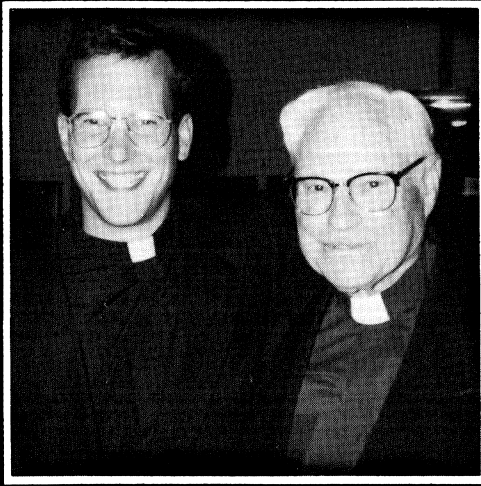


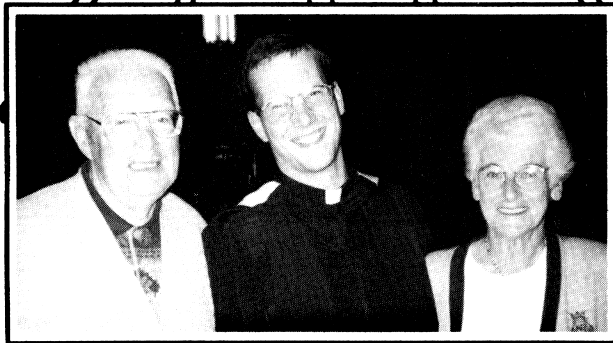
JEFFREY WHITE

ORDAINED

SEPTEMBER 18, 1998
PARRSBORO PASTORATE



Rev. Jeffrey White and Dr. M. R. Cherry
who delivered the ordination sermon.



Rev. Jeffrey White with Henry and Jackie Wagstaff
Port Greville United Baptist Church

Atlantic **B**aptist **F**ellowship

Bulletin



*ABF
Fall
Assembly*



(l to r) Eva Scott, Halifax, and
Marilyn Taylor, New Minas



(l to r) David Shaw, Hantsport and
Ed Colquhoun, Amherst

*Port
Williams,
N. S.
October 2nd and 3rd.*



President's Message

Paul Burden

It is November and time for another Bulletin. I know this because Terry called to tell me that I was late again.

The fall Rally was held at Port Williams UBC in October. It was a great success. There was a large attendance, Dr Furman Hewitt gave an interesting and informative talk on educating the clergy and laity. There was lots of fellowship both Friday night and on Saturday.

I would like to thank Hedley Hopkins and the members of the Port Williams United Baptist Church for their wonderful hospitality. We even had greetings from the Village of Port Williams. I would like to thank Andy Crowell for organizing this event and those who participated in the panel and all others who took part. All in all it was a weekend to remember.

Our business meeting was particularly well attended and those that came engaged in some interesting and valuable discussions. There were many suggestions and plans put forth for discussion at the next council meeting. A committee was struck to look into developing ties with Cuba. This committee is already hard at work.

It was nice to see Jeanette Holt again. She represented The Alliance of Baptists again this year. She led us in our devotional on Saturday morning and brought us a report from the Alliance at the business meeting. Thanks again Jeanette.

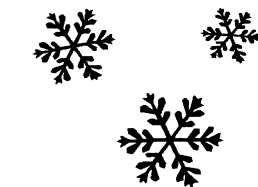
We are at this time looking for a Secretary for ABF. If you wish to accept the challenge please contact me or any of the executive.

Also Andy informed me that he would like to take a much-needed sabbatical from the position of program chair after the Spring Rally. This is much deserved as Andy has done a super job in this position. As with the secretarial position, if you are interested please make contact. I can promise you blood, sweat and tears (and some fun).

I understand that plans are well underway for a youth rally in Halifax this winter. If you wish to know more contact Tim McFarland at First Baptist Church Halifax.

I had the privilege this fall to speak at the United Baptist Churches in Canning and Port Williams and was warmly received. Thank you all for your reception and support.

I would like to end my report with a wish to you for a happy holiday season and much joy in the upcoming year.

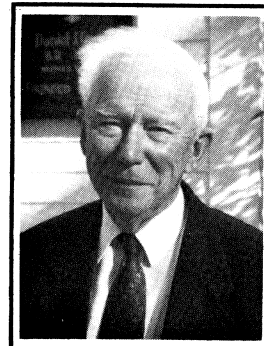


ABF President, Paul Burden discusses ABF Fall Assembly program with guests Furman and Donna Hewitt

On Wings of Faith

M. Allen Gibson

(The homily at a church service a few days following the crash of Swissair Flight 111)



Rev. Dr. M. Allen Gibson

We are gathered at a time of tragedy. I realize no words of mine can beguile you from your questions or from the sorrows that have plagued you in recent days. Nevertheless, I come as one who has found immeasurable blessing in the gracious ministry of the God and Father of us all and I crave for you such grace as my testimony may suggest.

The first word that comes to mind when I think of the crash of the Swissair flight is COURAGE. In these past few days courage has become a commonplace among us. This is the courage of crew members trying to keep their aircraft aloft until an airport can be reached.

This is the courage of families for whom joys have been shattered and by whom irreparable loss has been sustained. Nevertheless, they come to the scene of tragedy that they may be more directly involved.

This is the courage of firefighters, service personnel and police, working long, arduous hours to recover answers, hoping to find life itself. Their search, one that became increasingly difficult in the face of weariness and futility.

This is the courage of people who suddenly find themselves in the midst of tragedy and do not understand its implications. Yet they carry on. Do you not realize that you are in the presence of greatness?

There are some among you who are asking "Why?"; some who say, "Why did God permit this to happen? If that is your query, I am bound to say you are not asking the right questions. The implication is that this is the work of the Lord. The trouble with that point of view is that it overlooks, conveniently, the element of human involvement. It may be easy to blame God but that is the way of cynicism. I prefer the ultimate concept with which the Bible begins, "In the beginning, God . . ." Tragedy is a feature of life and so is the Grace of God. Take away the divine factor of the equation and the human element becomes unbearable.

The one redeeming feature of this whole tragic episode is God Himself. If there is one thing in this world of which we may be sure, it is God. He never leaves. He never forsakes. He cares, day in and day out. With Him is strength for the weak, courage for the fearful, peace for the anxious, hope for the doubter, and, at the end of life's little day, "life that shall endless be".

But I must not dwell longer on that for there are other matters clamouring for attention. I must speak to you of the passengers on that ill-fated flight. Among them were individuals of stature in the worlds of science, government and the Arts. We have lost valued men and women, perhaps some who held in their grasp the key to some of the great secrets of the universe.

That, surely, speaks to us of responsibility and of accountability. Who will take their places? Is there among us the person who will rise up to carry on great works already in progress? A man perishes only when his work, for want of a successor, dies with him.

I delight in that magnificent passage from Psalm 139, a Psalm of David,

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me".

It is a text which belongs to the passengers and crew of the flight which went down in the sea. They were winging their way over a darkened ocean toward the sunrise, riding the wings of the morning, upheld, in death as in life, by the hand of the Lord.

There is a phrase, more commonly used in Nova Scotia in bygone days but still heard among some of our older residents. After more than 60 years, I still hear my grandmother saying, "Good grief". Even as a child, I wondered how grief could be called "good". Yet, paradoxically, it is. We know that even grief is a therapy, its tears cleansing away our sorrows and its debilities a prelude to new strengths.

It is a great privilege to be with you today and I rejoice in the ecumenical nature of this service. Over many years, I have dreamed of and worked toward the fulfillment in our community of that profound New Testament vision, "That they all may be one". If tragedy is part of the price of that spirit then the cost, as exorbitant as it may be, is one deserving of our investment.

By the Grace of God, let us soar on wings of faith, "the wings of the morning" towards the breaking of that day when all shadows flee away and the triumphant reign of the Lord assures peace and joy in every heart.

Rev. Dr. M. Allen Gibson is retired, living in Chester, N.S. He spoke the words above during an ecumenical service at St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Chester on September 6 - providing comfort in the wake of the tragedy of Swissair Flight 111.

Alliance of Baptists . . .

Elaine MacInnis

reporting on the 12th Annual Convocation, March 1998



Elaine MacInnis

The Breakfast For International Guests, hosted by Stan Hastey, was one of the most moving experiences for me during the Convocation. There were four delegates from Cuba, one a blind pastor who spoke English fluently. His story, combined with those of the delegates from Zimbabwe, led me to the understanding that, even though we have different ways of government, and church organizations, we still worship the same God. *"Why are some threatened by different religious approaches to worship?"*

The Theme of the 12th Annual Convocation of the Alliance of Baptists was *Repair The Ruined Cities*. As the Leader of *The Call to Worship* asked, "what do you need?" I went to Convocation to learn, listen and worship as part of the delegation from the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. I was given a

Vision of Hope and the Challenge as we left the Washington Convocation reflecting on these words from *Isaiah 61*:

The Spirit of God is upon us

To preach good news to those who are poor, freedom to those in bonds

To comfort those whose hearts are broken.....

To repair the ruined cities, restore the places long devastated.

Editorial Comment . . .

Empty Rooms Should Teach Wisdom

Believe it or not, there are still some pastorates scheduling Bible Study - usually on Wednesday evening - expecting pastors to prepare adequately, only to have a few sometimes nobody, show up for the session. Meeting needs? Whose?

Perhaps the pastor's time should be used more effectively by encouraging pre-registration. Short term "courses" based on the interests of members would be offered only if a minimum of six members indicated they would participate.

All things should be done decently and in order.

Retired Clergy - Down, but not Out!

The CRC Report suggests the notion that ordained clergy must be elected by the local church in order to be an accredited delegate to Convention Assemblies.

The current constitution (Article III - c) allows every ordained minister to be recognized as accredited delegates to Convention. But, now, we are being told that it is a Convention of Churches - not clergy! — And, apparently, the same will apply to Association assemblies.

Retired Clergy seem to be the target. What a crying shame. All that "corporate memory" lost!

Who will rise amongst us to make sure the voice of every ordained minister will be heard ... ?

People We Meet

It came as no surprise to those who know her that Helen Ruth Balcom of Port Dufferin, N. S., was Nova Scotia's recipient of The Bowl of Hygeia Award for outstanding community service by a pharmacist.



Helen Ruth Balcom

The award, the most widely recognized international symbol of pharmacy, was established in 1958, and is presented annually in the USA, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Canada to dedicated individuals who made uniquely personal contributions to a strong, healthy community.

Helen's citation reads as follows (abridged):

"Helen Balcom received her diploma in pharmacy from the Maritime College of Pharmacy in 1950 and soon after took over the Balcom and Chittick Store in Sheet Harbour. From 1950 to 1985 she was the only pharmacist in the community, usually working seven days per week, with rare vacation...

She served on the Board of Directors of Lawtons Drugs and the Duncan MacMillan Hospital in Sheet Harbour for many years. Helen has always been a strong supporter of the local schools in her area and currently provides two annual bursaries for graduates of the ... High School. She is a long-standing member of the Port Dufferin Anglican Church and is considered to be one of its "congregational leaders".

The demands associated with single-handedly providing pharmacy service to an area cannot be understated. It left Helen with little time to take on... formal community positions ... Yet, her importance to the community is no less significant. In the early years, she "covered" for the doctors when they went on

continued on page 7

Dr. Furman Hewitt Addresses **ABJ**'ers

All Christians are theologians and theological education is a life long process, Dr. Furman Hewitt, stressed during his address to **ABJ**'ers at the opening session of the **ABJ** Fall Assembly at the Port Williams United Baptist Church, Friday, October 2nd.

The guest speaker, Dr. Hewitt, is director of the Baptist House of Studies at Duke University's Divinity School in Durham North Carolina. His theme was: "Educating Laity and Clergy – Theologically".

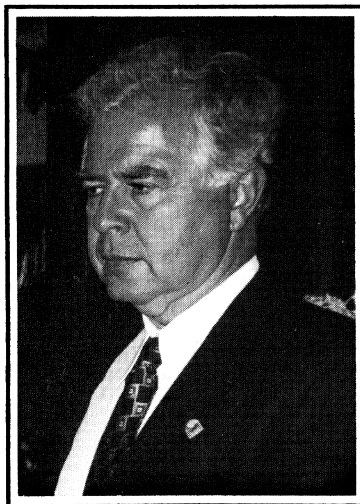
Dr. Hewitt suggested we help each other to be good theologians and that we be honest about our theological struggles and options. "Be honest with yourself and those in the pew".

Worship, to be meaningful, has to be understood. Attention must be given to the meaning of words and concepts – "turning the strange into that which is familiar".

He pointed out that theology is learned in the context of doing. Events like the crash of Swissair Flight 111 "drive us to our knees for understanding".

We do not wish to dishonour God with misleading statements that may do harm to other people. Does what I'm saying really make sense? Does what we are doing make sense?

Theological education must be morally and intellectually accountable – making sense of the Gospel in a credible way.



Dr. Furman Hewitt

In the second lecture of the weekend Dr. Furman Hewitt addressed the topic of "Theological Education of Clergy." Dr. Hewitt began his lecture stating that there are three characteristics of theological education: reverence to biblical authority, open inquiry, and responsible scholarship.

While keeping these characteristics in mind, Dr. Hewitt suggested five points that theological institutions ought to strive towards as they educate clergy. First, in order for seminaries to fulfill their role in educating clergy, they need to resist the temptation of "factory" education. A better approach would be to focus on the individual needs of the student; matching education with the student's prior life experiences, gifts, and goals.

Second, theological education ought to be "global" in scope. Recognizing our experience as being different from other countries, reminds us of the triviality of much that is around us. A focus on the poor and helpless who are God's concern is needed.

Third, seminaries ought to create a growing relationship with God. There needs to be an emphasis on developing skills necessary to develop or mature one's relationship with Christ.

Fourth, ministers require an awareness of the role of sin and guilt, in order to avoid operating out of their own catalogue of sin. Seminaries ought to assist students in identifying their own weaknesses.

(continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6) **Dr. Furman Hewitt Addresses**

Fifth, there is a need to live out our theology by doing it. The student can learn to honor the power of vision by working. We learn about love, not by reading but by seeing love abiding in the persons we are working with. We learn of the meaning of grace from the persons we serve. In the act of doing, we learn theology. Seminary education needs to incorporate acts of doing so that students may learn. Theology is not worth very much if we are unable to put it into practice.

(Friday's report: by **ABJ** Bulletin's editorial staff. The summary of the second address on Saturday was by: Shelia Smith, Minister of the Milton United Baptist Church.)

ABJ Bulletin Proof Readers



Sharon McGill and Lois Tingley, proof read all issues of the **ABJ** Bulletin. They took time out to attend the ordination service for Jeffrey White at the Parrisboro United Baptist Church in September.

(continued from page 5)

People We Meet - Helen Ruth Balcom

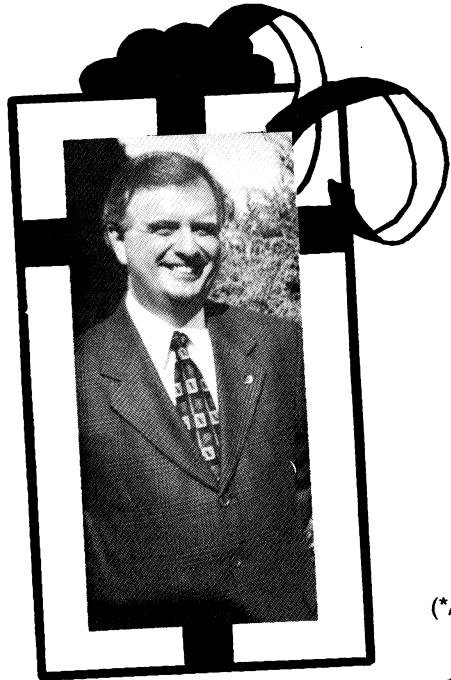
vacation. In the middle of the night, she could be depended on to go into the pharmacy to get a needed medication. When someone had family or financial problems, they talked to Helen. When someone needed a letter read or written, they went to Helen. When someone needed to borrow a car, they borrowed Helen's. When someone needed a place to stay, they stayed at Helen's. When the hospital, school, church, or any other community organization needed advice, they went to Helen. When a high school student needed encouragement and assistance to pursue further education, they knew Helen would help them."

Retired, Helen spends summers at her cottage in Grand Pre where she delights in discussing ethical and social issues and analysing data about political phenomena with her many friends.

She continues touching many lives with her good deeds - constantly going out of her way to help others. With an ecumenical spirit, Helen applies her faith to her life.

ABF Photo Album

October 2nd and 3rd



John Boyd

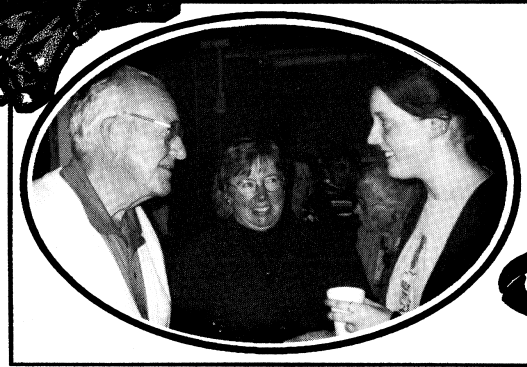


Yvonne and Earl Ward*
(*ADC Alumni Award for distinguished service)



Ruth MacPherson and Jack Wendt

Port Williams ABC



Howard Taylor, Susan and
Heather Colquhoun



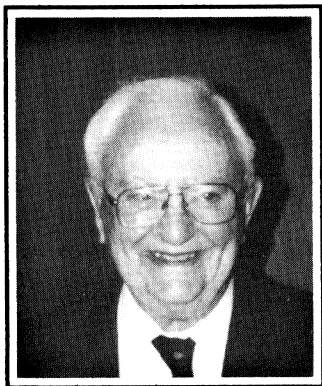
Max DeWolfe (the Gathering) and Isobel Horton



Sheila and Doug Smith and Jeanette Holt (Alliance of Baptists)

Christian Mysticism - Buttress to Christian Faith

M. R. B. Lovesey



M. R. B. Lovesey

When, in the nineteenth century of our era, the five traditional arguments for the truth of the Christian faith - the ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, the historical, the moral began to lose their appeal, some turned to mysticism in the attempt to find support for their faith. One such was William Ralph Inge, the "gloomy dean of St. Paul's," whose famous Hampton Lectures for 1899, published under the title *Christian Mysticism*, were delivered in St. Mary's Church before the University of Oxford. Inge felt his eight lectures fulfilled the intention of Canon Bampton that they should be given "in the confirmation and establishment of the Christian faith." Inge explains at the beginning of his book: "my study of the mystical writers has been directed solely by my own intellectual and spiritual needs. I was attracted to them in the

hope of finding in their writings a philosophy and a rule of life which would satisfy my mind and conscience. In this I was not disappointed."

Dr. Inge's lectures sparked interest in mysticism, an interest which was shared by such writers as Evelyn Underhill, whose book, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*, was first published in 1911 and subsequently went through many editions. In our day among those who have "caught the fire" is Karen Armstrong, as witnessed by her book *Visions of God: Four Medieval Mystics and Their Writings*, 1994. Karen finds the anonymous, fourteenth century, *Cloud of Unknowing*, especially helpful for her understanding of religion.

Religion is not a matter subject to infallible, mathematical-type proof. It requires faith or trust, or, as we had better say, following the advice of many leaders of Christian thought, John Macquarrie of Oxford in particular . . . it requires a reasonable faith. There are no absolute certainties here, for probability is the guide to life as most will acknowledge. Nonetheless, those who have experienced such moments find their faith in the transcendent strongly buttressed by them. Many will have had the kind of experience that Mark Parent writes about in his book *Spirit Scapes* (Northstone Publishing, 1998). On an occasion, being alone in a grove of maple trees, Mark says he felt as if he were among friends. "I raised my arms and did a slow dance, a dance of praise to God and unity with the leaves that fluttered and rustled in the breeze. For a moment, I sensed that I was one with the Earth and the trees. I was rooted in the ground as I reached the branches of my arms up high to receive the last of the fading sun and the start of the evening dew. Then the spell was broken. I dropped my arms and wondered to myself, what do we miss when we refuse to see?"

Mark Parent's experience might be called an example of nature mysticism. It was somewhat similar to such that I have had and which I cannot explain away in psychological terminology. In my late teens I was on holiday with my mother in Devonshire. Late, one evening as it was darkening I climbed to the top of Hay Tor rock, a famous beauty spot to the west of Bovey Tracy. Away to the south-east, in the direction of the City of Exeter, the River Exe suddenly came into view, a shining silver thread in the moonlight. It was indescribably beautiful! I felt I was in the presence of . . . what? The only word I can use is "God."

Another mystic experience I have had occurred in 1941 when I was a soldier on a troopship going to the Middle East theatre of war. A great storm blew up as we sailed north through the straits of Madagascar, zigzagging all the way to elude German submarines with their deadly torpedoes. I was a member of the gun-crew servicing the six-inch gun placed on the "blunt" end of the ship. Our ship, the Eastern Prince, had been bombed in Liverpool Harbour and had been repaired with concrete seals to her battered plates. Fortunately we never had to fire that gun for had we done so there was the obvious danger that the vibration would break the concrete seals and we would descend straightway to Davy Jones' locker! In that storm, in that perilous situation, I suddenly felt exalted in spirit, that God was with me, that whatever happened it would be for the best for me. It was an experience of a "presence" I find it hard to deny. In that storm I felt the presence of the mysterium tremendum et fascinans that primitive peoples have always reported they have felt.

Mysticism cannot give us absolute certainty of the reality of God's existence. We know feelings are not to be relied on - we can be mistaken! But such mystic experiences that most, if not all of us, have had give us the strong probability of our basic belief in God. Mysticism is a buttress to a reasonable faith, surely.

The main characteristics of mysticism (according to E.J.Tinsley, professor of theology, Leeds University) seem to be:

- 1) a profound, compelling, unforgettable sense of union and unity;
- 2) the successive character of time is transcended in an awareness of simultaneity;
- 3) the experience is not felt to be a mere subjectivity;
- 4) there is always a sense of joy, exaltation, a suffused sense of well-being; and
- 5) an overwhelming sense of 'presence,' of the utter nearness of the transcendent.

The thesis of the above considerations is that most of us, if not all of us, have moments in our experience that can be called mystical and which can be a strong support or buttress to our faith. This can be a comfort and support to us in this age of secularism and science when faith is under severe attack and sometimes hard to come by.

Lic. Sheila Smith, M.Div.
will be
Ordained
into the Ministry of God
January 31, 1999, 3:00 p.m.

Milton United Baptist Church
Milton, Queens County
Nova Scotia

ABF BULLETIN

Spring Convocation
Richmond, Virginia
March 12th to 14th, 1999
Theme
"And Jesus taught them saying . . ."

Meetings will be held at Northminster Baptist Church and on the Campus of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

For information about accommodations and registration contact either of the ABF Bulletin Editors

Marginal Notes

Grammateus

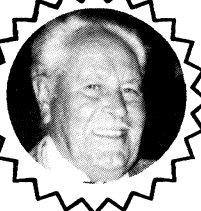
In the last issue of the ~~ABF~~ *Bulletin*, the Editor asks us: What think ye? about the Southern Baptist Convention's official acceptance of the idea that the father's headship in the family is for all time, for us. The following is the answer of one Christian living nearly twenty centuries after Ephesians was written.

In the first century of our era the family of a Roman freeman consisted of the father, his wife who was the mother of his children, the children themselves and a slave or some slaves. The husband/father was the "head" and the wife, children and slave(s) all submitted to him. The Christian family, as described in Ephesians 5:21-6:9, reflected the same order: wife, children and slave(s) were exhorted to submit to the master. The writer of Ephesians modeled the Christian family on the Roman order, but added a spiritual dimension in the inclusion of another relationship: that of Christ and the Church. The Christian father and husband must deal lovingly and caringly with his wife, children and slave(s); nevertheless they must submit to him.

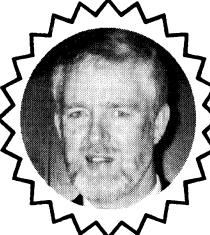
Christian apologists for slavery, as recently as the American civil war era, believed and argued that the Ephesian order, including the acceptance of slavery, to be divinely and immutably ordered.

But in an earlier letter, the Apostle describes a new creation in which all distinctions, including male and female, slave and free are abolished for "all of you are one in Christ" (Galatians 3: 27-29) .

We can still turn to Ephesians (5:21-6:8) to be reminded of the truth that relationships within the family, whatever the institutional order, must reflect the greatest of all gifts (I Corinthians 13) which is love.



Robbie Ernst, only living charter member of the Bayside United Baptist Church (NS), participated in the celebration ceremonies of the 60th Anniversary of the Church on September 12th and 13th. Robbie is actively involved with the church.



Hedley Hopkins, Minister, Port Williams United Baptist Church ... helped in no small way - to keep things moving smoothly during the ABF Fall Assembly

The Rev. Dr. Roger Cann is Secretary for the "Friends of ABF." Requests for membership, subscriptions to the *Bulletin* and information of concern to members, may be directed to him at P.O. Box 354, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0.

Freedom in Christ

Roger Cann

Ramanarsu and I were sitting on a bench in the courtyard of the Vizianagram Church in India. The speaker that evening was Ron Watts, General-Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. Ron was speaking on our calling as Christians, and he was seeking to explain the concept "freedom in Christ".

Ramanarsu turned to me and commented that the liberty we have in Christ was most difficult to get across to new Christians who had been brought up as Hindus. I think his words were, "it takes a conversion in our way of thinking as well as a conversion of our souls". The freedom Watts was describing was a radically different experience from the mental straightjacket of the moral entail of Karma and the cosmic law of Dharma.

We in Canada have our own mental shackles; predestination, political ideologies, materialistic determinism, the cult of the "bottom line", and a host of cultural mores, even the parenting style that conditions children to think they must win their parents love by appropriate behaviour. We too must have a conversion in our way of thinking to appreciate the Grace of God.

Our faith in Christ gives us a new position from which to appreciate our existence on earth. Freedom is part of Providence. In his new book Polkinghorne writes, "...The gift of love must be the gift of freedom, the gift of a degree of letting-be... It is the nature of humankind that sometimes people will act with selfless generosity but sometimes with murderous selfishness. ... (it is) the necessary cost of a creation given by its Creator the freedom to be itself."

Our experience of being in Christ is one of transformation; "new creatures in Christ", and as Tillich describes it, freed from the shame of guilt, freed from the fear of death, and freed from life without meaning. Baptists have long cherished their experiences of being free in Christ and have sought to highlight these basic principles.

- A. The Lordship of Christ: He has not delegated His authority or saving power -- not to a priest or minister, not to a ritual, however sacred, and not to any institution.
- B. Soul Liberty: Our personalities are subject to many influences as they develop and grow. A significant influence is the exercise of our will, and that can only happen in freedom. Paul resists making the rules. (2 Cor. 8.8) He had not lorded it over the faith of the Corinthians (1.24) and so he would not lord it over their conduct.

This freedom of conduct does not mean that we can do exactly what we like. (Galatians 5.13; 1 Peter 2.16) It is not selfish freedom. It is freedom in Christ, lived in a personal bond with Him, and to live as we believe He would have us live, so as to avoid what would weaken that relationship.

- C. Competent to Interpret Scripture: In the company of the faithful, we seek the Spirit of Christ to guide us in our understanding of the Christian Scriptures. (John 5.39) If "the Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from His word", we must be free to seek that light and to share what we hear God saying to us through the Scriptures.
- D. Congregational Freedom: Personally we are willing to modify our behaviour to avoid offending fellow believers. (Galatians 5.13) And to remain in fellowship with other churches, we are restrained in what we do as a congregation. Baptists hold that freedom belongs not only to the individual believer but also to the congregation of believers, the community of faith. We practice congregational government.

Congregational government holds that the will of God for a congregation

can best be determined through the members of that congregation, and that each congregation must be free to manage its own life and ministry under the leading of the Spirit of Christ. Notice that this is not the same as democracy. Congregational government does not seek the opinion of the majority, but the will of God expressed through God's people.

Notes:

John Polkinghorne, Bellef in God in an Age of Science (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998)

Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be

Ronald F. Watts, Devotions for New Baptists (Toronto: Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1986)



Roger Cann and Rodger Forsman
take time out during A.B.F. Fall Assembly

Worship and Liturgical Music

Rodger Forsman

The current controversy about liturgical music in Baptist churches reflects two incompatible concepts of worship. There is little hope of settling the controversy without taking account of this fact. I shall outline the two concepts of worship and then show how they are connected with liturgical music.

Worship, on one interpretation, is essentially a pattern of actions done as the human response which is appropriate to the nature of God. The word 'appropriate' is important: it implies that some responses are the right ones, some are not, and that what makes the difference is the nature of God, the being to whom the response is directed. On this understanding of worship the content, structure and execution of the liturgy is determined by what we understand to be the nature of God and of God's saving activity in the world.

On a second interpretation worship is basically a kind of experience which we undergo in certain settings. This experience is a complex set of affective states variously involving feelings of awe, wonder or self-abasement, a sense of guilt or of release from guilt, perhaps the tug of moral challenge (especially if presented with emotionally-laden illustrations), feelings of acceptance, and the enjoyment of the company of others engaged in pursuit of the same experience. On this understanding of worship the liturgy is determined by what we think is needed to generate the "worship experience".

What does the distinction have to do with liturgical music? The basic point is that both interpretations imply that there are criteria for making decisions about liturgical music. But they differ on the nature of the criteria. On the first interpretation the criteria are objective in the sense that they must stem from knowledge of God. In practice this is connected with a critical understanding of the Scriptures, the history of the people of God, the history of theology, the experience of the worshipping community, and the best and most informed of contemporary reflection about all of these topics. If one goes to church to worship (sense one) one expects liturgical music to focus on God and on God's saving activity and related matters.

On the second interpretation the criteria are not objective in this sense but rather are subjective in the sense that they foster the pursuit of the "worship experience". If one goes to church to worship, in this sense of the term, it seems that one prefers liturgical music which focuses on the self, on feelings of the kinds mentioned above, on the things God does for us, and on fellowship and the life of the worshipping (sense two) community.

I am not hopeful that this controversy will be settled soon because the two concepts of worship are fundamentally opposed. The way forward however, seems to be clear: as ministers and congregations we need to ask ourselves two questions:

- 1) Which concept of worship do our liturgies exhibit?
- 2) Which concept of worship is the more faithful to the tradition which makes us Christian?

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 Editors.

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.

CO-EDITORS ABF BULLETIN

Terry Tingley
9 Youth Camp Road
Bayside, N.S., B3Z 1L8
(902) 852-4405

Frank McGill
80 Camelot Lane, Apt 212
Halifax, N.S., B3M 4K8
(902) 457-2229

E-mail Address for article submission: fmcgill@fox.nstn.ca

Deadline for Article Submission for Spring Issue: February 1, 1999