
What is the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship?

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was formed about thirty years ago by a group of Baptist lay people and ministers who conceived it as a way to pursue certain converging interests. First, they wanted to witness to historical Baptist principles. Second they wanted to be involved with non-Baptist communions in joint worship, social action and ecumenical discussions of the nature of the Church. Third, they wished to create a safe and welcoming environment where Baptists can share concerns and points of view with out fear of being marginalized. The ABF is not an executive body, carrying out programs, and advocating positions. It is a consultative body with the following aims:

- (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 Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches 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.

In pursuit of these aims the ABF publishes *The Bulletin*, and meets semiannually for worship, fellowship, and study of an issue of contemporary interest. Everyone is welcome to attend.

THE BULLETIN

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

S P R I N G 2 0 0 4



PHOTO: BRUCE DIENES

Wolfville United Baptist Church

LOCATION OF THE SPRING ASSEMBLY,
ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

14 & 15 MAY 2004



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In This Issue

RODGER FORSMAN, EDITOR

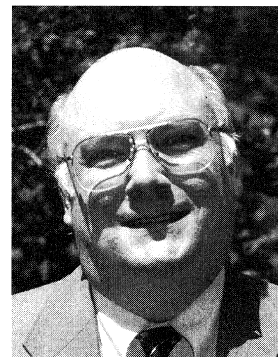
One purpose of *The Bulletin* is to provide a forum for reflection upon issues that arise in contemporary church life. There is no shortage of subjects. For example, how does the Baptist understanding of the nature of the church bear on the way in which boards, committees, congregations and ministers make decisions? Where does authority lie? How does it get established? Who is accountable to whom, and for what? Does appointment to a leadership role in a congregation entitle a person to some kind of coercive power over others? While we can theorize about churches in sociological and political terms, the church must be committed to thinking about itself within a theological framework as well. So our reflections about the above questions need to be informed by a good understanding of Scripture and the nature of the Christian Church.

In this issue Timothy Ashley addresses the question, How should we understand leadership in ministry? A previous contributor to *The Bulletin*, Dr Ashley brings a thorough biblical understanding and much practical experience in ministry to his discussion of leadership.

Reference to the Scriptures reminds us that people with an interest in the Christian tradition, especially church members, face a continuous challenge to stay up to date with current scholarship. Baptists have always had a high regard for education. One of the basic reasons is that Baptist thinking about the church begins with the conviction that a local church is formed when believers are moved to unite in a congregation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whose will is discerned through prayer, the study of the Scriptures, and informed discussion. Discerning the mind of the Holy Spirit thus involves the best thinking we can muster. This is why Baptists, when they have been at their best, have eschewed the head-in-the-sand stance in relation to ongoing scholarship. Instead they have insisted that a religious faith which is any good must be capable of intelligent interaction with expanding knowledge in any

Servant Leadership

DR TIMOTHY ASHLEY



Editor's Note: Dr Ashley is currently the minister at First Baptist Church of La Crosse, Wisconsin, after twenty-one years at Acadia Divinity College as Professor of Biblical Studies, where he taught Old Testament, Biblical Interpretation and Hebrew. He also served as Acting Principal and Associate Dean of the College. As well as other publications, Dr Ashley has written a major commentary on the Book of Numbers (1993).

field of inquiry. To fail in this regard is to contribute to the loss of new generations of people who are well informed and have this expectation of religious faith.

In this issue a new contributor, Ed Colquhoun, of Amherst, offers a perceptive review of a current book in biblical scholarship, one which obviously raises important questions about the role of Scripture in the church.

Christians have always understood that their faith involves social and political dimensions. We have perhaps not always expressed this conviction very energetically or very effectively. Often we have spent much time on consciousness raising and gathering information, without following through to concrete action.

An exception to this practice is found in the Ministries Committee of the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council. Organized over thirty years ago the WAICC conceives of ecumenism in terms of the cooperation among and mutual strengthening of its supporting communions, expressed in joint study, worship, and action to meet human needs.

In this issue we have a news item by Margaret Burton, of Wolfville, chair of the WAICC's Ministries Committee, another new contributor. She gives us a picture of the way in which one group of Christian communions has given flesh-and-blood reality to the idea of the unity of churches in one body, energized by the same Spirit.

In this issue we have introduced three concerns emerging out of contemporary church life. We have asked ourselves how we should think of leadership in ministry. We have examined some current biblical scholarship. We have heard an account of ecumenism in action.

Well, there you have it! I trust that you will find the articles interesting, thought provoking and above all useful.

I have been intrigued for many years by the idea of Servant Leadership/Ministry and taught about it frequently in my nearly twenty-one years at Acadia Divinity College. When we moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin, I discovered that one of our local universities offers a Master of Arts in Servant Leadership. Those enrolled in the programme work in such fields as education, social service and business, and not primarily in church vocations. The degree designers are convinced that servant leadership ought not be limited to those whose daily vocation is lived out in the Church, although they take it for granted there. It is probable that church leaders should pay heed, lest we find so-called secular leaders more spiritual than we are.

Jesus' statement to the disciples in Mark 10:42-44 continues to challenge my thinking about servant leadership (or ministry):

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers *lord it over* them, and their great ones are *tyrants over* them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.

The New Testament uses many pictures of ministry and leadership; but whenever Jesus specifically spoke of leadership, he spoke of servanthood. Imitation of Jesus ought to make us willing

to consider servant leadership today, although our natural preference might be for a leadership that is more controlling. But this is a temptation of the flesh, made more serious because in some quarters of the contemporary church and seminary it is actually encouraged as being on the “cutting edge.”

Four passages that are distinguishable but not detachable from the poems of Isaiah 40–55 are crucial for understanding servant leadership. Called *Servant Songs* since Bernhard Duhm’s 1892 commentary, they are found in 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–11; and 52:13–53:12. Traditional Christian interpretation says that the passages point to Jesus. Historical-critical exegesis has not been unanimous: many conclude that the songs point either to Israel, or to a “remnant” within Israel. I suggest that we be locked into neither interpretation, but take these passages as part of the canonical scripture of the Church. We can then see that they are fulfilled not only in Israel and the Christ, but also in the Church, the People of the Christ. Other biblical passages are also important; e.g., the Synoptic Gospels interpret much of Jesus’ ministry through the lens of the *Servant Songs*. The Mark 10 passage cited earlier is just one example that encourages Christians to see Jesus’ ministry in this way.

What follows is based on a careful study of the passages named above as well as others. It is a bare bones sketch of some general contours of what servant leadership might look like, albeit *without* the exegetical apparatus needed for a complete discussion.

First, servant leaders put a high value on what is internal and spiritual as over against what is external and measurable. They care more for people than for principles and for programmes. A further implication of this point is that servant ministers envision leadership as worked out *within* and *among* God’s people rather than *down to them*, or *up to them*. In the passage from Mark 10 above, Jesus twice contrasts leadership that lords it over others with leadership that serves others. In verse 43 Jesus does not command that “lording over” shall not be so among his followers. He simply states a fact: “It is not so among you.” It’s just the way it is among Christ’s people. People are not “objects” of evangelism, sermons, Bible studies, etc.; rather they are, as leaders are, created in God’s image, and co-human with the leader. Servant leaders realize that their ministries and the ministries of all God’s people are empowered

by God (Isaiah 42:1, “My (God’s) servant...my chosen...my spirit”). The laity must recognize the co-humanity of their leaders as well.

Again, because servant leaders care more for people than principles and programmes, servant leadership is gentle, and respects the integrity of persons (42:2: “... not lift up voice in the street ... not break a bruised reed ... not quench a dimly burning wick”). Servant leaders are more concerned with what happens to people than what happens to particular programme goals. It is unfortunately true that many “bruised reeds” have been broken and many “dimly burning wicks” quenched in churches today. I have found the “dimly burning wick” and the “bruised reed” in my own life. I have ministered with those who have been both over the years in church and seminary contexts, and do so now.

Further, the focus or goal of servant leadership is what brings life, rather than death (42:2–3; see also 2 Corinthians 3:4–18). One of the ancient figures upon which the picture of the “Servant of the Lord” was based is the Servant of the King, who was a powerful representative of the king. The figure of a “bruised reed” and “dimly burning wick” may come from symbolic actions that the Servant of the King enacted on the march to an execution. He would break a staff carried by the condemned, symbolic of the life that was about to be broken. He would extinguish a lamp, symbolic of the condemned’s life being snuffed out. But *servant leadership* does not affirm things that bring death to people. Rather servant leadership affirms “life” in its fullness.

Servant leadership, therefore, is concerned with justice (42:3–4). Because servant leaders care more for the spiritual and personal than for the external and programmatic, they take sides with PERSONS who have not found justice in the world (or even in the church).

Servant ministers do not simply proclaim a message, they *are* the message (49:6: “I (God) give *you* as a light to the nations...”). Servant leaders are incarnational leaders. Servant ministry/leadership is a matter of being a certain kind of person and not simply a matter of certain practices or even roles.

Servant leadership/ministry, if pursued faithfully, *may* lead to suffering (50:5–7). Because they deal more with people than with principles and programmes, servant leaders sometimes get the overflow of people’s negative reactions to all kinds of things. When

such suffering comes servant ministers respond by attempting to act redemptively on behalf of all concerned, even those who initiate the leader's suffering. Servant ministers act without retaliation, imitating Jesus. Servant ministers see power as the empowerment of others, not the aggrandizement of the leader (Isaiah 53:3-9; also Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 12:1-2).

Servanthood and servant leadership/ministry is not a specific set of practices, nor even what might be called a *model* for leadership/ministry. Rather, it is a theology or standpoint that undergirds practice. To be sure, some practices are ruled out from the standpoint of servanthood, but servanthood as a standpoint ought not be thought always to dictate a specific practice. Contexts vary and so do the practices of servant *leadership*. Every leader must stand for principles, and use plans and programmes. Servant leaders simply put these things at the level of useful tools, rather than seeing them as their masters. Their top priority is the people with whom they minister.

Ecumenical News from Wolfville

WAICC Forms an ad hoc Ministries Committee

MARGARET BURTON

Editor's Note: Margaret Burton has lived with her family in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, since 1997. Her interest in ecumenical matters began in 1983 through the Center for Ecumenism in Saskatoon. She is impressed by the spirit of Christian fellowship in Wolfville and is an active member of St Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic church. She is presently Chair of the Ministries Committee, a newly formed committee of Wolfville and Area Interchurch Council.

The Wolfville Inter-church Council (waicc) was founded in 1970 by the four main town churches: St John's Anglican, Wolfville United Baptist, St Andrew's United, and St Francis of

Assisi Roman Catholic. The Port Williams United Baptist Church and the Religious Society of Friends were welcomed at a later date, and the council was then renamed the Wolfville Area Inter-church Council. With Acadia University located in the heart of town, the university chaplain is also an integral part of the organization. For more history and information, please visit the website at www.waicc.org

The Wolfville Area Inter-church Council is a remarkable example of the spirit of ecumenism. Members of all participating denominations, both lay and clergy, have labored long and hard over the years to follow their common call to put faith into action in addressing both the spiritual and temporal needs of the community. They continue to coordinate regular services of common worship, lead semi-annual workshops and seminars on social justice, spiritual or community issues, and maintain a year-round emergency food relief program.

Recently, the waicc executive undertook to evaluate existing activities and programs in light of the Objects outlined in its Constitution, namely to participate in "common worship, consultation and common action in Christian witness, and ministry to human need ... within programs which the Council has developed". As a result of discussions, in May of 2002, an *ad hoc* Ministries Committee was struck to consider changes that could be made or programs that could be strengthened.

The committee focused on three areas: the need to examine emergency financial relief provided for disadvantaged families at home and at school, the need for the waicc to continue to be aware of, support and advocate improvements in public health care, and the need for the waicc to look beyond its local borders for some way to be Christian witnesses in the larger world.

When the committee examined existing services for helping local families in need, it realized that there were both overlaps and sometimes gaps in services, both volunteer and governmental. As a result, the committee organized and led a workshop in September 2003 called "Who is Hurting", to identify the needs of the disadvantaged and how best to assist. There was participation from all government agencies: health, labor, and community services, as well as town council, service clubs, charitable organizations and church groups. By the end of the day, many of the participants

had formed valuable connections with each other to close some of the gaps, and as a group, they specified achievable goals to work towards. This workshop also spawned a second meeting, held in January 2004, to identify the specific need for development of a local suicide prevention program.

The Ministries Committee also looked at the disbursements of the funds generously donated through the annual WAICC Christmas Campaign. It organized a meeting with the other charitable emergency relief organizations in the area. It has been obvious that rising energy costs cause great hardships for those on fixed incomes, and one of the outcomes of the meeting was that the Ministries Committee recommended to the WAICC executive to expand the emergency food relief program to include energy relief. This has been carefully implemented this winter, to the benefit of many families.

On the topic of health care, the WAICC has been active for many years in advocating improved public health services. Council members have sat on many a health board and committee and reported to Council on developments and ways to take action. The Ministries Committee will continue to monitor community needs, particularly in relation to palliative care.

The Committee also responded to requests from the WAICC executive to think more globally in areas of Christian witness. They wished to form a connection with people in another part of the world, particularly in a developing country. In this regard, Rev. Dr. Joao Matwawana, former interim pastor of the Port Williams United Baptist Church is now receiving both spiritual and financial support from members of the WAICC for the people of Angola and the efforts of the Angolan Council of Churches. The work in Angola was in fact the keynote topic at the final service of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2004.

The quiet achievements of the WAICC in these and other areas continue to have a positive impact on Wolfville and the surrounding community. The ecumenical movement, whose roots are in the New Testament, calls all believers to seek world-wide Christian unity. The Wolfville Area Inter-church Council is an active part of that movement, a group of people from so many different denominations who rejoice in their common beliefs and work together in active faith and witness to be a visible sign of Christ in the world.

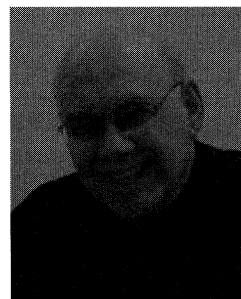
“There is one body, and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling ... (Eph 4:4)”

The Bible Unearthed:

*Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel
and the Origin of its Sacred Texts*

By Israel Finkelstein & Neil Asher Silberman
First Touchstone Edition, 2002, 385 pages

ED COLQUHOUN



Editor's Note: Ed Colquhoun has held many roles in public education - English teacher, counsellor, principal, human resources co-ordinator, regional director for school construction and renovation et al. A member of First Baptist Church, Amherst, he retains a theological bent acquired at Acadia Divinity College. Ed works part-time assessing students with learning problems.

Blame it on Dr. Ashley! In a serendipitous teaching moment, as he was bidding farewell to an assembled group at Acadia University, Tim suggested that the leading edge of Old Testament scholarship was not textual study but archaeology. In fact, he implied that some of the newer discoveries were truly disturbing. Thus, as I stood in a University of Alberta bookstore confronted by *Unearthing the Bible*, I was unable to resist. And the book is unsettling.

The central saga of the Hebrew Bible, the story of the patriarchs and matriarchs, exodus, conquest of Canaan, and the great kingdom of David and Solomon are the grist for this mill. And do they grind it up! After a careful retelling of the traditional story, the authors muster detailed and persuasive archaeological evidence,

correlated with the biblical accounts, to call into question the accuracy of these accounts. Although not biblical minimalists—Finkelstein, an established Israeli archaeologist and Silberman, an archaeological journalist, do not imply that the entire Bible is an ideological creation—they make a persuasive case that the story of Israel was composed and compiled to explain the defeats and triumphs, to justify the need for reform and to back ambitions to expand territory.

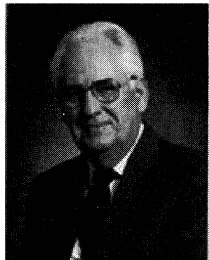
The authors contend that the keys to understanding how these scriptures were written are the very different histories of the northern Kingdom of Israel and of the southern Kingdom of Judah that are revealed in the archaeological record. (Read this book with good historical maps in hand or you will get lost.) Finkelstein and Silberman conclude that the primary biblical saga was written in the time of Josiah from the point of view of the southern kingdom. One of the supports for this argument is I Kings 13:1–2 which specifically predicts that the great king Josiah, three centuries later(!) will shut down the shrine at Bethel. The authors see this not as a gloss from the time of Josiah but rather one textual key to the whole composition. “The precision of the ... prophecy ... gives away the era when it was written.” (p.166) The alternate history they propose is that of a wealthy and successful Kingdom of Israel and a slowly-developing Kingdom of Judah. For example, during the reign of Ahab and his Phoenician princess Jezebel it appears that the great northern Kingdom of Israel prospered in cosmopolitan splendour while the southern Kingdom of Judah languished in obscurity. In fact, they propose to date from this later time period the supposed archaeological evidence for an expansive, wealthy, united kingdom under David and Solomon.

Two major groups find this research unsettling. For conservative Christians, Biblical archaeology was enjoyable when it revealed long-lost cities mentioned in the Bible; e.g. it seemed reassuring to discover that many of the cities of ancient Canaan were razed in a general cataclysm: Joshua’s conquest! Now that scientific study of pottery sherds and carbon 14-dated burnt timbers call into question both the identity of the destroyers and the dating of the destruction, archaeology does not bring them comfort. Nor does it comfort Israelis for whom the divine promise in the scriptures is closely related to their achievement of nationhood. Deconstruct-

ing the biblical story pinches me in some places but not in others. While I am more than ready to give up the idea of divinely sanctioned slaughter in Canaan, I really have trouble accepting that the vivid image of David’s court is a literary/theological creation.

What are we to think about such a book? I can think of two possible responses. We can throw up our hands at such perverse scholarship that would remove the factual underpinnings from the central saga of the Hebrew Bible, or we can reflect upon the obvious theological biases in the Pentateuch and the work of the so-called Deuteronomistic Historian. The point of view of the biblical writer or writers under the microscope in this book may not be the last word. A Christian viewpoint surely requires one to question the simplistic Deuteronomistic Historian in favour of a more nuanced consideration of the meaning of suffering and defeat; in fact, the Hebrew Bible itself reached such a height with the book of Job. Perhaps I should thank rather than blame Tim Ashley for unwittingly helping me, through this book, to understand and appreciate, yet to challenge, the thinking that led to the creation of the great biblical saga. This is not a book for everyone. Many people are indifferent to or don’t understand either the complex geography and history of ancient Israel or the methods of archaeologists. Others do not want to plumb the theological depths implied by the authors’ conclusions. For those who have the inclination and understanding, especially those charged with interpreting the Bible to congregations, the book is worthy of thoughtful consideration.

Dr. Charles Taylor Receives Order of Canada



Dr. Charles Taylor, formerly a Professor at Acadia Divinity College, has been made a member of the Order of Canada. This is the highest honour which a Canadian civilian can receive. He is honoured for his pioneer work in establishing Clinical Pastoral Training as a normal requirement for ministerial training in Canada. We congratulate Dr. Taylor on this achievement!

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Atlantic Baptist Fellowship Spring Assembly

WOLFVILLE UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH
Friday 14 May – Saturday 15 May

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|----------|-------|--|
| Friday | 6:30 | REGISTRATION |
| Evening | 7:00 | LECTURE & PANEL DISCUSSION "Where are Baptists in Atlantic Canada?" <i>Rev. Dr. Harry Gardner & panelists Rev. Ron Baxter, Rev. Dr. Frank Guinta, Rev. Dr. Lionel Moriah</i> |
| | | COMMUNION |
| | | RECEPTION |
| | | |
| Saturday | 8:30 | REGISTRATION & MORNING COFFEE |
| Morning | 9:00 | DEVOTIONAL <i>Rev. Dr. Frank Guinta</i> |
| | 9:15 | FORUM "Atlantic Baptist Fellowship's Vision for the Future" |
| | 10:30 | REFRESHMENT BREAK |
| | 10:45 | BUSINESS |
| | 12:15 | DISMISSAL |
| | 12:30 | VINCENT RUSHTON MEMORIAL LUNCHEON
Manning Memorial Chapel. <i>Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Keith Churchill</i> "Canadian Baptists and the ABF: Issues of Identity and Direction." |

Keith Churchill is a native of Nova Scotia and a graduate of Acadia University. Since ordination in 1964 he served churches in New Brunswick, Alberta and British Columbia. Keith took advanced studies at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California. From 1994 until retirement he served as the Alberta Area Minister, Baptist Union of Western Canada.