Wake Forest Professor 1986 Sprinkle Lecturer

Dr. Charles H. Talbert, professor of religion at Wake Forest University, will be the 1986 Sprinkle lecturer at Atlantic Christian College Wednesday and Thursday.

A member of the Wake Forest University faculty since 1963, he is considered one of the world’s leading scholars on the books of Luke and Acts. Talbert’s lectures will be entitled “Scripture as Living Word.” The Wednesday lecture will begin at 7:30 p.m., and the Thursday lectures will begin at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Talbert received the bachelor of arts degree from Samford University, the bachelor of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the doctor of philosophy degree from Vanderbilt University. He is on leave working on a commentary on Paul’s Corinthian letters.

Talbert is author of 10 books including “Reading Luke” and “Acts: Knox Preaching Guides,” both designed to assist the preacher. He is editor of SBL Dissertation Series/NT; co-chairman, Matthew Consultation, SBL; and a member of the editorial board of “Perspectives in Religious Studies.”

An ordained Baptist minister, he is an active preacher and teacher. He is married to Dr. Betty W. Talbert, a historian who is also trained in spiritual formation and works as director of spiritual formation, Trinity Center.

All lectures will be held in Howard Chapel on the Atlantic Christian College campus. The public is invited to attend.
The couple plan to move in late July.

The Talberts rolled into Winston-Salem on a Monday in the summer of 1963, a 6-by-12 trailer in tow to carry their few possessions. They had been married less than two years and had finished graduate school at Vanderbilt University the day before. He began teaching religion in summer school at Wake, and she began teaching American history at Greensboro College.

Their careers have progressed, and they’re well-known in Baptist circles.

She went from teaching to working for a year as an interim assistant chaplain at Wake Forest to starting the Trinity Center. While there, she has written manuals on spiritual formation, counseled individuals and families, and led spiritual formation and prayer retreats.

He has become a full professor of religion and a renowned New Testament scholar. He has written or edited more than 15 books and numerous articles.

Their new positions are just a culmination of their previous work, Charles Talbert said.

“We had been talking among ourselves a number of years about wouldn’t it be nice to go and do something different,” he said.

Then Baylor came calling last November to see whether he was interested in being on their short list of candidates for the teaching position. He was, but he told them that his wife would need to continue her career, too.

When Charles Talbert first told his wife that he allowed his name to be on the list of candidates, he said, “I feel like God is telling me I’m going to be leaving Wake Forest.”

She said she responded, “I hope he tells me!”

“God’s direct providence is a very real part of the way we live,” Betty Talbert said. She said she told God that she did not want to leave Winston-Salem and the Trinity Center, but that if he wanted her to leave, she would need to love the place they were moving to.

Baylor officials soon had several job options for Betty Talbert. One of them was giving spiritual direction to the seminarians there, and that idea excited her.

Baylor is a large, urban university with about 12,000 students and 700 faculty. It’s related to the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

They signed their contracts April 5, Good Friday, and have not regretted it. But leaving Winston-Salem is going to be hard, they agreed. Their two children were born and raised here. Their friends and co-workers at Wake Forest and the Trinity Center have been their extended family.

“It’s been interesting to watch the reactions to our leaving, especially from those 50 and older,” Charles Talbert said.

They’re surprised, excited and perhaps a bit envious that two people can start anew in another city and at midlife, he said.

“It seems like there’s a longing for those 50 years and older to do what we’re going to do,” he said.
Charles Talbert: “They just made an offer that was just too good to turn down.”

New Start

Couple feel tugged to leave Wake, Trinity Center for life at Baylor

By Amy Andrews  
JOURNAL REPORTER

At an age when many people look forward to retirement, Charles and Betty Talbert have their sights set on Texas and new steps in their careers.

They’re packing up their belongings and making a midlife move to Baylor University after spending 33 years in Winston-Salem — he as a professor of religion at Wake Forest University and she as a founder of and counselor at the Trinity Center.

“That was very unusual.”

Charles Talbert, 62, will teach doctoral students as a distinguished professor in Baylor’s religion department. That’s something he has longed to do, he said.

His wife, 58, will be the director of spiritual formation for Baylor’s George W. Truett Theological Seminary. In 1982, she helped start the Trinity Center — a nonprofit organization that offers counseling, spiritual direction and religious-education courses. It’s thought to have been the first center of its kind in the South.

“I think we both think it’s exciting to be able to start over,” Betty Talbert said recently.

See TALBERTS, Page B6

Betty Talbert has a new job at Baylor.
ISAC ASIMOV, associate professor of biochemistry at Boston University, has published over 100 books, including works on science fiction, science, and the Roman Empire. In this he tries his hand at illustrating the Bible. His intent is to treat the "secular side" of the Bible. That is, he tries to bring in the outside world, illuminate it in terms of the biblical story and, in return, illuminate the events of the Bible by adding to it the non-biblical aspects of history, biography, and geography.

The information given is basically the kind to be found in a Bible dictionary. For example, you will find two pages on the family tree of the Herods and three pages on the city Capernaum.

Why this book? Asimov says that such material "will now be presented in a newly useful way." What this means is that instead of the geographical, biographical, and historical data being presented in alphabetical order, they are supplied to the reader in the form of comments on terms and names as they appear in the biblical text. For example, the chapter on the Gospel of Mark consists of eight pages which supply information on the following items: Mark, John the Baptist, the Unclean Spirit, Levi the Son of Alphaeus, Abiathar, Boanerges, Legion, and Talitha cumi.

The volume may be used as a Bible Dictionary would be by simply referring to the full indices at the end of the book. There the topics treated come in alphabetical order.

Wrong Impression

On the other hand, to arrange the book as though it were a running commentary on the text of the New Testament writings gives a wrong impression as to what an interpretation of a New Testament writing is. The chapter on Paul's letter to the Romans, a theologically and religiously significant piece of early Christian writing, consists of ten pages of information on Rome, Spain, circumcision, Priscilla and Aquila, Rufus, Jason, Fortunatus, and Tertius. Nothing more! This is hardly what commenting on the text of a biblical book ought to be. But commentary is what we have been lead to expect by the book's arrangement.

As far as the content of Asimov's treatment of the "secular side" of the Bible is concerned, my impression is that it generally represents an amateur's acquaintance with somewhat dated secondary sources. A further reading this book I am more than ever convinced that if the public wants a respectable "popular" view of the Bible it will have to come from a specialist.
Talbert Gets Ford Grant

Dr. Charles H. Talbert, assistant professor of religion at Wake Forest University, has been awarded a grant to do research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during the coming academic year.

The grant is made under the Cooperative Program in Humanities to enable scholars in this region to have a year for research at either Duke University or UNC. It is sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

Talbert’s project will be concerned with the influence of ancient literature and art, especially that of Greece and Rome on early Christian rhetoric.

Talbert, who joined the Wake Forest faculty in 1963, is a graduate of Howard College at Birmingham, Ala. Theological Seminary and the Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University.

He is the author of the book, published in 1966, on “Luke and the Gnostics: An Examination of the Lucan Purpose” and is completing work on another book about the 18th century deist, Reimarus. He also has published a number of articles in professional magazines.

Unity Day

The 1967 Worldwide Unity Synod of the Unitas Fratrum decided to hold a special prayer day each year on the Sunday nearest March 1 which is the traditional date of observing the birth of the Moravian Church.

And it was decided that each of these prayer days would be a time to receive an offering for some special cause within the Moravian unity.

The offering this year is to be allocated to the work among Tibetan refugee children at Rajpur, North India, and is to be applied particularly to the construction of a home and school for refugee children.

Therefore on Sunday all undesignated offerings as well as those which are designated for this purpose will be received.
Two Wake Forest University professors have collaborated as editor and translator on the first in a new series on the "Lives of Jesus."


Dr. Charles H. Talbert, associate professor of religion, is the editor and Dr. Ralph S. Fraser, professor of German, is the translator.

Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768), Talbert explained, was a German deist and rationalist who inaugurated the first critical investigation on the life of Jesus.

This is the first time that Reimarus' life of Jesus has been completely translated into English, Talbert added.

The general editor of the series is Leander E. Keck, professor of New Testament at Vanderbilt University.

Right now, Talbert explained, the burning question in Christian education studies is whether the historical Jesus is relevant for Christian faith today or not.

Keck, recognizing this, approached Fortress Press on the idea of publishing the seven lives of Jesus written in the 18th, 19th and 20th century which have been crucial works in determining the way the life of Jesus is studied.

Because Reimarus wrote the first historical-critical study, Talbert explained, it had to be included in the series. He said Reimarus' work "was a bombshell in its time because it was so radical. It shook everybody."

The future volumes include two 20th century Americans, Suffley Jackson Case's "Jesus: A New Biography" and Shailer Matthews' "Jesus on Social Institutions"; and four 19th century Germans, Johannes Weiss' "Jesus Proclamation of the Kingdom of God," Wilhelm Herrmann's "The Communion of the Christian With God," Friedrich Schleiermacher's "Life of Jesus," and Strauss.

Talbert is the author of "Luke and the Gnostics: An Examination of the Lucan Purpose," published in 1966. He has returned to Wake Forest this summer after a year of study on a Ford Foundation grant in the Cooperative Program in Humanities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

While there he began work on another book, "The Artistry and Theology in Luke-Acts," which he hopes to complete by the end of the year. This spring he participated in the Pittsburgh, Pa., Festival on the Gospels. His paper, "The Redactional Implications from Luke to Theologian," has been published in "Jesus and Man's Hope," the first volume on the proceedings of that festival.

Fraser has done translations for other publications. He is chairman of the department of German at Wake Forest.

**Baha'i Group Meets Tonight**

The Baha'i Community of Winston-Salem will meet at 8 p.m. today at 1325 Dublin Court for a program of prayer and meditation in honor of the martyrdom of Bab, the herald and forerunner of Baha'u'llah, the Baha'i faith.

The Bab was martyred on July 9, 1850, at noon in the city of Tabriz, Persia. The group will read writings of the faith.

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**Church Notes**

**WFU Professors Edit New Book**

**By VIRTIE STRoup**

Staff Religion Reporter

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The other most radical view on the life of Jesus was written by David Friedrich Strauss, an early 19th century German. His "The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History" will be included in the series along with a critique of his work.

In announcing the series, Fortress said Reimarus' "rationalistic stance led to a rejection of miracles and the revelatory nature of the New Testament accounts of Jesus. In addition, contradictions inherent in these accounts, the ten­

dentious nature of the gospel narratives, and other con­
siderations, caused Reimarus to assert that the New

Testament record was largely a pious fabrication. Jesus was a political revolutionary. Because of his pioneering efforts in the field of Jesus research, Reimarus remains im­

potent for an understanding not only of the 'old quest' but also the 'new quest' of the historical Jesus."

Two 'Reimarus' writings are available in this book: "On the Resurrection" and "On the Intention of Jesus and His Disciples." Included also is a portion of Strauss' evaluation of Reimarus.

In his introduction to Reimarus' writings, Talbert furnishes the reader with an assessment of their signifi­
cance for contemporary historical critical studies of the New Testament, and in particular the gospels.

This particular series will have special merit, Talbert explained, because the actual books which constitute the subject of the surveys are unobtainable except in excep­
tional libraries.

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Professor to Study Luke as a Historian

Was Luke, the New Testament writer, a reliable historian as well as a literary artist?

Dr. Charles H. Talbert, associate professor of religion at Wake Forest University, will seek an answer to this question during the coming year.

A year's study — and a year's leave from Wake Forest — has been made possible by the Society for Religion in Higher Education, New Haven, Conn. The society awarded Talbert a post-doctoral fellowship for cross-disciplinary study.

Talbert will study Greco-Roman historiography, biography and romance at the Vatican Library and the American Academy of Classical Studies in Rome.

Of the 120 applicants from across the nation, the society awarded grants to 11. The society gives these grants in two categories: To people in religion who want to study in other fields and to people in other fields who want to study theology.

Talbert and his wife and daughter, Caroline, 5, expect to leave for Rome about Sept. 1.

Talbert said about the turn of the century New Testament scholars often went to the classical or Greco-Roman literature seeking a fuller understanding of their material, but in the last generation there has been no conversation with the classical school and New Testament scholars.

Talbert considers the Vatican Library's classical holdings one of its strongest areas and, therefore, he is excited about doing his study there.

Talbert's professional field is Christian origins and most of his work has been on the gospels and on Jesus.


During the coming decade Talbert wishes to do his research with two questions in mind: "What is a gospel?" and "What is an act?"

In recent times, Talbert said, it has been suggested that a gospel is "simply a Christian adaptation of popular Greco-Roman biography" and that an act is "simply a Christian adaptation of popular Greco-Roman history."

"What I want to do," Talbert said, "is to read the material said to be the closest to the gospels and acts to see the similarities and differences and to see if the gospels do belong to the genre of biography and if the acts do belong to the genre of history."

Since he has completed a work on Luke as a theologian and a manuscript on Luke as a literary artist, Talbert has in mind doing a work on Luke as a historian.
“Better than any other study of Luke I know, Reading Luke succeeds in placing the Third Gospel into its contemporary setting in the ancient Mediterranean world. The book is superbly organized, lucidly written, and is a work that can be read with great benefit. For those who know little of Luke, it is an excellent introduction. For those familiar with Luke, it is a gold mine of historical and literary insights. It is a superb example of the exposition of a gospel in light of its historical roots and literary forms, and is to be recommended to students, pastors, and scholars alike.” —Paul J. Achtemeier

“Charles Talbert’s new commentary, Reading Luke, can be recommended for its fresh literary approach to the Lukan Gospel and its teaching. It will be especially enjoyed by those who are looking for a rapid overview. A highly interesting approach!” —Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.
In recent years Lukan studies have resulted in a number of valuable academically researched commentaries and a comparable number of elementary introductions. The present book combines the virtues of both approaches. It is directed to that ever-growing body of students of the New Testament—pastors and preachers, religious-education directors and teachers, and concerned lay persons—who want a commentary based on the best contemporary scholarship but accessible to the non-specialist in content, organization, and style.

Reading Luke has been written from the perspective of redaction criticism as this latter has been influenced by non-biblical literary criticism. Its thrust is toward the theological understanding of large thought-units and of their relation to the entirety of Luke-Acts. In this effort to make the reader feel “at home” in the biblical text, the book follows neither the verse-by-verse method of traditional commentaries nor the development of secondary literature in Lukan studies. Like the classic work of C. H. Dodd on the Fourth Gospel, Professor Talbert’s commentary is concerned with the theological vision of the evangelist and with the religious meaning of the text as it stands before the reader.

OF RELATED INTEREST

A THEOLOGY OF Q: Eschatology, Prophecy, and Wisdom
Richard A. Edwards
"... a good, generally reliable introduction to the theology of Q, and the number of Lk/Mt texts quoted in full add to the work's usefulness as a teaching tool."
_Biblical Theology Bulletin_

KERYGMA AND COMEDY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
A Structuralist Approach to Hermeneutic
Dan O. Via, Jr.
"... the best available intermediate work demonstrating the application of structuralist methods to biblical materials. It also serves as a rich source of information on the (primarily French) structuralist theorists."
William G. Doty in _Journal of the American Academy of Religion_

THE KINGDOM IN MARK: A New Place and A New Time
Werner H. Kelber
"... undoubtedly one of the most stimulating of the recent redaction studies on Mark. The issues it raises will need to be examined in every serious investigation of the origin, purpose and structure of that Gospel."
Harvey K. McArthur in _The Catholic Biblical Quarterly_

MATTHEW: Structure, Christology, and Kingdom
Jack Dean Kingsbury
"I think Kingsbury has given us the key to Matthew in this simultaneous presentation of the earthly and the exalted - a reciprocal relationship between what happened to Jesus and what has happened in the church that Matthew knows."
Raymond E. Brown in _Union Seminary Quarterly Review_

FORTRESS PRESS
Philadelphia
Sure to be marked as a milestone in the study of early Christian literature, Dr. Talbert’s thesis provides a new and viable alternative to the present critical consensus, which holds that “the canonical Gospels are not biographies. They are rather the apostolic kerygma built up into a vivid narrative form.” This contention of the critical consensus is based on three foundations: the Gospels are mythical, ancient biographies are not; the Gospels are cultic, ancient biographies are not; the Gospels are world-negating, ancient biographies are not.

The author demonstrates—in contrast—that the canonical Gospels participate in the genre of ancient biographies. First, certain Graeco-Roman biographies of rulers and philosophers, just as the canonical Gospels, have their outer form or structure determined by myth. The Synoptic Gospels actually employ the same myth as do the biographies. Second, the book points out that certain ancient biographical texts, no less than the Gospels, perform cultic functions. Third, the author demonstrates that the canonical Gospels are varieties of the ancient biographical genre.