

CABF – AGM

President's Report – October 2021



“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear CABF, happy birthday to you! 50 years old! It can only get better.”

CABF has had many successes and a few challenges over this past year. However, what would life be without a challenge? This report will outline highlights from CABF's collaborations with various like-minded friends and partners. As you proceed through reports from our various committee Chairs, you will read about many of our other successes. My report highlights successes recognized and shared by Council as a unit.

CABF continues to thrive and achieve its goals of (1) **Proclaiming** telling our story/what we know about the Freedoms. (2) **Convening** for the purpose of fellowship and growth. and (3) **Supporting** one another as we live out the meanings of the freedoms.

This past year has been very successful. Of course, this would not be possible without the hard work and perseverance of Council, the Committees, and others, all of whom have contributed their time and skills to improve and sustain our Association.

As 2021 quickly approached, this meant CABF's 50th birthday was approaching as well. Council was excited to start serious deliberations for celebrations for our 50th birthday party! A 50th Anniversary Committee was moulded.

As always, when building a new committee to act on behalf of Council, it is important the committee be aware of its role and responsibilities. Chair, David Allen kept the committee on track. Early in the work of the 50th Anniversary Committee, it was realized the experience of the existing Program Committee would be a great asset. Therefore, the experienced Program Committee was married with the enthusiasm and excitement of the Anniversary Committee! AND, at the appropriate time, the Publications Committee was added as well! The collaboration of everyone was sensational.

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Together these folks worked with the speed and dexterity of a well-oiled machine. Much exciting work was completed. As you might imagine, due to COVID, there was great disappointment when Council unanimously voted to postpone the 50th Anniversary celebrations. Of course, this was done in the best interest and safety for everyone. (More about this in Jeff White's Program Committee report.)

Setting aside our untouchable 50th birthday, Council started 2021 with reflections on our Strategic Plan (Plan) that was established and solidified at our 2020 AGM. Although small steps were taken in response to tasks within the Plan, it became evident that to simultaneously action the Plan's intentions, and continue with regular and new business, Council needed a more creative approach. After serious discussions, and prioritizing what needed to be done, Council determined that CABF should begin with a tool (or tools) that would assist with proclaiming our CABF story. CABF needed a tool(s) that would identify to the membership, and non-members, who CABF is, what CABF stands for presently and how CABF sees its future. This could best be done by hiring an experienced specialist to assist us in telling our story. (Please read Hugh Kirkegaard's report – *Strategic Plan – Support Committee*.) Hiring this specialist to perform these tasks, would also complement the theme of CABF's 50th anniversary celebrations – *CABF Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*.

After a broad search, a specialist was contracted and started work with CABF on May 27, 2021. The specialist/contractor allowed Council to continue with its regular business and new business, and still feel confident work was proceeding that responded to our CABF Strategic Plan initiative.

Beyond the business of the Strategic Plan, designated Council members met with representatives from Canadian Baptist of Atlantic Canada (CBAC) and Acadia Divinity College (ADC). These meetings were scheduled based on the availability of the attendees. The dialogue was open, good listening and understanding was demonstrated by everyone and lessons were learned.

Also, in early 2021, leadership at First Baptist Church Edmonton (FBC Edmonton) contacted CABF about the possibility of joining our Association as one of their affiliations with Baptist congregations. Since May, multiple members of CABF leadership have met with the Senior Minister, and Church Council of FBC Edmonton, and spoken at

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congregational meetings (all via Zoom). FBC Edmonton continues in the discernment process with plans to make a congregational decision in November 2021. The potential of increasing church membership is always good news for CABF! We look forward to hearing from FBC Edmonton.

“People working together in a strong community with a shared goal and a common purpose can make the impossible possible.” Tom Vilsack

Although many tasks are done as a full Council, or as a representative of Council, there are times when we are grateful for individual members who step forward, on their own accord, to assist partners and/or associates of CABF. This past spring one of our very experienced Council members participated in a presentation and a panel discussion with friends from *The Gathering*. That spring meeting titled ‘*A Bigger Box of Crayons*’ – “big enough to fully include our LGBTQ+ sisters and brothers. The panel took the opportunity to discuss how their churches (churches of The Gathering) navigated processes that led to them to become “welcoming and affirming.” (The session was recorded and is available on ‘The Gathering’s’ YouTube channel. Search ‘*The Gathering of Baptists*.’) I feel sure you will be glad you took the opportunity to view this session!

Also, during this past year, CABF Credentials Committee collaborated with Atlantic School of Theology (AST) in mentoring an individual student who expressed interest in ordination with CABF. CABF directed and supported this individual during their final course in preparation for graduation. CABF has partnered with AST, for a couple of years, to provide direction and support for a Baptist student. A welcomed pleasure!

I trust these highlights will encourage you to read the remainder of these 2021 thought provoking CABF reports.

Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

This is my final year as CABF President. Before closing, I want to thank **all** Council members who I have had the immense pleasure of working with. I recall that because

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of the COVID challenges of last year, most of this year's Council, willingly extended their positions. You did this because we needed you. To all of you, thank you for stepping up; for all your hard work and for your leadership and persistence. To those of you remaining on Council for the coming term, thank you for your sacrifice and for being so dedicated and hard working. Your CABF experiences, your gifts and talents will be welcomed by everyone on the new Council.

To **all** of you: I could not have experienced a finer group of folks to share my last year as President with. In truth, there are no words that really express how grateful I am to have worked with each of you! I have been blessed by the presence of you **all**.

Blessings to everyone.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Nicholas-Pattillo
President

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