

# *The Bulletin*

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAPTIST FREEDOMS  
FORMERLY THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP



*Window detail, Manning Memorial Chapel, Acadia University*

*Epiphany: New Beginnings*

WINTER 2014

## *Editorial: 42 Years Advancing*

It is remarkable that last September we celebrated at our Assembly 42 years of worship, work and fellowship. Considering that we were Baptists who believed that the ecumenical movement is the work of the Holy Spirit, that congregational government is an important Baptist Principle, and our fellowship vital, we have done well.

Reflecting upon these years, we might consider two things: the joy of a lengthening history within and outside the Atlantic Baptist Convention where we are free to stand for the right to speak out for what we hold dear and look to the future with encouragement for these things.

Look to the future? We cannot just rest upon 'our principles.' It might give us pause to think that many of our congregations cannot even remember why the ABF, now the CABF, was formed in the first place. The prophetic voice of our fellowship somehow may be fading within our Convention, and our attention drifting to ourselves.

Perhaps our Council might initiate a 'steering committee' to contemplate what we might accomplish and how we may do it. Might a part-time general secretary help to coordinate some action plans? Might some project with a physical presence, like a CABF office, give a more visible presence? Of course, finances would be necessary but considering how to raise them would be another excellent challenge.

We must not stumble on, working from one general meeting to another, but see the long-term future with possibilities. Then the past 42 years would have been worth it.

ROGER H. PRENTICE, EDITOR *pro tem*.

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*The Bulletin* is published three times a year by the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms. It is meant to be an informative magazine about Baptist concerns and news of the Church in the world.

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*Keith Churchill:*  
*A Man of Faith, Honour & Service*

It was with growing concern that we learned of the failing health of one of our beloved members. The Rev'd Dr. Keith Churchill has been an important and honoured name amongst Baptists across Canada. A Minister for our Anglophone Baptist conventions, he also has been an Area Minister of distinction in our western provinces. Keith has long been a supporter and member of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, now known as the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms. He was the membership convener for a number of years.



Born in Nova Scotia of the Ernest and Mrs. Blanche Churchill, and elder brother of the Rev'd Dr. John Churchill, he and his wife, Joan, returned to the province in retirement and settled in Greenwich, and became very active members of the Port Williams United Baptist Church.

His ministry has enriched many in the faith and has offered vibrant leadership to his congregations. Keith's understanding of God's presence in our world, his compassionate and assuring ministry to people of all kinds, enthusiasm for the ecumenical work of the whole church of God, and appreciation of the place and dignity of worship has been inspiring to several generations of Baptists.

Sadly, Keith passed away on Saturday, 7 December 2013.

The CABF has been deeply enriched by his loyalty, thoughtfulness, and wisdom. We extend our sympathy and support to Joan, his son Jeff and his brother, John. We pray that they will be sustained by the Spirit of God and the blessed memory of Keith.

## Book Reviews

✦ James MacDonald, *The Vertical Church* (David C Cook, 2012).  
Reviewed by John Churchill.



Out of respect for a friend who gave me this book and despite my reservations, I read it. To my surprise, I agreed with many of MacDonald's points: church is off-centre when it is all about us, when the horizontal, social, aspects are emphasized at the expense of the vertical, transcendent.

MacDonald's criticisms of the horizontal church's preachers parading their personalities, singers seeking glory for themselves and self-help sermons resonated with me, as did his elevation of prophetic preaching, that ignores the applause meter. I agreed with his placement of worship at the centre of church activity and view that it is our highest expression that requires careful planning and more than shuffling service parts randomly.

But as I read, I had an uneasy feeling that the context and form of what he advocates is the existing charismatic mega-me church which equates crowds and self-indulgent emotions with success. MacDonald's own success is trumpeted: 90 affiliated churches with a weekly attendance of 13,000, a total of more than a million square feet, and over four hundred staff.

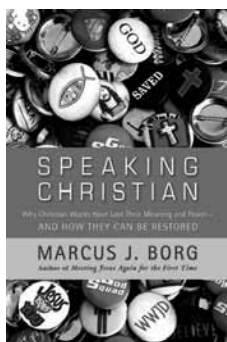
I wondered what place the holy, humility, and reverence played in his ideal of the good church where people line up at the doors ... and tears are flowing. In MacDonald's churches, the spirit of God is not invoked but manufactured. He says, the responsibility for what happens at church is on ... [the leader's] shoulders. Despite his criticism of the horizontal church, he admits that their trappings may not be all that bad: Tastefully crafted church names that remove offense for the irreligious; facilities that are hip with coffee shops; stage lights; preachers on stools with a

bottle of Snapple – None of these things are wrong! Some of them are unquestionably helpful.

The style is spontaneous; no Cheesy medieval music here. No lectionary preaching. Following his example, one should preach one passage as often as possible, and preach biblically verse by verse, exalting what God says versus (the preacher’s) insights/thoughts. He doesn’t say how one treads the dangerous boundary between the two.

Despite the inconsistencies, the book is helpful as a call to examine where in our church lives we have chosen the horizontal instead of the vertical and when we have softened the cutting edge of the Gospel and the prophetic tradition to make it more acceptable.

➤ Marcus J. Borg, *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power – and How They Can Be Restored* (Gale, Cengage Learning, 2011, 343 pages). Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary Of Faith* (Riverhead Books, 1999, 289 pages). Reviewed by Ed Colquhoun.



During a discussion group at First Baptist, Amherst, on Marcus Borg’s book, *Speaking Christian*, someone noted its similarity to *Amazing Grace* by Kathleen Norris. Both deal with the meaning of key words of Christian faith and the task for both seems to be to redeem Christian language from a narrow dogmatic perspective. That observation sent this reviewer on a very rewarding project of reading and comparing these two books.

Both authors emerged from rigid Protestant backgrounds and both now espouse a more expansive, inclusive faith that shows appreciation for the wide range of Christian experience. Following a career as what the Americans call a “liberal” Christian scholar, Borg became the Canon Theologian at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, Oregon. Norris, after a period of alienation from her faith, assumed the dual role of a member of a South Dakota Presbyterian church and a Benedictine

oblate at Assumption Abbey in North Dakota. Borg, the career academic, undertakes a systematic march through the terrain of Christian faith using what he calls an “historical-metaphorical approach” to contrast traditional heaven-and-hell Christianity with a faith that is about personal and societal transformation. Norris, a poet who rediscovered her faith, wanders that same landscape, telling deeply personal stories about “what it means to love God, my neighbor, and myself,” that is, what transformation means to her.

Not surprisingly, the books’ chapter titles reveal many common themes – God, Bible, Jesus Christ, Sin, Salvation, Creeds, etc. However, whereas Borg sticks to the main path, Norris finds interesting byways, dealing with angels, the Virgin Mary, exorcism, asceticism and so on. Interestingly, both authors cite the other with approval, Borg of Norris that he loved her insight that the words of the Nicene Creed reminded her very much of the poetry of William Blake, Norris quoting Borg saying that “becoming and being Christian is like learning another language.”

## *Rewarding Relationship with Cuba*

Carol Buckley

It all began with a TESL [Teaching English as a Second Language] course at St. Mary’s University, with a view to ‘travel with a purpose.’ Having been in El Salvador and Guatemala with Baptist Volunteers, and having retired from our ‘retirement’ project, we were seeking something new.

We had enjoyed a holiday in Cuba in 2005, taking an extra suitcase for Keith Meerman of Wolfville Baptist Church, who had been taking medications and other items not available in Cuba for several years. Keith put us in touch with Paco [The Rev. Francisco Rodés] who had been Pastor of the Matanzas Baptist Church for 26 years and who still teaches Biblical History at the Evangelical Seminary. Paco arranged for us to teach ESL classes at the Seminary in February 2007.



RON BUCKLEY, WANDA ROCCA, CAROL BUCKLEY, ORESTES ROCCA

The following year we taught a class at the Matanzas church where we worshipped, attended Seniors Craft Groups and musical performances. Paco told us about their Convention of churches, known as the Fraternity which formed after the Southern Baptists withdrew their support. He also referred to their affiliation with the Alliance of Baptists in the U.S. and the efforts of the Fraternity to encourage church partnerships between their member churches and churches in North America.

Paco took us to the small village of Olivia, about 30 miles inland from Matanzas, in an area where sugar cane was the main crop until the industry collapsed. Olivia has fewer than 100 houses and about 500 residents in the area. Here Pedro, an older Pastor, had planted a church some 12 years earlier, and Marisol, one of the first members, had given half of her house to be the church meeting place. We met the young Pastor, Josue Montejo Bayola, and walked around the village meeting some of the church members, after which Marisol treated us to Café' Cubano.

We returned to Port Williams United Baptist with enthusiasm for a partnership between Olivia and us. In April, our church voted to do

this. In 2009, Ron and I were privileged to meet with the Olivia church and share a celebration cake. Our church began plans to take a team to Cuba in 2010.

In these preparations we were blessed to have the Pastor of the Matanzas church, Orestes Rocca, and his wife Wanda, to visit us. As the main purpose of our visit was to offer friendship and fellowship to the church in Olivia and experience theirs' in return, we all made an effort to learn some Spanish.

Our team, including Pastor David Ogilvie and his guitar, was warmly received. Dave preached with Paco translating in the Matanzas church. We had a meaningful conversation with Pastor Josue and determined that the most immediate need was a parsonage. We were blessed through shared worship, meals and play in Olivia, Sabanilla and Matanzas.

In September, when Paco and Lila (his wife) were guests of the CABF Assembly in Port Williams, our church was able to send back \$1,000, mostly from a garage sale, to commence work on the parsonage. Land was free on the outskirts of Sabanilla, the closest town to Olivia. Pastor Josue and friends dug a well, lining it with cement. In 2011, Ron and I were able to visit and see their progress, taking \$3,000 (another garage sale and Christmas offering). A banner from our church and some new benches, plus a new coat of paint, added to the experience. On that trip we took three sewing machines: one to a seamstress in another village and two to women in Olivia who have been able to mend men's working clothing, make children's wear, and even sell some to help buy Sunday School supplies.

Over the years we have taken books for a church library, money from our Church School to enable a day at the beach, socks, T-shirts, fabric, sewing supplies, musical instruments (used in Matanzas in their outreach programme), bicycles for pastors at the Seminary, and many multivitamins and Tylenol.

Olivia originally had 22 members with only one man and 15 children in their Church School; now are 27 regular attendees. Seven men have joined the faithful group of women, there is an active group of youth and mission work has begun in a neighbouring village. Josue has been put in charge of youth work for all the Fraternity.



Both our church and we have been encouraged and blessed by this partnership. There are many more small rural churches in Cuba that could benefit from a relationship with a church here in Canada which would be equally blessed.

✞ *Carol and Ron Buckley are members of the Port Williams United Baptist Church and strong supporters of the CABF programme of partnership with Baptist Churches in Cuba.*

## *Church News*

**WOLFVILLE:** Wolfville Baptist has restored its Nativity Window which is high above the pulpit and depicts, interestingly, the Flight into Egypt. Mary and Joseph are with the baby Jesus resting under a tree, with the town of Bethlehem in the distance. The weight of the glass had eventually taken its toll. Now, with new reinforcing steel rods to support the glass, it shines before the congregation and celebrates this holy season.

**PORT WILLIAMS:** The Christian Education department has gotten off to a great start. The Church School has three classes for youngsters, and three adult classes. The youth are provided special service leaflets so that they may make notes during the morning service and special instructions for them to note as worship unfolds. A special Brunch began the church school year in September.

**SCOTT'S BAY UNION CHURCH:** The congregation, nudged by their Minister, Dan Gibson, has completely refurbished the wheel-chair ramp into their sanctuary. People of the congregation volunteered their time and completed it by October.

**ANNAPOLIS ROYAL:** Seth Moore, Minister of the Annapolis Royal Pastorate, was ordained at the Annapolis Royal church on Sunday, 22 September 2013. His wife, Vanessa, was called to be the Associate Minister of the Annapolis Royal church on a volunteer basis.

**HALIFAX:** First Baptist Church Halifax held their White Gift Service on Sunday, 8 December (Advent II). The supply of gifts along with food

hampers were distributed on Saturday, 14 December. Over \$8,000 was received for this ministry, including around \$3,000 at the service alone.

**MAHONE BAY:** The church is making long-needed repairs and maintenance to its exterior, particularly the front façade and bell tower. Individual donations and fund-raising efforts are helping to complete the work. In 2014 they will repair and paint the steeple that soars 80 feet, the highest standing structure in Mahone Bay.

**WINDSOR:** For 12 years, Windsor Baptist Church wrote its own Advent devotional book, each page written by an individual from the congregation. An ecumenical version of this project amongst West Hants churches will be attempted in 2014. It will be a cooperative spiritual discipline, a sharing of faith experience, and an expression of unity in Christ.

#### SPIRITUAL LIFE DIRECTOR WANTED

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HALIFAX** is seeking a full-time Director of Faith Development to provide leadership in the design, development and delivery of programs to nurture the ongoing spiritual growth of our congregation.

Grounded in Baptist principles, First Baptist Church Halifax is an inclusive and ecumenical community of believers in Jesus Christ committed to proclaim God's mission of love by word and deed. We are seeking an individual with demonstrated success in engaging individuals in all stages of their spiritual and life journeys to enrich and support their spiritual growth. Operating within a spiritual and prayerful framework, the Director will have a minimum of a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline and a theological understanding consistent with the mission statement and core values of our congregation.

For more information on this opportunity, please click on this link "Director of Faith Development" or contact [sheilastanley@fbchalifax.ca](mailto:sheilastanley@fbchalifax.ca).

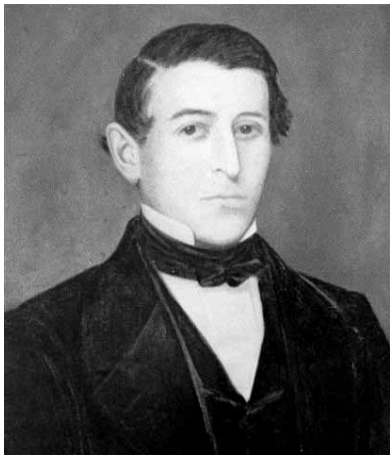
## *History Moment*

Pat Townsend



When the Nova Scotia Baptist Association met in Amherst in 1845 the following resolution was passed:

“That deeply impressed with the importance of securing materials for the history of the denomination in Nova Scotia, the Association affectionately requests brethren S.T. Rand, and Isaac Chipman, to collect whatever they can obtain relating to this subject; and farther that all publications which can be obtained bearing on this and kindred topics be deposited as the property of the denomination in the College buildings at Horton.”



Chipman, the talented energetic leader of Acadia in her early days and Rand missionary, philologist and ethnologist set out to gather materials related to the early history of Baptist work and bring it back to Acadia for safe-keeping. This effort which lasted till Chipman’s tragic death in 1852 resulted in the founding of what is

now the Atlantic Baptist Archives. A year later Chipman wrote to Dr. Harding in Windsor: “Your very great kindness in making additions to our Historical Collection is truly obliging.” He went on to hint that

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writing the history of local Baptist churches might well be undertaken. “You should prepare a Windsor Church History” he wrote. Chipman and Rand’s diligent efforts saved many early Baptist church and denominational records. It also resulted in the establishment of “The Portrait Fund”; more on that in the next issue.

## *Monetary Mulling*

A CABF Finance Sub-Committee composed of David Allen, Kim Sweet, Cynthia Ogilvie and John Churchill met on 25 October 2013 and considered the financial situation of the CABF, Discussion was far-ranging and resulted in several considerations.

It was noted that between 2011 and 2012 donations increased largely because of the greater giving of First Baptist Church Halifax, but that individual giving actually decreased. Indeed the deficit in 2012 was \$6,300 greater than 2011 and was mainly covered by money already in our savings accounts.

To even the outgoing flow, honoraria for the Bulletin editor be reduced and paid per issue rather than in a lump sum annually. They also suggested that there be only two issues of the Bulletin a year but that a ‘newsletter’ be used to keep people up-dated when necessary.

The committee also recommended that the annual individual dues be raised from \$10 to \$20 per year with renewal notices sent to such members. It was thought that \$1,200 be budgeted for sending delegates to other organizational meetings when they represent the CABF. Again, it was thought that e-mail invitations should be used for such occasions as the Rushton Lecture series.

The Treasurer, Cynthia Ogilvie reported that the CABF balance on hand as of 31 October 2013 was \$5,495.71. The Marion Grant Investments holds \$43,000.00, and the Vincent Rushton Endowment contains \$7,000.00.

# *Alliance of Baptists Report*

Lee Nicholas-Pattillo



I bring greetings in Christ from the Alliance of Baptists! I continue to be blessed with the working relationships of those I work with here at CABF and in some of my 'spare time' I'm just as privileged to continue as a Board Member on the Alliance of Baptists (AOB). At the same time as CABF held its annual meeting in September of this year, Alliance held its semi-annual board meeting.

The very first thing I want to share is the 2014 dates for Alliance's annual Gathering – May 2 to 4, 2014, in Portland, Maine. This is a great opportunity to meet with those who are as liked minded as our CABF membership. This is a reasonable distance to travel to share great fellowship. The theme of the Gathering will be focused on racial justice and multicultural life. Book your calendars! More information and details will follow. (More information will be posted to the CABF website in a timely manner.)

Upon recommendations from the Endorsement Council an additional four ministers were endorsed at this meeting. This means a total of eleven individuals have been endorsed over the past six months. Our numbers continue to grow!

Alliance continues to be active in other areas:

- Involvement in many ministries (example: Summer Communities of Service, Cuban ministry, and the World Student Christian Federation through Morehouse College – this federation has a focus on social justice)
- Visiting students on campuses like Wake Forest Divinity School, Andover-Newton Theological School and Bright Divinity School. Paula Dempsey from our Leadership Team did these visits.
- Through 'Search and Call' Alliance is intentional in helping women find pulpits

Two amazing and special gatherings occurred recently: In October

The Community for Equity for Women in the Church held their gathering! Waging Peace Gathering was held on the November long weekend in Washington, DC. The Community for Justice in Palestine and Israel planned this gathering – and over 100 people attended. The program was full! Rev. Mitri Raheb from Bethlehem, Palestine as a special guest speaker. His words were powerful and challenging. Folks were energized and committed to continue to carry this work forward as well.

Alliance is grateful to Mary Andreolli and the AllianceConnect team for their continued good work on the AOB website . With the upcoming version 3.0 it was expected that by mid- November the ‘Events and Calendar’ functions will be operational.

Like many organizations Alliance is working on ways to encourage additional givings from its membership and supporters.

Our Personnel Committee (of which I am a member) has compiled job descriptions for our Leadership positions and our administrative support position. It’s expected these descriptions will be reviewed by the Executive Committee for final approval in mid December. The job descriptions are helpful as we work through changes in staff and changes in staff responsibilities. The Personnel Committee continues to work to flesh out the staffing framework for 2014.

For more extensive history, updates and current happenings, visit our Alliance of Baptists website: <http://allianceofbaptists.org/our-alliance/>

## *Epiphany Today*

Timothy Ashley



Epiphany comes from the Greek word epiphaneia, which means “appearing,” “appearance,” or “exposure.” In the Pastoral Epistles of the New Testament the word usually refers to Jesus, either at his first or anticipated second “appearance” on earth (1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; 4:8,8; Titus 2:13). Epiphany Day occurs on January 6th each year. The Church has connected Epiphany most

commonly with the story in Matthew 2 when Jesus was "made to appear" or "showed" to the Magi not only as the Jewish Messiah, but as the Saviour of the world. For Matthew's readers this would have been a new and more inclusive way of looking at Jesus, though it is common to us now.

The Baptist congregation I serve starts the Epiphany season on the Sunday after January 6th, and so, near the beginning of a new calendar year. Epiphany ends with Transfiguration Sunday, which shows Jesus' glory in a striking way, as he stands in heavenly splendour, beside Moses and Elijah. Between the showing of Jesus to the Magi as saviour of the world "in the house" (Matthew 2:11), to the glory of Jesus on the mountain in Matthew 17, are a number of lessons that allow us to reflect on the increasing exposure (or epiphany) of Jesus in a wider, more inclusive way than persons had thought possible in their lives of faith.

For example, how does Matthew 3:13-17, the story of Jesus' baptism (the Gospel for the First Sunday after Epiphany, January 12th), show Jesus' glory and signal a more wide-open approach to God than before? The Gospel for the Second Sunday after Epiphany is John 1:29-34. How does John the Baptist's confession of Jesus as "the lamb of God" (John 1:29), the Spirit's descent on Jesus (1:33) and John's confession, "This is the Son of God" (1:34), show Jesus in a more glorious, more inclusive way than before? We have not always understood any of these matters inclusively, but Epiphany encourages us to do so. On the 3rd Sunday (January 26th), the Gospel (Matthew 4:12-23) tells of Jesus' leaving Nazareth for Capernaum to preach and teach in greater Galilee. Again, this shows readers and hearers that Jesus is taking his ministry to a wider circle. Four Gospel lessons come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. All of these compare Jesus' view of the Torah with other religious leaders of his day, and show him to be more "outward-facing" than inward. He continually says, "You have heard it said...but I say to you."

One of the things that happened very early in the Christian Church was the adaptation of the teaching of a Jewish rabbi in a Jewish sect (which is what Jesus and his disciples were first considered to be, and not without cause) into a faith that both could and would embrace the world. One can see that happening already in the Book of Acts (as the Church became more and more a Gentile phenomenon), and later, as

Christian preaching and theology took on the trappings of the Greek world so as to make sense in it. It is obvious that you and I do not live in the world in which Jesus, his first disciples, or the other writers of the New Testament did. We also do not live in the time of the post-apostolic interpreters of the faith, or the Middle Ages, or the Protestant Reformation, or ... well, you get the point.

I would suggest that it makes sense as we in our world read the lessons for Epiphany, we do it with an eye to the world into which our proclamation must go, and in which it must make sense. This year, our congregation will be using Epiphany to reflect on the ways in which these scripture lessons help us to see Jesus as Saviour of the world in a way that attempts to be inclusive of the reality of our multi-faith community. Our world now is closer to the multi-faith world of Jesus and the early church than it is to the world in which Christianity was the dominant or the only religious expression available to people. We may not want to admit it, but the Christian way is not the only option even in our community, and we can no longer simply say, "well, everybody's doing it." We must learn to live side-by-side with other religious expressions in a way that respects them and cooperates in ways that are helpful, without succumbing to a "lowest common denominator," that gives up the distinctiveness of the Christian Gospel. I would suggest that this New Year and this Epiphany season is a good time to begin to read the story of Jesus' "glorious appearance" in the reality of our contemporary world, as it is.



## *Dates To Note*

*The next Ruston Lecture and Luncheon will be held Saturday,  
7 June 2014. ¶ The Annual Assembly will be held 3-4 October 2014.*