

NEWS

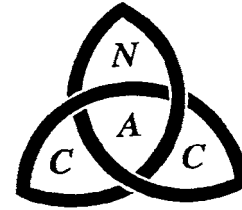
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BRIEFS

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2004 Annual Meeting

This year's AGM was hosted by the Alberta Region. All six Regional Associations were represented there. Worship was led by (Rev.) Bob Aldrich, one of the four Alberta clergy whose original initiative and vision led to the founding of the NACC, in 1991.

The three-day meeting (May 6-8) handled the normal business of the Alliance briskly, freeing up a good deal of time to consider an important BCACC proposal to set up a national office. Ways and means are to be investigated during 2004-5, with a decision at the 2005 AGM (This is scheduled for next June, in Newfoundland.) Three working groups were set up to examine how the idea can be brought to reality.

In every Region, face-to-face contact is very difficult because of the distances involved, so, besides a central office, the proposed model provides for field workers - initially, probably one each for Atlantic Canada, Ontario, and Alberta/B.C. Given the one-year timeline, all this will obviously be a major preoccupation for the Steering Committee. A very large challenge, indeed, but the meeting felt that the continued viability of the Alliance rests with its successful accomplishment. A good deal of work has already been accomplished.

Otherwise: the NACC Table Officers for 2004-5 are: **Immediate Past Chairman**, Bob Blackburn (COACC); **Chairman**, Geoff Wilkins (BCACC); **Treasurer**, Jack Scott (COACC)(to Dec. 31), and Cameron Smith (MACC)(from Jan. 1); **Recording Secretary**, Bob Kuhn (BCACC).

Shortage of United Church Ministers

Increasingly, we hear how difficult it is for our smaller congregations to find suitable new ministers. Despite what some have been told (by people like presbytery reps. on Joint Search Committees), this has little to do with their being NACC churches. The fact is that the whole UCC faces a grave shortage of clergy. (For more, see the *Observer* Feb. 2004, p22; Jan. 2004, p21; Sept. 2003, p18.) In the meantime, the NACC maintains a pastoral relations service which links orthodox clergy and congregations (NACC and other) and makes them mutually aware of each other. There is no charge for this service. For more, write, phone, or email the NACC as noted at the top of this page.

A Child Shall Lead Them: a true story told by Edward K Kazmarek

A Christian school recently held a meeting of parents, faculty, and students. As part of the program, there was a panel discussion among two or three parents, faculty members, and students, with the panel being moderated by a prominent, PH.D theologian and Episcopal priest. Early on, the theologian said something to the effect

that, "Christians just need to understand that Jesus is not the only way to God, and the sooner they get over this idea of exclusivity, the better off everyone will be."

In response to that statement, one of the student panelists, a sixteen year-old girl, said, "Excuse me, but like that doesn't make any sense."

"Why do you say that?" asked the theologian. "Because if there's more than one way to God, why would God come up with another way involving the death of his own son?"

One could see the audience perk up and nod to one another as they all came to the same conclusion: "That's not a bad question."

"No," said the theologian. "My point is simply this: if you want to get from Atlanta to New York, you can take a train, you can take a plane, you can take a boat. The point is you get to New York, not how you get there."

The young girl replied, "Well, I mean, like, no offence or anything, but that still doesn't make any sense. If you can take a plane, or a train, or a boat, or whatever, like why would God make his son get out and push a car?"

I could see that the theologian had had about enough of this conversation. She said, "Look. When you're young, you want everything to be neat, and tidy, and simple, but when you get older you realize that the world doesn't always work out that way. When you're older, you'll learn to accept ambiguity and complexity."

At this point another high school student in the audience spoke out, "Wait a minute. You cannot write her off just because she's a kid. She's asked a good question, and you've got to answer her. Several voices in the audience could be heard to say, "Yeah!" Instead we went on to another topic.

What a wonderful evening. My own impression is that we could not have asked for a better apologetic device than to watch the child confound the scholar.

-- E. A. Kazmarek, a Presbyterian elder in Atlanta GA. (*Theology Matters*, Jan/Feb 2004)

Bible Verses!

A new minister went out through his community, visiting the homes of his congregation. At one house it seemed obvious there was someone at home, but no one answered his repeated knockings. So finally he took out his card, wrote Rev. 3:20 on the back and stuck it in the door.

Next Sunday, when the ushers processed the offering, his card was in the plate, and they passed it on to him. Below his Bible verse had been written Gen. 3:10. When he checked that verse in his Bible, the minister collapsed in laughter. **Question:** How come?

Snappers

- **Recommended for good Christian reading** within our denominational tradition: (1) *Fellowship Magazine* - Box 237, Barrie ON L4M 4T2; or 1(800) 678-2607; or felmag@csolve.net (suggested donation \$24/year; (2) *Theological Digest and Outlook* - 403 Wilson Ave., Burlington ON L7L 2N2 (subscription \$15/year).
- **More good reading:** many of our congregations are rural, and their members will likely thoroughly enjoy *Rural Gleanings*, a glorious potpourri of items about Christian life in the country. No subscription is charged, but financial supporters receive tax receipts. Write (Rev.) Lester and Marion Settle, #3081, Hwy 4, RR1, Debert NS B0M 1G0.
- **The Supreme Court's response** to the federal government regarding the redefinition of marriage is expected shortly. As a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the NACC has ensured that the EFC's lawyers have made the court aware of our concerns over the government's proposed legislation.

