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EDITORIAL

Olive Wyon was a Congregational church member, a Presbyterian elder, and a confirmed Anglican. She was an Englishwoman of distant German descent and international reputation. Her ecumenism which at the time of her death seemed prophetic of an immediate future, now seems to illuminate a past which is indeed another country. It should have flowered more fully than it did in Geneva, where in fact it was (administratively speaking) frustrated. It certainly flowered fully, if relatively briefly, in Edinburgh where she became Principal of St Colm's. There she wrote the life of an earlier Principal, Ann Hunter Small, who had given a paper at Edinburgh 1910, the World Missionary Conference which (or so it is commonly believed) kick-started the Ecumenical Movement. That conference is characteristically re-assessed by David Thompson in the first of two centenary (give or take a year) commemorations; the second, by Dr. Kirsteen Kim, will appear in a future issue. David Cornick's paper on Olive Wyon was delivered as a presidential address to the Society's study weekend at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, in September 2009. Robert Pope's paper on Calvinism in Wales was also prepared for that weekend, and it appears here as a quincennial commemoration (again give or take a year) of Calvin's birth.

We welcome as reviewers John Coffey, Professor of Modern History at the University of Leicester; Kenneth Padley, Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wales, Bangor; and David Sullivan, of the School of Life-long Learning, also based at the University of Wales, Bangor.

Note: All enquiries about membership should be made to Margaret Thompson, as before, but she is also responsible for historical queries in a temporary capacity, while the Westminster College archivist, Mrs Helen Weller, takes maternity leave.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE CALVINIST CONSENSUS IN WALES

In 1900, William Evans, a Calvinistic Methodist minister based in Pembrokeshire in south-west Wales, published *An Outline of the History of Welsh Theology*.¹ Its main argument was that a specifically Welsh theological tradition can be traced back to the sixteenth century, that it evolved largely among various Puritan and Nonconformist groups and it was essentially Calvinist in outlook. Calvin himself receives virtually no mention in the book, while neither his writings nor many of what could be called his distinctive teachings are discussed at all.² Instead, Evans refers consistently to “Calvinism”, usually in the context of theological controversy and invariably with the spokesmen for Arminianism. If Evans’s assessment is correct, then Calvinism in Wales has amounted to little more than the belief in election and predestination, while Arminianism appears to be the doctrinal catalyst for the descent of a vociferous minority into the absolute heresies of Arianism, Unitarianism and all other ideologies that could be said to be rooted in that early perversion of Christian orthodoxy – Pelagianism.

Evans’s narrative has become the primary means of understanding the development of theology in Wales. The pattern is clear. Calvinism was established in the years following Henry VIII’s break with Rome. It came to prominence during the early Puritan period and was modified during the eighteenth century. After this it was infected by Arminianism and philosophical idealism and, by the end of the nineteenth century, it had been transformed into a particular brand of theological liberalism. This paper investigates this development, tries to identify the distinctive marks of Calvinistic theology and practice in Wales and then evaluates the extent to which this Calvinism was connected with Calvin himself.

The Reformation in Wales

I

If political expedience more than religious zeal marked the Henrician reform movement in England, then there was, in Wales, general apathy and lack of interest in the Reformation. In some ways, as Glanmor Williams explained, this is hardly surprising: “[Wales] had none of the nuclei around which reforming

1 Published London: James Nisbet & Co., and Newport: William Jones, 1900.

2 We could mention particularly Calvin’s views on ecclesiology or on the reality of union with Christ, for example, rather than his views on election and predestination. Of his teaching on union with Christ one Calvin scholar has asserted that “The central christological theme, which dominates his eucharistic doctrine, is not only woven through his view of the sacraments. It also applies to his whole theology and also to his conception of the church as the body of Christ.” See Willem van’t Spijker, *Calvin: A Brief Guide to His Life and Thought*, tr. Lyle D. Bierma, (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2009), 31.

movements normally formed: no capital, court, university, or big towns, and very few wealthy households or merchant groups.³ There simply were no means to spread the message of Reform. Alongside this, there were some, such as Thomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys, who were downright hostile. He denounced Protestant teaching as “an alien English faith (*ffydd Saeson*)”, a heresy “foisted upon the Welsh against their will”, while he condemned married clergy in uncompromising terms as “ignorant and conceited goats”.⁴ There appeared to be neither religious nor political reasons to adopt the Reformation. Indeed, it could be claimed, with a fair degree of accuracy, that things were rather confused in this early period: the scholar Edward Powell was executed in 1540, it has been suggested, because he continued to uphold the authority of the Pope,⁵ while Thomas Capper went to the stake at Cardiff in 1542 for denying the veracity of the doctrine of transubstantiation.⁶

There was a small band of Welsh enthusiasts who supported the Reformation, but they were irenic and scholarly rather than hot-headed radicals, erudite men who recognised the need for learning and who considered it vitally important that the scriptures should be available in the vernacular. In 1567, Richard Davies (1501?-1581),⁷ successively bishop of St Asaph and St Davids, along with William Salesbury (1520?-1584?),⁸ a lay scholar considered to be “the most learned Welshman of his day”, published the New Testament in Welsh. These men were, for want of a better expression, Anglican and Establishment figures. Although Davies spent some time with other Marian exiles in Frankfurt, Calvin and the Genevan expression of the Reformation were not on his radar. Instead, he and Salesbury sought to commend the Reformation to the Welsh as a learned, spiritual movement by claiming that this was not merely a modern phenomenon offering a revolutionary understanding of religion, but a return to authentic Christianity as it

3 Glanmor Williams, *The Reformation in Wales*, (Bangor: Headstart History Papers, 1991), 3.

4 Williams, *The Reformation in Wales*, 17; *idem* (ed.), *Glamorgan County History IV: Early Modern Glamorgan*, (Cardiff: Glamorgan County History Trust, 1974), 218-9.

5 Glanmor Williams makes this point (*The Reformation in Wales*, 11), but it should be said that Powell’s understanding of Papal authority led him into vocal opposition of Henry’s divorce of Catherine of Aragon and subsequent remarriage to Anne Boleyn as well as of the Protestant movement in general. In 1534 he was found guilty of high treason “for refusing to acknowledge the succession to the throne”. He spent six years in the Tower of London before being executed at Smithfield in 1540. For Powell (1478?-1540), see J. E. Lloyd and R. T. Jenkins (eds.), *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940*, (London: Society of Cymmrodorion, 1953) (hereafter *DWB*), 773.

6 Williams, *The Reformation in Wales*, 11; *idem* (ed.), *Glamorgan County History IV*, 215.

7 See *DWB*, 147-7; Glanmor Williams, *Bywyd ac Amserau'r Esgob Richard Davies*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1953).

8 *DWB*, 898; R. Brinley Jones, *William Salesbury*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994); Isaac Thomas, *William Salesbury a'i Destament / William Salesbury and His Testament*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967).

was practised by their Celtic ancestors. Davies accomplished this in his seminal "Epistol at y Cemburu" ("Letter to the Welsh"). This was a quite remarkable piece of writing in which the bishop suggested that the Reformation simply returned the sixteenth-century church to the earliest kind of Christianity known in Wales before the corrupting effect of Augustine of Canterbury had turned the British Church to Rome, largely at the point of the sword.⁹ He wrote:

The Britons [i.e. the Welsh] had kept their Christianity pure and undefiled, without mixing human imaginings with that which they received from Joseph of Arimathea, the disciple of Christ, and from the Church of Rome when it was holding to the discipline of the Word of God.¹⁰

Although the product of undoubted scholarship, the New Testament as produced by Davies and Salesbury was marred by a convoluted orthography and impossibly idiosyncratic expression. It was never popular, and perhaps it is fortunate that the projected Old Testament translation never saw the light of day, the result, it is conjectured, of a disagreement between the two humanist scholars over the meaning of a particular word. Yet less than twenty years later, the whole Bible appeared in a new, fresh, almost lyrical translation, the result of the labour of William Morgan (c.1545-1604),¹¹ a remarkable cleric, graduate of Cambridge University, and later the bishop of Llandaf (1595) and then of St Asaph (1601).

Scholars have stressed the vital significance of the 1588 Bible for the survival of the Welsh language as well as the subsequent flourishing of a distinctive Welsh – and Christian – culture, all of which gave rise to the development of an unambiguous Welsh national identity. Yet any positive impact that the appearance of the Bible in Welsh had in the sixteenth century was mitigated by the lack of preachers and teachers in the churches who could communicate effectively with the Welsh in their own language. Once the realisation dawned that there was need of gifted and qualified teachers and preachers, then a more directly Reformed insistence on the need for the proclamation, and hearing, of the Word of God emerged, something that would characterise Welsh Christianity for almost four hundred years, down to the middle of the twentieth century. The first person who realised the importance of the preaching office

9 Williams, *The Reformation in Wales*, 30.

10 "Testament Newydd 1567", in Garfield H. Hughes (ed.), *Rhagymadroddion 1547-1659*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), 17-45 [22].

11 *DWB*, 656; Enid Pierce Roberts, *William Morgan a'r Beibl Cymraeg*, (Caernarfon: Enid Pierce Roberts, 2004); Derec Llwyd Morgan, *William Morgan a'i Feibl / William Morgan and His Bible*, (Bangor: Cymdeithas Celfyddydau Gogledd Cymru, 1989); Glanmor Williams, *Beibl William Morgan, 1588-1988 / William Morgan's Bible, 1588-1988*, (Bangor: Workers' Education Association, 1988); Isaac Thomas, *William Morgan a'i Feibl / William Morgan and His Bible*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988).

and sought to establish it in Wales appears to have been the Presbyterian-turned-Separatist martyr, John Penry (1563-1593).¹²

Born in Cefn Brith in Breconshire in 1563, Penry matriculated at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, in December 1580. It is recorded that “when he first went to Cambridge he was as arrant a papist as ever came out of Wales, and he would have run a false gallop over the beads with any man in England.”¹³ It is unclear as to when and how he renounced Catholicism and embraced Puritanism, though Cambridge was undoubtedly still the seedbed of radical reform – Thomas Cartwright had vacated the Lady Margaret Chair in divinity a mere decade previously.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it was noted that “being full of Welsh blood, and of a hot and restless head, he changed his course, and became a notorious Anabaptist, and in some sort a Brownist, and a most bitter enemy of the Church of England.”¹⁵ His subsequent brief but turbulent career was characterised by the conviction that preaching was the “only ordinary means of salvation”.¹⁶ Such an insistence clearly resonated with the teaching of the continental reformers, though it is unclear whether or not Penry appropriated it directly from Calvin. It is not that Calvin was unclear on the subject. Indeed, Calvin was unequivocal about the importance of preaching and the office of the preacher. For Calvin, it is in preaching that “Christ is depicted before our eyes as crucified”¹⁷ and this led him to the recognition that in proclamation God’s Word is made known to His people. Calvin insisted, for example, that “when ministers preach [God’s] word to us, we are not hearing merely the sound of voices, or utterances from lips, or the enunciation of words” but

- 12 *DWB*, 746; Samuel Williams, *John Penry, 1563-1593*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1956); William Pierce, *John Penry: His Life, Times and Writings*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923).
- 13 Quoted in Benjamin Brook, *Lives of the Puritans: Containing a Biographical Account of Protestant Divines who Distinguished Themselves in the Cause of Religious Liberty*, II (London: James Black, 1813), 48.
- 14 Cartwright had asserted that the Early Church had adopted a Presbyterian rather than Episcopalian polity. R. Tudur Jones comments: “There was an enormous furore and Cartwright lost his professorial chair almost before he had time to sit in it!” See Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales*, ed. Robert Pope, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 10. Interestingly, Penry’s fellow student at Peterhouse was William Brewster (c.1566-1644) who was later one of the Pilgrims to reach the Plymouth Colony on the Mayflower in 1620.
- 15 Quoted in Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, II, 48.
- 16 The publication of the *Aequity* in 1587 resulted in Penry being brought before the High Commission. Archbishop Whitgift seemed affronted that someone of such youth could think himself able to understand such lofty ecclesiastical and political affairs. John Aylmer (1521-1594), bishop of London, was more interested in Penry’s criticism of absent clergy. It was in answering Aylmer that Penry made this statement about preaching. See Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, II, 49; Pierce, *John Penry: His Life, Times and Writings*, 173-177 [175]. The result was that Penry was imprisoned for a month.
- 17 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, (London: SCM, 1960), I.XI.7, 107. See also Galatians 3:1.

instead “it is God himself who is speaking through the mouths of his ministers in order that by understanding his word as we ought, we might at least submit to God and render God the obedience and honour which God is due.”¹⁸ Indeed, for Calvin, the preacher should act with due seriousness and diligence because it is through the proclamation of the word of scripture that people will hear the gospel and be saved: “Therefore,” he declared, “cognizant of the reason why God has sent us the doctrine of salvation, it is requisite of those of us who have been ordained of God to announce his Word, should faithfully fulfill our charge, rigorously endeavouring in our studies to lead mankind to salvation, attempting with all our effort to see that God is honoured.”¹⁹

Despite the similarities with the Genevan reformer’s ideas, Penry’s “Calvinism” was almost certainly discovered second hand rather than *ad fontes*. He had, for example, translated Theodore Beza’s *Principia Theologia* in 1591 under the title *Propositions and Principles of Divinitie*. But his commitment to the Reformation, especially as it was understood in Separatist circles, cannot be questioned, and in order to promote his ideas, he was a frequent and committed preacher²⁰ (though he was never ordained) while he also became a fervent pamphleteer and established his own printing press. Early in 1587 he published *The Aequity of an Humble Supplication* in which he petitioned the Queen, on behalf of “the country of Wales” in order that provision be made to provide the preaching of the gospel in his homeland. He continued:

For our estate is such, that we haue not one [i.e. priest] in some score of our parishes that hath a sauing knowledge. Thousands there be of our people that know Iesus Christ to be neither God nor man, king, priest nor prophet; ô desolate and forlone condition! . . . And shall we be in ignorance vntil we all learne English? . . . But why can we not haue preaching in our owne toung?²¹

The *Aequity* constituted Penry’s repudiation of the Episcopalian system which permitted both clergy and laymen to take possession of church land and assets but to release themselves from fulfilling their ecclesiastical responsibilities. During his examination by the High Commission, he confirmed his belief in the importance of preaching by declaring that non-resident clergy “are odious in the sight of God; because, to the utmost of their power,

18 John Calvin, *Sermons on the Book of Micah*, tr. and ed. Benjamin Wirt Farley, (Philipsberg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 344 (on Micah 6:9-11). See also Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.III.1, 1053.

19 Calvin, *Sermons on the Book of Micah*, 368-9 (on Micah 7:1-3).

20 For a short time he was a frequent preacher at the Separatist congregation in London led by John Greenwood (? -1593) and Henry Barrow (c.1550-1593).

21 John Penry, *Three Treatises Concerning Wales*, ed. David Williams, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1960), 32, 37. The quotations come from Penry’s *A Treatise Containing the Aequity of an Humble Supplication* (1587).

they deprive the people of the ordinary means of salvation, which is the word preached.”²² Penry was clearly convinced of the power inherent in proclaiming the gospel. He refers, for example, to “the tyranny of Sathan” which “may be ouerthrowen by the powerfull arme of God the worde preached, who can save our soules.”²³ He petitioned Parliament to show, “not onely the necessitie of reforming the state of religion among that people, but also the onely way, in regarde of substance, to bring that reformation to passe . . . that my countrymen by your meanes may haue the word preached, euen the meanes whereby they may liue for euer”.²⁴ However, nothing came of Penry’s pleas.²⁵ His increasing radicalisation during troubled and unstable times, along with the fact that he had made an enemy of Archbishop Whitgift, saw him meet his end, aged thirty, on the hangman’s gibbet at St Thomas a Watering at about 5pm on 29 May 1593. Whitgift’s signature was the first on the death warrant and the unpleasant prelate refused Penry permission to bid farewell to his wife (Eleanor) and four young daughters (Deliverance, Comfort, Safety, and Sure-Hope) or to make any final profession from the scaffold. It was not the fact that Penry’s voice was cruelly silenced at what was, even in those days, a tender age which meant that he had no impact on his homeland – for he had in any case lived in Northampton, Scotland and London after leaving university. But the fact that his primary concern was the supply of Welsh-speaking preachers and that he died as the result of action by a defensive and indifferent establishment, has meant that he has subsequently risen to a place of honour among his spiritual successors.

The idea that Welsh Calvinism emerged as a direct product of the Reformation is moot to say the least. Penry’s Calvinism is more implied than obvious, and Wales at that time has been described as “wholly overspread with Popish darkness”.²⁶ Nevertheless, a Calvinistic reform movement emerged

22 Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, II, 49; Pierce, *John Penry: His Life, Times and Writings*, 175.

23 John Penry, *Three Treatises Concerning Wales*, 13. The quotation comes from Penry’s *Aequity*.

24 *Ibid.*, 99, 100. The quotations come from Penry’s *A Supplication unto the High Court of Parliament* (1589).

25 His radical views had already made an enemy of Whitgift who was further incensed by the Martin Marprelate tracts, whose authorship remains a mystery but which were associated with Penry’s printing press. Marprelate had referred to the “Beelzebub of Canterbury”, “Canterbury Caiaphas”, the “monstrous anti-Christ” and “His Canterburyness”. Several theories have been suggested, including that Marprelate was in fact Job Throckmorton or even Christopher Marlowe. See M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, (3rd impression, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 245. Donald Joseph McGinn, *John Penry and the Marprelate Controversy*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966) argued that Penry was Marprelate, a suggestion refuted by Glanmor Williams, “John Penry and Martin Marprelate”, *Welsh History Review*, 3 (1967), 361-380. The scholarly consensus is that Penry was not the author of the tracts.

26 Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, II, 48.

within a generation of Penry's death, which would sow the seeds of a Calvinistic orthodoxy embraced and promoted by the vast majority of subsequent Welsh Christians. This was assisted by the fact that when Puritanism made its initial inroads into Wales with the founding of the first church along Congregational lines at Llanfaches, Monmouthshire, in 1639,²⁷ Calvinism had been defined in opposition to the teaching of Jacob Arminius at the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619). The so-called "Five Points" outlined a theological system in which original sin left human beings under condemnation, unable to do anything to redeem their condition. However, God, in his grace, has elected some to salvation without consideration of personal merit. It is for these elect that Jesus died and the gospel call, once it is heard by them, cannot be resisted. This leads to a sense that salvation cannot be lost because it depends on God's grace and not on human effort. Thus Calvinism had arrived at the point of definition, constituted by total depravity of humankind, unconditional election by God, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

The Puritan Movement II

Although there were no Welshmen present at Dordt, this official form of Calvinism was mediated through the efforts of the early Welsh Puritan leaders: William Wroth (1576-1641),²⁸ Rector of Llanfaches, Monmouthshire, William Erbery (1604-1654),²⁹ the radical vicar of St Mary's and St John's in Cardiff, Erbery's curate, the moderate and charitable Walter Cradock (1610?-1659),³⁰ the fiery and uncompromising Vavasor Powell (1617-1670)³¹ and the mystical poet Morgan Llwyd (1619-1659).³² They established their Congregationalism

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- 27 See R. Geraint Gruffydd, *"In That Gentile Country": The Beginnings of Puritan Nonconformity in Wales*, (Bridgend: Evangelical Library of Wales, 1976); Thomas Richards, *A History of the Puritan Movement in Wales: From the Institution of the Church at Llanfaches in 1639*, (London: National Eisteddfod Association, 1920); Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales*, chapter 2.
- 28 *DWB*, 1093; Trevor Watts, *William Wroth, 1570-1641: Father of Welsh Nonconformity*, (London: Congregational History Circle, 1989).
- 29 *DWB*, 216-7; Brian Ll. James, "William Erbery (1604-1654): Ceisiwr Cymreig", in J. Gwynfor Jones (ed.), *Agweddau ar Dwf Piwritaniaeth yng Nghymru yn yr Ail Ganrif ar Bymtheg*, (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1992), 63-93; *idem*, "The Evolution of a Welsh Radical: The Life and Career of William Erbery, (1604-1654)", in *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History* (1986), 31-48.
- 30 *DWB*, 85; Noel Gibbard, *Walter Cradock: A Welsh Saint*, (Bridgend: Evangelical Library of Wales, 1977); Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints, 1640-1660: Walter Cradock, Vavasor Powell, Morgan Llwyd*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1957), 18-36; M. Wynn Thomas, "Disgybl a'i Athro: Morgan Llwyd a Walter Cradoc", in J. Gwynfor Jones (ed.), *Agweddau ar Dwf Piwritaniaeth yng Nghymru*, 111-128.
- 31 *DWB*, 777-8; R. Tudur Jones, *Vavasor Powell*, (Swansea: Gwasg John Penry, 1971); Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints*, 37-54.
- 32 *DWB*, 594-5; M. Wynn Thomas, *Morgan Llwyd*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984); Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints*, 37-54.

in accordance with the "New England Way", which maintained a degree of affinity with the Established Church, encouraging members of the gathered congregation to attend the sacrament at the Parish Church, though only when there was a good and godly preacher present.³³

While their ecclesiology made manifest their Calvinism, for it was God's election that lay behind their advocacy of the gathered church of saints, the "New England" pattern led them to reject the more extreme way of total separation. As a result, these men were able to co-operate with the State in order to ensure that the gospel was proclaimed. There may well be echoes of Calvin here: the responsibility of the magistrate in performing his duty within the providence of God, including making provision for proclamation of the gospel through the supply, training and payment of preachers, *could* be traced back to the Genevan Reformer. But it is not without significance that their co-operation with the State occurred during the decade of the Civil Wars and the period of Cromwell's Commonwealth. Under a different regime, they might well have held out over the conscientious objection to State interference in religious life. As it was, they seem to have been deeply influenced by the work of John Robinson (1575-1625), Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680), Philip Nye (c.1595-1672) and, supremely, John Cotton (1585-1652),³⁴ rather than by Calvin himself, and it is at least possible that the Welsh Puritans were not particularly sophisticated in their theological attitudes towards the secular powers and that the best option before them was to co-operate with a political administration that sought to deliver what they had both wished for and demanded.

On 21 July 1646, Walter Cradock preached before Parliament and claimed (in a way that echoed Penry's earlier complaint) that "there were not, in the thirteen Welsh counties, thirteen conscientious ministers" supporting Parliament and preaching twice on the Sabbath.³⁵ By the end of that year, Parliament had set aside £300 to maintain Henry Walter (1611-1678),³⁶ Walter Cradock and Richard Symonds (1609-?)³⁷ in their preaching ministry in South

33 Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales*, 22-23; See also William Erbery, *Apocrypha*, (London, 1652), 8; Champlin Burrage (ed.), *Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research, (1550-1641)*, I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 172; Richard Mather, *An Answer of the Elders of the Severall Churches in New England*, (London: Benjamin Allen, 1643), 61.

34 Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales*, 22. Erbery had made the point that "The Independent Churches were born of Mr. Cotton and others in New England". William Erbery, *The Testimony of William Erbery left upon record for succeeding ages*, (London: Giles Calvert, 1658), 327; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660*, (2nd ed. Weston Rhyn: Quinta Press, 2001), 14-17.

35 Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales*, 27; Walter Cradock, *Saints Fulnesse of Joy in their fellowship with God*, (London: 1646), 34.

36 *DWB*, 1010-1011.

37 *DWB*, 927-8.

Wales, while Ambrose Mostyn (1610-1663),³⁸ Vavasor Powell and Morgan Llwyd were sent to the North, the first two to receive £100 and the last £150. This was followed, on 22 February 1650, by the Act for the Better Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel in Wales, which deprived 279 clergymen of their livings for being, in Vavasor Powell's words, "idle and self-feeding shepherds".³⁹ They were replaced by those whose beliefs were in accord with the Westminster Confession and were zealous in their calling to proclaim the truth of the Christian gospel. Under the terms of the Act, there were provided seventy-five English-speaking and sixty Welsh-speaking preachers with sixty-three itinerant ministers.⁴⁰

Alongside the emphasis on preaching, the Puritans also ensured that the Federal or Covenant theology became known in Wales. In this understanding, humankind was created to enjoy fellowship and communion with God through the covenant of works, but Adam's sin left humankind in the position of estrangement from God, under condemnation and with no way of redeeming the situation. However, God, in his mercy, established a new covenant which saves humankind. This is the covenant of grace secured by the mediator, God's Son, Jesus Christ, and made known not through immediate, inherent knowledge, but through the revelation of God in history and the proclamation of the good news. Essentially the Covenant theology, as expressed by the Welsh Puritans, sought to maintain the sovereign freedom of God.⁴¹

Although the centrality of covenant in the biblical material was promoted as early as 1534 by Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575),⁴² the successor to Ulrich Zwingli as head of the Reformed Church in Zurich, he offered no argument about a covenant between God and Adam constituted prior to the Fall. Calvin developed thinking in this way,⁴³ and the idea of the two covenants was the subject of intense debate in early seventeenth-century England ensuring that this theology was adopted by the Westminster Divines in the 1640s. It is not so much Calvin as the English Puritan divines who appear to be responsible for the widespread adoption of this theology, men such as John Downname (1571-1652), Robert Harris (1581-1658), George Downname (1560?-1634), and John Preston (1587-1628) being the main protagonists. Vavasor Powell was its

38 *DWB*, 1143-1144.

39 Quoted in Geraint H. Jenkins, *Protestant Dissenters in Wales, 1639-1689*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), 17.

40 *Ibid.*, 18.

41 See R. Tudur Jones, *Grym y Gair a Fflam y Ffydd: Ysgrifau ar Hanes Crefydd yng Nghymru*, ed. D. Densil Morgan (Bangor: Centre for the Advanced Study of Religion in Wales, 1998), 9-16.

42 Bullinger's work was *Exposition of the One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God* (1534). For a helpful discussion of Bullinger's ideas, see Angus Stewart, "Heinrich Bullinger, The First Covenant Theologian", at <http://www.cprf.co.uk/articles/covenant6.htm>, accessed 12 October 2009.

43 See Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.VII, IX, X, XI, 348-366, 423-463.

staunchest defender in Wales, with his *Christ and Moses Excellency* of 1650 being a particularly important apologetic.⁴⁴

Federal or Covenant theology was promoted by first and second generation Puritans and it was subsequently embodied in the Calvinistic Methodists' Confession of Faith (1823). But, despite all this, it is important to remember that the Welsh Puritans were not all card-carrying, five-point Calvinists. Their emphasis on the practice of piety led to theological developments which some were to dismiss as errant and false. Erbery had begun to develop an understanding of general salvation and an animus towards any institutionalised religion from 1645, while Morgan Llwyd, under the influence of such continental thinkers as the mystic Jacob Böhme,⁴⁵ came to interiorise much of his theological belief to the extent that he adopted a sense of immanence, even immediacy, between the human soul and the divine. It is not surprising that he felt attracted to the Quaker movement, though perhaps it is more remarkable that he never officially joined it.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Evangelicalism

III

Nevertheless, it was generally believed that Erbery's much vaunted "heresy" and Llwyd's immanentism were the exception rather than the rule, and a Calvinistic orthodoxy seemed to be the norm. Indeed, when a Methodist movement emerged in Wales in the eighteenth century, it was home-grown, it preceded the emergence of a similar movement in England and it was keen to identify itself as *Calvinistic* Methodism.⁴⁶ The leaders in Wales were Howel Harris (1714-1773),⁴⁷ Daniel Rowland (1713-1794)⁴⁸ and William Williams, Pantycelyn (1717-1791).⁴⁹ In theology, these men were (at least

44 A discussion of Covenant theology in Welsh appeared in 1651 when John Edwards published *Madryddyn y Diffynyddiaeth Diweddaraf*, a translation of Edward Fisher's *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*.

45 See Goronwy Wyn Owen, *Rhwng Calfin a Böhme: Golwg ar Syniadaeth Morgan Llwyd*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001).

46 Membership of the Welsh societies also reflected the leaders' Calvinism. "The Welsh societies, were... in stark contrast to their Wesleyan counterparts, exclusive assemblies; not only was faith a condition of acceptance, but the applicant was also expected to subscribe to Calvinism." Geraint Tudur, *Howell Harris: From Conversion to Separation, 1735-1750*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 86. David Ceri Jones, *"A Glorious Work in the World": Welsh Methodism and the International Evangelical Revival, 1735-1750*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 214-7.

47 *DWB*, 339-340; Eifion Evans, *Howel Harris, Evangelist, 1714-1773*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1974); Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Howel Harris, 1714-1773: The Last Enthusiast*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1965).

48 *DWB*, 891; Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, c.1985).

49 *DWB*, 1077-1078; Glyn Tegai Hughes, *Williams Pantycelyn*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983); Derec Llwyd Morgan, *Williams Pantycelyn*, (Caernarfon: Gwasg Pantycelyn, 1985).

initially)⁵⁰ in full accord with each other. "In 1739," says Eifion Evans, "the most prominent ministers involved in the [Evangelical] Revival in Wales were Calvinists."⁵¹ Like their Puritan forebears, Methodist preachers emphasised the depravity of human nature through original sin and the inability of individuals to justify themselves through their own efforts. But their advocacy of an atonement that was sufficient to save all who would come to Christ signalled a slight departure from the ideas of their stricter Calvinist predecessors. First of all, it demonstrates that the Methodist revival emphasised the importance of the religious affections in a more exuberant sense than the minute introspection of the state of the soul so characteristic of the Puritan way.⁵² But, secondly, it also reveals that five-point Calvinism was undergoing a transformation, for there appeared a sense in which salvation was not the fate of those elected and predestined to the blessed state but those who would come to Christ and throw themselves on his mercy. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the rhetoric of the Methodists was Calvinistic. Harris had said: "I hope that I shall contend with my last breath and blood that it is owing to special distinguishing and irresistible grace, that those that are saved are saved."⁵³

Clearly, then, Calvinism was undergoing a process of moderation from the middle of the eighteenth century. Its spread, as well as its codification, owed much to the insightful erudition and lucidity of Edward Williams (1750-1813),⁵⁴ a Welshman from Denbighshire whose name tends to be associated with the Rotherham Academy where he was principal from 1795 until his death. In a number of works, Williams sought to hold together God's gracious offer of salvation with humankind's absolute responsibility for sin. In so doing, he secured God's sovereignty in election and salvation, but refuted the claim that God was responsible for reprobation. As a result, he claimed that the Atonement was general, but salvation was limited: "the one being the justifying cost, the other being the salvation accomplished through it."⁵⁵

It was the union of these moderate ideas along with a distinctively Calvinistic rhetoric which became the norm in the Welsh pulpit by the late

50 Harris and Rowland parted company in 1750 because of a variety of theological disagreements including one over the need for assurance of salvation. For the details of the rift between the two men, see Tudur, *Howell Harris: From Conversion to Separation*, 151-194.

51 Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales*, 129.

52 See Derec Llwyd Morgan, *The Great Awakening in Wales*, (London: Epworth, 1988), 172.

53 Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, I (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878), 315. See also Eifion Evans, *Howel Harris: Evangelist*, 15-18.

54 For Williams, see W. T. Owen, *Edward Williams DD, 1750-1813: His Life, Thought and Influence*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963). His major works were *An Essay on the Equity of Divine Government and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace*, (Shrewsbury and London, 1809) and *A Defence of Modern Calvinism*, (London: J. Black, 1812).

55 Owen Thomas, *Cofiant y Parchg John Jones Talsarn mewn Cysylltiad a Hanes Duwinyddiaeth a Phregethu Cymru*, (Wrexham: Hughes and Son, n.d. [c.1858]), 381.

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Such a combination is exemplified in the life, as well as the writings, of John Elias, “undoubtedly the most popular and powerful” Welsh preacher of his age.⁵⁶ Elias was a man of strong character and firm views. He fiercely believed in the infallibility of the scriptures and in the limited atonement of the elect, and he was vociferous in his opposition to those who would wish to modify the Calvinist system.⁵⁷ Indeed, he claimed that, right up to the time of the first concerted Wesleyan mission in Wales (1800-1810) there was a Calvinistic consensus among virtually all Welsh Nonconformists. “In doctrine,” he asserted, “the Independents were in total agreement with the Methodists. The Baptists were generally also of the same opinion.” Although election *per se* did not figure much in Welsh theology, most of the five points that can be extracted from the Synod of Dordt were to be found in Nonconformist sermons: “The Fall of man and his total depravity; the wretchedness of his condition under the just curse and wrath of God; and his total inability to save himself; and free salvation from God’s sovereign grace and his love.” Yet, alongside this could be discerned Edward Williams’s modified Calvinism especially in Elias’s claim that preachers recognised that “Christ is the consummate saviour, sufficient for the chief of sinners; invites the lost to himself to believe in him; and encourage those who believe ‘to take care that they lead in good works’”. According to John Elias’s account: “That was the sum total of their preaching... That is the manner of preaching that conquered Wales!”⁵⁸ In this way, John Elias pointed to a Calvinistic consensus which had firmly established itself within Welsh Christianity by the dawn of the nineteenth century. He considered this to be nothing more than the orthodox, evangelical Christian position. Those who veered from this were simply branded Arminians. Nowhere are such conclusions seen more clearly than in a remarkable chapter on “Wales’s Theological Debates” in the biography of John Jones, Talsarn (1796-1857),⁵⁹ written by his theologically astute and politically powerful colleague, the Liverpool Methodist Owen Thomas (1812-1891).⁶⁰

Widely regarded as one of the most “celebrated and unusually forceful” preachers of the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion,⁶¹ John Jones, Talsarn, has been attributed with introducing a new style of profoundly practical preaching which tended to sidestep doctrinal considerations in order to

56 According to John Edward Hughes in *DWB*, 203-204 [203].

57 He had settled in Anglesey and, “because of his popularity as a preacher and his great oratorical powers, he became a foremost leader in the [Calvinistic Methodist] connexion, and since he was a man of strong will, an inflexible mind, and imperious nature, he could not be easily opposed”. This gave rise to him being known by some as the “Pope of Anglesey”. See *DWB*, 204.

58 John Elias, *Hunangofiant John Elias*, ed. Goronwy P. Owen, (Bridgend: Evangelical Movement of Wales, 1974), 75-6.

59 *DWB*, 478-479.

60 *DWB*, 960; D. Ben Rees, *The Life and Work of Owen Thomas, 1812-1891: A Welsh Preacher in Liverpool*, (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, c.1991).

61 So said Gwilym Arthur Edwards, in *DWB*, 478.

consider what it meant to live the Christian life. Though somewhat depleted as far as doctrinal content was concerned, there was no suggestion that John Jones had departed from orthodox Christianity, and he was still considered to be one who upheld the Calvinist system. He did so in the midst of theological debate, if not controversy, which Owen Thomas recounted in a chapter which takes up 327 of the 606 pages of the biography.

Owen Thomas was clearly contemptuous of those he calls "Arminians". He sees the Arminian cause beginning to take root with Jenkin Jones (1700?-1742),⁶² who built his own chapel at Llwynrhydowen in Cardiganshire and was ordained in it in 1726. As was the custom, other ministers were invited to take part in the ordination, and Thomas comments that Jones could not have made his Arminian views known before his ordination or else "it is doubtful that anyone would have been had . . . who would have taken part in his ordination".⁶³ He went on to record that the Arminianism taught by Jenkin Jones and those he influenced "was of a very low character, especially on man's original corruption; and so," he concluded, "they descended gradually to Arianism; and in time to Socinianism . . ."⁶⁴

What is most notable about this account of theological controversy in Wales is that, despite the references to the various perversions of Christian orthodoxy, Owen Thomas seems not to have felt the need to define any of them. Instead, he appears to take for granted that the technical differences between the theological positions would have been clear to his readers. Thomas certainly associated the Calvinist scheme with such ideas as election, original sin and limited atonement, but it is not clear that this is what was upheld by all those he identified as Calvinists. Indeed, he appears to have been at pains to suggest that Calvinism was simply a reasonable and balanced understanding of the Christian gospel. "It seems that their Calvinism, from the beginning, did not tend towards anything extreme, but was of a remarkably moderate character," he wrote.⁶⁵

We can deduce from his work that for Owen Thomas the Arminians seemed to give human beings a role to play in their own salvation even if that role was restricted to a choice, made through "free will", to accept the salvation offered to them. This offended the sense of God's Sovereignty (that human beings could usurp God's will by choosing either to accept or to reject what He had graciously offered) as well as the saving work of Christ (because Christ has died in place of the elect, they have no role to play in their salvation). As a result, the Arminians – whoever they were and whatever they believed – had to be opposed by all means available. Thomas records the recollections of one who had been in the congregation at a preaching festival in Bala in 1808 where

62 *DWB*, 471.

63 Thomas, *John Jones Talsarn*, 264.

64 *Ibid.*, 268.

65 *Ibid.*, 269.

he heard the great Methodist preacher, John Elias, make a statement that would profoundly effect him. Elias had thundered: "One further *challenge* to both devil and Arminian before I end, – 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ?'" The result was, said the listener, that "in my mind, for many years, the word 'Arminian' was associated very closely with the word 'devil'".⁶⁶

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, theological opinion began to diverge. The vast majority of Welsh Nonconformists were keen to associate themselves with Calvinism, even when they took little if any interest in Calvin and his work. For those men, Calvinism upheld God's sovereignty and his preveniency in redemption, both of which were essential to human salvation, given that sin had so corrupted humankind that self-help was an impossibility. The title "Calvinist", then, became virtually iconic. It had meaning, but it was not adopted because it defined a specific standpoint or identified someone with a particular theological school. Instead it came to represent those who looked to Christ's atonement as being sufficient for all while recognising that redemption would be limited to the elect, a scheme which had its foundation and its justification in God's sovereignty. Equally, "Arminian" became a title adopted not by those who abandoned Christian orthodoxy, despite what the Calvinists might have believed. Instead, it seemed to be aimed at those who believed Calvinism to be little more than a kind of fatalism. It is those who protested against this, and sought to uphold the freedom of human will to decide for or against Christ, who seem to have been tarred with the name of Arminius.

The Eclipse of Calvin

IV

We find in Wales, then, evidence to support the "Calvin against the Calvinists" debate that has raged in modern scholarship. There might well have been a normative Reformed theology in Wales, but this was not specifically Calvin's teaching,⁶⁷ and it often went hand in hand with a separatist ecclesiology which would almost certainly not have sat well on the Genevan Reformer's conscience. Reformed theology is not, and never has been, exclusively Calvin's theology, yet Calvin cannot be entirely divorced from Calvinism even if there is some distance between the details of his system and those of subsequent generations. Perhaps this is a more significant point

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁶⁷ See Carl R. Trueman, "Calvin and Calvinism", in Donald K. McKim, *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 224-244 [p.224]; see also Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); *idem*, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); *idem*, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, c.1520-c.1725*, (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, c.2003).

because Welsh theology has never been self-consciously Reformed. Instead it has been largely Dissenting although it almost always adopted the epithet "Calvinist". Nevertheless, Calvin was not known first hand, but instead through the work of his successors on the European continent and the more radical promoters of Reform in England.

Indeed, Calvin's work only began to appear in Welsh as the influence of the Calvinist system (primarily as defined by Dordt rather than by the *Institutio*) began to wane. It was not until 1828, and the appearance of *Esboniad Athrawiaethol ac Ymarferol ar Salmau Dafydd ac eraill* (A Doctrinal and Practical Commentary on the Psalms of David and others), that any of Calvin's works were translated into Welsh, with sections of the *Institutio* following in 1840. The translator, Evan Meredith of Monmouth (known as "Ieuan Gryg"), noted that "Calvin's teachings are much better known than his writings".⁶⁸ What seems clear is that, in the words of one modern historian, the Welsh Calvinists "see themselves as the supporters of a fairly eclectic tradition, Puritanical to be sure, where the two covenants, the five points and the sovereignty of God are fundamentally important, but where the work of Calvin himself... melts into the whole."⁶⁹

By the early twentieth century, the influence of theological liberalism, as understood in Schleiermacher's feeling of absolute dependence and Harnack's "essence" (*Wesen*) of the Christian message in terms of God's Fatherhood with its concomitant human brotherhood was widespread in Welsh Nonconformity.⁷⁰ One result of this was that Calvinism as a system, and Calvin as the one responsible for it, were often the focus of criticism which had very little foundation in either historical or theological reality. Robert Ambrose Jones (1851-1906, better known by his *nom-de-plume* Emrys ap Iwan),⁷¹ was particularly critical.

You all know what sort of a man Calvin was, he was able and very conscientious but wholly devoid of tenderness. He was extremely rational but a man lacking in all the poetic qualities... Calvin's god was very similar to Calvin himself, though he was infinitely greater – a heartless god with no smile on his face or tear in his eye.⁷²

More surprisingly, given his theological education under A. A. Hodge at Princeton Seminary and his status as Calvinistic Methodism's most

68 *Duwinyddiaeth Cristionogol, a ysgrifenydd yn wreiddiol gan y Parch. J. Calvin*, tr. Evan Meredith (Crickhowell: Private Publication, printed by T. Williams, [1840]), iii.

69 D. Densil Morgan, "Calvinism and Wales", unpublished paper read at the "Calvin and His Influence" conference, University of Geneva, May 2009.

70 This is outlined in Robert Pope, *Seeking God's Kingdom: The Nonconformist Social Gospel in Wales, 1906-1939*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999).

71 *DWB*, 509-510.

72 R. Ambrose Jones (Emrys ap Iwan), *Homiliau*, (Denbigh: Gee and Son, 1907), 82. See also D. Myrddin Lloyd (ed.), *Detholiad o Erthyglau a Llythyrau Emrys ap Iwan*, III (London: Y Clwb Llyfrau Cymraeg, 1940), 149.

accomplished Reformed theologian, R. S. Thomas of Abercynon (1844-1923), was even more scathing because he linked Calvin solely with the doctrine of reprobation. Calvin's "serious idea that the just and righteous God has created some men for damnation, cools the warmest blood and creates horror in the bravest heart," he wrote.⁷³

Perhaps the almost total eradication of the Calvinist consensus is best represented by the following tribute, made by D. Miall Edwards (1873-1941), the erudite and prolific Professor of Christian Doctrine and the Philosophy of Religion at the Independents' Memorial College, Brecon, on the death of Thomas Rees (1869-1926), the Principal of the Bala-Bangor College:

I used to chaff him with being a Sabellian and he would retort by calling me a Samosatene or even an Arian! I think we were orthodox in spirit and intention, though somewhat heterodox in form. But we knew that theological labels solve no problems, and that technical orthodoxy is a matter of little importance in comparison with the experience of God in Christ which the orthodoxies and even the heresies endeavoured with varying degrees of success or failure to safeguard.⁷⁴

Whereas in previous generations, labels such as "Arian" and "Sabellian" would have earned the censure of Welsh Nonconformist ministers, they were now considered to be no more than attempts to express an essential religious experience. Neither Edwards nor Rees was interested in Calvin, and philosophical idealism held more sway for them than the five points of Dordt. It was not the end of Calvinism because a neo-orthodox movement emerged which followed the development of the theology of crisis on the European continent, especially that of Karl Barth.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the quotation shows how far Welsh Nonconformity had travelled from its historic moorings in seventeenth-century Puritanism and eighteenth-century evangelicalism.

Conclusion

V

From this survey, we see that Calvinism came to Wales in the shape of Puritan Dissent in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. By that time it had already taken on a life of its own, only partly dependent on Calvin and his work, and much influenced by subsequent generations of divines in

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- 73 R. S. Thomas, "Diwinyddiaeth John Calvin", *Y Traethodydd*, (1910), 73-80, 87-98 [98]. For R. S. Thomas, see D. Densil Morgan, *O'r Pwll Glo i Princeton: Bywyd a Gwaith R. S. Thomas, Abercynon, 1844-1923*, (Bangor: Centre for the Advanced Study of Religion in Wales, 2005); *idem*, "Wales, the Princeton Theology, and a Nineteenth-Century Battle for the Bible", in *The Journal of Welsh Religious History*, new series, vol. 2 (2002), 51-81.
- 74 D. Miall Edwards, "Dr Thomas Rees of Bangor", *The Welsh Outlook* (1926), 182-185 [184].
- 75 See D. Densil Morgan, *Wales and the Word: Historical Perspectives on Welsh Identity and Religion*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 121-141.

continental Europe and in England. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the vestiges of Calvinism remained but Nonconformists had listened to the multifarious voices, both from within the Reformed tradition and beyond it, which had clamoured for an audience during the nineteenth century. Calvin's ideas, mediated and developed by other thinkers, constituted a virtual orthodoxy in Welsh Nonconformity and helped to ensure the survival of the Welsh language and the establishing of a buoyant literary culture. The Welsh might not have known much about Calvin, but the debt owed to him remains great. This is perhaps ironic given that Welsh Nonconformity according to some commentators appears to be in terminal decline,⁷⁶ and Calvin and his ideas are probably less known in Wales today than during any other period in the last five hundred years.

ROBERT POPE

76 The point was forcefully made by Elfed ap Nefydd Roberts in a review in *The Journal of Welsh Religious History*, new series 2 (2002), 110.

EDINBURGH 1910: MYTHS, MISSION AND UNITY

No student of modern church history, and certainly not that of the United Reformed Church, can ignore the significance of the ecumenical movement in the last century. Yet opinions remain divided on whether it has been a mistake to forsake the original missionary vision (so-called) in favour of internal church merger, or whether in the end it is impossible for a disunited church (however that may be understood) to pursue God's mission together. The centenary of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 has provoked a number of conferences and lectures on priorities in mission and ecumenism for the twenty-first century. This article offers a critique of the idea, built into so many narratives, that Edinburgh was the beginning of the modern Ecumenical Movement, and suggests more modest claims. It considers what the Conference had to say about missions, and what relevance, if any, that might have for today. The conclusion raises some questions about the relationship of mission and unity today. Originally prepared as a lecture for the 2010 Conference of National and County Ecumenical Officers, it reflects forty years' experience in the Ecumenical Movement locally, nationally, and internationally, as well as research in primary and secondary sources in Britain and further afield.

Unity

The Edinburgh Conference is widely held to be the start of the modern ecumenical movement; but why? If the Ecumenical Movement is understood primarily in terms of a closer movement together of the Churches, then it is striking that at the Edinburgh Conference the only Churches which were represented, as such, were those Presbyterian churches, like the Church of Scotland, where the overseas missionary work was handled by a Committee of the General Assembly. These were a definite minority. The Edinburgh Conference was essentially a gathering of the representatives of missionary societies. As such it was almost by definition a gathering of North Americans and Europeans, because those were the continents where the headquarters of the missionary societies were located. The coming together of missionary societies, however important, is not the same as the coming together of the Churches.

Again, if the Ecumenical Movement is understood in terms of its structural components, most obviously the World Council of Churches, then the outcome of Edinburgh was the International Missionary Council – a striking achievement, although one which had been wished for ten years earlier at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York in 1900. But the International Missionary Council retained a separate existence *after* the World Council of Churches had been formed in 1938 and inaugurated ten years later; and it did not become part of the World Council until the Third Assembly at New Delhi in 1961, principally as a result of the tireless work of Lesslie Newbigin (1909-98) of the Church of South India, who was the Council's last Secretary. Indeed it was not accomplished without considerable opposition from among certain Missionary Councils.

Thirdly, if the heart of the Ecumenical Movement is understood as concerted work on Faith and Order questions, then Edinburgh is a very odd beginning, because such questions were specifically excluded from discussion at the Conference.

Finally, although Edinburgh was a more representative conference than previous missionary conferences, it was essentially a Protestant gathering. There were no Orthodox Churches there, and the only whisper from a Roman Catholic was an unofficial letter from Bishop Bonomelli of Cremona, which was read by the vice-chairman of Commission VIII on "Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity", Silas McBee, an American Episcopalian layman.¹ It is true that in April 1908 Bishop Bonomelli had suggested to a teacher from the Bergamo seminary, Angelo Roncalli, that the time might be ripe for the summoning of "a great ecumenical council", but whether this really did influence the future Pope John XXIII in his decision to summon the Second Vatican Council can only be a matter of conjecture, though Peter Hebblethwaite implies as much.²

So why has the Edinburgh Conference been regarded as the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement? There are two principal reasons. First, as a result of the Edinburgh Conference, Bishop Charles Brent of the Philippines (1862-1929) was moved to call for a Conference on Faith and Order at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA in 1910. Indeed in several narratives the primary function of Edinburgh is presented as leading to the initiative behind Faith and Order. As a result there were visits from the American Episcopalians to the Church of England, the Episcopal Church of Scotland and the Church of Ireland in 1912 to gather support. Furthermore there were visits by the representatives of the leading North American Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches to the British Free Churches in 1914.

The other reason is that the Edinburgh Missionary Conference was different from its predecessors because there was a substantial delegation from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), the leading high church Anglican missionary society. It was therefore the first international missionary conference not to be exclusively evangelical in composition – though in the USA high and low churchmen managed to work together in missions more effectively. This was noted by Eugene Stock, General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at the New York conference in 1900, as a result of which he determined to secure the same in England.³

1 *World Missionary Conference 1910: Report of Commission VIII*, Edinburgh 1910, 220-3; cf. B. Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, (Grand Rapids MI: 2009), 11-12.

2 J. Delaney, "From Cremona to Edinburgh: Bishop Bonomelli and the World Missionary Conference of 1910", *Ecumenical Review*, lii, 2, July 2000, 420; P. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Council*, (London: 1984), 62.

3 T.A. Askew, "The New York 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference: A Centennial Reflection", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, October 2000, 152.

In fact, this emphasis on the Anglo-Catholic participation has become a *leitmotiv* of the standard ecumenical histories. Tissington Tatlow, the General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement, who had secured the same breakthrough for the SCM in Anglo-Catholic theological colleges in the early 1900s, emphasised this point in his *History of the Student Christian Movement* (1928). He also wrote the chapter on this subject in Rouse and Neill's *History of the Ecumenical Movement* (1948).⁴ There is no doubt that this was a significant development and Brian Stanley has shown in exhaustive detail at what cost in terms of principle it was bought by the Edinburgh Conference organisers.⁵ But at least it was an advance on the 1890s, when the Anglo-Catholics' most significant ecumenical achievement, if it can be so called, was to secure the condemnation of Anglican orders by Pope Leo XIII in 1896, as a result of the discussions between Viscount Halifax and Father Fernand Portal from France. (Halifax paid little attention to the wishes of Cardinal Vaughan of Westminster, and when Leo XIII appointed a Commission to rule on the matter, the verdict was negative.)

Moreover this Anglo-Catholic involvement at Edinburgh was continued in the composition of the Continuation Committee, arguably Edinburgh's most significant achievement, and this secured Anglo-Catholic involvement for future missionary conferences. However, none of this softened Anglo-Catholic attitudes towards, for example, the ecclesial status of the Free Churches or their ministers, as the fate of the Conversations following the Lambeth Appeal of 1920 demonstrated.⁶ Leonard Hodgson, who followed William Adams Brown as General Secretary to the Faith and Order movement in 1932 was an able administrator, but he resented the pressure (as he saw it) from Life and Work to move towards a merger with the Life and Work movement. This is seen clearly in his letter to William Temple of 1 August 1935, in which he first raised the spectre of a "super-church", which took the World Council more than a generation to overcome, and has remained in the anti-ecumenical vocabulary as a convenient red-herring.⁷ Described initially, presumably at least half-humorously, by William Temple as a new Secretary who "rather bullies us", Hodgson, like Bishop Headlam, was reluctant to recognise a place for the German Confessing Church in the ecumenical movement, and argued with Dietrich Bonhoeffer over this in 1935 and 1939, on the grounds that the Confessing Church was not eligible.⁸

4 R. Rouse and S. C. Neill, *History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, (London: 1948).

5 B. Stanley, *World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, 18-48.

6 D. M. Thompson, "The Unity of the Church in Twentieth-Century England: Pleasing Dream or Common Calling", in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (*Studies in Church History* 32), (Oxford: 1996), 507-31.

7 E. M. Jackson, *Red Tape and the Gospel*, (Birmingham: 1980), 232-33.

8 F. A. Iremonger, *William Temple*, (London: 1948), 402-3; E. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, (London: 1970), 398-400, 545-49.

There is an alternative, and more convincing genealogy, of the reunion movement within the Anglican Communion, which has received much less attention. It began in the United States. William Reed Huntington, an Episcopalian who has never received his full due on this side of the Atlantic, as early as 1870, wanted to think of Anglicans as a world communion, not just an extension of the Church of England. Although the initiatives behind the Lambeth Conference, about which successive Archbishops of Canterbury in the nineteenth century were less than totally enthusiastic, lay clearly with those from Britain (not least Augustus Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand and Lichfield), its ecumenical initiatives came firmly from the United States. The most obvious illustration of this is the four point declaration made by the Chicago Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1886, which was adopted by the Lambeth Conference of 1888, and – as modified in 1920 – has remained at the heart of official Anglican ecumenical endeavours ever since. Furthermore, the Lambeth Conferences of 1897 and 1908 took significant ecumenical initiatives in relation to other churches, notably the Presbyterians, which have never received widespread attention despite the faithful work of Alan Stephenson.⁹ Lambeth 1920 was bound to present a Report on Reunion, because of outstanding initiatives from 1908, and Charles Brent's own initiative was just one part of that. The detailed history of the Commission on Relations with other Churches in 1920 cannot be discussed here; but it reflects a series of dynamics, which were themselves influenced by the way in which Archbishop Davidson, and particularly George Bell as his secretary, had already responded pro-actively rather than simply reactively to the Geneva Preparatory Meeting on Faith and Order just before the Lambeth Conference began. I have argued elsewhere that the work of the English Sub-Committee for the World Conference on Faith and Order was more important at Lambeth 1920 than is generally appreciated, because it owed so much to George Bell, who wrote the biography of Randall Davidson and edited the four volumes of *Documents on Christian Unity*, published by Oxford University Press.¹⁰ In view of all this it is perhaps not surprising that Tissington Tatlow could remark that "there was a strong feeling in Europe, not only in Germany, that the Faith and Order movement was an Anglican imperialist move, entirely ignoring Continental circumstances and the Continental point of view".¹¹ Their initial impression may not have been wrong.

Nevertheless the ecumenical interpretation of Edinburgh is now so deeply embedded that Thomas Askew in articles on the London Centenary Missions Conference in 1888 and the New York 1900 Ecumenical Conference seems to have found himself almost inevitably looking for signs of an ecumenism which

9 A. M. G. Stephenson, *The First Lambeth Conference*, (London: 1967); *Anglicanism and the Lambeth Conferences*, (London: 1978).

10 Thompson, "Unity of the Church", 514-15; R. C. D. Jasper, *George Bell, Bishop of Chichester*, (London, 1967), 56-60.

11 Rouse and Neill, *Ecumenical Movement*, 417.

would flower at Edinburgh.¹² This over-teleological approach to church history is almost always misleading, despite its attractiveness in demonstrating “relevance”. It cannot be denied that both the London and New York Conferences (which is why Edinburgh was officially counted as the “Third” World Missionary Conference) had a significant ecumenical dimension. But it was the ecumenism that had characterised Evangelical co-operation for most of the nineteenth century, i.e. a willingness to work together without raising awkward questions about matters which the Liverpool Conference of 1860 regarded as clearly secondary. This is clearly illustrated by the Liverpool Conference’s “Minute on Native Churches”:

On one important topic laid before them, the transfer of European systems of Church organisation to foreign countries, several members of the Conference gave it as their opinion, that while a missionary, in commencing the organization of a church, will naturally begin with the system which he and his supporters conscientiously follow, still he should apply it to the new country and the new people with considerable latitude: he should endeavour to retain only its essential features; to rid it of mere technicalities, and of those historical elements which all systems, political and religious, absorb into their constitution in the course of years. It was suggested that, in respect to the ordination of native pastors and missionaries, while the Scriptural tenets of character enjoined by the Apostle should be retained in full, the standards of knowledge should have reference to the circumstances of the churches, and of their own training; and that in general these systems should be judiciously adapted to the communities, climates, and people among whom they are introduced.¹³

The description of “systems of Church organization” as “European”, the assumptions lying behind phrases such as “essential features”, “mere technicalities and historical elements”, and the idea that all systems should be “judiciously adapted” are all key questions for non-European churches. The responses of such churches to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* – the Faith and Order Commission’s consensus statement of 1982 – are a reminder that those questions have not gone away.¹⁴

However, there was one important ecumenical achievement, which is a direct consequence of the Conference. The Edinburgh Conference gave a significant stimulus to the acceleration of formal unity movements among Asian missions in single churches. These took two forms: the organic model,

12 T. A. Askew, ‘The 1888 London Centenary Missions Conference: Ecumenical Disappointment or American Missions Coming of Age?’ *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 1994, 113-18, ‘The New York 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference: A Centennial Reflection’, *ibid.*, October 2000, 146-54.

13 *Papers of the Liverpool Conference on Missions, 1860*, (London: 1860), 312.

14 See M. Thurian (ed.), *Churches respond to BEM*, 6 vols., (Geneva: 1986-88).

which developed in British India, leading in the fullness of time to the Churches of South India (1947), North India (1970), and Pakistan (1970). That did involve the coming together of episcopal and non-episcopal forms of polity, and in North India (but not South) two patterns of Christian initiation; but its main limitation has been that it has been for the most part confined to those churches arising from British missions. Thus American Methodists stayed out, because their bishops did not wish to face a possible reduction in their stipends; the Lutherans were only involved in the Church of Pakistan, and the United Presbyterians withdrew from that at the last moment. The other model was the federal model, adopted in China, and rather differently in Thailand and Japan. Here there was no liturgical unification of ministries, but rather a development to a further stage of the comity agreements that had become standard since the late nineteenth century, whereby churches recognised an inter-changeability of membership and did not trespass on one another's territory.

Although there have been several United Churches formed elsewhere – for example, the United Church of Canada (1925), the United Church of Christ in the USA (1957), the United Reformed Church in Great Britain (1972), the Uniting Church in Australia (1979), the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman (1992) – these have to be set against the number of negotiations for union that have broken down or stuttered to a halt, as in New Zealand and Nigeria, or with Anglican-Methodist Union in Great Britain. The most striking achievements have often been very local – Co-operating Parishes in New Zealand, or Local Ecumenical Partnerships in the United Kingdom – but larger schemes, such as the various Covenanting Proposals in the United Kingdom, following the Nottingham Faith and Order Conference of 1964, or the Consultation on Church Union in the United States, originally stemming from the Greenwich Plan of 1949, have either failed or taken a different form. The ecumenical atmosphere in general has been transformed, particularly since the Second Vatican Council, and the significance of this should not be underestimated, precisely because it is now so much taken for granted. Essentially, however, the present stage is what the Edinburgh Conference envisaged under the term “co-operation”. It would be more honest to acknowledge that, and reserve talk of unity for those situations where there is mutual recognition of membership and ministry. Cooperation is nothing to be ashamed of, and represents a significant advance – in the 1920s, and until the Second World War, Anglicans were not allowed to pray with Nonconformists, just as Protestants were not allowed to pray with Catholics before Vatican II. Tremendous strides were made in the twentieth century; it is now possible to appreciate how shameful the situation was before, and that was the situation faced by the Edinburgh Conference.

Mission

In the *Hibbert Journal* for October 1910, there was an anonymous article entitled “A Vision of Unity”, which was about the Edinburgh Conference. It

was attributed to "The author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*", a book published by Macmillan in 1901. The author was in fact Lily Dougall (1858-1923), who was born in Montreal but moved to Edinburgh in 1878, where she published ten novels in the 1890s. *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* represented a shift to non-fiction and a presentation of liberal Christianity. In 1911 she moved to Oxford and gathered around her a group of clerics, academics and others who were interested in inter-denominational discussions; the best-known of this group was probably B.H. Streeter.¹⁵ It is striking that as late as 1910, even in a liberal journal like the *Hibbert Journal*, she deemed it wise as a woman to remain anonymous. Lily Dougall was not an official delegate at Edinburgh, but presumably attended the various public meetings in connection with the Conference. Significantly her first conclusion from the Conference was that "the power to rise to the full stature of man is latent in every normal man, of whatever race or nation". Thus missionaries who failed to admit converts to social equality were the natural product of their home and nation: "Until the home Church realises that social antipathies and racial contempts, nursed upon prejudice and insufficient data, are serious sins in the kingdom of Christ, our missionaries are like men running in a sack race".¹⁶ Like most of the discussion in the Conference, the contest was seen as one between West and East; so although it was acknowledged that Christianity began in the East, it was understood to have come to fruition in the West. Her conclusion, however, is the most interesting part. Many Christian workers came to Edinburgh, she believed, "bold in the belief that the Christian's personal relation to the living Christ could be alone the basis of a unity visible in one organisation".¹⁷ This itself is an interesting comment on expectations of unity at Edinburgh; but she went on to say that no one could have left thinking that. What was needed was a basis of union, which would comprise great variety, "like light, which is made up of the different colours of the prism". Meanwhile "the co-operative unity of different Christian bodies is so essential to progress that bodies thus co-operating will reap swift, and perhaps genuine, success, leaving behind any that remain in conscientious isolation, to apparent, perhaps real, failure".¹⁸ The greater vision, however, was "of the unity of humanity, and of God with humanity". This was a liberal, almost "social gospel", interpretation of Edinburgh, rather than a mission- or unity-orientated one, which certainly illustrates the way in which different threads of the subsequent ecumenical movement could be found there.

What then were the striking achievements of Edinburgh 1910 in terms of mission? Lily Dougall's first comment that the power to achieve full human potential exists in all human beings regardless of whatever race or nation

15 "Lily Dougall", *ODNB*, xvi, 597.

16 "A Vision of Unity; by the author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*", *Hibbert Journal*, ix, 1 (Oct 1910), 77.

17 *Ibid.*, 80.

18 *Ibid.*, 81.

would be one. (This did not, incidentally, eliminate frequent contrasts drawn between civilised people and savages.) But it is illustrated by one of the truly memorable moments in the Conference. As indicated earlier, the membership of the conference was overwhelmingly North American and British. Even those from continental Europe were quite a small proportion by comparison – Lutheran representation, for example, was very small; but those from the mission fields were even fewer. Out of 1,215 official delegates, there were eighteen native converts of the Western missionary enterprise (of whom seventeen were from Asia). This was in spite of a specific request from the organising committee as early as 1908 that each delegation should include, if possible, one or two native Christians in its membership. More were invited by the American societies than the British. Some of those who did come were very distinguished in their own contexts, having been heads of their churches. Contemporary accounts say what they had to say was heard with interest. Brian Stanley rightly wonders whether they were really “heard”, in the sense in which that term is used today.¹⁹

Probably the most famous incident concerned V. S. Azariah (later Bishop of Dornakal), who had been invited by the British Executive Committee on the recommendation of Henry Whitehead, the Anglo-Catholic Bishop of Madras. In the area where Azariah worked, between 2000 and 3000 people a year were being converted to Christianity by 1910. On Monday 20 June, Azariah spoke in one of the evening meetings on the highly sensitive topic of “The Problem of Co-operation between Foreign and Native Workers”. Beginning uncompromisingly by saying that “the problem of race relationships is one of the most serious problems confronting the Church today”, he proceeded to analyse the issue of co-operation with plenty of illustrations to make his points; and he concluded that the urgent need now was to begin the process of the transfer of control from the foreign missionary to the native workers, not suddenly but gradually and decisively. Throughout his address, he had returned again and again to the theme of friendship, and his climax was dramatic:

Through the ages to come the Indian Church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for *love*. Give us FRIENDS!²⁰

With that he sat down. The atmosphere was electric. Henry Whitehead’s wife wrote later to Azariah’s wife that the speech had struck the company “like

19 Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 95.

20 *World Missionary Conference 1910*, ix, 306, 315. Azariah also recalled how a young missionary had told him of what he called the impudence of an Indian clergyman, who was a graduate of one of the Indian universities, in going forward to shake hands with him. “This man,” he said, “thinks, that because he is a graduate and has put on a European costume, I must shake hands with him!” (*Ibid.*, 310-11).

a bomb”, with half of the audience being delighted “and the other half very angry”.²¹ Some were so shocked that an informal meeting was called to discuss what should be done. Delegates wanted the public to be assured that things were not really like that on the mission field, and George Sherwood Eddy, an American Congregationalist and Azariah’s closest friend at the conference was asked to give him “a fatherly admonition”. Most of the press did not report the speech at all. As Stanley points out, Azariah should not be cast as an early critic of missionary imperialism – indeed he clashed with Gandhi in 1937, and Gandhi privately considered him as his Enemy Number One because of his lifelong commitment to the evangelization of the depressed classes. But even if the incident was not widely reported at the time, it stands for us as symbolic of the difference between then and now, when, as Azariah argued in his speech, a multi-racial Christianity is seen as an enrichment of the Body of Christ. From this point of view, even J. H. Oldham’s *Christianity and the Race Problem* (1924), although prophetic in its way, is still light years away from today.²² Azariah’s speech in 1910 more aptly captures the difference between then and now, than anything else; although it would be unwise to be complacent about the extent to which that message has really penetrated the pews in the United Kingdom.

The confidence with which delegates of all kinds differentiated between Christian civilisation and the rest of the world at Edinburgh was not destined to last very long after the Conference ended. Why? Because the world to which the Edinburgh Missionary Conference was addressed was blown away by the First World War. The European pretensions to a superior Christian civilization perished in the mud of Flanders and the appalling tragedy of the Battle of the Somme. If the press today is moved by the sight of the coffins of single soldiers being drawn through the streets of Wootton Bassett, how would they have coped with 57,000 killed on 1 July alone in 1916, for many of whom there is still no certain known grave?²³ The link between missions and civilisation, which had been a cornerstone of nineteenth-century missionary endeavour, completely lost its credibility. There is an even deeper irony here. The Conference’s message “To the Members of the Church in Christian Lands” included these words:

21 S. Billington Harper, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma: Bishop V.S. Azariah and the Travails of Christianity in British India*, (Grand Rapids, MI: 2000), 147-8; Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 126.

22 Nevertheless Oldham’s intervention in the same year with the Colonial Office to prevent Kenya being offered as a colony to India, in order to recognize the esteem in which Britain held India, was one of a number of protests which killed that particular Government idea stone dead. Keith Clements’s detailed discussion of Oldham and East Africa (*Faith on the Frontier*, (Edinburgh: 1999), 211-54), does not mention this incident, which is recorded in the Cabinet Papers at the National Archives, Kew.

23 M. Middlebrook, *The First Day on the Somme*, (Harmondsworth: 1984), 263.

The next ten years will in all probability constitute a turning-point in human history, and may be of more critical importance in determining the evolution of mankind than many centuries of ordinary experience. If those years are wasted, havoc may be wrought that centuries are not able to repair. On the other hand, if they are rightly used, they may be among the most glorious in Christian history.²⁴

They may stand as a warning to those who write Conference messages. They were probably right, but the next ten years were certainly not rightly used; whether the consequences were as dire as the Conference message suggested has yet to be proved, but it has not yet been falsified by experience.

To this must be added political developments in the relationship between colonised and colonisers. Whilst the seeds of the movements for self-rule in the colonies undoubtedly lay before 1914, even though they gathered pace between the wars and became a whirlwind after 1945, the First World War provided the rain, which assisted their germination. In the long run this profoundly changed the context of missionary work, particularly that which had sheltered under the umbrella of empire most directly. Most obviously this was seen in India, where the movement for self-government became most strident in the inter-war period. Further east, the last Chinese emperor fell in 1911, and that country entered upon a revolutionary century, which intensified more dramatically after 1949. India and China had been the main *foci* of the Edinburgh Conference, and therefore these changes in context were acutely felt. Furthermore the economic depression, which followed the Great War in the 1920s as the world struggled to adjust to a new balance of economic power and financial resources, had a direct effect on giving to support Protestant missions. This was most acutely felt in the USA, where there were significant cutbacks in missionary personnel, both in the Missionary Boards at home and also in the missionaries employed overseas. The effect was probably less dramatic in British missionary societies but it was none the less real. Here the downside of a missionary movement supported by voluntary societies became apparent.

These developments provided the context for the fate of the new "science of missions", which Oldham in particular had hoped would be an important result of the Edinburgh Conference. From a position on the sidelines of church life, Oldham hoped that it would become central, and could therefore be the object of scientific study. This idea was reflected in a proposal in the Conference *Monthly News Sheet* for May 1910 from Dr Weitbrecht of the CMS Simla Mission, and specifically mentioned in the evening address on 17 June by Professor Dr Mirbt of Marburg on German Missions. By "scientific study" Mirbt meant three things: a dispassionate factual history of missions; a theological theory of missions to address those problems, which could not be resolved by praxis; and finally theological examination of the relationship

24 *World Missionary Conference 1910: ix, History and Records of the Conference*, 108.

between Christianity and other religions.²⁵ The instrument of this continuing work was to be the Continuation Committee and the *International Review of Missions*, founded in 1912.

In the first issue Oldham's *Editor's Notes* spelt out his understanding of a "science of missions". He began by saying straightaway that he did not use the term "science" "in any sense which would limit the freedom either of God or of man".²⁶ So there was no elimination of the Godward dimension, as Charles Finney's *Lectures on Revivals* did in the 1840s, by suggesting that it was unnecessary to wait for God to move in order to have a revival.²⁷ What he did mean was the need to learn from the past and from one another; thus the vast body of experience accumulated in different mission fields needed to be sifted, so that it could be used to direct present work. All methods needed to be tested "with a view to securing the highest efficiency".²⁸ That was the purpose of the *Review*. It would be international, and also inter-denominational (rather than un-denominational or extra-denominational). The first task was to study the Missionary Message in relation to each of the non-Christian religions. But almost of equal importance was the need to make Christianity indigenous, by "building up a strong, independent, self-supporting, self-propagating Church" – a problem even more pressing than that of securing more foreign missionaries.²⁹ In referring to the "guidance and inspiration" that could be learned from the pages of the New Testament a little later,³⁰ he could almost have been referring to Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours*, first published later in 1912. Allen was an SPG missionary in North China, and later moved to Africa, working with the World Dominion Trust, and eventually died there in 1947.³¹ His book was about the importance of empowering the indigenous church. Even Donald McGavran, in his much later books on church growth (based on missionary experience), was making similar points.³² Nevertheless, not only did Allen think that his ideas would take another generation to catch on, but it can also be said that, particularly in Africa, they were only taken seriously after the Second World War, as the British Churches realised that political independence was incompatible with traditional missionary-dominated local churches. Even then United States Mission Boards were much slower to respond. One "cost" of this slow response was the

25 Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 293; *World Missionary Conference 1910*, ix, 213.

26 *International Review of Missions*, i, 1, Jan 1912, 1.

27 C. G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, (Oberlin, OH: 1868), edn, repr. 2005, 1-17. The comparison is mine not Oldham's.

28 *International Review of Missions*, i, 1, 2.

29 *Ibid.*, 4.

30 *Ibid.*, 5.

31 R. Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (ed. with Foreword by Lesslie Newbigin), (Grand Rapids, MI: 1962).

32 D. A. McGavran, *The Bridges of God*, (London: 1955); *How Churches Grow*, (London: 1959); *Ethnic Realities and the Church*, (Pasadena, CA: 1979).

development of the African Instituted Churches. Furthermore, it can be argued that only the Communist Revolution in China in 1949 finally forced Western Christians to look away from what they had for a century regarded as the greatest prize towards the "Cinderella" of Africa, which was to yield the fastest rate of growth in Christianity in the later twentieth century. David Paton's book, *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God* (1953), based on his Chinese experience, has sometimes been regarded as extreme; but if read as a judgement of traditional ways of missionary working (notwithstanding the unity advances in China), rather than the *missio Dei*, it still makes sense.

Oldham's priorities, however, explain the significance of the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1928 and the way in which it tackled the relationship of Christianity and non-Christian religions, and that between older and younger Churches. In a different way it illuminates the emphasis of the 1938 Conference, originally intended to be held at Hangchow, but eventually held at Tambaram, Madras in India, where Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* reflected Oldham's loss of belief by the end of the 1930s in the superiority of European civilisation: Kraemer's "Non-Christian World" was as much Europe as anywhere else.

There were some unexpected consequences of Edinburgh as well, one of which related to the role of women. By 1910 there were probably as many women missionaries as men. From the 1860s, especially in the United States after the Civil War, there had been a tendency towards the formation of separate Women's Boards of Missions, which secured contributions from women and children, and became highly successful. This was not so highly developed in the United Kingdom, although they did exist among the Baptists, and the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of England. The older missionary societies disliked them, not least because women's missions seemed to be undercutting them in terms of costs. Already before 1910, and particularly afterwards, there developed a strong impulse to "rationalise" missionary work and combine women's boards with their male equivalents. This was generally successful after the War, and where not implemented immediately was accelerated by the depression. Despite many promises given, the number of women executives slumped; but more significantly it seems highly probable that the dissolution of these Women's Boards also reduced missionary giving overall, especially in the USA. Any calculation is problematic because of the Slump. But the pursuit of "equality" may in fact have resulted in an overall loss, however politically incorrect such separate work now appears. More significantly this development almost certainly accelerated the campaigning for women's ordination at home, so the consequences of this development may indeed have been profound for the twentieth-century Church in the West. (In this respect the Catholic Church may have experienced less agitation, partly, of course, because of the agitation over "modernism", but principally because of the existence of women's religious orders, which had been by far the fastest growing side of the religious life in the nineteenth century).

Some aspects of mission were missing at Edinburgh. Africa was largely ignored, which in retrospect seems surprising. There was only one black African present, whom Brian Stanley has traced, Mark Hayford, a Baptist from West Africa, and he does not appear in the official List of Delegates.³³ This is the obverse of the emphasis on the East, rather than the South. Latin America was also deliberately excluded, to the dismay of the North Americans, because Anglo-Catholics regarded Protestant missions in Latin America as proselytisers in Catholic countries.

There was no real recognition of the significance of diaspora Christianity, despite the fact that this had been the vehicle for initial missionary engagement with indigenous populations in North (and South) America, South Africa, India, and Australasia. In the twentieth century diasporas became more significant and more varied, particularly as a consequence of the Russian Revolutions of 1917, which enlarged the Orthodox populations of Western Europe and North America. In this context the role of what might be called chaplaincy was often a bridge to a different kind of ministry; but it also enhanced Christian pluralism and weakened, even if it did not destroy, older identifications of church and nation or territory.

Nor was the question of mission at home touched in any detail; but again the First World War brought sharp reminders of the extent of the unchurched or partially churched among troops on the Western Front, leading to a series of analyses after 1918. The demand upon quite ordinary Christians “to give an account of the faith that is in them” gradually increased awareness of the need for quite basic catechetical training as the groundwork for mission. By the last third of the twentieth century too, the question of the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions had become a domestic question, as the Commonwealth “came home” after 1948, demonstrating how unprepared most ordinary Christians were for this encounter.

Mission and Unity Today

How then can mission and unity be held together? Edinburgh was the last occasion when conservative and liberal evangelicals and high churchmen worked happily together, until the Global Christian Forum of 2007 at Nairobi, Kenya (arising from conversations beginning in 1998). The conservative-liberal divide did not become acute in Britain until the formation of the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society in 1924 – but even then co-operation in missions continued between conservative and more liberal evangelicals until after the Second World War. It was the conservative groups in the IMC that were most opposed to union of that body with the WCC. In other words it has taken the best part of a century to get “ecumenicals” and “evangelicals” talking to each another again. Even now it is only too easy for the fundamental goal of mission to drop from the agenda of such conversations. It also remains a real

33 Stanley, *World Missionary Conference*, 97-8.

question, whether churches which are not united can engage in common mission. In England at present Local Ecumenical Partnerships are bearing the weight of this question, and the fragility of such relationships is often a cause for concern. So indeed are the ecclesiological consequences. Although there is a determination to avoid LEPs becoming a new denomination, the example of Co-operating Parishes in New Zealand is not auspicious, which suggests that if the Churches lose interest in engaging in anything beyond co-operation, eventually even that will wither and die with a change of generation. Church historians only have to look back to the Evangelical Revival to see examples of the same kind of thing happening in earlier times.

Oldham regarded Edinburgh's most significant *ecumenical* achievement as the establishment of the Continuation Committee, and emphasised this in his reflections on the Conference a quarter of a century later.³⁴ Moreover the work of the Continuation Committee sub-committee conferences in the years immediately following Edinburgh in India, China in 1912 and 1913, involving John Mott and one-third of the indigenous leaders present at Edinburgh, led to different patterns of united action by the Churches.³⁵ Yet if the establishment of the Continuation Committee, and eventually in 1921 the International Missionary Council, has been overshadowed by events, that was accentuated by the fact that the merger between the IMC and the WCC in 1961 came at precisely the point when the new political context for the non-Western world had become clear even in Africa, the last of the continents to experience it. Harold Macmillan's famous "winds of change" speech in South Africa was the year before in 1960. But in the contemporary World Council of Churches, its latest reorganisation has landed both the former Division of World Mission and Evangelism and the Faith and Order Commission in the same Unit, one of several, with less than half of the total budget for them and the other priorities of that Unit. Is it surprising that both mission and unity concerns seem to be marginalised in the ecumenical instruments today?

DAVID M. THOMPSON

34 J. H. Oldham, "After Twenty-Five Years", *International Review of Missions*, xxiv, 95, July 1935, 297.

35 K. Clements, *Faith on the Frontier*, 110-12; C. H. Hopkins, *John Mott 1865-1955: A Biography*, (Grand Rapids, MI: 1979), 389-404.

“SO PRACTICAL A MYSTIC” – OLIVE WYON (1881-1966)¹

Olive Wyon was born in Hampstead in 1881 of artistic stock. Her family tree can be traced back to Cologne, where in the 1730s and 1740s a Peter Wyon supplied coin and metal dies to the ecclesiastical and civic mints. A relative, also Peter, a metalworker, emigrated to Birmingham in the mid eighteenth-century, establishing a business which his grandsons eventually divided into two parts, one of which was based in London. Thomas the elder (1767-1830), the grandson who came to London, was appointed Chief Engraver of His Majesty's Seals in 1816, an office which was uniquely handed down through three generations of the London Wyons, the last to hold it being Olive's father Allan (1843-1907). Allan also completed his brother Alfred's magnum opus, *The Great Seals of England* (1887). Allan's uncle, Thomas the younger (1792-1817), who died young of consumption, was appointed Chief Engraver to the Mint in 1815, and his other uncle, Edward William (c. 1811-1885) was a noted sculptor, whose works included two caryatids for the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Another member of the Birmingham branch of the family (William, 1795-1851) designed Victoria's head on the Penny Black.²

The Allan Wyons were Hampstead Congregationalists, with a cousinhood that linked them to the Evangelical Anglican world of the Hitchcocks, Williamses and Hodders, and to the London Missionary Society. They were a family of some standing. Olive was a precociously intelligent, if delicate child. She was educated privately by a governess, and then at the age of ten spent an unhappy year at Hampstead High School before settling down at a small school run by devout Anglicans. There her linguistic skills flourished.³ By the time she became a member of Heath Street Baptist Church at the age of fifteen (1896), her sister Hetty reminisced that "...she was already reading stiff theological books, so she must have matured intellectually very young".⁴ When she was seventeen, an aunt suggested that she might benefit from a time in Germany, and she spent a year in Immerstadt living with a Lutheran pastor, Johannes Bullemer, and his family. She honed her French and German, and Frau Bullemer, herself an artist's daughter, nurtured Olive's innate artistic

1 The attribution is from the comment of one of Olive Wyon's students at St Colm's; Naomi Oates and Jean Fraser, *Olive Wyon, a Chronicle*, (privately printed for St Colm's College, Edinburgh by J. and G. Innes Ltd, Cupar, Fife, n.d. but 1971), 18. The introduction gives the surname Oatts, probably a printing error.

2 Philip Attwood, "The Wyon family (per. c.1760-1962) – die-engravers and medallists" *ODNB* – oxforddnb.com/view/article64499, accessed 8 May 2009.

3 Oates and Fraser, *op. cit.*, 5.

4 All Olive Wyon's papers have been deposited in the National Library of Scotland archive. I am most grateful to the staff of the archive for their help during my research. Notes by Hetty Wyon, Acc. 5468/3, Recollections on Wyon's life and work, mainly by her sister.

flair. That year was the beginning of a lasting friendship and an enduring love of the World Church.

She returned to a life of home and church duties – house-keeping, cooking, nursing, Sunday School teaching, “and a little visiting amongst the poor and sick”.⁵ But the underlying rhythm of her life was a call to missionary service which had been growing since she read a life of David Livingstone as a young child. At some point the family moved, and took up membership at Haverstock Hill Congregational Church in Maitland Park. Olive’s application papers to the LMS in 1905 name this as her home church, and she states that she had served as Missionary Secretary there since 1901. Encouraged by the Society, she moved north in 1905 to study at the United Free Church Missionary Institute in Edinburgh. She loved it, and threw herself into its life, but then tragedy struck, and she suffered a complete nervous breakdown.⁶ It was about this time that the entire family transferred their membership to Lyndhurst Road, Congregational Church, Hampstead, where Olive’s brother Allan was to become a deacon.⁷

Olive went to Switzerland to recuperate for nine months, during which time her French became fluent, and she found herself unwittingly engaged with what was to be her life’s work – translation. She read Paul Sieppel’s *The Life of Adèle Kamm*, and was so impressed by it that she asked the author for permission to translate it into English. Permission was granted, and it was eventually published in 1910 under the title *A Living Witness, the Life of Adèle Kamm*. In the meantime Olive returned to England, taking up a post as Assistant Warden of Birmingham YWCA, but still harbouring the hope that she might be able to fulfil her missionary ambitions. It was not to be. On 26 April 1910, the LMS doctor noted that he did not feel she could be passed on medical grounds. It was a crushing disappointment. She was twenty-nine and all that she had felt called for, hoped for and prepared for lay in ruins.

She took herself off to Woodbrooke, the Quaker College in Selly Oak, to undertake some serious theological study, and for a while worked for the Friends in Brittany and Geneva before war intervened and she returned to England. That must have been another sad blow for one with ancestral German roots and such a love of the German Church. Baptist, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Quaker, even before 1914 Olive could not be labelled. C. H. Dodd met her for the first time in 1915 when she was one of the first women to join the Free Church Fellowship, and he later commented, “Before we were all

5 Copy of her application papers to the London Missionary Society, Acc. 5261:57, Miscellaneous papers.

6 Dorothy Wyon to Naomi Oates and Jean Fraser, 20 August 1967: Acc. 5621:56.

7 R.F. Horton, *An Autobiography*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917), 297, “...Allan Wyon, the sculptor, one of my young deacons.” Horton is referring to the immediate aftermath of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 – Allan was then twenty-nine. There seems to have been an underlying family connection to Lyndhurst Road. Professor Clyde Binfield, private correspondence, 4.10.2003, notes that Dorothy was baptised there in 1888, three days before Nathaniel Micklem.

talking about 'ecumenism', she was a truly ecumenical personality".⁸ The Fellowship's aim of "... a Free Church of England so steeped in the spirit and traditions of the entire Church Catholic as to be ready in due time for the reunion of Christendom" would have struck a sympathetic chord.⁹ However, if the war years saw a forging of relationships with some who would later be influential in inter-war ecumenical circles, it also saw another serious bout of illness.

In 1917 an attack of Graves disease (exophthalmic goitre) left her with a permanently weakened heart and prone to illness for the rest of her life.¹⁰ It took her two years to recover. Part of that time was spent in Holland, where she added another language to her growing arsenal. Part was spent at the Convent of the Epiphany near Truro. Here, according to Hetty, she suffered from attacks of depression, and was greatly helped by Evelyn Underhill to whom she told "the whole story of her life... especially difficulties about 'family relationships'". She said that it was like a General Confession and that it changed her life.¹¹ They were to become great friends. This was also the beginning of an abiding love of Anglican spirituality and worship.

After the war Olive lived by her pen. In 1919 she joined the staff of the World Dominion Press. The Press had begun life three years earlier, and its eponymous journal (which began in 1923) stated its intent

...to deal with the world situation viewed from the standpoint of the kingdom of God... It will discover how Near Eastern problems may have Far Eastern causes. It will indicate how the moral condition of Europe may have Asiatic reactions. It will prove that 'white' selfishness may stimulate 'black' rebellion. It will seek to assist in the education of conscience in the interests of world peace and of the League of Nations. To sum up, the object of this Quarterly will be to think in world terms and to review the distribution of forces and resources of the Christian church in the light of world need. It will plead for co-ordination and co-operation and a World Plan.¹²

Olive was to be on the staff for ten years, rising to become Assistant Editor.

8 C.H. Dodd, 30 June 1967, Acc. 5621/56, Letters received by Mrs Oates and Miss Jean Fraser.

9 Quoted, J. W. Grant, *Free Churchmanship in England 1870-1940, with special reference to Congregationalism*, (London: Independent Press, n.d.), 218.

10 Hetty describes the illness as "... a very bad attack of exophthalmic goitre", and states that Olive was so ill it was thought she would not be able to work again, 11 May 1971, letter to "Isobel", Acc. 5468/3, Recollections on Wyon's life and work, mainly by her sister. However, Hetty confuses it with her earlier nervous breakdown of 1905, and wrongly attributes the translation of Sieppel's book about Adèle Kamm to this later period of recuperation.

11 Hetty's notes, Acc. 5468/3, 30.

12 <http://research.yale.edu:8084/missionperiodicals/viewdetail.jsp?id=574>; accessed 31 July 2009.

During this time she travelled extensively – through Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, in the Near East and Africa. One result was *An Eastern Palimpsest* (1927), the volume in the World Dominion Survey series which dealt with Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Transjordan and Egypt.

If ecumenism was a major thread in her life, a minor one was community life. In the wake of the First World War, there was a flurry of interest in the nature of community living. A gathering of those interested at Jordans, the Quaker centre, led to the establishment of the Order of the Kingdom. Olive's former Principal at Missionary Institute, Ann Hunter Small, was one of its leading exponents. For two long periods in 1922 and 1923 Olive shared in the experimental life of a Community House which Ann established in Highbury. She loved living the rhythm of prayer and service, welcoming guests who came on retreat, and those who simply wished to unburden themselves, yet

... there was plenty of fun and laughter. Every now and then we took a day off and went to an art exhibition or a theatre, or out to see friends. But the Silence Rule was kept very firmly: from 8 pm (after chapel) each evening til' the next day at 12 (noon) when we met again in chapel for our daily service. When the Silence settled on the house at night, it seemed as though a Cloud of Peace hovered over the habitation.¹³

The experiment did not last, and Olive spent the rest of the 1920s living in a flat in Canteloves Road, Kentish Town. From 1923 she was a member of Kentish Town Presbyterian Church, being ordained as an elder in 1929. A fellow elder remembered her passion for dignified and serious worship, as well as her commitment to leading the Junior Church (which she did from 1925). He also recalled that "... she found a monthly communion service was not sufficient"¹⁴ and that she was confirmed in the Church of England so that she could receive more frequently. Ecumenical openness marked the Wyon family. They belonged to that part of English Congregationalism which was caught in the tension between the Catholic and the Reformed. Olive's sister Dorothy served as an LMS missionary in China and was later ordained as a Congregational minister, her sister Hetty became an Anglican deaconess, serving in Chatham, but the tension was lived out most acutely by her brother, Allan.

Allan took after his great uncle Edward, and became a sculptor of distinction. He studied at the Royal Academy and along with Eric Gill, and Jacob Epstein was one of the first sculptors to practise direct carving in stone. His best known work is part of the frieze on the London Underground Headquarters, 55 Broadway, in collaboration with Epstein, Gill, and Henry Moore

13 Olive Wyon, *The Three Windows: the Story of Ann Hunter Small*, (London: James Clarke, 1953), 94.

14 Oates and Fraser, *op. cit.*, 11.

in the early 1920s.¹⁵ His clients were to include Hereford and Truro Cathedrals, the University of Nottingham, and the London School of Hygiene Tropical Medicine, whose entrance he designed. He became Secretary of the Art Workers Guild in 1924. After R. F. Horton's death, Allan became first a member of Marylebone Presbyterian Church, and then of W. E. Orchard's King's Weigh House, that extraordinary fusion of Congregationalism and Catholicism, for which he designed a reredos.¹⁶ The Wyons moved in circles which would have been deeply interested both in Orchard's clever but flawed attempt to make the Weigh House a "bridge church" in response to the appeal of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, and also in his going over to Rome in 1932. Allan, Hetty recalled, thought of following him, but eventually decided to become an Anglican instead. She suspected that Evelyn Underhill was behind Olive's decision to seek Anglican confirmation. Olive and Allan were confirmed together in St Paul's. Evelyn Underhill approved and asked her cousin Francis, who was the Dean of Rochester, to present her. Hetty noted "The Dean was a very devout, but perhaps slightly conventional Anglican, and I gather that he found Olive a very hard nut to crack!"¹⁷ Confirmed Anglican, Presbyterian elder. She and the Queen, C. H. Dodd later drolly commented, "... were the only women who were members of the Church of Scotland and the Church of England."¹⁸ Allan, rather more conventionally, proceeded to Anglican ordination, serving at Saltash (1933-36) before becoming Vicar of Newlyn in 1936, while continuing to work as a sculptor and medallist.

By the late 1920s Olive had an established reputation as a writer and translator. Her travels on behalf of *World Dominion* bore fruit in the seventh volume of their world survey series – *An Eastern Palimpsest: Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Transjordan, Egypt*. A mixture of factual narrative about religious life, travelogue and socio-political analysis, it is well-crafted high journalism for a specialist audience. Her acute analysis of the contradictions and possibilities of the newly independent Republic of Turkey is well-judged as she notes the tension between an inherently anti-clerical French influenced nationalism, the innate Islam of the poor, and a "substratum" of primitive religion which is found all over the Near East.¹⁹

She was balancing her "day job" with freelance translating. Her old friend, the Lutheran pastor Johannes Bullemer, was well-connected theologically.

15 http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Epstein%2C_Sir_Jacob_%281880-1959%29_Knight_sculptor; [http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Wyon%2C_Allan_Gairdner_\(1882-1962\)_Sculptor](http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Wyon%2C_Allan_Gairdner_(1882-1962)_Sculptor); accessed 26.6.09. Allan contributed "the East Wind".

16 Elaine Kaye and Ross MacKenzie, *W.E.Orchard: a Study in Christian Exploration*, (Oxford: Education Services, 1990), 82.

17 Hetty Wyon notes, Acc. 5468/3, 24 and 27.

18 C. H. Dodd, 30 June 1967, Acc. 5261/56.

19 *An Eastern Palimpsest: Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Transjordan, Egypt*, (London: World Dominion Press, n.d.), 23.

Whilst she was staying with them as a girl of seventeen, she met Adolf von Harnack and Friedrich Heiler. It was Heiler who set her on the path of theological translation.²⁰ In 1927 she set out on a journey which was to take her first to Germany, and then on through Eastern Europe and the Balkans. After a few days with the Bullemers she travelled on to Marburg to stay with Heiler whose Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh she was translating. She delighted in his family – “Anna Elizabeth and Birgitta [aged 5 and 3 respectively] are flax-haired little maidens with tight pigtailed tied with scarlet bows and bright blue cotton frocks. They look thoroughly German, excepting that they are rather thin...”.²¹ She accompanied him to his university classes where he was teaching a course on medieval Catholicism, enjoyed chatting to his women students, attended mass with him (a very good sermon on prayer, she noted), and discovered their common distaste for modernism and liberal theology:

I told him how I felt people were ‘horrified’ with me for believing as I do the Virgin Birth and the miracles. He smiled and said, “And my students are ‘horrified’ with me because of this”.²²

In 1929 her translation of Ernst Troeltsch’s *The Social Teaching of the Christian Church* was published. The work had been funded by the Halley Stewart Trust, at the princely sum of 10s 6d per thousand words.²³ Willem Visser’t Hooft, that most linguistically accomplished ecumenist, considered it “one of the most difficult translations ever made”,²⁴ and it established Olive at the forefront of European theological translators. E. R. Curtis’s *The Civilisation of France*, Gogul’s *Life of Jesus* and Harnack’s *A Scholar’s Testament* followed in short order during 1930. From 1934 to 1949 she was Emil Brunner’s translator. Paul Tillich thought her translations read better than Brunner’s original. Brunner added, “But I do not feel competent to say, and even doubt Tillich’s competence”.²⁵ Later, in the 1950s, she was to add Jacques Ellul and Hans Lilje to the list of “her” authors.

Translation was her main source of income during the 1930s,²⁶ and her freelance status allowed her the opportunity to develop other interests – she enrolled at King’s College, London, in 1934 to deepen her own theological studies, acted as a member of SCM’s Religious Book Club Advisory Committee from its inception in 1937, and more significantly was able to respond to J. H. Oldham’s request that she join his administrative team at

20 Oates and Fraser, *op. cit.*, 12.

21 Acc. 5261/3, Travel diary 1927, 7.

22 *Ibid.*, 13.

23 Letters, Acc. 5261/56, Joyce James, Bordon, 29 May 1967, and Kathleen Downham, 9 November 1967.

24 Oates and Fraser, *op. cit.*, 12.

25 Letter, Acc. 5261/57, Miscellaneous papers, David Cairns, Aberdeen, 22 June 1967.

26 Letter, Hector Turner, London NW5, nd. “Her ‘work’ was translating Barth [sic] and Brunner”.

Edinburgh House preparing for the Second Life and Work Conference to be held at Oxford on Church, Community and State in 1937. Olive was a “catch” to be had. Few were better networked across the world church. A decade of travelling around the world’s churches on behalf of *World Dominion* and her deep knowledge of German theology, to say nothing of her linguistic fluency, were ideal preparation for this task.

Her close colleagues in Edinburgh House were Hugh Lister, an Anglican priest who later joined the army and was killed in France in 1944, and Eric Fenn, a fellow English Presbyterian, and later a distinguished member of the BBC Religious Broadcasting staff. It also brought her into renewed contact with an international cadre of ecumenists – Brunner and Visser’t Hooft were on the Advisory Commission, and part of her work was working with the Geneva staff of the International Commission on Research which included Nils Ehrenström, with whom she would later work in Geneva, and whose *Christian Faith and the Modern State* she helped translate in 1939.²⁷ More significantly, she helped edit the eight volumes of papers and reports which emerged from the conference.

It is hard to over-rate the importance of the Oxford Conference and the preparatory work for it. Under the leadership of William Temple and J. H. Oldham new theological and ethical foundations were being sought for an understanding of the relationship between church and society. The seven preparatory reports were major theological studies in themselves, involving hundreds of the foremost theologians and thinkers from nearly all denominational and confessional communities. Similarly, the conference report was a pioneering statement about the work of the Church in the modern world, as important amongst the Protestant and Orthodox as, for example, Pius XI’s *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931)²⁸ was amongst Roman Catholics. Olive was an important cog in this machine, which became the engine that drove the formation of the World Council of Churches.

But then war intervened, and Olive found herself in Cambridge, encouraged and funded by Canon Charles Raven of Christ’s to pursue an unofficial chaplaincy to women in the university.²⁹ She became a member of St Columba’s, the Presbyterian Church in Downing Street. Ralph Morton recalled the way she shared in the congregation’s concerns about German Jewish refugees, and her passion for children. She took over the Primary Department, under the overall leadership of Lady MacAlister. Olive adored children, and they found themselves easily at home with her. She took every opportunity to engage in children’s work in church – at Haverstock Hill, in Kentish Town, in

27 Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier: a Life of J. H. Oldham*, (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 311. Clements’s comment that “Wyon, Lister and Fenn were all highly gifted young people” is over gallant – Olive was fifty-six! Oates and Fraser, *op. cit.*, 13.

28 Paul Albrecht “Life and Work” in Nicholas Lossky *et al.*, (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, (Geneva: WCC, 1991), 611-14.

29 Oates and Fraser, *op. cit.*, 15.

St Columba's, and in her last years at the university church of Great St Mary's, Cambridge, where she took charge of the children's group at Parish Communion and was greatly loved for her stories.³⁰

Joyce Roberts, who was at that time a demonstrator at Bedford College, met Olive at tea at the Strachans at Westminster College in 1939, asking how her chaplaincy could reach out to include those students who had been evacuated from the London School of Economics and Bedford College, London to Cambridge. They struck up a friendship, and Olive confided that she was thinking of writing a book about prayer because Free Church students experienced so many difficulties in learning to pray.³¹

Chaplaincy was combined with a little language teaching, some lecturing, and of course writing and translating. Once the war was over, the formation of the World Council of Churches continued apace. The nascent Assembly had four committees dealing with the business side of its life – three were to do with internal organisation, the fourth was devoted to the concerns of the church, one of which was “The life and work of women”, proposed by the French Reformed Church.

It is doubtful if it would have been taken as seriously as it was without the powerful personality of Twila Lytton Cavert, an American Methodist, whose husband, Dr Samuel McCrea Cavert, was General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches in the States, and a frequent visitor to Geneva because he chaired the Assembly Arrangements Committee. Twila discovered during a visit to Geneva in 1946 that the YWCA were gathering material about the role of women in the world church, and she was bluntly clear that she considered this inappropriate. It should be the business of the World Council. Visser't Hooft's wife was another advocate of the cause, and Visser encouraged Cavert to arrange a tea-party for the leaders of the YWCA. and the officers and leaders of the Council-in-formation, including Nils Ehrenström. Ehrenström reported to the provisional committee of the WCC in February 1946 that a paper on the subject would be included in the Study Department's *Ecclesia Militans* series. In April, Olive Wyon was appointed as a Secretary to the Study Department, and at the same meeting the Study Department was asked “...to submit to the Assembly an interim report into the Life and Work of Women in the Church”.³² There was no further mention of *Ecclesia Militans*. And so to Geneva she went, and immediately she became involved in the production of the report, working in harness with Twila Cavert. A comprehensive questionnaire had been sent to key women across the world, encouraging them to work with representatives of

30 Obituary, *Church Times*, 26 August 1966, Acc. 5261/53, O Wyon, obituaries.

31 Letter, Joyce Roberts, Hampstead, 26 June 1967, Acc. 5261/56.

32 Janet Estridge Crawford, “Rocking the boat: Women's participation in the World Council of Churches 1948-1951”, (Ph.D thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1995), 48, accessed by internet 30 July 2009. She is quoting the Minutes and Reports of the meeting of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, April 1947, (Geneva: 1947), 102.

the member churches of the provisional council. Fifty-eight countries sent in memoranda, providing an unprecedented picture of the role of women in the church. Olive and Twila worked closely together during 1947, mainly by correspondence. The fifty page summary report eventually covered the professional work of women in the church (including ordination), the role of women in voluntary activities, their participation in governance and policy formation and in the ecumenical movement.

They also collaborated on preparatory work for a pre-Assembly meeting for women at Baarn in the Netherlands from 13-17 August 1948, the first women's meeting held by the WCC. The participants included the Congregationalist, Elsie Chamberlain, and the Baptist, Gwyneth Hubble, the Principal of Carey Hall. But, as so often in Olive's life, ill health intervened (appendicitis this time), and although she had done so much work on the project, she missed the conference, and the final preparation of the report fell by default to Twila Cavert.³³

It may have been ill-health that led to her departure from Geneva after the inaugural Assembly, but the chaotic state of the initial administration may also have contributed. Stephen Neill, who was himself on the staff of the Study Department, argued that

the World Council swept various people into its service, with very little idea of what it was going to do with them, with no terms of appointment, no clear understanding about salary... When Olive arrived in Geneva, she thought that she was coming to head a department of translations, a thing most urgently needed and for which she was excellently qualified. She arrived to find herself provided with no office, with no clear definition of her status, no organised department, no control over other translators; in fact she had really been brought in simply to translate documents, work which she could perfectly well have done in England...

After the Assembly, he and Ehrenström and Wolfgang Schweitzer, all of whom were in the Study department, saw the need for her, but it did not happen, perhaps (Neill surmised), because Visset't Hooft was so linguistically proficient himself that he had a blind spot about the need for professional translation. And so she left, lamented by Neill not only because she was a friend, but because "...she had begun to exercise a considerable pastoral ministry amongst the women of the various staffs, at a time when that side of her work was almost completely neglected".³⁴ Olive was sixty-seven. She had had a lifetime's experience of handling disappointments.

But she returned to two joys. The first was an invitation to join the staff of St Colm's for a year to cover for a staff member who was abroad for the

33 These paragraphs rely on Crawford, 48-64.

34 Letter, Stephen Neill to Jean Fraser, Alice, Cape Province, 31 August 1967, Acc. 5261/56.

year. The second was the award of an honorary D.D. by the University of Aberdeen, honouring her piecemeal career as translator, ecumenist, counsellor and devotional writer. Olive was thrilled, carrying the letter with her for days, reading it again and again because she could hardly believe it.³⁵ Had they been presenting the award half a century later, the University might have chosen to honour her less for all those most laudable acts, than for her pioneering work on the role of women in the Church and in the history of spirituality. Three interests twine themselves into a rope in Olive's life, each incomplete without the other. The first is ecumenism, the second the place of women in the Church, and the third (and for her by far the most important) spirituality. Her formal contributions to the Ecumenical Movement lay in her editing of the material for the Oxford Conference of 1937 and her work with Twila Cavert in the earliest days of women's work in the nascent World Council of Churches.

However, her interest in women's work was far deeper and richer than that, and her reflections on it were iterative rather than linear. It began in 1905 whilst she was recuperating in Switzerland from her nervous breakdown when she read Paul Sieppel's life of Adèle Kamm. It took on a political complexion as she travelled for *World Dominion*. Her sharp eyes surveyed newly independent Turkey:

Women are beginning to go out into the world to earn their living as clerks and typists, in banks and business houses. A few are studying at the University alongside of the men. It all seems perfectly natural; there is a dignity and modesty about these girls which augurs well for the coming days and freedom for women in Turkey.³⁶

It was to dominate her next book, *The Dawn Wind* (1931), which looked at the changing condition of women in Africa and the East. She also published two biographies of women – *Radiant Freedom: the Story of Emma Pieczynska* and a life of her former Principal and friend, Ann Hunter Small, *The Three Windows*, which is rather more than a work of *pietas* and she discussed the life and work of the French Catholic spiritual writer, Elizabeth Leseur, in *The Congregational Quarterly* in 1929. This article was also produced as an off-print. When she was in Geneva in 1947 she made contact with Mère Genevieve at Grandchamp, and was a frequent visitor to her community, celebrating its work and that of other new religious communities in *Living Springs* (1963). None of this was labelled “feminist” or “women's interests” yet it adds up to a substantial volume of work about the work and ministry of women in the Church.

Biographical subjects are sometimes a mirror of the soul of the biographer. That was true of Olive Wyon. The women she studies and brings to life were called on to take illness, disappointment, and ostensible failure as unlikely

35 Letter, Sister Penelope CSMV, Wantage, 1967, Acc. 5261/56.

36 Olive Wyon, *An Eastern Palimpsest*, (London: World Dominion Press, nd), 20.

raw materials from which to fashion lives of coherent discipleship. Olive's particular interest was watching the subtle interplay of grace and personality on that difficult frontier. Whilst that produces the highest calibration of spiritual observation, it can also detract from a proper exploration of the historical context and meaning of the lives she is exploring.

Olive's explorations of the nature of the priesthood of believers within the body of Christ are profound. She writes first of the corporate nature of the Eucharistic experience, especially during the period of the early persecutions. The Church's faithfulness to the Eucharist was not a result of individual piety – "What the Christians cared about was the Eucharist as *the corporate act of the whole church*". The Church is a corporate priesthood called to offer up spiritual sacrifices. The whole Church offers the Eucharist, and the whole body is priestly. Lyndhurst Road had taught her well, as well as Gregory Dix. Rather less Reformed, but just as theologically compelling, was her consequent belief in the communion of saints as part of participation in the body of Christ. She brings the German Roman Catholic philosopher of religion, Romano Guardini, to her aid:

Each possesses grace not merely for himself but for all the rest. He passes it on in every word, every encounter with others, every good thought and every work of charity... There is something unutterably magnificent and profound in the thought that I am to share in all the purity and fullness of supernatural life hidden in souls of others, and it is mine too, in the solidarity of Christ's Body.

This "royal priesthood" is in the business of offering spiritual sacrifices. One element of this sacrificial life is prayer, but another is suffering, and she defines suffering as

... every kind of trial: loss bereavement, loneliness, pain of body and mind, limitation of all kinds, frustration, disappointment, injustice, oppression – in short, every human experience which hurts us, everything which 'touches us on the raw', everything from which we instinctively want to escape.³⁷

Passing by von Hügel's treatment of suffering, she returned after four decades to Adèle Kamm, and to Elizabeth Leseur, as illustrations of the relationship between suffering and priesthood in the lives of members of the body of Christ.

At the age of nineteen Adèle Kamm was struck down with a very painful form of tuberculosis, and she was to die of it some seven years later. Olive traces the journey "... through all the stages of despair, revolt, depression, to

37 Olive Wyon, *The Altar Fire*, (London: SCM Press, 1954), The quotations are from 58, 60, 71-2.

acceptance, and then to suffering as 'action' and as 'sacrifice'. The source of Adèle's spiritual serenity and joy was her "...vague, confused, but real sense of vicarious sacrifice". Olive commented that although she was "no theologian", she had penetrated to the heart of the faith, to the belief that her suffering was being used by Christ in his redeeming work.

If her first example was a young French Protestant, her second was a Parisian Catholic society hostess. Elisabeth Leseur was married to Felix, an agnostic doctor who moved in the very best intellectual circles. He tried to wean her from a conventional faith to the grown-up sanity of liberalism and then agnosticism. At his behest she read Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, but she thought it meagre, and went back to the sources and to the study of theology, and developed a mature and unshakeable faith. Her vocation, she decided was an apostolate of the ordinary – or as Olive puts it, "She had to carry on her 'society' life, entertain and go out, and dress well, and yet at the same time lead a Christian life".³⁸ The ordinary moments of everyday became opportunities for extending the kingdom of God. She speaks of practising "a little wordliness" in order that she should not alienate the guests and friends who passed through their house. But that "ministry" was sustained by a disciplined semi-secret spiritual life, the details of which were recorded in a Journal which was not discovered until after her death.

Her suffering came first in the form of that spiritual loneliness, but then in illness which resulted in her death at the age of forty-eight, and a sense that her life had achieved nothing, not even the conversion of her husband. Elisabeth confided in her Journal that:

I know by experience that certain graces were obtained by others during the hour of trial, graces which we could not gain before with all our efforts. Thus I have come to this conclusion, that suffering is a higher form of action, the highest expression of the Communion of Saints...³⁹

Olive found a similar dynamic in the life of the subject of her first biography, *Radiant Freedom*, the story of Emma Pieczynska. Emma's story needs more secure anchoring in the history of the women's movement than Olive allows. Orphaned at the age of five, brought up under the direction of a guardian, yet wealthy and of independent means, Emma's life was blighted by a bizarrely romantic teenage obsession with Polish independence (one of the great causes of nineteenth-century Romanticism). That passion overruled sense, and she married Count Stanislas Pieczynski, whom she did not love, when she was twenty. "It was an absolute sacrifice", she wrote later,

38 Wyon, *The Altar Fire*, 7; see also 'Elisabeth Leseur', reprinted from *Congregational Quarterly*, (1929), Acc. 5261/45.

39 Quoted *ibid.*, 78.

I offered myself up as a victim, willingly, without any illusions. In that terrible night when I made the decision, I realised that I might possibly meet someone later on whom I could really love, and in advance I renounced the love that might come to tempt me. Once for all I renounced love. 'But,' I said to myself, 'I shall have children, and they will console me.'⁴⁰

Slowly, the tragedy unrolled. The marriage was childless, to her immense sorrow, he squandered her fortune through ill judged investments, she suffered from intermittent bouts of ill health, and the marriage ended in divorce.

During one of her periods of illness when Emma was convalescing in Geneva, she met Dr Harriet Clisby. Olive tells us virtually nothing about Harriet Clisby (1830-1931), which is unfortunate, because she was an extraordinary woman. Born in England, raised in Australia, a life-long Swedenborgian, she became the publisher of an arts magazine, *The Interpreter*, which was the first magazine in Australia to be published by a woman. It included a medical page. Inspired by reading *The Laws of Life, with Special Reference to the Physical Education of Girls*, (New York, 1852; London, 1859), by Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), the first woman doctor to qualify in the United States (1849), and to be admitted to the British Medical Register, Harriet discovered a vocation for medicine. It was a long struggle. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson advised her against taking on the English university establishment, so after a time as a private nurse at Guy's Hospital she enrolled in the Medical College and Hospital for Women in New York founded by Dr Clemence Sophia Lozier, a homoeopathic physician and feminist. She qualified, practised in Boston, and founded the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, which was intended to do for women what the YMCA was doing for men. In 1880 she retired to Geneva,⁴¹ where she met Emma Pieczynska who said,

... She did not *explain* Jesus to me, she *showed* Him to me. Her way of living and of giving herself, her very personality herself, her absolute liberty of thought... transformed for me the whole question of faith. She became my spiritual mother, and she gave me life...⁴²

Inspired by Dr Clisby, Emma enrolled at the University of Geneva Medical School, but illness dogged her studies. It brought in its wake increasing deafness, until weeks before her five-year course was due to be completed, she found herself wholly deaf, and therefore incapable of practising as a doctor. Reflecting on the experience, Emma wrote to a friend,

40 Olive Wyon *Radiant Freedom*, (London: RTS-Butterworth, 1939), 23.

41 <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030402b.htm>, accessed 28.06.09, article by Kathleen Thomson.

42 Wyon *Radiant Freedom*, 41.

Some of the most precious experiences of my life were those when I had to let everything go, to leap out into the void... I had the strange, deep sense of the support of the 'Everlasting Arms'. I *felt* them. What can I say?⁴³

Despite this second great disappointment in her life, Emma followed in Harriet Clisby's footsteps, throwing herself into social reform and work for women with Hélène de Mulinen who was to be her partner through these years. She emerged as a key figure in Swiss feminism, a vital link in an abolitionist world that linked activists like Harriet Clisby and Josephine Butler (with whom she conducted a voluminous correspondence). Her reforming instincts were not limited to women's sexual liberation however. She founded the Social League of Consumers in 1906 to work for the improvement of working conditions, an unexpectedly ecumenical venture which brought together Catholic and Protestant clergy, academics and business people.⁴⁴ It was a remarkable life, grounded in a profound spirituality which accepted suffering as what Emma called "a kind of priesthood... a secret ministry, which is all the more effective because it is secret".⁴⁵

Olive's own dilemmas were played out in the lives of her subjects. What did it mean to be a gifted woman in a largely male world? How could illness and vulnerability be turned into the stuff of discipleship? How could disappointment and a failure to realise one's potential be transformed into service?

In his address at her funeral at Great St Mary's in December 1966, Ronald Speirs, who had been minister of St Columba's since 1961, judged that it was in part her "... deep experience of suffering [that] made her so much in demand by all kinds of people."⁴⁶ In particular, she was widely consulted by those facing the possibility of remaining unmarried, and he wished she had written more about that.

She did touch on the subject in *On the Way*, a fine exploration of old-fashioned pastoral theology. Olive loved children. After a period of illness her doctor commented on her ability to accept everything and asked if there was anything she wanted – "Yes, six children", she replied. So when she writes movingly of "involuntary celibacy" which is "peculiarly difficult" for women, she is writing from the depths of her own experience. It is difficult "... partly because it cuts clean across her deepest and tenderest natural feelings and desires, and partly because it is associated with so much prolonged uncertainty." Caught in the tension between career and marriage, the Christian vocation is to accept that uncertainty as "normal":

Then comes a further crisis: when she realises that the uncertainty is over, that her destiny is to remain single. To admit this – even to herself – is difficult; to accept it is still more difficult.

43 *Ibid.*, 53.

44 *Ibid.*, 67.

45 *Ibid.*, 107.

46 Ronald Speirs, "Memorial service address", Acc. 5261/57.

But out of such acceptance comes a sense of deeper meaning and purpose – “...that to her has come a call from God; that this way of life is her vocation.”⁴⁷

Olive was always certain of God. Some of her personal spiritual notebooks survive, and in one for 1956 (when she was seventy-five) she records her earliest experience of God. She was aged two or three, and recalled being on Southsea beach “minded” by a young girl who built sandcastles with her, creating in the top of one of them a little hollow which she filled with wild scarlet poppies:

I can still see vividly the scarlet flowers shining in the sunshine, the blue sky and the white clouds and feel too the fresh wind and hear the sound of waves breaking on the shore – it was all sparkling and joyful and I am sure that, young as I was, it was a revelation of God as Pure Joy and Beauty... I am grateful for such an experience, coming before my conscious mind had been clouded by the poison of fear – injected with it by unhealthy religious teaching when I was about 4 or 5. So my thanksgiving today is for this lovely memory, with its abiding meaning – ‘Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Everything in His Temple Saith Glory’ (Ps 29).⁴⁸

She never doubted the goodness of God, and the reality of her life was not the varied career of translator, ecumenist and educator, but her participation in life of God. That, for her, was the chief end of life, and the deep well from which her spiritual writings flowed. She wrote because she wanted others to share in that joy. As noted above, *The School of Prayer* (1943) was prompted by her observation that Free Church students found prayer difficult. *The Altar Fire* (1954) grew from a notebook which she began in 1947 so that she might be helped to enter more deeply into the worship of the Church, and “...to have by me a condensed book of Eucharistic prayers for use when travelling... or tired, or ill or kept away from all public worship for any reason.”⁴⁸ The inspiration of Evelyn Underhill’s *Worship* is readily apparent as Olive adopts her six-fold analysis of Eucharistic liturgies – adoration and thanksgiving, memorial of the passion, sacrificial centre, royal priesthood, heavenly food and the mystery of the Presence. Yet it remains her own distinctive book.⁵⁰ She has a formidable ecumenical reach – from P. T. Forsyth to von Hügel, from Charles Péguy to George Herbert. She harnesses the witness of women – Kamm,

47 Olive Wyon, *On the Way: Some Reflections on the Christian Life*, (London: SCM., 1958), 72.

48 Notebook: private, Acc. 5468/1.

49 The Altar Fire notebook, Acc. 5468/1.

50 Olive Wyon, *The Altar Fire*, (London: SCM., 1954), 19; David Cornick, “Olive Wyon: Prayer, Vocation, and Ecumenism” in Anna Robbins, (ed.), *Ecumenical and Eclectic: the Unity of the Church in the Contemporary World: Essays in Honour of Alan P.F. Sell*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2007), 154.

Leseur, Simone Weil and Angela of Foligno, and a nineteenth-century woman who wrote "At the Sacrament to-day I had the substance of the Feast, my very Christ, who is more precious than words can tell... To-day he has been made known in the breaking of bread." Olive's manuscript notebook records that this was Ruth Bryan, the daughter of a Congregational minister in Nottingham, and she admiringly adds a footnote, "She remained a Congregationalist – made her monthly communion in her [old?] church – and even if the service was not held til evening, she fasted beforehand."⁵¹ She also steers her way sure-footedly through the best liturgical and Eucharistic theology of the 1940s and 1950s. The result is what should be regarded as a spiritual classic.

In 1960 at Victor Murray's invitation she gave the annual pastoral lectures to the ordinands at Cheshunt College, Cambridge. Some delighted in her explorations, others were mystified.⁵² Prayer, she told them was like the springs of Clitumnus in Italy:

One of the most amazing things about this spot is the fact that in the hottest summer it never dries up: unhindered the little springs arise out of the earth; every fifteen seconds there is a tiny explosion of water; the water is always fresh, clean and copious. Even from the ordinary human point of view such a phenomenon seems almost miraculous... this lovely spot in Italy seemed to me a parable of prayers in the New Testament... It runs right through the NT like a pure stream, fertilizing everything it touches, and reminding us that at every turn we belong to two worlds, the seen and the unseen.⁵³

It was her gift to bring those worlds together in a series of popular spiritual writings – *Prayer* (1962), *On the Way* (1959), and *Desire for God* (1966). Prayer was never less than a communal activity for Olive. Even solitary prayer could only happen within the body of Christ, so prayer was of its essence an ecumenical activity:

As we pray we *are* one with the whole Church throughout the world... in this kind of deep prayer we are in vital unity with all in whom flows the life of Christ, the power of the Spirit.

Writing in 1943, in the dog days of war, she believed the world was waiting for a "revelation of God in community" and she took courage from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the gathering commitment to unity.⁵⁴ Twenty years later in *Living Springs* (1963) she was still hoping, but saw the possibilities of a new way of living emerging in new forms of religious community which were springing up across Europe, from Iona to Grand-champ. The hopes of the little House of Habitation of 1922 seemed writ a little larger. Those communities, she wrote:

51 Wyon, *op. cit.*, 85, and notebook, Acc. 5468/1.

52 Letter from Eric Pyle, Glasgow University, 7 Sept 1967, Acc. 5621/56.

53 "Prayer in the Gospels, for Cheshunt College, 1960", Acc.5261.

54 Olive Wyon, *The School of Prayer*, (London: SCM, 1943), 121-22.

...challenge us all to live more truly as members of the ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC CHURCH: that is, in unity, holiness, mission – and the three are one. For God is speaking to us, here and now.⁵⁵

She had simply imbibed ecumenism. It was as natural to her as air. As Ronald Speirs said at her funeral service, "... she never harangued about unity, and if you were a friend of hers, you just were somehow related to Roman Catholics and Orthodox and French Reformed whether you liked it or not."⁵⁶

Olive's career came to a surprising and unexpected fulfilment in 1951 when at the age of seventy she was invited to become the Principal of St Colm's at a time when the college was in transition in the wake of the General Assembly's decision that all male missionaries should spend a term of preparation there. Links were to be forged with the major committees of Assembly and with the Kirk's theological colleges. Her wide ecumenical experience and theological expertise made her an ideal Principal, and she served happily for three years. Her deep spirituality was readily apparent to her students, but so too was her sense of fun and her delight in the ordinary. Gales of laughter were heard from her office at break-time, and one student remembered waiting with her for a tram on George IV bridge in Edinburgh. Olive was convulsed in laughter because *The Times* had reported that the Pope was getting increasingly worried about chastity. The student did not help matters by innocently enquiring whether he meant his own or other people's. That was Olive's undoing. She had to be helped on board the tram by the conductor who was convinced they were both drunk.⁵⁷

The Altar Fire was published to acclaim whilst she was at St Colm's. Less acclaimed but equally significant was her life of Ann Hunter Small who had been her Principal half a century before. Some of the rhythms of her previous biographies can be discerned here – a brilliant missionary career in India cut short by illness⁵⁸, a wilderness period, and an unexpected flourishing as Principal of St Colm's. But here was a quite remarkable woman whose contribution to the history of the Church demanded to be recorded and celebrated. This was a serious exercise in women's history, an attempt to probe the nature of cross-cultural encounter. Her book *Yeshu-das* (bond-servant of Jesus), which Olive recounts, was the story of a young Brahmin who eventually walked the Christian path, yet it is full of vignettes of encounter. Later, back in Edinburgh, Small was a Principal of note, one of the few women to give a paper to the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh – on the work of the college, which was one of the few residential training centres for missionaries, and in its methods far in advance of its time. Ann Hunter Small deserved to be remembered as both a missionary and an educational pioneer,

55 Olive Wyon, *Living Springs*, (London: SCM, 1963), 126.

56 Oates and Fraser, *op.cit.*, 32.

57 Letter, Nan Blair, Gourrock, 18 Oct 1967, Acc. 5621/56.

58 Olive Wyon, *The Three Windows: the Story of Ann Hunter Small*, (London: James Clarke, 1953), 44.

exploring the nature of community as a preparation for Christian service.⁵⁹

Olive retired to Cambridge, finding her spiritual home this time at Great St Mary's. There was to be one more unexpected turn in her career. On 4 March 1960 Dr Cicely Saunders wrote to her on the recommendation of Sister Penelope of Wantage (a fellow translator whom Olive had met many years before at a patristics conference). Dr Saunders was planning what was later to become St Christopher's Hospice. She was working at that time with the Irish Sisters of Charity in Hackney, and was deeply impressed by "...the love and care which the Irish Sisters of Charity give to our patients, – something more than an ordinary group of professional women could ever give, I think." As her plans were formulating, the nature of community and spirituality were looming large. Sister Penelope had told her that Olive knew the Grandchamp Community well, and could she offer some advice?⁶⁰ A correspondence and friendship emerged. Olive did indeed put her in touch with Grandchamp, and (reading between the lines) gently persuaded Cicely that her enterprise should be ecumenical rather than Anglican. She was also one of four key thinkers who helped define the Aim and Basis of the movement.⁶¹

It was fitting that a woman who dated her first experience of God to the age of two or three should at the end of her life help devise a statement that "...dying people must find peace and be found by God, without being subjected to special pressures..." In his funeral address Ronald Speirs said that he had two images of Olive in his mind. One was a fantasy, of the great translator and spiritual "saint". But the second was of Olive six months before she died taking his six-year old daughter Veronica to tea "all by herself". They looked at picture books together and then went across to play hide and seek in Peterhouse garden.⁶²

She was a very simple woman – so practical a mystic. But through her long life flowed some of the most important currents of modern church history – ecumenism, the emerging leadership of women in the church, experiments in Christian community, and a grappling with the disciplines of spirituality in an increasingly secular age. She was shaped by those currents, but she also contributed in no small measure to the ways in which they shaped others. "You could not possibly conceive of attaching an ecclesiastical label to her", wrote Charlie Moule, Cambridge scholar and Anglican priest, "She was at home wherever Christ was Lord."⁶³

DAVID G. CORNICK

59 A. H. Small, "The Women's Missionary College, Edinburgh," in World Missionary Conference, Report of Commission V (1910), 251f. I owe this reference to David Harley's "Equipped for mission" http://www.martyrmission.cam.ac.uk/BIAMS_Harley1.htm, accessed 5 August 09.

60 Cicely Saunders to Olive Wyon, 4 March 1960, in David Clark (ed.), *Cicely Saunders: Founder of the Hospice Movement, Selected Letters 1959-1999*, (Oxford: O.U.P.), 23.

61 *Ibid.*, 68, 24 March 1964.

62 Ronald Speirs, "Memorial Service Address", Acc. 5261/57.

63 Letter, 9 Sept 1967, Acc. 5621/56.

REVIEWS

***John Calvin: Reformer for the Twenty-First Century.* By William Stacy Johnson. Louisville, Kentucky/Edinburgh: Westminster John Knox Press/Alban Books, 2009. Pp. x + 142. £10.99. ISBN 978-0-66423-408-9.**

“What does it mean to be reformed and always reforming?” is the final question of William Stacy Johnson’s exploration of John Calvin. This has been a question central to Reformed theology and ecclesiology for over 500 years and anyone who journeys through the pages of this book will be suitably inspired and equipped to begin to wrestle with an answer. For this is a workbook which takes the reader not only on a historical journey through Calvin’s life, context, theology and ecclesiology, but it also requires the student to embark upon his or her own personal or, perhaps even, corporate (if it were used in a group setting) journey in the present and in doing so looks toward the future of faith, life and church in the twenty-first century.

The twelve chapters of William Johnson’s book are packed with questions, some rhetorical, with the answers supplied immediately by the writer, and others (about sixty-five in all) that are asked at the end of each of the chapters with which the reader is expected to grapple. In the first chapter Johnson endeavours to put the human face on Calvin. In nine pages he goes from his early life, through his development and his troubles and triumphs, to his anonymous burial. The chapters that follow explore the main themes of Calvin’s thought about God, Grace and Faith, Scripture, Election and Predestination, Sin and Salvation, the Holy Spirit, the Law and the Gospel, the Church, Worship and Sacraments, Politics and Society, concluding with a chapter of challenge: “Reformed and always Reforming”. Each chapter follows a pattern of introduction, exploration and concludes with a section entitled “Always reforming . . .” Together they offer the reader a comprehensive introductory survey of Calvin and some thoughts on how he might inspire and instruct Christians today in a multi-cultural, financially volatile world where boundaries change on a regular basis.

From his descriptions of Calvin as “brilliant” and with “few intellectual equals”, it is evident that William Stacy Johnson is an enthusiast for his subject. However this is balanced with his admission that Calvin could also be “gloomy and difficult”. From beginning to end William Johnson achieves, with notable skill, his prefatorial objective to present “scholarship for the church”. His style is straightforward and is suitable for those of little theological or historical education, and yet each chapter is replete with information. Throughout the book, Johnson sets Calvin and his teachings in their original context, relating him to such contemporaries as Farel, Bucer and Zwingli, before attempting the leap of application to a contemporary readership.

This is a book not simply to be read, but rather to be *used*, prompting discussion and further study. It is recommended for those individuals who are interested in discovering John Calvin for themselves, but perhaps it could be

better put to use in Reformed churches that are trying to rediscover the roots of their identity in order to pursue their calling to be the reforming church in the present age.

JASON ASKEW

***Calvin.* By George W. Stroup. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press/Alban Books, 2009. Abingdon Pillars of Theology. Pp. 85. £7.99. ISBN 987-0-68765-913-5.**

The five hundredth anniversary of Calvin's birth was marked by a profusion of books, special editions of journals and conferences; an indication of the current interest in Calvin's thought both within the Reformed churches and beyond. Stroup's book is part of this celebration, and provides a sympathetic, though by no means uncritical, account of Calvin's theology and of its continuing relevance. Part of a series designed primarily for "the college and seminary class room" it will also be of interest to a wider readership, offering both a reliable introduction to those new to Calvin and a useful overview for those more familiar with his work.

The book begins with a brief discussion of Calvin's life which sets him in the context of his time. Stroup also introduces here a motif that reappears at several places in the book: that Calvin is a pre-modern thinker who nevertheless has much to say to readers in the twenty-first century. That is an important point to emphasise about Calvin, whose theology has sometimes been appropriated as if it could be applied unproblematically to the very different thought and practice of the modern world. This sensitivity to historical context is also seen in a thoughtful discussion, in the last chapter, of the historical influences of Calvin and Calvinism.

The central part of the book is taken up with an account of key themes in Calvin's theology including the knowledge of God, the authority of Scripture, God's Will, Christology, the Spirit, Election and the Church. Each of these is treated carefully and, even within the limits of a book of eighty-five pages, in sufficient depth to allow serious engagement with the issues. Questions for further discussion at the end of each chapter encourage the reader to explore further. The questions are intended for use by seminar groups but could equally well be used in church discussion groups, or by individuals.

It is understandable that Abingdon Press would want to publish this book in the five hundredth anniversary of Calvin's birth, but this well written and thought provoking book deserves to be read for many years to come.

DAVID SULLIVAN

***The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism.* Edited by John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. xii + 385. HB £45.00. ISBN 978-0-521-86088-8; PB £17.99. ISBN 978-0-521-67800-1.**

The first in the series of “Cambridge Companions to Religion”, published in 1997, discussed various aspects of Christian Doctrine, a book that should be of interest to readers of this *Journal* not just because it was edited by the late Colin Gunton. Twenty-four other volumes appeared between that date and 2008, each one discussing major themes and thinkers in theology and in religious studies. The aim of the series is to “provide an accessible and stimulating introduction to the subject for new-readers and non-specialists.” This volume, published late in 2008, offers a diverse and detailed discussion of Puritanism by twenty different scholars, and it certainly fulfils the series’ aims. Indeed, this is probably the first time anyone has attempted to provide a single volume which deals with Puritanism in all its diversity. It could have been a bitty and incoherent collection. That it is not, and that in fact the collection of essays possesses a profound inner coherence, is testimony to the fact that this is not just an introduction but a contribution to our understanding of the phenomenon (or should it be phenomena?) associated with the term.

The twenty chapters, each written by an expert in various aspects of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religion, are divided into four sections. The book begins with “English Puritanism”, with chapters dealing with the origins of the term, its growth from unpromising beginnings in the Elizabethan period, through the early Stuart period, the revolution of the 1630s and 1640s and its demise and replacement with Dissent in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Five chapters follow which focus on territory “Beyond England”. This is a fascinating section which begins with a treatment of the connection between England’s Puritans and the continental Reformed churches. It then moves on to discuss developments in New England, a chapter comparing Puritanism in Ireland and Wales and a discussion of the problem of the term and its use in Scotland. Eight chapters then deal with “Major themes” including the Puritans’ advocacy of “practical divinity”, the doctrinal controversies which emerged, the relationship with the Church of England, radical Puritanism, millenarianism, popular culture, gender and literature. Two chapters complete the collection in the section entitled “Puritanism and posterity”, dealing with the legacy of Puritanism and offering an account of Puritan historiography.

All the chapters are based on solid and comprehensive scholarship. A great deal of information has been condensed into each one, while the analysis of events and of the contribution made by individual Puritans is in each case exquisite. But the book’s genius is in the way in which it conveys so much information, owned by a diverse group of scholars, and yet it remains fascinating to read. All the major themes are given an airing, including the perennial issue of definition itself and the propriety of using the term (some scholars recognise the existence of *Puritans* but reject the idea of a movement,

a *Puritanism*). As the dust jacket declares, "As a distinctive and particularly intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism, it was a product of acute tensions within the post-Reformation Church of England. But it was never monolithic or purely oppositional, and its impact reverberated far beyond seventeenth-century England and New England." All this is treated eruditely and lucidly and those with prior knowledge of the subject will benefit from this presentation of the most recent scholarship, while those who know nothing about the Puritans will benefit greatly in reading it. Unlike many books, this one might well appeal to the expert and to the novice alike.

Four chapters should be picked out for especial comment. This is not to give the impression that some chapters are better than others because the quality of the whole collection is beyond doubt. However, I found the treatment of the term "Puritan" in the Scottish situation, a Reformed church on the Geneva pattern, established, but neither tainted with Arminianism (or Laudianism), nor committed to prelacy, to be fascinating, while John Coffey's "Puritan legacies" and Peter Lake's "The historiography of Puritanism" both condense massive amounts of knowledge and information as they evaluate the contribution of this particular tradition on subsequent society, culture, politics and religion. They offer a fitting climax to a fascinating volume. Crawford Gribben's chapter contrasting developments in Ireland with those of Wales is enjoyable, but I felt that the author seemed more secure when evaluating Irish developments and that Wales was not properly represented in it (though I confess to a certain sensitivity in this regard).

This is an excellent collection, written by established scholars and those who are beginning to make their contribution in this field. Our debt to the former is great. We can be satisfied that, through the latter, further insights will be found as research is conducted into the Puritans, their thoughts, their activities and their lasting contribution.

ROBERT POPE

***Nonconformity in Derbyshire: A Study in Dissent, 1600-1800.* By Stephen Orchard. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Pp. xii + 198. £19.99. ISBN 978-1-84227-620-4.**

This is a meticulously researched history of Derbyshire Nonconformity, one that covers a great deal of ground in short compass, offering an overview of Derbyshire Nonconformity from early Stuart Puritanism to the rise of Evangelical Dissent in the late eighteenth century. The book is chronologically structured, with chapters on the Puritan tradition before 1640, the Civil War and Commonwealth period, the ejections of 1662, the Restoration era, the experience of toleration in the three decades after 1689, and the decline and resurgence of Dissent under the influence of Evangelicalism in the later

eighteenth century. There are also a number of useful appendices: a list of ordinations in the Wirksworth classis during the Interregnum; a list of Derbyshire Dissenters after 1689 transcribed from the Assize records; the Evans list for Derbyshire; and a fifty page Gazetteer of Derbyshire Nonconformity, with substantial paragraphs on many of the towns and villages. Readers will learn a good deal about the Puritan and Nonconformist ministry, and there is a welcome emphasis on the critical role of lay patrons and of educational establishments, from Repton School under the Puritans to the Findern Dissenting Academy.

But while Orchard's book is a solid contribution to the scholarship on Dissent, it does have some drawbacks. It is not a particularly accessible work. The pages teem with proper nouns, as many as thirty on a single page, and since few of them are familiar, one often has to fight through a thicket of names to get at the bigger picture. There is a danger of losing the wood for the trees. This is compounded by the lack of engagement with historiographical debates. The bibliography lists specialist work on Derbyshire Nonconformity, but not the wider literature. There is, for example, no reference to Andy Wood's important monograph, *The Politics of Social Conflict: The Peak Country, 1520-1770* (1999), which has some sharp insights into religion in the county's mining region. And the chapter on the ejections would benefit from interaction with David Appleby's *Black Bartholomew's Day: Preaching, Polemic and Restoration Nonconformity* (2007). Because the study is written in isolation from historiographical controversies, it does not explore the wider significance of its findings in the manner of distinguished county studies by William Hunt (on Essex), Ann Hughes (on Warwickshire) or Mark Stoye (on Devon). Of course, these historians worked within a much tighter time frame, and on the period before 1642 or 1660, when Puritanism had real political impact. Orchard has achieved something different by providing a concise survey of two centuries of Dissent, but the result is a narrowing of perspective that reflects the limitations of much local and denominational history. A final weakness is that the book is overwhelmingly focussed on élites (ministers and their patrons). It does give us occasional glimpses of the "ordinary" laypeople who attended Dissenting churches, but it bears little trace of the recent fashion for studies of "lived religion" and "religion in practice". Partly, of course, this is due to the inadequacy of the sources, which for the most part do not allow us to recreate the religious lives of the laity. But one wonders if more can be done here.

Nevertheless, future historians of Derbyshire Dissent will be grateful to Orchard for the hard historical groundwork done in this study, and the book will provide useful leads for those working on English Dissent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

JOHN COFFEY

***Singing and the Imagination of Devotion: Vocal Aesthetics in Early English Protestant Culture.* By Susan Tara Brown. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Pp. x + 142. £19.99. ISBN-978-1-84227-407-1.**

It is worth moving beyond the daunting title of this book to consider its contents. We tend to note in passing that Protestants sing hymns but very little is written about how and when they did so and even less about the theology which underpinned the practice. Susan Brown has pursued early Protestant spiritual writing with great diligence and extracted the relevant themes. Whatever one makes of the conclusions she draws it is worth reading the extracts she presents in order to catch the temper of Puritan spirituality. Singing is good for our health and the right sort of singing deepens our devotions. If this is often presented as a modern conclusion it is good to see the seventeenth-century theorists there ahead of us. The Puritans did not approve of roistering in taverns but they did know that music is an alternative language of devotion and that the sensuality of music may be precisely what is needed to bring us closer to the divine.

Susan Brown is an American scholar and some of her linguistic uses read a little strangely – for instance “birth” is not a natural verb when what is meant is “bring to birth”. It is surely her American perspective which leads her to bring together Church of England and Nonconformist writers under one Protestant heading, even when dealing with the cathedral tradition. However, she brings much light to bear on a neglected area of our devotional tradition and reading this book increases our understanding of Puritan spirituality.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

***The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Cessation of Special Revelation: The Majority Puritan Viewpoint on Whether Extra-Biblical Prophecy is Still Possible.* By Garnet Howard Milne. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Pp. xx + 334. £24.99. ISBN-978-1-84227-521-4.**

There has been a growth of studies around the Westminster Confession in recent years. This study of the opening clauses concerning scripture and revelation is not for the faint-hearted but will repay the persistent reader. The author has not stood quite far enough back from the text of his doctoral thesis to assist the general reader, but he has cast a wide net through the writing of the members of the Westminster Assembly and their contemporaries and he provides background material to help us understand their context. Sometimes this richness is overwhelming, with whole sections of text where the footnotes dominate the page. However, the main theme, whether there has been a

cessation of revelation since the time of the Apostles, is painstakingly pursued.

The question was important in its own day and is still. The majority of the Westminster divines saw themselves as defending the orthodox frontier against the new visionaries and emerging Quakers. At the same time they needed to rebut Roman Catholic claims that they were themselves innovators. It was a delicate path to discern. This was no theoretical study. Outside the abbey antinomians were staking their claim to be heard in the constitutional upheavals that followed the first Civil War. To allow that there were still direct revelations from God was to legitimise the case made by some of the more radical groups. The Presbyterians who dominated the Westminster Assembly were essentially conservative figures, trying to stabilise the Church and State. They were ultimately outflanked by Cromwell's policies of toleration, supported by the Independents in the New Model Army. But even Independents were wary of the notion that direct revelation had continued and resisted the growth of Quakerism.

It is important to understand the context in which the Westminster Assembly laid down its dogmas since they were so influential in succeeding centuries. Working from the Reformers' commitment to *sola scriptura* they allowed for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the exegesis and application of scripture but were pushed towards seeing scripture as the final direct revelation of God's will and inerrant. This was tenable in the context of the seventeenth century, given their approach to the Old Testament, which made free use of symbolism and metaphor. However, they prepared the way for later scriptural literalism which became quite inflexible. It was possible to see the Bible as an all-encompassing text in the intellectual climate of the 1640s. What we forget is that these same divines numbered amongst themselves those given to natural philosophy and the beginnings of science. Had they been aware of later scientific findings they might not have boxed their successors into such a tight place intellectually. Shutting the direct revelation of God down in the age of the Apostles was not intended to shut down biblical exegesis and interpretation in the 1640s, but some of those who claim loyalty to the Westminster Confession seem to believe this to be the case. As the author shows, the Reformed tradition may share the classic scepticism about various forms of Pentecostalism without sacrificing the primacy of scripture. As it happens I was preparing this review at the same time as reading in a primary source, written some fifty years after the Westminster Assembly, of a debate among Nonconformists and Puritan Anglicans about whether it was lawful to eat black pudding. Although the Jewish law was reckoned to be superseded, the specific New Testament reference to not eating meat with the blood in it, for fear of offending Hebrew Christians, was taken by at least one authority as a command binding on Christians in perpetuity, as part of the continuing revelation of God in Apostolic times. This is just one example of the hermeneutic of casuistry which follows in the Westminster Confession tradition.

Dr Milne provides us with sufficient evidence to judge that modern

bibliolatry may be an unintended consequence of the heart-searchings of the Westminster divines on the subject of revelation. For that reason alone, as well as the copious quotations from rare Puritan texts, the book is worth reading.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

***The Unlikely Canon: George Evans of Windsor, 1630-1701.* By Graham Claydon. London: Sea Dream Music, 2009. Pp. x + 142. £10.00 (inc. p + p, copies available from Graham Claydon, Acre End, Tangmere Road, Tangmere, West Sussex, PO20 2HW). ISBN 0-9070888-445.**

From start to finish this work is a deeply personal story. Graham Claydon's *Unlikely Canon* describes in imaginative detail the life of George Evans, sometime Canon of St George's Chapel Windsor. Claydon attempts to set Evans's life within the macro-environment of the massive events of the day and the micro-climate of the priest's friends and family. The end product is both profoundly loving and academically infuriating.

George Evans is a man about whom little is known. He published nothing in his lifetime; he neither rose to high office nor caused significant controversy. As a result, in order to devote roughly equal sections of text to each period of Evans's life, Claydon's first seven chapters, covering the period before to Evans's arrival at Windsor Castle, are imaginative reconstructions of his world and extrapolations about how these might have influenced his hero.

Claydon's substantial thesis is signposted in the title and expounded in chapter eight, namely that Evans is an unusual figure among the canons who governed the restored royal chapel. Compared to most of the Chapter in 1660, Evans was unusually young and also socially and academically inferior. More significantly he was unique in having received presbyterian orders and not the laying on of hands by a bishop. Claydon appears unaware that, before the Act of Uniformity in 1662, Church of England livings were occasionally open to those with non-episcopal orders so long as the candidates could satisfy a bishop they were fit to preach God's word and administer the sacraments. Claydon's wider inference – that Evans was a man of principle who remained sympathetic to "Presbyterian" ideas – would seem largely unsubstantiated.

This biography will interest intelligent churchgoers and local historians. It is intended to help those with little or no knowledge of the period through an explanatory glossary at the front. It will, however, be a source of frustration to critical scholars. To keep things simple Claydon uses minimal referencing and indexing. He makes broad generalisations, such as the largely undefined (perhaps indefinable) use of the term "puritan", and anachronistic deployment of words such as "Anglican" and "terrorist". More worryingly, Claydon's colloquialisms can tip over into fundamental errors. Far from being "very

Protestant, some would say, puritan”, the King James Bible was an essentially cautious and conservative revision within the English translational tradition. Elsewhere he wrongly implies that Archbishop Laud produced a separate Book of Common Prayer for the Church of England akin to his controversial Scottish Book of 1637. Rather than “forwarding a more reformed Protestantism within the historic British church”, John Tillotson, a leading latitudinarian, was part of a concerted effort to extend the bounds of permissible doctrine beyond the tightly reformed framework in which the early Church of England was forged. Claydon consistently misspells this archbishop as “Tillitson”. Arianism was not a downplaying of Jesus’s divinity but an absolute denial of it. Historiographically, at one point he adopts a chronologically long “Whiggish” view on the origins of the Civil Wars which, without justification, now looks dated.

The Unlikely Canon is a touching work, to which the author, who is a direct descendant of the subject, has given much of himself. It is a tender hagiography, the critically significant pages of which are concentrated in the central eighth chapter.

KENNETH PADLEY

***John Wesley’s Preachers: A Social and Statistical Analysis of the British and Irish Preachers Who Entered the Methodist Itinerancy before 1791.* By John Lenton. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009. Studies in Evangelical History and Thought. Pp. xviii + 506. £34.99. ISBN 978-1-84227-625-9.**

Much of the study of the history of early Methodism has concentrated on the role and significance of the Wesley brothers in creating a worldwide movement leading to the evolution of the Methodist Church. John Lenton provides a valuable corrective in this comprehensive, scholarly and exhaustive study of the 802 men, John Wesley’s “Sons in the Gospel”, who joined the growing body of itinerant preachers before his death in 1791. It was their dedication and commitment, often very costly to their families and themselves, which nurtured, encouraged and developed the work started by Wesley and led to its subsequent growth, not just in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland but also in the Colonies and especially in North America.

In the early chapters of this book, Lenton analyses the personal lives of the preachers – their origins and background, their education, their subsequent marriages and families. This is not dry history but a vivid and often moving description of real men and their families struggling with the consequences of a preacher’s belief that he had been called by God. Here, as throughout, Lenton displays a detailed study of a vast amount of material and presents it in a systematic and readable way. The difficulty of such research is well-known – lack of documentation or incomplete records, similarities in names and changes in spelling, identifying places, even vagaries in the Minutes of

Conference. The text is supplemented by a number of charts and tables seeking to summarise the findings within the limitations of the information available, e.g. class is not known for 591 preachers, education for 690 preachers, and age at leaving school for 739 preachers.

Two central chapters provide descriptions and analysis of Wesley's distinctive pillars of structure and organisation – the Conference and Circuits. These were to have a profound effect in shaping both the developing Wesleyan Societies and the itinerant preachers themselves, and the way in which they have developed and evolved can be seen in the current practice and ethos of the Methodist Church. The majority of the preachers were lay – later, some hoped for ordination. Lenton discusses the attitudes of Charles and John Wesley to this and the growing pressures the latter was under from the mission field – from America in particular, from Scotland and Ireland, and from some at home – to allow the ordination of his preachers and make the sacraments more freely available. For most preachers in the period under review their aim was to be in Full Connexion with Mr Wesley. Lenton details the training and probation of men seeking to be itinerants. Kingswood, near Bristol, was both a school and a college for itinerants. Wesley encouraged their reading and wrote letters to guide and advise. Conference and other preachers provided examples to follow and mutual support and encouragement. The book is a full and honest account of ministry, both celebrating the achievements of the preachers in their Circuits as they tried to sustain and develop Wesley's work but also acknowledging those who ceased to be preachers for such reasons as ill health, exhaustion, even immorality and drunkenness. Some subsequently returned to the work. For those who stayed the course, there was the question of supernumerary status and retirement and the possibility of a pension. Lenton also devotes a chapter to the death of preachers, the facts such as age and cause, but also the significance of the deathbed, ceremonials following death, provision for widows, and the evolution of the obituary in the Minutes of Conference.

As a result of his unfortunate experiences in Georgia, for many years Wesley was unsympathetic to preachers seeking to serve as missionaries abroad. They were needed at home. Lenton shows how gradually preachers began to serve in Ireland and Scotland, in Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, from 1769 in America, and in the other Colonies and beyond. Methodism was very successful in America, partly because of the preachers sent by Wesley such as Dr Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, and partly because Methodist organization and ethos was in tune with the idealism, expansion and innovation of the New World. It is to the missionary preachers who took the concept of itinerancy to a new level that we owe the creation of a worldwide Methodist Church.

This book is to be commended to a wide range of readers, not just those interested in the early history of the Methodist Church. The serious academic scholar will find here a vital resource – the fruit of many years of detailed, painstaking research – that goes well beyond previous studies in this area and will remain a major source of information for a long time to come. The

preacher and more general reader will be introduced to a diverse group of Mr Wesley's Preachers and their families and to the evolving Conference, Circuits, Societies and even a Methodist ethos. It is a fascinating story of how ordinary and extraordinary people sought to proclaim the gospel and put its teaching into practice in a context with many similarities to our own. The growing influence of Methodism throughout the world is a tribute to those itinerant preachers who made it happen and a source of encouragement and inspiration to those who seek to follow in their footsteps.

PETER M. BRANT

***Sarah Biller of St Petersburg: A Sheffield Teacher in Nineteenth Century Russia.* By John Dunstan. York: Williams Sessions, 2009. Pp. x + 150. £8.99. ISBN978-1-85072-399-8. Illustrated. (Available from Sessions of York, Ebor Press Division, Huntington Road, York, YO31 9HS, £2.50 p. & p.).**

John Dunstan made his acquaintance with Sarah Biller when he was researching residential education in the USSR and its antecedents in the imperial era. In the midst of that research he lighted upon Sarah Biller (née Kilham) who arrived in Russia alone from Sheffield in 1820, at the invitation of the Tsar Alexander I. Visiting Britain some years earlier, Alexander had discovered schools organised according to the Lancasterian principle, whereby students were taught the rudiments of basic subjects and then entrusted to pass on what they had been taught to other students, mostly from poor backgrounds. The Emperor was convinced that this was a method that could assist him in his aim to extend education in his country. Sarah, then thirty-two, saw his invitation as a missionary vocation. She was the sole surviving daughter of Alexander Kilham, the instigator of the first Methodist schism and founder of the Methodist New Connexion. She also had links with the Society of Friends and, in St Petersburg, found fellowship with Congregationalists.

John Dunstan's book, the product of the most painstaking research, tells the story of Sarah's activities in both school and community. Here was a woman of immense courage and initiative. Here too was a project that bore considerable fruit as Sarah made Russia the land of her adoption and developed her educational, and later nursing, projects. Her story will appeal to people interested in Nonconformist, Russian and educational history and all admirers of pioneering women.

C. KEITH FORECAST

***Revival, Renewal and the Holy Spirit.* Edited by Dyfed Wyn Roberts. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009. Studies in Evangelical History and Thought. £24.99. Pp.xx + 285. ISBN 978-1-84227-374-6.**

The essays collected in this volume were initially read as papers at a conference, held in 2004 at the University of Wales Bangor, to mark the centenary of the 1904 Welsh Religious Revival. I have to declare an interest in that my academic department organised the conference and I was in attendance, though I made no formal contribution to the discussion and was not directly involved either in its organisation or in the production of this volume. Although Wales and its history of revivals was inevitably the focus of the conference, part of the intention was to place Welsh history into an international context. This is reflected in the content of this book.

The volume contains twenty-one chapters which are separated informally into four sections. Section one looks at the history of revival pre-1904 and contains articles on the eighteenth-century Methodists by Eryn White, the promotion of international revival during the Evangelical Revival by David Ceri Jones, the relationship between Methodists and the Established Church in the eighteenth century by John Morgan Guy, the effect of the American evangelist Charles Finney and his work on what is known in Wales as “the 1859 Revival” by Dyfed Wyn Roberts, an account of the “significance of hymnody” for eighteenth century revivalists in Britain and the United States by Mark Noll, an intricately detailed, but highly enlightening analysis of the revival at Ferryden in Forfarshire in 1859 by David Bebbington, and a chapter by Brian Talbot evaluating ideas about the work of the Holy Spirit found among Baptists in nineteenth-century Scotland.

The second section looks specifically at aspects of the Welsh Revival of 1904, opening with an intriguing psychological analysis of the evidence available regarding Evan Roberts, the popularly recognised leader of the revival, by Gaius Davies (who, before retirement, was a consultant psychiatrist), an evaluation of the influential, and indeed powerful, Jessie Penn-Lewis by Peter Prosser, a discussion of the place and value of visions in the revival by John Harvey, a localised account of the revival in Bethesda, Arfon, by Dafydd Job (the grandson of J. T. Job who, in 1904, was minister in the town and who worked tirelessly for revival), a much needed discussion of the Church in Wales’s association with the 1904 revival by the evangelical scholar Noel Gibbard, an account of the revival among the Welsh on Merseyside by D. Ben Rees, and a speculative, though insightful, article about why the revival came to an end by William K. Kay.

The third section highlights the links between the Welsh Revival and other localised revivals in the period directly after 1904 with a chapter on the Welsh Revival and Scottish Baptist churches by Kenneth Roxburgh, a chapter on the Brethren in Scotland by Neil Dickson, the influence of the Welsh revival in the United States by Emmanuel Hooper, and revival in Uganda by Tudor Griffiths.

The final section is perhaps the most eclectic, with an article on the Revival

and Social and Political action where the author, Daniel Boucher, argues that the renewal of evangelical theology and life will be found when the otherworldliness of revivalist piety is brought alongside a healthy this-worldliness, a chapter outlining the need for further research backed up by an international network of researchers by Wolfgang Reinhardt, and a short paper to close on the nature of the experience of dreams and visions by Susan Gabriel Talbot.

Each article has an intellectual integrity of its own and some are truly excellent; insights certainly abound, the chapters teach much and there is a challenge both to piety and to scholarship contained within the pages of this volume. As is to be expected, the collection ranges widely and it would have benefitted from either a more comprehensive introduction highlighting the significant claims of each paper, or a concluding chapter identifying some of the overarching themes and issues which link the chapters together. In lacking such a treatment, the volume fails to provide either an analysis of the 1904 Welsh Revival or a critical treatment of the claim that Wales was a land of revivals. Furthermore, the evaluation of the concept of revival and revivalism as worldwide as well as localised phenomena is not really discussed, and readers will find themselves looking to other volumes for any sustained assessment of the subject. The index is limited to proper nouns and falls short of what would have been truly useful. The volume stands as a record of proceedings of a successful conference, and it contains many chapters that are worthy of note, but it fails to fulfil its undoubted promise, and consequently seems to miss an opportunity. Perhaps this was exacerbated by the five-year wait to see the papers in print.

ROBERT POPE

***"To Strive and Not to Yield": Opposing Hitler, Adam von Trott zu Solz, 1909-1944.* By Kenneth A. E. Sears. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, Brighton. £29.95. Pp. xvii + 103. ISBN978-1-84519-282-2. Illustrated.**

Like most of my generation, I seem always to have known of the failed plot by the German Resistance Movement to assassinate Hitler. With it I have always associated the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This short but gripping book has helped me to appreciate both the strength of the Resistance Movement and the leading part played in it by Adam von Trott.

Adam von Trott zu Solz was a handsome, high-born German of considerable personality and intellect. He spent a term at Mansfield College in 1929 at the invitation of Dr Selbie, the then principal. The influence upon him of the college, then of course primarily concerned with the training of Congregational ministers, and of the university, proved to be considerable. In 1931 he returned, this time to Balliol, as Rhodes Scholar. Becoming a passionate anglophile, he preferred for the rest of his life to speak English rather than his

native German. Returning to Germany as the clouds were gathering in the 1930s, he identified with those who could see the peril the country and the continent were in as Hitler rose to power. His solution was to join, and to play his part in fostering, the Resistance Movement. He gained a position on the staff of the Foreign Office, travelled the world in support of the cause, and befriended the many senior army officers who shared its aims. He also retained his British friendships and confidently expected the British government to support his cause. They did not and shunned him, preferring to fight for the total surrender and humiliation of Germany rather than the elimination of Hitler and his replacement by leaders who, they felt, could not be trusted. Trott never understood this attitude. His love for his country and his desire for its renewal, as passionate as his hatred of Nazism, would not let him go down that road.

The *coup d'état*, planned for July 1944, failed. The war, which could have come to an end if the plot had succeeded, dragged on for another ten months. More people died in that final period, as the book points out, than in the previous five years. Adam von Trott, along with others, was tried and hanged: a martyr to a lost cause.

Kenneth Sears's story is vividly told. It offers a perspective on the history of the Second World War not always found among British historians. It contains many excerpts from Trott's letters, and many transcripts of conversations with contemporaries. There are forty-one photographs selected from family archives with the help of Trott's widow, Clarita. Unusually there are two forewords: one by the present principal of Mansfield College, Diana Walford, and another by her predecessor, David Marquand.

C. KEITH FORECAST

***The Early Preaching of Karl Barth: Fourteen Sermons with a Commentary by William H. Willimon.* By Karl Barth and William H. Willimon. Louisville, Kentucky / Edinburgh: Westminster John Knox Press / Alban Books, 2009. £16.99. Pp. xviii + 171. ISBN 978-0664-23367-0.**

From the wealth of publications on all aspects of the theologian's thought, it is manifest that the Karl Barth industry is going from strength to strength and seems set to do so for some time to come. One of the latest contributions in English is this selection of sermons from Barth's Safenwil ministry along with a commentary on each by the popular preacher and American Methodist bishop William Willimon. The *Gesamtausgabe* or collected works have been available from Zurich's *Theologische Verlag* for some time, and have served as the basis for the impressive scholarship which has transformed our understanding of Barth's early development, from his spectacular break with

liberalism around 1916 which led to the famous Romans commentary of two years later, to the publication of the *Church Dogmatics* beginning in 1932. Barth reception has been as moveable a feast as Barth scholarship proper, with Anglo-Saxon perceptions – itself an anathema to Brythonic Celts and Gaels – being dependent for the most part on the most recent English translations which were available at the time. Commencing with the American Congregationalist Douglas Horton's *The Word of God and the Word of Man* in 1928, Edwyn C. Hoskyns's translation of the Romans commentary in 1933 and G. T. Thomson's clunky rendering of *Church Dogmatics I/1* as *The Doctrine of the Word of God* three years later, a true grasp of Barth's actual development during the 1920s and 1930s was fitful to say the least. By the time G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance had supplied English readers on both sides of the Atlantic with the text of the *Dogmatics* in its entirety, from 1956 to 1975, interest in Barth had waned and threatened, especially during the secular 1960s, to be wholly eclipsed. It is only since the centenary in 1986 that Barth's reputation has recovered, while the "Barth renaissance" of the 1990s to the present, has strengthened the view that in him we are dealing with a theological genius of the first degree.

The very massiveness of the *Church Dogmatics*, as well as its author's reputation of being a *heavy* theologian, masked the fact that he saw his task as being a *preacher* of God's Word. Theology could only be done in the service of the church, hence the *Church Dogmatics*. The way in which God revealed himself was through the Word. The smooth analysis of the Swiss Catholic Hans Urs Von Balthasar that there was a basic correspondence between humankind and God, was in discontinuity with the "early" Barth and his disconnect and dissonance ("crisis") between the human and the divine, has more recently yielded to a new consensus, forged mainly by Princeton's Bruce McCormack, which posits a basic continuity between the Barth who broke with liberalism in 1916 and the commencement of the *Dogmatics* in 1932. We now know, on the basis of the *Gesamtausgabe*, the basic contours of Barth's early development: his increasing mastery of Calvin and Reformed theology in its classical guise during his professorship at Göttingen between 1921 and 1926, and his fruitful engagement with Roman Catholicism – a worthy foil – in Münster from 1926 to the end of the decade. We have also discovered, not least from the previously unpublished *Göttingen Dogmatics* of 1923-4, that his main aim was to supply preachers of the Reformed Church, along with the occasional apprentice Lutheran pastor, with a serviceable gospel which the older liberalism seemed no longer capable of providing. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Barth the professor was none other than a trainer of ministers, this being true of his time in Bonn, 1930-5, as well. The Barmen Declaration of 1934 was aimed at *preachers* of the gospel. In the face of Nazi totalitarianism the Word was to be *proclaimed*, not debated. Up to and beyond his ejection from Germany in 1935 and his return to his native Basel, Barth was never anything less than a preacher of the Word.

And it was between pulpit and manse, in the village of Safenwil from 1911 to 1920, with the cannons of the Great War audible in the distance, that this preached theology was initially fashioned. Although many of the pre-1916 sermons are now available in German, the fourteen reproduced here are from Barth's break with liberalism during that year. The liberal emphasis on emulating Christ, striving to create the Kingdom of God and Christ as the divine prophet have already yielded to something more craggy, immediate and critical. God is the Unknown, the One who breaks in from above, indeed "the Wholly Other", a phrase laconically suggested by Eduard Thurneysen, Barth's ministerial colleague in the neighbouring village of Leitwil and the fellow creator of the new theology which would later be dubbed "the theology of crisis" or "the theology of the Word". As it happens, Barth came first to be known in Britain and America through his joint sermons with Thurneysen. Such was the unanimity between them that Barth's earliest works apart from the Romans commentary (1919) was a collection of sermons, issued initially in the 1920s but translated during the 1930s as *Come Holy Spirit*. It is instructive to compare this selection, from 1916 to 1920, with the sermons in *Come Holy Spirit* (1934) prepared originally between 1920 and 1924. The present collection is much more rough and ready and more difficult to follow; they could hardly have gone down readily among the factory workers and farmers of the village of semi-rural Safenwil. What is apparent is a feeling of excitement and importance, that the preacher is wrestling with the Word and, indeed, with the God of the Word. Willimon's contextualization is helpful, as are his homiletic comments despite their coming from twenty first century mainline American Protestantism, itself a world away from Barth's European milieu nearly a century previously. Yet the verve and immediacy are still apparent and Willimon's plea for a new theology of the Word is apposite not only in the US but in the UK as well.

For those wishing to feel the force and attractiveness of Barth the evangelical preacher, it would be better to turn to *Come Holy Spirit* and even more so to the collections published during the 1960s, *Deliverance to the Captives* (1961) and *Call for God* (1967). By then Barth had spent a lifetime as a learned professor; his career at Basel, where he had been taken in following his ejection by the Nazis from the University of Bonn in 1935, was coming to an end. Although at that time his ten-year pastorate belonged to the distant, distant past, he still felt that his work had been to provide preachers of the Word with a message that they could preach. If the later sermons do not provide a way into the *Church Dogmatics*, they at least illustrate that theology must always be a servant of the pulpit. In this volume we have Barth the young minister in the very process of discovering a new world, the world of grace and redemption, and sharing that with his people. The excitement is palpable. It is worth reading these expositions and applications just to *feel* the electricity at work.

D. DENSIL MORGAN