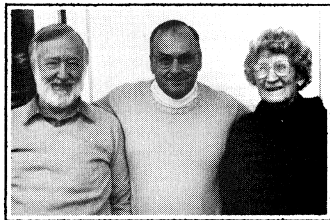


## ABF Council Meets, November 15, 1997



Table of Officers: Paul Burden, President,  
Andy Crowell, Secretary,  
John Churchill, Treasurer



Among Council members discussing ABF  
programs and outreach:  
Roger Cann, Paul Burden, Dorothy Lovesey

### ABF Council Meets

The ABF Council gathered in Windsor, N. S., on November 15th, President Paul Burden chaired the meeting attended by nine members. The following decisions were made:

- ◇ discover how many ABF'ers are interested in attending the annual convocation of the Alliance of Baptists in Washington, D. C., in March 1998, and hiring a van to transport them. (If you are interested in such an excursion, please contact the ABF Bulletin editors immediately.)
- ◇ seek ABF Bulletin BENEFACTORS willing to contribute \$100.00 each towards the cost of publishing the ABF Bulletin in 1998. The last request, in 1996, proved quite successful. Cheques are to be mailed to **Dr. John Churchill, ABF Treasurer, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S. B0P 1T0**. An official receipt for tax purposes will be mailed to you.

The Council discussed:

- ◇ representation at assemblies of the GATHERING in Ontario;
- ◇ participation in the Baptist Peace Fellowship;
- ◇ financial support by churches;
- ◇ an ABF women's caucus;
- ◇ the notice of motion to amend Article III of the constitution of the AUBC; and
- ◇ speakers for future meetings of the ABF.

**Next Issue:**  
**SPRING BULLETIN 1998**  
Deadline for submissions: February 15, 1998

## Bulletin



***Taking Our Environment Seriously***  
was the theme of the ABF FALL ASSEMBLY.  
Dr. Merrit Gibson (left) addressed the topic.  
Pictured with him: Elaine Anne MacGregor, past president, and  
Paul Burden, newly elected president.

Winter 1997

## President's Message

Paul Burden

I feel a great deal of trepidation succeeding Elaine Anne as president of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. She carried out her term in office with great effectiveness and dignity that it is a humbling experience to step into her shoes. I would like as one of my first duties as president to offer her my heartfelt thanks as well as the gratitude of the ABF for her service over the last few years. If I can do half as well as you Elaine Anne I will feel that I have done a good job.

Since this is my first time on the executive not to mention that I have only been a member for a short while, I am learning much about ABF and its history. I first came into contact with this group through John Churchill. I had been feeling uncomfortable with my religious affiliation for some time but I could not figure out why. My first experience with ABF was at Annapolis Royal. I immediately felt that I was among friends and I have felt that way ever since.

One of my goals during my tenure is to find ways of letting other people of our faith know of the warmth and welcoming nature of the individuals who gather under the banner of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. I think that there are many Baptists in this region who are not aware of who we are and what we represent.

I have been told by one person that we were a bunch of intellectuals. If that is true then I would not have been allowed in let alone elected president. In a recent article, we were described as "an ecumenical group." We do believe in ecumenism, however we are **BAPTISTS**. We need to let our fellow Baptists know that we are a fellowship of Baptists who support strongly the tenets of our faith and provide a forum for open and honest discussion of matters concerning our relationship with God.

We recently held the first meeting of the newly revived ABF Council. We had a wonderful exchange of ideas and besides setting a budget for the upcoming year, we decided to encourage as many as possible to attend the March 1998 Convocation of the Alliance of Baptists in Washington, D.C. There are details in this Bulletin on how you may attend.

I learned much at this meeting and am looking forward to our next one. Any person wishing to take part in the Council is encouraged to join. We are trying to set a meeting for the near future. Please call me at (902) 542-3681 or (902) 678-2227 or e-mail me at <drennie@fox.nstn.ca>.

I hope God blesses you now and through the festive season.

## A Crisis of Identity

Timothy McFarland

This year, within our convention, much attention has been placed upon the up and coming debate and vote for 1998. The debate concerns a motion to rescind the amendment of 1971, whereby anyone desiring to be a delegate from his or her church had to first be a church member who was baptized by immersion. The debate however does not focus so heavily upon the mode of baptism as it does the Baptist distinctive of **autonomy of the local church**. Opponents to the motion argue with emotional appeals with regard to the Baptist identity being found in the waters of immersion alone. The proponents of said motion remind us wisely that the amount of water used in a public profession of faith does not a Baptist make.

I am relatively new on the scene as a member of the clergy. When the amendment was first brought to bear I was six years old. What I am viewing now, the resurgence of a battle for the liberty of the local church to choose for itself, has roused me from my traditional apathetic stance. As a Baptist who chooses to celebrate the variety of expressions of faith in my own denomination, I am disheartened by those influences that would seek to make us look as if we had all sprung forth from the same cookie cutter.

This small missive to you is but an attempt on the part of this writer to communicate some thoughts on the matter. This is done by looking at some of the sub-issues present in the current debate.

**#1. Many who support the 1971 amendment claim that without it the Baptist churches of our Atlantic provinces would lose their identity.** Well the last twenty-six years has not proven this thought to be a correct one. Of the churches who continue to practice open membership, that is welcoming individuals into the flock who have not been baptized by immersion, the Baptist identity has indeed been a strong one since 1971. What a shame it is that such naivety in matters of faith thus cause valuable members to be held back from contributing at a convention-wide level. What we are in affect saying to these members is that you are second-rate and we do not want you involved to any more degree than volunteering at the local level and filling our coffers, please leave the decision-making to the properly baptized.

**#2. Many who support the 1971 amendment view baptism as the key ingredient to what makes a Baptist a Baptist.** Unfortunately this view has poisoned the waters. Children who do not yet possess the levels of understanding of what they are doing are practically forced into the waters at ages four, five and six. We come very close to practising the padeo-baptism that Baptists chose to reject a long time ago. Judd Levy once wrote that it is very unfortunate that we are called Baptists because too much attention is then placed upon that mode of public profession.

Might we not want to view other things that carry greater weight with respect to our own particularity within the Christian sphere. This leads us logically to the matter of our Baptist liberties to decide for ourselves how best each local church might decide to express itself in faith. I will always very much defend the church who chooses to have a closed membership policy with regard to Baptism. That is their decision. I expect, nay as a Baptist I demand that the same church respects my own community of faith and her decisions, be it at the local, association or convention level. Without this guiding principle of our denomination to be part of who we are, we will all of us cease being Baptists more surely than if every baptistry in the Atlantic provinces was to disappear.

Our responsibility, as we approach the debate of 1998 is to be informed and to inform others. Too many decisions have been forced upon us through the means of crass emotionalism or because of people who take advantage of our ignorance with respect to Baptist distinctives. Let us leave our pools of ignorance and defend who we are as Baptists and who we are as Christians. Amen.

Atlantic Baptist  
Fellowship



within  
Convention

### 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.

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., B0P 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., B0P 1T0.

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# A Christmas Man of Principle

Roger H. Prentice

Christmas brings to mind shepherds, angels, Mary with the Christ Child, and even wise men, and standing behind, slightly out of the way, Joseph. This is the person St. Matthew describes as "a man of principle." This is a description which hides the human reaction which he gave to the amazing, but to Joseph, troubling, news that Mary was "with child."

This is vividly portrayed in the Mystery Nativity Plays, such as Coventry's. Joseph is shocked. He even becomes angry with Mary, believing himself betrayed, before the angels reveal the real news.

The English Bibles translate St. Matthew 1: 19 in various ways.

"Being a man of principle ..."	(Revised English Version)
"... being a righteous man ..."	(New Revised Standard Version)
"... being an upright man ..."	(New Jerusalem Bible)
"... being a man of honour ..."	(Jerusalem Bible)
"... being a just man ..."	(Authorized Version)

What these means are trying to say is that Joseph was a righteous Jew where the law demanded that he should divorce (or worse!) his wife who was so seemingly unfaithful. After all, what else could a pregnancy mean to Joseph of the Old Covenant?

The Christmas Story is filled with converted people. Joseph is one of them. He was successfully able to leave behind his whole understanding of the old covenant with God, and accept a new one. This is the man who stands slightly behind and aside of Mary. He is a person who underwent a great spiritual change.

To me, this lies at the core of the "Christmas Miracle." One wonders if it can happen again. In World War I there was the informal Christmas truce when soldiers on both sides gathered in no man's land to recognize Christmas. This was soon forbidden by the generals. The real miracle happens when we come to a truer understanding of Mary being with child and the changes within us which this child can accomplish.

The ubiquitous and dreaded Christmas TV commercial which invokes us to "give like Santa and save like Scrooge" seems to sum up everything which is contradictory to the Christmas Story. The real story is like our changed Joseph. A Christmas miracle which reveals to us the incarnation of God today bestows real meaning around the Christ Event. Our holiday is joyful and full of meaning. The body of Christ (the Church) becomes the centre of the festival again.

Why are we not saying this to our neighbours who are burdened down with an old covenant of their own? Why not revive the old Mystery Plays? In Wolfville, for a few years, the Christmas Pageant was held right in the streets at the height of the Christmas shopping season. Shepherds and kings wandered up and down sidewalks, and into stores, asking bemused shoppers if they had seen angels or a star. Mary and Joseph rode through to a manger scene on a donkey. The high school choir sang carols, and people followed the sight and sound of the Crèche which was in an empty building along the main street. Who sponsored this wondrous sight? Not the churches. It was the local business association and the Town.

Gaze at Joseph and see as a changed person, changed from the old to the new story of God. It changed his life, perhaps like ours, so we could step into the pageant scene, with him.

# Editorial Comment . . .

In the midst of Advent and Christmas we should pause and take time from our busy lives to reflect on the true meaning of this season and its effect on and in our lives. As the Christ Child was conceived and born out of the love of God for His earth bound people, then should not our lives mirror and magnify this love? No matter which direction our eyes may look – there is need. Reach out and through your words and actions reveal God's loves and your's too!

I believe, as members of ABF, that everything we do and believe in, should reflect this love. From where I stand, humbly before my God, we owe it to Him and ourselves as Baptists and members of the Body of Christ to ensure that His love, truth, and understanding prevail.



## . . . always steady . . .

It was uplifting for this writer to join colleague Rev. Willis Henderson for the 151st Anniversary of the first Baptist congregation in Sydney. Willis has been minister of the Sydney United Baptist Church since 1970. He has a way of conducting a worship service so that those present are enabled to more adequately worship God sincerely and thoughtfully. Obvious is the support in the form of encouragement, confidence, and relationship that Willis has developed with the fellowship in Sydney over the years. These words (adapted from II Timothy) apply to Willis: already steady . . . fulfilling his ministry.

The United Baptist Church in Sydney is enriched with its own accumulated memories of God's fellowship with this body of believers over the past 151 years. We are all aware of Sydney's role in the establishment of ABF.



Rev. Willis Henderson



## . . . sincere, personal faith . . .



Elaine Ann MacGregor

As ABF president, Elaine Anne MacGregor made a significant and meaningful contribution. She is a living expression of sincere, personal Christian faith. As our president, she took her stand for basic Baptist beliefs unashamedly and courageously.

As ABF quarterback, Elaine Anne helped us plan strategy for our witness in the huddle. Willing to take risks herself, she asked that we, too, leave the huddle fearless and faithful in proclaiming our beliefs. The signal from Elaine Anne is plain and simple – let us not spend all of our time in the huddle.

And now she hands the ball to Paul Burden.

Run with it Paul!

# A Tale of Three Preachers

M. R. B. Lovesey

My first story is that of Billy Graham whose autobiography was published by HarperCollins in 1997 at US\$35.00. Hailed as the world's greatest preacher he has ministered to over 200 millions in person world-wide and to many millions more through radio, TV, books and film. He was born to an American Southern dairy farmer and his wife and raised in a strict Presbyterian home of conservative opinions. The book, dedicated to all supporters of his ministry over the years, is full of interesting anecdote. Some things he says are startling - for instance he tells us he has been baptized not once or twice but three times! His first baptism occurred when as an infant he was christened according to the rites of the Presbyterian Church; the second took place when as a young boy he was confirmed in the Presbyterian Church; the third when as a young man he was baptized by immersion in water according to the practice of the Baptists and his name added to the roll of accredited preachers of the Southern Baptist Convention. Called to be a fiery evangelist with the gift of persuading people to accept the Christian Gospel as he understood it he early found his niche in the service of the Church. The success of his mass evangelism campaigns was due in part, he explains, to the fact that the newspaper owner and tycoon, William Randolph Hearst, ordered his news-hounds to give full coverage and publicity to Billy's work following the success of the Los Angeles crusade in 1947. He became America's youngest college president when he was selected by the leading fundamentalist W. B. Riley of Minneapolis, Minnesota to head up the conglomerate of institutions that Riley had founded. Billy soon realised the need for further education beyond the BA in Anthropology level he had achieved without much distinction at Wheaton College. This brought him face-to-face with the problem of biblical authority for he was well aware that the doctrine of the infallibility and inerrance of the Scriptures was rejected by many teachers in the theological colleges of his day.

My second story is that of Charles Templeton, who along with Billy and under the leadership of Torrey Johnson, went with a team to Great Britain and the continent of Europe following the cessation of fighting in World War 2, to promote the cause of Youth For Christ. Templeton, like Billy, had been recruited to serve under the banner of YFC. He was a man of many parts, a distinguished worker in the communications field. He has told his story in Charles Templeton: An Anecdotal Memoir published by McClelland and Stewart in 1983. Theological study at Princeton led him out of the fundamentalist persuasion and this led ultimately to his abandonment of the Christian Faith. He gives his reasons for his loss of faith in Christianity in his work Farewell to God: My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith, published by McClelland and Stewart in 1996. The creed he has finally come to accept - he has by no means ceased to be a believer in metaphysics - is printed at the end of his book. He clearly does not believe in the biblical faith; rather he thinks of a "Life Force, a First Cause, a Primal Energy, a Life Essence." Reflection on the cosmos makes him unable to believe in any kind of benevolent, loving, heavenly father!

Billy's friendship with Charles deepened over the years following the time they spent together journeying together in Europe in 1947, but their theological views soon began to differ markedly. Both eventually survived a crisis of faith about the reliability of the Bible. Billy describes a moment when he finally decided in a leap of faith to accept the Scriptures as totally reliable and the final authority in faith and practice. One cannot help reflecting that what we need is not faith alone - our need is for a reasonable faith!

My third story is about a young Presbyterian preacher who was kind enough to

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

tell the congregation gathered for worship in the Manning Memorial Chapel on the Acadia Campus a short while ago something of his spiritual pilgrimage. Raised in a conservative, evangelical home he was shocked when introduced to the modern criticism of the Bible when training for the Presbyterian ministry at the Montreal Presbyterian College and McGill University. In reaction he went neither the way of Billy Graham nor the way of Charles Templeton. It seemed to me that he had solved the problem of authority in religion in a manner superior to that of Graham or Templeton. He came to see that authority in religion is not a matter of Bible only or reason only, but is a very complex affair made up of at least four element-that can be summed up in the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. See The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology, by Donald A. D. Thorsen, Zondervan/HarperCollins, 1990.

## Online . . . HOW

Every Christian church in the world with its own Web Site!

The Houses of Worship project out of Pittsburgh is seeking to circle the globe by 2000, connecting Christendom's estimated two million churches. The project is built around an electronic backbone that supports four web pages per church for church news. The pages are free.

The project is backed by a \$5 million (US) grant from the American Bible Society which sees it as a way to get the Scriptures into the hands of people.

Internet address for Houses of Worship is:

<http://www.housesofworship.net>

## Seaton Spirituality Centre

Rather new on the scene is Seaton Spirituality Centre, Terence Bay, N. S. - about 20 minutes from Halifax. Centre Staff provide private and group retreats, personal and group spiritual direction, and a variety of spiritual/personal growth and development programs. The Centre is a continuation of the Spirituality Centre at Mount Saint Vincent Mother-house. For inquiries regarding programs: telephone (902) 852-4212, or write Seaton Spirituality Centre, Terence Bay, N.S., B3T 2C6.



## Appointment

The ABF Council selected Rev. Andy Crowell to represent ABF at the Atlantic Ecumenical Council. Andy was elected secretary of the ABF at its fall sessions.



# ABF Photo Album

## Anniversary Celebrations



170th Anniversary - (September 28)  
First Baptist Church Halifax  
Don Myers with Guest Speaker  
Rev. Dr. Max DeWolfe

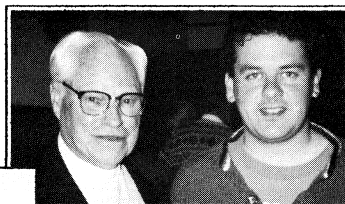
151st Anniversary (November 2)  
Sydney United Baptist Church  
(l to r) Bev Miles, Arlene Canning  
(United Church "Observer"), and  
Marguerite Campbell



## ABF Fall Assembly Pereaux United Baptist Church - October 3 & 4



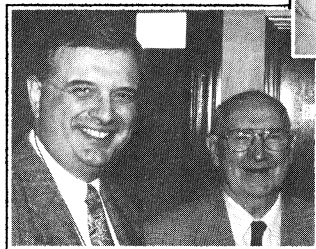
Jeanette Holt, Associate  
Director, Alliance of Baptists,  
Washington, D.C. and  
ABF'er John Dickinson



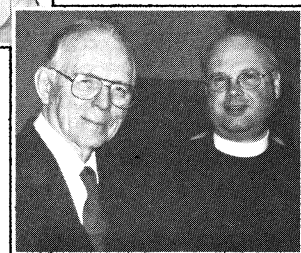
M. R. Cherry and  
Tim McFarland



Janet Kirkconnell  
ardent ABF  
supporter



John Boyd and  
Sheldon Fountain



Vin Rushton and  
Roger Prentice

*Greetings to Members of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship*

*At this blessed season of Advent, as we await once more the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh and his coming again in power and glory, I greet you warmly in behalf of our individual members and affiliated congregations. We wish for you and yours the very best this wonderful season offers.*

*We in the Alliance of Baptists are grateful to God and to you for our partnership in the gospel. We especially give thanks that we are continually learning from you those gifts of the Spirit your movement so beautifully embodies.*

*Stan Hasteley, Executive Director  
The Alliance of Baptists*

## A Basic Baptist Belief

(from: Basic Baptist Beliefs, by Gordon C. Warren; published by Canadian Baptist Federation)

Baptists believe in the independence of the local church. In polity they are congregational. Each congregation carries on its local affairs and will brook no interference, much less dictation, from any Association or Convention. It engages its own pastors, arranges its own services, and claims the right to ordain its own ministers. In the conduct of its own internal affairs it is absolutely independent.

While jealously guarding the independence of the local church, Baptists early recognized the value of co-operative endeavour. Almost from the beginning of their history they gathered in Associations, both in England and America, to promote Christian fellowship, disseminate information, generate enthusiasm, and join in co-operative enterprises for promoting the interests of the Kingdom of God. As early as 1624 five General Baptist churches in England organized the first Association. The Philadelphia Association, organized in 1707, was the first in North America; and in 1800 the first Canadian Association was formed among Maritime Baptists. Thus the Baptists supplemented the principle of the independence of the sisterhood of churches. This principle has had a progressive growth across the years until there is now a series of organizations ranging from the local church to the world brotherhood.

These include the local church, the District meeting, the Association, the Convention, the Federation, and the Baptist World Alliance. Excessive independence with its inherent weaknesses and inefficiency is redeemed by a full recognition of the **interdependence** of the churches. No church is compelled to adopt the program of Convention, but practically every church in recognition of its interdependence within the denomination gladly assumes its share in that program.

NOTE: Dr. G. C. Warren was the first President of The Baptist Federation of Canada. He gave his entire ministry to the Maritime Provinces, serving as a Pastor, as Editor of The Maritime Baptist, and Professor, and later Dean of the Theological Department of Acadia University. Dr. Warren passed to his eternal reward on November 30th, 1956.

## Some Ideals for Christians to Follow in Situations of Conflict

Roger Cann

1. Use the head as well as the heart: the Grace of God may be mediated to the crisis situation in which we find ourselves, through a calm manner and a logical approach to feelings, fears, and issues that concern us. We can avoid the tit-for-tat approach, which may end up in a deadly spiral of injury and hurt.  
We reflect on our experiences for lasting value. God may use our times of reflection to speak to us. When Peter was thinking about the vision, messengers came from Cornelius with an invitation. (Acts 10.19)
2. Hearing others: exercising the whole of our attention. So that we may understand their experience, their point of view and their recommendations. That's what it means to consult, and together make decisions in accordance with God's will.  
It's a valuable first step. As viewed in Proverbs, "If one gives answer before hearing, it is folly and shame". (Proverbs 18.13)
3. Being trustworthy, and having that quality recognized: faithful and reliable in all our dealings. It starts with little things like respecting confidences, "A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence. ( Proverbs 11.13)  
It then moves to more significant issues. "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much...." (Luke 16.10a) And then we are perceived as trustworthy, and our views are given full weight.
4. Persuasion not coercion: ready to take risks in trying to persuade and being open to persuasion, to reach an agreement that everyone subscribes to. When you have peace within yourself, you are less likely to demand absolute victory over those opposing you. "Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from. Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?" (James 4.1) The need to defeat the others in conflict situations stem from unresolved conflicts within.
5. Accept the other in love: these are the brothers or sisters for whom Christ died. These are the ones who have experienced Christ in their lives, who have something to tell us about God and how He has revealed himself in their lives. They are worth dealing with and learning from.
6. Redeem the relationship: strengthen the ties that bind as a result of the disagreement, and subsequent reconciliation. That goes beyond "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7.12) It's more of what Jesus was describing in the Sermon on the Mount, "... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...." (Matthew 5.39) We want to absorb the hurt, to take the pain of severed relationships on ourselves. Not retaliating, but reaching out to heal.

### Distinction

Rev. Dr. M. R. B. Lovesey was recently presented with the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) 1997 by the Dr. C. B. Lumsden Branch, Number 74. Wolfville, and, Dominion Command, Royal Canadian Legion.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## Never Have So Many Lost So Much

Eric Patton and Roger Cann

In lotteries you think of a lot of people losing a little and one or a few people winning big bucks. But for VLTs it's something else. A large number of Nova Scotians lost a great deal of money last year, and there is no relief in sight. In Nova Scotia in 1996 approximately 20,000 gamblers on average threw away \$3,800. each. Just imagine what some of the individual losses were.

### How Many People?

There are 909,282 people in the province of Nova Scotia according to the 1996 Census. Of those approximately 690,000 are adults.

### How many play VLTS?

Our Department of Health studied problem gambling and their statistics support the finding that 18% of the population are recent players, that is they played a VLT in the past year. 18% of the adult population of 690,000 is 124,200. In addition the results of the study show that another 3% or 20,700 play the VLTs at least once a week. The vast majority of Nova Scotians did not play a VLT last year.

### What did they lose?

We know the revenues from VLTs in Nova Scotia in 1996 was \$106,000,000.00. That is not the amount wagered. You would have to add on another third to cover the winnings. The \$106 million is what gamblers lost in 1996 on VLTS.

Back to the Department of Health study. The estimate is that the 18% of the adults or 124,200 recent/occasional players lost on average \$227.00 during the year. That is a total of \$28,183,464.00 in 1996. Take that from the \$106 million, and you have another \$77,816,536.00 to be accounted for.

### That leaves us with the conclusion that the 20,700 who played a VLT once a week or more often, lost more than \$77,800,000.00 last year.

That is a staggering sum. Translate it into family meals not eaten, or rent not paid, or bills not covered. The average loss is \$3,800.00 per gambler. That average is bad enough. Many, if not most, of the weekly players are addicted, and pouring down a rat hole everything they have and can get. Those are people needing help.

In 1997 The Gaming Corporation opened up more VLTs in more locations. The situation will get worse.



Stan Hastey  
Executive Director  
Alliance of Baptists

**THE ALLIANCE OF BAPTISTS  
ANNUAL CONVOCATION  
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
MARCH 12 TO 14, 1998**

Plan to get on board the ABF van to Washington. For information contact the ABF Bulletin -  
[fmcgill@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:fmcgill@fox.nstn.ca)

## Marginal Notes

### Grammateus

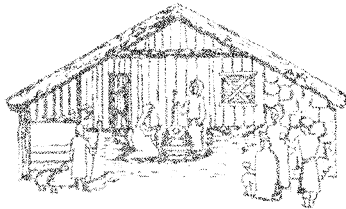
The Church of Christ, whose membership is known only to God, is variously defined in the New Testament. One such definition is found at Romans 8:28b-30:

... those who love God who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. (NRSV)

This mystical, mysterious body is sometimes called The Invisible Church, The Catholic Church, the Church Universal. In daring New Testament metaphors she is called the Bride of Christ or the Body of Christ. Christians have always been divided in their understanding of how this invisible church achieves visibility. Baptists have always believed that the Church of Christ is most perfectly manifest to the world in the local faith community whose members covenant with God and with one another to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and to seek divine help to walk in his way. The marks or signs of the visible Church are the acceptance of the Bible as God's Word and the practice of the two sacraments or ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Conventions, Associations and the Baptist World Alliance are not churches. They are organizations through which local churches associate with one another for missionary, educational and social service enterprises beyond the capacity and resources of the local church. A delegate to an association, or convention assembly is just that -- a delegate to an assembly which lasts but a few days. She or he is not, in any sense, a member of the association or convention.

Baptists, especially in the Anglophone world, have differing understandings and policies about membership. While a Baptist church teaches, preaches and practises baptism by immersion upon profession of faith, it does not seek to exclude from membership in the body of Christ the great majority of other Christians who have differing concepts of Christian initiation and faithfulness. We do not exclude them from the Lord's table. Some of our churches do not exclude them from associate or full membership. We do not think any believer will be excluded from heaven, whenever or however (or even if ever!) they were baptized. We do not think it very logical to exclude them from participation in deliberations at Wolfville or Sackville if their churches decide to send them as delegates!



### Shared Responsibilities

ABF'ers at the fall business meeting at t Pereaux United Baptist Church, adopted the Bulletin editor's recommendation that Frank McGill become co-editor, effective immediately.

## Book Review: Jimmy Carter, Living Faith (New York: Times Books, 1996), 257 pp.

Mark G. McKim

In this book the former president ,writes simply, and openly about his faith. What emerges is a picture of an extremely well read, thoughtful Christian, who has often struggled with how he should live out his faith. Carter defines faith by quoting Kierkegaard: "Faith means the betting of one's life upon ... Jesus Christ ... the commitment of one's whole life." But to Carter the real challenge is to live out that faith in deeds.

One of the first challenges Carter details is his struggle to reconcile his faith with a scientific world view. His conclusion was that his faith and scientific outlook were compatible. There could be no discrepancy between true scientific fact and genuine faith. To a large extent, Carter came to this conclusion because though he holds to a high view of Scripture, it is not a fundamentalist one which demands that the Bible be a book of science.

Indeed, Carter expresses pain over the fundamentalist take-over of the Southern Baptist Convention, and wonders whether, in part, the reason his children do not regularly attend church is their dislike of its "constant squabbling". And though the SBC has been his religious home, Carter finds some of its narrow sectarian attitudes unacceptable. "The essential beliefs of all Christians are fundamentally compatible" he writes. He also can find no support for churches which discriminate against women on the basis of selective quoted Scripture texts and decries the slowness of many congregations to combat racism, and to work toward establishing justice, feeding the hungry, and providing decent housing.

The death of his father forced Carter to re-evaluate his naval career, and to ask himself who, in God's eyes was more important ?" He resigned his commission and returned to Plains, Georgia, to enter business, only to be confronted with the issue of racism. His faith commitment led him to oppose segregation, but cost him dearly, both in business and politics. Not surprisingly the former president has a great deal to say about government. Government, at its best is to "embody, and defend values that are shared with religion." He quotes Reinhold Niebuhr approvingly "To establish justice in a sinful world is the whole sad duty of the political order." Yet, writes Carter, government has limitations in what it can do. "There are deeper religious values, such as atonement, forgiveness, and love, that transcend what government can achieve. When governments reach their limits, the teachings of Jesus Christ ... must prevail."

In retirement, Carter has devoted much of his time to two organizations. The Carter Centre is involved in mediation and peace efforts, as well as relief and development. Carter deplores his country not exhausting all other options before resorting to military force, and questions the invasions of Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf. He is dubious about sanctions and trade embargoes which often deprive children and the poor of medicine and food but do little to affect some dictator other than make him look a hero for standing up to the United States. Habitat for Humanity has provided a balance with personal witnessing which Carter considers one of Christ's most important commandments. But "one of the most significant aspects of the ministry of Jesus was the combination of his ... witnessing with his personal service...." Both words and deeds are required of the Christian.

Toward the end of the book, Carter recounts his reaction to a sermon by his pastor who asked "If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Carter asked himself - would there? He admits he has only rarely, tried to conform his life to the radical parts of the Sermon on the Mount, and that for him, it is a continuing struggle to have a living faith.

**Editor's Note:** Dr. Mark G. McKim is the minister of Germain Street United Baptist Church in Saint John, N. B.

## Places We Worship ... Manning Memorial Chapel



Manning Memorial Chapel, Acadia University, has become a favourite place for worship of many in the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. It is not a Baptist place of worship, but ecumenical, and has become familiar to many who are associated with the university.

The chapel sits in the centre ring of the campus, and its tall spire with a six-foot gold-leafed cross is a beacon to those who know and love the faith. Classical in design, with soaring columns, graceful lines of the nave, instructive chancel window, it should inspire anyone who has the privilege of sitting in its pews, or standing in its pulpit. A bell, dedicated to the memory of Dr. I.

Judson Levy, former ABF member, editor of the *Bulletin*, and university chaplain, rings to call worshippers together.

The first sound to fill the ears inside probably would be the pipe organ. This magnificent baroque instrument is known world-wide because it was one of the first which Casavant Freres constructed to revive the North German design which was so familiar to J.S. Bach. It is included in articles of dictionaries of music. It is also fortunate that the University provides an internationally known organist, who plays for the services each day.

Looking forward in one's pew, the worshipper is conscious in the intimate space that he or she is joined with others desiring to worship God, but with the focus beyond themselves. The sight is one of an altar, shaped like a tomb or casket, to recall that our Lord was "crucified, dead, and buried", as the Creed would have us say. Holy Communion, which is celebrated every second and fourth Sundays in term, is done on top of this altar, as a sign that the tomb is empty, that Christ has indeed risen. He is, indeed, risen in us.

There is nothing to block the view of this central focus of worship. There is a lectern to the right, where the scriptures are read, and slightly higher and thrusting pulpit to the left, emphasizing the proclamation of the word made flesh. At no time is the altar blocked from the congregation save when the people's own offering is given, or when God's benediction is pronounced at the end of the service. The clergy sit discreetly aside unless presiding at the Communion, and then they sit only behind it.

The chancel window is a spectacular and inspirational object upon which to gaze. Blue and maroon dominates the colour during the day, the colours of the University. The design tells the complete story: what a University should be about, and the spiritual context in which a University should be set. It speaks of God's creative act in the world. It begins with Creation, and describes human history through the biblical accounts until it reaches the Christian era. The final panel makes the point clearly: God has led to the founding of Acadia University as a part of Creation, where this is to be studied in all its forms. Edmund Crawley, lawyer, Baptist minister and one of the first members of First Baptist Church Halifax, later President of Acadia, stands with the first University Hall in one hand, and a Bible in the other.

Worshipping at the chapel is easy, during the University terms. There are services Monday to Friday twice a day (11:30 - 11:50 a.m. and 6:15 - 6:35 p.m.) and on Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

## Friends of the ABF - Update Doris Hilchey

Dear "Friends":

In His parable of the absentee owner of the vineyard, Jesus told how the owner first sent messengers to the tenants to collect his just dues, and when that failed, how, finally, he sent his son, saying, "They will reverence my son."

At Christmas God sent us His Son to show us His love for us. The tenants in the parable killed the son. How are we responding? Do we reverence the Son? In our scurrying, almost frantic preparations for Christmas, what are we really reverencing? God's Son? Or . . . ? Are we feeding the gods of materialism and our own vanity? Or are we rendering to God, the rightful owner, by obeying His command to live justly, to care for His earth, for our brothers and sisters, and for all His creatures?

God grant us wisdom, strength and love so to do.

Statistically, as we come to the close of 1997: We have added eleven new members, but lost five by death or resignation, leaving us with 268 on our membership list. Of those, to November 30, 127 have sent in subscription/dues in the amount of \$1,909.67, down from last year. There is still time to respond for 1997. Please do so if you can.

ABF needs you: you need ABF.

A blessed Christmas to all.

## Please Join Us. We need You. You need Us.

### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

(approved by the Spring Session, Wolfville, June 14-15, 1985)

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is a community of Baptist churches, laypersons and ordained ministers. It is supported by voluntary contributions made by persons and churches sympathetic to its aims, 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.

Please cut along this line and mail to:

Miss Doris Hilchey  
1350 Oxford Street, #207  
Halifax, N. S. B3H 3Y8

PLEASE ENROL ME AS A FRIEND!

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