

A Quarterly Publication of the
Atlantic Baptist Fellowship
the **Bulletin**



**Participants in the ABF Fall Assembly
(l-r) Roger Cann, Howard Taylor and Jack Wendt.**

The Fall Assembly of the ABF was held at the Wolfville UB Church on September 24 and 25. The Speaker on Friday evening was Dr. Lee McDonald, new principal of Acadia Divinity College. A communion service was conducted under the direction of Dr. Das Sydney, minister of the Wolfville UBC and the deacons of the church.

Following the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the large crowd present shared in the joy of Christian fellowship.

A devotional began Saturday's program, conducted by Dr. Pauline Allsop, a deacon at First Baptist Church, Halifax and lecturer at the Atlantic School of Theology.

Dr. Roger Cann, Dr. Howard Taylor, and Dr. Jack Wendt, then led an interactive educational event, "Building Congregations and Communities of Peace".

ABF'ers examined the mission of the local church, and issues of justice, compassion, and conflict resolution. Following a scripted panel presentation, interest groups were selected to discuss strategies appropriate to the local church. Summaries of group conclusions were shared with all present.

Following lunch at noon, the ABF business session concluded assembly activities.

Spring Assembly 2000

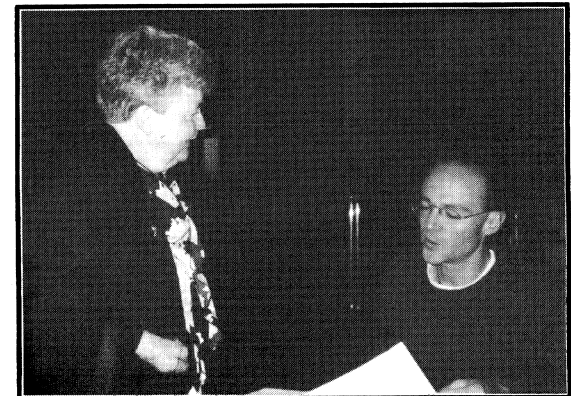
The planning committee for the ABF Spring Assembly (2000) was selected at the ABF business meeting held on Sept. 25th at the Wolfville UBC.

Members are: **Nita Irvine**, Wolfville; **Terry Tingley**, Bayside; **Jeff White**, Parrsboro; **Paul Burden**, (ex-officio) Port Williams.

It has been proposed that the ABF Spring Assembly be held at Parrsboro UBC and this will be confirmed in the near future.



**Fred and Bev Miles, Sydney with Jeffrey White
(centre) Parrsboro, in attendance at the ABF Fall
Assembly 1999**



Nita Irvine, Wolfville and Andy Crowell, Canning

President's Message

Paul Burden, President — ABF

The fall assembly of our beloved organization is over for another year. The event was a wonderful experience for me and I have heard many excellent comments on the program. Firstly, I want to express my thanks to Rev. Das Sydney and the Wolfville Baptist Church for the wonderful hospitality we were shown during the weekend. Das and deacons of the church lead the communion on Friday evening, a special time for the attendees. The members of the Social and Benevolent group provided an excellent coffee time on Friday evening and a great lunch on Saturday, many thanks. I would like to give a special thank you to Walter Morine, the custodian of the church for working many overtime hours to see that we were set up and had everything we needed.

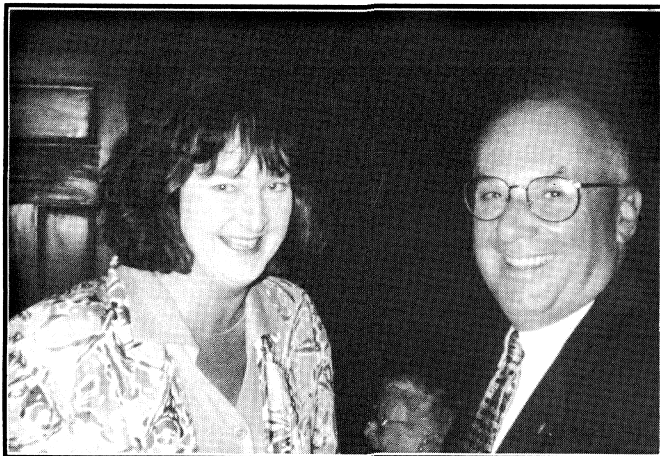
We had the opportunity Friday evening to have Dr. Lee McDonald, new Principal of Acadia Divinity College, bring the message at the worship service. We also had the opportunity to meet and talk with him afterwards.

Saturday morning, Pauline Allsop brought us a very thought provoking message. Afterwards the program was organized by Roger Cann, Howard Taylor and Jack Wendt along with help from others. We took part in some very lively discussions and we were made to promise to act on those items that came out of these groups. Great job everyone! A special thank you to Sadie Cann who provided such a good (and healthy) mid-morning snack.

Some important decisions arose from the business meeting on Saturday. Roger Prentice has volunteered to form a committee to study ways that ABF can improve and move forward into new areas.

A Program committee consisting of Nita Irvine, Jeff White and Terry Tingley has been struck to look at possible programs for future assemblies. If you have any ideas I am sure that they would like to hear them. By the way, the Spring Assembly is planned for Parrsboro.

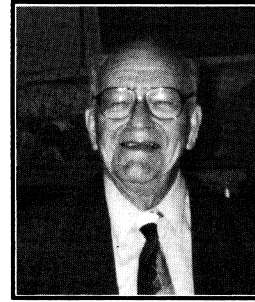
A nominating committee has been formed to look for a vice-president and to perhaps fill some upcoming vacancies. If you have any suggestions or would like to volunteer, contact John Churchill.



Katherine MacPherson chats with ABF president Paul Burden during the fellowship time at the ABF Fall Assembly

The Enigma of Suffering

Howard H. Taylor



Howard Taylor

manifesting forbearance under provocation.

Many years of ministry and chaplaincy service in general hospitals, prisons, psychiatric and rehabilitation institutions involved me in the intense suffering of many men, women and children. Some of these persons disabled from accidents, disease and duress broke up emotionally. Others broke out in anti-social behaviour. The more fortunate courageously drew upon inner and spiritual strength. This helped them to accept and successfully cope with the difficulties their particular afflictions had upon them.

Intense suffering of disconnectedness also requires support from others. Indeed the word support from L, *sub+portare* to carry is a very appropriate word for it expresses the need of suffering persons to be literally carried physically and upheld psychologically and spiritually. Suffering persons also require comforting. The word comfort implies healing from LL *comfortare* to strengthen greatly and from L *com+fortes* to give strength and hope to another. These words well describe the function of comforting.

The author of Hebrews had an understanding of the psychological, religious and spiritual dimensions of the paradox of suffering and healing when he wrote the following:

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons and daughters, to make the captain of their healing perfect through suffering."

Henri Nouwen's chapter entitled "Ministry by a Lonely Minister" in his book The Wounded Healer further elaborates on this theme of suffering when he describes ministry to a suffering world by one who also participates in suffering.

Violence and the evil actions of persons who want control and power over others cause horrendous suffering upon hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world today. Eli Weisel in his book Night, records the traumatic experience and shock which he experienced upon arriving at Auschwitz when he witnessed the barbaric atrocities of the German soldiers dumping truckloads of babies and children into a burning ditch. "Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp. which turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget the faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky." In the telling of this

Continued on Page 4

account of his story now, the story becomes part of our story and causes us to draw upon all the spiritual resources we are able to muster to have what Paul Tillich calls *the courage to be*. W.H. Auden implies a similar sense of courage.

September 1st. 1939.

Defenseless under the night our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere, Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just exchange their messages:
May 1, composed like them Of Eros and Dust,
beleaguered by the same Negation and Despair,
Show a affirming flame.

The Hebrews have a word *Nepesh* for the breath and power of human life. This, to the Hebrew mind, is the very breath of God which created out of the dust of the earth human life in all its complexity. Through the experiences of the joy of ecstasy and agony of suffering we become who and what we are for better or for worse.

Harry Emerson Fosdick in his book, *What is Vital Religion*, causes us to meditate and ponder the enigma of suffering in this question. "Why is it that some of life's most revealing insights come to us not from life's loveliness but from life's difficulties?" Is it perhaps related to the power of faith in the belief that even in and through suffering the realities of truth, justice and love may be revealed within ourselves, and through us, to others who suffer?



Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

ABF BULLETIN

The **ABF Bulletin** is published quarterly by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. Submissions: Articles must be less than 500 words in length. Opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the ABF or the Editors. The **BULLETIN** is mailed to interested churches and individuals. Those wishing to receive the **BULLETIN**, and all details of changes of address, etc., are to be sent to the distribution organizer.

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Deadline for Article Submission for Spring Issue February 1, 2000

Editorial Comment . . .

It's About Time!

Two proposals for a new year, a new millennium. Nothing new - just leftover from the 90's.

A psychological assessment program for men and women considering studying for the ministry was examined in *The ABF Bulletin*, April, 1995. Such evaluations enable informed decisions to take place about one's vocation in life and "fit" in ministry.

As the century comes to a close, it is felt that not only should psychological evaluations be mandatory for clergy, but psychosexual assessments as well.

Better - more thorough - screening measures for clergy and church employees and volunteers, youth workers and camp volunteers and other lay leaders must be put in place during the year 2000.

The 2nd proposal was first suggested in the *ABF Bulletin*, fall, 1997, i.e. all church buildings within our Convention providing barrier-free access. Proposals?

Why not resolutions for the year 2000?

The Church - Grand Pre - National Historic Site

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

Terry *Frank*

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
Invites you to Our Fifth Gathering
Summer Conference (A.K.A. Peace Camp)
"On Earth as In Heaven"
July 10 - 15, 2000 (Monday evening - Saturday morning)
Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina
Mark your calendar and watch for details

Reflection

(Devotional Address, ABF Fall Assembly 1999)

Pauline Allsop

It has been said of ancient societies that their cultures are defined by "what, where, when and with whom" they eat. This is certainly true of first century Palestine, where the rituals of eating were governed by the Purity Laws of Israel. The priestly families and the Pharisees followed these laws most strictly, but even ordinary people were bound by them, particularly regarding the "what" and the "with whom." One did not eat certain foods, and one did not share a meal with certain people, especially anyone who was regarded as "impure" or "unclean." This included, among others, the following groups:

1. all non-Jewish people (that is, Gentiles), and also any Jew who associated too closely with Gentiles,
2. any person who had a visible disease, especially a skin disease, or a handicap,
3. "sinners," that is, those who failed to obey all the commandments (so a toll collector would be regarded as doubly unclean, because he worked for the Roman (Gentile) authorities and was also automatically considered to be guilty of robbing those from whom he collected tolls);
4. prostitutes and, in fact, women generally (who were "unclean" for much of their lives, e.g. during their menstrual cycles and after childbirth, and at other times because they took care of sick [unclean] people and did the preparation rites for the dead - anyone who touched a corpse was considered to be unclean).

Given these rules, it is not surprising that the religious authorities of his day condemned Jesus for "eating with tax collectors and sinners." Jesus' practice of open table fellowship would have been regarded by the religious authorities of his day as contrary to the purity laws, and this would certainly have brought him into conflict with the "chief priests, scribes and Pharisees." It is impossible to imagine that Jesus would not have known that this would be the case, and yet he continued to welcome anyone who came to him. Why did he do this? Why was open fellowship so important that he would invite conflict with the authorities by refusing to change this practice?

We have come to realize that Jesus had a purpose for everything he said or did, and that purpose was intimately connected with his proclamation of the inbreaking of God's reign in the world. How does the praxis of open fellowship relate to this proclamation? Clearly, Jesus' welcome of all people, regardless of purity status, must reveal something important about the Kingdom of God. That "something" is **inclusiveness**. Jesus taught, and his own praxis of open fellowship showed, that the Kingdom of God includes everyone, even those whom the religious authorities might consider unworthy or unsuitable. In God's gracious realm no one is excluded. There are no boundaries or barriers to inclusion. There are no insiders and outsiders.

This teaching would have been shocking to most people in Jesus' time. It might even be shocking to many in our time. Yet Jesus practiced it and even told a parable to illustrate it. We are all familiar with the parable of the great dinner in Luke's Gospel, our reading for today, and its parallel, the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22. Scholars believe that both of these parables are re-tellings by the evangelists of an original parable of Jesus, which they edited somewhat to suit their own theological purposes in writing their Gospels. According to one

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scholar, the original parable was probably something like this:

Someone, a rather wealthy person, prepares a banquet and sends a servant to say to the invited guests that everything is ready. However, all make excuses, with the result that nobody comes. The host becomes furious and orders the servant to go out and bring in others, *anyone*, saying, "My house must be full."

The Matthean and Lukan redactions tend to obscure the original message of the parable, which would have been shocking for Jesus' hearers: **the reign of God is for everyone and anyone, not, as the common understanding was, for the rich, the elite, the ritually pure.** The message of this parable and of Jesus' "praxis of inclusive wholeness," as one scholar has aptly referred to it, seems clear: God's love, and therefore God's kingdom, is for everyone. No one is better or more valued than another; no one may deem another to be of lesser worth.

It is clear from the writings that have survived to come down to us that Jesus' praxis of inclusiveness was carried on by the early church. Jesus' first followers were all Jews, but within a few decades Gentiles were being welcomed into the church. Paul's letters attest to the fact that women were leaders of house churches in many centres, and that slaves and former slaves were valued members and co-workers. Other early documents give us a picture of the way in which the early church viewed such practical matters as how to celebrate the Lord's Supper and how to baptize, and it is evident that flexibility and inclusiveness were paramount. One has only to read the instructions on how to baptize from *The Didaché*, a late first or early second century book on church order, to see this.¹

If this is the case, what are the implications for us as Baptists as we approach the new millenium? What does it say about our tendency towards exclusiveness? For example, can we continue to require that those previously baptized as infants or children in other denominations must be rebaptized by immersion before being admitted to full membership in our church? Is the amount of water used in baptism more important than public profession of faith by an adult believer? In view of the evidence from *The Didaché* and other documents from the first and second centuries, is it appropriate for us to refuse full membership to a baptized person who has been a faithful follower of Christ during his or her adult life, and who now wishes, through public profession of faith, to join us in full fellowship? Should we continue to place barriers in the way of baptized people seeking membership in our churches?

Maybe we need to examine more closely the teachings of Jesus about inclusiveness, and his praxis of welcoming everyone to the group of followers who gathered around him. Such an examination may very well lead us to the conclusion that the "Jesus movement" was indeed a "discipleship of equals," as one scholar has called it. If we also examine the documents of the early church we will find that membership was not dependent on the amount of water used at baptism; more important by far was the spiritual state of the baptized, as publically professed, and the words spoken by the one baptizing. Can we retrieve some measure of that barrier-free, inclusive society in our churches today?

¹Didache VII: "As for baptism, baptize this way. Having said all this beforehand (i.e. all the teachings that have preceded in the first six sections), baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 'in running water. If you do not have running water, however, baptize in another kind of water; if you cannot [do so] in cold [water], then [do so] in warm [water]. But if you have neither, pour water on the head thrice in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit."

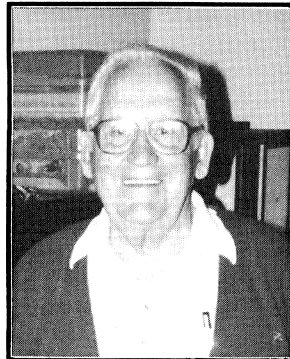
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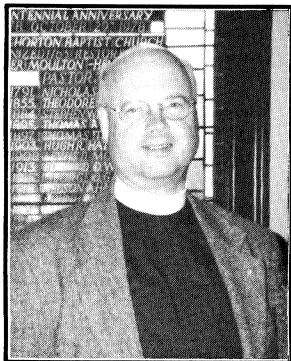
Pauline Allsop, Barb Putnam, and Elinor Nicoll



Janet Atwood and Das Sydney



Neil Price



Roger Prentice



Lee MacDonald and Rodger Forsman



Vicki Brown and Carl Dexter



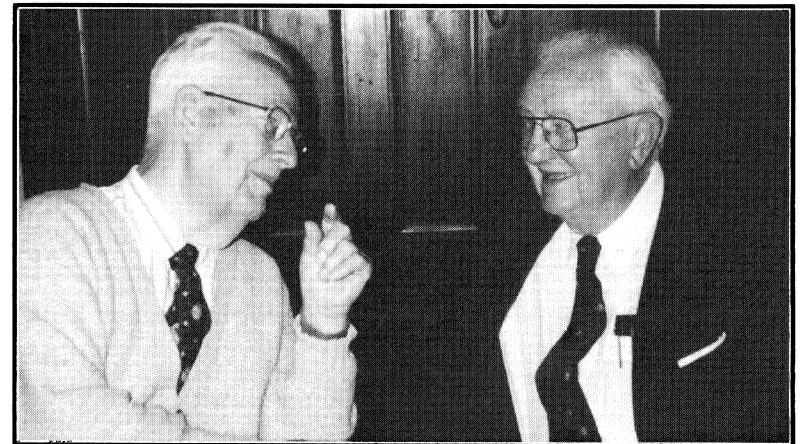
Charlotte Taylor



Dorothy Lovesey



Hester and Don Jackson



Charles Taylor and Morris Lovesey

Fall Assembly -- Wolfville UBC

September 24th and 25th

Moving-on is Life: Not Moving-on is Death

M.R.B.Lovesey

Some years ago a former tutor of mine at Spurgeon's Theological College, London, to whom I am immensely grateful for teaching me Classical and New Testament Greek, sat in my study and asked me, "Are you the same as you used to be when you were at Spurgeon's?" I have completely forgotten what my reply was on that occasion but I know now what I ought to have said: "In one way I am the same, in my allegiance to Jesus Christ and God's Church; but, in another way I have moved on. My continuing education, which is never ending, and my widening experience of life, have necessarily changed me."

My dear friend, now long deceased, knew very well that changes in life's convictions necessarily come as life moves on. When I was his student he was contemplating a change in his ecclesiastical connection, and, ironically, I did something to bring about that change. He knew I had been nurtured in the gracious Evangelical Anglican tradition and was indebted to the ministry of the Reverend Harold Earnshaw Smith, M.A. (Cantab.), one of its leaders, but had moved into the Baptist tradition, brought about by the fundamentalist/conservative/evangelical theology of my early church connections. He asked me if I had a copy of G.R.Balleine's History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England. I said I had and would be happy to lend it to him. Not long afterwards he left the Baptists and became an Anglican!

Movement in religious matters is a sign of life; non-movement is a sign of spiritual death. My recent readings has included a good example of this. I refer to Marlene Winell's interesting book, Leaving the Fold: A Guide for Former Fundamentalists and Others Leaving Their Religion (New Harbinger Publications, 1993). Dr.Winell, a practising psychologist, was raised in a Pentecostalist home, and as a child and young woman entered into that way of life with enthusiasm, but her education, firstly in her University Arts studies and secondly in psychology as a doctoral candidate, led to her abandoning most of that. She moved on, from a rigid belief system to a wider philosophy of life. She came to see, I think, that Christianity is more a way of life (taking love radically) than a rigid belief system.

One may, and some do, of course, move back! Billy Graham, in his recently published autobiography, tells us that he moved back when challenged by his friend Charles Templeton to modernize his theological understanding of the Gospel. He says that during a mystic experience he took a leap of faith to accept the dogma of the complete authority of the Bible in every respect. He prayed: "Father, I am going to accept this [the Bible] as Thy Word - by faith. I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word."

One recalls that the Epistle to the Hebrews is a dissuasive. Its message is, "Don't move back - move on!" The Jewish-Christian group in Rome some time shortly before A.D.70 was being tempted to give up its faith in Jesus as the Messiah and revert to its ancestral Judaism. The writer of the Epistle sends his "word of exhortation" seeking to win them back to a firm adherence to Christianity. And he wanted them to move on in the faith. "Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity"

Charles Templeton moved out! He gives his reasons for rejecting the Christian faith in his book Farewell to God, published 1996.

One regrets this and feels it was not necessary. He could have done what so

many Christian believers have done through the ages — he could have modernized his theology and by so doing could have moved on rather than moved out. We hope he will have another change of conviction.

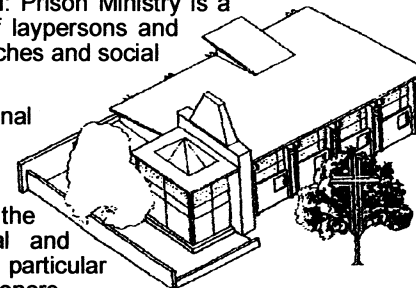
It might be as well if we all followed the wisdom of St.Paul: "Forgetting what lies behind . . . I press on" The challenge of today is that we neither move back, nor move out, but that we move on!

— Printed first in, the Window, the magazine of the Wolfville United Baptist Church, Autumn 1999. Used with permission.

St. Luke's Renewal Centre Project

The Christian Council for Reconciliation: Prison Ministry is a federally chartered charity, made up of laypersons and clergy from a wide cross section of churches and social groups both French and English.

In an agreement with The Correctional Service of Canada, the Council has contracted to establish St. Luke's Renewal Centre within the prison reserve of Springhill Institution for the purpose of focusing on the spiritual and personal development of prisoners, with particular emphasis on the needs of long term prisoners.



Spirituality addresses the search for meaning, for wholeness, for unity of purpose. It is concerned with capacities which help a person transcend the destructive forces associated with criminal behavior. Spirituality speaks of the mystery of who we are.

We believe that the Renewal Centre will offer a relaxed environment, where prisoners will gain a positive outlook towards their future as they are encouraged to seek what Viktor Frankl has described as "the search for meaning."

The Centre will work in close relationship with the prison's chaplaincy team and will be open, not only to prisoners from the Springhill Institution, but to all prisoners in the Atlantic Region. There will be no discrimination.

Geographically the Springhill Institution serves the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland and prisoners coming into the Correctional System in these areas are processed at this Institution.

The Centre will be a single-story, free-standing building with about 2000 sq. ft. of floor space. It will have a program room with a fire place, a dining room with a kitchen, a small library, a meditation room for quiet-time or reading, and sleeping accommodations for six persons.. A series of large windows will allow viewing of the distant hills. The meditation room will have a skylight through which the moon and stars may be viewed.

The Council will provide the Centre with a Facilitator who will have experience appropriate for the work. Working through a Committee of the Council, the Facilitator will manage the Centre and be responsible for its day by day operation. In the Management Agreement with The Correctional Service of Canada, the Council has contracted to build the Centre and to staff it with a Facilitator. Total construction costs are estimated at \$375,000 of which \$200,000 will be the responsibility of the Christian Council.

Inquiries and donations may be sent to: Christian Council for Reconciliation, Treasurer's Office, Box 1096, Amherst, Nova Scotia, B4H 4E2 — (902) 667-3177 — e-mail: christcr@istar.ca

a sermon . . . The Peter Principle

Neal MacPherson

Romans 12:1-8 and Matthew 16:13-20

Many of us know something about *The Peter Principle* as it operates in corporate structures. *The Peter Principle* was authored by Dr. Lawrence Peter and Raymond Hall in 1969. It is based on the concept that within a corporation people are promoted to their greatest level of incompetence. For example: John gets hired at a new job. Within several months, he thoroughly impresses his bosses and they promote him to a position with new responsibility. John does this job quite well so he's promoted again. In his new position he does well enough that after a few years he gets promoted to a position that is finally too much for him to handle and, since he can no longer perform well he's not promoted any longer.

That is how The Peter Principle operates in the corporate structures of our society. Corporate structures are hierarchical in nature. To do better financially, one has to be promoted to higher levels within the structure, and so it happens that eventually people achieve a position in which they are incompetent to do the job. The Peter Principle, by the way, is not confined to corporate structures alone. We have all witnessed The Peter Principle operating in academic and church structures as well.

I want to suggest that there is a Peter principle that is to be found in the four Gospels. This Peter principle has to do with the ascendancy of Peter as the leader of the early church in Jerusalem. It was the Jerusalem church that became the leading church among the followers of Jesus in the years following his death and resurrection.

When we read the Gospels superficially we get the impression that Peter is chosen by Jesus himself to be the leader among the disciples and therefore in the early church. We certainly gain this impression from this morning's reading from the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus says to Peter, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Now, I must say that I count myself among those who have come to the conclusion that Jesus never actually said this. Jesus never had the idea that a church would be established in his name. The word "church" was not a word in his vocabulary. Jesus was a teacher and a healer, the founder of a spiritual renewal movement in first century Palestinian Judaism. But he never envisioned that his movement would result in the establishment of an organized church community.

I hope you are not offended by my conviction that Jesus never said this to Peter, fearing that such convictions undermine the authority of scripture. For me, the authority of scripture means that we respect scripture enough to bring not only our hearts but also our minds to the interpretative task.

The fact is that there was a leadership struggle within the community of the first Christians. The outcome of that struggle was that Peter eventually became the recognized leader of the Jerusalem church, the first and foremost church in the growing Christian movement. The early church needed to give Peter's leadership scriptural authority and so the gospel writer Matthew created the words of Jesus found in our passage: ". . . You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church."

There is, however, more to say, and this is where the story gets interesting. For

Matthew and also the other three Gospel writers are determined to present a contrasting picture of Peter within the story. They will not allow Peter to be honored without reservation. No sooner does Jesus declare Peter's unqualified leadership than he turns around and declares Peter to be an embodiment of Satan! Jesus lets the disciples know that he must go to Jerusalem and be killed and on the third day be raised. Peter refuses to accept this prediction of Jesus and Jesus says to him, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

So if Peter is honored on one level, he is most certainly condemned on another. In much of the story, neither Peter nor the other disciples come off all that well. Peter, you will remember, will deny Jesus at the crucial moment and he and all of them will flee the scene when the going gets tough. Throughout the story none of them really want to believe that Jesus will die and be raised from the dead. Then there are James and John. They want a special place in the kingdom when Jesus comes into his glory completely forgetting, it seems, the radical egalitarianism taught and practiced by Jesus.

This radical egalitarianism was a cornerstone of Jesus' ministry. He opened his table fellowship to all, sinner and righteous, male and female, rich and poor. He honored the least among those whom he invited: the poor, the sick the lame, the outcast. Of children he said that unless we become like them we cannot enter the kingdom of God. And to James and John, when they made their request to be seated at his left and right hands, he judged them severely, saying that among his followers everyone must be the slave of all.

Martin Luther King Jr. caught the spirit of Jesus' teaching when he said in a sermon that "everyone can be great because everyone can serve." The Gospel writers had to honor Peter out of political necessity but if we read the Gospels carefully we will find others who are honored as much and even more than Peter. There is the Beloved Disciple of the Fourth Gospel who saw the empty tomb and believed, something that Peter could not bring himself to do at the time. There are those children whom Jesus embraced and the Canaanite woman of last week's Gospel lesson who used her wit to persuade Jesus to heal her daughter. These are but a few examples. The greatest honor given anyone in all four gospels is the honor given to the woman in this story reported by Mark: Chapter 14:3-9.

No one is honored more in all of scripture than this woman. She is the only one who believed Jesus when he said that he must go to Jerusalem in order to die at the hands of the Roman and religious authorities. Peter and the disciples never understood Jesus' impending crucifixion. But now, in the home of Simon the Leper, for the first and only time this nameless woman believes that Jesus is going to die and that unless his body is anointed now, it never will be.

Now, what does all this have to say to us who are of the church? It surely means that within the Christian community we must not get caught up in *The Peter Principle* as it operates in the corporate structures of our society. It is a sad commentary on the church that very early on the followers of Jesus forgot his radical egalitarianism and in its place established a church based upon a hierarchical pattern of leadership. It took monastic renewal movements and Protestant reformers to counter this elitist pattern of leadership. However, the Protestant churches soon became establishment churches in Europe and North America. And a church dominated by male clergy became the norm in spite of the fact that these same male clergy gave lip service to the priesthood of all believers.

Now is the time for the church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, to take a critical look at its pattern of leadership, dominated as it is by those of us who are

clergy (and male), and catch once again the vision of equality as taught and practiced by Jesus. We are to be a contrast community. We are to pattern ourselves not according to the ways of corporate America but according to the spirit of the Gospel. We would do well to heed the teaching of Saint Paul who advises us not think of ourselves more highly than we ought. For we "are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."

In our community, everyone can be great because everyone can serve. Leadership is to be shared equally; truth and power belong not to a few but to all. We are to adhere to a contrast Peter principle that honors not only those who are named as leaders but even more so all the faithful whose names have been forgotten by the world but remembered by us. For the good news is to be proclaimed in remembrance of them. So will we be a faithful community? So will we be the people God in Christ calls us to be? So be it. Amen.

Neal MacPherson began his ministry in the AUBC in 1966 — in churches in the Truro area. He has just completed his eleventh year as pastor of the Church of the Crossroads, United Church of Christ, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Neal MacPherson delivered this sermon at the Wolfville United Baptist Church on August 22, 1999.

ABF Bulletin Benefactor

Those attending the ABF business meeting in Wolfville, September 25th agreed to seek 100 ABF Bulletin Benefactors to contribute \$100.00 each for the publishing of

the BULLETIN in the Year 2000

The Bulletin continues to serve as a mouthpiece for the ABF and as a disseminator of information.

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Marginal Notes

Grammateus

For the past year or so my energy has been concentrated in looking after my wife, Freda, although until the last issue I did not miss my "Grammateus" piece.

For this issue I am enclosing a prayer-poem that is on the notice board of The Melville Lodge Nursing Home (Halifax, N.S.). The author and source are unknown. But those of us who have stood on watch know how accurate it is.

I have deeply appreciated being part of the Fellowship over the years.

Gerry Harrop

An Alzheimer Patient's Prayer

Dear Lord . . .

Please grant my visitors tolerance for my confusion, forgiveness for my irritability, and the strength to work with me into the mist of misery my world has become.

Please help them to take my hand and stay awhile, even though I seem unaware of their presence.

Help them to know that their strength and loving care will drift softly into the days to come, just when I need it most.

Let them know that when I do not now recognize them, I will . . . I will.

Keep their hearts free of sorrow for me, for my sorrow, when it come, only lasts for a moment, then it is gone.

And finally, Lord, please let them know how very much their visits mean and even through this restless mystery . . .

I can feel their love.

Editor's note . . .

Freda Harrop, "dear wife" of Gerry Harrop died November 4, 1999. A memorial service was held November 9, 1999 in First Baptist Church Halifax. "Marginal Notes" by Grammateus first appeared in the Bulletin, December 1994. The articles by "Grammateus" have enriched our Bulletin — stretching our minds. Although this is the last composition by "Grammateus", articles will continue to be submitted by Gerry Harrop for future editions. Readers agree that Gerry Harrop is one of ABF's most exciting thinkers!



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