

# *The Bulletin*

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FORMERLY THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP



*Detail of a window in Wolfville Baptist Church: The Flight into Egypt*

WINTER 2015

## *Editorial: A New Emmaus Road*

After reading Charles Marsh's new biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Strange Glory*, it came to mind that there is an emerging drought of Christian thought these days. The word, 'theology,' is made up of two Greek words found in the New Testament. One is *theos*, which means 'God,' and the other is *logos*, which means 'word', 'study of' or 'the inward thought or reason itself.' How much real theology have we heard in our church these days? How much theological discussion have we encountered? Who are our major Baptist theologians in 2015?

Our so-called 'consumer society' has now well trained us to expect 'on demand' almost everything. But knowing God requires much thought as well as experience. Both should go together for a mature faith.

It is worrisome when our leaders know little or nothing about theological formation and expression. Many have not even heard of the ante-Nicene or post-Nicene Fathers, for instance, let alone of Bonhoeffer, or a good selection of modern Christian thinkers and scholars. How much thoughtful discussion do we have in our own life as 'the church'?

Theology must not be a lost component to our Christian faith and life. It should not be a dry and dusty duty, but an alive and exciting process to think about God and share with others what our minds conceive of the Divine. It was no accident that Jesus added to the Old Testament shema the word 'mind'. (St. Matthew 22: 37, St. Mark 12: 30, St. Luke 10: 27)

If our minds are a special gift from God, then surely we are to give the thoughts from our minds back to God. Let us give more thought about God, what God asks of us, and how God continually reveals new aspects about creation, discipleship, communion and personal devotion through the work of the Holy Spirit.

On another note, we express our deepest sympathy to David and Dan Gibson for the loss of their father, the Rev'd Dr. Theo Gibson. He passed away on 7 November 2014 in Brantford, Ontario. He made significant contributions to Baptist life across Canada.

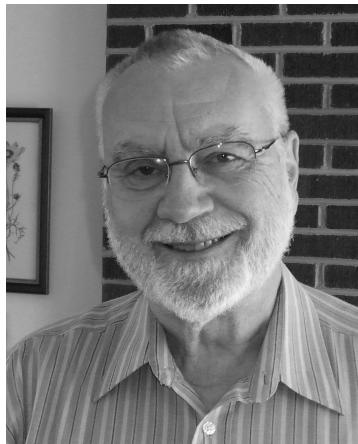
*Roger H. Prentice, Editor pro. tem.*

## *Led by the Spirit....*

Churches typically have a set of rubrics that state what they are about. These are often framed partly in theological language which connects a church with historical Christian tradition. For example, the first line of what was once a fairly standard form of covenant for a Baptist congregation runs as follows:

“Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour ... we do now ... enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

Phraseology of this kind indicates where Baptists historically have begun their thinking about the church: believers, led by the Spirit of God, solemnly undertake to unite in a congregation. This is not merely a matter of like-minded people deciding to get together to pursue a common interest, in the way in which a few people interested in postage stamps might organize a stamp-collecting club. On the contrary, in Baptist ecclesiology the church does not originate solely in the human will, but in our collective awareness of, and response to, the leading of the Spirit. Being “one body in Christ” is a matter of being called to become a certain kind of people, not merely a matter of autonomously gathering to pursue interests of our own. Of course, none of this precludes a Baptist congregation from being a community in which people have common loyalties, celebrate common joys, and share common aims; but



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Editor *pro tem* is Roger Prentice  
5 Grandview Drive, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B4P 1W5.

we are a Christian congregation because we are led by the Spirit, not merely because we get together. Thus when the church covenant cited above speaks of believers being led by the Spirit it is clearly presupposed that this is an identifiable event or circumstance involving the activity of the Spirit of God, the discernment of this activity by believers, and the believers' response to this activity.

Now what might actually count as “discernment” of the activity of the Spirit? If we don’t have some convictions about the signs of the Spirit’s presence in congregational life our talk about discerning the Spirit’s will and work is just so much empty twaddle. And people do have such convictions, sometimes citing rare or spectacular events or experiences such as visions, miracles, speaking in tongues, private revelations, and appeals to certain kinds of authority, to mention but a few.

Interestingly, the above-mentioned covenant does not invoke such events or experiences as signs of the presence and activity of the Spirit, but speaks instead of God’s saving grace at work in our midst. What one finds is language such as: walking together in Christian love, striving to advance the congregation in godly living, working against sin and injustice, being just in our dealings, being exemplary in deportment, and so on.<sup>2</sup>

Descriptions like these have three crucially important features.

(1) They refer to observable behavioural characteristics. For example, we generally do know how to tell when someone is being fair and just in her or his dealings, or is living an exemplary life.

(2) They signify ways in which people interact. For example, walking together in Christian love is clearly a collaborative enterprise, as is working against sin and injustice. In other words, the Spirit’s work is manifested in the way people behave and relate to each other.

(3) They are all concerned—to put it in the language of the New Testament—with the building up of the body of Christ,<sup>3</sup> with living in such a way as to help each other grow into becoming the kind of persons who work for the good of all.<sup>4</sup>

In short, talk about the leading of the Spirit, the saving work of Christ, the activity of God in the world, and so on, is systematically correlated with an observed manner of life, a manner of life that exhibits

qualities like those briefly sketched in the three points above. This manner of life is spoken of as the effect of the Spirit's leading and work, and hence taken as evidence of the presence and activity of the Spirit. Although the Spirit is not seen, the results of what is described as the Spirit's work in our midst are observable in our manner of life as we live and work together in and beyond the fellowship of believers. The leading of the Spirit is sought by intelligent study of the Scriptures, by prayer, and by informed discussion of issues in which all members of the body have a voice. For in some way all have been led by the Spirit, and like many lights from different angles the experiences of all are to be respected as contributions to the discernment of the whole.

Now what counts as "discernment" on this approach to the matter? Plainly it is not merely a matter of observing some peoples' manner of life, although that could part of it. However, it is more: it is essentially a matter of acknowledging the attractiveness of the manner of life and deciding to enter into it oneself—and that too is the leading of the Spirit.

Space is not available to go more deeply here into the epistemological issues the above discussion raises. But it is worth observing that from the point of view of the religious tradition the basic issue in the long run is not how to persuade skeptics of the rational plausibility of the claim that we are led by the Spirit to a certain manner of life, no matter how worthy that activity is. The ultimate issue is practical, behavioural: how to embody faithfully in our congregational and personal lives the manner of life to which we say that the Spirit is leading us.

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Baptist Ministers' Handbook (Baptist Federation of Canada, 1955), p. 5f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, loc. cit.    <sup>3</sup> Eph. 4:9-16    <sup>4</sup> Gal. 5:13-6:10

*Dr. Rodger Forsman is a retired Religious Studies and Philosophy professor at Acadia University. He and his wife, Lois, are members of the Wolfville Baptist Church.*

## *Carving out a Place for the Minister*



In making the case for educating theology students in the complete nature of the ministerial office, the Acadia Divinity College's calendar promotes a curriculum that overcomes some of the inadequacies of traditional theological education, such as ... a lack of understanding in how the church functions and what ... [the minister's] role in it should be. This leads us to the important topics of church governance. In such a discussion, we are considering the human side of the divine nature and mission

of the church, and always in a theological context.

Church governance is the way the local church organizes itself for ministry and the way in which its various bodies and personnel share authority and responsibility. It answers the question: who has the responsibility and authority to do what?

Some churches have thought through a model showing how boards, committees, and staff interact, while others may feel their way through situations or rely on tradition. Some models are the typical organizational pyramid with a body or person at the top with overall authority. (Of course, in all models Christ will be at the head, and in Baptist polity, the local congregation will be underneath.) Other models comprise interlocking circles that depict a shared authority with a central coordinating body. The issue of where the minister "fits" is sometimes left vague. To overcome this deficiency, some churches have adopted the Carver model -- as has the CABC Council.

The Carver model – also known as Policy Governance – is the only comprehensive model of organizational governance. (See the Council of Convention's Policy Manual for a good overview.) It has been adopted by a range of organizations. At a Carver workshop I attended, the vast majority of participants represented churches or religious foundations. Following are a few of Policy Governance's key features. (As you read, identify what may be the church equivalents.)

- All power resides with a central board which acts on behalf of the organization.
- The board decides how much authority, to do what, it will assign to the CEO.
- The CEO is assumed to have all authority, except where the board places limitations.
- The CEO's actions are monitored by the board through regular reports.
- The main focus of the board is Ends (not means). Key questions are: what results are expected, for whom, and at what cost? Carver is strong on the board as "servant leader."
- Staff report to the CEO and are never directed by the board.

As a one-time trustee of a public pension fund that operated under the Carver model, I am an enthusiastic devoteé, but is it appropriate for church bodies? I asked John Carver this question and his answer was "no." Let's begin with the model's shortcomings for church application. First, the terms CEO and minister are not interchangeable. The minister must be a leader but does not have executive authority or "run the organization." We know the difficulties churches can have if this is not clear. Second, a church may not have a central authoritative board; power is usually shared amongst boards and committees. Third, the main board(s) often deals with means as well as ends because there is not enough staff to which to delegate details. Also there should be a reluctance to ask the minister to busy his or her time with administrative detail.

Even so, policy governance has some positive aspects churches should consider. First, it causes a church to think through which boards and committees have authority over which matters and how they share responsibility and accountability with the minister. It is a good idea to sort this out before contentious issues arise. Second, it proposes that a body (Deacons, Church Council, etc.) work most directly with the minister so that the minister does not have as many "bosses" as there are church members. Third, the idea of a regular review of the minister's responsibilities is a good opportunity for both parties.

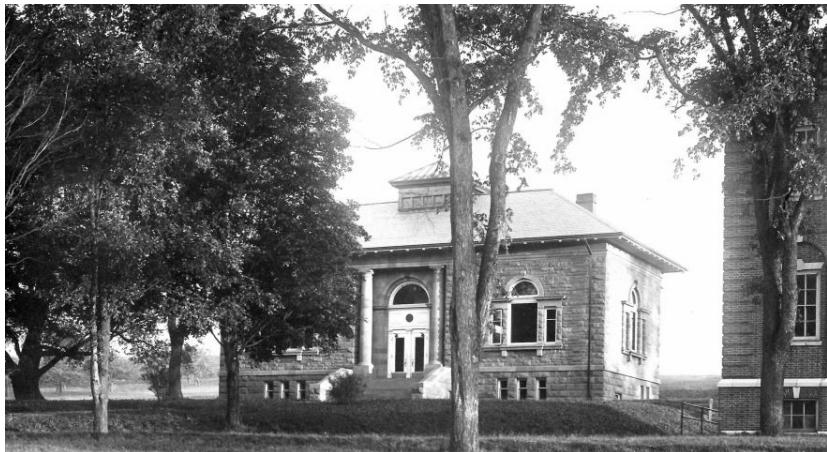
There are problems in fully implementing the Carver model in a local church, but it is a valuable tool that can assist the church to understand and implement policies around the sharing of responsibility and authority.

*Dr. John E. Churchill is a retired faculty member of the Acadia University Manning School of Business. He and his wife, Lana, are members of the Port Williams United Baptist Church.*

## *Buildings around the Acadia Quad: Emmerson Memorial Library*

When First College Hall was completed in 1854 a room was designated in it for the “College Library.” When the Second College Hall was completed in 1879 it contained a large room on the second floor for the Library and 3000 books were housed there, many of which were rescued from the December 1877 fire. By the early 20th century Acadia recognized that the Library needed to be reorganized, catalogued, and equipped to meet the needs of modern scholarship. Basically it needed its own building and professional staff. This would eventually come to fruition with the completion of the Emmerson Memorial Library in 1914. Emmerson is an architectural gem on the Acadia campus. It was designed by the noted Nova Scotian Architect Andrew Cobb (1876-1943). Cobb was one of the first students of the “Ecole des Beaux Arts” to practice architecture in Nova Scotia and that influence is clearly seen in his design of Emmerson. It had exterior aesthetic appeal, comfortable interiors, and well-crafted details plus built in furnishings all appropriate for a library. The building was the result of a donation to Acadia of \$25,000 by the Emmerson family



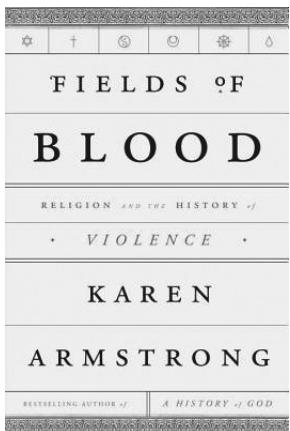


*Emmerson Memorial Library, 1914. Courtesy of Acadia Archives and Special Collections.*

of Westmoreland County, NB. Most of the money however came from Henry R Emmerson (1853-1914) an entrepreneur who developed mining and manufacturing companies in the Maritimes. Henry represented Westmoreland County in the House of Commons for 14 years and during that time was Minister of Railways in the Laurier government. One of his stipulations was that the building be named in honour of his father, the Reverend Robert H. Emmerson (1826-1857) a New Brunswick Baptist minister, and that it be built of stone from Emmerson-owned quarries in Albert County. The Acadia Bulletin of September 1913 noted: "Several schooners of stone have arrived and the building operations are being pushed vigorously." On completion in 1914 Emmerson was a state of the art library building- virtually fireproof, able to accommodate 125,000 volumes beside large comfortable reading rooms, study alcoves, rooms for special collections and processing. Andrew Cobb presented Acadia with a gift of the University Seal in copper, manufactured by Tiffany and Company of New York to be placed over the entrance door where it remains to this day.

*Pat Townsend is the Acadia University Archivist. She is married to George Townsend and they live in Wolfville.*

## *Book Review*



*Karen Armstrong, Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence (Alfred A Knopf, 2014, 512 pages)*

As today's news portrays killers motivated by religious fervour, Canada's armed forces begin to engage the "Islamic State". Can it be time to gird up one's loins to tackle yet another tome from Karen Armstrong about the history of "religious" conflict? Was not this ground tilled most thoroughly in *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*? Previously Armstrong traced the stories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from the momentous setting of 1492 Spain to 1999 Jerusalem; with this current book, however, she somehow manages to add the religions of India and China (hence more symbols on the dust jacket) and to include developments from pre-history to the present in fewer than a hundred additional pages. *Fields of Blood* is also focussed more tightly on this one question, "Is religion the cause of most of the violence in human history?"

Beginning with a discussion of contemporary brain research noting the role of the reptilian brain still present in humans, Armstrong then proceeds, in a detailed historical synthesis, to show how agrarian civilization depends on systematic exploitation of a peasant class to support a small, privileged group in luxury. In her historical analysis, she shows how the great empires like those of Mesopotamia and Rome inevitably rested on wealth acquired in organized theft.

Another theme running through the book is her argument that religion is an inevitable part of human culture, and therefore implicated in violence but not its cause. "The problem lies not in the multi-faceted activity that we call 'religion' but in the violence embedded in our human nature and the nature of the state ...." (p. 394) However, the process of

endowing everyday life with meaning ensures that every culture will develop religious practice, a theory Armstrong illustrates by the bizarre and violent state institutions created in France after the Revolution moved against the Catholic Church. “The French state had certainly not become more irenic after eliminating the Church from government.” (p. 282) Armstrong feels that seeing religion as a private practice, separate from society, is a unique, somewhat peculiar, Protestant idea that was not known before the Reformation, nor since in non-Protestant cultures. [This Protestant idea is sometimes distracted by her thoroughly Catholic sensibility, which makes Armstrong incapable of acknowledging that Baptists exist, even as she discusses heroes of the faith like Martin Luther King or Jimmy Carter, Iran’s Great Satan.]

In 1978, Edward Said, in his book, Orientalism, wrote that “every culture requires the existence of another different and competing alter ego.” Again and again, Armstrong shows how great civilizations like those in China consider those outside to be barbarians, beasts to be punished, and how even early modern thinkers considered human rights to be inapplicable to “savages”. “The West”, faced as it is with what is seen as barbarous opposition, is fortunate to have the penetrating yet compassionate Armstrong to guide it through to understanding and reconciliation.

*Ed Colquhoun is a retired Educationalist. He and his wife, Susan, are members of First Baptist Church, Amherst, NS.*



## *New Minister of Faith Development*

In a news release this past summer, First Baptist Church Halifax announced that at a 1 June 2014 congregational meeting it assented to call Jenny Csinos as Minister of Faith Development. This position

is a new one for the congregation, developed by a Christian Education Reconstruction Team. Their focus was on faith development.

Ms. Csinos began her ministry on 1 September after completing a course in Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Joseph's Health Centre, Hamilton, Ontario. She has a Bachelor's degree in Christian Education and a Master of Divinity degree from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. She also studied at Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, Ontario, with a focus on Christian Education and children's ministry, as well as study in Christian Education at Union Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia. She also served two years as interim minister of Christian Education and Faith Formation Ministry at the Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo.

Her Induction Service was held at First Baptist on Sunday evening, 26 October. The Rev'd Borden Scott, Moderator of the Halifax Region United Baptist Association led the Exchange of Commitments and inducted her with prayer and benediction. The CABF welcomed her into our fellowship by the Rev'd Dr. Roger Prentice. The sermon, "Competing Issues, Conflicting Priorities," was preached by the well-known author and educator, Melvin Bray.

Jenny has moved to Halifax with her husband, David, this past August and the CABF wishes them, and the congregation, God's blessing and guidance.

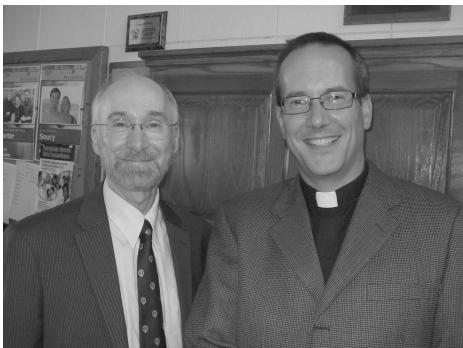
First Baptist Halifax has thus completed one of the early steps in their transition towards a new ministry in anticipation of the approaching conclusion to the distinguished ministry of the Rev'd John Boyd, which officially ends on 31 July 2015.



*Ms. Jenny Csinos*

## *Jeff White Moves to Digby*

This past summer the Rev'd Jeffrey White was called to the ministry of the Digby United Baptist Church. After an exceptionally successful ministry in the Windsor Baptist Church, he and his wife, Sharon, moved to the other end of the Annapolis Valley to begin his position as minister there. The Rev'd Donald Robertson was his predecessor.



*Rev'd Dr. Barry Morrison with Rev'd Jeff White at the Digby Induction Service*

An Induction Service for Jeff was held at the Digby church on Sunday afternoon, 28 September, before a representative congregation of the church and the Annapolis-Digby Association and friends. Mr. David Van Tassel, chair of the Digby United Baptist deacons, presented the new minister to the people. The Rev'd Greg Jones, Associate Executive Minister with the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, read the scripture lesson, St. John 1: 1-9. The Rev'd Patty Beals, the Association Moderator, led the Act of Induction and the Rev'd Donald Robertson gave the Prayer of Induction.

The Rev'd Garnet Parker, a retired Baptist minister and good friend of Jeff, now residing in Upper Burlington, Hants Co., delivered the sermon, "Always Remember!"

It was a happy coincidence that the day of Induction was also the 16th anniversary of Jeff's ordination to the Christian Ministry. Following the service a bountiful reception was held in the church hall and included greetings from colleagues and friends from other congregations of the town and the Association.

The CABF congratulates the Digby church for calling Jeff to its ministry and wishes Jeff and Sharon God's blessing as they settle and serve as helpmates to the church in their Christian discipleship.

## *Worship is Drama: Drama is Worship*

The brothers, indistinguishable in cowl and robe, enter the ancient abbey in procession in the sputtering glow of a few, guttering candles. The shadows high in the vaulted ceiling respond to their chant in antiphonal echoes. They mount the steps and enter the choir and each finds a brief identity in his proscribed stall. The Abbot stands before the high altar and lifts the Lord on high. This is the drama of worship.

In a little non-conformist chapel somewhere in rural England, a young cleric, eyes flashing with the spark of the Spirit, pounds the pulpit and shouts down the evils of the age. Then in softer, yet triumphant, tones he proclaims a new faith, a new knowledge of God and calls each one, toilers in factory and farm, to become a priest and make their own, personal redemption with newly found knowledge of the Word. This is the drama of worship.

The evangelist, world famed, stands centre front in the huge hockey arena now filled with enthusiasts for a different game, the contest of good versus evil. The famous one intones, "Every head bowed and every eye closed" and he calls the repentant to come to the throne of grace. Here and there among the throng people come down the aisles and merge in solemn procession moving toward the altar of redemption. This is the drama of worship.

In a modern church, designed in the gothic style, in the heart of suburbia the organ thunders, the crucifer raises the cross on high and the choir in robe and surplice approaches the chancel in solemn procession. The clergy, in the colour of the season, pauses in reverence before the altar and then begins a liturgy that is four centuries old. She breaks the bread and pours the wine. The faithful come for the saving food of heaven. This is the drama of worship.

In the newly built center of worship, functional in design and use, the singers stand in a gently writhing row across the stage. They are surrounded by mikes and wires, with LED lights flickering in black boxes and their guitars connected. These are the altar trimmings of the new liturgy. Their music pulses with amplified power drawing the worshipers into its rhythms, invoking the spirit to come in the sound of a rushing

wind. The worshipers raise their hands and sway in controlled response seeking the elusive sense of God and praying for their hollowness to be filled by the Spirit. This is the drama of worship.

Our liturgy in all its varied forms is drama. The church lives in the drama of its worship. Some liturgies are scripted, some impromptu, but all play out the drama of condemnation and redemption, all feel for the touch of God in the soul and all seek to stir the will to embrace a new and better life.



On occasion churches do drama purposefully, miming the ancient stories of a wondrous birth and angels visitant. Some productions are more elaborate, scripted plays exploring new frontiers of thought and feelings. Some are faltering, wanting in dramatic polish. All are the liturgy of the common people coming in new and varied ways to find the presence of God.

Should your church do drama? You do, week by week as you worship. Should your church intentionally do works of dramatic art as part of your worship? Yes, if you are willing to accept the best that the people are able to do. It will be true worship, the people of God doing the liturgy, the work of God.

*The Rev'd Bert Radord is a retired Baptist minister who has an ecumenical interim ministry. Bert and his wife, Mae, are members of the Burlington Baptist Church (ON).*



*Discussion Panel: Vicki Brown, Rev'd Dr. Dan Green, Jenny Csinos at the CABF Annual Meeting, October 2014, Chester United Baptist Church.*

## *Notice of Meeting*

The CABF Council is calling a Special Meeting of the membership to deal with the procedural document regarding accreditation for licensing and ordination. Members and delegates are asked to meet at First Baptist Church Halifax on Saturday, 28 February 2015 at 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. For details, please refer to the CABF website. A notice of motion to be presented at this meeting will be found on the CABF web site.

## *Rushton Lecture 2015*

Prepare to attend another Rushton Lecture which will be held Saturday, 6 June 2015 at the Port Williams United Baptist Church. The Speaker will be the Rev'd John E. Boyd, "Musings on a Ministry".

### **CABF MEMBERSHIP FORM**

**Please use this form to become a member or renew your membership**

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