

# BULLETIN

of the

Atlantic Baptist Fellowship

September 1989



*Job and his Wife* Dürer, c.1503

## FALL ASSEMBLY 1989

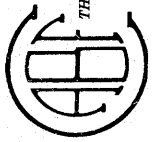
29-30 September 1989  
West Lane United Baptist Church, Moncton, N.B.

Theme: *"The Element of Doubt in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament"*

Special Speaker:

Reverend Dr. Timothy R. Ashley, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies,  
Acadia Divinity College

For full particulars see Page 16



### 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 637, Amherst, N.S., B4H 4B8.

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, Mr. Don M. Myers. (address above). Receipts for income tax purposes will be mailed.

*"Few developments in this century have shown so clearly the depth of the upheaval separating the old from the new paradigm as the new awareness by women of their identity, equality, and dignity."*

— Hans Kung, 1928 —

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Southern Baptist Convention continues to be dominated by the Fundamentalists, for at its June 1989 Convention, held in the gambling city of Las Vegas, Nevada, it re-elected fundamentalist Jerry Vines as its president. Observers tell us that there are now *four* recognizable groups in the Convention who talk at each other rather than *with* each other: (1) the Fundamentalist bloc (a far from uniform group); (2) the Moderate "Baptists Committed to the SBC" group; (3) the Moderate "Southern Baptist Association"; (4) the Reformed-Calvinist-Theology group of younger evangelicals (who hope to bridge the gap between Moderates and Fundamentalists). The unending controversy has created mistrust, division and animosity at all levels of Southern Baptist life.

Those who would like to investigate the decade-long theological controversy in the S.B.C. are recommended to read *The Takeover in the Southern Baptist Convention: A Brief History*, edited by Rob James (SBC Today, Decatur, Georgia, 1989, 66 pp., \$3.00). Sensitive to the dislike fundamentalists have for this term, and noting their preference for the designation "conservative," the book refers to people who cooperate with the takeover as "fundamental-conservatives"; and those who oppose the takeover are often referred to as "moderate-conservatives." Walter Shurden dubs the book, "relevant, readable and right."

On a happier note it is heartening to report that 73% of the delegates attending the recent Baptist Union of Great Britain Assembly in Leicester voted affirmatively to join I.C.P. (Inter-Church Process, whose structures will be taken over when the British Council of Churches dissolves in 1990).

Congratulations to our good "Friend" Dr. Esther Clark Wright, recently admitted to the Order of Canada; and to Jean Gordon awarded the honorary D.D. degree by the Atlantic School of Theology.

Further afield, the American Bible Society reports it has been informed by the U.B.S. (United Bible Societies of the World) that despite the recent turmoil in China and the horrors perpetrated in Beijing, it is "business as usual" at the printing press in Nanjing. Apparently the political turmoil that has interfered with the lives of many throughout China has not affected Nanjing to any great extent. The Amity Printing Company has orders for bibles for at least a year in advance, and there are orders still to be fulfilled for 700,000 hymn books. Some concern must be felt for the safety of the leaders of the China Christian Council and other Christians who were somewhat out-spoken in their support of the students who demonstrated for some degree of democracy in Chinese politics.

Contributors to the *Bulletin* are asked to observe the following deadlines for the submission of material: for the December 1989 and the May 1990 editions, the deadlines are respectively, 24 October 1989 and 16 March 1990.

We are happy to report that the number of "Friends of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship" now exceeds the one hundred mark; and we would like to remind all "Friends," new and old, that 1989 dues should be paid *now*, please. And we hope *you*, dear reader, will seriously consider joining up as a "Friend," and thus concretize your commitment to the aims and ideals and the support of the Fellowship. There is something exhilarating about making a commitment of this kind! You may recall that in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, the dissenting preacher, the "Ranter" Moses Barraclough, confronting the Tory oppressors of his early nineteenth century times in the West Riding of Yorkshire; the rich, land-owning, mill-owning class as well as the Anglican clergy; was proud to confess, "I'm a joined Methodist!" May you have the thrill and exhilaration of saying, "I'm a joined Friend of the A.B.F.!"

## ABF SPRING ASSEMBLY 1989

One hundred and twenty persons registered for the Spring Assembly of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship hosted by the Pereaux United Baptist Church, Pereaux, Nova Scotia, and held 16-17 June 1989. The general theme was: "The Challenge of Feminism for Faith and Worship." The theme speaker was to have been the Reverend Heather S. Gilmour, the Associate Minister of the Highland Baptist Church, Kitchener, Ontario, but most unfortunately a few days before the conference Heather fell and broke her leg and thus was unable to be present. Fortunately, at very short notice indeed, Dr. Kathy Schwartztruber, a member of the First Baptist Church, Halifax, stepped into the breach and with but two weeks' notice gave two excellent lectures on the theme. Because of their general interest, these two lectures are reported on in fuller form than is usual on pages 6-11 in this edition of the *Bulletin*.

### FRIDAY EVENING

The Assembly began with the opening remarks and devotions given by the president, Roger Prentice, and a welcome expressed by the pastor of the church, Dr. M.R. Cherry, a good "Friend" of the A.B.F. Dr. Schwartztruber then gave her first lecture entitled, "The Challenge of Christian Feminism: Issues and Opportunities." The day closed with the observance of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, conducted by the pastor and deacons of the host church, and a time of fellowship and refreshment.

### SATURDAY MORNING

The morning session began with a devotional period led by Dr. Dorothy M. Lovesey, the secretary of the "Friends" organization of the A.B.F. By request her address, "Crumbs for the Dogs," is printed on pages 14-15 below. Dr. Schwartztruber gave her second address, "Why must We do Something about Language in the Church?" After mid-morning refreshments, a panel, consisting of the Reverends Ida Armstrong-Whitehouse (Bedford), Adele Crowell (East Wolfville) and Ralph Wilton (Wolfville), under the chairpersonship of the A.B.F.'s second vice-president Jerry Harrop, responded to the lectures. This was followed by a vigorous and enthusiastic general discussion in which many took part. A delicious lunch at midday was prepared and served by the ladies of the church.

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON

A very good business meeting, which deserved to be better attended, was held after lunch, skillfully and graciously guided along by the president.

The treasurer, Evelyn Smith, gave a financial statement for the second quarter of this year, which showed a balance of approximately \$2,450.00, a most satisfactory state of affairs. She reported that (a) the \$1,000.00 donated recently by Dr. Esther Clark Wright has been invested in a Metropolitan G.I.C., and (b) that the late Marion Elder Grant had left a substantial legacy from her estate to the funds of the A.B.F. Following acceptance of this report, Evelyn Smith said the time had come for her to resign as treasurer. It had been her joy, she said, to have served the A.B.F. as treasurer for many years. Gwen Atherton, a former president, expressed to Evelyn the Fellowship's warmest thanks for Evelyn's careful and cheerful service graciously given over many years. Gwen's motion for expressing thanks was unanimously carried with great enthusiasm. Agreed that Mr. Don Myers be the new treasurer.

The next A.B.F. Council meeting: noon, 16 September 1989, Annapolis Royal United Baptist Church, Nova Scotia.

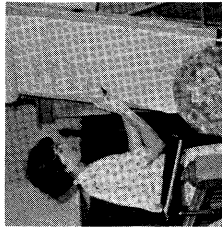
A memorial moment for friends who have recently died was held.

## SCENES FROM THE SPRING ASSEMBLY 1989

Photographs by Philip Griffin-Allwood



The Assembly assembles



The Lecturer lectures



The Discussers discuss.



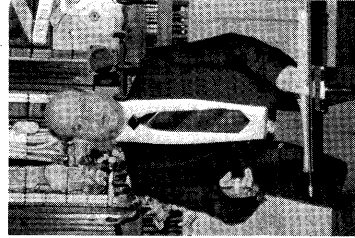
Vince demurs



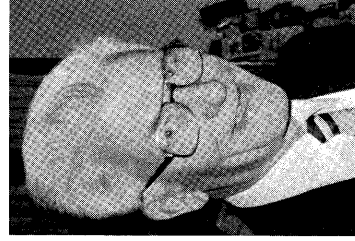
Gary enjoys



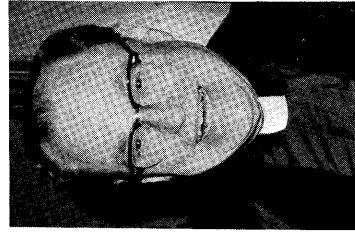
Deborah laughs



The President presides



A Past-President relaxes



The Host Pastor welcomes

# LECTURES BY DR. KATHY SCHWARTZENTRUBER

## A. THE CHALLENGE OF CHRISTIAN FEMINISM: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES I. INTRODUCTION

Since feminism is a topic that evokes strong feelings in both men and women I approach it with some trepidation. I venture to share with you my current understanding of what the terms feminism and Christian feminism mean. Such reflection is undertaken not to destroy, undermine or divide the Church, but rather to strengthen, build and liberate it.

## II. FEMINISM 1. A CRITIQUE OF PATRIARCHY

Feminism has to be seen in the context of patriarchy, of which it is a critique. A critique of patriarchy is an open examination of the assumptions about people and relationships that patriarchy makes and a hard look at its functioning.

In a patriarchal system, the male is seen as the norm of humanity. In our society, the male patriarchal norm is the white, middle to upper class male. He is at the top of the pyramid, everything below him — females, children, people of other economic classes, animals, the rest of creation — is inferior and has to be dominated and subjugated.

The males at the top of this pyramid define the experiences of those beneath them. Hence women's experience, for example, is defined in white male terms; at best it is marginalized, at worst it is regarded as non-existent. Traditionally, woman's role was defined as taking care of the home and raising a family and finding happiness and fulfillment in so doing. If she did not think that way there must be something wrong with her. The existence of a valid reality other than that defined by the white male cannot be accommodated in a patriarchal system.

A patriarchal view of the world is dualistic: everything is seen as either/or; one side is pitted against another in the struggle for domination. From this comes sexism (the view that women are naturally inferior and must be dominated and controlled), racism, class-ism, homophobia and age-ism. A patriarchal view of the world is also androcentric. Humankind, mankind specifically, is seen at the centre of creation. The rest of creation is viewed in terms of our relation to it. Relations between the non-human parts of creation are seen as unimportant.

## 2. RELIGION AND PATRIARCHY

Religion and patriarchy are intertwined. A religion developed in a patriarchal, sexist society incorporates the prevailing societal norms and interpretations, so is necessarily patriarchal and sexist itself. And, of course, it is given the divine seal of approval.

The patriarchal dualistic view of the human self divides us into mind/body, reason/passion, spiritual/sexual. Patriarchal religion images God as male and associates mind, reason, spirituality and good with the male;

and the body, passion, sexuality and evil with the female. As God rules over humanity, so mind should rule over body, reason over passion, spirituality over sexuality and male over female.

A study of quotations taken from the writings of the Church Fathers, such as Augustine, Tertullian, Luther and others, assembled by Rosemary Ruether (*Sexism and God-Talk*, Beacon Press, 1983), shocking as they are to our ears, reveals that they have contributed to the shaping of Christian thought on the status of women. For example, Luther could say that for the sin of bringing evil into the world, woman must be punished! Biblical texts which seem to reflect or justify this and similar views are seen as more authoritative than texts which offer different views.

Feminism, then, seeks to recognize and repudiate the patriarchal and androcentric bias of our society.

## 3. FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

If feminism were only a critique of patriarchy, it would not have much to offer us in the way of developing a world-view. Feminism is best viewed not as being *against* patriarchy and hierarchy, but as being *for* equality and mutuality. Feminism does not seek to replace the male with the female at the top of the hierarchical system, but rather to construct a system which restores mutuality and equality to relationships between the sexes. Feminism seeks cooperation not competition, interdependence not domination. Differences are not seen in terms of either/or or superior/inferior and is not threatened by them. They are seen as both/and, tolerated and welcomed as alternate, equally valid and valuable expressions of being.

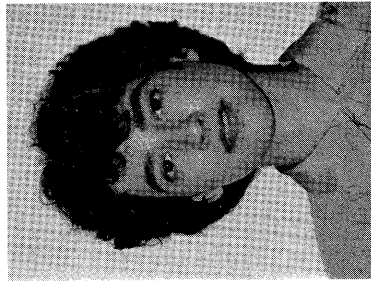
Further, feminism seeks to integrate our view of ourselves. We are mind and body, reason and passion, spiritual and sexual, and all of these things are good. And still further, feminism seeks to restore humankind to a relationship of mutuality and equality with the rest of creation. Feminism does not demand that nature and the planet serve us, but that we coexist in relationships that preserve the integrity of each element of creation.

## III. CHRISTIAN FEMINISM

Rosemary Ruether (*Christian Feminism: Visions of a New Humanity*, Harper and Row, 1984) defines theology as "the reflection on human experience in the light of our relationship to God." For her, Christian feminism is a response to the historical reality of sexism in human society and in the church that has resulted in the exclusion of women's experience from the reflection on our relationship to God. That this exclusion has occurred is seen by the relative absence of women in the official, hierarchical structures of the church, in the shaping of an anti-female bias in the codes and practices of religion, and in the absence of women's experience from the record of faith.

Christian feminism believes that women are fully human and that mutuality and equality are givens. Ruether states: "Feminist theology starts with the affirmation that God, the ground of being and new being, underlies, includes, supports and promotes female personhood. Woman is not subordinate or included under, but equivalent as image of God."

All this means women's experience is a valid criterion of truth. To take an example: consider a woman assaulted and humiliated by her husband. Her friends, and leading folk in church and state, say (a) she is not really being abused for male/female relationships are always of this kind, and (b) she is to submit to her husband because this is the word and will of God. Feminist theology permits this woman to say: "This treatment I have suffered is abuse and my perception and understanding of this experience is valid. God values my personhood as much as my husband's. I am as



Kathy  
Schwartzentruber

much made in the image of God as my husband. Therefore, when I am told that submitting to my husband in this abuse is the will of God, I am not told the truth. This abuse is not the will of God." Sexism is sin.

#### IV. BIBLICAL RESOURCES FOR FEMINISM

Feminist theology rejects every elevation of one social group over another, a principle in harmony with the prophetic tradition of the whole Bible. This tradition has four basic themes:

- (1) God's defence and vindication of the oppressed;
  - (2) a critique of the dominant systems of power and the power holders (e.g. see Isaiah 10.1-2; Amos 8.4; Luke 4.18-19);
  - (3) a vision of a new age to come when injustice is overthrown and the reign of justice is established (see, e.g., Jeremiah 31.22 and the Lord's Prayer);
  - (4) a critique of religious systems that serve to sanctify the existing unjust social structure (e.g. Amos 5.21 and Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple).
- The patriarchal societies of biblical times applied these principles to their external oppressors, not to the oppressed of their own societies (which included slaves and women). In recent history these principles have been applied to the black people of North America, to the peoples of South America (Liberation Theology) and currently they are now being applied to the issue of sexism in our societies and churches.

Biblical texts always have to be used with care. Interpretation involves an appeal to biblical principles and "proof-texting" must always be avoided. For example, many passages seem to condone and justify slavery; but we know the biblical principle of love must exclude the practice of the evil.

Feminist interpretation of the Bible by scholars such as Phyllis Trible, Rosemary Ruether, Letty Russell, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Katherine Sakenfeld and others, has been applied to more than the prophetic tradition in the Bible. This research has brought a new understanding to many biblical passages that have been traditionally interpreted in a manner oppressive to women.

#### V. CONVERSION FROM SEXISM

It is perhaps true that few people see the need for a conversion from sexism. Probably it is easier for a woman than a man since it is women that suffers most from sexism and who has most to gain from liberation from it. And since men generally do not experience it they find it difficult to appreciate it as women see it. It's the same with racism. Whites who have no personal experience of racial oppression and discrimination can never truly understand what it means to grow up black in our society.

Most women of my age have been exposed to the ideas of feminism from a relatively early age. But it is not until the harsh reality of it impinges upon them that they become emotionally as well as intellectually involved with it. With older women the catalytic effect of something sometimes opens their eyes and they see how their lives have been shaped by sexism. Men, one feels, are usually brought to an appreciation of sexism through a woman with whom they have a close relationship. But once the evil is seen it captures the mind.

A true conversion from sexism leads to the painful discovery that we all participate in and contribute to the maintenance of patriarchy and sexism. As a white, middle class female, I contribute to the oppression of other women in lower economic classes and of the women of non-white cultures. We must all realize that the price we pay for our privileged positions is too high.

#### VI. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

What are some of the opportunities and issues for a church that seeks to be a haven of equality in the midst of our sexist society? High on the list must come the matter of inclusive language; we shall consider this in the next lecture. An extremely important issue is that of Christian education, in which the recovery of our total biblical tradition as understood today must be taught to our Christian people.

I digress at this point to say that I have reached the conclusion that "feminism" is too limiting a term. What we are about under that heading is *more* than the place of women in church and society and the restoration of egalitarian and mutual male/female relations. I feel that *Christian inclusivism* is a far more descriptive term for what Christian feminism is about. This terminology raises other issues:

— does the inclusive church seek empowerment of the people rather than power over people? This involves the further question, what is the relation of clergy and laity?

— do the rites and creeds used in the church reflect the church's understanding of itself as an inclusive community? What is the role of the church community in shaping the liturgy?

— stewardship of the earth is an important issue in the inclusive church. Inclusivism does not see the role or function of humanity in creation as being to dominate it but to live in harmony with it. Are there practices in the church which show poor stewardship of the environment?

— how does the inclusive church view militarism in the light of the striving for interdependence and cooperation rather than domination?

— does the church participate in the social or economic oppression of parts of our society? What does the inclusive church do about it?

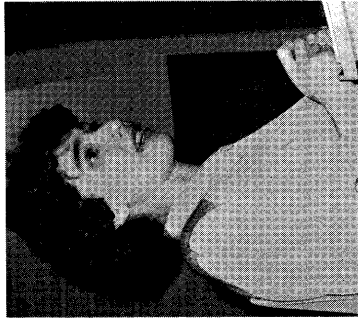
— does the church community consider people of all ages as valuable, contributing members of the community with gifts and insights to share?

Baptist churches, believing in the autonomy of the local congregation, are well suited to develop this reflection. Wrestling with such questions will inevitably lead to change, and this is to be welcomed. Change neither destroys nor weakens the church but is a necessary condition for growth. We can see change as frightening and threatening or we can choose to see it as exhilarating and liberating. It is only in moving beyond the status quo that we move ahead, that we deepen our understanding of what it means to be a community of believers, a community of God, a community in the image of God.

#### B. WHY MUST WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT LANGUAGE IN THE CHURCH?

#### I. INTRODUCTION: THE LANGUAGE-THOUGHT- FEELING (ATTITUDE) CONNECTION

This hour we shall try to develop an understanding and appreciation of inclusive language and what it can offer us. This not to be an "how-to" discussion, but rather a "why-to" discussion. Once we see the necessity



Kathy at work

of the use of inclusive language, the "what" and the "how" are relatively easy to deal with.

The need for inclusive language centres on the connections between language and thought, and between thought and feeling. We are probably most familiar with the latter. We have all had experience of being in a situation where our feelings, of nervousness and the like, arise not so much from the situation *per se* as from our thoughts about it. The former connection, the language-thought connection, is a little harder to get a handle on because it is more hidden and we don't have as much control over it. This has become clear to me as a result of learning French as an adult and of living for five years in a French culture. I had to learn that there are two words for "you" in French, "tu" and "vous," and that it is highly important to be accurate in their use. You use "tu" in addressing a child or a good friend or someone who might be considered to be socially inferior to you; and "vous" for somebody you don't know well, your boss and people considered "superior" to you. I made many mistakes along this line in my early days of speaking French in France; people often felt insulted and were very cross with me for using the wrong word. Eventually I learnt the importance of using the right word in the given circumstance; I finally knew my place in French society.

A good understanding of the language-thought-feeling (attitude) connection is essential as prolegomenon to any discussion of the topic of language in the church.

## II. LANGUAGE IN THE CHURCH

We should, I think, try to use inclusive language in our worship services, so that nobody should feel excluded. The continual use of sexist language can, at best, leave people confused as to whether a particular usage of words includes them and, at worst, frankly excludes them. As a little girl I was often told, "Christ calls men to follow in his footsteps" . . . but since I was a girl I felt that invitation (whatever it meant?) could not possibly apply to me. Had the minister said, "Christ calls us to follow him," or, more at a distance, "Christ calls people to follow in his footsteps," I would have felt included.

One feels that the continual use of sexist, or so-called generic language, that the church has traditionally used has shaped our thoughts and attitudes towards the "proper" role of women in the church (especially towards women in the ordained ministry). This is changing but we've a long way to go.

## III. HOW DO WE GO ABOUT CHANGING THE LANGUAGE?

This is not a "how-to" talk! What is required, it seems to me, is simply being aware of sexist words being used and substituting for them words which are inclusive. Even if you personally do not see the need for inclusive language, try to remain sensitive to others in the congregation who do. You're not losing anything by the use of inclusive language but someone else may be gaining.

One must be very cautious in changing the words of hymns. Changes can be made in a non-threatening way. A note can be placed in the bulletin — "You may substitute the word 'people' for 'mankind' in verse 3 if you wish."

The language of the Bible has strongly influenced the language we use in church. We need to recognize, though, that the collection of writings we know as the Bible was written in societies that were patriarchal and sexist in nature, and that some of the language in the Bible reflects that sexism. And further, our English translations were made by men who were

themselves living in patriarchal, sexist societies. In many instances where we read man, men and mankind, the word in the original language is "human" or "person" or "people." Recovering this language, these words, is not changing the Bible, but restoring it to the way it was originally written.

Some of the language of the Bible can be changed if the changes are consistent with our understanding that the Bible speaks to all people in all times. If such changes contribute to our understanding that God is speaking to all people then these changes are in keeping with the prophetic liberation tradition of the Bible.

Why is it that we think of God primarily as Father, King and He? and avoid using the female, maternal images of God, like "the God who gave us birth"? Why are we reluctant about associating the female with the Holy? Could it be that after centuries of calling God Father and King that we really believe that God is a man, a male? Have we shut our minds and hearts to the fullness of knowledge that is being offered to us in these images and names? I do not want God to be called Mother, Queen, She, all the time. God is neither male nor female. Inclusive God language seeks to use masculine and feminine imagery for God where that is appropriate in telling us something, but mostly to use *gender neutral imagery* such as Teacher, Guide, Creator, Liberator. My personal preference lies with the gender neutral names. Still, I have no objection to the use of male imagery and the male pronoun if, and only if, female imagery is used as well. I have a problem when the imagery of one sex becomes dominant. That's trying to put God back in our little boxes!

The English language does present us with a problem when we come to pronouns. English has no gender neutral pronoun which can be applied to God. It is possible however to structure our sentences and speech in such a way that the use of pronouns is kept to a minimum.

## IV. CONCLUSION

I hope I have presented some ideas for reflection about language in the church that will be of some value. Many resources are available in pursuance of this reflection. Books on inclusive language and the reasoning behind it have been written. There are lists of inclusive hymns and whole inclusive hymnals. There are worship aids containing inclusive prayers and translations of Scripture where attention has been paid to inclusive language.

Our most valuable resource in our reflection on inclusive language and Christian feminism is each other. Men and women, black and white, rich and poor, young and old must start to reflect together on what it means to be a community of equals living in mutuality in the image of God.

**Editor's note.** Kathy Schwartztruber, the daughter of a Mennonite minister, was educated in Ontario and graduated in 1976 from McGill University with an Honours B.Sc. degree in Chemistry and the Silver Medal of the Canadian Institute of Chemistry. Doctoral studies in Organic Chemistry were taken at the University of Paris at Orsay under the guidance of Sir Derek Barton, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry. She was awarded the Ph.D. in 1984, after which she worked with the National Research Council's Halifax Laboratory. Interest in education led her to complete Dalhousie's B.Ed. degree and to teach French part-time at Dal. Since 1987 she has worked as a Forensic Scientist with the RCMP in Halifax while continuing to teach part-time for the French Department at Dalhousie. Kathy is a "Friend" of the A.B.F., and a member of the First Baptist Church, Halifax, where she serves in the choir, as a member of the Board of Christian Education and the Young Women's Group. Keenly interested in music she played violin with the London Youth Symphony Orchestra.

## COMMENT

I wonder if you, dear reader, have ever played a party game in which the participants were asked in turn to identify groups of letters such as CBC, JSBC, UN, NATO, UNESCO, GATT, BOAC, KLM, CICCUC, SCM, IVCF and the like. Failure to reply correctly required a forfeit of some sort guaranteed to raise a laugh, a stated number of which caused the offender to be "out." The last person to be left "in" of course, was rewarded with a magnificent prize appropriate to the occasion. I have often thought that a church party might well have a game of this kind using such letter combinations as KJV, AST, AV, RV, JB, TEV, NIV, RSV, NEB, NAB, et cetera. The replies would give a good indication of the level of biblical knowledge of the group since they are all abbreviations of various English translations of the Bible.

One wonders whether, even if the meaning of the letters is known, the theological and ecclesiastical milieu from which any particular translation comes is known. For instance, is it known that the NIV, the *New International Version*, so widely used in our churches, originated, under the sponsorship of the New York Bible Society, from a large group of over one hundred conservative, evangelical Protestant scholars to meet the need of those that have become dissatisfied first with the alleged "liberal" tendencies of the RSV, TEV, NEB et alii, and second with the paraphrases and amplifications popular in conservative circles (such as, *The Living Bible Paraphrased* and *The Amplified Bible*)? Significantly, Isaiah 7.14 in the NIV reads "the virgin will be with child," whereas the RSV correctly renders the verse as "a young woman shall conceive"! One fears that in cases like that dogmatics has triumphed over scientific etymology. However it must be admitted that the merits of the NIV outweigh its limitations and that it is probably now established as the standard version for conservative, evangelical Christians and churches.

The religious press informs us that next summer, 1990, we shall see on sale in the bookstores another English version of the Bible and we shall have to add another group of letters to our list. We shall be invited to purchase the NRSV, the *New Revised Standard Version*. This is the fruit of a team of some thirty scholars from Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish backgrounds, under the chairpersonship of Bruce M. Metzger, the eminent biblical expert, working for fifteen years. The National Council of Churches in America, which owns the copyrights of both the RSV and the NRSV, approved the updating for publication in May 1989, and granted publication rights to half a dozen or so publishing houses in the U.S.A. and England. Authorization was given to the American Bible Society to offer the NRSV in its programme.

Metzger claims the new version eliminates English "male-bias" gender references not found in the original language. For instance, the RSV of Romans 16.7 reads "They are men of note among the apostles"; the NRSV changes this to, "They are prominent among the apostles." Further, says Metzger, there has been no "tampering with the gender of the deity. God remains 'our Father,' and Jesus Christ is still the 'son of God.'" Revisions correct confusing word order, update words whose connotations have changed, improve clarity, use "natural" English, and make reading of the Bible easier.

RSV renderings that can only be called "unfortunate" have been changed. The RSV of Psalm 50.9, "I will accept no bull from your house," has changed to "I will not accept a bull from your house." The RSV of 2 Corinthians 11.25, "Once I was stoned," becomes in the NRSV, "Once I received a stoning."

## IN MEMORIAM

**MARION ELDER GRANT** died 29 April 1989, aged 89. A member of the Acadia class of 1921, former Dean of Women (1936-60), President of the Canadian Federation of University Women (1949-52), President of the Acadia Associated Alumni (1961-63), Member of Acadia's Board of Governors (1976-87) and Honorary Governor since then, Marion was one of that small number of people who are loved, respected and honoured by all. She was named Acadia's "Woman of the Century" by the Associated Alumni in 1984. A dedicated Baptist, her great love for the objectives of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship is reflected in the very substantial legacy she bequeathed to that organization. She is greatly missed.

Dear Marion



Herman & Florence Olsen

**FLORENCE OLSEN** died 25 April 1989, aged 87. Regarded by many as the perfect minister's wife, Florence is pictured here with her husband, whose ministry she loyally supported and who pre-deceased her. Study for the B.A. (Manitoba) was followed by graduate study at Columbia University. Music was her great joy: she directed choirs for all sorts and ages all her life; she directed the Atlantic Baptist Convention Choir for a decade. She is survived by a son, Christopher, a daughter, Mary Elizabeth, a sister and a grandson.



Billy Oliver

**WILLIAM PEARLY OLIVER** died 26 May 1989, aged 77. Billy Oliver became one of the Province of Nova Scotia's first black university graduates when Acadia granted him his B.A. and B.D. degrees. Ordained in 1936, he was minister of the Beechville Baptist Church for the past 53 years while serving Cornwallis Street Baptist Church in Halifax for the past 25 years. A worker for education and for the black community, he is lauded as a principal figure in the founding of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the Black United Front and the Black Cultural Centre. In WW2 he served as a padre in the Halifax area. He was elected president of the Atlantic Baptist Convention in 1962. He was awarded the D.C.L. of King's College and Acadia's D.D.; and in 1984 was admitted to the Order of Canada. In 1988 he was given the Distinguished Service Award by the Associated Alumni of Acadia University. A Christian Gentleman of great dignity, he will be missed.

**OBITUARIES** — With regret we note the deaths of the following: Eric Wilfred Balcom, aged 80; Harvey Doane, aged 79; Winston Arnet Steeves, aged 70; Burnett David Stevens, aged 89; Eric Lane Titus, aged 79.

# SERMON

by Dorothy M. Lovesey

## CRUMBS FOR THE DOGS

Hans Küng says that one of the things that confused and upset his contemporaries most about Jesus was his attitude to women. He always treated them as persons in their own right, and they were not ordinarily regarded as such; they were seen in their relationships to their fathers, their brothers, or their male offspring! The neighbour's wife in the ten commandments is listed with house, slave, ox and ass as things not to be coveted. It was not the matter of the violation of the woman that was a concern, but rather it was the violation of the man whose property she was. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, women were inferior to men in every respect and men were advised to talk very little with their own wives and even less, or not at all, with other women. But Jesus turned all that around! As Dorothy L. Sayers says: "Nobody could possibly guess from the words and deeds of Jesus that there was anything 'funny' about women!"

Jesus had women as his close friends. He even accepted a tribute from Mary Magdalene and saved the life of a woman taken in adultery. Again he suggested that there were other places for women to serve than in the kitchen. He talked to the disciples about eternal life, and both she and the disciples were amazed that he should address a woman at all. He never patronised, flattered, or talked down to women. Of a quick wit himself, he recognised and appreciated it in others, even women! It is surely little wonder then that they ministered to him in life and in death, and that he should appear first to a woman after his resurrection.

It was perhaps then her observance of Jesus' attitude that gave the Syro-Phoenician woman the temerity to approach him, the tenacity to demand something from him and the courage to say what she did to him. The passages that deal with this incident occur in Mark and Matthew only (Matthew 15.21-28; Mark 7.24-30). Surprisingly it is not in Luke, he doubtless would have included it had he known of it! These passages have been considered as among the most difficult in the Gospels, for they appear to present Jesus as unwilling to heal the small daughter of a Gentile woman and changing his mind because of what she said. Various attempts have been made to explain this by suggesting, for example, that a rabbinic method is employed here whereby the right answer is elicited by the use of an outrageous statement; that Jesus was in fact testing her out. Or perhaps Jesus was considering whether he should extend his ministry to the Gentiles at this time or not, and the woman pointed the way forward to him. What she said possibly served to remind him of things he already knew and helped him to resolve the situation.

As the story opens, Jesus is worn out with his labours, wants to get away from the crowd, and withdraws to a quiet place in the region of Tyre and Sidon in Phoenicia, gentile country. But escape was impossible for him. A Canaanite woman, hearing of his whereabouts, came after him, intent that he should heal her small daughter who had an "unclean spirit."

The disciples did their best to get rid of her because as far as they were concerned she was nothing but a difficult woman making a nuisance of herself. Jesus also would not listen to her but kept silent in her presence. But she refused to be deterred from her purpose, until finally Jesus says offhandedly (in the Matthean account), "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." One recalls the story of Jonah who had to be thrown into the sea and swallowed by a fish before he would consent to prophesy to the heathen Ninevites. He had finally to come to grips with the fact that God's concern extends to all people, and even cattle!

But the woman swept past all that and replied quite simply to Jesus, "Lord, help me!" One thinks of Mercy, in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, banging frantically at the gate in her desire to enter the way, and when it finally opens, gasps, "As my Lord sees, I am come. And if there is any grace or forgiveness to spare, I beseech thee that I, thy poor handmaid, may be partaker thereof." However, unlike the kind words Mercy heard, the Syro-Phoenician woman was greeted with, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the [Gentile] dogs." Of course we do not know *how* Jesus said this. What was the tone of his voice? He says it with a smile? Did he say it banteringly, as if to say, "You know very well if you give holy things to dogs they will turn and rend you"? Or was it said reflectively, introspectively, "Should my mission be extended; shouldn't the children of Israel get the good things first? There's so much to accomplish; better to stay with Israel; after all, I was sent to the house of Israel"? We only know *what* Jesus said, and it sounds harsh: "It is not right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." In other words, the children of Israel should have priority in the receiving of the good news, it is not for Gentile dogs. "Dogs" in the ancient world was used metaphorically and disparagingly of unbelievers, Canaanites and the like; in the same way as certain epithets are sometimes used today to depersonalize and degrade people — even "skunks"?

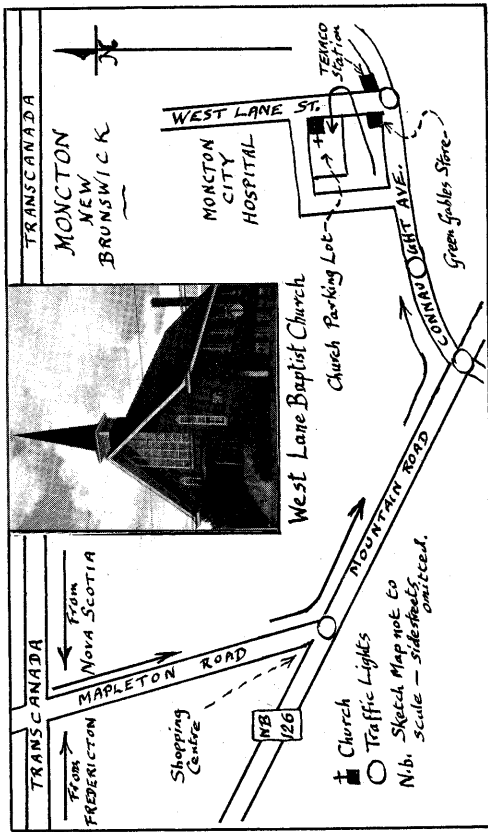
The quick-witted Canaanite woman, however, had an answer to that. Using the word literally she said, "Yes, but even the dogs get the crumbs which fall from their master's table." What was she saying then? "Reckon me among the dogs then, I'll be content with the scraps!" Or is she implying that in the everyday situations in life even the dogs are looked after, and are entitled to the scraps? Are there then no crumbs for an ordinary Canaanite woman and her child in God's order of things? Clearly she thought there was. Moreover, is not a child, a woman, a nation of more importance than a dog?

The faith that she had then, was in an all-embracing salvation. The good news and the good things were for all. Her faith included all those beyond the pale, all those beneath the salt — the ne'er-do-wells, the outcasts, the rejects, the battered, the bag-ladies of Toronto, those without human rights in Nova Scotia — all the "dogs" in fact!

Jesus could only respond with approval: "Great is your faith, be it unto you even as you will." And her daughter was healed from that hour. One might suggest that if we had a vision of faith like that of the Syro-Phoenician woman, and a similar persistence and courage, a miracle might even happen today!

**Editor's note.** Dorothy M. Lovesey was born and received her training as a nurse, midwife and health visitor in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has raised a family of three and served as a minister's wife in England. Academically she has lectured in English at University level and holds the following degrees: BA, PhD (London); MA, BEd (Acadia).





## ABF FALL ASSEMBLY, 29-30 SEPTEMBER 1989

West Lane United Baptist Church, Moncton, N.B.

Theme: "The Element of Doubt in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament"

Special Speaker: Rev. Dr. Timothy R. Ashley, Acadia Divinity College

### PROGRAMME

#### FRIDAY

- 6.30 pm Registration
- 7.00 pm Opening Devotions (President)
- 7.15 pm Welcome of Host Minister and introductions
- 7.25 pm Lecture I. "Doubt in the Wisdom Literature: the Problem" — Dr. Ashley
- 8.30 pm Break
- 8.45 pm The Service of Holy Communion conducted by the Reverend Robert Baker and the deacons of the Host Church
- 9.30 pm Reception

#### SATURDAY

- 9.00 am Morning Devotions, conducted by the Reverend Andrew Crowell (Truro)
- 9.20 am Notices and introductions
- 9.25 am Lecture II. "Doubt in the Wisdom Literature: the Solution." — Dr. Ashley
- 10.15 a.m. Coffee break

- 10.30 a.m. Panel Response: Dr. Gerry Harrop (Second V.P., chair), the Reverends Byron Corkum (Amherst) and John Dickinson (Lancaster, Saint John). General discussion follows.
- Midday Dinner at Church
- 1.15 p.m. Business Meeting
- 3.00 p.m. Dismiss

### HOSPITALITY

- Nor-West Motel, 1325 Mountain Road, 506.384.1222 s.49/d.55
- Beacon Light Motel, 1062 Mountain Road 506.384.1734 s.36/d.38
- Colonial Inn, 42 Highfield 506.382.3395 s.63/d.67
- Keddy's Brunswick Hotel, 1005 Main, toll free 1.800.561.7666 s.66/d.66
- Rodd Park House Inn, 434 Main St., Toll free 1.800.565.0207 s.69/d.79
- For free billets, call Mr. C. H. Robart, 506-384-4885.