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The Fruit of Truth

Congregational Studies Conference 2009

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Congregational Studies Conference
Papers 2009

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The papers are printed in the order in which they were given at the Conference; as usual the contributor is entirely responsible for the views expressed in his paper.

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Tony Lambert graduated in Chinese Studies at London University, and served in the Diplomatic Service from 1971 to 1982, including periods at the British Embassies in Tokyo and Beijing. In 1982 he and his wife joined the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, where he is Director for Research for Chinese Ministries. He has written *The Resurrection of the Chinese Church* and *China's Christian Millions.*

Photographs by Dr Digby L. James

Foreword

The purpose of the Congregational Studies Conference has always been to learn from the past and apply the lessons to our situation in the present. This year's Conference has demonstrated that purpose very well.

The Cambridge (Massachusetts) Platform was drawn up by New England Congregationalists over ten years before the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order. Gordon Cooke, giving his third paper at a Studies Conference, gives us the background and outcome of this important document.

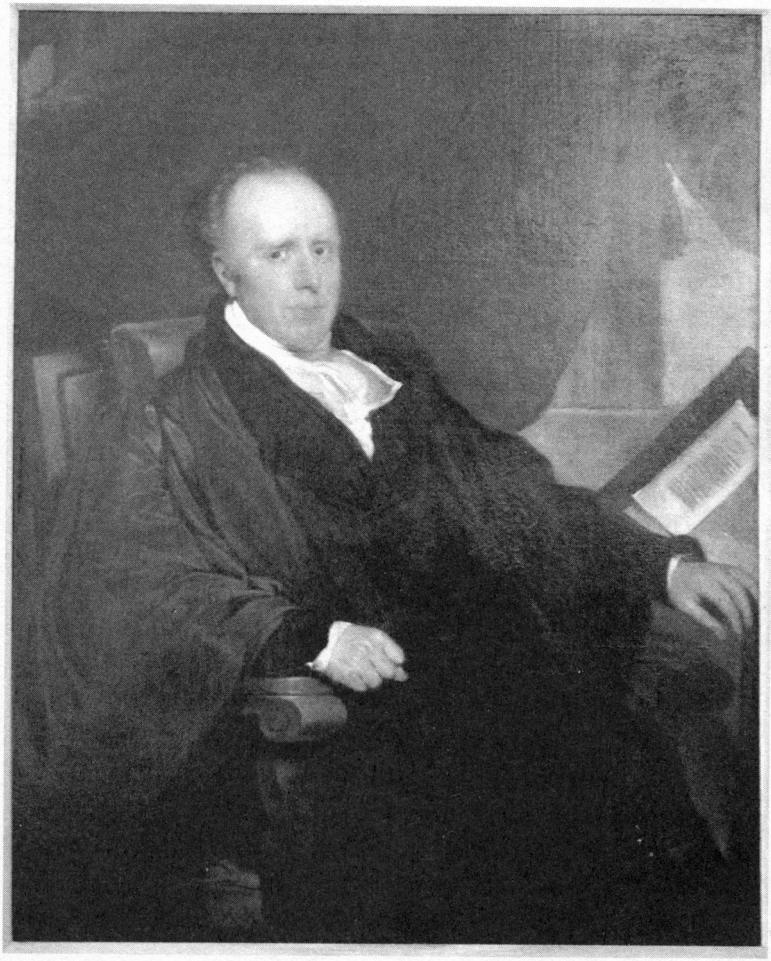
A common criticism of believers is that they are too heavenly minded to be of no earthly use. The life of Andrew Reed, as presented to us by Ian Shaw, shows how untrue this is. Knowing the love of God for lost sinners in his heart he sought to bring the gospel to the lost and show God's love to those who were ignored by so many who were only earthly minded.

It is appropriate that Tony Lambert, Director for Research for Chinese Ministries for the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, which began its existence as the China Inland Mission, should have spoken to us about the spread of the gospel in China, past and present, focussing on the pioneering work of Robert Morrison in translating the Bible into Chinese. Despite oppression by the Communist government, and the expulsion of missionaries, the gospel has spread and flourished.

We were grateful for the hospitality of the members at Oldbury Congregational Church who looked after us very well.

A special word of thanks is due to Rev. John Semper, for ten years the Chairman of the Congregational Studies Conference, who was responsible for arranging the lecturers and subjects for this year. He has retired from this role, and will be greatly missed: we express our warm gratitude to him for all that he has done.

The 2010 conference will be held, God willing, on Saturday 13 March; the venue will be announced later. The speakers and subjects will include Dr George Speers (Ballynahinch Congregational Church) on the Congregational Churches in Ireland and Dr Robert Oliver (Bradford-on-Avon Baptist Church) on Cornelius Winter of Marlborough (1741–1808).



Portrait of Andrew Reed (hanging in Reed's School, Cobham, Surrey)

Andrew Reed (1787–1862): Preacher, Pastor, Philanthropist

Ian Shaw

> 'The pursuits of the philosopher, the patriot, the philanthropist, are nothing compared with the minister of Christ.'[1]

Introduction

Study of the ministry of Andrew Reed allows us an insight into the preaching, pastoral and practical activity of an evangelical Congregationalist in the nineteenth century urban environment. Reed, the son of a clockmaker, rose to be the minister of one of the largest Congregational churches in London, and through his philanthropic efforts enjoyed the favour and patronage of the Royal family. He combined evangelical urgency with profound social concern. In terms of endeavour and achievement, Andrew Reed stands in the foremost rank of evangelical philanthropists, but sadly, he is largely a forgotten figure.[2] Philanthropy was not Reed's primary calling. He was above all the minister of a thriving church in the East End of London.

Andrew Reed's Life

Reed was born in London in 1787. His parents ensured that he enjoyed a godly Dissenting upbringing, and his father, a watchmaker, was an active itinerant lay preacher. In 1803, when he was 16 years old, he was converted through a sermon preached by Samuel Lyndall, the minister of New Road Chapel, and he became a member of the church a couple of years later.[3] With the encouragement of Matthew Wilks, minister of Whitefield's Tabernacle in Moorfields, and Lyndall, Reed commenced study at Hackney College.[4] At the end of his course he was offered a number of pastoral openings, but he

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1 A. Reed and C. Reed, eds., *Memoirs of the Life and Philanthropic Labours of Andrew Reed, D.D., With Selections from His Journals*, (hereafter *Memoirs of Reed*) (London: 1863), p. 113.

2 The *Memoirs of Reed* compiled by his sons is the principal source for materials relating to Reed's life. See also I.J. Shaw, *The Greatest is Charity: Andrew Reed (1787–1862), Preacher and Philanthropist* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2005)

3 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 5–16.

4 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 30. Wilks was a Calvinistic Dissenter trained at the Trevecca College. He was actively involved in the wider pan-evangelical scene, taking a role in the London Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, and the *Evangelical Magazine*. Wilks also sought to encourage young men into the ministry. He was closely connected with the theological College at Hackney.

accepted a call to New Road Chapel which had become vacant with the resignation of Samuel Lyndall. He was ordained on 27 November 1811.[5]

Five years after his ordination, Reed married Elizabeth Holmes, daughter of a wealthy City merchant, a marriage that undoubtedly enhanced his social status. Andrew and Elizabeth had one daughter and four sons, although a further two children died in infancy.[6] The children followed their father into evangelical faith. His oldest son, Andrew, became a successful Congregational minister, with a long pastorate in Norwich. His second son, Charles, earned his living through printing and type-founding businesses, and devoted much time to the Sunday School Union, the London Missionary Society, the Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, and other religious causes.[7] Charles served as a Liberal MP, and was knighted.

Reed's Urban Ministry Context: East London, 1811–62

There was a noticeable decline in the social condition of Stepney during the period of Reed's ministry, as pockets of serious deprivation and urban decay developed. In 1811 the New Road Chapel was described as being attended by a 'respectable suburban congregation.'[8] Many of the poor social conditions of East London remained hidden from the immediate sight of casual visitors, but the reports of social observers offer us insights.[9] In 1848, St George's-in-the-East, closely adjacent to Wycliffe Chapel, was described as an area of 'dingy streets, of houses of small dimensions and moderate elevation, very closely

5 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 30–43. In the *Memoirs of Reed* his sons refer to the itinerant society with which Hackney College was associated as the London Itinerant Society (p. 31). R. T. Jones gives the name of the society as the Village Itinerancy or Evangelical Association for Spreading the Gospel in England (*Congregationalism in England 1662–1962*, (London: 1962), p. 236).

6 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 53.

7 Charles Reed married the youngest daughter of Edward Baines (Senior). He was a staunch Liberal in politics, and during the election of 1847 launched the weekly *Nonconformist Elector*. In 1868 he was elected MP for Hackney. He later became chairman of the London School Board, and in 1874 was knighted. His son, Charles Edward Baines Reed became secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Three of Reed's grandsons earned places in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. (C.E.B. Reed, *Memoir of Sir Charles Reed* (London: 1883); G.C. Boase, 'Reed, Sir Charles (1819–81)', *DNB* 16, ed. S. Lee (London: 1909), p. 831. The Baines family were prominent in Nonconformity and Liberal politics in Leeds, owning the *Leeds Mercury*. (On Baines see C. Binfield, *So Down To Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity 1780–1820* (London: 1977).)

8 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 47, 148.

9 e.g. H. Gavin, *Sanitary Ramblings: Being Sketches and Illustrations of Bethnal Green. A Type of the Condition of the Metropolis and Other Large Towns* (London, 1848); T. Beames, *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present, and Prospective* (Second edition 1852, repr. London, 1970), pp. 91–105; E. Chadwick's, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population* includes scattered references to poor sanitary conditions in the area—eg. pp. 202, 224.

packed in ill-ventilated streets and courts'. The populace were largely labouring, and represented the '*average condition* of the poorer classes of the metropolis'.[10] There were limited employment opportunities for females: 'distressed needlewomen' were numerous. Their scanty earnings led to both 'moral and pecuniary difficulty'. The average weekly wage in the area was 20s. 2d.[11]

Some housing in St George's-in-the-East was in an appalling state. Batty's Garden was a court accessible only by a small arch; its houses lacked light and ventilation, and were close, damp and unhealthy. At one end of the street was a dust-heap on which night soil and refuse of every description were piled, and which saturated and penetrated the walls of the premises behind. Some privies were 'entirely choaked and cannot be used'. Overcrowding was a problem: the average number of persons per room was 2.0, and an average of 2.46 persons for every bed.[12] The average age of death in the district was just 27 years.[13]

The 1851 Religious Census suggested that around 30% of East Enders attended some form of worship on the Census Sunday.[14] The figure for Stepney was lower, at around 25.5%. Some 10% of the population worshipped in Anglican churches, and 6% in Independent chapels.[15]

The East End of London was an area of serious, and increasing, social and religious problems, to which Andrew Reed and his congregation sought to respond. Their success in this will be considered after assessments of Reed's theological position, and then of the nature of the congregation itself.

The Theology of Andrew Reed

Andrew Reed's theology was a fusion of Calvinism with the experiential and evangelistic emphases of the Evangelical Revival. The result was powerful evangelical preaching with a direct appeal to the heart, whilst relying on the grace of God for conversion. The influence of the Evangelical Revival on

10 'Report to the Council of the Statistical Society of London from a Committee of its Fellows Appointed to make an Investigation into the State of the Poorer Classes in St George's in the East, with the Sum of £25 given for this Purpose by HENRY HALLAM, Esq. F.R.S., aided by a Donation of £10 from R.A. SLANEY, Esq. M.P., and further sums from the General Resources of the Society', in *Quarterly Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 11, Part 3 (August 1848), Reprinted in *Slum Conditions in London and Dublin* (London, 1974), pp. 193–94.

11 'Statistical Society Report', pp. 203, 210.

12 'Statistical Society Report', pp. 197, 210–14.

13 W. Quekett, *A Statistical Return of the District of Christchurch, In the Parish of Saint George in the East, in the County of Middlesex*, St George's-in-the-East, 1847, in *Slum Conditions in London and Dublin.*

14 D.B. McIlhiney, *A Gentleman in Every Slum, 1837–1914* (Allison Park, Pennsylvania: 1988), p. 105.

15 Watts, *Dissenters*, 2: 682.

Reed's Calvinism is confirmed by the choice of George Whitefield as his model, as he confided to his journal in 1814, 'How I pant for Whitefield's ardour, talents, and success! But, alas! I often seem his perfect contrast'. Also influential was Samuel Lyndall, minister of the New Road Chapel attended by Reed, who had a strong experiential emphasis in his preaching.[16]

Theological training further moulded Reed's evangelical Calvinism. From 1803 to 1847, the President of Hackney College, where Reed studied, was George Collison, and he firmly maintained an evangelical tone in the college.[17] Reed deplored any tendency to underplay Divine sovereignty and overstress human action and responsibility, which created 'unwarrantable extravagance'.[18]The 'rich and spontaneous grace of God' was stressed by Reed.[19] He carefully balanced the sovereignty of God with an appeal to the human heart for response, and argued that this was the perspective of the apostles' preaching:—

> Mark how they command all men to repent and believe the Gospel, and yet maintain that these deposits are the gift of God …[20]

Reed's theology was at heart practical and evangelistic. He urged Christians to act on the truths they believed: 'Now that redemption is accomplished, make haste to proclaim the Saviour as the rightful Sovereign and to establish His kingdom over the whole world'.[21] The evidence suggests that his congregation responded actively.

The New Road and Wycliffe Chapel Congregations

The New Road Chapel had not prospered under Samuel Lyndall. When Reed was called to the pastorate in 1811, there were just 60 church members, worshipping in a building capable of seating 800. The chapel was also

16 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 14–45, 52 sets out Reed's early theological development, including the purchase of Calvin's *Institutes* in 1806, and the influence of Matthew Wilks, minister of Whitefield's Tabernacle in Moorfields.

17 On George Collison see *Congregational Yearbook, 1847*, pp. 142–3; H.T. Jones, *Congregationalism in England* (London: 1963), p. 236. The emphasis Collison maintained reflected the college's roots as an academy founded in association with the Village Itinerancy, or the Evangelical Association for Spreading the Gospel in England

18 A. Reed and J. Matheson, *A Narrative of a Visit to the American Churches, by the Deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales*, Two Volumes (London, 1835), (hereafter *American Narrative*), 2: 72–74.

19 A. Reed, *The Revival of Religion: A Narrative of the State of Religion at Wycliffe Chapel During the Year 1839* (6th edn, London: 1840), pp. 21–22.

20 A. Reed, *The Sacred Trust. A Charge Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. T. Atkinson, Over the Church Assembling at Hounslow, Middlesex, On the 2nd of October, 1832* (London, 1832), pp. 19–20.

21 A. Reed, *The Extension of the Messiah's Kingdom. A Sermon Preached at the Opening of the Independent Chapel, St Mary's Street, Portsmouth, On Tuesday Morning, 30 August 1842* (Portsea, 1842), pp. 8–9, 20.

struggling under a £2,000 debt, which was not cleared until 1818.[22] The impact of his ministry was immediate: between 1811 and 1818, 354 members were added to the church, most of whom Reed believed were converts under him—'my joy in the Lord' as he called them.[23] The growth of the congregation under Reed was notable for both its size and length of continuance. There were in total 2,460 additions to the membership of Wycliffe Chapel during the course of his ministry, indeed, there were more accessions to the church membership during the second half of Reed's ministry than the first—1,466 between 1837 and 1861. As will be seen, the years of highest growth, 1839–41, were years of revival. Other periods of rapid growth appear linked to special or unusual events, others have no obvious explanation. In 1832, at least 27 were proposed for membership as subjects 'of a Divine change' in consequence of the increased sense of concern occasioned by the cholera epidemic in the area. In 1849, the opposite appeared to occur, when a further cholera epidemic brought the death of a number of members, and the removal of others from the vicinity of the disease, and[24] only 33 members joined during the year. The last decade of Reed's life saw a fall-off in the rate of growth, probably accounted for by the effects of increasing age on his ministry.

In 1846, the total membership of Wycliffe Chapel was 1,100,[25] but, as was typical of Nonconformist churches of the time, the congregation was consistently much larger than the membership. In the years after Reed's arrival the New Road chapel, seating 800, became crowded,[26] and a decision was taken to build a new chapel, seating 2,000. Wycliffe Chapel was opened in 1831 at a cost of £7,722,[27] and was well filled at the height of Reed's ministry in the 1830s and 1840s.

Reed's sons describe the New Road congregation as a 'respectable suburban' one, and Helmstadter asserts that the congregation were 'solidly affluent'.[28] However, the evidence indicates that the economic status of the congregation was somewhat lower than these impressions suggest. This conclusion is supported by the baptismal register of the New Road chapel, dating from 1811 to 1817, which suggests 88.5% of fathers were of the solidly upper working class and artisan level—the ranks from which Reed himself had

22 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 43, 57.
23 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 55–56.
24 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 146, 154, 379–80.
25 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 370.
26 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 48.
27 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 64, 144–48. The more famous King's Weigh House Chapel was rebuilt in 1833–34 with accommodation for just 800 in pews, and 300 in free sittings (E. Kaye, *The History of the King's Weigh House Church* (London, 1968), pp. 66–67)
28 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 47; Helmstadter, 'Reed', p. 16.

risen. The names of 96 fathers, with occupations for 92, are given, including 7 clerks, 7 mariners, 7 blacksmiths, 4 carpenters and 4 tailors.[29] The average weekly wage for the twelve occupations on the baptismal register for which figures are available was 22s. 0¼d. The figures from Reed's chapel confirm the suggestion that popular evangelicalism was concentrated in, and attractive to, the upper echelons of the 'lower orders' and the lower income groups within the 'middle ranks' of the society.[30] Reed certainly reached a significantly lower social stratum than Thomas Binney at the King's Weigh House Chapel in central London, where even the free seats were filled by young men starting their training in a career or business.[31] The membership records of Reed's church do not record occupations, but they do list the addresses of members, and a predominantly local congregation is revealed.[32]

Church Practice During Reed's Ministry

Andrew Reed believed that the church was a theocracy, 'Not only its institutions and officers are of divine appointment, but the persons likewise who are in succession, to administer them. All is of God'.[33] He took a high view of the office of the minister, 'The cure of souls and the honour of the Redeemer are his charge. He is a priest in the sanctuary, to him the holy mysteries are revealed; he is a prophet of the Most High, to him the visions and inspirations of an eternal world should be familiar'.[34] In discharging this calling Reed ensured careful oversight of the church, closely controlling the many agencies of the chapel. The other principal officers in the church were elected deacons. For a large church, the number was kept relatively small—nine in 1839, and seven at the time of Reed's retirement in 1861.[35] They met monthly, and served mainly to support and encourage Reed in his work, which they did wholeheartedly. During times of special religious effort the

29 Baptismal Register, New Road Meeting, 1811–17, Greater London Record Office N/C/23/1. The Baptismal Register 1850–73, Wycliffe Chapel, Stepney, GLRO N/C/40/1, does not list fathers' occupations. The value of such registers in assessing the social geography of churches is discussed on pp. 80–81, footnote 33 below.

30 Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, p. 66.

31 Kaye, *Weigh House*, p. 92.

32 Members' Roll, New Road and Wycliffe Chapel, GLRO, N/C/40/10.

33 A. Reed, *Ministerial Perseverance. A Charge, Delivered at the Settlement of the Rev. Arthur Tidman, over the Church Assembling in Barbican, London, on 8 January 1829*, London, 1829, p. 23.

34 A. Reed, *The Pastor's Acknowledgements. A Sermon Occasioned by the Occurrence of the Ninth Anniversary: On Sunday November 26, 1820*, London, 1820.

35 Reed, *Revival of Religion*, p. 4; Minutes of Deacons' Meetings and Church Meetings, 1849–1851, Wycliffe Chapel, Reverse, Deacons' Meeting 1 June 1849, GLRO N/C/40/3 Reverse; Minutes of Deacons' Meetings and Church Meetings Commencing 27 November 1861, Wycliffe Chapel, Deacons' Meeting, 27 November 1861, GLRO N/C/40/3/ Front.

deacons joined with Reed's plan of systematic visitation of those associated with the church. Candidates for church membership were visited by two deacons, and were required give a profession of faith, or evidence of transfer from another cause. Those not suitable were told to 'stand over'.

The pattern of regular services for worship was fairly standard: Sunday morning and evening, and on a Wednesday evening, with a prayer meeting on a Friday evening.[36] To aid congregational worship, Reed wrote a number of hymns, and compiled a hymn-book, published in 1842. The most famous of these is 'Spirit Divine attend our prayers', which still features in many modern hymn books, and his wife also composed a number of hymns.[37]

In his daily routine, Reed gave central place to study and preparation for the pulpit. In 1825, his pattern was to rise early, to study until noon, and at one o'clock to go out on pastoral visitation or benevolent duties.[38] This focus on preaching led Reed to encourage young men in training for the ministry, as he had been helped by Matthew Wilks. The Members' Roll of Wycliffe Chapel records the membership in the church of a number of students from Hackney and Homerton Colleges.[39] However, as the church grew in size, and his benevolent commitments increased, the time given to personal pastoral work declined, and so he sought to devolve the responsibility to others.[40]

The determination to extend the gospel outside the confines of Wycliffe Chapel led to the establishment of six daughter causes in the area by 1836—none came about as a result of schism. In 1839 four 'preaching stations' were also maintained, at which preaching and Sunday School work were conducted, and four Bible classes. The chapel also ran a Christian Instruction Society, which in 1839 employed a paid agent and about 70 visitors, and ran neighbourhood lectures on evangelistic subjects. Two 'Juvenile Societies' also worked with the missionary stations.[41]

Education and Sunday Schools

Outreach to children formed an important aspect of his response to the social and religious needs of the inner city. One of Reed's earliest decisions was to establish day schools, in order to relieve the Sunday School teachers from the duties of drilling children in the rudiments of secular knowledge, and to make

36 Deacons' Minutes Wycliffe Chapel, 1849–50; Reed, *Revival of Religion*, pp. 5–6
37 A. Reed, *The Hymn Book: A Compilation of Psalms and Hymns, for Use in a Public Worship, by Dr Watts and other Authors, With Some Originals*, London, 1841. (For other editions in 1842 and 1860 see Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, p. 953).
38 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 52,111.
39 Wycliffe Chapel Members' Roll, 1822–67.
40 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 154, 147.
41 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 290–291; Reed, *Revival of Religion*, pp. 43–47.

spiritual instruction the focus of Sunday School teaching.[42] By 1839 the chapel was running a Day School for 280 scholars, an 'Infant School' with 120 pupils, and an 'Adult School' with 120 pupils. The schools were aimed at the children of the poor, providing basic, moral, and spiritual education. Further schools in a destitute area of Bethnal Green, attracting some 400 scholars, were conducted by 20 teachers in fellowship with the church.[43]

The Sunday School was seen by Reed as an agency of evangelism and social guidance: it was 'The hope of the church; it is the great preventative of moral deterioration in our land; and the most powerful antidote to those evils which seem to threaten our popular government'.[44] By 1859 there were 665 attending the Sunday School.[45] For a number of years Andrew Reed's wife conducted a Bible Class of seventy or eighty young ladies, many of whom joined the church, and for several years Reed's son Charles was Sabbath School Superintendent.[46]

In 1857 a week-night class was established for the purpose of teaching reading and writing to scholars who were too young to attend the adult night school, and who did have not the opportunity of attending the day schools. Through the Sunday Schools the chapel was reaching some of the lowest social levels, and the most educationally needy, of East London society.[47]

Andrew Reed and Revival

Although Reed was undoubtedly aware of Charles Finney's work before he visited America in 1834, the development of his views on revival owes more to the Calvinistic revival tradition from Whitefield and particularly Jonathan Edwards. This approach was set out in the American W.B. Sprague's *Lectures on Revival*, a cautious Calvinistic antidote to Finney, and Reed was able to meet with Sprague on a visit to America in the 1830s. Sprague argued that not all conversions were sudden, that excitement and large numbers of conversions were not necessary to a revival, but that preaching was essential.[48]

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42 Minute Book of Wycliffe Chapel Sabbath School, Commencing October 1881, Jubilee Services in Connection with School Buildings, 21 October 1883, and Public Meeting 24 October 1883, GLRO N/C/40/20.

43 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 50–51; Reed, *Revival of Religion*, p. 47.

44 Reed and Matheson, *American Narrative*, 1: 389.

45 Committee Minutes, Boys' School, 1843–67, Annual Public Meetings, 26 October 1859, and 29 October 1861.

46 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 308; Minute Book of Wycliffe Chapel Sabbath School, 1882 onwards, Jubilee Services in Connection with School Buildings, 21 October 1883 and 24 October 1883.

47 Minute Book of Girls' Sunday School, Quarterly Meetings, 18 December 1854, 12 June 1856, 11 June 1857.

48 *American Narrative*, 1: 325, 347, 352; W.B. Sprague, *Lectures on Revival* (New York, 1832), pp. 12–14, 129–48, 258–286.

Reed's sermons were highly charged, often building up to a searching and emotional peroration, but they were quite different from the approach of revivalist preachers. The period of rapid growth in the church during the 1832 cholera outbreak came at the time when Reed was undertaking reading on revival. He arranged special meetings for servants and interested enquirers, and used a small room to retain proximity to his hearers. He distributed shortened forms of his sermons in the form of tracts. In December 1832 he spent 12 out of 14 nights speaking to enquirers at the chapel.[49] As a result of this spiritual upturn at a time of epidemic, there were 86 members added to the church in 1832, 60 in 1833, 68 in 1834, and 109 in 1835, all of whom had been carefully prepared for membership.[50] The church enjoyed strong, sustained, underlying growth throughout Reed's ministry.[51]

It was Reed's opinion that disrepute had been brought on the name of revival by over-hasty adoption of techniques from America. He gained first-hand experience of revivalism during his visit there in 1834, and believed that only somewhere between one fifth and one tenth of the 'conversions' from such measures were of a lasting nature. Camp meetings were felt to be overlong, and tended to hysteria.[52] Reed concluded that the essential features of a true revival were simple, pungent, decisive Biblical preaching ministry; sound Sunday School and Bible Class teaching; systematic visitation; special meetings for prayer; and follow-up meetings for enquirers. His conclusion was that 'in proportion to the diligent and wise use of just and scriptural methods, is the blessing'.[53]

In late 1838 he began seek a religious deepening,[54] and he challenged the church to set apart one hour per week for special prayer, and preached ten lectures on 'the Advancement of Religion'. A week of special services was held at New Year, which emphasised humility and repentance. After the week was over Reed continued to meet with those under spiritual conviction. At the funeral of a female missionary candidate, there were emotional outbursts, many were prostrated, and a few were affected hysterically. Reed was highly suspicious of such manifestations, and immediately cancelled a prayer meeting that was to follow the service. He believed that the signs should be viewed as indicating 'human infirmity, and not as signs of religion, and they soon disappeared'.[55]

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49 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 154–157.
50 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 158.
51 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 284.
52 *American Narrative*, 2: 35–41, 277–97.
53 *American Narrative*, 2: 2–4, 5–13, 30, 60.
54 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 299–304.
55 Reed, *Revival of Religion*, pp. 4–15.

Rather than perpetuating the revival meetings, Reed sought to infuse the spirit of the revival into the existing services. The Christian Instruction Society called meetings of those in its districts who attended no place of worship to a special ticket only service, which 3–400 'highly attentive' persons attended. Prayer meetings were spontaneously started by groups of children. Converts ranged from a child of seven, to the elderly.[56] From the young females' class and the schools in Bethnal Green came 30 additions to the church: most were over 16, and none under 14, although there were confident hopes of some who were younger than this. Those who were proposed for membership in the aftermath of the revival were examined very carefully, and a number were deferred for further examination. 300 persons met Reed for private religious conversation during 1839. None of those who subsequently joined the church were from other neighbouring churches.[57] The effect on the chapel membership was most significant. Whereas in 1838 there were 70 new members of Wycliffe Chapel, in 1839 there were 168, with 105, 110, and 94 in the succeeding years. The new members were overwhelmingly local in their residence: of the 168 additions in 1839, 135 (80·4%) were from Stepney.[58] The revival was not a 'sensation' that drew crowds from other causes as spectators, but was a local church based phenomenon, and as such did reach some of the unchurched, although the indications are that the revival mainly reached the pool of adherents and children already associated with the chapel and its societies. Interestingly, men seemed to have proved more responsive in the context of the revival. Normally, just 33% of new members were males, but this rose to 41·5% in 1842, just at the end of the revival. This would weigh against the suggestions that women were more susceptible to the emotionally charged atmosphere during revival.[59] Reed published his account of the revival to encourage others to follow his methods, distancing himself from many American techniques, or any induced emotionalism. He stressed the central role of the pastor using ordinary means.[60]

Missionary Concern

The evangelistic concern of Andrew Reed reached beyond the confines of Stepney, and indeed beyond the shores of Britain. A number of members of New Road and Wycliffe Chapels served abroad as missionaries. He also expressed his practical support by taking into his home the orphaned children

56 Reed, *Revival of Religion*, pp. 16, 11, 29–43.
57 Reed, *Revival of Religion*, pp. 21, 17–18.
58 Wycliffe Chapel Members' Roll, 1822–67.
59 Wycliffe Chapel Members' Roll, 1822–67.
60 Reed, *Revival of Religion*, pp. 23–28.

of Dr Milne, a missionary to China.[61] Reed believed that missionary work was '*immediate and imperative*'; the conversion of the nations would come through '*human instrumentality*'.[62]

This earnest missionary concern led to Reed being appointed a member of the Board of Directors of the London Missionary Society, and in May 1831 he was accorded the honour of preaching the annual sermon of the LMS at the Surrey Chapel, and he spoke at other meetings for the society around the country.[63]

The attachment of Reed to the missionary cause was passionate and personal. He offered to serve abroad as a missionary to Canada in 1835, and China in 1842, but each time he was dissuaded by ministerial colleagues and his church.[64]

Andrew Reed and Congregationalism

Reed was involved in a number of societies and agencies operating amongst the Independents, and later the Congregational Union. In 1829 he was elected to serve as a member of the committee of the Home Missionary Society.[65] When, in 1830, a 'Provisional Committee' was appointed to consider the 'desirableness and practicability of a General Union of Congregational Ministers and Churches', Reed served as a member. This led to a meeting in May 1831 to establish a Union of Congregational Churches, independent in church government, to promote evangelical religion; brotherly affection and co-operation; fraternal correspondence; collection of statistical information; and financial assistance with erecting places of worship.[66] In the work of the Congregational Union Reed took an active role. One aspect of this was his visit as a delegate from the Congregational Union of England to the churches of the United States in 1834. Here he met the leaders of both Congregational and Presbyterian churches, and was introduced to the President of the United States. Andrew Reed was accorded the honour of the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Yale University. His *Narrative* of the visit allows a unique insight into social and religious conditions in the United States in the 1830s.[67]

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61 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 263–65.
62 A. Reed, *The Hope and Duty of the Church. A Sermon Delivered in Grosvenor Street Chapel, Manchester, at the Annual Meeting of the East Lancashire Auxiliary Missionary Society, 18 June 1833* (London, 1833), pp.19–22, 50. [Italics original]
63 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 255–271.
64 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 272–282.
65 *Tenth Annual Report of Home Missionary Society* (London: URCL 1829,). On the Home Missionary Society see discussion of Irons' involvement above.
66 R. W. Dale, *History of English Congregationalism* (Completed and Edited by A.W.W. Dale) (Second Edition, London: 1907), pp. 688–695.
67 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 162–178. See narrative of the visit.

Although convinced of the rightness of Congregationalism as a system of church order, Reed was no narrow denominationalist. He appealed for unity amongst Christians based on spiritual oneness, and urged, 'Our pulpit must be open to all who preach Christ'.[68] When preaching the Anniversary sermon for the LMS in 1831, Reed declared his belief that evangelical unity was essential to the evangelisation of the world. While the Church was divided into parties, 'the worldly will remain scandalised or indifferent. They will justify themselves in postponing an inquiry after the truth, till its professors shall have agreed on what it is'.[69] Such views drew Reed into efforts to promote unity among evangelical Christians. In 1839 and in 1845 he met with evangelical leaders to discuss forming an Evangelical Union, but he was unable to decide whether a 'United Church' or a 'Free Church' was the best policy to advocate. Reed was deeply disappointed that the outcome of these discussions was merely the Evangelical Alliance of 1846. He sought not an alliance of individuals, but an Evangelical Union of churches.[70] Saddened by the failure of his vision for evangelical unity, Reed turned his attention to his ministry in the East End, and the charities he established.

The Social Concern Of Andrew Reed

In 1855 Reed wrote in his journal, 'For my occupation, I had rather proclaim the Gospel of the blessed God than be engaged in any other pursuit; and for my recreation, I prefer to relieve the miseries of the wretched above all other pleasures'.[71] The pursuit of this 'recreation' placed him in the foremost rank of Victorian philanthropists. He can rightly be called the Orphan's Friend. He personally gave over £4,000 to six charities he founded, and many thousands to others he supported.[72]

The social concern of Reed, shaped by the needs of the East End environment and his evangelical Calvinism, was actively worked out within Wycliffe Chapel. At the height of his ministry in 1839, the chapel ran a 'Bethesda Society' for visiting and relieving the poor in times of sickness; a 'Mother and Infant Friend Society' for the relief of married women in confinement; and two 'Maternal Societies'. There was also a 'Dorcas Society' to work for the deserving and distressed poor.[73]

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68 A. Reed, 'The Day of Pentecost. A Sermon Preached at Leeds Before the West Riding Auxiliary Missionary Society, 6 June 1839; and Published by Request', in *Charges and Sermons*, pp. 448–49.
69 Reed, *Eminent Piety*, p. 15.
70 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 225–231.
71 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 473.
72 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 538–39, 112.
73 Reed, *Revival of Religion*, p. 47.

The London Orphan Asylum

Reed extended his social concern beyond the confines of his church with the full support of his members. His principal interest was the plight of the orphan. His mother had been an orphan, and her experience, together with the example of George Whitefield's Orphan House in Georgia, allied to the pressing needs of East London, motivated him to action. In 1811, Reed visited a dying widower who was distressed over who would care for his young children after his death. For a period Reed took them into his own home, and from this initial gesture of pastoral kindness he and his sister undertook the care of the children of a dying man he had been visiting pastorally. This led him in 1813 to a larger plan for what became in 1815 the London Orphan Asylum, for children aged from 7 to 14. Its purpose was:—

> To relieve destitute and orphan children; to afford them clothing and maintenance; to fix habits of industry and frugality; to inculcate the principles of religion and virtue; and to place them out in situations where their morals shall not be endangered, and where a prospect of honest livelihood shall be secured.[74]

No comparable institution existed in East London, and Reed decided that the venture would be best served by a policy of denominational co-operation. An Anglican, the Rev. C.W. LeBas, MA, was invited to serve as joint secretary, and broadly Episcopal forms were followed in education and religious worship. By the time they were 14, children would be able to decide on the merits of conformity or nonconformity on their own. In this way, Anglican donors, who were in the majority, would not be out off. In 1814, a house off Cannon Street Road was rented, and the first children arrived to take up their places. Reed aimed high in securing patronage for the asylum. The Duke of Kent attended the institutory dinner in 1815, and became a patron.[75]

The project demonstrated Reed's ability as a philanthropist. An asylum costing £25,000 was erected on a site between Clapton and Homerton, which was opened in 1825. To raise the sum, Reed appealed to the Governors of the Bank of England, the East India Company, and the Corporation of the City of London, and the patronage of King George IV was obtained. Reed supervised the arrangements for the daily running of the asylum, from the scheme for education to the provision of physical education and play equipment, and in association with the chaplain, spent time pastorally with the children.[76] His work on behalf of orphan children was remarkable, yet he was troubled as to

74 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 86–89.
75 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 89–96.
76 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 97–112.

whether this work was interfering with the priority of his call to gospel ministry. In 1827, he confessed in his diary to being troubled by the realisation that over the previous 12 years the charity had taken over half his time, 'May I remember that I am a minister of the New Testament! What is there to equal this? The pursuits of the philosopher, the patriot, the philanthropist, are nothing compared with the minister of Jesus Christ'.[77]

Sadly, the non-sectarian policy in the running of the London Orphan Asylum failed, and in 1843 Anglicans effectively took over the running of the society, although he remained a Vice-President of the Society. By the time of his death in 1862, there had been 2,757 admissions to the asylum, and donations totalled £407,128.[78]

The Infant Orphan Asylum

In 1827, with the support of his closest friends, Reed resolved on the formation of an institution for the care of children under the age of seven who were not catered for by the London Orphan Asylum. To be supported were children orphaned of both parents, the children of widowers, and of disabled fathers unable to support their families. In 1828 the first four children were elected to the 'Infant Orphan Asylum', and whilst a house was prepared for them, two temporarily lodged with Reed.[79]

Again Reed successfully sought royal patronage for the new charity. Anglican involvement was crucial to the success of the project. As with the London Orphan Asylum, Reed took a close personal interest in the children, visiting the home frequently, and ensuring a humane regime was followed. He saw the work as having an ultimate spiritual intent. 'In the nursery is trained the future man; man, who was designed to bear the image of God; man, the noblest of the Creator's works. Let this training be worthy of such a being.' The first stone for a permanent home for the orphanage was laid by Prince Albert in June 1841, at a site on the edge of Wanstead Forest,[80] and the building was opened in 1843, having cost £40,000, with a capacity for 600 children. By his death the charity had received £302,611, and 1,918 children had come under its care.[81]

Again the religious policy was to use small portions of the Anglican services considered suitable for little children, and for sixteen years Churchmen and Dissenters acted harmoniously on these principles, but by

77 'Diary' of Andrew Reed, quoted in *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 113.
78 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 237–40, 538–39.
79 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 115–120.
80 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 121–135.
81 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 538–39. The building is now used as Snaresbrook Crown Court.

1840 tension between the two groups was growing. One clerical secretary began to insist on using the Catechism with the children, to which Reed objected. Eventually, Reed was constrained to resign on 12 February 1843.[82]

The Asylum for Fatherless Children

It took Reed some months to recover from the shattering of his philanthropic hopes, but his zeal was not diminished. He now resolved on an overtly non-sectarian scheme, free of religious tests. The result was *The Asylum for Fatherless Children*, which was started in March 1844. Education was to be 'strictly religious and scriptural', but not denominational, and support was drawn from both Conformist and Nonconformist to unite on the central tenets of compassionate religion—'whatever religion is besides, it is mainly essential love, visiting the fathers and widows in their affliction… Let us leave in abeyance the peculiarities of sect and party, and satisfy ourselves by presenting, in all their simplicity and power, the great, solemn, and holy truths on which, as Christians, we are all agreed'. Children from all backgrounds were to be accepted, whether Jew or Gentile, Conformist or Dissenter: this was to Reed truly 'Divine benevolence'.[83] In 1858 an asylum at Coulsdon, near Croydon, was opened at a cost of £22,230, and by his death £62,821 had been donated to the charity, including £1,800 from Reed himself. The capacity of the home was 300, and it had cared for 468 children by 1862.[84]

The Earlswood Hospital

From the 1830s onwards Reed became increasingly concerned as to the fate of those with learning disabilities or mental handicaps, some of whom were chained in prison, or generally left to wander the streets, often subject to public ridicule. In 1847 Reed launched an institution to provide both practical training (to avoid dependency), and promote spiritual elevation. He hoped that each resident might thus 'cease to be a burden on society, and become a blessing; that he may be qualified to know his Maker, and look beyond our present imperfect modes of being to perfected life in a glorious and everlasting future'.[85]

In 1848 a house on Highgate Hill, standing in 16 acres, was rented as an asylum, and within a year 50 residents had been admitted. Queen Victoria made a donation of 250 guineas. In spite of previous disappointments, Reed again sought to work on a broad sectarian basis: the Board included the

82 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 135–139.
83 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 233–37.
84 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 538–39.
85 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 383–91.

evangelical Anglicans. The success of the project led to the building of a 400 bed hospital on the Earlswood Estate, at a cost of £30,000, opened by Prince Albert in April 1855. By the time of Reed's death 920 people had passed through the hospital's care, and it had received £210,000 in donations. A further annexe in Colchester was opened in 1850.[86] The scheme made Andrew Reed a world pioneer, with his conviction that children with mental handicaps could and should be offered education, exercise, and spiritual instruction.

The Hospital for Incurables

Remarkably, Reed had one further charitable project to bring to fruition before his death. Those who were deemed incurable found themselves discharged from hospital, yet often were unable to work, required constant care, and were left destitute. In 1854, Reed called a meeting of his friends to discuss his plan for what became the Hospital for Incurables. It was not designed to help the '*worthless*, the *dissolute*, or the *mere pauper*', but those who would gladly have helped themselves 'had not the Divine providence crossed their path by sudden and overwhelming calamity'.[87] Again Reed sought to operate regardless of religious party distinctions, and 'in the spirit of that love which cometh down from heaven and is the bond of perfectness'. Initially a home in Carshalton was opened, and the first patients arrived in November 1854, before the hospital moved to Putney House. The usual enlightened regime was instituted—good books, nourishing diet, nurses, readers, companions, work for those capable, and religious services and spiritual support.[88] By the time of Reed's death the charity had raised £43,871 and had admitted 258 patients; 159 patients, and other non-residential cases were being cared for.[89]

The aggregate of Reed's philanthropic work, alongside his ordinary pastoral, political, and denominational labours, was enormous in expenditure of time, energy and his own money. The charities which he founded helped 6,423 cases in his lifetime, and in all they raised £1,043,566—here was a man who asked God for help, and he gave him a million pounds![90] Reed viewed such work as part of gospel ministry, a necessary outflow of gospel compassion, but not a substitute for the gospel. His motivation was the

86 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 392–424, 538–9; on Champneys see McIlhiney, *Gentleman in Every Slum*, pp. 74–6.
87 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 425–35. [Italics original]
88 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 435–458.
89 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 538–39. The hospital is now the Royal National Hospital for Neuro-disability.
90 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 538–39.

example and the command of Christ, 'Let us bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,—the law of kindness and of love!'[91] His was not the only significant voice in the charities, but his entrepreneurial skill, catholic spirit, and persuasive abilities made him a catalyst. His ability to harness business skills and acumen to philanthropic intent made him notable as a Dissenting minister, although in its ranks Congregationalism did include many laymen who were successful in business. The Boards of the charities had a strong ministerial presence, and they operated with a clear Christian ethos, and evangelism was an aspect of their work. His gospel compassion stretched far beyond the Lord's poor.

In declining health Reed resigned from the pastorate of Wycliffe Chapel in November 1861, the anniversary of his call to the ministry fifty years earlier. He died a few months later on 25 February 1862.[92] After his death, apart from a short upturn under the Rev. Reun Thomas in 1868–75, the numerical decline in the congregation continued. In 1904 the church moved to join with Christchurch, Ilford, which was renamed Wycliffe.[93]

Conclusions

Reed was an able and conscientious Christian minister and philanthropist, discharging his duty in the sight of God, believing he would be called to account at the divine bar of judgement for every minute spent on earth. He showed remarkable personal generosity, and worked in his charities for nothing. Zeal for the gospel and heartfelt compassion help explain his approach. The fusion of evangelicalism with Calvinism was most fruitful in Reed's experience. His evangelistic work saw great success: a struggling church was transformed, there were many conversions, there was a season of revival. Yet between evangelism and social concern, Reed felt no conflict. The Memorial Tablet erected for Andrew Reed at the London Orphan Asylum depicts him reaching down to two small orphan children—in one hand is a Bible, in the other is a plate of bread. Reed saw social concern as part of the fully orbed Christian ministry, although above all he saw himself as a preacher. Reed was truly the orphan's friend; his attitude to the mentally handicapped was remarkably enlightened and far in advance of his time. His concern for the care of the incurable long predated the hospice movement.

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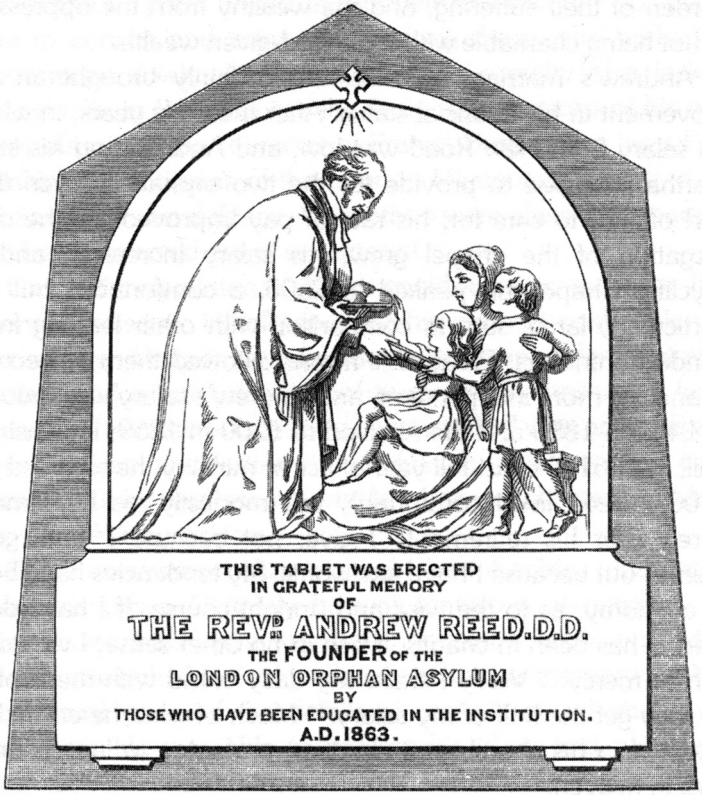
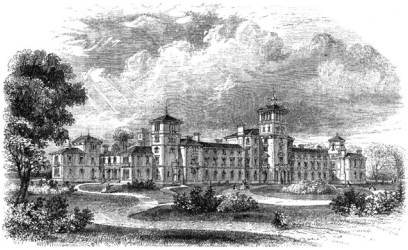
91 *Memoirs of Reed*, p. 434.
92 *Memoirs of Reed*, pp. 483–85, 518.
93 Wycliffe Chapel Records, GLRO, N/C/41.
94 The subsequent history of the charities is given in J. McMillan and N. Alvey, *Faith is the Spur: Andrew Reed and the Schools and Hospitals he Founded* (Cobham, 1993).

The charities Reed helped to found still continue, although in changed form.[94] They were the outflow of his personal background, regular contact with the scenes of deep poverty in the place he worked, and deep rooted compassion motivated and shaped by his theological convictions. Here was an enlightened and imaginative social concern shaped, but not restricted, by evangelical Calvinism. Reed would have claimed that his theological convictions were the motive force for his compassion. Andrew Reed, assured of his standing before God on the basis of grace alone, believed he was simply following both the command and the example of his Saviour.

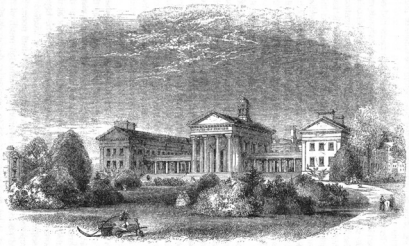


The Earlswood Asylum

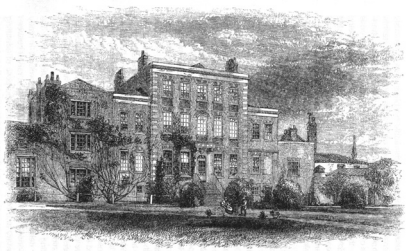
The Infant Orphan Asylum, Wanstead



The Asylum for Fatherless Children



The London Orphan Asylum



The Hospital for Incurables, Putney House

Wycliffe Chapel

A

PLATFORM OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

GATHERED OUT OF THE WORD OF GOD: AND AGREED UPON BY THE ELDERS: AND MESSENGERS OF THE CHURCHES ASSEMBLED IN THE SYNOD AT CAMBRIDGE IN NEW ENGLAND

To be presented to the Churches and Generall Court for their consideration and acceptance, in the Lord.

The Eight Moneth Anno 1649

Psal: 84 1. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts?*
Psal: 26.8. *Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house & the place where thine honour dwelleth.*
Psal: 27.4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the dayes of my life to behold the Beauty of the Lord & to inquire in his Templ.*

Printed by S G at *Cambridge* in *New England* and are to be sold at *Cambridge* and *Boston* *Anno Dom:* 1649.

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LONDON,
Printed by *William Bentley* for *John Ridley* dwelling at the Sign of the *Castle* in *Fleetstreet.* 1652.

The Cambridge Platform

Gordon Cooke

If it wasn't enough for you to have moved today from London to the West Midlands for this annual conference, I want to take you on a further journey for a short time this afternoon. We are going to Cambridge, not the city north of London, famous for its university, which, according to Rowan Atkinson, is, along with Oxford and Hull, the greatest university in the land, but to another Cambridge, equal in size and with a similarly famous university. For we are off to Cambridge, in the state of Massachusetts, USA, home of Harvard University!

You may not know that this Cambridge was once the home of the largest ink manufacturer in the world, or that it is known as the City of Squares, because so many of its commercial districts are built around intersections. You may not know either that 129 of the world's 780 Nobel Prize winners have at some time been affiliated with at least one of its universities, but you need, as Congregationalists, to know about its history.

It was founded in 1630 by 700 Puritan colonists who had sailed from Britain under the man who became its first Governor, John Winthrop. And, of particular interest to us today, it was the scene of the development of the Cambridge Platform, or to give it its full title; *A Platform of Church Discipline, Gathered out of the Word of God: And agreed upon by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches Assembled in the Synod of Cambridge, in New England.*

There are many ways in which we could look at the Cambridge Platform. It is surely one of the most important documents in the development of Puritanism in America. It was vital in terms of the development of the culture of New England, and has made an influential impression on American history as a whole as a result; but gathered here today, we are probably better off to take a more narrow focus.

This is the definitive statement of church order and discipline produced by the Congregationalists of colonial New England. If we want to know what Congregationalism meant to the founders of our tradition, this is the place to look. And it is clear that those who formulated the Platform were aiming to make their Congregationalism as thoroughly biblical as they could.

That is not surprising when we pay attention to the quality of the men who produced the Platform, and particularly to the two men who were most closely associated with it. Delegates to the synod selected a draft document from three presented. The one chosen had been submitted by Pastor Richard Mather of Dorchester, and with minor modifications and polishing it was

agreed upon unanimously. To it was added a foreword by another highly respected leader of the church, John Cotton. It is of use to detour for a minute to remind ourselves of who these men were.

Richard Mather

Richard Mather had been born near Liverpool in 1596. At the age of fifteen he could have gone to Oxford, but family finances did not allow it. Mather, instead, became the Master of a local Grammar School which led to him living with a cultured Puritan farmer, Edward Aspinall. He began to listen to Puritan sermons and read their writings. By the time he was eighteen, Mather knew that he had been born again, having despaired of his own ability to keep God's law, and believed the promises of God's Word. In 1618, Mather did go up to Oxford, where he studied at Brasenose College, but within a year he was back home, where the people at Toxteth had pleaded for him to become their minister. He stayed there fifteen years, seeing much fruit from his ministry. The Puritan minister at nearby Warrington, William Gellibrand, having heard him preach, famously said, 'Call him Matter; for believe it, this man hath substance in him.' Mather married Katherine Hoult, and had six sons, four of whom became ministers themselves, including of course, Increase, who became a famous preacher in Massachusetts.

By 1633, Mather had developed Congregational views, particularly in relation to church government, and this led to him being suspended on more than one occasion from his Church of England pulpit. Seeing no way of gaining restoration, Mather sailed to America in 1635, settling in the Massachusetts Bay colony, where he soon helped found the church at Dorchester. He ministered there until his death in 1669, never giving up hope of the resolution of the problems that had caused him to leave England. Indeed he always saw himself as an exile in a foreign land. Before drafting the Platform he had engaged in vigorous debates with Samuel Rutherford in Scotland.

Mather was known for his opposition to antinomian tendencies in the church, and defended a restrictive view of church membership. The visible church needed to be as pure as possible, and whereas others, such as his good friend and colleague John Cotton, would take a more gentle position, Mather was firm in his belief that it was better to shut out some Christians rather than admit one hypocrite.

Mather's preaching was plain but powerful. His grandson, Cotton Mather, wrote that he aimed 'to shoot his arrows, not over the heads, but into the hearts of his hearers. Yet so scripturally and powerfully did he preach his plain

sermons, that … he saw a great success of his labours in both Englands [Old and New], converting many souls to God.'

John Cotton

John Cotton was born in Derby in 1584, to parents who were sympathetic to the Puritan cause. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of thirteen, graduating in 1603. He became a fellow in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, earning an MA in 1606, and in the following six years he lectured and tutored. It was during this time that he was converted under the ministry of Richard Sibbes, realizing that he had built his hopes of salvation on intellectual abilities, rather than on Christ.

Cotton was ordained in Lincoln in 1610, and two years later became vicar of a large parish in Boston, Lincolnshire. He remained there for 21 years. Again, though, Cotton found himself developing nonconformist views and this led to his being suspended from the ministry. Only the friendly relationships he enjoyed with local diocesan bishops, and the people of Boston, helped lift these suspensions. Meanwhile other Puritans both in England and on the continent valued his wise counsel, and help in difficult situations. In 1629, both Cotton and his wife contracted malaria, disabling them for a twelve month, and taking Elizabeth's life two years later.

At this time Cotton became aware of the colonization of New England, even preaching farewell sermons for some of those departing. He was beginning to feel the oppression that others had struggled with, being summoned to appear before Archbishop Laud's commission, and going into hiding in London as he contemplated what to do next. Despite contrary advice from men such as Thomas Goodwin, Cotton could not conform, and in 1633 he sneaked out of England eluding those watching for him at various ports. He arrived in Boston in September of that year. There he quickly became the teacher at the First Church there, where God's Spirit was already abundantly blessing. It is hard to exaggerate the influence Cotton wielded and the respect he enjoyed in New England. He played a leading role in the theological and political controversies of the time, and by 1646 had already produced a number of treatises on church government, such as *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Power thereof,* influential in the development of the Independent position at the Westminster Assembly. But he had also written widely on a number of other subjects. He produced nearly forty books in his lifetime, some of which have enjoyed recent republication. These gifts, along with his Christ-like humility, made him a great influence for good as the church was founded in New England, and the 'New England Way' developed.

He was a natural choice to provide the foreword to the Platform when it was eventually published.

Historical Circumstances

To understand the way the Platform is structured, we need to bear in mind the historical circumstances out of which it arose. The colonists of New England were heavily influenced by events taking place, and issues being worked through in the 'old England' from which they had emigrated. The seventeenth century was a time of theological ferment with great discussions taking place about the nature of the church—it was the era of the Puritans, church reform was a national issue rather than a church one. Charles I was about to be beheaded and Parliament was in the ascendancy. From this period the Westminster Confession (1646) and our own Savoy Declaration (1658) owe their origin. Indeed the discussions which were taking place around those doctrinal documents back in England seem to be an accepted background to the Cambridge Platform. The Platform is not meant to be a standard, or a doctrinal basis for the churches of New England. It only deals with matters of church government and practice, and, as we shall see, mirrors quite closely the final section of the Savoy Declaration which deals with the Church. It also seems clear that those responsible for the drafting, publication and recognition of the Platform shared the Calvinistic theology of those addressing wider issues back in London, but clearly did not accept the Presbyterian forms of church government that the Westminster Confession outlined.

The people of New England, especially the Congregationalists, had a problem of identity. With the rapid development of Presbyterian churches in the colonies there was a fear that if Presbyterianism became the dominant church order, then that would cause trouble. In New England one had to be a church member to have a child baptised, or, indeed, to vote in civil elections. If Presbyterianism became the acknowledged standard form of church government, Congregationalists feared being forced to subscribe to it to safeguard their own rights. If that happened the whole reason for moving half way around the world might be lost. Congregationalists realised that they needed to establish their own structures, to formalise what they believed. In that way was freedom.

So in May 1646, the General Court of Massachusetts called the Congregational churches together in Synod. What began as an attempt to formalise beliefs on a limited number of subjects such as church government and baptism, soon developed into a more comprehensive statement of church principles. They met three times, once late in 1646 and then again once each

in the following two years. The completed work was presented to the court in October 1649, some 360 years ago this year.

The Cambridge Platform was no simple, dry theological thesis, nor even just a formal, legal document. It was the codification of the practices of the New England churches for at least a generation, and although it waned in influence in later decades, there are still churches in the USA today which have it as their rulebook.

Before examining the Platform in more detail and comparing its guidance with the state of affairs in many of our Congregational churches today, it is probably only fair to outline some of the features of colonist life and thinking which form the backdrop to the Platform. This is of course the period of the Puritans. It is surely true to say that their idea of what a church should be was far stronger, and dare I say, more biblical than ours often is. For the Puritans, one of the real evidences of conversion was a desire for fellowship and Christian community. They did of course have a very clear theology of conversion which sometimes can be lost, but that accepted, real spiritual life always resulted in a longing for the communion of other Christians. For them, the idea of the communion of the saints could not just be an article of belief. It needed to be lived out in some form of pious community. We see that, not only in the letters that they sent to one another, and back to Christians in England, but also in the sermons that were preached and the books that were written. The church had to be 'a city on a hill'. One couldn't live a godly life in splendid isolation. So the Cambridge Platform grew out of a desire to create the means to nurture a community of the visible saints, whilst reaching out to any in the broader community who might at the moment remain 'invisible'.

Indeed it was, it could be argued, the restrictions placed on the Puritans by their enemies in the Church in England, in this area in particular, that had driven so many of them from England, either to the Continent, or to the new land to the west, in the first place. In the early 1600s, churches had been much more like communities of saints. The hierarchy of the church had adopted a much freer approach to how individual churches were governed and how they acted, and the Puritans had taken full advantage of that. Many of them had graduated from the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge where they had enjoyed times of spiritual communion and conference with brothers of all backgrounds. Others had enjoyed private tutelage in godly homes, and either way, they then sought to replicate the 'family' atmosphere of such places in their churches.

When more repressive centralised church policies, driven by those with an anti-Puritan agenda, began to dominate, the Puritans soon found it harder to nourish the communities of saints within the parishes. Whereas before,

churches would often fellowship with one another, travel to one another's churches to hear sermons, and hold private conferences, this proved more and more difficult. The idea of the church as a large family faced the threat of being lost. The Puritans felt that something terrible had now happened to church life as a result. From both the Old and New Testaments they concluded that a spirit of love and of family had dominated the true church, tracing such thinking back to the example of Abraham and Sarah in the book of Genesis. This was proving impossible to cultivate under the oppression of Laud and others.

In New England, however, there was freedom to start afresh, and so those forming the church community had been in a position to put into practice what could now only be a principle in the old world. The challenges here would be many and varied, but, at least at the moment, there was not the need to safeguard true spirituality from the attacks of ungodly men in high positions in the church. It is true to say too, that the model that they formulated, as well as being a codification of what had already been established in New England, was a model for what the Church of England that they had left behind could be like; what they longed for it to be like.

It would be interesting to know what these founding fathers would make of Congregationalism today. There are a number of areas of church life where practice in our churches is substantially different from that outlined in the Platform. It might be of benefit to us today to highlight a few of these and ask ourselves whether there are yet important truths that we can return to as we look back through the centuries.

How independent should a congregational church be?

The first area which repays careful perusal is the extent to which Congregationalists relate to other churches, Congregational churches or otherwise. New England Congregationalists were at pains to point out that they were not Independents. Though they were labelled such, it was not with their approval!

As early as chapter 2 of the Platform, there is teaching in relation to the nature of the church catholic. Particular visible gatherings of the saints were to be seen in context as a part of a universal church

> 1. The catholic church is the whole company of those that are elected, redeemed, and in time effectually called from the state of sin and death unto a state of grace and salvation in Jesus Christ.
>
> 2. The state of the members of the militant visible church, walking in order, was either before the Law, economical, that is, in families; or under the Law, national; or since the coming of Christ, only Congregational (the term

> Independent, we approve not): therefore neither national, provincial, nor classical.

In chapters 15 and 16 we see that this had a concrete expression in the way the churches were to relate to each other. In chapter 15 the Platform outlines six ways in which churches could encourage each other. Amongst other things, churches were expected to take care for one another's welfare, consult with each other when there were difficult issues to deal with, not be slow to admonish any sister-fellowships that were slow in dealing with sin within the body, and minister relief and aid to one another in times of need. That should not be a difficult thing to imagine for any of our churches that hold the *Savoy Declaration,* for in the second section of chapter 27 there, *Of The Communion of Saints,* it seems we are pointed in that direction also:

> All Saints are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, though especially to be exercised by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in families or churches, yet as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Even more interestingly, perhaps, Chapter 16 deals with synods. As we have seen in the full title of the Cambridge Platform, the document itself came from such a gathering of representatives from different individual fellowships. These synods would be made up of elders normally from each of the churches. They were to be seen as an ordinance of Christ, and were necessary for the promotion of spiritual health in the churches, by the discernment of heresy and error, and the establishment of peace and truth. The synod had no judicial power as such. The Platform does not recognise the authority of synods in the way that a Presbyterian would, for example, but 16.5 falls not far short of this:

> 5. The Synod's directions and determinations, so far as consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement therewith (which is the principal ground thereof, and without which they bind not at all), but also, secondarily, for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word.

It seems clear that churches were expected to take careful note of the results of the synod's proceedings at the very least, although there seems little in the way of instruction as to the direction that should be taken if a church would not listen to the result of such a synod.

Furthermore, the reader of the Platform cannot escape the conclusion that our transatlantic forefathers felt that this could be held in balance with the concept of the independence of the local church. Consequently, it is hard to

see how they would approve of the situation in a number of our Congregational churches today, where we exist in not-so-glorious isolation. I wonder what they would make of a body like EFCC!

The idea of an advisory synod is not foreign to the *Savoy Declaration* either, as we can see from section 27 of the appendix entitled *The Institution of Churches, and the order appointed in them by Jesus Christ*:

> In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine or in administrations, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church in their peace, union, and edification, or any member or members of any church are injured in, or by any proceeding in censures, not agreeable to truth and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together. do by their messengers meet in a synod or council, to consider and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned. Howbeit, these synods so assembled are not entrusted with any church-power, properly so called, or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures, either over any churches or persons, or to impose their determinations on the churches or officers.

Again it must be remembered that the Platform was written out of a desire to distinguish a Congregational system of church government from a Presbyterian one, and if anything might have been expected to follow, it would have been a more entrenched position which allowed less for outside involvement from synods and other individual churches. But that was not the result.

We would do well to challenge ourselves as 21st Century Congregationalists in this matter. We might have a different understanding from Presbyterians of Scriptural passages like the Jerusalem Council account of Acts 15, but do we recognise our interdependence with other fellowships in the Body of Christ? We might ask ourselves whether we make enough provision for churches to assist one another, particularly when difficult pastoral situations arise, or when there is financial need in one fellowship which could be met by a larger one, maybe not many miles away, geographically or theologically! How do we as individual Congregational churches perceive ourselves in relation to the universal, catholic church of which we must be a part? It is the clear desire of our Lord in John 17 that we might be one. Passages like Ephesians 4 emphasise that unity. We remember Dr Lloyd-Jones, whom we Congregationalists often claim as one of our own, passionately reminding us, often from those very passages, that although we needed to stand aside from the ecumenical drift that characterised much of the

second half of the twentieth century, real biblical church unity was something of an altogether different order.

What does it mean to be a church member?

As you read through the Platform, and as we look back on how it was worked out in individual congregations, especially in the early years, it seems clear that church membership was meant to mean something. As early as the third chapter of the document we see this matter dealt with at some length. Listen to section ii:

> By saints, we understand:
>
> Such as have not only attained the knowledge of the principles of religion, and are free from gross and open scandals, but also do, together with the profession of their faith and repentance, walk in blameless obedience to the Word, so as that in charitable discretion they may be accounted saints by calling, (though perhaps some or more of them be unsound and hypocrites inwardly), because the members of such particular churches are commonly by the Holy Ghost called 'saints and faithful brethren in Christ'; and sundry churches have been reproved for receiving, and suffering such persons to continue in fellowship among them, as have been offensive and scandalous; the name of God also, by this means, is blasphemed, and the holy things of God defiled and profaned, the hearts of the godly grieved, and the wicked themselves hardened and helped forward to damnation. The example of such does endanger the sanctity of others, a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Though there is no evidence that church leaders were over-burdensome in the way they questioned prospective members, or overly strict in the way backsliding members were disciplined, there seems little doubt that church members were to walk the talk, live the life. All members were encouraged to bear public testimony before the church, or, at the very least, the church elders, on admission to membership, and were then encouraged to see themselves as being in a covenant relationship with the body of Christ in that particular place. It seems very difficult for the unrepentant to be admitted or for those who actually are unregenerate to remain in membership.

Chapter 4 is almost wholly given over to this subject. A lengthy quotation of some of these sections will prove the point:

> 1. Saints by calling must have a visible political union among themselves, or else they are not yet a particular church, as those similitudes hold forth, which the Scripture makes use of to show the nature of particular churches; as a body, a building, house, hands, eyes, feet and other members, must be united, or else (remaining separate) are not a body. Stones, timber, though squared, hewn and polished, are not a house, until they are compacted and united; so

> saints or believers in judgment of charity, are not a church unless orderly knit together.

Before carrying on in this section it is worth pointing out something which is a feature throughout the Platform, but, perhaps, is especially noticeable in the paragraph which I have just read. The men of Cambridge were thoroughly biblical. We can see how they had thought through the illustrations that the New Testament uses when it discusses the church, and had allowed that to dominate what they then issued as guidance for how the churches at New England should operate. The footnotes throughout the published Platform also can be seen to abound with Scriptural references. The outworking of such thinking continues in the remaining paragraphs of this chapter.

> 3. This form is the visible covenant, agreement, or consent, whereby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the 'church covenant,' for we see not otherwise how members can have church power over one another mutually. The comparing of each particular church to a city, and unto a spouse, seems to conclude not only a form, but that that form is by way of covenant. The covenant, as it was that which made the family of Abraham and children of Israel to be a church and people unto God, so is it that which now makes the several societies of Gentile believers to be churches in these days.

> 4. This voluntary agreement, consent or covenant—for all these are here taken for the same—although the more express and plain it is, the more fully it puts us in mind of our mutual duty; and stirs us up to it, and leaves less room for the questioning of the truth of the church estate of a company of professors, and the truth of membership of particular persons; yet we conceive the substance of it is kept where there is real agreement and consent of a company of faithful persons to meet constantly together in one congregation, for the public worship of God, and their mutual edification; which real agreement and consent they do express by their constant practice in coming together for the public worship of God and by their religious subjection unto the ordinances of God there: the rather, if we do consider how Scripture covenants have been entered into, not only expressly by word of mouth, but by sacrifice, by handwriting and seal; and also sometimes by silent consent, without any writing or expression of words at all.

> 6. All believers ought, as God gives them opportunity thereunto, to endeavor to join themselves unto a particular church, and that in respect of the honor of Jesus Christ, in his example and institution, by the professed acknowledgment of and subjection unto the order and ordinances of the gospel; as also in respect of their good communion founded upon their visible union, and contained in the promises of Christ's special presence in the church; whence they have fellowship with him, and in him, one with another; also in the

> keeping of them in the way of God's commandments, and recovering of them in case of wandering, (which all Christ's sheep are subject to in this life), being unable to return of themselves; together with the benefit of their mutual edification, and of their posterity, that they may not be cut off from the privileges of the covenant. Otherwise, if a believer offends, he remains destitute of the remedy provided in that behalf. And should all believers neglect this duty of joining to all particular congregations, it might follow thereupon that Christ should have no visible, political churches upon earth.

How does this compare with the state of affairs often found in Congregational churches of Great Britain in 2009? Some of them would have a membership roll far in excess of the number who might ordinarily be expected to be present on a Sunday. For those present on a Sunday, many might feel that attendance once on the Lord's Day is enough, and so consequently, the evening service in many congregations is either attended by a handful, or in some churches has disappeared altogether. As for the midweek fellowship meeting, the Bible Study and Prayer Meeting, only the particularly keen are likely to be there. Many of our churches are a group of individuals who come together for public worship, but who rarely relate to one another on a spiritual basis; in other words, rarely fellowship in a biblical sense. When difficulties arise between individual members, this is not seen as a major problem which must be addressed in a biblical manner, but something which can be allowed to remain the state of affairs, or worse fester into something more hostile. Often within the modern church, there is comparatively little reluctance when it comes to severing our connection with a particular fellowship, maybe over a personal difference, or a secondary theological matter. There are, after all, other churches in the area that would be only too glad to see us in their congregation, and contributing to their income, next Sunday morning! How different that is from the idea of covenant community commitment which runs through the Cambridge Platform, or indeed our own *Savoy Declaration:*

> Persons that are joined in church-fellowship, ought not lightly or without just cause to withdraw themselves from the communion of the church whereunto they are so joined.

The churches of the Platform felt that the second Great Commandment, the need to love our neighbour as we love ourselves, was a clear basis for church community life.

One cannot help feeling that our churches would be in a far healthier condition if these standards were at least approximated to. The idea of 'dead wood' on a membership roll is too easily tolerated. Names on a membership are no substitute for living members of a healthy body! Furthermore, if members had more of an idea of being in a covenant relationship with their

church, perhaps relationships would be worked harder at within a church, and people would be less speedy in leaving one church and moving down the road to the next. Perhaps!

Interestingly, another two prominent features of the Cambridge Platform relate to issues currently in debate in evangelicalism at large:

Is there a place for ruling elders in a Congregational church?

The vast majority of our Congregational churches nowadays are led by a single Pastor, if finances and other circumstances allow, assisted by a group of deacons. The idea of a plural eldership, although enjoying a certain popularity in the last twenty years or so, has made comparatively little progress in Congregationalism. Where it has, it has met with a certain resistance from congregations often determined to maintain the status quo: either because they want to maintain the supremacy of the church meeting, or perhaps, because they feel a threat to the position of 'the Lord's Anointed', the Pastor. Sometimes that latter resistance might even indeed have come from the Pastor himself! The Browne-Barrow debate is still alive and kicking in some of our churches!

It is interesting to see that the churches of the seventeenth century colonists saw things differently. Both Presbyterians and Congregationalists held that the plurality of elders was scriptural and desirable, and the Congregationalists saw no reason why this should necessarily conflict with an authoritative church meeting. Of course, the Savoy Declaration allows for elders, and indeed a plurality of them:

> The officers appointed by Christ, to be chosen and set apart by the church so called, and gathered for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power and duty which he entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are pastors, teachers, elders and deacons.

Chapter 6 of the Platform, however, not only introduces the idea of teaching and ruling elders, but surely takes us a step further:

> 4. Of elders (who are also in Scripture called bishops) some attend chiefly to the ministry of the Word, as the pastors and teachers; others attend especially unto rule, who are, therefore, called ruling elders.

Chapter 7 outlines their functions in relation to the church. The office of the governing elder was to be distinct from that of a Pastor or of a Teacher. Preaching and teaching were the remit of the Pastor and Teacher, and ruling elders were to work alongside them in matters such as the admission of members, the ordination of officers, the excommunication of those who offended and could not be restored otherwise, and by the restoration of such

who came to repentance. Their work is further outlined as calling the church together when necessary, organizing and moderating meetings of the membership, and leading the administration of church life generally. Their pastoral role is further recognized in their responsibility to prevent and heal offences that might corrupt the church, to feed the flock by words of encouragement and admonition, to visit and pray over sick members when they are sent for, and to visit and pray with church members at other times as the opportunity arose.

These elders were selected by the congregation, and could be deposed by the same. Unlike Presbyterianism, where the elders had a responsibility for more churches than their own, those subscribing to the Platform believed that the ruling elder's jurisdiction was limited to the place where he was appointed. But it was clearly believed that a board of elders was a necessary corrective against two undesirable extremes. As Cotton Mather puts it:

> Unless a church had divers elders, the church government must needs become prelatic or popular.

Many would argue that this seems to be a far more biblical state of affairs than that which exists in many of our Congregational churches today. Although, perhaps the New Testament is not as clear as some of us wish on the questions that dominate the discussion of plurality and parity of elders, it seems reasonable from the plain reading of passages such as Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17ff, 1 Timothy 3:1–7, and Titus 1:5–9, that a plurality of elders with real pastoral, authoritative responsibility, perhaps not unlike that suggested in the Platform, was the expected state of affairs in churches founded in the first century. Moreover, the introduction to a number of Paul's epistles, and even a look back into life amongst the Old Testament people of God, suggests to us that God's people should be led by a group of such men, given the necessary gifts and having developed the required graces, so that the whole church might benefit.

But isn't the point of congregationalism that the church meeting is sovereign? It is clear from the Platform, that Congregational government, and a board of ruling elders, were not mutually exclusive. Decisions taken by the church should meet with the approval of both levels in the church structure.

Chapter 10.3 has it like this;

> This government of the church is a mixed government (and so has been acknowledged, long before the term of independency was heard of); in respect of Christ, the head and king of the church, and the Sovereign Power residing in him, and exercised by him, it is a monarchy; in respect of the body or brotherhood of the church, and power from Christ granted unto them it

> resembles a democracy, in respect of the presbytery and power committed unto them, it is an aristocracy.

This section, though, and one or two others of the Platform pose more questions than perhaps they answer. It is clear that the document recognizes the possibility of a church existing without elders. Elders are for the well-being of the church, not for their being. The absence of elders does not, therefore, nullify the reality of it being a church. That plus the fact that elders were selected and could be removed by the congregation suggests that the balance of power lay very much with the congregation, and so, although the section we have just quoted pictures a scene of harmonic agreement between the eldership and the congregation, it is not hard to see which would have the dominant influence when that agreement broke down. That being the case, one wonders whether the eldership envisaged by the platform really is a biblical eldership at all. The history books tell us that within a decade or so of the Platform being agreed upon, the matter of ruling elders was in the melting pot again, and by the end of the seventeenth century, many of these churches had no ruling elders.

Those chapters, 6–8, also discuss the other offices of the church, attempting to make a distinction, perhaps less successfully, between that of Pastor and Teacher. This seems to be based on a particular understanding of Ephesians 4:11, whereas many would see the term Pastor and Teacher as either interchangeable, or to be understood as referring to two distinct aspects of one role, the Pastor-teacher.

> 5. The office of pastor and teacher appears to be distinct. The pastor's special work is, to attend to exhortation, and therein to administer a Word of wisdom; the teacher is to attend to doctrine, and therein to administer a word of knowledge; and either of them to administer the seals of that covenant, unto the dispensation whereof they are alike called; as also to execute the censures, being but a kind of application of the word: the preaching of which, together with the application thereof, they are alike charged withal.

The driving force behind the differentiation being made however, might be the simple recognition that churches need a ministry which is doctrinal, but also one which is applied. That is something that even a one-man ministry needs to bear in mind. Another thought is that although we might not use the same terminology, perhaps what we have here is not far from the idea of team ministry that we see in a number of our larger churches.

There is also a tightly defined description of the work of a deacon; From chapter 7

> 3. … The office and work of a deacon is to receive the offerings of the church, gifts given to the church, and to keep the treasury of the church, and

> therewith to serve the tables, which the church is to provide for; as the Lord's table, the table of the ministers, and of such as are in necessity, to whom they are to distribute in simplicity.

The preceding paragraph makes it clear that the office of Deacon is limited to the care of the temporal things of the church. It does not include dealing with or the administration of spiritual things such as the Word and the Sacraments. Perhaps because of our reluctance to have a plural eldership, deacons in our churches are called upon sometimes to perform tasks that the Cambridge colonists, and, perhaps more importantly, the early church, would not recognize as their responsibility. Furthermore, in churches where female deacons are appointed we might then be asking women to be responsible for activities that Scripture restricts to men.

How are new churches formed?

In a day when there is much discussion about church planting it is interesting to read the Platform's views on the ideal size of a church and what should happen if a congregation exceeded this. It is clear from Chapter 3.4, that the colonists would not have felt it proper to have the so-called megachurches that we see their descendents rejoicing in.

> The matter of the church, in respect of its quantity, ought not to be of greater number than may ordinarily meet together conveniently in one place; nor ordinarily fewer than may conveniently carry on church work. Hence, when the holy Scripture makes mention of the saints combined into a church estate in a town or city, where was but one congregation, it usually calls those saints 'the church' in the singular number, as 'the church of the Thessalonians,' 'the church of Smyrna, Philadelphia,' etc.; but when it speaks of the saints in a nation or province, wherein there were sundry congregations, it frequently and usually calls them by the name of 'churches' in the plural number, as the 'churches of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia,' and the like; which is further confirmed by what is written of sundry of those churches in particular, how they were assembled and met together the whole church in one place, as the church at Jerusalem, the church at Antioch, the church at Corinth and Cenchrea, though it were more near to Corinth, it being the port thereof, and answerable to a village; yet being a distinct congregation from Corinth, it had a church of its own, as well as Corinth had.

And so, when a church grew greater in size, provision was made in chapter 15.4, a section which also displays the great gift of the Puritans for drawing illustrations from the world around them;

> there is also a way of propagation of churches; when a church shall grow too numerous, it is a way, and fit season to propagate one church out of another, by sending forth such of their members as are willing to remove, and to

> procure some officers to them, as may enter with them into church estate among themselves; as bees, when the hive is too full, issue forth by swarms, and are gathered into other hives, so the churches of Christ may do the same upon the like necessity and therein hold forth to them the right hand of fellowship, both in their gathering into a church and in the ordination of their officers.

Now, it might be argued that, because our situation is so different from those of seventeenth century Massachusetts, there is little for us to learn from them. Where church planting is being carried out in our country, we are often seeking to do so in areas where former churches have died, the light on the lampstand has long-since been extinguished, and there are whole communities without a witness. The situation that we are looking at was very different. With every boatload that arrived from the homeland came numerous Christians who desired to settle into fellowships. In the 1730s alone, it has been estimated that 20,000 or more puritans had migrated from England. But the 'family' principle which can be seen underlying so much of the Platform is exercising its influence here. Churches cannot be so big that people cannot meet together or get to know each other. If that is happening, the fellowship has become too big.

There are of course, other areas of the Platform where it can be seen that it is very much a product of its age and environment. There is a section given over to the authority of the magistrate in church life, and this issue also intrudes into some of the other chapters. The relationship of church government and civil government, and the respective responsibility of each needed to be discussed in a society with such Christian foundations as Massachusetts of the 1650s. We might feel that it has less to say to us today. Would that our governments ever thought it their responsibility to advance righteousness, honesty and godliness, as they are expected to do by the Platform!

Later Developments

Before seeking to sum up, it is of course, necessary to see how the strictures and structures of the Platform played out in life after its eventual acceptance by the churches. We have already seen in our consideration of some of the features, that difficulties soon arose, not least in the matter of ruling elders. Other problems arose as one generation was succeeded by the next, and the ardour which characterized the communities which had been formed by the émigrés from England diminished. This is perhaps particularly noticeable in the events which led to the publication of the Halfway Covenant in 1662.

We have previously noted both in the character of men such as Cotton and Mather, and in the Platform itself, the seriousness with which they approached the matter of church membership, and the great efforts that were made to keep the churches pure in this regard. In time however it became clear that those who had been baptized as infants of the founders of the churches were now bringing their own children for baptism, without having such a clear testimony to God's grace in their lives. Such parents could of course have their children baptized in other church situations, but not in congregationalism under Cambridge. Civic privileges were still tied to church membership and so this was a knotty issue. The Halfway Covenant attempted therefore to reduce the qualifications for baptism and church membership, and was therefore a significant downgrading. People were allowed to retain a limited measure of membership privileges without meeting the qualifications that had hitherto held. This is of course the sort of problem that has existed in pædobaptist churches ever since. How many Pastors have been approached by members of their congregation longing for their grandchildren to be 'christened', when it is clear that the parents of the said baby are completely godless in their living. The Halfway Covenant was a form of words which did not demand any testimony or evidence of regeneration;

> I do heartily take and avouch this one God who is made known to us in the Scripture by the name of God the Father, and God the Son even Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Ghost to be my God, according to the tenor of the Covenant of Grace; Wherein he hath promised to be a God to the Faithful and their seed after them in their Generations, and taketh them to be his People, and therefore unfeignedly repenting of all my sins, I do give up myself wholly unto this God to believe in, love, serve and Obey Him sincerely and faithfully according to this written word, against all the temptations of the Devil, the World, and my own flesh and this unto death. I do also consent to be a Member of this particular Church, promising to continue steadfastly in fellowship with it, in the public Worship of God, to submit to the Order, Discipline and Government of Christ in it, and to the Ministerial teaching, guidance and oversight of the Elders of it, and to the brotherly watch of Fellow Members: and all this according to God's Word, and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ enabling me thereunto. Amen.

But we are not here to examine the Halfway Covenant, except to say that those who could not assent to the covenants proposed by the Cambridge Platform itself had this imposed upon them instead. It is the fact that it replaces a statement of personal regeneration that is its main problem. It was a clear step away from the pure biblicalism of the Puritan founding fathers, and a clear step towards a situation where it was acceptable for church members to

live lives indistinguishable from those around them who had no church affiliation whatsoever. The Half-Way Covenant provided a partial church membership for the children and grandchildren of church members. Those who accepted the Covenant, and agreed to follow the creed and rules of the church, could become church members without claiming a spiritual experience. Such 'half-members' could not vote on any issues within the church, although all members could participate in the sacrament of the Supper.

Some of the Puritan preachers of the day, including men such as Solomon Stoddard, held the hope that this plan would maintain some of the church's influence in society. In time, it was also hoped that these 'half-way members' would see the benefits of full membership, be exposed to teachings and piety which would lead to the them being 'born again', enabling them to eventually take the full oath of allegiance. But a good number of the more conservative members of the brethren rejected this plan as they saw it did not fully adhere to the church's guidelines. Many opted to wait for a true conversion experience instead of taking what they viewed as a short cut.

Having said all that, the Cambridge Platform remained the standard formulation throughout Massachusetts for the remainder of the century and in Connecticut until the Saybrook Platform of 1708, which advocated a more centralized form of church government, more akin to Presbyterianism.

Conclusion

Are there good things that we can take from the experiences, practices and problems of the New England Congregationalists of 360 years ago? We have seen how many of the debates that they had are still active in church life today, and we might be no nearer a resolution of them now as they were. But surely we should seek to replicate at least two of the features of church life that were so prevalent then.

Christians of every age should place the same importance on approaching issues in church life from the foundation of the Scriptures, and so churches need to place sufficient emphasis on the teaching of Scripture and Biblical doctrine as our forefathers did. Only if this is done can we hope to reach the purity of church life that was the Puritan aim. We need to ensure that how we structure our church life enables this to be realizable.

Secondly the need for churches to be communities of people who love one another and take their commitment to one another, to the local fellowship, and to the Lord of the church as a serious covenantal matter, is, if anything, more important now, in the deeply fragmented Western society of which the church is a part, and to which, more importantly, the church must be a

witness. Who knows what a difference would be made in our impact on the world if this were so!

Richard Mather, who drew up the Cambridge Platform

Robert Morrison

Robert Morrison (1782–1834), first Protestant missionary to China
The man and his mission

Tony Lambert

Why remember Robert Morrison? Because he not only was a great missionary, but because he excavated the firm foundation on which the Chinese church has been built up over 200 years into the vast edifice we see today.

Robert Morrison was born to devout Presbyterian parents in 1782 in Northumberland. His father, a Scot, was originally a farm labourer, but eventually set up a boot-tree workshop in Newcastle. Robert was a serious lad, and aged twelve was able to repeat from memory the whole of Psalm 119 in chapel! In 1798 he experienced true conversion and joined with others in fervent prayer and Bible study. He was very studious and was drawn to an interest in missions—then still a novelty, as the London Missionary Society (LMS) had only been founded a few years previously.

In 1802 he went to study at the Congregational college at Highbury, then known as Hoxton Academy. He started to study Chinese, using an old Roman Catholic translation of part of the Bible which had ended up in the British Museum. In 1804 he wrote to the LMS offering himself for missionary service. 'I conceive it my duty to stand candidate for a station where labourers are most wanted,' he stated. 'I am extremely suspicious of myself, jealous of the strength of my love to Jesus to bear me through. But leaning on his love to me, I have now, sir, made up my mind if the Lord will, to "forsake all and follow him", to spend and be spent for the elect's sake that they may obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ.'

Although he had some thought of going to Timbuctoo in Africa, after much prayer he felt he was providentially guided to China. The Committee of the LMS agreed, and in 1805 he did further theological and medical studies and was able to study Chinese with one of the few Chinese then living in London. In January 1807 he was ordained and consecrated in the Scotch Church in London, and on 31 January set sail for China.

However, even getting there was no easy feat. China was a closed country, with Western traders limited to living on the tiny island of Shamian off Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China. The powerful East India Company had no sympathy with missionaries, fearing interference with their profitable

opium trade, and refused to carry them on their ships. So Morrison set sail for New York. Here he obtained a letter from the American Secretary of State which later proved invaluable. While on the quay in New York a cynical ship-owner jeered: 'Do you really expect you will make any impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese empire?' Morrison then uttered the immortal reply which set the tone for his entire missionary career: 'No, sir, but I expect God will.'

After seven months of sea voyages since leaving London he finally docked in Canton in September 1807. He was received with kindness by the American consul, and soon obtained lodging and a Chinese tutor. The situation was extremely sensitive. The Chinese authorities forbade any of their citizens even to teach their language to a foreigner. Two severe persecutions in 1805 and 1811 had driven the 200-year-old Catholic church underground and most of the priests out of the country. The penalty for spreading the Christian faith was strangulation. Morrison, now tenuously perched in the two small enclaves of Canton and Macau allowed to foreigners, knew that one false step could mean the end of his mission virtually before it had even started.

His lodgings were an airless, unsanitary basement. He was overcharged for rent, food and furniture and found it hard to make ends meet. He tried to hold public worship (in English) but found few foreigners were interested. He at first donned Chinese dress but soon found this made him far too conspicuous, so reverted wisely to wearing the typical foreign merchant's garb of a light jacket and straw hat.

Morrison set to work to fulfil his mandate for the LMS which was to compile a Chinese-English dictionary and to translate the Bible—formidable tasks which were pioneer territory. Because of poor health he moved briefly to the Portuguese enclave of Macau. Here again, there was opposition from the Roman Catholic authorities to any Protestant missionary endeavours. It was there, however, that he met Mary Morton. After a courtship during which Morrison worried that he was being distracted from his all-important language work, they were married on 20 February 1809.

His wedding-day proved memorable for another reason—suddenly, the East India Company changed their mind concerning him and offered him the lucrative post of Chinese Translator at their Factory at the princely sum of £500 per annum. Morrison's quiet determination and facility in the Chinese language had attracted favorable attention in the small foreign community. He immediately wrote to the LMS outlining the advantages of accepting the post :

> Firstly, his official status as a member of the East India Company would give him legal right to be in Guangzhou, as opposed to living in a twilight zone in constant fear of expulsion;

Secondly, his duties would help his language learning as he would meet many Chinese officials and merchants;

Thirdly, his salary would mean less expense for the LMS;

Fourthly, his readiness to serve the Company might help them to be more tolerant of missionaries generally.

Unsurprisingly the LMS agreed.

They might not have done so if they had known how one hundred and fifty years later Morrison's acceptance of a post with 'John Company' would be viewed by the Chinese Communist Party, many patriotic Chinese and, indeed, some Western academics, and even Christians, as having fatally compromised his spiritual vocation. Indeed, in 2007 when the Chinese church overseas was celebrating the bi-centenary of Morrison's arrival in China with the evangelical Gospel, there was a deafening silence in China itself. It is easy to be critical with historical hindsight. At the time, joining the Company seemed to make eminent sense. Morrison himself viewed it as a means to the all-important end of bringing the Gospel to the Chinese in Chinese. Certainly, if he had refused the post, his precarious position might have led to the abortive end of his great mission sooner rather than later. A fair assessment might be to admit that his mission was compromised, but the dedication, nobility and spirituality of the man himself ensured that he never consciously placed political or commercial interests ahead of those of the Gospel of Christ.

By the end of 1808—less than two years after his arrival in China—Morrison had already completed a Chinese grammar, and his Chinese dictionary was near completion. Of greater importance to him and the LMS was the fact that the first part of his translation of the New Testament into Chinese had also been completed.

He could now speak Mandarin and other dialects, as well as read and write. His proficiency as a linguist meant other foreigners now came to him to be tutored. This, his work for the company and the continual translation work on the Scriptures meant his time was fully occupied.

Moreover, there was tragedy in his personal life. Although married, his wife had to spend her time in Macau, as foreign women and children were not allowed in Canton.

Mary was diagnosed with an incurable illness. Their first child, a son, was born on 5 March 1811 but died a day later. Mary survived the ordeal. But in their grief they were forced to bury little James on an open hillside outside of Macau as the Roman Catholic authorities in Macau forbade Protestants the use of their cemeteries.

In the midst of these sorrows, there was one shaft of light—1810 saw the first 1,000 copies of the Book of Acts printed. Morrison knew he had been

charged an exorbitant amount, but the printing was symbolically significant—it showed that the Scriptures could be not only translated, but also printed and (with care) distributed. He set about with renewed vigour to translate Genesis and the Psalms. The Gospels were also soon with the printers.

The year 1812 was a mixed one. On the one hand Morrison had the joy of seeing his wife's health recover, and the birth of a daughter, Rebecca. Also, the LMS appointed Dr Milne as his colleague, whose assistance proved to be invaluable. However, also in that year the Emperor made the printing of any Christian books a capital crime. One of Morrison's Chinese teachers carried poison on his person, prepared to commit suicide rather than endure gruesome torture if caught!

Morrison had great vision. He foresaw today's Christian 'tentmakers' or 'Christian professionals'—Christians genuinely employed in secular fields who would shine for Christ in an environment hostile to professional missionaries. As early as 1807 he warned against too high profile a Christian presence in Guangzhou and suggested the formation of a team of lay workers—a doctor, an astronomer and a watch-maker—stationed outside China but ready to enter when it became possible. In 1809 he wrote to the LMS suggesting a string of missionary bases be set up throughout SE Asia where there were strong Chinese communities. One hundred and fifty years later Hong Kong and other countries were similarly used as a springboard for the Gospel when Communist China was closed to mission (roughly 1950–1980). The LMS responded favourably and the 'Ultra-Ganges Mission' was established with Malacca as then first base, established in 1814 with Dr Milne and Dr Medhurst as the first two missionaries. Translation of the Bible was still the priority, so Milne gave himself to help translate the Old Testament into Chinese.

In April 1814 Morrison had a son born to him, John Robert. But he was soon embroiled in a political storm as some people sought to dismiss him from the East India Company as he had published religious books in defiance of the Imperial decree. However, he was now so much respected in South-East Asia that his position was rather strengthened. In 1816 he accompanied Lord Amherst on his abortive mission to Beijing as Chinese secretary. He was drawn not so much by political or patriotic motives (although these existed) but by the prospect of meeting the best Chinese scholars in the Empire and forwarding the cause of Christ in the capital itself. He came back with a vast amount of new information as well as a renewed sense of urgency to complete the Old Testament whose pages condemned the idolatry he had seen in countless temples on his journey north to Beijing.

In 1818 the 'Anglo-Chinese College' was formally established in Malacca for the reciprocal study of Chinese and European literature. This became the forerunner of all the many British-founded colleges and universities throughout the Far East. Both Europeans and Chinese could study Chinese Classics, English, History, Geography, Logic, Philosophy and, of course, the Scriptures and theology. Some scholars believe he was a century ahead of his time.

All this time the laborious work of translating the Bible continued. The carving of wooden blocks for every page was time consuming, and Morrison originated the then revolutionary concept of introducing movable type for printing Chinese characters. As over 3,000 different characters were used in his translation this was a herculean task. Finally, on 25 November 1819 he wrote to the LMS in London:

'By the mercy of God, an entire version of the books of the Old and New Testaments into the Chinese language was this day brought to a conclusion.' He had single-handedly translated no less than thirty nine books himself. Milne had contributed the historical books of the Old Testament, as well as Job. For the remainder, Morrison modestly gave credit for several books in the New Testament to the unknown Roman Catholic scholar whose work he had discovered in the British Museum, even though he had made extensive revisions. He was acutely aware of the historical and spiritual significance of what had been achieved:

'If Morrison and Milne's Bible shall in China at some subsequent period hold such a place in reference to a better translation as Wickliff's or Tyndale's now hold in reference to our present English version many will for ever bless God for the attempt.' He also pointed out that whereas the King James' version had fifty four scholars working in their own language, the Chinese Bible had been completed by just two persons 'performed in a remote country and into a foreign and newly acquired language, one of the most difficult in the world.' The words were almost prophetic. For just as Tyndale's work made possible the Authorise Version, so the Union Version completed less than a century after Morrison, and all subsequent Chinese translations owe their origin to his seminal and gargantuan labour.

In June 1821 Morrison's wife Mary died. A plot of land was purchased in Macau and this later became what is now known as the Old Protestant Cemetery, where Morrison himself has a handsome monument. The following year Morrison's close friend and worker William Milne died aged only 37 of tuberculosis. With Morrison's encouragement and example he had co-founded with him the first Protestant institution to begin to train Chinese evangelists at Malacca, as well as contribute to Bible translation, write Chinese tracts, set up

the first Protestant free school for Chinese and survey missionary prospects throughout south-east Asia. He was also the first writer to denounce the opium trade as 'the curse of China and the disgrace of the East India Company', and encouraged Morrison to do the same. In 1816 Milne also baptised Liang Fa who was later ordained in 1824 by Morrison as the first Chinese evangelist, whose ministry was to have far-reaching effects. Milne's death was a great blow; there closeness was evident in the fact that Morrison adopted his son Robert to bring up with his own children.

In 1823 Morrison left Guangzhou for Singapore where he met the famous Lieutenant-Governor, Stamford Raffles, who sought his co-operation in setting up an educational institution in Singapore similar to the one Morrison had already established in Malacca. At a public meeting Morrison demolished the colonial prejudice that it was a waste of time and money to educate Chinese and Malays, and predicted the scope for study east Asia would afford for the study of the sciences. He had a very modern, holistic view of man 'as a compound being as neither all body nor all mind but as made up of both, and as related both to time and eternity.' His audience were clearly impressed as they made liberal donations and appointed him Vice-President and a Trustee of the new institution. Leaving for Malacca, he assumed the active role of chaplain, was appointed Vice-President of the College there, too, published reports on the college, advised Raffles on new laws to control gambling and white slavery, as well as write a memoir of Milne and erect a memorial tablet for him.

In December he left for England after a continual stint of service lasting 16 years (modern missionaries complain if they can go home once only every four years!) He took with him his 10,000 volumes of Chinese books which he planned to donate to a university if they set up a Chair of Chinese language. To his amazement the authorities refused to admit the books duty free! In the end, MPs and even cabinet ministers fought on his behalf and the issue was resolved. He had an audience with King George IV, and preached at numerous places, seeking to educate people about China as well as present the spiritual needs of its people, and his belief that, given the then strict limits on missionary work in China itself, the best way forward was to communicate the Gospel through educational institutions. In June 1825 he set up the Language Institution, whose purpose was to educate Westerners about Chinese language and culture. Sadly, this venture foundered only three years later after he had returned to China. 1825 also saw him elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, a signal honour, and appointed by the LMS to its Board of Directors. This latter honour went against the LMS's usual custom, but Morrison was frank enough to say that it was a wise move, as when missionaries returned from overseas

they had 'a right to be heard as equals in the missionary councils of Christians at home.' Again, this is a principle which missionary societies today do well to observe.

His time in England was taken up with preaching, committee meeting and even teaching Chinese in his home in Hackney. But he found the time to fall in love with a Miss Armstrong and re-marry, before returning in 1826 to China via Singapore, taking his family with him. In Guangzhou he wrote regularly for the new English-language newspaper, the *Canton Register* with full liberty to express his religious views.

His linguistic work continued—1829 saw the completion of his *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect.* But in order to concentrate fully on Gospel work he took the momentous decision to resign from the East India Company. Conscious of mortality he now made strenuous efforts to ensure the torch of mission would be handed down successfully. To this end he proposed that the Americans should send their first missionaries to China, and the first two missionaries arrived in 1830.

In 1832 he co-wrote with the American Elijah Bridgeman a report on the first twenty five years of Protestant mission to China. Short and modest, he admitted that it was seven years before he baptised his first convert, and in all only ten Chinese had been baptised over the quarter-century. His health deteriorated, but in July 1834 he accepted the post of Chinese Secretary and Interpreter from the King's Commission headed by Lord Napier. But on 1 August he died peacefully in his son John's arms, and was laid to rest next to his first wife in the little cemetery in Macau. He was only 52, worn out with overwork. He had spent twenty seven years (more than half of his relatively short life) in China.

But the fruits of his labours lived on. His vision for educational and medical mission work was soon put into practice with the establishment of a Medical Missionary Society in 1836 which in 1838 opened two hospitals, in Macau and Guangzhou.

But it is for his literary and translation labours that he is best remembered. Wylie lists eleven works in Chinese written by Morrison, all of them evangelistic and Biblical except for one which introduces the Chinese reader to European culture. Between 1810–1836 752,000 tracts and books flowed from the Chinese mission presses and a very large proportion of this staggering number were written by Morrison. He also published nineteen works in English, the majority of which were linguistic. His magnum opus in this sphere was his Dictionary of the Chinese language in six volumes. However, it was the translation of the entire Bible into Chinese which was his crowning achievement. The claim has been made that his spirit 'lives on in the spirit of

every missionary movement, every hospital and every school or college in the Far East today' (Lindsay Ride)

But it may now also be said that his work lives on in the vast growth of the Chinese church. In October 2008 *The Economist* claimed that Mainland China may now have the largest Christian community of any country in the world. It had taken over a century since Morrison's death for the number of Protestant Christians to reach the one million mark (in 1949/1950). This was when the Communist Party took control of the country. By 1952 virtually all foreign missionaries were forced out of the country. By 1958 all the various churches, missions and denominations were forced to merge and accept the leadership of the Communist-controlled 'Three Self Patriotic Movement' (TSPM). In that year 90% of the churches were closed. But worse was to follow. In 1966 Mao unleashed the horror of the Cultural Revolution on the country, and the remaining churches were closed and all religious expression effectively banned for thirteen years (1966–1979). Many Christians were martyred for their faith and others endured long years in labour camps.

It was only in 1979 under Deng Xiaoping that limited freedom of religion was again granted. Since then an explosion of evangelical faith has taken place. As late as early 1979 when I visited China there were no churches officially open. Today, there are 55,000 legally registered Protestant churches and countless hundreds of thousands of 'house-churches' which meet on the fringes of legality—often grudgingly tolerated but sometimes still fiercely persecuted. The government and the TSPM admit to twenty million Protestants—a twenty-fold growth over the last thirty years or so. But a recent poll taken within China and published in 'People's Daily' estimated 40 million and even that figure may be too conservative. Although there is no evidence for a figure of over 100 million as sometimes claimed overseas, it is quite possible there may be between 50–70 million Protestants and 10–15 million Roman Catholics.

The faith of Chinese Protestants is vigorously evangelical and firmly rooted in the Bible. The centrality of Christ, his atonement, resurrection and coming again are preached. In this there is a direct spiritual link with the robust evangelical faith professed by Robert Morrison. It is common for both registered and unregistered churches to admit hundreds of new converts every year. In January this year while in Beijing I was told by a young house-church leader that the network of twenty churches he helps teach has baptised between 1,000–2,000 new converts every year for the past four years. On Easter Sunday 2007 I witnessed 134 new converts being baptised in one of Beijing's largest registered churches. In the same year I visited the huge new modern church in Hangzhou which seats 15,000—the largest Chinese church-

building in the world. This January I visited the Dongguan church in the north-eastern city of Shenyang which has 20,000 adult members. While Europe and the UK languish in a post-modern and post-Christian moral vacuum, probably the greatest ingathering in 2,000 years of Christian history has been taking place in Mainland China over the last three decades and so far shows no sign of slackening. Overseas, Chinese churches and fellowships are springing up everywhere, and many of China's intellectual elite are finding faith in Christ while studying overseas. The government recently admitted in a leaked internal document that several million of its own professedly atheistic Party members had become Christians.

In all these ways the spiritual legacy of Robert Morrison lives on. It is a lesson for all Christian pastors and missionaries today, to build a firm foundation on the Word of God and to persevere seeking only the glory of God in the face of intense opposition.

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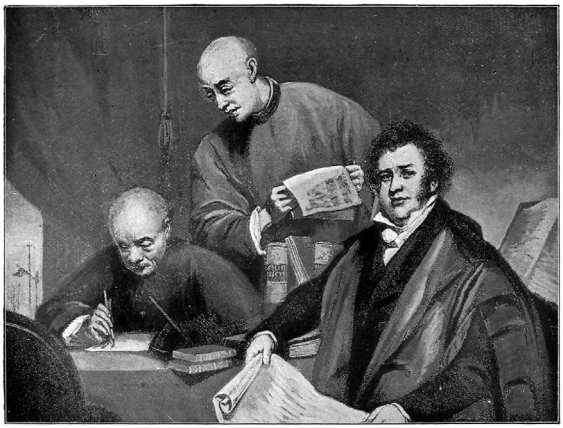

Dr Morrison and his assistants translating the Bible into Chinese (from an original painting by G.G. Chinnery)

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