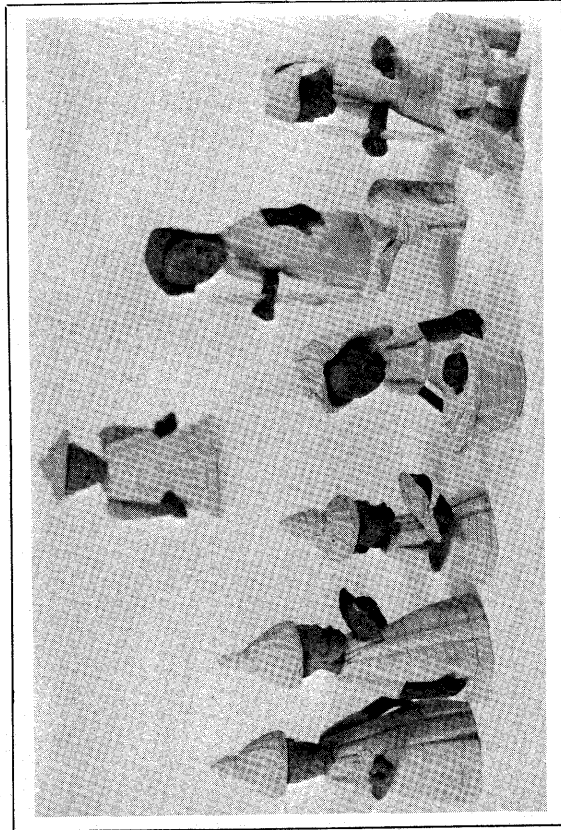


# BULLETIN

of the

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

December 1987



The Nativity

*Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King*

Nigerian Style

## SPRING ASSEMBLY 1988

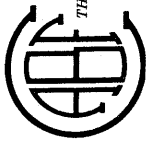
10-11 June 1988

Lancaster Baptist Church, Saint John, N.B.

Theme: *"The Theory and Practice of Worship"*  
Special Speaker:

Dr. J.R.C. Perkin, President, Acadia University

Full details in next edition of the Bulletin



### THE OFFICERS OF THE ABF ARE:

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### 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.

*While fully acknowledging the difficulties of religious faith, Harry Emerson Fosdick (1898-1969) confessed: "But I am sure of Mind behind the Universe, Purpose running through it, Meaning in it, Destiny ahead of it. And I am sure of an available Power in whose fellowship we can find strength to do what we ought to do, and to endure what we must endure."*

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Seasons Greetings to all our kind and gentle readers and generous supporters!

The photograph, from which the picture on the front of this edition is taken, is due to the expertise of Vincent Rushton, our now formally elected Director of Public Relations. The figurines came from Northern Nigeria, sent home some Christmases ago by my younger son, while he was serving there with CUSO teaching English in a high school. They express so simply the joy of Christmas which we all feel at this time of year. God is indeed with us; we need be anxious about nothing!

There was so much good material available for this edition that several regular features have had to be postponed until next time, and much of what we have printed had to be cut down severely to fill the available space.

Vincent Rushton, to whom we are grateful for several illustrations in this number, informs us that the Southern Baptist Alliance, called into existence recently by the resurgence of the fundamentalist/modernist warfare of the 1920s, and whose experience closely resembles that of the ABF's, wish to send a representative to one of our assemblies in the near future to learn what we have achieved by our history and experience. Further, Dr. Buddy Shurden has been recommended to us as a speaker at some future assembly — the SBA have kindly offered to assist us with his travel expenses.

And that brings me to appeal to you, gentle reader, for your financial support. Our finances are in a poor way and need your help. If you think the ABF serves a useful purpose among the Baptists of Canada, and if you like to read our *Bulletin* and find its production worthwhile, please send us a donation immediately — make it your Christmas gift to us.

You will be interested to know there are now 17 churches, with a membership totalling 11,000, which support the Southern Baptist Alliance. There are also 1,400 individual members. It is expected that by the end of this year those numbers will have doubled. The Southern Baptist Convention, by the way, has a membership of 14.4 million.

We should all note that the Baptist World Alliance Council meeting in Amman, Jordan, 5-12 July 1987, *recalls* the historic Baptist understanding of religious liberty to which our forebears were persecuted and put to death, and therefore *calls upon* its constituent members to uphold continually that vision of freedom grounded in the gospel of the living Christ, and therefore to allow for varieties of practice and interpretation.

It is good to hear that 10,000 bibles and 10,000 hymnals were delivered to the leaders of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians — Baptists in the Moscow Baptist Church last June. More bibles will be delivered soon.

I close by quoting, for your delectation and meditation, a few lines I like from the writings of C. Maurice Bowra, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, my *alma mater*. "In Oxford the mere collection of facts has never been thought to be enough; still less is there any tendency to believe that all facts are equal before the throne. What counts most is the ability to think, to detect false arguments and bad evidence, to construct a coherent case, to see more than one side of a matter and to decide which is best, to make words perform their task with the utmost clarity and precision."

A merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to One and All!

## ABF FALL ASSEMBLY 1987

The theme of the Assembly, held at the United Baptist Church, Canning, Nova Scotia 25-26 September, 1987, was "Human Sexuality and Christian Ethics." Two lectures on this important and timely subject were given by Dr. Douglas W. Archibald ("Human Sexuality from the Standpoint of Medical Science") and the Reverend Dr. M.R. Cherry ("Human Sexuality from the Standpoint of Christian Ethics").



*Douglas Archibald*

Douglas Ward Archibald was born in Campbellton, N.B., the son of a United Church minister. Educated at Mount Allison and Dalhousie Universities, he graduated from the latter in 1960 with the M.D. degree. For the next seven years, he worked in general practice with the United Church, primarily with Native Indians in Northern British Columbia and Manitoba. Returning to Dalhousie, four years were spent in completing the Residency Training Programme in Psychiatry, including postgraduate training at the University of Edinburgh. His particular interest has been Social Psychology. He was for thirteen years Medical Director of the Fundy Mental Health Centre, Wolfville. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Canada in 1971. Dr. Archibald's present position is Administrator, Psychiatric Mental Health Services, Department of Health, Province of Nova Scotia.

Millard Ross Cherry was born in the state of Kentucky. In 1944 he received the B.A. degree from Ouachita Baptist University, Arkansas, and in 1948 the B.D. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Continuing to study while in pastoral charge, he earned the D.Th. degree from Southern in 1957.

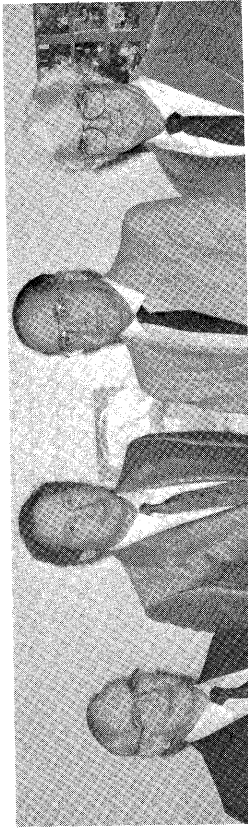
In 1957 Cherry began a 30-year career at Acadia University, joining the School of Theology as professor of systematic theology, a position held until his retirement in the spring of 1987. He served as acting Dean of Theology during August 1963 through December 1964 and was then appointed Dean and served until 1971. During the period 1968-1971 he served as the first Principal of the Acadia Divinity College.

Cherry's influence has been widely felt across the Acadia campus. He has served on the University senate, as a regular member and a member of the executive, and on numerous committees of both the University and the Divinity College. He will long be remembered as a very friendly and generous man, a loyal supporter of all the activities of the campus. An avid sports fan he was usually to be seen (and heard) at almost all sporting events.

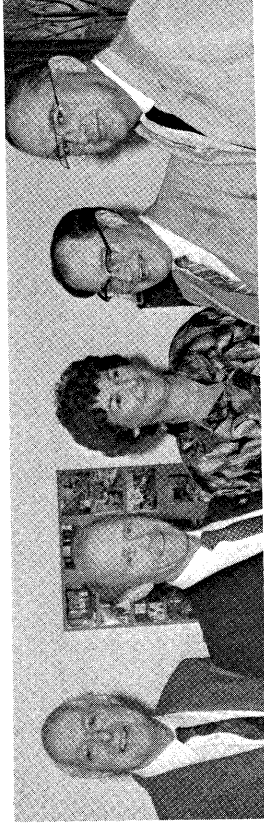
Cherry has preached and lectured widely and has published extensively in periodicals and journals. He is always ready to serve the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship and its *Bulletin*, as this and previous editions can easily show. He has been the recipient of many awards, including honorary doctorates in divinity from Pine Hill Divinity Hall and McMaster University. At this year's Fall Convocation, October 17th, he was awarded Acadia's honorary

## SCENES FROM THE FALL ASSEMBLY 1987

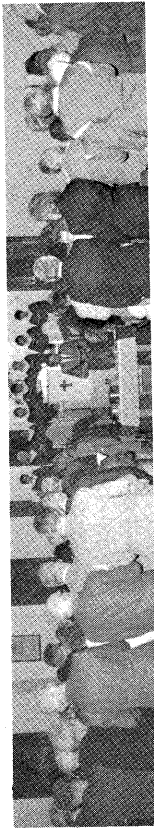
*Photographs by Vincent Rushton*



*Dr. Malcom Harlow, Rev. G. Delaney, Dr. Douglas Archibald, Dr. G. Harrop.*



*Rev. E. Ward, Dr. P. Kinsman, Mrs. G. Atherton, Dr. M.R. Cherry, Dr. D. Archibald.*



*The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper.*



*Good Fellowship.*



*Great Hospitality.*

D.D. degree. He was further honoured the next day by being asked to preach at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Sesquicentennial of Acadia University held in the Wolfville United Baptist Church.

#### FRIDAY EVENING

The Friday evening session was opened by the Second Vice-President, the Reverend Dr. Gerry Harrop, who proceeded to invite the Reverend Dr. Malcolm Harlow, the minister of the First United Baptist Church, Truro, Nova Scotia, to conduct opening devotions. Following this, the Reverend Gordon Delaney, the minister of the host church, welcomed the friends of the ABF to the Assembly, praying that they might have a pleasurable and profitable visit to his community. Dr. D.W. Archibald then presented his lecture, "Human Sexuality from the standpoint of Medical Science" (see page 7f. for a condensation of the lecture). The session wound up with a celebration of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper. A period for refreshments and fellowship closed the activities of the day.

#### SATURDAY MORNING

The President, Mrs. Gwen Atherton, opened the morning session and invited the Reverend Ralph Wilton, minister of the Wolfville United Baptist Church, to lead morning devotions. The Reverend Dr. M.R. Cherry was then called on to deliver his lecture, "Human Sexuality from the standpoint of Christian Ethics" (see page 9ff for a condensation of the lecture).

After morning coffee break, a most instructive and useful "give-and-take" session was held, in which the two speakers interacted with a panel (chaired by Dr. Harrop, consisting of Mrs. Gwendolyn Atherton, RN, BN, MED, Dr. Paul Kinsman, MD, and the Reverend Earl D. Ward) and the audience. A feature of this period was Dr. Kinsman's distribution of xeroxed copies of an article by Dr. Seth L. Haber, entitled "The Four Fatal Myths of AIDS."

#### SATURDAY AFTERNOON

The Saturday afternoon session of the conference, opened with prayer offered by Dr. M.R.B. Lovesey, was devoted, from its beginning to the close of the conference in mid-afternoon, to the necessary business of the ABF.

The Treasurer reported that the finances of the ABF were in very bad shape, so bad that it might become necessary to cancel the 1987 December issue of the *Bulletin*. The matter was referred to the Executive for action. (Editor's Note - the Executive discussed the crisis at its October 17th meeting, when it was decided, since the financial situation showed a slight improvement and since there were concrete proposals for fund-raising and reducing expenditures, there would be a number of the *Bulletin* issued in December 1987.)

It was agreed that the Spring Assembly 1988 would be held at the Lancaster United Baptist Church, Saint John, N.B., 11-12 June. The speaker will be Dr. J.R.C. Perkin, President of Acadia University; his topic, "The Theory and Practice of Worship." The topic for the Fall 1988 Assembly will be "The Southern Baptist Alliance," with, if funds permit, a visiting speaker from the Alliance.

Of the several Convention Concerns discussed, much time was given to the matter of the Convention joining the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. It was agreed, in response to a letter from the Editor of the *Atlantic Baptist*, that individual members of the ABF, not the body itself, should write letters concerning the proposal for publication in the denominational paper.

## HUMAN SEXUALITY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

by Douglas W. Archibald, MD, FRCP(C)

With permission, I wish to define the "Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality" in a broad sense including psychological aspects and then move to some aspects of human relationships which I have gained from reading and personal experience in practising psychiatric medicine.

### I. MEDICAL ASPECTS OF SEXUALITY

The perception of sex as an activity with both physical and social implications dates back to very early perhistoric times. As cultures change the understanding of sexuality changes, the rules and tabus are always relevant to the contemporary culture.

It is necessary to distinguish *sexual identity* from *gender identity*. *Sexual identity* is made apparent in the external genitalia. *Gender identity*, the maleness or femaleness felt, usually completed by the age of 2½ or 3, is the more important. Gender identity once set is irreversible. Gender identification and knowledge of how it is achieved is still in its infancy; it is *believed* to be achieved by 2½ or 3; it may or may not be congruent with the sexual identity; it appears to be irreversible.

Three forces appear to shape Gender Identity:

(1) *Biologic*. In the early embryo, the resting state for mammals is female, and maleness is produced only if an androgenic pulse (hormone) is added. This is set off by the male "Y" chromosome that induces the "H-Y" antigen (androgen) to be produced.

(2) *Biopsychic*. Almost nothing is known regarding this. These are non-mental stimuli from outside and inside the organism exerting an influence.

(3) *Environmental-Intrapsychic*. In general in lower species, maleness and masculinity are synonymous. But higher up the evolutionary scale, and reaching a peak in human beings, one finds that masculinity is due to response to environment.

(a) The shaping of sexuality is due to the rewards and punishments inflicted on the growing child by its parents.

(b) Bonding. Relationships between mother and child involves skin-to-skin and eye-to-eye contact. In the male the father intervenes so skin-to-skin contact is not excessive.

(c) Parents' modelling.

(d) Communication and teaching. Intimacy and giving pleasure are more important than erection and orgasm. Intercourse should not be the greatest goal.

(e) Freud's views of Gender Identity:

- the baby boy is early attached to the mother, but by age 2 to 3 he sees the father as a competitor for the mother's affections.

- he develops an anxiety (Freud called it "castration anxiety") because he feels the father is bigger and more important than himself . . . but then he overcomes that anxiety by deciding to be like his father, the father becomes his model, and, like the father, he searches for other females.

- in the case of the female, the mother as love object causes homosexual feelings. There is penis masochism and passivity. But then the female develops the ability to move towards the father and man.



Gordon Delaney

We need to be very humble as regards *gender identity*, as little is known about it. It appears we have little choice in the matter and that our degree of maleness or femaleness is determined at an early age.

## II. SOME ASPECTS OF SEXUALITY GAINED FROM WORKING WITH PEOPLE

Gender Identity is a matter of "feelings." There are shades of grey between total maleness and total femaleness, which is probably a myth anyway.

(1) Feeling. A feeling is just a feeling, it is neither good nor bad in itself. Wherever it comes from, the important thing is what we do with it. We must beware of making the common mistake of judging the feeling. For example, the feeling "to kill" is neither good nor bad, it is just a feeling. Now what we do with the feeling can be judged. If it leads to murder it shall surely be judged bad. It is the same in the sexual area. The feeling to rape is neither good nor bad, it is what we do with it — say Yes or No to it and act accordingly — that matters.

In a sense we are our feelings i.e., our unique reality. Yet we wear masks and stereotypes, including sexual stereotypes.

*Intimacy* is the sharing of "feelings" with another person.

*Love* is finding that another person accepts those feelings.

*Acceptance* grows as the other person begins to approve of those feelings. The more we can *risk* in intimacy with another person and find acceptance, the more we will come to accept ourselves. Could "eternal life" be acceptance by myself of myself in totality?

Sexual activity in this context becomes a specialized form of communication, often "non-verbal" communication. It is subject to great change due to depression, marital discord, illness, financial and other pressures, lowered self-esteem, medication and performance anxieties. But in proper perspective, with the joys of intimacy, sexual activity can increase love and acceptance.

(2) Homosexuality. In 1974, the American Psychiatric Association ruled that homosexuality is not a mental disorder. It seems today there is a "sexual orientation disturbance" if a person is unhappy and wants to change. In the light of Gender Identity, as discussed above, it becomes difficult through all shades of grey to determine what is homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual feeling and behaviour.

Kinsey's investigations found 4% are homosexuals; 13% of males are predominantly homosexual for 3 or 4 years, plus an additional 13% of males who reacted emotionally to other males, but had no genital contact. Various explanations are given to account for homosexuality (psychoanalytic, genetic, hypothalamic, etc., all somewhat confusing and contradictory), but we really do not know its cause. The important thing, of course, is how we respond to that feeling.

I have tried to show that sexuality is not well understood, but appears to be a matter of feeling much more than biological sexuality identity. These feelings are engendered at a very early age and are irrational and unique to each person. The feelings are neither good nor bad, but the response and subsequent action can be seen as good or bad. We do have control over the action. Feelings, including sexual feelings, should be shared in an intimate relationship where love and acceptability may be found, which in turn will lead to affirmation and acceptance of one's self. Surely this is at the core of our spiritual beliefs. It is by losing oneself to another person that one finds oneself.

# HUMAN SEXUALITY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

by Millard Ross Cherry

It is no simple matter to develop a biblical view of sex and sexuality, yet the attempt must be made if we are to arrive at a Christian understanding. The task is difficult for at least three reasons. First, because not every word of scripture has the same value and authority — there is development in biblical thought. Christians interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New. Second, because of the difficulty of the biblical models — which to follow and which not to follow. Third, because of the difficulty of interpreting the seventh commandment ("You shall not commit adultery," Exodus 20.14), which lies at the base of all biblical teaching about sex — this only forbids adultery, but Jesus interpreted it to require purity of heart as well as purity in deed (Matthew 5.28).

## I. SEX AND CREATION

Genesis 1.26-27 teaches that sexuality belongs to the very order of creation — "God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them." Note that "man" is singular, not plural. That humanity is male and female is grounded in the fact that humanity is created in the image of God. Karl Barth has emphasized that God is *being in community*, or *being in relation*, and that humanity, reflecting the image of God, is also *being in community* or *being in relation*. This point is made even stronger in the older creation story of Genesis 2.4bff. Humanity is created in relationship (community) and the fundamental relationship is sexual.

That human sexuality is to be understood theologically in relation to the image of God in humanity is not to deny that it is also to be understood in terms of nature and the natural process. Human beings consist of dust plus the breath of God (Genesis 2.7). We are related both to God and the natural creation. However it is the unique relationship of human beings with God which distinguishes them from the animals and places upon them a responsibility for their sexual conduct which is not required from the animals.

The creation, according to Genesis 1.31, was judged to be "very good." And that includes human sexuality. Sex is God's gift to humanity. There is no biblical evidence whatever to the view that sexuality is inherently evil.

## II. A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF SEX

Otto A. Piper's book, *The Christian Interpretation of Sex* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, p.30), gives us a helpful summary of biblical teaching concerning sex. He summarizes in five fundamental statements:

1. In sexual intercourse two persons of different sex become joined in indissoluble unity.
2. Sex is meaningful in itself, creating a specific kind of personal relationship. It does not require a justification by concomitant features, as, for instance, the possibility of propagation it offers.
3. In sex life one attains knowledge of the inner secret of one's own physical being.
4. In love, sustained by faith, sex attains its consummation and perfection.
5. Sex life is necessary and good, but not absolutely essential for a full human life.

The following comments on these five statements might be made:

1. There can be little doubt that the indissolubility of marriage is the biblical ideal. Though to do so is contrary to the biblical ideal, marriage can be, and often is, ended by divorce — but apparently the mysterious unity which takes place in sexual union can never be completely dissolved. Sexual union is not simply a biological act; in it two persons do not simply give their sexual organs to one another, they give themselves to one another.

2. The early Church believed, because of its view that sex is evil, that Christians should only engage in procreational sex. But such a view is contrary to the biblical affirmation of the goodness of sex.

3. Many of us have ignored for far too long how fundamental our sexuality, our maleness and our femaleness, is in shaping and determining who we are.

4. Obviously non-believers may and do enjoy sex, but its consummation and full meaning is only possible for Christian believers whose faith issues in Christian love (*agape*).

5. Piper means that it is not absolutely essential for us to have sexual intercourse in order to have a full human life. He is aware that Paul teaches that celibacy is a special gift of God to a few (1 Corinthians 7.7), that Jesus makes reference to those who make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19.12), and that Jesus himself was not active sexually. The unmarried person needs to develop meaningful and rewarding relationships with other persons in order to experience something of the complementarity and completion which ideally married persons experience in marriage and the sexual union in which the mysterious unity of "one flesh" is experienced.

### III. A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SEX

In the light of the above discussion, we may now attempt a sketch of the Christian view of sex and sexuality:

1. Sex is good and necessary.

Sex is one of God's good gifts to humanity. It was only when Hebrew thought was interpreted in terms of popular Greek dualism that the early Church began to teach that sex was inherently evil.

And sex is not only good, but it is necessary. Necessary, not only for the propagation of the race, but to bring to full fruition the marriage union. Such is not absolutely essential in order that the individual may enjoy a full human life, but it remains a necessity for most.

Sex may be perverted like all of God's good gifts. Human beings are fallen creatures — sin pervades the whole of our being. Lust, adultery, fornication, prostitution, homosexuality are all viewed in scripture as the abuse of our sexuality.

3. Sex is the sacrament of marriage.

Ideally, sex and intercourse is the outward and visible sign of that inward and spiritual grace, the love and commitment of husband and wife to each other, the covenant, that makes them one. And it is more than a sign, it is a symbol — sexual intercourse between husband and wife is a participation in that mysterious oneness which the bible designates as "one flesh." God has so created man and woman that the only adequate physical expression of their love is sexual union. This is the true meaning of sexual intercourse.

4. Sex is the divinely appointed means of procreation.

This involves the man and woman in tremendous family responsibilities particularly in the raising of children. This does not mean they are to produce as many children as possible, for family planning is one aspect of being responsible.

5. Celibacy is the gift of God.

The bible assumes most human beings will marry, but Paul held that celibacy was a "special gift from God" (1 Corinthians 7.7). Celibacy is a vocation. Such a person offers up his or her sexuality to God, foregoes the pleasure and fulfilment of his or her sexuality, and dedicates his or her full energies to the service of the Kingdom of God.

### IV. SOME ETHICAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH HUMAN SEXUALITY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO HOMOSEXUALITY

The sex drive is one of the strongest human instincts, its control is difficult and it gives rise to many problems. Sexual desire is not evil in itself, but inordinate desire, that is lust, is. Some of the ethical issues associated with human sexuality are masturbation, promiscuous sex, incest, rape, birth control and homosexuality. Here we can only deal with the last.

Both Testaments condemn homosexuality (see, for example, Leviticus 18.22; Romans 1.26-27; 1 Corinthians 6.9-10; 1 Timothy 1.10).

A leading psychiatrist, Charles W. Socarides, defines homosexuality as "a pattern of sexual behaviour wherein individuals repeatedly and out of inner necessity engage in sexual acts with partners of the same sex" (quoted in Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse and Urban T. Holmes III (eds.), *Male and Female: Christian Approaches to Sexuality*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1976, p.144). He distinguishes *obligatory* homosexuality (which he regards as true homosexuality) from *non-obligatory* homosexuality (which is not a true homosexuality, but which is practised by choice). In spite of the 1973 decision of the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association to eliminate homosexuality from its official Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Socarides maintains that all obligatory homosexuals suffer from a mental disorder that can only be treated effectively by psychotherapy.

If Socarides and others are right in believing that true homosexuality appears so early in childhood that the true homosexual is such of inner necessity, it is difficult to see how society and the Church can hold the true homosexual responsible for his or her condition. Such persons should not be rejected by the Church nor recriminated against by society. It seems that medical science is not yet sure whether homosexuality is of psychogenetic or genetic origin. I find Kinsey helpful at this point. He says that on a scale from zero to six in which zero represents those who are exclusively heterosexual in both feelings and behaviour and six represents those who are exclusively homosexual, relatively few persons fall near zero or near six. Most fall somewhere between but with a clearly felt and expressed bias towards one orientation or the other.

Four theological stances can be seen among Christians and Christian theologians:

1. *Rejecting-punitive*. Strong historically and possibly held by most Christians today, it finds little support from Christian theologians.

2. *Rejecting - non-punitive*. Supported by theologians such as Barth and Muehl.

3. *Qualified acceptance*. Supported by Helmut Thielicke and others.

4. *Full acceptance*. The position adopted by the English Quakers in *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, by Fr. John McNeil and Norman Pittenger. Homosexuals are human beings, created in the image of God, and like us all stand in need of God's grace. They need the ministry of the Church. The command to love neighbour as oneself includes the homosexual.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON CONVENTION ASSEMBLY 1987

by Philip G.A. Griffin-Allwood

The return of debate to the floor of the Convention Assembly was the most significant feature of this year's assembly. This shows that the churches through their ministers and delegates are once more becoming a force in denominational life.

(a) The debate on the motion to cease the examination of women for ordination was carried on in an atmosphere of civility. That the motion was soundly defeated was perhaps mostly due to the stand taken by the leaders of the denomination and the Convention's theological school. One hopes that the defeated, substantial minority, that took its stand on certain scriptural texts, will not feel alienated. Within an ecumenical union, such as our Convention is, the majority has the responsibility of ensuring that the minority still feels it belongs.

(b) The amended motion on the examination of ordination, attempting to deal with the problem of homosexuality, was an improvement on that originally proposed. However, it will place all single candidates under suspicion. Further it was phrased negatively. It would have been better to hear from the candidate an affirmation of heterosexual chasteness and vital marriage. Affirmations communicate more effectively than condemnations!

(c) Notices of motion concerning the examination for ordination will, if passed, add morality to the constitutional prerogatives. At issue here, in the morality amendment, is whether the churches wish to surrender their prerogative to determine the morality of members. Does the Convention become a church, when morality is added to its constitutional prerogatives? Are the rights of the local church sufficiently protected if the constitution is amended to include morality in the examination of the local church's members for ordination?

The rest of the amendments represent matters of choice. Incidental to the proposals is the question of the authority of the Convention to make the change (from "Licence to Preach" to "Recognition of Gifts for Ministry") without ratification by the local church and the associations with which the licensing authority rests.

(d) The notice of motion for the Convention to join the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada on terms similar to those adopted by the Baptist Union of Western Canada at its 1986 Assembly raises concerns similar to those reported by me last year. First, the EFC's requirement that members adhere to its confession of faith differs from the historic evangelicalism's stress on the private interpretation of scripture. Second, a doubt must be felt about the institutional integrity of an organization that has a constitutional requirement of adherence to its confession, yet accepts a denominational requirement of acknowledgement of "general acceptance of (the EFC's) statement of faith as similar to (the BUWC) position." Third, there is concern, in the light of the EFC's definition of the spiritual unity of all believers, in the integrity of the denominations and the accountability of the EFC to its constituency.

I left Convention with three impressions: (1) the debates often seemed to reflect an input from the United Church of Canada rather than from authentic Canadian Baptist thinking; (2) perhaps we are moving beyond the "churches in *new* communities" mentality to a recognition of the needs of the "churches in *old* communities"; (3) the shift from "outreach" to "discipleship" represents a better balance of the Convention's focus, for the latter includes the former.

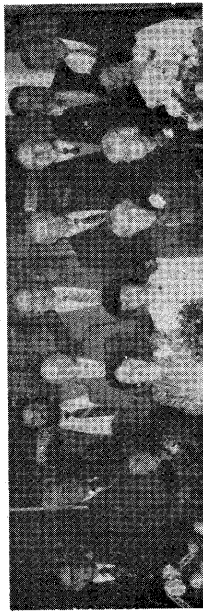
## NEWS OF THE CHURCH FROM FAR AND NEAR

### ANGLICANS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

At the policy-making general synod of the Anglican Church, meeting in London, England, on 11 November 1987, a motion that would have judged homosexuality and adultery "sinful in all circumstances" and would have required the removal of all homosexual priests from their pulpits, was rejected. It had been brought by a country rector who wanted the churches to "reaffirm the biblical stand," to declare homosexuality a sin, and to ban homosexuals from the priesthood. A milder motion, brought in by the Bishop of Chester, was passed by an overwhelming majority. This motion declared fornication and adultery to be sins against the Christian ideal of "a permanent married relationship." It said that intimate homosexual acts "also fall short of this ideal." It does not explicitly call homosexuality a sin. It also said adultery, fornication and homosexuality should be "met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion."

### THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT PEREAU, NOVA SCOTIA CELEBRATES 125TH BIRTHDAY

A well attended birthday service and reception was held at the Pereau Baptist Church on Sunday, 26 October, 1987. Eight former pastors



were present — Frank Sinnott, Charles Taylor, Garry Manthorne, Howard McCormack, Howard Taylor, Austin MacPherson, Vincent Rushton and Robert Childs. The present pastor is the Reverend David Shaw. The anniversary sermon was preached by the Reverend Dr. Charles J. Taylor.

### THEOLOGICAL WARFARE ESCALATES IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

(a) Trouble at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C. Recently the trustees voted 15-10 to alter the way the seminary uses to choose its faculty to ensure that professors believing in biblical inerrancy shall be added in future. Last October, both President Lolley and Dean Ashcroft resigned finding themselves unable to accept the trustees' ruling.

(b) Trouble at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia. A wealthy fundamentalist layman recently mailed out 5,000 letters to supporters of the institution, where over a million Southern Baptists are battling for control, accusing the University's president, R. Kirby Godsey, of preaching heresies (he doesn't believe the Bible and does not believe in the atonement) and allowing students to live immoral lives. The suggestion made, to improve matters, is that the Georgia Baptist Convention, not the University as is now the practice, should select the candidates for trustee positions.

(c) Trouble at Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee. 75% of the 360 messengers to the annual meeting of the Shelby Baptist Association of the SBC, voted to withdraw fellowship from the Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, Memphis, for calling a woman (Nancy Hastings Sehested, a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, New York) to its pastorate. It should be noted that in recent years 450 women have been ordained SB ministers, although only about 10 of these have found pastorates most of these in small churches that do not pay their ministers.

## COMMENT

### Whatever has happened to our Worship?

We would raise our hats to the belief that the church is not a social club, but the gathering of the Body of Christ, but what do we see as we gather for worship? Having visited several Baptist churches recently, it might be forgiven if we thought that the practice of worship has fallen to the level of a social club gathering.

It is possible that the congregations did not understand what was happening to their worship, which would be the cause of more alarm. Are we resigned to sit on this "slippery slope"? During one service recently, three different people participating in leadership began by saying "good morning", and almost waited for the congregation to respond!

A small change, one might think, to greet people in worship with a "good morning", but it is unrecognized that this turns around completely the direction of our worship, especially when it is the first thing said by the people conducting the worship. One happy innovation in the past number of years has been the institution of "greeters" at the door of the church. This is where it belongs. When we formally begin our worship our faces should be turned towards God.

Usually the leaders of worship have not seen most of the congregation until they proceed to the lectern or pulpit, and there is an understandable temptation to make a personal greeting. This would be to forget, however, that they proceed to the front of the people as a sign of the beginning of worship and turning from ourselves to God. The first words of worship, then, should be sentences of scripture. Throughout the service, our attention needs to be focussed upon God.

Is this making too much of a small thing? It is not if it is the first of many things cut into a true model of worship. Think of the hymns which we sing in worship: are they connected with the theme of that day's worship? If hymns are chosen solely because they are popular and "enjoyable", then the direction of worship is turned back upon us again, for they are being sung for our enjoyment, rather than expressing our inner soul to God within the context of corporate worship.

It took Baptists about 100 years and great battles over principle before hymns were even allowed into our worship. Perhaps there was some justification for the opinions of those Baptists who wished only to chant the Psalms in their worship. Hymns in worship need to be rescued from any attitude reminiscent of men's social club "sing-songs" or a well meant variety programme.

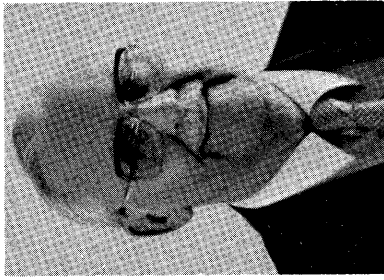
When hymn verses are omitted willy-nilly, one suspects this is done for our convenience rather than for the praise of God. When this is done for the convenience of the speaker because he has preached too long, it is nothing less than robbing the people of *their* act of worship.

What in the world has happened to our worship? It may be that even with the best of intentions, the leaders of services have inadvertently turned the direction from God to us, the worshippers. It is time to recall the words of the psalmist, as recorded in Psalm 33.8 NEB:

Let the whole world fear the Lord  
and all men on earth stand in awe of Him.

## THE ACID TEST OF CHRISTIANITY

A Sermon by George L. McNeill



Dr. George L. McNeill

Webster defines the acid test as: "a severe or decisive test of authenticity." Applied to our Faith, it suggests the one true test by which we determine the genuine nature of our Christian experience.

Some would declare it Doctrinal Orthodoxy; other, Moral Integrity; yet others, Living by the Golden Rule, or even Universal Benevolence. While recognizing the place and value of all of these in the Christian life, the longer I live the more I am convinced that the Acid Test of Christianity is Love.

Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." In his post-resurrection appearance, recorded in John 21, the one factor of which he wants to be assured, before he commissions Peter, is the absolute nature of his love. Love for God, as revealed in his Son, translated into love for our fellow human beings, is the acid test of Christianity. Paul had grasped this and places it above all other divine gifts when he calls it the "more excellent way," in 1 Corinthians 13. He claims that one could have all coveted gifts and even be a martyr for one's faith, but without love one is valueless.

Love, then, is the acid test of Christianity. We should note that, when we truly love Christ as he has loved us, other factors inevitably follow.

### I. We Have an Adequate Foundation for Our Faith

Jesus of Nazareth is an historical figure, attested by secular historians of his times as well as by the Gospel writers. He lived, grew, walked, talked, worked at a carpenter's bench, taught, healed, won support, aroused opposition, was crucified, certified to be dead and was buried. He was more than a martyr for he not only suffered murder but positively, on his own accord, laid down his life for the redemption of the world. And his death was not the end, for God raised him from the dead and the Church came into being based on belief in Christ's victory over death, a victory in which all Christians share.

In terms of faith, the Christian can not only say, "he loved me and gave himself for me," but also, "he loves me and gives himself for me." Religious faith is no mere subjective experience, the answer to an inner craving, but involvement with a life, his life, towards which faith travels, on which it rests, and to which the heart's devotion can be given without reserve.

An Indian mystic, Sadhu Sundar, visiting England, was asked by a professor of comparative religion, "what do you find in Christianity that you did not have in your old religion?" The Sadhu replied, "The non-Christian religions have many fine things in them . . . but they do not have Christ." In possessing Christ we possess all else — a philosophy of life, a rule of faith, the highest possible ethic, a purpose in living and a glorious destiny. In Christ we possess all things.



## II. We Have an Adequate Motive for Morality

The main problem of life is not WHY we ought to be good, but HOW we can be good. Dr. John Watson said many years ago: "Humanity does not need morals, it needs motives . . . Few men condemn the good, they simply leave it undone. Few men defend evil, they just do it. The moral machinery is complete, but it is motionless."

The decalogue is an admirable basis for morality, but it is powerless to make bad men good. The Sermon on the Mount gives ethical standards from the viewpoint of Jesus, but they live far beyond the potential of unregenerate human beings. Victory in the moral struggle only comes through surrender to Christ.

William James felt impotent and frustrated by the lives of the saints. He said that they mocked him. They mock us too, until we discover their secret, which is "abiding in Christ," allowing him to live his life in us. It is a love relationship. Living in him and with him we are transformed by him more and more into his image. Love for him supplies the motive for morality and is the secret of victory.

## III. We Have an Adequate Dynamic for Doing

Love for Christ affects not only our morals and produces character, it also supplies a zeal for evangelism and a mandate for mission. An enthusiasm for Christ carries a concern for our fellow men. Over the years, love for Christ has kindled social passion and has been responsible for building hospitals, schools, orphanages and homes for the aged and the handicapped. All merely humanitarian motives are thin and pallid, compared with the love of Christ constraining.

A missionary was asked by a professor, "What motive prompts you to make this great sacrifice?" The missionary replied, "The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." David Livingstone, facing the terrible hazards of men, beasts and nature in the jungles of Africa, said, "That hymn of St. Bernard's rings in my ears: 'Jesus, the very thought of thee with sweetness fills my breast.'" So it was with William Booth, when he founded the Salvation Army to reveal the love of Christ to the poor and the destitute untouched by the churches of his day. When Father Damien embraced the emaciated lepers of Molokai, when Kagawa braved the rat-infested slums of Kobe, when Jim Elliott was slain by the Auca Indians, when Norman Dabbs gave his life in Bolivia, it was, in each case, the love of Christ reaching out through his dedicated followers.

Love for Christ, translated into love for others, is the mightiest force in the world for individual, national and world regeneration. That is the acid test of Christianity. "Lord, it is my chief complaint that my love is weak and faint. Yet I love thee and adore; O for grace to love thee more."

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**Editor's Note:** George L. McNeill was born and educated in Scotland. After taking the M.A. degree of the University of Edinburgh, he studied for the Baptist ministry at the Baptist Theological College of Scotland and was ordained in 1942. During WW2 he served as an Army chaplain. After serving pastorates in the British Isles, he and his family emigrated to Canada in 1958. Canadian pastorates served have been those of the First Baptist Church, Moncton, N.B. and Bedford, N.S. George has served on numerous boards and committees of the AUBC and the CBF. He was president of the Convention in 1969. He has also served Acadia University and the Acadia Divinity College on its boards. On retirement he was named Minister Emeritus of the Bedford Baptist Church, and was honoured with Acadia University's D.D. degree in 1986.