

**MORRIS ROLAND BEZANTINE
LOVESEY
BA, MA, BSc, BD, MTh, DD**

**BY
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DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL VINCENT RUSHTON
LECTURE
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Many times each week I take a wooded path that leads to the University, on my trek to the Post Office, and so I pass the lovely reddish-brown Victorian house at 20 Westwood Avenue once owned by Morris and Dorothy Lovesey - who were tolerated by Susie, their cat. Many happy memories come to mind, not the least wonderfully very English dinners we enjoyed between the three of us (Susie, in her arrogance, would suddenly leave for parts unknown when visitors arrived) about every 4 to 6 weeks.

Morris Lovesey was one of the ABF Founders. Without a doubt, in some spiritual way (which would have intrigued him greatly) Dr. Lovesey is with us today. Equally present is his wife, also a 'Dr. Lovesey,' who would be at his side playing a prominent part, if a little quieter, in the proceedings. Indeed, this luncheon's genesis rests with Dorothy, who was the 'Secretary' of the ABF *Friends*. She was determined that the 'ABF Friends' should meet outside the regular assembly - as a prayer auxiliary, really - so we could get to know each other outside of the usual business. They were pleased that we named the luncheon after another stalwart member, the Rev'd. Vincent Rushton.

Today, we honour Morris. He was born in Watford, Hertfordshire, just northwest of London on 8 October 1916. He never knew his father, who was, at that time, in the British army. His father came home after being injured in battle, and left before Morris was born, and was killed during the Second Battle of Passchendaele. This explains the third name,

Bezantine, for it is the little village where his father, Roland, was killed – it was a custom of the time. So Morris bore the name of his father (Roland) and the place name where his father died and is buried.

Educated at the Watford Grammar School, where Morris was Captain of the school varsity Rugby Team (he was very proud yet modest of this achievement) he went on to Birmingham University where he was granted an Honours B.Sc.

Thinking that his future would be with Geology, in 1939 he went to South Africa and became the shift-boss at the Robinson Deep Gold Mining Company in Johannesburg. The war began and he joined the South African army as a Lieutenant and was shipped to Lebanon (in a vessel that had been previously torpedoed and repaired with cement). Here he directed tunneling for railways in order to move troops quickly along the coast – in fear that the Nazis would try a ‘pincer movement’ against the Suez Canal. There are photographs of Morris serving in the Levant, and he was a strikingly handsome young man.

It is no wonder, then, that when he met Dorothy in a Baptist church in Johannesburg, they fell in love. He returned to Johannesburg in 1943 and married Dorothy May Surmon on 4 December. They subsequently had three children.

Morris felt called to the Christian Ministry, so he and Dorothy set out by ship to London for training. They recalled that because of the danger of U-Boats, the ship zigzagged all the way, doubling the time at sea, and providing double the opportunity to watch a less-than-riveting documentary film on birds nesting – the only entertainment available aboard the ship.

It was still wartime, and whilst Morris was studying at Spurgeon’s College, he was a firewatcher, spending many nights on the rooftop trying to spot enemy planes and action.

Dorothy, by the way, was a well-qualified nurse and mid-wife, and she would peddle through the London blitz on the same nights to serve the injured and needy.

After studying at Oxford (Honours BA, MA) and the University of London (Honours BD and MTh) Morris became minister of the Kirby Muxloe Free Church, Leicestershire from 1950 to 1956; then he was invited to come to Canada as Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Acadia University (1956-58), Professor of Biblical Literature (1958-1968), and for Acadia Divinity College and Acadia University (1968-1982).

Dr. Lovesey was a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, the Canadian Theological Society, the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies since he did graduate study on Origen. (We all know what happened to Origen.)

Morris and Dorothy were founding members of the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council, he serving as Treasurer and President twice. He was a founding member of the Atlantic Ecumenical Council, serving as Vice-President, President, Secretary (three separate terms), and Treasurer.

Dr. Lovesey was tremendously interested in the Canadian Bible Society and was President of the Wolfville Branch (1981-1989). He was the author of *The Pastoral Epistles* (1956), *Called to Serve, a Mini-biography of Clarence Basil Lumsden* (1996), and numerous reports, articles, and book reviews. He was Editor of the ABF *Bulletin* from 1985 to 1992.

Morris was honoured many times including being the Kitchener Scholar at Birmingham University (1936-1939), the Sir John Cadman Medal, Department of Mining, Birmingham University (1938), Neobard Scholar, Mansfield College, Oxford University (1948-1950), Faculty Fellowship for theological study in England, American Association of Theological School (1966-1967), and granted a Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) by McMaster University in 1970.

Dr. Lovesey was Chaplain of the Royal Canadian Legion, C.B. Lumsden Branch No. 74, Wolfville, from 1972 to 1997 and awarded the Certificate of Merit in 1978 and became a Royal Canadian Legion Life Member in 1993. He was also awarded the Nova Scotia Certificate of Appreciation for Volunteer Service in 1982.

Morris Lovesey was a fearless debater and commentator – it was not unusual to see Dorothy pulling his coat-tails when he was standing to speak, a gentle hint that he should shut up.

Morris and Dorothy Lovesey were loyal supporters of this chapel. Every Sunday they would be in their pew – which was the third from the front on the South side – he with his Greek New Testament so he could follow the lessons and the sermon. If either one were ill or otherwise occupied, the other would come alone, to show support for the Chaplaincy.

It was in this chapel that he preached his last sermon. He was a minister who took the pulpit very seriously.

It was in their home when the profound English defense of personal privacy was dropped, and there we experienced a man who was devoted to his wife, and well-read: to his last days he was familiar with the most modern of theological writings. It was in his home when he would bring out his marvellous stamp collection of Newfoundland stamps, or whisper that he spent too much money on either a stamp or the latest book. It was then when we might see the family photograph albums meticulously labeled for posterity.

Morris Lovesey helped establish, evolve, maintain and support the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. For many years he would take a group of us, through snow, rain, sleet or hail, to Saint John to visit the General Secretary of the Convention so we could maintain an annual contact and to affirm that we are Convention churches, determined to be Baptist in principle,

and ready to discuss any issue thought important to Christ's Church today.

This Spring, as I passed by his former home, I noted with a sense of love and nostalgia, the rising from the old gardens some of the flowers that were planted by Dorothy. Behind the garage is their former vegetable garden – the fruit of which I was proudly served so many times. I see curtains in the windows, now beginning to show their age and lack of care, that were made by Dorothy. I look to the roof and remember it being reported by neighbours that Morris was crawling over it, well into his 80's, shoveling off the snow that had accumulated, and the driveway where he would run out in his housecoat to place the garbage at the curb.

On 12 January 2005, I conducted the funeral for Morris Lovesey in this chapel. It was less than a year after conducting a similar service for Dorothy on 22 March 2004.

Morris Roland Bezantine Lovesey was a Scholar, a Christian Minister, a Teacher, a man profound in thought and counsel, a husband, a father, and a member of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship for which we owe a great deal. And we pause to remember him today. I thank God for the life of Morris R. B. Lovesey.

**LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN: AND OUR FATHERS
THAT BEGAT US.**

**THEIR BODIES ARE BURIED IN PEACE; BUT THEIR
NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE.**

**THE PEOPLE SHALL TELL OF THEIR WISDOM; AND THE
CONGREGATION WILL SHEW FORTH THEIR PRAISE.**

Ecclesiasticus 44: 1, 14, 15 (AV)

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