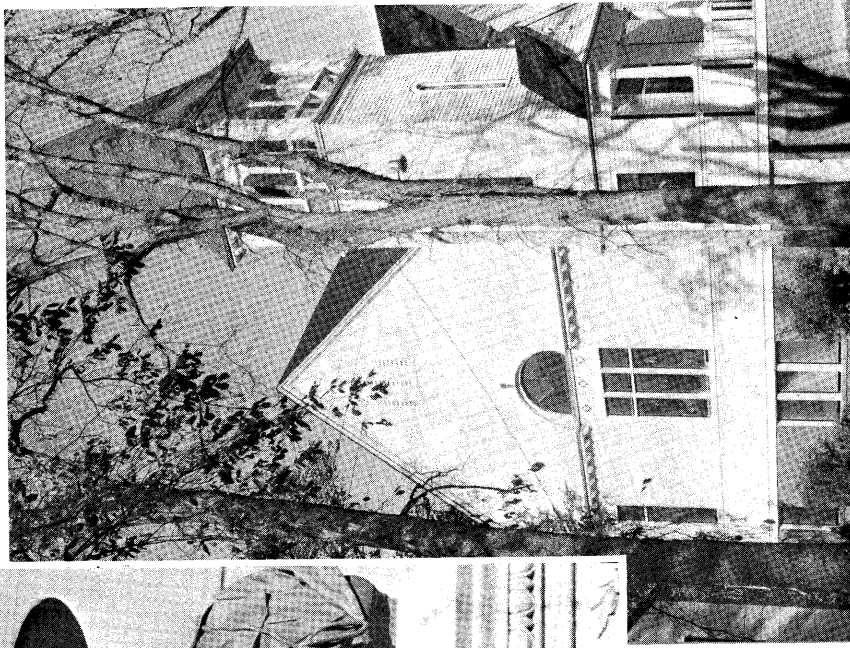


# BULLETIN

of the

## Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

August 1987



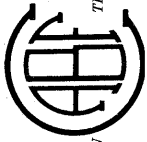
**FALL ASSEMBLY**  
**UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH, CANNING, NOVA SCOTIA**  
**25-26 SEPTEMBER 1987**

Theme: Human Sexuality and Christian Ethics

*Special Speakers:*

*Dr. Douglas W. Archibald, MD FRCP (C), Grand Pre, Nova Scotia*  
*Rev. Dr. Millard R. Cherry, Wolfville, Nova Scotia*

For full particulars see page 16



### THE OFFICERS OF THE ABF ARE:

President: Mrs. E. Gwendolyn Atherton, Comp. 4, Site 19, Sandy Point Road, R.R. #1, Saint John, N.B., E2L 3W2  
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Treasurer: Mrs. Evelyn Smith, 1021 Cole Harbour Road, Bldg. 2, Apt. 247, Dartmouth, N.S., B2V 1E8

### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP (approved by the Spring Session, Wolfville, June 14-15, 1985)

The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is a community of Baptist churches, laypersons and ordained ministers. It is supported by voluntary contributions made by persons and churches sympathetic to its aims, which are:

- (1) To witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion which is the essence of the traditional Baptist position;
- (2) To affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to the whole, visible, catholic and evangelical church of Jesus Christ;
- (3) To strengthen the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces and to encourage it to strive for the above;
- (4) To provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social problems and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love;
- (5) To publish, at regular intervals, a Bulletin which seeks to further these aims and which describes the activities of the Fellowship and announces the agenda for its general meetings which will be held in the spring and in the autumn of each year.

**THE BULLETIN OF THE ABF** is published by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, Editor — The Rev. Dr. M. R. B. Lovesey, P.O. Box 68, Wolfville, N.S., B0P 1X0. Telephone 902-542-5264.

The Bulletin is mailed to interested churches and individuals. Those wishing to receive the Bulletin, and all details of changes of address, are to be sent to the distribution organizer: The Rev. Byron Corkum, P.O. Box 68, Lawrencetown, N.S., B0S 1M0.

While the Bulletin is mailed free of charge; donations to help pay the ever-increasing costs of publication and mailing are gratefully received and should be mailed to the treasurer, Mrs. Evelyn Smith (address above). Receipts for income tax purposes will be mailed.

*Each generation needs men who, in honesty and devotion, are prepared to undertake 'explorations into God,' to press beyond the confines of what hitherto we have grasped, and to move away from places that have become too narrow for us in the light of modern knowledge and experience.*

— F. Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1909.

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Dr. Dan O. Via, Jr., provided us with "feed for sheep" rather than for "lambs," "solid food" not "milk," when he addressed the Spring Assembly of the Fellowship last June. A summary of his excellent, most illuminating and thought-provoking addresses, together with a valuable bibliography, will be found below, pages 6-10. A brief summary of this most useful Assembly which was reasonably well attended is given below on page 4.

The upcoming Fall Assembly of the Fellowship will deal with the theme of human sexuality, which we trust will do much to "clear the air" on a matter of the greatest importance for the health and happiness of individuals and society in general. The meeting will be held at the Canning, Nova Scotia, United Baptist Church; see page 16 for full particulars. The front page of this edition features a picture of the Canning church building and also a picture of the memorial which is situated near the church and which is perhaps one of the most memorable features of the village. The memorial commemorates Lieutenant Harold Borden (son of Sir Frederick Borden, Canada's Minister of Militia and Defence, who was a cousin of Sir Robert Borden, Canada's Prime Minister, 1911-1920). Born in Canning, Harold was killed in the South African War during an action at Witpoort, 16 June 1900. The memorial was erected in 1902.

We are indebted to Professor Fred Krieger for an excellent thumbnail sketch of one of the great doctors *par excellence* of the early Western Church (the others being Gregory the Great, Ambrose and Jerome), the *Doctores Ecclesiae*, theologians of outstanding merit and acknowledged saintliness. This is the fifth study in the series on the great theologians which, according to Hans Kung, deserve our closest attention. Fred was born in the United States on New Year's Day 1938, and was ordained priest of the Anglican Diocese of Southern Ohio in 1963. He has served his communion in Canada and the AST since 1968 and was made a Canadian citizen in 1977. He is married and has three children. We very much regret his manuscript had to be cut severely owing to the exigencies of space and for that we offer him our apologies. Two references that he made that had to go deserve a place here. One was to Augustine's ever-so-human prayer, "Give me chastity, *but not yet*"; the other was to his famous saying, "Love God and do what you will."

We record with respect the deaths of two outstanding Nova Scotian Baptist leaders whose long lives were spent in Christian ministry. See page 14.

Kind readers of this edition will find within its pages an envelope for their convenience for sending a *special gift* to the funds of the ABF which we hope they will use. If you are pleased with the objectives of the Fellowship and find its *Bulletin* to be of interest we hope you will mail it to our treasurer. The cost of producing, printing and distributing the *Bulletin* keep rising constantly. Currently we distribute some 6,000 copies of each edition, an expensive enterprise as you can well imagine. We count on your support in the interests of "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father." We might add that extra funds are needed to cover the cost of bringing to our area Christian leaders from across North America and Europe.

Will Durant, in his treatment of Voltaire, in his *The Story of Philosophy*, ends with an anecdote of the "laughing philosopher" as he lay on his deathbed. He sent for a priest to hear his confession, but he refused Voltaire absolute until he should sign a profession of full faith in Catholic doctrine. Voltaire refused, but then drew up a statement which his secretary drafted and which he signed:

"I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies and detesting superstition. (Signed) Voltaire. February 28, 1778."

## ABF SPRING ASSEMBLY 1987

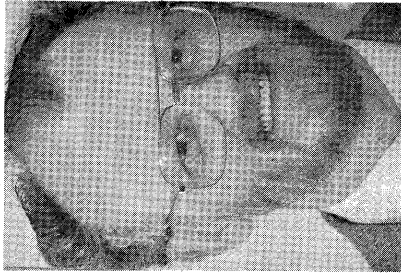
The theme of the Assembly, held at the First Baptist Church, Amherst, Nova Scotia, 12-13 June, was "The Concept of the Historical Jesus and its Theological Significance," on which two lectures were given by the Reverend Doctor Dan O. Via, Jr., Professor of New Testament, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

### FRIDAY EVENING

Opening devotions were conducted by the Reverend Morley A. Shaw of New Glasgow, N.S., following which the Reverend Austin D. MacPherson gave a moving tribute to his friend, the late Alder Colpitts.

Introduced by Dr. M. R. Cherry, Dan Via delivered his first lecture on the theme of the Assembly. For an abstract of the lectures, see below, pages 6ff.

The evening's exercises were completed by an observance of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper conducted by the pastor of the host church assisted by his deacons. The order of service was based on the Lima liturgy of the World Council of Churches which was used for the first time at the plenary session of the Faith and Order Commission at Lima, Peru, on 15 January 1982.



Morley A. Shaw

### SATURDAY MORNING

Morning devotions were led by Pastor Ogueri James Ohanaka, who ministers in New Glasgow, N.S. This was followed by Dan Via's second lecture.

After morning coffee break, a useful period of general discussion was held, initiated by responses to the theme and the lectures by Drs. D. M. and M. R. B. Lovesey. A good session of dialogue was only terminated by the call to lunch at noon; a meal delightfully and graciously served by the ladies of the host church.



James Ohanaka

Highlights included the following:

1. It was announced that, by wish of the family, the Alder Colpitts Fund is now at an end. It was never intended to be more than a gift to ABF funds in memory of Alder made at the time of his passing.
2. A report on the work of the Atlantic Ecumenical Council was given by John Boyd, the representative of the ABF to that Council. John, who currently serves the Council as its president (until April 1988), spoke of the 19th Atlantic Ecumenical Conference (1-3 September 1987, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, with Archbishop Ted Scott

## SCENES FROM THE SPRING ASSEMBLY 1987

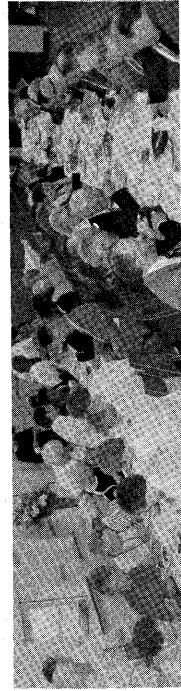
Photographs by Vincent Rushton



Active and passive — speaking and listening



Question and answer — Ed Colquhoun and Dan Via



Eating and drinking — good table fellowship

as theme speaker) and the progress of the feasibility study regarding a possible institution of a chair of ecumenics at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, N.S.

3. Convention concerns. The following topics were considered:
  - a. the ordination of women;
  - b. the possible affiliation of AUBC with the Evangelical Fellowship;
  - c. the possible alteration of the rules for ordination;
  - d. the motion about homosexuals and ordination likely to be brought before Convention in August (fears were expressed that such a difficult, controversial and potentially divisive matter might be hurried through without knowledge, due care and thought).
4. Officers elected to serve for the next year:  
President: Gwen Atherton  
1st V.P.: Roger Prentice  
Secretary: Philip Griffin-Allwood  
Treasurer: Evelyn Smith  
Director of Public Relations: Vincent Rushton
5. It was decided that from 1988 offices shall be held for two years.
6. It was felt that at present, despite requests made from outside the Atlantic region, and owing to lack of funds and personnel, the ABF could not think of extending its work to include the other Canadian Conventions. Nevertheless, personal membership in the Fellowship, which includes the regular reception of the *Bulletin*, is offered to friends living outside the four eastern maritime provinces of Canada.

## THE CONCEPT OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND ITS THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

by DAN O. VIA, Jr.

The lectures will neither consider the content of Jesus' action and teaching, nor discuss how we critically disengage the historical Jesus from the Synoptic Gospels. They will rather ask *why* are we interested in the historical Jesus and *what* we do or might do theologically with him.

I. THE REASONS FOR THE QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS  
Why do we in the Church concern ourselves with the historical Jesus?

(a) Martin Kahler told us we should not; since the Gospels do not establish causal connections in Jesus' story. Moreover, reconstructing the past depends on our being able to make analogies between the unknown past and what we know about life. But Jesus in his sinlessness is too different from us to be grasped through analogy with our own existence.

However, Kahler's rejection of the Quest is not so much based on these points as on his positive evaluation of what he called the whole Biblical Christ. By the *historical Jesus* he meant the Jesus reconstructed from behind the Gospels by the methods of historical scholarship (the meaning understood in these lectures). Kahler believed that the Jesus of historical scholarship is an abstraction which obscures the picture of the Biblical Christ — our true object of faith. How could the ever changing picture of Jesus constructed by scholars be an object of faith? But Kahler assumes (a large assumption) that the earthly Jesus etched on the mind of his



Dan Via

followers an image of himself reliable enough to assure us we are not dealing with pure fiction. The real significance of the Gospels with their picture of Christ is that they are preaching documents, containing confession and dogma, and are the means for eliciting faith and achieving the saving intention of preaching.

I agree with Kahler that historical critical scholarship cannot demonstrate the reality of revelation in Jesus. We come to the certainty of that only by an act of personal acknowledgement in response to the Spirit's witness to Scripture.

What then might be some reasons for pursuing the scholarly reconstruction of the historical Jesus?

- (b) Salvation comes through the Christ of the Kerygma, but the historical Jesus is of intellectual interest to the Church and has a kind of preliminary significance for salvation. Our encounter of the preaching of the historical Jesus can put us in the situation of having to make a decision for or against God, but it does not bring us through the decision into faith. This is roughly Bultmann's position.
- (c) One can take the opposite extreme from Kahler. It is not the risen or preached Christ who is the origin of Christianity but the historical man, Jesus. It is significant for faith what the historical Jesus thought about himself. That changes in scholarly judgments about the historical Jesus causes changes in our object of faith is an inevitable consequence of believing in a God who reveals himself/herself in history. This is the judgment of Jeremias.
- (d) Kasemann thinks Bultmann grants too little theological significance to the historical Jesus and Jeremias too much. One of the theological points Kasemann makes is that while tracing a particular theological theme back to Jesus would not prove that it is true (only faith can do that), the historical Jesus is a criterion which may prove that some Christological interpretations of Jesus are not Christian. The historical Jesus keeps us from conforming Christ to the contours of our own religious experience.

## II. HISTORY AND FAITH IN THE QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

In what sense does it matter whether Jesus believed, say, that he was the Messiah, as Jeremias says it matters?

It matters *historically* because historians are interested in factual truth — among other things. Would it make a significant *theological* difference if Jesus believed that he was not the Messiah but was rather the eschatological prophet? I think probably not, since both categories interpret Jesus' historical mission as final or decisive. Does it make a difference for *faith* — personal appropriation? Again, in this case, I think not. It seems to me that what we can know about Jesus critically justifies the early church's interpretation of him. But I would not know how to determine *how much* accurate historical Jesus material we would have to have in order to justify the early church's Christology. Faith, we should remember, is not a solution to historical problems. That is, my faith that Jesus is the Messiah has no bearing on the question whether Jesus believed he was the Messiah. That is a historical question and has to be treated with historical evidence.

It is possible that the meaning and quality of faith is enhanced if the historical Jesus did not specifically hold himself to be the Messiah by using a title — like Messiah — of himself. That is, faith becomes more faith-like, more a venture.

Peter's confession of Jesus — You are the Christ (Mk.8.27ff) — can be interpreted tradition-historically to mean that Jesus rejected the title. Alongside this is the fact that when Jesus was asked point blank about the source of his authority he refused to say (Mk.11.27-33). These two texts taken together may seem to mean that Jesus did not want his authority to be formal — to be based on a title which had already been given authority by the tradition, as Messiah or Christ had. He rather wanted his authority to be based on the inherent content of his mission, which people would have to discover for themselves.

James Robinson has developed Kasermann's suggestion that the historical Jesus is a criterion for an adequate Christology. We cannot prove that Jesus actually lived his life from the transcendence of the present eschatological kingdom, but we can show that he understood himself as doing so and as being the bringer of eschatological salvation. Jesus' preaching gives us access to the same understanding of existence that the church's proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection does. To take the risk of believing that life comes through death is existentially the same as dying and rising with Christ in Paul's kerygma.

Gerhard Ebeling develops this line more fully. The answer to the question — What comes to expression in Jesus' history? — is that faith came to expression in it. Faith is the experience of being thrown off oneself on to a ground that one cannot control. Ebeling then makes faith in this sense the organizing principle for his systematic theology.

Edward Schillebeeckx makes the historical Jesus the starting point of his Christology. Jesus' humanity is the unique locus of God's encounter with humankind, and apparently Schillebeeckx takes it as axiomatic that the historical Jesus is the appropriate criterion for Christology. He wants to use historical criticism to discover what it was in Jesus' mission — what patterns of faith — that made Jesus rather than someone else, say John the Baptist, the locus of the hope for salvation. Notice how far we have come from Kahler! Schillebeeckx knows that in the historical Jesus reconstructed by scholarship we do not grasp Jesus as he actually was. We have only an interpreted image of him. But that was also true of the first disciples. While the historical method is applicable and indispensable, it also has its limits. There is more to reality than history!

Schillebeeckx was the first to draw a distinction between a *theology of Jesus* and a *Christology*. A theology of Jesus is a theology about Jesus. It says that Jesus was fully and simply a man and that God was eschatologically active in him. Jesus is who he is as Christ only in relation to what God does in him. But a Christology is an ontology of Jesus because Jesus in some way is identical with the Word or Wisdom of God. What exactly does this identity entail? Does it mean that God is qualified or defined by Jesus or does it mean that the human personality of Jesus is obliterated by the divine Word?

The positions discussed above are theologies of Jesus, not Christologies. Even Jeremias' attempt to get behind Christology to the facts about the historical Jesus is an interpretation, a theology of Jesus. Remember that Jeremias acknowledges that our view of the facts is always changing. The facts are always a view of the facts and hence an interpretation, a theological assessment of Jesus.

### III. THEOLOGIES OF JESUS AS A HERMENEUTICAL ENDEAVOUR

All theories of Jesus — and Christologies — participate in the *hermeneutical circle* that structures all interpretation. To understand or interpret X (something relatively unknown, something to be understood) is to see it as Y (something I already understand relatively well). So my

position or presupposition or standpoint — that is, Y — colours what I want to understand — for the sake of our present discussion, Jesus. This dependence of understanding on my prior understanding is not necessarily a flaw or a distortion to be deplored but is rather the way we have meaningful access to our own tradition. Let us then consider three contemporary standpoints, hermeneutical points of departure, which have generated particular theological understanding of Jesus. Who is Jesus viewed from these positions? In the context of such a discussion the purpose of the quest of the historical Jesus is to keep our hermeneutical vantage points from distorting Jesus and making him over in the interest of our hermeneutical concern. But we seek this safeguard while acknowledging that our hermeneutical presuppositions influence what we can see in the New Testament story of Jesus itself.

(a) *Liberation Theology*. For liberation theology (Croatto, Sobrino) only present participation in the struggle against oppression enables us to see what God was really doing and saying in the Bible, enables us to see that God's liberation of the oppressed is the heart of the Biblical message. Our hermeneutical vantage point enables us to see that Luke was right in having Jesus say "Blessed are the poor" — for liberation begins with them now, from economic poverty. Matthew was wrong in having Jesus say "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*." Yet Jesus was a religious, not a political leader. Had he been an overt revolutionary his movement would have exhausted itself in the first century. However, his religious liberation of human consciousness from subservience to the law is a continuing indirect provocation to radical political liberation (Croatto).

(b) *Black Theology*. It is the black socio-religious experience of oppression that gives black theology its access to Scripture and to Jesus. That experience determines not only the questions we pose to God but also the answers we receive. But Scripture is at the same time an independent criterion of all theological truth and an indispensable source of black theology, for it was Scripture which enabled the slaves to have a view of God which differed from the theology of the white masters, a theology which intended to make slaves better slaves.

While it is the black experience which gives us access to Jesus, there is no knowledge of Jesus Christ today that contradicts what he was in his first century Jewishness. He was a Jew who fulfilled God's covenant with Israel. Jesus is who he was. But he is also who he is and is not limited to his past in Palestine. To put it dramatically, Jesus is black. His blackness brings out the soteriological meaning of his Jewishness for our existence. In the context of white racism, Jesus must be black in order to remain faithful to the divine promise to bear the suffering of the poor (Cone).

(c) *Feminist Theology*. Feminist hermeneutics is reading a text, writing an analysis, or reconstructing a history in the light of the oppressive structure of a patriarchal society. It tends to think that what goes as objective, historical scholarship is really patriarchal. Therefore, feminist hermeneutics wants to liberate Scripture from the patriarchal bias of the texts themselves and from the bias of white, male, middle-class interpretation. It will approach Scripture with the question: What androcentric bias or oppressive structure is coming to expression here? Some feminist theologians will decide that the Bible is too patriarchal to be salvaged at all, while others will conclude that patriarchy is not the only thing in the Bible and there are meanings to be recovered (Tolbert).

Schussler Fiorenza, for example, is prepared to see non-patriarchal elements in Jesus and early Christianity behind the patriarchal text of the New Testament. Others will identify in the Bible what can be called texts for women, texts which present women in a non-marginalized, non-

patriarchal light. One such is Jesus' healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter. The woman comes across as "uppity". She enters into a verbal contest with Jesus worthy of the craftiest teachers and wins the argument. No Jewish man, especially one with a religious vocation, expected to be approached by a woman unless she was a prostitute. But here was a woman who was prepared to break with custom for the sake of her daughter. She went after healing for her and succeeded in getting it. You remember Jesus' harsh answer to her request: It's not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. But she persisted and in doing so she ministered to Jesus. Her act enabled Jesus to see the situation in a new way. Jesus was freed to respond, to heal, to become a channel of God's redeeming presence in the situation (Ringe).

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Reverend Dan Oscar Via, Junior, BS DLitt (Davidson College), BD (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), PhD (Duke), an ordained Baptist minister, was born in 1928, is married to the former Margaret Bateman and has two sons, Dan Forrest and Charles Carter.

Dan has invested his life in the teaching ministry of the Church where his teaching areas have been the New Testament, Hermeneutics and Religion and Literature. He has taught at Wake Forest University, the University of Virginia and the Duke Divinity School; and has been Visiting Professor at the University of Zimbabwe and the Harvard Divinity School. He has published extensively and was named by the *Christian Century* as a scholar who made a creative mark on religious studies during the decade 1965 to 1975. His books include *The Parables*, 1967, and *The Ethics of Mark's Gospel*, 1985. He is well-known as the Editor of the Fortress Press' *Guides to Biblical Scholarship*.

\* \* \* \* \*

*If teaching has brought its joys, it has brought its sorrows as well. I never knew what hatred was until I began to teach. Beyond a doubt the odium theologium, theological hatred, the hatred of the theologians is a reality.*

— William Barclay, 1907-1978

## NEWS OF CHURCHES FROM FAR AND NEAR

### CREATIONISM NOTHING BUT RELIGION

The Supreme Court of the United States, on 19 June 1987, barred states from requiring the teaching of creationism in public schools where evolution is taught, calling such laws — as the 1981 "Balanced Treatment of Creation-Science and Evolution-Science" Act passed by the state of Louisiana — as thinly veiled attempts to promote religion. Such laws, it was ruled, are in violation of the Constitution of the United States which requires the separation of church and state.

### SOUTHERN BAPTISTS HEADING TOWARD SCHISM?

It is being widely said in the public media that the latest tightening of the grip of the fundamentalists' control of the Southern Baptist Convention is increasing the interest of moderates and liberals in the possibility of a secession from the parent body and the formation of a new church community. The SBC's recent convention re-elected the fundamentalist Adrian Rogers as president, tightened the fundamentalists' hold on church committees and agencies, and resolved to put new pressure on seminaries to curb teaching that does not reflect fundamentalist views.

The reaction to fundamentalist imperialism is beginning to take two shapes. Some think the end of it all will be the creation of a new body. But others, like the supporters of the recently formed Southern Baptist Alliance, want to avoid schism, to meet the fundamentalists head-on, and to fight for control of the denomination. The SBA will try to protect professors from fundamentalist animosity and from dismissal. It will also seek to distance the denomination from too close alignment with conservative political causes.

### BILLY AND THE POPE

It has been announced that Billy Graham and the Pope will both preach at an ecumenical gathering at Columbia, S.C., in September of this year, the first time such a thing has happened. This will mark John Paul II's first important acknowledgement of the evangelical movement. Billy probably owes the Pope one; for in 1978 he, Billy, was allowed to speak in a major Roman Catholic church by permission of the Pope who at that time was the leader of the Polish Catholic Church.

### THE UCC'S REVISED BOOK OF WORSHIP

The United Church of Christ (1.7 million members in the United States) has recently published a revised worship manual, which was made primarily to drop male-biased language. A feature of note is a five-page "Order of Recognition of the End of a Marriage." This is the first U.S. denomination to authorize the ritual recognition of divorce. In the service the minister says that a husband and wife have decided to dissolve their marriage "after much effort, pain and anger." The once married couple then utter words of regret and respect.

### SUPERSTITION

The parish priest of Pamplona, Spain, has ordered holy water to be removed from the baptismal font of his church for health reasons, after discovering that drug addicts were using it to wash syringes. Presumably junkies hoped the holy water would remove any AIDS virus on them! One recalls that Galloway's *Philosophy of Religion* claimed that the enemies of true religion were fear, superstition and ignorance.

## COMMENT

What opinions ought one to have about homosexuality? As a Christian, I mean. One thing is quite clear, namely, that a variety of opinions exist among believers today, varying from condemnation on the one hand to acceptance on the other. The two extreme positions are often vehemently held, each position condemning and unchurching the other. The experience of the United Church of Canada on this issue over the past decade is sufficient evidence of this.

But first, let us define some words so that we know what we are talking about. A *heterosexual* person is one who is sexually attracted by and/or participates in sexual activity with members of the opposite sex. A *homosexual* person is an individual who is sexually attracted primarily to others of his or her own sex (a Lesbian is a term used for a female homosexual). A *bisexual* person is one who is sexually attracted by and/or participates in sexual activity with members of both sexes.

Walter Wink, professor of biblical interpretation, at Auburn Theological Seminary, New York City, has pointed out recently, in an article in the *Christian Century*, that no more divisive issue faces the churches of North America today than the question of ordaining homosexuals. The conservatives in the Church say an impassioned No! to any such idea, and quote a long string of biblical texts in support of their opinions. But, as Wink points out, it all depends on *how* you interpret the Bible, the hermeneutics or principles of interpretation that you have. Wink thinks the Bible has no sexual ethic — it only knows a love ethic. And it is the love ethic of the Bible that must be brought to bear on whatever sexual mores are dominant in any given country, or culture, or period.

A helpful analogy might be drawn from slavery. The Bible sanctions slavery and nowhere attacks it as unjust. Are we then prepared to argue that slavery today is biblically justified?

Many modern Christians have a strong personal revulsion against homosexuality that goes far beyond reason — but ethical decisions cannot be based on such feelings. It is quite clear that none of us can dodge thinking about this issue and coming to at least a tentative, well-researched, well thought-out and truly Christian opinion. On such an important issue it is not sufficient to have mere opinions, we must have *informed* opinions.

### AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, 354-430

by Frederick Gordon Krieger

St. Augustine was born in North Africa. Though raised as a Christian his baptism was delayed for prudential reasons. He was educated in rhetoric, a literary education in the Latin classics which cultivated the arts of speaking and writing. He seems to have been a secular, predictable kind of man, though with an aptitude for making friends. He took a mistress who bore him a son. Then he met Bishop Ambrose of Milan who taught him to read Scripture and interpret it spiritually, and this led eventually to his conversion to Christianity, all of which he describes in his *Confessions*. He was baptised, ordained priest and made Bishop of Hippo Regius, where his ministry set the agenda for his voluminous writings. He died in AD 430 as the Vandals were attacking his city.

#### I. WRITINGS

Augustine's literary output was enormous: an estimated 113 books, 218 letters, and 500 sermons survive. Of special importance are the *Confessions*, the *City of God*, and *On the Trinity*.

The *Confessions* is a work of interior autobiography, in which he describes his restless life before his conversion and how God healed his divided will and gave him rest. Unlike the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, which are addressed to himself, the *Confessions*, addressed to God, describe a man we can recognise and understand.

In his *City of God*, Augustine seeks to answer the charge that the Sack of Rome in AD 410 is the punishment of the old gods on the city for their worship being replaced by the new religion of Christianity. The book examines universal history and the nature and destiny of humankind, which he likens to the perpetual conflict between two cities, the one symbolising the love of God, the other the love of creation and self. The destiny of the City of God (i.e. those who love God) is beyond history.

The thought of *On the Trinity* moves from exegesis to interior reflection and speculation. Faith seeks to understand God's triune nature by studying the human being, made in God's image. God's nature is similar to man's nature which consists of memory, understanding and will. The threefoldness of God is expressed by the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit (which is the bond of love between the Father and the Son). The Athanasian Creed, is a handy epitome of Augustine's, but not Athanasius', trinitarian thought.

## II. THEOLOGY

Henri Marrou summarises Augustine's theology in four slogans: Philosopher of Being, against the Manichees; Teacher of the Church, against the Donatists; Theologian of History, against the pagans; Champion of Grace, against the Pelagians. His controversy with the enthusiastic and puritanical Donatists led him to say that the Church is for sinners, that the effectiveness of the sacraments is independent of the worthiness of the minister, that persons baptised by schismatics need not be re-baptised. His controversy with Pelagius led him to stress, and perhaps over-stress, God's grace; to the dogmas of original sin, the mild damnation of unbaptised infants and predestination. His view of grace, less severely defined, became the teaching in the West.

## III. EVALUATION

Eastern Christianity finds Augustine puzzling and often wrong, but in the West he has been largely followed, especially in his anthropology and Trinitarian dogma. His anthropology, rather than Pelagius', seemed more satisfactory, although many questioned his view of original sin. Of permanent value is his view that for one to understand it is necessary to believe, and vice versa, and that we understand God by reflecting upon the nature of the human soul. Influential also have been his views of evil as a privation of good, of sin as disordered love, of the three stages of the relation of free-will and sin — able not to sin (Adam), not able not to sin (humanity since the Fall), not able to sin (fulfilled humanity). It is to be feared that in our times of TV and condensed books he will not be read as he should be.

Editor's Note: The Reverend Frederick Gordon Krieger, BA (Hobart College, New York), STB (Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass.), a Priest of the Anglican Church of Canada, is Professor of Historical and Theological Studies and Director of Basic Degree Programmes at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he has taught since 1971.

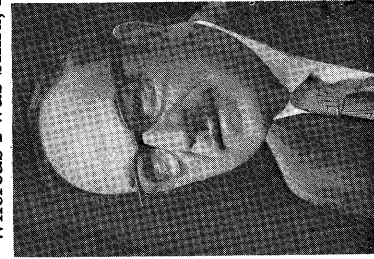


Frederick Krieger

## IN MEMORIAM

### R. BEN GULLISON, 1905-1987

Dr. R. Ben Gullison, CM BA MB ChB DCL DD, was born in Maitland, Nova Scotia, the son of parents who went as missionaries to India in 1896. He graduated in Arts from Acadia University, in medicine from Edinburgh University and also studied at Gordon Bible College, Boston. In 1933, along with his wife Evelyn, Dr. Ben first went to India where he became the first resident missionary for the Sompeta field. From 1933-1969 he and his staff in the small 120-bed hospital in Sompeta opened over 120,000 blind eyes. In 1962 Dr. Ben returned to Canada seeking funds for his struggling hospital and while speaking to a large audience in Calgary inspired a handful of Christian businessmen to organize Operation Eyesight Universal the following year. His dedicated work on behalf of the destitute blind of the developing world has been widely and suitably recognized by the Canadian State and Church. A member of the Order of Canada, he was given Acadia University's highest honour, the Distinguished Service Award, in 1986. His memorial will be the gratitude of multitudes who, because of him, are now able to say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see."



### ABNER JAMES LANGLEY, 1910-1987

The Reverend Abner James Langley, BTh (Gordon), MA (Boston), BD DD (Acadia) was born in Goldboro, Guysborough County, Nova Scotia on 9 May 1910 and died in the Eastern Kings Memorial Hospital, Wolfville, on 20 May 1987. A well-attended, beautifully constructed and moving Service of Witness in his remembrance was held in his church, the Wolfville Baptist Church on Saturday, 23 May 1987.

Ordained in 1935, Abner began his ministry at Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass. He served as pastor of four Maritime churches: Immanuel Baptist Church, Truro, N.S.; Central Baptist, Saint John, N.B.; West End Baptist, Halifax, N.S.; First Baptist Church, Moncton, N.B. He served First Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces in 1951. He was Principal and Dean of the Acadia Divinity College, 1971-75, and Director of Development and External Relations of that institution, 1976-86. He was a Governor of Acadia University, 1952-67; and from 1975 until his death he was Field Superintendent of the DMin programme of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

He was a member of the Executive of the Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board, and its Chairman 1967-70, and visited and preached in many parts of the world on its behalf. He served many Christian organizations including the Lord's Day Alliance of Canada and the Canadian Bible Society. He was President of the Baptist Federation of Canada and served on the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance. As a delegate he attended many gatherings of world Baptist and other leaders. He was a member of the American Academy of Homiletics.

When the biblical Abner died, many wept. Many will feel a deep personal loss at Abner Langley's passing and will thank God for his occupancy of the pastoral office which he served with such distinction.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S DEPARTURE

A Sermon by Harold Logan Mitton

We gather today to rejoice in the goodness and mercy of God which followed Abner Langley all the days of his life. As he neared the end he might well have said, in the words of Paul, "The time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

I. The Apostle speaks of his approaching death as a *departure*.

The Greek word used here for 'departure' (*anastasis*) had in the ancient world a threefold usage. Seamen used it for the unloosing of a ship from its anchorage; plowmen used it for the unyoking of a team of animals after a hard day's work; travellers used it for the folding up of their tent prior to beginning the travels and adventures of a new day. In like manner Paul used it to describe his impending death. It will be a release, a liberation, the beginning of a new adventure.

We Christians do not think of death as an unmitigated tragedy. For us it is the *reward* for one whose race is run. Often it is the release from the infirmities of age and from excruciating pain; it is the shuffling off of this mortal coil that we might put on the garment of immortality.

II. Is not this for our comfort?

Death is not an experience to be feared. It is simply a departure, an exit from one life into another. As Tennyson said, "May there be no moaning of the bar/When I put out to sea... no sadness of farewell/When I embark... I hope to see my Pilot face to face/When I have crossed the bar."

III. Departure, nonetheless, does involve the breaking of ties.

The death of a loved one does involve pain for those left behind in this mortal life. But we believe that separation is not final; it is only for a while. Some day we will be reunited in the eternal world.

We do not mourn as those without hope. We are comforted and sustained by the words of our Lord: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

We are comforted and sustained, too, by the blessed and imperishable memory of the one who has finished his earthly course. Abner Langley was in so many ways a truly remarkable person. He was learned, a lover of books, knowledgeable, far-sighted, wise. He was loyal — to his Master, Jesus Christ; to his wife and family; to the Acadia Divinity College. The College's building on the Acadia campus will be his enduring monument, and its sound fiscal policy his legacy. To his denomination he was loyal and gave it distinguished leadership. A man of strong convictions, he was nonetheless loveable, "slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." He will long be remembered as a faithful pastor, wise counsellor, mission strategist, theological educator and prominent denominational leader.

We offer our loving sympathy today to those who have lost a dear one. We commit you to God as you commit your loved one into the care and keeping of the Eternal.

**Editor's Note:** The above sermon, of which only a summary is given, was preached by the Reverend Dr. Harold L. Mitton at the Service of Witness in remembrance of the Reverend Dr. Abner Langley held in the Wolfville Baptist Church on Saturday, 23 May 1987.

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*My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage and my courage and skill to him that can get it.*

— John Bunyan, 1628-88



**ABF FALL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME**  
**UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH, CANNING, NOVA SCOTIA**  
**25-26 SEPTEMBER 1987**  
**Theme: HUMAN SEXUALITY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

**Friday**

- 7:00 p.m. Devotions — Rev. Dr. F. Malcolm Harlow,  
 First United Baptist Church, Truro, N.S.
- 7:20 p.m. President's opening remarks
- 7:30 p.m. Lecture I — Dr. Douglas W. Archibald, MD, FRCP(C),  
 "Human Sexuality from the standpoint of Medical Science"
- 8:30 p.m. The Service of Holy Communion, conducted by the  
 Minister and the Deacons of the host church
- 9:00 p.m. Fellowship — refreshments will be served

**Saturday**

- 9:00 a.m. Devotions — Rev. Ralph D. Wilton,  
 United Baptist Church, Wolfville, N.S.
- 9:20 a.m. Lecture II — Rev. Dr. M. R. Cherry,  
 "Human Sexuality from the standpoint of Christian  
 Ethics"
- 10:20 a.m. Coffee break
- 10:45 a.m. Response to lectures — Mrs. Gwen Atherton, RN  
 BN MED; Dr. Paul Kinsman, MD; Rev. Earl D. Ward.
- Noon General discussion — chaired by Dr. G. G. Harrop.
- 1:00 p.m. Dinner at church — freewill offering
- 3:00 p.m. ABF business and discussion of Convention affairs  
 Dismiss

**Hospitality**

**Bed and Breakfast in  
 Canning Area**

	Tel.	Single	Double
The Pilgrim's Rest, Main St., Canning	902-582-3258	28.00	35.00
The Country Squire, Main St., Port Williams	902-542-9125	30.00	35.00
This Old House, Main St., Port Williams	902-542-4126	30.00	35.00
The Old Farm House Inn, Route 358 The Planters Barracks, Starr's Point Rd., Port Williams	902-542-4417	30.00	42.00
	902-542-7879	50.00	60.00
<b>Motels</b>			
Blomidon Inn, Main St., Wolfville	902-542-9326	54.00 up	64.00 up
Old Orchard Inn, Greenwiche	902-542-5751	63.00 up	70.00 up
White Spot Motel, New Minas	902-678-3244	23.00 up	26.00 up
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**THE UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH, CANNING, NOVA SCOTIA**

The Canning Free Baptist Church was organized in 1845. In 1870 the Calvinist Baptist Church at Canning, an offshoot from the First Cornwallis Baptist Church, began with a membership of 27. In 1906 the two churches united to form the Canning United Baptist Church, a body with over 200 members. The buildings of the uniting churches were sold and the present United Baptist Church was erected in 1911.

From 1924 until 1978 the Pereaue Baptist Church was connected with the Canning United Baptist Church in one pastorate.