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Congregational History Circle Magazine

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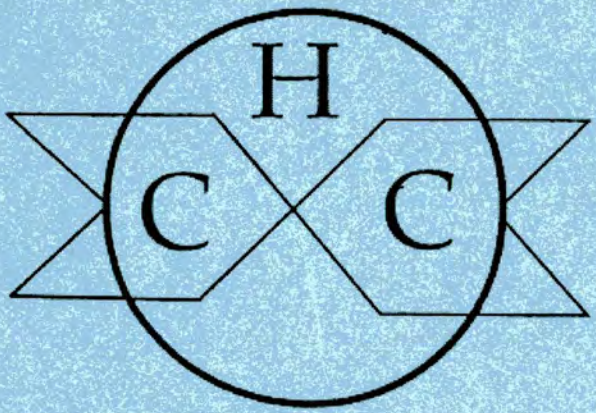

Spring 2002

The Congregational History Circle Magazine

Volume 4 No 4 Spring 2002

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EDITORIAL

This issue of the CHC Magazine draws together themes which we have explored in part before but which repay further consideration. In addition, an examination of a learned Puritan minister of the seventeenth century leads us to his links with an Oxford college for Dissenters. Derek Watson revisits the world of church music in his article on hymnology. Nigel Lemon takes the reader back to the village churches of Cheshire and the Welsh border, territory first made familiar to our members by the late Ian Sellers. Our editor returns to the peripatetic exploits of Elsie Chamberlain whose travels took her far and wide, even in her maturity. Elaine Kaye explores the links between John Owen and Mansfield College.

We welcome Nigel Lemon and Elaine Kaye, both new contributors, to our pages. Nigel Lemon is a non-stipendiary minister in the United Reformed Church. He pastored Lavister and Trevalyn, near Wrexham, 1975-90, and was provincial director of studies for URC non-stipendiary ministry 1990-92. Since 1995 he has been associate minister at Hoole in Cheshire. Elaine Kaye is the historian of Mansfield College and of Northern College and its predecessors. She has written biographies of C J Cadoux, and W E Orchard, and studies of The King's Weigh House, and of Queen's College, London, among other works.

NEWS AND VIEWS

For Your Information

The Friends of the Congregational Library, launched in June 2001, are holding a summer event on Saturday, 15 June 2002 from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm at The Congregational Library, Dr Williams's Library, 14-15 Gordon Square, London, WC1H OAG. Talks will be given by Chad Van Dixhoorn and Elaine Kaye on the academic work they have in progress and a practical session in the afternoon will include some book conservation and an opportunity to see some of the library's treasures. The cost of the event is £7.00 and membership of the Friends is £5.00 per annum. Further information about both membership of the Friends and the summer event may be obtained from the secretary, Ann Davies, 38 Lansdowne Road, Bedford, MK40 2BU.

Castle Hill United Reformed Church, Northampton are commemorating the 300th anniversary of the birth of Philip Doddridge by holding a seminar on 29th June, 2002. Four speakers will address the meeting - Prof Francoise Deconinck-Brossard of the University of Paris, Dr David Wykes of Dr Williams's Library, Dr David Bates of Cambridge and Dr Alan Clifford of Norwich. The seminar fee of £12.50 includes lunch and refreshments, a conducted tour of the church, and admission to an exhibition of Doddridge artefacts. All those interested or wishing to attend should contact the minister

of Castle Hill, Malcolm Deacon, at 57 Green Street, Milton Malsor, Northants, NN7 3AT or by telefax on 01604 858363.

The publishers, Boydell and Brewer, have announced that they are now in charge of the distribution of the Victoria County History, the standard reference work for English local history. Backlist volumes, from Bedfordshire to Worcestershire, and to Yorkshire, East Riding, are available at a standard price of £35 per volume. Orders should be sent to Boydell and Brewer Ltd, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF or telephone 01394 411320.

Quinta Press, which has recently published the second edition of Geoffrey F Nuttall's important work Visible Saints The Congregational Way 1640-60, is preparing for publication a collection of Dr Nuttall's essays and articles. These will include several which have previously appeared in specialist journals and are less well known than they deserve to be. In addition Quinta hope to publish this year R W Dale's The Atonement (1875) and John Angell James's The Anxious Enquirer (1834), among other works. By 1904 the former was into its twenty-third edition while the latter ran into six editions during its first year alone and was translated into many languages. Enquiries to Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Salop, SY10 7RN.

The Secretary's Jottings

A recent development, of interest to CHC members, is that the Archive Room in the Congregational Federation's offices, Castle Gate, Nottingham is now functioning as a collection centre for books, diaries, manuscripts and other memorabilia relating to the history of Congregationalism. It does not, of course, supplant the Congregational Library, now housed at Dr Williams's Library, Gordon Square, London, but it does offer a refuge for material which might otherwise be lost.

The Congregational Lecture 2001 (reviewed later in our pages) was an interesting account of the work of the seventeenth century Congregationalist, Thomas Goodwin. I have seen the shelf-spanning volumes of the Works of Thomas Goodwin in libraries but have never seriously studied his thought. The lecturer, Paul Blackham, provided little incentive for me, by describing Goodwin as a man "not of brevity". Indeed, his 12 volumes on The Work of the Holy Spirit seem, today, an astounding feat when most ministers and clergy would be hard-pressed to fill two sides of A4 on what they knew of the Holy Spirit.

It was a salutary lesson to be reminded that it is possible to move from Augustine's economic model of the Trinity where the three Persons seem to have psychological functions, One for memory, one for understanding, one for will, to a society of the Persons of the Trinity, in *koinonia*, endlessly discoursing, "let us make Man..."etc and *to be invited and empowered* to be participants in that discourse of divine drama that is the cosmos.

Recently I came across a fascinating pamphlet among some of our friend

the late Bill Ashley Smith's books, entitled The Diary of a Cambridge Minister (1937) by A G Matthews. Written during Joseph Hussey's time at the Congregational church in Cambridge, situated at Hog Hill (later Downing Place), 1691-1719 the diary was in 1937 held in the archives of Emmanuel Congregational Church (now URC). It was a small quarto volume of some 500 pages bound in pig-skin. Hussey was born just six weeks before the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 and was educated at Morton's Academy at Newington Green. Owing to what Hussey himself calls "the cloudiness of the times", his ordination by six officiating ministers merely indicated that of their personal knowledge they knew him to be an ordained minister; for caution prevented them admitting that they themselves had actually ordained - the sixth would not even give his name.

After a pastorate of three years in Hitchin, Hussey was called to the Presbyterian Meeting at the site in Downing Place. He managed to move the fellowship towards Congregationalism, but with great difficulty. Later the congregation divided.

Among the numerous entries which A G Matthews selected is one for a "Day of Public Fasting" (Good Friday) in 1701. Hussey began preaching from Proverbs 8.14 at 11.00 am and ended "half an Hour after three in the Afternoon, *without an Intermission*" - the italics, of course, being my own. He preached many sermons, consecutively from the same text, a common practice, - 34 sermons on 1 Cor 1.20 but failed to better Robert Bragge (1626-1704), aptly nicknamed Eternal Bragge for spending four continuous months on Joseph's coat of many colours.

I have recently bought The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament (1878) by G A Jacob, formerly the headmaster of Christ's Hospital. A strange book in many respects, by an Anglican who thought, in the 1870s, that the Church of England would shortly be overwhelmed by Anglo-Catholicism and the reformation element in it would be completely marginalised. His exegesis of New Testament organisation and worship is well worth study, particularly by Congregationalists.

Colin Price

JOHN OWEN AND MANSFIELD COLLEGE

Let us first imagine that we have gone back three and a half centuries, that we are fellows, tutors and professors of Oxford colleges, and that we have gathered in the Divinity School to be addressed by the Vice-Chancellor:

> Go on, therefore, most learned doctors, and with your virtue continue, as you have begun, to adorn as your Sparta, the sacred treasury of Theology, the heirloom of truth, the honour of religion, the glory of true sanctity, the fame of learning, all now deserted by many, shamefully and disgracefully trampled under foot. Your virtue and your industry have hitherto withstood the barkings of the sycophants and the envious, the changes of times, the bitings of the offended, and the invasions of the enemies. Cultivate more and more every day the candour, the fear and the worship of God, earnestness of manners, and the other gifts of mind and disposition which the University has hitherto observed in you, until ignorance and envy are conquered, all rust wiped away, and the eyes and minds of all, both our own countrymen and aliens, will be turned towards the University as the most perfect emporium of all the virtues.[1]

The speaker was not only the Vice-Chancellor of this University, he was also Dean of Christ Church. His name was John Owen, and he was addressing senior members of the University in July 1655.

The present Dictionary of National Biography, now 100 years old, offers the view that Owen ranks with Richard Baxter and John Howe as the most eminent of the Puritan divines of the seventeenth century. 'His learning was vast, various, profound, and his mastery of Calvinistic theology complete', wrote J M Rigg. Rigg has to admit what others have also said, that 'his style is somewhat tortuous and his method unduly discursive, so that his works are often tedious reading'.

John Owen's life (1616-1683) spanned the most crucial years of the seventeenth century for the religious history of this country.[2] He was the son of a clergyman, educated at The Queen's College, Oxford. He graduated MA in 1635 and was then ordained deacon at Christ Church. He began to prepare for the BD degree by making a study of the Arminian controversy, a study which strengthened his own Calvinist theology. The high church theology then

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[1]This lecture was delivered to the John Owen Society at Mansfield College, Oxford on 9 November 2000. The Oxford Orations of John Owen (ed P Toon) (Cornwall 1971), 26-7.

[2]See P Toon, God's Statesman: The Life of John Owen. Pastor. Educator and Theologian (Exeter 1971).

predominant in Oxford was sympathetic to Arminianism and made Owen sufficiently uncomfortable to persuade him to leave in 1637 and undertake chaplaincies for more sympathetic gentry. After the civil war broke out he was appointed to the living of Fordham in Essex in 1643. Although at first he held Presbyterian views, his reading of John Cotton's Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven and of An Apologeticall Narration, produced by the five divines of the Westminster Assembly, expounding the Congregational Way, led him to Independency. When he was appointed vicar of Coggeshall three years later, he organised the church on Independent lines. As the defeat of Charles I in the civil war became more likely, so Owen came to the forefront of national life. He preached before the House of Commons on 29 April 1646, when he was still only 30, and he preached to parliament on the day after the King's execution. He then accompanied Cromwell to Ireland as chaplain.

Oxford had been a royalist stronghold during the war. The University, though not the town, supported the King, and Charles had made his headquarters there during the first stages of the civil war. The University fell into disorder, and the Long Parliament removed many of the royalist supporters amongst the fellows in 1648. Cromwell put great store on reforming the two universities, both for valid educational reasons, and also in order to forestall any royalist plots. Of the two universities, Oxford, where Puritanism was weaker, offered the greatest threat and needed to be dealt with firmly. Ceremonialism in college chapels was abandoned; the Directory of Public Worship replaced the Book of Common Prayer; Calvinist doctrine re-appeared in theological discussion and teaching. Cromwell turned to John Owen who was now one of the regular preachers to the Council of the Commonwealth. He was appointed Dean of Christ Church in 1651 by a vote of parliament, and a year later, Cromwell, as Chancellor of the University, appointed him Vice-Chancellor. The chief task facing him was to build up the life of the University and re-establish proper standards of learning. His most powerful colleague in this task was the Independent Thomas Goodwin, who was President of Magdalen. Unfortunately we know little of Owen's own church membership while he was in Oxford, but we do know that in 1658 he was a prominent member of the Savoy Assembly which drew up The Savoy Declaration. We also know that he met with much success in reviving both learning and religion in Oxford during the six years that he was Vice-Chancellor [3]

Owen's influential friendships meant that he did not suffer in the manner of many of his colleagues after the Restoration, and he was able to continue preaching. For a time he officiated at a small meeting in Leadenhall Street in

[3]See B Worden, 'Cromwellian Oxford', in N.Tyacke (ed). The History of the University of Oxford vol IV (Oxford 1997).

the City of London, and attracted an eclectic congregation. He wrote prolifically until the time of his death.

Owen was the pre-eminent Independent theologian of the seventeenth century. His comment that he traversed 'the valley ... of democratical confusion and the precipitous rock of hierarchy tyranny'[4] is well known, though as Alan Sell has pointed out, Owen's sympathies 'were more with the Reformed concern for order than with the Anabaptist openness to the Spirit'.[5] Nevertheless, he has provided us with the clearest and most developed exposition of Congregational church order from its classical period.

His prolixity and somewhat turgid style make him difficult reading for us today. James Moffatt remarked on the fact that despite Owen's Welsh background, 'few drops of Celtic firs and fancy trickled in John Owen's veins.'[6] Nevertheless, as this society recognises, he is forgotten at our peril.

So what does all this have to do with Mansfield College? The two main architects of Mansfield were R W Dale and Andrew Martin Fairbairn. Dale, minister of Carrs Lane church in Birmingham, was chairman of the Board of Education of Spring Hill College, where he himself had studied for ministry. When it was first suggested that Spring Hill should move to Oxford, he had resisted the idea. Oxford and Cambridge were opened to Nonconformists without restriction in 1871, but the old prejudices against the Anglican establishment were deep rooted. Oxford after all was home to the Tractarian movement. Would it not be dangerous to expose young, impressionable Nonconformists to the lure of high church ritual in gothic chapels?[7] But Dale was eventually persuaded, apparently by the pleas of T H Green of Balliol, who pointed out that Nonconformists would go up to Oxford as undergraduates in any case, and if there was no Nonconformist centre to support and guide them, they might indeed be lured to Anglicanism. It should be noted that although there was a Congregational church in the centre of Oxford - George Street Congregational Church, on the site of the present ABC cinema - it was not a strong church and was, at the time, without a minister. One may wonder whether Dale and his supporters did not consider Cambridge. In fact, they did, Dale visited Cambridge, where there was a strong Congregational Church, Emmanuel - to sound out the situation, but met some resistance on the grounds that a Dissenting college could be divisive.

So, it was to Anglican, high church, royalist Oxford that Dale turned his

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[4]'The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished' in Works, (1850-53) ed W H Goold XIII 5.

[5]A P F Sell Saints: Visible. Orderly and Catholic (Geneva 1986) 39-40.

[6]J Moffatt The Golden Book of John Owen (1904) 1.

[7]A similar debate took place among Roman Catholics.

attention. There were however dons of more liberal views, growing in influence. When Dale came to Oxford to look for a possible site for a new college, it was Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, who helped to show him sites which might be available. There were now many liberal Anglicans who welcomed the prospect of a theological college which was neither evangelical (in the party sense of that word) nor high church, but moderate liberal. The present site was eventually found and purchased from Merton College. A building committee set to work to find the funds, and a new principal was appointed. While funds were raised, an architect chosen and a design approved, the college found a temporary home at 90 High Street, once the home of the Oxford Union. It began work in October 1886, under the name Mansfield College, called after the family who had provided the funds for Spring Hill College in 1838.

Dale was both theologian and historian, well aware of Congregational roots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His massive History of English Congregationalism (published posthumously in 1907) devoted more than half its length to the years up to 1688; it acknowledged Owen's position among the Congregationalists of the seventeenth century, though it does not particularly single him out.

It was Dale's inspiration to invite the then principal of Airedale College in Bradford, Andrew Martin Fairbairn, to be the first principal of Mansfield. Fairbairn was Scottish, brought up in the old Evangelical Union. His own formal education was scanty - we might except from that judgment the year he spent in Germany in the late 1860s, but, by the time he reached Oxford, Lord Acton was heard to remark that there was no one in Oxford more learned than Dr Fairbairn. He was not rooted in English Puritanism in the way that Dale and others were, but he had thrilled the autumn assembly of the Congregational Union in Hanley in October 1885 with his address on 'The Sacerdotal and the Puritan Idea'.

Though he did not mention Owen by name, Fairbairn was very conscious that in coming to Oxford in 1886 Congregationalists and other Nonconformists were returning to reclaim the inheritance which was theirs until Owen was dismissed in 1660, and the Act of Uniformity of 1662 finally effectively excluded the Independents and Presbyterians, along with others, from the two universities. When Fairbairn gave his inaugural lecture on 'Theology in the Modern University' in October 1889, at the opening of the new Mansfield College building, he clearly had the work of Owen and Thomas Goodwin in mind in saying that :

> ... it was through the battlefield that the Puritan came here to power. Oxford had been his enemy's stronghold; here his forces had been recruited, gathered, disciplined; here ancient corporations had given of

> their wealth to his cause, and where men sacrifice much of what they have and have inherited they deeply love and they sternly hate. And so the Puritan came where the passions that raged forbade justice, and would not brook toleration. It had been a university, but hardly was one; its colleges were disorganised, its studies neglected, its students were more familiar with the camp than the school, its leaders more acquainted with the council and the alarms of war than with the lecture and the academic disputation. And out of these ruins, amid these raging fires, the Puritan began to build. In building he could not please, often he could not spare, the enemy that hated him; yet two things must be confessed - the stroke the Legislature meant to be heavy was often softened by the hand called to administer it, and the work of academic reconstruction was marvellously rapid, thorough and complete. Indeed the contrast of 1658 with 1646 is perhaps the most striking in our academic annals.[8]

But then, he said :

> With the Act of Uniformity, not simply the reign, but the very being of the Puritans in the universities came to an end. It is no purpose of mine either to criticise or judge the Act; history has judged it, and from its judgment there is no appeal. Only let this be said: the Act secured neither learning nor loyalty; under it, both decayed. The period of its most absolute supremacy was the period when in the universities men most talked treason and least defended faith. Its history furnishes conclusive evidence of this - that legislative enactments and sanctions can never make religion live. The more they hedge it about the more its energies are restricted, its spirit weakened, its outlook to the Eternal limited and dimmed. The university must be free if religion is to be real; religion must speak in its own name and live by its own right if it is to prevail.[9]

Mansfield had 'come home'. It was not a college of the University but its staff and students were all matriculated members of the University, and Fairbairn and other staff played a significant role in the theology faculty, and did much to make the course more rigorous. The chapel was from the beginning intended to be a chapel for all Nonconformist undergraduates, and its Sunday services attracted large congregations, senior as well as junior members

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[8]Quoted in Mansfield College Oxford: Its Origin and Opening (1890) 118.
[9]ibid 120.

of the university, town as well as gown. It can be claimed that Mansfield has contributed to the revival of sound learning in Oxford, not least in mediating continental Reformed theology and biblical criticism.

The bicentenary commemorations of 1662 in 1862 had done much to revive interest in Congregational history. The formation of the Congregational Historical Society in 1899 was part of the general increase of interest in history, and its growth as an academic subject. Modern history (i.e. history after the fall of the Roman Empire) entered the university curriculum in the second half of the nineteenth century. A whole cluster of Congregational scholars now began to write Congregational history, among them F J Powicke, George Lyon Turner, T G Crippen. In the following generation came Albert Peel and A. J Grieve. Dale's History of English Congregationalism came out in 1907. In the same decade of the twentieth century a series of short books began to appear on 'Congregational Worthies'. Number 7 was on John Owen, written by James Moffatt (Nos 1-6 were on John Milton, Sir Henry Vane the Younger, Robert Browne, Admiral Robert Blake, and John Howe). Moffatt was then a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, but was soon to join the staff of Mansfield as Yates professor of New Testament. His book was actually a republication of the lengthy 'Introduction' to a work which he had published in 1904, The Golden Book of John Owen. He clearly had an admiration and respect for Owen, but his work was not based on primary research. He remarked that Owen's works 'have been dropped into the cell of oblivion' because of their 'dry, stiff prose', and therefore he felt that an anthology such as he had prepared was the best way of rescuing him from that oblivion. The last edition of Owen's work had been issued in 1850, edited by W H Goold, with a long biographical introduction by Alexander Thomson. Whether or not Moffatt talked to his students about Owen is not recorded.

It was in the context of the ecumenical discussions of the twentieth century that scholars began to turn to Owen again. Fairbairn's successor as principal of Mansfield was William Boothby Selbie, one of the first Mansfield students. He returned to the college after significant pastorates in Highgate and in Cambridge, and was principal from 1909 until 1932. In 1920 he was to be the first Independent to receive an Oxford DD by decree since John Owen received his in 1653. Selbie was pre-eminently a preacher, and filled the chapel every Sunday morning during term time. But he was also a leader in earlier ecumenical discussions. He had attended the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 as a representative of the London Missionary Society. On his return to Oxford he organised a series of meetings on 'Evangelical Christianity: Its History and Witness', and edited the published version of the lectures under the same title. After the war, Mansfield was host to several conferences which met prior to and after the Lambeth Conference of 1920,

which had issued the 'Appeal to All Christian People'. Selbie was chairman of the group which produced a formal response to the Appeal, and then amongst those Free Churchmen who continued dialogue with Anglicans in the early 1920s. This experience, which involved working out how much of Congregational theory and practice could be modified or abandoned in the service of unity, and how much was 'non-negotiable', stood him in good stead when he came to write a book on Congregationalism, in a series called 'Varieties of Christian Expression' in 1927. While not uncritical of Owen, he calls him 'the best example of the true spirit of Independency'. 'More than most, Owen was a High Churchman with a strong sense of the mystical quality of the Church as the home of the Holy Spirit and the organ and instrument of Christ in the world'.[10] While undoubtedly Calvinist in theology, he and Thomas Goodwin 'in their practical presentation of Christian truth ... provided the basis for that modified form of Calvinism which later became the distinctive feature of Congregational theology'.[11]

Selbie's students included Nathaniel Micklem, C J Cadoux and, for a shorter time as a research student, Albert Peel. Geoffrey Nuttall was an undergraduate and attender at college chapel during the last years of Selbie's principalship. For each of them, the issues of theology and churchmanship with which Owen was concerned were of crucial importance, and most of them drew to some extent on Owen's writings.

So it was in the two decades, the 1930s and the 1940s, in particular, that appeal was being made to John Owen, in the debates about the essence of Congregationalism. Congregationalists went through something of a crisis in those years, and on the outcome of this crisis was to depend the future course of the denomination. In 1930 Frank Lenwood's book, Jesus, Lord or Leader?, was published, and its extreme liberal stance alarmed many. Lenwood was a former Mansfield student, and a member of a group of liberal modernists centred round Thomas Wigley, minister of Blackheath Congregational Church, a group which published what they called , 'a reasoned restatement of the grounds of Christian belief, couched in terms better suited to the educational standards and scientific apprehensions of the present day', in the Christian World, 9 February 1933. This led to a chorus of protest in succeeding columns of the paper. Among the protesters was the principal of Mansfield College, Nathaniel Micklem. Another was J S Whale, professor of church history at Mansfield.

Micklem had just returned from four years in Canada, where he had been teaching New Testament Studies at Queen's Theological College, Kingston,

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[10]W. B. Selbie, Congregationalism (1927) 88, 89.
[11]ibid 165.

Ontario. The United Church of Canada had recently been formed and gave Micklem experience of worship and churchmanship with Methodist and Presbyterian as well as Congregational background. He went to Canada as a liberal, but on his return it was soon clear that his ideas had changed, revealed clearly in an article that was published in Canada just after his return to England: 'The Theological Watershed'.[12] Whereas in 1919 he had been urging his readers to 'help deliver Christianity from the jargon of theology and dead metaphysics',[13] he was now emphasising that 'the core of the Christian faith is something to which the human reason of itself could never attain' and the phrase 'orthodox Christianity' was beginning to appear in his writing as a term of commendation. He set himself to oppose the ultra-liberal Christianity of Lenwood and Wigley.

Micklem had a difficult time when he first became principal in 1932. Some members of the College Council were very suspicious of his views, even thinking that he was some sort of crypto-Catholic. The fact that Cadoux was appointed professor of church history to succeed Whale, and was also appointed vice-principal, an appointment that was viewed by some as a counter-weight to the principal's views, hardly made for a co-operative atmosphere. The Junior Common Room was critical too. But as time went on, a group of theologians, most but not all of them connected with Mansfield, emerged, a group with a concern for church order and dogmatic theology, with Micklem at the centre.

In 1937 Albert Peel, editor of both the Congregational Quarterly and the Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, and a most erudite historian, produced a collection of papers and addresses under the title, Inevitable Congregationalism, published by the Independent Press. The general thrust of his argument was that 'the polity of apostolic Christianity was Congregational',[14] and that the achievement of the Elizabethan Separatists was to revive this apostolic Christianity. His appeal to history is to the sixteenth rather than to the seventeenth century - there is a very brief reference to The Savoy Declaration, but no reference to Owen. Nathaniel Micklem's reading of this work was that it reduced the essence of a Congregational church to a gathering of two or three in Jesus' name, failing to give significance to the essential 'order' - ministry, eldership, covenant, diaconate, church meeting, sacraments - which are, Micklem claimed, the marks of any truly apostolic church.

The first public statement of the group centred round Micklem was in an

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[12]Queen's Quarterly 41 (1934).
[13]The Open Light (1919) 166.
[14]A Peel Inevitable Congregationalism (1937) 34.

Open Letter of 1939 to all Congregational ministers, prepared by Bernard Manning of Cambridge, and revised by Micklem and Whale, recalling them to their Reformed inheritance. Micklem had already explained in a booklet on Congregationalism Today (1937) - a book which was in effect a rejoinder to Peel's Inevitable Congregationalism - that this meant returning to the seventeenth century and to John Owen's interpretation of Calvin. Those of a similar mind now formed the Church Order Group, and used a series of short books under the title, 'The Forward Books', published by the Independent Press, to expound their ideas. The editor of the series was John Marsh, at the time, chaplain, later to be principal, of Mansfield. In his introduction to the series, he wrote of the need for more centralisation of the churches, but of a centralisation which must be 'spiritual in its foundations and in its authority', and on the need to build on what John Owen and others had begun. Micklem himself wrote Congregationalism and the Church Catholic in 1943, in which he argued, quoting from Owen's treatise on 'The True Nature of a Gospel Church', that synods - that is, the mutual communion of particular churches - are 'the true expression of catholicism'.[15] Every true Congregational church, argued Micklem, is part of the Church Catholic, and, he went on, 'the notes of the Church Catholic are not anything external (such as membership of the Congregational Union or government by bishops) but a fellowship in the faith, sacraments and conversation of the Gospel'[16]. Synods were not 'a convenience or expediency but an ordinance of Christ; like the local church meeting they have an essential and theological place in the organisation of the church'.[17] Synods had spiritual but not legislative authority The Church Order Group included several other Mansfield men. John Huxtable came to Mansfield from Western College in the early years of Micklem's principalship, and eventually became a college principal himself. He always made clear how much he owed to R S Franks, his principal at Western, but also acknowledged his debt to Mansfield. While still a minister in pastoral charge at Palmers Green, he produced an abridged and edited version of Owen's The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government in 1947. Huxtable described the work as 'a classic expression of congregational polity', and therefore the witness which Congregationalists themselves believed they had to contribute to the Church Universal. It should, he argued, convince the Anglican that the Congregational approach to ecclesiastical issues is more theological than their own. In line with Micklem's view, he urged that Owen could help the modern Congregationalist to understand the theology of synods; he would 'enable us to

[15]N Micklem Congregationalism and the Church Catholic (1943) 43.
[16]ibid.
[17]ibid 45.

see how to act together as an ordered whole and not as a collection of isolated and separate units'.[18] John Huxtable's book in the Forward Books series on The Ministry, published four years earlier, also made reference to Owen and the Savoy Declaration in support of its theology of ministry.

Daniel Jenkins was also at Mansfield in the late 1930s. He began his ministerial education and training at the Yorkshire United Independent College in Bradford; as was the Yorkshire custom (a custom introduced by Fairbairn when he was principal) he went to Edinburgh for his arts course before theological study. His time in Edinburgh coincided with the introduction of Karl Barth's work to the Scottish theological community - Barth was widely studied in Scotland before many English theologians took notice of him - and when he returned to Bradford he was fortunate enough to be taught by Lovell Cocks, who was already interested in Barth. When Jenkins came to Oxford he was already strongly drawn to the Reformed emphasis in Congregational theology. In the decade and a half after he left Oxford he had two pastorates, and between the two, a series of ecumenical appointments which stimulated his thinking on churchmanship. During this time he wrote some important books on Congregationalism and the Reformed tradition: The Nature of Catholicity (1942), Congregationalism: A Restatement (1954), The Protestant Ministry (1958), all of which drew at some point on Owen's theology, though not in every respect uncritically. In 1958 he wrote a theological comment for an edition of The Savoy Declaration of 1658, which was edited by another former Mansfield student, A G Matthews.

Daniel Jenkins was for much of its life the editor of a journal called The Presbyter - , 'A Journal of Confessional and Catholic Churchmanship', sponsored by the Church Order Group. It ran for seven years, from 1943 to 1950. The editorial committee included not only John Marsh, but also two other Mansfield men, Alec Whitehouse and Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (universally known as Jonah) and Nathaniel Micklem and J S Whale were official supporters. Alec Whitehouse was chaplain of Mansfield for a time during the 1940s, then went on to spend most of his working life in academic work in Durham and the University of Kent. Cunliffe-Jones was also an academic theologian, spending several years as principal of the Yorkshire United Independent College. In May 1944, John Huxtable wrote an article in The Presbyter on 'John Owen on Schism', pointing out to the readers that, 'It is apparent to all but the blind that he (Owen) cared about church order in a way which puts his spiritual descendants to shame'. Two years later 'some Congregationalists' (whom we may conclude were mostly the members of the

[18]J Huxtable - introduction to The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government (1947) 21.

editorial committee) wrote an editorial in The Presbyter on 'Congregationalists and the Future' and offered this comment on John Owen: 'It was the greatest achievement of our greatest systematic theologian, John Owen, that he so restated Catholic church order as to find within it an essential place for the spontaneous movement of the Spirit in granting new gifts to the Church'.

Now it would be misleading to suggest that all Mansfield men were of these views. During most of Micklem's time as principal the professor of church history was C J Cadoux. Micklem and Cadoux had been contemporaries at Mansfield before the first war, and were in a measure friends, though socially from very different backgrounds. By the early 1930s their theological positions were very different, and this unfortunately led to a good deal of frustration and unhappiness on both sides. It was Cadoux's responsibility to teach Reformation history. Up to this point his interests had been in early church history - the subject of his thesis was the attitude of the early church to social questions, including war - in New Testament Studies, which he taught at Bradford, on Congregational and Catholic doctrines of the church - his longest book was called Christianity and Catholicism, published in 1928 - and in the history of Smyrna, his birthplace. Reformation history had not been a major interest and he did not publish in this field at all. His students remembered his lectures on this theme as having been meticulously prepared, but not exciting.

Geoffrey Nuttall was a student at Mansfield from 1933 until 1936. He has to be regarded as the most outstanding historian of Nonconformity that Mansfield has so far produced. He has written extensively on the seventeenth century, especially in The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (1946) and Visible Saints (1957). He has much to say about Owen, and has probably studied Owen in greater depth than anyone else I have mentioned, but he does not refer to The True Nature of a Gospel Church, the work which the Church Order Group quoted so much. He was not a member of the Church Order Group, and indeed was not in sympathy with its aims. It is significant that his research has centred much more on Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge, two of the most eirenic and ecumenical figures from the classical period of Congregationalism.

It would be quite wrong to give the impression that Mansfield was the only college whose staff and alumni appealed to Congregational history, and the seventeenth century in particular, in seeking guidance for the denomination. The Lancashire Independent College in Manchester was home to a number of scholars interested in history. George Lyon Turner, A J Grieve, W G Robinson, E J Price, for example. But it could, I think, be claimed that in the 1930s and the 1940s John Owen was a particularly important figure for Mansfield - even though, as far as I have been able to discover, Owen did not

figure in any part of the curriculum.

After the end of the second world war, conversations between Congregationalists and Presbyterians with a view to union which begun before the war were resumed. These were the discussions which were to lead in 1972 to the formation of the United Reformed Church. While Owen has influenced both those who opposed and those who supported this union, it is probably fair to say that Owen was quoted most often by those who wished to promote this union, people such as John Marsh and John Huxtable. The Statement of Faith which was produced in 1967 in preparation for union owed much to the thinking of the members of the Church Order Group. Certainly the synodical structure which was eventually incorporated into the URC could be defended by an appeal to Owen. It is my hope that in the near future some young Congregational or URC scholar will make a detailed study of the negotiations leading up to the decisions of 1967 and 1972, and will consider the possible influence of John Owen.

I hope that I have made it clear that all of us in the traditions we share owe a great debt to John Owen, and that, whether or not we agree with their interpretation, Mansfield staff and students have helped to keep alive the relevance of his theology for us today.

Elaine Kaye

PASTOR BOFFEY'S CONGREGATIONAL CIRCUIT

The Setting

The Methodist Circuit, expressing both organisation and authority, has a history dating back to the days of John Wesley himself: its integrating pattern of relationships seems distantly removed from Congregationalism's traditional Independency. This paper, however, describes an interesting link between these two church forms, less in the pattern of church behaviour than through a particular twenty-one year rural ministry.[1] Its geographical position overlaps with the area covered by the late Rev Dr Ian Sellers in his 'The Threapwood

[1] This article owes much to Mrs Ivy Boffey of Farndon and others associated with her husband's 'Circuit', their conversations having greatly augmented and enriched both CYB and URCYB statistics and the author's personal knowledge and experience.

Story', the life of a small congregation on the margins of England and Wales.[2] The four village congregations discussed here in fact spanned a neighbouring and not dissimilar border between Cheshire and Denbighshire. Eight miles due south of Chester lies Farndon with Barton perhaps two miles to its east: Lavister, in Wales, is equidistant between Chester and Wrexham with Trevalyn a mile towards Farndon. Farming and market gardening sustained all four communities when the chapels were founded. Today, although not of uniform size, each is a commuter village.

Congregationalism's origins in Barton, Trevalyn, Farndon and Lavister (in that order) have no common pattern: one was missioned by a neighbouring village with the then young county union's financial support; the second was initially linked to the New Connexion Methodists in Chester; the third's chapel was the gift of a devout layman; and the latest was an outstation mission from one already in place. None of the causes was ever a full-time single-church pastorate: two received stipendiary ministry for much of their lives; the other two, constituted as one church, depended far more on 'Oversight' care; all four were continuously served by lay preachers of varying denominations and perhaps doctrine.

Barton

Congregational preaching at Barton had commenced by 1816 when Mr Thomas Hitchin, engaged by the Cheshire Congregational Union to evangelise the villages around Tattenhall, extended his work there.[3] Remaining an "outstation" until perhaps 1886, there followed six years of apparent independence: meanwhile, the attractive village chapel of 1877 had been built by Thomas Huxley, Congregationalist and senior deacon at Malpas, whose secular life encompassed the various trades of builder, wheelwright and farmer. His denominational generosity had already aided the construction of chapels at Malpas (1862), Norbury (1868) and Threapwood (1874). Whether the church at Barton came into being in 1865, 1877 or 1883 remains unclear.[4] What is certain is that the county union made annual grants towards the work at Barton, £10 being normal from 1865 until 1872, whilst joint work with Farndon attracted £50 or £55 from 1892 until 1906, although halved if there were no minister. The Farndon link would last almost continuously until 1981. The

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[2] CHC 3:2, 1994.

[3] F.J.Powicke, A History of the Cheshire County Union of Congregational Churches (1907), 116ff. and 141. Hitchin's Obituary notice in CYB 1859, 201 however describes his ordination at Bromstead in 1803.

[4] respectively: undated Typescript by Sydney Boffey c1977, URCYB 1990/91 and CYB 1956.

pastorate, sometimes including Tattenhall and most latterly Malpas, called a total of eight ministers and three lay pastors. Barton's final minister was non-stipendiary, serving only that congregation. Membership, described in 1899 as being mostly farm labourers and domestic servants, seems highest in 1905 with 32 and 32 children. It then fluctuated between 20 and 31, dipping below 20 only from the late 1960s. Despite its rural setting, Barton was rarely isolated from the wider church, preachers from many denominations journeying regularly from Chester, Whitchurch, Ellesmere Port and Rossett: and in the 1950s and 60s, a Hoole (Chester) church secretary attempted a preaching plan for numerous village churches, Barton included.

Farndon

Discussion about extending Congregational activity to Farndon, the largest of the four villages and alone in having a parish church, dates at least from 1881 when Thomas Huxley (1823-1903), builder of three of our chapels and the 1900 Chairman of the Cheshire Congregational Union, urged the union to fund preaching there through a Chester minister and lay preacher. The delayed response of 1887 stated "the opinion that we should not undertake the responsibility of building a chapel and commencing services at present". In two years, Huxley had planned and built a chapel: he placed its trusteeship with the CCU in 1898, had additionally donated three cottages by 1902 and attended the Sunday school stonelaying shortly before his death in 1903.[5] For half a century, these premises sufficed for local work and frequently as a base for ministerial activity within a largely unchanged group. Total destruction by fire of both church and Sunday school in April 1957, only a few liturgical items surviving, led to the opening in October 1958 of the present chapel of light, modern design.

The Farndon Group retained a full-scope minister from 1892 until 1968, although never encompassing Tattenhall, Barton, Farndon and Malpas together during any one ministry: Barton alone never provided the manse. Those in pastoral charge between 1892 and 1970 included two lay pastors, one of whom progressed from the Congregational Union of England and Wales' List B (Evangelist) to ordination elsewhere, before returning for a second Farndon term. Four ministerial ordinations took place here during the second half of the twentieth century: that of Harold Swindells (1954) followed training at Paton College, Nottingham; Brian Slater (1961) came from New College, London; Sydney Boffey's ordination (1978) resulted from that year's United Reformed Church assembly resolution about local pastors; and Alan Johnston (1984) was trained through the URC course for the auxiliary ministry. The last named

[5] Powicke, op. cit. 117ff.

served only Farndon.[6]

Lavister & Trevalyn

Trevalyn Chapel was opened in August 1836, five years after worship commenced locally in a rented room at the Griffin Inn opposite, and in the kitchen at nearby Pinfold Farm. From 1841, Chester Congregationalism at the Queen Street and Handbridge churches provided preaching and pastoral assistance, one deacon alone arranging pulpit supplies for some forty years.[7] The 1851 Religious Census noted 50 morning and 56 evening attendances, the returns at the "Independant Chapel, Independents" being made by "Edward Owen, Manager" (sic). This neat, rectangular two-bay chapel of domestic appearance cost £150, with free cartage of materials by local farmers: by the twentieth century a porch shielded its side entrance and a small kitchen had been added. The furnishings remained simple: plain moveable pews for 60 people, a small tub pulpit approached by only two steps, a similarly neat harmonium and, through all its later years, "Sankey's 1200" hymnbook.

Lavister's origins required a double impetus. From 1861 to 1872 Edward Owen, who farmed at Trevalyn, encouraged cottage meetings in Lavister property he owned: on its sale, the work lapsed until Dr Williams's Trustees aided the purchase of the plot on which Lavister Chapel was built. Thomas Huxley again, planned its construction: foundation stones were laid in September 1889, and opening services held in June 1890. 'Gothic' had now reached the villages, Huxley's preferred designs demonstrating Congregationalism's removal from Dissent or sect to Church: visible evidence included a spirelet, pointed windows in three bays, and a small rose window above the porch. Simple, hard, open-backed benches sufficed for seating: a transept-like extension for a vestry, and far more latterly a kitchen, was added in 1924. This chapel cost approximately £500. Individual donations, both local and from Cardiff, Southport and Manchester, totalled £233.18.8½d (£233.93½p) by opening day: the warm generosity of ten guineas sat alongside 5½d (2½p) from 'a friend', anonymity perhaps hiding the embarrassment of poverty. Thomas Huxley remitted a final remaining debt of £4.10s. A nominal yearly land rent of five shillings (25p) was paid to Dr Williams's Trustees until, aided by a £40 grant from the English (sic) Congregational Chapel Building Society, the freehold was purchased for £65 in 1904 and the land vested in the Trust.[8]

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[6] The United Reformed Church, Rock Chapel, Farndon. Centenary Souvenir (Farndon 1989).

[7] Lavister & Trevalyn Church Book, c1906.

[8] Lavister & Trevalyn Church Book, c1930.

At least four trusts cover the years of the joint church: two, of c1890 and then 1916, were of named individuals; that of 1981 with the Cheshire Congregational Union (Inc); the final one of 1986 with the United Reformed Church Mersey Province Trust. The Rev J Llechryd Jones (Great Boughton, with oversight 1914-1921) "put all the business of the churches in perfect order, (arranged) also a fresh list of Trustees, and got the churches connected with the Cheshire Congregational Union". The 1916 trust of 16 men included a blacksmith, grocer's assistant, platelayer, bricklayer and forester.[9] Surprisingly two, but only two, survived when the 1967 church meeting resolved to place the property in trust with the county union. Despite necessary and assiduous research at local farms into the dates and places of death of former trustees, the then foot and mouth epidemic severely hampered this task: delayed resolution came only in 1981, whilst the final trustees took office, shortly before the sale of the first redundant property.[10]

The 1893 (joint) church meeting had elected "a committee to assist the minister (the Rev Wm Jones, Handbridge) in the discharge of his duties", hardly traditional Congregational practice: but Sunday afternoon and evening services, a women's meeting and the Sunday school were maintained, these activities varying over the years as to time and place, in almost continuous but arm's length company of an oversight minister from Handbridge, Great Boughton, Farndon or Northgate from 1890 until 1960. Lavister and Trevalyn were member churches of the Cheshire Congregational Union, the Congregational Year Book legend 'e' carefully signifying 'in another county' (or country!): district treasurers, both Congregational and URC, had frequent difficulty in understanding this one church with two buildings, a secretary from Lavister and treasurer from Trevalyn, two largely different congregations, one church meeting, and in Wales.

Pastor Sydney Boffey

Sydney Boffey was born in Leeds in 1909: his family moved almost immediately to Ellesmere Port, a nineteenth century Cheshire town on the river Mersey, providing many of Britain's inland canals with access to the sea. His religious upbringing was at Heathfield Road Primitive Methodist Mission Church where personal qualities found him in the 1930s both a fully accredited local preacher and the Sunday school superintendent. In 1932, he had successfully candidated for the Primitive Methodist ministry: that year's

[9] The Lavister & Trevalyn Church Book lacks annual Minutes before c1936 but contains quite lengthy retrospective synopses written in c1906 and c1930.
[10] N.J.Lemon, A Century for Christ. Lavister Chapel 1890-1990 (Lavister Centenary Pamphlet 1990).

Methodist Union however foresaw fewer potential ministers than were available and Boffey was amongst those not called for training. Also in 1932, his place of employment as a butcher moved from Ellesmere Port to Farndon, with which village he would be associated for the rest of his life. Marriage to Ivy in 1936, the birth of their two children, war service and then demobilisation in 1946 all preceded but prompted a redirection of religious activities to the Rock Congregational Church in their adopted village, nearer than either Crewe-by-Farndon or Churton Methodist churches. Boffey's preaching activity was already widening from Methodism into Congregationalism, and also across the Dee into Wales among its Calvinistic Methodists (or Welsh Presbyterians). Whilst his membership long remained Methodist, to the point where he had served a full forty years 'On the Plan', he was made an honorary deacon at Farndon and, in the 1950s, was elected chairman of the Chester district of the Cheshire Congregational Union for the customary one year period. When the Rock Chapel was destroyed by fire in 1957, he became joint treasurer of its Rebuilding Fund, keeping a daily record of donations received. The Farndon Group's then minister, Harold Swindells, saw Boffey as a senior colleague in matters organisational and spiritual: it was his perception and encouragement which now enabled the older man to fulfil his earlier but frustrated ministerial calling in a manner which Congregationalism could more easily permit than would his native Methodism. Swindells' Farndon ministry concluded with a concurrent year's oversight of Lavister & Trevalyn: moving to Congleton in 1960, he suggested that Lavister & Trevalyn consider calling Boffey, already known as a very acceptable lay preacher, as their lay pastor. This new and spare-time ministry (1960-75) overlapped in part with a similar position at Barton and Farndon (1971-1981) and a less formal link with Tattenhall (1960-61). By resolution of the status committee, Sydney Boffey was admitted to the Register of Lay Pastors of the Congregational Church in England and Wales in 1971.

Boffey's regular pastoral and liturgical ministry included leading a monthly communion service for each of his four churches: at district lay preachers' meetings, he encouraged colleagues to complete his churches' annual preaching plan, church secretaries then assuming responsibility for remaining pulpit supplies. Membership grew in two of the three churches: Lavister & Trevalyn from 18 via 24 to 21, Farndon from 38 via 30 to 40; but Barton declined from 15 to 11. Children's numbers more uniformly fell: Lavister & Trevalyn from 40 to 25, Farndon 40 to 35, Barton 16 to 8.[11] The comparative resilience of these numbers suggests the effectiveness of a continuous and visible ministry, whilst his own residence in Farndon facilitated

[11] CYBs 1961ff and URCYBs 1973ff

regular visits to its Church of England Primary School, perhaps to some passing benefit for the Rock's Sunday school. Informal links across the four churches existed continuously through family relationships and the availability of Lavister & Trevalyn's hymn books for traditional and well-loved "Sankey Evenings": but there were few if any formal joint meetings, save for discussing the approaching decision regarding the URC.

Fulfilment

October 1972 found all four congregations, as three local churches, within the Cheshire district of the United Reformed Church: lay pastor became local pastor. Three years later Pastor Boffey resigned the pastorate at Lavister & Trevalyn but continued serving Barton and Farndon until 1981. Meanwhile the 1978 URC general assembly, discussing the anomalous position of local pastors who were authorised to serve as ministers amongst only their own congregations, resolved that district councils might offer ordination to "the ministry of the word and sacrament" to those local pastors willing to accept this position. Sydney Boffey was ordained at Farndon in November 1978, thus fulfilling the call he had felt approaching fifty years earlier. He retired from active ministry in 1981 and died in August 1991.[12]

By the start of the present century, each chapel having celebrated its centenary and one a 150th Anniversary, closure had already overtaken Trevalyn (1987), Barton (1992) and Lavister (1999). Of the four congregations, there now remains only Farndon, the one whose need was most queried by the Cheshire Congregational Union in 1887. It is currently grouped within a pastorate of the coming Chester South Cluster in the URC's Cheshire district. One of the pastorate's other churches, the Caldy Valley Neighbourhood Church, is a united Methodist/URC congregation: mediated through his Congregational years, Pastor Boffey's Methodist origins and leanings would be much at home in these latter days of the year 2002.

Nigel Lemon

[12] URCYB 1993.

ELSIE CHAMBERLAIN 1971-1980
On The Road

In 1970 Elsie Chamberlain left her part-time position as associate minister of the City Temple in London. She questioned the basis of the proposed United Reformed Church, (to be formed by a union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists) and, living in the rectory at Greensted, near Ongar in Essex, where her husband was the incumbent, she sought and, in 1971, found a pastorate at Hutton, near Brentwood, in London's outer suburban green belt, nearer to her home. In Liverpool during wartime she had learned to be a pastor, at Friern Barnet she had begun to stamp her own character and interests on her church, and at Richmond she had successfully combined the role of minister, Anglican parson's wife and BBC broadcaster, while working happily for some years in partnership with a colleague in the ministry. In addition, in the years after the Second World War, she had overcome principled objections and prejudice alike to her serving as a woman chaplain in the RAF. At the City Temple she had experienced the distinctive demands of a unique City centre congregation, while working with a number of part-time and full-time junior and senior colleagues.

Therefore by the early 1970's Elsie Chamberlain had worked in a variety of different settings and locations - inner city Liverpool, north London, the armed forces, south west London, religious broadcasting and, most unusual of all, the City of London.[1] She had, of course, gained a national reputation, well beyond the confines of Congregationalism by working for the BBC. Indeed she was that most unusual of beings, a mid-twentieth century celebrity whose fame rested entirely on her presentation of the Christian faith.

Elsie Chamberlain in Demand

In 1971 Elsie remained much in demand as a speaker. In the spring she addressed nearly two hundred women from churches in the Leicestershire and Rutland Congregational Union at their rally in Westcotes Congregational

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[1]It may not be clear to those unfamiliar with the capital that London's suburbs have very distinctive characters. Friern Barnet, although only 14 miles from Richmond-upon-Thames and 23 miles from Hutton, is very different in feel, atmosphere and mood from either of these places, as they are also just as different from each other. It goes without saying that The City Temple, the only Free Church in the City of London, on Holborn Viaduct, was and is still unique.

My thanks go to G Adams, E Banyard, I Blayney, C Damp, J Wilcox, J Wootton and P I Young for their help in preparation of this article.

Church, Leicester. There she commented on answers which had been submitted earlier to the churches.

"Women are sometimes content to do very practical things in the Church but do not use their brains enough to help people who want to know about the faith", she stated with characteristic trenchancy. She felt that women had not always made the most of the options open to them. "We have had the vote for fifty years but we have not been growing up as fast in knowledge or as fast as the opportunities of our times ought to allow us", she asserted.[2] Elsie remained keen to prompt women to take the initiative in the churches. Never one to sit submissively on the back pew herself, she consistently urged other women to take on leadership roles.

Elsie conducted a festival of praise in the summer of 1972 during a flower festival at Ridgewell Congregational Church, Essex where the pastor was Miss Frances Cleeves. Both the church and Frances Cleeves were to join the Congregational Federation later that year. In late 1972 Elsie was the visiting preacher at the anniversary of Southam Congregational Church in Warwickshire. Southam also joined the CF.[3] That Elsie would willingly take on a demanding schedule of activities was not surprising to her friends. No invitation was too insignificant for her. She did not see herself as a dignitary, above the humdrum level of ordinary church life and regularly accepted invitations to preach, to speak to mid-week meetings, to share her faith and to give of herself and of her spirit. This did not tire her. Rather it invigorated her. She always enjoyed meeting people, making new friends, becoming familiar with hitherto unknown churches. She was good at these functions, bringing not only her easy grace but also a sense of dignity and authority to the most unprepossessing of gatherings.

The Congregational Federation's Beginnings

In 1972 plans were revealed to continue in some mode the former Congregational Union of England and Wales and a provisional committee to that end was set up at a meeting at Church House, Westminster in January, on which Elsie Chamberlain sat. The committee decided to convene a national assembly of continuing Congregationalists on 13 May in London. In April 1972 fifty people, gathered from Congregational churches in the south-east, attended a meeting at East Ham Congregational/Methodist Church where they unanimously agreed to form an area association of the CF. Lady Stansgate chaired the meeting and Elsie was among the speakers.[4]

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[2]The Congregational Monthly (June 1971) 17.

[3]ibid (July 1972) 19, Congregational News (January 1973) 8.

[4]ibid (February 1972) 2,3; ibid (April 1972) 10. Both in typescript held at

On 13 May 1972 the planned national conference was held at Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, Hampstead, London for those considering whether they should remain Congregationalists. It was arranged by the provisional committee of the CF with the express purpose of finding "a simple way of uniting" those Congregational churches which had chosen not to join the coming United Reformed Church. Elsie Chamberlain led the opening devotions and gave the closing address.[5] The church was full, the fellowship animated and a spirit of expectancy permeated the meeting.

Edward Stanley Guest, not sympathetic to the proponents of the CF but equally opposed to the URC, put forward a plea for Congregationalists to uphold a conservative evangelical stance. The assembly listened respectfully. Reginald Cleaves, from the platform, argued for a broad based union of those seeking a deeper understanding of the potential of Congregationalism. He engendered such optimism among his hearers that they returned home, believing that, although Congregationalism had suffered setbacks, these losses need not be fatal. It seemed possible, even at the eleventh hour, that these continuing Congregationalists might salvage something from the wreckage. The meeting revealed an appetite for Congregationalism which had been suppressed for some time. Yet not all at the conference were to join either the Congregational Federation or an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches (favoured by Stan Guest). Some present were from churches which, at the first ballot, had not chosen to join the URC (including A T Illingworth Jagger, 1911-1992, the minister of Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church from 1953) but would later reverse their decisions.[6]

The significance of this conference at Lyndhurst Road for continuing Congregationalism can hardly be overstated. From it the CF proper had its beginning. The former name, the Congregational Union of England and Wales, which many would have preferred to retain, for legal and charitable reasons, had to be abandoned. Lady Stansgate proposed the title Congregational Federation to the meeting, claiming, for the term federation, a significance for all "those joined together in the bonds of a common faith". The conference endorsed the appointments of Lady Stansgate as president of the CF, Reg Cleaves as chairman and John Wilcox as secretary. Cleaves explained that the conference had been called "to secure and perpetuate the Congregational way of worship and concept of the Church... We are met to strengthen our faith and our belief in the co-operation of autonomous churches working to maintain the Christian way of life. Many differences existed, theological, political, social

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Kentish Town Congregational Church.
[5]The Congregational Monthly (May 1972) 19.
[6]URCYB (1994) 272.

but there was room for all in Congregationalism".[7]

Cleaves argued for a more inclusive position for the CF than that put forward by the more sharply defined boundaries of an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. Yet the organisers of the conference generously and properly had given Stan Guest of an EFCC the opportunity to plead his cause. That Guest, and his fellows, felt unable to co-operate in one Christian body with Cleaves, Elsie Chamberlain and other Congregationalists meant that the coming of the URC had reinforced suspicions and revealed deep fissures within Congregationalism, perhaps making them even deeper. Henceforth continuing Congregationalism would be fragmented between the CF, an EFCC, and the unaffiliated Congregational churches, with little contact between them.[8]

That Elsie was not given any formal position at this stage should not be interpreted as her not being fully trusted by the movers of the CF, nor did it indicate any lack of commitment on her part. Attenders at the Lyndhurst Road conference were enormously heartened by her presence on the platform. "Doesn't she look young?", "She looks no different than she did years ago", were among the comments overheard. Elsie herself was charged with zeal for her cause and, as always, her enthusiasm communicated itself to her listeners. This was her true calling. She brought confidence and spirit to the CF from its beginnings. From the outset she was the star in the continuing Congregational firmament, invariably giving bravura performances.

Conversely, this very advantage which Elsie's involvement brought could cause the CF difficulties. Elsie was to occupy several posts within the Federation in the years to come - chairman of council, officer for ecumenical

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[7] R W Cleaves Congregationalism 1960-1976. The Story of the Federation (Swansea 1977) 75-76.

[8] Arguably the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion also should be included. It had churches which had been listed in the Congregational Year Book as members of both the CUEW and the Connexion, such as Goring, Southstoke, Mortimer West (all near Reading, Berkshire), Ely (Cambridgeshire), Bodmin and Zion, St Ives^ (Cornwall), Ashbourne (Derbyshire), Fordham*^ (Essex), Ebley (Gloucestershire), Immanuel* (Basingstoke), High St, Cheshunt, Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbotts and Wormley (Hertfordshire), Broad Oak* (Canterbury), Emmanuel* and Bell's Yew Green* (both in Tunbridge Wells), Zion* (East Grinstead), Shoreham, Turner's Hill*, Copthorne*, West Hoathly* (Sussex), Bearfield~ (Wiltshire), Malvern Link, Leigh Sinton*, Suckley* (Worcestershire). CYB (1962). Churches marked with an asterisk do not appear in CYB (1970-1971). Churches marked ^ joined an EFCC EFCCYB (1992-93). The church marked ~ joined the Congregational Federation CYB (1979-1980).

relationships, president - but no formal post could provide a sufficient channel for her zest for life. Valuable though Elsie undoubtedly was to the CF, her talents sat awkwardly within the conventional job description. Where might her unique gifts be best employed? Some interested observers believe that this puzzling question was never adequately answered.

Elsie Chamberlain gave the CF her own healthy contempt for the stuffy and the staid. Her liveliness could not be constrained by cold formality. Her spirit rebelled against it . This cheeky rebelliousness stood in stark contrast to the arch formalism of the moderators of the CCEW who had often performed their duties with an air of pomposity and self importance. Elsie's girlish audacity, in the early years of the CF, seemed especially suited to the new beginning being made by these Congregationalists. Despite her age and experience, she brought an air of freedom and hopefulness which reinforced the release from those shackles, imposed by the uncritical proponents of church union schemes in the former CCEW. The power of the ecumenical zealots had been broken for these continuing Congregationalists and increasingly many in the CF came to find that participle "continuing" inadequate. Rather than continuing, they felt that they had been freed to defend Congregationalism and to find encouragement in its witness. In particular, they felt reborn, a rebirth exemplified by Elsie and her exuberance. Whereas the term continuing seemed to suggest the same as ever and possibly an inability or unwillingness to adapt, the word reborn spoke of freshness and energy. Elsie guided the CF churches out of the winter of a frightening, uncertain future into the spring of new growth.

An Induction for the Congregational Federation

The first ministerial settlement to be arranged by the CF took place in early 1972 when Ivor Morris was inducted to the pastorate of Bocking End Congregational Church, Braintree, Essex. The presiding minister was the moderator of the CCEW's Eastern province, Clifford John Buckingham (1907-95) who, from May to October 1972, was the last president of the CCEW. Reginald Cleaves gave the charge to the minister and Percy Wiseman (1900-85), then in retirement in Braintree, gave the charge to the church. Others taking part in the service included Donald Pattinson (1910-76), minister-secretary of the Essex Congregational Union, Stan Guest of an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, Elsie Chamberlain and Viscountess Stansgate - a remarkably inclusive fellowship. A party of fifty attended the service from Ivor Morris's former church at Knebworth in Hertfordshire where he had minstered since 1968.[9]

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[9]Congregational Monthly (May 1972) 19.

This induction service displayed at that time a rare spirit of co-operation between Congregationalists who were within months of separating in three different ways. The various participants in the service would have known fairly clearly the positions of each other on the URC. Buckingham, Wiseman and Pattinson would join the URC, Guest was a moving spirit in an EFCC, while Lady Stansgate, Elsie, Cleaves and Morris himself were to take leading roles in the Congregational Federation.

Buckingham was a modest, independent man whose willingness to preside at this induction was greatly to his credit during a time of division. Percy Wiseman and his wife "always felt at home in small causes", like those they had known in their early years. He had been brought up in Essex by his grandparents and had served several small churches, many in his home county. Pattinson had been minister of Baddow Road, Chelmsford 1947-60, before becoming full time minister-secretary of Essex Congregational Union. Never merely an administrator, he saw his work in pastoral terms and was regarded as serving selflessly the churches and ministers of Essex.[10]

Stan Guest had served at Southchurch Park, Southend-on-Sea, Essex 1950-56 and from 1956 Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire. From 1964 he also had the oversight of Hadham Cross and Little Hadham. He had been a consistent advocate of the conservative evangelical position within English Congregationalism for some years and like Cleaves, had been barracked at assemblies for his defiance of the platform. Guest suspected that the CF would stand for liberal Christianity and felt that he and those sharing his views would compromise their position, were they to join it.

At the 140th Congregational spring assembly chaired by Buckingham, Ivor Morris returned the new president's favour by bringing "a gracious greeting" from the continuing Congregationalists, though it was understood by one commentator as bearing the "courteous flick of a backlash".[11] Feelings among Congregationalists of all persuasions in 1972 were acutely sensitive. Observers were quick to attribute mischievous and partisan motives to what on other occasions might seem innocent enough remarks.

On 14 October 1972 the CF held its first annual assembly at Westminster Chapel. At this Elsie Chamberlain acknowledged the call to each church to develop closer relations with other Christians and, alongside this, the need for each local church to proclaim the gospel and bear witness to their unity in Christ. Elsie regarded the freedom Congregationalists enjoy as the "agency"

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[10]URCYB (1977) 270; (1984) 269; (1996) 260. Congregational Monthly (June 1972) 2.

[11]ibid (June 1972) 20.

which could bring about the desired unity of the churches.[12]

Invitation to Hutton

In early 1971 Elsie Chamberlain was living with her husband in Greensted rectory, near Ongar, in Essex. She had preached on a number of occasions at Hutton Free Church and discovered that the members there were looking for a minister. Their previous pastor, Allen Robert Kemp, had been in the Methodist ministry 1963-69, had then become a Baptist, and from 1969 was officially assistant minister at the neighbouring Hutton and Shenfield Union Church but in fact served Hutton Free which, like Union Church, was a member of both the Baptist Union and the Congregational Church in England and Wales. Kemp remained the minister there 1969-70. [13]

In conversation with the church secretary, Elsie let it be known that she was seeking a pastorate. She then met the deacons formally who reported on these conversations to the church. At a special church meeting in February 1971 twenty-seven members were in favour of continuing to explore the possibility of her becoming their minister while four abstained and one church member voted against her. In early March she outlined to the deacons how she envisaged her possible ministry at Hutton. She foresaw a half-time pastorate of three to four Sundays preaching, with one Sunday off each month. She would also work for them on two full days each week, and one evening. She explained that she and her husband, John Garrington, were committed to being in Plymouth for the first week in every month. John had discovered that he had a talent for helping people with psychological problems and he used their cottage, near Plymouth, as a consulting room. Elsie stated that she understood the pastor's role as that of a trainer, instructor and missionary, while she insisted that the deacons themselves must be prepared to undertake some pastoral visiting alongside the church administration. She suggested a trial period of six to twelve months.[14]

On 16 March Elsie met the church at her request. Two days later the church meeting unanimously asked her to preach with a view. On 15 April sixty-five votes were cast in her favour with five against. Elsie herself decided that she must meet the officers of both the Baptist Union and the Congregational Church in England and Wales before making a final decision.

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[12]Congregational News (November 1972) 7. This was the first printed copy of this bi-monthly magazine.

[13]CYB (1970-71) 158. The Baptist Handbook (1970) 130, 291.

[14]Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1968-75 - 18 February 1971; Deacons Meeting Minutes Book 1970-74 - 10 February 1971, 10 March 1971. J Williams First Lady of the Pulpit (Lewes, Sussex 1993) 55.

The suggested stipend was £600 pa which included a travel allowance of £100 tax free and the church was also prepared to meet the minister's telephone bills.

In May 1971, with all preliminaries satisfactorily concluded, Elsie accepted the call to the pastorate at Hutton Free Church and attended her first church meeting there. She was 61 years old, her denomination's future was uncertain and she was taking a leading role in the formation of a new but small body of churches. Yet she was undaunted. She thrived in a crisis and was irrepressible. She was the woman for that time.

One month earlier the question of the URC had arisen at the church meeting. The BU had recommended that all union churches (like Hutton Free Church, in being affiliated to both the BU and CCEW) should abstain at the coming vote on the URC. One deacon went further and proposed that Hutton Free Church should vote against the URC but his proposal found no seconder so it was dropped.[15]

Hutton Free Church

Hutton Free Church was set within London's commuter belt with City workers in membership, so evening meetings took the London train times into consideration. At this church Elsie was to bring all her varied experience, her maturity and wisdom, as well as her seemingly inexhaustible enthusiasm and energy, to bear on the church's life. The impression she made there upon those in the church and for many in the area was unforgettable.

In May 1971 Elsie told the church that she would only accept £465 per annum as a stipend to underline that her pastorate was part-time. It was noted that she would conduct an average of six services a month and would normally be in Plymouth on the first Sunday of the month. In June Elsie was criticised in her absence by one man who was disturbed by the "question and answer method" she had used at evening services. He preferred "expository preaching" but was emphatically told that the minister was free to employ various ideas and methods in worship.[16]

In July 1971 Elsie mentioned at the church meeting that she intended to hold "enquirers classes" for those seeking church membership. She was pleased at the response to the call for Sunday school teachers but was displeased that church business had been discussed outside the church. It was also noted that the neighbouring Hutton and Shenfield Union Church was recommending that no vote should be taken on the URC.

Concern was expressed at the church meeting in October 1971 about

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[15]Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1968-75 - 8 March 1971, 15 April 1971.

[16]ibid - 20 May 1971, 17 June 1971.

whether the church might remain Baptist, if it were to join the URC. The following month Elsie reminded the church members of the rehearsals for The Messiah which was to be sung at Christmas. In the minister's absence, a special church meeting, held on 14 December 1971, voted whether or not to join the URC. No votes were recorded in favour of the motion although twenty-three voted against it. In November 1971 a children's play-group was set up at Hutton.[17]

In February 1972 the church secretary reported on the past year. He recorded that Elsie had first come merely to lead worship at Hutton and had been asked by a deacon if she was interested in becoming their minister. At that time, he stated, Baptist ministers had been frightened away by the coming prospect of the URC while Congregational ministers were just not available. Although Elsie was the first Congregational minister the church had ever called, he stated, "our growth spiritually and numerically is entirely through her efforts".[18] Elsie was beginning to make an impression.

Hutton's Development

In 1970 -71 Hutton Free Church had 91 members, 145 children, 11 teachers and 1 lay preacher. A year later the members had increased to 102, children to 175, and teachers to 13. A further year later there were 110 church members, 180 children, 15 teachers and 3 lay preachers.[19] In a relatively short time Elsie had made a positive difference to Hutton Free Church and to its presence in the neighbourhood. This was revealed not merely in statistical returns but also in a more positive attitude among the church members.

In 1980-81, the year after Elsie had left Hutton, the figures returned suggest a falling back to the situation before she arrived there. The church members stood at 94, the children at 195 and there were still 3 lay preachers. However the church listed 53 adherents, a considerable number. Elsie clearly had a powerful impact on Hutton, its church and its community and she is remembered there with respect and great affection.[20]

By the mid-1970s the church had developed in many ways since Elsie's arrival. Members recall that the building was packed every Sunday morning when she was preaching, so much so that an extension had to be built from the back of the building into the car park. Early in her ministry at Hutton, while

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[17]ibid - 20 July 1971, 19 October 1971, 14 December 1971; Deacons Meeting Minutes Book 1970-74 - 10 November 1971.

[18]Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1968-75 - 22 February 1972.

[19]CYB (1970-71) 158, (1971-72) 158, (1972) 83.

[20]CYB (1980-81) 93.

the church halls were being built, services for worship were held in Brookfield School. Yet even this did not deter newcomers from joining the congregation. Although some had been biased against women ministers, undoubtedly church members came to feel that she was the "best minister we ever had". New people were attracted to the church by Elsie's personality and warmth. She would speak at women's meetings in the area and on Sundays the congregation would be swollen by her mid-week hearers keen to hear more.

In March 1972 the church held half hour services on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of holy week. On Maundy Thursday a united service with Brentwood Congregational Church was held and on Good Friday Stainer's Crucifixion was sung by the choir and congregation at Hutton. In May 1972 the church's ministry was reviewed and thanks were expressed to Elsie. The church members hoped not to overtax her resources but noted her good work, especially with young people. In October 1972 Elsie reported that she had been given a "huge Christmas tree" for the church. The church members were apprehensive because it was as tall as a two storey house. The gift was received "with some hilarity" and is remembered as only just fitting into the building.[21]

In May 1973 the deacons recommended to the church meeting that Elsie be asked to stay for another year and the church members unanimously agreed. By this time Elsie had become president of the CF although it was noted with some embarrassment, in November 1973, that Hutton Free Church itself had not actually affiliated to the CF. The church meeting agreed that the affiliation fees should be paid. Elsie began regularly to include on church meeting agendas an item headed 'Ministers Concerns'. She would report on her pastoral visits and comment on matters of spiritual importance at this time.

In 1976 Elsie proposed the church should hold a "thinking weekend" to aid the fellowship's spiritual growth and to consider the needs of the world. She hoped to involve her ministerial colleague from Hutton and Shenfield Union Church (by then in the URC), the former Congregationalist, Edmund Banyard, with whom she was on good terms and whose church had been a consistent support to Hutton Free in the past and would be again in the future.[22]

Good Neighbours

The coming of the URC made no difference to the close relations between the Union Church and Hutton Free and their two ministers, holding each other

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[21]Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1968-75 - 21 March 1972, 16 May 1972, 17 October 1972.

[22]ibid - 22 May 1973, 29November 1973, 18 December 1973; ibid 1975-1982 - 29 April 1976.

in high regard, enjoyed a warm friendship. Edmund Banyard (born 1920) was a Londoner. Like Elsie, he was born and grew up in Islington, as did his wife Doris. He had trained for the ministry at Paton College, Nottingham, serving two pastorates before coming to Hutton and Shenfield. He was minister at Marlpool, Derbyshire 1949-57, at Stowmarket 1957-73 and moved to the Union Church in 1973. He remained there until 1987. On one visit to the rectory at Greensted, Edmund and Doris Banyard returned home with some of the herbs which John Garrington grew. Elsie would herself have the occasional meal with the Banyards and would sometimes admit to being tired. However Banyard recalls Elsie as "a ball of ever renewing energy". He had one other obvious point of contact with Elsie in that he had become a regular fixture on Anglia Television's late night Christian discussion programme, The Big Question, (with Alan Webster, then Dean of Norwich, and Eric Doyle, a Franciscan friar). Banyard appeared on this for over fourteen years, continuing the intelligent, thoughtful presentation of Christianity on the television which she had herself given on the radio. [23]

Edward Banyard and Elsie Chamberlain clearly saw the formation of the URC differently. The church at Stowmarket where Banyard had ministered, at the time of the decision, had been divided on the issue and only came to a sufficiently united mind to enter the URC, one year after it was formed. Banyard himself had entertained doubts although he also chose to enter. Elsie had done her hard thinking at the City Temple. Any hesitation she had felt was by 1973 entirely dispelled. She was then certain of her opposition.

The Banyards admired Elsie Chamberlain for her past achievements and for her work at neighbouring Hutton. Edmund saw that she used her "great gifts" quite "selflessly". Yet, knowing her well, he realised that "she could be forthright" and he expected not always to agree with her. But, he stated, "that didn't matter" because "she accepted that there were times when others didn't see the light that was so brilliant for her"! After Elsie's resignation from the ministry at Hutton Free, Banyard took the chair at several church meetings there during 1980. Edmund Banyard's distinctive gifts were recognised by the URC when he was chosen to be the moderator of the general assembly 1988-89.[24]

In February 1977 Elsie was keen to promote the Christian ministry as a vocation and urged the church members at Hutton to consider the possibility of

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[23] Reform (May 1988) 3, 4. Edmund Banyard is also a successful playwright of Christian drama with a number of his plays having been performed notably at the Westminster Theatre, as well as in other venues.

[24] URCYB (2002) 170. Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1975-1982 - 20 January 1980.

entering the ministry in their later years, describing such people as "worker ministers".[25] She had made a similar appeal three years earlier in 1974, when president of the CF, combining with it the suggestion that Congregationalists should look for suitable church buildings for sale and also for possible manses. Again in May 1976 she had written an article, encouraging men and women to consider training for the Congregational ministry, while one year earlier she had appealed for candidates to take a lay preachers' course.[26]

John Garrington's Death

John Garrington's poor health was one reason why she had sought a church nearer Greensted. In January 1978 he suffered a major heart attack. He was placed on a life support machine in Epping Hospital but died early on Sunday morning, 28 January.[27] Elsie was devastated. One friend wrote that she "lost half of herself when he died".[28]

After John's death Elsie moved from the large, comfortable rectory at Greensted, where she had been happy, to the manse at Hutton, a much smaller house. Many items had to be sold and Elsie had to make a new home for herself on her own - without John, and, of course, without her mother who had been so important both in her formative years and in her first pastorate at Friern Barnet. For the first time in her life, at the age of 67 years, Elsie was alone and she felt her loss keenly. John had been able to help Elsie, who was so much a live wire, so often in the public eye, to relax. In their home together, at the end of a very full day, they would unwind together and let go of the pressures. Never a good sleeper, without John, Elsie was to experience loneliness and fear.

Theirs had been a mutually supportive marriage for she had been content, when needed, to be "the vicar's wife in his parish" and he in turn offered good humour, strength and openness to her flock and her visitors when called upon. When a party of Congregationalists, some twenty or so strong, believing that they were expected, appeared unannounced at Greensted rectory one Sunday afternoon, John and Elsie welcomed them. John escorted them, all newcomers to him, around his beloved ancient church while Elsie prepared food and drink. The visit which could so easily have been a disaster proved a triumph. John's readiness to entertain and the couple's flexibility were crucial factors. On another occasion at the rectory at Greensted, while entertaining a visiting

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[25]ibid - 17 February 1977.

[26]Congregational News (Nov-Dec 1974) 3, (May-June 1975) 4, (May-June1976) 12.

[27]J Williams op cit 81.

[28]The Independent 20 April 1991.

American couple, whom Elsie herself had only met two or three days earlier, John was more than happy to play his part. He was a gregarious, hospitable man by nature and calling. An improbable union, of two awkward and unusual characters, the marriage had nevertheless worked very well.[29]

On the Move

Elsie found grief hard to bear. Her remedy, in the years to come, was to throw herself "into service for the Church as never before". She attended meetings in London and Nottingham where the CF set up its offices, spoke at rallies, conducted services far and wide, and yet somehow found time for her own folk in Hutton, of whom she grew enormously fond. In turn they grew protective of her. She also took up the challenge, posed by several small CF churches, (should they survive or not?) of which the most notable proved to be at Kentish Town, in north London.[30]

After John Garrington's death, Elsie had need of the manse at Hutton. This property in Rayleigh Road was owned by Hutton and Shenfield Union Church, which had bought the house some years previously and had made it available as a manse for Hutton Free Church. It remained the property of Union and, during the years when Elsie lived in the Greensted rectory, Union looked after it and let it.

Once Elsie had settled into the house, again in use as a manse, Hutton Free asked if they could buy it from Union but selflessly Union decided that the house should be given to the Free Church. This led to a long running saga of how this could be done in law - i.e. the legal problem of giving away a trust property. After a considerable amount spent on legal fees, someone at the Union church came up with the simple solution of altering the trust in Hutton Free's favour and so the deed was done. This simple act of generosity arose from a unanimous decision on the part of Hutton and Shenfield Union Church and reflected and reinforced the excellent relationship between the two churches. [31]

Other Interests

In February 1979 Elsie raised the possibility of her helping the small church at Kentish Town. She had been concerned previously for a

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[29]The Guardian 15 April 1991, The Times 12 April 1991, Daily Telegraph 16 April 1991. John Garrington was a man of "great charm and deep human understanding" Congregational News (March-April 1978) 15.

[30]The Independent loc cit.

[31]Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1975-1982 - 21 March 1978.

Congregational church in Manchester but, a new minister having started there, her efforts for that cause were no longer required. This was Walkden Congregational Church where Harold Holdsworth was inducted to the part-time pastorate in March 1979. Elsie took part in that service. Kentish Town's needs were deemed "urgent". The church at Hutton was asked to support Elsie in this venture by releasing her for half a week to Kentish Town, over a period of six months. Elsie anticipated that two or three friends from Hutton might be actively involved, while the "young people" of Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, south London, were willing to help. Elsie expected to be in Kentish Town from Wednesday until noon on Sunday and then in Hutton from Sunday evening to Tuesday night. The church members at Hutton, loyal to Elsie, gave their blessing, although three abstained and two voted against the proposals.[32]

In July 1979 Irene Blayney's name was put forward to the Hutton church meeting for its approval of her decision to offer herself for training for the ministry.[33] Previously Elsie had asked Irene to occupy the pulpit because she stated that it was difficult for her to pop up and down from the church 'orchestra' and to leave her other commitments on a Sunday. Irene had therefore preached the grand total of one sermon at Hutton before Elsie recruited her to help in the work at Kentish Town! At that time Irene, like Elsie, had recently been widowed and the two women were naturally drawn to each other for companionship and support.

Resignation from Hutton

In November 1979 Elsie stated, at the deacons' meeting, that she felt that she no longer retained the full support of the diaconate. Without making specific allegations, Elsie stated that she believed that some deacons had been "disloyal" to her and consequently she had drafted a letter of resignation. The deacons asked her to reconsider her decision and, later that month, declared themselves "unanimous" in their loyalty to her. Elsie thanked the deacons for their support but, after further reflection, in January 1980, she felt that she should hold to her decision to resign.[34]

What did she mean by her accusation of disloyalty? Could it be that some deacons resented Elsie's work for Kentish Town and also her constant travelling over the years to churches and meetings throughout the land? Did

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[32]ibid - 20 February 1979, 23 March 1979. Congregational News (July-Aug 1979) 15.

[33]Hutton Free Church Church Meeting Minutes Book 1975-1982 - 25 July 1979.

[34]Hutton Free Church Deacons Meeting Minutes Book 1975-1982 - 9 November 1979, 21 November 1979, 3 Jan 1980.

they want her to give more time and attention to the needs of Hutton Free Church? If so, that would be quite understandable and most ministers might have sympathised with and even shared that desire. However Elsie Chamberlain did not come from ordinary stock. The standards by which most ministers tried to live were not for her. She had an inner dynamism and an unequalled stamina which drove her on and, perhaps, accentuated after John Garrington's death, her need to release that energy was overwhelming. Undoubtedly she found her release in Christian service although eventually, of course, the constant travelling and speaking would take its toll of even her seemingly inexhaustible energy.

Why then did Elsie resign from Hutton Free Church, after nearly nine happy years in that pastorate? Perhaps some minor criticism may have provided the occasion but realistically one is led to conclude that her restless spirit sought greater freedom, a looser arrangement, guaranteeing her liberty to undertake the Church's work, as and when she saw fit. The reasons she had originally sought an Essex pastorate were now removed. John's death had released her from the necessity to be based near Greensted. Perhaps Elsie sensed that her talents should have a roving commission and that this was not possible while she retained responsibility for Hutton. A normal pastorate had never proved enough for Elsie and could not bring her fulfilment. Hutton had given her warmth, respect and happiness but once she no longer had to care for John, and, without his constraining influence, she felt able to respond to all those wants she could identify in other Congregational churches. She saw their needs and, alongside her experience and wisdom, she had the desire to help.

The disruption of the years prior to, and consequent upon, the formation of the URC left many Congregational churches in a state of shock, their deacons and members saddened, hurt and feeling betrayed. What possible future might these churches have? Should they believe the outpouring of propaganda from the Congregational moderators and from the CCEW's offices in Memorial Hall, before 1972, that Congregationalism's day had passed? Were they now simply and quietly to wait for that certain death, without complaining, and without making a fuss? Were the continuing Congregational churches an anachronism, an embarrassing and unfortunate survival which in a few years would be entirely forgotten? Elsie knew such thoughts and questions abounded and she hoped to counter them by sharing her unbridled optimism, her self-belief, and her confidence in God for the future. She was herself elderly in years but not in spirit and she refused to wait quietly for death to come calling. She would rather rally her physical and spiritual forces and live to the full. Should she not show the churches of the CF how to do the same? She must have reasoned that she could not be Hutton's minister and tackle such a task.

Elsie was loved at Hutton. Her church members knew that she was special

and openly spoke of her in the most glowing terms. Possibly Elsie was unaware of this. Certainly it did not influence her. She lacked vanity and resolutely refused to let praise go to her head. Elsie generated such activity that many of those groups which began in her time, like the toddler's club, the play school, and the old peoples' club, were still going strong twenty years after her departure from the church. At Hutton, as at Friern Barnet and at Richmond, Elsie's love of music overflowed into her church work. She started a church 'orchestra' at Hutton and played the cello in it herself. Finding one's way through the musicians to the pulpit at Hutton could be a hazardous journey!

Elsie's sense of fun communicated itself also to those who attended the speaker's classes at Hutton. At these she encouraged people to engage in public speaking. Elsie would give each person a subject to speak on so that even the most fearful and reluctant speaker somehow discovered the ability to say a few words, to their own and to others' benefit and amusement.

Despite her achievement there and the undoubted high regard in which she was held, in early 1980 Elsie was adamant that she should leave Hutton and seek service elsewhere. A farewell gathering for her was planned for 29 March and in the spring of 1980, aged 70 years, Elsie gained the freedom she sought to go wherever the Spirit might lead her.[35]

Kentish Town

By December 1978 the deacons and members of Kentish Town Congregational Church had become convinced that their church should close. They had grown old and saw little hope for the future. However the fate of the church had become a subject of interest to others in the CF, especially in London, and a meeting to discuss Kentish Town was held at Trinity Church, Brixton on Saturday, 13 January 1979. At that meeting a further offer of help to Kentish Town was made but a final decision on the church's future was put off until the end of March 1979.

The meeting at Trinity, Brixton had been lively. Although the Kentish Town folk were resigned to their church's closure, others present strongly urged that Congregational churches needed to be opened and re-opened rather than closed. No middle course seemed possible between these two opposed views. With opinions so sharply divided, David Watson, the secretary of the CF's south-east area, shared his concern for Kentish Town with Elsie.

In January 1979 Watson wrote to Elsie stating that he felt there was probably "no hope" for the future of the church at Kentish Town. Elsie had replied, refusing to accept this verdict as final. Watson had reported on the meeting at Brixton and asked Elsie if she was willing to chair a church meeting

[35]ibid - 3 January 1980.

at Kentish Town. He had persuaded the members and deacons there to have one further meeting so as to review the situation. The church secretary also wrote to Elsie, asking her to chair the church meeting in February. He stated that David Watson would also attend. The Kentish Town folk recalled that, on a previous visit some thirty years earlier, Elsie had then stated bluntly that their church was "more like a club than a church".[36] In fact Elsie had conducted the evening service at Kentish Town on 2 June 1957 as part of the commemoration of the church's 150th anniversary. She had then recently retired from office as chairman of the CUEW which she served from May 1956 to May 1957.

In 1979 the premises were also used by a black-led pentecostal church which had been worshipping there since 1962. Certainly this church would have expressed an interest in purchasing the site had the Congregational church closed and the deacons would have had such a sale in mind. Consequently Elsie Chamberlain herself attended Kentish Town's next church meeting on 13 February 1979 and, as expected, she took the chair.

The church secretary explained the situation, as he saw it. The elderly congregation faced rising costs, with much needed repairs to the building, to be met from a small income. At that point the meeting took an unexpected turn. Elsie responded by making several points. She herself undertook to be responsible for six months, from April 1979, for pulpit arrangements, at Kentish Town, and she agreed to visit with "her own people" the surrounding flats and houses, "in an endeavour to encourage new people into the Church". This included her taking charge of the women's fellowship meetings. Her offer of help was subject to the approval of her own church at Hutton, to be made known after she had consulted the diaconate there. All present at that Kentish Town church meeting in February 1979 accepted Elsie's offer of help. Elsie conceded that if the position remained the same in October 1979 "with few if any, newcomers ... She would agree to the closure".[37]

The formal nature of the minutes hardly does credit to the unparalleled nature of this occasion. Elsie had clearly decided what she would do before she arrived at Kentish Town. The secretary's account of the church's depressing plight was totally predictable but it was followed by Elsie's revolutionary offer. She must have swept them off their feet. If the young people of Brixton, with their different feel for life and their unbridled enthusiasm for Congregationalism, could be depicted as simply not understanding the reality of an older generation's weariness in north London, the same did not apply to Elsie. After all she was herself an old aged pensioner, exactly of the same

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[36]Kentish Town Congregational Church - Church Meeting Minute Book 1967-79 - 16 January 1979.

[37]ibid - 5 December 1978, 13 February 1979.

generation as these depressed and beaten church members before her! Her offer to assume control of Kentish Town Congregational Church's affairs amounted to nothing less than a coup d'etat. The church members there must have been thunderstruck and it is likely that they never overcame that sensation. Whatever they expected to happen, at that meeting in February 1979, it was not that Elsie would take control.

Her takeover of the church's affairs also marked a significant contrast between the CF in the 1970s and English Congregationalism prior to 1972. The CF, as represented by, and for many embodied in Elsie, was not prepared to rubber stamp the fatalism of the earlier Congregational Union and later Congregational Church of England and Wales. The CF had made a difference. Small churches, merely by virtue of their size, were not expendable. They were not necessarily expected to close. There was to be no easy acceptance of what had long been put forward as inevitable. Kentish Town Congregational Church was going to fight for its life and, with God's help, and Elsie's, it would survive.

The next church meeting at Kentish Town was held on 3 May 1979, with Irene Blayney (still a member of Hutton Free Church) in the chair. It was stated that the church usually closed for the whole of August, as only a small number might be expected to attend. However Irene overruled this option because she knew that Elsie Chamberlain would wish the church to remain open throughout 1979. All agreed. In addition the programme of church events for September and October was arranged, including an autumn fair and a harvest festival. The long serving leader of the women's fellowship, recognising the change of direction in the church's life, resigned her office.[38]

On 26 January 1980 both the fair and the festival were judged to have been successes, with an encouraging response at the harvest from the Brownies. Elsie explained her vision for the church's future which she had already discussed with the deacons. She envisaged that the present buildings, consisting of part of the former church hall and a small, unattractive sanctuary, built after the bomb damage of the Second World War, should be demolished and the entire site re-developed. New buildings to be erected should include a church, halls with all the required amenities, and some flats. She had already made contact with various large building firms but stated that the fabric of the old premises was "crumbling" and constituted a danger. A new beginning was under way.[39]

The six months originally agreed upon, in which Elsie took responsibility for the church at Kentish Town, had come and gone. Elsie remained, without

[38]ibid - 3 May 1979.
[39]ibid - 26 January 1980.

any voice raised, publicly at least, against her. She was not there to ratify the opinions of any "club", however long it had held sway. She recognised that lasting and effective change at Kentish Town Congregational Church required the passing of this club and the beginning, at least, of a new congregation.

In 1980 Elsie, appealing for financial assistance at Kentish Town, described the situation as she had found it. "Some of us felt it was wrong to close another Inner London Church" and so we "offered to do some work there". Elsewhere she grieved that so many old London churches had been demolished to make way for supermarkets and housing estates. "If a church is ever needed in the neighbourhood no one will be able to afford the land for it", she stated. "Once they go, they've gone for good". She explained that Irene Blayney was then training for the ministry and was helping with the pastoral work. At that time Elsie was also chairman of the CF's council. The Kentish Town Congregational Church newsletters in 1980 designated Elsie as the "Minister with Oversight" and the "Pastor" as Mrs Irene Blayney. By June 1981 Elsie's name had been dropped from the newsletters.[40]

Change at Kentish Town

In 1979 Elsie produced some publicity material to be distributed in Kentish Town. It announced, "we are a team led by the Rev Elsie Chamberlain. We want to find out if you want a church that is also a community centre". The treasurer of the south-east area of the CF, Bill Meyer, sensitive to the financial sacrifices involved on the part of Elsie and her helpers, sent an unsolicited cheque for £200 toward the expenses of her work at Kentish Town.[41]

She also asked for volunteers for the "mission team in Kentish Town" which, she described, was to explore whether the Congregational church there was "viable and needed". The team planned "a six month campaign camping on or near the premises for half of each week from April through September". Elsie and Irene Blayney found two bedrooms for themselves in an old lady's home at Golders Green who believed that she should "help the helpers". The six months actually began on Easter Day with Elsie preaching and a posy of primroses for each woman attending, the flowers coming from the garden in Golders Green. Irene was left in charge when Elsie's many duties called her away and thus she felt the need for a more formal training and enrolled on the CF's course for ministry.

A notice was placed on the church's board reading, "Do You Have a

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[40]Correspondence and newsletters held at Kentish Town Congregational Church. R I Blayney Kentish Town Congregational Church 1804-1991 A Brief History (1991) 16-17 available from the church.

[41]Material held at Kentish Town Congregational Church.

Problem? Why not come in and talk about it over a cup of tea?". This brought an "overwhelming" response from those who were homeless, unemployed, poor, suffering from emotional difficulties, manic depression, schizophrenia, anorexia nervosa and a variety of other complaints. Friends at Hutton sent blankets, clothing and money and some became regular helpers at Kentish Town's Saturday Club. Many of the Saturday folk began to attend the worship on Sunday mornings and several, in time, were received into church membership. Elsie and Irene also held a healing service on Saturday afternoons in response to the apparent needs. They realised that Christ's help was more effective than their own. This service, although less formally than before, continued after Elsie's move to Devon in 1980.[42]

On 27 April 1980 a special church meeting at Kentish Town passed a motion unanimously that the trusteeship of the church buildings should pass to the Congregational Federation Limited. It was also noted that the trusteeship of two properties - 41 and 43 Yerbury Road, in Upper Holloway, London N19 - would also be transferred to the CF Limited. These terraced houses (bequeathed to the church years earlier) had not previously been mentioned in discussions on the church's future and their existence to those outside the "club" at Kentish Town had been unknown. They had only local trustees prior to April 1980. The following month it was reported that one deacon had resigned, as she had recently moved to Abingdon. At this meeting also Elsie announced that ten applicants for church membership had been received (Irene Blayney and Elsie herself among them). All ten were women and all ten were accepted.

In August 1980 Elsie was still trying to find a satisfactory scheme for the church buildings. The two houses in Yerbury Road were deemed to be in a bad condition, a state worsened by widespread damp. The status of these houses, their past use and their neglect, over many years, resulted in the church's seeking advice from a solicitor who consulted the Land Registry. At this meeting Irene Blayney, having conducted many services for the church during the past year, asked for a short rest. On September 7 it was announced also that Bryan Tween would be coming to Kentish Town to preach "with a view" to becoming the pastor. Tween lived in North Finchley, had a weekday job and was seeking a church. He had previously been lay pastor of Little Waltham and of Southminster, both in Essex, and was later to accept pastorates within the CF at Shalford Green, at Bocking End, Braintree, and at North Walsham, Norfolk to 1992 and an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, at Dereham, also in Norfolk, from 1993 onwards. Kentish Town was also to start

[42]Blayney op cit 19-28

a newsletter and a young people's social club.[43]..

On 5 October, at a special church meeting, the church treasurer resigned both from his office and from the diaconate as he had moved away from the district. At this stage in the church's life Elsie had been in control for two and a half years. Irene Blayney had been a loyal lieutenant, chairing church meetings and conducting services regularly at Kentish Town, since shortly after her first arrival in 1978. Elsie still chaired the occasional church meeting, as on 7 May 1981 but, to all intents and purposes, she had delegated responsibility to Irene.

At that meeting in May 1981 a tenant at 41 Yerbury Road was reported upon. This man who was keen to enter the ministry had been given a six months' trial as assistant pastor, beginning in February 1981. In July, however, he was asked to leave because the church were unhappy with his work. In September the church members learned that a local council grant of 75% might be available to carry out essential repairs to the two houses in Yerbury Road. They were situated in a Housing Action Area designated by Islington Borough Council. Throughout 1982 Elsie gave much time to Kentish Town although by September 1982 she had become the minister of North Street Congregational Church, Taunton. She was present at church meetings in May, July, September and November at which repairs to the two houses were reported upon. Once the council grants had been made, the church had to meet a shortfall of £12,000. This sum was covered by generous interest free loans from the south-east area of the CF, from Elsie Chamberlain herself, and from one other relatively new church member.[44]

In November 1982 the church's future was again discussed at a special church meeting. Various options were considered, including the possibility of closure, of joining the URC, and of selling to the Calvary Church of Christ, the pentecostal church which still hired the buildings. These options, after discussion, were dismissed. Elsie reported that "many discrepancies" had been discovered in the church account books but she advised that no action should be taken. The possibility of selling 41 Yerbury Road was mooted. By January 1983 the church had decided to sell this house while the rents of the two flats in 43 Yerbury Road were to be raised.[45]

In 1984 Barrie Jefferies became a church member and Mrs Gail Johnson

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[43] CYB (1997). Blayney op cit 1980. CYB (1995) 104. Kentish Town Congregational Church - Church Meeting Minutes - 27 April 1980, 24 May 1980, 7 August 1980.

[44]ibid - 5 October 1980, 21 February 1981, 7 May 1981, 12 July 1981, 27 September 1981, 19 May 1982, 21 July 1982, 8 September 1982.

[45]ibid - 14, 28 November 1982, 9 January 1983.

became the treasurer. Jefferies represented the church in conversations with Camden Social Services and he introduced a firm of architects into the discussions on the church's future. This led in time to re-development plans which were finally passed in the autumn of 1989 and to the opening of a completely new church building, on the former site, on the 8 June 1991. The service that day was led by Revd Irene Blayney who had been lay pastor at Kentish Town since 1979 and was ordained to the ministry in 1984. Despite resigning from Kentish Town in August 1982 (and then retracting her resignation), she was to remain until 1991. She was minister of Hutton Free Church 1992-97.[46]

Elsie's unexpected and courageous intervention in 1979 had made this new building possible. Her efforts and vision, aided by several friends, principally from Hutton, and the raising of generous loans had rescued this church in a changing area of inner London from a quiet but undignified death. What makes this the more remarkable is that she was simultaneously involved in so many other activities.

Presidential duties 1973-75

In May 1973 Elsie Chamberlain became the second president of the CF, in succession to her friend, Viscountess Stansgate. In her presidential address she spoke of the "simplicity of our basic belief as Congregationalists" which, she emphasised, should provide "the basis for the unity of all Christendom". The foundation lay in "faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour". She wanted the Congregationalists to "stay simple", not uneducated, but rather "a church without power, except the power of the Holy Spirit".[47] One visitor on this occasion recalled Elsie kicking her shoes off as she spoke. Such unexpected but characteristic informality, puncturing all pomposity, made an immediate impression on those present as did her sense of humour, her down to earth friendliness, as well as her dedication to Congregationalism. In addition to serving as its president, Elsie was to represent the CF on the United Navy, Army and Air Force Board (dealing with chaplains for the forces), and to consult with the BBC over religious broadcasting. She was also one of fourteen founder members of the CF (Incorporated) and she accepted the post of the CF's officer for ecumenical relationships.[48]

At Easter 1973 Elsie addressed the CF youth at their rally at Cheltenham.

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[46]CYB (2002) 140. In April 1991 the elderly couple who lived in 43 Yerbury Road decided to leave and the house was put on the market for sale. In September 1991 Revd Christopher Damp accepted a call to the pastorate.
[47]Congregational News (July-August 1973) 2, 3.
[48]ibid (May-June 1973) 3, 4, 6; (July-August 1973) 2, 4.

In May 1973 she addressed the Norfolk Congregational Women's spring rally at the Old Meeting House, Norwich. In June she took part in the induction of Wilfred Potts to the pastorate of West End Congregational Church, Haverhill, Suffolk and also that month was a speaker at the CF's south-east area rally at Ardingly in Sussex. She put "challenging questions" to the meeting and spoke of "exciting, encouraging and inspiring responses to the challenge and opportunity of continuing Congregationalism".[49] In September 1973 Elsie was the main speaker to the Federation of Congregational Women at their meeting at Wilnecote, Staffordshire. In October she filled the same role at a women's rally at Silver End, Witham in Essex.[50]

On 7 October 1973 Elsie was once again "on the air" in a Radio Four programme, which marked the first anniversary of the formation of the URC. John Huxtable's and Elsie's views were recorded in the studio and then they were discussed by a live audience of young people from Muswell Hill URC. In the programme, On Reflection, she took part in a discussion with Huxtable on "the way to Christian unity". Huxtable had been minister/secretary of the CCEW and was then the joint general secretary of the URC, of which he was generally reckoned to be "the main architect".

Douglas Brown, the religious correspondent of the BBC, opened the discussion by stating that, in his view, the steam had gone out of the movement for organic unity of the Church and that the future lay in closer relationships at the grass roots. Elsie Chamberlain denounced the pressures for organic unity in "no uncertain terms". She was aware, she claimed, that people had tried "to bend their consciences to meet the needs of something that isn't according to conscience". Why not let "the little churches keep what may be funny ideas to us but are matters of principle to them"?, she asked. She defended those who resisted these pressures. "If funny ideas", the principles of people in little churches, help them "on the way to God, let them keep them. We have got to go for a church without power and my idea of such a church is one based simply on faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour -we can all accept that". She continued, "I see the way forward as the basis of accepting each other's churchmanship - acceptance of faith in Jesus Christ as the basis of our togetherness. I believe this is the way forward as the basis of our togetherness. I believe this is the way to unity that could include us all provided we do not want to push one another into our kind of mould". She maintained that church leaders and committed zealots had no right to "push others into our kind of mould".

Huxtable did not accept this view. He could not recognize Elsie's vision

[49]ibid (September- October 1973) 5, 6, 11.
[50]ibid (November-December 1973) 5; (March-April 1974) 12.

of what he called "an ecclesiastical free-for-all as a responsible structure". To which Elsie retorted that even if John Huxtable didn't recognise it, the early church did. He diagnosed "plain human cussedness" as "the main problem" facing ecumenists. Elsie responded that she wanted people "to have a conscience of their own" which seemed to echo her feeling, when associate minister at The City Temple, that the denominational leaders, with their big battalions, were bullying and bamboozling the people in the pews into otherwise unwanted schemes of union. Did she understand Huxtable's frustration with "plain human cussedness" (presumably his diagnosis of the sickness afflicting the non-uniters in the CF) as an intolerance towards difference and independence? He wanted people to share his vision but what if they thought otherwise? By 1973 these two former friends were now poles apart.[51]

In January 1974, Elsie, as president of the CF, attended a seminar on the ministry at Cheltenham. The speakers were Dr W T Pennar Davies and Trefor Evans, both of Memorial College, Swansea. Elsie closed the seminar with prayers. In May she presided at the induction of John Bourne to the ministry of Bedford Street Congregational Church, Stroud in Gloucestershire. In April she performed the same function for Gerald Gossage at North Street Congregational Church, Taunton. In 1974 at Cheltenham she had reported to the CF May assembly on the "talks about talks" on church unity between the Christian denominations. She had attended with "a very definite mandate" - that although the CF believed in unity, it did not subscribe to organic union. In August she spoke at Swan Hill, Shrewsbury to 150 people gathered from twelve Congregational churches. In September she attended the return of Wavertree Congregational Church, Liverpool to its church building, having spent two years away after fire had damaged the premises.[52]

In March 1975 Elsie was the guest speaker at the Dorset and Somerset rally of the CF. She stated there that the way forward to church unity was through "stark simplicity". At the Easter CF youth conference at Penge, south London she had been one of the speakers. In April she led worship for a packed congregation at the 150th anniversary of Coxheath Congregational Church, Kent. In May 1975 Elsie was one of eleven CF representatives at Chislehurst, Kent for a planning meeting, which looked forward to an international Congregational fellowship. Also in May 1975 she became the first president of the Federation of Congregational Women, having, two months earlier, addressed 150 women in Ton Pentre in the Rhondda valley. At its

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[51]ibid (November-December 1973) 3. Reform (October 1973) 18.

[52]Congregational News (March-April 1974)2, 3, 5; (July-August 1974) 1, 14; (November-December 1974) 10; (January-February 1975) 15.

spring assembly Elsie proposed that the CF should apply to join the British Council of Churches.[53]

Elsie wrote that her two years as CF president had passed "with incredible speed". She planned to spend more time travelling northwards in the coming year and wondered if she might be able to visit more churches. She invited churches in Yorkshire and Cheshire to use her, if they could. In addition she stated that she expected to visit the Rhondda, Shrewsbury and the West Country at some time in the coming months and again she was ready and willing to serve churches in those places if required.[54]

Having served as president from May 1973 to May 1975, when David Watson was appointed, Elsie found herself still in demand. This may, in part, be explained by the fact that Watson was a layman and, although a lay preacher, he was less likely to be invited to preach at church anniversaries, inductions and ordinations. In addition his was a quieter, more retiring personality than Elsie's and church secretaries may have felt that, although Watson was a competent speaker for an area rally, and undoubtedly he was an unflagging worker for Congregationalism, Elsie brought colour, drama and warmth to any activity. She was sure to pull in the crowds, in a way which, at that time, no other CF speaker, however worthy, could do.

Thus Elsie felt a clear call to give of her time and her energies in a ceaseless quest to motivate and inspire the Congregational churches. How much these travels tired her we may never know. Certainly she was herself always at her best with "ordinary people". She warmed to them and they loved her. Her engaging smile, her authority and her confidence enabled even the reticent and the awkward to trust her. As CF president she had been expected to accept invitations from churches and groups up and down the land. Once she had stood down from office, the invitations still poured in. Should she decline them? She found that she could not.

Elsie attended the first CF summer school for ministers in June 1975 at Blackpool. Also that summer she travelled to Mickleby, near Whitby, in North Yorkshire to speak at the anniversary of the church there and to Loddiswell, near Kingsbridge, at the opposite end of the country, to speak at the annual rally of the South Devon group of Congregational churches.[55]

No CF rally or meeting seemed complete without her. Her activity was breathtaking. She was simply everywhere, preaching at rallies, anniversaries and ordinations, presiding at inductions. In September 1975 she preached at the ordination of Christopher Gillham at Charlesworth, Derbyshire and at the

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[53]ibid (May-June 1975) 15, (July August 1975) 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 16.
[54]ibid (March-April 1975) 1.
[55]ibid (September October 1975) 5, 16, 19.

induction of Victor Cameron at Wivenhoe, Essex. In October 1975 she led worship for the women's guild of Penge Congregational Church. In February 1976 she preached at the induction of John Watkins at Market Harborough Congregational Church. It was noted that Elsie's "mileage for God", in these early years of the CF, must have set "a record". Her appearance at Market Harborough entailed her leaving her husband in hospital in Plymouth and then driving 250 miles to Leicestershire. He had been taken ill only the day before. It was so icy, on the Saturday of the induction, that the church's front steps were considered too dangerous to use so entry was made by the side doors. After the service, Elsie bolted a few sandwiches and then motored the 100 miles to Hutton in order to conduct the Sunday services there. In June 1976 she took part in the inductions of Tom Hodgson at Hay Mills, Birmingham and of Edward Maynard at Latimer, Stepney.[56] In October 1977 she presided at the ordination of Alan Argent in Brixton, and also that month at that of Arthur Boyle at Orsett in Essex.[57]

A Wedding

In June 1975 Elsie presided at the wedding of Janet Morris and Chris Wootton at Loughborough where the church was then without a minister. She prepared the couple for marriage by asking, "This is for life, isn't it?", and accepting their affirmative reply. The wedding occurred on a Sunday afternoon as part of the ordinary church service, with the marriage ceremony set between the sermon and the final hymn. However, after preaching the sermon, Elsie announced the last hymn to the quiet consternation of all present. At that point, the bride-to-be leaned forward from the front pew and reminded her that she had forgotten something! Elsie had close links with Janet's family for she had been Janet's mother's minister at the Vineyard, Richmond-upon-Thames, and, in September 1979, she was to give the charge to the minister and the church when Janet Wootton was herself ordained and inducted to the pastorate of West End Church, Haverhill, Suffolk.[58]

Elsie the Preacher

When leading worship Elsie would wear a long black cassock and preaching bands. This would, of course save her from the worry of choosing a suitable costume. (She was not obviously troubled by questions of fashion.) The cassock also enabled her to appear formal when performing a task which

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[56]ibid (November-December 1975) 12; (January-February 1976) 10; (July-August 1976) 14-15; (September-October 1976) 14.

[57]ibid (January-February 1978) 13, 14.

[58] ibid (November-December 1979) 16. Private Correspondence.

many felt should be reserved to men, reasoning that a woman preacher need not flout all conventions at once. She would have her long hair pulled back neatly but not severely so that she should not resemble the archetypal schoolmistress or librarian. This formality of appearance, though not emulated by all CF ministers, proved influential, particularly with some younger women.

Elsie's preaching, especially on first acquaintance, could be quite electric. Her disarming manner, her lack of side, her natural good humour enabled her to address a congregation as if she knew each person intimately and several hearers have described how they felt that she could see inside them as she spoke, leaving them exposed and shriven. She seemed to be directly addressing each individual, as she met their eyes with hers, smiled and drew them to her. This was no formal ecclesiastical exercise. Her language eschewed high flown rhetoric and excessive demonstrations of feeling. Rather her preaching, like her character, was straight-forward, plain and unadorned. Her own strength of mind, her lack of artifice, her transparent goodness and honesty communicated itself, at once both humbling and accepting her listeners.

If her sermons were engaging, in truth, they lacked theological depth. Yet she could hold a congregation in rapt attention and combined reverence with personal and contemporary prayers.[59] Although her preaching was not delivered off the cuff it was flavoured with immediacy. Her life was too busy, too full for her not to include references to her own recent experiences. As a preacher she sought not to condemn but to understand, to sympathise and to encourage.

Elsie was God's servant. She did not need to collect worshippers and devotees for herself. She wanted her hearers to know him and his mercy and love and she held out these graces to those who heard her. God's strength enabled her to go on serving his people for as long and as vigorously as she did and, by taking her own experience as a model, she encouraged others to rely on God's strength and forgiveness in their lives.

Churches Unity Commission

The CF officers felt that they needed to explain why their grouping of churches was among those denominations willing to participate in the Churches Unity Commission. On 11 November 1974 the CF issued a press release signed by Elsie Chamberlain and ten others. It announced that Elsie and her fellows saw the way forward as working for "visible unity - but not for organic union". They argued that "some ecumenists' eagerness to create a vast integrated structure" contradicted "the lessons of history" and ignored "the fact

[59]The Times 12 Aptil 1991.

that the Church, being Catholic is properly a mosaic not a monolith". They feared that "to contrive mergers while deep differences of interpretation remain unresolved is to sow the seeds for future unease".[60]

In January 1976, in response to a recent call by the Churches Unity Commission for all Free Church ministers, after a certain date, to be episcopally ordained, Reg Cleaves, David Watson, and Elsie Chamberlain made a public statement. They stated that they could not accept episcopacy but rather commended the churches to seek "unity in diversity" which they understood to have been the practice of the early church. Such unity, in their view, offered a "far more practical means of making visible the oneness all Christians know the Church to possess". Elsie's stand for "unity without uniformity" and for "unity without organic union" was given national publicity in The Guardian, as well as being reported on the front pages of The Methodist Recorder and The British Weekly.[61]

In late 1976 Elsie was one of four who issued "Ten New Points on Christian Unity", in response to the Ten Propositions on unity which the Churches Unity Commission had recently put forward. They objected to uniformity and the imposition of bishops on the Free Churches and called for the denominations to extend "mutual recognition" to one another. Elsie wanted all CF churches to discuss the "Ten New Points" and to inform her if they found them acceptable.[62]

Elsie also attended the Churches Council for Covenanting in England on behalf of the CF. In November 1979 she reported that the Church of England General Synod's attitude to the ordination of women raised serious difficulties for those denominations which already had women ministers. Divisions on this issue had threatened to halt the move toward covenanting, although the council resolved that there were grounds for continuing its work.[63]

Congregational Federation Council

By July 1978 Elsie had become the chairman of the CF's council. Reg Cleaves who had occupied that office, since the CF's inception in 1972, had been forced to take a more prominent role than he had desired, through his own conscientious commitment to his principles. Although Elsie was well known, both within and without the CF, temperamentally she was not an obvious choice to occupy the chair of any committee. She was impulsive, quick to make judgments and impatient of those with whom she disagreed. At times she

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[60]Congregational News (January-February 1975) 3.
[61]ibid (March- April 1976) 2, 3.
[62]ibid (November-December 1976) 1; (January-February 1977) 4.
[63]ibid (November-December 1979) 4, 5.

could be a bully, mercilessly browbeating those she considered awkward, stubborn or simply wrong and quite unable to see that these were among her own qualities too. She would not necessarily feel it important to discover the views of all present nor to ensure that all were happy with a proposed policy. If the chairman's role entails the organisation and preparation for any meeting which he or she is to chair (a task Reg Cleaves had meticulously performed) then Elsie was a poor chairman. She was neither thorough nor ordered. Some even detected her taking the occasional catnap during meetings and Elsie's time management was notoriously bad. More then one meeting which she chaired failed to work through its agenda in the time allotted, causing proceedings to be resumed at a later date. As chairman she tolerated too many asides, too many forays into the interesting but not strictly relevant, so that the meeting could degenerate into a free for all. Yet she was warm-hearted and would encourage the shy, new member of council to contribute and, if the chairman was needed to provide leadership and direction, then Elsie was more effective than her critics might readily allow.

International Congregational Fellowship

The International Congregational Fellowship held a series of meetings from 9 to 16 July 1977. The CF played host to an international conference of 380 Congregationalists, with representatives from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Greece, Guyana, England, Wales and other lands, who met in the William Booth Memorial College, Denmark Hill, in south London. Lady Wilson of Rievaulx, whose husband Harold had resigned only one year earlier, as leader of the parliamentary Labour party, and as Prime Minister, addressed the delegates. She explained that she had known Lady Stansgate for many years and was especially pleased to be among women ministers and Congregationalists.[64]

Elsie also took a prominent part in the proceedings, speaking on the subject "Unity in the Spirit" on Monday 11 July, following Lady Wilson's recollections of her childhood in a Congregational manse. Elsie spoke of her sixteen years at the BBC, helping both "simple people" and "a lot of the great ones, Bishops and all sorts" to clarify their ideas before eight o'clock in the morning. She came to "know people very well", working with them so early in the day and having breakfast with them. She hoped in similar fashion to be natural and unpretentious with her hearers in Denmark Hill, and warned them not to expect "the fire and earthquake today".[65]

She conceded, to the advocates of church unity, that "the family of God

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[64]ibid (September-October 1977) 2, 3.

[65]A reference to Elijah's experiences in I Kings 19:9-12.

must be united", in response to Jesus' prayer, but she saw the latest plans of the Churches Unity Commission as likely to bring about "a new division among Christians" - those with bishops and those without. She described herself as "an ecumaniac born", given her Anglican father and Congregational mother, and then her marrying an Anglican husband, which all naturally led to her appointment as the CF's officer for ecumenical affairs. Yet, she confessed, that she was "not very interested in positions" as such and was "not very keen" to sit on the CUC where she was "a voice in the wilderness" and where her voice was not liked much which, in truth, did hurt her feelings. She described her role there as having "to battle for Unity in Diversity" and, she stated, "I battle alone and they're all very clever people, College Professors, Bishops, I think there's an Archbishop too, and they don't know ordinary people like I know people, at least they behave as if they don't".[66]

In May 1980 Elsie again reported on ecumenical relationships to the CF's assembly, stating that "a lot of water had gone under the bridge - a frightening amount - because the people who got together at first to try to work together towards unity without uniformity were getting more and more uniform". She was saddened and feared that people would soon face the choice of going into "a modified form of the Church of England" or of breaking "with the ecumenical movement". She did not believe the "plan for covenanting ... was the way to unity". Rather she held that the CF showed the way to unity by its "inclusiveness", that is by not erecting barriers to exclude any "who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ". This positive attitude, she felt, should be communicated by Congregationalists to the churches in their neighbourhoods and, by so doing, the feeling of unity would grow and the world would know more of the gospel.[67]

In her attitudes to church unity, as expressed throughout the 1970s, Elsie may be accused of being simplistic, of not listening to the arguments put forward at the CUC and, without having weighed up the evidence from the different standpoints, stating her preconceived position. In doing so, did she not simply defend an entrenched and entirely predictable position, repeating time and again the same thin and unattractive theological gruel? This accusation is not without foundation but it must be allowed that the CF, by standing out from the URC, was swimming against the tide, in seeking to maintain what was then a deeply unfashionable, if tenable position. The message she had to bring from the CF was a direct challenge to the spirit of the times and to the CUC chairman, John Huxtable. By the same token, however, if Elsie did not listen

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[66]International Congregational Fellowship. The London Witness Record of Proceedings (1977) 18-22.

[67]Congregational Federation Assembly. Record of Proceedings (1980) 225.

to others, did anybody on the CUC seriously pay attention to her and to the CF, by giving any more than lip service to her argument? Almost certainly at the CUC meetings, Elsie put forward a view which most in the CF churches would have supported at that time.

Surprisingly Elsie had confessed that she was overawed by the other CUC representatives. She was not easily overawed. She was, after all, very experienced in wider ecclesiastical affairs, having attended the International Congregational Council meetings in the 1950s and 60s and having been present at the inaugural meetings of the World Council of Churches in 1948. She had come to know leading theologians and churchmen and women in all the British denominations through these links, and while working for the BBC. Earlier still, when defying the British establishment to become an RAF chaplain, she had become well acquainted with leading parliamentarians. Elsie Chamberlain's record, therefore, shows that she was not easily intimidated. Yet one can understand that she felt unwelcome and hurt at the CUC. The CF was a tiny rump of what had been, even before 1972, a small body of Christians and her plea for a different approach to unity was easily ignored. In such circumstances she must be given credit for her courage and her willingness to witness to an unfashionable message, even though she was marginalized for so doing. Elsie had known the fickle praises of men. Now she suffered their scorn.

More Travels

In February 1977 Elsie conducted the ordination service of Ivy Morrison Knights at Old Heath Congregational Church, Colchester.[68] In January 1978 Dr John Crew Tyler was inducted to the pastorate of Vineyard Church, Richmond-upon-Thames and Elsie gave the charge to the church at this, her former church.[69] In the summer of 1978 Elsie preached at the induction of Dr Clifford Hill to Highbury Church, Cheltenham, and she led worship at Walkden, Manchester during the centenary celebrations of the church.[70] In March 1979 the weather was "terrible" for George Hughes' induction as minister of Harting Congregational Church, West Sussex but the church was filled to capacity to hear Elsie preach.[71]

Elsie Chamberlain travelled to the United States of America in the summer of 1979 and spent three weeks, travelling hundreds of miles, visiting many Congregational churches, eating pot-luck suppers, attending dinners, barbecues

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[68]Congregational News (May-June 1977) 15.
[69]ibid (May-June 1978) 16.
[70]ibid (November-December 1978) 19; (January- February 1979) 16.
[71]ibid (July-August 1979) 15.

and lunch parties. She found the worship "more formal" than in England, with "more professional music". At the national assembly of the Congregational Christian Churches of the USA in Claremont College, California, Elsie delivered a 45 minute lecture on "Congregationalism and Ecumenicity" and took part in two study groups - one on marriage and the other on the world church. Her views, she discovered, were not always shared by her hosts although she enjoyed the "lively and exciting time" she had with them.[72]

Within five days in October 1979 Elsie took part in two inductions. On Saturday 6 October she presided at Beer in Devon to which Tom Cox had moved from Crediton. On Wednesday 10 October she gave the charge at the induction of Kenneth Chambers to the pastorate of Victoria Church, Blackpool.[73] In April 1980 Elsie was again the speaker at the CF Youth's Easter conference. Seventy-six young people from twenty-one churches gathered at Hutton Free, Elsie's former church in Essex. The theme of her five talks was "Love is". Among other events, the young people were also taken on a visit to Greensted Parish Church. They had not found a venue for their conference until the eleventh hour when Elsie had suggested Hutton. This shows something of the regard for her at her former church. She had just resigned its ministry, with many at Hutton not understanding her decision. Yet the church members were persuaded to open their homes to these visitors and provide for them, on Elsie's recommendation.[74]

In June 1980 Elsie gave the Dr Shergold memorial address to the lay preachers' annual conference also at Hutton.[75] In July 1980 Elsie attended the 400th anniversary celebrations at the Old Meeting House, Colegate, Norwich and spoke on "Congregationalism at the present".[76] In June 1980 she attended the CF's south west area women's rally at Idle, Devon. Two weeks later she conducted morning and evening services at the Congregational cause in Bournemouth, on the occasion of that church's first anniversary.[77] In 1980 she offered her help to the restoration of the Pennymoor building at Poughill, also in Devon, where young people were assisting in the church's development.[78]

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[72]ibid (November-December 1979) 6, 7.
[73]ibid (January-February 1980) 15.
[74]ibid (January-February 1980) 11; (September-October 1980) 15.
[75]ibid (May-June 1980) 13.
[76]ibid (May-June 1980) 30.
[77]ibid (September-October 1980) 18.
[78]ibid (September-October 1980) 19.

In April 1980 Elsie Chamberlain had left her pastorate at Hutton. By installing Irene Blayney as pastor at Kentish Town in 1979 she had prepared the way for the loosening of her ties there. In May 1980 at the CF assembly in Bristol Elsie announced that she intended to take "a sabbatical" but was "prepared to visit any churches that cannot keep going or are about to close". She had realised that she was good at rescuing what might appear to others as lost causes. Certainly the CF had many small churches in town and country, up and down the land. Elsie announced that she was "available for service" for the remainder of 1980 from July onwards. She was prepared to visit any church and stay for one day or one month. She was then still living in the manse at Hutton.[79] In September 1980 Long Compton Congregational Church, Warwickshire was visited by Elsie and Irene Blayney who spent a week in the village, delivered leaflets to and visited every house, ending with an open meeting on the first Thursday in October. Church attendances had been dwindling for some time and the meeting brought out several new ideas - a young people's group, a musicians group, a Bible Study meeting and others.[80]

Elsie Chamberlain was inducted to the pastorate of North Street Congregational Church, Taunton on 6 December 1980.[81] While serving as CF president, she had come to know at first hand the dire needs of some CF churches, often with dis-spirited congregations. She announced to the assembled delegates in May 1980, "I know a church that refuses to change its ways one wit (sic!) in order to bring in more people; I know two other churches that together could become a community centre but they are ... jealous of each other".[82] Such obvious weaknesses provoked and stimulated her to action. Not for her the inertia of old age, the gentle lapse into physical frailty or senility. If the CF churches must change to live, she was ready to initiate the change and be mid-wife at the rebirth.

Thus Elsie discovered and developed a new calling. At the age of 70 years, when her contemporaries had been retired for some time, she was prepared to become a one woman emergency flying hospital service, a para-medic for churches, who brought relief and a cure, if possible, to sickening and

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[79]ibid (July-August 1980) 6.
[80]ibid (January-February 1981) 4.
[81]ibid (March-April 1981) 4.
[82]Congregational Federation Assembly. Record of Proceeedings (1980) 241.

neglected flocks. She had not founded the Congregational Federation but she would do her best to maintain it and to save its churches. Making no concessions to age, she showed no signs of flagging.

Alan Argent

LATER CATHOLIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO FREE CHURCH HYMNODY

Hymns & Hymn Tunes

Gifts from Post-Reformation Catholics to Free Church Congregations

Christian hymnody, enjoyed today, draws on prose, poetry and music from as far back as the first millennium, and for these ancient resources we are indebted to the Catholic Church. No less than 25 hymns and 11 hymn-tunes sung in the Free Churches today are the gift of pre-Reformation Catholics; something of the origin and background to these enduring hymns has recently been presented.[1] The present paper now recalls the extent of our debt to those post-Reformation Catholics who also contributed handsomely to our churches' hymnody.

The mixed consequences of the European Reformation, ranging from enormous common good through to schism and bloody war, were hardly conducive to poetic, creative activity among Catholics. In this respect and in contrast to the 6th & 7th centuries, the 16th & 17th centuries were largely barren. Leaders of the Gallican Church of France, largely independent of Rome in the 18th century, undertook a great revision of their liturgy. Prominent among these was Charles Coffin (1676-1749). Coffin, was a college principal and rector of Paris University. He was also mainly responsible for the Paris Breviary of 1736, the source of two of our hymns. Though Coffin wrote in Latin, he made a break from the traditional style and his hymns were more akin to modern ones than to the early Latin school.

The first: *Jordanis oras praevia* translated by John F Chandler (1806-76) and slightly altered in all verses except the first, by the editors of HA&M (1851)[2] and the compilers of Mission Praise Combined (1990).

v 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
come then and listen for he brings
glad tidings from the King of Kings.
(MP 538 ; HTC 601)

v 4 To heal the sick stretch out Your hand
make wholeness flow at Your command
sin's devastation now restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.
(MP 538; R&S 134; BPW 147; H&P 84,)

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[1] D Watson "Early Catholic Contributions to Free Church Hymnody" CHC Magazine Vol 4 No 3 Spring 2001 193-214.

[2] A table of abbreviations of hymn book titles is given at the end of this article.

The second of Coffin's hymns: *O quam juvat fratres, Deus*, begins:

Happy are they, they that love God,
whose hearts have Christ confessed,
(BHB 496, H&P 711, SF 517, HTC 473).

This comes to us via Robert S Bridges (1844-1930) who was dissatisfied with Chandler's translation. Bridges gives us more a paraphrase than a translation. Also, the third and fourth verses are entirely his own, and reflect on the thought that our sorrows and pains offer a path leading us nearer to Jesus, and may be used by God for the good of those who love him.

Another hymn found in the same Paris breviary and also in the Cluniac breviary was one that used to be sung by late 20th-century Nonconformists. This was from Jean Baptiste de Santeuil (1630-97), a prolific writer of Latin hymns much sung in Anglo-Catholic circles. Verse one, a fine translation by the Welshman, Isaac Williams (1802-65) runs:

Disposer supreme, and judge of the earth,
you choose for your own the weak and the poor;
to frail earthen vessels, and things of no worth
entrusting your riches, which ay shall endure

Printed in Methodist and Congregational hymnals, and also in a current English version at WOV 355, the hymn was omitted from their successors, H&P and R&S.

There are several other translations of outstanding Latin hymns brought to us by one who spent most of his life ministering to the sick and the poor. This was Edward Caswall (1814-78). Ordained in the Anglican Church in 1839 and later caught up in the Oxford Movement and its recovery of the Roman Catholic liturgy, he followed John Henry Newman into the Roman Church and in 1849, after his wife's death, entered the oratory in Edgbaston, Birmingham. Of the ten 'recent Catholic' hymns sung by Free Church people for more than a century (see Table C), Caswall has given us four, one an original and three translations.

The basis of the earliest hymn Caswall translated, *O Deus ego amo te*, found in Coeleste Palmetum (1669), was itself a 17th-century anonymous translation from a Spanish sonnet. Caswall's text, published in his Lyra Catholica (1849), went into the Crown of Jesus Hymnbook (1862) and other books with small changes tolerated by Caswall. His verse one in CM is:

My God, I love thee -not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
nor yet because who love thee not
are lost eternally
(BHB 211, H&P 171, WOV 130)

which in Jubilate Hymns version becomes:

My God, I love you; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
nor yet because if I do not
I shall Forever die.

(HTC 479)

A respectable translation in four 10s by E H Bickersteth (1825-1902) is also sung.

My God, I love thee, not that my poor love
may win me entrance to thy heaven above
Nor yet that strangers to thy love must know
the bitterness of everlasting woe

(R&S 357)

German Roman Catholic hymnals, over the first half of the 19th century, printed an anonymous hymn in variant forms. This, *Beim fruhen Morgenlicht*, is familiar to us as When morning gilds the skies. Edward Caswall translated sixteen of its stanzas, revising them in 1873 to fourteen verses of two couplets each. Today, our denominational books usually print a cento of five verses, although no two hymnals are alike in their selection. The hymn is often mistaken for a morning hymn which it is not. Its last verse, together with the response after each couplet, parallelling the German *Gelobt sei Jesus Christus*, clearly makes it a hymn for any time of day or night.

Be this, while life is mine
my canticle divine
May Jesus Christ be praised
Be this the eternal song
throughout the ages long
May Jesus Christ be praised

In 1857, Edward Caswall translated an Italian hymn beginning: *Viva! Viva! Gesu che per mio bene* that he had found in a collection made by a priest, Telesephoems Galli (died 1845). Caswall's nine verses are entitled *Hymn to the Precious Blood.* This topic is difficult, if not repulsive, for some Christians. Hence the hymn is rarely sung. Blood, however, transmits life, and in this case the pouring out of the earthly life of Jesus on the cross was to give eternal life to us humans.

v 1 Glory be to Jesus, who in bitter pains
poured for us the life-blood from his sacred veins

v 7 Raise ye then your voices, swell the mighty flood.
Louder still and louder, praise the precious blood.

(ChH 219, WOV 263)

In some versions, since 1965, we are led to praise not just the precious blood

but the whole of God's precious sacrifice, i.e. to sing:

Louder still and louder, praise the Lamb of God.

(HTC 126, HFP 88)

In addition to his 250 translations, Caswall wrote a score or so of original hymns that for theological reasons were not popular with the Catholic fraternity. Only one of these has survived. It is found in his The Masque of Mary and Other Poems (1856) and headed *Christmas*:

See, amid the winter's snow
Born for us on earth below
See, the gentle Lamb appears
Promised from eternal years.

A feature of Caswall's hymns (translations and originals) is their purity of rhythm. This makes the words specially adaptable to music and well-suited to fervent congregational singing, which was certainly not characteristic of Anglicanism in the two generations following Caswall's death. In fact, *See, amid the winter's snow* was not contained in two of their hymnals, HA&M and EH. That this Catholic Christian hymn is enjoyed today is almost entirely due to its being sung to John Goss' tune HUMILITY by Nonconformists before World War Two. Mention must be made of the lofty prophetic chorus which finely contrasts with the delicate simplicity of each verse.

Hail thou ever blessed morn
Hail Redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Caswall wrote seven verses. One, calling on the 'Virgin Mother, Mary blest' to 'pray for us' is understandably omitted from our Free Church books. Most hymnbooks print five or six verses (BPW 173, HF 148, H&P 117, HTC 90 HFP 252). An alternative version opens with the words *See, in yonder manger low*, an altered form from verse 2 (R&S 157)

Two hymns we sing today come from the pen of J H Newman (1801-90) who was received into the Church of Rome in his 44th year. Within four years he had established an oratory (house of prayer) in both Birmingham and London. A brilliant and subtle thinker, Newman became rector of the new RC university in Dublin and wrote on The Scope and Nature of University Education (1852). He also wrote much on religious history and doctrine and his Verses on Various Occasions (1866) included *The Dream of Gerontius*. Although he wrote few poems, two became popular classics at the end of the 19th century when sung as hymns.

Of his first, *Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,/Lead Thou me on*, Newman initially declared it not suitable for singing. Millions have proved him wrong. Commenting later on this, Newman said "But you see, it is not the

hymn, but the tune, that has gained the popularity" and certainly Dr Dykes, the composer of LUX BENIGNA, had seized the mood and sentimentality of his age. *Lead, kindly Light* was written in a slow cargo boat returning from a holiday in Italy where he had been ill. Newman was suffering debility, if not depression. He was very concerned about the Church of England, although he subsequently made it clear that what he wrote had nothing to do with the challenge he felt a decade later to enter the Roman Catholic Church. His hymn is headed *Unto the godly there arises light in the darkness* (Ps 112:4), comprising three prayers, recalling first his past and then his present spiritual state. In the third, he confidently faces the future, knowing that God's light will illuminate his way. (BHB 543, ChH 733, 3CH 682, H&P 67, HF 406, R&S 544)

Newman's second hymn, still sung in our Free Churches, is *Praise to the Holiest in the height.* This is taken from his visionary poem *The Dream of Gerontius* which traces the journey of a Christian soul, in this case a monk, Gerontius (the name means an old man), through the gate of death into the presence of Christ Jesus. When first published as a hymn, the opening verse was repeated at the end. The setting by Edward Elgar (1857-1934) of Newman's *Dream* in 1900 provides some authority for this repetition. Half way through Part 2 of the oratorio, the chorus and angels sing most of the poem interlaced with repetitions of the phrase 'O generous love'. After more responsive singing the scene ends with a double SATB chorus singing the whole of the first verse again - before the judgement.

In *Praise to the Holiest* Cardinal Newman uses phrases which some find hard to interpret. By 'a second Adam', he means the man Jesus who came to fight sin and rescue us from its guilt and power. Paul called Him 'the second man from heaven' (1 Cor 15:45-47). In verse 4, 'a higher gift than grace' refers to the Incarnation, to 'God's presence and his very Self' in the manhood of Jesus, the 'indescribable gift' (2 Cor 9:15). Verse 4 is omitted from 3CH 238, while two of our hymnals try to make the meaning clearer by amending its opening couplet.

> And that the highest gift of grace
> should flesh and blood refine
>
> (BPW 562, HTC 140)

Verse 5 speaks of the 'double agony' which the second Adam, Jesus, suffered for us humans. 'Double' denotes the spiritual ordeal of the secret agony in the garden on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:44) and the physical pain and torture of the crucifixion for our salvation.

> O generous love! that he who smote
> In man for man the foe
> The double agony in man

For man should undergo.

(HF 176, H&P 231, R&S 103)

The meaning of this verse becomes clearer with the appropriate use of capitals, as printed at 3CH and MP 562, and as further modernised at HTC 140:

O generous love! that He who came
as Man to smite our foe.
The double agony for us
as Man should undergo.

The last Catholic hymn-writer to note here is Frederick William Faber (1814-63). Although of Huguenot stock and brought up a strict Calvinist, Faber soon came under the influence of Newman and, aged 30, entered the Church of Rome. His working life was spent at the Oratory first in Birmingham, and then in London (later the Brompton Oratory) where he became Father Superior. In the last 17 years of his life Faber wrote over 130 hymns. He much admired the Olney Hymns (1779) of William Cowper and John Newton and attempted, with only a modicum of success, to do for English Catholics what Cowper had done for Protestants. Today he is remembered for a piece in a collection he called Jesus and Mary, or Catholic Hymns for Singing and Reading (1849). This hymn, beginning *My God, how wonderful Thou art*, invites the singer to contemplate in adoration our loving and eternal God, in all his majesty and glory. There were nine stanzas in the original but late 20th century Free Church hymnals print five or six, with editorial changes including the replacement of 'aweful' by 'awesome'. (ChH 17, H&P 51, HF 11, R&S 408) The compilers (Fudge/Horrobin/Leavers) of Mission Praise (1990) find only five of Faber's verses acceptable. They also use today's English, as introduced in 1982 by Jubilate Hymns (see HTC 369). With the help of a new link line, they put Faber's second verse at the end, making a fitting climax to the hymn, as follows:

V 4 Yes, I may love You, O my Lord,
almighty king of kings,
for You have stooped to live in me,
with joy my heart now sings:

V 5 How wonderful, how beautiful,
Your loving face must be,
Your endless wisdom, boundless power,
and awesome purity!

(MP 468)

A second sample of Faber's output is sometimes sung in our Free Churches. This is a piece, inspired by Zophar's address to Job, on the limitless greatness of God (Job 11:7-9). It is 13 stanzas long and contained in Faber's

Hymns (1862). It opens vividly:

Souls of men! why will ye scatter
like a crowd of frightened sheep?

Today in our Free Church books, it begins with Faber's third verse:

There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.

For his last verse, Faber wrote:

If our love were but more simple
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would be all sunshine
in the sweetness of our Lord.

Those of our denominational books that include the hymn have altered the final couplet, so that we sing:

And our lives he filled with gladness
from the presence of the Lord
(BHB 419, BPW 573)

OR And our lives would find fulfilment
in the goodness of the Lord
(HTC 443)

OR And our lives would he illumined
by the presence of our Lord
(H&P 230, R&S 353)

The amendments seem improvements on Faber's sentimental fancy and are also true, whilst Faber's deduction is not.

THE MUSIC OF THE HYMNS

The plainsong of unnamed monks and the folksong of common people, living sometime between the sixth and fifteenth centuries, provide us still with 10 or 11 tunes for today's hymns.[3] Since the Protestant Reformation, Roman Catholics have continued to bring us lasting tunes, and from the 16th to the mid-20th centuries some 22 of these are sung in the Free Churches. In contrast to the anonymity of earlier tunes, these later ones are mostly by known individuals composing for the Catholic Church (see Table D).

The earliest post-Reformation composer whose tunes are still sung in our churches is Thomas Tallis (1505-85), often referred to as the 'father' of English cathedral music. Little is known of him until his 28th year when he was 'player of organs' at Dover Priory. In 1537 he was choir conductor at St Mary-

[3]CHC Magazine loc cit.

on-the-Hill, London, a year later organist at Waltham Abbey, Essex, until its dissolution in 1540 and then a chorister (lay clerk) for three years at Canterbury Cathedral.

In 1543, Henry VIII appointed him a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, then at Greenwich. An exceptionally gifted man, a sort of musical vicar of Bray, Tallis survived the religious upheavals of the rest of his times. Through Mary's reign (1553-58) and probably earlier, he composed choral music, masses and motets, for the Latin services. During the initial 32 years of Elizabeth's reign (1558-1603), he wrote distinguished anthems and settings of the canticles and responses for the English services. Tallis contributed to Matthew Parker's The Whole Psalter translated into English metre (1567) by composing for it nine hymn tunes in 4-part harmony. The third of these tunes has been made famous by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) in his *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. This is THIRD MODE MELODY. It suits both Anna Waring's 19th century hymn: *My heart is resting, O my God* (BHB 505) and the modern hymn by Fred Pratt Green: *To mock your reign* (R&S 221). His ninth tune TALLIS'S ORDINAL fitted the translation of the Veni Creator Spiritus which was in the Prayer-book Ordinal; hence its name. It is little used now (H&P 310, 586).

TALLIS'S CANON, the eighth tune Tallis wrote for Parker's Psalter, is attached to Psalm 67, *May, God be gracious unto us*. By the end of the century it had been shortened from eight lines to four but was written out in four voice parts, remarkably for 16th century Anglican practice. Free Church people today still sing it with Thomas Ken's 'evening hymn' (c 1672), *Glory to You, my God, this night* (BPW 108, HTC 224, MP 108), also with a contemporary hymn, *Come all who look to Christ today*, by R G Jones. (BPW 476, H&P 765). Rejoice and Sing (1991) and older books retain Ken's Restoration English.

Another late 16th century tune we sing, NARENZA, comes from Catholic Czech sources. The tune is the kernel of a more substantial 7-line (see 3CH 206) composition by a Czech pro-bishop Johann Leisentritt (1527-86). It appears in his Catholicum Hymnologium Germanicum (Bautzen 1584, Cologne 1587). Several different forms of his melody were published in 17th century psalm and song books on the Continent. In England a disabled priest, W H Havergal (1793-1870), adapted and abbreviated Leisentritt's melody, before adding it to his collection: Old Church Psalmody (1847, 5th edition 1864) where it was named NARENZA. Since being printed in HA&M (1866) the tune has been associated with the old words of Philip Doddridge (1755), *Ye servants of the Lord, each in his office wait* (ChH 435, H&P 248, R&S 618), but Leisentritt's tune has inspired an up-to-date version of these words, and a worthy last verse descant (HTC 598).

Georg Joseph, a Polish musician, employed by the prince-bishop of Breslau, gave us the lovely melody wedded to *At even, ere/when the sun was set* (Mark 1:32). The tune ANGELUS in its original form was composed in the middle decades of the 17th century. It was set to a hymn in Heiliger Seelenlust (Breslau 1657), a collection of sacred poems, for which Joseph was musical editor. Joseph's melody appeared in a slightly altered form in Turle's Psalms and Hymns for Public Worship (1863) and in HA&M (1868). In the original, the first two phrases were without anacruses (pick-up notes). Rhythmic changes in the penultimate bars of lines 2 and 4 left us with the familiar ANGELUS (BPW 616, ChH 879, H&P 142, HTC 315, R&S 644). Its name comes from Scheffler's adopted names, Angelus Silesius, on his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1653.

LASST UNS ERFREUFN, sometimes known as EASTER SONG or ST FRANCIS, is a tune from north Germany, found in all our hymn books. An ancient text *Lasst uns erfreuen hertzlich sehr* (*Let us heartily rejoice*) was first associated with this melody in a small Jesuit book Auserlesen Catholische, Geistliche Kirchengesange (Cologne 1623). There are two main versions of the tune. The original, simple and austere, was in general use by German-speaking Catholics in Europe until about the 1980s.[4] It is preserved in The University Carol Book (1961) ed Erik Routley. A new arrangement by Vaughan Williams was prepared for the English Hymnal (1906) and, although not authentic, this is now a classic. It introduces the rhetorical device of repetition, gathers the Allelulias in mounting banks, and turns the nine allelulias or 'O praise hims' into a dramatic event. This modern festive form is equally suited to praise God for his creation, *All creatures of our God and King* (BPW 28), as it is for the Easter triumph, *Light's glittering morn bedecks the sky* in Neale's words, or in current English *Light's glittering morning fills the sky* (HTC 157)

French Church Melodies

In France, a number of strong tunes of unknown origin came to light during the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation in the last 30 years or so of the 17th century, and the first 30 of the 18th. Before this time, the recognised form of harmony here for both church and secular music was the Gregorian chant or plainsong, and the French Church Melody presented a fresh development towards our metric hymn. It moved away from the ecclesiastical mode and speech rhythm to the major or minor key and measured rhythm. One tune from the Coblenz district on the Rhine, and found in the Guild of St

[4] J Wilson "The tune Lasst uns erfreuen as we know it" Hymn Society Bulletin no 150, 194 (1961).

Cecilia's Catholische Geistliche Gesange (1608), closely resembles a French Church Melody. Originally this tune ANDERNACH was in England associated with the 6th century hymn of Fortunatus, *The royal banners forward go* (see SP 130). It survives in BHB 147 and PH 32.

French Church Melodies were introduced to this country by Vaughan Williams in the English Hymnal (1906). Several found their way into dissenters' hymnals but the wish expressed by Parry and Routley in 1953[5] that they might become popular has not been realised in our churches. Three are in general use.

The French diocesan melody CHRISTE SANCTORUM takes its name from a medieval office hymn beginning *Christe sanctorum, decus angelorum.* It is first found in the Paris Antiphoner (1681) set to a different hymn. Almost 300 years later, it has become familiar with the words *Christ is the world's light, He and none other* (F Pratt Green 1969-2000) in 10.11.11.6 metre. (BPW 34, H&P 455, HTC 321, R&S 600)

Another melody in the Sapphic metre, DIVA SERVATRIX, seems to have been composed late in the 17th century. It appears in the Bayeux Antiphoner (1739) and, according to the Hymnal for Scotland (1951), the conversion from plainsong to measured duple time is ascribed to Pierre David Huet (1630-1721). Father James Quinn SJ (1919-) has written two hymns for this tune. His latest in Rejoice & Sing (1991) opens:

Father of mercy, God of consolation
look on your people, gathered here to praise you,
Pity our weakness, come in power to aid us,
source of all blessing

(R&S 645)

The tune also supports a recent translation of a Prudentius (4th century) hymn, in Peculiar Honours (1998).

O night, O darkness, troubles and confusions,
the world lies clouded by such deep divisions
as dawn is breaking, Christ the Light is making
you flee before him

(PH 67)

GRENOBLE (DEUS TUORUM MILITUM), a later French Church Melody in triple time, is found in the Grenoble Antiphoner (1753), set to a hymn beginning *Deus tuorum militum.* This powerful tune is cast in a different idiom than others of its class. Its opening is striking, with the first four bars of melody climbing, then descending the tonic chord before momentarily continuing up to the tenth. Notwithstanding this high note, the tessitura of

[5]K L Parry and E Routley Companion to Congregational Praise (1952) 41.

GRENOBLE is low and is therefore more effectively and enjoyably sung at a brisk pace in the original key of C. At least four different hymns are currently sung to this tune. (HF 464, H&P 433, HTC 580, R&S 204, WOV 330).

John Wade and his tunes

Eight or nine hymn tunes by eighteenth century Catholics are popular with Nonconformists today (see Table D). Some seem firmly bound to a text; others have proved serviceable for two or more texts. Most of our tunes' composers lived and worked in mainland Europe, and the earliest of them, John Francis Wade (c1711-86) was a devout Englishman who had emigrated to avoid religious persecution. He became self-employed in the refugee colony of Douai in northern France, teaching Latin at the English College there, copying and selling plainchant and other music to wealthy families and Catholic chapels. All his manuscripts show triple time music with note values very different from those of today. Fortunately, Wade's manuscripts have been preserved for us in a volume: Cantus Diversi pro Dominicis et Festis per annum (1751), now at Stonyhurst College, near Blackburn, Lancashire. Two tunes by this Catholic layman are present in our Free Church books.

ADESTE FIDELES was written about 1740 for the words *Adeste fideles, laeti triumphantes*. It is found in seven 18th century manuscripts, the earliest being a 1743 copy of words and music by Wade. The melody is first given modern notation in Brabant's Hymns for Catholic Services (1776), and the earliest printing in its present duple rhythm (1782) is by Samuel Webbe, senior. There seems no doubt that Webbe's choir and organ at the Portuguese Embassy popularised the new hymn, which for a while was called PORTUGUESE HYMN. Ten years later, he gave us the four-part harmony to which Protestants were soon singing almost any words that could be fitted to it, even by slurring. ADESTE FIDELES and TALLIS'S CANON were two of the four most common tunes on barrel-organs used in our churches in the first half of the 19th century. A fascinating and scholarly account of the source of words and music to *O come, all ye faithful* is given in The New Oxford Book of Carols (1992).[6]

From the mid-18th century HOLYWOOD (ST THOMAS) was the tune used for the hymn at benediction in the Roman Catholic service. It appears in the 1751 'Wade manuscript' already referred to, and Wade is believed by Dom Jean Stéphan to be the composer.[7] The last two verses of the hymn were sung in Latin to the *Tantum Ergo* of St Thomas Aquinas - from whom the tune derives one of its names. HOLYWOOD is its Scottish name, and distinguishes it from other St Thomas tunes of different metre. Samuel Webbe promoted it

[6]H. Keyte and A Parrott (eds) The New Oxford Book of Carols (1992) 238-243.
[7]Parry and Routley op cit 161.

in his 1782 Essay and again in his 1791 Church Music Collection.[8] In 1861 HOLYWOOD was taken into HA&M, and it was in the Presbyterian Church Hymnary (1898 reprinted 1919).

In spite of HOLYWOOD (ST THOMAS) being generally unavailable to Baptists and Congregationalists until the 1950's, Percy Dearmer in 1933 could write "this is now one of the best-known of all hymn tunes".[9] By the 1960s our major denominational books carried the tune (BHB 619, CP 314, HF 543, MHB 808) but by 2000 only two used it. In Peculiar Honours (1998) HOLYWOOD perfectly matches the anonymous translation (from New Congregational Hymnbook of 1869) of part II of Aquinas' hymn *Pange lingua*, beginning:

Low in adoration bending,
now our hearts our God revere;

(PH 39)

In Christian Hymns (1977) it is the tune to Thomas Kelly's (1769-1854) prayer for departing missionaries:

Speed thy servants, speed them;
Thou art Lord of winds and waves:

(ChH 445)

Samuel Webbe the Elder, and his tunes

Christians of the Protestant Reformed Churches owe a debt of gratitude to Samuel Webbe senior (1740-1816) for his lovely contributions to their worship music. Webbe was a Catholic who composed for his church; he was also an enthusiastic writer of humorous part-song, catches and glees for men. At a time when Catholics were politically handicapped and obliged to build their churches in back streets, Webbe was musician to St Agatha, the principal Catholic church in London, and organist to the Sardinian, the Spanish and the Portuguese Embassies there. He wrote easy Masses and tuneful motets for his choir and, from 1776 to the end of his life, did much to keep alive Roman Catholic service music in England. Today, Webbe's ecclesiastical music is used in the Catholic Church whilst we, in the Free Churches, enjoy the hymn tunes he wrote, arranged or preserved.

CORINTH (BITHYNIA) (BPW 621, ChH 664, R&S 138) is attributed to Webbe, c1782, first appearing in plainsong notation for the text beginning *Tantum ergo sacramentum veneremur cernui.*[10] In 1792 it was given modern

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[8]S Webbe An essay on the Church Plainchant, including tunes for R.C.Chapels in London (1782). S Webbe A collection of modern Church Music (1791).
[9]P Dearmer Songs of Praise, Discussed (1933) 190.
[10]S Webbe An essay on the Church Plainchant, including tunes for R.C.Chapels

notation.[11] Melodies similar to this in 87.87.87 metre (HF 427, H&P 402, BPW 226) were customarily grouped under one heading *Tantum Ergo*. Protestant editors later gave them ad hoc names like CORINTH, to distinguish one from the other. By repeating the first two lines, an equally satisfactory 87.87.D. tune emerges, as at R&S 138, to *Come, Thou long expected Jesus.*

MELCOMBE, an LM tune by Webbe, 1782, was set to a figured bass in plainsong notation for the Latin hymn beginning *O Salutaris hostis*, and headed "At Exposition, Elevation or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament".[12] In 1791, it appeared in Ralph Harrison's Sacred Harmony, the first of innumerable Protestant hymnbooks to print it, where it was probably named after Melcombe Regis, Weymouth, where George III often went sea-bathing from 1789. In the first half of the 20th century MELCOMBE was extremely popular. It is now associated with the words *New every morning is the love* (Keble) and *Head of the Church, our risen Lord* (Conder). W H Monk's harmonisation (HA&M, 2nd edn 1875) is currently used.

VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS, like MELCOMBE, was first seen in plainsong notation; it is written for two voices in harmony, and marked for the *Hymn at Benediction* i.e. the *Tantum Ergo*.[13] The melody flows gracefully with a beauty of its own; it is one of Webbe's best, and known to us through Caswall's (altered) translation of the 13th century *Veni sancte Spiritus*: *Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come* (H&P 284, HTC 227, R&S 297, BHB 228).

Tunes from the Haydn brothers

Joseph (in full, Franz Joseph) Haydn and Johann Michael (generally called Michael) Haydn were born in a wheelwright's cottage in the village of Rohrau, Lower Austria in 1732 and 1737 respectively. Both were greatly gifted, and painstakingly developed their skills as composers and performers.

AUSTRIA (AUSTRIAN HYMN) by Joseph Haydn, 1797. F J Haydn (1732-1809) wrote the music for a new national hymn to be sung on the Emperor Francis' birthday. Its three opening bars seem to have come from a peasant song brought into Austria by certain Croatian settlers. In 1809 when his country was occupied by Napoleon, Haydn, ill, feeble and aged 77, had himself carried to the piano and solemnly played *The Hymn to the Emperor* as our AUSTRIA was then called.

In 1799, Dr Edward Williams, principal at Rotherham Independent

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in London (1782).

[11]S Webbe Collection of Motettes & Antiphons for 1,2,3 and 4 voices or chorus (1792).

[12]Webbe An essay...

[13]ibid.

Academy, compiled A collection of about Six Hundred Hymns designed as a New Supplement to Dr Watts' Psalms and Hymns. For this, Dr Edward Miller (1735-1807), organist to the borough of Doncaster, provided a book of tunes called Sacred Music (1802). His selection included, "250 of the most favoured tunes now commonly sung at the Churches, Chapels and, Dissenting Meetings" as well as tunes not previously published, among which was one called HAYDN. This was the first time *The Emperor's Hymn* appeared in England as an ordinary hymn-tune.[14]

SALZBURG by Michael Haydn, 1785. J Michael Haydn (1737-1806), like his brother, was educated at the Cathedral Choir School, Vienna, and initially made a living as a freelance musician. In his lifetime, he was regarded as a better composer than his eminent brother. Among his pupils were Weber and Diabelli. He spent the last half of his life in Salzburg, in 1781 succeeding Mozart as Salzburg Cathedral organist. Our tune is taken from a hymn in a German High Mass, composed for country choirs by Michael Haydn, in 1785. It is scored for SATB choir, two horns, two violins and organ. An English word-setting, having no connection with the German text was made by the Moravian minister and musician C I Latrobe and published in his Selection of Sacred Music (1806) with the original 8-line service tune. The 4-line tune SALZBURG appears in the Presbyterian Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship (1866) where, under Henry Smart's musical editorship the original unaltered first and fourth couplets were given triple time in place of the original 6/8 measures. Josiah Booth and the compilers of Congregational Hymnary (1916) must be credited with improving substantially the harmonies of SALZBURG, and the books containing it today print their version (BPW 599, ChH 735, H&P 235, R&S 71, PH 23).

Two more 18th century hymn tunes from Catholic sources remain. The first is MOSCOW by Giardini, 1769. The composer Felice di Giardini (1716-96) was born in Turin and educated as a chorister at Milan Cathedral. In Italy he became a distinguished violinist, who after an extended European concert tour, arrived in England in 1751. Giardini soon took his place as a foremost violinist and orchestral leader, and was the first of a long line of Continental violin teachers to make England their home. When 68 years old, Giardini went travelling again, eventually settling in Russia. He died in Moscow at the age of eighty, apparently in poverty. In England, Giardini was friendly with the aristocracy amongst whom was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, at that time an evangelical Anglican. Through her influence, Giardini agreed to contribute four tunes for the Martin Madan's Lock Collection (1769), a book of psalm and

[14]F Fowler Edward Miller, Organist of Doncaster, His Life and Times (Gainsborough 1979) 104-6.

hymn tunes sold to benefit the Lock Hospital for venereal diseases.

Our tune was composed for the anonymous hymn beginning *Come thou Almighty King, help us thy name to sing, help us to praise*, and was printed in one of Wesley's halfpenny leaflets, about 1757. In the *Lock Collection* this hymn is headed "Hymn to the Trinity, set by FG". It has a figured bass and three-part harmony, with a rather more decorative melody and with its penultimate bar and a half a third higher than in the current tune. Also the hymn is in three sections of eight bars, achieved by repetition of the last four bars of the stanza. A century later, it was renamed MOSCOW after the composer's place of death, and since its setting by J B Dykes in HA&M (1861), MOSCOW has featured in many fellowship songbooks and in almost all hymnbooks. Baptists and Congregationalists today use MOSCOW for Marriott's hymn *Thou whose Almighty word chaos and darkness heard* or a modernised wording, e.g. BPW 591, HTC 506.

ST BERNARD from Tochter Sion 1741. The earliest form of this comes with a hymn in praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Neues ... Kirchen und Hauss Gesang der Tochter Sion (Cologne 1741). The last twelve of its twenty bars suggest a folksong origin but this character is lost when the tune appears, a century later, in Cantica Spiritalia II (Munich 1847). From this version the present music was probably arranged by John Richardson (1816-79). At the time the book was published, Richardson was tutor and music master at St Edward's College, Shaw Street, Liverpool. He became a celebrated figure, receiving presentations from Cardinals Newman and Wiseman and Pope Pius IX. Amongst his pupils was William T Best, later to become the world's first distinctively concert organist. ST BERNARD was taken into the Bristol Tune Book (1863), into the Congregational Church Hymnary (1887), and has been in most Free Church hymnals ever since. The CM tune is probably unique in its opening: an anacrucis before a drop of a perfect fifth. Its name is derived from its association with the words *Jesus, the very thought of thee/You* and hence with St Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153).

Mention has been made of the work of Samuel Webbe senior at the Sardinian Embassy chapel. The career of his son, Samuel Webbe junior (1761-1843) was in many ways a continuation of his father's, including teaching, arranging and textbook writing. Although most of his life was spent in Liverpool (first at Paradise Street Unitarian church, then at R C churches in Toxteth and Sefton Park), he briefly succeeded his father as organist and choirmaster at the Sardinian Embassy in London.

A third distinguished musician was to work at an Embassy chapel; this was Francis Vincent Novello (1781-1861). Vincent was a boy chorister under Webbe senior, and from the age of 16 served as organist-choir master at the Sardinian Chapel for 25 years. He examined music mss for Cambridge and

York Libraries, and edited old music, often making scholarly figured material more accessible - especially to the partly-trained and less skilful, serving the ordinary church or chapel. Vincent Novello collected and published old and new anthems and choral music of all kinds with a passion that led to the foundation of the famous firm, Novello & Co.

Some of Novello's compositions can be found in his four volumes of The Psalmist published between 1835 and 1843. Two of his hymn tunes, ALBANO and ROCHESTER, were published posthumously. The latter, not to be confused with C H Stewart's of the same name, appeared in Congregational Hymnary (1916). ALBANO by Novello, c1806, was clearly a favourite with Congregationalists. This gently rolling tune first appeared in the appendix of HA&M (1868) but, in Congregational Church Hymnal ed Barrett (1887), it was set to no less than nine hymn texts, and subsequently has had a place in all Congregational books. ALBANO was written for William Bright's poem of 1866, *Once, only once and once for all*, a marriage maintained in Kevin Mayhew's Hymns Old and New of 1996. In some evangelistic books and in Golden Bells (1924) ALBANO carries the young children's hymn *I love to think, though I am young, my Saviour was a child* (E Paxton Hood) (ChH 853, HF 614, also HTC 135, R&S 335).

ORIEL by Caspar Ett c1840. This simple and stately tune is first found set in 4-part harmony to Aquinas' hymn *Pange lingua* in Cantica Sacra, compiled and presumed composed by Ett in Munich, about 1840. Caspar (or Gaspard) Ett (1788-1847) was educated as an Abbey chorister and at the Elector's School, Munich. He was organist at St Michael's Church there for 31 years. His tune was given its name from the Oxford college of that name. ORIEL is associated with *To the name of our salvation* (Neale's translation in 1851, of the lovely anonymous 15th century Latin hymn. (HF 124, HTC 222, R&S 291). We use it too, for W C Smith's Advent hymn *Earth was waiting, spent and restless*. (BPW 141, ChH 167). It is very popular in the USA.

What have been called 19th century "Catholic Revival Tunes" emerged in the sixth and seventh decades. Some simple tunes were heard sung and whistled in the poorer quarters of towns, especially those served by Roman Catholic missions. These tunes won great popularity among both young and old Catholics, before being taken up by others. Some of the earliest were collected and edited by Henri Frederick Hemy (1818-88) in his Easy Hymn Tunes with words in full adapted for Catholic Schools (1851-53). Hemy, born to German parents, was organist at St Andrew's R C Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He taught music in Tynemouth, spent some time at St Catherine's Theological College, Durham, and later became a professor of voice and piano at St Cuthbert's College, Durham. He edited The Crown of Jesus Music (1864), a collection of Latin hymns, Benediction services, chants and Masses,

which enjoyed extensive use in late 19th and early 20th century Catholic churches.

At various times in the 20th century three or four "Catholic revival tunes" have been sung in Baptist, Congregational and Methodist churches. One was first heard being sung by children in the village of Stella, west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Hemy, c1851, set it to J Lingard's words: *Hail, Queen of heaven, the ocean star* for his Easy Hymn Tunes for Catholic Schools, and named it STELLA. It was included in The Crown of Jesus Music, and in the first issue of the Bristol Tune Book (1863) where it carries the caption *Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go* (Faber). Current use seems limited to users of H&P 47 and ChH 559.

ST CATHERINE (TYNEMOUTH) by Hemy c1863. This is found set for a 10-line hymn beginning *Sweet Saint Catherine, maid most pure* in Hemy's most influential The Crown of Jesus Music. An unpretentious tune in triple time, it is almost certainly by Hemy himself. James George Walton (1821-1905) adapted it for six lines of 88.88.88 metre, while interspersing a more stable contrasting phrase for line five. This was presented in Walton's Plainsong Music for the Holy Communion Office (1874) and subsequently appeared in the Bristol Tune Book (series 2, 1874) and in Congregational Church Hymnal (1887). The harmonies, though better than most of its class, were revised for part-singing by David Evans and his version was later taken up by Baptists (BHB 606). Erik Routley offered another version (CP 106) for E R Conder's *Ye fair green hills of Galilee*, but the hymn most often associated with ST CATHERINE is *My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness* (E Mote et al). (BPW 335, ChH 554, H&P 747, HTC 462).

TICHFIELD attributed Richardson c1853. This is first found in Formby and Lambert's Collection of Catholic Hymns (1853) where it is unnamed, but assigned to John Richardson. It also appears in Hemy's Crown of Jesus Music from where it was taken into several Methodist books and used for many different hymns. TICHFIELD is a gently skipping 'revival tune' used for the words of Jane Leeson, *Saviour, teach me day by day love's sweet lesson to obey*. However, when the tune to these words first appeared in Barrett's CCH (1887) it was assigned to Richard William Beaty, and stated to have been written in 1830. Both Sacred Songs and Solos (1903) and Golden Bells (1924) give Beaty as composer but subsequently our denominational books credit the tune to the Liverpool school-teacher, John Richardson (1818-79) (BPW 485, ChH 288, HF 446)

Uniform across nationality, culture and personality the celebration of the Mass has been associated with much glorious music, especially that of Monteverdi (1567-1643), Schutz (1618-48), Haydn (1732-1800), Mozart

(1756-91), and Bruckner (1824-96). For much of this music, expressing man's deepest feelings, many of us are eternally grateful. However, up to and including the 19th century, there had been almost no congregational singing in the main act of worship, the Latin Mass. On those occasions when, eventually a hymn was allowed, it was sung not entirely for its own sake, but more as a cover for liturgical action. Changes occurred in some Catholic services after each World War, when more vocal offerings from the people were permitted. From 1900 to 1950 several classic hymns and hymn tunes from Protestant, including Lutheran, sources were taken into Catholic usage. In exchange, Protestants have to acknowledge the contribution of one distinguished musician, Sir Richard Terry, who at the age of 31 became a Roman Catholic.

Richard Runciman Terry (1865-1938) a Northumbrian, won a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge in 1888, where he came under the influence of A H Mann and C V Stanford, becoming a FRCO the following year. Terry worked as a professional musician at several schools in England and in Antigua, before being received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1896. Thereafter, he was organist and choirmaster at Downside Benedictine Abbey, and then Director of Music at Westminster Cathedral 1901-24.[15] Terry edited The Westminster Hymnal (1912, revised 1940), the first authorised English Roman Catholic Hymnbook. Remarkably then, Terry's own best hymn tune, HIGHWOOD (1930) appeared first in the Methodist Hymn Book of 1933. HIGHWOOD was composed to fit a prayer for a marriage couple. *O perfect love, all human thought transcending*, written by Dorothy Frances Gurney in 1897 before Mrs Gurney and her husband became Roman Catholics. It is more spirited and shapely for the words than the dull but popular tune of BARNBY. Methodists, since 1933, have used HIGHWOOD for Myers' *Hark what a sound, and too divine for hearing* (H&P 236) while Baptists over the same period, have sung it to Fletcher's *O Son of Man, our Hero strong and tender* (BHB 127), or more recently to Bayly's *O Lord of every shining constellation* (BPW 130). Users of Rejoice & Sing have the tune set to Briggs' *Light of the world, from whom all truth proceeding* as well as to *Hark what a sound.*

Terry's BILLING (1912) served Catholics as the tune for Newman's *Praise to the Holiest in the height* for over fifty years, before it was first sung by Nonconformists (see BHB(1962) 206, 632). Today several hymns in our Free Church hymnals are sung to BILLING. The tunes ST FULBERT and RICHMOND, familiar to three generations of Congregationalists for Bonar's *Fill thou my life, 0 Lord my God* (ChH 772, CP 22, CH 30), have been replaced in R&S 406 by BILLING.

It seems prudent to end this tribute in the mid-20th century, i.e. before the

[15]H Andrews Westminster Retrospect - a memoir of Sir Richard Terry (1946)

age of godlessness crept in after World War Two. Then the greatest upheaval, since the formulation of the Mass in the twelfth century, occurred when a liturgical sea change was brought about by the Second Vatican Council, and the publication of its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963). A glimpse of this is seen in a foreword (1971) to a new and enlarged edition or Praise the Lord (Leominster 1972), one of the few 20th century Catholic Hymnbooks. Cardinal Heenan refers to the speed with which this edition was prepared as "a sign that hitherto the Silent Church is on its way to becoming a Singing Church". Many late 20th century hymns/songs have been sung in our churches. Prominent among them are Estelle White's *Moses, I know you're the man*; *Make me a channel of your peace* and *I, the Lord of sea and sky* (both from the USA); *Sing of the Lord's goodness* (St Thomas More group). To what extent they will become integrated in the different forms of worship we in the Free Churches will have, only the passing of at least another generation (God willing) will reveal.

Derek Watson

ABBREVIATIONS

BHB	Baptist Hymn Book	Psalms & Hymns Trust 1962
BPW	Baptist Praise & Worship	OUP 1991
CCH	Congregational Church Hymnary	CUEW 1887
ChH	Christian Hymns	EMW Bridgend 1977
CH	Congregational Hymnary	CUEW 1916
3CH	The Church Hymnary, 3rd edn	OUP 1973
CP	Congregational Praise	Independent Press 1951
HA&M	Hymns, Ancient & Modern	W Clowes, London 1875
HF	Hymns of Faith	Scripture Union 1964
HFP	Hymns for the People	Marshall Pickering 1993
H&P	Hymns & Psalms	Methodist Publ Ho 1983
HTC	Hymns for Today's Church	Hodder & Stoughton 1987
MHB	Methodist Hymn Book	Methodist Conference 1933
MP	Mission Praise, Combined Edition	Marshall Pickering 1990
PH	Peculiar Honours	Stainer & Bell 1998
RCH	The Revised Church Hymnary	OUP 1927
R&S	Rejoice and Sing	OUP 1991
SP	Songs of Praise, enlarged edn	OUP 1932
TCH	The Church Hymnary	Humphrey & Milford, Edinburgh 1898
WOV	With One Voice	Collins 1979

TABLE C

ROMAN CATHOLIC TEXTS (POST-REFORMATION) SUNG BY FREE-CHURCH PEOPLE

AUTHOR OR ORIGIN	TRANSLATOR	HYMN
J H Newman 1834		*Lead, kindly Light*
C Coffin 1736 Latin	J Chandler 1837	*On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry*
Anon 17th-c Latin	E Caswall 1849	*My God, I love thee, not because*
F W Faber 1849		*My God, how wonderful thou art*
F W Faber 1854		*There's a wideness in God's mercy*
Anon 18th-c German	E Caswall 1854	*When morning gilds the skies*
Anon c1805 Italian	E Caswall 1857	*Glory be to Jesus*
E Caswall 1858		*See, amid the winter's snow*
J H Newman 1865		*Praise to the Holiest*
C Coffin 1736 Latin	R Bridges 1899	*Happy are they, they that love God*

TABLE D

TUNES FROM ROMAN CATHOLICISM (POST-REFORMATION) SUNG IN THE FREE CHURCHES

CENT	TUNE NAME OR ORIGIN	COMPOSER	HYMN TEXT PARTNERED --
16th	TALLIS'S CANON	T Tallis	*Glory to Thee, my God, this night*
	NARENZA	J Leisentritt	*Ye servants of the Lord*
17th	ANGELUS	G Joseph	*At even, ere the sun was set*
	LASST UNS ERFREUEN	anon N Germany	*All creatures of our God and King*
	CHRISTE SANCTORUM	anon French Ch Melody	several
	DIVA SERVATRIX	anon French Ch Melody	several
18th	GRENOBLE	anon French Ch Melody	several
	ADESTE FIDELES	J Wade	*O come, all ye faithful*
	HOLYWOOD	J Wade	*Speed Thy servants, Saviour*
	CORINTH	attr S Webbe (Elder)	several
	MELCOMBE	S Webbe (Elder)	*New every morning is the love*
	VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS	S Webbe(Elder)	*Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come*
	AUSTRIA	J Haydn	*Glorious things of Thee are spoken*
	SALZBURG	M Haydn	*O God of Bethel, by whose hand*
	MOSCOW	F di Giardini	*God/Thou whose almighty word*
	ST BERNARD	anon arr Richardson	*In Christ there is no East or West*
19th	ALBANO	V Novello	several
	ORIEL	C Ett	*To the name of our salvation*
	ST CATHERINE	H Hemy	*My hope is built on nothing less*
	TICHFIELD	J Richardson	several
early 20th	BILLING	R Terry	*Praise to the Holiest in the height*
	HIGHWOOD	R Terry	several

Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640-1660. By Geoffrey F Nuttall. Pp xiii, 190. Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7RN 2001. £25.00. ISBN 1 897856 12 1.

This is a welcome re-issue of a valuable work, long out of print. The second edition of Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640-1660, first published in 1957, gives not only its author great pleasure but also those readers who eagerly have read and enlarged their knowledge of 'Cromwellian Congregationalism and its antecedents' through study of its contents. Geoffrey Nuttall has resisted the temptation to rewrite his Visible Saints but, to the first edition, has added addenda and corrigenda in an appendix, references to which are indicated in the main text. By these means and the addition of a brief bibliography of works, published since 1957, and the inclusion of some few others, previously omitted, Geoffrey Nuttall offers brief, but significant improvements, to his readers. He provides also, in this new edition, an index to names and churches mentioned in the additional notes (the original indices are, of course, retained).

In the Foreword to the First Edition the author pointed out that 'the Congregational way' is larger than any denomination but is 'rather, an interpretation of the Gospel and a doctrine of the Church which arose out of the Reformation'. In the Foreword to the Second Edition Geoffrey Nuttall asks for 'deeper engagement' with the history behind ecumenical divisions. This study, he believes, has an 'ante-ecumenical' slant although the author's viewpoint and sympathies are not hidden.

I urge those who have not previously read Visible Saints and who are seriously interested in the history of Congregationalism to study this book It has a most useful historical introduction which traverses Congregationalism's antecedents, from medieval monasticism through John à Lasco, the emigre Polish Protestant active in mid-sixteenth century London, Dutch and East Anglian Congregationalism, to the importance of John Owen and the London churches of the 1640s and 50s. Those unfamiliar with Nuttall's works will especially profit from his penetrating analysis and his formidable erudition. In an impressive passage, a favourite of the present reviewer, Nuttall compares Congregationalism to the Donatist schismatics of the fourth and fifth centuries: "it is certainly significant, that the earliest formulation of any ecclesiology at all approximating to Congregationalism, was, like the Donatist ecclesiology with which it is so often compared, nurtured in, if not born out of, persecution; and 'persecution always brings to the front the men who manufacture scruples, make divisions, and are hard on the weak and fallen' " (page 7). In the

footnote he makes a telling quotation from Richard Baxter's life and times, his Reliquiae Baxterianae (1696): "to persecute Men, and then call them to Charity, is like whipping Children to make them give over Crying". The footnotes are invariably useful and thought-provoking.

Visible Saints is a clear exposition of those ideas and beliefs which animated the early followers of the Congregational way during the English civil wars and interregnum. The early Congregationalists were those "in whom the sense of the divine initiative and call to holiness was so strong in them that they came out, not knowing whither they went. That they should also have perceived that in the new fellowship which was created, only a free response, in others no less than in themselves, was worthy of God's grace is the most remarkable thing about them. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom': 'then are the children free' " (page 167).

Yvonne Evans

Thomas Goodwin: Word and Spirit The Congregational Lecture 2001. By Paul Blackham. Pp 24. The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1978) Ltd, 2001. Available from Dr Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AG. £2.00 ISSN 0963-181X.

In this lecture delivered at Dr Williams's Library, Dr Paul Blackham, an associate minister at All Souls Langham Place, London, chose to speak about those aspects of the theology of Thomas Goodwin DD (1600-1680) which relate to the Trinity, and particularly to the work of the Holy Spirit. In the course of the lecture Dr Blackham discussed Goodwin's views on the relationship between all three persons of the Trinity and their individual roles. This theme has been important to theologians through the ages but has always been a difficult one to tackle. Paul Blackham himself admits that Goodwin "is not easily accessible for the uninitiated". Although we are told something of Goodwin's Christian experience, Blackham gives us very little background to the life of this Independent minister who was one of the dissenting brethren at the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and also attended Oliver Cromwell on his deathbed. Indeed while president of Magdalen College, Oxford, in the 1650s, Goodwin confessed to a desire to "seperate hymselfe to his studyes, to perfect severall bookes, which he hath now under his hands, conteyninge a body of divinity, and without doeing of which he professeth he cannot dye in peace". More information about this life, lived at a time of much political and theological ferment in England, ferment in which he was intimately involved, would have made the lecture more accessible for the non-specialists among his audience and his readers alike.

We are, in fact, told that Goodwin sought to understand how justification once and for all through Christ related to his own experience of guilt and the need for regeneration through the power of the Spirit. This is something that many Christians will recognize and understand. Those who wish to study Goodwin's theology of the Spirit may find much to interest them in the printed version of this lecture but it is likely to be rather daunting for anyone with little formal theological training and those who may be coming as novices to seventeenth century Congregationalism and to the study of Goodwin and his thought. Sadly Blackham has done little in this lecture to make Thomas Goodwin better known to a wider public, even within those churches which still seek to follow the Congregational way, as he did.

Lesley Dean

Northern Accents: Aberdeen Essays on Preaching. Edited by David Fergusson and Alan Main. Pp 145. Theology in Scotland, St Mary's College, University of St Andrew's, Fife, KY16 9JU, 2001. Available from The Secretary, Christ's College, 25 High Street, Old Aberdeen, AB24 3UB. £7.26 including postage.

Dr Paul Dumas Jnr has researched the history of the Warrack Lectures and has helpfully contributed some appendices on the Declaration of Trust made by Mr Frank Warrack and on the identity of the lecturers since 1921, the subjects addressed and the places of delivery, together with the titles of those subsequently published. According to the original Declaration of Trust "the committee shall observe the following two guiding principles, namely: the negative- that the appointment is not to be regarded as a reward for services, however eminent in other fields of the work of the Church, and still less as a Consolation prize for comparative failure in all; and the positive- that it is to be offered to the Preachers most noted for their power to attract and hold the people"! Distinguished Congregationalists have served as lecturers: J D Jones, S M Berry and J S Whale. J D Jones' lectures of 1929 were never published and his subject remains unknown - I wonder can anyone help here?

For the 1998 series, here published, the precedent was set of inviting six speakers to deliver one lecture each rather than one speaker delivering six lectures. And all the lectures were delivered in the University of Aberdeen by speakers connected with Aberdeen. The result is theologically a mixed bag, ranging from Sinclair Ferguson's "Preaching and the Reformed Theological Tradition" from a conservative evangelical and Presbyterian to "The Use of Literature in Preaching" from William Anderson, a Roman Catholic. Other subjects covered are "The Role of New Testament Criticism in Preaching", "Preaching from the Lectionary through the Christian Year", "Preaching in the

Scottish Highlands", "Politics and Preaching".

The lecture by Donald Meek, the other conservative evangelical contributor and a Baptist in background, on "Preaching in the Scottish Highlands", is perhaps worthy of particular note. Donald Meek is professor of Celtic at Aberdeen and his father was the last Gaelic-preaching Baptist minister in Scotland. Professor Meek was brought up on the Inner Hebridean island of Tiree. All the lecturers display understanding of their chosen subjects, though Professor Meek's grasp of his theme, "Preaching in the Scottish Highlands in relation to its cultural context", as an evangelical and a Celt myself I found enthralling.

We need to encourage discussion about preaching and to nourish the call to preach. Our day is somewhat poverty stricken in terms of the quality of our preaching and the content of our message. As Donald Meek's old Gaelic-speaking friends in Tiree would have said: "Is e seo lò nan nithean beaga" - "This is the day of small things".

Alan Tovey

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

The Baptist Quarterly (vol XXXIX no 2 April 2001)
Ken R Manley "A Colonial Evangelical Ministry and a 'Clerical Scandal': James Taylor in Melbourne (1857-1868)". Kenneth Roxburgh "Eric Roberts and Orthodoxy Among Scottish Baptists". Paul Martin and David Tennant "Believers' Baptism, the Fellowship of Believers and Faith Development: Part I".

(no 3 July 2001)
Christopher Ellis "A View From the Pool: Baptists, sacraments and the basis of unity". Paul Martin and David Tennant "Believers' Baptism, the Fellowship of Believers and Faith Development: Part II". E A Payne, transcribed by Leonard Maguire "The Baptist Church Near the Barbican: with list of members 1717". Ruth Gouldbourne " 'This Sad Work': Scandal in Broadmead".

(no 4 October 2001)
Nigel G Wright "Inclusive Representation: Towards a Doctrine of Christian Ministry". Steve Wright "Leonard Busher: Life and Ideas". Roger J Owen "The Revd A E Greening: A nineteenth-century Calvinist evangelical". Trevor Kirkland "This Sad Work: The case of Mary Smith of Broadmead: A rejoinder".

(no 5 January 2002)
Paul Weller "Insiders or Outsiders? Religion(s), State(s) and Society: Propositions for Europe. Part I". Neville Clark "A Perspective on Christian Ministry". David L Wykes "Joshua Toulmin (1740-1815) of Taunton: Baptist minister, historian and religious radical". Clive Jarvis "Gilbert Boyce: General Baptist Messenger and opponent of John Wesley".

The Strict Baptist Historical Society Bulletin (no 28 2001)
Tim Grass "The Development of Particular Baptist Hymnody in England to 1915".

Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society (vol XXII no 3 April 2001)
Arthur Long "Unitarian Thought in the Twentieth Century. Part 1". Tony Cross " 'One of the Advanced School' - R R Suffield in Croydon". David Steers "Samuel Halliday (1685-1739)". R K Webb "Six Years with the New DNB".

The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society (vol 6 no 8 May 2001)
Keith L Sprunger "A Case of Mistaken Identity: (The Strenuous Puritan) and Hugo Petri". Geoffrey F Nuttall "The Speldhurst Church Book". Brian Kirk "Emmanuel Harford (c1641-1706): A Note" Stephen Orchard "The Wilson Family and Derbyshire". Timothy Larsen "Sex, Lies, and Victorians: the Case of Newman Hall's Divorce". Elisabeth J Neale "Thomas Rhondda Williams (1860-1945) and Brighton". W C R Hancock "R J Campbell: Christianity Interpreted as Socialism".

(no 9 October 2001)
Marilyn Lewis " 'The Anabaptist Washt and Washt and Shrunk in the Washing': John Gibbs's Baptismal Controversies with Richard Carpenter and Richard Davis, c 1652 and 1691-2". Robert Glen "Launching a Clerical Career in Late Georgian England: Nathaniel K Pugsley - from Hoxton Academy to Industrial Stockport". Elaine Kaye "Benjamin Parsons of Ebley Chapel". W C R Hancock "English Nonconformity and the Rise of Labour Politics 1893-1914". Anthony Tucker "Nathaniel Micklem and the Ecumenical Movement". Caryl Micklem "A Corner of Rural Northamptonshire Fifty Years Ago".

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (vol 53 part 2 May 2001)
Martin Wellings "Making Haste Slowly: The Campaign for Lay Representation in the Wesleyan Conference 1871-8". Alison Lewis "Bicentenary of Rev James Evans". Arthur T Mignot " 'Mon Plasir' and the Methodists of Guernsey". Peter B Nockles "Methodist Archives: Manuscript Additions 2000-01" Roger Thorne "Local Branches Report 2001".

(part 3 October 2001)
Ralph Waller "Converging and Diverging Lines: Aspects of the Relationship between Methodism and Rational Dissent". Colin C Short "Robert Winfield and the Revivalists". Obituary: Thomas Shaw.

(part 4 February 2002)
Henry D Rack "Charles Wesley and the Irish Inheritance Tradition". Norma Virgoe "The Yarmouth Circuit Booklist 1806" Obituary: William Leary.