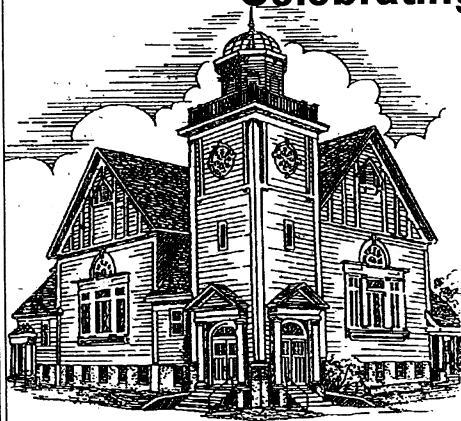


Sydney United Baptist Church

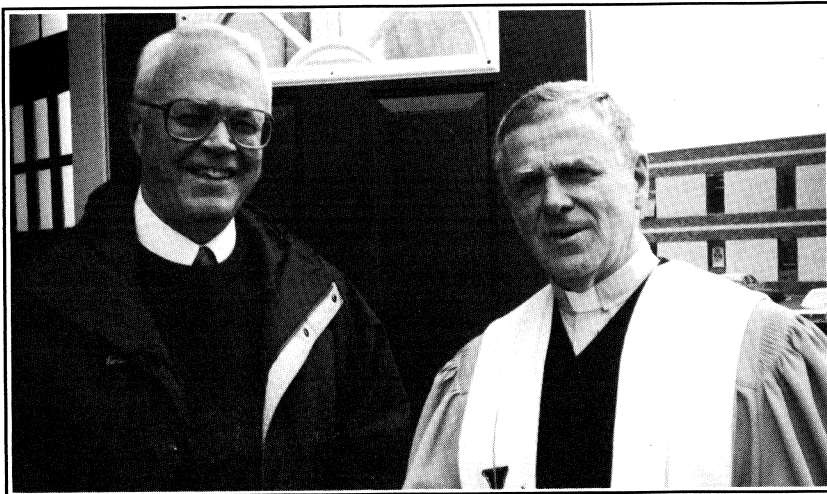
Celebrating 150th Anniversary



Sydney United Baptist Church
Established - 1846



Lynn Baechler and Joan Richards



Fred Miles and Rev. Willis Henderson - in his 26th year as pastor of
Sydney United Baptist Church

ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN



"Time-out" during ABF Retreat April 13.
Betty Short, Elaine Anne MacGregor, and Eileen Mantz

ABF ASSEMBLY 25TH ANNIVERSARY

September 27 and 28, 1996
Wolfville United Baptist Church
Wolfville, N.S.

SUMMER 1996

25TH ANNIVERSARY - LET US CELEBRATE

Elaine Anne MacGregor - President

In anticipation of ABF's 25th Anniversary a Retreat was held on April 13th at First Baptist Church, Halifax. As you will read in Carol Ann Janzen's report (page 10) we reminisced about ABF's past, reflected on our present, and looked ahead to our future. The thoughts expressed at the Retreat are cause for encouragement as we discovered that the original values and goals of the founders of the ABF have proven to be good and worthwhile, and have in large part been maintained by the ABF. The thoughts expressed are also a cause for excitement as we explored new ideas and committed to three projects. The projects are: 1) development of regional fellowship groups, 2) maintaining an understanding of issues before Convention, and 3) Christian education of laity. These projects speak to what ABF is about: a fellowship of Baptists within and concerned about Convention that values continued education.

The conclusion of the people gathered at the Retreat is that ABF has much to celebrate! ABF's 25th anniversary Assembly will be held at Wolfville Baptist Church on September 27th and 28th and it will be a celebration! ABF goals are important to more than just the handful of people that founded ABF as is evidenced by the diversity of people who are friends of ABF and by the friendships that have been formed with the Alliance of Baptists and the Gathering. I warmly invite you to attend this celebration. If you once attended ABF Assemblies but have not done so in awhile, or if you have never attended an ABF event, please accept this invitation to celebrate the existence of **ABF** and help launch us into our next 25 years! **ABF** is only as strong and diverse as the people who are part of it. Your participation is wanted and needed. Come, bring a friend, and let us enjoy the fellowship of one another.

REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The report presented by Edward Colquhoun, chairman of the nominating committee, was adopted by those in attendance at the ABF business session in Amherst on June 8th:



Dorothy Lovesey (r) congratulates her successor
(**FRIENDS of ABF**) Doris Hilchey (l)

President
Elaine Ann MacGregor

Secretary
Jeff White

Treasurer
John Churchill

FRIENDS
Doris Hilchey

AEC
Roger Prentice

Editor: Bulletin
Terry Tingley

A vice-president will be nominated at the September 28th meeting in Wolfville.

MARGINAL NOTES

Grammateus

Many years ago, in deep antiquity, I was a seminarian preparing for the Baptist ministry. In our senior year we took a course called, if I remember correctly, Pastoral Duties. The purpose of the course was to prepare us for the responsibilities soon to come our way. Among other topics discussed in this class was the subject of ministerial ethics.

Most of us were about to face, for the first time, the fearsome ordeal of "preaching for a call." I remember how strictly we were enjoined never to find ourselves in competition with fellow ministers. If we were to discover that the pulpit committee interviewing us was also considering one or more others, we were to withdraw immediately, until the other candidate(s) were called or not. If they did not receive the call, or did not accept it, we could let our name stand, making sure that it was going to stand alone. Thus, there would never be unseemly competition.

A couple of weeks ago I learned of a prominent Baptist Church (in the central Convention, not ours!) where four names were before the pulpit selection committee, with competing resumes. This kind of procedure is modelled on the way that firms, or corporations, or universities, recruit. On this issue, I am a conservative. I prefer the ancient path. A pulpit committee, elected by and responsible to a Baptist congregation, prayerfully considers one name that has come before it. The hope is that the candidate herself or himself is equally engaged in discerning the divine will for this particular church as well as for her/himself. The process of 'calling' should be as spiritual as possible from beginning to end. After all, Willowbank Baptist Church is not Trendy Tires and Better Batteries!

THE STATE OF OUR DENOMINATION

Gerry Harrop

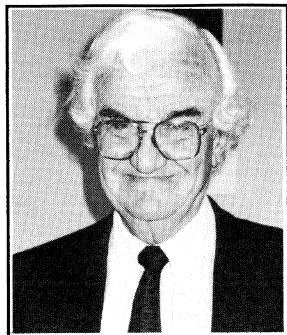
The UBCAP Convention did not suffer the ecclesiastical civil war that sundered its western coreligionists in the twenties. There certainly was a struggle between fundamentalists and others, but it was largely sporadic guerilla war. If there was a single, defining contest it was at the convention assembly of 1971 which decided to leave the Canadian Council of Churches and to refuse to give Convention assembly credentials to "unimmersed" persons, even if they were elected by their own churches. Subsequently affiliation with the EFC has only been narrowly avoided and the ordination of women only reluctantly affirmed. The decisions of the 1971 assembly resulted in the creation of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship (ABF) with its insistence on the centrality of the doctrine of soul liberty, or the voluntary principle in religion. It took a quarter of a century more for such a group (The Gathering) to come to be in Ontario.

Many (perhaps most) of the supporters of the ABF would agree with much of the EFC creed. But it is the insistence on conformity with it, or any confession beyond Jesus is Lord, that is considered to be anti-Baptist.

There seems to be no possibility of reunion with the Canadian Council of Churches (or its successor). Indeed our own presence as a national body is being diminished. The disappearance of the Canadian Baptist Federation and its replacement with a merger between it and the Canadian Baptist International Ministries robs us, I think, of a national denominational presence. The Federation was always a feeble body whose only tangible legacy was A Manual for Worship and Service, published in 1976. There is already talk of cancelling the next triennial national assembly, for lack of funds and interest.

(continued on page 4)

Canadian Baptists contributed to the leadership of the CC of C out of all proportion of our numbers and financial support. Three Canadian Baptist ministers — George Gilmour, Reg Dunn and Emlyn Davies became President, and the professional staff included Reg Bennett, Roger Cann and Fred Poulton. To contend that we increase our influence in the whole church and in Canadian culture and politics by withdrawing from such an association is an idiocy that is hard to understand.



Dr. Gerry Harrop

In place of our membership in the CC of C we are urged to seek affiliation with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). This fellowship is not a council of churches, but a confessionally homogeneous group which can be joined by individuals, by single churches, or by denomination. I think all ABF members would feel that Baptist authenticity is compromised by participation in a religious community that requires credal adherence, if not subscription. We who would not join such a body voluntarily should not become part of it through our Church and our Denomination. If and when our Convention seeks and achieves such an affiliation, some of us, indeed this fellowship, will have to face serious decisions.

How should ABF react to the state of our denomination?

It is important that we maintain and strengthen our ties with like-minded Baptist Communities such as the Alliance of Baptists and, of course, The Gathering. Perhaps we should undertake the joint publication of a Canadian Baptist alternative journal.

The idea, fathered by the Rev. Roger Prentice, of a residence for Baptist students, probably in Wolfville, should be explored, although it seems at the moment, to be far beyond our present financial horizons.

Our present logo sees the ABF encircled in the arms of the big "C" Convention. Our statement of objectives states that we should strengthen our ties with the UBCAP and encourage it to strive for soul liberty and witness within the evangelical and catholic ecumenical church. It is an understatement to observe that we have not done this very successfully!

Is it not more urgent for us to seek the resurrection and revival of our congregational roots? We have traditionally believed that the church achieves her visibility in the covenanted, gathered community of believers known to one another by name and by face, and united in their confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

To take this seriously would mean that many of our churches should examine their constitutional structures, for in some cases the congregational model has been abandoned for a Presbyterian system whereby a Board of Ruling Elders makes all the decisions, and the only congregational participation is at an annual meeting when decisions long ago made are expected to be legitimized.

But most important is that we recover our common spirituality at the level of our local faith communities. Do we have any idea how to seek the divine will by prayer? Is our public worship supported by our personal piety? Is there a time and place for small groups to explore these matters? Do we not deeply fear what may attend the practice of the presence of God? What would a truly alive church be like? Have we the courage to try to find out?

Note: Canadian Baptists: Then and Now and Tomorrow was the topic addressed by Dr. Gerry Harrop at the Friends Rally in Wolfville April 27th. Although only his remarks re UBCAP are reported here, Friends at the Rally enjoyed presentations about the BUWC and BCOQ as well.

EDITORIAL COMMENT...

Manage rather than Lament

Downsizing and reorganization. Signs of the time. Since our Convention structure has not changed in more than two decades it is now necessary to tackle large-scale reforms. A moratorium seems in order for any new appointments to denominational staff positions during the restructuring process. And, a realignment of responsibilities could probably reduce at least four full-time staff positions to part-time jobs.

Let us not lament changes. Rather, let us manage the change.

Wegesegum

The Camp Wegesegum Spring Newsletter (April 1996) announced the Annual Meeting on August 10th at 2:00pm. A motion will be presented that "commits the alumni to arrange for the loving disposition of the camp following our 75th anniversary celebrations in 1998". For more details, contact the editor of the newsletter: N. H. Scott, Site 15, Comp. 12, R.R. #2, Hampton N.B., B0C 1Z0.

BPFNA

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America will be holding its annual summer conference in Waterloo, Ontario, from July 8 to 13, 1996. For more information contact: Lindsay Penn Matheson, 719 Gibbons St., Oshawa, Ontario, L1J 5A2, or telephone 905-576-4565.

Neil Price Awarded Doctor of Divinity Degree

Congratulations to Rev. Neil Price who received the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) at Acadia University this spring. The citation given by Dr. Andrew MacRae, dean of theology, concluded with these words:

"Mr. Chancellor with a great deal of pleasure, I present to you Neil Gladstone Price, a native of New Brunswick, an outstanding Acadia Grad and hockey player, a highly regarded member of the Wolfville community, a citizen of all of Canada, a great family man, a lawyer, a minister, a social activist, and a man of irrepressible spirit and unquenchable humour, which prevents him from taking even himself too seriously, and a man whose faith has made his life a life of conviction, compassion and commitment, that he may receive honour at your hand."

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship



within
Convention

ABF BULLETIN

The **ABF Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. Submissions: Articles must be less than 500 words in length. Opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the ABF or the Editor. The **BULLETIN** is mailed to interested churches and individuals. Those wishing to receive the **BULLETIN**, and all details of changes of address, etc., are to be sent to the distribution organizer:

Mrs. Isobel Horton, P.O. Box 586, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0.

The **BULLETIN** is mailed free of charge. Donations towards cost of publication are gratefully received and should be mailed to the treasurer:

John Churchill, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S., B0P 1T0.

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FALL BULLETIN 1996

Deadline for submissions:
August 15, 1996

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

THE NEED TO RESTRUCTURE SEMINARY EDUCATION

Mark Parent

Being the father of a child these days who is about to graduate from grade twelve and go on to university is an interesting and perplexing position. When I was about to attend university it was assumed the main problem would be in obtaining high enough marks to be admitted to the program of my choice. All this is a thing of the past. What should one advise one's children to do? Young people today no longer have any certainty that they will find employment after their university training. One thing that I would not advise my child to do is to take a Master of Divinity degree, at least as it is presently organized.

The statistics are absolutely plain. Attendance and membership in United Baptist Convention churches have been falling for some time now. This has been paralleled by a drop in financial giving. At one time the statistics revealed that the typical United Baptist Convention Church had 76 people in the pew on any given Sunday. My hunch is that 50 people is a more accurate reflection of our contemporary situation.

While it is theoretically possible that 50 people support a full time minister, it is not practically possible. Of the fifty people in church there are only about 20 or 30 wage earners. If one assumes an average salary of \$30,000 per wage earner this results in a total of \$600,000 to \$900,000. Ten percent of this would equal \$60,000 to \$90,000. However, with the tax base being as high as it is in Canada a more accurate goal would be five percent which would result in a figure between \$30,000 to \$45,000.

What this means is that if trends continue, it will be impossible for the vast majority of our UBCAP churches to support a full time minister. In light of such a scenario it is a prohibitive luxury to require seven years of study in a university setting in order to qualify for a position as an ordained minister. Without taking account of increased tuition fees, along with rising food and housing costs, the average student will pay somewhere between \$5,000 and \$10,000, per year of university training. This translates over a seven year period to a debt of \$35,000 to \$75,000 per student.

To put it bluntly — we can no longer afford to train students for the ministry as we have done in the past! We must change!

There are three options available to those who are charged with the training of ordained ministers:

- 1) Go back to demanding less education, a B.Th., for example, rather than a B.A. and M.Div..
- 2) Teach only one year of the M.Div. level on a full time basis and teach the following two years through intensive week long courses or through the internet.
- 3) Add one more year on to the M.Div. degree and negotiate with other professional programs so that the student is able to obtain a double degree during this period. Such a graduate would then be able to accept a call to even a very small church and be able to supplement their salary through part time work in their other academic field.

Of these options, I favour the third one since options a and b lessen the debt load of the ordained minister but do nothing to help the financial situation of the typical church. That is not to say this option does not have its problems. Nonetheless, it is the best option if we hope to continue to have well trained clergy for our local Baptist churches.

Note: Rev. Dr. Mark Parent is the minister of the Pereaux United Baptist Church

SCHOLARLY JOURNAL BOWS TO FUNDAMENTALIST PRESSURE

M. R. B. Lovesey

It is reported in the American religious press that a first-class scholarly theological journal connected with the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for 93 years has severed its bonds with that institution due to the fundamentalist take-over of the Southern Baptist Convention. The editorial board of the prestigious quarterly, the Review and Expositor, has publicly announced that it is reorganizing and that it should no longer be considered the faculty journal of the Southern Baptist Seminary. Clearly the board refuses to be bound by the theological orthodoxy required by the fundamentalist masters of the SBC and the Southern Baptist Seminary, as any responsible scholarly and theological body must do. To be dominated by the fundamentalist system is intolerable to all responsible theological leaders. A spokesman of the board and a professor at the Southern Baptist Seminary has said: "Events over the past couple of years have made it obvious that the Review and Expositor cannot survive long-term in its historic relationship as the faculty journal of Southern Seminary."

The Southern Seminary president R. Albert Mohler, Jr., said that he was shocked and saddened by the news. He said the whole matter will be investigated but one thing is clear, namely, that a "theological journal of the highest quality and clearest conviction will be published in the name of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary."

The new 13-member board of the Review and Expositor will include three faculty members from the Southern Seminary and there will be six seats for new moderate seminaries and theological schools. The new schools represented are the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond; Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary; Mercer University School of Theology; Central Baptist Theological Seminary; Gardner-Webb University's divinity school and Campbell University School of Divinity. This new arrangement has been designed to attract funds and readership back to the journal, both of which have slumped alarmingly since the 1993 fundamentalist take-over of the Southern Baptist Convention. From 1987 through 1995, subscriptions to the journal dropped 63.6%, from 4,583 to 668.

Many of the readers of this article will have profited from past editions of the Review and Expositor and will hoard cherished copies. In illustration this author would like to acknowledge his high regard for vol.LXXVIII, No. 3 (summer 1981), which dealt with Jeremiah and which contains an excellent essay by Ron Clements, of England, that looks at Jeremiah as a prophet of hope. Vol.LXXVI, No.2, dealing with "The Psychology of Religious Experience" is also a treasure.

In these sad days of ferocious theological conflict it is comforting to find peace and hope in the wise words of Tennyson:

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

BOOK REVIEW: GOD HATES RELIGION

Levan, Christopher. God Hates Religion: How the Gospels Condemn False Religious Practice. C. 1995. (\$15.95) The United Church Publishing House, 3250 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario, M8X 2Y4.

Athena Colpitts

An arresting title, at first glance rather debatable, but take time for consideration before sweeping condemnation. Here are questions which demand answers at the end of the 20th century. The subject matter is challenging, thoughtful, at times depressing, shaking us out of our complacency, but finally giving us a hope for the future.

The author uses the lifecycle of the forest to illustrate development of the the church. At first there are small weak plants, soon disappearing, but adding nutriment to the soil; next the conifers appear, adding seeds as well as nourishment. The third stage produces longer lived hardwoods which have their day. Then the cycle begins again. Each period has prepared for further plants which will contribute and then die. There will be modification but renewed growth. So with the church; there will be adaptation and modification added by the preparation of the soil.

Jesus presented a way for himself and his followers - I am come that you may have life more abundantly - In Matthew, Mark and Luke, there is his proclamation in the synagogue, his pattern of service in Matthew 25, and his direction to his disciples.

In the centuries following, his simple direct pattern is almost buried in the interpretation, doctrines, legalism, and regulation which have been added by the church leaders.

Levan looks at the North American churches of the 20th century: Huge buildings in a world where space is more and more limited, auditoriums, frequently used for 2 brief hours each week; expensive furnishing, stained glass, stately organs, the pride of the affluent society, the "successful Pharisees", with an emphasis on material possessions. Nevertheless these stalwarts of the strong denominations are losing ground, with their stereotyped form of worship, their mediocrity in subject matter, their obsession with statistics. Replacing them in popularity are the former "sects" which are more readily responding to the need for change, yet their day is also limited because of the rigidity in code and conduct.

What will replace these churches? Are there enough dedicated souls to follow the Jesus way - to go out to the unemployed, the unsuccessful, the deviates and sick, and lonely, to go out with a "centrifugal pattern" to bring them into a circle in which there is no hierarchy or dominance to substitute for genuine concern.

The latter half of the 20th century noted a steady withdrawal of youth, bored with the monotony of formalism, the indifference to their interest and preferences. So the church largely remained staid and unbending. But recently a change is being noted. The rebels of the 70's are now the parents of today's families. They are seeking the best for their children. They recall the youth programs, the Sunday School, happily remembered because of dedicated leaders who made these programs a place of surprise and happiness, leaders who followed the Jesus way in joy and love and unselfishness. The "seeds" in the soil will grow. These parents will choose churches, not necessarily their former church, but where their children may grow in a happy atmosphere. Here is the opportunity of the 21st century: A willingness to risk in time, in faith for the future, in daring to open the coffers to provide a real and abundant life.

Levan closes his book with a plea to churches to risk all, prestige, financial holdings, time, to create a society, truly representing the Master. In our churches there are faithful souls who are ready to risk to establish God's reign of justice and love.

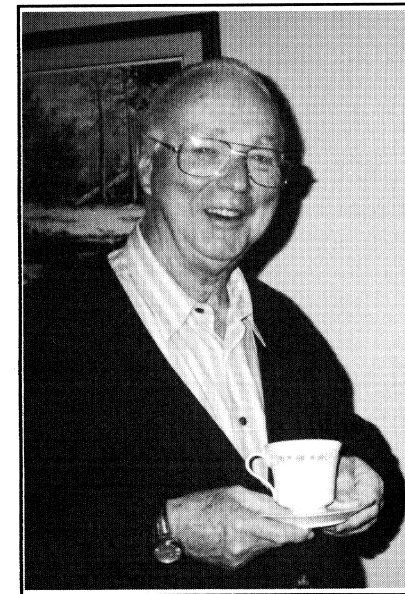
"Heaven help us if we fail to follow their example; heaven help us if we do."

Note: Athena Colpitts, a supporter of ABF from its beginning, lives in Indian Harbour, just minutes from Peggy's Cove.

ABF PHOTO ALBUM . . .



Miriam Ross



Reg Short



Doug Horsman and Mel Scott

REPORT ON THE ABF RETREAT

Carol Anne Janzen

On April 13th, 30 people met at First Baptist Church Halifax for a day of reminiscing, visioning and planning. Many of those present were members of the ABF, while a few were first-time attendees or observers. The Rev. Timothy McFarland, Associate Minister: CE of the host Church, began the day for us with an appropriate devotional based on the first chapter of 1 Peter, reminding us that the care of our faith, which is imperishable and which binds all Christians together, is our "living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:3). Elaine Ann MacGregor, the president of the ABF, then ably guided us through the day's discussions, which addressed the past, present and future of the ABF.

During the first session, a number of people shared their personal memories of the circumstances within the Atlantic Baptist constituency of 25 years ago, which led to the formation of the ABF. Although the catalyst for action was the withdrawal in 1971 of Canadian Baptists from the Canadian Council of Churches, other factors played a part. Some members recalled their feelings of isolation from the mainstream of Atlantic Baptist life and witness, their need for a network of encouragement and support, their desires for continued dialogue and co-operation with other Christian faith groups, and their wish to promote education and discussion of historical Baptist principles and identity. Out of these concerns grew the formation of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship and its vehicle for communication, education and promotion, the Bulletin. This time of reminiscence proved to be very illuminating to younger participants who had no recollection of the beginnings of the Fellowship. One of the strongest sentiments to emerge was the desire to remain a vibrant and supportive force within UBCAP, and to provide support for those who felt theologically marginalized.

Our next session focused on the present state of the ABF, and on the challenges facing it today. Concern were expressed on issues such as contemporary worship, theological education, Baptist identity, the nature of church, support for women in ministry, as well as for the need for a greater fellowship and growth within the Fellowship. Concern was also voiced for the future of the Bulletin, given increased financial pressures.

After a delightful lunch provided by the host church, we moved into our final session, and under the capable direction of Elaine Ann, addressed the future of the ABF. After a rich discussion, during which many shared their personal visions and dreams for this organization, Dr. Roger Cann presented a summary of suggested goals:

1. to sponsor educational events on Baptist perspectives, ecumenical discussions and activities;
2. to publish a journal;
3. to foster regional fellowship and Friends;
4. to participate in a network of like-minded Baptist groups (the Gathering, the Alliance of Baptists);
5. to seek to establish a Baptist House in Wolfville;
6. to participate with ecumenical groups;
7. to maintain Convention involvement;

From these, several priorities were chosen:

1. a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the ABF, to be held at the United Baptist Church in Wolfville, September 27 and 28.

(continued on page 11)

2. the possibility of a Web site
3. fund-raising
4. the establishment of small working groups for:
 - 1) regional fellowship
 - 2) Convention relationship
 - 3) lay education

Volunteers agreed to co-ordinate most of these projects, it is hoped that we will see some progress in the next few years.

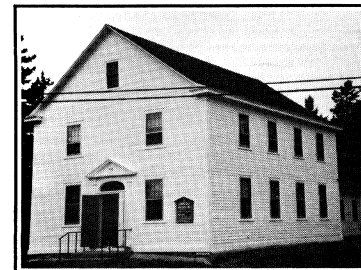
Over all, an air of optimism and purpose, and a felt bond of Christian fellowship, pervaded the day's proceedings. It appears that the ABF still serves a useful function within the Atlantic Baptist constituency.

SPECIAL STUDENT PROJECT

A special fund raising effort has been undertaken to finance the transportation costs of Jeff White and Margo MacDougall to the Alliance of Baptists Convocation which was held March 14 to 16th in Charlotte, North Carolina. This special project is a way for the ABF to take action in broadening the experience of our future Ministers. Margo and Jeff participated in the Convocation and their report appeared in the Spring issue of the Bulletin. If you are able, a financial contribution, beyond your usual ABF contribution, is requested to help defray the costs incurred. Please note on your contribution envelope "Student Project" and mail it to: **John Churchill, Treasurer ABF, P.O. Box 56, Port Williams, N.S., B0P 1T0.**

PLACES WE WORSHIP: Granville Beach UBC

Timothy McFarland



Granville Beach United Baptist Church

Travelling down the Annapolis Valley, one is able to enjoy the sight of many historical churches. One house of worship worth seeing is Granville Beach United Baptist Church.

Influenced by Henry Aline's work in the "New Light Movement" (1775-1782), some English speaking settlers of the Lower Granville area were moved to establish the Lower Granville Baptist Church in Granville Beach (then called Stoney Beach), on March 10, 1780. The first Baptist association in the Dominion of Canada was also formed on the site on June 24, 1800, under the direction of Rev. Edward Manning.

Granville Beach's first church building was built around 1796. The present building, however, was erected in 1833.

The interior of the church is modest in the tradition of reform churches. Two aisles divide three sections of pews on the main floor. As well, there are balcony pews on the right and left sides of the sanctuary. The pulpit is at the front, in the center of a raised dais with the organ and choir loft behind. The Sunday School rooms are upstairs and a fine hall added about fifteen years ago, makes the church a center of ministry and fellowship for those who attend.

With her sister churches, Granville Beach UBC provides a warm atmosphere of worship as it sits nestled among trees on the Western end of the Annapolis Valley. If ever you visit the area, make a point of stopping and reading the plaque at the front of the building. History and the Gospel message blend to make Granville Beach United Baptist Church a fine place where we can worship.

Rev. Timothy McFarland, Associate Minister: CE, First Baptist Church Halifax, was former minister of the Granville UBC along with three sister churches at Port Royal, Port Wade and Victoria Beach.

ECUMENICAL MODELS FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Roger Cann

Introduction: There was an article in the Christian Century a few years ago entitled "Ghostly and Monstrous Churches". The article dealt with the pitfalls of seeing the Church of Christ as either a variation of the "invisible" community, or a creation of the chappies who have a program for your church which they want to sell you.

The Ghostly Church is the one where you have the true believers known only to God. The mistake is that they picture the true church as trapped in a dead institution. That gives them the right to breeze through the round of religious activities confident that they do not have to deal with those they don't like. Their focus is on unchurched all those others, until you have the perfect church, even if it's only you and your spouse. And you count your spouse as one under instruction.

The Monstrous Church is the Frankenstein type, where you purchase a program here, and stick on something you picked up at a workshop there. The expert came all the way from Toronto, mind you. He earns more than \$100,000. a year and his fund-raising group makes big waves. Then you add an intentional outreach program focused on the cultural sub-group which is identical with those who are already members. Next you stick on an arm or leg from some other ecclesial pirate. Then you wait for the Spirit of God to breathe life into your patched together monster.

No. That is not our experience. The Church we know is real and visible. It may be a hodge-podge of peoples and groupings. But it is held together with the glue of the Gospel. The Church is God's chosen instrument, the very "salt of the earth".

I take as a given that the local church is the Body of Christ in that place, largely because I grew up within a family of Baptists, and participated in the life of a Baptist congregation from an early age. I do see the local church as endowed for its mission, although seen as a set of separate congregations and parishes.

I never thought of the local fellowship of believers as exclusively made up of Baptists because I participated in ecumenical youth activities in the city of Sydney and during my university years. I caught a vision of what the church might be as a leader in YMCA, at inter-church summer youth camps, and S.C.M. work camps. And I married a wife who grew up in the United Church of Canada. My experiences led me to see that the gifts of the Spirit for ministry are to be found in the ecumenical fellowship.

In theological circles, Archbishop Ramsey and Hans Kung along with others, and of course Baptist writers, all agree that the local church is the Church of Jesus Christ in that place. There are a few instances in Scripture when the term "church" was used in an universal sense, but those do not detract from the more general understanding in the New Testament. A working definition of "place", or locale, of the local church would be, an area where Christians can easily meet and form one committed fellowship in worship, nurture, witness and service.

I see all of the believers in that place as potential participants in the fellowship which comprises the Church. That is my vision. From my point of view, occasional, partial, or even representative ecumenical gatherings or groups may be given some ecclesial designation, as cells within the total Body of Christ.

It's important to remember that other churches may not view the ecumenical enterprise in the same light as we do. Then we would not be disappointed when they do not respond as you would expect them to.

Differing understandings as of the local church should not be a block in thinking of the Fellowship of Believers within the local context. Diversity in the Church is in part a gift of God. Variety in church life is recorded in the New Testament, as differing people responded to the call of the Gospel in differing locales.

(continued on page 13)

Churches were established in those places, which expressed the faith in a variety of disciplines, liturgies, and theological traditions.

The diversity of the local churches resulted both from the gifts of the Spirit and the difference in the context in which they are found. This is one of the main topics for discussion in the World Council of Churches, and will be the theme of the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism (Nov 24 - Dec 3) in Salvador, Brazil. "Called to One Hope - The Gospel in Diverse Cultures".

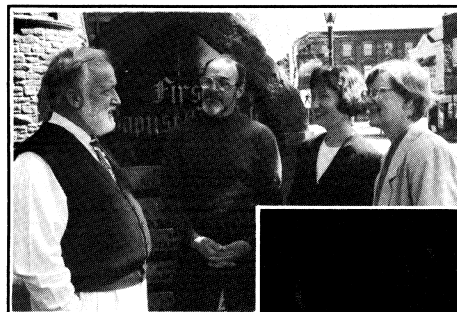
Once we have accepted the view that the unity of the faith and the diversity of its expression are both from God, then we can agree that an essential component of our understanding of the local church is ecclesiological pluralism.

Churches are not to be identified as true or false, but all are partial, needing the others to complete the unity of the Church. A great deal of diversity, such as in the theology of the Church, can be accommodated within unity, without either resolving all of the differences, or attempting a superficial harmonization.

The idea of complementarity is to present a network of interlocking concepts and models to explain the reality. The differing doctrines of the Church held by the various Christian tradition then can be taken as interim statements, expressed in different languages, meaningful to the particular tradition. There can be no difficulty in accommodating a great deal of diversity in unity, as long as it is acknowledged that the reality transcends the scope of the theological statements.

Editors Note: The above is part one of a condensation of the addresses given by Rev. Dr. Roger Cann, DMin, at the ABF Spring Assembly. Part two will be included in the fall edition of THE BULLETIN.

ABF Spring Assembly . . . 1996



(left to right)
Roger Cann
Chuck McCready
Elaine Anne MacGregor
Harriet McCready

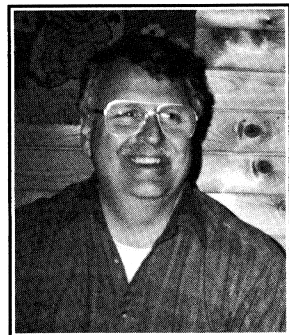
(left to right)
Susan Colquhoun
Elizabeth O'Donoghue
Ann & Glen Manthorne



(left to right)
Roger Prentice
Rhoda Allen
John Perkin
Ula Noiles



Berwick Camp Celebrating 125th Anniversary



Leland MacLean
President - Berwick Camp

The United Church Camp at Berwick, Nova Scotia, is celebrating its 125th Anniversary July 26th to August 4th.

Dr. John Moses will conduct Bible Studies and Theology for Today sessions. Evangelist will be Dr. George Malcom Sinclair.

Plan to spend a day or more at Berwick Camp this summer.

For Reservations and information re: Berwick Camp, contact:

Truman and Vivian Layton,
20 Hanover Court
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 3K6
(902) 443-9819

Atlantic Christian Ashram

The Atlantic Christian Ashram is an interdenominational Christian Camp which uses the United Church Camp at Berwick. The doctrine of the Ashram is simple - *Jesus is Lord*. This year the evangelist is Dr. Roy Pointer from Fredericton, N.B. and the bible study leader is John Bennett from P.E.I. The dates are July 13th to July 18th. For more information contact:

Mrs. Pauline Tracey
Tracy, New Brunswick, E0G 3C0

1996 PROGRAM

Friday, July 26th

- 7:30 PM Opening Worship with Evangelist
- 8:45 PM Singing/Social in Dining Hall

Saturday, July 27th

- 7:30 AM Fireside Worship
- 2:00-3:00 PM Children's Anniversary Events
- 7:30 PM Worship with Evangelist
(Greetings from Berwick Mayor)
- 8:45 PM Singing/Social in Dining Hall
Youth Gathering in Youth Centre

Sunday, July 28th

- 9:00 AM Communion Service
- 11:00 AM Worship with Evangelist
- 2:30 PM Concert of Sacred Music
- 7:30 PM Worship with Conference
President, The Rev. Grant Walls
- 8:45 PM Singing/Social in Dining Hall

Monday, July 29th to

Friday, August 2nd

- 7:30 AM Fireside Worship
- 9:00 AM Vacation Bible Fun
- 9:30 AM Youth Program
Bible Study
- 10:45 AM Theology for Today
- 1:30 PM Youth Program
- 2:00 PM 125th Anniversary Special Events
- 7:30 PM Worship with Evangelist
- Evenings Youth Programs as arranged
- 8:45 PM Singing/Social Dining Hall

Friday, August 2nd

- 8:30 PM Hemlock Review (following evening worship)

Saturday, August 3rd

- 7:30 AM Fireside Worship
- 9:30 AM Vacation Bible Fun Closing
- Afternoon Anniversary Events & Recreation
- 7:30 PM Worship with Evangelist
- 8:45 PM Singing/Social in Dining Hall
Youth Social Program

Sunday, August 4th

- 9:00 AM Communion Service
- 11:00 AM Worship with Evangelist
- 2:00 PM Closing Worship Service

FRIENDS OF THE ABF - UPDATE

Dorothy Lovesey

A very successful Rally of the "Friends" of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship was held from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm in the Manning Memorial Chapel on the Acadia Campus in Wolfville on Saturday, 27 April, 1996. Thirty-three persons were in attendance.



In attendance at the "Friends" Rally

Again thanks are due to the chaplain, the Reverend Roger H. Prentice for the use of the facilities and to the catering services of the University who provided a splendid lunch. Our good friend, Dr. G. Gerry Harrop, professor emeritus of Biblical Studies at the McMaster Divinity College, was the special speaker; his topic, "Canadian Baptists Today." His address was well received and elicited a good general discussion. A résumé of his discourse will be found on page 3 in this paper.

We very much regret to record the deaths of two friends of the Fellowship and we extend to their families, relatives and friends our sympathy in their loss. Mrs. Irene McDormand, widow of the Reverend Dr. Thomas B. McDormand, of Amherst, died in September last year. News has just reached us of the passing of Rolanda, wife of the Reverend Dr. Gordon Barss, in early May, after a long illness.

Acclaim has come recently to two of our "Friends" and we hasten to add our hearty congratulations and good wishes to them both. The Rev. Dr. R. Frederick Bullen has been named the Distinguished Graduate of the Year in 1995 at McMaster University. Nearer home, the Reverend Neil Price received the DD honoris causa from his alma mater Acadia University.

PLEASE JOIN US WE NEED YOU - YOU NEED US

100 BULLETIN BENEFACTORS

A notice of motion was given at the ABF Spring Assembly in Amherst that at the next ABF meetings in September it will be moved: "the publishing of the four ABF BULLETINS in 1997 be sponsored by 100 benefactors who will contribute \$100.00 each for this purpose."