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EDITORIAL

Last issue's combative tone has demonstrated to the Editor that the *Journal* has its readers. This issue sustains the tone with the second of Martin Camroux's papers on the United Reformed Church, to which David Thompson has provided a prompt Afterword. Professor Thompson was closely involved in what emerged as the union between the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church. He writes as a historian of the Churches of Christ, having explored a brief, therefore intense, and certainly remarkable theological and ecclesiological evolution. He also writes from the angle of the Re-formed Association. Michael Hopkins, minister at Farnham, considers the evidence for a hardly less radical evolution, the slender but distinctive local continuity which can be traced in his congregation linking it through disaffected late eighteenth-century evangelical Anglicans to late seventeenth-century Presbyterians. The relationship between Free Churches and the law has been challenging, painful, and sometimes embarrassing. Professor Thompson recalls how law facilitated rather than thwarted a particular union. Mr Hopkins uses legal evidence to suggest a continuity that was commoner than might be thought.

Stephen Orchard, our Society's Chairman and the United Reformed Church's General Assembly Moderator for 2007-2008, delivered his lecture on Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, in the Fisher Lecture Theatre of St John's College, Cambridge, on Westminster College's Commemoration Day, 13 June 2007. It marked the close of his service as Principal of the College and looked ahead to his Moderatorial year.

J. D. Jones played a key part in the institutional evolution of English Congregationalism, yet he was no ecclesiastical bureaucrat: he was J. D. Jones "of Bournemouth", preacher, pastor and active citizen, influential because he was grandly representative. John Taylor, who heard him preach, focuses on the preaching and sets it not uncritically in the context of congregational ministry. It is vital to recapture what was preached. It is harder to decide what was heard as well as preached.

We welcome as a reviewer R. T. France, former Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, who now lives in retirement in Wales.

WHEN WAS FARNHAM UNITED REFORMED CHURCH FORMED?

The United Reformed Church, and before it the Congregational, Year Books have steadily listed the year of formation of the Farnham cause as 1792 or 1793. In 1993 a bicentenary was rightly and joyfully celebrated. The historians of Surrey Congregationalism, John Waddington¹ and Edward Cleal², make reference to an earlier Presbyterian cause, and suggest that some of its remaining members united with the new Independent cause in the last years of the eighteenth century, but offer no evidence to support this.

The story of the founding of an Independent church in Farnham in 1792/3 is well documented by Waddington³ and Cleal⁴, and in the “case of the people of Farnham”, a copy of which hangs framed in the vestry of Farnham United Reformed Church. The “case” was an appeal printed by the Independents of Farnham to raise funds for their new building, the Ebenezer Independent Chapel. It was endorsed by many leading ministers, and has a postscript written by the man at the centre of the story: William Alphonsus Gunn.

The story it tells is this: in 1786 Gunn was appointed afternoon preacher at St. Andrew’s, Farnham. His preaching was evangelical, and different from anything previously experienced at Farnham. The “case” asserts that “for a century past, the Gospel was not preached at Farnham”, which we can take to mean that the gospel had not been preached in terms acceptable to evangelical Protestants of the late eighteenth century.

While Gunn’s preaching was popular among many and brought them into the church, it was not universally popular, especially among the higher social classes. The result was that Gunn was dismissed by the Vicar of St. Andrew’s at Michaelmas 1792. Many of the congregation left the parish church with Gunn, and initially worshipped where they could, including private houses. They faced great danger in so doing from a riotous mob, which attacked them on several occasions, culminating to such effect on the Thursday after Easter 1793 that the army had to be called in to quell the riot. Nonetheless, funds were soon raised for a permanent building, and the Ebenezer Independent Chapel was opened in East Street on 16 October 1793.

Independents were increasingly known as Congregationalists during the first half of the nineteenth century, and Farnham’s Independent Chapel was first described as a Congregational Church in October 1844⁵, and joined the

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- 1 John Waddington, *Surrey Congregational History*, (London: Jackson, Walford and Hodder, 1886), 204-206.
 - 2 Edward E Cleal, *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey*, (London: James Clarke, 1908), 368-371.
 - 3 *Op. cit.*, 206-211.
 - 4 *Op. cit.*, 371-373.
 - 5 Church Meeting Minute Book, 30 October 1844.

Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1848.⁶ Early in 1856⁷ the Congregationalists felt the need of a new building, in a better location, to demonstrate their social and ecclesiastical standing, but they could not see a way to raise the necessary funds, so they contented themselves with improvements to the Ebenezer Chapel. However, by 1871⁸ the need for a new building was pressing, and the church agreed to move forward to a new building. Thus the foundation stone of a magnificent stone edifice, with a tall spire, on the then new road from Farnham town centre to the railway station, South Street, was laid on 22 October 1872, and the completed building was opened on 8 July 1873.⁹

The former chapel in East Street, the Ebenezer Independent Chapel, was used for Sunday School and other meetings. In 1929 additional rooms and halls were built behind the premises in South Street, and the East Street premises were sold. A garage now occupies the site. In 1972 Farnham Congregational Church joined the United Reformed Church.

This was the end of the story. However, newly re-discovered documents prove that Farnham's Presbyterian Dissenters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had stronger links with what is now Farnham United Reformed Church than the suppositions of Waddington¹⁰ and Cleal¹¹ suggest.

During the Commonwealth and Protectorate many Anglican clergy were deprived of their livings, and Puritan ministers put in their place. Farnham was no exception, and in 1643 Paul Clapham, Vicar of Farnham, was removed from his living, accused of drunkenness and of fathering illegitimate children.¹² Various Puritan ministers served after Clapham's removal¹³ until 20 August 1656, when Samuel Stileman, a Presbyterian minister, was admitted to the living of St. Andrew's. Whilst a Presbyterian minister was not universally welcome, it is clear that Stileman had a significant following. In 1660, he was ejected from the living.¹⁴ However, he continued to minister to the Presbyterians from his own home in the town.

6 *Ibid.*, 4 February 1848.

7 Farnham Independent Chapel Building Committee Minute Book. The committee was formed on 1 January 1856.

8 Record book describing events and accounts leading to the building of the new chapel in 1873.

9 The total cost of the building was £4866 2s 5d. Of this £1400 was covered by a mortgage, £375 was loaned by the English Congregational Chapel Building Society, and the remainder was paid for by subscriptions from a great many members of the church and community, paying between £2 and £50; the average was about £20. The loan and mortgage were slowly paid off by subscriptions from members, and a two-day bazaar in 1908 raised £403 3s 1d, and finally paid off all debt on the building.

10 *Op. cit.*, 205-206.

11 *Op. cit.*, 370-371.

12 A.G. Matthews, *Walker Revised*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 350.

13 David Woodcock, *Dissenting and Nonconformist Pastors of Farnham*, (Farnham & District Museum Journal, Vol. 12, no. 11, September 1999), 208-209.

14 A.G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 464.

Stileman was not the only Presbyterian in the area, and Farnham was not the only local town where Presbyterians worshipped. The Rector of Worplesdon, George Farroll, was also ejected from his living in 1660.¹⁵ What became of him immediately after his ejection is less well known. However, his will was proved in Farnham on 1 January 1667/8,¹⁶ and we can reasonably infer that he had been resident in Farnham at the time of his death. In 1672, licences under the Declaration of Indulgence were granted for James Prince, and John Farroll, both exercising a Presbyterian ministry in Farnham.¹⁷ Furthermore, William Bicknell, ejected as Vicar of Portsea in 1662,¹⁸ was licensed in 1672 in Alton as a Presbyterian also ministering in Farnham, continuing to do so until 1689.¹⁹ From a will made by Nicholas Turner, of 1711, we note the existence of a Presbyterian Meeting House,²⁰ and in 1740, through a will of Rebecca Reynolds,²¹ we know that a small Presbyterian Meeting House was in existence in West Street in Farnham.

Thus we can trace a continuous line of Presbyterian worshippers in Farnham, from the Commonwealth and Protectorate into the eighteenth century. Initially part of the Church of England, they met in houses following Stileman's ejection in 1660, and in secret following the Act of Uniformity in 1662. Many licences were given in 1672, and we know of their existence at the Act of Toleration in 1689. This group clearly increased in strength and number, for by 1711 they had a permanent Meeting House. This strength was not sustained through the eighteenth century. Although there was, nationally, a decline in orthodox Nonconformity during the eighteenth century, the close presence locally of the Bishop of Winchester in Farnham Castle would not have helped. Waddington records the names of Presbyterian ministers serving in Farnham during the eighteenth century, but with declining numbers the Presbyterians at Farnham, Guildford and Godalming shared ministry and resources. Furthermore, reflecting what happened across the country, many of these Presbyterians became Unitarians. Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century, the remaining Presbyterian cause in Farnham was so weak that it closed. Waddington suggests, however, that rather than simply closing, the Presbyterians decided to unite with the newly formed Ebenezer Independent Chapel.²²

Waddington's statement is without any supporting evidence, and there is no primary evidence to back it up. However, documents found languishing in a church cupboard shed more light on this largely forgotten episode of history. A will of John Holloway, dated 1744, left £300 of Old South Sea Annuities,

15 *Ibid.*, 191.

16 G126/3/3, Surrey History Centre.

17 Woodcock, *Op.cit.*, 208-209.

18 Matthews, *Op.cit.*, 53.

19 Woodcock, *Op.cit.*, 208-209.

20 PROB 11/534, National Archives.

21 DW/PA/7/25 DW/PA/5/1744/69, Surrey History Centre.

22 Waddington, *Op.cit.*, 205-206.

and a will of Mary Lee in 1745 left £100 to the Presbyterians of Farnham. Original indentures, dated from 1763 onwards, record the appointment of trustees for these annuities. Indentures for this purpose exist continuously until 1897, when the annuities have been converted to consolidated stock, and appear to have been taken into general church funds. What is significant is that the annuities transferred seamlessly from the Presbyterians into the hands of what became Farnham Congregational Church. This would support Waddington's assertion that the Presbyterians merged with the Independents, rather than simply closing, because had they closed then a different legal process would have been needed to transfer the annuities from the Presbyterians to the Congregationalists.

One further point to note is that under Mary Lee's will there was a "gift over", which meant that whenever there was no "Meeting for anytime kept up there for the use of the Protestant Dissenters aforesaid" ("aforesaid" meaning the Dissenters "commonly going under the name of Presbyterians"), the income of the annuities was to go back to Lee's executors (who were not named), in other words to her estate. Likewise under Holloway's will, if there were ever no Dissenting minister belonging to the Presbyterian Meeting at Farnham, that trust's income was to go to his executor William Paradise "for his own proper use and behoof", meaning for his own benefit, not as an executor or trustee. The latter entitlement is recorded as passing from William to his widow Mary, and thence to one John Turner Harris.

If in 1793 or later the Presbyterians of Farnham had ceased to meet, and the congregation of the Ebenezer Chapel had not been considered to be a continuation of the Presbyterian meeting of Lee's and Holloway's day, then presumably the executors would have claimed the income to which they were entitled. Furthermore, if there were considered to be no chance of Presbyterians ever meeting in Farnham again, they might even have claimed the capital.²³ Clearly their claims were not forgotten, at least up to the point where the entitlement of John Harris was noted.

Unfortunately there are no extant records, other than the indentures, to prove the links between the Presbyterians and the Ebenezer Chapel. Likewise there is no documentation in the church book of the conversion to consolidated stock, or its absorption into the general church accounts, so this must retain an element of conjecture. However, there is no other credible explanation.²⁴

Thus, it would appear that Farnham United Reformed Church can trace its origins from two strands. One is the formation of the Ebenezer Independent Chapel in 1792/3, and the other is the Presbyterian congregation originating in

23 This provision in both wills seems to fall foul of a technical legal device known as the "rule against perpetuities", but if that had been enforced then the legal action would have been of sufficient importance to be noted and documented, which it was not.

24 I am particularly indebted to Farnham local historian, Pat Heather, for her assistance with research, and to Dr. Augur Pearce of Cardiff University for legal advice.

the ministry of Samuel Stileman, and existing as a congregation separate from the Church of England from 1660. The two strands united around 1793 or soon after.

So, did not Farnham United Reformed Church first originate in 1660?

MICHAEL HOPKINS

SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON

With this paper a cycle is completed which began in 1965. As a research student, newly married, I had already been diverted from my main enquiries to write a history of Cheshunt College, soon to be merged with Westminster. The main sources, minute books and college reports, were to be found in bookcases in the main lecture room. While I was scouring the college office for anything further the College Secretary, Rita Richardson, drew my attention to bundles of papers in an old tin box. These turned out to be the correspondence of the Countess of Huntingdon, which Edwin Welch subsequently considered to be intact since they left Trefecca en route to Cheshunt. As it happened, these bundles added little to my college history, but did enable me to identify a strand of missionary thinking, which I was able to incorporate in my doctoral thesis. Edwin Welch was called in as an expert archivist to advise on how we should proceed and the rest leads inexorably, through the cataloguing and micro-filming of the collection, to Edwin's reassessment of the life of the Countess of Huntingdon under the title *Spiritual Pilgrim*.

One aspect of this discovery which was not borne in upon me at the time but which has become much clearer in preparing this paper, was the extent to which the Countess used Trefecca as a principal base in the last twenty years of her life. The accumulation of letters represented many hours of sitting at Trefecca, reading letters and preparing replies. Edwin Welch first brought to my notice that the Countess never replaced John Fletcher with a new President for the college, but took on that role for herself. The full significance of this has never been emphasised in studies of the period. What we are saying, in effect, is that she became the first female Principal of a men's college. No wonder John Wesley found her so difficult to fit into his universe. I propose to expand on her role as an educator in the first part of this paper. I shall then consider another aspect of the correspondence, almost exclusively found in the American letters, that of missionary strategist. The third aspect of this paper is more elusive, and something which her biographers have not really attempted, and that is to plumb the depths of her spirituality, represented in her own words in the correspondence here in Cambridge.

Trefecca College was *sui generis*. Nonconformists had, for a hundred years before 1768, offered a substitute Oxbridge education in their own academies, which prepared some people for ministry. Trefecca was not a Dissenting academy. It did not set out to offer a substitute for a proper university education. It was an entirely new concept, preparing people for a radically different kind of ministry, but trying to provide sufficient grounding in traditional studies to satisfy ordination requirements. It offered a basic education in the classics and theological disciplines, but never at the expense of its other functions. It had some aspects of Howell Harris's nearby community, or "family" as he termed it, a place where Christians paced each other's spiritual growth. It was a clearing-house for young men on their way to being assigned for preaching tours in England and Wales, and then beyond. I stand by what I wrote forty years ago in the Cheshunt College history, so far as the daily routines are concerned. What I would want to add is to underline what Edwin Welch has said about the supervision of the college after John Fletcher's time as President.¹ I agree entirely with his assessment, typically understated, that the Countess then became *de facto* President herself, in an age when a woman would have looked ridiculous claiming the position formally. She spent some months of every year at the college until infirmity stranded her in London. The correspondence she shared with students and former students is not that of a great lady to commoners. It observes etiquette but its tone is much more tutorial and pastoral than directive. In her letters to William Peircy, a man barely senior to the young men he led in her mission to Georgia, we see something of her inner world and convictions. She writes with an intimacy more commonly associated with family correspondence. Thousands of miles away in England she does her best to control affairs in Savannah through her appointed leader, who himself needs motivating as well as correcting. She constantly reminds him that being overbearing with people, falling back on rank or rights, is rarely a successful way of getting things done. She regards herself as someone who has treated the students kindly and talks of the need to let young people make their mistakes, the need to learn Christian humility if you want to be a good teacher, and the spirit of love and tenderness which is an essential when ruling over people.²

These Peircy letters show that the Countess was, by the standards of her time, an enlightened educator. She herself puts this down to early experience. In a tantalising glimpse of those years before she married, about which we know very little, she talks of herself, "... being obliged from early days to be exceeding attentive upon this subject, having had in my lot many young people, either out of duty, love or compassion, to watch over." She goes on to observe, "Youth are always so wise else, they seldom think they want anything, and if you hurt that kind of self love in them too soon, all your

1 E. Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 125.

2 Cheshunt Foundation Archives, Westminster College, Cambridge. See especially A4/3/2 and A4/3/3.

influence will soon have an end. Good-humoured patience is the surest way, with tolerable sense.”³ In the same letter she gives her recommendations for student reading, with a view to stocking a library at Bethesda, Savannah. She reckoned that style and clarity were as important as content. Of her contemporaries she recommends Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, who wrote on the prophets. Newton she also reckoned to be a good influence because he had produced an edition of John Milton, who ought to be read because of what he had to say about the Fall and his beautiful imagery. Another contemporary writer she admired was Dr Thomas Sherlock, (1677-1761), Bishop of London, a Tory but a strong opponent of the Jacobites. A volume of his writings on prophecy may well have been at Trefecca for students to read, though none survives in the Cheshunt collection. She linked style and content together using the classical argument that a well-ordered mind is able to communicate clearly. As a teacher she argues “The fewer and clearer the ideas given into the mind the better, leaving those to work; this I find the most effectual and those as strong to awaken the powers of the mind.”⁴ One might argue, “Physician, heal thyself” since her own letters are often brimming over with all kinds of ideas. Part of the historic problem with them has been the poor handwriting and absence of punctuation. With a little work on the transcription she becomes a much clearer writer, especially on practical topics, such as education. As we shall see, it is only in some of her spiritual advice that her meaning becomes opaque. All her educational ideas were subject to one overriding theological principle, that her colleges in both Trefecca and Savannah should be under the rule of the Holy Spirit, “the only virtual power by which truth is known to be such . . .”⁵

She also saw her colleges as sacramental communities. One of the little-noticed aspects of life at Trefecca has been the frequency with which communion was celebrated when ordained ministers of the Church of England were there. The great anniversaries of the college were occasions for preaching, prayer meetings, spiritual encouragement and daily communion. No doubt the Trefecca communion plate, which is still in use in Westminster College, was used by the congregations who met under the presidency of Whitefield, the Wesleys, Fletcher, Berridge, Venn, Haweis and all the other Evangelical luminaries who visited. The Countess says almost nothing about the sacraments in her letters, but we can infer she had orthodox views on the subject from her insistence on the importance of securing ordination for her preachers, within the Church of England. This frequency of communion in itself distinguished Trefecca College from anything in the ancient universities. A generation later the great Evangelical Charles Simeon rarely attended Kings College chapel as a Fellow; the service was, he said, irreverently performed. Of the chapel services in another college in 1808 it was said:

3 A4/3/9.

4 *Ibid.*

5 A4/3/9.

The Dean generally goes through the first part of the service to a single auditor. Towards the beginning of the first lesson the students come in right frisky; some running, some laughing, and some staggering. The lessons are not infrequently read by a drunken scholar, who is either too blind to read what is before him, or too much inclined to vomit to pronounce what he can read. The rest of the men are, perhaps, in the meantime, employed in tossing the candles at each other, in talking obscenity, or damning the Dean, the chapel, the Master.⁶

Much of this irreverence arose from the requirement for daily attendance at chapel by all students. The sacraments were observed sparingly in the eighteenth century, although they constituted a test of religious allegiance, to push Roman Catholics and Dissenters to the margins. The Wesleys and other Evangelicals regarded sincere piety and the regular observance of the sacraments as the proper disciplines of people who were serious about their Christianity.

So Trefecca was a place where students were taught certain academic disciplines, with good-humoured patience, prayed and shared the sacrament together, and practised preaching. The Countess regarded the college as a reservoir of preachers on which she could draw to supply the churches of her Connexion. The idea of a Connexion is now almost exclusively associated with Wesleyan Methodism and its offshoots. The Calvinistic Methodists were equally committed to a Connexional model of working, as many studies have shown. The Countess's commitment to it was total because she could not envisage successful Gospel preaching on any other model. One of the bones of contention between her and the congregation in Kendal was their wish to have a settled minister, what she termed "the constant confinement of a minister" rather than a supply of preachers.⁷ One ground of her complaint against the bishops was that if they did not ordain her young men then they settled with Dissenting congregations.⁸ She regarded ordination among the Dissenters as defective, according to scripture.⁹ However, it also tied preachers down in one place, whereas Anglican ordination gave opportunity to preach at large, even when a living had been secured. Her preachers were Anglicans who responded to her invitations and her own students. It is often assumed, from a cursory reading of the correspondence, that the Countess autocratically ordered the students hither and thither. The detailed evidence suggests that she gave them some latitude in their movements, partly because she expected them to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit on their own account, rather than simply mediated through her. There were always more gaps than people to fill them

6 *The Satirist*, May 1808, II, 248-9, quoted in V. H. H. Green, *Religion at Oxford and Cambridge*, (London: SCM, 1964), 231.

7 A4/5/22.

8 E3/2/9.

9 A4/3/5.

and she persuaded her preachers to move as best she could.¹⁰ Every new opening had to be pursued for the sake of the Gospel, even when it made heavy demands on the college.¹¹ Her direct intervention was necessary when the students got above themselves, especially in spending her carefully husbanded resources. When student Jones went to Dublin to help the work in Ireland he earned a reproof for his extravagance. Writing to Hawksworth, who was supervising the work, she says:

I enclose you a note for the bill Jones has sent which does greatly depress me, as it exceeds more in one quarter than you had in half a year. If this extravagance continues he cannot continue. Sedan chairs and barbers' accounts won't do. I am quite amazed. I beg you will regulate matters for him, for another student at such an expense will render the work in Ireland too heavy for me. It has been three years now on foot and none seems raised to have sufficient zeal or courage to undertake the management. I want not to avoid all the Lord will enable me to do. To spend and be spent in his services is my only honour but I wish to see fruits.¹²

There rings the authentic note of the enthusiast who has not lost touch with reality. Extravagance imperilled her true object, which was for the college and the preaching stations to flourish. A more positive note in the same letter to Hawksworth shows the enthusiasm winning out.

With the Lord's leave I am to be Octr 23rd at Chichester for the opening the Chapel there and should the Lord (whose I am and whom only I wish to follow) have no other call for me I shall return to Bath in my way to my much beloved College, where I have found so much of that fire that is only kindled by the true fire from off the altar.¹³

The Countess's beloved college was a source of disquiet among other Methodists. John Wesley, who generally found himself at odds with her, reckoned not to understand it. Howell Harris blew hot and cold, at one time co-operating, at another opposing the college. The Countess tells how a wandering preacher called Hall "[after our services] stands in the lane before the house, abusing us all and calling all the students, abroad and at home, preachers of Baal; and the last Sunday preached in the streets of Brecknock and abused me by name . . .".¹⁴ Hall was a member of Harris's Trevecca settlement. These were the years when Harris was out of the limelight of the Welsh revival. The fact that Welsh ministers were holding meetings at Trefecca

10 G2/1/1.

11 G2/1/6.

12 G2/1/12.

13 G2/1/12.

14 G2/1/7.

College and its students preaching with wide acceptance in the neighbourhood clearly riled him. John Wesley, too, tried to start a turf war with the Countess over her students preaching in Cornwall in 1776.¹⁵ Her own attitude was that there was more work to be done than people to do it. Beneath the doctrinal disputes and the territorial possessiveness may well be lurking what we would now call "gender issues". The Countess of Huntingdon was assertive even by the standards of aristocratic women of the day. To see her running her own college and team of preachers may have been unacceptable on the Johnsonian dictum about as soon seeing a woman preach as a dog walk on its hind legs. Preaching and the conduct of worship were the only significant public religious exercises that the Countess did not practice.

As with all the eighteenth-century proponents of mission, the Countess moved effortlessly from the consideration of bringing the Gospel to the estranged labouring poor of Britain to the question of mission abroad. Within a year of the opening of the college the Countess was challenging the students to volunteer for service in Bencoolen, an East India Company fort on the coast of what is now Sumatra. A Mr Baker, who was establishing a colonial settlement there, approached the Countess for help in recruiting a minister and school-master.¹⁶ She, in turn, approached the Bishop of London to ordain her two student volunteers, Pecore and Hewer. It was quite clear to her that, apart from any chaplaincy to Europeans, this was for "the good of the poor heathen." Pecore subsequently secured the lucrative chaplaincy to the garrison.¹⁷ Hewer came to a sad end, failing in Bencoolen and in the Gospel, so far as the Countess was concerned, since she regarded his subsequent death in his own pulpit as regrettable but deserved.¹⁸ This Sumatra mission is rarely noted in mission histories. It is one of the links which leads from Moravian missions and Jonathan Edwards's Prayer Call to the founding of the modern Protestant missionary societies in Britain. Another is the Countess's subsequent plans for Georgia, once she had inherited Whitefield's Orphan House at Savannah.

So what was it that spurred the Countess to consider foreign missions? Here the Cheshunt college archives concerning the Georgia mission and the picture of John à Lasco in Westminster's library come together, although no-one realised it when Cheshunt College moved to Westminster, or when the Presbyterian Historical Society purchased the picture. Edward VI giving the charter for a Protestant church in London to John à Lasco was a Moravian propaganda piece, part of an immense display on the staircase of Lindsey House, Chelsea, created by Count Zinzendorf to underline the authenticity of the Moravian Church. Through John à Lasco, who had pastoral responsibility for the Czech Brethren in Edward VI's reign, Zinzendorf traced the relationship of his episcopate to that of the Church of England. That

15 E4/3/2A.

16 E3/1/7.

17 E3/1/5.

18 G2/1/7.

relationship was important in justifying the Moravian use of England as a missionary base. Around this great picture, then larger than it is now, were ranged smaller scenes setting out the history and work of the Moravians. Wycliffe, Huss and Stephanus, a Waldensian martyr, were displayed, along with Comenius. More importantly, for our purposes, were the missionary scenes:

Schmitt (i.e. George Schmidt 1709-1785) teaching Hottentots to dig;
 Richter (i.e. Abrah. Ehrenfried Richter, who died as a missionary to
 Christian slaves in Algeria) preaching to the Pest-slaves;
 Nitschmann leaping over a crocodile;
 Boat on the Polar Sea;
 Wayomick Waterfall (where is this, perhaps America?);
 Covenant of Friendship with the Esthen.(i.e. Zinzendorf and the Five
 Kings of the Nations or Chiefs of the Iroquois Indians) 1742;
 Negro and Negress in baptismal dress;
 One of Schumann's (i.e. Theophilus Salomo Schumann) wild
 Brazilians;

To these you may add other exotic pictures showing unlikely converts to Christianity.¹⁹ These were the pictures the Countess would have seen on her visits to Zinzendorf in the 1750s, when her relationship with the Moravians was cooling. It is these pictures which inform her imagination, together with the reading of David Brainerd's mission to American native people, when she began to shape her own plans for America.

She inherited Whitefield's orphan house in Savannah at his death in 1770. The estate was in debt. She took on her inheritance as a sacred trust from one of her oldest friends and then let her imagination take over.²⁰ Whitefield had been informed by the work of August Hermann Francke of Halle in setting up his orphan house.²¹ Like Francke, he had originally conceived of it as the beginning of a complete settlement for a religious community. The various practical difficulties had kept his plans in check. The Countess returned to the vision of Francke, whose portrait hung at Trefecca, and decided to expand the Savannah settlement to include a college, which would act as a base for preachers, on the Trefecca model. More than that, she planned to create a religious settlement as far west as she could in the new colonies, to be a base for missions to what she called the Indians, that is, American native people.²² The whole scheme was to be financed by an expansion of her land-holdings

19 Herrnhut Archives A I 90 (a, b, c and d) with additional notes by the archivist Herr Trager, as given in Peter Kroyer, *The Story of Lindsey House, Chelsea*, (Country Life: London), 1956.

20 A3/10/24.

21 Welch, *op.cit.*, 132.

22 A/4/4/22 and 24.

in Georgia to generate increased income.²³ Over the years this project eventually swallowed up at least £6,000 of capital, compared with the £1,500 it took to set up Trevecca, and largely accounts for her pleas of poverty in later life. She gave generously for the foundation of chapels in England, but these came in at about £500 each. It was in Georgia that she overreached herself. She was badly served by her managers; a fire burnt down the largest of the buildings she inherited from Whitefield; the orphan house was occupied and looted in succession by troops on both sides of the War of Independence. Had it all gone rather differently we might have celebrated the bi-centenary of the formal founding of modern European missions some twenty years earlier than we did. Moreover, even at this early date, the Countess was anticipating what became a theme for the London Missionary Society in due course, and for others – missions to the Jews.²⁴ Her imagination exceeded even her own formidable organisational skills in the end. She never did get to Savannah to sew garments for the children of her new converts, as she once imagined herself doing. Hers was a romantic vision before Romanticism as such is reckoned to have begun.

The constant factor through her missionary plans, apart from Evangelical zeal, is that the outreach to “the heathen” is from a Protestant Evangelical settlement, rather than an heroic individual mission. Her ambition was to settle good Protestants as far west as possible, to constitute a base for missions to the American native people.²⁵ She proposed to invest in more plantations and an increased slave labour force to generate the income to support this venture. When the London Missionary Society sent out the first mission to the South Seas it was a company of artisans who went, full of the Gospel but also practical skills. Commerce was seen as an ally to the Gospel, although Evangelicals began to see the slave trade as inimical to its spread. The London merchants who financed the voyage of *The Duff* to take missionaries to Polynesia also expected a return on their investment in the shape of a cargo of tea brought back from China. The relationship between mission, commerce and exploration has always been a complex one. The Countess offers no solutions to our ethical dilemmas because they were not hers. No one had yet considered sustaining long-term mission by the voluntary contributions of large numbers of people.

Behind the energetic enterprises of the Countess lay deep spiritual convictions, which have been less explored by her biographers. Where are these rooted? One constant feature of her life was the recurrence of illness. People did die quite suddenly in the eighteenth century. Her own favourite daughter, Selina, died in 1763, at the age of 26, after a short illness. In this sense it is entirely credible that there are many references in correspondence to her illnesses and fears for her life. However, the illnesses are often non-

23 A4/3/7. This plan included buying more slaves.

24 G2/1/9.

25 A4/4/24.

specific. It is possible she suffered from stone, or disorders consequent on her frequent pregnancies. In later life she diagnosed her pains as gout. Illness did not prevent her travelling widely. She was confined to her London house only in the last years of what was a long life. Only one of her own children survived her. If she was a constant invalid she was certainly one of the robust variety, a creaking gate that kept on swinging. Illness did, however, put her into contact with doctors. Whilst recovering from the birth of her second child, George, the Countess of Huntingdon took the waters at Bath under the supervision of Dr George Cheyne. Like John Wesley she had already had opportunity to read William Law's *A Serious Call*, which had appeared in 1729 and caught the imagination of people beyond his circle of Non-Jurors. Law gave people a taste for Boehme, the German mystic. Cheyne now widened the circle by bringing to her attention the French Quietists, particularly Madame Guyon.

Madame Guyon, (1648-1717), though a Roman Catholic, had the inestimable benefit, so far as British Protestant readers were concerned, of being persecuted by her own Church. She bore with two imprisonments in the Bastille when French Quietism was attacked. Her spiritual biography was published in French soon after her death but was not available in English. The Countess possessed a manuscript translation of an early work, Madame Guyon's spiritual "Rule for the Fraternity of the Holy Jesus", along with a manuscript selection from St John of the Cross. The Countess was clearly an intelligent young woman. We have no reason to doubt that she was pious in a conventional sense and conscientious. Although she dated her religious conversion to around 1740 what she learned from the mystics in the previous decade was reflected in much of her later thinking. The attraction seems to be the personal fervour of the mystics. For the Evangelicals making religion real was a constant theme. There was a heavy emphasis on the immortal soul in contrast to the sinful body. Mysticism offered an anticipation of the joys of heaven and of being in the presence of God. Madame Guyon writes, in the translation known to the Countess:

If Desiring to advance in Perfection you pray in this Manner out of the Depth of your soul; "O Jesus, my Divine Master, Teach me to deny myself, to take up my Cross in imitation of Thee, Every day to follow Thee, & conform myself in every thing to thy Righteous will. Dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I offer myself up to Thee without Reserve, renouncing for ever all right of Reassuming myself. I abandon myself for ever to thy good pleasure. Make me to walk in thy presence. Why can I not always preserve a Remembrance of my God within me, and Pass my Life in the amorous Regard of the well beloved of my soul? Thou shalt be, O my God, the God of my Heart, & my Portion for Ever." Thus may you exercise yourself in a prayer which continually purifies your Heart; and ravishes the heart of God, which Disengages you from the Creature, and makes you Cleave to God alone. For a Mind may set itself a fluttering by notionall

Considerations upon many subjects, but it is the Affection of the Heart only that makes a soul fly up to God.²⁶

This prayer is clearly echoed in that at the heart of the Methodist Covenant Service. Historically the Methodists were much exercised over the doctrine of sanctification. Wesley never went so far as to speak of a disengagement between body and soul but all Methodists put a high value on spiritual exaltation. A constant theme of Charles Wesley's hymns is the visitation of the divine love to the human heart, thus raising it into the presence of God. Quite how many modern congregations appreciate that in the later verses of the ever popular "Love Divine, all loves excelling" they are expressing a fervent sentiment that once visited by divine grace they wish to remain in the heavenly chorus for ever is not obvious. Such "Enthusiasm" was what damned Methodists in the eyes of many of their Christian contemporaries.²⁷

We might here reflect for a moment on Westminster College's Reid Lectures for 2006, when Nancy Murphy observed that a dualistic view of the human being, comprising body and soul, carries other theological consequences. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the Methodist movement. The Countess of Huntingdon was an eminently practical person, given to good works, but she went out of her way to emphasise that salvation of our immortal souls is the prime object of human existence. Her differences with John Wesley revolved around this point. He looked for evidence of sanctification in the life of believers to confirm the grace of God and accused the Calvinists of antinomianism, "you can do as you like because you're saved". She wanted to emphasise our utter dependence on God for eternal life and accused the Arminians of preaching salvation by works. Both took the eventual separation of soul and body for granted. The soul would live to eternity, either rejoicing in the heavenly chorus among the redeemed or suffering endless torment. It was this conviction which led both the Countess and John Wesley, essentially conservative about liturgy and church order, to sit lightly to both if it meant saving souls. But while John Wesley continued to use the language of Christian perfection the Countess fought shy of it in her later years.

Other common themes remained prominent in her thinking. Salvation and Atonement were essential emphases among Methodist preachers, whether Arminian or Calvinist. The Cross was a meeting point and the meditation on the Cross a common spiritual discipline. Such meditation is to be found throughout Christian devotion. For the Countess it was defined by her reading of the mystics and her encounters with the Moravians. Their art represented the theme of the bleeding Christ as frankly as any medieval religious painting. Moravians are portrayed gathering the precious blood from the Saviour's

26 B/5/4, 53-54, Madame Guyon, "The Rule of the Fraternity of the Holy Jesus".

27 The historical and doctrinal links between European mysticism and English Methodism are fully explored in W R Ward, *Early Evangelicalism. A global intellectual history, 1670-1789*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

wounded side in dishes so that it may be shared. Twentieth-century scruples have seen off such Evangelical hymns as William Cowper's "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains." Editors still omit from Isaac Watts's great hymn on the Cross the verse that begins, "His dying crimson, like a robe, spreads o'er his body on the tree." The Countess's hymnbook, which she edited, included Watts's other hymn on the Cross, "Alas, and did my Saviour bleed", not to mention hymns of other writers – "Jesus thou lovely bleeding Lamb", "Nothing but thy blood, O Jesus", "O come, thou wounded Lamb of God" – all of which invoke in words what the Moravians portrayed in paint. The English Puritan tradition resisted the pictorial representation of the wounds of Christ but no such inhibitions were shown in the words of hymns, prayers and sermons. One extended quotation from a letter of the Countess to William Piercy will serve to illustrate the point further.

On that part of our Lord's sufferings immediate upon the Cross, or which is termed his Passion, an idea that suits its views to me as the Passion of loss was then so close so purely and fully exemplified; and in this extremity his eye was effectually led by his heart to view two under the Cross. That was so much the case of his experience when he said "Woman behold thy son. What maternal tenderness then sprang up for his beloved disciple? and what filial piety instantly on these words being spoken "behold thy mother"? And from that time the disciple took her to his own home. Much, very much, does this mysteriously convey. Happy Mary, that had such a son given her by God. Happy John, that had his fellowship with that heart, who had so many things laid up in it for his use and blessing. How many blessed hours did they pass. What tenderness presented to her view all his sufferings in Patmos. What Holy Joy accompanied all her cares for him. They first loved under the Cross, as the pledge that only that union made there and continued there was of an eternal nature. May I ever so love. May I ever so continue to live. I have thought what must the Pharisees say to this. She had many sons, but Joseph's son was not all God's sons and Zebedee's son was not John's mother. Now his own home, his heart, was to be her abode. Thus this happy union was made under the Cross and by him who hung upon it. This will ever be the protection of such heavenly purity, the destruction of all natural delight is for me to be the spring, the main spring, of heavenly love to holy souls and, therefore, makes the daily Cross, the daily self-denial of our whole lives, the only proper subjects of divine love.

"The happy union" under the Cross was applicable beyond John and Mary. For the Countess the Church was the mystic body of believers united by the blood of Christ. She rooted some of this conviction in her reading of the letter to the Hebrews. Our eternal union with God in Christ, the High Priest and

sacrifice for us all, brings us into union with each other this side of the grave. Indeed, she sees it as an essential characteristic of the Christian life.

... it is what purified spirits on earth must partake of if ever they are made to inherit the glory that the saints of God enjoy, who walk in the light of the new Jerusalem, and which that explanation of the spirits of just men made perfect fully characterises as relative to the covenant of grace. Those who shall be companions in eternity must have this little pledge of their eternal enjoyment of each other, that when this robe of flesh is off they will know no delight but in that Bridegroom of their souls, and those that by the power of that spirit and that same love does so unite, for the perpetual unity that shall subsist to his glory and bliss for ever.²⁸

This is the same spirit as that characterised in Charles Wesley's verses on Christian union, which begin "Christ, from whom all blessings flow." She was always able to maintain the "loving sympathy", of which he wrote, with Charles, but saw it ebb out of her relationship with John.

Towards the end of her life this sense of the eternal, spiritual union of true believers in the blood of Christ came to override her sense of the natural order represented by the Church of England, whose bishops did not share her spiritual perspectives. She wove the opposition of the Establishment into her picture of the sufferings that true believers endure. To Craddock Glascott, who was wavering in his loyalty to the Connexion in opposition to his bishop, she wrote,

My object, wishes and purpose was to do or suffer any thing that you might be wholly Jesus Christ's, not only by your labours, but by your most known intimate union.²⁹

Whatever her disagreements with other Methodists, she shared their general conviction that separation from the Church of England, "the Church He [Jesus] has so dearly bought with his own blood,"³⁰ was to be avoided at all costs. At this time she publicly distanced herself from John Wesley, as someone whose Doctrine of Perfection was at odds with the Thirty Nine Articles.³¹ This was ironic, given that John died without any formal breach with the Church of England while she became a kind of exile. Her own spiritual rationalisation for ordaining ministers without benefit of bishops was that it was the Church of England which had rejected her rather than *vice versa*. In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, which went through much drafting, she states:

28 A4/3/6.

29 A4/3/8.

30 E3/2/1.

31 E3/2/17.

I have viewed it in all lights in those many anxious moments which habit and a partiality to the Church has afforded me. My steady adherence to her doctrines has been long proved, and my warm attachment to her interests is known to your Grace by a letter I had the honour of writing to you some time ago. This, with so late in the day being driven from her communion, and that while not in my life willingly giving one moment's offence, I would humbly hope operates by a grief not less just than natural.³²

When her son wrote to express his concern after she lost her case in the ecclesiastical courts she responded:

Fear not, care not about me my dear son, I have a faithful Friend who has said, "I will never leave nor forsake you, no, that I never will." I have tried his promise often and he has never failed me yet.³³

Her inner spiritual resolve carried the conviction that the Methodists were right and the ecclesiastical courts wrong. This even manifested itself as defiance.

I am to be cast out of the Church now for what I have been doing this forty years, speaking and hiring for Jesus Christ, and if the days of my captivity is now to be accomplished, those that turn me out, and so set me at liberty, may now feel what it is to serve by sore distress themselves, for that hard service they have caused me to serve in their way and will so long. Blessed be the Lord, I have not one care relative to this event, but to be found exactly faithful to God and man through all. I think I see you smile and will rejoice with me in all I may suffer for our dear Immanuel's sake.³⁴

It would be wrong to characterise the Countess's inner life as all spiritual earnestness. Her remarks on education, with which we began, carry notes of irony. She teased a friend who had put off a visit to Trefecca:

I proved the hospitality of all my neighbours surrounding me with requests to mark their respects on the occasion of seeing you in Wales. The chickens, ducks, geese &c made their merciless slaughter heard on your account, while the whole household was ready to assure you, by every instance of all the liberality love could show you, how welcome their hearts made you; nay, they and our roses and lavender continued to abound in their sweets for you and thus you see all your loss without feeling it.³⁵

32 E3/3/6.

33 E3/3/3.

34 G2/1/21.

35 A4/5/23.

She also sees the ridiculous side of a pious portrait by Russell, now in Savannah, but represented by engravings in this country. Writing to William Peirce she says:

The wine, shirts &c. are sent by this ship and the picture, which I beg be kept in the case, as I sent it over only because it stood at Russell's to be looked at, which distressed me and in all my life never repented of any one thing done that was not directly or indirectly wrong. I hope to hear, should there be a storm at sea, it will be thrown overboard to lighten the ship and knowing there was no room for it I chose it should remain in the case.³⁶

All in all, the dour autocrat of popular legend is not the woman who emerges from a study of her letters. Strong women have a hard time at the hands of some male writers and Selina was particularly unfortunate that, having forbidden a biography, she fell into the hands of Aaron Seymour fifty years after her death. Edwin Welch has recovered some of her humanity but would have been the first to admit that he understood her religious sentiments in terms of her quarrels with others rather than because he entered into them. I have tried, in this paper, to celebrate her educational innovations, her pioneering approach to missions and her spirituality. I have also tried to suggest that she is a much more complex and interesting character than the pious biographies depict. So let us give her the last word, in a letter to John Wesley, who has criticised her sending students into what he regarded as his territory, in Cornwall. Having explained that she only ever responded to invitations given to her, she holds her corner, while claiming the moral high ground. No wonder he found her so exasperating.

Nothing has been so continually enforced by me in various ways to the students as to avoid all disputes or casting the smallest reflection upon you or any of your friends. The Christian character can never be so obscured as by returning railing for railing, or evil of evil, as it is our privilege to suffer all things from all men for the Lord Jesus sake, committing our souls in well-doing to his faithful and kind care for us. I praise the Lord our young men are better employed and, I may assure you, better taught also and what you choose to say or think of their having me for their directress (in railing, as on this occasion) I have no objection to while I remain so well satisfied myself of its unjustness upon the subject. Education and principle (next grace protecting me) will be ever my sufficient security and while you may continue to think otherwise I shall only wish respect to your person and labours, ever remaining, dear sir, your old and faithful friend, S.H.³⁷

STEPHEN ORCHARD

36 A4/3/7.

37 E4/3/2A.

J. D. JONES – THE PREACHER

In the first three decades of the twentieth century J. D. Jones of Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, was the best known name among Congregationalists. It often graced the pages of *The Christian World* while all who had attended the May Meetings were aware that his hand was on the helm of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Holiday-makers used to queue up to hear him on Sunday mornings and evenings and consequently local people had to take their places well before services began so that the queue could be admitted in good time. To return home and tell your minister and friends that you had heard J. D. added to one's reputation. The number of visitors on a Sunday was said to fluctuate between 300 and 500 according to the season of the year.¹ They came from as far as America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, for J. D. was a great traveller and people wanted to renew his acquaintance. Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, pressed him to become their minister in 1914. He was sorely tempted but persuaded by Silvester Horne and J. H. Jowett to decline. The Congregational Union, they said, could not do without him.²

In the Spring of 1940 J. D. came out of retirement to preach at Richmond Hill and I joined the queue morning and evening. Sydney Cave was heard to say that a student who was handsome and well mannered would soon find a pastorate and J. D.'s appeal began with his appearance. By 1940 his handsome face had become benign and his hair silver but, resplendent in a doctor's scarlet robes, every eye was drawn to him. To an act of worship he gave the care that a director gives to drama in the theatre: "atmosphere" he observed, "has much more to do with the success of religious gatherings than we sometimes recognize."³ The building and music at Bournemouth caught something of the atmosphere of a cathedral. Yet at its centre, J. D. was restrained, quiet, unhurried, both in leading worship and preaching. Joseph Parker was dramatic and boisterous and Silvester Horne full of passion and fire but J. D. was simple and homely; he never got worked up.⁴ What was striking was his voice. The music of his Welsh voice cast a spell on his hearers. Ernest Jeffs, editor of *The Christian World*, said there was nothing he liked better to do after toiling away at his desk at the May Meetings than to go and listen to J. D. It was relaxing, as good as listening to Mozart.⁵

1 A Porritt, *J. D. Jones of Bournemouth*, (London: Independent Press, 1942), 103. Background material comes mainly from this source and J. D. Jones's autobiography, *Three Score Years and Ten*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940), signified hereafter as *TST*.

2 *TST*, 174.

3 *Ibid.*, 48.

4 Porritt, *op.cit.*, 90.

5 *Ibid.*, 93.

J. D.'s critics dismissed him as a comforting preacher. Were they fair? They were right, yet misled. His calling was not to soothe and calm weary Christians but to strengthen their convictions, arouse their resolve and fire their enthusiasm.

The same calling inspired his work for the denomination, for the remarkable fact is that, though well paid by his wealthy congregation, he was in reality only a part-time pastor, half his time being given to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, of which he was honorary secretary for most of his life. The middle of most weeks was spent in London.

A short but impressive biography of Jones by Alan Argent, "The Pilot on the Bridge", is to be found in the Society's *Journal* (Vol 5, No 10, June 1997, pp.592-622), but a brief mention of his background will not be out of place. His was a loving home but his father, a well-known musician and composer, died when he was a small child. From the age of five till twelve, with no father, he grew very close to his mother. She had a hard struggle to survive. Then she re-married and they moved from Towyn to Chorley in Lancashire, where his step-father, David Morgan Bynner, was the good and devoted minister of St George's Street Congregational Church. Happily, he gave John Daniel and his younger brother generous affection and encouragement. This childhood experience led to J. D.'s lifelong concern for the welfare of ministers and their families and when, at Newland, Lincoln (1889-1898), he had responsibility for the church's outlying mission stations, their ministers and families received his particular attention.⁶ The hardship experienced in many a country manse at the time was something crying out to be put right and it inspired his determination to bring about denominational reforms. He was to introduce a minimum stipend, to improve stipends, and eventually to install moderators to facilitate the movement and settlement of ministers. Inevitably he was to meet with hostility from diehard Independents and at times he was on the brink of failure, but in the end he achieved success.⁷ His powers of persuasion on the Union platform became famous but he was equally successful in many a businessman's study, appealing for funds.

How did such a man pursue two careers: caring for a large pastorate yet spending the middle of most weeks at Memorial Hall on denominational business in his capacity as honorary secretary of the Union (there was also the salaried secretary)? His work in Bournemouth was extensive: he propagated a number of new churches over which he presided; he chaired both Wentworth College governors (he had founded the college in 1899), and later the Borough Council Secondary Education Committee, overseeing the building project for a new Secondary School for Boys. In the winter he held a well-attended Bible Study on Tuesday mornings. Obviously he had to have help. The day-to-day affairs of his large church, including its youth work, were handled by a sequence of able assistant ministers. With the assistant he met frequently and

6 *TST.*, 56, 69.

7 *Ibid.*, 118-9.

regularly to keep abreast of pastoral news and he made a point of visiting all cases of need, especially people in hospital; church members were often taken by surprise to find him on their doorstep. One must not forget how well he was supported by both his wives and, during the long years when he was a widower, by his daughter, Myfanwy. A man with so many responsibilities needs a robust constitution and indeed he was seldom unwell, though he lost the sight of one eye in mid-life and in the last years before he retired from Bournemouth in 1937 he was obviously feeling the strain. Yet he never suffered breakdowns like his over-burdened friend Silvester Horne. Some respite was provided by golf on Monday mornings and more by long holidays abroad, often with weeks at sea.

Sermon preparation was for him a perpetual activity. Like an artist who is always conscious of light, shade and form, J. D. was an observer. Unlike Gladstone, who discovered the potential of addressing the masses but never gave a thought to what they might be interested to hear, J. D. listened. Like a patient angler, he caught the big questions that were worrying people. In his pocket he carried a note-book in which he was constantly recording what he witnessed, heard and thought. Here were stored away clues to people's spiritual needs, the questions they asked, what was bothering them. At his daily devotions, when he read Scripture, again he was on watch and open came the notebook to receive textual and philosophical observations. By Monday he usually knew what he would preach about the following Sunday and he would set about any necessary research. Then, on the train to London and back during the week, he would sketch out the framework of the sermon. It always moved steadily from point to point; commonly the traditional three points but four, five and even more were not infrequent. But he never forgot to address the heart as well as the mind. Saturday saw him writing by hand full manuscripts for the following day and this he could do with astonishing rapidity, seldom amending anything. When I heard him preach he seemed free of any manuscript and so, in the evening, I purposely sat in a side gallery behind him to see for myself. "I have always read my sermons," J. D. tells us and I witnessed him turning the pages. But whether he was reading I was not sure.⁸ He was like an accomplished orchestral conductor, he knew his score.

In this article we are limited to those sermons J. D. selected for publication to which are added a few chosen by Ernest Jeffs to amplify his biography of Jones. J. D. also wrote devotional books which do not concern us here, which receive attention in Alan Argent's article. The printed sermons had an appeal for his admirers at the time but a modern reader who dips into them, as one confessed to me, is likely to be disappointed, finding them wearisome. It was his delivery that brought them alive. Nevertheless, from these prosaic relics we can learn much about the great preacher: his use of texts and exegesis, his theology, his culture and, above all, his goals. They also reveal his descriptive

8 *Ibid.*, 48.

power; like a novelist he could invite you to join in some biblical event. You became a grumbling Israelite following Moses, or a soldier whiling away the hours beneath the cross.⁹ However, more often he turned the congregation into the class sitting before the lecturer: we are treated to several minutes explaining a Greek word, less often to one in Hebrew, and once in a while, to his own translation of a biblical passage. Maybe his people felt flattered.

Newly ordained at Newland, Lincoln, in 1889, his mind highly charged with biblical studies, his sermons could be overwhelming with references to the Scriptures – as many as nineteen in one – but in Bournemouth his practice became far simpler. He had taken into account the decline in family prayers and private Bible reading. Nevertheless, of the sermons published in book form, all but one began with a text.

J. D. was noted for his expositions but a few sermons occur with little more than a nod to the text. He frankly acknowledges his neglect, confessing in one instance, “The verse I have quoted is rather a motto than a text”, in another, “I am going to ask you to treat this sentence simply as a motto,” and another, “I ought to apologize for reading out this great aphorism of the Apostle Paul as my text, for I cannot pretend that I am going to preach directly upon it.”¹⁰ Undoubtedly, this was the price for trying to serve two masters: a large pasture and a demanding denomination.

His love and knowledge of the Bible are obvious but whether he took much interest in biblical criticism is less so. When talking about creation he acknowledged Darwin, Jonah he took as allegory and the Psalms he attributed to others besides David, but the Sermon on the Mount he assumed was preached as a single utterance by Jesus and the Letter to the Hebrews he ascribed to Paul. Yet J. D. was scholar enough to be invited by both Yorkshire and Lancashire Congregational theological colleges to be their Principal, invitations he declined. However, his prize subject had been philosophy, not biblical studies. What he displayed from time to time was a reverence for the Bible. akin to awe and it was this that made him hesitant about biblical criticism. There were passages he was reluctant to discuss, “analysing them is like analysing your mother’s face to see what it is that face to you the fairest in the world.”¹¹

Quotations are not common in conversation and they are infrequent in J. D.’s “conversation style” preaching. When they occur they are often surprisingly lengthy. I wonder whether he picked up the book to read the poem or the passage. A quotation from Goethe, introduced with a brief biography, must have taken five minutes. Now and again he gave the congregation a short lecture on one of the architects of the Reformed tradition: ten minutes on Calvin, Knox or Baxter; shorter passages on Bunyan and one or two on

9 J. D. Jones, *Watching the Cross*, (1926), hereafter *W*.

10 J. D. Jones, *The Gospel of Sovereignty and Other Sermons* (1914), XVII, hereafter *GS*; *Elms of Life and Other Sermons* (1904), 60, hereafter *EL*.

11 *TST*, 70.

Matthew Henry. Addison and Steele's *Spectator* appeared as well as the poetry of Blake, Wordsworth, Arnold, Tennyson and Mrs Barrett Browning (sic). One day he read from a pamphlet, *Letters from Prison*, written by German pastors imprisoned by the Nazis, not, of course, from Bonhoeffer's. Bonhoeffer was still a free man and in London at that time. A few novelists appeared, such as George Eliot and George Borrow. Thomas Hardy, with whom he corresponded, was recommended at some length, while Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* formed the theme of a complete sermon.

Preachers commonly illustrate points by recounting personal experiences but it was rare to hear J. D. do so. One can count on the fingers of one hand references to people he met or incidents he witnessed, despite the notebooks, let alone to his own religious life.

Where did he stand theologically? When he left Lancashire College he says he considered himself a modernist but he supposed that by the time he retired most people thought he was conservative. Like preachers in general he struggled to present the faith in terms relevant to the time. He and Silvester Horne called themselves Liberal-Evangelicals and his sermons mixed Evangelicalism and Liberalism. He plunged ahead, tacking one way and then the other. Unavoidably, to Liberals he was too cautious and to Evangelicals too muted.

J. D. always gratefully acknowledged his debt to Horne, his close friend, with whom, until the latter's sudden death in 1914, he used to spend most of a week in the summer touring rural parts of the United Kingdom, preaching at rallies and calling at scattered manses. Nor did they ignore local golf courses and links. They visited places as widely different as Hampshire and Wales, Norfolk and Sligo. Originally they planned to cycle but poor weather made them accept travel by the motor-car, a more practical proposition made possible by wealthy laymen. Once they met with an accident which pitched them into a ditch, and J. D. claimed to have "saved Horne's life . . . for I fell first into the ditch and he came tumbling on top of me."¹² After the loss of his colleague, J. D. continued visiting country churches, rousing congregations and their pastors with his appeal to mind and heart.

His evangelical concern shines through his numerous sermons on Jesus Christ: "The Vision and Compassion of Jesus", "The Grasp of Jesus Christ as God's Image", "The Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings", "Watching the Cross", to name a few. His liberalism is particularly striking in his rejection of traditional theories of the Atonement. He affirms that Christ died for our sins by the grace of God and that no further explanation is necessary.

P. T. Forsyth had a strong influence on him. He became critical of Theological Liberalism. It was failing to lay the foundations of the faith adequately. The Sovereignty of God no longer overarched preaching and he believed that whereas God's "awful purity" had been emphasized at the expense of his

12 Porritt, *op.cit.*, 252.

love, the present generation emphasized his love at the expense of “his awful purity.” The Fall was passed over. Liberalism led preachers to leave sin aside and concentrate on suffering instead. In a sermon on judgment this preacher of comfort censured the age for being “sentimental, not ethical.”

I suppose people think that the idea of judgment contradicts the great truth that God is love. The truth is really the opposite. You destroy God’s love when you deny judgment . . . Love which refuses to judge and condemn and punish is not love at all; it is a limp, flabby, unmoral, if not immoral good nature.¹³

Before 1914, he, like the majority of people, inspired by Darwin, believed in progress: in Tennyson’s words, “The world is sweeping into a younger day.” After the war he realised the opposite had happened. By the 1930s he was pointing out the decay of democracy – in Russia, Germany, Italy and Spain. Moral standards everywhere bore no sign of progress. On the stage and in print there was a lack of propriety. Some of the magazines he saw on people’s coffee tables would have been condemned as obscene in his youth. He was critical of growing sexual laxity and condemned those who said, “Follow your inclinations” – there was no happiness that way. People were losing respect for authority. Thoughtful people had grave doubts about the doctrine of progress popular before 1914.¹⁴

As I try to recall life in the 1930s memory suggests that J. D. was in tune with a great many Nonconformists brought up strictly in the homes and schools of Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Contrary to what people of our day imagine, we also find J. D. lamenting that churches were more than half empty and children were no longer being sent to Sunday School (Richmond Hill’s membership declined from 906 in 1931 to 796 in 1939.) He acknowledged that there was religious feeling outside the Church but it gave him no comfort.

What was J. D.’s attitude to feminism? He kept to a strict rule not to allow politics to enter the pulpit, a rule he needed because he was deeply interested in politics and counted Lloyd George as a personal friend, but we are not left in complete darkness. There was a significant number of women in the pews who supported the emancipation of women, who took pride in woman leaders such as Margaret Bondfield and Maude Royden. Nevertheless, many must have been taken by surprise to hear J. D. say, “Full human nature, combining the manly and womanly, the masculine and the feminine you find in Jesus Christ,” and “It is at our peril that we ignore the feminine in Christ.” “Emphasize the masculine qualities – His strength, boldness, courage, and men will inevitably turn to the Virgin Mother, for they want tenderness as well as

13 *W*, 263.

14 *TST.*, 223-5.

strength.”¹⁵ We note that his church council had women members and one of them was his daughter.

Not allowing politics in the pulpit necessarily restricted relevance to many current issues. However, he felt obliged to press on his congregation the serious plight of the worst off in society, especially children. In a sermon on “The Vision and Compassion of Jesus” (Matt. 9.36) delivered just before the Great War, he says,

The fact that millions of our countrymen are living on the poverty line – that is our concern. . . . Children are not adequately fed or clothed. People so badly paid that they cannot marry, or if they marry, cannot maintain their families in decency – that is our concern.¹⁶

Some people have queried his sincerity for he lived in some affluence. A preacher who had some influence on the well-healed classes, the leaders of business and industry, one who could correspond with the Prime Minister, Asquith, or pay a call to Lloyd George, had to have prestige, to live in a large manse with a tennis court in the garden and receive a large enough stipend to entertain and travel. In those days this was accepted without question and it still persists in the United States.

Experience in denominational affairs taught him to be cautious. He was no stranger to controversy but he steered clear of it at the privileged height of the pulpit. It is impossible to judge, from sermons selected for people to read over the years, how much J. D. alluded to topics in the news. The printed sermons seldom refer to passing events though they cannot escape the impact of the Boer War and the two World Wars. Unhappily, no indication of when sermons were delivered is given and the substance provides no clues. J. D.’s sermons were reflective, which is hardly surprising when we remember that his best subject as a student was philosophy.

Personal religion was never far from his thoughts. For example, “The True Ground of Rejoicing” provided golden opportunity to stress the significance of personal salvation.¹⁷ The place of emotion in religion concerned him; in “The Zeal of the Lord” he tackled the dangers of emotional religion devoid of secure foundations.¹⁸ He challenged Christians: they believed they were fully committed disciples but they may not be as he showed in “The Divided Heart”, his sermon on *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.¹⁹ Some sermons are designed for the older people at Richmond Hill; Bournemouth was a popular retirement area. Their particular danger is spiritual staleness: he employed Hebrews 2:1, to alert them to it and examine their faith, “lest we drift away from it,” and this has a

15 *EL.*, 57-8.

16 *GS.*, XIX.

17 *GS.*, XVI.

18 *GS.*, II.

19 *GS.*, XVII

parallel in Ps. 24:3, “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?” Here he offered the alternatives: continue to climb up or else slide back, but there can be no standing still.²⁰ The toughness of discipleship was a constant theme. In “Walking without Fainting” he addressed hardship and conflict in life while in “The Faith delivered to the Saints” he illustrated them from our Puritan forefathers, but went on to point out the need for ecumenical collaboration in modern times.²¹

J. D. liked to help people by sharing with them their doubts and difficulties. Scientific thought, evolution in particular, worried people who had been brought up on the inerrancy of Scripture. He challenged them in a sermon on “Limiting God.”²² Was their understanding of God too small? Had their understanding of God not developed since childhood when they conceived the heavenly Father after the image of a man, which is inadequate for adults in the universe as we find it? Was their notion of salvation limited to the individual whereas it should be set in the context of community? Salvation must be “social as well. . . . Christ came to herald a kingdom.” Another sermon is entitled, “The Benefits of Limitation.”²³ It begins by commending “humble, reverent Christian agnosticism”; for our present powers are limited and we cannot see into the future. Thus God teaches us to depend on him. Among his congregation were several local businessmen as well as town councillors and people raised the question whether the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount was practical? Having first dealt with the fanciful oriental exaggerations with which Jesus amused his hearers, he goes on to ask whether anyone can live and work in our competitive society and at the same time fulfil the law of Christ. “I do not think he can,” he answers frankly. And then he adds, “so do we leave business, leave citizenship? No, we must leaven the lump.” There are other sermons dealing with such subjects as authority and freedom, idealism and realism and ecumenism and faith.

Whether his hearers were satisfied with his sermon on Providence, preached in wartime, it would be interesting to know.²⁴ He commented that “in the events that befall men there seems no hint of the care of a loving God.” But what are we looking for? If we suppose that the aim of life is happiness “we shall see no sign of God’s Providence in many of the events that befall us.” “Many of us are Epicureans”, he feared. (How many hearers had to conjecture what that was?) But “Is comfort the end of life?” He then propounded the moral discipline theory: “whom he loveth he chasteneth” and he concluded with the words of Faber, “All is right that seems most wrong if it be God’s sweet will”²⁵ One misses the significance of Christ and the cross.

20 *GS.*, V.

21 *GS.*, V.

22 *W.*, 207.

23 *GS.*, III.

24 A.Porrirt, *Op.cit.*, 241.

25 *Ibid.*, 251.

His regard for Dale and Forsyth did not induce him to include among his printed sermons any on the Church or the Sacraments, although his popular small book on church membership shows that he knew their importance. No doubt he considered such subjects not appropriate for his reading public.

What is puzzling is that a preacher who had travelled the globe never referred to it, nor did he allude to missionary work, at least in the sermons he chose for publication. It is disturbing that in his memoirs he tells us plenty about people he met in South Africa but does not describe the piteous state of the black populace and the racial tension he must have seen; it was worrying the London Missionary Society in London. J. D.'s blindness was not limited to one eye.

Although J. D. seemed to brim with self-confidence to all about him, he was self-critical. It worried him from time to time that he had tried to pursue two callings. He was sure he could have been a much better preacher if he had given up denominational work. His misgivings are confirmed by the imperfections in his published sermons (let alone those unpublished) and the feeling one has that he might have had a more profound and even prophetic voice had he had more time for reflection. But would there have been the queues at Richmond Hill on a Sunday had he left the denominational field? Could his influence have been anything like so widespread?

This study of an acclaimed preacher of the early decades of the last century is something of an archeological find. It bears the characteristics typical of its time, with its strengths and weakness. Somewhat similar sermons, individually crafted, many not so well designed, were probably the fare of many congregations all over the country.

JOHN H TAYLOR

WHY DID THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH FAIL? II THE ECUMENICAL HOPE

The United Reformed Church was born in the hope that it might break the ecumenical log-jam. This was its *raison d'être* and its primary (perhaps only?) missionary strategy. It had come into being to "take wherever possible, and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people."¹ Dreams were about to be put to the test.

There was one immediate response. At the first United Reformed Church

1 *The Basis of Union*, A1.

General Assembly an approach came from the very small Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, previously official observers at the joint negotiations between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The early history of the Churches of Christ centres on an Irish Presbyterian minister, Thomas Campbell, who came to believe that Christian disunity was a scandal and that the way to restore the unity of the Church was for the Church to model itself upon the Church of the New Testament. In 1842 the Churches of Christ emerged as a denomination in Great Britain with a commitment to believer baptism, an insistence on the parity of non-professional and stipendiary ministry and of the autonomy of each local congregation.

However, under the influence of scholars such as William Robinson, the Churches of Christ gradually became less certain that their model of the Church did in fact reflect the clear teaching of the New Testament. Two Commissions on Ordination (reporting 1941) and on the Work and Status of the ministry (approved 1953) challenged the traditional restorationist theology of the Churches of Christ. Presbyterian or Episcopal systems of church government might also be compatible with the New Testament. Perhaps believer baptism was not essential to the Church? At the same time after rapid growth in the nineteenth century the Church went into deep numerical decline. In 1930 the association had 200 churches and 16,000 members. By 1980 there were only seventy-five churches and 3,586 members left.² Like Congregationalists and Presbyterians the Churches of Christ found themselves a declining church with a diminishing sense of theological distinctiveness.

Again Christian unity was grasped as the solution to the dilemma. The question, Norman Walters argued in 1954, was "whether we are finally going to decline into a narrow sectarian body, or whether we are going to venture in faith, grasping the countless opportunities of the ecumenical movement towards furthering the cause of Christian unity."³

A joint committee was set up by the United Reformed Church and the Churches of Christ to seek union between the two churches. This reported in 1976 and the United Reformed Church overwhelmingly accepted its proposals. However, the Churches of Christ failed to reach the required majority for union. Rather than accept this negative result the Churches of Christ dissolved their Association in order to allow the majority of its churches to join the URC with fifty-four churches supporting the union and twenty against. Those in favour joined the Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ which united with the URC in 1981. By demonstrating that a church committed to infant baptism could unite with another committed to believer baptism this enlargement of the URC had ecumenical significance. However, union was only possible at the cost of schism and what might appear to be an evasion of the agreed procedures. The number of churches joining the URC was so small

2 David M. Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall*, (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1980), *passim*.

3 David Cornick, *Under God's Good Hand*, (London: United Reformed Church, 1998), 180.

that in many areas of the country there was no Churches of Christ representation within the URC. The total membership of the Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ was less than the annual URC membership loss and the impact was minimal.

At the same time as negotiations went on with the Churches of Christ, talks were also held with the Congregational Union of Scotland. In 1798 Robert and James Haldane with others founded the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home out of which a number of Congregational Churches developed and formed a Congregational Union in 1812. Secessions from this and from the more recently constituted United Secession Church led to the formation in 1843 of the Evangelical Union; the Congregational and Evangelical Unions came together in 1896.

In the twentieth century a belief that the visible disunity of the Church was hampering mission and squandering resources led to a growing commitment to ecumenism. Between 1965 and 1988 the Congregational Union of Scotland explored unity with the Church of Scotland, the Churches of Christ, the United Free Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church. Proposals for union with the URC were approved by the URC in 1988 but only supported by a sixty-five per cent vote in Scotland, which fell short of the legal requirement. As with the Churches of Christ those committed to ecumenical union did not accept the negative result. A period of internal conflict followed and in 1993 a third of the member churches withdrew following a fracturing of relationships marked by suspicion and mistrust. The remaining churches again approached the URC and a union was achieved on 1 April 2000. On the positive side the addition of a Synod of Scotland gave the URC (which, it should be recalled, had had congregations in Scotland from 1981) a clearer identity as a tri-national church that has made it more sensitive to the evolving nature of the United Kingdom. On the other hand, once more unity came at the cost of a new disunity and part of the motivation was the growing weakness of the Scottish Congregationalists. And again, in the event, the numbers involved were minimal. The reported comment of one minister that he voted for the scheme because he thought his pension would be safer may have been extreme, even apocryphal, but it reflected a reality.

No-one imagined that unions of this sort were anything other than of secondary importance. The great hope which had inspired the URC was that it could lead to a major breakthrough to church unity which would revitalise the church for mission. In 1973 the first General Assembly of the new United Reformed Church sent an invitation to all Christian churches in England to talk together to see if any way forward to Christian unity could be found. A wide spectrum of churches from the Roman Catholics to the Independent Methodists responded. The joint General Secretaries of the URC, John Huxtable and Arthur Macarthur, visited Michael Ramsey and were assured of his support. Asked what they should aim for he gave the simple reply, "A united church in England."⁴

4 Arthur Macarthur, *Setting Up Signs*, (London: United Reformed Church, 1997), 93.

There is more than one model of what this might mean. The New Delhi, Uppsala, and Nairobi assemblies of the World Council of Churches (1961, 1968, 1975) laid down that unity is made visible when “all in each place who are baptised into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship”. This has generally been interpreted as a commitment to organic unity. However an alternative model of union is that of “reconciled diversity” – which has been especially influential in America. In 1983 a report from the International Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, (usually known as the Cold Ash Report), defined the goal of full communion as “A relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognises the catholicity and apostolicity of the other”⁵ and this definition was endorsed in principle by the American report “Called To Common Mission”.

When the United Reformed Church was formed in 1972 its basis of union stated “The United Reformed Church declares its intention, in fellowship with all the churches, to pray and work for such visible unity in the whole church of Christ as Christ wills.”⁶ It was axiomatic that the goal was organic national union but it was soon clear that this was going to be difficult. As John Huxtable observed, “Something like unrelieved gloom prevailed over some of these sessions.”⁷ Anglicans and Methodists were still bruised by their failure in 1972. Others were going through the motions rather than genuinely committed. Some were beginning to wonder whether the way forward in unity might not be local rather than national. Huxtable and the new URC believed otherwise. “A couple of relatively small logs had shifted, perhaps the whole log-jam would now be able to float downstream at some pace.”⁸ Strong support for this positive view came from the Archbishop of York, Donald Coggan. It was agreed that a new Churches Unity Commission should be set up for three years to review and further the ecumenical enterprise.

The Commission determined that there were four essential needs: to share in one faith, to acknowledge one membership, to recognise one ministry and to be ready to share resources. Out of this, Ten Propositions were published in January 1976. The crucial proposition was the sixth, which offered mutual recognition of ministries and provided for a future recognition of new ministers by means of a new ordinal which would include episcopal, presbyteral and lay roles in ordination. This was rather less than some ecumenists had hoped for. It was not a proposal to unite the churches by 1980 or any similar date. The

5 *Anglican Lutheran Joint Working Group Anglican Lutheran Relations: The Cold Ash Report*, (Geneva, 1983), 25.

6 United Reformed Church, *A Book of Services*, (London: United Reformed Church, 1980), 115.

7 John Huxtable, *A New Hope For Christian Unity*, (Glasgow: Fount, 1977), 25.

8 *Ibid.*, 26.

more modest plan was to avoid the difficulties involved in full organic unity by substituting for it an act of corporate recognition from which it was hoped a wider unity would grow.

In fact, however, old problems such as episcopal ordination and the ordination of women were to prove as fatal to this new approach to unity as they had to the old. In 1982 the Anglican General Synod failed to accept the covenanting scheme and with that it was finished. Strangely this was good news for the United Reformed Church. As the originators of this new move towards unity the URC had responded warmly to the Commission's proposals. In 1977 the General Assembly passed a resolution that "The United Reformed Church welcomes wholeheartedly the promise of further steps held out in the report of the Commission." As far as Proposition Six went it indicated that it understood by this that it would accept a ministry of bishops:

We recognise that any advance towards visible church unity in England that is to include the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches must honour the convictions of those Churches concerning the ministry of bishops and must find a basis for harmony between those convictions and the doctrine of the Church as held among us.⁹

The implication was that, as the URC exercised *episcopate* through the structures of its conciliar ecclesiology and the ministry of its Moderators, there was no longer in principle an objection to bishops. Historically however, the objection to bishops had been a core belief for both Congregationalists and Presbyterians. It had centred on the belief in a church committed to the priesthood of all believers and to the equality of all ministers of word and sacrament. Was this really compatible with the historic understanding of the role of the bishop? As Daniel Jenkins put it:

Doctrines of episcopacy vary but there can be little doubt that the 'historic episcopate' as understood by most Anglicans threatens the Reformed principle of the parity of all believers and implies an attitude to tradition which we have usually rejected. Moderators have never been given the juridical or disciplinary powers nor the teaching authority nor the kind of right to ordain and confirm which bishops have.¹⁰

The United Reformed Church made its definitive response to the General Assembly in 1978. Synods voted 83% in favour, District Councils 71% but local churches only supported the propositions by 57% to 39% revealing a deep division in the Church. Nevertheless, the Assembly decided to proceed on

9 United Reformed Church, *Record of Assembly*, 1977, 111.

10 *Reform*, July-August 1978.

the proviso that Proposition Six should be accorded equally to women and men and that when in future ministers were received, this should be without any special action by the other Covenanting churches.

By now a number of denominations, including the Roman Catholics and Baptists, had made clear they could not continue in this approach to unity. Five churches, including the URC, went ahead. A new body, the Churches Council for Covenanting, was set up under the chairmanship of Bishop Kenneth Woolcombe. Its task was to draft a covenant on the basis of the Ten Propositions. In 1980 this was set out in *Towards Visible Unity*.¹¹ As part of this proposal each Church would bring forward candidates for ordination as bishops and there would be a reconciliation of ordained ministry. All the United Reformed Church representatives on the Churches Council for Covenanting accepted these proposals. The General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, Bernard Thorogood, declared "we cannot accept that bishops are essential to being a Christian Church . . . but I have reached the point where I believe bishops are essential for the achievement of Church unity in England."¹²

Not everyone was so convinced. Some were concerned lest the ambiguity of the service of recognition called into question the validity of Free Church ministry. As T.W. Manson had once said, "I cannot legitimise myself by bastardising my fathers." Donald Hilton of Princes Street URC in Norwich, who up to this point had been deeply committed to the ecumenical process, was "horrified"¹³ to find that a Covenant was only possible if the Free Churches accepted episcopacy. In a letter to *Reform* fifteen URC ministers set out their view that "the acceptance of episcopacy by the URC as a precondition for covenanting for unity . . . will not contribute to the well being and intellectual integrity of a united church and could lead to further divisions in the Church."¹⁴ This led to the formation of an Alternative Response Group chaired by Caryl Micklem of St Columba's Oxford with Donald Hilton as its Secretary. Over 200 URC Ministers indicated their support. Their concerns were expressed in "An Alternative Response" issued by the group in 1981. The theological heart of this was an essay by Daniel Jenkins, who was a committed ecumenist and a former Professor of Ecumenical Theology, but to whom it seemed that the report demanded "our immediate capitulation, without further discussion, to Anglican claims for their conception of 'the historic episcopate'. We can choose it in any colour so long as it is purple."¹⁵ From a feminist position Kate Compston argued that if episcopacy was non-negotiable for Anglicans

11 *Towards Visible Unity: Proposals for a Covenant*, 1980.

12 *Reform*, November 1980.

13 Interview, 27 October 2004.

14 *Reform* April 1981.

15 Daniel Jenkins, "Covenant or Capitulation" in *An Alternative Response*, Norwich, 1981, 7.

why was not the ordination of women equally non-negotiable for the URC?¹⁶

At the 1982 General Assembly the Covenant was agreed by a vote of 434 to 196, a majority of 66.88%. Technically this was sufficient – fractionally over the required two-thirds majority. But in practice it put the URC in the extraordinarily difficult position of only marginally approving the results of the process it had initiated. At the level of the local church the covenant was supported by churches representing only 52,000 of the URC's total membership of 147,000: only 35% of the membership. Had the United Reformed Church included in its procedure for the Covenant a reference back to local churches with a need to reach an agreed percentage of approvals (as was the case for the creating of the URC itself) it seems probable the covenant would have failed. As ever the creation would almost certainly have led to internal schism and Donald Hilton and others met secretly with the Congregational Federation.¹⁷

Fortunately it was a case of the Church of England to the rescue. If the acceptance of bishops was a step too far for some in the URC the concessions made to the Free Churches over episcopal ordination were too much for some Anglicans. The result, they felt, would be to increase the difficulties of eventual reunion with the Roman Catholic Church. Equally unacceptable to some was acceptance of the ministry of women ministers let alone women bishops. In July 1982 proposals for unity were rejected by the General Synod due to the lack of a two-thirds majority in the house of clergy. Dr Kenneth Greet, the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, drew a bleak conclusion. "The way marked out by a whole generation of ecumenical leaders has proved to be a *cul de sac*."¹⁸ John Huxtable equally recognised the implications: "I came to see that I had been working on a set of assumptions which I could now see were too much of a pipe-dream."¹⁹

On a superficial level the failure of the Covenant might be attributed to a reactionary tendency in the Church of England. There is some truth to John Huxtable's rueful comment that the Church of England sometimes seems, the "bridge church over which no traffic ever flows."²⁰ Huxtable certainly felt deeply let down. "I can understand the mood of the Methodist who said to me, 'they'll not lead me up the garden path a third time.'²¹ The problem however was much more profound than simply the timidity of one Church. The reality was that the enthusiasm for organic unity was clearly diminishing everywhere. As Bishop Woollcombe noted, the real problem was not just the minorities who

16 Kathryn Compston, *An Alternative Response*, 15.

17 Interview with Donald Hilton.

18 K. Woollcombe and P. Capper, *The Failure of the English Covenant*, (London: British Council of Churches, 1982), 30.

19 John Huxtable, *As It Seemed To Me* (London: United Reformed Church, 1990), 70.

20 *Ibid.*, 71.

21 *Ibid.*, 71.

opposed such union. "In the end, in all the churches, there was a general lack of the enthusiastic heart to make the Covenant happen, and so it died". Lesslie Newbigin commented on "the lamentable failing of the ecumenical vision in the minds of the English church people."²² Adrian Hastings put it bluntly when he said, "It all seemed to have become an irrelevance, and rather a boring one too."²³ Rather than initiating a new break-through towards unity the formation of the URC was the last gasp of a movement which in its current form was now exhausted.

For the URC this failure was an utter disaster. Being the catalyst for a unified Church was the *raison d'être* for the United Reformed Church. No serious thought had been given to what was the purpose of the Church otherwise. The question now was, what was the point of the URC? At the time of the earlier talks between Presbyterians and Anglicans Arthur Macarthur had warned that losing touch with the Anglicans would mean that "any union between the Congregational Church and ourselves would result in a united church confused about its purpose and unable to find a role". Writing in 1997 he could say, "I sometimes feel the chill of that prophecy."²⁴

It was not that ecumenism as such was defunct. At the national level the failure of the covenant revealed that obstacles to organic unity were more serious than had been imagined and the prospect increasingly irrelevant. At local level, however, there was growing evidence that denominational loyalties were becoming irrelevant. It is ironic that one of the reasons given for the covenant was that without it local unity schemes would wither. In fact areas of local ecumenical experiment (now known as local ecumenical partnerships – LEPs) – began to spring up all over the country. By 2007 there were 850 such partnerships including 200 joint Methodist/URC churches. There was a massive growth also in local councils of churches – the number rising from 126 in 1945 to 600 in 1970 and 1200 by 1993.²⁵ In all sorts of ways Christians became used to working together and affirming each other. Theological training was increasingly shared. The Methodists would happily appoint a URC member, John Ellis, as Secretary for Business and Economic Affairs and the URC someone of Baptist origins, Andrew Bradstock, as Secretary for Church and Society. As Paul Avis comments, "Mutual respect and understanding and co-operation between individual Christians and between Christian churches can now largely be taken for granted."²⁶

The problem for the United Reformed Church was not that there was a return to denominationalism. It was that the model of unity which it was

22 Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, (London: SPCK, 1985), 249.

23 Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1991*, (London: SCM, 1991), 627.

24 Macarthur, *op.cit.*, 89.

25 Tony Tucker, *Reformed Ministry*, (London: United Reformed Church, 2003), 164.

26 Paul Avis, "Rethinking Ecumenical Theology," in Paul Avis (ed), *Paths To Christian Unity*, (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 91.

created to express – the search for organic national unity – was becoming culturally and theologically obsolete.

First, the contrast between national failure and local progress revealed a significant change in the culture. In the 'sixties there was much talk about mergers, take-overs, the uniting of the small into the larger. The drive towards European Unity got under way; bringing together the British car industry was going to revolutionise the industry. Uniting churches reflected the same mood. In the 'seventies, however, contemporary culture began to emphasise the local rather than the national. One might have expected Congregationalists above all to be sensitive to this change of mood.

One of the theological contributions of the independent tradition should surely have been to question whether creating national churches was as important to the mission of the Church as national leaders imagined. What is the rationale for giving greater priority to the union of national churches than to the mission of the local congregation? In fact this was a question hardly asked. The URC had committed itself to organic national unity. When this failed, it had no conception of where to go next – in all the life of the URC from the failure of the Covenant to the present there has been no debate in General Assembly as to the nature of the unity we seek. Theologically the URC was in a condition of ecumenical *stasis*.

Secondly, the failure of the Covenant revealed the extent to which real differences of belief constituted a bar to organic unity. In its more optimistic moments the ecumenical movement saw theological divergence as, in essence, complementary, perhaps even rooted in the nature of God as Trinity. Therefore all could naturally find their place together in one comprehensive church. The Covenant revealed the limits of this view – the reality that differences in the understanding of the Church and its visibility are sometimes neither minor nor superficial. Any realistic approach to Christian diversity needs to take seriously the fact that, rather than saying the same thing in different ways, Christian traditions are sometimes expressing real cognitive difference.

With the failure of the Covenant it was above all differences over episcopacy which demonstrated this. For those in the Catholic tradition of Anglicanism episcopacy is a non-negotiable expression of the unity of the faith. At the Lambeth Conference of 1888 the Bishops adopted the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, which affirmed that the Holy Scriptures, the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments, and the historic episcopate were necessary for any reunited Church. This has consistently been reaffirmed by Anglican ecumenical statements. As the Fetter Lane Common Statement put it "A ministry of oversight (episcopate) is a gift of God to the Church. It is necessary in order to witness to and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the Church."²⁷ By contrast Reformed theology does not believe that it is necessary for either purpose and cannot do so without believing its own church life to be deficient. As Daniel Jenkins put it in the Alternative Response:

27 Fetter Lane Common Statement 28 (j).

For us the substance of ministry has not inhered in any 'order' but in the service of Christ, standing over against the whole church, including its ministers in judgement and promise. It is the Church as a whole which maintains the apostolic succession and it only does this as it points away from itself to the apostolic testimony to the risen and crucified Christ.²⁸

Believing this of the concept of personal episcopacy as understood by the Church of England, he says, "We can have none of it". This is a real difference of belief.

This point has still not been fully appreciated. Writing in 2004 Christopher Hill could urge that episcopacy be "commended in a very carefully framed context" so that it might be "seen and welcomed by the Church as part of its essential evangelical and Catholic task of maintaining and deepening its ties to other churches past and present."²⁹ This does not take seriously the convictional nature of the opposition to episcopacy. Alan Sell is more intellectually rigorous when he points out that once episcopacy is seen as being part of the *esse* of the church, Nonconformity's opposition to it is not simply that it undermines the equalitarian nature of the church but that, by making essential what is not, it reduces the church to a sect.³⁰ As Lovell Cocks put it, "it is not the bishop we repudiate but the theory which makes him essential to the being of the church. It is Catholicism – let it be said with the utmost plainness – which is standing in the way of the catholicity of the gospel."³¹ Of course some might argue that at a time when people were increasingly ceasing to believe in any of the fundamental Christian beliefs such matters are secondary. Perhaps for the sake of unity Nonconformists should be willing to compromise on what historically has been intrinsic to their understanding of the gospel. But the search for unity revealed that convictional differences were not simply illusions. In the Parliamentary debate on the United Reformed Church Bill Norman St John-Stevas had argued that "In the ecumenical movement there is no loss but only gain. No one loses his own traditions; people add new perspectives to those traditions."³² That is Pollyanna theology. Our traditions contained deep convictional differences that are not painlessly reconcilable.

The reality is that organic unity including the Church of England is only possible with the acceptance of personal episcopacy (just as unity with the Roman Catholic Church must involve the primacy of the Pope). Certainly there were those in the URC who saw this and were willing to pay that price. But

28 *An Alternative Response*, 9.

29 Christopher Hill, "Seeing the holy and apostolic church," in *Avis, Paths To Unity*, 128.

30 Alan P.F. Sell, *Nonconformist Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 115-118.

31 H. F. Lovell Cocks, *The Faith of a Protestant Christian*, (London: Independent Press, 1931), 46.

32 Quoted Cornick, *op.cit.*, 178.

others moved towards the idea of organic union without recognising the realities of differing convictions and the extent to which organic union necessitated a narrowing of the diversity of Christian belief and practice.

The third problem highlighted by the failure of the covenant was the changing valuation of diversity in a post-modern world. The movement for organic unity was motivated by the belief that the diversity of churches was offensive to those outside the Church and that one church doing things together would, axiomatically, be more effective. But in fact contemporary culture was moving to the recognition that it was good to have different stories and choices, and a situation in which the more choice was available the more people would respond. It was the very opposite of what had been believed by those who sought organic unity.

To William Temple the idea of "The Coming Great Church" might be one of promise. But if the truth of God is infinite mystery and if theology is not knowledge but a kind of learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), may not a plurality of theologies and attempted actualisations of the faith be more adequate expressions of it than one encompassing church which inevitably will tend to equate its own way with God's? David Martin's analysis of the social consequences of monolithic Roman Catholicism³³ serves as a reminder of the danger of monopolistic churches and theologies. In any case the developing culture was built around personal choice and the concept of one church had little appeal. While the United Reformed Church still officially looked to organic unity as the way in which the church's mission would be revitalised, in practice the number of autonomous religious groups increased and growth was frequently strongest in those which cared least about national structures or organic unity.

The failure of the Covenant was not simply due to an obscurantist element within the Church of England. The view of ecumenism which motivated it was culturally and theologically outmoded at its conception. This failure was disastrous for the new Church. It was a wider unity which the URC saw as its primary answer to its own decline and increasing lack of purpose. With that gone what was left? Significantly John Huxtable said that, for him, the "peak moment" of the whole United Reformed Church was the service in Westminster Abbey which began it.³⁴ Arthur Macarthur later wrote it was as if "The United Reformed Church seems sometimes to be on a hiding to nothing, with its flag still high on the mast proclaiming its wish for further unity and the absence of answering signals from the rest of the fleet."³⁵ With its *raison d'être* and primary missionary strategy in ruins how would the United Reformed Church take up the challenge of its unexpected and unwanted longevity?

MARTIN CAMROUX

33 David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization*, (Oxford: Blackwell Books, 1978), 63.

34 John Huxtable, 'The First Year in the United Reformed Church', *Epworth Review*, 1974, 48-51.

35 Macarthur, *op.cit.*, 95.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST, 1979 AN AFTERWORD

Martin Camroux states on page 100 that “union was only possible at the cost of schism and what might appear to be an evasion of the agreed procedures”. The second half of that sentence is a value judgement presented as a statement of fact. It may therefore be useful to state the facts in rather more detail than was possible in the closing pages of *Let Sects and Parties Fall*, since it is a salutary reminder that a “Free Church” in modern Britain is subject to the law.

In 1975 the Churches of Christ Central Council reported to Conference that it had set up a working party to review the structure and function of Standing Committees and Conference in the light of “the economic and financial pressures of the last year”.¹ The experience of Philip Morgan, John Francis and myself as observers on the Congregational-Presbyterian Joint Committee had made us aware that such changes were legally more complicated than the Annual Conference had previously supposed, when it had amended its Rules and Regulations (originally drawn up in 1902) from time to time. The Standing Committees of the Conference were all separately registered charities, which required that the Charity Commissioners be approached. Legal advice was taken, and the Commissioners pointed out that the Association lacked the power of amendment of its own Rules and Regulations. Annual Conference of 1976 therefore resolved to invite the Charity Commissioners to confer on the Conference such a power of amendment.² A Scheme was duly drawn up and sealed on 9 August 1977.

The Commissioners advised that all the revisions to Rules and Regulations made to date should be formally adopted at an Extraordinary General Meeting at Annual Conference 1978. The meeting could not take place earlier because under the 1977 Scheme three months’ notice of the proposed meeting and business had to be given. The Commissioners also advised that provision be made for the dissolution of the Association.³ This was part of a general policy to clarify the situation arising when charities effectively collapsed without any clear indication of what should happen to their assets.

Accordingly a revised set of Rules and Regulations, including the dissolution provision, was voted upon at Conference on 3 August 1978. The dissolution provisions (one procedural, the other indicating the manner in which assets might be allocated) were passed overwhelmingly by 235 votes to 9 and 235 votes to 2 respectively.⁴ Thus both the power to amend Rules and

1 Report of Central Council, *Year Book of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland 1975*, 3.

2 Resolution 6, *Year Book 1976*, 76.

3 See Report of Central Council, *Year Book 1978*, 3.

4 *Year Book 1978*, 78.

Regulations and the power to dissolve the Association were introduced at the specific suggestion of the Charity Commissioners.

By the time the new Rules and Regulations were approved, the outcome of the voting on the Proposals for Unification with the United Reformed Church was known. In April 1978 a meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Conference (consisting of all members of Conference Standing Committees) had been held to consider the future, at which it became clear that a policy of full cooperation with the United Reformed Church should be adopted, until an alternative way into union could be found. The 1978 Annual Conference therefore spent a considerable time considering what the next steps should be. After a full discussion a resolution was approved which did four things. First, the Conference affirmed its belief that Churches of Christ should move towards union with the United Reformed Church. Secondly, Conference earnestly requested those churches, which failed to obtain a 75% vote in favour, to reconsider their position in the light of the majority vote of the churches. Thirdly, any church which changed its view was asked to notify the General Secretary by 30 November 1978. Finally, Conference authorised Central Council to consider the responses received and either to discuss with the United Reformed Church a procedure for implementing the Proposals or to apply the procedure set out in the new dissolution provisions, so as "to allow for a re-formation of the Association in such a way as to enable those churches which wish to unite with the United Reformed Church to do so, and to enable the remainder to form a new association if they so wish".⁵

Twelve churches notified the General Secretary that they had considered the request of Annual Conference; seven had held church meetings to reconsider their attitude to the Proposals. Four had increased the majority in favour, but only two had reached the required 75% level of approval. Central Council therefore initiated the procedure for dissolution in January 1979. Fifty-four churches voted in favour of dissolution, twenty against and one did not return a vote. Three possible initiatives had been placed before the churches by the time Annual Conference met in 1979.⁶ A report on the Implications of Dissolution was presented by the General Secretary on 29 July and fully discussed; on the following day the Conference decided that the date of dissolution should be 31 March 1980, which was all that the Conference could do, since the churches had already decided to dissolve the Association.⁷ What many people fail to appreciate is that the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ was a new legal entity. There was no evasion of any agreed procedures; the whole procedure of dissolution was completely transparent from start to finish, and was accomplished with remarkably little acrimony. As

5 Resolution 45, *Year Book 1978*, 75-6.

6 Report of Central Council, *Year Book 1979*, 3-4.

7 *Ibid.*, 70; cf. D.M. Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall*, (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1980), 196-7.

President of Conference I was present at the initiation of both the Re-formed Association and also the Fellowship of Churches of Christ.

I wrote the concluding pages of *Let Sects and Parties Fall* after the Annual Conference in 1979 but before the date of dissolution. At that point I was still not clear what the future would be. It is possible to disagree with the decision that the Conference made; it is not possible to argue that it did not have the power to take it. A voluntary association is precisely that – a voluntary association; it can be created and it can be dissolved. “Can two walk together, except they have agreed?” (Amos 3:3 AV). The original description in 1861 was that the Churches were “co-operating for evangelistic purposes”. A century later Churches of Christ, like the other major Free Churches, had developed an ecclesiological practice that went beyond their legal status. Ecumenical commitment goes beyond voluntarism, in recognizing a determination to live with diversity of view. But it is perverse to use the argument of diversity to criticise those who want to make the ecumenical step, by contrast with those who prefer to stay in their own small corner.

For the alternative situation, consider the Church of England. On every major ecumenical initiative since 1958 a majority of the Church Assembly or General Synod has voted in favour. But nothing has been approved because of a legally-protected minority. The result is frustration on the part of those who want to move and a constant sense of being threatened on the part of the minority. Even the Anglican-Methodist Covenant of 2003 was probably approved because of the departure of many hardliners to Rome and the Orthodox after the decision to ordain women to the priesthood in 1992. Worse still, individual dioceses make their own decisions, provoking crisis and paralysis in the Communion as a whole.

But it is sheer complacency to argue that this shows that we just have to make a virtue of the schisms of which we currently are victims. Albert Williamson, President of the Churches of Christ Conference in 1957, said that “Unfortunately we have built a house for God but not made it His home; we have been satisfied with a hut for pygmies, when what we needed was a cathedral for giants”.⁸ Too many people still try to justify huts for pygmies.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

8 *Year Book 1957*, 37-8, quoted Thompson, *op.cit.*, 198.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Growth of the Brethren Movement: National and International Experiences. Edited by Neil T. R. Dickson and Tim Grass. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006. *Studies in Evangelical History and Thought.* £19.99. Pp. xvi + 271. ISBN 978-1-84227-427-9.

Eschatology and Pain in St. Gregory the Great: The Christological Synthesis of Gregory's "Morals on the Book of Job". By Kevin L. Hester. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. *Studies in Christian History and Thought.* £19.99. Pp. xvi + 155. ISBN 978-1-84227-437-8.

Blood and Fire, Tsar and Commissar: The Salvation Army in Russia, 1907-1923. By Tom Aitken. Paternoster. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. *Studies in Christian History and Thought.* £24.99. Pp. xxii + 319. ISBN 978-1-84227-511-5.

Reinventing English Evangelicalism, 1966-2001: A Theological and Sociological Study. By Rob Warner. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. *Studies in Evangelical History and Thought.* £19.99. Pp. xx + 284. ISBN 978-1-84227-570-2.

Anyone interested in reviewing one of the above volumes should contact the Reviews Editor. Contact details are on the back cover of the *Journal*.

REVIEWS

Holy Spirit and Religious Experience in Christian Literature ca AD 90-200. By John Eifion Morgan-Wynne. Paternoster, Milton Keynes, 2006. *Studies in Christian History and Thought.* Pp. xxii + 381. £19.99. ISBN 1-84227-319-9.

Did post-apostolic Christianity lose the “first fine careless rapture” of the immediate experience of the Holy Spirit in the apostolic age, and become increasingly dry and formal (or, to use our author’s words, “domesticated and bourgeois”)? This is the question Morgan-Wynne aims to answer in this wide-ranging Ph.D. thesis (enthusiastically commended in a foreword by its supervisor, James Dunn of Durham, himself a leading authority on the charismatic element in New Testament Christianity).

The answer is, inevitably, mixed. Most of us know about the charismatic emphasis of the Montanists and the later Tertullian, but the author has drawn together a number of other case-studies from various parts of the early Christian world to fill out the picture. Probably the most surprising to those not

familiar with them will be the extraordinary spiritual exuberance and vivid imagery of the (probably) second century *Odes of Solomon*. More mainstream writers testify to a serious engagement with the New Testament teaching about the Spirit's role, and a belief in his presence and power, but without the same expectation of extraordinary experiences. And not a few are clearly suspicious of the extremes of charismatic claims and activity which brought unwelcome tensions to their church life (most memorably in the sober warnings of the *Didache* against exploitative wandering charismatics).

All this is hardly new or surprising. What this thesis has done is to analyse the evidence systematically to allow the historian of second-century Christianity to gain a more nuanced view of the various tendencies in the post-apostolic church. The task is undertaken with admirable objectivity and scholarly caution, and succeeds in keeping a clear sense of direction among a mass of varied material. Both "orthodox" and Gnostic or other "deviant" writers are included.

The teaching of each of the authors/texts in relation to the Holy Spirit is placed against a grid of three themes: divine presence, divine illumination, and divine power. This can be a bit of a straitjacket, though the categories are interpreted quite widely, or where appropriate omitted. The fact that some sources offer rather meagre pickings under these headings brings into sharper focus the most significant contributors to the theme. The fullest treatment is given to Irenaeus ("the first since Paul to ground the Christian way so thoroughly in the work of God's Spirit"), Tertullian ("a stern, puritanical rigorist . . . spiritual pride and elitism"), and the *Odes of Solomon* ("vibrant with the intensity of Christian experience . . . bordering on the erotic"), and there are substantial and illuminating comments on the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

Morgan-Wynne decided to arrange his material geographically, grouping authors and texts on the basis of their probable provenance. Inevitably this involves some debatable choices (the Gospels of John and Matthew in Syria; the Pastoral Epistles, Jude and 2 Peter in Asia Minor). It also results in the separation of some studies which thematically belong together (e.g. Montanism studied under Asia Minor, but Tertullian's championing of it under North Africa). But some principle of organisation was needed, and on the whole the geographical one serves well. It results in the thought-provoking observation that there is "a diminishing stress on the centrality of the Spirit in religious experience as we move westwards".

More controversial is his dating of New Testament texts. He rightly makes a point of the need to bridge the gap between New Testament and patristic studies. But the subtitle restricts the scope to the years 90-200 (what he calls the "third to fifth generations" of the church), and many scholars would date most (or even all) of the New Testament before that period. Morgan-Wynne, however, opts for dates at the latter end of the scholarly spectrum, so that most of the New Testament comes within his "post-apostolic" remit. Only the "genuine" Paul, Luke and (non-Pauline) Ephesians are considered to

represent the first two generations. Those who hold to more conventional dates for other parts of the New Testament will need to subtract substantial parts of the data from the author's survey. But in fact it is the post-New Testament sources which provide the main bulk and the most interesting findings for the thesis.

Professor Dunn's enthusiasm for the project focuses on the relevance of the study to today's Christianity, which has a tendency to regard spiritual "enthusiasm" as a bygone feature of the apostolic period and to be suspicious of its re-emergence. There were certainly people who took that line in the second-century church, but they were not typical. What this fascinating study has done is to show that in the wide sweep of "third to fifth generation" Christianity the spiritual exuberance of Montanism was by no means the isolated and untypical phenomenon it has traditionally been understood to be.

R.T. FRANCE

***Prophecy, Miracles, Angels and Heavenly Light? The Eschatology, Pneumatology and Missiology of Adomnán's Life of St Columba.* By James Bruce. Paternoster, Carlisle, 2004. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Pp. xvii + 285. £19.99. ISBN 1-84227-227-6.**

The theme of the book is the place of the miraculous in Adomnán's account of St Columba's life. The question mark in the title indicates the author's intention to address the reality of these phenomena. Bruce writes with a mind open to the reality of miracles in Christian history and open to the intellectual integrity of Adomnán, and he invites us also to be open to a place for wonders in the mission of today's Church. "Direct divine interventions in this age act as promissory signs of the Kingdom."

He confronts other views of the miracles in Adomnán which see them merely as means to inflate the stature of his hero, Columba, or to exert greater influence for Iona in the secular world or over other Christian centres such as Lindisfarne and Armagh. He argues that the wonders are in the tradition of scriptural miracles and within that of the 600 year Christian history that Adomnán and his community were heirs to. He wrote for a community that recognised divine intervention as normal, much as modern day charismatics do.

Adomnán was not, Bruce argues, painting Columba in Druidic colours, nor was he influenced by pagan Celtic wonder stories. Indeed, as Christian monks wrote down the pagan sagas much later, there could have been influence in the other direction. He further argues that Adomnán was not following the miraculous patterns of previous biographies of saints but what he recorded was within the tradition of scriptural and apostolic wonders, though not all are paralleled.

Bruce states that Adomnán and his community had the sense of living in the

last days as the gospel was now reaching “the furthest corners of the earth” in the Scottish isles and that this was the context for miraculous expectation: the Kingdom of God was “flowering”. There were eschatological characteristics in the wonders Adomnán records within his three-fold division of Columba’s life into prophecy, miracles, and visions of angels and light.

This book is substantially the author’s doctoral thesis and, to this reviewer, it reads like it. It would have benefited from being recast for readers and shortened in length as material keeps reappearing under different headings and the argument risks getting lost in the references to other authors’ views and in the raising of questions for which there are no answers through lack of any evidence on which to formulate hypotheses. An acquaintance with *Tain Bo Cualnge* (The Cattle Raid of Cooley) on the part of the reader is assumed when quotation would have been helpful, and at times the reader could do with Adomnán’s *Life of Columba* in the other hand to refer to. Some reduction in scripture references would not have detracted from the book. The author cannot be faulted for thoroughness, but at times he seems to be labouring to spin gold from straw and at others to prove the obvious. There is a copious bibliography of related literature and thorough indices of Adomnán’s *Life of St Columba*, of scripture references, authors and subjects. There are tables and pie charts showing analyses of the marvels.

The author’s approach is mainly to provide parallels from scripture and the early Fathers in refutation of possible pagan influences. (One reference missed was that Columba’s praising cows have a parallel in Jonah’s repenting cows!) Other approaches to the miraculous, e.g. insights from psychical research and from research into religious experience, are not attempted. For instance, what is the relationship, if any, between asceticism and clairvoyance, or do visions come to those “whose communion with God is refined by the ethical life-styles in which they live” as Bruce affirms? Or could a voice be heard across the sound from Iona to Mull with the right atmospheric conditions or with primitive attempts at amplification without having to resort to the miraculous as the explanation?

The italicised “and” in the title seems to convey that heavenly light may be a step too far, although it is not an uncommon element in ecstatic experiences. Indeed it is strange to find Bruce apparently retreating from his literalist position in saying that four examples of heavenly light experiences “can be seen as . . . typological devices to illustrate the closeness of the life of Columba with that of Christ”. In his link to Christ’s Transfiguration we are surprised to find that Abraham has somehow taken the place of Moses on the mount.

However, for those with an interest in Celtic Christianity, this book makes a useful contribution, and opens up questions and avenues for further study. Of particular interest is the likelihood of Adomnán’s indebtedness in particular to Gregory the Great. How does one distinguish between similarity and dependence? Does Adomnán’s crediting Columba with miracles like Elisha’s or Christ’s mean that he is giving him similar status to them? There is also Adomnán’s similarity of theological outlook to the eastern, non Augustinian

Church; and the ongoing question of the relationship if any between Druid and Saint, miracle and magic. Finally, for the brave or foolhardy, there is Bruce's footnote to be tackled: "a question we are left with is, what went wrong; why when the gospel had reached to the ends of the earth did Adomnán not see the ushering in of the kingdom?"

RODNEY WOOD

***Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity II: Biblical Interpretation in the Reformed Tradition.* Edited by Wallace M. Alston Jr and Michael Welker. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007. £27.99. Pp. xii + 469. ISBN 978-0-8028-0386-3.**

Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity is evidently a series. The first volume came out in 2003 and explored a number of major themes in doctrinal and systematic theology. This second collection of essays, arising from a conference in South Africa in 2001, considers the ways that Reformed Christians use and study scripture. Twenty-nine writers contribute, and their chapters range in length from eight to thirty-four pages. At least five of these authors are women, and the countries from which they came included Ghana, Hungary, India, Romania, Scotland, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States.

This is a lively and lucid miscellany, serious in tone, but not unnecessarily abstruse or technical in its language. You would not need to be a full-time scholar to gain from it or enjoy it. These writers care about the church, and about its traditions and responsibilities, and they have thought deeply about how to connect learning to faith.

Some of the pieces tell a story, of how the style or substance of biblical study has developed in one corner or another of the Reformed world, and what has been gained or lost through these changes. How has biblical criticism, Reformed confession or political circumstance affected the reading of scripture in academy and church? Other chapters look at a theological issue: hope was one such; joy was another; and history. A long contribution by Ron Piper of St Andrews discusses recent academic work on the historical Jesus, and characterises Jesus as a mediator, or "broker", of access to God. Calvin crops up in several essays; his profound awareness of God's presence and his sense that scripture addresses life regularly make him a helpful conversation partner. One author, for example, found strong resonances between Calvin and Ecclesiastes, in their attitudes to work and vocation, and to life, mortality and death.

I particularly enjoyed those chapters, like the one on Ecclesiastes, which examined a specific biblical text or theme. Does the Babel story, asks one chapter, suggest that God means our communities to be culturally diverse,

rather than uniform and homogeneous? Yet even if this can be a liberating message for minorities in North America, it may not seem so elsewhere. For not very long ago, Reformed Christians used exegesis of this kind to justify South African apartheid. Or again, did Ezekiel anticipate the Reformers, with his emphasis on self-knowledge as a key to the moral life? And is his valuing of memory as a tool for dealing with painful experience an insight that has been helpfully recovered in recent South African history?

Rather than “identity and ecumenicity”, I would describe the book’s main concerns as “identity and contextuality”. The issue of context is prominent throughout – both the contexts of the places where contributors live and work, and that of the South African setting where they met. To be Reformed and to be biblical is also to be contextual – this was a conviction that ran right through the collection.

So these essays invite us to an enriching and absorbing journey: through our tradition, across scripture, and around the world church. But I thought more could have been done to present and frame the material. There are no indices, and no list of contributors (although most of them said something in passing about their circumstances and concerns). The introduction was very short indeed, and the pieces were not arranged or classified in any thematic way. The chapters simply followed in alphabetical order of the author’s names. It is, then, just an accident that the collection foregrounds Denise Ackermann’s essay, which I found especially potent and perceptive. She compares the Tamar incident in 2 Samuel 13 to the South African AIDS crisis. Gender inequality, sexual abuse, contempt, exclusion, concealment, denial: Ackermann finds many points of contact, until eventually her quest for hope leads her on to the cross and the eucharist. Reformed reading of scripture must attend to text and to context, and above and through all to Christ.

JOHN PROCTOR

***Black Bartholomew’s Day: Preaching, Polemic and Restoration Nonconformity.* By David J. Appleby. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. £55 (hardback). Pp. xiv + 255. ISBN 978 0 7190 7561 2**

David Appleby’s book has one of the characteristics of really good work. Its topic is so interesting and important that the reader is left surprised that it has not been dealt with comprehensively before. Yet Appleby seems to have a genuine claim to novelty. No previous historian has examined in as intensive and systematic a way the farewell sermons of those who were ejected from their pulpits by the Act of Uniformity in August 1662. Appleby’s analysis is based on the reading of seventy-seven sermons preached around the time that Nonconformists had to leave their congregations (as he shows, enforcement

of the Act was mixed – Calamy did not preach his farewell sermon until December 1662). Given that some ministers gave more than one farewell discourse, the total number of ministers whose farewell sermons were published was about fifty. These men are systematically contextualized. Appleby considers both their age and their geographical location relative to more general patterns of Nonconformity and Anglicanism. Unsurprisingly, given the easy access to printers, a disproportionate number of published ministers were based in or around London. Yet other areas of Dissenting strength are also represented; thus a number of West Country ministers published their final orations. Published ministers tended to be a bit younger than the average age of those ejected as a whole (39.6 compared to 41.9). The suggestion that those who left the Church of England in 1662 were past their prime is one that Appleby is keen to reject and refute.

The content of the sermons themselves is particularly interesting. Appleby notes how many of them began with prayers for the royal family and expressions of apparent loyalism. A superficial reading of the texts might suggest that these were largely quietist. Appleby argues quite forcibly, though, that while the ejected may have departed peacefully, they did not go quietly. For those with ears to hear, there were important messages about authority and good government lurking within the texts. There are some interesting absences: little mention is made of the Solemn League and Covenant because it remained politically explosive. The regicide went largely unmentioned, although the focus on all being equal in God's eyes suggests that the theme of questioning established authority was not entirely absent. Perhaps more surprisingly, relatively little space was given to anti-catholic rhetoric.

Appleby's analysis of the ways in which scripture was deployed is revealing. Whereas earlier generations of Puritan preachers had tended to take their texts largely from the Old Testament, most of the texts for the farewell sermons were from the New Testament and many were from the Pauline epistles. The reason for this appears to be twofold. On the one hand, some Old Testament themes and characters had become so intimately connected with political themes that to use them might have been dangerous. The Bartholomeans were keen to play down continuities between their own preaching and that of the 1640s and 1650s which was widely perceived to have played a significant part in the execution of the king and the descent into political anarchy. On the other hand, Paul's writings to the embattled early Christian communities scattered around the Mediterranean offered a useful source of comfort and hope to Dissenting communities in seventeenth-century Britain who also found themselves facing the prospect of persecution. Some preachers went so far as to suggest that the ejection might be a signal for the onset of the last days. It was difficult for ministers to negotiate the line between passive obedience and a direct challenge to authority. Appleby suggests that some texts were mentioned and included within sermons in the knowledge that a listener reflecting on the sermon would have to read passages close to the originally cited text that had a less straightforwardly obedient message. He also highlights the difficulties

that preachers faced when talking about royal authority. The language of “King Jesus” had become particularly popular during the Interregnum but its continued use could be perceived as a challenge to the authority of the restored Stuarts. In short, Appleby shows that there is far more to the sermons than might at first appear.

This point is hammered home in two rather different ways. First, Appleby devotes considerable space to the question of whether sermons and preaching were still important after the Restoration. Some scholars of the early seventeenth century have tended to dismiss religion’s political importance in the post-Restoration world. Appleby disagrees and has good sense and a growing band of scholarship on his side. If religion were still important, Appleby argues, then there are good grounds to study sermons. He thinks that the debates about the supposedly puritan “plain style” disguise the broader similarities of rhetorical strategy and structure present in both Dissenting and Anglican sermons in the 1660s. Appleby also discusses how sermons were recorded and circulated. It is clear that there were important channels through which sermons could be circulated in manuscript form, so the published versions probably represent the tip of an iceberg. Moreover, when we have surviving notes of sermons that were eventually printed, it appears that the published versions may have been toned down. This might be because the published version was based on the preacher’s notes and might not entirely reflect the power of spoken delivery. It might also indicate that care was taken not to enflame Anglican passions in the climate of fear of the 1660s.

Appleby shows how campaigns to control Dissenting polemic in this period reflected struggles for power at court, as well as fears about the dangers that Dissent posed for the state. There was an active Anglican campaign which followed from the publication of some of the collections of farewell sermons. Anglicans tended to lay stress on the number of clergy who had been ejected during the Interregnum when faced with Dissenting pleas for toleration and freedom of conscience. Appleby stresses here that the printed record seems to show a much greater division between Anglicans and their opponents, particularly within Presbyterianism, than some other historians have suggested. He is not, however, comparing like with like – local cooperation and an active battle in the public sphere could coexist quite happily. One other minor complaint about an otherwise excellent study relates to structure. Appleby has an epilogue that traces historiographical interest in the farewell sermons beyond the 1660s. This would have fitted much better in the introduction, thus placing his analysis within a broader context at the outset. That said, Appleby has provided an illuminating study of a neglected area that deserves serious attention.

ANDREW C. THOMPSON

***Early Congregational Independency in Lowland Scotland*, Vol. II. By William D. McNaughton. Glasgow: United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland and The Trustees of Ruaird Congregational Church, Tírce, 2007. Pp. xvi + 505. £20.00. ISBN 978 0 900304 94 1.**

This sturdy hardback, a veritable bran tub of information concerning Glasgow and the western Lowlands, has been produced at a remarkably favourable price. We are already indebted to Dr. McNaughton for biographical notes on Congregational ministers who served in Scotland from 1794 to 1993. With this volume he completes his Congregational and Evangelical Union trawl of church records covering the entire land, for good measure noting forays into northern England and Evangelical Union activities in Ireland and Canada.

In the two introductory chapters some important points are made: the *raison d'être* of Scottish Congregationalism was evangelistic, not sectarian or ecclesiological. Positively, the stimulus was provided by the labours of Whitefield, Bogue, Fuller and others; negatively, by the desire to counter Moderatism. Evangelists were sent to many parts by The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home, which was constituted in 1798. Prominent leaders included James and Robert Haldane who, on embracing Baptist views departed, taking their funds with them, thereby leaving some of the Congregational causes in a financial plight. Long-term distinguished leadership was provided by Greville Ewing, and Ralph Wardlaw. By no means all areas were receptive to the Gospel, but some were, and lives were changed, not least that of the newly converted young man who had been illegally making malt, informed the Excise of his activities, and surrendered all the malt in his possession. Some suffered for their convictions, as when farmers were turned from their land by landowners supposedly influenced by parochial clergy; or when quarrymen and servants were sacked on leaving their employers' churches. The importance of the Glasgow Theological Academy (1811) cannot be overstated. Although their motives were not sectarian, the Congregationalists did expect that their churches would comprise the regenerate, and be constituted in accordance with biblical principles, though they did not carry restorationism as far as the Bereans, the Old Scots Independents, and the Glasites. Charles Grandison Finney's *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835) was influential in some quarters, but the idea of protracted revival meetings and the adoption of the "new measures" were elsewhere regarded with suspicion. Whereas the Congregationalists upheld God's sovereignty in the matter of the salvation of the elect, others, tending in an evangelical Arminian direction, held that Christ's saving work had been accomplished for all, that all obstacles to salvation had been removed except the individual sinner's unbelief, and that whether individuals were saved or not turned upon their own free response to the Spirit's striving within. James Morison was in the latter camp, and on expulsion from the United Secession Church he and others formed the Evangelical Union in 1843. By 1867 (Dr. McNaughton's terminal date) the

flames of evangelical zeal had largely been extinguished by conventional religiosity, and in 1897 the general coalescence of soteriologies permitted the union of the Congregational and Evangelical Unions.

There follow chapters on the churches in the area under review. Those interested in doctrine and church order will find much to interest them. I have already mentioned Calvinism *versus* "Arminianizing" tensions. In addition there was a tussle at Wishaw EU church when some sixteen people who had become convinced that having a plurality of elders was the biblical way left to form a Brethren meeting. Greville Ewing found himself in a pamphlet war with John Robertson, the assistant minister at Cambuslang Parish Church, over the propriety of itinerant preaching – something which Ewing defended to the end.

Those who lament the all but lost art of godly discipline will enjoy reading the responses to the 1845 questionnaire distributed by the Congregational Union. From the answers it appears that ministers would baptize only the children of members of the church though George Simpson Ingram of Albion Street/North Hanover church, Glasgow, "would not object to baptize the children of presbyterians or episcopalians provided he were satisfied that such were *Christians*." The Lord's Supper was held weekly, except when the minister was away and a substitute minister could not be engaged; though Thomas Low of Inverkip said that he would not object to the Supper's being held in his absence. Unusually, the church at Stewarton was constituted when, on confessional grounds, two Wesleyans were refused communion at the Parish Church. It would seem that weekly church meeting was the norm.

Those concerned with socio-ethical issues will find something to their liking here: Ralph Wardlaw's work for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, for example; or the work of the Glasgow City Mission and the role of David Nasmith; or the temperance question, which reared its head in a number of churches. Strife over the temperance question prompted the resignation of the Evangelical Union co-founder and professor, John Guthrie, from the Greenock church, and explains the refusal of both Alexander Davidson and A. M. Fairbairn to succeed him there. Guthrie sympathized with the position of the Scottish Temperance League, namely, that moral persuasion should be the policy, whereas others supported the United Kingdom Alliance which advocated legal prohibition.

Ministers in pastoral charge will find a word of consolation that they may recall if ever they are told, half-accusingly, that "the chapel used to be full." For at Albion Street the attendance at services exceeded 700, but there were just ninety communicants. In other words, the chapels were seldom filled by the church; and nowadays the 610 would be in the shops, off to the football, caravanning in the summer or wintering in Málaga (a prospect which makes the most boring sermon seem strangely inviting). Again, ministers who feel oppressed by heavy duties may reflect upon the work-load of John Ward of Kilmarnock. He conducted public worship three times every Sunday, gave a lecture every Thursday, and conducted other occasional meetings. In addition, "The minister seldom fails in seeing all the congregation at their own houses

at least once or twice a-year. Some of them at a considerable distance he sees much oftener, and he always preaches in places where he can find accommodation. Since his induction, he has been in the habit of preaching in the towns and villages in Kilmarnock and surrounding parishes, especially where members of the congregation reside – often in the summer in the open air.”

There is a great deal of miscellaneous information along the way. During the opening service of the Glasgow Tabernacle “The rails of the staircase giving way, some limbs were broken; but . . . no lives were lost.” Although Ewing could have been addressed as Dr. or The Reverend, “His disapprobation of ‘religious titles’ . . . was sacredly regarded by his family and friends. The only distinctive title which he liked, was ‘minister of the Gospel’.” (What a fine man he was). At Bridgeton church thirty-five members including the precentor resigned when, on 9 February 1858, Nisbet Galloway appeared in the pulpit wearing a gown. Notwithstanding that the Trinity Congregational church stone-laying ceremony was “gone through in due Masonic form”, the church ran into financial difficulties. David Livingstone “gave himself to the Lord” at the Sunday Bible class at Hamilton. When Mr. Wilson, a Secession minister, attended the Inverkip church and heard Thomas Low preach “He was so pleased with the matter of the Discourse that he made me repeat to him the heads of it while he wrote them down, but he said it was very ill delivered, and strongly advised me to go and study elocution.” It would seem that the first organ to be used in worship was installed in North Dundas Street EU church, Glasgow, in 1853. When preparing the ground for Neilston/Barrhead EU church, John Kirk sadly recorded that at Neilston “We have only conversed with four. One or two seem to have received the truth, but the general ear is *shut*. . . . Perfect contempt appears in many of the faces.” The folk of Huddersfield gave Kirk a more enthusiastic welcome: “Both men and women kept crying out at intervals – ‘Aye’ – ‘Yes’ – ‘Bless the Lord’ – ‘That's it!’” Finally, it was a pleasure to meet William Cunningham of Stewarton: “Every night he dressed himself in a newly laundered white nightgown and night cap in preparation for the Advent, but as he expected it to be somewhat cold flying through the clouds he always put on plenty of woollens [*sic*] underneath.”

There are nearly a hundred pages of notes, tables supplying information on CUS and EU churches, and indices of persons, and of subjects and places.

Scholars will benefit greatly from Dr. McNaughton's works, while others will find much to interest and entertain them. With this volume a major project has reached a triumphant finale. What will Dr. McNaughton do for an encore?

ALAN P. F. SELL

***Called to Be Saints: A Centenary History of the Church of the Nazarene in the British Isles, 1906-2006.* By T. A. Noble with a contribution by Hugh Rae. Manchester: The Didsbury Press, 2006. £15.00. Pp. 351. ISBN (10) 0-9552507-0-6. Illustrated.**

This is almost a family history: my mother and mother-in-law appear as centenarians whose lives virtually spanned the period under review and my father-in-law, father and brother all play important roles. Writing mainly for a Church of the Nazarene (CofN) readership, the author also hopes the book will be of service to the wider Christian community. It deserves attention for several reasons.

Here is the story of a mission becoming a church; of a small, new denomination making headway when mainline churches have been managing decline; of a lay-led movement coming to accept ordained ministry; of a movement, whose pioneers often lacked higher education but so prized it that today's Nazarene Theological College has 250 students and invites leading academics to lecture. Various streams fed into the union that produced the present CofN in Britain, influencing the worship and polity of the developing church. The story thus has ecumenical interest too.

An Anglican, Reader Harris, founded the Pentecostal League of Prayer to promote holiness interdenominationally as a second crisis experience after conversion. David Thomas, a draper in Battersea with a Congregational background, eventually left in 1906 to begin "The Holiness Mission", soon becoming "The International Holiness Mission" (IHM) when it sent a missionary to Africa. (The development of Nazarene foreign missions is a sub story.)

Also in 1906, in Parkhead, Glasgow, a Congregational minister with a background in Methodist ministry in the USA, George Sharpe, was voted out on the issue of sanctification. Eighty left with him to form a new church. Sharpe's transatlantic connections helped him and by 1909 there were three congregations under the name of "The Pentecostal Church of Scotland".

In 1912 this church was the first to ordain a woman in Scotland, Olive Winchester BA, BD. She trained its ministers (the development of ministerial education is another sub story) and promoted links with "The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene" in the USA. In 1915 the latter welcomed Sharpe's churches into their denomination. With the coming of Pentecostalism, the adjective "pentecostal" was dropped from the church's title. By 1940 British membership had increased to 1001 in twenty-five churches.

Thomas's IHM was aided by its League of Prayer connections. There were twenty missions in association by 1916 and particular support came from the independent Star Hall in Manchester whose magazine was adopted. The IHM became a limited liability company in 1920, with an executive council of twenty lay members. In 1917 they appointed a Baptist minister to act as Superintendent Minister to the movement. By 1930 there were eight ministers. Inevitably tensions began to emerge between the ministers and the lay leadership.

An important inter-war IHM development was “trekking”: a group of “blue shirts” pulled a handcart around the country, holding tent campaigns. Prominent among them was the young Maynard James. A product of the holiness movement and trained at Cliff College, he became a talented evangelist. At Bolton 1000 conversions were recorded together with some faith healings; other campaigns in the midlands followed.

With James, tensions with the IHM leadership came to a head and a split ensued over “tongues”. James accepted the gift as valid but not as evidential of Spirit baptism. Four leaders and missions resigned to form a new denomination, the Calvary Holiness Church (CHK).

The four CHC leaders led campaigns for the CofN in Scotland and Sharpe ordained them. The CHC magazine, *The Flame*, edited with flare by James, peaked with a 25,000 circulation. New churches were founded and new ministers found for them mainly from the IHM and Methodism. James also acted as principal of his training college.

However, by 1940 the great days were over and membership fell in the war years. James’s charismatic style neglected details of administration and the new church began to run into difficulties. Meetings between the IHM and the CHC began in 1938 and achieved a reconciliation in 1946.

Meanwhile the IHM’s Superintendent Minister, J. B. Maclagan, a CofN minister, was effectively its leader. Under his influence, the IHM council voted unanimously for a union with the CofN, which took place in 1952. The IHM brought to the union twenty-four churches, 1000 members, eighteen ministers, and thirty-two missionaries. The British CofN now divided into two districts: North and South.

Impressed by this union, the CHC entered successful negotiations in 1955, managing an accommodation on tongues.

The second half of the century saw slowed growth but new churches added; in the latter part of the century most church growth took place in Northern Ireland. The enlarged denomination had to be consolidated and transatlantic differences accommodated. The American CofN wavered between treating Britain as “foreign” and as “home”. For instance, the setting up of a European College in Germany with lectures in English, by-passing the British College in Manchester, was hard to accept.

The author has presented his history with useful contexts: the historical development of holiness doctrine and the sociological backgrounds that facilitated the early advances. He comments judiciously about its shortcomings as it enters the twenty-first century, and is candid about the differences between their early holiness doctrine and John Wesley’s. He reflects on the dangers of preaching “instant sanctification” and looks to a more nuanced approach. A useful bibliography on holiness and an index of names and churches is included.

Unfortunately, there are a few last minute errors that have crept in. Mrs Maynard James was Louie not Lois; the names under the lower photographs on page 86 need crossing over; Harry Wood’s name is omitted as the third from the left in the photograph at the top of p.280.

The book poses questions for outsiders about our own doctrine of holiness and the place we give it. And how do we account for the CofN's growth in a century of church decline?

RODNEY WOOD

***St Andrew's Kenton United Reformed Church: Fifty Years 1957-2007: The Story of a Church Family.* By Richard Potts. Published by the serving elders of St Andrew's Church, Wyndham Avenue, Kenton, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE3 4QJ. Pp. 62 illustrated. £3.00 (+ £1 p&p). Obtainable from Richard Potts on Richard.potts@ncl.ac.uk or 0191 2857982; or Lyall Scott (tel. 0191-2362758),**

This publication is thoroughly researched and well presented. The text is clear and competently written. The authors (principally one of the elders, Richard Potts) have wisely resisted the tendency, too often employed, of arranging the material in chapters according to the incumbency of the various ministers, as though the "reign" of a minister defined the life of the church. This congregation has experienced the ups and downs of suburban church life during the last fifty years and thus comments obliquely on the experience of similar churches across the country, giving it added value. It is not always clear for whom the book is intended. If it is primarily for members of the local congregation and others who know the church well, the frequent reference to individuals by name will doubtless be welcome and informative. If a wider readership is in mind, such references can be intrusive and irritating. The book nevertheless reads well and is a credit to those who have produced it. There are many colour photographs which depict not only the building but also the church, which is the people.

C. KEITH FORECAST