

The Bulletin

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

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ON THE COVER

The Rev. Dr. Charlie Taylor, a founder
of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

Editorial

BY SCOTT KINDRED-BARNES

¶While the ABF was founded officially in the fall 1971, the First General Meeting did not take place until May 26–27, 1972, at First Baptist Church, Halifax. A Communion service on the opening evening led by Dr. Charlie Taylor, then a Professor at Acadia Divinity College, was reported to have been one of the more moving portions of the assembly. An account of that service was given in the earliest edition of the *Atlantic Baptist Fellowship Newsletter*. According to the account, the service “demonstrated our Christian unity in Christ and was a “highpoint” of the meetings in Halifax.” Thus, in the fifty years since, the tradition of holding a Communion service on the opening evening of the assembly, has often been followed. What many do not know is that the service almost did not happen, at least with Charlie’s leadership.



A possible date for the Spring meeting was discussed in October 1971 in Truro, and tentatively set for April 21–22, 1972. At this early meeting in Truro, Taylor had agreed to lead Communion on the opening evening. However, a letter from Taylor to Kendall J. Kenny dated February 25, 1972, reports a conflict: “At the time [the meeting in Truro] I did not have in my date book meetings in Toronto of the National Accreditation and Certification Committee of the Canadian Council for Supervised Pastoral Education. Since I have a prior commitment to be in Toronto for this committee work, I will not be able to share in the meetings of the Fellowship on the April 21–22 dates.... If the dates happen to be later, I would be happy to participate in this way.” Whether or not Charlie’s conflict was the reason for the moving of the first General Meeting is difficult to ascertain but it likely played a factor in

moving the meeting to May. In the end, Charlie attended and led a meaningful Communion for all present.

Hence, when the CABF meet in June 2022 to celebrate our 50 plus years as a fellowship, a special Communion service will take place on the opening evening as is the custom. This service will be led by several past Presidents, including Ed Colquhoun, who will preach the anniversary sermon. We hope to do plenty of reflection on our history. Yet, as the articles in this volume point out, the CABF exists in part to help Christians reflect carefully and critically on both the present and future as well. To this end, John Perkin offers some reflections on what is often compromised when liberty of conscience is pushed aside in favour of uniformity of belief. We also see the first of three instalments of Derrick Marshall's *Culture Shock & Kenosis*, where he explains his theological rationale for serving in the armed forces as a chaplain. Climate Justice has too often been ignored by Baptist Christians. Thus, we include a summary of a talk given at Wolfville Baptist Church in the Spring 2021 by Professor Robert Raeside of Acadia University on Climate Change. Dorothy Hunse offers a book review of a text that may prove helpful to those interested in the interplay between psychology and spirituality. John Churchill closes out this edition with a practical article on how churches can encourage and support leadership development of their respective ministers.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Kindred-Barnes is the Senior Minister at Wolfville Baptist Church in Nova Scotia.

Reflections on the Centrality of Christ, and Soul Liberty of Conscience in our times

BY JOHN PERKIN

¶ In my return to congregational ministry, I have also returned to using the lectionary in worship. The current lectionary year uses Mark, supplemented by readings from John, as Mark is a very short Gospel. Mark is such a passionate Gospel, dominated by stories about what Jesus is doing. Small accounts of the ministry of Jesus are laid back-to-back, focusing on what Jesus did more than what he said. There are few sections of any extended teaching, and Jesus seems to move quickly through Galilee and through his ministry. All this contrasts powerfully with John, which has Jesus slowly moving around the countryside engaging in long, drawn-out discourses of a theological nature, the few healings and other works of Jesus becoming opportunities for Jesus to preach or teach. In Mark, Jesus is a healer and miracle worker, declaring the Kingdom of God in word and deed; in John's Gospel, Jesus sets out theological precepts around his identity and says nothing about the Kingdom.

I think it is wonderful that we have such different Gospels in the New Testament, and that these two Gospels, Mark and John, which are so very different, are read during the same year. Two more different Gospels than Mark and John cannot be imagined, and yet of course, they come to the same climax: the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection. The important thing to note is not so much that they tell the story differently, but that they both tell the essential story of the passion and new life. For me, the lectionary texts this year, from these two different Gospels, highlight that there is



more than one way to tell the story of Jesus; they also remind us, implicitly, that there is more than one way to worship, more than one way to believe, more than one way to be Christian, and that unity in Christ does not have to mean uniformity of witness and proclamation.

Within my own church, First Baptist Ottawa, there are different understandings of Jesus and faith; there are different experiences of God, and perhaps different ways of wanting the worship service to reflect those experiences. We hold different perspectives on issues from climate change to the way we read and interpret the holy word; we have different ideas about what God's grace is, and why Jesus was crucified, and different strategies for reaching out to the larger world with the good news of Jesus. And I think this is all wonderful, because we all hold to the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ, and in him we find our central rock, our unifying force, and we hold to a unity in Christ even as we allow diversity in almost everything else. And the church is richer for it. I celebrate the different perspectives of faith that are part of our congregation, and I celebrate the different experiences of faith that we have had as well as the different ways we engage in ministry. Some are passionately immersed in works of social justice seeking to change systems, and some offer lives of compassion and care to others bringing change to one life at a time; some engage in abstract theological reflection, while others want to proclaim the good news of the gospel to everyone they meet. Some have journeyed well on the journey of faith, others are still trying to find the beginning of the path, and many more are somewhere different along the way. We are all God's children, we all belong in the church, we all have our strengths and gifts, and in sharing our stories, we are reminded that the Spirit of both Mark and John are present in our congregation; I believe this should be the case in Baptist Churches, which hold to freedom of belief, usually stated as sole liberty of conscience.

This is not universally the case among Baptists, however; in the summer of 2021 the largest Baptist denomination in the world, the Southern Baptist Convention, concluded their annual assembly after much politicking around electing the new leader and the direction this denomination might move in the future. It seems there

is little room for diversity among the Southern Baptists, many of whom want to bring further uniformity of belief and practice to that convention. As one commentator noted, “The drama playing out within the convention is representative of the wider struggle within American Christianity. None of us can fully escape the downsides and the dark sides of our communities and our culture. The question is whether those who profess to be followers of Jesus show more of a capacity than they have recently to rise above them, to be self-critical instead of simply critical of others, to shine light into our own dark corners, even to add touches of grace and empathy in harsh and angry times” (*New York Times*, Sunday June 20, 2021). And it is not only the Southern Baptists who are pushing for this uniformity of belief. I see this push for uniformity or standardization also playing out in the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec as well, as motions presented at the recent CBOQ virtual Assembly would have Baptist churches in the Convention moving towards a uniformity of belief and practice. While the motions were defeated, narrowly, they highlight the way in which some issues take centre stage, and the way in which differences overshadow the central tenets of the faith that are so important.

As we read the Bible, which serves as the guide for our lives of faith, we need to remember that it holds a diversity of perspectives, but still points us to the central figure of Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour. I hope that our denomination, and the larger Baptist world, can also remember this.

The Rev. John Perkin serves as the Minister of First Baptist Church, Ottawa. Prior to moving to Ottawa in 2020, John served as Chaplain of Mount Allison University from 1993–2020.

Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy & its Pastoral Theology

Part 1: Culture Shock & Kenosis

BY DERRICK MARSHALL

¶ When one becomes a military chaplain one not only becomes immediately immersed into a new and strange culture of military bearing and ethos, but also into a pluralistic chaplaincy service. It becomes quickly evident that one is going to not only have to learn to ‘talk the talk and walk the walk’ of a soldier, sailor, air personnel, but one must also cooperate with fellow chaplains, all of whom represent a plethora of denominational and religious backgrounds. A united front among the chaplains within the military is the only way to see that our mission as chaplains succeeds: to provide pastoral care to all Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel while being faithful to the Great Commission (St. Matthew 28:19–20).



Consequently, a certain degree of self-forgetfulness needs to take place. A chaplain is still a minister representing a proud religious tradition within the CAF, but also something more than that when one dons the CAF uniform and cap badge of the *Royal Canadian Chaplain Service*. If a chaplain is going to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the troops under his or her care one must learn to fit within the greater mission of the units to which one ministers. The Chaplain Service's ethic directs us to care for all troops placed under our charge, even where we may not be able to help provide for their spiritual needs because of the particulars of our differing religious traditions. Even if we cannot directly provide a sacramental ministry, then we are to provide pastoral ministry by finding someone who *can* minister to them according to their needs.

For example, when the Kosovar Refugee Crisis hit in the wake of the NATO Offensive against Serb forces in Kosovo in 1999, the chaplain team of 14 Wing Greenwood provided for a make-shift mosque and a local Imam to look after the spiritual needs of the Muslim Albanian guests within our care. We were not asked to, nor would we have, faced Mecca and led prayers in Arabic nor read from the *Q'uran*. It would have lacked integrity for the chaplains, all of whom represented different denominations within the Christian faith, to do so. However, we were able to provide a venue and a spiritual leader who could do those things with integrity. Such a ministry as this one is both an ecumenical/inter-faith challenge and requires a certain degree of “self-emptying” on the part of the CAF chaplain within today’s pluralistic context. Not everyone is ready or able to engage in such a ministry and chaplains are carefully screened before donning the uniform of a CAF chaplain for this very reason. Personally, I have found it to be a very interesting and enriching ministry and I would recommend it to any religious leader willing to take up its challenges, lifestyle and adventures. More to follow on this subject in my next installment in a subsequent edition of *The Bulletin*!

Major (The Reverend) Dr. Derrick Marshall, CD, is currently Halifax Senior Fleet Chaplain. He is graduate of Acadia Divinity College and a long-time supporter of the CABF.

A Christian approach to climate change: what do we know? what do we believe? what do we do?

A Summary

BY ROBERT RAESIDE

¶ Most people are aware of changes in weather, but over the long term it can be difficult to resolve shifts in climate from hazy memories. An early spring or a massive heatwave may indicate changing weather, but individual events are not easily attributable to global warming. The saying is “seeing is believing”, but sometimes evidence isn’t readily visible. When it comes to climate change, we want proof.



Most scientists avoid claiming that they *believe* in climate change. “Believing” implies acceptance on faith, but people who investigate natural phenomena want to *know* what causes them. In the Maritimes we are surrounded by evidence that climate has changed over the long term. Drumlins and U-shaped valleys point to a time 20,000 years ago when the area was buried in ice. Clearly climate has changed. Warming happened because of an interplay of cyclical changes in the Earth’s orbit around the Sun. But that was long ago – it should be cooling down again. The global warming happening today has nothing to do with the Earth’s orbit. It is caused by the burning of carbon that has long been buried in the Earth.

On a sunny winter’s day, the temperature in our greenhouse exceeds 35°C. Sunshine heats the contents, which then warm the air. Warm air is trapped inside by the glass. This “greenhouse effect” works similarly for the whole atmosphere. Sunshine heats the

ground, which radiates heat into the air from below. Even at night, radiating heat continues to escape back to outer space. So long as the sunshine coming in equals the heat going out, the average temperature is maintained.

For the past 200 years, we have been mining carbon and burning it, releasing CO₂, which absorbs some of that radiating heat, preventing it from escaping back to space. Thus the atmosphere warms globally. We know there is 30% more CO₂ in the air than 60 years ago, we know CO₂ traps the heat, so the atmosphere must get warmer.

In Genesis we read, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over ... every living thing that moves upon the earth.” What does “have dominion over every living thing” mean? Is it the farmer who tends the land and livestock? Is it the lumber company who fells and replants the trees? Is it the geologist who seeks ore to serve big industry, but also the metals to make batteries and solar roof panels? Or is it the oil company that mines the fuel we still use to make electricity and run vehicles? Where do we draw the line between “subduing the earth and having dominion over it” and exploiting the earth for selfless profit? Ultimately who is responsible for global warming? We may blame the oil companies that exist to make a profit by selling carbon, but we, the consumers of carbon, are ultimately responsible.

What does it mean to a Christian? Genesis makes it quite clear that part of the role that God created us to play in the world is to rule over creation. But this call to ‘have dominion’ over the earth isn’t a licence to exploit the earth for our gain. It is a call to manage it. How can we reflect God in our treatment of the Earth?

Jesus called us to love our neighbours by taking care of their bodies and souls, and that requires us to take care of the Earth; they are all interconnected. Any form of environmental destruction has consequences for people around the world and down the generations. Doing our part to limit the increase of CO₂ is a major component. We have the power to use even our small decisions in ways that have a global impact. Where we have options, we can choose the low-carbon one, we can buy local, we can conserve and reuse. We can be responsible for our environment.

Professor Robert Raeside, Ph.D., is the Head of the Department of Earth and Environmental Science at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. He is also a long-time member of Wolfville Baptist Church, where he serves as the church moderator.

Psychology & Spirituality

Hepburn, Alexandra M. *The Interplay of Psychology and Spirituality: A Resource for Counselors and Psychotherapists*. Berkley CA: She Writes Press, 2019. 371 pages. ISBN 9781631526503

REVIEWED BY DOROTHY HUNSE

¶ What a fascinating book! The goal is to provide a resource to help counselors and psychotherapists care for their clients' spiritual needs, and what a monumental task that is. As Hepburn notes, defining the term "spirituality" is difficult enough, let alone providing resources that are broad and deep enough to aid counsellors, who may or may not be spiritually minded themselves, as they offer care in this way. To the degree that I can assess it, it is my opinion that the author has succeeded in accomplishing her goal. In terms of the concepts and theories with which I am most familiar (such as the Enneagram, and Fowler's stages of Faith development), the author presents this material clearly and succinctly and yet with attention to nuance. Because the book is so detailed, one wonders how it might be received by anyone who has not thought explicitly about spirituality before? Would it be helpful or potentially overwhelming?

The author has written this book because research and experience demonstrate that many clients are looking for counsellors who can provide spiritual as well as psychological support. Hepburn understands why psychology initially eschewed connection to reli-



gion and spirituality but hopes that there can now be an openness to “aspects of human life that are *beyond* the rational.” (p. 63). Nevertheless, the book is anything but polemical. The reader, whether spiritually minded or not, is offered non-judgmental respect and acceptance, and the material is provided in the spirit of invitation not expectation.

The number of topics covered by Hepburn is breathtaking, from Jungian personality styles and the Enneagram to spiritual practices and stages of faith development. Elements of integral psychology and transpersonal development also factor into Hepburn’s study. However, the author does not ignore the fact that spirituality can hinder a client as well as reap benefits. Hence, Hepburn discusses the professional ethical issues that can arise when seeking to offer care in this realm, such as value conflicts and when to support and offer challenge.

Although a resource which invites further exploration, this book provides the reader with enough material to begin to implement the insights offered. As a first step towards implementation the reader is encouraged to reflect personally on the material, and beyond this many practical suggestions for applying the insights are offered. The author models good therapeutic practice by affirming that the goal is not so much to become an expert on spirituality, but to develop enough facility to walk with a client as they explore their spiritual needs.

It is fascinating to consider the ways this book may be of help to pastoral caregivers, who are already versed in addressing spiritual matters in their caregiving. Most obviously, this book will serve as a resource when we find ourselves caring for someone whose approach to spirituality is different from our own. More than this though, I deeply appreciated the way in which this book, written from a perspective different from my own—the author has been influenced by aspects of Christianity but also Buddhism, Hinduism and metaphysics—propelled me to begin to reflect theologically on my own embedded understanding of spirituality. I was humbled and reminded that although I have spent considerable time and energy thinking about my own understanding and practice of spirituality that there is always room for reflection and growth.

Rate Your Minister?

BY JOHN CHURCHILL

Have you seen “Rate My...” websites where you can rate your teacher and even your doctor? As a professor, I anxiously looked at my students’ ratings.

But what about rating your minister?

When a church’s leadership decides to poll the congregation, some churches use a questionnaire with a belief that this is an “objective” way (far from it) to assess their minister. But most of these are poorly constructed, and the results are often difficult to interpret. Some churches use rating systems that are borrowed from corporations that do not quite capture the nature of ministry.

And some believe that evaluating a minister in any form is inappropriate because it equates the ministerial office with a “job.”

A regularly-scheduled evaluation is an important exercise for both minister and congregation — if it is done properly. First, it should not be a rating, but a mutual, open, and respectful *conversation* between the minister and the “official board.” Second, it should not be a review of the minister — and certainly not the minister’s personality. And most importantly, it should be a review of the MINISTRY of the church for which the minister and Board share responsibility, with the goal of strengthening that ministry.



CONSTRUCTING THE CONVERSATION

The *first step* is to outline the areas the church feels are the important aspects of the ministry to which it has been called, and the necessary qualities of character that support this ministry. Worship, Pastoral Care, Christian Development, Mission, and Leadership would probably be the categories on most churches’ lists.

The *second step* is to list the behaviours within each area that are required of both the minister and the Board to carry out the church's ministry. These might include the minister and Board members following through on commitments, and adhering to ethical standards (Character); the minister counselling and ministering to the special needs of the congregation, and a commitment by the Board to pray for and support those in need (Pastoral Care); and the minister helping the church prayerfully discern and organize its witness and social responsibility to the local and global community, and the Board committed to a demonstrated concern for the spiritual and temporal welfare of its "neighbours" (Mission).

The discerning of these areas by each church is an important exercise alone. If the work is begun prior to a "pulpit" search, it can provide a valuable basis for candidate interviews.

CONDUCTING THE CONVERSATION

Leadership of the process deserves as much attention as the content of the discussion and is an important topic itself. At least, it should go beyond asking if there are any complaints. Too often, the response is a reluctance by any to raise potentially "troubling" issues.

An open and respectful on-going discussion between minister and Board can strengthen the ministry of any church.

For my compete outline and your suggestions, email me at John.churchill@acadiau.ca

The Rev. Dr. John Churchill was ordained in 1971. In addition to his years of ministry, John has 20 plus years of additional experience in consulting, and teaching finance and management at Acadia University.

CABF News

📅 **FALL ASSEMBLY RESCHEDULED.** The Fall Assembly and the 50th Anniversary Celebration planned for October 1st and 2nd has been rescheduled by CABF Council to June of 2022 due to Covid-19 concerns. The 2021 CABF Annual General Meeting will be held via Zoom Conference Call at 1:00 pm Atlantic Daylight Time on Saturday, October 2nd. The Zoom link will be posted on the CABF website 24 hours before the start of the meeting and will be provided to the email list prior to the AGM.

📅 **MAKING HISTORY: ACBAS 30th ANNIVERSARY.** Acadia Centre for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies celebrates 30 years on September 20-21. Join us at Acadia or online. Events include the Zeman lecture, a “Baptist and Anabaptist Treasures” exhibit, and a lunch panel on “Do Denominational Labels Matter in Today’s World?” For more information and to register for the lunch, visit acbas.acadiadiv.ca.

📅 The Rev. Dr. Daniel J. Green of First Baptist Church, Amherst, has announced his plans to retire as the Senior Minister of the Congregation as of June 30, 2022. We wish Dan well as he retires, in the year that marks the 43rd anniversary of his ordination.

📅 **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AMHERST**, a centrally located historic Maritime Baptist congregation, is searching for a Senior Minister to begin service in July 2022. The congregation maintains association with both the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada and the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms and will accept ordination for pastoral leadership recognized by either body. All inquiries should be directed to Ed Colquhoun, Search Committee Chair, 1 Durley St., Amherst, Nova Scotia, B4H 2B2. All inquiries will be kept in strict confidence.