

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

of

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

March, 1980

Lord

Make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred, let me sow love

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light, and

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master

Grant that I may not so much

Seek to be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

*And it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life.*

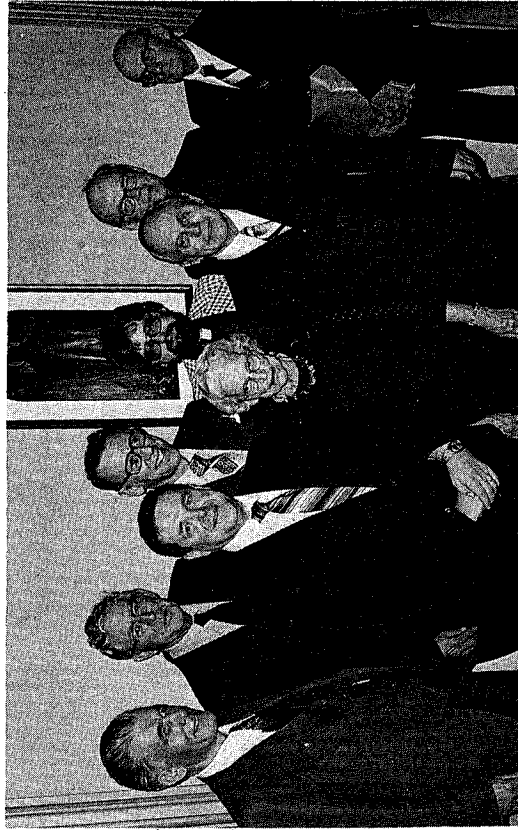
Prayer by Saint Francis of Assisi

Editorial Comment

This issue of our Bulletin contains a variety of material. There is more Church News than usual, and this for two reasons: So much material, that seemed to demand priority, crowded out some of the news items in the last Bulletin, and many interesting things are happening in various branches of the Church that we want to bring some of these to the attention of our readers.

In a longer than usual editorial, we are presenting what we consider to be the main objectives of the ABF Bulletin. It is hoped that many people will read and evaluate this, so that all can understand what is being attempted and why. We welcome a timely article by Dr. T. B. McDormand on "Should Dissent be Limited?" The article on "Baptist Forerunners" (with a special emphasis on the Anabaptists) is in our series on Baptist history and principles. On the ecumenical front, the article on "The Women's Inter-Church Council" gives valuable information on one of Canada's most successful ecumenical activities, one in which Baptist women have played, and continue to play, a very important part.

All of this, along with other items, is presented for information of our readers — may it be of interest and value to all.



Members of the ABF Council meeting at First Baptist Church, Halifax, October 30, 1979. Left to right, back row: Bob Matthews, Jud Levy, Jack Matthews, Byron Corkum, Reg Dunn, Frank Sinnott. Front row: Willis Henderson, Marian Grant, Don Jackson. Present, but not in the picture: Evelyn Kenney, Vincent Rushton and Phil Allwood.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: The Spring Conference of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship will be held in the Baptist Church at Mahone Bay, N.S. on June 13 and 14, 1980. More details as to program and accommodation will be given in the Bulletin. In the meantime, please reserve these dates.

The ABF Quarterly Bulletin— What? Why?

The ABF Quarterly Bulletin has been published regularly for three and a half years — the first number appearing in October, 1976. It is to be noted that, from its beginning in 1971, the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship has published a newsletter from time to time. However, it is since October 1976 that the Bulletin, as it is now known, began regular publication.

Four times a year, the ABF Bulletin is sent to a number of Atlantic Baptist churches, and to an increasing number of individuals. For the most part, it has been, and is, well received. In order that it may be read by more people, it seems fitting at this time to make a clear statement as to the What? and the Why? of this publication — its aims and hoped-for place among Atlantic Baptists.

The Bulletin is linked closely to the aims and activities of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship, the sponsoring and publishing body, and so the Bulletin can be understood only in this connection. In my first word as editor, I wrote: "It seemed wise in this first issue (that is, first in this series) to stress the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship itself — the justification for its existence, its aims, purposes and the emphasis that it seeks to advance within our convention circles." In order to make this plain, the then president of the ABF, Dr. Reg Dunn, at my request, supplied an article on "The ABF — its Aims and Purposes". From that article, and as a reminder, I now quote:

"One thing that needs to be made clear at the beginning of this article 'The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship — its Aims and Purposes,' and that is simply this: it is generally understood by the Fellowship that it has no intention of setting itself apart from the Fellowship of Baptists in general; whatever its 'aims and purposes,' it is the hope of the Fellowship that these can be worked out by the Fellowship within the Atlantic Baptist Convention. It is the hope of the Fellowship that it may represent as faithfully as possible certain strands in the total Baptist witness — strands which the ABF deems to be of historic validity and of current importance. From time to time in our history some aspects of Baptist life and witness are strongly emphasized while others tend to be challenged or muted or neglected. Such muted or neglected aspects need a voice and a visible demonstration within the total body for the health of the whole body."

In order to connect this with the Bulletin, I recall my words, from the October, 1976, edition; as I assumed the editorship:

"As editor, it is my hope that this publication may be instrumental in clarifying these issues and promoting the same. It will be our aim, from time to time, to present articles that will enable our readers to understand the historic Baptist position. The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is interested not only in Baptist fellowship and service, but also in the wider outreaches of the Church of Christ. With this in mind, we hope to include in each issue, as far as space makes possible, news items from other church bodies and of ecumenical councils and activities."

It was made plain from the beginning that this Bulletin was not to be an instrument of division, but to be constructive and educational in its discussions. How well we have succeeded in this is to be judged by our readers.

In the light of the foregoing, we now state what, in part at least, we think of as our main objectives in this publication.

1. The ABF Bulletin is the organ and voice of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. This does not mean that everything in the Bulletin is approved by every member of the Fellowship — how unbaptistic that would be! What it does mean is that the Bulletin seeks to stress the emphases that are set forth by the ABF, to give advance notice of coming events, to report on the meetings of various committees and the Fellowship as a whole. The ABF Bulletin makes no pretence of speaking for the convention, but, on occasions, speaking to the convention, giving one viewpoint on matters under discussion. It assumes this privilege, not as an outside organization, but as part of convention, and, in doing this, recognizes the right of any other part of convention to be heard on matters of vital importance to the health of the body. It is a basic assumption in any democracy that all viewpoints on any issue be made known. The ABF Bulletin seeks to promote one viewpoint that is felt by many to be legitimate and timely.
2. The ABF Bulletin regards its role as partly educational — in presenting, from time to time, brief articles on some aspects of the historic Baptist position. It is recognized that, even here, one must speak by way of interpretation, and interpretation is always coloured by personal opinion — but what we present is done from an historical perspective. We have published articles on Baptists and Creeds, Baptists and Ecumenicity, Baptist Views of the Church and Ministry and others — with others to follow.
3. THE ABF Bulletin, in trying to be true to the Baptist position, recognizes that Baptists do not make up the whole Church of Christ and so seeks to relate us to the Whole. This is what the much misunderstood word "ecumenicity" is all about. We, as Baptists, are part of the Whole Church. No one, in honesty, can claim for us more than that. Like it or not, we are related to the Whole, and, because of that, we cannot avoid ecumenicity by whatever name it may be called.
We, as Baptists, are divided in our opinions about ecumenicity, as we are about other matters — a situation that is inevitable due to our concept of freedom in thought and action. Surely we would not have it otherwise. The price of uniformity is the loss of freedom, and the price is too high! There always have been Baptists who support ecumenical activity and those who do not. The point is that, among Baptists within our Convention, Federation and World Alliance, there are those who support ecumenical activity, not just to be different or difficult, but out of a deep conviction of what we believe to be God's will for His Church. This is not something new among Canadian Baptist in general and Atlantic Baptists in particular. Indeed this is the heritage handed on to us by many of our Baptist leaders of the recent past. The ABF Bulletin, without apology, is a voice speaking for those Baptists who so believe. On this, as on other matters, we do not deny the right of others to believe otherwise. One of our main concerns is that whatever action is taken, it grow out of an informed opinion, and this can only happen after a free discussion of all viewpoints.
4. One thing more, and this underlies all that has been said thus far. Fundamental to the Baptist position is the stand that, on all matters of faith and

practice, the Bible is the all-sufficient guide. This is a meaningless proposition unless it carries with it the right of each believer to read and interpret Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Truly this is a "daring" belief, and, being human, most of us tend to question the other's interpretation — but the real question is, do we believe it or do we not? To whatever degree we do believe, every effort to make any creedal statement the basis of Baptist fellowship is a serious departure from Baptist belief, and must be resisted at any cost.

The struggle for freedom has been before the Church for many centuries, not only in our denomination but in the Church as a whole. One would like to say that this struggle is a thing of the past, but the facts do not warrant such a statement. Indeed it is not too much to say it is one of the crucial issues facing the church in this day. Current religious journals, as well as the secular press, are bringing this to our attention. Here are but a few that have come to our attention in recent months.

The Roman Catholic banning of Dr. Hans Kung as a Roman Catholic professor of theology at Tübingen University in Germany (for more on this, see Dr. McDormand's article, page 11) . . . The faculty of Dallas Baptist College are being required to sign a statement of faith which is a modified version of the Baptist Faith and Message statement of the Southern Baptist Convention, with some very significant and disturbing additions . . . Ultraconservative Texas Southern Baptists in the Dallas area are spearheading a fight to discredit a text book, *People of the Covenant*, written by Baylor University professor, H. J. Flanders, and two others in 1963 when all were professors at Furman University, a Southern Baptist school, in Greenville, South Carolina . . . and nearer home — At the closing session of the Baptist Seminar, held in Wolfville in October, in an open discussion, a statement was made to the effect that "perhaps the time is ripe for another witch hunt". We took it to be in jest, and it may have been, but as the discussion proceeded, somehow suddenly it did not sound funny!

We could go on reciting similar happenings in this day. But enough has been said to indicate that the issue of freedom is still alive in the church in our day. The Christian Century (January 22, 1980) in an editorial comment on the case of Dr. Kung, concluded in these words:

"Yet darkness falls over another part of the church, and the places where the lights can burn within it are fewer this month. Timid bishops, seminary rectors, Catholic University officials, and theologians themselves, not knowing whose company to keep or how far to go in pursuit of truth, will lose the kind of daring which Christianity needs today if it is to outthink the secular world on urgent issues and help the community of faith survive into a new day."

The ABF Bulletin aims to be a voice — or, is it only a faint squeak? — urging the vigilance that is necessary to safeguard freedom.

I. Judson Levy
Editor

Whatever impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes the relish off spiritual things, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself.

Susannah Wesley

Miss Bessie Lockhart—A Tribute



The ABF Bulletin is happy to salute our much beloved veteran missionary, Bessie Lockhart, who, on January 10, celebrated her 90th birthday. The occasion was fittingly observed by a birthday party in her church, the Wolfville Baptist, when representatives of twenty-five Baptist Women's organizations extended greetings, along with a large number of people, both women and men, from the Baptist churches of the area.

Miss Lockhart, a native of Falmouth and a graduate of Acadia University, went to India, as a missionary in 1916 and served until her retirement (?) in 1955. During her years of missionary service, she served mostly as a teacher, and, for one period, was in charge of a boarding school with over 300 students.

Persons of Bessie Lockhart's dedication and stamina do not retire easily, if at all. During the years since 1955, she has visited churches right across Canada, sounding the challenge of the mission field, and when, in her own words, she "had nothing to do," she went to India at her own expense and served for another four years.

We pay tribute to Bessie Lockhart as a valiant and faithful servant of Christ—one whose ministry has been a blessing to many people on two continents. We thank God "at every remembrance of her," and pray for her more years filled with helpful service.

Study Paper Available

A study paper entitled "The Nature of Theology" has been made available by the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. This study guide is produced by the Theological Commission of the ABF. It is designed to help laymen understand theology and theologizing.

Recognizing the need for the Christian to communicate his or her faith in a comprehensible manner, the study examines the meaning and scope of theology. It admits the progressiveness of theological development, therefore it looks at the sources, Bible, tradition, and experience, which shape theology.

The laymen is often bemused and confused by theology. The study paper recognizes that 'Christian theology is "God-talk," the human expression of the realities of God, man and the world.

This study paper is an aid for removal of the layman's bemusement and confusion. Copies of it are available by writing Dr. R. E. W. Forsman, Secretary, ABF Theological Commission, Box 220, Department of Religious Studies, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. B0P 1X0. (Please enclose 25 cents for postage.)

Baptist Forerunners

(The following article is made up of paragraphs from the book, "A History of the English Baptists" by A. C. Underwood. What is reproduced here is from his opening chapter "Forerunners" from whence the title of this article. This bit of history is given here to help our readers understand something of the background lying behind our Baptist history. These groups about which Dr. Underwood writes, strictly speaking, were not known as Baptists, but they held to a concept of truth akin to our Baptist position, and help us understand ourselves better. The Editor)

No modern reader of some of the early histories of the Baptists can fail to be surprised at the extraordinary way in which their descent from the New Testament is traced through such groups as the Montanists, the Novatianists, the Paulicans, the Albigenses, the Waldensians, the Lollards and others, all of whom are claimed as Baptists. The instincts of the writers who made these excursions in genealogy were sounder than their scholarship. We cannot all agree that all the groups they so industriously enumerated were Baptists, but they did belong to the same type of Christianity, and of that type Baptists have been the spearhead.

(The writer here refers to two types of church life which were listed by Troeltsch as the "Church — type and the "Sect-type." Now to continue in the words of Dr. Underwood — Editor)

The most prominent feature of the Church-type is the stress it lays on the institutional character of the church which is thought of as being in exclusive possession of the supernatural life. . . . it conveys its divine life to the individual by means of its sacramental system. Hence it emphasizes the need of infant baptism as the sacrament of initiation which brings the child under the supernatural influence of the church . . . The Sect-type of Christianity starts from the Christian experience of the individual believer and stresses the necessity of a genuine, if rudimentary, Christian experience in all who would join a church. No man can be born into this type of Christianity. He can enter it only by personal choice, that is, on the basis of conversion.

(It should be noted that, in spite of whatever meaning this may suggest, the term "Sect-type," as used here is not a derogatory term, but is useful in setting forth this type of church. . . Editor)

During this time of religious upheaval (the time of the Protestant Reformation is indicated), the Sect-type of Christianity sprang into vigorous life . . . On every hand there sprang into existence small groups of earnest Christians, living apart from "the world" and claiming complete religious freedom. These were the Anabaptists who promoted what has been called "the common man's Reformation." The fundamental principle which governed the Anabaptist Movement was that of the immediate and direct accountability to God of each individual. Between God and the individual soul they recognized no mediator save Jesus Christ. This principle determined all their views, religious, social and political. It led them to insist upon the right of the individual to interpret scripture for himself. This supreme qualification for the interpretation of scripture was spiritual illumination . . . They re-baptized all who joined them who had been baptized in infancy. Hence their name Anabaptists (Re-baptizers) which was given them by their enemies . . . In spite of their name, the Anabaptists did not, as a matter of fact, attribute as much significance to baptism as their Lutheran and Calvinist opponents. They disclaimed all notions of baptismal regeneration. Nor did they accept the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Lord's Supper, which for them was an expression

of personal faith in Christ and a festival of Christian fellowship, betokening mutual love and unity.

The Anabaptist churches were organized in the simplest fashion, as became a movement essentially lay in character. They rejected all priestly and hierarchical notions of the Christian ministry . . . They also rejected all forms of State support and maintained their preachers by their free-will offerings. The one qualification they insisted upon in their preachers was a divine call to such service in the Church. Their form of worship was as simple as their organization. Not all of their leaders belonged to the lower classes, as their rich hymnology and the writings of men like Hans Denck and Hubmaier make plain.

The first Anabaptist church was founded in Zurich about 1525. The movement spread with amazing rapidity throughout Central and Western Europe. Everywhere it attracted to itself all who were dissatisfied with the Reformation and the remnants of the medieval, evangelical groups. The Reformers, still wedded to the idea of a social order expressed in a State Church, saw in the Anabaptist Movement nothing less than the destruction of the very basis of society itself. Hence the sanguinary persecution with which the official churches met the new movement, which they decimated with savage cruelty.

(The writer, at this point, speaks of the severe persecutions of this group of earnest Christian people, and goes on to quote a Quaker scholar, Dr. Rufus Jones, in this eloquent tribute to the Anabaptist Movement — Editor)

‘It is the spiritual soil out of which all nonconformist sects have sprung, and it is the first plain announcement in modern history of a program for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially in America and England, has been slowly realizing — an absolutely free and independent religious society, and a State in which man counts as man, and has his share in shaping both Church and State.’ (Studies in Mystical Religion, page 369)

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada began in 1918, when Bessie McMurchu, a Presbyterian, called together women representing 5 women's missionary boards, to discuss the possibilities of “promoting the spread of Christ's Kingdom by united prayer, united action and a stronger voice in national questions.” Out of this meeting grew the World Day of Prayer service in Canada.

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, over the past sixty years, has had as its central focus the World Day of Prayer. In it and through it, women and men across Canada join the rest of the world in prayer. In the past several years there has been a growing feeling that much more could be done ecumenically than promotion of just one day a year. This led us into a search for directions and programmes that would be a help to women across Canada as we learn how to pray, share, study and act together.

The Fellowship of the Least Coin is a prayer fellowship originating and organized by the Asian Christian Women's Conference. We encourage Canadian women to be a part of this powerful link with women throughout the world as we pray for reconciliation and peace, the year round.

Shawls of Solidarity is a programme to encourage participation in the human rights struggle. Green circular shawls are crocheted as a symbol of concern for Human Rights in every country of the world, including Canada.

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is basically a resource producing and sharing organization. We can share with various denominations what others are doing, especially concerning women's groups.

Ecumenical Bible Studies are growing at an amazing rate across Canada. Women's Inter-Church Council has available various Bible Studies: a study on the current World Day of Prayer theme, a study with a cassette supplement on “Hearing and Responding”, and a short study on Jesus and women. As we come together as Christian women to reflect on our experience in the light of the scriptures, our faith develops and the way of action becomes clearer.

As part of our effort to raise awareness, we have produced a kit for ecumenical and/or denominational women's groups to explore their potential as Christian women in today's world entitled “Women Tomorrow Today Kit.” We are presently producing a kit for women's groups on Human Rights which will help women to explore their feelings on this issue with a view to responsible actions as Christians.

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is in an exciting and unique position. As women in the churches deal with the transition in their roles and lives that is prevalent in society, the necessity of having structures that are responsive to that transition is obvious. We are not all at the same place; in fact many women, regardless of their position, feel a lack of support from other women. Ecumenical women's groups can help break down these alienating barriers and allow healing to take place. Women have been instrumental in the development of the church and must continue to do so even though that involvement may appear to be different from our participation in the past. Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is dedicated to help all women in our churches develop their full potential “so that all people may find fullness of life in Christ.”

— The B. C. Ecumenical News

“There are times in history when the dark drums of God can barely be heard amid the noises of the world. Then it is only in moments of silence which are rare and brief, that their beat can be faintly discerned. There are other times. These are the times when God is heard in rolling thunder, when the earth trembles and the treetops bend under the force of his voice. It is not given to men to make God speak. It is only given to them to live and to think in such a way that, if God's thunder should come, they will not have stopped their ears.”

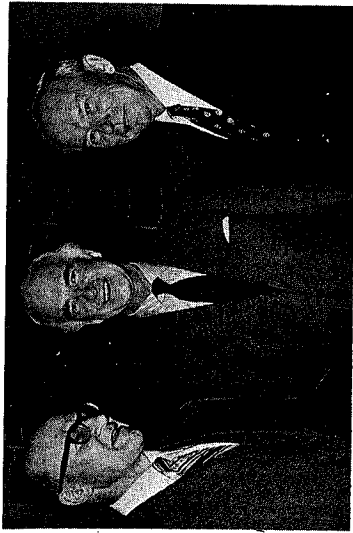
Peter Berger

There is no way of predicting the movements of the spirit. I have often thought that even a person equipped with all the tools of modern social science would have been hard put to predict the Reformation, at the onset of the 16th century. I will not make a prediction here, but I will make a guarded statement: It is possible that out of the contestations of our time will emerge voices of great and renewed power. There is a kind of stillness now, and has been for quite sometime. It is possible that the stillness will be followed by thunder. We are not supposed to know. But the possibility is worth a cautious hope, and perhaps even a gamble of faith.

Peter Berger (in The Christian Century)

1979 Lancelot Lecture

It is quite possible that the heading over this article will not mean much to some of our readers, but, because of what it is, it seems desirable to say something about it. The Lancelot Lecture is presented each year, in October or November, and is sponsored by The Lancelot Press of Hantsport, N.S., publishers of the magazine, *The Second Mile*. Four of these annual lectures have taken place; the fourth being in the Community Centre of Port Williams, N.S. on November 5, 1979. Following an excellent meal, prepared and served by the ladies of Port Williams, the lecture was delivered by the Rev. Dr. John Gladstone, senior minister of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, Toronto.



by the singing of some of Watt's hymns by the choir of the Chester Baptist church, with the audience joining in the singing of some of the hymns.

The accompanying picture shows three of the participants in the evening program, and are (reading from the left) the Rev. William Pope, manager and editor of Lancelot Press, Dr. Gladstone and the Rev. Allen Gibson who was chairman for the evening.

The Lancelot Lecture, as mentioned above, is an annual event, and already, through the calibre of the lecturers who have been invited, has become an outstanding lecture series — something too good to miss! Another lecture in the series will be given late in 1980. Watch for the announcement which will be made in due course.

Attention — Please

In the November Bulletin, a suggestion was made that, in view of the increasing cost of publishing and distributing the ABF Bulletin, voluntary gifts from our readers would be appreciated. The response has been encouraging, and, while thanking those persons who have responded with a donation, we repeat the suggestion with the hope that others will respond in the same way. All contributions should be mailed to the treasurer, Mrs. K. J. Kenney, 37 Crescent St., Bridgewater, N.S. B4V 1L1. A receipt, good for income tax deductions, will be sent to each contributor.

"There's no point in burying a hatchet if you're going to put up a marker on the site."

Sydney J. Harris

Should Dissent Be Limited?

The Roman Catholic hierarchy has recently removed Dr. Hans Kung from his professional chair at Tubingen University, Germany, one of the world's prestigious universities (founded in 1477). This is one of the very few universities with "dual faculties" — faculties of both Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths.

Dr. Kung, one of the world's best known contemporary theologians, was Professor of Theology at Tubingen. His "inquisitorial" treatment by the Curial Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has been deplored and denounced by many liberal Catholic theologians and churchmen in both Europe and America. Kung himself vows to challenge his expulsion, and has denounced in no uncertain terms and criticized Pope John Paul II for not "being sufficiently familiar with recent developments in theology."

This highly publicized disciplining of Dr. Kung raises some important questions, not only for Roman Catholics but for many Protestant groups who prefer authoritarian uniformity of belief and statements thereof to open-minded consideration of new ideas — ideas which can open new vistas in the landscape of older ideas, and which, without discarding older ideas, serve to define them more clearly and apply them more perceptively.

The all-important question issuing from the Hans Kung case is "To what extent should dissent be encouraged, or at least tolerated?" Kung has been under suspicion in Rome for ten years, largely because of his allegedly deviant views on such basic Catholic doctrines as papal infallibility, the virgin birth, the celibacy of the clergy, the authority of church councils and others.

A statement by the Catholic clergy of the Chicago area points out: "There has developed in our church a spirit of tolerance for public discussion and reasoned dissent on many issues . . ." Evidently Pope John Paul II does not approve of this development and seeks to restore the unquestioned authority of the pope, Catholic tradition, and conciliar rulings.

The argument is that "there can be no deviation from the truth." But, as Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Traditional interpretations of truth can be questioned, revised, elaborated without affecting the core of truth involved. Indeed, such critical reassessments of time-honoured views and their interpretation is an essential aspect of true progress in the proclamation of the will of God for His world. To stifle the process of dissent can enslave us to the past and cut the nerve of scholarly effort.

Having said this, we must recognize another view of dissent. There are basic tenets of the Christian faith which cannot be airily waived aside without serious loss. That faith is rooted and grounded in certain fundamental revealed truth regarding the person of Christ, the nature of the atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, the authority of scripture for believers, and so forth. While the meanings of such fundamentals may be clarified, and calibrated to modern thinking, they cannot be dissented from to the extent of denying their foundational truth. Such revisionism (as we might call any such effort) would emasculate the Christian faith and leave us with no chart and compass, no beacon lights to guide us. We must welcome constructive dissent, to be sure, but not dissent which undermines the very structure of faith built with blood and tears by inspired men of God through the centuries.

— T. B. McDormand

"Inasmuch....."

The accompanying picture shows the Rev. Robert Matthews, representing the churches of Annapolis Royal, as he greets a Vietnamese family of "Boat People" at the Halifax International Airport — this



family being sponsored by the churches of Annapolis Royal in joint effort. We are happy to present this picture for in it is depicted something of what is best in the church — as hearts and hands are joined across denominational lines in extending the love of Christ to needy people. Looking at this little child in Mr. Matthews' loving arms, one's imagination is kindled in contrasting what was in store for this little one, and what may now be in a new life made possible by Christian love. The best thing about this picture is that, in what it shows, it is not an isolated instance, but typical of what has been, and is, happening in Christian churches of all denominations right across this country. Truly as one thinks of the church in this ministry, one takes heart and thanks God, and hears again the word of the Lord of the church: "I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Seminar To Discuss Family

The Twelfth Atlantic Seminar in Theological Education will meet in Truro June 1-6 at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. The theme to be studied is "The Family in Transition." Under the leadership of a theologian, a church administrator, a sociologist and a biblical scholar, delegates will examine the history of the family and the forces which have been and are at work upon it. The role of the Church in relation to the family will be considered, along with the theology of marriage. There will be discussion of the view that the Church is "family" in order to assess the extent to which the Church may support, extend or substitute for family life.

In addition to regular lectures and workshop periods there will be a number of special sessions, including public worship on the evening evening; forums on "The Family, the Government and the Law" and "The Family under Pressure"; and a day-long programme on the theme "The minister's two families."

Resource personnel include Dr. Douglas Archibald of Wolfville, Judge Elliott Hudson of Halifax, Dr. Dianne Looker of Acadia University, Dr. Robin Smith of Toronto, the Hon. Laird Stirling, Minister of Social Services,

province of Nova Scotia and Dr. Penelope Washbourne of the University of Manitoba.

During the last decade the Atlantic Seminar has established itself as a worthwhile venture in continuing education, a time of worship and fellowship, and an occasion for exposure to new concepts and methods.

Detailed brochures of the Seminar will be available shortly and may be obtained from the Treasurer, the Rev. Douglas MacEachern, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, B2N 5E3.

Church News

The Canadian Council of Churches has announced the appointment of two new members to the staff. The Rev. Tadashi Mitsui, a Japanese, is a minister of The United Church of Canada, and a former missionary in Lesotho, South Africa. He will work in the area of world concerns. The Rev. Roger Cam, a Baptist minister, for some time a missionary in India, joins the CCC staff as part-time communication worker.

Bible sales are up sharply in Poland after the first Polish pope, John Paul II, visited there last May. Urgent orders are in for an additional 25,000 copies of a Polish language New Testament after the first 16,000 were sold out. An extra printing of 20,000 copies of a pocket edition of the Bible were sold out immediately.

Members of the ABF will wish to extend congratulations and good wishes to two Anglicans, well known to many of us, as they assume new and heavy responsibilities in their church. The Rt. Rev. Leonard Hatfield recently was installed as the Bishop of Nova Scotia, succeeding Bishop George Arnold who retired at the end of the year. The Very Rev. Austin Munroe, formerly of Lunenburg, has been installed as Rector of the Cathedral of All Saints in Halifax, and Dean of Nova Scotia. He assumed his new duties on December 1, 1979.

Miss Alice Ball, a Baptist, has recently been appointed the General Secretary of the American Bible Society — the first woman to hold that position.

Nearer home, we extend congratulations and good wishes to three of our young ministers recently ordained: the Rev. Philip Allwood of Seabright, N.S.; the Rev. Gregory Whitehouse of New Ross, N.S. and the Rev. Sue Laverty, Associate minister at Amherst.

The Rev. Roger Prentice has resigned from the Baptist Church in St. Stephen, N.B. in order to enter upon a three year study project in Baptist worship at Regents Park, Oxford University, England, and has begun his work there. Roger will be remembered as the editor of the ABF newsletter in the early days of the ABF. His many friends will be anxious to surround him with prayers and every measure of support that is possible.

WILLIAM BARCLAY, who produced seventeen volumes of commentary on the New Testament, and many other related topics related to the Christian faith, is being honoured by a memorial fund being raised through an appeal by the Presbyterian Church of Toms River, New Jersey. The fund will provide scholarships in theological education at Glasgow University in Scotland, and are awarded to persons outside the United Kingdom.

WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS DRAFT PEACE PLAN

PRINCETON, N.J. — Peace is possible, but the times are dangerous, declared 338 participants at a world convention of religious leaders here. Ten world religions and 47 countries were represented at the third assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

After the 10-day meeting, delegates produced the Princeton Declaration calling for the outlawing of war and all weapons of mass destruction.

In a five-point plan for peace, the document said the world's religious bodies must struggle for: a just economic order; nuclear disarmament; protection of human rights; conservation of energy and environment; education for peace.

"We are approaching not only the turn of the century, but also a turning point in human history, with the survival of world civilization at stake," the declaration warned.

Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Shintoists, a Confucianist and a Zoroastrian were among the delegates. A group of religious leaders from the People's Republic of China attended, the first time in nearly two decades such a group from that country has taken part in an international religious meeting.

Insight

HERE IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT! — The Church of Scotland is opening its previously all-female diaconate to men. The Presbyterian body, which has admitted women to its ordained ministry for the past ten years, has for many years employed deaconesses, or "church sisters" in parish duties, visiting the sick, youth work, and educational and social welfare activities. Now male deacons as well will undergo training at St. Colm's College in Edinburgh and be commissioned for diaconal work.

The New International Version of the Bible (NIV), published by Zondervan, has been named "Book of the Year" in Eternity magazine's annual year's top book — the New English Bible in 1970.

In Evansville, Indiana, representatives of two Southern Baptist churches were denied seats at the annual meeting of a regional Baptist Association because their churches accept members baptized in other denominations. Pastors of the two churches contend that under the Baptist polity of local church autonomy, the practise of accepting members baptized in other denominations is permitted. In regards to this matter, Professor Walter B. Shurden of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville comments: "Although an autonomous Baptist body can do what it wants to do, it is an extremely dangerous precedent in Southern Baptist life for state convention membership to be dictated by membership in an association. It represents a dangerous trend toward centralization of church life and loss of autonomy."

Mother Teresa, Nobelist

Mother Teresa, Calcutta's "saint of the gutters," has been awarded the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. Known not only in India but around the world for her work with the poor, sick and hungry of Calcutta's slums, Mother Teresa has said she will spend the \$193,000 prize money on the poor among whom she has worked for over 30 years. She founded her order, the Society of the Missionaries of Charity, in Calcutta in 1948. Today the order has a worldwide network with 158 branches in which some 1,800 nuns and 120,000 co-workers serve. About 53,000 lepers are

among the patients treated at the order's medical centers in Africa and Asia. The Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament said it was honoring her both for her managerial skills and for her compassion and dedication to the poor.

The Christian Century

Christians around the world, and many others, rejoice in the recognition of the life and service of this great woman. Her life of unselfish service is a challenge to all who bear the name of Christ. We thank God for this life that has helped, and inspired so many. The Editor.

Anniversaries

The War Cry, official magazine of the Salvation Army, celebrates its centennial this fall. War Cry's first edition appeared December 17, 1879, in London and sold 17,000 copies. Today the circulation is 208,000 for its British edition. Forty-five editions are published overseas; the first American one was issued in 1881 in St. Louis. War Cry's century-old existence has been described as an economic miracle. It has never carried commercial advertising and it has always had a total ban on articles or news stories featuring crime, sex, politics or astrology.

Celebrating its 150th anniversary with its November issue is the United Church Observer, published by the United Church of Canada. Established in 1829 by Egerton Ryerson as the Christian Guardian, the Observer adopted its present name 41 years ago. Its current circulation is 312,000.

EDITOR APPOINTED

For the first time in its 150 year history, the United Church Observer is to have a layman as editor. Hugh McCullum of Toronto has been appointed to succeed Rev. A. C. Forrest who died a year ago. Mr. McCullum is a former editor of The Canadian Churchman (Anglican). He recently joined the United Church, and will begin his duties as editor next July.

Bibles for Cuba

The Cuban government has given approval for the importing of 10,000 Bibles by the United Bible Societies. Valued at \$38,000, the shipment is being sent from the organization's headquarters in Stuttgart, West Germany, to the Ecumenical Council of Cuba. The new Bibles, titled Dios Habla Hoy (God Speaks Today), are a translation produced by an inter-confessional team of Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars. The Cuban Bible Society ceased functioning in 1968 after the Castro regime placed restrictions on private businesses. The last previous United Bible Society shipment to Cuba from Stuttgart was in 1977 when 2,500 New Testaments were shipped.

NAMED the 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury, the spiritual head of the Church of England and leader of the world's 65 million members of the Anglican Church including 1.5 million in Canada, is the Rev. Robert Runcie, bishop of St. Albans. Succeeding the Most Rev. Donald Coggan, who is retiring on his 70th birthday, Bishop Runcie, 57, does not favor ordination of women because it creates problems in relations with the Roman Catholics. With liberal views on divorce, capital punishment, homosexuality and other social issues, he says the challenge of the 1980s will be to gain a genuine desire for a better way of life.

THE OBSERVER

Dr. J. R. C. Perkin has been appointed Academic Vice-president of Acadia University for a six year period. We extend congratulations and good wishes as he assumes this heavy responsibility in the life of our university.

Note this date — The Spring Conference of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship will be held in Mahone Bay, N.S. June 13-14, 1980.

Father, Forgive Them

During these Lenten days the attention of the Christian world is directed toward the Cross — the Cross “On which the Prince of Glory died”. Like those who were at Calvary, on that memorable day so long ago, we too “watch him there”. We come, however, not only to watch, but to listen. Our Lord, during his earthly ministry, spoke about the coming event which we speak of as “the Cross”. He not only spoke about the Cross, but, in the actual event, he spoke from the Cross — seven times in all, according to the New Testament story.

What did he say? What we think of as the first word from the Cross was a prayer: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” What an amazing prayer this is! It surprises us, but why should it? After all this is what Jesus taught — “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” Yes! — but, even though we like to hear these words, is it not true that we tend to think of them as idealistic, quite removed from reality? These words were spoken by a young teacher, with all the youthful idealism of one, as yet, untouched by life’s bitterness and pain. What will he do in a trying moment when it comes? Well, it has come. This is it! He did what he asked his followers to do. He prayed for those who, even then, were persecuting him. Jesus stood the test. He had come over a dirty road, but there was no dust on him. His soul was clean, untouched by the slime through which he was passing.

For whom did our Lord pray? Who were the “them”? They were the Roman soldiers who drove the nails. They were under orders, so it was relatively easy to pray for them. There was Pilate, the Roman Governor, who was caught up in a web of circumstances over which he had little or no control. He could be included in the prayer. But, what of Judas, the betrayer, of Caiaphas and his associates who planned the cruel and unjust deed? Can we expect forgiveness to go that far? Surely they knew what they were doing — or, did they?

This brings us to the purpose of the prayer, and the heart of the Cross. The real sin, so often, is not that which we recognize as sin, but that to which we have become so accustomed it is not regarded as sin. The deepest blasphemy, even though done unconsciously, is when we sin, and think we are doing God’s will. It is then that we “know not what we do.” It is precisely at this point that we come to the necessity of the Cross, and when its deepest meaning becomes most apparent. The Cross was not erected to deal with those sinners who, recognizing their sin, make confession and cry out for forgiveness. The Cross atones for the sins of mankind that are not recognized and so not confessed, and for which some one must pay the price.

Forgiveness does come at a price. It is never easy to forgive. Forgiveness is not to be confused with forgetting. Some sins lead to results so serious that they cannot be forgotten, and for which some one must pay. To forgive is to become so identified with the wrong doer as to take upon oneself the burden of the wrong that is done. Only the one who is will to do that can say “I forgive you,” and so pray for the offender. This our Lord did, and, bearing the terrible price of the wrong, pray: “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”