

ANNAPOLIS-DIGBY UNITED BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Annual Meeting, April 30, 2005 **Hill Grove United Baptist Church**

The Annual meeting of the Annapolis-Digby United Baptist Association was held on Saturday, April 30^h at Hillgrove United Baptist Church with one hundred and five people registering for the event.

Rev. Dave Tramley, the pastor of Hill Grove opened the assembly with prayer. This was followed by "Holy is the Lord", "Above All Names", "How Great Thou Art", and "Amazing Love", led by the church's Worship Team. This was followed by prayer by Pastor Dave Tramley, and another hymn, "In Christ Alone". Everyone greeted each other in the name of the Lord.

Rev. Bill Patterson welcomed all the delegates and guests to the meeting and Pastor Dave gave the announcements for the day. Clerk Mary Billard gave the offertory prayer and the offering for Missions was given at this time.

The theme of this spring Assembly was "**The Future of the Small Church in Rural Nova Scotia**". Dr. Randy Legassie was the keynote speaker and gave interesting statistics of what is happening in small churches in Nova Scotia. He talked about attendance, finances, spirituality, growth, conflict and other areas of concern. The most important point of his message was that ministry is about people, not programmes. It seems that the churches that use programmes like Discovery, Alpha and others, experience growth and viability, but that is not the real reason. The churches who use these programmes have developed relationships first with their people and then use these tools to reach out in love to people. Church ministry has to be about Christ-like relationships **within** the church before we can reach out to the community and non-believers. If our ministry is not based on Christ-like relationships, the outreach will not work. Eighty to ninety percent of the people who come to church are there because of a relationship with some Christ-like person who cared enough to invite or bring that person to church. We live in a time when everyone is looking for a relationship.

John 13:34-35 commands us to "**love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another**". When a church has conflict within itself, it takes ten years for a church to come back to the pre-conflict time, and some churches never fully recover. In a Christ-like relationship, there must be love for everyone - the kind of love that is caring, honest, thoughtful and seeking the best for others.

No programme, regardless of how great it may seem to be, will ever work unless it fits the needs of our people. Relationships grow out of our personal relationship to Christ and to each other. We build relationships by talking honestly, really listening to each other, and respecting each others' opinions, regardless of the topics. We need to get back to the scriptures. Read the Gospel of John, chapters 3-8 to see how Christ treated people and built relationships.

Our real ministry is relationships, and it begins with each of us taking the time to pray for each other, to talk to each other, to listen to each other. Only then will we be on our way of following Christ's example to love one another and create a healthy church, because healthy churches are blessed by God.

After a break, the Assembly attended workshops led by Rev. Ron Baxter and Lic. Mark Reece, with the ABW meeting on their own with Pam Churchill from the Tri-County Pregnancy Crisis Centre in Yarmouth. These sessions were followed by lunch.

A hymn-sing preceded the devotional by Rev. John Purdy, based on Mark 12:28. John used bird analogies to illustrate how as Christians we are often more like crows, flapping our wings and making a lot of noise instead of soaring like hawks to move beyond our definition of comfortable love. It is easy to love those we like, but if we are truly engaged as a whole person with the Living, Holy God, we will realize that He has a purpose for us: to love as Christ loved! We need to focus on God's call on our lives to be more like Christ and to show others Christ-like love.

An offering for the Association was taken at this time.

A Panel Discussion on Natural Church Growth was led by Rev. Fred Bigelow and Rev. Dave Tramley. Both spoke on their experiences in working in small churches in rural settings. Fred commented that the tasks of making time for reading the Bible and other books, for prayer and building relationships with the people in each of the churches on his field, is sometimes overwhelming. Dave commented on the importance of communication with people and the two-way street of pastor and congregation and congregation and the pastor. There are 10 points that we all should strive to use in our lives to build healthy relationships and a healthy church.

1. Come into God's presence by seeking Him in prayer, by reading the Bible, by talking to other Christians and by earnestly seeking God's will for our lives.
2. Be involved in God-exalting worship as a way of life where Jesus Christ is glorified.
3. Continue to grow spiritually as we walk daily with Christ, and allow ourselves to be disciplined by the Holy Spirit.
4. Communicate with other Christians, and seek out wise and Godly mentors who can help us in our spiritual walk and growth.
5. Make sure that you are first involved with making healthy spiritual relationships with people and then consider which programmes might fit the needs of the individuals in the church.
6. Make a commitment - pastor to people, and people to pastor, to be honest, loving and caring in all situations to create a healthy, spiritual, Christ-like relationship with all people.
7. Focus on the gifts of leadership in the church. Everyone has a gift to offer the Lord. Sometimes people are not always aware of their gifts and have to be encouraged to discover what they are. Others might have to be encouraged to use their God-given gifts to advance the Kingdom for God's glory. Put people where they are needed and be ready to reach out to the community in love.
8. All church members should be diligent, informed, wise and accountable for anything that goes on in the house of the Lord. They should also be diligent in stewardship.
9. Network with the Body of Christ. Other pastors and churches can often be a help to a struggling church and can provide the moral support needed in times of struggle. Use the Association and Regional Ministers to help in what you cannot do alone.
10. A Healthy Church reaches out and shares the love of Christ with others.

Both pastors reiterated the importance of attendance at church and weekly prayer meetings where we pray for ministries, people, relationships and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Relationships take time, using all of our skills and various resources molded to fit our needs. Churches could benefit from a **Spiritual Gifts for Ministry Inventory**. When we become skeptical about church growth, we have to remember that God gives the increase so we don't have to do all the work ourselves.

BUSINESS OF THE ASSOCIATION: The clerk, Mary Billard read the Rules of Order, and opened the business session with prayer.

BEAR RIVER EAST BAPTIST CHURCH: Regional Minister Ron Baxter presented a delegation to the Association from the newly formed church. The church was formerly part of the Clementsvale membership as a preaching station and now plan to go on their own. Ron gave a brief history of the church from its founding in 1899 to the present. The church applied on March 5, 2005 to become part of the Association.

MOTION # 1: D. Tramley/F. Clements, that the Association accept Bear River East Baptist Church into membership of the Association. **CARRIED.**
A prayer for the church and its people was given by Rev. Bill Patterson.

ANNUAL REPORTS:

MOTION # 2: Billard/P. Inman, that the **Minutes of the Fall Association Business meeting** held on September 4, 2004 at Hill Grove Baptist Church, be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 3: Billard/ E. Mullen, that the **Financial Report** for the period of May 1,2004 to April 30, 2005 be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION #4: Billard/Bradley, that the **Ladies Retreat Report and Financial statement** be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 5: B. Patterson/F. Clements, that the **Moderator's Report** be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 6: J. Purdy/C. Batson, that the **Mission Commission Report** be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 7: D. Tramley/ P. Inman, that the report of the **Association Youth Committee** prepared by Roxanne McGaw, be accepted as presented and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 8: D. Tramley/A. Outhouse, that the report of the **Witness Commission** be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 9: Billard/S. Budd, that the **Proposed Budget** for the next fiscal year be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

The Nominating Committee presented its report and asked for nominations from the floor for vacant positions.

MOTION # 10: W. Bradley/S. Marshall, that nominations cease. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 11: S. Budd/J. Purdy, that the report of the Nominating Committee be accepted as presented, printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 12: J. Purdy/ F.Clements, that the Association give power to the Council Executive to fill any positions left vacant on the Council and committees for 2005-06. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 13: Billard/J. Hirtle, that the report of the Regional Minister, Rev. Ron Baxter, of Region II, be accepted as presented and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 14: J. Purdy/R. Purdy, that the report from Regional Minister of Region V, Rev. Wayne Fevens, be accepted as printed and circulated. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 15: C. Page/W. Bradley, that the **Licensing Committee Report** be accepted as presented and circulated. **CARRIED.**

The committee was impressed by those candidates who came before them to be examined.

MOTION # 16: E. Waugh/ T.Potter, that the **Training Commission Report** be accepted as presented and circulated. **CARRIED.**

With no further business, on motion by Thelma Potter, the meeting was adjourned.

The Moderator, Bill Patterson, thanked the Pastor and Host church for the wonderful day. He thanked the presenters and the people that came out for this Association meeting. Bill thanked the Council members for supporting him over the past two years and looks forward to continuing to serve the Lord in the Association in other ways. Bill closed with prayer.

We were all truly blessed by being here this day. Praise be to God!

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Billard, Clerk