

The Bulletin

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COVER: *Find Me by the Water's Edge* (wool, weaving scraps, felt on canvas). A collective piece from the L'Arche Homefires Art Program featuring Machelie, Johanna, Nonie, Stephen, Krystle, Lori, Heather, Brenda, Wolf, Douglas, Joy, Emma, Gaga, Shin.

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A Note from the Editor

BY SCOTT KINDRED-BARNES

¶ Worship is the theme of this edition. We hope the articles will stimulate your thinking on this often divisive albeit essential topic. The CABF Publications Committee is excited to make this edition available to CABF members and member churches both online and in print. We recognize the value of both formats. You can read the current and past issues online at www.c-abf.ca/publications. If you would like to receive *The Bulletin* electronically, please contact the Chair of the Publication Committee, the Rev. Dr. Aaron Kenny: aaron@bridgewaterbaptist.com

Embracing Holy Envy

BY AARON KENNY

For this I offer no apologies, I am filled with Holy Envy.

¶ Along the South Shore of Nova Scotia, our local Baptist churches have long practiced open membership, welcoming by experience of faith people from other Christian traditions. On a Sunday morning in October, I asked our congregants to raise their hand if they grew up in a non-Baptist tradition. A sea of hands was the response. “If you were raised in a community of faith other than Baptist,” I continued, “shout out the name of that religious tradition.”

A chorus filled the church “Lutheran! Pentecostal! Anglican! United! Catholic! The Salvation Army! Christian Reformed!” and on it went. Such a wealth of experience. Over the two months that followed, we celebrated and reflected upon the diversity within our

church. People shared how they had experienced God in unique and diverse ways in other traditions. We experienced the meditative prayer of Cursillo, the band marches of Salvationists, foreign liturgies, and courageous testimonies. It was a celebration of Holy Envy.

This term might seem strange to some. I'm not talking about jealousy, but deep appreciation of something shared. An open-handed grace that values *both* our unique Baptist convictions and forms of worship, *and* the desire to emulate the varied and wonderful witness of the whole Church.

The term was first coined by the late Dr. Krister Stendahl, a former dean of the Harvard Divinity School and a Lutheran bishop in Stockholm, Sweden. When seeking to learn about other religious traditions, Dr. Stendahl offered three rules: (1) Ask the adherents of that faith and not its enemies; (2) Never compare your best to their worst; (3) And leave room for holy envy.

The first two rules are self-explanatory, but the third must be experienced to be understood. In essence, Dr. Stendahl called the Church to embrace the differences among us not as a defect to be overcome, but as a feature to be celebrated.

Growing up in a Canadian Baptist Church, I did not always understand this. My own mixed religious heritage was a source of tension, even shame. My desire to blend into the group was coupled with the immaturity that pushes one to compress great mystery into bullet points, that seductive sin of certainty. This is a pattern of exclusion, where we define who we are by who we are not. The building of walls rather than bridges.

And then I fell in love with a Catholic. Well, I fell in love with a young woman named Erica, who was Catholic.

It is funny how our perspectives change as we encounter real relationships and vulnerability. And in honouring my wife, I wanted to honour her traditions, and she mine. We were married at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in her hometown of Riverview, New Brunswick, by the late Father Daniel Bowen and Rev. Dr. Richard Coffin, her priest and my pastor. And a year later we baptized our first-born son in the same baptismal font where our two families had met to bless our marriage.

Have you ever witnessed the Catholic rite of asperges during Eastertide, when the priest sprays water over the congregation, entreating them to “remember your baptism”? As Baptists, this might sound very odd. Remember your baptism? How can people be asked to remember something done to them as infants? My own experience of believer’s baptism was a defining moment in my life—an outward expression of my inward faith. I could remember this rite of passage. This step of “owning” my faith. But how could a Catholic?

When I remember my baptism, I think of the weeks leading up to it. Our pastor met with my brother and I in our living room after the school bus had dropped us home. Together we read Gospel accounts of Jesus descending into the water and emerging from it—The Spirit descending upon him like a dove; The words of God’s blessing “You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”; The great commission, given by Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them. As the weeks went by, Baptist convictions framed my understanding and my identity. In the waters of baptism, I identified with the death and the resurrection of Jesus. In obedience, I followed Jesus through the velvet curtained baptistry of First Baptist Church Charlottetown into the Jordon.

And now, here I was—A young father, yielding to the tradition of my enlarged family out of respect, but in my heart reasoning that one day our son would choose the path that was my own. A Catholic baptism little more than a dedication, not unlike the ones in my baptist tradition. But something happened that day which I had not expected. In my son’s baptism, I witnessed something I had completely missed in my own.

On the day of the baptism, we gathered awkwardly with other couples. Coddling our naked newborns wrapped in white towels, we followed the priest to the running water of the baptismal pool. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we presented our son to God and into the waters he vanished and then emerged. We watched as the priest pulled him from the water, holding him close to his chest, and blessing our beloved son. Soon he was returned into our arms, and gowned in a lacy white baptismal dress. The same dress that my wife had worn as an in-

fant, the same dress that her sisters and mother had once worn at their baptisms as well.

After the service we gathered in celebration, and a big white cake with billowing boiled white icing was carried out. In the tradition of the family, our son's little pink bare feet were lowered deep into the marshmallowy waves of sticky white frosting. And he giggled with delight as up from the cake he came. To my surprise, he was immediately passed throughout the room from family member to friend. Each one swiping finger tips of frosting from his little feet, kissing his forehead, and whispering to him "You are loved!" And in that room, I could remember the words of blessing spoken over Jesus, and the blessing extended to each of us; 'beloved daughters and sons of God.'

Years later, I would have the great joy of officiating services of Believers' baptism for both my father and my wife, but I came to these occasions with a deep appreciation of their prior experiences of baptism in the Roman Catholic Church. Believers' baptism is a profound and beautiful part of our worship and experience of faith, but so is the gracious love that receives and blesses the least of these in other traditions of the Church. There is something good there that should not be lost. How I want all people to have that memory, of the body of Christ tickling their feet, kissing their nose, and whispering you are loved. That is Holy Envy.

The Rev. Dr. Aaron Kenny serves as the lead pastor of the Bridgewater Baptist Church in Nova Scotia. Prior to this, he and his wife Erica Kenny, served as Africa Team Leaders for Canadian Baptist Ministries where they ministered for over thirteen years among indigenous church partners in East and Central Africa, and directed relief, sustainable community development, and peace-building programs. They are members of both the CABF and the CBAC.

Worship as the Re-Sacralization of Time

BY MARK PARENT

¶ For a long time, I thought that nothing more could be added to Archbishop William Temple's definition of worship. Found in slightly different forms across his writings and public talks, my favourite variation is taken from his book *The Hope of a New World*, written at the beginning of World War II. In that book, Temple claims that the world could be saved from political chaos by one thing alone and that was worship because to worship was "*to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.*" Over my years of ministry, however, I have come to see that William Temple, in his many writings on the importance of worship, omitted one important aspect of worship; that worship—true worship—"re-sacralizes time."

With the rise of modernity, the Christian concept of time as the arena of God's kairotic activity was abandoned in favour of "time as history" (to quote George Grant). Time became something that was future oriented. The present was abandoned in an emphasis on the future where true hope and salvation were to be found. Unfortunately, this concept of time affected even the Christian Church and distorted worship so that worship became a course in Christian education, or social justice encouragement, or, more recently, a form of entertainment and a means of personal actualization. In a world where things were seen to be getting better and better such bastardizations of worship could survive but, in a world, where things are not getting better and better but worse and worse, they will not suffice. We need to recover a worship which re-sacralizes time which claims that God is not to be found in the undefined future of history but in the eternal present of God's kairotic activity.

Away, then with “*Good morning, I am glad to see you*” in favour of “*In the Year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, he was high and lifted up and his train filled the Temple and the angels cried holy, holy, holy is the Lord.*”

Away, then, for at least one hour a week, with the wind of education, the fire of social action, the earthquake of entertainment and self-fulfilment, in favour of the still small voice of the divine.

Dr. Mark Parent has served as pastor of several churches across Canada and has written two books and numerous articles for journals and newspapers. Mark has served as an elected member of the Nova Scotia Legislature in the capacity of minister of Environment and Labour and minister of Agriculture.

Worship from the Choir Stalls

BY ADAM BOYD

Come, Christians, join to sing—Alleluia! Amen!

Loud praise to Christ our King; Alleluia! Amen!

Let all, with heart and voice,

Saved by God’s gracious choice,

Now in this place rejoice: Alleluia! Amen!

CHRISTIAN HENRY BATEMAN, 1813–1889

¶ Every chorister is focused on the director of music as the appointed time draws near. Seeing the nod, all stand and open their folder, draw a collective breath and begin to sing: a motet during the approach, an anthem at the offering, or music during communion. Challenging music praises God and helps the congregation create the emotions needed to bring them away from their everyday concerns and toward a holy place. Usually seated at the front, occasionally in the back, the choir is a part of the congregation and

also set apart to represent the congregation to God. It is mostly from the choir stalls that I experience corporate worship.

In many churches Sunday morning, when the congregation quietly prepares for worship—perhaps listening to a prelude introducing the service—the choir is already gathered and prepared to process into the sanctuary singing the first hymn with the entire assembly. For choristers, preparation for worship begins Thursday evening when we gather to practice anthems, hymns, and other music for Sunday. For worship as “worth-ship,” what we bring to God must be worthy, and that requires collective effort to achieve. Members of the choir often bring music home, often using online recordings that emphasize their part (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) so the music sung on Sunday is of a quality worthy of God.

There is very little “down time” in the choir stalls. After the processional, the hymn book is replaced by the service leaflet and each chorister is thinking ahead. Our movements help indicate the appropriate time to sit and stand; we have the next hymn marked; we are ready to sing “Gloria Patri,” “Agnus Dei,” or “Doxology.” We have the tune and at least some of the verses of the last hymn memorized so we can walk down the aisle without tripping, and have the choral benediction or three-, six-, or nine-fold “Amen” taped to the back cover. Our time of worship is quite active, and I often think of Jesus’ words recorded in Mark 13:37 “And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep awake.”

There are few human activities that exemplify unity and purpose more than a choir. Each person has their own part, and all voices combine in a collective sound. Paul says in Romans 12:1: “Therefore, my friends, I implore you by God’s mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart.” (REB) If “mind” and “heart” are separate aspects of our very selves, then perhaps it is music that most often serves to bring these aspects together.

Adam Boyd is a lifelong Baptist (First Baptist Church Halifax) and a public school teacher in Nova Scotia. He serves on the CABF Publications Committee.

The Practice of Worship in the Early Church

BY JOHN C. PERKIN

¶ Worship in the New Testament era was an evolving activity; we catch only glimpses of what worship was like in the very early gathering of Christians in post-resurrection Jerusalem, mostly from the story told by Luke late in that first generation of Christianity. More glimpses come to light in the early New Testament documents, including the letters of Paul to the churches in Asia Minor and Greece, and also in the general epistles. Some sense of earthly worship may be suggested in John's vision of heavenly worship in Revelation.

In that first generation of the church, it seems that worship across the decades—and across the geographic expanse of where churches were growing—was unstructured but with a desire for order or at least orderliness. Elements of worship may have been drawn from synagogue practices of readings and prayers. Worship from Thessalonica to Jerusalem, from Ephesus to Rome, may have been quite different, but contained common elements. It included the reading of scripture (what we call the Old Testament, particularly the prophets, whose promises the church saw fulfilled in Christ). The proclamation of the good news and some teaching or explication was the norm. Prayer, certainly, formed an important part of worship. Singing took place. The psalms were read, likely antiphonally, perhaps with a response provided by the lector as less than five per cent of the population was literate. And likely in some churches the letters from Paul were read aloud, along with other writings circulated in that time. Such writings may have included selections from the manual of church life we now know as the *Didache*, or teaching of the apostles, with its guidelines for prayer, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, referred to as the Eucharist or giving thanks.

As Baptists, seeking to base our faith and practice on the model of the New Testament, it is helpful to look at elements of early church worship, even if we cannot form a specific model from the few small pieces of information provided. A few notes about New Testament worship may inform our own worship as we seek to be true to the teachings of the apostles, the practice of the early church, and the word of scripture.

1. Worship was not consistent across the period of time in which the New Testament documents were written, nor was it necessarily consistent across the churches from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Ephesus to Corinth to Rome. The practices of worship were evolving, so we cannot base our worship with any certainty on the practices that we see in small passages of scripture.

2. Worship was based on the gathering of an intimate community. Typically meeting in homes that would hold a couple of dozen people comfortably, it must be assumed that the first churches were not only house churches, but were very small in size. There was a social and spiritual intimacy in these gatherings where the worshippers called each other brother and sister regardless of ethnic or economic background. The holy kiss was encouraged by Paul in his letters to the Romans, Corinthians and Thessalonians; it is also encouraged in 1 Peter, as a kiss of love. The symbolism of this kiss, which in the early days was a kiss on the lips, signified the equality of the believers gathered in worship, and unity. It was a liturgical act; that is, it was done in the context of worship, probably in preparation for sharing the Lord's Supper, and likely with specific words and instructions governing it.

3. Participation by the believers was the norm; worship was not a spectacle to be watched by those attending, and performed by a priest or church leader. This may have led to some disorder in Corinth, as addressed by Paul, until some way of ensuring that the various contributions of readings and interpretations, proclamations and prophecies and prayers, were offered in a more ordered and structured manner.

4. Worship was celebratory, offering praise to the God of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ; the proclamation of the good news of Jesus was at the heart of all that took place. There was a sense of enthusiasm, a word meaning *filled with the presence of God*. As the Spirit was present, we may imagine voices raised, hearts filled, and possibly a spontaneous outpouring of emotions and responses. It is clear that while worship had a cognitive component, in the explanation and teaching of the faith, there was also an affective or emotive component. Possibly sometimes this fervour manifested itself in ways that Paul thought unhelpful, and he sought to bring a balance between head and heart.

5. There was a didactic or instructive element to worship. Worship was the one time and place where believers gathered, much as in a modern church; in the context of this gathering scripture was read, and interpreted, and explained. Paul took pains to elevate those he called teachers to the same level as those referred to as prophets. A prophet brought a message revealed by God; it was up to the teachers to explain, interpret, and make sense of revelations so that messages so communicated could be incorporated into the theology and practice of the believers.

6. While worship was simple in the domestic setting of a home, it was nonetheless significant for those who participated. Its transcendent and transformative qualities went beyond being a simple human gathering where learning took place. In worship, the early Christians believed they were being claimed as God's heirs, and in the process of worship were taking on or affirming their new identity. They were experiencing the joys of the heavenly realm on earth, and future eschatological hopes were being made real in the present. Worship, then, was significantly meaningful for worshippers, and transformative of their sense of identity and purpose.

7. Finally, worship was missional. It had a purpose, to lift up the minds, hearts and spirits of the believers to changed lives and witness. Worship was a presenting of the believers' bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1); in other words, the worshippers were to

be changed not just in their self-awareness, but in the very way they lived their lives. The goal of this transformation was to live out the teachings of Jesus, the values of the Kingdom, in their day to day lives. Worship was to enable to ensure that God's will would be done on earth, as it is in heaven, as they prayed; in other words, they were to make God's grace and mercy real.

As Baptists, we have freedom to shape our worship in a variety of ways; if we are to be true to the New Testament teachings and practice, that freedom will be shaped by recognizing the intimacy of the community and the participation of the worshippers to share in a worship that is significant, transformative and related to the living out of our Christian witness in the world.

The Rev. John Perkin serves as the Minister of First Baptist Church, Ottawa. Prior to moving to Ottawa in 2020, John served as Chaplain of Mount Allison University from 1993–2020.

Worship: Who is the Audience?

BY ALLAN EFFA

¶ Søren Kierkegaard was alarmed by the worship services in 19th century Copenhagen. They had become refined productions of excellent music and oratory. Many congregants approached Sunday morning the same way they attended a concert or theatrical event: rating the performances and critiquing those who were on stage. He suggested that the proper approach to worship is to see God as our audience and each person in the pew as a performer. The people on the platform are merely prompters, helping the congregation to perform the work of worship with beauty and order.

This is a timely reminder. Seeker-driven services brought us highly programmed stage productions for mostly passive listen-

ers. Then Covid arrived and churches resorted to livestreaming their services so people could watch in the comfort of their homes. Friends of mine in Edmonton claim that they “attend” a church in Minnesota, but they are purely consumers and not performers.

Kierkegaard was partly right. God is the audience, but so are we! Worship is a dialogue between God and God’s people. It is a conversation that is designed to transform us. God is the initiator. The call to worship is God’s invitation; praise is our response. We confess sins and hear God’s assurance of pardon. We listen to the Word read and proclaimed and respond with “thanks be to God” and by offering our gifts and ourselves to God anew. Take a fresh look at your order of service and heartfully join the conversation!

Dr. Allan Effa served eight years as a Baptist missionary in a remote part of Nigeria where he was involved in theological education and outreach. He has recently retired from the faculty of Taylor Seminary and is an active member of First Baptist Church, Edmonton.

Reflections on the First CABF Cross-Canada Conference

OCTOBER 23–26, 2023

¶ Our goal was quite simple; to gather, to learn, to encourage and to bless one another! We truly believe we checked all the boxes!

Twenty-five CABF clergy and layleaders gathered for four days of education, encouragement, reflection, laughter, and rejoicing in God’s goodness and grace. We had four teaching/speaking sessions:

1. Rev. Dr. Jo-Ann Badley led us in two sessions on “Jacob, Lover of God and Neighbour.” We walked through Genesis 25–36 and

re-visited the transformation of Jacob. We reflected on the question: “How is the love of one woven into the love of the other?” We also learned anew of how Jacob’s transformation informs our journeys of teaching, preaching, and learning in faith.

2. Dr. Randal Rauser (www.randalrauser.com) led us in a session called “Manifesto of a Progressive Baptist: Movements from fear to love, certainty to faith, victory to hope.” We were inspired to keep on reforming our faith and the church so that faith, hope and love might be put on display in a world where so many paradigms are creating places of ‘non-charity.’ Key verses for reflection included 1 John 4:18, 1 Corinthians 13:12 and Genesis 32:28.

3. Andrea King and Luke Dowding (from www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk). The mission-vision statement for OneBodyOneFaith is as follows:

OneBodyOneFaith is a dynamic grassroots charity that enables LGBT+ Christians and advocates for change within the church, ecumenically and intentionally in partnership with likeminded organisations.

For many LGBT+ Christians places of Christian worship and community remain harmful and challenging. We are committed to stopping abuse through initiatives such as the Ban Conversion Therapy coalition; embracing positive change such as the advent of marriage equality in many traditions; and the transformation of church structures: our desire is for LGBT+ Christians to thrive, not just survive.

4. Through their stories and personal testimony, Luke and Andrea encouraged and inspired us while at the same time offering us CABF Baptists an opportunity to explore a future of partnership that will unite/connect our churches both locally and globally.

Our conference also offered time for connecting, eating, sightseeing and relaxation.

During our closing prayer, we reminded each other of one of the commitments from our CABF Covenant: “We will support and

uphold one another in mutual respect and love, and remember one another in prayer.”

Next year, we’re hoping to gather for the second annual CABF Cross-Canada-Conference. The location is set for Halifax, N.S. and we are tentatively planning for the latter half of October 2024.

We are grateful for these exciting days of connection and encouragement in the CABF and looking forward to God’s goodness and providence as we lean into the future.

Peace be with you!

REV. DR. RYAN SATO, FBC EDMONTON

REV. DR. RUSTY EDWARDS, FBC HALIFAX

REV. JEFF WHITE, FBC AMHERST



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAPTIST FREEDOMS

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