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EDITORIAL

There is a Scottish feel to this issue of the Journal, reminding us of Scotland's distinctive church history which, of course, is also part of the United Reformed Church's history.

John Bremner's essay charts the beginning of a congregation in Bathgate. It clearly and concisely outlines the complexity of the Scottish churches' past, setting the scene for a second instalment, in a future issue, which will show how the three churches which emerged from a single congregation ended up belonging to three different denominations. This first article also sets the scene for David Dutton's essay which takes the theme of church planting in England by the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church. Notwithstanding the continued presence of Trinitarian Presbyterians, especially, though not exclusively, in Cumbria and Northumberland, there can be little doubt that this migration reinvigorated Presbyterianism in England. It would result, in 1876, in the inauguration of the Presbyterian Church of England. Ian Randall offers an account of the ministry of Alan MacLeod – born in Liverpool to a father from the Scottish Highlands "who came to England 'to convert the English'" – as missionary and as professor and principal of Westminster College, Cambridge. His work in what is now Bangladesh reminds us that Christianity is a missionary faith and that there is more to the Christian world than our sometimes parochial denominationalism might suggest. Something of his belief that "God does make a difference" reverberates through this article. My thanks to each of our authors for submitting their engaging and fascinating essays.

We welcome Rosalind Kaye as reviewer.

THE ORIGINS OF BATHGATE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH: AN INTRODUCTION TO SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY, 1643-1807

In 2007, Bathgate United Reformed Church celebrated its bi-centenary. Plans to mark this event were already well underway in 2006, when the present writer moved to Bathgate in answer to a call to serve that congregation as its Minister of Word and Sacraments. A principal figure on the Bi-Centenary Committee was William Millan, a retired school teacher and elder of the Church, whose interest in local history had already led him to help found the town's Bennie Museum,[1] for which services to the local community (among many others) he had been awarded the M.B.E. In 2002, Millan had published a history of Bathgate United Reformed Church, entitled *A Time with Christ*,[2] and this book may be said to be one of the starting points for the present essay.

A highlight of the Bi-Centenary Year took place on Sunday, 10 June, when a large proportion of the congregation, accompanied by various other friends, travelled the three miles up into the hills to visit the place where, on 14 January 1738, a crowd had gathered to hear John Hunter preach a sermon.[3] A stone, laid in 1739, though dated 1738 for an unknown reason,[4] marks the spot; it is situated in a field belonging to Upper Craigmailing Farm[5] in an area known as Tartraven. There is no record of how many people were there in 1738 to participate in that act of worship, though it may have been two or three hundred,[6] but in November 1738 the gathered congregation appealed for, and was granted, recognition as a congregation by the Associate Presbytery of the Secession Church. The Presbytery was unable to supply any regular preaching for the time being and, at first, the congregation met occasionally in a barn or in the fields.[7] Within two years, however, sufficient people were gathering on a regular basis for a building to be raised, with the capacity, so it is claimed, for one thousand.[8]

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1 Bennie Museum, which was opened in 1989, includes many artefacts of local historical interest. It is to be found in the town centre, on Mansefield Street.

2 William Ian Millan, *A Time With Christ: History of the Church in Marjoribanks Street, Bathgate* (Bathgate: W. I. Millan, 2002).

3 Scotland adopted 1 January as the start of the new year in 1600. England did not do so until 1752, so 1738 was, indeed, 1738 and not 1739.

4 See Millan, *A Time With Christ: A History of the Church in Marjoribanks Street, Bathgate*, pp. 4ff.

5 Or "Upper Craigmailen". As is often the case with rural lowland place names in Scotland, the spelling varies, depending on whether the writers follow local dialect or official legal names.

6 William MacKelvie (ed.), *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: Oliphant and Co. and Andrew Elliot; Glasgow: David Robertson, 1873), p. 269, (hereafter *Annals*).

7 *Annals*, p. 269.

8 See *Annals*, p. 270 for an account of the building of the Church.

I: Scotland Religious and Political, 1637 to 1737

Although the civil wars in England, Ireland and Scotland during the 1640s were contemporary and, to some extent, interlinked as armies marched across borders and sailed the Irish Sea in pursuit of their various political and religious goals, they were, in reality, three separate events. With regard to the situation in Britain, because of his "Divine Right" theology, Charles I had managed to annoy many people, both in England and in Scotland. But whereas the English Civil War was, to a large extent, a political event, with the powers of king and parliament at issue, (though religious factors played an enormous part in that conflict), the Scottish Civil War was more strictly religious in origin, as it was the attempted imposition of Laud's High Anglican Prayer Book in 1637 which sparked the civil conflict which, in Scotland, continued on and off until the Settlement in 1690.

Jenny Geddes may not have actually thrown her chair on the third Sunday of July, 1637, when John Hanna, Dean of Edinburgh, started to read the new service,[9] but there was certainly a riot in St Giles's Kirk. Led by a group of Protestant nobles, a movement developed which quickly culminated in the first signing of the National Covenant, at the Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh on 28 February 1638. For the next fifty years, Scottish society was riven by the religious question - during the seventeenth century far more Scots died in battles between different Protestant factions than had died during the initial Reformation period, which had culminated in 1560 when the Scottish Parliament voted to adopt the Reformed faith as that of the nation.

Following the invitation issued to William of Orange to ascend the thrones of England and Scotland, which he did in 1688 along with his wife Mary, Presbyterianism eventually won the battle against Episcopalianism in Scotland. The Act of Supremacy, that had established Episcopalianism as the form of government of the Church of Scotland, was repealed in 1690, while Anglican Prelacy was confirmed as the preferred form of Church government for Ireland, England and Wales.[10]

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9 Michael Lynch, for one, declares this particular aspect of the events of that day to be "an invention of the nineteenth century". See Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1991), p. xv. However, Professor Burleigh has no doubt that a riot took place. See J. H. S. Burleigh: *A Church History of Scotland*, Edinburgh: Hope Trust, 1988, p. 216.

10 There is plenty of literature regarding the National Covenant and the period of history from its signing until the 1690 Settlement. Relatively modern research into the period in question includes Walter Makey, *The Church of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979); John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Julia Buckroyd, *Church and State in Scotland 1660-1681* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1980); and, for a general view, Lynch, *Scotland: A New History*, chapter 4, "The Crisis of the Three Kingdoms". Todd's work is particularly useful in seeking to understand the mind-set of the "common folk" in the period. It is also worth noting that the "Glorious Revolution" (as it is known in England) is often referred to as "the Revolution" (see, for example, Burleigh, chapter 5); however, it was a much slower process in Scotland than it was south of the Border (see Burleigh, pp. 253ff).

But many Scots were not happy. The new king, William, had failed to honour the commitments made by his father-in-law, Charles I, and brother-in-law, Charles II, to bring England into line with the theology of the National Covenant and the Westminster Confession.[11] Some, citing the theological and military battles fought by their fathers and grandfathers in defence of the Covenant, withdrew from the National Kirk, forming groups or "societies" which joined with remnants of the "Cameronians" – a group of Presbyterians who had refused to acknowledge James VII as king and had suffered brutal persecution as a result. Others formed a network of "Praying Societies", meeting mostly in private for prayer and study of the Bible while remaining within the established Church of Scotland, with its protected status guaranteed by the Treaty of Union and the Act of Union.[12]

The suspicions of many that "Scotland's ancient rights and privileges", including those of the Kirk, would be ignored, or even overturned, by the Westminster Parliament were well founded. In 1712, following a dispute about the rights of local Patrons to "present" ministers to congregations in vacancy, an Act of the British Parliament overturned the position which most Scots assumed had held heretofore (at least since 1689). Millan puts the point strongly, but not unfairly:

> ... in 1712 Queen Anne's Parliament re-introduced patronage into the church, in flagrant disregard for the Treaty of Union, itself imposed five years earlier. This gave the right to a wealthy patron or heritor who paid the minister's stipend, to place a minister of his own choosing in a charge, regardless of the wishes of the congregation.[13]

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11 Charles I agreed to implement the Covenant in August 1641 (Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 223) as part of a wider settlement and thereby convinced the Covenanting Army, which had invaded England in August 1640, to return to Scotland. Charles II subscribed to the Covenant and, by implication, to the products of the Westminster Assembly, in June 1650 (Burleigh, p. 230), in an attempt to gain support in Scotland for his claim to the Scottish throne following the death of his father. Charles was, indeed, crowned King of Scots at Scone in January 1651.

12 One of the first acts of any new British monarch is that of taking an oath to uphold the "Government, Worship, Discipline, Right and Privilege of the Church of Scotland", in accordance with the 1707 Act which confirmed the Presbyterian nature of Church Government in Scotland at the time of union with England. Queen Elizabeth II took that oath within hours of returning to London, following the death of George VI. The 1921 Church of Scotland Act confirms those liberties and recognises the Kirk's right to total independence in regard to spiritual matters. Burleigh gives a brief account of the origins of the Cameronians (*A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 250ff). For a more detailed discussion of the Praying Societies see *Annals*, pp. 1ff; W. McMillan, "The Covenanters after the Revolution of 1688", in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. X (1950), pp. 141-153; and W. McMillan, *John Hepburn and the Hebronites: A Study in the Post-Revolution History of the Church of Scotland* (London: J. Clarke, 1934), pp. 39ff.

13 Millan, *A Time With Christ: History of the Church in Marjoribanks Street, Bathgate*, p. 3. "Heritor" is a Scots legal term meaning owner of land. In ecclesiastical terms it was someone who might be expected to contribute to the finances of the parish.

Valerie Wallace informs us that the 1712 Act was seen by many as "not only offensive because it signified a blasphemous encroachment of the civil authority in the spiritual sphere, but also because it struck at the very foundations on which the established Church in Scotland was based.[14] She continues by saying that from 1712 to 1874 around 40 per cent of Scotland's parishes contested the appointment of a new minister, and that "troops were frequently dispatched to enforce a patron's decision and silence violent crowds". One example of such use of troops to clear the way for an unwanted minister is cited as having taken place at Bathgate in 1720.[15]

From 1715, a group of ministers, led by Ebenezer Erskine, had been agitating against the Patronage Act, calling it "subversive of the right of election belonging to the Christian congregations by the Word of God",[16] but to no avail. During the General Assembly of 1733, a small number of ministers and lay commissioners broke away from the Kirk in protest: the Secession Church, and its Associate Presbytery, came into being under the leadership of Erskine and his brother Ralph. Over the coming months and years others joined them, and the two brothers were invited to travel the country, speaking at meetings and preaching at services. Ralph Erskine preached at Linlithgow on 5 August 1737 to "a great assemblage of the people", and at their first joint meeting following this visit, the local Praying Societies declared themselves in favour of the Secession. Fifteen elders and 122 members left St Michael's Kirk in Linlithgow and withdrew from the town to hold services at Tartraven.[17]

II: Eighteenth Century Scotland

The social and political situation in Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century was far from calm. Quite apart from the religious controversy, changes were beginning to take place in rural life which, in retrospect, were to be termed the "Agricultural Revolution". Those feeling themselves to be economically threatened were also quite frequently those for whom their status as "equals before the Lord" in the affairs of the Kirk was now threatened by Acts of what Wallace calls an increasingly "foreign" Parliament. In 1724, a large group of people in the rural southwest (Galloway and Ayrshire), already noted as an area of strong Covenanting and Cameronian traditions, gathered together to fight the agricultural changes taking place, changes which were threatening their status as independent farmers. The "Galloway Levellers", as they were called, knocked down many of

14 Valerie Wallace, "Presbyterian Moral Economy: The Covenanting Tradition and Popular Protest in Lowland Scotland, 1707-1746", in *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 89, no. 1 (2010), pp. 54-72.

15 Ibid., p. 58; and, for the Bathgate reference, note 13, citing J. McKerrow, *The History of the Secession Church* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1839).

16 *Annals*, p. 7.

17 *Annals*, p. 269.

the new stone dykes which were dividing up the land.[18] A contemporary ballad sums up the mood of the times:

> For they that strain the poor man's right of either land or food
> The Lord says he'll debar their souls from any spiritual good;
> They are more forward to thrust out poor people from their land
> Than Israel was the heathen folk when Moses did command.[19]

The interlinking of social and religious thinking is obvious in this verse, and its metre places it solidly in the psalm singing tradition of the Covenanters.

In 1725, the Walpole government introduced a malt tax. This was understood by many Scots as contrary to the Act of Union in 1707, and the rebels in the southwest were strengthened in their fight against what was regarded as "an illegitimate State"; among other things, smuggling became a major part of the economy throughout the southwestern sea lanes with their various islands (Rathlin, Ailsa Craig, Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes to name but six). Many people have confused this illegal activity with Jacobitism.[20] Nothing could be further from the truth. Wallace notes that "Presbyterian moral economy was a robust and continuous, but (today) unduly neglected, strand in the history of Scottish radicalism".[21] Here were the inheritors of the Covenant tradition, fighting against the "un-Godly" state, as their forebears had nearly a century before.

How does all this relate to the congregation in the Bathgate Hills? If we were to look carefully at the area close to Upper Craigmailing Farm, and its "Lower" neighbour, where the remnants of the church built in 1740 still exist, we would see, to this day, the signs of small industries interspersed with agriculture, signs which were familiar to those eighteenth century worshippers. To the north and west, agricultural land of middling quality descends, sometimes steeply, to Linlithgow and the Avon valley. But to the east, to the northwest and southwest, and a mile to the south, there are also redundant quarries; and to the southeast, two sets of lime kilns, now overgrown. And to the south of the Craigmailing farms, there was a lead mine, which had, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, produced silver; indeed, Sir Thomas Hamilton of Binnie, on whose land the mine was found, had amassed the considerable sum of £6,000 Scots from the silver, before selling the mine to King James VI for a further £5,000, making him "the richest man in Scotland". He sold up in Linlithgowshire and invested in the much richer land of

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18 Wallace, "Presbyterian Moral Economy: The Covenanting Tradition and Popular Protest in Lowland Scotland, 1707-1746", p. 59.

19 Ibid., p. 62, citing W. C. McKenzie *The History of Galloway from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, vol. II (Kirkcudbright: J. Nicholson, 1841), p. 396.

20 See Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1685-1746* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1995), pp. 206-211.

21 Wallace, "Presbyterian Moral Economy: The Covenanting Tradition and Popular Protest in Lowland Scotland, 1707-1746", p. 72.

East Lothian. eventually becoming Earl of Haddington.[22] By the time the Secession congregation was founded. however, the silver had been mined out and the lead was becoming difficult to extract. But we may reasonably surmise that the Bathgate Hills had a healthy population during the mid-eighteenth century, albeit by no means a wealthy one. The Bathgate Hills were populated with men and women who gained their living – such as it was – from a mixture of farming, quarrying and making lime (much of which went to Edinburgh to help with the construction of the New Town). We may also assume that many of these people would have readily associated themselves with the theology and ecclesiology of the Secession and, before that, the Praying Societies and their Covenanting antecedents.

It is not intended here to follow the intricacies of life in the Secession Church of the eighteenth century (for which the reader is advised to consult McKerrow's *History* and MacKelvie's *Annals*). However, it is necessary to note that, in 1747 the Secession Church split into two factions over the use of the "Burgess Oath". Introduced by the Hanoverian government in 1745 as a response to the Jacobite Rising, this was an oath to be taken by magistrates and those wishing to enter the trade guilds in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth, and it included a clause agreeing to "the true religion presently professed within this realm and authorised by the laws thereof: renouncing the Roman religion called Papistrie".[23] For the majority of the Secession folk, the oath was correct theologically and therefore ought to be taken; for others (the minority) there was a problem about state intervention in the rights of conscience, for which reason the oath was to be avoided, with all the social, economic and political consequences which followed. The Secession split into "Burgher" and "Anti-Burgher" factions. The Craigmailing congregation belonged to the latter faction and, from that time onwards, drew additional support from several surrounding towns and villages.

Despite the division of 1747, the Secession Church (the Associate Presbyteries, as they now were) continued to thrive. The growing number of Secession congregations, of both factions, in Linlithgowshire led to many of those who worshipped at Craigmailing joining the new missions, particularly in Bo'Ness, five miles to the north, beyond Linlithgow, and in Mid Calder, six miles to the

22 West Lothian Local History Library pamphlet, *Mining Silver in the Bathgate Hills* (Linlithgow: West Lothian Council, 2004). We might note that Sir Thomas Hamilton abandoned the poorer West Lothian for the richer East, with its less hilly and more fertile fields. To this day, farming in the higher parts of the Bathgate Hills is unlikely to produce great economic rewards. Nils White, in his study of the old farms in the area, notes that, although there was pastureland, and some good dairying land was to be found, "the farms were usually small, and the steadings [farm buildings] humble by comparison [with East Lothian]". Nils White, *The Farmsteadings of the Bathgate Hills* (Linlithgow: West Lothian Council, 1991).

23 See *Annals*, p.18; also Alex M. Bisset, *History of Bathgate and District* (Bathgate: West Lothian Printing and Publishing Co., 1906), p. 42. In some respects, the Burgess Oath may be seen as analogous to the Test Acts in England, which inhibited the participation of Dissenters in public life; but we ought to be careful not to assume that the meaning of the English term "dissent" can be applied easily in the Scottish situation.

south east. Alex Bisset, a local historian, records that such was the reduction in the size of the Craigmailing congregation that by 1805 the building had fallen into a state of disrepair; and "taking into consideration its inconvenience of situation", the congregations decided to abandon it.[24]

III: Three Congregations from One – and further division in the Kirk

The majority of the Craigmailing congregation came from Linlithgow and its surrounding area, and along with its minister, Revd Alexander Oliver, decided that a new building and congregation should be erected in that town.[25] Within two years, the new congregation had established itself under the title of "Craigmailen Kirk", though it was known officially as "The East Church" to distinguish it from the Burgher Secession congregation worshipping at the west end of that town. The Craigmailen congregation is now part of the Church of Scotland.

Mention has already been made of the Anti-Burgher Secession church in Bo'Ness, on the banks of the Forth. The founding of this congregation in around 1763,[26] had already weakened the Craigmailing congregation. As was the case in Linlithgow, this Bo'Ness congregation took with it the name "Craigmailen"; it also found itself in competition with a Secession congregation of the Burgher branch. Both these congregations now belong to the United Free Church of Scotland.

A third group decided to establish a congregation in Bathgate – a congregation which eventually became part of the United Reformed Church. A sequel to this article will outline how these three congregations came to belong, as they now do, to three different denominations.

Before concluding, one further aspect of the general situation among the Presbyterian churches in Scotland at the start of the nineteenth century must be noted. In 1738 a minister was forced on the congregation of Duns, in the Borders, against the will of the members; this happened again in 1748, and a group broke away in protest. In 1752 the parish of Inverkeithing, in Fife, suffered the same fate, and this time groups formed in both Inverkeithing and nearby Dunfermline under the leadership of a certain Revd Mr Gillespie. The pattern was repeated in many other places and, in 1761 under the guidance of Gillespie, "The Relief Presbytery" was formed, later renamed the "Synod of Relief". By 1770 the number of congregations had grown to 15, and by 1820 to around 70.[27] It may be asked why Gillespie and his followers did not join the Secession. The answer, in all likelihood, is that they assumed their "rebellion" would be short lived and that an amicable settlement with the Established Kirk would be forthcoming. But such is the way of these things that no such settlement was achieved, and the Relief Church continued to prosper. The re-union of the two branches of the Secession Church, and their subsequent union with the Relief Church are important matters in Scottish history,

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24 Bisset, *History of Bathgate and District*, p. 42f.

25 Ibid., p. 43; also, *Annals*, p. 276.

26 *Annals*, p. 270.

27 *Annals*, p. 40.

along with the two controversies in 1843 which caused major divisions in both the Secession Church and the Church of Scotland, and these issues will be addressed in the next article. Nevertheless, a few tentative conclusions may be drawn:

First, we may note that Scottish church history consists of much that is strange (one might even say "alien") to the English (and Welsh) reader. At a time when the question of Scottish identity is a major cause of debate, it is worth remembering that the church in Scotland has played a significant part in maintaining the "difference" between Scotland and England, even while involving itself fully in the "Union" and, particularly, in its Empire.

Secondly, the reader, may well be forgiven for becoming confused by the splits and re-unions which have taken place in the Scottish church since 1560. If we include the United Reformed Church, there are currently at least eight churches in Scotland which can claim descent from the Presbyterian theological structure which emerged from the Westminster Assembly. Most Scots are as bemused by this fact as those who live in less fractious parts of Great Britain.

And thirdly, this essay has, as one of its purposes, that of reminding readers of the *Journal* that the United Reformed Church is a Church in three nations, and that the history of those congregations which form the Synod of Scotland is every bit as much a part of the history of the United Reformed Church as those congregations which are to be found in southern climes.

Having addressed the origins of the congregation, a second article will take us towards the present day. But it is the writer's hope that, through the study of the origins of Bathgate United Reformed Church, a little light may have been shone on a period of Scottish church history which has much to tell us about how religious issues interact with constitutional and economic ones to mould the life of both church and nation.

JOHN S. BREMNER

THE PLANTING OF "SCOTCH" CHURCHES AND THE RECOVERY OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN ENGLAND, 1662-1876

One of the features of church life in England in the eighteenth century was the way in which, as English Presbyterianism continued to decline, Scottish Presbyterianism built up a presence south of the English/Scottish border. Such "planting" helped to compensate for the decline in English Presbyterianism and contributed to the revival of Presbyterianism in England. This article will trace the decline of English Presbyterianism, compare the planting strategies adopted by the Church of Scotland with those of the Secession, Relief, United Secession and United Presbyterian Churches, and describe how, in 1876, the Presbyterian Church in England and the English Provincial Synod of United Presbyterian Church came together to form the Presbyterian Church of England.

The article will make extensive use of two main sources for the planting of Scottish Presbyterian churches in England. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: The Succession of Ministers of the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, Vol. VII (1928) provides information on the congregations which formed the "Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England, in connection with the Church of Scotland",[1] while *The Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church* (1873) provides information on congregations which formed the "English Provincial Synod of the United Presbyterian Church".[2] Both works bear the imprimatur of their respective denominations. In 1860, William MacKelvie, editor of *The Annals*, died, leaving a manuscript which was edited by a committee appointed by the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church. And in 1871 Hew Scott, editor of the *Fasti*, died and his work was completed by a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The article will also make use of articles on the decline of English Presbyterianism,[3] its transformation into Unitarianism,[4] the presence of Scots migrants in England,[5] and the formation of the Presbyterian Church of England,[6] and refer to various other publications and websites.

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1 Hew Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, Vol. VII (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928), p. 457, (hereafter *Fasti*).

2 William MacKelvie (ed.), *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: Oliphant and Co. and Andrew Elliot and Glasgow: David Robertson, 1873), (hereafter *Annals*).

3 James C. Spalding, "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760", in *Church History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (March, 1969).

4 Russell E. Richey, "Did the English Presbyterians become Unitarian?", in *Church History*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (March 1973).

5 Keith M. Brown and Allan Kennedy, "'Land of Opportunity': The Assimilation of Scottish Migrants in England, 1603- ca.1760", in *Journal of British Studies* (November 2018), (accessed online).

6 David Cornick, "Catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman! Nationalism, Theology and Ecumenism in the Presbyterian Church in England, 1845-1876", in *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, Volume 3, No. 6 (May 1985), pp. 202-203.

I: Decline of English Presbyterianism

The historian James Spalding has identified three phases in the decline of English Presbyterianism.[7] The first occurred between 1662 and 1688 and was characterised by the persecution of Presbyterians and other Nonconformists. Presbyterians had supported the restoration of Charles II and expected him to favour a moderate form of Presbyterianism. In 1650, in an attempt to ingratiate himself with the Scots, he had signed the Solemn League and Covenant (1643)[8] in which the English and Scottish Parliaments had undertaken "the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland ... according to the word of God, and example of the best reformed Churches"[9] and had promised, in the Declaration of Breda (1660), "liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom".[10] However, after Charles returned to England in 1660, it became apparent that he favoured a moderate form of episcopacy.[11] Faced with this unwelcome development, a group of Presbyterians, led by Richard Baxter, attempted to persuade Charles to accept a "comprehensive" form of church government in which episcopacy would co-exist alongside synodical government.[12]

However, the "Cavalier" Parliament, which was elected in 1661, was dominated by Anglicans and passed a series of measures, known collectively as the "Clarendon Code", which were designed to support the Church of England and suppress dissent.[13] The Corporation Act (1661) required members of municipal corporations to take communion in the Church of England at least once each year; the Act of Uniformity (1662) required ministers to use the *Book of Common Prayer*; the Conventicle Act (1664) banned religious assemblies of more than five people from different households outside the auspices of the Church of England; and the Five Mile Act (1665) banned ejected ministers from living within five miles of their former residence. These measures, especially the Act of Uniformity, had a devastating impact on Puritan factions seeking greater reform of the church, but its effect was especially felt by Presbyterians. It is estimated that of the approximately 2,000 ministers who were ejected from their parishes for refusing to conform, around 1,500 were Presbyterians.[14]

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7 Spalding. "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760".

8 Christopher Falkus, *The Life and Times of Charles II* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1972), p. 41.

9 The Solemn League and Covent 1643, paragraph 1. Available on *Reformation History* at https://reformationhistory.org/solemnleaguecovenant_text.html. Accessed 11 February 2020.

10 "Declaration of Breda", available at https://www.constitution.org/eng/conpur105.htm. Accessed 11 February 2020.

11 Spalding. "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760", p. 65.

12 Ibid., p. 67.

13 Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1714* (London and New York: Longman, 1994), pp. 292-298.

14 Albert Cassell Dudley, "Nonconformity Under the 'Clarendon Code", in *The American Historical Review* (October 1912), p. 70.

Despite facing arrest and imprisonment, some ejected ministers continued to conduct worship. Gilbert Rule of Alnwick preached in various locations in north-Northumberland;[15] John Forsyth of Lowick preached at conventicles in his former parish until 1677;[16] and Thomas Lupton of Woodhorn and his followers worshipped in secret in mid-Northumberland.[17] Other ejected ministers conducted clandestine worship in Belford, Glanton, North Shields, Stamfordham, South Shields, Sunderland, Warkworth and Wooler.[18] While their efforts kept the flame of Presbyterianism alive, especially in Northumberland, by the Revolution of 1688 the struggle for the soul of the Church of England had been lost.

The second phase in the decline of Presbyterianism occurred between 1689 and c.1720 and was characterised by a loss of identity. Although the 1689 Act of Toleration ended almost three decades of intermittent persecution and granted Presbyterians freedom of worship, Spalding indicates they were forced to accept that their future would be as "Protestant Dissenters".[19] The Toleration Act required Presbyterian meeting-houses to be administered by local trustees rather than sessions, and there was no provision for presbyteries to meet. In 1691 Presbyterians and Independents in London entered a "Happy Union", in which ministers were grouped into a body approximating a presbytery.[20] However, its powers were only consultative. Although similar bodies were set up elsewhere in England, during the next two decades doctrinal and liturgical differences led Presbyterians and Independents to move apart. By 1720 most Presbyterians had rejected the authority of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) and the term "Presbyterian" was being used in a doctrinal sense to describe "those who believe in the sole authority of the Bible to the exclusion of human formulas".[21]

The third phase in the decline of English Presbyterianism occurred after 1720 and was characterised by a doctrinal metamorphosis which turned most English Presbyterians into Unitarians. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, Presbyterian ministers favoured "a free and candid searching of the Scriptures".[22] John Taylor of Norwich described this approach as "the most Catholic and charitable foundation ... [for] the public duties of religion".[23] Although Presbyterians continued to repeat the mantra "the Bible and the Bible alone",[24] they interpreted Scripture in the light of reason rather than through traditional forms of exegesis.

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15 *Fasti*, p. 464.

16 *Fasti*, p. 461.

17 J. A. and G. E. Gordon, *Presbyterian Church of England, Widdrington: 1765-1965* (Alnwick: 1965), p. 10.

18 "Nonconformist Histories" on Northern Synod, available at https://urc-northernsynod.org/Nonconformist-histories/, accessed 8 December 2020.

19 Spalding, "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760", p. 74.

20 Ibid., p. 75.

21 Ibid., p. 78.

22 Ibid., p. 79.

23 Cited in Spalding, "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760", p. 79.

24 A. H. Drysdale, *History of Presbyterians in England: Their Rise, Decline and Revival* (London: Presbyterian Church of England, 1889) p. 507.

Historians have offered different explanations as to how Presbyterians became Unitarians. In his *History of Presbyterians in England* (1889) A. H. Drysdale claimed the problem was structural and that, by vesting authority in ministers and local trustees, the 1689 Toleration Act robbed Presbyterianism of its synodical government upon which its doctrine, order and discipline rested and that, without these rudders, Presbyterian ministers were left to drift with the tide.[25] Drysdale singled out academies, where ministers were trained, for particular censure; describing them as "seed pods of heterodoxy".[26] However, in his *History of English Nonconformity* (1911) A. H. Clark argued that structures of themselves cannot guarantee the spiritual health of a church, which depends on its inner life, and that English Presbyterianism declined because Dissenters abandoned the Puritan ideals of their forefathers.[27] In the late 1960s, James Spalding suggested that one of the factors in the decline of English Presbyterianism was its lack of a "definite liturgy" of the kind that tied Anglicans to their traditions.[28] However, Unitarian historians have offered an alternative narrative. They deny that English Presbyterianism "declined" and instead argue that by a process of evolution, guided by Whig ideas of liberty, Presbyterians moved "from Calvinism, through Arminianism, through Arianism, to Unitarianism in gradual acceptance of humanitarian principles and the freedom of conscience".[29] An expression of this view is to be found in *The English Presbyterians: From English Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism* (1968) by C. G. Bolam, Jeremy Goring and H. L. Short.[30] Although historians disagree over the cause of the decline/evolution of Presbyterianism, it is accepted that, by the end of the eighteenth century much of Presbyterianism in England had embraced Unitarianism For some Presbyterian churches, the only way to maintain Trinitarian orthodoxy was to become independent or congregational in polity. Nevertheless, Trinitarian Presbyterianism survived due to considerable assistance from Scotland.[31]

II: Ministering to Scottish Migrants in England

Until recently information on the extent and nature of Scottish immigration into England was sketchy. Historians interested in immigration to England tended to

25 Ibid., p. 550.
26 Ibid., p. 511.
27 Cited in Richey, "Did the English Presbyterians become Unitarian?", pp. 60-61.
28 Spalding. "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760", p. 80.
29 Richey, "Did the English Presbyterians become Unitarian?", p. 61.
30 C. G. Bolam, Jeremy Goring and H. L. Short *The English Presbyterians: From English Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968).
31 Spalding, "The Demise of English Presbyterianism: 1660-1760", p. 81. Cf. Alasdair Raffe, "Presbyterianism", in Andrew C. Thompson (ed.), *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions Volume II: The Long Eighteenth Century, c.1689-c.1828* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 11-29 [p. 12]. John H. Y. Briggs, "The Changing Shape of Nonconformity: 1662-2000", in Robert Pope (ed.), *T&T Clark Companion to Nonconformity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 3-26 [p. 8].

concentrate on more exotic and easily identifiable European migrants, such as the Huguenots, and those interested in emigration from Scotland tended to concentrate on the Scottish diaspora in North America, Australia and New Zealand. However, in 2018 Keith Brown and Allan Kennedy of Manchester University published a paper giving details of Scottish migrants in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[32] They show that immigration to England, which had existed throughout the early modern period, was boosted by the regal union of 1603 and the parliamentary union of 1707, and that, while a minority of Scots felt unwelcome and returned home, for the overwhelming majority migration was "a positive experience". Brown and Kennedy identify several factors which led to this "success", including migrants having skills that were in demand and a culture that was compatible with that of their hosts. While there were institutional barriers that prevented Scots making headway in some professions, including the church and the law, they had considerable success in others, including medicine, male midwifery and architecture, and were overrepresented in the higher ranks of the army. Unfortunately the database available to Brown and Kennedy did not allow them to produce as detailed a picture of the experience of working-class Scots. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose their experience was fundamentally different from that of their middle-class countrymen. Brown and Kennedy estimate that in 1700 there were 35,000 Scots living in London and by 1750 that number had risen to 60,000: that is around 10 per cent of the total population of the capital. While they concede that these estimates are "extremely rough and derived from very limited data", it is likely that by the middle of the eighteenth century "London [had] the largest urban population of Scots after Edinburgh".

Although it is not possible to be precise about the number of Scottish migrants who came to England in the eighteenth century, they were sufficiently numerous to justify the Church of Scotland planting congregations south of the English/Scottish border. The origins of this involvement can be traced to the 1670s, when Scots came to the aid of English Presbyterian congregations. In 1672 William Bird, who was a licentiate of the Church of the Scotland, crossed the border to avoid having to conform in his native Berwickshire,[33] and was ordained as a colleague to Luke Ogle at a meeting-house at Barmoor near Lowick and remained there until his death in 1712.[34] Also in 1672, Nathanial Barnand, ejected from the parish church in Brampton, obtained a licence to hold services in the house of a glove-maker named William Atkinson.[35] After Barnand moved to Hawick, the congregation called James Noble from Edinburgh, and thereafter most of its ministers were Scots.

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32 "Land of Opportunity". Note: as the online version does not have page numbers it is not possible to provide precise references. See note 5 above.

33 It is estimated that in 1663 around 270 ministers were ejected from the Church of Scotland for refusing to accept the reintroduction of episcopacy. See J. D. Mackie, *A History of Scotland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p. 235.

34 *Fasti*, p. 461.

35 *Fasti*, p. 474.

What is impressive about the presence of the Church of Scotland in England is its geographical spread. As well as a number of congregations in the London area[36] and in the border counties of Cumberland[37] and Northumberland,[38] there were other congregations, which were either in communion with the Church of Scotland or served by Church of Scotland ministers, in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Devon, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire, Westmorland, Wiltshire, Yorkshire, and on the Isle of Man.[39] One of the earliest was Crown Court in London which was founded in 1711 and moved into a purpose built meeting-house in Russell Street in 1719.[40] The number of Scots migrants and their descendants living in the capital increased during the nineteenth century and in 1846 the Presbytery of London purchased a building known as the "Holloway Chapel", previously used by Independents, for the use of Scots living in the district.[41]

It is not surprising that Scots, brought up on a diet of Calvinistic worship, anti-Episcopal rhetoric and distrust of religious enthusiasm, preferred to form their own congregations rather than worship in their local parish church or even in a Nonconformist chapel. Because Scottish Presbyterians were Protestant, the planting of their meeting-houses did not attract the same hostility as the erection of Roman Catholic chapels. These "Scotch" churches enabled migrants to meet fellow Scots and assisted them in retaining their cultural identity. The Scottishness of these congregations was reinforced by the fact that most called ministers from Scotland. However, ministers who moved south faced significant challenges. They no longer had a recognised place in the local community and were required to minister to a gathered congregation rather than a parish church or chapel of ease. Inevitably not every minister was able to adjust to his new sphere of service. In 1849 George Young moved from Paisley to Islington. However, after six months the Presbytery of London decided that he had not made the required adjustment and dissolved the pastoral tie between Young and his congregation.[42]

In 1836, on the recommendation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, representatives of the Presbyteries of Lancashire and North-West England met in Manchester and constituted themselves the "Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England, in connection with the Church of Scotland".[43] In 1839 they were joined by the Presbyteries of London and Newcastle-upon-Tyne; in 1840 by the Presbytery of Berwick-upon-Tweed; and in 1842 by the Presbyteries of Northumberland and North-West Northumberland. The creation

36 *Fasti*, pp. 466-471.
37 *Fasti*, pp. 473-478.
38 *Fasti*, pp. 504-521.
39 *Fasti*, pp. 456-526.
40 *Fasti*, pp. 489-503.
41 *Fasti*, p. 466.
42 Cornick, "Catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman!", pp. 202-203.
43 *Fasti*, p. 457.

of the Synod meant that by 1843 the Church of Scotland in England enjoyed a measure of autonomy.

However, within Scotland the ecclesiastical tectonic plates were moving and an earthquake was on its way. In 1834, after the Evangelical Party obtained a majority in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, it began to implement a series of radical measures, including the "Chapels Act" to increase the number of places of worship in growing urban communities, and the "Veto Act" to prevent ministers being imposed on parishes. However, both measures led to divisions within the National Church and conflict with the civil authorities.[44] When the Court of Session declared the Chapel Act incompetent and the Veto Act unlawful, the 1842 General Assembly approved a *Claim, Declaration and Protest, anent the Encroachment of the Court of Session*, which asserted the independence of the Kirk in spiritual matters.[45] Parliament rejected the Assembly's claims and Non-Intrusionists decided to attempt, what Alex Cheyne calls "a pre-emptive strike", in the hope of snatching victory out of defeat.[46] On 18 May 1843, the General Assembly met in St Andrew's Church, George Street, Edinburgh. Before proceedings got underway, the retiring Moderator, Professor David Welsh, read out a Protest and led around two hundred ministers and elders out of the church to the Tanfield Hall in Canonmills where, in the presence of a large crowd, they constituted themselves "The Church of Scotland – Free". Yet it was not the decisive victory the Non-Intrusionists expected; only a third of ministers and between a third and a half of the membership "came out" of the National Church.[47] The Disruption, as it came to be known, had a disproportionate effect in England where four out of five congregations left the Church of Scotland.[48] In 1844 the Synod of "the Presbyterian Church in England, in connection with the Church of Scotland" dropped "the Church of Scotland" from its title and became simply "The Presbyterian Church in England".[49]

There were those in the new denomination who believed that its task was to continue to minister to the Scottish diaspora, in what was seen as a hostile environment, and there were others who believed that it had a wider mission, and that it should shed its Scottish identity and concentrate on being a Presbyterian church for those living in England. David Cornick has shown that the debate was both far reaching and fractious and that it "affected every aspect of denominational life, from the supply of ministers to the provision of hymnbooks, from the use of organs to schemes for union".[50]

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44 Alex C. Cheyne, *The Ten Years Conflict and the Disruption: An Overview* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1993).

45 Ibid., p. 10.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., p. 11.

48 *Fasti*, p. 472.

49 Drysdale, *History of Presbyterians in England: Their Rise, Decline and Revival*, pp. 611-612.

50 Cornick, "Catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman!", p. 203.

III: A Flexible Approach to Planting Churches in England

Meanwhile the United Presbyterian Church was making steady progress in England. It was the product of the tendency of Presbyterians in Scotland to divide and divide again. Two of the main secessions centred on the issue of lay patronage, which had been restored in 1712. In 1733 Ebenezer Erskine and three others formed the Associate Presbytery "in disgust at patronage and the decay of doctrine and discipline in the [established] church"[51] and in 1761 Thomas Gillespie and two others formed the Presbytery of Relief to support those on whom a parish minister had been imposed.[52] However, three other divisions occurred over the relationship of church and state. In 1747 the Secession Church divided into the Associate (Burgher) Synod and the General Associate (Antiburgher) Synod over the propriety of taking the "burgher oath" which required the holder of a public office to uphold "the true religion professed in this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof";[53] in 1797 the Associate (Burgher) Synod divided over whether to continue to support the concept of an Establishment;[54] and in 1806 the General Associate (Antiburgher) Synod divided over whether to espouse the Voluntary Principle.[55] The suffix Auld Licht (Old Light) came to be attached to traditionalists and New Licht (New Light) to innovators.

While the Auld Licht/New Licht controversies led to the formation of two new Presbyterian denominations in Scotland, they also paved the way for the majority of Burghers and Antiburghers to come together. In 1820 they formed the United Secession Church[56] and, in 1847, it joined the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church.[57] The new denomination adhered to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. It was committed to the Voluntary Principle, active in overseas missions, open to "enlightened" theological ideas and "democratic" to the extent that every minister and a representative elder from each congregation attended the Synod.

Part of the success of the United Secession and the United Presbyterian Churches lay in their flexibility. Unlike the Church of Scotland they did not require parliamentary approval to plant meeting-houses and during the nineteenth century were able to respond to the needs of an increasingly mobile population without having to go through the contortions which divided the National Church.[58]

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51 David W. Bebbington, "Protestant Sects and Disestablishment", in M. Lynch (ed.), *Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 494.

52 D. C. Lachman, "Gillespie, Thomas", in Nigel M. de S. Cameron, (organising editor), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 361.

53 *Annals*, pp. 18-19.

54 *Annals*, p. 21.

55 *Annals*, p. 22.

56 I. Hamilton, "United Secession Church", in de S. Cameron (ed.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 841.

57 Ibid., pp. 839-840.

58 Cheyne, *The Ten Years Conflict and the Disruption: An Overview*, p. 2.

Seceders showed the same flexibility in England and adopted a threefold strategy. Like the Church of Scotland and the Free Church, both Burghers and Antiburghers responded to the arrival of Scots in England. As early as 1755 Scots in Whitehaven, received supply from the General Associate (Antiburgher) Presbytery of Sanquhar; in 1778 Scots, who had settled in South Shields, received supply from the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Kelso;[59] in 1779 Scots, who were living across the Tyne in North Shields, received supply from the General Associate (Antiburgher) Presbytery of Kelso;[60] and in 1798 Brunswick Street Church, Manchester, received supply from the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Edinburgh.[61] During the nineteenth century Scots formed Secession congregations in Leeds (1803), Liverpool (1807), Blackburn (1809), Blyth (1820), Ramsay on the Isle of Man (1830), Hull (1838), Bristol (1855), Woolwich (1861), Derby (1863) and Willington Quay (1865).

Secondly, the Secession churches acquired congregations from other denominations. The largest group had previously been Presbyterian Dissenters. They tended to seek supply because of difficulties in obtaining a new minister or a colleague and successor to a serving pastor. In 1797 a congregation in Penrith, which had previously called licentiates of the Church of Scotland, was recognised by the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Selkirk and called Henry Thomson from Musselburgh[62] and in 1826 a congregation of Presbyterian Dissenters in Warkworth was recognised by the United Associate Presbytery of Newcastle and obtained a successor to their elderly minister.[63] Presbyterian congregations in Carlisle, Halford, Penruddick, Great Salkeld, Plumpton, South Shields, Swalwell, Tunley, and both congregations in Wooler also joined either the Secession Church or the Relief Church.[64]

The next largest group of congregations had been in connection with the Church of Scotland. In 1801 the Castlegarth Church in Newcastle joined the Relief Church after its minister, William Davidson, was translated to Berwickshire and the congregation struggled to find a suitable candidate from within the Church of Scotland.[65] In 1803 the congregation in Falstone became vacant and, prompted by members who had previously belonged to the Secession Church, asked the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Selkirk for assistance during the vacancy. However, when the congregation recalled its previous minister, James Wood, who had moved to the Carleton Chapel, Glasgow, the majority chose to remain in the Church of Scotland. Nevertheless, the minority formed a congregation in nearby Bellingham which was recognised by the Associate Synod.[66] One of the

59 *Annals*, p. 533.
60 *Annals*, p. 532.
61 *Annals*, p. 479.
62 *Annals*, p. 120.
63 *Annals*, p. 539.
64 *Annals*, p. 15.
65 *Annals*, p. 527.
66 *Annals*, p. 536.

more bizarre defections occurred in Hexham. The constitution of the Church of Scotland congregation in the town allowed members to have multiple votes in the election of a minister, depending on the number of seats they rented. This led to the election of a probationer against the wishes of the majority of members and in 1831 a disgruntled faction formed a separate congregation which was recognised by the United Associate Presbytery of Newcastle.[67] Congregations in connection with the Church of Scotland in Holywell, North Middleton, Maryport, North Sunderland and Whitby also joined the Secession Church.[68]

The smallest group had been Independents. In 1810 William Graham and his congregation in Darlington were received into the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Coldstream.[69] However, the experiment ended when Graham left in 1815 and the congregation reverted to its former status. In 1823 Robert Neil and his congregation in Wallsend acceded to the United Secession Church and stayed the course.[70] In 1845 there was a split in an Independent congregation in Stockton-on-Tees. While the minority remained in the Congregational Union, the majority were received into the United Secession Presbytery of Newcastle and in 1849 called James Caldwell from Greenock.[71] And in 1821 members of an Independent meeting-house in Dukinfield, known as "Providence Chapel", were recognised by the United Associate Presbytery of London and called John Ramsay, a probationer of the United Secession Church, who had been providing supply.[72] However, soon afterwards Ramsay was deposed and the congregation reverted to its former status. The mixed experience of Independents who joined the Secession suggests that, for some, embracing Presbyterianism proved more problematic than they had anticipated.

In the third place, Secession congregations were formed as the result of outreach, either by presbyteries, congregations or individuals. One of the earliest examples occurred in the 1760s. At the suggestion of the Associate Synod, John Brown, Minister of the Burgher Church in Haddington,[73] undertook a preaching tour of the north-east of England. After he had spoken in a theatre in Sunderland, local residents formed a congregation, which was recognised by the Associate Synod.[74] In 1834 the United Secession Presbytery of Newcastle opened a mission station in Hartlepool, then a fishing village on the coast of County Durham. The following year it had attracted sufficient members to be recognised as a congregation.[75] In 1856 members of the Hartlepool congregation helped form a congregation in nearby West Hartlepool, which had been founded in 1845 by the Bishop of Durham to provide accommodation for those working on the railways, in the docks and the

67 *Annals*, p. 540.
68 *Annals*, p. 15.
69 *Annals*, p. 536.
70 *Annals*, p. 538.
71 *Annals*, p. 545.
72 *Annals*, p. 485.
73 John Brown (1722-1787) is best known for *his Self-Interpreting Bible* (1778).
74 *Annals*, p. 530.
75 *Annals*, p. 542.

shipyards.[76] In 1861 the United Secession Presbytery of Newcastle sent preachers to Middlesbrough, whose population had grown from 40 in 1829 to 19,000, and which had become a major centre of iron production. The outreach was successful and in 1862 the Presbytery recognised 35 residents as a congregation.[77] A number of other congregations were formed as the result of outreach, including Lisburn Street in Alnwick, Bedlington, Houghton-le-Spring, Longtown, Otterburn, Walker and Wigton.[78]

The willingness of the United Presbyterian Church to plant congregations where and when the opportunity arose, saw it plant congregations in a number of other industrial communities in the north-east of England. In 1857 the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Newcastle responded to a petition from Irish and Scots who had come to work for the Derwent Iron Company in Consett, and planted a congregation in the district of Blackhill.[79] In 1863 Thomas Dodds, who had been sent to preach in south Durham, was asked to concentrate on Crook where the Weardale Iron and Coal Company was expanding its activities. His efforts were successful and people from the town and surrounding villages formed a United Presbyterian congregation.[80] The following year local residents founded a United Presbyterian congregation in nearby Tow Law where the company had built an open hearth furnace.[81] The arrival of Scots on Tyneside not only led to the formation of a new congregation at Willington Quay, it also resulted in the revival of a mission station in Jarrow, known as the "Salem Chapel", which had closed in 1847.[82] In 1852 it was reopened to accommodate Clydesiders who had come to work in Palmer's Shipbuilding and Iron Company. As the company expanded, more Scots came to work in the town, and by 1870 the congregation had a membership of over 500[83] and was preparing to build a new church seating 900 in the centre of the town.[84] According to Callum Brown, between 1850 and 1880 dissenters in Scotland came to include the "respectable labour aristocracy".[85] The same can be said of the United Presbyterian Church in the north-east of England.

In 1847 there were 58 United Presbyterian congregations in England: 46 in connection with English presbyteries and 12 with Scottish presbyteries.[86] During the next quarter of a century that number almost doubled.[87] It was a remarkable

76 *Annals*, p. 543.
77 *Annals*, p. 547.
78 *Annals*, p. 30.
79 *Annals*, p. 546.
80 *Annals*, p. 547.
81 *Annals*, p. 549.
82 *Annals*, p. 546.
83 If the 400 children who attended the Sabbath School are included, roughly 20 per cent of the population of Jarrow had a connection with the Scotch Church.
84 "Presbyterian Jarrow", on http://www.donmouth.co.uk/ Available at http://www.donmouth.co.uk/local_history/Presbyterians/Presbyterian_jarrow.html, accessed 17 December 2020.
85 Callum G. Brown, *The People in the Pews: Religion and Society since 1780* (Dundee: The Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1993), p. 16.
86 Cornick, "Catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman!" p. 205.
87 *Annals*, p. 35.

achievement for a denomination whose roots were in the religious controversies which divided Scottish Presbyterians in the eighteenth century and testimony to its pastoral concern, evangelical zeal, tenacity, flexibility, and capacity to evolve. The growth of the Secession in England was part of a wider movement which saw Secession churches founded in Ireland, the United States and Nova Scotia.[88]

IV: The Recovery of Presbyterianism in England

In 1845 leading evangelicals from England and Scotland held a conference in Liverpool to explore the issue of unity.[89] They were presented with two visions of what it might mean. The first involved individuals from different churches working together, and led to the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846. The second, which Thomas Chalmers had advocated in his paper in *Essays on Christian Union* (1845), involved churches co-operating with one another and working towards an incorporated union. Chalmers's advocacy of an incorporated union led to a debate within the Presbyterian Church in England as to what unity might mean for them. Opinion was divided between those who believed that it could only be achieved as part of a larger, British union and those who believed Presbyterians in England should come together regardless of the situation in Scotland.

In 1849 the small Presbytery of Cumberland brought an overture to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England calling for steps to be taken "towards union with 'congregations of the same faith and order' belonging to 'a Scottish denomination of Presbyterian dissenters'". However, the Synod was not ready to make such a radical commitment and accepted a less specific proposal to set up a committee "to consider the whole subject of the admission of or union with ministers or congregations of other denominations".[90] Although Hugh Campbell, minister of Ancoats, was in favour of union, as an ecclesiastical lawyer he felt obliged to point out that it would be difficult for the Synod to enter into dialogue with the United Presbyterian Church because "their government spanned the Tweed".[91] Within the Presbyterian Church in England there were those whom David Cornick describes as "pro-England" liberals and also those he describes as "pro-Scotland" conservatives.[92] The former were represented by James Hamilton, minister of Regents Square, London, who regarded unity as a pastoral necessity[93] and the latter by Alexander Munro, minister of St Peter's Square, Manchester, who believed that, if the link with Scotland was severed, the heritage of his fathers "would be sold down the English dissenting river".[94] However, it was

88 *Annals*, pp. 43-50.
89 Ryan Mallon, *Dissent After Disruption: Church and State in Scotland, 1843-1863* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), pp. 81-83.
90 Cornick, "Catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman!", p. 205.
91 Ibid., p. 206.
92 Ibid., p. 205.
93 Ibid., p. 204.
94 Ibid., p. 206.

becoming clear that, if unity was to be achieved, it had to involve co-operation between churches. The Evangelical Alliance had, during the controversy provoked by Sir Robert Peel's decision to endow the Roman Catholic seminary in Maynooth, become "essentially defensive and polemically anti-Catholic",[95] and its individualistic approach had been criticised as a "rope of sand".[96] In any case, United Presbyterians in England were reluctant to sever their links with the "mother church" at a time when they were expanding.[97] They feared that, without the moral and financial backing of the wider denomination, their cause would be weakened and congregations, many of which had been formed recently, would struggle to survive.

During the 1850s the Presbyterian Church in England was preoccupied with disputes over liturgical reforms, the introduction of hymnbooks and the use of organs,[98] yet the 1859 Synod proved to be a turning point. In his Moderatorial address William M'Caw warned against nostalgia for a lost past and argued that the mission of the denomination was "to establish an ecclesiastical middle ground between episcopacy and independency in England".[99] The Synod went on to consolidate the Presbyterian Church in England by endowing its college, which that year moved to Queen's Square in Bloomsbury; created an Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund; and increased its Home Missions Fund. While there was a desire for unity, there was a continuing debate as to whether unity was best achieved through a British solution or whether Presbyterians in England should take their destiny into their own hands.[100]

In 1863 matters were complicated by the fact that in Scotland the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church entered into negotiations about a possible incorporated union.[101] At the same time the United Presbyterian Synod established an English Provincial Synod. Although it was seen as a purely administrative device, the fact that the United Presbyterian Church had a body capable of speaking for United Presbyterians in England opened the way for dialogue with the Presbyterian Church in England. Negotiations on a possible union did not begin until 1867 and were often frustrating. While to many the prize was greater visibility, there was recognition that union would involve accepting the limitations of a united church. The clock could not be turned back to 1660 and the united church would be one of several "free" churches in England. In 1873 the prospect of a "British Solution" receded when the Free Church/United Presbyterian talks ended without agreement.[102] With no alternative on the horizon, in 1876 the Presbyterian Church in England and the English Provincial Synod of United

95 Ibid., p. 204.
96 Ibid., p. 209.
97 Ibid., p. 211.
98 Ibid., p. 206.
99 Ibid., p. 209.
100 Ibid., p. 211.
101 Mallon, *Dissent After Disruption* p. 263.
102 Ibid., p. 265.

Presbyterian Church came together to form the Presbyterian Church of England. David Cornick says its formation was achieved through a mixture of pragmatism, evangelical theology and a fear of extinction, and that it was both "the expression of the conservative solidarity of a migrant sub-culture" and "a positive and costly response to the godless English city".[103]

V: Summary

This article has argued that by the end of the eighteenth century a combination of persecution, loss of identity and doctrinal transformation had rendered English Presbyterianism almost extinct; that during the eighteenth and nineteenth century the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland planted congregations in England to minister to the Scottish diaspora; that the Secession, Relief, United Secession and United Presbyterian Churches also planted congregations in England and that, as well as ministering to migrants, accepted congregations from other denominations and engaged in outreach; that while by the middle of the nineteenth century ministers in both the Presbyterian Church in England and the United Presbyterian Church in England recognised that unity was essential for mission, there was debate over whether it should be individual or corporate, British or English; and that it was only after nine years of negotiations, that the Presbyterian Church of England was formed in 1876.

However, although the planting of Scottish Presbyterian congregations contributed to the revival of Presbyterianism in England, it did not lead to the revival of English Presbyterianism. While English Presbyterianism had its roots in Elizabethan Puritanism, the churches which formed the Presbyterian Church of England had their roots in the Scottish Reformation of 1560, the Revolutionary Settlement of 1690, the Secessions of 1733 and 1761, the "burgher oath" controversy of 1747, and the Disruption of 1843. To adapt David Cornick's metaphor, the Scotchman may have become an Englishman but he continued to wear a kilt.

DAVID W. DUTTON

MISSION AND UNITY: THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALAN GORDON MACLEOD (1911-1984)

Alan Gordon MacLeod was a minister of the Presbyterian Church of England (PCE) who became a missionary in what is now Bangladesh and after 19 years there returned to England, to Westminster College, Cambridge. He was part of a denomination that traced its roots back to a Synod of Presbyterians in England in 1844. The first Synod took steps to establish foreign mission work and to set up a theological college to train ministers.[1] A larger Union, with the name Presbyterian Church of England, was formed in 1876. The first missionary endeavour under the auspices of the English Presbyterians in (what was then) Bengal in India was undertaken by Behari Lal Singh, ordained in 1859. He and his wife visited people, distributed Bibles and tracts, took in orphans, and built a school. A Christian community emerged in Rajshahi, a town in Bengal on the eastern bank of the Ganges, and a chapel was built. Rajshahi was served by a railway and was a centre for government officials and business and professional people.[2] PCE mission work there continued and it was to Rajshahi that MacLeod came in 1936. This article examines the overseas experiences of MacLeod, with his wife Margaret, and their three children. It then looks at MacLeod's subsequent ministry at Westminster College from 1955 until his retirement in 1978. The particular focus will be on his contribution in the areas of mission and church unity.

I: Beginning in Bengal

Alan MacLeod, the son of a Presbyterian minister,[3] was born in Liverpool and went to Liverpool Collegiate School and then Liverpool University, where he graduated BA, won the Rankin Prize for Philosophy, and enjoyed sports. From 1932 to 1936 he was at Westminster College, training for the Presbyterian ministry, with his University of Cambridge College being Fitzwilliam Hall. He gained a first class honours in the Cambridge Tripos. For 18 months he considered whether his calling was to home or overseas ministry. At that time the PCE, with 81,000 communicants in 347 congregations, had over 70 missionaries, serving

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1 See David Cornick, "'Our School of the Prophets': The Presbyterian Church in England and its Colleges 1844-1876", *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (November 1994), pp. 283-98.

2 A. G. MacLeod, "Our Mission in India", in Edward Band, *Working His Purpose Out: The History of the English Presbyterian Mission, 1847-1947* (London: Presbyterian Church of England, 1948), pp. 497-504.

3 Alan MacLeod once described his father as a Scottish highlander, who came to England to "convert the English", MAC 4/19. MacLeod papers, denoted MAC, are held in the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide (CCCW). I am grateful to CCCW colleagues for access to these papers. I am also indebted to Helen Weller, the archivist of Westminster College, Cambridge, for her assistance with the MacLeod material held there.

in China. Formosa (Taiwan), Malaya (Malaysia) and Singapore, and Bengal. MacLeod's conclusion was that he was being called overseas.[4] As he completed his Cambridge studies, another crucial event took place: Margaret Nicol and he met at a Young Presbyterians' Easter Conference in Weston-Super-Mare. Margaret was 19 at the time, and was living and working in Bristol. The Nicol family had moved there from Glasgow and had retained their Presbyterian allegiance. Following ordination, Alan travelled by ship and train to Rajshahi and Margaret followed later. They were married in Rajshahi Church on 2 November 1938.[5]

After settling in, Alan MacLeod wrote in February 1937 about his "Impressions of India". This was the first of regular updates for readers at home. The Foreign (later Overseas) Missions Committee of the PCE expected missionaries to write reports, with extracts being published. The PCE produced a monthly, the *Presbyterian Messenger*, and from 1938 a quarterly covering missionary work, *Far Horizons*; articles by MacLeod were to appear in both over the next two decades.[6] In a "First Impressions" report he mentioned the traditional British idea of India as a Hindu country and described Rajshahi, with 25,000 people, as having roughly equal proportions of Hindus and Muslims, while the surrounding districts were 90 per cent Muslim. The town's Hindus were a wealthy segment of the population. In addition to those in government and business, the education sector was important, with a College – a Department of Calcutta University – offering a range of degrees. MacLeod was impressed by the activities of Rajshahi's Presbyterian Mission. Others had built on Behari Lal Singh's pioneering endeavours. There was a women's hospital and dispensary, a hostel for students, a home for orphan children, a primary-junior school for girls, and two village schools for boys. A men's hospital was being built. There were two long-term PCE workers involved in education and training, Mary Miller and Phyllis Vacher. Local evangelists and Bible women were active and MacLeod encouraged them that their message about God's power and love was able to meet "the needs of the human spirit".[7]

In a later survey in 1937, MacLeod concentrated on events in connection with the Rajshahi College and the associated Westminster Hostel – run by the Mission for College students.[8] Shortly after the First World War, William Paton, Secretary of the National Council of India, had visited Rajshahi and suggested

4 Martin Cressey, "Alan Gordon MacLeod", in Clyde Binfield and John Taylor (eds), *Who They Were in the Reformed Churches of England and Wales, 1901-2000* (Donington: Shaun Tyas/United Reformed Church History Society, 2007), p. 142.

5 I am indebted to Christine and Robin, two of the MacLeods' children, for their help in providing insights. They speak of their father's *humanity* – his warmth, sly humour, honest doubts, open-mindedness, and sense of fun.

6 The PCE's *Our Sisters in other Lands* was first published in May 1879 and from 1938 was incorporated into *Far Horizons*. See Marion Tugwood, "Women, Mission and Power: The Women's Missionary Association of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1878-1972" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2016), p. 70, fn. 188.

7 A. G. MacLeod, "First Impressions of India", *Presbyterian Messenger*, [hereafter *PM*] (April 1937), pp. 110-11. Manuscript: 17 February 1937, MAC 1/1.

8 A. G. MacLeod, "Westminster Hostel", Annual Report, 1937, MAC 2/1.

the PCE consider offering students residential accommodation. H. K. Bannerji, a Professor at the College and a Christian, gave his backing, and in 1923 Douglas Ewart, who had experience of student work, was given the task by the PCE of planning for a Hostel. In 1926 this was opened, with Ewart as Warden.[9] It was, very unusually, a place where Muslims and Hindus lived together harmoniously in shared accommodation. After a visit to Rajshahi, Christian Irvine, the former Principal of Carey Hall, Birmingham, wrote, in 1935, that the Hostel was seen as "the best bit of work of its kind in India".[10] A year later, George Barclay, minister of St Columba's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, suggested that the PCE had "not really maintained an adequate missionary staff in Rajshahi". By that time, Douglas Ewart and his wife Edith were in need of extended leave. It was decided by the PCE's Foreign Missions Executive that MacLeod would become Warden. Barclay reported that opportunities in Rajshahi meant the Executive discerned "a call of God to our Church which we cannot well resist". He quoted from Exodus 14:15, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward", and asked if this was "the word of the Lord to our Church".[11]

For MacLeod, taking up the Hostel wardenship was significant and in 1938, in *Far Horizons*, he spoke of the role of the Mission. Rajshahi College had been temporarily closed because of communal disturbance: the dispute was about the College's allocation of living quarters between Hindu and Muslim students. A representative of the Mission was on the College's governing body and MacLeod was pleased that this body had asked the Mission to bring the two sides in the conflict together and "to effect a settlement". The governors had recognised "the impartial attitude the Mission takes up in local affairs for the benefit of both communities". Out of about 750 students in the College, the Hostel housed 53. Of these 32 were Hindus and 21 Muslims. One Hindu student remarked that only a few of the Hindus were interested in any religion and MacLeod took this as a challenge. Christian witness occurred in the Hostel, often through personal conversations. Tutorials in Literature, Philosophy and the Bible were offered within it and a library contained books in English and Bengali and an ambitious range of periodicals. Students also had shared social life, including athletics, volley ball, table tennis and chess. As College classes resumed after the temporary closure, MacLeod, with his strong commitment to academic life, was delighted that the Hostel's one final year Philosophy student had gained first place among College Philosophy students. Several senior students began to attend the Bengali Sunday church services. In MacLeod's mind the task was to show "that God does make a difference".[12]

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9 MacLeod, "Our Mission in India", p. 518.

10 Christina Irvine, "Impressions of Rajshahi", *PM* (February 1935), pp. 48-9. Carey Hall trained women for the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society and the PCE.

11 George Barclay, "Rajshahi", *PM* (February 1936), p. 44.

12 A. G. MacLeod, "Westminster Hostel, Rajshahi", *Far Horizons*, [hereafter *FH*], No. 2 (April 1938), pp. 41-3.

Other aspects of the work in Rajshahi meant that MacLeod's thoughts, as he put it, were directed "to our responsibility for the large percentage of the Muslim population of the district". He was in touch with the Bengal Christian Council's "Committee for Work among Muslims", and Lewis Bevan Jones, Baptist missionary and Principal of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies in Aligarh (previously in Lahore), came to Rajshahi in February 1939 to give a course on Islam.[13] Subsequently the MacLeods attended the School. The Mission hospital had experienced difficulties due to both Muslim and Hindu opposition, but the work of hospital staff had been appreciated during floods in 1938 and MacLeod later reported that opposition had largely disappeared. Through the hospital and the Hostel, help and reconciliation continued in local communities. In Europe, the Second World War broke out in September 1939, and MacLeod was struck by the way a war between two supposedly Christian nations, Germany and Britain, raised question in the minds of thoughtful Hindus and Muslims. Conversations had shown MacLeod that the worth of Christianity was often "judged by what was going on in the West"; he was convinced that "part of the problem of evangelising the East is still the proper evangelisation of the West". Current responsibilities, however, were local, and MacLeod gave attention to "the witness of a community living in a new way with a new spirit".[14]

II: Building Communities

As part of communal witness, MacLeod appreciated working with teams. He had a gift for warm relationships. One valued colleague was J. H. Manson, a lay missionary in Bengal who after study in Cambridge was ordained. Another was Pratul Chandra Barhoi, a dispenser who was well known locally as "Doctor", because he carried a stethoscope. MacLeod, with his sense of fun, commented that Pratul had developed "a far-away expression" when deciding on medicines, which was "very impressive". MacLeod, Pratul and three other local Christians, Sunil, Kiron and Bejoi, formed a team to visit local villages, sometimes by boat. In one Hindu village, Chakprasad, at an evening meeting, (when the men had returned from the fields), MacLeod was fascinated by the musical instruments employed by the team: Pratul played a hand organ, Kiron a drum and Bejoi the cymbals. The result was "a racket fit to raise the dead, but it is the real thing for these parts". The people loved it and MacLeod felt "more oriental" than he had done since coming to India. Some songs were sung "in the old Scottish Psalm singing style", with a leader singing a line and everyone repeating that. The team spoke in turn, and Kiron, who had been a Hindu, was especially effective as he spoke about how "he had come close to Christ".[15] Pratul was to train for ordained ministry.

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13 For Lewis Bevan Jones, see Clinton Bennett, "A Theological Appreciation of the Reverend Lewis Bevan Jones (1880-1960): Baptist Pioneer in Christian-Muslim Relations", *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 5 (1988), pp. 237-52. Aligarh is in today's Uttar Pradesh.

14 A. G. MacLeod, "Report for 1939", MAC 2/3; A. G. MacLeod, "Rajshahi", *PM* (July-September 1940), p. 52.

15 A. G. MacLeod, "Visit to Chakprasad", Special Report, 25 November 1939, MAC 2/4.

Alan MacLeod's 1940 report came from Naogaon, about 65 miles from Rajshahi. An initial visit to this town in August 1939 revealed a church house in a state of collapse and a divided Christian community.[16] Leadership was needed, and it was decided that the MacLeods should move there. It is significant that the first Naogaon report gave priority to outreach rather than internal church problems: MacLeod spoke of attempts to "avail ourselves of all the opportunities presented to us of spreading the Christian message among the people of Naogaon district". The district was predominantly Muslim. The "opportunities" included market preaching, sale of Gospels and Christian literature, and personal conversations. Perhaps because of the arrival of a British couple where there had not been foreigners, people were coming to the Mission House seeking financial help. MacLeod commented that if they were willing to offer such assistance "the numbers of the Christian community would increase, but there would be no corresponding increase in its spiritual life". Yet help was needed in some cases as a Muslim becoming a Christian might well lose his business.[17] In *Far Horizons* in 1940, Margaret MacLeod, then in her early twenties, wrote about the situation of young women she met. She affirmed the efforts of "enlightened Muslim women" and Christian missionaries to bring to women "freedom, happiness and knowledge".[18]

A year later, Alan MacLeod was able to delineate areas of progress in the Christian community. The Naogaon church, previously weakened by quarrels, had taken appropriate disciplinary action against those undermining the community's shared interests. Daily prayer, weekly worship and regular Communion services had been held, and the homes of the 40 adult members were being regularly visited. Financial giving had increased and it had been agreed that a proportion of this would go to the Bible Society, to the PCE's work in China, and to the Naogaon Dispensary. These commitments had been met. Members had also been working on repairs to the church's building. MacLeod joined them, as he had skills in carpentry and plumbing. He was especially delighted about the new outgoing spirit. Work was being done with adults who were illiterate, using the Frank Laubach method.[19] Also, the church was cooperating in "village uplift", such as better roads. Evangelistically, church members had been involved in a week of outreach organised by the Bengal Christian Council. At a Hindu fair, nearly 500 Gospel portions had been sold and lantern lectures had attracted crowds of 300-400. MacLeod was now preaching in Bengali and learning Arabic. A meeting on the veranda of the Mission House with Muslim leaders generated discussion that continued for hours.[20] These became frequent, and frequently noisy, events. Authentic mission was developing.

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16 See A. G. MacLeod, "Rajshahi", *PM* (August 1939), p. 238.

17 A. G. MacLeod, "Report from Naogaon", 1940, MAC 2/5. See also A. G. MacLeod, "Modern Movements in Indian Islam", *FH*, No. 10 (April 1940), p. 25.

18 Margaret MacLeod, "Women in Islam", *FH*, No. 9 (January 1940), p. 10.

19 Frank Laubach, while a missionary among Muslims in the Philippines, developed the "Each One Teach One" literacy programme.

20 A. G. MacLeod, "Report from Naogaon", 1941, MAC 2/6; published in 1942; A. G. MacLeod, "The Christian Community in Naogaon", *PM* (April-June 1942), p. 28.

The sense of advance suffered a devastating blow when food shortages began to hit Bengal in 1942. Japan invaded Burma in that year and this resulted in up to a million refugees from Burma trying to escape to India, travelling through Assam and Bengal. Many were suffering from malnutrition, dysentery, smallpox, malaria or cholera. The invasion also led to the loss to Bengal of imported Burmese rice.[21] Although the famine is often associated with the years 1943-44,[22] the beginnings were evident to MacLeod before that. In a letter in autumn 1942 for the *Presbyterian Messenger* he described how the Naogaon Mission had set up a home for the destitute, housing 120, and an "emergency hospital".[23] In March 1943, he wrote in *Far Horizons* about the dire situation: insufficient rice and prices above anything known in the past.[24] He followed this with an article in the *Messenger*, again speaking of soaring prices and extensive suffering.[25] His reports preceded general awareness of this in Britain.[26] The Mission House became a distribution point for government relief supplies and MacLeod took responsibility for the equitable distribution of rice to the starving. He also set up a brick-making factory to provide work for those who were destitute. In the Mission's Relief Hospital all treatment was free, whereas the Government Hospital needed a proportion of fee-paying patients. As chair of the Committee for the Hospital, MacLeod acknowledged that it "isn't always as clean as say Guy's Hospital", and a trained English Sister might "throw up her hands in horror". But he was seeing those suffering from starvation and chronic diseases recovering and finding hope.[27] In 1944 the Government took responsibility for maintaining the Hospital, which was helpful, although MacLeod bemoaned government "red tape".[28]

In the midst of the famine, during which MacLeod and others estimated that two million died, MacLeod said he had "never been more certain than now of the utter need for the work God has given us here". The message of the reality

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21 Hugh Tinker, "A forgotten long march: The Indian exodus from Burma, 1942", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1975), pp. 1–15.

22 Paul R. Greenough, "Indian Famines and Peasant Victims: The Case of Bengal in 1943–44", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1980), pp. 205-35. For a recent, extended study, see Janam Mukherjee, *Hungry Bengal: War, Famine and the End of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

23 A. G. MacLeod, "Famine and Failure of the Rice Crop", *PM* (July-Sept 1942), p. 65. For background, see Lance Brennan, "Government Famine Relief in Bengal, 1943", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (1988), pp. 542-67.

24 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 1943, MAC 2/8; A. G. McLeod, "Famine Prices", *FH*, No. 21 (March 1943), p. 15.

25 A. G. MacLeod, "Conditions in Bengal", *PM* (April-June 1943), p. 37.

26 Editorials and photos from August 1943 by Ian Stephens, editor of the British-owned and Calcutta-produced newspaper, *The Statesman*, played a crucial role. See "The Plight of a Province", *The Statesman* (8 August 1943).

27 A. G. MacLeod, "Naogaon Relief Hospital", Report, 14 February 1944. MAC 2/11. A. G. MacLeod, "Famine in Bengal", *FH*, No. 25 (March 1944), p. 33.

28 A. G. MacLeod, Report, October 1944, MAC 2/12; A. G. MacLeod, "Naogaon Famine Relief Hospital", *FH*, No. 28 (December 1944), pp. 26-7. He continued to report on the hospital: A.G. MacLeod, "Our Indian Mission", *PM* (January-March 1946), p. 32.

of Christ continued to be promulgated. Priya Kumar (P. K.) Barui, the very able pastor in Rajshahi, wrote a short "Life of Christ", and a Hindu scholar and friend to whom he gave it for checking commented: "As regards the 'Life of Christ' your people will benefit and so will mine!" This was MacLeod's hope. He saw the pressing need for the deepening of Christian thought among younger church members, but was not convinced that any were yet ready to go away for theological studies.[29] Nevertheless, he was seeing some new life. Walter Moss, from the same home congregation as MacLeod, visited Naogaon and was present when a man was baptised. Moss wrote in *Far Horizons* in September 1943: "I do not know Bengali but I was very conscious of the feeling of reverence and awe during the service." In spite of all the difficulties, the Christian people were "obviously happy".[30] Margaret MacLeod described in November 1944 how Pratul Barhoi, now training locally for ordination, was guiding the Mission in providing food to families in greatest need.[31] In a subsequent report she was delighted about three new local "Bible women" engaged in evangelistic work.[32] Further promise was evident in 1945-46, with Alan MacLeod hoping Naogaon might have its own pastor, "to build it up as a worshipping and witnessing community".[33]

III: Wider Connections

With their two young children, Robin and Christine, the MacLeods were able to have an overdue period of home leave following the end of the Second World War. A prolonged furlough, until 1947, was spent in Britain, mainly in Cambridge, where MacLeod kept up with Old Testament Studies and was engaged in writing.[34] In 1946 he was awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind Silver Medal for Public Service in India, specifically for his work with famine sufferers.[35] At Westminster College he was pleased to have conversations with Lesslie Newbigin, who was to be an influential bishop of the Church of South India and was a "distinguished former student" of the College.[36] The furlough involved speaking in churches, with MacLeod, a skilled photographer, able to illustrate visually life in Bengal. He had managed to adapt an

29 A. G. MacLeod, Reports for 1943 and 1944, MAC 2/8, 2/9. He mentioned the possibility of studies at Serampore University, where he was an examiner in Divinity.

30 Walter G. Moss, "A Visitor to Naogaon", *FH*, No. 23 (September 1943), p. 17.

31 Margaret MacLeod, Report, 15 November 1944, MAC 2/13; Margaret MacLeod, "Feeding the Hungry – Naogaon", *FH*, No. 29 (March 1945), pp. 6-7.

32 Margaret MacLeod, "Glimpses of Women's Work in Rajshahi", *PM* (April-June 1945), p. 38.

33 A. G. MacLeod, "Naogaon Report", 17 March 1945, MAC 2/14; A. G. MacLeod, "Introducing Naogaon", *FH*, No. 35 (September 1946), pp. 3-4.

34 Margaret MacLeod, "Memories: East Pakistan/Bangladesh", in George Hood (ed.), *Pilgrims in Mission* (London: United Reformed Church, 1998), p. 127.

35 "Public Honour to our Missionary", *FH*, No. 33 (March 1946), p. 7. The most famous recipient of the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal (Gold) was Mohandas Gandhi, but he returned it as part of the protest against the Amritsar massacre of 1919.

36 "Westminster College", *PM* (February 1947), p. 17. MacLeod's and Newbigin's training had overlapped, 1933-36.

acetylene projector to create a photographic enlarger, developing pictures despite ambient temperatures far above prescribed levels.[37] There was also opportunity for the family to spend time in Scotland, where Alan could enjoy fishing. It was known that he "lured salmon out of unpromising waters".[38] Margaret later recalled the journey back to India from Liverpool "in a troop ship" and three days on trains until they arrived in Naogaon. Here they were welcomed enthusiastically by the Christian community.[39]

On 3 June 1947 the Mountbatten Plan outlined the partition of British India into the independent states of India and Pakistan. In anticipation of independence, MacLeod wrote in the summer of 1946 on "Mission Work in Free India", arguing that the attitude of a future independent government to Christian mission would be influenced by the way mission enterprises were still making a very large contribution to social welfare – through schools, orphanages, colleges, technical institutions, hospitals and welfare centres.[40] On 1 February 1948, the MacLeods reported that the first sermon they heard at the Rajshahi church on their return to what was now East Pakistan was on "the children of Israel in the wilderness longing for the flesh pots of Egypt". While not forcing the analogy to equate British rule in India with slavery, the preacher's point was that "the way was forward, not back".[41] MacLeod recognised East Pakistan's economic problems, with Calcutta, the main trading centre of Bengal, on the other side of the partition. Yet he hoped the new countries would succeed and he noted that despite the problems, the Naogaon church had made a commitment to a building fund: each household put aside handfuls of rice, and a system of "first fruits" was adopted, so that the church "looks like a vegetable market", with cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, coconuts and Indian corn.[42]

One devastating effect of partition was that in the space of four months in 1947 about 14 million people migrated. Many Hindus, who were often business people, left East Pakistan, while huge numbers of Muslims arrived. In this massive migration, long processions of people passed each other in opposite directions.[43] MacLeod commented that East Pakistan was becoming more self-consciously Muslim. However, a major event in the Naogaon church in 1948 attracted 500 Muslim visitors. This was the staging by the Christian community of a play, with lighting effects, based on the Prodigal Son. It was part of a series of meetings connected with the ordination of Pratul Barhoi. Under the auspices of the ecumenical Bengal Church Council, Pratul was "solemnly set aside by laying

37 Robin MacLeod writes: "These photos survive to this day in perfect condition".

38 "Alan Gordon MacLeod: Obituary", *URC Year Book, 1985/86*, p. 199.

39 Margaret MacLeod, "Memories", p. 127.

40 A. G. MacLeod, "Mission Work in Free India", *PM* (Summer 1946), p. 71. In 1946 independence was a certainty, but partition was not. See Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

41 Alan and Margaret MacLeod, "From Naogaon, East Pakistan", 1 February 1948, MAC 1/3.

42 A. G. MacLeod, "Pakistan Today", *FH*, No. 42 (June 1948), pp. 26-8.

43 Reginald Fenn, *Working God's Purpose Out, 1947-72* (London: United Reformed Church, 1997), pp. 53-4.

on of hands". MacLeod considered it all "magnificent" and but for already being involved in mission he would have said, "I want to be a missionary too". He added that there were Indians who judged events by "the quality of the food provided" and the Naogaon fare helped to ensure a positive verdict.[44] MacLeod's ecumenical links were becoming stronger, and following the ordination he wrote to encourage "all Christians concerned about the unity of the church, who pray, as our Lord himself prayed, that his people might be one". Referring to plans for the united Church of North India and similar plans for Pakistan, he considered that the "Holy Spirit is leading the Church" and such unions could be patterns for the West.[45]

In his reports during 1949-51, MacLeod discussed the situation of individual Christians and also wider issues between the religious communities in East Pakistan. In a report published in December 1949 as "The Price of Discipleship in Pakistan", he spoke of examples of anti-Christian activity, including diverting work away from Christians and trying, although unsuccessfully, to force Christians off land they owned. At the same time, he considered that opposition was drawing Christians closer together and he described a "most solemn and impressive" baptismal service at Naogaon.[46] In "News from Naogaon" in 1950, he mentioned one couple intending to be baptised whom he had encouraged to buy their own land, as it was safer to be independent.[47] On witness more broadly, he referred in 1951 to the newly-enunciated Roman Catholic doctrine of the bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary. He commented that it had "repercussions for our work in Bengal", since for Muslims the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was always a stumbling block. It was regarded as polytheism. The Assumption of Mary made it seem that the Trinity was God, Jesus and Mary, and Muslims readily took that as a picture of three "gods". Roman Catholics were the largest Christian Church in East Pakistan - MacLeod referred to the 1951 census that out of a population of 42 million, 32 million were Muslims and 9 million Hindus, with Christians 106,000.[48]

The PCE Mission members from Britain in Rajshahi and Naogaon in the post-partition period were the MacLeods, Mary Miller and Phyllis Vacher, and two newly-arrived couples – a doctor, Ian Patrick, his wife Molly, a hospital sister, a minister, Bryan Dawson, and his wife Margaret. A major change within the Mission in this period had to do with the Westminster Hostel. Its role in bringing together Muslim and Hindu students proved no longer viable and it was decided to turn it into a hospital. The success of this very demanding project owed much to the Patricks. At the opening of the new hospital, which had 25 beds, Ian Patrick was pleased that the district Magistrate, a Muslim, gave wholehearted support, and that

44 Alan MacLeod, Report, 1948, MAC 2/20; A. G. MacLeod, "Ordination at Naogaon", *FH*, No. 43 (September 1948), pp. 44-5.

45 A. G. MacLeod, "A Pattern for the West", 1948. MAC 2/33-34.

46 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 4 September 1949, MAC 1/5; A. G. MacLeod, "The Price of Discipleship in Pakistan", *FH*, No. 40 (December 1949), pp. 72-3.

47 A. G. MacLeod, "News from Naogaon", *PM* (May 1950), p. 15.

48 A. G. MacLeod, "A Stumbling Block to Muslims", *PM* (March 1951), p. 12; A. G. MacLeod, "Pakistan", MAC 2/53.

a local Hindu doctor commended the work of reconciliation done by the Mission.[49] The stronger local Mission team meant that Alan MacLeod could respond to wider opportunities. For several years, from April to June, he was Principal of the Darjeeling Language School for new missionaries. Typically, 40-50 came each year. In 1951, for instance, there were 46, from 17 missionary societies and 11 nations.[50] Margaret MacLeod spoke of enjoying, in the beautiful mountain setting, the company of "enthusiastic mission workers from many denominations". She also described the "physical tearing apart" when children of missionaries went to boarding school and had no physical contact with their parents for years. The MacLeods made this sacrifice with Robin and Christine, after their years of home schooling by Margaret. A younger son, Nicol, remained with them. Another child had died at eight months. Strength in hard times was drawn from a wider Christian community.[51]

IV: New Developments

In January 1950 the Mission in Rajshahi and Naogaon began new work among the Santals, whose origins predated Hindus and Muslims coming into India. The Santals cut through jungle and dug land, making it suitable for agriculture. Hunting and fishing also helped in providing a livelihood.[52] As early as 1938, MacLeod was interested in contact with the Santals.[53] The Norwegian Lutheran Mission had been working among them since the late nineteenth century.[54] In the later months of 1950, MacLeod reported that through a Christian relative of the Santals a link had been made, and some Santals had come to ask for Christian instruction. It emerged that they did not come until their crops were in, for fear of seeming to be "relief-rice" Christians. Visits by Mission members to Santal villages followed. There had been substantial Santal migration to India after partition, but they had arrived there with little money and no shelter, and many had died of cholera. Some were now returning. MacLeod noted that Santals were hard-working and that women worked alongside men in the fields and joined in all village activities. In a Santal village, Belghoria, the Mission was starting a school and also offering teaching for adults. MacLeod was delighted to find that a school was judged good if the noise level was high! Initial oversight was given by P. K. Barui of Rajshahi, who knew several Santals. Because Santali, not Bengali,

49 Ian Patrick, "Opening of Rajshahi's New Hospital", *FH*, No. 50 (June 1950), pp. 28-9; *PM* (July-August 1950), p. 14.

50 A. G. MacLeod, "Language School, 1951", MAC 2/30.

51 Margaret MacLeod, "Memories", p. 129.

52 Fenn, *Working God's Purpose Out*, pp. 58-9.

53 A. G. MacLeod, "Mass Movements in India", *FH*, No. 4 (October 1938), pp. 78-80.

54 See Marine Carrin and Harald Tambs-Lyche, "The Santals, though unable to plan for tomorrow, should be converted by Santals", in R. E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Christians and Missionaries in India* (Grand Rapids, MN: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 274-294; R. E. Frykenberg, *Christianity in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 452-3. The first missionary work among Santals was undertaken by the Baptist Missionary Society.

was the language of the Santals, efforts were being made to find a Santal teacher and evangelist.[55]

In January 1951 MacLeod reported that the Naogaon church was "looking forward to the baptism of the first group of Santals in the Belghoria area within the next few weeks". He saw it as "quite a milestone". Ever-practical, he was thinking of the changing socio-economic environment: the Santals had been cultivating land that largely belonged to Hindus, on a "share and share alike principle" (known as *adhi*), and when demand for land was limited the system had worked. However, movements of people meant that more land was being bought up, and MacLeod was exploring ways to enable Santals to buy their own.[56] Reporting two years later, MacLeod spoke of the Mission's "evangelistic staff" – from Rajshahi, Bryan Dawson and Priya Barui, and from Nagaon, Pratul Barhoi and himself (although he was about to move back to Rajshahi) – as having directed most of their outreach to Santals. The evangelistic team had camped from time to time near a Santal village. In the rainy season a cowshed had been converted into the team's living quarters. Staff of the Rajshahi Hospital had also visited. Two additional doctors had been appointed, Arthur Farmer and Elizabeth Connan, and Joan Hope had come to train nurses. For MacLeod, "a work of the Spirit of God" was going on among the Santals and the opportunity was one "we have never had in the whole history of the Rajshahi Mission".[57]

In 1954 MacLeod could report further progress, with Santal churches in three centres. These were "flourishing". Baptisms had taken place and in the face of some opposition the new Christians had stood firm. Maidas Marandi, who had been appointed a teacher, was "an excellent leader". He had previous experience with the Baptist Missionary Society. Church meeting-places were being built, with associated accommodation for Marandi. Through Christian teaching came deeper awareness of "the worth of every individual in the sight of God", an awareness that to follow Christ meant a change of life. MacLeod was intrigued that in one family preparing for baptism the husband got drunk and his wife hit him with a stick to encourage him to amend his ways! In order to give the Santals a "larger vision of the Church and its work", a Santal Christian Conference was convened.[58] A year later a second Conference took place, with about 100 attending. Lectures were given on "The Problems of the Christian Life" and the event concluded with "a united Communion service followed by a common meal". Some local Muslims visited and although they could not understand Santali they had private conversations in Bengali. The Mission was now employing three Santal teacher-preachers, who

55 A. G. MacLeod, Report, September 1950, MAC 1/6; A. G. MacLeod, "The End of a Beginning", *PM* (October 1950), p. 13. A. G. McLeod, "Among the Santals", *FH*, No. 52 (December 1950), pp. 77-8.

56 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 22 January 1951, MAC 1/7; A. G. MacLeod, "A new beginning", *PM* (May 1951), p. 3.

57 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 1952-53, MAC 2/16; Report, 1953, MAC 2/38; A. G. MacLeod, "Rajshahi Retrospect", *FH*, No. 64 (December 1953), pp. 63-4.

58 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 1953-54, MAC 2/17; A. G. MacLeod, "Evangelism in East Pakistan", *FH*, No. 68 (December 1954), pp. 75-6.

were speaking at church services and teaching children. MacLeod, always keenly interested in education, was pleased that three Santal boys had transferred to a local High School and were keeping up with Bengali students. The new movement was advancing on several fronts.[59]

Another new development in this period in which MacLeod was involved was a fresh translation of the Bible into Bengali. In 1951, when two representatives from the PCE came to visit, they commented that MacLeod was an acknowledged authority on the Bengali language.[60] The British and Foreign Bible Society approached MacLeod, asking him to take responsibility for the new Bengali translation. He accepted "with trepidation", knowing that various unsuccessful attempts at revision had been made over 50 years. The existing version, from the end of the nineteenth century, used language that was ornate, literary and obscure. It was also highly literal, which made it appear "foreign" to educated Bengalis. MacLeod discussed how the poet Tagore had been a major influence on the Bengali language, with his rejection of the formal style. P. K. Barui and MacLeod cooperated closely in the translation project, with help from a Jesuit priest and a Translation Committee. Barui, who had considerable experience of translation work, was a known critic of the existing version. In 1955 the draft translation of St Mark's Gospel was completed and was sent to various people for their comments. The diverse responses showed MacLeod the need for further work, but this would be done by others. What was encouraging to MacLeod was that so many had shown interest in the new version "even if only to criticise it", and he felt that this "promises well for the future of the Bengali Church".[61]

Further developments in the Mission in the early 1950s included the ordination in 1950 of Toshimon Mondol as the first female Bengali elder elected in the Rajshahi congregation.[62] The move of the MacLeods back to Rajshahi, in 1953, opened up opportunities to meet new people, especially some leading Muslims. MacLeod was having conversations with a Professor of Islamic History and Literature who wished to borrow books from MacLeod.[63] Later MacLeod was to write a booklet, *The Cross and the Crescent*, in which he spoke with his typical open-mindedness of his indebtedness to conversations with "many Muslim friends".[64] In December 1954, Reginald Fenn, as PCE moderator-designate, visited Rajshahi. By this time

59 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 1954-55, written 9 September 1955, MAC 2/18.

60 Andrew Jamieson, "Pioneering work", *PM* (September 1951), p. 7; "East Pakistan", *FH*, No. 35 (September 1951), pp. 44-55.

61 A. G. MacLeod, "A new Bible in Bengali", MAC 2/35; A. G. MacLeod, "A New Bible in Bengali", *FH*, No. 71 (September 1955), pp. 44-6.

62 P. K. Barui, "The Local Church – Rajshahi", *FH*, No. 52 (December 1950), p. 70. A later (but undated) report by Pratul Barhoi on Naogaon mentions a female elder there: "Session", MAC 2/19.

63 A. G. MacLeod, "Report", written from Rajshahi, 13 May 1953, MAC 1/8.

64 A. G. MacLeod, Preface, *The Cross and the Crescent* (Cambridge: privately printed, 1979). The material arose out of a series of lectures given by MacLeod in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio, USA in 1979. A handwritten copy is held in the Westminster College archive.

MacLeod's work was well known in PCE churches.[65] Fenn described how the Rajshahi congregation left their shoes outside and squatted on mats inside the church. The hymn-singing was Bengali songs with Bengali tunes.[66] With Barui and another colleague, Paul Biswas, MacLeod was running a training course for churches in East Pakistan and was happy "to take a share in this wider missionary enterprise".[67] He also organised a Summer School in 1955 with K. W. Anand from the Henry Martyn School in Aligarh.[68] MacLeod had become an influential figure. Given his evident ability, it was no surprise that in 1955 he was appointed by the PCE to the staff of Westminster College.[69]

V: A Missionary Scholar

The *Presbyterian Messenger* of January 1956 reported that the new Professor of Old Testament Literature, Language and Theology at Westminster College was Alan MacLeod. The College community had also welcomed Margaret MacLeod and their children. Connections with East Pakistan remained strong, and P. K. Barui arrived for a term of study in Westminster and then meetings in Britain, where he made many friends.[70] *Far Horizons* spoke of the MacLeods' work overseas. They were "loved and admired by all classes of society".[71] The PCE was aware of "serious consequences" for the "already impoverished Church of East Pakistan" through losing Alan MacLeod's leadership.[72] His many gifts were now deployed in new ways. As a student, MacLeod responded to the call to world mission, but in 1940 *Far Horizons* observed that it was rare for students to come to Westminster with a sense of call overseas.[73] There were discussions about how practical ministry and mission might be given more emphasis at Westminster.[74] Although appointed as an Old Testament scholar, MacLeod brought a wealth of other experience, and it is significant that the *Messenger* of October 1956 spoke

65 MacLeod's book, *Rajshahi: The Challenge*, was "receiving a great welcome" in PCE churches: "Rajshahi: The Challenge", *PM* (January 1954), p. 6.

66 R. E. Fenn, "Communion at Naogaon", *PM* (December 1954), p. 6.

67 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 1953-54, MAC 2/17. A. G. MacLeod, "Evangelism in East Pakistan", *FH*, No. 68 (December 1954), pp. 75-6.

68 A. G. MacLeod, Report, 1954-55, written 9 September 1955, MAC 2/18. For K. W. Anand's interests, see his "Reorientation of Muslim Work in India and Pakistan", *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 39 (1950), pp. 83-87.

69 For the College, see W. A. L. Elmslie, *Westminster College, Cambridge: An Account of Its History, 1899-1949* (London: Presbyterian Church of England, 1949); R. B. Knox, *Westminster College, Cambridge: Its Background and History* (Cambridge: Westminster College and the United Reformed Church History Society, nd, 1979).

70 "Westminster College", *PM* (January 1956), p. 3.

71 "A Glimpse from Rajshahi", *FH*, No. 73 (March 1956), p. 14.

72 Overseas Missions Report, "East Pakistan", in *Reports of Committees and other papers submitted for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1956*, p. 16.

73 "Missions and Westminster College", *FH*, No. 12 (October 1940), p. 85.

74 See W. N. Leak, "Westminster College in the Life of the Church", *The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, Vol XII, No. 1 (May 1956), pp. 3-20.

of how the College "stands at the centre of all the Church's evangelistic, extension and missionary tasks".[75]

During the later 1950s Westminster typically had about 20-25 ministerial students. Most attended lectures in the University, but the College was also committed to providing formation for PCE ministry. As well as delivering lectures, MacLeod took up theological themes in preaching in the College Chapel. As an example, he preached in 1959 on 1 Corinthians 11:28, addressing the meaning and practice of Holy Communion, a subject to which he returned regularly. He referred to "Communion tokens" displayed in the College library and explained that in past Presbyterian practice they were a "visible sign of spiritual preparedness, which guaranteed admission to the Lord's Table". Although he did not commend this practice, it offered a reminder of the importance of "serious preparation" before Communion. MacLeod went on to expound the Pauline teaching on the Lord's Table and asked whether in the light of scripture "we come believing that Christ Himself here meets with us" and whether there were any inner attitudes "incompatible with the intention of Christ". He also quoted extensively from John Calvin, who encouraged all who trusted in Christ as Saviour, confessed the faith, and loved their fellow-Christians to come to the Table. None were worthy in themselves to come – MacLeod quoted the "Prayer of Humble Access", said at Anglican services: "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table" – but "the One whose feast it is invites".[76]

The quotation from another Christian tradition was indicative of the ecumenical outlook MacLeod brought, in the College and more widely, an outlook which had developed through his overseas missionary experience. The College Senatus, which was glad to draw from MacLeod's administrative ability, recorded in 1959: "An important element in the life of the College which often passes unnoticed is the close contact we enjoy with the other theological Colleges in Cambridge": Westcott House and Ridley Hall, the two Anglican Colleges, Wesley House, the Methodist College, and Cheshunt, which was described as Congregational. An annual weekend conference for students and staff from the five Colleges had been started and a united service was held each term organised by one of the Colleges. This had "stimulated an interest in ecumenical affairs".[77] In 1960, Westminster and Cheshunt jointly convened a Summer School with MacLeod as the main lecturer. His overall theme, reflecting his interest in historical theology, was "John Calvin and our common heritage". The background to this was exploration of what was held in common by Presbyterians and Congregationalists and what form the uniting of these traditions might take. The aim, as MacLeod put it later, was "to discover the kind of Church God wants in this present age to do His work".[78]

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75 "Westminster College", *PM* (October 1956), p. 3.

76 A. G. Macleod, "1 Cor. 11:28", Westminster College, 14 January 1959, MAC 3/2.

77 "Report of the Senatus of Westminster College, Cambridge", in *Reports of Committees and other papers submitted for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1959*, p. 38.

78 A. G. MacLeod, "Psalm 133", a sermon preached in Cambridge on 25 January 1973. MacLeod was reflecting on his earlier involvements, MAC 3/11.

Overseas commitment continued. In 1958-59, MacLeod arranged for Westminster students to visit churches to communicate the need for more help for the Santals, among whom there had been "an encouraging response to the Gospel".[79] MacLeod had recently returned from a tour of the regions where PCE missionaries were serving – Pakistan, Malaya, Singapore and Formosa. PCE staff, in common with other Western missionaries, had left mainland China in the early 1950s.[80] In his report, MacLeod spoke of the Santals as a baptised community of 200, with 150 others receiving Christian teaching. He was writing a small book, *The Santal Story*. MacLeod was convinced that at the heart of this story was the reality that "God's Spirit is active in their midst". God was calling for support for these "neglected people" who are "pressing into the Kingdom of God". He also argued for more study of Islam and for positive means of presenting the Gospel to Muslims, "rather than indulging in the easy yet profitless sniping at Islam which has too often characterised work among Muslims in the past". Referring to Formosa, he said that if anyone had doubts about missionary endeavour they should visit Formosa. The PCE had seen the emergence of a self-governing and self-propagating Church, with thousands in the island's mountain communities becoming Christians.[81]

In 1961 MacLeod's internationalism meant he represented the PCE at two major events. The first was a World Presbyterian Alliance gathering, held in Zürich in August. The theme was "The service of the Church in Europe today". There were delegates from 29 Churches in Europe, including six countries from behind the Iron Curtain.[82] Later in the year he was the PCE's representative at the historic New Delhi Assembly, with its 1,000 delegates, which saw the integration of the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches. As MacLeod met people from so many nations, cultures, languages and theological traditions, he saw vividly portrayed the reality that the whole Church is "the agent of mission at home and abroad". After New Delhi, MacLeod addressed Presbyteries and other audiences and appeared on TV programmes to talk about the Assembly.[83] Margaret MacLeod was reminded by such international events of "services in Darjeeling when denomination was second in importance to loyalty to Christ" and she wrote of involvement in local ecumenical services in Cambridge, with friends from Methodist, Congregational, Baptist and Presbyterian churches.[84] The Westminster College community was enriched in this period by students and visiting scholars from Malaya, Singapore, Korea, Japan, Italy, Germany, Australia,

79 "Westminster Students' Plea", *PM* (April 1958), p. 7.

80 Fenn, *Working God's Purpose Out, 1947-72*, pp. 9-14.

81 A. G. MacLeod, "Report of O.M. Committee to the General Assembly", May 1958, MAC 2/28; A. G. MacLeod, "Report of Overseas Missions Committee to General Assembly", *PM* (June 1958), pp. 6-7. For this Assembly, see W. A. Visser 't Hooft (ed.), *The New Delhi Report* (London: SCM, 1962).

82 A. G. MacLeod, "World Presbyterian Alliance", *PM* (November 1961), p. 3.

83 MacLeod, "Despatch from Delhi", *PM* (January 1962), p. 3. "Report of the Senatus of Westminster College, Cambridge", 1961, p. 21.

84 Margaret MacLeod, circular letter, March 1961, MAC 1/10.

New Zealand, South Africa, USA, and Kenya. A number were research students, such as John Mbiti from Kenya, then studying for a doctorate, who would become a major African leader.[85]

VI: Principal and Ecumenist

In June 1963 the PCE General Assembly elected Alan MacLeod to succeed R. D. Whitehorn as Principal of Westminster. It was also a notable year in that Margaret Taylor became the first woman to complete the full course of College training for the ministry. Speaking at the Assembly, MacLeod signalled his intention to promote an ecumenical agenda, reminding Assembly members that the PCE and the Congregational Union of England and Wales had been committed for over a decade, through a "solemn covenant" made by both denominations, "to seek all opportunities for mutual co-operation in the service of Christ".[86] Margaret MacLeod, too, was prominent at the 1963 Assembly as the new President of the Women's Missionary Association (WMA), a position she held until 1969. When she was welcomed as President-designate in 1962, appreciative references were made to her role as an elder and her "charming personality" and "keen sense of humour".[87] She had taken over the editorship of a PCE newspaper, *Overseas News*, from Kenneth Slack, a PCE minister who became Secretary of the British Council of Churches (BCC). In anticipation of the 1963 Assembly a booklet was produced, edited by Margaret MacLeod and with six contributors, *One Hundred Years in East Pakistan*, marking the centenary of PCE work in Rajshahi.[88]

The MacLeods ensured that the twin themes of mission and unity remained prominent in their activities in the mid-1960s. As WMA President, Margaret was one of two PCE representatives at events in Taiwan in 1965 to give thanks for 100 years of English Presbyterian mission there, beginning with Dr James Maxwell. Margaret was impressed by the very large outdoor meetings, featuring choirs, school bands, lanterns, banners, crosses and biblical texts. About 12,000 people gathered in the Hall of the China Cultural and Athletic Centre, Taipei. Thanksgiving was offered that the Presbyterian Church's goal to "Double-the-Church" in the past 10 years had been achieved. This growth caught the imagination of others: 22 denominations and organisations in Taiwan took part in the Presbyterian-led celebrations.[89] In the following year, a report by Alan MacLeod described changes in Rajshahi. The Christian Community there was now a United Church, comprising Presbyterians, Baptists, Anglicans and others. Opportunities in the hospital and an expanding University had attracted Christian doctors, nurses, teachers and students from across East Pakistan.[90] In Cambridge,

85 See for example, "Westminster College", *PM* (October 1962), p. 5. For an example of John Mbiti's work, see his *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1970).

86 "Westminster College", *PM* (June 1963), p. 15; "Possibility of Union", *PM* (June 1963), p. 17.

87 "Women's Missionary Association", *FH*, No. 98 (June 1962), p. 34.

88 "Rajshahi Centenary", *PM* (February 1963), p. 23.

89 Fenn, *Working God's Purpose Out, 1947-72*, pp. 30-2.

90 A. G. MacLeod, "United Church", *PM* (March 1966), p. 17.

it had been decided to bring Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges together, and under MacLeod's oversight events moved quickly. He referred in 1966 to the BCC Conference in Nottingham of 1964, with its wider hopes for unity and talk of possibilities for an "ecumenical college" with "ecumenical education". This was MacLeod's vision for the new, combined College.[91]

In 1966 the *Presbyterian Messenger*, which had been such a vital organ of communication in the PCE, became *Outlook*. The title of the new magazine was deliberately less denominational. However, PCE issues were still covered in some detail. *Outlook* for January 1967 reported that MacLeod was PCE Moderator-designate for 1967-68. The article spoke of his fine leadership as Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges came together. The article described MacLeod in a sentence that others would subsequently quote: "Scholar and preacher, skilled craftsman with tools and cameras, fisherman and sportsman, minister and friend".[92] Although not mentioned, his practical skill was needed when the roof of Westminster College was found to be seriously defective. MacLeod and his former missionary colleague, Bryan Dawson, raised an enormous sum of money for the replacement of the roof and MacLeod was often to be seen up a ladder or clambering over the roof to do repairs.[93] Ecumenically, it was noted that MacLeod had served as convenor of the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the PCE and was involved in conversations between the Church of England and the PCE, as well as in Congregational-Presbyterian discussions.[94] MacLeod won the respect, too, of the University of Cambridge, which chose him to be Chairman of the Board of the Faculty of Divinity.[95]

As Moderator, MacLeod spoke to the General Assembly of the PCE in May 1967 on the subject "Is there a Future?" His over-arching theme was that "God is Lord of history". He cautioned against human attempts to understand "Providence", but he argued that from a biblical point of view there was a sense of human progress and destiny, albeit in the context of humanity's sin and God's judgment.[96] On other occasions in the months that followed, he spoke in more detail about the ecumenical journey. In one address he referred to an editorial in the *British Weekly*, which was read especially in Free Church circles, depicting the "ecumenical tortoise" plodding slowly to its "merited goal". MacLeod was critical of this perspective, since in some respects he saw ecumenism proceeding quite quickly, and also because there was no "merit" involved. Unity was a gift, but could be frustrated by human wickedness and indifference. He took as an example of dramatic change the Second Vatican Council, arguing that through it "barriers of misunderstanding, mistrust and intolerance, which we helped to create" had in

91 *Reports of Committees and other papers submitted to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1966*, pp. 193, 198.

92 "Moderator Designate", *Outlook* (January 1967), p. 3.

93 Information from Robin and Christine MacLeod.

94 In 1968 the Church of England PCE conversations were published: *Relations between the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of England* (London: SPCK, 1968).

95 Knox, *Westminster College*, p. 32.

96 A. G. MacLeod, "Is there a Future?", *Outlook* (June 1967), pp. 1-3.

part been demolished. This, for MacLeod, was evidence of "a movement of the Spirit of God in our time".[97]

For a second time, in 1972, MacLeod was elected moderator of the PCE, this time as "Interim Moderator". The long-running Congregational-Presbyterian conversations had led to a commitment to union, as the United Reformed Church (URC). As *Outlook* reported it, MacLeod was the "last moderator" of the Presbyterian Church of England, and it added that no-one was better equipped for the task.[98] In his address, MacLeod looked back to the contribution of early English Presbyterians to the Reformation in England, instancing Thomas Cartwright and Richard Baxter. He argued that there was never a time in English Presbyterian history that was free from change, yet within "all the ups and downs of our history God has been at work". The future, he affirmed, "is in God's hands". MacLeod was committed to the belief that "the Lord's people are to be one that the world may believe". His vision was of one Church united for mission, perhaps beyond Presbyterians and Congregationalists. As a global thinker, he referred to the united Churches in India and Pakistan, and asked if that could happen in Britain. He concluded, appropriately for an Old Testament scholar, by quoting Exodus 33:15, with Moses's words: "If thy presence will not go with us, do not carry us up from here."[99]

VII: Conclusion

Alan MacLeod "played a significant part in the life of the Church" in today's Bangladesh, having "the confidence of all his colleagues, both western and Bengali, as well as many in the surrounding community".[100] It was in that context that his concern for Church unity developed. When he and Margaret, with their children, settled in Cambridge, the context was very different, but MacLeod maintained his missionary vision, with his ecumenical involvement increasing over subsequent years. On 15 October 1972, preaching in Great St Mary's, the University Church in Cambridge, he described a service ten days before in Westminster Abbey, at which 2,220 people celebrated the coming into being of the United Reformed Church, and he reiterated his larger vision of "One Church, renewed for mission".[101] MacLeod served for seven further years as Principal of Westminster College. When he retired in 1979 many tributes were paid to him for the contributions he had made to the Church and the College, and to Margaret for her work in the home, College and Church. Alan MacLeod's obvious pleasure in the students he had trained belied his comment that he could have "killed some

97 A. G. MacLeod, Notes of an "Inter-Church Report", 1967, MAC 3/5.

98 "Interim Moderator", *Outlook* (April 1972), p. 4.

99 A. G. MacLeod, "Closing Address", 1972, MAC 2/55; "At the end of the Day", *Outlook* (June-August 1972), p. 26.

100 Fenn, *Working God's Purpose Out, 1947-72*, p. 61.

101 A. G. MacLeod, "Formation of the URC". A sermon preached on 15 October 1972 at Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge, MAC 3/9.

of them sometimes – but for the grace of God".[102] At this stage Barnabas Mondal, Bishop of the Church of Bangladesh, hoped MacLeod might help with theological education in Bangladesh, but although MacLeod found the idea of being back "very attractive", he considered that the Church there was called to "stand on its own feet".[103] MacLeod's life-long commitment was to authentic mission.

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102 "Westminster College", reports, *Reform* (June 1979), p. 12; (September 1979), p. 19.
103 Alan MacLeod to Elia Ta'ase, Council for World Mission, 2 March 1979, MAC 1/12.

REVIEWS

Schoolgirl Days at Milton Mount College 1920–1960. **Edited by Martin Neal. The Miltonian Guild, 2016. Pp. 150. £10.00 + £2.50 p&p. ISBN 978-0-99353-220-7. Illustrated.** Obtainable from rosielee@aol.com

The book records the memories of those who attended the school, which closed in 1960, whereas the formal history for same period has been written by Hilda Harwood, who taught English, and Marion Farrell, Headmistress until closure. The Miltonian Guild realised that soon there would be no one alive who had attended the school so an appeal was made for memories; this book is a distillation of the responses which flooded in.

A brief history of its origins as a school for the daughters of Congregational Ministers brings the school in 1920 to Worth Park, once the home of Sir Francis Montefiore. Few schools could have enjoyed such decorative surroundings. Archive photographs of the building from the Sussex Record Office, sadly none in colour, show the reception areas on the ground floor with moulded ceilings, decorated woodwork and brocade wall coverings, and the main staircase with an elaborate metal banister. Such a home required a fleet of servants but their plain back corridors and stairs are not recorded here. All this was swept away after 1960 to be replaced by a block of flats.

The gardens, a fine example of Victorian formal design, are similarly recorded in detail. The camellia walk overlooked the formal Dutch garden, laid out with topiary. Areas of the garden at different levels were separated by balustrades with huge urns. From the raised terrace round the house, steps led down to the main feature of the garden, the round pond with a fountain. Beyond the pond was an area of rough grass and a lake separated from the formal garden by a ha-ha. Many of the decorative features of the garden, such as the islands in the lake and the rockery, were made by James Pulham and Sons. The firm created an alternative to natural stone by coating heaps of rubble with cement which were modelled to simulate the colour and texture of stone. The gardens are being restored with the aid of the original plans and are now open to the public.

A timetable for a ten year old pupil shows that physical education was more frequent than in schools today; games appeared four times a week and lessons in the gym three times. If it was too wet for games, everyone went for a walk. Music and singing were taught in class and there was an orchestra. Pupils could receive individual tuition on piano or another instrument as an extra; practice was done in the "cells" – a group of tiny rooms behind the camellia walk. Performances were given on Open Days – a concert, opera or play.

Sunday began with letter writing and mending. The service in the beautiful Assembly Hall was taken by a visiting minister, often the father of one of the pupils. In the afternoon everyone retired to lie on their bed for two or three hours of silence – an oasis of quiet rest in an otherwise busy week. It was perhaps unusual to timetable silent inactivity, but it was much appreciated. After the evening service, taken by the minister or Miss Farrell, the form mistress would read to her form from a book of her choice.

From 1930 the school held a Parliament each term. Every form appointed representatives and could send proposals for debate such as the revision of the order mark system or the provision of badges for games captains. The staff participated but could not vote; however they had the power of veto if the proposal was impracticable. The opportunity to propose changes in the school organisation was taken seriously.

Unlike today, few families owned a car so pupils travelled to school by train, with trunks sent "luggage in advance". There was no half-term holiday, but if the school had behaved well, a surprise half-day holiday was declared. In pre-mobile phone days the only contact pupils had with their parents during term was by letter.

At the outbreak of war the Headmistress was given one week in which to vacate Worth Park when it was requisitioned for Canadian soldiers. She acquired the use of a hotel at Lynton, with some rooms nearby for sleeping quarters. The Congregational Church Hall, Town Hall and a field in the Valley of Rocks were all hired for PE and games lessons. The pupils had more freedom, with scope for adventure (legal or otherwise), but the make-do premises were not easy for the staff.

The school was divided into Houses for sleeping, each named after a famous person – all men at this time. The Houses competed for Cups in various aspects of school life such as sport, tidiness, deportment, and behaviour. Good behaviour was encouraged by example. Minor offences earned a Disorder mark but more serious breaches led to a pupil being removed from her house or form for a period of time, prompting reflection. Girls were encouraged to be outward-looking through support for Barnardo's Homes, the Canning Town Settlement and Fen Place, the home for retired ministers.

The school closed in 1960; the building had aged and Crawley New Town was encroaching. After serious consideration the Board of Governors decided that it should merge with Wentworth school, with the name maintained. Since then further mergers have taken place and the name has been lost.

The book is generously illustrated with personal and archive photographs covering a wider time span than that of the written contributions. The Miltonian Guild continues with an annual magazine and residential weekend, which speak of the value and affection with which alumnae hold their time at the school. Everyone has experienced school, however long ago, so the book will have wide appeal. It adds to the record of experience of life during the Second World War and will be of particular interest to anyone who attended Milton Mount and to their descendants.

ROSALIND KAYE

***Chapels of England: Buildings of Protestant Nonconformity.* By Christopher Wakeling. Swindon: Historic England, 2017. Pp. 320.** £50.00. **ISBN 978-1-84802-032-0. Illustrated.**

At first glance, the size, shape, and colourful cover of this volume might lead one to think that this is a coffee table book. Opening the cover soon disproves that

misnomer. Wakeling traces the history of chapel buildings from their beginnings to the present day. He covers all periods roughly equally, over-emphasising neither the earlier nor later periods. The photographs and occasional plans are in places reminiscent of Christopher Stell, but this is altogether more discursive and less technical..

I thoroughly enjoyed reading it, and it will have a serious place on my shelf. Although I did not learn vast amounts of new information, I found everything set out clearly and straightforwardly, a comprehensive overview in one illustrated volume. I also noted that the language was accessible to the non-specialist, while the style was also appropriate to the due seriousness of a major historical reference book. There is a helpful glossary, an extensive bibliography, and a good index.

Readers of this *Journal* with be familiar with many of the examples and photographs, but they might be pleasantly surprised to see our churches at Carrs Lane, Digbeth-in-the-Field, Trinity Norwich, Trinity Poplar, and High Street Wellingborough. If I were to offer a criticism, the early eighteenth century perhaps has an overabundant emphasis on Unitarian chapels. Undoubtedly the Unitarians possess many fine buildings from the period, but they are not alone in that; the Five Mile Act chapels at Aston Tirrold and Middle Lambrook, for instance, or any of the chapels at Kilsby, Long Buckby, Daventry, or Castle Hill Northampton might have added to that chapter. I also regretted that neither Mansfield College chapel nor Bunyan Meeting merited a photograph. No doubt, every reader will be disappointed at the omission of their personal favourites.

This is a fine book, worthy of a place alongside Stell's works of reference on any bookshelf.

MICHAEL HOPKINS

***The Political Bible in Early Modern England.* By Kevin Killeen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 310. £75.00. ISBN 978-1-10710-797-7.**

The way that Diggers, Fifth Monarchists and other "radicals" of the Civil War period used the Scriptures has been well-documented, not least by that doyen of seventeenth-century scholarship, Christopher Hill. What has received less attention is the presence of the Bible in the discourse of Royalists, Anglicans and others of lesser interest to Hill. This, argues Kevin Killeen, is as "thoroughgoing as in any Puritan and parliamentary writing" (p. 6), and he sets out to address this imbalance.

That the Bible played a significant role in shaping political thought in the seventeenth century is widely recognized. People searched the Scriptures to discern the drift of events and how they might respond to them. One-to-one correspondence between biblical and contemporary figures was not uncommon, and depending upon your point of view Charles could be depicted as the "man of Blood" or King David, Elizabeth as Jezebel or Deborah. Killeen's main focus is the role that biblical monarchs played in political discourse of the time, though he is less concerned with examples of equivalence than the kings themselves, "the

interpretative histories and multiple attributes that accrue around them". Adopting this approach enables a different picture to emerge, "less a monosemantic than a kaleidoscopic identity" (p. 4).

So despite its misleading title – surely at least a sub-title might have been added to orientate the potential buyer and reader – this is quite a narrow book. Killeen himself alludes to its "tunnel vision" (pp. 16, 17), and goes to considerable trouble in the Introduction to set out his intentions. Yet even while limiting himself to a study of "biblical kings" Killeen acknowledges he has "barely scratched the surface of seventeenth-century Biblicism" (p. 17). This statement modestly hints at the depth of his study and might also, one hopes, inspire others to continue his quest.

Killeen adopts an accessible style as he takes us through his material. After chapters on how the Bible was read and preached in the seventeenth century he explores the way specific kings were "used" in political discourse, not least at the time of the execution of Charles Stuart and inauguration of a republic. Jehu, Ahab, David and Solomon all receive attention, and a chapter is devoted to Rehoboam and Jeroboam, who reigned over a divided kingdom. Hezekiah is probably the subject of most attention, though the index is unhelpful in pointing this up.

Killeen is particularly interesting on the topic of regicide, rowing against the received wisdom that such an act was unthinkable in England before it actually occurred, even in the minds of those who carried it out. Rather, he asserts, "the era was wholly, obsessively aware of the contingency and, indeed, killability of kings" – not because the history of England contained plentiful examples, but because "English political memory went as readily to the Bible as it did to the Norman Yoke, the Baronial wars or the Wars of the Roses". Political imagination in seventeenth-century England, Killeen suggests, "registered the reigns of Jehu, Jeroboam or Jehoshaphat with as immediate a presence and relevance as that of William or Edward the Confessor, and with far greater immediacy than the affairs of classical Rome" (p. 159).

The size of the bibliography of secondary sources in this book, stretching to twenty-seven pages and including many recent works, attests to the high level of current interest in the book's topic. Killeen himself has also stimulated this by his co-edited volume of essays on the Bible in early modern England published in 2015. This monograph is a welcome addition to the list, filling as it does a significant gap in our understanding of the role the Bible played in political discourse in a century so wholly different from our own. As Killeen concludes, we simply cannot understand the politics of that century if we neglect its reliance on the Bible, nor can we transpose the scriptural into a secular language without losing much of its force (p. 20). This is a point that earlier Marxist interpreters of the seventeenth century, including Christopher Hill, often failed to grasp.

Killeen also contends that looking at the events of those years – plague, war, constitutional crises, regicide, restoration – through the lens of the biblical cannot but render them "strange" to the modern mind. The narrative appears familiar in its outlines, "but also off-kilter, a semi-tone out" (p. 238). That is a wholly valid

conclusion, but to claim this "strangeness" on the basis that the Bible has nothing to say to politics today, having been "shunted to a private and theological realm", sounds itself discordant and no less off-key. This is only a minor niggle about what is otherwise an authoritative, scholarly and compelling book, but in an era which has seen the Bible inspire such high-profile and progressive movements as liberation theology and Jubilee 2000, and inspirational change-makers such as Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu and Pope Francis, it is slightly surreal to be told that, "Insofar as any remnant of the political Bible survives in the public realm, it is as a language of anti-intellectualism, allied to a nineteenth-century literalism, a thoroughly discredited myopia" (p. 17).

ANDREW BRADSTOCK

***Protestant Pluralism: The Reception of the Toleration Act, 1688-1720.* By Ralph Stevens. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 202. £65.00. ISBN 978-1-78327-329-4.**

It is often supposed that after the passage of the 1689 Toleration Act, the position of Dissent in England and Wales was resolved; this book argues that, on the contrary, it was the beginning of a process that was not complete until the twentieth century. While possibly unsettling, this revisionist view is truer to the facts, and also explains some contemporary problems. In the first place, the author argues that what happened in 1689 was only half a loaf; the Comprehension Bill that was intended to accompany Toleration did not gain the approval of the Convocation of Canterbury, and was dropped, leaving some situations permitted by Toleration inexplicable or incomplete. These were resolved by case-law over the next thirty years, but that also depended on variations in government policy over the same period. The argument is sustained by a series of case-studies, some covering familiar ground, but others depending on topics that have not necessarily been previously discussed in this context: public office, reformation of manners, education, baptism and chapels. Hence what began as toleration of Dissent ended up as the acknowledgement of the existence of a series of distinct dissenting denominations – a situation almost unique in Europe and North America. The book is illustrated by a series of countrywide examples, showing the author's thoroughness as well as the regional variety of the situation described. What does come through very clearly is the extent to which the composition of the local aristocracy and gentry was crucial to the whole process, complicating and nuancing any simple theory of denominational development. Throughout, the distribution of power, both financial and in the form of political influence, was crucial to the formation and survival of various congregations. This book is an important contribution to the history of the survival of Protestant Dissent of whatever denomination.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

***W. T. Stead: Nonconformist and Newspaper Prophet.* By Stewart J. Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. 256. £30.00. ISBN 978-0-19883-253-9.**

John Clifford preached the sermon at W. T. Stead's memorial service. He was, he said, "a prophet who came straight out of the Old Testament into our modern storm-swept life". This fine biography explores the contours of the earthquakes prompted by the collision between the tectonic plates of late Victorian and Edwardian nonconformity and mass media. It was Stead's genius to appreciate the potential of the newspaper to hone the social and political edge of nonconformity into a force that could change the world, and his fate to be exposed by its inevitable hypocrisies and ambiguities.

He was shaped by Congregationalism, a son of Northumberland and Tyneside manses, educated (all too briefly due to lack of money) at Silcoates, where he was converted in the latter stages of the 1858-62 evangelical revival. There too his mind was captured by the American abolitionist poet James Russell Lowell who wrote of sacrifice in the struggle for justice and suggested that the newspaper editor was the Old Testament prophet redivivus. His call was to serve the poor, his second conversion. A heady brew, topped off by Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845) – "I woke up to a consciousness of the fact that I felt a far keener and more passionate love for Oliver Cromwell, than I did ever for the divine figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Cromwell was so near, so human and so real". Congregationalism was "God's Englishman", Milton and the Pilgrim Fathers – "the representatives of extreme Democracy which knows neither male nor female". Stead remained a faithful, if increasingly heterodox, church member all his life.

His was a remarkable career – from 1871 when at the age of 22 he became editor of the Darlington *Northern Echo*, (the youngest editor in the country) – to the creation of the highly successful *Review of Reviews* in 1890. He did indeed turn the editor's chair into the prophet's pulpit, taking the provincial voice of the northern nonconformist conscience to the heart of the establishment – thanks to W. H. Smith and the train service in 1873. Rough cut, inherently nonconformist and inescapably provincial, Stead epitomised the rise of political nonconformity, and as he did so turned journalism into a moral crusade – the so-called "New Journalism" – campaigning, emotional, sensationalist. Having cut his teeth on Josephine Butler's campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act, and propelled Gladstone back to public life with his trenchant championing of the oppressed Slavic nations during the Bulgarian Atrocities agitation, he joined the *Pall Mall Gazette* as John Morley's assistant editor in 1880.

Never short of self-confidence, Stead suggested a newspaper editor should "combine the function of a Hebrew prophet and Roman tribune with that of a Greek teacher". His "missions" were moral – the relief of poverty, which led him into alliances with the Salvation Army and Andrew Mearns, and support of the Settlement Movement; the advocacy of General Gordon (an equally driven, "called" evangelical) to bring peace to Sudan; and the notorious exploration of the world of Victorian child prostitution – "the Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" which

led to Stead's imprisonment, vilification, and world fame. Brown's exploration of each of these campaigns, but particularly the latter, is meticulous and moving. We see Stead disintegrating as he delved deeper into the abuse and suffering of the young victims, watch the fatal mistake he made in "acquiring" Eliza Armstrong, observe his success in the raising of the age of consent to 16 through the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and feel the malicious pleasure of his journalistic peers when he was convicted and imprisoned. Friends fell away, but not the minister and members of Wimbledon Congregational Church where he was a member, nor the steadfast Cardinal Manning with whom Stead had forged an unlikely friendship – "You have served him with a single eye", he wrote to Stead in Holloway Prison in 1885. "You now have the crown upon your work".

It was while he was in prison that Stead had his "third conversion". A voice came to him, "No longer be a Christian, be a Christ". He glossed, "it is not Christians who will save the world, nor Churches – it is Christs".

As the tectonic plates collided, the gospel crashed against imperialism. Journalism could unite humanity, and create a "Civic Church" (a faint echo of Coleridge's "clerisy") that would unite all religions, institutions and individuals who would sacrifice themselves for the betterment of humankind. *The Review of Reviews* was founded to promote the "Civic Church", including the view that "the English speaking race is one of the chief of God's chosen agents for executing coming improvements in the lot of mankind". The sharp, abiding clash – lauding Cecil Rhodes, followed by impassioned disillusionment about and condemnation of the Boer War – made him one of the most hated figures in England.

In 1893 the World Parliament of Religions and the ecumenical Lucerne Conference listened carefully and respectfully to Stead, but neither was persuaded by the "Civic Church", nor was Leo XIII that he ought to become "the International Director-General of the Humanitarian Forces of the World". It was Robertson Nichol who dryly noted in the *British Weekly* that Stead's "Civic Church" was mere social engineering, imperialist aspiration bolstered by the efficiencies of the bureaucratic state, and very little to do with Christ.

Yet Stead's drive was unabated. He turned his attentions to psychical research, convinced that certain knowledge of the other world would prove the truth of the gospel, and finally to the campaign for world peace. Stead was one of the just over 1,500 who perished when the *Titanic* sank on 15 April 1912. He was on his way to talk about world peace in New York. Rarely has one life encompassed so much. This rich book recreates a crowded, driven life, and with deft sympathy lays bare its triumphs and its lasting, ambiguous legacy.

DAVID CORNICK

***A Life of Alexander Campbell.* By Douglas A. Foster. Grand Rapids, MN: Eerdmans, 2020. Pp. xviii + 345. £23.99. ISBN 978-0-80287-633-1.**

It is one of the most remarkable features of the historiography of Churches of Christ that we should have had to wait until now for a critical biography of the man

at the centre of the movement – Alexander Campbell, who died on 4 March 1866. This was perhaps due to the rapid publication of Robert Richardson's two-volume *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* in 1868 and 1870. Richardson was Campbell's son-in-law, co-editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* and chief administrator of Bethany College, West Virginia. But it has always been obvious to even a casual reader that this was a biography, with heavy hagiographical overtones. Doug Foster, of Abilene Christian University, Texas, has now filled that gap, and what a revelation it is. The "received version" of his life is not so much wrong as incomplete; and most, if not all, the internal controversies in the movement for which Campbell was responsible are omitted. In fact Campbell fell out with nearly all the other leaders of the movement, apart from his father, Thomas – even including Richardson himself! Undoubtedly some are less important than others; but the total effect is to remove any possibility of seeing Alexander as a latter-day "Athanasius contra mundum". Moreover it obscures the extent to which the arguments, which still fill the pages of some continuing Churches of Christ periodicals to this day, have their origins in Alexander's tendency to pick arguments over small matters, while leaving great issues untouched in order to preserve a precarious unity within the movement in different regions. This is most obvious over chattel slavery. Alexander did not believe in slavery himself and advocated emancipation; but since it was not against the law, he believed that it should not be disturbed. More significantly, however, he did believe in what is now called "white supremacy", and defended that without hesitation.

Alexander was born in 1788, to Thomas Campbell, an Ulster Seceder Presbyterian minister at Ahorey, County Antrim. His father gave him a good education. Thomas was involved in the Evangelical Synod of Ulster, as one of a group trying to bring the Burgher and Anti-Burgher sections of the Seceders together, not least because the Burgess Oath (the ostensible cause of the division) had never applied in Ireland, and the differences between the two were essentially over evangelicalism. But the Associate Synod in Scotland set its face steadfastly against union, and rejected the Irish proposal, though they allowed Thomas to argue the case before voting it down. (Union eventually took place in 1820).

Dejected and worn out with running his school at Rich Hill as well, Thomas decided to emigrate to the USA, which he did in 1807. Two years later he summoned the rest of the family to join him. Unfortunately their boat was wrecked off the west coast of Scotland, and they spent the winter of 1809-10 in Glasgow, which enabled Alexander to spend from November to May studying at Glasgow University. While there he came under the influence, first of the Haldane brothers and then of Greville Ewing, a former Haldaneite who became an Independent, as a result of which Campbell became convinced of the arguments against infant baptism, and also for an independent church polity. On arriving in America with the rest of the family, he discovered that his father's thinking had been moving in a similar direction (for different reasons). Thomas had drafted his *Declaration and Address* in 1809 (now incorporated as one of the foundation documents for the United Reformed Church), setting out the case for Christian union on the basis of New Testament Christianity; and the pair withdrew from the Secession

Presbytery of Washington, PA. Thomas ordained Alexander to the ministry on New Year's Day, 1812. In March 1811 Alexander had married Margaret Brown, daughter of a Presbyterian farmer nearby, to whom Thomas supplied books, and a year later their first child, Jane, was born. That immediately turned infant baptism as a theological question into a practical issue for the young couple. When Alexander and Margaret reflected on what to do, Alexander decided not to have Jane baptised, but rather to seek immersion himself from a nearby Baptist minister, and this moved the new movement decisively in a Baptist direction. Although the Campbells did not require any members of the church to be immersed, in fact most of them were, including even Thomas, who overcame his scruples about "rebaptism". The 1820s saw the development of Alexander's journalism and his first theological tracts, written in a controversial style that was to become typical. Campbell's movement became distinct after the union with Barton Stone's Christians in Kentucky in 1832. Although Alexander never spoke publicly against this, he was unenthusiastic, feeling that there were not sufficient safeguards against Unitarianism and enthusiastic revivalism with no clear theological basis. Foster emphasises this more than previous writers have done. Whereas Richardson's emphasis was on the underlying unity of the movement, Foster is readier to acknowledge the existence of fissiparous tendencies, (some the fault of Alexander's writing style), which became more apparent after Campbell's death in 1866.

For Alexander the Civil War had been a disaster. Not only did it lead to the division of Baptists and Methodists – the largest groups to benefit from the Second Evangelical Awakening – but it dealt a decisive blow to his hopes that the United States, as God's chosen people, could inaugurate the millennium by adhering to the "original order of things" in Christianity. It led him into deep depression, which, combined with exhaustion from so much travelling and preaching, brought about his death in March 1866, followed by an unseemly legal battle between the children of his first wife and his second over whether Alexander's final will, which favoured the latter, was made while he was of sound mind. Perhaps we can see why a critical biography has been so long delayed.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

***Protestant Dissent and Philanthropy in Britain 1660-1914.* Edited by Clyde Binfield, G. M. Ditchfield and David L. Wykes. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020. Pp.xiv + 262. £65.00. ISBN 978-1-78327-451-2.**

This timely collection is part of the celebration of the 2016 tercentenary celebrations of the death of Dr Daniel Williams, a singular benefactor of Dissent, whose name lives on in the trust, charity and library named after him. It is timely because, as the editors note, the history of philanthropy has increasingly attracted historians over the past thirty years, but little has been written about the contribution of Dissenting bodies to the development of understandings of philanthropy, and its explosive growth and diversity during the late eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. The papers gathered here seek to redress that balance, and they do so with verve and insight.

Three themes emerge. The first is the scope of the papers – from 1660 to the early years of the twentieth century. That enables the contributors to trace changing understandings of "philanthropy". David Wykes's chapter on "Dissent and Charity, 1660-1720" provides a significant insight into the ways in which charitable giving to ejected ministers and their dependants evolved through the establishment of toleration in the years following 1687 into institutions like the Common Fund, and a focused interest in causes like the education of the poor and the support of French Protestant refugees. The sixty year period he studies ends with Dr Williams who left c. £50,000 for charitable purposes – a different world to 1662.

In the eighteenth century, as Hugh Cunningham notes in his definitive chapter on John Howard, "philanthropy" meant one who loved "humankind", and Howard's exhaustive and exhausting examination of European prison conditions exemplified it for rational dissenters and their enlightened co-travellers. Howard, though he was a Calvinist, acutely aware of sin and his own shortcomings, was appalled by the thought that a statue might be raised to him in Bedford. As Cunningham notes, "the Howard who was philanthropy incarnate, was very different from Howard the person" (p. 70). The legacy of Howard's systematic work was the understanding that philanthropy dealt with large political questions – crime, prison reform, slavery – and that flowed into the nineteenth century. Those themes find echoes in Mark Freeman's study of the establishment and operation of the Rowntree family trusts in 1904, and the tension between Seebohm Rowntree's sociological research and "new Liberalism" which seemed to support a structural response to the causes of poverty, and his identification of "secondary poverty", that resulted from drink and familial financial inefficiency. The latter reflected the perception of the great age of evangelical philanthropy that needs are there to be met by Christian charity. That is reflected in John Briggs's wonderfully sympathetic survey of nonconformist treatment of children and orphans in Victorian Britain – Andrew Reed, George Müller, Charles Spurgeon, William Quarrier and Thomas Bowman Stephenson are arrayed before us in their compassionate Christian diversity and barrier-breaking charitable energy. They made the world a better place.

The second theme is the distinctiveness of dissenting philanthropic interests. Dissent was, of course, voluntarist. That meant that support of theological education, ministers and widows would be a priority, as indeed would be chapel building. Clyde Binfield guides us into the career of Joshua Wilson, "one of Congregationalism's indispensable string-pullers" (p. 113), who among much else was the first Treasurer of the English Congregational Chapel-Building Society. A micro-study of building philanthropy emerges, tracing Wilson's encouragement of and giving to the new Congregational Chapel at Crediton – "that is how true philanthropy works to best effect, locally directed, yet replicated nationwide" (p. 128). At the opposite extreme of grandeur was the Wesleyan Methodist Centenary Fund of 1839-1844 which at its close had raised the remarkable sum of £229,944. David Jeremy's detailed analysis reveals both Methodism's heavy reliance on the

magnates of "Cottonopolis", as well as some women of considerable independent means. That, allied to a connexionalism masterfully managed by Jabez Bunting, resulted in theological colleges in Didsbury and Richmond, a city headquarters for the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and support for a missionary ship, distressed chapels and ministerial widows.

Such inward looking philanthropy was a result of state religious policy – dissenters had no other option than to fund themselves. However, their eyes were also focused beyond the chapel, and Stephen Orchard provides a portrait of one of dissent's most irritating, driven and eccentric children, David Nasmith. A Scottish Congregationalist, he was profoundly influenced by Thomas Chalmers, but wanted to translate his vision from that of the (then) state church into a non-denominational city mission, and he spent the rest of his life in non-stop itineracy, campaigning tirelessly to establish them in Scotland, Ireland, America and England. Some rooted (for example the London City Mission) but most did not, yet for all that, an understanding that the duty of care belonged to all Christians and that it should be exercised together, was precious.

The third theme is that philanthropy reached beyond denominational boundaries, but could also form denominational identity. G. M. Ditchfield, David Wykes and Alan Ruston show clearly how this happened across the history of Unitarianism in a very different way to the hierarchical, connexional Wesleyan Centenary Fund. It is an instructive contrast.

Two essays not yet mentioned, Jennifer Farook's on dissenting charity sermons from 1700-1750 and Elizabeth Gow's on Enriqueta Rylands, are object lessons in how unpromising sources can yield rich rewards. The former shows how charity sermons stimulated dissenting appreciation of the duty of philanthropy. The latter, (amongst much else), uses Mrs Rylands's account book for 1904-8 to unfold her philanthropic priorities as she gave away £10,000 a year (about a tenth of her income) – domestic missions, and education perceived in its widest sense "to ensure the centrality of religion in civic life, particularly in Manchester" (p. 222).

Dr Williams would surely be delighted at the legacy revealed in honour of his tercentenary.

DAVID CORNICK

***The Journey to the Mayflower: God's Outlaws and the Invention of Freedom.* By Stephen Tomkins. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2020. Pp. xi + 372. £20.00. ISBN 978-1-47364-910-1.**

This volume is a significant and accessible version of the author's extensive academic work on the thinking of the Separatist Movement, though the author modestly claims that the volume is "more a story that manages to rescue a few of its insights from oblivion" (p. xi). Steve Tomkins's substantive concern is not the journey of the Mayflower to the so-called New World. The volume explores the reasons behind the exodus of the Separatists from England in the first instance: why did groups of Christians leave England for the Netherlands and Europe,

eventually ending-up in the so-called "new world"? What were the push-factors? While we tend to hear about the Mayflower journey, what is not recalled, except by some academic historians, are the forces and layered stories behind what the author names as "the many flowers of an illegal religious movement in Elizabethan and Jacobean England" (p. x). The Mayflower is remembered at the expense of the longer and larger storylines – formative influences, ideas, beliefs, choices etc. – behind the so-called journey.

Creatively structured into three parts, *The Journey to the Mayflower* is loaded with names of fascinating and significant figures important in the shaping of the protesting and dissenting traditions in England, especially Puritans of a variety of theological and ecclesial dispositions. To capture so many years of history in one volume, and in a format that gives the reader a feel of key historical moments and the struggles for religious freedom against the larger backdrop of the socio-political realities, has to be a skilful undertaking. Tomkins has been able to capture the differences and similarities of the multiplicity of characters, groups, and provide a glimpse of the religious ferment that happened around the necessity for religious freedom. The endnotes in the book are quite useful for those who may not be familiar with the historical background and connections. Given the many splinter groups, fallouts, and in-fighting around strong convictions and beliefs, this is not a volume aimed at hagiography about the Puritans, especially the more radical group(s) often referred to as Separatists. Here are stories of people who risked all for their beliefs, with quite a few losing their lives.

But more than the stories of people, the author's more pressing and substantive point is that of re-member-ing what he terms as "the story of an idea", essentially "that religion should be free and that the Church of Christ is a voluntary community, not an entire church state" (p. x). Willing to lay down their lives for such a radical idea at that time, *The Journey to the Mayflower* tries to capture how the mix and complex make-up of radical Puritans (Separatists) wrestled with, proclaimed, and embodied the idea of freedom. It was not smooth sailing when we further interrogate that "idea of freedom". Any talk of, and acts toward, freedom was a threat to the powerbase of the status quo (Church and State). What did God's outlaws, to deploy Tomkins's descriptor, really want? Freedom? A society full of the godly and the good? Total eradication of what they perceived as popish practices? An imagined perfect restoration to the church of Believers as God intended (Christ as its King)? Both political and ecclesial politics felt threatened.

While we may certainly admire the radical Puritans' passion and focus, we may wish also to contemplate how and why "reforming" with such spiritual urge can end up re-inscribing rigid forms of beliefs. This is not to diminish the polemics in the multiplicity of tracts, writings, discourses etc. that were often in conflict with church hierarchy, and a monarchy that sought to crush the more socio-political acts of conscience. Indeed, one is struck by the desire/search for – almost an obsession with a perfect-pristine-pure-authentic belief and practice – a "perfect reformation/church". It is not surprising, therefore, how this strong desire resulted in internal in-fighting, quarrelling, and intolerance – alongside the external pressures of Church and State – consumed God's outlaws.

The decision to separate (including migratory moves) must have been regretted and conceivable only after painful spiritual deliberation. One should not underestimate the experiential "deep anxiety of the soul" of these "outlaws". Did they abandon the church or did the church abandon them, as they feared for and fled from the corruption of their very souls? No wonder tropes such as Egypt-Wilderness-Exile-Promised Land found new biblical warranty to the extent that the most ardent practitioners eventually sailed off to the New World to preach and hear the pure gospel free from the restraints of a corrupt Church wedded to ungodly Monarchs. Knowingly or unknowingly, they became part of the imperial agenda very much alive at the time.

God's Outlaws on their costly journeys *to*, *on* and *beyond* Mayflower may not have seen themselves as part of a colonial project: yet their narratives, and a strong sense of God's calling/leading/accompanying cannot be separated from the links the colonial interests and their financial backers may have seen and calculated. We should not forget that from the late fifteenth century Europe began conquering and colonizing the world in the name of Christ (including Britain). God's Outlaws became co-opted into the colonial project, the legacies of which still play out today.

Readers will appreciate what Tomkins set out to do and has done in this volume, as a necessary intervention into disrupting the ongoing focus and almost hagiographical tendencies around the actual Mayflower journey and settlement in the so-called New World. This is also a complicated story of land grabbing, massacres, enslavement, and four hundred years of white terror, for we are confronted today, with the tenacity of forces that shaped dominant white self-representation over these particular years of imperialism.

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