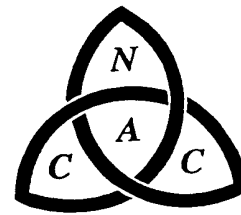


# NEWS BRIEFS

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## To Serve Them All My Days

### The Reverend Bob Whalls, d. March 31, 2008

On the last day of March, Bob suffered a massive heart attack and could not be revived. It was a day of shocking and tragic loss. Port Lambton, an NACC church, was Bob's first and only charge, and he pastored the charge's three congregations and their communities for twenty-one years. Your editor met him only twice – once at Alderwood United in April, 2006, where he represented the LRACC at the NACC AGM, and again on his home turf at the Port Lambton church in, I think, the fall of the same year. I was there that evening to meet with some of the congregation, and Bob led a relaxed little introductory service, accompanying the singing on his guitar. Lots of singing, and a good evening!

Several days ago, a congregational member emailed that there were over 1200 people at the visitation, and over three hundred at the funeral. I also understood a memorial service was planned for a Baptist church in Wallaceburg, chosen as better able to accommodate the expected numbers. All of which suggests Bob's must have surely been an unusually powerful ministry.

Others can speak on that, but my brief personal experience of this special man tells me that he was, in the fullest sense of the phrase, a Christian gentleman, a *gentle* man, quietly and patiently committed to loving and serving his Lord and those around him. I am confident the trumpets sounded for him as he crossed the river.

Many will sadly miss him. For my part, I have a real sense of regret that I will not get to know him better, at least in this life.

Please hold Bob's family in your particular prayers – his wife Shirley, and his children Krista, Tobin, Sarah, and Rachel.

God bless

*Geoff*

## NACC Annual General Meeting, 2008

Your prayers are also invited for the NACC's coming AGM in Debert, NS, April 17 and 18. Present will be folk from Newfoundland/Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Alberta, and BC. Please ask God to be with us and lead us on right paths.

### "Of the Making of Many Books"

The full quotation is, of course, "Of the making of many books there is no end; and much study [of them] is a weariness of the flesh." (Eccl 12:12)

That pretty well sums up how I feel about the latest "cutting edge" reappraisal of Jesus and the faith, *With or Without God*, by Gretta Vosper, a United Church minister in Toronto. The *Observer* reports that the book's frank intent is to drop us all "into the fast-flowing waters of dis-belief (sic)" - an interesting goal for someone who presumably once felt Jesus calling her to "Feed my sheep". But, some will say, Jesus probably never said that, and, if he did, what did he want them to be fed with? Etc., etc., etc.

In cases like this, I'm with the writer of Ecclesiastes - Who needs this stuff! But those who write in this vein nevertheless get laudatory reviews, build reputations as bold new thinkers, and so on. Well, "bold", perhaps, but "new"? - No, I don't think so. Nine-tenths of what they have to offer is just regurgitation of old heresies, heresies which the early church examined carefully and then firmly rejected. (But still it seeps back to the surface - see some of "A Song of Faith".)

The *Observer's* reviewer of Vosper's book foresees "a storm on the horizon". Personally, I hope not. Storms attract people's attention. And so, it is that books are sold, reputations made. The secular media is happy to make a story out of it all - witness the recent major article in *MACLEANS*, vigorously stirring the apostate pot, assigning the huggers of theological headlines scholarly status they do not deserve. And so people become confused and rudderless. I fancy some gurus are going to have to do some fast explaining at the end of time.

**More Positively** - If you have Internet access, please explore these websites. They build the faith rather than tear it down:

- **Jesus Central** (jesuscentral.com) - a site ministering powerfully and credibly to all ages; it offers the opportunity of interacting with others.
- **Lee Strobel** (leestrobel.com) - Strobel is by no means the only resource here; also on offer are videos, newsletters, answers to faith questions from a range of Christian authors, speakers, and academics, etc.
- **Need Him** (needhim.org) - intended particularly for those just entering the faith or young in it; questions answered online or by 24-hour phone, etc.
- **God Speaks** (godspeaks.com) - presents the Good News through simple, lucid stories, testimonies, and answers to faith questions.