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# Baptists and Covenanting

## I.

AT A CONFERENCE in Wrexham, in January 1972, the Joint Covenant Committee, through the Council of Churches for Wales, presented its final report: *Covenanting for Union in Wales*. Part I consists of the covenant presented for discussion among the churches with a commentary; Part II consists of several papers as a background to the whole project. The report was accepted by the conference and sent out for discussion at every level within the churches and ecumenically.<sup>1</sup> This programme has now begun so that by 1974 there should be some clear idea as to the response of the various churches.

Among the list of members appointed to the Joint Covenanting Committee were two from the South Wales Area of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Thus Baptists were directly and officially involved and are now directly implicated in debating the scheme. Indeed at first there were no Baptists but after the first report, when the Committee was reconstituted with the specific task to draw up a covenant, T. Trevor Evans and William Davies, then Area Superintendent, were asked to be representatives. At no time has the Baptist Union of Wales been involved. Unfortunately, however, it is further complicated because there is no Baptist signature to the report. Trevor Evans served 1966-68 and William Davies continued until his death. This was noted in the report: "In his death, the ecumenical cause in Wales lost an untiring advocate and worker."<sup>2</sup> But it would appear that in the unfortunate but unavoidable series of quick changes in the last few years no new members were nominated. Yet the Baptist Union was represented at the final conference, where the reports were received and commended. This can surely only mean that we are partners in the current programme.

The impetus for covenanting came from the first British Faith and Order conference at Nottingham, 1964, and was embodied in the notorious group of resolutions in which the Churches were urged to speed up unity discussions in order to release energy for the real task of mission. The immediately relevant sections are in Section V. A.

"1. United in our urgent desire for One Church Renewed for Mission, this Conference invites the member churches of the British Council of Churches, in appropriate groupings such as nations, to covenant together to work and pray for the inauguration of union by a date agreed amongst them.

Conference: 5 against, 12 abstained.

Official delegates: 5 against, 8 abstained.

2. We dare to hope that this date should not be later than Easter Day, 1980. We believe that we should offer obedience to God in a commitment as decisive as this.

Conference: 53 against, 18 abstained.

Official delegates: 41 against, 14 abstained.”<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, the excitement was engendered over the 1980 clause, but even then it is worth remembering that the resolution to covenant was virtually unanimous in a conference of 474 of whom 329 were official delegates, and that the controversial clause was received by majorities of 7:1 and 6:1. It is of course impossible to know details but the Baptist Union was officially present and as the *Guardian* remarked, it should be impossible “for ecclesiastical assemblies in the years that lie ahead, to be allowed to forget that the vote was ever recorded”.

Equally significant, however, in the event, was the Scottish intervention that inserted the words “in appropriate groupings such as nations” for it was the Welsh regional group that took these resolutions up and pioneered the way. Indeed it is in Wales that most has been done on covenanting. By 1966 the original committee, appointed through the Council of Churches for Wales subsequently, had agreed to recommend that the churches should be invited to consider formulating the terms of a covenant. The reconstituted committee presented an interim report in 1968 for discussion and its final report this year.

## II.

The English churches through the British Council of Churches also explored the meaning of the Nottingham resolutions. Once again the Baptist Union was officially represented here from the first. It was, however, stated that membership of the consultation did not commit anyone, that there were many difficult questions and various opinions. “Nevertheless, there was full agreement that the exploration should be carried further *together*.<sup>4</sup> This has meant that the standing conference has not presented unanimous recommendations but merely reported the situation, and has assumed that the initiative to covenant would come from a small group of churches who could see themselves in a special relationship to each other, although it was also able to report general support for the idea from “a clear majority”.

Here there emerges a second feature of the English discussion. It would appear that the Anglican-Methodist scheme overshadowed the conversations and that covenanting was understood as somewhat parallel to Part I of those proposals. That is, to agree to covenant pre-supposed an already foreseeable organic union and that the interim was just a period of consolidation. Thus the form of covenant suggested is very short.<sup>5</sup> Indeed it is hardly more than a recasting of the Nottingham resolutions and it still keeps the date 1980. Such an approach may have kept part of the spirit of the original intention but it was bound to be divisive, as was the emphasis on organic as a

definitive term for the form of union.<sup>6</sup> Under the circumstances it was inevitable that it had to be reported: "Some member Churches of the British Council of Churches do not accept, or remain committed to the goal of organic union in the way outlined above." Among them were the Baptists. "Many Baptists make the judgement that (their) coherent evangelical position could not be maintained within organic union."<sup>7</sup>

It is not surprising therefore, to find that the response of the Baptist Union to covenanting was summarised: "The chief emphases in this response were of widespread concern of Baptists for better Church relations and for a clearer expression of the unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, but of their real difficulty over the concept of 'common organic structure' as a necessary part of that goal."<sup>8</sup> This was in line with the discussions of the report *Baptists and Unity* summarised in "*Baptists and Unity*" Reviewed which stated (p. 15): "That though the Baptist Union is not able at present to enter into a covenant to work and pray for the inauguration of union by 1980 or any other particular date, Baptists are right in sharing in the exploration of what covenanting together might mean and the conditions on which it might become possible for Baptists." Thus it would seem reasonable to say that at the moment the English discussions of covenanting have taken a direction that effectively prevents Baptist participation in any move to sign a covenant though without precluding continued interest and observation.

### III.

So far, therefore, by being a member of the Welsh Joint Committee, the South Wales Area has kept in line with the general direction of Baptist participation. At this stage, however, the Welsh covenant is under active consideration and has been produced in very different ways from the English. Notably, it is only now that member churches have been asked to offer any comments on their attitude to this approach to ecumenical conversation. The final reports are unanimous recommendations of the Joint Committee.<sup>9</sup> The question, therefore, is whether Baptists ought to go on to the next stage, indeed seriously to entertain the possibility of covenanting. There are a number of features about the Welsh covenant and context which strongly suggest that this ought to be actively encouraged. Only a doctrinaire limitation of the extent of ecumenical fraternisation or the refusal to consider any form of unity would appear to rule this out.<sup>10</sup>

The Welsh covenant, as proposed, comes out of long discussion and the forms and length indicate the importance attached to it as a theological church document.

#### THE COVENANT<sup>11</sup>

Confessing our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and renewing our will to serve his mission in the world, our several churches

have been brought into a new relationship with one another. Together we give thanks for all we have in common. Together we repent the sin of perpetuating our division. Together we make known our understanding of the obedience to which we are called:

1. (a) We recognise in one another the same faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ found in Holy Scripture, which the creeds of the ancient Church and other historic confessions are intended to safeguard. We recognise in one another the same desire to hold this faith in its fulness.  
(b) We intend so to act, speak, and serve together in obedience to the gospel that we may learn more of its fulness and make it known to others in contemporary terms and by credible witness.
2. (a) We recognise in one another the same awareness of God's calling to serve his gracious purpose for all mankind, with particular responsibility for this land and people.  
(b) We intend to work together for justice and peace at home and abroad, and for the spiritual and material well-being and personal freedom of all people.
3. (a) We recognise one another as within the one Church of Jesus Christ, pledged to serve His Kingdom, and sharing in the unity of the Spirit.  
(b) We intend by the help of the same Spirit to overcome the divisions which impair our witness, impede God's mission, and obscure the gospel of man's salvation, and to manifest that unity which is in accordance with Christ's will.
4. (a) We recognise the members of all our churches as members of Christ in virtue of their common baptism and common calling to participate in the ministry of the whole Church.  
(b) We intend to seek that form of common life which will enable each member to use the gifts bestowed upon him in the service of Christ's Kingdom.
5. (a) We recognise the ordained ministries of all our churches as true ministries of the word and sacraments, through which God's love is proclaimed, his grace mediated, and his Fatherly care exercised.  
(b) We intend to seek an agreed pattern of ordained ministry which will serve the gospel in unity, manifest its continuity throughout the ages, and be accepted as far as may be by the Church throughout the world.
6. (a) We recognise in one another patterns of worship and sacramental life, marks of holiness and zeal, which are manifestly gifts of Christ.  
(b) We intend to listen to one another and to study together the witness and practice of our various traditions, in order that the

riches entrusted to us in separation may be preserved for the united Church which we seek.

7. (a) We recognise in one another the same concern for the good government of the Church for the fulfilment of its mission.
- (b) We intend to seek a mode of Church government which will preserve the positive values for which each has stood, so that the common mind of the Church may be formed and carried into action through constitutional organs of corporate decision at every level of responsibility.

We do not yet know the form union will take. We approach our task with openness to the Spirit. We believe that God will guide his Church into ways of truth and peace, correcting, strengthening, and renewing it in accordance with the mind of Christ. We therefore urge all our members to accept one another in the Holy Spirit as Jesus Christ accepts us, and to avail themselves of every opportunity to grow together through common prayer and worship in mutual understanding and love so that in every place they may be renewed together for mission.

Accordingly we enter now into this solemn Covenant before God and with one another, to work and pray in common obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that by the Holy Spirit we may be brought into one visible Church to serve together in mission to the glory of God the Father.

A number of points need to be emphasised.

1. The basis of the covenant, as in the Biblical pattern, is the already manifest activity of God who has already brought the churches into a deep awareness of their common faith and mission. It is a declaration of where, in a real sense we already stand. Not that all the problems are solved or that this means all differences are irrelevant but that we recognise a reality given to us by God. The implication of the Nottingham resolutions was that there was already enough depth of common agreement and unity in Christ to warrant taking the next step. The report of the Joint Committee was: "Our Churches would not have sent us into this consultation had they not recognised in one another the same Christian identity underlying all their differences."<sup>12</sup>

It is one of the often emphasised distinctive marks of our tradition that we do indeed recognise the reality of other Christians. One of the implications of the open table is that there are no barriers in Christ. Any exclusion is done by those who exclude themselves. Similarly while there needs to be regularity and order Baptists are not interested in "orders". Why then should we need to covenant to recognise this? The answer must lie in the readiness to welcome and understand those who do not think and act as we do. In a situation that has in fact been characterised by so much ignorance and suspicion there is every reason to do whatever may help to reconcile. Why not, in any case,

just celebrate that we are Christ's people? As will be noted below, the modified approach suggests there is here no necessary contradiction to the B.U. Council report, 1965, regarding the level or nature of the agreement or disagreement between the Churches since we are not being asked to enter directly into union. The two cases, English and Welsh, are very different.<sup>18</sup>

2. The covenant is for union. There is no escaping that; but once more there has been a shift in approach. This is symbolised negatively by the omission of the date and positively in the words "*We do not yet know the form union will take*". At Nottingham, Dr. A. E. Morris, then Archbishop of Wales, said: "The danger of a timetable is that we have not yet found a pattern of reunion on which we are all broadly agreed, and, until we have, it is dangerous and impractical for us to commit ourselves to a date."<sup>14</sup> This is subsequently echoed: "The commitment envisaged, therefore, is not to unite by an agreed date whether or not fundamental differences of conviction have been resolved. It is a binding commitment seriously to work and pray so that union may be possible."<sup>15</sup> What is envisaged is a period in which, because of the mutual trust gained from the solemn promise, the churches can begin to draw closer together and to break down some of the traditional "shibboleths". The most striking example of this is the public assertion that for the Church in Wales the covenant can mean the breaking of the deadlock over intercommunion: that within the covenant there could be reciprocal communion before unification of ministry. "The Church in Wales representatives, for example, in commending the covenant to their church state their belief that it includes sufficient agreement in faith and order to make such intercommunion possible."<sup>16</sup>

Also it is in the process of growing together, which provides a new basis for sorting out the knotty problems of ministry and structure, where there would begin to emerge the form of the Church for God's mission in our time and place, more and more soundly based on the given nature of the Christian presence in Scripture and experienced in history. "As the relationship grew, the consequences of covenanting would become progressively clearer until the form of the one church emerged."<sup>16</sup> At this stage therefore, we are not being asked to lose identity, or to forego any precious heritage. But it is important to realise that if Baptists really do believe that they have a distinctive contribution to make to the pattern of the Church or that there is gain in learning from others then this is best done from within and not in protest on the fringes. The answer to so many questions is open. If unity is not meant to be uniformity or rigidity, if there is a vitality in flexibility, local initiative and evangelical witness then the only way to find out is to put them to the test. If these things that we value are God's gift then he will ensure that they are not lost, as he will also find ways of making them become part of the common heritage.

In any case the call is to a venture in faith, to allow the Holy Spirit

to lead. "Nothing is cut and dried. The situation is wide open and the churches wait upon God expecting his guidance. In answering God's call it is seldom possible to see more than the next step ahead."<sup>17</sup> It is part of the Baptist insistence on freedom that we shall be able to respond to the Abrahamic call to venture out into the unknown. That we are free to be "ex tempore", to move in faith in and for the present time. Are we not in a real sense part of that tradition that produced the Pilgrim Fathers, with John Robinson's challenge: "There is still more light and truth to break forth from God's holy word" and of William Carey and the great missionary pioneers who broke through the barriers of social and theological inertia?

3. It was always realised that covenanting was being discussed alongside other more specific schemes for union such as the Anglican-Methodist-Presbyterian, the United Reformed Church and the four Welsh Free Churches.<sup>18</sup> Such negotiations were seen as steps towards the goal of a united Church. "We believe that the covenant should demonstrate that our several Churches are not merely proposing to strengthen one another against other Christian bodies with whom they are not at present in discussion about union . . . Both should be considered together."<sup>19</sup>

Two points emerge from this. First that to be in covenant with other churches engaged on more specific negotiations both widens the context of those negotiations and allows for a level of participation by those not directly involved so that the open-ended nature of schemes of union will be more fully in everyone's mind. Secondly, and much more importantly, however, there is an inbuilt flexibility in the covenant. With the omission of the 1980 clause also goes the clause about "a date agreed among them". In other words there is no need to see covenanting as a "Caucus race", in which all start together and all end together. There must always be the possibility of enlarging the number of those covenanting. Within there will indeed be a common aim and commitment but the moves towards the realisation of this will not necessarily be by continuous unanimity. There are some traditions that are closer, between which growth together will be more natural. There will be different areas of life and practices in which one denomination will relate variously to a number of others. Again, geographically there will be incredible variations of expression of the new found unity and renewal. Organic growth, and this surely is the proper understanding of organic union, must take as far as possible, account of this living diversity and the need for maturity. The covenant should help to hold all these together in intention and faith through strain and frustration. So long as a church is playing fair by its commitment then they and their partners must bide patiently while the problems are worked through. Therefore, let those who will go as far as possible (even including some of our own congregations?). But the covenant is for any who sincerely wish to be "found in the way".

4. A further consideration concerning covenanting as a move towards union that ought to be significant to Baptists is that inherent in it is the need for the whole church at every level to be involved. This is not a scheme drawn up for approval, straight from the drawing board but a corporate evaluation into which every member ought to be caught up. The New Delhi report described "the unity which we seek" as "being made visible as all in each place . . . are brought into one fully committed fellowship . . ."<sup>19</sup> While any consideration of the form of the Church must include regional and national and global dimensions, it is interesting to note that this declaration which has influenced the search for unity so widely, should lay such paramount stress on what we understand as the local community. So it is important to realise that participating in the covenant is a total experience and can only be real as the ecumenical growth which marks the meeting of denominational leaders is projected right across the board. Too often ecumenists have looked like generals without troops or conferees trying to convey an excitement which is by definition incommunicable. Here is an attempt to ask that unity should grow out of neighbourliness, out of common action and concern at the point at which it alone can be real, the neighbourhood. It is the Baptist duty, as part of the congregationalist tradition, to insist that this is in fact the place of growth and initiative.

More than this, the concept of the gathered church and the emphasis on the legitimacy of the local congregation has its own ecumenical thrust. It is not enough to regard the congregation as the casual coming together of those who wish or who like it that way. The congregation is the gathering together of God's people called into fellowship, worship and service. It is his calling, and the fragmentation of the Church can only be regarded in some way as the failure of the Church to realise its own potential. Without obscuring matters of truth and division, there cannot be any peace until there is a gathering into one.<sup>20</sup>

5. What are the immediate implications of joining in covenant? "Essentially covenanting means a changed relationship between existing churches by means of which each church is changed."<sup>21</sup> There must be some changes but not prescribed, rather in terms of disposition. The primary change would be that no covenanting partner could act as though the covenant did not exist.<sup>22</sup> There would have to emerge some standing means of cooperation and exchange.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps, however, the most significant expression of the change could be spoken of in terms of "areas of ecumenical experiment" as put forward by the same section of the Nottingham Conference and now part of ecumenical activity.<sup>24</sup> "In some parts of Britain there are "areas of ecumenical experiment" where, by agreement among the churches, joint worship and action are encouraged that go beyond what is the general rule. So far as the covenanted churches are concerned, "the whole of Wales would become such an area of experi-

ment, though what was done locally would depend of necessity on the initiative of Christians in that place".<sup>23</sup> That is, this is a covenant to give real expression at a more specific level to the dictum accepted at Lund (1952) and pressed as an ecumenical norm: "There are truths about the nature of God and his Church which will remain for ever closed to us unless we act together in obedience to the unity which is already ours. Should not our Churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other Churches and *whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?*"<sup>24</sup> This would mean being committed to examine at every level the possibility for joint action, shared facilities and the deployment of manpower. Such a concern can only be regarded as proper stewardship in a land of declining industry, moving population and growing areas of depopulation in which the energies of the churches are being used up too largely in the older areas to support passing social structures. What is envisaged is that in time it will be possible, through the growing number of experiments and joint activities to see a basic coherence emerging and for experiments gradually to become the norm while the separated patterns recede into the past. Such cannot happen overnight but for too long it has been possible to regard experiments as the oddity merely out of line with the customary. In a living situation the reverse should be true.

As far as Baptists are concerned, while participation in an area of ecumenical experiment is through the wish of a local church or association, the Union has expressed its approval in principle. Thus: "We believe that the Union and the churches in membership with it should help promote united planning and action on a greater scale than heretofore in the interests of the more effective communication of the Gospel" and "To share, wherever possible, in cooperation with local Baptists, in the designation of areas of ecumenical experiment."<sup>25</sup> There is therefore, no inherent obstacle in participating in such an experimental area on a much wider scale. In practical terms there may be some questions as to how this can be done through a whole area of the Union and what this would mean in terms of relationship with the Union. But for a good while this would not arise which would give time for the necessary adjustments to be made. There is also the point as to how authority is obtained to adhere to the covenant. Presumably this is through Associations, but legally there is *prima facie* evidence to suggest it would be by congregations. Would this mean that all congregations have to agree (by whatever mechanism devised) or could there be some who take up the covenant while others abstain? At least if the opportunity arises, it is to be hoped that the Union, Associations and congregations will accord as liberal a view as the B.M.S. has taken in North India where support is continued for those Unions that have joined the Church of North India and those who have remained outside.

## IV.

It is hoped that enough has been said to indicate that the kind of ecumenical commitment envisaged by the covenant is somewhat different than hitherto understood. There are, however, some further points that have some bearing on the issue.

1. It is one of the oddities about this whole discussion that any attempt to set this covenant in relation with the Biblical concept and other forms of covenant is almost entirely absent. Yet it would seem that the very word and the form of the statement compel the analogy to be made. Covenant is in fact the basis of the call of Israel and the foundation of the Christian community. Through the mighty acts of salvation God calls his people into loyalty and faith on the basis of God's revealed will and character. They respond with allegiance and obedience, becoming the bearers of the marks of their Lord for the sake of the world.

The foundation covenant, however, does not stand unique though primary. There is a history of the covenant marking the renewal of the broken reality and the need for new understanding under different circumstances. There are also covenants and international treaties. But these are all part of the great creative covenant whereby Israel was called into existence by God, and to which, whatever man does, God is faithful. However, the covenant relationship contains significant implication. Essentially, it is the creation of a new existence. Israel is not Yahweh's people by right or by birth or by territory but by grace. The creative activity of God is symbolised in covenant and in the maintenance and renewal of covenant. Broken covenant can only be restored by a fresh creative act. Thus it is possible to see in this "covenant for union" an affirmation of the primacy of God's free creative love that can recreate anew the bond between those who, despite their common faith, have been estranged. The covenant is primarily between us and God but must include the brethren and even the stranger. It is not for us to say whom God has joined but to accept them in the redeemed community.<sup>28</sup>

Further it is proper to note that one of the important strands of Puritan theology, out of which Baptists have grown, is the so called "Federal" or "covenant theology". This found the basic Christian existence in the unmerited grace of God that had called the Church, the company of the saved, into existence. Within the Separatist tradition more stress was laid on the reciprocal nature of the covenant and the life of obedience as one of the marks of the elect. Therefore, church covenants were used as signs of this calling and loyalty, a custom continued in Independent and some Baptist congregations. For Baptists, however, baptism on profession of faith seems to have taken the place of covenanting, for it was also a pledge of loyalty and fellowship in the congregation. Other forms of covenant were also practised: personal pledges, promises and signs of repentance. The

danger here is that it is too easy to slip into legalism and pharisaism. Nevertheless, here was a concept that at heart continually reminded the Christian of his dependence on God's mercy and steadfast love, his need for obedience and the "societary" nature of the Church.<sup>27</sup>

2. In the last resort, as has been noted, the proposed covenant is a covenant for union. The question is, therefore, do we envisage union? It would be impossible to join in covenanting if, when it comes to the test, Baptists were not really willing to let union emerge. It may indeed be necessary to resist pressures and question genuine attempts, and thereby to appear dilatory and resistant. It is no secret that "There is probably no other major denomination in which there is such widespread doubt concerning the present desire and movement to recover the unity of the Church."<sup>28</sup> There are a number of reasons for this which would appear in fact to be somewhat confused and even contradictory. One suspects that much of the inertia is due to the inability to make sense of the crazy patchwork which is the Baptist denomination but this does not make for clarity of principle or direction. There is a fear of compromise and a desire for a purity of truth. There is an individualism and "spiritualisation" that undermines any concern for order or structure and is content with an invisible unity. There is the desire for autonomy of the local Church and the fear of organisation, rigidity and uniformity. There is the heritage of freedom from state control and prelacy. There is the concept of the priesthood of all believers and the questioning of orders and succession. So there would appear little urgency or incentive. This is expressed in the 1948 statement: Baptists "believe in the catholic Church as the holy society of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ . . . in which he dwells by his Spirit, so that *though manifest in many communions, organised in various modes and scattered throughout the world, it is yet one in him.*"<sup>29</sup>

Yet it is possible to record, not only the traditional interest in association and union and even international ties, but also a growing awareness of the theological reality of the Faith and Order movement and the dimensions of ecumenism in mission. It has already been noted that there is a proper ecumenical dimension to the concept of the gathered Church. The report *Baptists and Unity*, which had as its background the challenge of Baptist involvement in the Nottingham conference, forcibly argued "that Christian unity is of great importance, urgency and complexity: whilst there is an undeniable spiritual unity binding together believers to our Lord Jesus Christ and to one another, this *needs to be given visible expression* in a clearer and more unmistakable manner than at present" (p. 49: *italics added*). And while the report was duly cautious about the manner and speed of ecumenical participation there was no hesitation about its desirability, and that this involvement implied the search for unity. "For Baptists to weaken their links with either the British Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches would be a serious loss

to themselves and would make it more difficult for Baptists to present their distinctive witness and heritage to others; to receive in return from them other insights and corrective truths till "all come in the unity of the faith . . ." . . . (p.49: italics added).

The challenge of the Welsh covenanting movement is that as "a scheme for basically altered Church Relations" it appears to be most suited as a starting point for Baptists to show the reality of their intention. Indeed, we may be witnessing a new shape to the search for unity. It is more and more impossible for Baptists to ignore the existence of the ecumenical movement. Individual Baptists have and are making a significant personal contribution. Across the world Baptist communities are being caught up willy-nilly into various schemes and conversations. And in our own country there is a great variety of involvement in ecumenical experiment. At this point it may be possible for Baptists to make just that distinctive contribution for which they have been looking. Certainly it would appear to test the reality of our intentions, making it imperative to take up the issues seriously, to support and encourage initiative and to back it up with educational drive. For some, indeed, not to take a positive step would impose severe strains of loyalty.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The reports of the Joint Committee (published by the Council of Churches for Wales, Publications Department, Diocesan Office, Bangor), are:

1. *The Call to Covenant* (1966).
2. *Covenanting in Wales* (1968).

3. *Covenanting for Union in Wales* (1972), Parts I and II. These will be referred to as W1; W2; W3, I + II.

<sup>2</sup> W3, I, p.9.

<sup>3</sup> Conference report: *Unity Begins at Home* (SCM Press, 1964), pp. 77-78. The relevant description and quotation from speeches, pp. 43-48.

<sup>4</sup> The Standing Conference on "Covenanting for Union" have published two reports (through the Church Information Office, Westminster):

1. *Covenant — commitment before God*.
2. *Covenant, Union and Mission*.

These will be referred as E1 and E2. Here E1, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> E2, p. 9: cf p. 8. "The Covenant can be signed only by those Churches whose entry into an organic union appears practicable within the foreseeable future."

<sup>6</sup> E1, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> E1, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> E2, p. 4: cf Report on the Resolutions of the Nottingham Faith and Order conference adopted by the Council of the Baptist Union, 9th March, 1965; found as Appendix II in *Baptists and Unity* (Baptist Union, 1967), a report of the Advisory Committee for Church Relations.

<sup>9</sup> W3, I, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> It ought to be emphasised that Baptists in Wales were involved in a scheme for Free Church Union through the Four Denominations Committee, 1954-1965. The final report: *A scheme of union — the United Church of Wales*. But this in the event proved abortive.

<sup>11</sup> Taken from W3, II, pp. 9 and 11. An unfortunate editorial error meant that a draft copy of the English version was included in W3, I first edition. This has subsequently been corrected.

- <sup>12</sup> W2, p. 13.
- <sup>13</sup> B.U. Council report, 9th March, 1965, para. 7a.
- <sup>14</sup> Report p. 46. Italics added.
- <sup>15</sup> W1, p. 13.
- <sup>16</sup> The Archbishop of Wales, Dr. G. O. Williams, at regional conferences in Cardiff and Abergavenny, April-May 1972.
- <sup>17</sup> W3, I, p. 45.
- <sup>18</sup> W1, pp. 17, 19, 21.
- <sup>19</sup> Report of section on Unity, para. 2, from L. Vischer: *A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement* (Bethany Press, St. Louis, 1963).
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. *Baptists and Unity*, pp. 44-46.
- <sup>21</sup> W1, p. 13.
- <sup>22</sup> W3, II, p. 37.
- <sup>23</sup> Report p. 79, "To designate areas of ecumenical experiment, at the request of local congregations, or in new towns and housing areas" cf. Section report pp. 71-74 and R. M. C. Jeffrey: *Ecumenical Experiments, A Handbook* (B.C.C. 1971) and *Case Studies in Christian Unity* (SCM Press, 1972).
- <sup>24</sup> Lund, final report para. 3, from Vischer: op. cit., italics added.
- <sup>25</sup> *Baptists and Unity*, p. 60. Report on Nottingham, B.U. Council, March 1965, and p. 50: Conclusion 8 (1).
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. W. Eichrodt: *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. I (E.T. SCM Press 1961) especially chapter II and G. von Rad: *Old Testament Theology* (E. T. Oliver and Boyd, 1962), pp. 129ff.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. F. W. Dillistone: *The Structure of the Divine Society* (Lutterworth, 1951).
- J. S. Coolidge: *The Pauline Renaissance in England* (Oxford, 1970).
- B. R. White: *The English Separatist Tradition* (Oxford, 1971).
- Horton Davies: *The English Free Churches* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 35-8.
- G. F. Nuttall: *Visible Saints* (Blackwell, 1957).
- G. R. Cragg: *Puritanism in the period of the Great Persecution* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 151-2.
- <sup>28</sup> *Baptists and Unity*, p. 45.
- <sup>29</sup> ibid, p. 47. Quote from Baptist Union (1948) Declaration (italics added). cf. also E. A. Payne: *The Baptist Union* (Carey Kingsgate, 1959), Appendices VI-XI for Baptist ecumenical statements 1888-1953.

PAUL H. BALLARD.

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#### OUR CONTRIBUTORS

- P. H. BALLARD, M.A., B.D.,  
Tutor and Warden, Collegiate Centre for Theology, University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire.
- D. BEBBINGTON, B.A.,  
Research Student, Jesus College, Cambridge.
- D. C. SPARKES, B.D.,  
Secretary, Baptist Historical Society.
- B. R. WHITE, M.A., D.PHIL.,  
Principal, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
- Reviews by: R. BROWN, J. F. V. NICHOLSON, K. R. M. SHORT.