

REVIEWS

Repent and Believe: The Baptist Experience in Maritime Canada
 Edited by B. M. Moody. Lancelot Press, 1980. \$6.95. 215pp.

The Journal of John Payzant
 Edited by B. C. Cuthbertson. Lancelot Press, 1981. 130pp.

Baptists in Canada: Search for Identity Amidst Diversity
 Edited by J. K. Zelman, G. R. Welch & co. 1980. 282pp.

The first two volumes are part of a series on Baptist heritage in Atlantic Canada, published in co-operation with Acadia Divinity College, Nova Scotia, each year since 1979. The chairman of the Acadia editorial committee, J. K. Zelman, edited the third volume, which comprises papers presented at an international symposium, "Baptists in Canada, 1760-1980", held at Acadia University in October 1979.

Repent and Believe contains nine essays which discuss various aspects of the development of Baptist work from its revivalist origins to becoming the Maritime Baptist denomination of today. The Baptist cause spread rapidly in the rural areas, especially among people whose origins lay in the former Thirteen Colonies. It is an interesting feature of these essays to realise the contribution made by North Americans, black and white, and by British settlers, to the growth of Baptist work in Maritime Canada.. The essays are linked by the recurring theme of identity and definition, as converts found that to "repent and believe" was only a beginning and not an end of the Gospel.

The essay by Savannah Williams on the role of the African United Baptist Association is tantalising in its brief rehearsal of the work of David George, Richard Preston, and James Thomas. George was a black Baptist Minister from Silver Bluff, South Carolina, who came to Shelburne, N.S., in 1782 where he became pastor of a Baptist Church which comprised blacks and whites. In 1792 George was one of the 1190 Nova Scotia blacks who sailed to settle in Sierra Leone, which is where he becomes of interest to British Baptists. Richard Preston, a former Virginian slave, arrived in Nova Scotia in 1816. In 1831 he was sent to England to raise funds and further his theological education. He was ordained in London - by whom and on what grounds? - and returned to found and lead the African Baptist Association. He was succeeded in 1861 by James Thomas, a Welshman who owned a fur company in Halifax, N.S., and who was married to Hannah Hubbard, a black woman. It is to be hoped that this material can be developed further.

John Payzant's *Journal* is one of the important manuscripts which reflect the life of Nova Scotians in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when "intense religious activity interacted with the social and economic dislocation caused by the American Revolution and the settlement of the Loyalists", white and black, in Maritime Canada.

The text contains a personal history of the New Light movement which was inspired by the preaching of Henry Alline and later absorbed by Baptist churches. Payzant himself never became a Baptist; and his relationships with Baptist leaders and

congregations in Nova Scotia were often bitter. But his journal throws considerable light on Baptist origins, and Mr Cuthbertson is to be thanked for making this document available to a wider public.

Baptists in Canada comprises fifteen essays divided into three sections. Part one traces the English, French and immigrant influences which have affected the present identity of Canadian Baptists. Part two considers Baptist concern for social responsibility issues such as human rights, world relief, and involvement with the social gospel and the radical politics of Western Canada. The third part considers theological trends and conflicts, which have been of an intensity not known amongst British Baptists this century.

Of the three volumes, this one is almost polemical, seeking to make many points about the current Canadian Baptist scene. For example, the two contributions on "the modernist impulse at McMaster, 1887-1927", and that on "T. T. Shields and Fundamentalism", will do little to satisfy British Baptists. There is still considerable in-depth research to be undertaken concerning some of the principle participants such as L. H. Marshall and W. M. Robertson (of Liverpool) from Britain, and W. N. Clarke from America, before the conclusions reached will be accepted. From across the water, this volume will be of least interest. It may prove helpful to Canadian Baptists if it calls forth further research into the issues discussed.

Those interested in these themes will find further symposium papers published in *Baptist History and Heritage* Vol.XV, No.2 (April 1980), and in *Foundations* Vol.XXIII, No.1 (Jan. 1980).

ROGER HAYDEN

TURNING THE TIDE. An Assessment of Baptist Church Growth in England. By Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson. Bible Society. 1981. 110pp.

Controversy already surrounds this book; much that it says is uncomfortable.

The book records a quest for answers to the slowing of growth in the Altrincham church following five encouraging years. On the basis of Church Growth principles, Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson (of the Manchester Business School) conducted a survey of 330/350 Baptist churches with memberships over fifty. Some 300,000 items of information were processed through a computer, compared with Church Growth's Seven Vital Signs, and conclusions then applied to the Altrincham situation.

On the whole, the information gained confirms Church Growth findings. The book's originality lies in the particular nature of the survey of English Baptist churches, described in the preface as a "thorough empirical test", and in the concept evolved by the authors of the "spiral" model: a method of relating church activities to an on-going cyclical process.

Whatever one's reactions to the presuppositions and the details, the authors should be congratulated on their courage in venturing on such a survey, their questioning of the quality of much church activity and their concern for the future of our churches. They breathe a faith and optimism which will be widely welcomed, but whilst they seek to inspire hope, the authors also stress that they offer no "manual for success"; their intention is to explore tendencies towards growth.

Important issues are raised about the structure of ministry. The survey showed an average conversion growth rate of three per church per year, again underlining the limited impact on non-believers and the reliance upon transfers of most church growth. There are indications of how little is done to nurture church members and develop their gifts, and arguments for more effective leadership, lay mobilization, comprehensive planning and careful policies and clarity of purpose in church activities.

The authors readily acknowledge the limitations of their work and recognize that it is open to misuse. However, the most serious defect is the lack of a deep critical appraisal of Church Growth principles. Thus in spite of the disclaimers, the impression remains that the aim is business-like efficiency and success rather than the seed growing secretly and the free movement of the Spirit. There may be times when the church must fulfil a prophetic role that alienates rather than attracts growth.

Further studies are necessary to complete the picture. What are the sociological factors making growth more likely in certain areas? What is the church's response to be in areas where the conditions conducive to growth cannot prevail? What are the factors leading to church decline, and what, in more detail, is happening in churches which experience growth without confirming the signs? Is the poor growth record in churches with ministers over forty related to that or to the type of churches which tend to call men ready to begin a second ministry? Another important contribution would be a long-term survey of growing churches and their memberships, including those who move away. Answers to these questions are urgently needed.

L. B. KEEBLE

The Hymns and Ballads of Fred Pratt Green. With commentary by Bernard Braley. Stainer & Bell Ltd (U.K.) and Hope Publishing Co. (U.S.A. and Canada). 268 pp. Limp cover. £5.00.

The "hymn-explosion" of the last twelve years has not only resulted in the publication of innumerable new hymn-books and supplements to standard hymnals; it has thrown into relief four or five names who have emerged as by far the most prolific and outstanding hymnwriters of the present day. The remarkable thing is that of these "top" contemporary writers, two are over eighty years of age! One of them, Albert Bayly, has been writing hymns for forty years; but the other, Fred Pratt Green, only began hymn-writing at the end of a long and distinguished minis-

try in the Methodist Church. Though recognised as a poet of no mean calibre long before that, he has now spent thirteen years of "retirement" enriching the worship of the whole Church in this country and abroad by the constant stream of hymns which have flowed from his ready pen. He has done more than this: by the very naturalness and immediacy of his writing - there is nothing contrived or ostentatious about his hymns - he has set a standard for all contemporary hymn-writing.

For examples of his hymns you can turn to almost any hymn-book published in the last twelve years; and now in this delightful volume published simultaneously in the U.K. and the U.S.A. to celebrate Pratt Green's eightieth birthday, we have the definitive collection of over two hundred of his hymns and religious songs. They are grouped in four sections - the first containing over one hundred general hymns, roughly in the order in which they were written; the second, hymns written for special occasions, many of them within the last two or three years; thirdly a section of "ballads" or religious songs (four of which are familiar to users of *Praise for Today*); and lastly, a group of translations, in which the author has versified the literal translations of hymns from Spanish, French, German, Welsh and Latin texts.

This collection has been compiled by Bernard Braley who has also added to each hymn information culled from Pratt Green's own scrapbooks regarding the circumstances in which they were written or the occasion of their first use. Here, for instance, we can read how Pratt Green's *Hymn for the Nation*, which the Norwich Council of Churches commissioned for their local celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, in the event ousted the Poet Laureate's own composition for that occasion, and was sung at official services throughout Britain and the Commonwealth.

This commentary on the hymns is in itself of great interest, because it reveals this hymn-writer as a man who literally writes to order, not out of a restless creative urge. Pratt Green is not ashamed to admit this: as a servant of the Church he has accepted a different sort of discipline from that which directs the poet, who can be free to choose his themes, his forms and his language. Most of the contents of this book, therefore, were written to meet stated needs - to provide new words to fit existing tunes, to celebrate a particular occasion, to fit a certain part of the liturgy, or to honour one of the Church's saints. One result of this is that Pratt Green's hymns, unlike those of his distinguished predecessor Charles Wesley, range far and wide over many diverse aspects of Christian life in the Church and the world. Twenty-seven of them have been selected for the new Methodist hymn-book due to be published in December 1983, a number exceeded only by Charles Wesley himself and (by a small margin!) Isaac Watts. Here at last, as Erik Routley has said elsewhere, "Methodism has produced somebody worthy to be mentioned alongside the immortal Charles".

This book is delightfully produced, with a foreword by Erik Routley, and introduction by Bernard Braley, and a personal note by the author. In addition to the commentaries on each hymn, there is a comprehensive bibliography, a subject index and an index of scripture texts which have inspired or support the hymns. It marks in a worthy manner the unique contribution our leading contemporary hymn-writer has made to the Church's worship in these days.

The Search for Beulah Land by Glyn A. Williams. Croom Helm, London, 1980. 190 pp. £8.95.

Professor Williams has presented us with an exciting, colourful and invigorating study of Welsh Dissent, particularly the Baptists, at the end of the eighteenth century.

At this period the Atlantic dimension was central to the formation of the first modern Welsh nation. As the Atlantic world responded to the challenge of the American and French Revolutions, the industrial capitalism of England was planted in the south and east of Wales and disrupted the traditional rural community to the west and north. It led not only to civil disorder but also to the migration of many Welsh people, particularly Dissenters, to America.

Since the sixteenth century there was a tradition that America had first been discovered by the Welsh prince, Madoc, in 1170 - a myth previously documented by Professor Williams in *Madoc: the Making of a Myth*. Thanks to the "farrago perpetuated by Morgan Jones, one of the early Welsh settlers in America", the close of the eighteenth century saw something of a "Madoc fever" in the USA and the belief in the "Welsh Indians" became universal.

The myth was just what certain Welsh *Jacobins*, who emerged at this time, needed. It fuelled the fires of their attempt to establish the Welsh language and culture. It offered them "a living myth of Original Cambrian Freedom strictly parallel to that of the Freeborn Saxons... it reinforced a sense of identity, added something to the flavour of an Israel to be created in the wilderness. The Madoc myth ran as an insistent descant to the Welsh diaspora of the 1790s; John Evans was slogging his way up the Missouri in quest of the Madoc Indians even as projectors were scouring the American frontier for the sight of a *Gwladfa* or National Home; the two missions were one in many migrants' minds... They were building a *Kingdom of Wales* as many a Welsh applicant for American citizenship told the clerks in Philadelphia" (p.38).

The major import of this study is to establish the Professor's claim that "politics in Wales began with the American Revolution". This in turn leads on to a discussion of the "London-Welsh" influence on the Welsh people; an assessment of John Evans, who pursued the Madoc myth in America, going up the unknown Missouri further than any previous white man, in search of his lost Welsh Indian brothers; and a very full description of the life of Morgan John Rhys, who "burns in the mind like a sudden flame, all warmth and brilliance and brevity" (p.53). Rhys typified in his life, and dreams for his fellow Welsh, all who ventured to America; and there were thousands of them, in search of a new Welsh homeland. Using a host of original and previously unused sources, Professor Williams draws a superb picture of Rhys and his contemporaries.

He was a visionary and there was a dreamer in him... He rarely carried anything to completion. He was a precursor born. He let himself be trapped by his times; his friends; his loyalties. He could not come to a sharp enough focus in time; he was dead before he was 45 and forgotten for a century. Yet in himself he mirrors the aspirations, the achievements, the frustrations and the contradictions of the Welsh in the Atlantic Revolution. (p.53).

Professor Williams has expressed his surprise at the volume of the Welsh-American correspondence available, mainly in America, and speaks of the "Baptist International" of this period.

It remains for a researcher yet to be found to fill out the totality of this "Baptist International". It will involve a number of studies both here and in America. It will be concerned with Ken Manley's work on John Rippon, and my own on William Staughton; but it will also have to follow out some of the areas, as yet to be developed, concerned with Robert Robinson; Robert Hall, jnr.; Caleb Evans; Elias Keach; Jacob Grigg; Morgan Edwards and others. Studies which will perhaps re-establish in the contemporary Baptist mind that a concern for radical democracy is an integral and priceless part of our heritage which the present generation ignores at its peril.

The detailed, lively, three-dimensional study of Professor Williams is essential reading for those concerned with Baptist developments in this period.

ROGER HAYDEN

PRIZE ESSAY ON DAVID JORIS

David Joris (c.1501-1556) was prominent in the rise of the Reformation in the Low Countries, and became a leading Anabaptist. After the insurrection of Münster, Anabaptists tended to choose either to withdraw from the world and internalize their beliefs (as did many under Joris's leadership), or to practise an open obedience to Scripture with all the consequences of persecution (as did many led by Menno Simons). There are many questions of interest regarding both the nature and content of Joris's thought, and its relation to the Mennonite tradition. The Directors of Teylers Stichting and the members of the Godgeleerd Genootschap are presenting the following prize-question to be answered before 1st May 1984:

An investigation pertaining to the life and work of David Joris or the treatment of a theme deriving from his range of religious and theological ideas.

Full details and conditions of entry may be obtained from:
The Directors of Teylers Stichting, Damstraat 21, 2011 Haarlem,
The Netherlands.