergy do not have a grasp of church history or her traditions. Congregations will also be aware of their laity's lack of knowledge, including the important area of Christian Education. Just the matter of choosing Church School curriculum has become a matter of confusion. Lay people are not as informed about teaching practice, theory, and Christian theology as they once were, disabling them from confident selection of materials.

Most new clergy are ignorant of the vast ecumenical organization and outlook of the past 50 years. Their scope of knowledge is often limited to the local congregation and denomination. How can the Church speak to the world's situation without leadership in this area? Many clergy are blissfully unaware of recent scientific discovery and thought, knowledge of which significantly adds to our understanding of God's presence in the world.

Because universities provided both ministerial and lay leaders for the Church and this source is quickly drying up, the vacuum soon will be felt. Because educated people know to raise important and difficult questions, and to think critically (i.e. analytically), learning which they traditionally brought to the Church, they will not be satisfied with the answer, 'just believe.'

Ethical and moral debates in secular society are becoming urgent. Standards and practices in the medical and business professions, debates over euthanasia, abortion, gun control, casinos and many other issues before our society and government cry out for knowledge by which society may make decisions and establish acceptable standards of judgement. Too often the

Church has attempted to escape this responsibility by pronouncing judgement without serious enquiry or thought. It is not unimaginable that a new 'Dark Ages' might descend on the Church.

If this is true, then we have a crisis of leadership. We need to appreciate the importance of a thorough education, and its application to church leadership. Christian Education must resume its importance within our congregations and denominations. 'Youth Ministry' is meaningless without a strong programme of Christian Education, beginning with the Church School. Teaching must be reinstated as an important ministry of the Church. Clergy must be well-educated to assume leadership in this teaching ministry.

The future is bright if we can regain 'the brightest and best' minds for the Church, helping to give leadership for the coming new century.

Editorial Comment Just a matter of time

During a recent trip in the New York area it was interesting to hear church ads on the radio. Like one church inviting interested listeners to its 9:40 a.m. worship service. Or another scheduled for 10:10 a.m. Not only was it novel to hear churches advertising on radio, but the times of services caught this listener's attention.

What is so sacred about 11:00 a.m. for Sunday's worship service ?

Many churches are finding earlier times for morning services are more convenient or appealing for all family members . More user-friendly, if you will. A result of polls of families pertaining to their preference of the hour for the morning service may prove surprising.

And, surely, the time has come to design services of worship with children in mind. It is normal for children of all ages to share in the common worship of the congregation. It is inspiring to see families together, worshipping God. If we consider families, perhaps we will have to examine the length of our services.

What is so sacred about one hour ?

ABF BULLETIN

The ABF Bulletin is published quarterly by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship.

Submissions: Articles must be less than 500 words in length.

Opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the ABF, or the Editor.

Photographs in this issue: by the editor. (except p. 15)

The BULLETIN is mailed to interested churches and individuals.

Those wishing to receive the BULLETIN, and all details of changes of address, etc., are to be sent to the distribution organizer :

Mrs. Isobel Horton, P.O. Box 586, Wolfville, N.S. BOP 1X0

The BULLETIN is mailed free of charge. Donations towards cost of publication are gratefully received and should be mailed to the treasurer: Dr. John Churchill, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S. BOP ITO. Receipts for income tax purposes will be mailed.



Isobel Horton

Next Issue - ABF BULLETIN September 1995
Deadline for Submissions August 14th

ATLANTIC ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

The newsletter, "Friends of AEC", is published quarterly. Those who send a minimum of \$5.00 per year to the Atlantic Ecumenical Council's Friends of AEC fund will receive "Friends of AEC". Mail your donation to Wilson Jones, Treasurer, AEC, 39 Parkdale Ave., Bridgewater, N.S., B4V IL8 marked "FRIENDS".

Editor of "Friends of AEC" is Terrance R. Trites, R.R. 4, New Glasgow, N.S. B2H 5C7

A Balancing Act

A Synopsis of Dr. Walter Shurden's lectures
ABF SPRING SESSIONS- JUNE 2nd & 3rd
by J. Derrick Marshall

Dr. Walter Shurden underlined for the ABF his basic thesis that what Baptists need is to strike a balance between the worth of the individual and the necessity of fellowship. Historically, Baptists have not been able to respect the need for individual thinking and community support at the same time.

- The Individual -

The hunger for recognition and applause is the single most important and damaging addiction of our age. Thus, we compromise ourselves in order to be acceptable to the world. Such "applause addiction" makes us "other directed" people. The mark of authentic humanity is the refusal to emulate but rather to initiate. In this no one was more authentic than Jesus Christ.

How do we conquer "applause addiction"? Baptist spirituality might best help in this regard, with its emphasis on the individual right to decide for his/her self on matters of faith and practice in response to the mercies of God. To be truly free from tyranny means to believe the Gospel of unconditional love by God for God's people. Only this grace will free people from the sickness of needing to conform in order to find acceptance.

- The Community -

All of us need to find a place, a "home", where we can find intimacy and community. A sense of belonging or home is central to Baptist life. For the centrality of the individual in Baptist thought does not preclude the need for fellowship. We are always individuals in community. The Baptist understanding of fellowship involves three key components : Fellowship must be (a) Geographically Specific (b) Numerically Small (c) a Participatory Democracy.

Fundamental to the Baptist understanding of community is Christ - like compassion, caring and trust all based on a common allegiance to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We all long for our individuality to be respected, while receiving acceptance. The Baptist churches, if they are living up to the three key components, will go a long way towards meeting individual and society's needs. (Editor's note: Dr. Shurden's lecture will appear in the September issue of the Bulletin).



Walter Shurden and Derrick Marshall



John Boyd, host minister

ABF FALL SESSIONS

September 22nd & 23rd

at the

Canning United Baptist Church

- details in the September issue of BULLETIN -

ABF Spring Assembly: – Photo Session –

Enjoying activities at the ABF meetings June 2nd & 3rd at First Baptist Church, Halifax:



Mel Scott and John Martin.



Dahryl Whitney, Joan Fraser and Frank McGill.



Shirley and David Roy and Phyllis Menzies.

Ethically Bankrupt

(excerpts from a sermon by Rev. John E. Boyd of First Baptist Church, Halifax)

As many of you know, I have been involved in the anti-casino movement.

I have done so because I believe gambling in all its forms, and casino gambling in particular, is a destructive force in society and for individuals.

Gambling undermines the work ethic, promising something for nothing; it devalues a productive economy where people in community work to produce those things which will enhance life for all.

Gambling raises greed beyond the level of mere acceptance to a blessing - a worthy goal for one's time and resources is gaining wealth without contributing anything of value to society.

Gambling encourages people to trust in a counterfeit hope, that life's great turn around is in the hands of the lottery or VLT gods, if we but feed them our sacrifices.

Gambling preys on addictive personalities, and creates dependencies through diabolically programmed and technologically effective VLTs.

For a society, through its government, to move from tolerance to advocacy, from restricting gambling's legality to reforming laws and social practices, and even snubbing religious values in the guise of regulations, is morally wrong and ethically bankrupt...

... (But) government wouldn't have tried this if many Nova Scotians, including church people, were not already gambling on every lottery in sight; many using lotteries, bingo and raffles to raise money.

Government wouldn't treat Sundays as the same as every other day if Nova Scotians, including church people, were not letting Church School and worship slide down the priority scale to somewhere between going to a flea market and taking a walk.

Government wouldn't be trying to buy off our consciences with promises of donations to charities and sports if Nova Scotians, including Christians, had not been hooked already on hand-outs from on high rather than the harder work of sustainable community development...

...People have always said Christians are better at talking the talk than walking the walk. God calls us to bear the fruit of justice, righteousness, and love as an alternative to a world frightened by its own excesses into betting its future on a waltz with unscrupulous dream spinners.

What can we do?

We can stay out of the casino - it will have success only if we give it.

We can give a voice to the victims - we must not waver in calling for accountability and responsibility on behalf of those who are preyed upon.

We can be prepared to offer a ministry of compassion to those whose lives will be ruined by gambling - they must know of our openness to them.

We can pray for changed hearts and changed minds, for the fruit of repentance in our leaders, who have opened this vein to the public treasury and become hooked on the rush of easy money, that they may be released from their own addiction.

MORE BLOOD FLOWS AT THE SBTS

Comment by M.R.B.Lovesey

The latest known instance of the attempt to weed out all non-fundamentalists from the teaching staff of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, by President Albert Mohler, is the firing of Diana Garland, dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work. This institution is the US's only accredited seminary-based social-work school.

The dispute between Garland and Mohler began when the former appointed David Sherwood to a tenure-track faculty position at Carver. Mohler's opposition to Sherwood's appointment was based on "the candidate's views on the service of women in the pastorate." Garland's reply to this was that Sherwood met all the school's official criteria for employment - the real issue being freedom of conscience. She felt it was improper to consider a faculty candidate's "private thoughts" on issues outside the Seminary's Abstract of Principles.

The dispute escalated when Garland addressed the student body at Carver, warning them that the institution's future was in jeopardy and stating that the new standards set up by Mohler would make it impossible to hire qualified faculty in the future. This action caused Mohler to ask for Garland's resignation as Dean on 20 March 1995. So Garland was fired, but she was allowed to stay on the Seminary's staff in the role of Gheens Professor of Christian Family Ministry. She joined the Faculty in 1983, becoming Dean in 1993.

On 5 April 1995 Mohler met the students and said his intention was not to destroy the Carver School, but he noted that "the culture of social work and the culture of theological education are not congruent." He defended his decision to fire Garland from the deanship and chastised the students for protesting his action and going behind his back to influence trustees and donors. "You cannot hold us [the Seminary's leaders], accountable. That is not your role . . . Your responsibility as a student is to study."

In a letter to the students Mohler blamed both the former social-work dean and the students for the Seminary's current crisis. Garland was fired because she claimed (wrongly in Mohler's view) that Carver's future was imperilled by his new requirements for faculty appointments. These included specific interpretations of the Bible's teachings on certain issues, including women in ministry, homosexuality and abortion. He claimed that most Southern Baptists, the ultimate authority in Seminary affairs, would support his leadership - in this one feels he is undoubtedly correct! However, it is reported that at a faculty meeting on April 5, professors voted 37-2 by secret-ballot with two abstentions to approve a resolution of support for the Carver School of Church Social Work and for Diana Garland.

David Dockery, Vice-President for Academic Administration, in a recent interview stated that the SBTS is operating on four requirements for Faculty nomination that reflects a strong consensus among trustees: 1) affirming women in ministry and their giftedness but restricting the role of women in the church from the office of senior pastor; 2) affirming the exclusiveness of salvation in Jesus Christ alone; 3) being clear that the Bible teaches that all homosexual behavior is sinful; 4) acknowledging that the sanctity of life is pro-life and against abortion except in the most extreme circumstances.

A trustees' committee has been set up to study the future of the SBTS's Carver School of Church Social Work, and report back by October of this year.

BOOK REVIEW

(Prepared by Rev. Richard Cross, First Baptist Church, Perth)

Fire From Heaven, by Harvey Cox (Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1995) 321pp. \$30.95.

"With a novelist's feel for history, a philosopher's clear insight, and a reporter's eye for detail Harvey Cox has written a breathtaking story." These words of Daniel Mark Epstein, author of *Sister Aimee*, well express the feelings that I had upon reading this important book.

The book is sub-titled, "The Rise Of Pentecostal Spirituality And The Reshaping of Religion In The Twenty-First Century." It is a book about the vibrant, primal spirituality of pentecostalism, the fastest growing form of worship on earth. Cox believes that it could surpass Roman Catholicism by the year 2,000.

The author visited pentecostal congregations on four continents and sees a bright future for this movement.

From its beginning in the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles in 1906 "a kind of primal spirituality that had been all but suffocated by centuries of Western Christian moralism and rationality reemerged with explosive power. Along with primal speech this newfound spirituality became the second key feature of the revival.... Its potent combination of biblical imagery and ecstatic worship unlocked existing, but often repressed religious patterns, enabling pentecostalism to root itself in almost any culture." (p.101).

Cox notes that pentecostalism has been able to tap into the primal spirituality of many different cultures, such as the shamanism of Korea, and to syncretise this with more traditional expressions of Christianity. He argues that this syncretism may be a positive feature of pentecostalism. "If what I call 'primal spirituality' underlies all faith traditions, including the one recorded in the Bible, then what pentecostals are doing is reaching deep into the foundation of a common human religiosity which also underlies biblical faith." (p.248f.)

Fire From Heaven includes chapters on the recovery of primal speech, primal piety, and primal hope, as well as chapters on reclaiming primal spirituality in Europe, Latin America, the Asian Rim, and black Africa.

Harvey Cox is less optimistic about the future of pentecostalism in North America. He fears that it "might be destined for an endless splintering into mean-spirited factions headed by power-obsessed egotists in the country of its birth." (p.297) He cautions North American pentecostals against the dangers of racism, fundamentalism, and elitism.

This book is hopeful, in that it gives a global picture of burgeoning growth in the Church; it is disturbing in that people of more traditional spirituality may feel threatened; and it is incomplete in that Cox makes no direct reference to the Vineyard Movement.

(Note to reader: I have followed Cox's practice of using a lower case 'p' in words such as 'pentecostal' and 'pentecostalism'.)

A READER WRITES...

I have had the privilege of reading Walter B. Shurden's book - **The Baptist Identity**. The four fragile freedoms are portrayed in lucid and simple fashion readily understood by the average layperson. The book is written in a tone of tolerance and goodwill as an expression of optimism to the future of Baptist positions. This book is an encouragement to Baptists who have witnessed such signs of intolerance and rigidity in many of the churches positions on freedom and ecumenicity. The writer depicts so carefully the reasons one has to be happy with Baptist outlook. - Athena Colpitts, Indian Harbour, N.S.

Conference of Religion, Culture and Society

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

October 13-14, 1995. Conference sessions will explore such themes as Social Gospel, Gender, Education, Ethnicity, Denominational Life, Christianity and Culture. An ecumenical event, partially sponsored by the Anglican Church on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Fredericton, the Conference will address emerging patterns of scholarship, encourage further research and highlight contemporary issues in the cultural & religious history of Atlantic Canada.

Write: Dr. Gregg Findlay, Chair, Conference Committee,
c/o Synod Office, 115 Church St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 4C8

A letter to ...
ABF BULLETIN EDITOR:

This letter is a personal response to the very brief article "A Crisis in Canadian Baptist Theological Education?" in the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship Bulletin for April 1995. The article was about McMaster Divinity College (MDC) and cries out for a response. It was printed without the author's name and with no indication that it is not the opinion of the editor of the ABF Bulletin or of the ABF itself. It reminds me of those awful television programmes which, when surveying the mysteries of planet earth, ask questions such as "Could it be that ... ?" and thereby suggest unsubstantiated conclusions in the readers' minds without providing the necessary evidence. Much falsehood can be disseminated in a few unthinking short paragraphs. Unfortunately it takes much more time and space to refute those falsehoods.

Questions prove nothing. The title "[is there] A Crisis in Canadian Baptist Theological Education?" subtly suggests to the reader that there is a crisis and nothing in the article comes close to primary evidence. The article closes with two indirect questions: (i) "What Canadian Baptists everywhere need to ask is whether or not this [presumably the 'new direction' and the 'conservative evangelicalism' mentioned earlier in the article] is another 'straw in the wind' blowing us toward the kind of storm that has been the recent experience of our Southern Baptist sisters and brothers"; (ii) "We need to ask, furthermore, if the Baptist tradition of soul liberty and freedom from credal subscription is once more at risk". Given the present diversity of the regular and adjunct faculty, which includes those from both before and after the start of the so-called "new direction", these two indirect questions are absurd, as the following two paragraphs will also show.

The article accuses MDC of moving in the direction of "conservative evangelicalism" and away from "the ecumenical tradition that it has historically characterized". I could not believe my eyes when I read that statement! Does the author or ABF not believe in ecumenism? Do they believe in the exclusion of "conservative evangelicals" from ecumenical fellowship? Is being "conservative" and "evangelical" bad? MDC has in the past often been accused of being "liberal" or "modernist" and in defense has rejected those labels and has often argued, justifiably, that it holds to a moderate conservative position and that it stands in an evangelical tradition. To bring this point closer to the homes of most of the readers of the ABF Bulletin, is not Acadia Divinity College moderately conservative and evangelical? What's the problem with being "conservative" and "evangelical"? To be such does not preclude critical thinking, open-mindedness or ecumenical involvement.

MDC is as ecumenical as it has ever been. Its student body is, from year to year, made up of virtually every denomination of Christendom you could think of. 40%-50% of the student body are Baptists. Others are United Church people, Baptists of all shades, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Salvation Army, and others. We also have a large number of international students. Furthermore, non-Christians may study at MDC — what a great opportunity for a non-Christian to find out about Christianity first-hand. We have had a Hindu study with us and we have had Unitarians. In chapel worship we have had people from diverse denominations speak, including the Roman Catholic Bishop for Hamilton, Ontario. Nothing could be further from the truth than the statement that MDC has moved from its ecumenical tradition.

The article also states other false facts. I am left wondering whether the anonymous author got his/her 'facts' from second-hand sources or hearsay, whether the anonymous author assumes that what she/he had read or heard from secondary sources was true, whether the anonymous author did not bother to check information from other sources that might provide contrary information, whether the anonymous author presumed that because the source(s) sounded so sincere and convincing that therefore the information relayed was true, or whether the anonymous author has an axe to grind. In writing history or a journalistic story one seeks to assess, weigh and balance the information from all sources, including information both for and against a position, primary sources being the most important; one does not assume the truth of information simply because the source appears to be sincere and convincing or has status in the denominational community; and one does not publish material from someone with an axe to grind without a complete disclaimer by the editor on behalf of his/her magazine. Furthermore, I find it cowardly for an author to hide behind anonymity.

The article accuses MDC of moving in a 'new direction'. So what! Is it wrong to move in a new direction when the world in which we live is fast moving in new directions as we move from modernity to the so-called postmodern world? The institution that does not carve out a new

direction is the one that needs to be critiqued. The new and revised Association of Theological Schools' accrediting criteria will expect to see theological institutions moving in new directions if they are to maintain their status as accredited theological schools. MDC is moving in new directions and as a result it is in the process of being revitalized. Community spirit has been enhanced, chapel worship experiences are some of the best I have known, the present faculty is working well together as a unity, better than I have known in my 17 years at the College, and student enrollment is up. MDC is presently experiencing the most positive relationship with its denomination and with the vast majority of its constituent churches than it has experienced in decades. The College will, I predict, continue to move and adapt and change and seek out new directions, and I am glad; MDC is an exciting place in which to serve Christ on the eve of the 21st century as we seek to train men and women to live and communicate the Gospel in a fast changing world.

The article, in its opening paragraph makes a false accusation. In referring to a number of personnel changes that have occurred at MDC over the last number of years it says: "These changes involve the firing (in one case) and (some say 'forced') retirement of seven members of the Faculty and staff. Where did the author get his/her information? The statement is a mixture of truth, half-truth and untruth! Yes, one faculty member was dismissed. I am aware of only one retirement, as of the writing of the ABF Bulletin's article, and whether or not that was forced is a matter of opinion. Some say the retirement was voluntary. What can be said is that at the time of the retirement MDC was running a \$100,000 yearly deficit and had to do something to reduce its salaried expenses. The understandable result was one early retirement and the laying off of two secretarial staff. The one faculty member who retired early has been at MDC ever since as an adjunct with an office and will be teaching a regular teaching load next year in both the masters programmes and the D.Min. programme. Two other faculty members have resigned to go to other institutions, but were not 'forced' to leave; they chose to leave. Another faculty member resigned (some say 'forced' to resign) and now directs an ecumenical outreach and drop-in centre. Of course the author of the ABF article was not aware of the second very recent early retirement, which I hasten to add was voluntary, is not a retirement forced by the College and is not a retirement into oblivion but to a voluntarily chosen new avenue of work.

Another falsehood stated by the article is that all living professors emeriti signed a letter to the Board of Trustees protesting the 'new direction'. The truth is that most, but not all, signed the letter. This letter proves very little. With all due respects to our retired faculty, they are not in touch with what is going on from day to day at MDC, as the substance of their letter demonstrated. They have not checked out all the primary evidence, for and against, and have been misled by one-sided opinions of others.

Consequently, may I ask the members of ABF to discount any criticisms of MDC as hearsay, even if it comes from a seemingly convincing witness, until they have listened to all the evidence from all sides.

Finally, let me say that my defense of MDC does not signify my unqualified agreement with everything that has been said, decided and done on behalf of MDC by its administration. I cannot imagine being in a position to totally agree with any other human being or human institution. I did not totally agree with everything under the former administration; neither do I under the present administration. Nevertheless, I support MDC; most of what has happened, I agree with, the overall "direction" is positive, and the community of students, faculty and staff is excellent.

Given the nature of the unsubstantiated accusations and interrogative inuendos the ABF author's brief article made, I trust that the editor of the ABF Bulletin will agree to publish this response in its entirety, in the interests of free and fair speech for the accused to defend itself against unsubstantiated accusations.

McMaster Divinity College deserves a big apology.

Yours sincerely "en Christō"

Malcolm J.A. Horsnell
(Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and
Associate Dean at McMaster Divinity College)

P.S. I HOLD THE COPYRIGHT TO THIS LETTER AND I PERMIT THE ABF BULLETIN TO PUBLISH IT ONLY IN ITS ENTIRETY OR WITH MY AGREEMENT TO ANY EDITORIAL PRECISING OR CHANGES.

Rally of ABF Friends



Evelyn Denton, Ferne Levy, and Debbie Boyd attended the Rally of ABF Friends April 29th. They heard **Ed Colquhoun**, immediate past president of the ABF executive, speak on Credible Christianity, stating theological thinking has suffered a major upheaval. Ed's address will be printed in the September issue of the **BULLETIN**.

ABF Business Briefs

During the ABF business meeting conducted June 3rd in Halifax it was decided to hold our **Fall Assembly** at the Canning United Baptist Church on September 22nd and 23rd.

As well, those present agreed to maintain membership in the **Coalition for Responsible Television**.

Philip Griffin - Allwood reported on behalf of the **Atlantic Ecumenical Council** noting the Fall 1996 Ecumenical Conference will be replaced by "The AEC Meets in Newfoundland", October 4 and 5, 1996, a first for Atlantic Ecumenism.

Negotiations will continue with the **Beaver Dam Baptist Church** in Franklyn, Virginia, pertaining to an exchange visit with ABF. Perhaps a delegation from the Beaver Dam church will participate in the ABF Fall Assembly.

Enjoying Activities at ABF Spring Sessions



Philip Griffin - Allwood



Roger Prentice and John Churchill

MISSION TASK ON BEHALF OF WOMEN

Roger Cann

A Christian minister reported that she got an anonymous phone call late at night berating her for shaming the church, and acting as a disciple of Satan for daring to teach and preach in the church. Didn't she read the Bible which prohibits those acts?

Recently Barbara Bishop wrote of being appointed Sunday School Superintendent and one of the members of the church complained. Women were to be submissive to men, she said, and it was not appropriate for a woman to be superintendent over male teachers.

"It wasn't that I loved being Sunday School superintendent. It was that I understood clearly what was being said about my worth as a woman in the Body of Christ. Dress it up in polite treatises about "roles" and "functions", smooth the edges and do whatever you want-if I could be a department head at work but could not be a Superintendent in the church. Within the church I was being told that my gifts were an unacceptable offering to God, and that my personhood was therefore also unacceptable." (1)

I. Justice in Mission

A major task for Christian Missions is to ensure justice for women in the world. A good place to start is in our churches. The pity is our churches remain poor instruments for God's Mission, as long as they continue to deny justice to women.

The task must be carried out on several fronts at the same time to have significant and lasting results. There is the world of ideas and a confrontation with classical Greek philosophers. There are social mores sanctified through the centuries, which need to be desanctified. And for the churches the task is let the light of the Gospel illuminate all the little corners of church practise.

II. The Greeks Got it Wrong

The Greek philosophers consistently denigrated women. The worst offenders were Plato and Aristotle. The line went; the female is inferior to the male, because rational knowledge is associated with masculinity, and nature with femininity. Aristotle goes further and identifies values such as unity, goodness and light with maleness. The female values are the opposites; bad, darkness, instability.

Augustine had complicated relations with women, both personally and theoretically. He saw women as equal to men in heaven, but less so on earth. "...woman was subordinated morally as a result of the Fall - the fault of the woman "Unfortunately Augustine's attitudes stuck.

III. Historical Replay

In the medieval period, Greek philosophy was synthesized with the three great religions of the West (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam). The religious writers gave religious sanction to Greek misogyny (hatred or mistrust of women). They added to Greek thought the concept of the maleness of God as they understood it.

When you have all of the major streams of influence flowing into the Middle Ages telling the same story it's hard to find any dissent. You had Plato and Aristotle, and the neoplatonism of Philo and Augustine, and the Arab interpretation of Aristotle taught to Aquinas at Naples and Paris. Aquinas locked on to what he thought was Pauline teaching on the subordination of women. All of these systems of ideas gave a constant portrait of woman as naturally subordinate to man. "...everything that was important for the soul, heaven eternity, etc., was never refused to women. But everything that is important for social and political life and a person's relation in the world was regarded as 'only male'."

There was no great improvement in the Renaissance, nor in the Enlightenment. The denegration of women was dominant well into the twentieth century. In many circles there are still detrimental associations of women with private life, the passions, and nature. The only good news is that modern philosophers who maintained those associations are the ones who supplied the philosophical tools that feminists employ to release the image of woman from that of "subordination". Some of those tools - individual rights, autonomy, historical consciousness - give the positive view of gender to replace the misogyny of the past. (2)

1. Barbara Bishop, "Unfinished Story", page 7 in PMC: The Practise of Ministry in Canada, Winfield BC, Vol. 11 No.4, November 1994)

2. "Human Nature, Gender, and Ethnicity" (Part One) by Deal W. Hudson, in The Great Ideas Today 1994 (Toronto: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1994) pages 127-169.

MARGINAL NOTES

by Grammateus

In my Sunday school, ages ago now, we used to sing a missionary hymn with the following refrain:

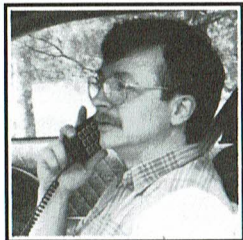
*For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noon-day bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of Love and Light.*

In the year 1900 a Congregational journal became ecumenical (perhaps more correctly Pan-Protestant) and was renamed The Christian Century, a name it still bears.

What happened to the Christian century? As it draws to a close, after two world wars, a devastating world-wide depression, a planet polluted and threatened by the garbage of our wasteful consumer society, we grope for a basis of hope. As the Information Super Highway is created, we may well ask ourselves what information, what good news, do we have to pass along.

I am going to leave the question unanswered, for we are still seeking the answer. Apocalyptists have no problem—the darker the night, the nearer the dawn. But some of us somehow still believe in freedom of choice. It is nearly gone for the way of humankind is conditioned by the choices we have made already. But God's freedom has not been destroyed and, according to the Bible, God offers his freedom to us. So there is still set before us the choice between "life and prosperity or death and adversity." And we are invited to "choose life so that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19) Alas the choice is not simple: once and for all and forever. The human adventure is a journey with many turnings and many choices, after we have made the choice to live and not to perish. May the 21st century be, if not "the Christian century", a more peaceful, and free and just time. May those who come after us have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

ABF PHOTO ALBUM



Paul Tingley has assisted in advertising ABF assemblies for the past year. The most recent was no exception. Paul is a member of Bayside Baptist Church.



Elaine Anne MacGregor, ABF President, and John Ewing Roberts, President of the Alliance of Baptists, during the 1995 Convocation at Vienna, VA.



ABF'er Sheldon Fountain, First Baptist Church, Halifax.

FRIENDS OF THE ABF—UPDATE

By Dorothy M. Lovesey

A happy and very successful spring luncheon for "Friends" was held 29 April 1995 from noon to 2.00 p.m. in the Manning Memorial Chapel at Acadia University. Forty-eight "Friends" were present, a number having travelled lengthy distances to attend. Thanks are due to the University Chaplain, the Reverend Roger Prentice, for our use of the Chapel facilities and the provision of an excellent meal.



The speaker for the occasion was Edward A. Colquhoun, BA BTh MEd (Acadia), headmaster of the E.B. Chandler Junior High School, Amherst, Nova Scotia, an active participant in denominational and ABF affairs. His address on "Credible Christianity" provoked considerable interest and evoked both questions and comments.

We are encouraged by letters received from "Friends" far and wide and for the kind remarks about our witness and the quality of the Bulletin. We particularly feel for those experiencing hard times (and especially for some of our older "Friends" who have lost their life's partner) and for them we send a reminder of Arthur Clough's lines:

Say not the struggle nought availeth

The labour and the wounds are vain,

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking

Seem here no painful inch to gain,

Far back, through creeks and inlets making,

Comes silent, flooding in the main.



Ed

We regret to report the death of our good "Friend" Blanche Etta Churchill, who died 15 April 1995, aged 80. Widow of the Reverend Ernest Churchill, she was a loyal member of the Wolfville UBC. Our deepest sympathy goes to her sons, her family, and her many friends.

PLEASE JOIN US WE NEED YOU - YOU NEED US