

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Andrew Cundill

BIOGRAPHY – Pastor Alan B. Christensen

Born: July 24, 1931, Bridgeport, CT
Schooling: Bridgeport, CT Public Schools
Church: First Congregational Church of Black Rock, Bridgeport, CT
Bible School: Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL, Graduated 1952
Academic: Gordon College, Wenham, MA, 1958 - 1960
Training

Ordained: June 16, 1952, First Congregational Church of Black Rock, Bridgeport, CT

Missionary: Youth For Christ, 2 Years as an Evangelist in Europe, 1952 - 1954 Service

Married: Marion Kerulo, 1953

Children: Paul, Peter, Pamela, Patricia

Pastorate: Bethany Evangelical Free Church, West Orange, NJ, June 1960 - March 1963

Secular Work: President: Bridgeport Exterminating Co. Bridgeport, CT

Pastorate: Hope Evangelical Free Church, Wilton, CT, October 1970 – July 1995

Pastorate: Resident Pastor, The Cove, Billy Graham Retreat Center, Ashville, NC, August 1995 – August 2001

Retirement: September 2001 – June 2003, Resident, Lake of the Ozarks, MO, September 2002 – June 2003

Death: June 18, 2003

Editors Note: The following narrative was written by Peter Christensen, son of Pastor Alan B. Christensen

My father, Alan Brian Christensen, was born July 24, 1931 in Bridgeport, CT, to Henry Christensen and Madeline (DeCarmo) Christensen. His early childhood was spent at Central Baptist Church in Bridgeport and his teenage years he was active in the youth fellowship of the First Congregational Church of Black Rock, Bridgeport, CT.

After graduating from Bassick High School in Bridgeport he went to Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL. In June of 1952, after passing a rigorous examination, the First Congregational Church of Black Rock in Bridgeport CT ordained my father to "The Gospel Ministry." In August of 1952 he graduated from Moody and entered into two year service as an evangelist traveling around Europe with Youth For Christ. He preached alongside John Wesley White and Dr. Bob Cook

and had the joy of seeing many people come to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He told me of their experience in Belfast, Northern Ireland where they preached every day for four weeks in a large tent. Daily two to three thousand people would attend with many hundreds coming forward to demonstrate their new found faith in Jesus. At that time my father was only 21 years old. I am told that even today that crusade in Belfast is remembered as a time that God moved powerfully in Northern Ireland.

My father married my mother, Marion Kerulo, in 1953 and after my grandfather died, leaving his exterminating business to my dad and his brother, my father managed the termite control side of the business. On weekends he preached as an itinerant minister up and down the east coast of the United States.

To further his academic training my dad attended Gordon College, Wenham, MA, from 1958 – 1960.

In June of 1960 he was called to the full time pastorate by the Bethany Evangelical Free Church, West Orange, NJ. He ministered there on a full time basis until March 1963 when he returned to secular work with his brother in the exterminating business.

From 1967 to 1970 my father preached part time at a new start up church in Wilton CT. called Hope Evangelical Free Church. The church had a congregation of approximately 25 people and was meeting in the Tilford Miller Elementary School.

Hope Church called my father to be its full time pastor in October 1970. He held that position for 25 more years seeing the church grow and build two buildings. At the 1986 annual conference of the Evangelical Free Church Association of America held in Gettysburg PA, my dad was selected to be the keynote speaker.

In July of 1995 he retired from the Hope Church pulpit and accepted the call of the Billy Graham Evangelical Association to be the resident pastor at The Cove, its retreat center in Ashville NC. He frequently filled in for absent seminar speakers and also had a weekly radio ministry at WNIF, The Light, a Blue Ridge Broadcasting Corporation in Black Mountain, NC.

In 2001 he retired from the Cove and decided to build a house alongside me on Lake of the Ozarks, MO. In 2002 the house was complete and I had the great honor and privilege to have my mother and father move to live beside my wife, three children and me.

My dad never really retired from the ministry. He was a guest speaker at Osage Hills Baptist Church, where he led a men's Bible study and also a weekly devotional for the staff.

His retirement at Lake of the Ozarks was a happy time for him. In June of 2003 he was scheduled to preach at the Osage Hills Church a two part sermon taken from Hebrews 2:1-4 . The first weeks sermon was titled **Don't Drift** and the second weeks was **Stay Anchored**. He delivered a great sermon on the first week and I was very much looking forward to his "Stay Anchored" sermon when on the following Wednesday he called me at work to tell me he was having difficulty getting out of bed. I immediately left work and went and got him to a hospital. He never regained consciousness and the Lord called him home two weeks later on June 18th, 2003. He always told me that he wanted to leave this place doing the Lord's work and that is what happened. He never finished the second part of his message, **Stay Anchored**. Some day I look forward to hearing it from him.

My father was a compassionate man of faith who was a true servant of his Lord Jesus Christ. He was a modern day Barnabas as a source of encouragement to many people, a twentieth century Paul who truly had the gift to teach and preach. Many have come to know Christ and the richness of his love and grace through my dad's ministry.

My family and those who had the opportunity to know my father have been richly blessed. Now we rejoice that he is in the presence of the God He loved and we are encouraged that we will see him again. II Samuel 12:23, *"I will go to him, but he cannot return to me."* I know my father would want us to honor the Lord by loving and following Him. I hope these series of studies will help you as you seek to follow Him.

A thankful son,
Peter Christensen