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CHRISTIAN BRETHERN REVIEW

**CAUTIONARY TALES FROM  
BRETHERN HISTORY**

Editor: Harold H. Rowdon

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## Preface

It has been well said that those who are ignorant of history are condemned to repeating its mistakes. That is not to say that those who are aware of it are immune from the danger, but it does mean that they are in a better position to avoid it.

The Christian Brethren Research Fellowship has, as one of its avowed objects, the investigation of the origins and history of the Brethren Movement. This collection of essays is offered to members of the fellowship and other interested readers, in the hope that they will be instructed and edified by it. The two major pieces it contains are well-researched and clearly written cautionary tales.

Peter Lineham's careful and judicious examination of the reaction of Brethren in New Zealand to modern charismatic teaching is based upon letters and papers as well as published works. It presents us with a warning against hasty condemnation of teaching which—at first sight—appears novel and, indeed, threatening, and rejection *in toto* of views which may have rough edges and blemishes here and there but which claim the authority of the scriptures we all recognize as the sole source of definitive doctrine. It also rings warning bells regarding the creation of denominational infrastructures—however low-key they may appear to be. This is particularly appropriate here in Britain where Brethren are becoming increasingly aware of the disadvantages of a rigid insistence on the autonomy of local churches that threatens to run contrary to the inter-relatedness and interdependence of the churches in the New Testament period.

Christopher Smith's meticulous research into the activities of J. N. Darby in Switzerland has valuable lessons to teach us about evangelism and church-planting across cultural frontiers. It also draws attention to the dire consequences of seeking to impose ecclesiastical uniformity on the congregations of Christ's people. This is not to say that Darby was not a dedicated man—far from it—but it shows again how profoundly wrong well-intentioned Christians can be.

Also included in this review is another of Timothy Stunt's revisions of Brethren history. This time it is the date of Leonard Strong's adoption of Brethren ways that comes under the scrutiny of the historian. It appears that, misled by a slip of Professor Rendle Short's pen, we have all been betrayed into thinking that the Brethren Movement had a spontaneous point of origin in Guyana.

The general reader should not be perturbed by the extensive footnotes. They are not intended for his use, but for that of the specialist. As is normal in serious historical writing, they provide evidence of the sources used. In addition, many of the footnotes to Christopher Smith's essay include material which makes significant contributions to a better understanding of Brethren history but may not be of interest to the majority of readers.

Harold H. Rowdon\*

*\*Harold H. Rowdon, who teaches Church History at London Bible College, comes from a Brethren missionary family and is a member of the executive committee of C.B.R.F. He is the author of The Origins of the Brethren.*

# **Tongues Must Cease: The Brethren and the Charismatic Movement in New Zealand**

PETER J. LINEHAM\*

In the nineteen-sixties, many churches throughout the western world were deeply affected by the Charismatic Movement. Nowhere was the impact larger than in New Zealand, and in no church in New Zealand at that time were the consequences so extensive, so divisive or so early, as they were in the Open Brethren assemblies. The aim of this paper is to investigate the reasons for this.

The problem may seem a trivial one. Doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences between the Brethren and the Pentecostals have always been accentuated because the two groups are in so many ways alike. Both have common roots in the pre-millennial movement, and both are separatist churches in the English pattern of evangelical or fundamentalist fellowships which seek to be fully obedient to the New Testament. Both disdain emphasis on office and prefer to give scope to the spiritual gifts of their members. This is not a sufficient explanation of why the Brethren found it so painful to take a stand against the Charismatic Movement, nor why that stand proved so unacceptable to people within the assemblies. Nor does it explain why the New Zealand Brethren were obliged to grapple with the issue before almost any other church throughout the world except the Episcopal Church in California. This paper will show how a number of theological and personal dimensions to the confrontation gave it significance.

Some people have told me that this subject is too delicate to be discussed in print. Brethren are an informal and intimate fellowship, and they not unnaturally regard what happens among them as private. Yet unfortunately this very attitude can lead to a feeling of resentment and bitterness on the part of those who disagree with their elders. It certainly has done so in this case. As I have collected a prolific number of tracts and pamphlets on the issue, and as I have corresponded and conversed with a diverse group of people involved in the controversy, I have

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realized how traumatic the conflict was. Subsequent access to a unique collection of letters and papers<sup>1</sup> on the issue assembled by two leading Brethren has enabled me to understand some of the less public aspects of the controversy. Memories of the events analysed in this paper are reawakened whenever the charismatic issue surfaces in Brethren assemblies. Yet often those memories are inaccurate or incomplete. Consequently time has proved less a healer than one might hope. Yet there is a need for greater understanding, for the good of both parties, and I believe that the issue will be clarified rather than exacerbated by historical analysis and accurate detail. Like many who were Christian young people in that era, I have known for myself the bitterness of the debate; the intensity of the pressure to receive and to avoid the baptism in the Spirit. I do not speak in tongues, and my use of the expression 'the baptism in the Spirit' is a matter of convenience rather than of conviction. Yet I owe much to the inspiration of charismatic spirituality, just as I owe much to the godliness and good example of the Brethren, for they have lived up to their name in my own experience. Perhaps the healing process can begin only when wounds are carefully and sensitively exposed.

### **The Development of the Rift**

The early history of the Brethren is entangled with that of the Pentecostals. In the eighteen-twenties and thirties Edward Irving's proto-Pentecostalism was as burning a topic among evangelicals in Great Britain as was J. N. Darby's doctrine of the church. Darby's desire to return to apostolic patterns of worship is usually related to his view that the dispensation of the church, the church age, was coming to an end and that the church was in ruins. It was therefore necessary for Christians to separate from existing churches and become a little flock obedient to New Testament patterns. Yet his thinking was also shaped by a distinctive belief that the ministry of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the inner experience of the individual believer, as Protestant theology tended to imply. It was also a ministry of directing the congregation in its worship and witness. In rediscovering this, the Brethren returned to the New Testament pattern of deriving all genuine Christian ministry from spiritual gifts. Moreover this emphasis on the Spirit was accompanied by the hope that their stand would be confirmed by an outpouring of spiritual power and life. Captain Hall, A. N. Groves and Darby himself were particularly interested in the question, and 'the duty of seeking for miraculous gifts was strongly insisted on' at the 1832 Powerscourt Conference.<sup>2</sup> When these men heard that Edward

Irving, the minister of the National Scottish Church in London, believed that the supernatural gift of tongues had been restored they were very curious, for they shared many of Irving's eschatological views. Thomas Douglass of Plymouth and H. B. Bulteel of Exeter College, Oxford, were among those who decided that Irving had more returned to apostolic patterns than had the Brethren. Others hesitated, and, although they would not reject the theoretical possibility of miraculous gifts, they were unconvinced that Irvingite tongues were the same as the Biblical gift.<sup>3</sup>

The Brethren had not found it easy to evaluate Irvingism, but their final assessment was to prove enduring. Irving's unusual views on the nature of Christ's humanity proved adequate grounds to doubt that the Irvingite charismata came from the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Indeed more than a century later, when evaluation of the Charismatic Movement proved essential, identification of the phenomena as neo-Irvingite short-circuited the task of assessing the charismatic gifts. The memory of Irvingite excesses, especially as described by a former disciple of Irving, Robert Baxter, in his *Narrative of Facts* was not forgotten. In 1908, when Pentecostalism first reached London, this information was used by Sir Robert Anderson as evidence of tendencies inherent in all such movements.<sup>5</sup> Thus rescued from oblivion, Baxter's pamphlet was to inspire many subsequent cautionary tales about the history of Irvingism. When the New Zealand Brethren denounced the charismatics their spokesman recalled:

Our assemblies came into being, we believe, as a very definite movement of the Spirit of God about 1830, at the very same time as the 'Tongues Movement' led by Edward Irving ... was sweeping London. ... With this distressing example before them, all our most gifted and well-taught brethren during the whole of the 130 years that have intervened, have themselves neither spoken in tongues nor countenanced its introduction into assemblies.<sup>6</sup>

Irvingism did not flourish for long. The Catholic Apostolic Church of Irving established a branch in Dunedin in New Zealand, but it was characterized more by ritual than by charismatic gifts.<sup>7</sup> The historical origins of the Charismatic Movement of the sixties are more accurately traced to the emergence of the Pentecostal churches from the Wesleyan holiness movement in America in 1905-6.<sup>8</sup> For in the evangelical world of the day, revivals and manifestations were publicized swiftly and emulated enthusiastically. By 1907 Pentecostal phenomena of the kind seen at Azusa Street, Los Angeles, were in evidence right across Europe, and even in Australia.<sup>9</sup>

The typical English response to the early Pentecostals was hardly

enthusiastic. A series of evangelical leaders voiced their criticism of it in no uncertain terms. In New Zealand, the revival caused alarm, but there were no attempts to emulate it. Among the opponents of the distant phenomena, one may number the Brethren who repeated the criticisms of their English friends. Robert Anderson's attack on the Pentecostals seems to have been distributed in the dominion. The comparisons he drew with Irvingism and with the millenarian follies of J. H. Prince and the Agapemone were complemented by the theological argument that the 'Pentecostal Dispensation' was a distinctly temporary phase in the life of the church, and its gifts were intended for Jews and not for the Gentile church. In other words he adopted the traditional Calvinist view of the temporary character of miracles and adapted it to suit the dispensational framework by which Brethren and their friends organized biblical history, dividing God's dealings with man and the Bible into seven ages culminating in the millennium.<sup>10</sup>

Although this warning was only one of several, its analysis was of particular importance. The *Treasury*, the magazine which served effectively as a channel of communication among the New Zealand Brethren, reprinted a denunciation of the heresy by the Anglo-American preacher and biographer, A. T. Pierson, which echoed Anderson's views. Later a prominent New Zealand brother, Captain Robert Neville of the Union Steam Ship Company, who had observed Pentecostals in Melbourne, criticized belief in a baptism in the Spirit subsequent to conversion as unbiblical. Edgar Whitehead, who was on a tour of mission fields, added a warning from his observations of Indian Pentecostals.<sup>11</sup> Soon the movement faded from the public gaze. It was shortly after this that a writer in the *Treasury* first referred to the completion of the canon of Scripture to explain the perfect state mentioned in I Corinthians 13 as the time when tongues would cease. 'But when the perfect has come that which is imperfect shall vanish away', reads verse ten of that chapter, and verse eight reads: 'As for tongues, they shall cease, as for prophecies they will vanish away.' Thus the subsequent debate over these verses was already foreshadowed. But the issue was as yet somewhat distant from the concerns of the New Zealand Brethren.<sup>12</sup>

A potential basis for the establishment of the Pentecostal Movement in New Zealand lay in the undoctinaire interest in revival and spirituality among New Zealand Christians. New Zealand increasingly lay on the international sawdust trail of revivalists like Herbert Booth and others in the holiness tradition. Books by Hannah Whittall Smith, R. A. Torrey and Andrew Murray were widely read, and they introduced concepts like the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' and 'baptism of fire' and 'power from on high' to colonists. Such views were even preached to

some Brethren congregations.<sup>13</sup> The distinctive views on a 'higher Christian life' popularized at the annual Keswick conventions in England soon spread to the dominion. About 1910 the Reverend H. B. Gray organized a Keswick-style convention at Pounawea, near the southern city of Dunedin.<sup>14</sup> This 'revivalist' tradition, as we shall term it, which encouraged deeper spiritual experiences and evangelistic energy was stimulated after the first world war by the appointment of one of the great trans-Atlantic revivalists, Joseph Kemp, to the pastorate of the influential Baptist Tabernacle in Auckland, the country's burgeoning northern city. From 1920 until his death in 1933, Kemp was a powerful advocate of 'old-fashioned religion', and he established three institutions which perpetuated this emphasis after his death. They were the Ngaruawahia Easter camp-convention, commenced at a site fifty miles south of Auckland in 1921 on Keswick lines; the Bible Training Institute which was modelled on the Chicago Moody Bible Institute; and an interdenominational magazine for revival, the *Reaper*.<sup>15</sup> He was able to enlist the support of other enthusiasts for revival, including a former Brethren missionary, C. J. Rolls, who became the first superintendent of the B.T.I. By the 1930s several interdenominational conventions had become regular events in the New Zealand evangelical calendar, and drew huge crowds, while intending missionaries from many denominations, including some Brethren, attended B.T.I. in preparation.

Perhaps a more important precursor to the Pentecostal Movement in New Zealand was the widespread interest in healing in the dominion. Several divine healers established a surprisingly large following. A. B. Worthington, a former Christian Scientist, gained a very large following in Christchurch, one of the two main cities in the South Island, in the nineties, until he was exposed as a bigamist. Another visitor to the Antipodes, John Alexander Dowie, who established a healing mission called the 'Free Christian Church' in Australia between 1878 and 1893, visited New Zealand in 1888.<sup>16</sup> Friends made then remained faithful when he subsequently established a healing community called Zion on the shore of Lake Michigan in the United States. His flamboyance did not endear him to the Brethren and he was criticized in a debate on healing in the *Treasury* in 1903.<sup>17</sup> However the sectarian and revivalist character of the early New Zealand Brethren meant that some of them were open to the miraculous. The followers of Alfred Feist had experimented with faith healing in the 1870s and this interest had not completely died out. In 1904 when the broken arm of Hans Hansen, an ex-Feistite of Feilding, was miraculously mended, the event led to renewed interest in healing among local Brethren.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless most Brethren hesitated to accept contemporary mani-

festations of the supernatural. They believed in the literal truth of the Bible, but they were also empiricists, and assumed that miracles were no longer likely. The discussion on healing in the *Treasury* in 1903 illustrates this. One of the contributors was John A. D. Adams, subsequently the founder of a 'full gospel' mission in Dunedin, who was then evidently a member of an assembly. His defence of aspects of the work of Dowie (whom he had met in 1888) was not appreciated by the editor of the magazine, Franklin Ferguson, who stood for Brethren orthodoxy. Yet Ferguson was anxious to allow that he was not totally hostile to the possibility of healing. 'We have great faith in the Lord's ability to perform miracles if need be for his own glory', he wrote.<sup>19</sup> And in this age Brethren elders willingly obeyed the injunction of James 5:14 and prayed for the sick, anointing them with oil. Sometimes healings occurred after this had been done.

This ambivalent interest in healing was not confined to the Brethren. In the era after the first world war the healing of a Nelson Baptist, Miss Fanny Lammas, was widely acknowledged, especially since the account of it came from the pen of the Rev. Joseph Kemp.<sup>20</sup> About the same time the Maori prophet and healer, Ratana, attracted many Maoris into a new sect, and the miracles associated with his sect aroused great interest within the main churches. In 1923-4 an English layman, J. M. Hickson, toured the Anglican province of New Zealand with the blessing of the Archbishop of New Zealand, although local evangelical Anglicans were more cautious about him.<sup>21</sup>

Pentecostalism was established in New Zealand by the famous English healer and evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth, (himself of Brethren stock). It is not surprising to find that when he arrived in New Zealand in 1922, there was a large degree of interest in his mission, and it was very successful, attracting very large crowds. His visit had been sponsored in the first place by the Wellington Christian Covenanters Confederacy, a body dedicated to the promotion of deeper spirituality, which had been formed after Herbert Booth's visit to New Zealand and included some well-known supporters of revival from within the main churches.<sup>22</sup> However the respectable public was not so impressed by Wigglesworth. Nor were the evangelicals, who were probably aware of his Pentecostal background. The leading ministers of the city of Auckland united behind J. W. Kemp in their denunciation of Wigglesworth, who seemed to be breaching and disturbing evangelical harmony.<sup>23</sup>

The leaders of the assemblies also took the part of critics, for similar reasons. In Wellington, where Smith Wigglesworth made his largest impact, C. J. Drake, one of the leaders of the Tory Street Open Door Mission which was about to become an assembly, took up the subject in a long and passionately argued address. In its published form Charlie

Drake's address used the argument that the miracles and signs reported in the Acts of the Apostles 'were not strictly Christian in character', but were intended specifically as signs to the Jews.<sup>24</sup> The Darbyite thesis that the establishment of the church is not prophesied in the Old Testament allowed him to argue that supernatural gifts were reserved for Jews entering the new dispensation.

Yet the fact remains that the preaching of Smith Wigglesworth made a small but significant mark on the assemblies and on evangelical life in general, which had not been forgotten by the 1960s. The Pentecostal congregations proved to be small and uninfluential and very separatist in outlook. Yet when they sponsored healing missions they attracted public attention. Healing caught the interest of press and people, far more than tongues did in this era. The visit of A.C. Valdez in 1924, and A. H. Dallimore's huge meetings in the Auckland Town Hall in 1931, with his bizarre healings of animals and blessing of handkerchiefs, made good newspaper copy. Evangelicals voiced fierce criticisms of the healings. Joseph Kemp lashed Dallimore with his pen, describing his meetings as 'a deliberately "cooked up" frenzy of religious emotionalism of the most morbid kind', deriding the healings as 'displays of undoubted hypnotism' and the healed as 'poor dupes'.<sup>25</sup> The theology of the baptism in the Spirit was also criticized, especially by the capable administrator of the Bible Training Institute in Auckland, J. Oswald Sanders, himself of Brethren background. In a series of articles written in 1939 he sought to distinguish the Keswick concept of holiness from the misnamed 'baptism in the Spirit'. He wrote cautiously, and displayed the same care in his comment on the gift of tongues:

We would not dogmatically state that the manifestation of this gift is impossible today, but we would say that most of the cases where it is claimed, so violate the conditions imposed for its exercise, as to give abundant evidence that they are counterfeit and not genuine.<sup>26</sup>

Some Brethren critics went a little further. The 'Tongues Movement' seemed to them to be dangerous, divisive and influenced by Spiritualism. Two pamphlets prepared by Brethren missionaries for the guidance of Indian Christians were of this character. They were circulated in New Zealand, as was another by Kate Dawson of Bayswater in Auckland (an interesting example of female Brethren scholarship).<sup>27</sup> Other Brethren concentrated their criticisms on healing missions and on the teaching that Christ's death atoned for men's illnesses as well as their sin. Henry Yolland, who was Dean of the B.T.I. wrote sharply against 'the present-day impostures', and a number of articles and tracts reiterated the same point.<sup>28</sup>

Despite all these denunciations the Pentecostals made some gains at

the expense of the Brethren, notably among dedicated young people who were attracted to a new movement where everyone was totally committed. The influence of R. A. Torrey's writings led some young men to seek the baptism in the Spirit as a path to spiritual power. Colin Graham, later a notable Brethren evangelist, was interested in it until he received a careful rebuttal of the teaching from his old Bible Class leader, Ralph Groves. Arthur E. Birch, who became the foundation treasurer of the Wellington City Mission which was the first Pentecostal church in New Zealand, had previously been an assistant at the Tory Street Mission, and he did not entirely break his links with it. In the same city, Keith Robertson left the Vivian Street assembly for the Pentecostal church, and later went to Japan as a missionary with the Apostolic Church, while Edward R. Weston, who had left the assemblies to become a Baptist minister, was a leading Apostolic pastor in the 1930s.<sup>29</sup> A number of full-time workers in the assemblies came in contact with Pentecostalism on their itinerations, and found it attractive. Harold Jenkins, a retired Gospel Carriage and Maori worker, joined the Pentecostal Church in its early days.<sup>30</sup> Collett L. Saunders, a Nelson Gospel Carriage worker from 1932 to 1935, made his interest so clear that he was excommunicated and joined the Apostolic Church. (He later left that church and founded his own Universalist fellowship in New Plymouth).<sup>31</sup> In 1934-5 three other missionaries to the Maoris, Elsie Phillips, Katie Rout and Sylvia Martin, who were based in Te Puke, grew frustrated with the restrictions they faced as women, and associated for a time with the Apostolic Church, which sent A. L. Greenaway to promote revival there. A hasty campaign against the Apostolic Church was mounted by a local Brethren elder, Albert V. Brown, and the women subsequently returned to assembly fellowship.<sup>32</sup>

### **Changes in Pentecostalism**

In the years after the second world war, interest in healing and in 'higher life' teachings quickened. New Zealanders shared a high standard of living and placed a priority on leisure and enjoyment. It was a practical and pragmatic culture, less interested in fact than in feeling. And it affected the church too. Interest in sensational revivalism was growing and suspicion at reports of the miraculous declined. Magazines about healing seem to have been widely read in New Zealand, and Oral Roberts' campaigns, especially those in Australia in 1956, awakened fresh interest.<sup>33</sup> The Pentecostals were ready to respond to this renewed interest.

The Pentecostal churches of Australia and New Zealand had

splintered into several denominations in the 1930s including the Apostolic Church and the Assemblies of God, and what became the Elim Church. Ten years later some of these small denominations were further fractured by a series of disputes over theology and over the nature of the church. The teaching of an American pastor, W. H. Offler of Seattle, created particular tensions in the post-war era. In a book entitled *God and His Bible*, published in 1946, Offler had used a typological method to demonstrate the absolute gulf between the Old Testament and God's new and supernatural New Testament principles. In his 'Latter Rain' teaching he insisted that true believers must be baptized or rebaptized 'in the name', that is, not according to the trinitarian formula. Only people baptized in Jesus' name could be part of his new work. The existing churches, which were characterized by the appointment of ministers, by membership rolls and by doctrinal statements and creeds, thereby identified themselves as Babylon, not God's church.

This teaching was promoted by three American pastors who served the Pentecostal Church (later called the Elim Church) from 1945 until their resignation in 1946.<sup>34</sup> They then formed a small and informal separatist sect, isolated from the other Pentecostal churches. It was these men, chief among them Ray Jackson, who were to break the barriers which prevented the Pentecostal sects from making an impact in the mainstream churches. In New Zealand and then in Sydney and Melbourne, Ray Jackson attracted very talented men around him. His 1953 Bible school in Melbourne included men who were to be of great influence in the future, including his son Dave Jackson, Ron Coady, Kevin Connor, Peter Morrow and Rob Wheeler.<sup>35</sup> Such men held evangelistic missions in tents and even non-Pentecostal churches, moving beyond the confines of Pentecostalism since they disdained the institutionalism of its sects. Rob Wheeler travelled throughout New Zealand in the later 1950s as a tent evangelist, and made quite an impact. And in Tauranga, in the North Island's Bay of Plenty, a winter Bible school was held, led by Wheeler, Coady and Ray Necklen, which served as a home base for the work.

In consequence a series of independent but close-knit congregations began to be created. Not all of them were associated with Wheeler. In Palmerston North, near Wellington, another base was established by Keith Whitehouse, a New Zealander who had visited from the United States. He held tent missions in many places in the North Island. His mission in Rotorua led a young man in the Brethren assembly there to receive the baptism in the Spirit and become a very active member of the Apostolic church. Whitehouse commenced a small Bible school in Palmerston North, and some of those touched by him, including the

White family, Methodists from the nearby Rongotea district, founded the Open Door Mission which gained quite a name in the district. Antaneas (Bill) Bloomfield and his son Ray were also among these independent men. Bill Bloomfield was probably from Brethren stock, and retained sufficient acceptability among them to enable him to speak in some assemblies. He founded what he called the People Worship in Freedom Movement, which had a chapel in Auckland.

An evangelist from the United States, A. S. Worley, was another of these independent itinerants. Worley had a healing ministry, and was noted for his gift for healing toothache with miraculous silver fillings. In 1960 he was touring the South Island and was invited by L. E. Murray to visit Timaru. In April he held a small mission there, and then felt called by the Spirit to return and work on a larger scale. And so it proved to be. His twice-daily meetings from 17 June until 24 July 1960 created a sensation among the churches and the dentists. The congregation established at the conclusion of the mission became a crucial base for further evangelism of the South Island by Ron Coady, Peter Morrow, Paul Collins and David Jackson, and the congregation pioneered distinctive neo-pentecostal patterns of worship.<sup>36</sup>

These little congregations with their dynamic leaders were remarkable for their dedication and their experimentation. Angelic visitations, unstructured and intense sessions of praise and worship, victory marches, and children drunk in the Spirit were characteristic of these new groups, which were later often known as 'New Life Centres' but at this stage were called Revival Fellowships. It was the millennial quality of these groups which attracted other Christians to visit them, and in the 1960s they became a force to be reckoned with. The most significant one began as an upstairs coffee bar, 'Adullam's Cave', in Christchurch, at the instigation of Peter Morrow.<sup>37</sup>

In the 1970s these fellowships were among the most dynamic forces in the religious life in New Zealand. They were certainly not free from problems. One of Peter Morrow's assistant evangelists established a separatist sect in Rangiora, with its own school and workplaces, in disillusionment about the way in which the world had infiltrated the revival. Another preacher fled the country to escape prosecution by the Inland Revenue Department. Yet indirectly and directly this group of independent Pentecostals and reactions to them shaped some of the Brethren response to the Charismatic Movement.

### **Post-War Changes in the Assemblies**

However this is to anticipate. For in the years after the second world war

interest in Pentecostalism was almost universally taboo among evangelical Christians. The dalliances of the preceding years were succeeded by a hardening of attitudes. Yet the ground was being prepared for a new wave of interest. The indication of this was a surge of interest in 'higher life' teachings within the evangelical world. The perennial interest in faith healing also survived, and the literature of faith healers like Oral Roberts and William Branham were widely read in the dominion. Moreover these views became associated with a longing for world revival which was in sharp opposition to the Brethren belief that the age preceding the return of Christ would be one of decline and lukewarmness. In interdenominational circles this teaching received particular support at the Easter and New Year conventions at Ngaruawahia and elsewhere. Among the overseas speakers on these platforms were Alan Redpath and Major Ian Thomas. W. Ivor Davies, who had been a missionary in the Belgian Congo during the semi-Pentecostal revival there, came to New Zealand about 1960 as local director of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (W.E.C.). His advocacy of the higher life inclined in a 'charismatic' direction. Although J. H. Deane, the principal of the Bible Training Institute, was partly influenced by this theology, the successor after his tragic death in 1959, the Rev. Allan Burrow, who remained at the Institute only until 1964, was particularly interested in the Keswick teaching. This interest in how to live a victorious Christian life was not necessarily associated with an Arminian theology, but in the late 1950s American missionaries established branches of the Church of the Nazarene in New Zealand, and this church caused considerable controversy both in the Auckland area and in Christchurch through its ardent advocacy of the Wesleyan goal of Christian perfection.

The first Billy Graham crusade in New Zealand in 1959 contributed significantly to the growing interest in Christian experience. For that crusade in the cities of Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland, and its landline links to towns all over New Zealand, attracted a proportion of the population virtually unequalled either in New Zealand or beyond.<sup>38</sup> It thus promoted a sense of evangelical identity. The crusade also created an interest in vigorous non-denominational evangelism in every denomination. Even members of the Pentecostal churches had assisted, and they thus became more acceptable to other church people. The converts of the crusade were its most important fruit. They had undergone a very deep and emotional experience, and they did not all fit easily into the existing churches. Many of them hungered for deeper knowledge of Christian realities, which led them in their dissatisfaction toward the emerging Charismatic Movement. They had accepted Jesus as Saviour; now they wanted to experience his power.

Among the Brethren the impending crisis over the Charismatic Movement was not really anticipated. In that era criticisms of the Pentecostal churches were blunt but unconcerned. Yet one must not overlook a series of cases where Brethren were touched by Pentecostal teachings in the 1940s and 1950s. Some Brethren became interested in these doctrines through a desire for faith healing. In the late 1940s John H. Manins, a capable and influential Brethren expositor, known for the depth of his faith, began to show symptoms of Parkinson's disease, and attended healing services in the United States conducted by Oral Roberts, in search of relief. On his return he recorded his testimony that he had seen genuine miraculous cures at the meetings, but his own continued illness did not help his case. In response Bob Auld wrote a series of studies on healing in the *Treasury*, emphasizing that while God could heal, prayer was not a way to force his hand. But this did not end discussion of the subject.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically Auld himself was later to experience a remarkable remission of a cancerous growth.

Subsequently there was a burst of interest in healing and spiritual experiences in Wellington, and this moved in a Pentecostal direction. Frank Garrett, one of the sons of a prominent Napier Brethren family, was an elder at Tory Street Hall, and a popular evangelistic preacher. He had long searched for a deeper experience of spiritual power, and through fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands he had come into what was virtually a baptism in the Spirit. Then one Saturday in June 1953 he invited his friend Noel Gibson and a small group of friends to hear Ray Bloomfield, one of the independent Charismatics, at Frank's business premises and explain more about the baptism in the Spirit. The friends included A. E. Birch, who had left Tory Street at the time of Smith Wigglesworth's campaign in 1922. Bloomfield's encouragement led Garrett and Gibson to experience the baptism and the gift of tongues. It was not in Frank Garrett's nature to keep his experience to himself, but naturally his distribution of Pentecostal literature caused concern to the Tory Street elders. It was the turning point in Frank Garrett's life; his considerable influence in charismatic circles may be traced to this experience and his subsequent departure for the Elim Church. Yet he continued to have many contacts in the assemblies, and through his influence Frank Carlisle of Moera assembly in the nearby Hutt valley joined him at Elim.<sup>40</sup> That same year Frank also shared his experience with his Napier Brethren relations. At his recommendation Ray Bloomfield held meetings in the homes of some of them. Their elders were very troubled, and required them to say nothing in favour of Pentecostalism or they would be put out of fellowship. Two of those involved decided to join the Baptist church, although they were not warmly received there either.<sup>41</sup>

The most notorious case of 'Pentecostalism' during those years was the secession in 1955 of Ezra M. Coppin, an itinerant evangelist and son of Enoch Coppin, the best-known of all Brethren full-time workers. Ezra, whose published autobiography is certainly colourful, experienced a kind of baptism in the Spirit in September 1954. The chief influence on him seems to have been Kiwi Thorne, a former W.E.C. missionary, who moved among the Auckland assemblies and was an influential advocate of deeper levels of Christian experience. Ezra subsequently left the assemblies and departed for the United States, although he did not develop as a Pentecostal for some years. His experience nevertheless embittered his father's attitudes to Pentecostalism.<sup>42</sup> Late in 1955 Enoch Coppin was preaching in Tasmania at the time when Oral Roberts was holding his sensational Sydney crusade, and he seized the opportunity to join the chorus of criticism of Roberts and faith healing and Pentecostalism in general.<sup>43</sup> He remained a vociferous critic for the rest of his life.

Thus from 1953 to 1956 people in the assemblies had been caught up in a debate over the Pentecostal signs. About 1956 someone went to the trouble of sending to every assembly copies of W. F. P. Burton's account of the Congo Evangelistic Mission, with its accounts of supernatural gifts in action.<sup>44</sup> Yet in spite of so many ardent advocates this wave of interest was short-lived, and went unnoticed in many places. A few evangelists beside Enoch Coppin felt the necessity to denounce it. Colin Graham did so at a meeting at Queen Street assembly in Palmerston North. He was undeterred by prophecies by a local Pentecostal pastor that he would become insane if he publicly criticized the movement.<sup>45</sup> The failure of the prophecy increased Colin's distrust of their beliefs. There were a few later cases of anti-Pentecostal campaigns. For example the 1958 crusade of Tommy Hicks in Wellington and Christchurch, which was sponsored by all the Pentecostal churches, was tape-recorded and replayed with a critical commentary by evangelist Ces Hilton at the 1958-9 Mount Maunganui camp.<sup>46</sup>

It may be wondered why this should have been significant for the Brethren. For theirs was a church held together not by formal organization but by constant and warm fellowship. The basic character of the Brethren was reasonably clear. There were a few distinctive assemblies like the very open Elizabeth Street Chapel (formerly Tory Street Hall) in Wellington and the 'inner ring' of conservative assemblies which looked to Mornington assembly in Dunedin as their 'cathedral', and there was a tendency for assemblies further north to be more open in outlook. Yet these variations were relatively minor, considering that there were 20,000 Brethren and 250 assemblies. One magazine served the whole fellowship, and Brethren of almost every ilk attended the

same conferences. When problems arose, southern and northern, and conservative and open leaders consulted with each other; indeed, as Arthur Wallis has commented, the telephone seemed to work overtime in New Zealand. Brethren had an acute sense of their own identity, yet they were far more accustomed to associating with other Christians than were most Baptists or Presbyterians. Many Brethren were eagerly engaged in interdenominational work, finding opportunities beyond their local assembly which were not available to them there. Yet such Brethren still retained a very strong sense of identity, and this created real problems for interdenominational groups like Scripture Union which received support from them. In the words of a staff member of that organization, Brethren 'had to fight all sorts of prejudices' which had been ingrained into them.<sup>47</sup>

Yet in the 1950s this distinctiveness had significantly declined. The old sectarian atmosphere with its enthusiasms and its absolute interpretations was beginning to be replaced by a more restrained and genteel image. As the Brethren grew more wealthy after the war, they rebuilt their halls as chapels, they ceased to give loud 'amens' to prayers, and they sought a better image in the community. Their most respected leaders were laymen rather than full-time Christian workers.

While this process was inevitable among a group which had prospered through their diligence, it had also been a matter of deliberate policy on the part of some influential assembly leaders, notably those in Auckland where the assemblies were more open and less divided than those in many other places. The thirty-five assemblies in Auckland (the highest concentration of assemblies in any city in the world), tended to look to the mother assembly at Howe Street where the elders were men of stature both in the wider evangelical community and in the outside world. The leading elder in this assembly was Robert A. Laidlaw, the founder of the large and prosperous 'Farmers' Trading Company' retail and mail order department store. 'Bert' Laidlaw combined evangelistic zeal, deep spirituality and a personal prestige which he placed at the service of many evangelical institutions. The Brethren have always highly respected laymen who are at once prosperous and godly, and for Laidlaw they felt what one observer identified as an 'undue deference'.<sup>48</sup> By 1960 he was 72 years old, and the weight of advising the assemblies had made him more cautious. He listened increasingly to another of the patriarchs at Howe Street, Dr. William H. Pettit, 'Mr. Valiant for Truth', who had led the fundamentalist fight against the Student Christian Movement in the 1920s which led to the foundation of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship: he was temperamentally inclined to be combative.<sup>49</sup> Other leaders of the Auckland assemblies included the brilliant lawyer and intimate friend of Laidlaw, Jim Burt, who died in

1961, Stan Goold, Leo Clarke and Jack Hume.

It had long been the policy of Bert Laidlaw to fashion the assemblies into a more outward-looking and aggressively evangelistic body. In the 1930s the leaders at Howe Street gave warm support to interdenominational bodies like the Bible Training Institute, Scripture Union, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship and the missions of many visiting interdenominational evangelists at a time when Palmerston North assembly leaders like Charlie Hewlett were much less sympathetic to ministry beyond the perimeter of the assemblies. After the war this policy became more influential. It was epitomized by the whole-hearted support given by most leading Brethren to the Billy Graham crusade, and the genuine efforts made to accommodate converts in the assemblies.<sup>50</sup> This policy was accompanied by another which originated with these Auckland men, to establish more formal assembly institutions.

They began in 1920 by founding a property holding body, the Steward's Trust, and after the war they supported the formation of a uniformed youth movement exclusive to the assemblies, the Every Boy's and Every Girl's Rallies, and the establishment of the New Zealand Assembly Bible School in 1959. In Auckland the assemblies also co-operated in the Assembly Bible Class Movement, which held large quarterly rallies. Since the 1930s the elders of the Auckland assemblies had met quarterly to discuss matters of mutual interest. The assemblies south of Auckland in the Waikato area later established a similar body. Thus although the Brethren remained essentially a fellowship of independent churches, in practice they were tightly knit, and they now had institutions capable of acting in a denominational manner. Laidlaw and his friends had supported the foundation of these institutions because they believed that by such means the assemblies would be better equipped for zealous evangelistic work. But they were to show their potential as instruments to encourage denominational loyalty in the 1960s. There was by then sufficient institutionalism to enable assembly leaders to enforce a standard interpretation of Brethren doctrine.

At the same time, paradoxically, the old sectarianism had been profoundly altered. In the aftermath of the Billy Graham crusade the Assembly Bible Class Movement's quarterly rallies were reshaped under the influence of a youthful committee led by David Jacobsen into a lively Christian Youth Crusade. And at the same time the 'higher life' teaching began to find more supporters within the assemblies. Evangelicalism had always experienced a tension between Biblical fundamentalism and revivalist excitement, and traditionally the Brethren were inclined to the fundamentalist pole. However this was changing.

Bert Laidlaw had spoken at the Keswick convention in England. Keith Liddle, a builder who attended the Wiremu Street Gospel Hall, was an even more ardent advocate of Keswick teaching, and these views began to be heard at the large Christmas convention at Mount Maunganui. It seems that the newly established Willow Park Easter Camp in Auckland was intended to be more firmly in this mould. In essence some younger men in the Auckland assemblies had come to give their first allegiance to revival rather than to the assemblies. That change in emphasis was to become apparent in the next few years.

In the period after 1959 when Dennis Bennett desired to accept charismatic gifts, and yet remain within the Episcopal Church in California, the Brethren were thus somewhat susceptible to this Neo-Pentecostal movement, as it was termed before the introduction of the term 'Charismatic Movement'. But the basis was also laid for highly effective opposition to it. The rest of this article will investigate what happened.

### **The First Brethren Charismatics**

Thus by 1960 there were people within non-Pentecostal churches who were quietly beginning to advocate the baptism in the Spirit. The influence of W. Ivor Davies and Kiwe Thorne in Auckland is one example. In Wellington, where Pentecostalism's impact was assisted by the unsectarian attitude of Frank Houston, the minister of the Assembly of God at Lower Hutt, a number of Baptists were baptized in the Spirit in the 1950s, including Trevor Chandler, the lay-missioner at Titahi Bay in 1957, and the minister of the Berhampore church, Eric Sherburd.<sup>51</sup> Frank Carlisle, who had been Brethren but had moved to the Elim Church, began to attend Berhampore Baptist, but after the neo-Pentecostal views of the minister were exposed, he decided to move back to the old Tory Street assembly, now meeting in Elizabeth Street Chapel. Although Frank Garrett had left this assembly, he too remained in close contact with some of its members. Noel Gibson, now local director of the Open Air Campaigners, was still in this assembly, although he never sought to discuss his views on spiritual gifts there. Overseas influences were to be responsible for a much greater impact. David Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade* was very widely read in New Zealand and awoke interest not only in ministry to gangs but also in spiritual gifts. Public acceptance of the gifts within the main churches, which is crucial to the distinction between Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement took a significant step forward when the Rev. Dennis Bennett of St. Mark's, Van Nuys, California remained

in the Episcopal ministry after he told his congregation in 3 April 1960 that he spoke in tongues. In New Zealand this may have seemed a mere Californian fantasy, but the visit of Leonard Ravenhill en route to and from Australia in December 1960 and January 1961 introduced similar teachings to the country. For the author of *Why Revival Tarries* had come to experience more than the usual form of the higher Christian life. Ravenhill spoke at several Youth for Christ gatherings, and may also have addressed the Brethren Christian Youth Crusade in Auckland.<sup>52</sup>

The arrival of Campbell McAlpine in New Zealand in 1959 preceded Ravenhill's visit, but its significance only slowly unfolded. Campbell's father, John McAlpine (1877-1960), had been an evangelist among the Brethren in Scotland and beyond. On his retirement he had visited South Africa and then decided to settle in New Zealand, living at first near his daughter in Hamilton, and then subsequently in Rotorua. He also conducted meetings in various parts of New Zealand and became quite well known.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile his son had shown talent as a youth evangelist and served with Youth For Christ in South Africa, later moving to a wider European ministry. His desire to visit his ageing father (who died in 1960) attracted Campbell McAlpine to New Zealand, but he came because he felt guided to seek opportunities as an evangelist in the dominion.<sup>54</sup> Arriving in Auckland in mid-1959, he was welcomed at Howe Street assembly by R. A. Laidlaw who greatly respected his father, and he quickly befriended Will Miller, the Scottish-born naturopath who was giving most of his time to pastoral work within Howe Street. Miller understood that Campbell McAlpine was accepted as a preacher by overseas assemblies, and not just by Youth For Christ, so he arranged speaking engagements for him both at Howe Street and on rather less open platforms further south, beginning with a young people's conference at Wanganui in August 1959. Campbell proved to be a dynamic speaker who made a deep impression both on Christians and unbelievers. His sermons on the gates of Jerusalem mentioned in the book of Nehemiah were long remembered. His constant and searching theme, illustrated from his own experience, was the intimate fellowship a Christian could have with God. Campbell had a winning personality, and an aura of saintliness about him. His mission at Roslyn assembly in Palmerston North in September 1959 was very successful, and he was urged to stay in New Zealand and take up the many invitations to minister. So with generous assistance from R. A. Laidlaw, who arranged a mortgage for him on a house in the Auckland suburb of Mount Roskill, he arranged for his family to remove to New Zealand.<sup>55</sup> He spoke at the 1959-60 Christmas camp at Mount Maunganui and he held notable crusades at Te Puke and at Sylvia Park and Tamaki in

Auckland. He became a regular speaker at the Auckland Bible Class movement's Christian Youth Crusade meetings, and at Howe Street he began a long series of sermons on the book of Romans. He also spoke at the 1960 B.T.I. graduation service.<sup>56</sup>

However the Brethren who welcomed McAlpine did not realize that he and his friend, Denis Clark, had experienced a filling of the Spirit in South Africa, and that he spoke in tongues in his own private devotions. His public ministry was not on the subject of spiritual gifts, although it was very much in the tradition of 'higher life' teaching. Privately he was willing to discuss the gifts, although he never identified himself wholly with the Charismatic Movement. His emphasis was not unacceptable at first. For example his action against an apparent case of demon-possession at the 1959-60 Mount Maunganui camp was sympathetically supported by most of the leaders of the camp.

It was through Noel Gibson rather than Campbell McAlpine that the first overtly charismatic event occurred within the ken of the assemblies. For in June 1960 Trevor Chandler of Titahi Bay Baptist Church, who was a member of the O.A.C. committee, spoke at the annual Queen's Birthday weekend O.A.C. conference at Otaki, north of Wellington. Open Air Campaigners was largely supported by Brethren; it was acceptable as an organization in which Brethren young people might be urged to profitably devote their energies, and it was a training-ground for potential full-time Christian workers. It was firmly anti-Pentecostal in its official stance. In Australia it had been involved in the ardent campaign against Oral Roberts and it would not allow Pentecostal speakers on its platform. Manawatu young people assisted in the assembly-based Manawatu Gospel Messengers, but these young people often attended O.A.C. conferences as well. This however proved to be no ordinary conference. For the assembled young people were given opportunity in an unofficial session to hear Trevor Chandler explain the meaning of the baptism in the Spirit. Some of those present experienced the baptism at that meeting. Others came into the experience at subsequent cottage meetings at which Chandler and Gibson spoke in Nelson, Wellington and Palmerston North. Furthermore in 1961 Gibson assisted Campbell McAlpine at an after-meeting at Elizabeth Street Chapel at which they laid hands on those who were seeking the blessing. To those who heard about it, it sounded rather like a Pentecostal tarrying meeting.

It was not the Wellington Brethren but those in Auckland who felt the need to do something. In Auckland there was also discussion about charismatic gifts among young people at the Assembly Bible School and at the Bible Training Institute. Among those attending these institutions was Colin Campbell who had been at the 1960 O.A.C. conference.

At the Assembly Bible School the book *Rees Howell, Intercessor* sparked off a debate, which Bob Auld, a senior lecturer, could not contain. The young people also attended Campbell McAlpine's sermons on Romans at Howe Street and this stimulated further interest in forms of Christian experience. Ken Calvert experienced the baptism in the Spirit and spoke in tongues while at the Bible School. McAlpine's sermons drew to a close, however, and so did all his public ministry there. For when Will Miller preached on 1 Corinthians 13 at Howe Street, McAlpine's expression of reservations about his interpretation led Will Miller to give more credence to reports about the Scotsman's Pentecostal inclinations. A meeting was convened with R. A. Laidlaw and Dr. Pettit to discuss his views. Faced with a direct question at that meeting, McAlpine confirmed that he believed the gift of tongues was still available, and that he used tongues himself in his private devotions. No-one in New Zealand had been so generous to him as had Bert Laidlaw and Will Miller, and no-one was more concerned to protect him, so he agreed at their urgent pleading not to propagate his views, but he felt unable to change them.<sup>57</sup>

Nothing else was done, and nothing was said in public. But McAlpine was under observation. He had not been invited to speak at the 1960 Christmas camp at Mount Maunganui despite his great impact there in 1959, and when he spoke at the largest Brethren Easter camp at Marton in 1961, one of the other invited speakers, Selwyn Cunningham of Elizabeth Street Chapel, Wellington, insisted that there be no mention of the Holy Spirit in his talks. He spoke instead on the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and did not fail to draw out the necessity of deep personal fellowship with Christ. Hostility to 'Neo-Pentecostalism' thus tended to quicken interest in his views rather than to quench it.

Much of his subsequent ministry took place in 'cottage meetings' in private homes, where he responded to questions and told of his experience in greater detail. If some felt that his theology was inadequate, his life had a quality about it which was compelling. Moreover Campbell prophesied that New Zealand was about to experience a great revival, and people were eager to be spiritually equipped in readiness for it. Prayer groups began to be established throughout the country by assembly members and other enquirers. It was among young people, many of whom were eager for spiritual power but restive in the face of the Brethren establishment, that most support arose. In Wellington a number of Brethren and Baptists received the baptism in the Spirit at this time. Tom Marshall at Wainuiomata formed a charismatic prayer group in his Baptist church, at which McAlpine, Gibson and Chandler spoke. Barry Martin of the Stokes Valley assembly was another person who received the baptism in the Spirit. During 1962 Ron Hardman,

who had been a Brethren full-time worker since 1955, first in his home district around Auckland and after 1961 at Titahi Bay, where he was doing visitation work, came into a charismatic experience, and joined Trevor Chandler's Baptist congregation. This caused shock waves in those assemblies at which he had frequently preached.<sup>58</sup> The recently formed Wellington Assembly Research Fellowship chose this moment to discuss the Charismatic Movement. G. A. Hughson's paper on the Holy Spirit delivered in August 1962 led to a vigorous discussion on the charismatic issue, which was enlivened by a contribution of an ex-Pentecostal, W. J. Redit. The issue was so topical that W.A.R.F. boldly invited D. Crozier, a former assembly member who had become a Pentecostal, to discuss his views at their November meeting. To their surprise Crozier brought with him Rob Wheeler and a number of others including Frank Garrett, who were eager to bear testimony to Pentecostal gifts, although their exegetical basis for them seemed as shaky as Hughson's belief that tongues had ceased when the canon of Scripture was closed.<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile in Palmerston North interest continued among the Manawatu Gospel Messengers, and some were influenced by the Open Door Mission and by the tent missions of Rob Wheeler. Colin Campbell was cold-shouldered out of Queen Street Chapel because of his association with Pentecostals, although he had not then experienced the baptism in the Spirit.

It was Campbell McAlpine's deep impact on other Brethren full-time workers which was most important. His ministry made a large impression on the Maori evangelist, Muri Thompson, and on his friend, David Jacobsen, the full-time pastoral worker at the Sylvia Park and Tamaki assemblies in Auckland, and convenor of the Christian Youth Crusade rallies. Meanwhile in the absence of many invitations for service among the Brethren, Campbell McAlpine considered leaving New Zealand until meditation on Jeremiah chapter 42 led him to dream of a crusade to 'Tell New Zealand' the gospel by placing a copy of John's Gospel in every home in the country. 'God has clearly shown that we have to do this distribution here', he told the General Secretary of Scripture Union in December 1961, and he expected that a revival would occur once the distribution had been completed.<sup>60</sup> Those who assisted in the distribution of the Gospels included many Brethren and assemblies, and his team of full-time assistants included several charismatic Brethren young people, including Colin Campbell, Rowley Houghton, David Harrison, Gordon Adair and Brian Pearson. The distribution was completed by mid-1963, but the expenses were heavy, and R. A. Laidlaw assisted generously with paying the bills. Meanwhile McAlpine's vision had expanded to one which aimed to 'Tell the Nations', and in September 1963 after a friendly farewell from R. A.

Laidlaw who loved him, although he disagreed with him, he and some of his New Zealand team left for the Philippines. He returned to England on 6 December 1963.

### Confrontation

It took very little to harden Brethren attitudes against the Charismatic Movement. Its associations, whether real or assumed, with Pentecostalism, Irvingism and Spiritualism were decisive. Increasingly Brethren observers interpreted it as a movement inspired by the Devil. It was not just an unsound movement, or a work of the flesh; it was an instrument of Satan himself. The decisive swing of Brethren opinion occurred during 1962. On Queen's Birthday weekend in the June of that year, one of the best-known of Brethren evangelists, Colin Graham, was invited to give a series of talks on the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit at a Christian Progress Camp for Brethren young people at Mount Maunganui. He was excused from preaching on the Sunday night because of a prior engagement at Te Awamutu, some seventy miles away. The next day he told his audience that he could no longer regard tongues as a work of the flesh in every case; for he had witnessed a satanic attempt to disrupt his Te Awamutu meeting. His preaching had been interrupted by a man speaking in a tongue which a Brethren worker among the Maoris had identified as a series of Maori obscenities. 'Was that of the Holy Spirit of God?', asked Colin Graham. 'Well then, what spirit was it? Is it of the flesh, or is it another spirit? ... It won't make you any more spiritual, any more holy, any more godly.' And he used the story repeatedly to prevent acceptance of charismatic gifts.<sup>61</sup>

In Auckland critical comments were not sufficient to destroy the influence of Campbell McAlpine. The youthful committee which had established the Willow Park Easter camp in 1961, including David Jacobsen, John Massam, and C. Blythe Harper, declined to ostracize him, and in 1962 he spoke at the camp. However they also invited R. A. Laidlaw, and he used the opportunity to denounce the Pentecostal heresy. Laidlaw's message was made available on tape by the Gospel Publishing House.<sup>62</sup> This concern was already shared by the editor of the *Treasury*, the devotional expositor widely respected far beyond New Zealand, H. Charlie Hewlett. In 1961 he began to use the *Treasury* to criticize the 'phantasy' of any idea of a second blessing, and he used the October 1961 issue to promote his opinion that the 'sign gifts' described in Mark chapter sixteen were of limited duration.<sup>63</sup> One month later J. Foster Crane, the senior assembly missionary in Fiji, used the same journal to denounce tongues as a product of 'the flesh [which] loves any

kind of show and excitement'. The same view was further elaborated by Gordon Junck, the new editor of the magazine, in May 1962.<sup>64</sup>

These were strong statements, but they received an able answer in a cyclostyled booklet prepared by G. Milton Smith and entitled *Tongues shall cease*. A pamphlet from Milton Smith's hand naturally attracted attention. Smith had come into the Brethren when he joined the ultra-conservative assembly at Mornington in Dunedin about 1940. Qualified with an M.Sc., he had taught mathematics at the Secondary School at Suva in Fiji, and later held a position at New Zealand's leading state secondary school, Auckland Grammar. He was also well read and an enthusiast for painstaking exposition. His reputation was large, and beside ministering in his home assembly at Waikowhai in Auckland he was a respected preacher and lecturer at the Assembly Bible School, and led a Bible study group for Brethren students. His careful analysis of 1 Corinthians chapter thirteen weakened the usual Brethren demonstration that tongues had ceased, for he argued that the 'perfect' state mentioned in the chapter was none other than the perfection which believers would receive when they saw Christ at his second coming.<sup>65</sup>

This pamphlet was quite a milestone in charismatic literature. Pentecostal theology had argued on the basis of passages in the book of Acts that there was a baptism in the Spirit subsequent to conversion which was always evidenced by speaking in tongues. But most charismatic publications were essentially testimonies, and the use they made of Scripture was rarely very accurate. They were thus very vulnerable to criticisms from the Brethren who wanted Biblical evidence, and better evidence than strained interpretations of the book of Acts. Milton Smith had caught them out on their own principles, for he showed that their dismissal of tongues was itself based on a forced interpretation of Scripture. There was a flurry of responses. Dr. Pettit, who quickly became the stoutest opponent of Neo-Pentecostalism, suggested to a young student at Auckland University that he write an answer. So Murray Harris, who was later to be recognized as a notable New Testament scholar, prepared a critical analysis of the pamphlet, but he did not attempt to defend the usual Brethren interpretation. At a more popular level, gospel halls began to resound to frequent denunciations of the movement. An eloquent exposé by Gordon Maclachlan, a Wellington public servant, at Vivian Street Gospel Hall in Wellington in April 1962 was serialized in the *Treasury*.<sup>66</sup> Indeed for two years the *Treasury* returned to the subject every month with monotonous regularity. The fiercest condemnation came from the prolific pen of the lawyer, W. G. Broadbent of Paeroa. Taking 1 Corinthians 13, and applying an ultra-dispensational method to assist his interpretation of it, he proved to his satisfaction that 'tongues shall cease' means neither more nor less than

that 'tongues have ceased'. Assuming that this was the text as it should have been written, he thus convinced himself that tongues were hypnotically induced voices of evil spirits which seduced men to worship a Jesus other than the Biblical one.<sup>67</sup>

Circumstances soon seemed to necessitate more authoritative answers than had so far been produced. For the arrival of Arthur Wallis in New Zealand in 1963 signalled a new challenge to Brethren orthodoxy. Arthur was the son of the great preacher, Captain Reginald Wallis, who visited New Zealand in 1939, and he himself was a free-lance English preacher with half a foot in the assemblies, although he ministered far beyond their confines. He was an advocate of 'deeper life', and in 1956 he had written a book, *In the Day of thy Power*, which predicted a coming age of world revival. He had become interested in the charismatic renewal shortly after its commencement although he did not initially experience the gift of tongues. Early in 1962 the editor of the *Witness*, Cecil Howley, invited him and a number of other men touched by the renewal, including David Lillie, Denis Clark and William Ward, to discuss their views with a number of open-minded Brethren including W. G. Norris, Douglas Brealey, Alan Nute and Stephen Short. Howley and his friends doubted the theology of the charismatics, but conceded that Wallis in particular was a man of real godliness.<sup>68</sup>

Wallis was invited to New Zealand by the Willow Park Easter Camp committee to speak at the 1963 camp. He took the place of Milton Smith who was now unacceptable to many Brethren. They invited him not because he spoke in tongues (they probably were unaware that he did) but because of his great reputation as an advocate of revival. In the view of the early charismatics, tongues was no more than a subsidiary issue, a pathway to power. Wallis received the invitation in mid 1962. However while he was considering the invitation his sympathy towards Pentecostalism came out into the open, due to the publication of an address he had given at Eastbourne early in 1962 on the subject of revival and reformation in the church. In the course of his survey of church history he remarked that: 'thoughtful Christians, who are not blinded by prejudice, are coming to realize increasingly that the Pentecostal movement in the providence of God has come to make its special contribution to the great unfolding of God's truth.'<sup>69</sup> A copy of the published text of the address fell into the hands of a noted assembly evangelist, Ransome Cooper, who had spent a year in New Zealand in 1954 and was well informed by letters and visitors about the growing tensions over Pentecostalism in the antipodean assemblies.<sup>70</sup> On hearing of the invitation to Arthur Wallis he seems to have written in some haste to advise R. A. Laidlaw of Wallis's views. Consequently Laidlaw brought heavy pressure to bear on the Willow Park committee to

persuade them to cancel the invitation.

The committee resisted this pressure for they had not lost the independent outlook which had led them to invite Campbell McAlpine to speak in 1962. They had received a gift which enabled them to pay Wallis's return fares to New Zealand, and they believed he was the speaker God wanted at the camp despite his own reluctance to attend. Wallis had originally consulted R. A. Laidlaw before he initially declined the invitation, but the reiterated request had about it a new urgency, and when the words from Jeremiah, 'Go ... and I will teach you what you are to say' were impressed on his mind, he decided to come.

The camp went ahead as planned, and Wallis shared the ministry with the Rev. Allan Burrow, the principal of the Bible Training Institute, who was noted for his own revivalist emphasis. Burrow had written in the B.T.I. magazine, the *Reaper*, on the subject of tongues, and although he was very cautious about their authenticity, he insisted that there were no Biblical grounds for dismissing them as spurious.<sup>71</sup> Once again tension arose between advocacy of revival and the defence of fundamental truths. R. A. Laidlaw was concerned at the turn of events, and so too was his old friend, Dr. Pettit, who was swiftly becoming a seasoned campaigner on the subject. On 6 May 1963 at Dr. Pettit's invitation the camp committee gathered in his surgery with Arthur Wallis in attendance, to discuss the charismatic issue. Arthur Wallis arrived with a message for the doctor which he had received in a dream three days earlier. 'Tell him', the prophecy said, using the words of Ecclesiastes chapter eleven which were taken up by Bunyan in the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress* when advising Mr. Valiant for Truth of his forthcoming death, 'Tell him "the pitcher is broken at the fountain"'. Although Arthur Wallis never offered any interpretation of those words, Dr. Pettit took it to be a threat that he would die if he opposed the new teaching.<sup>72</sup>

## Division

The pressure to take action was by now considerable. Inevitably the issue was discussed by the Howe Street Chapel elders and they decided to make a public gesture to dissociate themselves from Campbell McAlpine, since access to Howe Street's pulpit had been the vehicle by which he had first gained the attention of the assemblies. They inserted a notice in the *Treasury* in May 1963, announcing that 'We cannot allow our brother Campbell McAlpine either to occupy our platform or minister in our assembly, owing to the views he has on "tongues".<sup>73</sup> The action was of no practical significance; there had been no likelihood

of Campbell McAlpine preaching at Howe Street for more than a year and he was about to leave New Zealand. It was the symbolism which mattered, and the respectful attention which any warning from Howe Street was bound to command. Some of the leading Howe Street elders also thought of a more official way to thwart the new teachings and their teachers. R. A. Laidlaw forwarded a draft manuscript of a denunciation of Neo-Pentecostalism to many leading brethren all over the country, inviting them to add the weight of their signatures to an attempt to put an end to Pentecostal influence in the assemblies once and for all. Once the draft had been revised twenty Brethren agreed to their names being used; they were A. G. (Alex) Bain, Dr. Pettit, H. C. Chenery, A. L. (Stan) Goold and Jack Hume of Auckland; from the Manawatu, W. Stewart, Ron Hathaway, Jack Moir and H. B. Honore and of course H. C. Hewlett; from the East Coast of the North Island, David A. Hewlett (H. C.'s brother), F. W. Brown and John C. Henderson; from Christchurch, R. H. Aston and Charlie Purdie, and from Wellington, Gordon Maclachlan, Ron. J. Drown and the man who had opposed Smith Wigglesworth forty years earlier, Charlie Drake. They were a distinguished group of men, some of them in the professions, others prosperous employers. There were no full-time Christian workers in the list except for H. C. Hewlett.

A number of other Brethren declined to sign. One may understand their reluctance on examining the emphasis of this 'letter of twenty'. For the pamphlet put forward a very simple and straightforward case. It did not contend that there were special 'sign-gifts'. It disputed Milton Smith's interpretation of the perfect state mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 by referring to the chapter's statement that even when the perfect had come faith and hope would still continue. Surely faith and hope would be redundant in heaven? The gifts must therefore have ceased much earlier; to be specific they must have ceased with the completion of the canon of Scripture. The tract was bolstered by lengthy quotations from Graham Scroggie, Campbell Morgan and Harry Ironside (Laidlaw's brother-in-law), which implied that these notable preachers had used the same arguments against Pentecostalism as the pamphlet. However this was not the real focus of the pamphlet. It turned from scriptural exegesis and interpretation to another kind of evidence:

Even if there were any room for a difference of opinion of what God has written, there can surely be no difference when we interpret what He has written by what he has done ... [If tongues were a genuine gift] all our assemblies of reasonable size would have at least one worker of miracles, one healer, and one speaker in tongues and one interpreter.<sup>74</sup>

It was a species of reasoning based on a very idealistic interpretation of the character of the assemblies.

The logic of the pamphlet was curious; Professor F. F. Bruce exposed the weakness of its Biblical interpretation in answer to a question in the English magazine, the *Harvester*, in 1964. And Cecil Howley, the editor of the *Witness*, passed a trenchant comment on its arguments in a private letter:

I think it very unwise to engage in sweeping condemnations. To overstate a case never strengthens it, but weakens it. The booklets that I have seen from the New Zealand assemblies are, frankly, disappointing; and I hope they are not panic measures. You see the exegesis of I Cor[inthians] 13:8 given is, I believe, quite wrong. ... [To answer Pentecostal teaching] the really valid portions [of Scripture] need to be understood, then expounded clearly; and we need to be very careful about talking about excommunication when control would probably solve the matter. ... I cannot believe we can put away for tongues alone.<sup>75</sup>

Howley's closing comment was particularly apposite. The exegesis of the pamphlet was less important than the advice it gave to elders. Appealing as it did to the opinion of 'the very great majority of responsible brethren', and to Brethren history, it urged the necessity of action 'to preserve the testimony which God has committed to the Assemblies'. Its advice was forthright: 'We cannot give tacit approval to brethren holding that the gift of tongues is for today, by putting them on our platforms or allowing them to minister.' A covering letter insisted that the signatories did not wish to restrict the autonomy of assemblies, but no-one could have missed the hint.<sup>76</sup>

7,500 copies of the pamphlet were distributed, although its appearance was privately regretted by a number of Brethren. One man put his criticisms into print. Frank Carlisle had already withdrawn from Elizabeth Street Chapel in Wellington after a controversy about his suggestion that a charismatic Baptist minister address the young people of the chapel, so he had nothing to lose when he published a reply, which cleverly had the same title and format as the letter of the twenty. His fifty-page booklet argued that the letter of twenty misrepresented both Scripture and the exegetes it cited. In conclusion he challenged the Brethren to be genuinely obedient to Scripture:

If we cannot produce a valid case from the Scriptures against the presence of the gifts in the church today, then we must adopt a positive attitude to all the relevant Scriptures and apply them in our fellowship.<sup>77</sup>

Several thousand copies of his pamphlet were distributed, including one to every New Zealand assembly, but its very tone discounted it in the eyes of most Brethren. Missionaries were warned by the Palmerston North Missionary Funds office to ignore it. However other discordant voices were less easily silenced. In a letter published by the Wellington

Assembly Research Fellowship, Dr. Douglas Stewart, while solemnly denying that he had any sympathy for the Charismatic Movement, warned of the danger of 'insistence on a uniform interpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit'. He concluded his letter: 'This recent controversy is a method of the Devil to neutralize many of our best men.' And in the letters published in answer to Stewart's, several Brethren concurred with these views.<sup>78</sup>

This call for charity had come too late. By 1963 most of the leaders of assemblies had decided it was necessary to take a stand. The first to do so were the elders of the Christchurch assemblies (where as yet there had been little Brethren involvement in things charismatic). In September 1963 they held their first ever combined meeting at which they reiterated phrases of the letter of twenty in a resolution which read:

The standard interpretation accepted throughout 130 years as assemblies is that "apostles" have passed away, that "prophets" have ceased with the completion and circulation of the full Word of God, and that miracles, gifts of healing and tongues were given as Divine signs at the introduction of this dispensation, but having served their purpose have ceased.<sup>79</sup>

When this resolution was published in the *Treasury* the news editor confidently commented that 'assemblies are solidly behind the conclusions reached in the pamphlet', and indeed after the assemblies in the Hutt valley forwarded a similar resolution a month later, a halt was called to printing more protestations of loyalty. They were unnecessary. This sequence of public statements had already exerted heavy pressure on assembly members who were straying from the fold. And the threat of loss of fellowship was more alarming to Brethren than any official discipline could be.

It was one thing to pass resolutions; it was quite another to implement them. Assemblies inevitably turned to this next. The chief person to fall under suspicion was Don Caldwell, the thirty-nine year-old Brethren evangelist who had been commended by the Te Puke assembly in 1949. Te Puke was in a vicinity in the Bay of Plenty in the North Island where charismatic questions were very live ones. Twenty-five years before, the Apostolic Church had disrupted Brethren outreach to the Maoris there. Nearby Tauranga had subsequently become a centre for the dissemination of neo-Pentecostal teachings. The chief influences were Rob Wheeler, Des Short, who was pastor of the local Assembly of God, and Eric Sherburd, who had moved from Berhampore to the Tauranga Baptist Church. Moreover within the Te Puke assembly there were several ardent advocates of revival, including the Bowen family, and for many years a regular revival prayer meeting had been held there.

These were matters of concern for the Te Puke elders, but they were

of little relevance to Don Caldwell, for he was an explicit opponent of Pentecostalism. However he had worked with Campbell McAlpine, and was deeply impressed by him. News that Campbell had experienced the gift of tongues forced him to reconsider whether such a gift could be genuine, and after long study he came to the conclusion that God could still bestow the gift. He did not claim to have received it himself. Bert Laidlaw eventually heard with concern that Caldwell had become at least sympathetic to the new teaching. So he invited Caldwell to his office for a five-hour meeting, and lent him a draft of the letter of twenty. To Laidlaw's horror, Caldwell did not find it convincing, and in his reply he was sharply critical of the tenor of the pamphlet. He felt it misquoted Scroggie and the other exegetes it cited, and that it disposed of the gifts by inventing an unbiblical category called 'sign-gifts'. He concluded with a warning which so upset Laidlaw that he was later to quote just those paragraphs of the letter as proof of Caldwell's obduracy. Here are those paragraphs in full:

The sending forth of such a statement as theirs is going to have very much greater repercussions than ever anticipated. Furthermore, for them to have deliberately ignored and omitted the clear-cut written expositions of such saintly and scholarly teachers as Drs. Scroggie, Ironside and Campbell Morgan, is going to seriously undermine the confidence of younger men in the spiritual integrity of their elders throughout the whole country. This is indeed a grave situation, and to take any action outside the will of God will be disastrous. That our senior elder brethren who sign the proposed statement are in God's perfect will in this matter is open to serious question.<sup>80</sup>

His words may have been accurate but especially out of context they seemed very sharp. R. A. Laidlaw hastily replied, urging Caldwell to fall into line, and to accept that standard evangelical teaching had been correctly cited. He pleaded with Caldwell to: 'put aside all thought of any of the lesser gifts, about which there is so much controversy and devot[e] yourself to the use and development of the far more important gifts which God has already bestowed upon you'.<sup>81</sup> A month later he wrote again in earnest desire that he would not have to publicly criticize Caldwell. Why, he asked, 'should we be divided on such an unimportant subject as tongues?'<sup>82</sup>

Bert Laidlaw valued evangelism, but he was consciously warning Caldwell that his evangelistic work was less important than his loyalty to assembly beliefs. The choice was an unpalatable one, and it was only after 'many months of burning heart-searching' that Caldwell finally wrote to Laidlaw in July 1963 declining to accept an interpretation of I Corinthians 13:8 on the supposed authority of exegetes like Scroggie who had in fact denied the accuracy of such interpretations. 'If assembly

Christians would gain the tacit approval of their Brethren they must repudiate the expositional ministry of these mighty men and rigidly adhere to the signed assembly statement', he lamented. And this he would not do.<sup>83</sup>

Bert Laidlaw was conscious that in this correspondence he was acting as a representative for the Brethren. He was aware that there were agitators abroad who were not beyond accusing himself of being soft on Pentecostalism, and in the existing atmosphere he realized that some would believe them. Elder Brethren are always very conscious of the opinions of their peers. So Laidlaw decided that it was time to take action, and unbeknown to Caldwell he reproduced much of the correspondence and forwarded it to the signatories of the letter of twenty. He asked for their suggestions as to appropriate action, for, he wrote, 'I feel sure he will not be able to resist propagating amongst our young people what he believes so deeply'.<sup>84</sup> The Wellington signatories responded urging Laidlaw to forward copies of the correspondence to the Te Puke elders with the suggestion that his commendation be withdrawn. 'Firmness' was essential, and if the Te Puke oversight was unwilling to act, then might not the signatories of the statement expose Caldwell's views in the *Treasury*? In such a way the autonomy of local assemblies might be circumvented.<sup>85</sup> However this eventuality never arose, for the Te Puke elders swiftly advised Caldwell to write 'a very humble apology and also a statement from you that no controversial teaching would be given or propagated by you in any way'. Caldwell did write the demanded apology, but he declined to write more than this, and Laidlaw was not appeased.<sup>86</sup> A debate with Charlie Hewlett in the presence of the Te Puke elders failed to change his views.

The Te Puke elders presented Caldwell with two alternative statements. In signing one he would reaffirm standard Brethren teaching; in signing the other he would declare that his views had changed so much that he saw that he could not remain as a Brethren commended worker. He was willing to sign neither. Consequently his elders felt obliged to deal firmly with him. It would have been easier for them if Don Caldwell had been directly involved in the Charismatic Movement, but Caldwell always stoutly denied rumours to that effect, so his crime remained one of declining to criticize speaking in tongues. Rowland Rogers, the son of E. W. Rogers, who had urged the Te Puke elders into action, participated in the correspondence on the subject within the Wellington Assembly Research Fellowship in 1964. He argued that if a person 'refuses to give ... an assurance [that he will not propagate Pentecostal teachings], declaring that he is answerable to the Lord alone, and that he must be free to do as the Lord tells him to', then the platform had to be closed to such a person.<sup>87</sup> He was plainly referring to Caldwell.

Late in May 1964 the Te Puke elders announced to their assembly that the commendation of Don Caldwell had been withdrawn, and a notice was inserted to this effect in the June issue of the *Treasury*.<sup>88</sup> To the surprise of many, Caldwell did not leave the assembly, and he continued his full-time evangelistic work in wider circles than previously. But the door was effectively closed to many of the assemblies where he had previously ministered.

Not long after this action a dispute broke out at Paeroa, not far from Te Puke. Two of the leaders of the assembly, W. G. Broadbent and the evangelist Ces Hilton, found themselves in the minority in their identification of a case of alleged charismatic activity. A tussle for the control of the chapel resulted, and the Waikato and Bay of Plenty elders at their regular meeting decided that the Stewards Trust had better adjudicate, since they held the deeds of the recently-built chapel. It was a touchy issue, for on it hung the issue of whether everything called Pentecostal had to be purged. When the integrity of the Stewards Trust adjudicators was impugned by the minority, the Stewards Trust invited a representative group of non-Aucklanders to assist their deliberations, and seventeen men were at the meeting when the issue was resolved. They included Cecil Grant and Charlie Brace from Wellington, John Henderson of Hastings, A. W. Emmett of Wanganui, Eric Edwards of New Plymouth, Courtney Lawry and Peter Greenfield from Nelson and R. H. Aston and Charlie Purdie from Christchurch. Their solution was to leave the chapel in the hands of the allegedly pro-charismatic majority, but to issue a statement denying that they were sympathetic to Pentecostalism, and insisting that tongues and healing were strictly confined to the apostolic age. 'As the knowledge of God increased, and the churches were established, God's purpose for the gifts was achieved and they ceased', read the third clause of their public statement, and the fourth declared: 'We believe that the present-day teaching that the gift of tongues and healing are still in operation is divisive and erroneous.'<sup>89</sup>

The uniform line now being demanded did not in fact receive the support of all elder brethren. In some assemblies the charismatic party seemed quite strong. In Auckland in particular the number of committed Brethren charismatics was naturally large. At Waikowhai assembly in the city, the elders were deeply divided on the issue, and one of those elders was Milton Smith, who conducted the Bible Class. Consequently Waikowhai was the only assembly in which Arthur Wallis ministered at any length when he remained in New Zealand after the Easter camp of 1963. However by 1964 a majority of the elders led by Eric Purchase decided that the time for tolerance had passed, and this led to a division in the assembly. Some went to the large Hillsborough Baptist Church, including Jim Dawson and his wife Joy, who was the

daughter of J. H. Manins. Milton Smith decided to shift his allegiance to the Te Papapa assembly in the south of the city. Te Papapa assembly had been established in a state housing district in 1948, and it developed a very significant outreach in the neighbourhood. It had been here that Ezra Coppin had been preaching when he received the baptism of the Spirit in 1954. By 1964, under the guidance of its leading elder, Les Faithful, it had become a haven for charismatic Brethren from all over Auckland. Naturally they expected that its forms of worship should reflect this.

When Dr. Pettit heard that some such concessions had been made, he and another elder from Howe Street, Jack Hume, visited the assembly, and then reported what they had discovered to the quarterly meeting of elder Brethren of the Auckland assemblies at the Wiremu Street Hall on 14 March 1965. This body was responsible for inserting advertisements in the Saturday editions of the Auckland newspapers containing information on the meeting times and places of 'Christians known as Open Brethren', and it had also advertised to dissociate the assemblies from the Exclusive Brethren excesses which had been the focus of considerable attention from the media.<sup>90</sup> It felt a similar responsibility to preserve the pure character of the assemblies when it heard the report about Te Papapa. So a statement was unanimously agreed upon which led to the omission of Te Papapa from the newspaper list of assemblies, and to a remarkable notice which was printed in the *Treasury*:

Brethren taking responsibility in Te Papapa Gospel Centre have decided that, while not permitting women to teach, they allow them to participate in the Lord's Day morning meeting by (1) Reading Scriptures (2) Announcing hymns (3) Engaging in prayer (4) "Prophesying". They also stated that, on three occasions, women had already "prophesied". Furthermore they said that they would allow speaking in tongues if an interpreter was present.

In view of the above this meeting of elders of Auckland assemblies considers that Te Papapa Gospel Centre has put itself outside the fellowship of Assemblies known as "open brethren".<sup>91</sup>

It was a drastic step, and evidently it was felt necessary to justify it as a defence of the longer established Brethren orthodoxy on the role of women. (It is true that one appeal of Pentecostalism was the opportunities it gave to women.) Nevertheless the announcement was in fact directed against Neo-Pentecostalism. For Milton Smith it was a very real shock. 'Suddenly', he writes, 'I found myself alone, unrelated to Brethren Assemblies and leaders with whom I had warm fellowship and mutual service for years. I felt this very keenly.'<sup>92</sup>

The action did not escape criticism, especially among Brethren beyond New Zealand. In 1965 an avid discussion had developed in the

pages of the *Witness* in response to an article by A. E. Horton which had admitted that: 'frankness demands that we cannot prove from Scripture that all supernatural manifestations of the Spirit's power have completely and permanently ceased'.<sup>93</sup>

Stung by these comments, R. A. Laidlaw, Dr. Pettit and Will Miller wrote to the English magazine insisting that the policy of 'extreme caution' which Horton had advised, had failed in New Zealand, and that 'definite opposition' was the only safe policy. In illustration of their point they quoted the text of the expulsion of Te Papapa.<sup>94</sup> To their surprise their letter provoked a rash of horrified answers. Eminent Brethren who emphasized that they had no sympathy with the Charismatic Movement expressed their distaste for a step which savoured of the Exclusive Brethren policy of 'disfellowshipping' people by isolating them. If Paul had not separated from the Corinthian assembly, despite all its faults, was it right for Brethren to be more discriminatory? 'In what way', asked one correspondent, 'does this action differ in principle from the Papal Convention now being held in Rome?'<sup>95</sup>

These unsympathetic remarks caused considerable irritation in New Zealand, for the strength of its assemblies compared to those of Britain, lay in their unity and uniformity. Laidlaw, Pettit and Miller said as much when they replied to their critics in a subsequent issue. Denominationalism was a fact of life in any vigorous movement. 'Why try to live in a world of make believe instead of facing reality?', they retorted.<sup>96</sup>

By 1964 the views of the New Zealand assemblies were altogether clear. In order to confirm waverers a conference on tongues, healing and prophecy was held in Howe Street Chapel on Saturday 21 November 1964. This conference proved to be an unusual event, because the quarterly meeting of the Auckland assemblies accepted a resolution by Mr. McCaskill of Eden Chapel that both sides of the issue be presented at the meeting. Consequently Don Caldwell's name was substituted for that of Leo Clarke, after consultation with the Te Puke elders. Don was a convenient choice to state the 'other side' just because his views were so moderate. Yet his talk, with which the conference commenced, caused quite a stir, for he emphasized the injustice of the manner in which he had been treated, and emphatically denounced the excesses of Pentecostalism, denying that he had any personal experience of things Pentecostal. 'I believe the angel of the Lord is standing over the assemblies with his sword drawn in his hand, to execute judgement', he declared. These words caused considerable unease, and the organizers felt obliged to invite a Te Puke elder to explain why action was taken against him. The other speakers at the conference were Bert Laidlaw, Dr. Pettit, Charlie Hewlett (despite his unhappiness at attending a conference at which a troubler of the assemblies was permitted to speak)

and Will Miller. Opportunity was also given for brief ten-minute contributions, and among those who took part were Enoch Coppin, Arthur Vine, Bill Turkington and Ralph Dowdell of Waikowhai. A few contributors from the congregation of three hundred men dared to present a viewpoint sympathetic to charismatic claims, and towards the end of the conference Mr. McCaskill lamented that so much of the proceedings of the day had consisted merely of denunciations of people and their heresies, instead of analyses of the controverted passages of Scripture. This was unusual for a Brethren conference, but then this was no ordinary conference, but an attempt to goad assemblies into action.<sup>97</sup>

Local assemblies soon began to investigate the actions and beliefs of their members and especially full-time workers commended by them. This was not an easy operation because charismatic sympathizers were reluctant to state their views publicly, and such people were also privately inclined to denigrate the spirituality of elders who had not come into the blessing. In one assembly the elders issued a statement, and then required individuals to assent to it. It read, in part:

Those members of this assembly who in any way hold the signs gifts ... or those who associate with people who hold these views, are not to take part in any assembly gathering or activities, whether in the remembrance meeting of a Sunday morning, the Sunday School, the rallies, the women's meeting, or any other activity at all, until they are freed from their error to the satisfaction of responsible brethren. ... If ... brethren and sisters continue to fellowship with other professing Christians who hold and practise the sign-gifts they will have to withdraw ... because we will have nothing to do with these practices.<sup>98</sup>

This decree was probably fairly typical of many. As a result many people left the assemblies, including a number of full-time workers such as David Jacobsen. The Maori work of the assemblies suffered severely. In Wellington there was a series of explosions over the issue. At Elizabeth Street Chapel in the city, the elders had reacted in a low-key manner to early indications of charismatics in the assembly. However several of these elders were on the national committee of Open Air Campaigners, and when the issue erupted in that organization it spilt over into the assembly. In July 1965, after an incident in the Nelson district, the O.A.C. committee issued a statement insisting that despite 'certain incidents', 'O.A.C. ... does not and will not permit any of its members to practise or propagate such teachings'. Noel Gibson was required to read a public apology at Elizabeth Street Chapel. At Taupo, Palmerston North, and the Hutt, assemblies were badly split.<sup>99</sup>

One of the chief culprits for the trouble, according to the Brethren, was Arthur Wallis. He had remained in New Zealand after the 1963

Willow Park Easter Camp, and preached wherever he was welcome. He was invited to only two or three assemblies, but he did hold private cottage meetings all over the country. He remained for twenty-one months, and in that time he helped to bring charismatics who were not in Pentecostal churches into contact with each other, and to assist them to retain their own identity separate from other Pentecostals. A key aspect of his ministry was his extensive use of the 'word of knowledge' and 'deliverance' by means of the laying on of hands. He gave an interesting evaluation of his work to his English friends:

I did not meet with any unhealthy preoccupation with spiritual gifts such as tongues or healing. Though gifts are being received, my impression is that they are being used sparingly. ... I do not want to suggest that mistakes have not been made, or that unwise things have not been said and done. The infallible Spirit is pleased to work through fallible instruments, but it *is* the Holy Spirit who is working, not self or Satan ... Fear of the Lord and love of the brethren forbid me to say anything concerning the policy of those who view very differently what is taking place. Let us pray for them and for the crisis that has arisen in their circles. I can see no happy issue, only sorrowful division, so long as the present policy is pursued.<sup>100</sup>

To consolidate his work, he and some friends including Milton Smith planned a conference of charismatic Christians at Massey University in Palmerston North for August 1964. The conference was intended to direct the charismatics toward New Testament ecclesiology as well as spirituality. The speakers at the Massey Conference also included Milton Smith and Campbell McAlpine, who returned from England to participate. The only non-Brethren speaker was Tom Marshall, a Wellington Baptist, although several people of other denominations including Frank Houston of the Assemblies of God also shared in the testimony meetings. The conference had been advertized in a circular which offered a solution to all the tensions of the past years. It read:

The time has come for a larger coming together to share the great vision that the Spirit of God is unfolding. ... the Holy Spirit of God is wanting to work in Apostolic power through a fully-functioning local body, fed and led and governed by spiritual elders, amongst them those with special gifts and callings.<sup>101</sup>

Those who attended the conference regarded it as a remarkable experience, but no new local churches were established as a result; indeed Arthur Wallis in the opening session went to some lengths to deny that this had ever been his definite intention. This conference, he declared:

has *not* been convened to call any individual to leave his denomination,

church, assembly or fellowship. This conference has *not* been convened to form anything; a new movement or a new church. If any of these things are involved, then God must do them; the onus is upon the Almighty. We would not presume to raise a little finger to precipitate anything.<sup>102</sup>

Yet it is plain enough that some of those present had hoped for such an outcome. When Brethren leaders had seen the conference brochure they felt justified in regarding anyone who went to such a conference and then returned to his assembly as a subversive agent. R. A. Laidlaw and eleven North Island elders hastily printed and circulated a letter to the assemblies denouncing the conference as 'a call for a division in the church of God', and there were attempts to infiltrate the conference. Many Brethren who attended it were identified, and their assemblies warned about them. Fortuitously Bill Turkington of Wellington had just distributed widely among the assemblies packets of literature exposing Pentecostalism, including booklets by Enoch Coppin, Charlie Drake, Cyril Maskery and a compilation of cases of alleged Spiritism associated with tongues. They popularized the view of Enoch Coppin that the Charismatic Movement was 'Satan's rival programme'. Intended to dampen interest in the movement, they had an opposite effect in some cases.<sup>103</sup> However the conference was more significant in stimulating charismatic interest in other denominations, especially in Palmerston North. It was from this time that the Awapuni Baptist Church began to evolve into the independent charismatic Christian Centre, which attracted many former Brethren. Moreover several Anglicans became involved in the movement as a result of the conference, including the Rev. Cecil Marshall, who along with a Palmerston North curate, the Rev. Ray Muller, arranged the visit to New Zealand by Father Dennis Bennett in 1966. That tour marked the commencement of the Charismatic Movement in the main churches.<sup>104</sup>

After 1964 the issue gradually subsided among Brethren, who became renowned for their opposition to things charismatic. The most notable campaigner was Dr. Pettit, whose prolonged life (he is still alive, aged 97, as this article is being written) testified to the failure of at least the apparent meaning of Arthur Wallis's prophecy. Several evangelists including Enoch Coppin, Colin Graham and Ces Hilton repeatedly condemned the 'error'. When Ces Hilton began to establish a chain of evangelistic institutions he expected his assistants to agree to a doctrinal statement including an assertion that 'some of the gifts of the Spirit such as tongues and healing were evidently limited to the early church and have thus ceased'.<sup>105</sup> Every year a few more Brethren removed to churches where charismatic gifts were more acceptable, although not all of them settled easily in these churches. Here and there the charismatic

issue blew up at regular intervals, and the list of assemblies which experienced disputes over the matter became a long one. Some of these divisions led to the formation of essentially ex-Brethren charismatic churches, most notable among them the Palmerston North Christian Centre, but also including the Christchurch East Revival Centre, and the Northcote Christian Fellowship in Christchurch, the Upper Hutt Christian Fellowship and the Strathmore Fellowship in the Wellington district and the Fairlie New Life Centre. Such fellowships have since tended to absorb a much wider group than simply ex-Brethren, but they do differ from the Pentecostal churches in their desire to avoid one-man ministry. A conference of such churches in Taupo in July 1981 attracted 150 pastors and elders of whom some 40 per cent had a Brethren background. Many other former Brethren drifted in other directions; the Baptist Union, which eventually decided to tolerate charismatics, attracted many ex-Brethren, some of whom have become prominent ministers and lay leaders in it. It is difficult to estimate the extent of Brethren losses through the dispute. They were certainly extensive. Beside the people who departed from the assemblies in the period from 1963-5, many more have drifted out, then or later, through disenchantment at Brethren intransigence. The decline of Brethren affiliation in the 1966 census by several thousands owed as much to this issue as it did to the tensions within the Exclusive Brethren. All told the assemblies are perhaps ten per cent smaller than they would have been had the schisms been avoidable, assuming that no major evangelistic advance was thwarted by the division.

### **Wider Ripples**

Brethren leaders exported their anguish concerning neo-Pentecostalism in various directions. It showed up in the interdenominational groups in which they played such a large part. Conservative Evangelicals as a group were cautious at the undoctinaire quest for experience by charismatics, but it was the Brethren who were most eager to force the issue. In Scripture Union, in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (later the Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship), in Youth For Christ, in the Child Evangelism Fellowship, in the Open Air Campaigners and in the Bible Training Institute (now the Bible College of New Zealand), Brethren supporters urged that action be taken against charismatics. In a few places this did take place, but by-and-large the leaders of these organizations felt there were lessons to learn from the experience of the Brethren, and these were the lessons of cautious tolerance of divergent views of non-essential issues wherever possible. For example when Professor

E. M. Blacklock and Dr. Pettit expressed their concern at the infiltration of Pentecostalism in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship in 1970, a survey revealed that: 'some of the most able and conscientious students [are charismatics] ... there is no question of their showing disloyalty, schism or suchlike'.<sup>106</sup> Yet tensions were felt by Brethren involved in these organizations, tensions which were sometimes resolved by either withdrawing or succumbing.

The experience of the New Zealand assemblies also caused repercussions on the Brethren world-wide. In the aftermath of the Massey Conference, Ransome Cooper warned the English Brethren to close their platforms to men like Arthur Wallis and Campbell McAlpine. Some of the literature circulated in New Zealand gained a larger readership among the English assemblies. David Lillie wrote a booklet for the Fountain Trust to counteract this teaching, and this was widely distributed in New Zealand also.<sup>107</sup> However, many of the more open English Brethren followed the advice of Professor F. F. Bruce in avoiding the exegesis of the New Zealand Brethren. They were influenced by the cautious analysis of the issue by the evangelical Anglican leader, the Rev. John R. W. Stott, although this caution certainly did not prevent divisions. When F. F. Bruce visited New Zealand there was some alarm that his undogmatic views would encourage the Charismatic Movement, but in fact the controversy had died down by then.<sup>108</sup> The House Church movement which is now one of the major charismatic bodies in the United Kingdom has quite a number of ex-Brethren leaders, among them Arthur Wallis. In the United States, where Brethren assemblies are less numerous, Enoch Coppin on a 1964 visit to California persuaded assemblies there to emulate the reaction of the New Zealand Brethren.<sup>109</sup> Brethren missionary work was extensively affected, according to a recent analysis.<sup>110</sup>

Changes in attitude are now occurring. C. Ernest Tatham, the author of the Emmaus Bible Course on the Holy Spirit, came into a charismatic experience in the 1970s, but he did not leave the assemblies, and he has written on the subject using the subtitle: 'for all who want God's gifts but are unable to accept mainstream charismatic theology'.<sup>111</sup> Even in New Zealand the trauma of maintaining such fierce opposition to the Charismatic Movement persuaded many Brethren to be more cautious, and over the last ten years fewer have left the assemblies on these grounds. The wave of Jesus marches in 1972 was supported by many Brethren. The surge of centripetal forces among the assemblies encouraged by the dispute waned after the death of R. A. Laidlaw, for there was no leader who has taken his place. The assemblies have become more diverse, and many have become rather more open. 'Scripture in Song', which was initiated by David and Dale Garrett, the former of whom has

a distinguished Brethren and charismatic pedigree (he is the nephew of Frank Garrett), is now almost universally used by assemblies, as it is in other churches. Many open assemblies do not trouble to check whether there are those among them who used tongues in private. Some assemblies have sought to go further, and the Te Atatu assembly in Auckland recently adapted a joint statement by English evangelical Anglicans and charismatics to express their views. They also suggested the need for more openness to charismatic gifts in an open letter in the *Treasury*.<sup>112</sup> Yet it has rarely proved easy for charismatic and non-charismatic to be members of a single congregation, and toleration is more easily discussed than practised. Many charismatics feel the frustration expressed by one former Brethren pastor: 'the church structured as it is just doesn't meet the needs of so many. ... The Brethren assemblies we believe, are too restrictive'.<sup>113</sup> Yet, as the later history of Te Papapa assembly indicates, charismatic churches are not necessarily free from problems. After nearly twenty years of development some of them are facing the same pressures of institutionalisation and loss of purpose which come in the aftermath of every revival. Certainly most of the growing churches of today are charismatic, whereas some formerly large congregations of the Brethren including Howe Street Chapel have declined in the same era. Yet there is no single formula for church growth, and many assemblies continue to be vital and vibrant in their witness to their community.

### **Some Reflections**

At the Howe Street Conference in 1964 Charlie Hewlett described the period as: 'the most critical days our assemblies have ever known'. The reaction of the Brethren to the Charismatic Movement has left a deep scar on both the assemblies and charismatics in New Zealand. The last twenty years have not been easy ones for Brethren. Gordon Junck sadly remarked in 1964: 'It seems that the Lord is scourging the assemblies today. Need we wonder at this after years of careless ease and wholesale materialism'.<sup>114</sup> In many ways a more significant threat to assembly life triumphed unnoticed during that painful age. Tension and distrust and declining commitment to the faith by many of the Brethren who remained combined to distort their spiritual vision. An age akin to the McCarthyite era of anti-communism in the United States broke out. Sometimes the mere mention of the Holy Spirit led to suspicion of the speaker's orthodoxy. The most strident opponents of Pentecostalism gained a large following. Unknown tongues may have been silenced, but, as Don Caldwell commented at Howe Street, lying tongues were

not. The call for renewal of the assemblies in recent issues of the *Treasury* reflects a now widespread realization of the problem. Charismatics see this situation as the judgment of God on Brethren for resisting newly revealed truth. Because the impact of the charismatic renewal has been so extensive in New Zealand churches, the assemblies have been isolated and branded with a peculiarly negative stigma.

The Charismatic Movement in New Zealand owes much to the Brethren in its spirituality, its eschatology, its ecclesiology and its leadership. Many people left the Brethren reluctantly, but they felt a greater loyalty to their new spiritual experience. Such people still greatly respect the Brethren heritage, but they believe that by institutionalizing this the Brethren have destroyed it.

Among Brethren, on the other hand, there is a feeling of frustration at the persistence of charismatic demands that they should change. Most Brethren did not seek the reputation for intolerance which they have gained. They are willing to maintain friendly fellowship with members of charismatic churches, but they feel that frank recognition of the distinctiveness of the Brethren concept of the Spirit's work is the prerequisite for fellowship with charismatic churches. Fellowship within congregations is possible only if each person recognizes and respects the work of God in others in the church. Too often charismatics proselytize within churches by denigrating the spirituality of other members, and especially the elders of the church. It is interesting that Douglas Stewart, whose passionate plea for mutual tolerance has been quoted earlier, subsequently admitted that tolerance simply did not work.<sup>115</sup> There is also concern at the unbiblical and unwise behaviour of many Pentecostal groups and leaders. In a Christian world which tends to decide everything not by its truth but by how it feels, Brethren want to continue to be faithful to the truths of the Bible in as much as they understand them. Criticism of Brethren often overlooks the value of their example of faithfulness to revealed truth. Brethren justifiably complain at the monstrous abuse of the Bible by some charismatic leaders. They recall examples (even if they are exceptional) of prophecies which have failed, healings which have proved fraudulent, and former charismatics who now no longer profess to be Christians, and they feel that the charismatic experience is over-rated. They also doubt whether all the spectacular attention which the Charismatic Movement has drawn over the last few years has really increased the number of faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. They recall with sorrow the decline in the evangelistic work of assemblies during the 1960s. It is all very well longing for revival, but the work of evangelism calls for patience, diligence and informed understanding of the faith and not just enthusiasm for signs and wonders.

Thus there are hurts on both sides which will not easily heal. It may seem presumptuous to hope that this paper might ameliorate the situation. Yet it would be helpful to both sides to see some of their mistakes. For example the tensions of the sixties led to an abuse of Scripture on both sides of the fence. Both the Charismatic and the Brethren orthodoxies then formulated are on insecure biblical bases. The Brethren interpretation of I Corinthians 13 was ill-founded, and so was the charismatic use of the Book of Acts to demonstrate the necessity of a post-conversion baptism in the Spirit. The Brethren thought that they had found a simple scriptural argument against the continuance of tongues in I Corinthians 13:8. If it was not obvious then it is generally recognized today that this verse does not define the perfect state as the period after the New Testament was completed, and that this interpretation is therefore guilty of reading a meaning into the text rather than out of it. The argument based upon the temporary and Jewish nature of the sign gifts mentioned in Mark 16 is a stronger one, but one should recognize that the concept of a 'sign gift' necessitates conflating of two quite separate Biblical categories. Both arguments employ an ultra-dispensational analysis of Scripture which effectively reduces the authority not just of I Corinthians but of many other parts of the Bible. To recognize these mistakes is not to establish agreement upon the Biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but it is interesting to note that some recent charismatic writers including Tom Smail and Ernest Tatham are seeking a better theological basis upon which to explain the work of the Spirit in the life of individual and congregation. Brethren should surely participate in this reconsideration of what the Bible teaches on these subjects.

The whole dispute casts an illuminating light on the Brethren. There is reason to believe that Brethren views were in fact based less on their reading of I Corinthians than on their fear of anything irrational in their midst, or anything which would distract young people from their loyalty to the assemblies. They were deeply offended that some in their midst should implicitly criticize the spirituality of their elders by seeking for and claiming a higher level of spiritual life. Perhaps the Brethren looked too proudly at themselves as God's unique instrument in an age of decline and modernism. They thought of themselves as important to God, and they were confident that they knew all that God had for them to do. Theirs was a lay religion, which distrusted worldly religiosity and adopted the implicitly secular attitude which had undergirded Protestant capitalism and Protestant science in a previous age. They were empiricists at heart, and so they sought other explanations for charismatic claims of supernatural manifestations in the present age. Both parties need to seek a more Biblical understanding of divine

involvement in human experience than is possible when one assumes a sharp divide between natural and supernatural.

There have been many subsequent regrets about the over-reaction to the Charismatic Movement in the 1960s. Many of the fears which were very understandable in the 1960s, when the Brethren felt that they alone were being challenged, may now be discounted. One may have understandable hesitations about aspects of the Charismatic Movement, yet one cannot avoid seeing that the Spirit of God has used it. It has been a very significant agent in renewing an evangelical witness in the main churches. Now that it is better known, the charge that it is Spiritualist may be dismissed apart from exceptional cases. The weak theology of the older Pentecostal churches and the excesses of the independent Pentecostals have earned the criticism of many participants in the Charismatic Movement. Indeed there is less unity in the Charismatic Movement today; it has developed a variety of streams and factions. The variety of the movement means that criticisms are not universally applicable. Certainly some of these groups and their leaders demand and receive a blind loyalty which is subversive both of truth and trust. It was these things to which Brethren have reasonably objected. Yet the same accusation could be levelled against the demands which the assemblies made on their members in the same period. Loyalty is a necessary tool, but blind loyalty is very dangerous.

Readers may detect a somewhat critical view of the Brethren in this article. Perhaps that is inevitable. Any institution has a tendency to develop mechanisms to cope with threats to its own existence. Unfortunately those mechanisms develop unthinkingly, and thus Christian institutions resort to quite unchristian reactions to problems. There is good reason to think that had this article focussed on the Pentecostal churches, it would have recorded institutional behaviour which is at least equally objectionable. The reaction of the Brethren assemblies to the Charismatic Movement was paradoxically the consequence of their trying to copy the pattern of the churches of the New Testament age. For all churches require some agreed basis, but the Brethren earned distinction for their refusal to impose on their congregations any authority other than the Bible. Yet a standard 'Brethren' understanding of the meaning of the Bible inevitably evolved, and all assembly members were expected to accept it. The attempt to enforce a standard denominational reaction to the Charismatic Movement was of the same character. The relative success of this attempt indicates the extent to which sectarian isolation survives among them. However that stand was also unfortunate, for Brethren chose to speak most emphatically on an issue on which they were most susceptible to criticism. There does need to be a common understanding of Biblical truth and a fellowship of

assemblies, but it is easy to lurch into either anarchy or tyranny, and this principle applies as much to denominational groups as it does to individual congregations. Christians who want to be faithful to the Bible must allow to each other the same right.

If this is conceded, then we may be able to learn from each other. For both Brethren and charismatics have valuable insights for the church, but both also have inherent shortcomings, and the movements do not easily find common ground. We cannot avoid the fact that both movements exist. Yet in the end God will judge people separately from the movements under the banner of which they justify their acts. This should cause us to ponder our values. We should all be willing to repent where we have erred, and be eager to love all of our brothers and sisters in Christ, seeking to discern within each other the mark of the one indwelling Lord. It may not be easy, but that is our common calling as fellow Christians.

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#### NOTES

1. This file, cited below as Drown-Cooper Papers, consists of letters and papers collected or written to and by Ransome Cooper and Ron Drown. It has been deposited in the New Zealand Assemblies Archive. I have supplemented it with other relevant materials. I have also interviewed or corresponded with most of the people mentioned in this paper who are still living. I am grateful to several readers of varying perspectives who have carefully read and criticized this paper. Nevertheless its accuracy and interpretation rests only with me, and is not intended to be used in criticism of any person, living or dead. I am grateful to Massey University for secretarial, library, computer and research facilities which made this research possible.
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  16. Worsfold, *op. cit.* 86
  17. *Treasury*, 5 (1903) 25-6, 76, 105-6
  18. *Treasury*, 6 (1904) 248; Lineham, *There we found Brethren* 43
  19. *Treasury*, 5 (1903) 76, 106 For Dowie and Adams see Worsfold, *op. cit.* 88-90.
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  21. W. Morrell, *The Anglican Church in New Zealand* (1973) 174; Worsfold, *op. cit.* 134-40, 147-8; *Nelson Diocesan Gazette*, April 1925
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  23. Worsfold, *op. cit.* 149; *Nelson Diocesan Gazette*, Jan. 1924; *Reaper*, 4 (April 1926) 43-49
  24. C. J. Drake, *Pentecostal Gifts, Tongues, Healings and Miracles; Should we accept them Today?* (c. 1927; reprint, c. 1965) 10, 15
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  26. J. O. Sanders, *The Baptism, Filling and Gifts of the Spirit* (1939) 17-18
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  29. see Lineham, *No Ordinary Union* 46, 55-6; Worsfold, *op. cit.* 104, 127, 244-6, 251, 258, 321 For Colin Graham's concern, see R. Groves to C. Graham, 6.4.1937. I am indebted to Mr. Graham for supplying me with a copy of this letter.
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  32. Worsfold, *op. cit.* 158 See A. V. Brown, *The Apostolic Church in the Light of Scripture* (n.d.) See also Drown-Cooper Papers, C. Graham to G. Junck [early 1962]
  33. For an example see L. E. Murray, *Where to World* (1977) 15.
  34. F. Nichol, *Pentecostalism* 89-91; Worsfold, *op. cit.* 182-190
  35. M. Henderson, *From Glory to Glory* (1980), [29]
  36. Henderson, *op. cit.*; L. E. Murray, *Where to World* 24-29
  37. See two rare periodicals, *Church Bells and Revival News*, which cover the years 1966-8 and 1962-3 respectively in available copies.
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  39. R. Auld, *The Bible and Healing* (1953) Manins recorded his experiences on a 78 rpm record.
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  41. *Treasury*, 55 (1953) 162-3; Scripture Union archives: C. K. B. to K. J. O'S., 29.10.1953

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44. Burton, *God working with them* (1933); *Treasury*, 58 (1956) 177
45. C. Graham, *What about the Holy Spirit?* (1972) 22
46. Information from the Rev. Cecil Marshall; see Worsfold, *op. cit.* 194
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49. For Laidlaw see his *The Story of the Reason Why* (1969). For Pettit see Lineham, *No Ordinary Union*, 36-7, 53, 126-8.
50. *Treasury*, 60 (1958) 195; *ibid.* 61 (1959) 90-91, 95, 115
51. *I will build my Church: Massey Conference Report* (1964) 35
52. *Challenge*, 17 Dec. 1960, 14. Jan. 1961, 11 Feb. 1961
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57. Information from W. T. Miller, C. Campbell, J. Hitchen, C. McAlpine
58. *Treasury*, 57 (1955) 106; *ibid.* 63 (1961) 91, 124, 161, 269, 304, 340; *ibid.* 64 (1962) 232; Drown-Cooper Papers, Cooper to G. C. D. Howley, 25.9.1962
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63. *ibid.* 63 (1961), 291-2, 336-8
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77. F. B. Carlisle, *Is the Gift of Tongues for Today? An Examination of the Brethren Statement of the same Title* [1963] 52
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79. *Treasury*, 65 (Oct. 1963) 16
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81. *ibid.*, 5, Laidlaw to Caldwell, 20.5.1963
82. *ibid.*, 9, Laidlaw to Caldwell, 25.6.1963
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91. *Treasury*, 67 (April 1965) 19
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94. *ibid.* Oct. 1965, 384-6
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96. *ibid.* March 1966, 110-111
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113. D. Grennell, Circular to Rutland Street Assembly c. 1979
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# **J. N. Darby in Switzerland at the crossroads of Brethren History and European Evangelism**

A. CHRISTOPHER SMITH\*

## **Meeting at the Crossroads**

When John Nelson Darby arrived in Geneva, he was at a critical point in life. That was why he hoped to find refreshing among believers who had convictions like his own. Of course, he did not know then that he would leave Switzerland a different man. Even less could he foresee that he would be able to test out his ideas on leading God's people into really being his church. Perhaps he realized that he was a fortunate person because he did not have to work for his living and could travel wherever he wished. But more than that, he would have the unusual fortune in life of frequently arriving at places at the very moment when life-changing decisions were being made. By seizing such opportunities, he would be able gradually to establish himself as a leader, first in the towns along Lake Geneva, and then in the Brethren movement of Great Britain.

On arriving in Switzerland towards the end of 1837 he found that the evangelical churches were still giving serious thought to the formation of their identity. Only a young church movement, they had already had enough to contend with in terms of persecution, free-lance missionaries, foreign sects, denominational opportunists, and the like. Thus they were in no mood for further outside interference. After all, they were Swiss: they knew that dependence on foreign leadership had never served them well. Yet history can take strange turns, and in a moment of insecurity they would turn to Darby for assistance and so open themselves to an influence that would challenge all that they stood for more than anything they had yet experienced. Nevertheless, their normally

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fierce, parochial independence would become the stumbling-block on which their evangelical witness would trip, and then fall; thus they would unwittingly provide a foreign leader-in-the-making with a stepping-stone for the outworking of his own idealistic convictions. In this way, an original form of congregationalism would succumb to the extremes of exclusivism and presbyterianism. The startling thing is that so much power — to ‘pluck down’ or ‘build up’ — could be exercised by one ‘foot-loose’ Englishman. Brethren in Britain would live to regret that ‘churchmanship’ and ‘missiology’ (the study of mission principles) never found a place in his theological preparation or practice.

By focusing on the dynamic encounters that became history as British and Swiss nonconformists got to know one another, this essay will show that the Brethren movement developed in the way that it did precisely because its members were part of a larger evangelical stirring throughout Europe. Within this renewal movement there were, quite understandably, both pietist and sectarian tendencies. Because of this, the development of a new ‘Brethren’ identity would depend on precisely which European paths crossed, how they came to cross one another, and what happened when they did so.

## **Where the Paths Began**

### *A Matter of Perspective*

If history teaches anything, surely it is that we rarely learn its lessons and frequently repeat its mistakes. The misfortune of the Christian Church is that all too often its leaders fail to perceive what is happening, with the result that history repeats itself. Had it been otherwise a century and a half ago, a striking parallel might never have developed between John Wesley and John Darby. Recent research has shown how the Methodist Awakening fared well under George Whitefield until he persuaded John Wesley to take care of the leadership while he undertook itinerant evangelistic ministry on an unprecedented scale on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> Whitefield was the great evangelistic preacher while Wesley, with his organizing abilities and literary strength, was the one with whom Darby would have so much affinity.

Darby and Wesley lived within a decade of each other. Both began their ministry as austere Anglican curates and followed up their early wanderings with an abortive ‘missionary’ venture abroad.<sup>2</sup> Both became tenacious controversialists: Wesley against Whitefield, and Darby against such as Benjamin W. Newton. Both had essentially insecure personalities that resorted to rash confrontation with opponents, and both produced volumes of dogmatic literature that would leave many

people in no doubt as to what they should believe. In leadership, their style was decidedly domineering, and the oversight they exercised over their groups of followers was rigorous. Where they differed considerably was in the content of their theology: in fact, it was precisely in combating Wesleyan 'perfectionism' that Darby made his first mark in Switzerland. However, both became prominent religious leaders because of their aggressive leadership style, and their theology was basically a 'support system', a compass, and a means for controlling the movements named after them. Such paternalistic control lasted until they died, but after that nobody was able to prevent their followers from dividing into separate factions.

All this is simply to make the point that nineteenth-century dissenting movements need to be viewed not just against the horizon of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, but also in terms of the larger context of Europe's earlier 'Evangelical Pietism' and contemporary experiences of revival.<sup>3</sup> Against the sweep of that broad canvas, the origins and extension of spiritual renewal and evangelical awakening in the first half of the nineteenth century can be analyzed more perceptively. During that time, sectarian experiments and related schemes of prophetic interpretation flourished in the wake of a transatlantic moving of the Holy Spirit, but their value was at best short-lived since they rarely achieved anything substantial in the long term: only diverting believers away from their true vocation of *being* united together in Christ and of *engaging* in his mission, through his Church, to his world, in his way!

Finally, it must be emphasized that the history of cross-cultural Christian ministry should be written particularly with the viewpoint of those at the 'receiving end' in mind. Since no personality is merely an island Darby's career will never be understood until his prolonged inter-action with independent Swiss believers is given due recognition. Thus the present thesis that what happened to a foreign 'fraternal representative' in *la Suisse romande*,<sup>4</sup> between 1840 and 1845, had serious repercussions on the future course of the British Brethren movement. It was there and then that sectarian pietism and independent evangelicalism converged — and then separated, once and for all.

### *The First 'Brethren' Connection*

The origins of dissent in French-speaking Switzerland may be traced back to Eastern Europe. That path began with Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) who organized a Czech remnant of the *Unitas Fratrum* into the Renewed Church of the United Brethren in the 1720s. This Lutheran nobleman had been significantly influenced by Spener

and other German Pietist leaders. His 'Brethren' movement was based in Herrnhut (near the southern end of the German-Polish border) and by the 1730s it had begun sending out small groups of members to establish missionary communities overseas.<sup>5</sup> Soon after, in 1741, he visited Geneva and held 'preaching meetings' for some three months, hoping to found a Moravian community there, but it was probably only on his second visit in 1758 that he was successful.<sup>6</sup> Out of such a pietistic cell, a small Bible study group composed of — mostly theological — students came into being in 1810. Most of these young men were to be leaders of a new, evangelical, dissenting movement. Itinerant Moravian evangelists tried to help them grow spiritually, but the Reformed pastors of the town would have none of it and forcibly dissolved their *Société des Amis* a few years later.<sup>7</sup>

An extraordinary feature in the history of the *Ancienne Dissidence*<sup>8</sup> was the frequency with which foreign evangelicals happened to walk on to the scene just when local dissenters were facing a crisis. First in this respect was Madame de Krudener (1764-1824), a widowed baroness from Latvia, who had been married to a Russian ambassador to various European countries. As a Moravian who continued to move in aristocratic circles, she was characterized by a mystical faith which Darby, at a later date, did not at all appreciate.<sup>9</sup> She was clearly anything but the mature, spiritual counsellor that the students needed, and she gained the ambiguous distinction of being the first foreigner to encourage a ministerial student to renounce a clerical career in the Swiss Reformed Church of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Not long after, a British lady, Mary Anna Greaves, began a more sustained ministry among some theological students in Lausanne.<sup>11</sup> With these stimuli, dissent was born in the two main cities on Lake Geneva because independent-minded laypersons thought that the State Church was altogether moribund.

### *The Birth of 'le Réveil'*

Spiritual renewal began on a very low key in cantons Geneva and Vaud. Canton Neuchâtel's turn was to come later. In the city of Calvinist fame, it came to life with the assistance of a series of wealthy British evangelicals.<sup>12</sup> Richard Wilcox, a Calvinist Methodist, came to open a weaving factory there in 1816 and somehow managed to get in touch with the young dissenters. He advised them to reject the prevalent, Socinianist preaching of salvation by works, and eventually they got together to hold communion meals in private. However, he could not help them much in their theological quest, thereby contrasting with the Scottish Baptist lay-leader who arrived providentially, just after he left town.

Robert Haldane did not know about the young group of dissenters when he arrived in Geneva, and he came very close to achieving nothing at all there. Indeed, it was only after he met Miss Greaves in Lausanne and the baroness in Basel that he was willing to return to the city.<sup>13</sup> Yet even then it was only by a happy coincidence that he found the young adults who had been praying that God would send them a teacher. Thereupon, he started lecturing on Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, and in a short time he led some of the students to the Lord, subsequently making a great contribution to their spiritual development. The leadership he had provided in Scottish evangelical churches was useful experience to have behind him for this situation, and although he became the first foreigner to speak out against the hostile *Compagnie des Pasteurs*, he appears to have been quite discreet in his approach to all concerned, throughout his stay. Thus, even when ecclesiastical pressure was increased on the dissenting students in 1817, he urged them not to be rash, did *not* encourage them to reject the clerical bans, and refused to interfere in the formation of the new evangelical group.<sup>14</sup> If only subsequent Britons could have emulated his missionary perception and matched his hesitancy to secure a personal following! If only Drummond and Darby had been willing to learn from the example, the cross-cultural-ministry lesson, provided by their predecessor!

Dissent came alive in Lausanne, the main city of Vaud, when some of the students associated with Miss Greaves took the orthodox, Calvinistic lectures they attended more seriously than their clerical professor intended.<sup>15</sup> Their pastor-teacher, who was dean of the Vaudois Reformed Church, could not accept such independent thinking, and he soon became the chief opponent of the evangelical, pietist movement in his canton. Of course, Doyen Curtat and Haldane contrasted with each other in the way they reacted to the renewal of their students' faith, but they were alike in one respect, namely, in providing a doctrinal impetus which fostered spiritual life that expressed itself in an indigenous form of Christian witness outside the established church.

### *Reaction to Problems Along the Way*

Soon after the first evangelical group of 'believers only' had been founded in Geneva, in mid-1817, Haldane moved on to France in order to avoid unduly influencing its decision-making. Two days before he left, however, a wealthy and somewhat eccentric English politician came on the scene. Henry Drummond was a Methodist, only recently converted, who was on his way to the Holy Land, after selling his hunting establishment.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, he was like the baroness in lacking Haldane's sense of churchmanship and doctrinal depth, so it was as a

simple, 'foot-loose' believer that he stumbled across the new-born dissenting group. This meant that the native leaders were able to prevent the foreigner from dominating in their discussion about what would be a suitable form of presidency and pastoral oversight for their new church. However, the impetuous Englishman had ample resources, whereas the young dissenters were unemployed, so when he offered to pay them for doing evangelistic work in France and neighbouring cantons he began to have an effect on the course of their ministry.<sup>17</sup>

It would take too long to describe all that the young evangelicals of Geneva had to suffer once they moved their meetings into a larger room in a well-populated quarter of the city, named Bourg-de-Four.<sup>18</sup> From there they branched out into preaching-points and several 'satellite' assemblies centered on local homes. César Malan then left the State Church and built his presbyterian *Eglise du Témoignage* as a temporary measure, hoping that, one day, sound teaching would be restored in the establishment. During those difficult days, they all took heart when British evangelicals began protesting in the foreign press about the harsh treatment that their dissenting brethren were having to endure from local church authorities. The gospel then came to be heard in new places and some spiritual stirring occurred in the nearby rural villages of Vaud. Along with itinerant preaching went the distribution of Bibles, and this was supplemented by the public circulation of French Switzerland's first evangelical periodical, the *Magasin évangélique*.<sup>19</sup> The formation of related *sociétés des missions*, the holding of informal prayer meetings, and the giving of money for missions, were among the first signs of evangelical renewal in Vaud. But there was a cost to be paid due to clerical ill-will, and rowdy elements of society were roused to assault those leading and attending the dissenters' meetings. Several pious ministers then protested at such unbecoming trouble-making on the part of their colleagues, and left the Church of Vaud. They then had to suffer being banished from the canton — something that the nascent evangelical movement could ill afford.<sup>20</sup> Because of that, their churches were hurt before they had time to become strong, well-integrated fellowships.

The believers' testimony in those days was that persecution could not stop the process of leading persons to Christ and incorporating them into evangelical fellowships. This was achieved largely without help from anyone other than their Genèveois brethren, so it was really quite an authentic 'home mission' enterprise. Geneva's good fortune had been that it had not had to go through the fires of clerical and 'popular' persecution *before* at least one independent church had been formally established.<sup>21</sup> Needless to say, the dissenters understood that anything

that could be deemed to unsettle the status quo would draw fire from a jittery administration which was still very concerned about securing its recently-won independence from Napoleonic imperialism. Thus they knew what was involved in being faithful to the Lord and true to his gospel.

### *The Brethren from Plymouth*

The situation in which the Brethren movement arose in the British Isles was a far cry from what the Swiss believers had to put up with. It has been well described and analyzed by the classic studies of F. R. Coad and H. H. Rowdon,<sup>22</sup> so the focus here will be on the course taken by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) as he gradually moved into a leadership position among those who have been ambiguously called the 'Plymouth Brethren'.

Darby was the youngest son born into an Anglo-Irish family residing in London, and had the distinction of being both godson of the famous Lord Nelson and heir to a fortune. By the time he turned twenty, he had become a Classical Gold Medallist of Trinity College, Dublin, and was heading for a prestigious career in law, although he could well have turned to other spheres of secular life to earn distinction, had he so wished. Instead, he abandoned such worldly pursuits and became a simple Anglican curate, among poor Irish peasants. After a few years, however, he became rather disappointed with the Church because it was so mixed up with mundane affairs, and he resigned from his pastoral charge in 1828.<sup>23</sup> From then, until 1834, he tried to find an alternative to contemporary nonconformity, which he considered to be hopelessly divided, and to the established Church of England, which had hopelessly compromised its spiritual authority.

In spite of the fact that he had been partially disinherited by his father for abandoning a promising career 'at the bar', Darby was provided with sufficient means by his family to be able to travel at will for the rest of his life.<sup>24</sup> First of all, this involved a 'pilgrimage' in search of people who might be similarly concerned about discovering the true nature of Christ's Body, the church, or at least how its unity should be experienced. This led him to fellowship with pious dissenters in Dublin. He was put into touch with believers of similar convictions in Oxford and various other places in England. One of these was Benjamin W. Newton, who invited him to come to Plymouth to meet 'others who had been taken up by the intense interest then attaching to study of the Bible prophecies'.<sup>25</sup> This sort of visiting continued for several years, in the course of which he prepared himself for participation in lively discussions — on matters of prophetic interpretation and its relevance for the

present church, etc.—at conferences, like the series held at Powerscourt, which were latterly controlled by the emerging ‘Brethren’. Such debating inevitably brought into the open ‘quite different conceptions of the Church’ which derived from experiences and theological backgrounds that were just as diverse.<sup>26</sup> An unfortunate result was that some local Brethren leaders found that they could not live with diversity on such tricky, and apparently important, issues as the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy and the form of worship most befitting ‘saints’. This led to Darby and Newton openly and quite deliberately challenging each other by 1837, for both were very concerned about the future course of the Brethren movement, especially as it was expressed at Plymouth.<sup>27</sup> However, by then, the Devonshire believers had established contacts with dissenters in Geneva, which appeared to offer a refreshing diversion from further rounds of exhausting controversy.

### How the Paths Converged

Evangelicals from *la Suisse romande* visited their counterparts in Britain from as early as 1821. Both sides were aware of each other’s publications even earlier due to the contacts established in previous years by British visitors — to Geneva in particular. It was consequently ten years *after* the Swiss *Ancienne Dissidence* had first entered into fraternal relationship with ‘free churches’ in England, that connections were developed between Plymouth and the Bourg-de-Four church. That meant that Darby owed a considerable debt to a number of evangelists, lay-leaders, church-planters, and pastors when he put his cases down in Geneva for the first time, in 1837. Where they had sown and cultivated, he would be able to reap, in his own peculiar way: he was indeed ‘entering into other men’s labours’.

### *Through the ‘Laying-on of Hands’*

History contains some intriguing examples of how beleaguered believers have used their initiative to overcome burdensome liabilities and hard limitations. Leaders of the Bourg-de-Four church were a case in point when they turned to British nonconformists for ordination in order to gain exemption from participating in Sunday military exercises. This was worked out thanks to the help of Haldane, the *Société Continentale* founded by Drummond in 1817, and sympathizers in Paris.<sup>28</sup> Following this plan, Guers and Gonthier made their way to Paris in May 1821 in order to receive from an English Presbyterian pastor, Mark Wilks, introductory letters to nineteen nonconformist pastors in London.<sup>29</sup>

With his co-operation, they made good speed to the metropolis, where they were welcomed by eight Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregationalist pastors, who were willing to promptly administer 'the laying-on of hands' in the presence of a large gathering in Poultry Street Chapel. After that, the two Swiss pastors spent some time visiting Haldane and other acquaintances in London, Bristol and Bath, particularly conferring on the issue of evangelizing French-speaking countries. Then they had the unusual opportunity of helping to ordain two workers from the *Société Continentale*, one of whom had been a founder of the Bourg-de-Four church, their friend, Henri Pyt.<sup>30</sup>

Evangelicals experienced something similar in canton Vaud. Their leaders who had not been ordained by the Reformed Church in earlier years were finding that the ecclesiastical authorities were determined to silence them, but such repression back-fired when they turned to fostering solidarity with British sympathizers. That explains why Henri Olivier, excluded from graduating at the Theological Academy of Lausanne, in May 1823, went to seceding Presbyterians in Glasgow, Scotland, for the 'imposition of hands'.<sup>31</sup> In Vaud, however, such a manoeuvre unfortunately proved to be only of temporary advantage, because six years later the authorities refused to recognize the validity of his Scottish ordination, and ordered him to stop holding house-meetings in their canton.<sup>32</sup> Vaudois evangelicals had more set-backs to reckon with than did the Genèveois, so it was mostly through the latter that the paths of British and Swiss evangelicals began to converge, in terms of prayer support and encouraging fellowship.<sup>33</sup>

### *Through Swiss 'Deputation Work' in Britain*

As the paths of the brethren on either side of the English Channel began to converge, it became apparent that the Swiss were opening themselves up to paternalistic and even sectarian influences that could do them little good. This was particularly the case when 'para-church' agencies, and proselytizing mission societies, tried to use Swiss pastors for extraneous purposes. The worst situations developed when wealthy patrons like Drummond were in control of operations. Yet all was not lost thereby, for such foreign interference in the *Réveil* did not prevent dissenters in the cantons from developing their own alternative forms of Christian outreach.<sup>34</sup>

From as early as 1822, the *Société Continentale* began to use its Swiss workers to rouse British evangelicals to support evangelistic work in France. The first national to co-operate in this way was probably Méjanel, a Frenchman who in 1817 had been Bourg-de-Four's first pastor, though only for a short time.<sup>35</sup> In 1823, he accompanied Haldane

and preached in many large cities in Ireland, Scotland and England. However, on a later trip to Scotland, he joined the mystic-charismatic Irvingite movement, in which Drummond already figured prominently. He became the first *Genèvois* to fall under the spell of a British sect and to proselytize on its behalf in France and Switzerland. It would have been better if he had never been brought over the English Channel.

Henri Pyt was also an ex-pastor of Bourg-de-Four who turned to the 'mission agency' financed by Drummond in order to get support for a semi-itinerant evangelistic ministry, but he was more stable in character than Méjanel.<sup>36</sup> After the July Revolution (1830) in France, he was called upon to interest Irish Christians in the society's work, so he spent the last four months of the year preaching there. Further months were spent in Britain, in 1832, 'drumming up' financial contributions, but when he returned to Paris that October it became clear that the society was in serious trouble.<sup>37</sup> The irony was that Drummond's zealous espousal of Irvingism led him to attack Haldane in a series of pamphlets, with the result that he effectively wrecked the society and was obliged to withdraw from it! Yet the real tragedy consisted in the bankruptcy of the sole specifically evangelistic agency in France, for although Pyt tried to establish a Parisian committee to take over operations, he found himself left in the lurch.<sup>38</sup> But as if that was not enough, Irvingism began to infiltrate the newly-planted evangelical churches, and Pyt had to spend his last adult years (until dying in mid-1835) sadly trying to counteract the short-sighted, foreign extremists. Thus financial dependence on brash, theologically-eccentric gentry turned sour on him, and even though he belatedly refused to be a tool for fickle foreigners he was unable to respond effectively on behalf of his own people.

### *By Reacting Against Sectarianism*

There is usually good reason for suspicion when overseas mission operations are directed rigidly from the 'sending country'. But what can be worse for churches overseas than a situation where members of a foreign society or sect try to promote their cause by making their money 'talk' at others' expense? That was what the *Ancienne Dissidence* had to face when its leadership was either seduced or tempted to jettison indigenous responsibilities. One of the most glaring examples is the case of Ami Bost, who juggled with church appointments and offers from British missionary societies from the 1820s onwards. His erratic career included a stay with Irvingites in London late in 1835, but he did manage to refuse their advances when they suggested that he establish an Irvingite work in Geneva.<sup>39</sup> Still, he was an opportunist to the end, and on returning home from London he went back to the Reformed

Church's ministry and settled down, as if there never had been any *Réveil!*

Fortunately the Vaudois evangelicals did not have to endure such dreadful inconsistency from their leaders — or from those who should have been — nor did they have a degenerate *Société Continentale* to contend with. Left largely to their own devices in the 1820s and '30s, and in the absence of co-ordinating leadership (due to banishment) they grew in number with the help of many parochial 'evangelical societies'.<sup>40</sup> By the early 1840s they could count some 42 churches or groups which were scattered throughout the canton and were divided up into a number of clusters under area-leaders.<sup>41</sup> Evidently they were not much disposed to working as a collective church movement, and it was only when they felt their public evangelical identity was being compromised that they really worked together. A notable instance occurred in the Yverdon area in 1832 when an 'apostle' named Lardon, began perpetrating a type of exclusive, charismatic fanaticism. The Swiss evangelicals reacted by sending a delegation of leaders from Vaud and Geneva to publicly discipline him in his own church. This had such an impact that the local folk-eccentricity shrivelled up, and even when British Irvingites tried to establish their own sectarian cause in its place, they had very little success.<sup>42</sup>

The history of dissent in Vaud teaches that it is much more difficult to cure problems than to prevent them; but prevention requires foresight. Local churches never learned this lesson since they did not seem to realize that reticence to co-operate with one another — except when defensive, rearguard action was urgently needed — was just as dangerous as overt sectarian threats. Their Achilles' heel was a lack of corporate vision and united action. Such disunity could be exploited by forceful individuals, given 'favourable' circumstances, and it was not too long before the unexpected actually happened!

### *By Joining in a Missionary Venture*

The first intentional contact between Geneva and Plymouth appears to have resulted in a decision to share responsibility for sending a missionary to India. The way this came about can be traced back to two influential evangelical leaders from these cities. First, there was César Malan who had led to the Lord, in Switzerland, a Devonshire squire, surnamed Douglas. Among the many other persons whom Malan influenced were Carl and Rudolphe de Rodt, from Berne. Carl studied under him in Geneva, and it may have been due to the contacts that his mentor established while visiting Britain in the 1820s that Carl was ordained in a separatist church in London, by a Dr. Cox, in 1833.<sup>43</sup> Rudolphe was

converted under Malan, and after studying in the theological school of Geneva's Evangelical Society he was commissioned as a missionary to India, by his home church — Bourg-de-Four — in July 1835. This happened because an early leader in the Plymouth Brethren went on a rather unusual missionary-recruitment drive in Switzerland.

Anthony Norris Groves (1795-1853) sailed from Plymouth in the summer of 1829. His first stop was the Middle East, before he moved on to India in 1833. A year later, he returned home to get new workers, but instead of launching out into deputation work among the Brethren assemblies, he abruptly left England for Switzerland and Germany, with his brother-in-law George Müller.<sup>44</sup> Somewhere along the way — perhaps through Mr. Douglas ? — he must have been informed that *la Suisse romande* was a likely place for getting recruits, and sure enough, Bourg-de-Four had one available! From then on Plymouth and Bourg-de-Four had something important joining them together.

After his commissioning, Rudolphe de Rodt went to Plymouth, and that October saw him on the point of leaving for India with Groves' party.<sup>45</sup> In 1836, Carl visited Plymouth again, perhaps to represent his brother at a time of particular need. Whatever the occasion was, there can be no doubt that Groves and the Swiss brothers were the basic source of the information that J. N. Darby obtained about 'like-minded' believers in Geneva. Thus history repeated itself as British mission-promoters sought, not to strengthen the Swiss evangelical cause, but rather, to enlist recently-trained young Swiss for foreign enterprises. Missiologically, this was far from desirable. Indeed, Groves most probably would have regretted exposing the unsuspecting 'young church' overseas to a difficult colleague of his, who could interfere in its affairs quite disastrously.<sup>46</sup>

### *An Occasion for Going Abroad*

Only a book could do justice to the task of describing the intricate network of the evangelical 'grape-vine' which existed between leaders of Britain's pietistic dissenters in the 1830s. Such a study would demonstrate that a translation of Monod's 1833 *Appel aux Chrétiens de France, et de l'Etranger en faveur de l'Eglise Evangélique de Lyon* in the *Christian Witness* of 1834 was not significant in alerting Darby to the 'goings on' in Geneva.<sup>47</sup> It is just as unlikely that Haldane, Drummond, or any of their friends, were responsible for arousing Darby's curiosity with respect to the *Ancienne Dissidence*. Now that is not to argue that Darby's knowledge of evangelical affairs in Geneva in 1836-37 was strictly limited to what Groves and the brethren in Plymouth shared with him, but it is to underline that the sending of Rudolphe de Rodt to India was

the major occasion that enabled him to cast his thoughts beyond the English Channel to Geneva.

Like Groves, but unlike many earlier British nonconformists, Darby made a deliberate decision to leave England and head directly for Geneva in order to become acquainted with the believers there. Years later, he explained this decision as follows:

It was in no way any particular opposition that led me to Switzerland in 1837, but a report of a brother who had been there, and stated that there were meetings like ours.<sup>48</sup>

Precisely what lay behind such a comment is not clear, but a number of factors may well have contributed to the move. For example, his relationship with Newton on the issue of leadership was very strained, and he did not feel ready to provoke a 'show-down'. As for Ireland, nothing seemed to attract him there any more; he had not been able to establish a strong Brethren witness there, and the eligible Lady Powerscourt had recently died. Under such circumstances, it would be quite understandable if he left to spend time in a place where he could reflect quietly and renew his sense of purpose and direction. He was at a turning-point, and Switzerland appeared to be a good option for a man who wanted to get away from unpleasant distractions.

### **When the Paths Crossed**

Unbeknown to Darby, the Swiss evangelical movement was at a particularly delicate stage of development in the late 1830s. The problem was due in part to the frequent absence of many potential native leaders in past years. It had resulted in unity becoming a low priority and had led to multiple forms of internal dissension over church order. Bourg-de-Four was an obvious example at the local level after Guers returned from a visit to England in 1837, having collected a bequest which was to be applied to the building of larger premises in La Pelisserie, another part of Geneva.<sup>49</sup> In all likelihood, it was just after Darby first set foot in the city that a meeting of Bourg-de-Four's 'brothers only' decided that their church would henceforth 'look after its own affairs' and that the pastors would be the last, rather than the first, to express their opinion on administrative matters. That meant that a swing occurred away from any semblance of presbyterianism by the end of November 1837, and church members subsequently began to have much more of a say in their church's life. It was some time for Darby to arrive!

**J. N. DARBY'S MOVEMENTS : 1837-1882**

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>KEY</i>
1837								b			§§	§§	A: Canada & U.S.A.
8										B			
9	B	B						b			§§	§§	B: Britain
1840	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	C: Caribbean
1	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	
2	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§f	F	F: France
3	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	h	b		B	B	
4			F	F	F	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	§§	G: Germany
5	§§	§	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	
6	B	B				B	B	B	B		B	B	H: Holland, Belgium, or Prussia
7	B	B		F		F			B	B			
8	F	f§	f	B	bf	B	B	B		§§	§§	§f	
9	F	F	F	F	F	f§	F		F	F	F	F	I: Ireland
1850	F	F	F	F	F	§§	§§	§§	f		§§	F	N: New Zealand
1	F				F		B		B	b§			
2		B	B	B	B		B	bf	§§		B	B	
3		F	f	F				F	§§		B	B	T: Italy
4			bf	f	ib	B		bh	G	G	G	G	
5	G	G	G	G	§§				B	B	B		§: Switzerland
6	B			B	F	f				§§		F	
7	F		F	F		B		H	H	G		§b	
8	B	B		b	bf				B	B	B		(A LARGE letter refers to a whole month; a small letter refers to half a month.)
9	B	B	b§	B		I			B	I		B	
1860		f		hf	B	B		F	§§	§§	§§	§§	
1			B		B	B		F	B	G		B	
2	B		B	B		B	B	A	ab			A	
3	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I	B	B	B	
4		§f	fb		B	F	F	§§	§h	B	B	A	Darby's trans- oceanic travels occurred between 1862 and 1877.
5	A	A	A		A					B	I	B	
6	B	i	F	§§	§f	B		A	A	A	A	A	
7	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
8	A	A	A	A		I	B		B	B	B	C	
9	C	C	C	C	C	B	B	§§	§f	§§	G	G	
1870	G	G	G	G	B		A		B	B	B	B	From Feb. 1880 Darby was in Britain where he died on 29 April 1882.
1	B	B	B	B	B	bi	I	ibf	§§		T		
2	hf	hf	F	fb	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
3	A	A	A	A			B	B	b	b§	B	hi	
4	ib	ft	T	t§	§§	G	B	bia	A	A	A	A	
5	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	N	N	N	
6	N	N	N	N		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
7	A	A	A	A	A	ai	B	B		B	B	B	
8	I			I	bg	§§	§§	§§	bi		B		
9	F	F	F	F	F	fb	B	bi	F	F	F	F	

### *Darby Arrives at a Decisive Moment*

Discovery of some writings of Darby's in French, dated 1837 and 1838, has at last made it certain that he first visited *la Suisse romande* during the last two months of 1837.<sup>50</sup> An interesting letter entitled 'To the Saints of God who meet for worship simply as saints and IN THE name of the Lord Jesus' (*sic*) and dated 1 November 1837, has him identifying with an assembly in England in almost apostolic style. His opening and closing remarks, as well as the special request for prayer, suggest that he was abroad then.<sup>51</sup> More noteworthy are two letters written to brethren in Geneva in 1838, in which he demonstrates personal knowledge of people and affairs in the Bourg-de-Four church, particularly a Mr. Foulquier.<sup>52</sup> The letter from Hereford was written probably that September, just after he had participated in a large conference of brethren 'from nearly all parts of England and from Ireland,' and at which he wished 'some of our Swiss brethren' could have attended.<sup>53</sup> In it, he expressed fond memories of the time he had spent with the brethren in Geneva, for, though 'a stranger previously, and for the most part unknown, I found a welcome which was the manifestation of the operation of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>54</sup> These letters, as well as the existence in Darby's own handwriting of a copy of the letter which the Geneva 'brethren' sent to their three pastors during the crisis of autumn 1837,<sup>55</sup> together demonstrate that he was personally close to some of the church's leaders, and had insight into their circumstances, during that eventful year.

### *His Early Orientation in Geneva*

At the present stage of research into Brethren history, it is impossible to be precise about the nature of the initial relationship that obtained between Darby and the evangelicals at Bourg-de-Four. To begin with, he probably proceeded as inconspicuously as possible, but his 1838 letters show that he already felt free to advise the leadership on the conduct of church life. He was already well aware of the delicate position that the pastors were in, yet he did not refrain from suggesting how he would like to see the brethren become more separate from Christians who were merely dissenters.<sup>56</sup> In the light of this, one should be very careful in evaluating the rosy commentary offered by secondary Darbyite sources, such as Cuendet's, where statements are made to the effect that Darby was received 'with open arms' as one 'who seemed so whole-heartedly in accord with their aspirations', that he possessed 'the confidence of all, pastors and flock' in his early months there, and that he succeeded in repairing the breach between them.<sup>57</sup>

The circumstances that led Darby to return to England after being in Geneva for a few months, are not known. However, it appears from his Hereford letter that some mutual friend of his and Bourg-de-Four's requested him to write to Geneva without further delay, in September 1838, and presumably asked him to return there.<sup>58</sup> Whatever the details, it is clear from his correspondence that he returned to Switzerland by 22 November 1839, and was in Geneva for December.<sup>59</sup> 23 March 1840 saw him in Lausanne, where he probably spent most of his time until early 1843; between March 1843 and February 1845 he spent more time travelling around the two cantons.<sup>60</sup> But one should not jump to false conclusions about the regard in which the Swiss held him, because he himself recorded that he was not considered as 'one of the flock' at Bourg-de-Four; in fact, they even went so far as to tell him not to interfere in their business.<sup>61</sup> That would explain why there was little to hold him back from moving on to Lausanne in March 1840. Yet, in all fairness to Darby, dissent in Lausanne was then in a very sorry shape, and he cannot be blamed for not being impressed by what he encountered there.

### *His Success and Upset in Lausanne*

What had happened before his arrival in Vaud may be summarized as follows. During 1839, British 'Wesleyans' tried to get a following for themselves there with the assistance of unsettled Ami Bost. The first independent pastor to accept their teaching about 'the entire sanctification of the believer' was Henri Olivier, and late in 1839 he and part of Lausanne's church at Saint-Pierre separated from the *Ancienne Dissidence* to found a Methodist congregation.<sup>62</sup> Not long after, British Methodism extended its proselytizing success to the town of Vevey.

All this was news to Darby when he stopped in Lausanne en route for home in the spring of 1840. Geneva was behind him, and he was really looking forward to getting back into familiar English surroundings, when a strange incident occurred. He found himself

suddenly *arrested* in my course, *by what is purely a trial of faith*; ... I turn into a lodging alone tomorrow, knowing none here but those who now are almost all a weight, and that I have a sort of *responsibility for drawing [them] after me* ... All the pastors of the so-called churches — I abhor the name now — stood aloof, and let the wolf do what he might. ... Did I not lean on the Lord ... I should be ready to say, am not I wrong thus to care for them all, instead of letting them all ruin themselves? You have no idea of the patience which this country demands; there was plenty to try sometimes in England, but it was play compared to this. ... However, I hope soon to be free, and to wend my way towards work where my heart a good deal is.<sup>63</sup>

Clearly, he did not wish to minister in Switzerland any more, but when he was sought out by H. Olivier's brother, Francois, he felt that he should try to help out where he could, even if he had no more time for the *Ancienne Dissidence*. In this he was successful, for he refuted the Methodist 'perfectionism', induced the majority of the seceders to return to the *églises disciplinées*, and within a year got H. Olivier not only to recant but even to join forces with himself!<sup>64</sup> This was Darby's first *tour-de-force* abroad, yet it was rather a hollow victory when one considers that it consisted in exorcising *foreign* sectarianism! Furthermore, he was still far from wanting, let alone obtaining, a following in Vaud. The foreign scene had become too much for him, as a letter from mid-September 1840 shows:

I have suffered lately from violent pain in the stomach which ... sometimes four nights a week deprived me of rest ... Labouring in extreme heat, and the toil occasioned by the state of Lausanne — where there was no life to walk stayed on the Lord, and if the evil [Methodism] showed itself elsewhere [there was] none that could go and meet it — so that I was pressed above strength, have occasioned this attack. ...

I see all my weakness here — weakness of conduct, and worse, weakness of faith — but too evidently, and it humbles me exceedingly. It is very distressing when one has the interest of the church and of the saints at heart, to see one's own want of faith and fidelity hindering the inflow of blessing. ... Once too, since I have been here ... my foot has slipped through want of caution, want of patient waiting on His will.<sup>65</sup>

This was a very candid account of his feelings in the previous year, and goes to explain the postscript added to the same letter:

I am, in a measure, for the moment, broken up from Lausanne, and therefore, with some delays of visits on the road, I hope to be among the saints in your country ere very long. ... But I hope to leave this soon.

A short time later, leaders of the Swiss dissenters would be wishing that he had gone ahead and left!

### *Darby Throws Down the Gauntlet*

In actual fact, Darby drew fire from the leadership of Vaud's evangelical movement before he ever came to Switzerland in 1839. It began early in the year when far-sighted Auguste Rochat wrote his *Unité du corps de Christ*, alerting Vaud to the serious challenge that *Plymouthisme* posed to its evangelical congregationalism. This provoked Darby to respond in 1840 with his *Sur la Formation des Eglises*, in which he asserted that Christians are *not* competent to form churches after the New Testament: it was no longer God's will because the Lord's return was

imminent.<sup>66</sup> He simultaneously attacked every type of ecclesiastical organization, and consequently embarrassed and upset the very believers who had turned to him for a peaceful resolution of their problems. In so doing, Darby openly declared how he felt about dissent there, and headed for home, leaving it behind as a hopeless situation.

Who or what made him change his mind is a complete mystery, but on 8 October 1840 he was to be found in Geneva, writing:

I fear I have lost some months of service ...; I thought of being in France almost at this time, and I see scarcely any probability of it as yet; perhaps I can say that Satan hindered me. ... I am afraid of remaining here a while, because *I am like a piece of furniture here*. ... What would comfort me, if I remain a little longer in Switzerland, would be to encourage those in the interior for surely God would have it so in His grace: there is some need of it.<sup>67</sup>

Was it indeed Satan who had influenced this hitch in his plans? Some light can be shed on the significance of these frank reflections by observing that it was around this time that he delivered eleven evening lectures in Geneva, not at Bourg-de-Four, nor at any dissenting church, but in the Reformed Church of Sacré Coeur.<sup>68</sup> These lectures in *L'Attente actuelle de l'Eglise* were published in November, and in all probability were repeated soon after '*dans un modeste local de la maison Barbaz-Mayor, en Saint-Pierre*': ie, in the neighbourhood of Henri Olivier's church in Lausanne. The reason for this sudden turn-around defies explanation, but it certainly proved to be a turning-point in Darby's Swiss fortunes, because the lectures excited interest and caused quite a stir as they injected a new system of Biblical interpretation into the *Ancienne Dissidence*.<sup>69</sup> With that, he abandoned all ideas of a peace-making ministry in Switzerland, and began to promote his own cause at the expense of the weak, yet nonetheless indigenous, evangelical movement. That became possible partly because some believers in the Reformed Church had already begun to regard 'relations with the State as incompatible with the very idea of the Church', but there can be no explanation as to why dissent capitulated to Darby, other than the weakness of the evangelical churches as a co-operating fellowship and the forcefulness of Darby's leadership style.<sup>70</sup>

## Why the Paths Separated

### *First Signs of a Serious Split*

As noted earlier, Darby probably spent most of his time in Lausanne

before he returned to England in the middle of 1843. After delivering his discourses on prophecy, he was approached, he later recounted, by

some young men who desired to work for the Lord [and] wished to read the scriptures with me. I feared a little giving up my own work but would not refuse them, and for a year at one time and a good part of one at a subsequent period, I had ten or twelve, not always the same, and we studied the word together. ... They gradually got into work as the Lord called them.<sup>71</sup>

From 1841, it thus became clear that Darby had found means whereby he could disseminate and apply his own separatist ideas in *la Suisse romande*. On the one hand, he had living close to him a good number of young men who were financially supported by him then, who took the Lord's Supper with him daily, and over whom, he asserted, 'he exercised no control ... but what their affections claimed'.<sup>72</sup> These became adept at propagating his special doctrine, particularly in France. On the other hand, he plunged into a pamphlet controversy with the few leaders of the *Ancienne Dissidence* who were ready to stand up to his dispensationalist assertions about 'the apostasy and fall of the church'.<sup>73</sup>

That Darby had broken with the *Ancienne Dissidence* by as early as the beginning of 1841 is further borne out by his letter from Lausanne on 11 January:

I ... am in a very critical position here, and desire much the prayers of the brethren for me. The brethren who laboured among the Dissenters here ... feared almost the determination with which it [Methodism] was opposed [by Darby! yet] they were ... glad that the battle was fought; but when necessarily this conflict produced other effects, many Nationals came more or less out, and united. ... In the meanwhile, the jealousy of the Nationals was natural enough; many many Dissenters in heart desire the union of God's children; others are excessively irritated, and hence ... [many] of the others ... are timid as to committing themselves with their brethren who are opposed at Lausanne. ... In one place the dissident body is dissolved ... and there is a meeting where all the Christians ... unite to break bread with one of the ministers ... — very happy. At Vevey, Nationals, ex-nationals and Dissenters meet the last Monday of the month to break bread — very happy. It is a beginning. ... Here the old Dissenters, and some who thought to seize the occasion to establish themselves, hate me cordially, at least, the elders.<sup>74</sup>

Under Darby, a new kind of dissent was coming into being which appealed to state-church members and dissenters who would believe his talk about uniting believers together, regardless of denomination. Because of this, some naïve persons began praising him as a man of open-mindedness.<sup>75</sup> Of course, everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but 1841 was a really bad time for evangelicals in Vaud, since a recently-passed law was beginning to deprive the native dissenters of their religious liberty.<sup>76</sup> They had already had to pass through the fires of per-

secution to get their new churches established. Surely this was no time for a rank outsider to aggravate the situation.

### *The Rupture Becomes Complete*

Once separate groups of Darbyite brethren started forming in opposition to the original, independent, evangelical churches, it was only a matter of time before an exclusive assembly took over as the prime, non-conformist *ekklesia* in Lausanne. February, 1842, was the date of that take-over. In Geneva, however, no such capitulation to the foreign doctrine occurred, although a decisively sectarian schism did split the Bourg-de-Four brethren that same year.

Eager to disavow responsibility, Darby claimed that it was during his absence that some 50 or 60 of the Geneva brethren withdrew from Bourg-de-Four to form 'the first nucleus of the meeting at L'Ile'.<sup>77</sup> Guers rejected this alibi on the grounds that a friend of Darby's, named Donnel (*sic*), was there and that he 'opposed Guers and his supporters in an indiscreet and niggardly manner'; that was what precipitated the rupture that occurred on Thursday, 3 March 1842.<sup>78</sup> According to Guers, the seceders were 'the oldest and most capable brethren', who no longer would tolerate pastors over them. A number of sharp letters then passed between the pastors and Darby, but every attempt at bringing about reconciliation evidently ran aground, because the pastors would not renounce their pastoral status and would not get rid of the platform from which they served communion.<sup>79</sup> Who, they thought, did Darby think he was to make such demands of them? A particularly sore point was the withdrawal of Ch. Eynard to l'Ile, for he had been one of the most generous supporters of the church's institute for training evangelists: his departure caused its closure.<sup>80</sup> To the pastors' horror, the walls of the sheep-fold had been breached, and part of the flock was being enticed away by a stranger who would suddenly quit when the wolf of persecution came along.

More followed before Darby returned to Geneva that October, showing that even dialogue with him was now impossible. No longer did he seem to have any respect for the Swiss who refused to concur with that which was 'right in his own eyes'. As far as he was concerned, they could be treated as apostate believers who were not even worthy to receive an explanation from him. At least that was what he communicated in the final show-down during September. He would bring about what not even public persecution had been able to accomplish!

Because they viewed the schism as a calamity for French Swiss evangelicalism, and because Darby was already denouncing the original, indigenous church as itself schismatic, the remaining spokesmen of the

Vaudois *Ancienne Dissidence* sought to end the deadlock by proposing a conference where Darby's views on 'the apostasy of the present economy' would be discussed.<sup>81</sup> The venue was to be F. Olivier's house at Montbenon, Lausanne, and the date, Tuesday 6 September 1842. On receiving the invitation, however, Darby flatly denounced the whole idea, and it was only after he was pressed by someone concerned about their testimony that he eventually acceded. Yet it was to no avail, for when Darby arrived on the scene with a phalanx of twelve disciples, he promptly condemned the meeting and refused to take part in any discussion!<sup>82</sup> How shocking that he should have to be virtually adjured to respond to the questions that were raised! Or was it that he could not relate to people who had not had a pilgrimage similar to his own? Then the volcano erupted. Christian grace flew out the window. Darby had lost control of himself. Even his followers were shocked at the torrent of dogmatic self-contradictions that burst forth from the master-mind. Swiss believers were being subjected to the kind of lashing that only a leader, suffering from sectarian neurosis, could administer. Needless to say, the conference had to be abruptly terminated because such cross-cultural ministry was not perceived to be at all constructive or edifying!<sup>83</sup>

Unfortunately for all concerned, Darby was on an exclusive wavelength. That was why he could prove himself master of the proverbial English understatement when he wrote about the event just a month later:

There is much blessing in Switzerland, but a little commotion, because of the new wine, which does not suit well with the old bottles — old at least in many respects, because they are human — and everything is feared about if anything is touched.<sup>84</sup>

How impatient or insensitive could he be to those on whose shoulders he was standing! Or again, in a letter written the next day:

In comparison with what was the case a year and a half ago [just after he had broken with the dissenters], the awakening and the results are striking enough, but old Dissent on one side, and especially *the old Dissenting ministers, whom the new awakening has laid aside*, are jealous, and are bestirring themselves. We have no other difficulty, except this jealous spirit of the ministers. They have taken the ground solemnly in a conference lately, that the church was not responsible for the condition in which it then was. I feel myself much more, or rather altogether apart, from all official connection with *their system*; ... *it appears to me a principle of rebellion against God*. ... This attempt to revive the old Dissent in opposition to the awakening which is taking place, makes me undecided for the moment as to my duty to leave; the rather because hearts are calm as long as I am here, and are more agitated if they are themselves the object of these attempts.<sup>85</sup>

A more self-opinionated, schismatic approach to a 'young church' overseas can hardly be imagined — even if local leaders did leave something to be desired. Indeed, had not the indigenous evangelical movement got into its poorly-integrated condition precisely because British nonconformists and local persecution had deprived it of a chance to develop a stable, unifying leadership? In the light of that, Darby's approach to cross-cultural ministry rendered him liable to indictment on two counts: first, for lack of care towards a smoking flax burned by British nonconformists (in the 1820s and '30s) who were quite *blasé* with reference to missiology, and second, for lack of missiological integrity towards a bruised reed, already badly beaten by godless local folk.

### *Swiss Attempts to Halt Darbyism*

Shaken by this fiasco, the dissenting leaders realized that they must cooperate more than ever before in order to repulse Darbyism, so that December they produced *L'Exposé scripturaire de principes généraux relatifs à l'assemblée des croyants*. This joint statement was signed by Empaytaz, Lhuilier, A. Rochat, and three others. Francois Olivier then decided to break from Darby formally and he led some of the latter's Lausanne supporters to carry out separate worship meetings at Montbenon; by the end of 1844, he was distributing the Lord's Supper quite separately from everyone else!<sup>86</sup>

The second major attempt to enable the evangelical churches to survive began with 'fraternal communications' admonishing the dissenters to mutual fidelity in the face of Darbyism, and urging them to participate in a conference at Nyon on 20 April 1843. The hope was that a new association could be formed to unite the *première dissidence* of Geneva, Vaud and Berne.<sup>87</sup> Some 50 people did attend, and they did manage to arrive at a fair degree of accord on doctrinal issues, but even then their desire for local church independence overrode the possibility of forming a definite union of churches. A third conference, under Rochat's presidency, was held five months later in order to consider how they should deal with those teaching error (ie, Darby and his followers), but the young Swiss church seemed to be already losing some of its anti-Darbyite momentum now that the contending lines had become fairly clearly drawn.<sup>88</sup> Besides, negative protest in itself was quite inadequate as a bond to unite believers together. In short, the earlier *Réveil* spirit was lacking among those who were still trying to 'hold the fort', which they had won long before Darby had ever come on to the scene.

The most significant explanation for the lull experienced from the end of 1843 in all probability derives from the fact that Darby — at last — left for Britain that summer. No doubt he felt confident enough to do

so because his following had become unified enough to be able to cope with opposing dissenters, and because there were enough young *frères à l'oeuvre* ('brothers in the work') to hold the members together — or keep them in line! In fact, he had achieved something that had eluded the *Ancienne Dissidence* for decades.

A whole year was to pass before he returned to the Swiss cantons. During that time, he found that Brethren in London had been praying much for 'the work in Switzerland', so much so that he received quite a welcome on returning from his long stay abroad. What this reception did for his status among them, and how it affected his growing apostolic self-consciousness, can only be surmized, but the happiness he expressed over them, and the fact that he subsequently launched out on long international itineraries, would suggest that he had reached a turning-point in his self-financed, roving life-enterprise.<sup>89</sup>

His main task on returning to Switzerland, after several months in France, was to consolidate and stimulate the work named after him. This involved not a little remedial work which could hardly have excited him. For example, a case had arisen where one of the assemblies (perhaps Vevey) had threatened to withdraw from him; that had to be dealt with. Then he had to ward off an attack from Swiss evangelicals in the *Société de Genève* and the *Société Laïque de Vaud*, written by P. Wolff and entitled: *Le Ministre aux Temps apostoliques et aux Temps actuels*.<sup>90</sup> To this, Darby replied in 1844 with his *De la Présence et de l'Action du Saint-Esprit dans l'Eglise* since it was vital to him that every opponent should be rebutted, and that he should always have the last word. This meant that his self-defence was already quite lengthy by the end of 1844. It also meant that he contrasted with his opponents, because they felt there were more important things to do than waste their time in endless disputing. Heresy hunting was not to be their full-time occupation even if *his* ministry was obsessed with shooting down every form of 'evil'! Like Wesley, then, Darby proved that he was master of the pen. He would prevail, due to his own persistence and his opponents' eventual default. That was why he brought out *Le Témoignage des disciples de la Parole*, as a journal to propagate his views further, especially during his absence.<sup>91</sup> Yet he was not to get his own way for long, since political realities would achieve what no amount of evangelical self-defence could. History would demonstrate who belonged where.

### **Where the Paths led to**

Darby would never have influenced Swiss dissenters so much if their leaders had been more united in churchmanship and skilled in problem-

solving. In one sense, however, they were unready to meet his challenge creatively because they had never come across anything like his obsessive drive before. As a foreigner, he was difficult to understand and even more difficult to stop, so he was able to get for himself, in their backyard, what would never have been possible in his own land: preliminary experience in leading a movement that looked to him as its founder and theological master-mind. All this he accomplished in a few years, so by 1845 he knew what it was to be 'man of the moment', and how to set the agenda for coming confrontation.

With all that behind him, he felt more prepared than ever to move straight to the heart of Brethren concern in Britain and — even though he had been away from Plymouth for so long — to pontificate in no uncertain manner. Success in confronting hostile opinions and leaders in Switzerland had convinced him of his apostolic calling to straighten out erring Brethren. Yet how ironic it all was! The *Ancienne Dissidence*, which had suffered considerably from foreign, sectarian gentry during the last twenty years, was to return to Britain a re-cycled version of Britain's own sectarian exports. History thus came full circle! The dynamic effects of the cross-roads encounter in *la Suisse romande* were to be experienced no less dramatically and painfully in Plymouth, the West Country, and the ends of the earth.

### *Christian Witness Threatened*

Darby only achieved what he did in Switzerland because the years 1840 to 1844 were far freer of political turbulence than had been the case for a long time. Thus when revolution broke out in Vaud in 1845, under a radical government that was determined to apply the law of 1839 against offending dissenters, Darby and his followers had to decide how they would face persecution.<sup>92</sup> His own decision was to stay around for a few weeks and then leave for England, but for his followers there was to be no such easy escape from 'trial by fire'. In fact, he categorically refused to be persuaded to stay with them — he felt he had other work to do in Plymouth.<sup>93</sup> For him there would be no moderation. Nothing would be allowed to divert him from his peculiar course.

Sure enough, the Darbyites took a beating in Lausanne as their meetings were invaded and their premises ransacked or confiscated, from the middle of February. Reviled as 'Protestant Jesuits' and *mômiers*, they had to suffer as scapegoats while mobs, maddened by Jesuit threats to social order in neighbouring Catholic cantons, vented their hatred for sectarian fanatics, particularly those of foreign origin. Wesleyans, too, came under attack, in Aigle, and had to suspend their proselytizing, close their chapels, and 'make do' with small house-meetings until the

storm passed. This time, others were caught up in the turmoil — even Reformed ministers! Those who had been holding evangelistic services of any sort were forced to desist, and when some 221 of them protested against the clamp down on their religious liberty, 42 of their number were temporarily suspended from preaching.<sup>94</sup> The outcome was that a large majority of the Vaud clergy seceded from the state church by the end of the year, and a new Free Church came into being by 1847.

Members of the dissenting churches do not appear to have fared so badly during this critical period in Darbyite fortunes. Indeed, they sought to take hold of the opportunity to regain some of their number who had gone over to Darby. With this in mind, they held another three conferences and issued another joint statement, entitled, *Moyens de manifester la communion spirituelle que les unes chrétiens ont entre eux et que les églises ont les unes avec les autres par la foi en Jésus-Christ et en Jésus-Christ seul.*<sup>95</sup> It was signed by leaders from three cantons: Guers, Empaytaz, Lhuilier, Saladin, Monsell, de Rodt, Henri and Francois Olivier. But sadly, even at such an opportune time, there was less than total agreement, for A. Rochat and du Plessis of Vaud held back, insisting that the statement did not express the principle of the independence of the local church sufficiently.<sup>96</sup> Such a performance makes one wonder whether the Vaudois remnant of the *Ancienne Dissidence* could ever function as a cohesive, evangelical fellowship. It appeared that no matter what happened, local leaders would never take a substantially united stand in the face of serious threat. A parochial world-view militated against regional — not to mention national — concerns for concerted witness, so it was partly due to ecclesial default on the dissenters' side that they were eclipsed by a new Free Church of Vaud in 1847, and almost ceased to exist by 1850. Degeneration of the *Réveil* thus became complete in Vaud. Darby had managed to snuff it out almost single-handed, thanks to the cantons' lack of decisive, indigenous church-leadership.

### **Christian Fellowship Impoverished**

Darby returned to Vaud rather furtively, early in 1848, not knowing whether he would be treated as an undesirable alien or otherwise. As it turned out, he *was* allowed off the French boat at Ouchy, the port for Lausanne, but he could do no more than hold some meetings with his followers in the Casino there.<sup>97</sup> Soon after that, he returned again to Britain, and it was from Plymouth — that June in Europe's 'Year of Revolutions' — that he complained to a French-speaking 'sister': 'As for dear Switzerland, I am indeed rather a stranger there now'; and again: 'I

am really too much of a stranger, but the circle enlarges, and the difficulty of visiting them all increases'.<sup>98</sup> The point was that his attention was turning more to France than Switzerland. He had given the better part of 1845-48 to Brethren troubles in Britain, and the five years before that to Switzerland, but now he felt it was time for him to develop new areas. For him there could be no settled ministry: he was an apostle-at-large.

In all, some three and a half years passed before Darby spent a satisfactory period of time back in the Swiss cantons. Since he had left them, early in 1845, his hands had been full establishing his own faction among Britain's Brethren, but by October 1848 he felt it necessary to return to his Swiss followers and help resolve some problems that were troubling them. The first, and perhaps the most difficult case calling for his attention was in Geneva. Earlier in the year there had been an open debate about elders between Darby's followers there — led by Foulquier and Guillaumet — and pastor Demole of the *Oratoire*, which was then in close relation with the evangelical church at la Pelissierie.<sup>99</sup> Evidently the Darbyites did not fare too well in this debate, because they could not answer Demole's questions. This upset them so much that Foulquier, in desperation, blurted out that even if God sanctioned elders he would never go along with it. Casting discretion aside, he then told Demole to go to Darby with his questions if he wanted them answered, thereby admitting that Geneva's Darbyites could not stand on their own feet: they were dependent on their foreign leader to do the thinking for them!

All this put Darby in an awkward position since he did not want to admit that any of his followers were in error, nor did it look good that he should appear as an indoctrinator. In the event, he made a lame excuse for Foulquier which convinced nobody, least of all Foulquier, who later publicly admitted his error. Indeed, he even prevailed upon his mentor to include that confession in his rejoinder to Demole: *Vues Scripturaires sur la question des anciens en réponse à l'écrit intitulé: Faut-il Etablir des Anciens*.<sup>100</sup> Of course, this affair did not give Darby or his followers the kind of publicity that they wanted, but it stands on record as an example of the snare that Christians can fall into when they cannot afford to 'lose face' in front of one another. That is what happens in a sect, where one reaps what one has sown. Darbyites referred to themselves as saints and so had to work hard to maintain the sense of spiritual perfection on which their fragile security rested. As a result, they became overly dependent on their leader not only to teach them the deep things that should be believed — Christian *gnosis*! — but also to defend them when they did not know how to answer those who flummoxed them.

After a month of such remedial ministry in Geneva, Darby moved on to Vaud. To his relief, he found that the political scene was much calmer

than it had been earlier in the year. Thus he wrote from Geneva that December:

The Lord is gracious, and gave perfect quiet while I passed through the Canton de Vaud. I had meetings every evening I was in it, and not a word was said. The gendarme looked at my last visa, but did not even ask my name on going into the Canton. I went through Neuchâtel and Vaud, once arrived on the scene of work, save the top of the mountain where we were on sledges, on foot with my haversack. ... In the Canton of Neuchâtel there is a great deal of blessing. In Vaud, the persecutions and lack of visiting have produced some languor. I trust the brethren may pray for these dear brethren. By persecutions, I mean the difficulty of meeting together. There is no particular evil, but slackened energy.<sup>101</sup>

From this, it can be understood that his followers in Vaud had not made any progress since he had left them hastily in 1845; indeed, when he was not present to strengthen their commitment to the Darbyite way, a certain sluggishness took over. This he would have to combat as long as he had the strength to travel. He did so in the 1850s by returning to hold conferences almost every year, but from the 1860s onwards his attention was more taken up with North America and other lands, so that he was only able to get back to Switzerland every two or three years. By force of circumstance, then, Darby eventually found it necessary to let his Swiss followers become responsible for their own affairs. When that happened, the integrity of his movement was disturbed,<sup>102</sup> simply proving that foreign authoritarianism — as the cement that holds believers together — is no substitute for strong, collective leadership that arises from among the people themselves.

### *Christian Integrity Compromised*

Sheer determination and an amazing — he could have considered it providential — ordering of events frequently enabled Darby to be resilient where an ordinary person would have given up. Dogged persistence and stubborn unwillingness to let his opponents have the last word consequently carried him through many an *impasse*. Thus when the evangelicals in Geneva — from the *Oratoire, la Pelisserie* and even the state church — united in 1848-49 to constitute a new *Eglise évangélique libre*, which would contain elders and deacons, would treat pastors as elders, and would allow both adult and infant baptism, he did not consider it impertinent to announce sanctimoniously: 'Brethren of la Pelisserie, the principle of the clergy has destroyed you, and now you cast yourselves there, where one reaps the fruits of this corruption.'<sup>103</sup> From then on, he took advantage of every opportunity to make his Swiss opponents appear to be apostate believers, doubtless with a certain

sense of self-gratification.<sup>104</sup> By doing so, he demonstrated an important feature of sectarian methodology: a leader should never relent from reinforcing and reiterating why his followers should stand fast in their exclusive thinking towards those who profess to be regenerate, yet do not recognize his authority.

The next hundred years were to show that Darbyism had come to stay in Switzerland. In fact, the passage of time has shown that Darby stamped his own outlook, theology and 'assembly' principles on exclusive-minded brethren there to a greater extent than proved to be the case in any other country. Perhaps this reflected the fact that he spent more time in the Swiss cantons (some 90 months spread over 26 years between 1837 and 1878) than in any other country outside England.<sup>105</sup> The course by which the Darbyite movement developed in French Switzerland is consequently significant, and may be analyzed in two ways. First, it evolved through three stages during Darby's lifetime. After a few months of orientation, he launched an *offensive* which attracted a considerable number of followers and provoked schism from the indigenous evangelical churches (1840-1845). But expansion gradually declined due to persecution, internal tension, and exhaustion of the local churches' supply of potential recruits for Darbyism. A *transition* then occurred towards introverted exclusivism and a far less aggressive form of proselytism (1845-1861). Thus *stagnation* set in as staid ritual and pious pondering over Darbyite classics came to predominate in the life of the movement (from the 1860s onward).

From another perspective, it can be seen why Darby appealed to not a few disturbed believers who felt all the more insecure in their faith because of the revolutionary and even violent times through which they were passing. All he had to do was follow the trail of previous manifestations of spiritual renewal in the Church-at-large and take advantage of situations where 'enthusiasm' was on the wane, by promising that he would lead the spiritually-disappointed in a far better way. The tragedy is that people believed him as he passed from one country to another, so much so that he became responsible for promoting sectarian degeneration of church life abroad, as much as at home. It was the misfortune of the evangelical churches in the French-Swiss cantons that he felt free to test his exclusive, programmatic ideas among them. In the process, he encountered considerable resistance, but 'fate' was in his favour and he left the country in the mid-1840s sufficiently self-assured and emboldened to act more forcefully with British Brethren opponents than anyone could have imagined when he first left for Switzerland.<sup>106</sup> *La Suisse romande* thus became the spring-board for Darby's divisive career. That was where he first 'found his feet', even more, where he discovered that authoritarian leadership could achieve much if it simply

gave itself full-time, and without reserve, to the task of aggressive proselytizing, bold apologetics and bulky dogmatics.

### *Audacious Confrontation*

Switzerland was important to Darby because it enabled him to re-orient himself after a long spell of controversy with the Brethren in Britain during the 1830s. The first half of the 1840s was a good time to be abroad, and he was able to carry out a successful apostolate that gained him no little prestige in the estimate of the important concentration of Brethren in London.<sup>107</sup> In short, his five-year spell in Geneva and Vaud turned out to be a test-case for developing his approach to other 'brethren' and evangelicals-in-general. He was able to do this because he initially had nothing to lose by interfering in the affairs of the young church overseas. By 1845, he consequently had a support-base in both London and Switzerland behind him, and it was as a leader in his own right, with his own following, that he felt secure enough to 'jump into the deep end' at Plymouth. Besides, he had hardly anything to lose in Devon!

From such evidence as is available, it appears that Darby's sudden return to Plymouth in March 1845 was not particularly desired by those at the receiving-end.<sup>108</sup> The self-appointed apostle, however, was quite undeterred and promptly set about asserting his own views in opposition to those of his rival, B. W. Newton.<sup>109</sup> Not surprisingly, this provoked outright confrontation between the two, and Newton was put on the defensive as Darby took the initiative. To Newton's shock, he found that it was not only his teaching but also his personal integrity that was up for question; even worse, it appeared that Darby would yield no ground whatsoever. Reconciliation between the two therefore failed at every turn, and nothing could be done to prevent Darby from high-handedly withdrawing from the first Brethren church in Plymouth in order to set up a rival congregation, before the year was out. Under the circumstances, this represented an amazing escalation in the conflict, and can only be explained by observing that Darby had become quite adamant, even fiercely autocratic if necessary, in the way he expected others to submit to his views and hence his leadership. His first year back in Plymouth thus proved to be as explosive as his first full year in Geneva had been: respect for his opponents, into whose 'parish' he had so rudely barged, was totally out of the question, and corresponding 'fruit' followed. How he thought he could 'get away with' such grievous breaches of Christian conduct defies explanation, unless earlier Swiss success had proved too strong a wine — 'new wine', in his own words — for him.<sup>110</sup>

Local evangelicals were caught off their guard by Darby's sheer

audacity. What unnerved them was not so much his keen, almost surgical perception of his opponents' weaknesses, but his brazen shock-tactics. Thus their resistance to him was less than convincing right from the outset. What Neatby wrote about the Brethren in Plymouth consequently reminds one of the situation of the dissenting churches in Geneva and Vaud, which likewise fell prey to exclusive sectarianism:

... In their first emergency [they] found themselves absolutely unprepared to grapple with it. They had no constitution of any kind. They repudiated congregationalism, but they left their communities to fight their battles on no acknowledged basis and with no defined court of appeal. If once the sense of fair play (one would be ashamed to speak of spirituality) broke down, there was no check on the most arbitrary temper.<sup>111</sup>

In short, what Darby wrecked actually succumbed because he went directly for their all-too-vulnerable, ecclesial Achilles' heel. The pious evangelicals had never dreamed that anyone from among them could ever be so grossly indecent as to take advantage of their treasured, organizational informality.

### *Exclusive Disgrace*

The first Darbyite assembly in England — in Plymouth to be precise — began with 50 or 60 members, just as in Geneva; but that was only a start. In Vaud, Darby had managed to topple the whole dissenting movement, so it was hardly surprising that he should go for Newton's 'jugular' in 1846. One of his devices was publication of a *Narrative of the Facts, Connected with the Separation of the Writer from the Congregation meeting in Ebrington Street*. This struck Lord Congleton as so disgraceful that he wrote in Newton's favour, though simultaneously withdrawing from his wronged brother, as follows:

As to John Darby's narratives, I am thoroughly disgusted with them, both the spirit of them and the falseness of them, though I do not charge him with intentional falsehood. He seems to me like a man intoxicated. I trust he will soon come to his senses.<sup>112</sup>

Unfortunately for God's people, Darby was beyond moderation. His most trusted follower, Wigram, followed with another bitter attack on Newton, and at the end of the year Newton was unceremoniously excluded from fellowship by Darby's loyal Rawstorne Street assembly in London. Short of total capitulation to Darby, there was nothing left that Newton could do to prevent himself and his assembly in Plymouth from being 'effectively isolated from all Brethren elsewhere'.<sup>113</sup> Darby had done his worst, and had done it thoroughly, so by 1848 the Ply-

mouth Brethren proper were in irreversible disarray. What awesome responsibility he had taken into his own hands!

The final stage leading to Darbyism's ascendancy among the Brethren in England developed out of a situation in April 1848, when two prominent friends of B. W. Newton applied for communion at George Müller's Bethesda Chapel in Bristol. On hearing that they had been accepted, Darby was immediately incensed, and in a rather back-handed manner announced his separation from the Brethren there. His sectarian 'witness against evil' hardly could have been more explicit than in *The Bethesda Circular* which he subsequently issued from Leeds to all Brethren that July: with that, his exclusivism may be said to have been fully born.<sup>114</sup> From then on there was no way that he would consent to have fellowship with anyone who was sympathetic to Newton. Perhaps the real tragedy was that there was no one to stop him. That, however, may have been partly due to the fact that no other Brethren leader had engaged in such an extensive, free-lance ministry as he had, nor was anyone willing to waste his life spending his energies producing rebuttals that would match his voluminous propaganda. No one else was married with hard-line steadfastness to the spread of such an ecclesial obsession, no one else felt he had as much at stake as a leader among the Brethren, as Darby did. Nobody was as determined to impose uniformity of thought and practice on the Brethren as Darby. He had confused himself with all that his leadership was meant to symbolize and consequently became a dangerous man, whose path it would be folly to cross, but for the fact that he was bringing disgrace upon Christian witness to the Lord.

### **Tumult at the Crossroads**

If there had been a promise of evangelical renewal in the 1810s and 1820s, and if the 1830s had indicated that the path to blessing would not be trouble-free, then the 1840s represented a great leap backwards in terms of Christian relationships. It really happened so quickly. British and Swiss evangelicals had hardly had a chance to establish proper fraternal relations with one another, when a terrible identity crisis developed. What God would unite, Darby would put asunder because he was a stranger to the truth that 'mission is the Church-crossing-frontiers-in-the-form-of-a-servant'.<sup>115</sup>

The dissenting churches of the Swiss cantons were dealt a mortal blow by Darby. Disintegration and disorientation became the order of the day as the 'man from outside' ran rough-shod over the feelings of those who had suffered so much for their Lord. Indeed, one cannot help

but sympathize with the church-leaders who felt 'like a bear robbed of her cubs'. But no sooner had Darby 'done his thing' in Geneva and Vaud than he turned to Plymouth and the West Country of England. Schism upon schism! B. W. Newton had to bear the brunt of the attack, and emerged a crippled man after just two years. As for the Plymouth Brethren, they no longer existed as such by mid-century. Thus it looked as if a complete rout had been accomplished among God's pious people by a man who belonged elsewhere.

The crossroads of Brethren history and European evangelicalism one and a half centuries ago demonstrates how difficult it was for believers from different cultures to respect, and minister maturely to, one another. That each party needed the other was clear enough, but the desire of British gentry to 'lord it over' their Swiss brethren, on the one hand, and the concern of Swiss believers to assert their local churches' independence, on the other, worked to their mutual shame. As a consequence, Swiss evangelical witness never became strong in the French-speaking cantons, while in Britain thousands of needy souls were to discover that Darbyite exclusivism was ultimately a 'dead end'.

One can only hope that the costly lessons of the past — when sectarian leadership forgot that Christ's Church is to be *built up*, not *carved up* — will be learned by the present generation. Of course, there will be anxiety about who should be leading God's people forward, but may we be spared from those who forget that the forward movement to which the Church is called is participation in *Christ's* mission to his world! We are called to maturity of faith *and* to further the kingdom of God, but believers will only demonstrate that Jesus Christ is Lord when they refuse to be side-tracked by personal interests, petty leaders, and confining causes.

Where cross the crowded ways of life,  
Where sound the cries of men at odds,  
Above the noise of selfish strife,  
We seek *Thy Way*, O Son of God!

(Adapted form of the hymn by F. M. North, 1903)

#### NOTES

1. A. A. Dallimore's *George Whitefield*, 2 vols., (1980) is a superlative exposé of the actual relationships and leadership differences between Whitefield and Wesley.
2. Oxford University had an important role to play in the early pilgrimage of both

- men in terms of the relationships they formed there; eg Darby with Newton and Wesley with Whitefield.
3. For excellent treatments of these phenomena, see D. Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (1978); F. E. Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (1971); R. Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (1978); J. Kent, *Holding the Fort. Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (1978); H. A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley, and Patterns for Church Renewal* (1980).
  4. That is, the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland, particularly small canton Geneva and much larger canton Vaud, both of which are adjacent to Lac Léman (Lake Geneva).
  5. John Wesley was converted during such outreach in 1738 and then visited Zinzendorf and German Pietist leaders in what is now East Germany.
  6. J. R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (1956); A. G. Spangenberg, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinzendorf* (1838).
  7. The *Compagnie des Pasteurs* did this in 1813 because it regarded the group as a sect. See E. Guers, *Vie de Pyt* (1850) 247; Ch. Eynard, *Vie de Madame de Krudener*, 2 (1849) 246,247; E. Guers, *Le Premier Réveil et la Première Eglise Indépendante à Genève ...* (1871) 19ff. 43-47 (henceforth cited as *Réveil*).
  8. This designation may be translated as the 'original', 'former', or even 'earlier' dissenting movement. As early as 1842, Darby was calling its members 'old dissenters' (see his *Letters*,<sup>2</sup> 1:53). However, the adjective *ancienne* was strictly-speaking a misnomer because Darbyism did not embody the principles of Swiss evangelical dissent in a new way, and a phrase such as *nouvelle dissidence* was never coined.
  9. See Eynard, *op. cit.* vol. 2. Eynard was a Darbyite when he wrote this biography, probably for non-Christians in the aristocracy. Darby's prompt critique of the lady was dated 29 May 1849, and was entitled 'On Mysticism': see his *Collected Writings*,<sup>2</sup> (32) 218-226 (henceforth cited as *C.W.*).
  10. Henri Empaytaz was the first to be induced to leave Switzerland and engage in evangelism abroad — helping her witness to aristocratic ladies in Karlsruhe, Germany, for two years (Eynard, vol. 2. and *Réveil* 73ff.).
  11. She was an Anglican who in principle opposed 'dissent': her concern was for evangelical reviving of the existing church. See J. Cart, *Histoire du Mouvement Religieux et Ecclésiastique dans le Canton de Vaud pendant la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1870-1880) 1; Bk. 2, 96-177; Bk. 3, 269-272.
  12. The term *le Réveil*, popularly used by nineteenth-century historians to designate the small-scale movement of spiritual renewal that occurred in the French-Swiss cantons, should be translated as 'awakening' rather than as 'revival': it was essentially an inaccurate term. Guers, one of the leaders in the *Réveil*, professed no embarrassment that strangers were used to animate the spiritual life of Geneva, because that was how the Reformation had been established there centuries before (*Réveil* 100, 101).
  13. A. Haldane, *Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of his Brother James Alexander Haldane* (1853) 378. By 1825, he had spent hundreds of thousands of pounds on evangelical work in Scotland and French-speaking Europe, according to *The Christian Baptist*,<sup>2</sup> 3 (1827) 352.
  14. A number of senior orthodox Reformed pastors in Geneva, as well as the theological students who respected Haldane, refused to accept the consistory's ban on the preaching of Christ's divinity, on original sin, the operation of grace, and predestination. *Réveil* 86-98; Haldane (French translation by E. Petitpierre, one of the first dissenting pastors in Neuchatel, 2nd ed. 2 (1859) 33-53).

15. Vaud's Reformed Church, unlike Geneva's, had remained true to its orthodox Calvinism, even if most of the original vitality had been lost through time. Cart 1; Bk. 2.
16. A. L. Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle* (c. 1934) 126; W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists. The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (1978); *Réveil* 99-104; Haldane, 374. Haldane left on 20 June.
17. He was expelled from the canton in Oct. after being interrogated at length by the *Compagnie des Pasteurs*. This happened because they considered him a 'sectarian': the same reason why Miss Greaves was expelled from Canton Vaud in 1822.
18. They met in small house-groups until Sept. 1818. From Oct. they were publicly nicknamed *mômiers*, or 'bigots', because of their nonconformist stance towards state religion.
19. From 1819, Bost and Guers were responsible for publishing and promoting this evangelical paper, which got its information particularly from the Basle Missionary Society. See *Réveil* 224-233; Cart 1; Bk. 3, 190, 191.
20. All this happened by 1825. Some pastors died from the injuries they sustained. The law passed in 1824 prohibited all prayer meetings, on pain of fines, imprisonment and banishment. It was carried out quite seriously.
21. Vevey was the first place in Vaud to have a truly organized dissenting church (from Sept. 1824). See Cart 1; Bk. 4, 10-19. By inciting the common people to attack the *mômiers*, the clergy provoked the very secession from the state church that they wanted to avoid so much!
22. F. R. Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*<sup>2</sup> (1976); H. H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren, 1825-1850* (1967).
23. Coad 31-35, 62, 117; W. B. Neatby *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (1901). Darby hesitated for a long time before severing his ties with the Church of England, c. 1834.
24. Rowdon 43, 44, 48; Coad 52, 106; Neatby 78; G. Ischebeck, *John Nelson Darby: Son Temps et Son Oeuvre* (trans. from German), (1937) 10, 11.
25. Coad 61. Olivier has demonstrated how fashionable the interpretation of prophecy had become among dissenters, both within and without the established Church, by 1831. An example is the series of conferences held at Henry Drummond's Albury Park villa in Surrey, from 1826. Lady Powerscourt, whom Darby once would have liked to marry, attended the 1826 meeting there (Rowdon 86). Darby attended her Powerscourt (Ireland) conferences at least in 1829 and 1830. Irving visited her at Powerscourt in Sept. 1830. She was the same age as Darby and died on 30 Dec. 1836, in her mid-thirties. See L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* (1946) 3; 263-282, 436ff., 449ff.; Neatby, 38, 39.
26. Coad 130ff.
27. The name 'Plymouth Brethren' was coined by outsiders because the Devonshire assembly there was particularly influential in the formation of the Brethren movement. See Rowdon 37, 111, 159-161. Although Darby visited the place occasionally, he never was formally a member there, let alone the 'presiding elder' (Newton filled that position). The Brethren in Ireland were commonly called 'Darbyites' because Darby was the dominant influence there by 1834 (Rowdon 104; Neatby 51).
28. A. Wemyss, *Histoire du Réveil 1790-1849* (1977) 88-100; A. L. Drummond, *Edward Irving* 127. Because of the mediocrity of Bourg-de-Four's resources, Drummond largely financed the society. Between 1819 and 1832, Méjanel, Pyt, Porchat, Neff, Guers, Coulin, Bost and Barbey were the leaders or members of Bourg-de-Four who at some time worked for, or were supported by the society.

- Méjanel organized the society's initial French activities from Paris, under supervision from London.
29. Empaytaz was exempt from military exercises for health reasons. Guers and Gonthier had received ordination from Ami Bost in Geneva in March 1819 (he was already ordained in the state church), but the *Compagnie* would not recognize it. *Réveil* 177, 188, 189. For details about Wilks, see D. Robert, *Les Eglises Réformées en France 1800-1830* (1961) 364; T. Stunt, 'Geneva and British Evangelicals in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Journ. Eccl. Hist.*, 32, Jan. 1981, 40, 41.
  30. In the same chapel in London, at the end of July 1821. The *Société* was known in England as the Continental Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge. See Guers, *Vie de Pyt*, 130; Froom, 440. Another worker of the society, who had been a member at Bourg-de-Four, Felix Neff, was ordained in the same place in 1823, also by arrangement of Mr. Wilks. See A. Bost, *Letters and Biography of Felix Neff* (1843), 106-116.
  31. Since he is not mentioned in the relevant records of Glasgow Presbytery for 1823, and since the 'Secession Church' — in contrast to the Church of Scotland — did not refuse to recognize Malan, it is reasonable to assume that Olivier was ordained by the more 'independent' or dissenting wing of Scottish Presbyterianism.
  32. Cart 1; Bk. 4, 233, 259-264.
  33. For the contacts that Malan managed to establish in Britain, see D. Robert; L. Maury, *Le Réveil Religieux dans l'Eglise Réformée à Genève et en France 1810-1850* (1892) 1; 126, 127; Baron H. de Goltz, *Genève Religau Dix-Neuvième Siècle* (1862) 183, 197; *Réveil* 122-125; Stunt, *art. cit.* Haldane led Malan to the Lord in Geneva (Haldane 396, 397).
  34. The *Société évangélique de Genève* was founded in 1831 by dissenters from the state church who did not join the Bourg-de-Four brethren: they opened the *Oratoire* church in 1834. H. Heyer, *L'Eglise de Genève 1535-1909*, reprint, (1974) 134, 135; 466, 467; 489, 490; Froom, 3; 688, 689; *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge* (1908) 4; 437, 438. 7; 316, 317. This indigenous, 'non-aligned', evangelical movement soon eclipsed the outreach of Bourg-de-Four both at home and abroad, and decades later was still going strong with 60 colporteurs and over 12 pastors. See D. Maselli, *Tra Risveglio e Millennio. Storia delle chiese cristiana dei Fratelli* (1974) 39-47, *passim*. Gausson visited England in order to get encouragement for its work, early in the 1830s.
  35. *Réveil* 107-110, 122, 252, 253. Méjanel must have been with Haldane when the latter preached to congregations of Anglican and dissident evangelicals at Powerscourt. Haldane 429. Drummond set Haldane's plan in motion for founding this society in 1818/19 (Haldane 418, 427).
  36. Guers, *Vie de Pyt* 41, 58, 59. Haldane arranged for him to be thus employed in France, from early 1819.
  37. *Ibid.* 255-263, 285-300; Olivier 125, 126; Haldane 428, 455ff., 488ff., 504, 505. Haldane and Irving/Drummond clashed because of the latter's metaphysical speculations on the Lord's humanity, their eschatological speculations, and the matter of spiritual gifts. Trouble about inclusion of the Apocrypha in French Bibles made matters even worse.
  38. This committee established the *Société évangélique française*, but it was very short-lived. In 1834, the independent churches of French-speaking Europe united in an evangelical association of churches—after a lot of slow discussion—with Bourg-de-Four as the nerve-centre for the task of evangelization. This only held together till 1840, when the Geneva church withdrew because it was so concerned about its own developing identity—which by then involved minimiz-

- ing the role of pastors in church affairs. *Réveil* 322-328; Maury 1; 333ff.
39. Drummond was behind this push to buy Bost's co-operation, and Méjanel acted as a go-between. See A. Bost, *Mémoires pouvant servir à l'histoire du Réveil religieux* (1854) 2; 123-329. T. Stunt, *art. cit.*, has pointed to Malan's connections with the circle around Drummond and Irving.
  40. Some time during their banishment, the Olivier brothers worked for the *Société Continentale*. F. Olivier directed the 'Haldane Institute' in Paris from 1824 to 1832 (Robert, 364, 365, 702). H. Olivier worked in French-speaking Canada from c. 1834 to 1839. See *Feuille Religieuse*, no.9, rv. 161, 332; *Narrateur Religieux* (1839) 675, 676, 702.
  41. Church polity varied from presbyterian and congregational to exclusive apostolic. Cart, 1; Bk. 4; 114ff., 204, 232, 2; Bk. 7, 255.
  42. *Ibid.*, 2; Bk. 6, 123-132; Bk. 7, 297. Rowdon (205) notes that Irvingism disturbed the school of theology (of the *Oratoire*) in Geneva in the spring of 1837.
  43. See above, n.33. It is quite possible that Carl then visited Mr. Douglas, who established the first off-shoot of the Plymouth Brethren assembly on his Salcombe estate. See Ischebeck 57; Rowdon 77. Carl died in Sept. 1848 after several years of pastoral leadership in Berne. K. Guggisberg, *Bernische Kirchengeschichte* (1958) 607, 624ff.
  44. Mrs. A. N. Groves, *Memoir of A. N. Groves*,<sup>3</sup> (1869) 355, 356, 324. See Rowdon 195-199, 38-41; G. F. Bergin (ed.) *Autobiography of George Müller*,<sup>3</sup> (1914) 69-76. Groves managed to get several Swiss to go into missions under Brethren auspices, between 1836 and 1840.
  45. Since the party's departure was delayed by bad weather until March 1836 (five months) the Plymouth assembly must have found out quite a lot about the evangelical scene in Geneva from Rudolphe. Ischebeck 57. Did Mr. Douglas, who also counted Malan as his 'father in the Lord', share significantly in underwriting Rudolphe's expenses? Guers (*Réveil*, 245, 246) provides the letter Rudolphe wrote to Geneva from Plymouth on 12 Sept. 1835. It appears that Rudolphe went over to the LMS in India in 1838, after several years of service with Brethren support. *Réveil* 452; R. Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (1899) 2; 738. In Sept. 1834, Douglas was an important leader along with Newton, Borlase and Harris, in Plymouth. It appears that some time in 1836 Douglas and a third of the Brethren at Salcombe went over to the Irvingites. Newton had to preach against the Irvingite threat in the West Country. Did this turn of events affect support for Rudolphe? Rowdon 78, 84, 231. Earlier in Baghdad (in 1831), A. N. Groves had faced the possibility of Brethren support being withdrawn because of their impatience at his lack of success (A. N. Groves, *Journal of a Residence at Baghdad*, 1832, 299).
  46. Groves himself testified that he had several opportunities to talk with Darby between the end of Dec. 1834 and 10 March 1836. See Coad 291-295; Rowdon 292; Ischebeck 37ff., 128, 129, 29. The Plymouth assembly, moreover, had had six months to get acquainted with all that Rudolphe had to share. Did Darby actually meet Rudolphe at Plymouth during this time?
  47. Darby appears to have transferred information about meetings in Neuchâtel from this article into his pamphlet on *Communion and Visible Unity, the Duty and Privilege of all True Christians* (1837). This 24-page booklet may be found in *Brochures Diverses de J. N. Darby at the Lausanne 'Bibliothèque des Pasteurs'* (TP 6106): henceforth cited as *Brochures*. J. J. Herzog, a Swiss theology professor who wrote *Les Frères de Plymouth et J. N. D., Leur Doctrine et Leur Histoire*, during Darby's lifetime, states that in 1830 Darby visited Paris, Cambridge and Oxford, and then went to Plymouth (*New Schaff-Herzog*

- Encyclopedie* 3; 357). This may be a reference to the account of F. Estéoule: *Le Plymouthisme d'autrefois et le Darbyisme d'aujourd'hui* (1858).
48. He wrote this in 1868: *Letters of J. N. D.* 1; 515, 516 (henceforth cited as *Letters*). The 'brother' was either Rudolphe or Groves, and not G. V. Wigram, whose information on Geneva—apparently after his conversion in 1824—was very scant. See his anonymous pamphlet, *What are the Brethren?* (2) in *Brochures*; also Stunt, *art. cit.* 42.
  49. *Réveil* 330-333. As one of the pastors, he began to think during his English visit, that the church was moving too far in the direction of congregationalism, so that Aug. he tried to get the church's constitution modified along presbyterian lines. Some of the 'brothers' then charged the three pastors with dominating them, and several meetings, excluding the pastors, were held in Oct-Nov. to deal with the situation. The outcome was that Guers' controversial proposal backfired. The Bourg-de-Four congregation moved to la Pelisserie some time early in the 1840s.
  50. Two English letters from the 1850s corroborate the evidence in *Brochures*; see *Letters* 3; 293, 297-305.
  51. His comments suggest that he had settled down in the place from which he was writing. It could have been addressed to brethren in either London or Plymouth, but was later printed for distribution. Darby was in correspondence with Wigram about the formation of the Brethren in London in Oct. 1838 (Neatby 109, 282, 283). Notice his 'apostolic' style of writing (see Coad 63). For his relationship with the Brethren in London, see his letter of 3 Aug. 1843 (*Letters* 1; 63) and below, notes 107, 113.
  52. 'G., E. and L.' were probably the pastors there: Guers, Empaytaz, and Lhuilier (see *Réveil* 331ff.). Foulquier became, and perhaps already was, one of the principal 'brethren' there, and it was in answer to one of his letters that Darby wrote the present letter from Edinburgh in Sept. 1838, finishing it on 6 Oct. See the Swiss-French Darbyite periodical, *Messenger Évangélique* (1897) 293-300 (henceforth cited as *M.E.*). A third, but short, letter from 1838 is located in *M.E.* (1945) 195, 196.
  53. *M.E.* (1971) 122-130; *Letters*, 3; 232-236; see below, n.78. By 'our enemies who were present' there, he appears to have been referring to believers 'seduced by that fatal delusion of Irvingism'. Was this conference in Dublin? (see Neatby, 38, 39). The letter was written before he visited some 'exclusive' brethren in Edinburgh. On the Hereford assembly, see Rowdon 164-170.
  54. He referred to his 1837 visit (which may have overlapped into early 1838) in the following opening remarks: 'So long a time has passed since I saw you, without my having addressed to you one word, that you may believe I no longer was thinking of it; but it is not so at all. I have been, during many weeks since my return, hindered.' *Letters* 3; 232.
  55. *M.E.* (1897) 258ff. It is not known whether Mr. Foulquier, Lhuilier or someone else enabled him to do this, nor is it possible to demonstrate why he should have wanted to copy it.
  56. The Hereford letter's comments about the process of separation that had taken place among the Brethren in Edinburgh, and his call for the brethren in Geneva to be 'rigid in discipline' towards one another—as well as 'large-hearted towards all Christians', for good measure (so long as they played down the issue of adult baptism in both Geneva and Edinburgh?)—indicate that Darby was moving away from a 'neutral' or non-partisan position in this delicate situation. Already, a distance was discernible between Darby and Guers. See his writing to Guers on the subject of baptism, some time between 1838 and 1840 (*Letters* 1; 43). He did not approve of 'the principle of dissent which was more or less prevalent' in

- Bourg-de-Four's constitution. See N. Noel, *The History of the Brethren* (1936) 1; 40; Coad 88.
57. F. Cuendet, *Souvenez-Vous de Vos Conducteurs* (1935) 23; Cart 3; Bk. 11, 340.
  58. Maselli (25) states that Darby received an invitation from a community in French Switzerland in 1838, and subsequently got a good welcome. The source is not cited. Did Foulquier do this? Darby wrote to him from Edinburgh, just after the Hereford letter: in this, the Englishman was more candid in commenting about pastors such as Guers.
  59. *Letters* 1; 33ff.; *M.E.* (1971) 222ff.; (1965) 252; (1971) 248ff.
  60. For a detailed outline of his travels, see the chart at the end of this article. Exhaustive listing of the evidence for these datings is summarized in my treatise, 188-195. Darby's claim that he worked in Geneva for four years, seeking to maintain peace and unity, is consequently quite inaccurate. He was probably in Geneva never more than about six months at a time, and then perhaps on only one occasion. (See *Letters* 1; 55; 3; 293)
  61. *C.W.*, 4; 188-191. By 1840 he was writing that he encouraged the flock to recognize the pastors, yet he was totally against electing pastors or establishing elders, and had to withhold totally from all interference.
  62. Cart 3; Bk. 11, 319, 340; Bost, *Mémoires* 2; 244, 245, 254; G. A. Krüger, *Le Darbysme étuïé à la lumière de la Parole de Dieu* (n.d.) 20.
  63. *Letters* 1; 37, 38 (emphasis mine). He also wrote in that letter, in somewhat military language: 'I had broken up from Geneva, where I had a share more or less in all the happy work and intercourse of the place ... and was pleasing myself ... that I should soon turn my face towards my old work in England, and what God in His goodness has prepared for me there, and indeed, I long much ... to be on my way thither, or rather to work there.'
  64. Cart (3; Bk. 11, 341) states that Francois had already met Darby in Geneva in 1837. In 1840, Darby wrote the article: 'De la Doctrine des Wesleyens à l'égard de la Perfection', *C.W.*, 3; 164-205. C. Rieben, *Les Petites Eglises* (1923) 41; Cart, *ibid.* 348, 319-323. Henri recanted in the spring of 1841.
  65. *Letters* 1; 40, 41. Clearly, Darby did not find it easy to adjust to the French-Swiss culture and climate.
  66. The English title was: Reflections on the Ruined Condition of the Church: and on the Efforts Making by Churchmen and Dissenters to Restore it to its Primitive Order (*C.W.* 1; 211-237). It would be helpful to know the precise date of the writing of this article in 1840. See Rowdon 209, 210, 285, 286; and below, n.69.
  67. *Letters* 1; 42 (emphasis mine).
  68. Cuendet 25; Cart 3; Bk. 11, 348, 349. The English title was 'The Hopes of the Church of God, in connection with the destiny of the Jews and the Nations, as Revealed in Prophecy', *C.W.*, 2; 420-582. By doing this outside of the Bourg-de-Four church, he clearly indicated that he was trying to attract support from people not really at home in either dissent or the state church.
  69. His basic ideas on ecclesiology and the interpretation of prophecy were clearly laid out here. For analysis of Darby's 'hermeneutical key', see Rowdon 51ff., 207, 208, 230, 231: 'By now, Darby had come to see clearly that the key to understanding the unfolding revelation of the Bible was the distinction between the Jewish dispensation and that of the Christian Church.'

It helps one to understand his fiercely-held convictions, such as the hopeless ruin of the Church, at this time, if one bears in mind that sometime earlier, he had dated the Second Advent for 1842. See below, n.109. French Darbyites soon made it out to be c. Nov. 1844, while Drummond and others set it at 1847. See Darby's *Studies on the Book of Daniel*, 316; Coad, *Prophetic Developments*

- with particular reference to the early Brethren Movement, *C.B.R.F. Occ. Paper*, no.2 (1966) 18, 21-26; and for many other sources, my treatise, 128, n.361.
70. Cf. Neatby 94; there was hardly any more respect for the idea of paid clergy in some circles. The evangelical cause had already been hurt in Sept. 1838 when one of its spokesmen, Charles Rochat, died prematurely from wounds suffered during the earlier persecution (Cart 2; Bk. 8, 22).
  71. *Letters* 3; 293; 1; 55, 56. Neatby (81) observes that Darby made the study of prophecy the pivot of his work in Vaud. For the Swiss, such study and such a subject was something for which they were quite unprepared.
  72. *Letters* 1; 56; Ischebeck 10, 11; Cuendet 27. English and Vaudois friends also helped to support this *ad hoc* 'Brethren' training course.
  73. See especially his *On the Apostasy of the Present Economy*, 1841.
  74. *Letters* 1; 44, 45.
  75. Cart 3; Bk. 11, 351ff. How many sects and cults claim as much for their leaders and programmes today!
  76. This law came into effect on 1 Jan. 1841. J. I. Good, *History of the Swiss Reformed Church since the Reformation* (1913) 476, 477; Cart, 3; Bk. 11, 346ff.
  77. *C.W.* 4; 189; Cart 3; Bk. 11, 363; *Réveil* 338.
  78. *Ibid.*; Ischebeck 59; de Goltz 455; Rowdon 206. Darby's lectures and publications surely had an impact on Geneva! Is Donnel the (Irish?) contact—'our dear brother'—who, according to Darby, brought news to Geneva about how Darby was getting on in his British work in 1838? See above, n.53. Was the Hereford letter hand-delivered to Bourg-de-Four, and did it partly function as an introduction to them for Donnel? *Letters* 3; 232.
  79. Ischebeck 59; de Goltz 455; Guendet 25; *Réveil* 338; Cart, 3; Bk. 11, 363; P. Perret, *Nos Eglises Dissidentes. Assemblées de Frères Larges* [Open Brethren] (1966) 15. Darby himself recorded that one of the pastors asked him to bring about reconciliation between the separated groups, but he would only do so on his own terms (*C.W.* 4; 190).
  80. Cuendet 149. Many of its students then went over to Darby.
  81. The counter-charge by Darby is to be found in his 1842 *Le Schisme* 11ff. See Cart 3; Bk. 11, 370-373. For the spate of articles written by Darby and his opponents, see my treatise, 171-180.
  82. The questions relating to the topic for discussion were later outlined by F. Olivier in his *Essai sur le Royaume de Dieu, suivi d'un examen rapide des vues publiées par M. John Darby sur l'Apostasie de l'Economie Actuelle* (1843). Thus the very leader who had sought Darby's help for the beleaguered dissenters in 1840 was now diametrically opposed to him, so shocked was he with the kind of person Darby was as a leader.
  83. Cart 3; Bk. 11, 373-376; Rowdon 212; Neatby 86.
  84. *Letters* 1; 52. Written from Geneva, 10 October 1842. He wrote from Lausanne the next day (*ibid.* 53).
  85. Emphasis mine. The conversions (mentioned in the same letter) under his 'workmen' in France do not substantiate his claims about a new awakening, for Bourg-de-Four sent out many evangelists until Darbyism split the church and Geneva's Evangelical Society continued to send out many more evangelists for many more years.
  86. Cart 3; Bk. 11, 241ff., 375. Olivier began these separate meetings during the winter of 1842-43; they had a polity which, on leadership, was a compromise between the original dissenting position and that of Darbyism. See Ischebeck 68; *C.W.*, 33; 20.
  87. Cart *ibid.*, 244-248. Carl de Rodt's church in Berne had recently suffered a year of painful relations with the Vaudois Darbyites. Ischebeck 67.

88. Cart *ibid.*, 252-255. The third conference was held at Nyon on 28-29 Sept. 1843. It is not clear whether the conference scheduled for 16 May 1844, at Rolle, was ever held. By the end of 1843, F. Olivier and Rochat gave up wasting their time writing against Darby.
89. From 3 August 1843 onwards. See *Letters* 1; 63-71. It is significant that Darby's ties were with the Brethren in London rather than in Plymouth. See above, n.51.
90. The English title was: *Ministry as opposed to Hierarchism and chiefly to Religious Radicalism*. Wolff was a theological candidate of the school of the *Oratoire* in Geneva and had this essay finished before Darby left in 1843. See Rowdon 211; Cart, 3; Bk. 11, 385; C.W. 3; 206, 207.
91. Translatable as *Testimony of Disciplines of the Word*. See *Ischebeck* 10, 11; Maselli 38; Cart 385; Herzog 82.
92. Good 477-484; *Letters* 1; 126, 82, 83, 55, 42. Physical assaults were suffered and even resulted in death, according to accounts in some of Darby's correspondence between 1845 and 1848.
93. *Letters* 1; 80, 81, 92; *Ischebeck* 46, 72; see above n.63. As early as 1840, he was wanting to get on with some particular 'project' in England. Would he have gone straight for Plymouth once he had been refreshed? If so, what might have happened there then?
94. Cart 3; Bk. 11, 332-498; Bk. 13, 6, 11, 36; Neatby 93.
95. *Means of demonstrating the spiritual communion which Christians have among themselves and which the churches have with one another through faith in Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ alone*.
96. Cart 3; Bk. 11, 255-261. According to a letter of F. Olivier from Geneva on 15 June 1846. A. Rochat's death in 1847 only weakened Vaud dissent further. In Vaud, only his 'leaderless' group of *églises des élus* managed to survive to 1859. Then it joined up with a major breakaway from the Darbyites. J. Blandenier, *Le Réveil: Naissance du Mouvement évangélique en Suisse romande au XIXe siècle* (after 1950) 14.
97. *Letters* 1; 135. He probably made this visit while he was based in France during Feb./Mar. On 24 Mar. he wrote about having visited V. (Vevey?) where he persuaded the brethren not to vote in the state elections that were soon to take place (*ibid.* 129). Another sectarian feature of separation from the world! Vevey is the next large port east of Lausanne.
98. *Ibid.* 135-137.
99. Darby's account (C.W. 4; 192ff.) should be compared with the remarks of E. Demole, written just after the *Eglise de l'Oratoire* (of which he was pastor since 1843) united with the *Eglise de la Pelisserie* (formerly Bourg-de-Four) in 1849, entitled, *Faut-il Etablir des Anciens?* (Is it necessary to appoint elders?).
100. *Scriptural Views on the Subject of Elders, in answer to a Tract entitled, 'Are Elders to be Established?'* (C.W. 4). A few years after this, a similar situation occurred in which Darby could not afford to reprimand or deal with another indefatigable supporter, Wigram (Neatby 171, 172). The significance of eldership to Darby is reflected in the fact that the lack of a powerful local eldership was the great negative condition of his autocracy (Neatby 259; see below, n.113).
101. *Letters* 1; 143. Darby was in Geneva on 20 Oct., 10 Nov., 12 Nov. and 8 Dec. (see *M.E.* (1927) 240ff.; (1924) 141ff., 319ff., 339ff.) and in Lausanne on 5 Dec. (*M.E.* (1962) 57ff.). During the late 1840s Darbyism became a force to be reckoned with in Neuchâtel, and disturbed dissenters there considerably. This canton's experience of dissent and Darbyite sectarianism was an 'afterthought' to, and thus was only indirectly affected by, what happened in Geneva and Vaud. In terms of numbers, dissent there was only a fraction of what it had been

- in Geneva and Vaud; however, Neuchâtel eventually became a strong part of Darby's Swiss following. See my treatise, Appendix D 181-187.
102. As early as 1848, Guinand, a leading brother in Vaud, was beginning to react against Darby's authoritarianism. He split the Darbyites over this issue in 1866, when he challenged Darby to an open debate. See his *Lettre à M. Darby* (1866) 7, and Cart 3; Bk. 11, 395, 396.
  103. de Goltz 527-541; Cuendet 133-136; *C. W.*, 4; 109, 81-132, 184, 185.
  104. When Prof. Scherer resigned from the theological school of the *Oratoire* in 1849 because of his unorthodox views on Biblical authority, Darby wrote several articles on *The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, and the leaders of Geneva's new Free Church had nothing with which to reproach Darby. Between 1852 and 1859, Darby wrote against several leaders of the new evangelical church—naturally never doing it face to face—including Ch. Saladin, Guers, and Comte de Gasparin. With the last named, he engaged in a running literary duel on the issue of elders (see above, n.100). One of the Geneva elders brought out a tract on *Plymouthism in view of the Word of God* in 1850, which Darby also rebutted. Against Guers' *Note on the Errors of Mr. B. W. Newton* he wrote an open letter in 1853.
  105. See the following chart of Darby's travels, and my treatise, 150, 188-195, for further clarification. He is still referred to with reverence as 'brother Darby' by elderly Brethren there. French Switzerland became the stronghold of Darbyism abroad (Neatby 93, 94, 304ff., 316).
  106. See also Rowdon's interpretation of the effect that Switzerland had on Darby (214).
  107. The Brethren were established in London by Wigram by 1838, and developed a strong semi-connexional system of meetings during the 1840s. Wigram was one of Darby's most staunch supporters and was implacably opposed to Newton by then. He was in close collusion with Darby in breaking from Newton's Plymouth assembly at the end of December 1845. See Rowdon 161-164, 250, 247; P. L. Embley, 'The Early Development of the Plymouth Brethren', in B. R. Wilson (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism* (1967) 226, 227.
  108. See Coad 141, 142; Rowdon 236-238, 242, 243; Embley 230ff.; Neatby 103, 104. Harris, who wrote to Darby in Switzerland early in 1844, went over to Darby in October 1845.
  109. See above, n.69; Neatby 104, 105, 109-113, 227, 228. They disagreed most on the question of the Secret Rapture and the relation of the Church to the Great Tribulation. This dispute seemed of immense practical consequence to them since they then anticipated the immediate end of the age. Darby charged Newton with clericalism and sectarianism, among other things.
  110. See above, n.84. According to Rowdon (247), Lord Congleton—a statesman who was not unfairly biased in favour of Newton—described Darby's action as 'unequivocally sectarian'. Newton refused to be judged publicly in Darby's stronghold (London) and so was unilaterally excommunicated by it.
  111. Neatby 119-121.
  112. This is an excerpt from Lord Congleton's letter to Newton, quoted by Embley 234. Lord Congleton had been one of the founders of the Brethren movement in Dublin in 1825 (under the name Parnell). His estimate of the 1845 split was most level-headed (see Neatby 23, 41, 115-122, 147). Darby's action reminds one of Wesley's behaviour with Whitefield.
  113. Newton was embarrassed and discredited by Darby for his *Remarks on the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus*, even though he admitted his error and retracted his remarks; he even had to leave Plymouth, on 8 Dec. 1847. See Coad 147-153; Rowdon 259ff.; Neatby 50-62, 129, 138, 146, 147, 176, 221, 222, 303, 304, 325.

Rawstorne Street assembly became the nucleus of Darby's metropolitan system of administration. Wigram had a considerable fortune and was another of the aristocratic leaders in the Brethren movement from the beginning.

114. Groves protested in 1836 that Darby emphasized witnessing *against* error—and thus was sectarian—rather than witnessing *for* truth—which is the evangelical position. See Rowdon 292, 276ff.; Neatby 62, 146, 147, 176, 303, 304.
115. This definition of the Church's role in God's mission is taken from D. J. Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (1980) 248. See above, n.100.

# Leonard Strong: the Motives and Experiences of Early Missionary Work in British Guiana

T. C. F. STUNT\*

Students of Brethren history have long been aware of certain facts concerning Leonard Strong (1797-1874). He served in the Navy during his youth and after a dramatic experience in the West Indies was converted. Having read for ordination, he set sail in 1826 for British Guiana where he had been appointed as Rector of St. Matthew's, Demerara. After his removal to Georgetown, on account of opposition from the slave-owning planters, Strong seceded from the Anglican Church and gave up his living (worth £800 p.a.) and began to meet with other Christians for worship on lines similar to those of the early Brethren in England. By the 1840s his work was known and supported by George Müller and other Brethren among whom Strong ministered after his return to England in the late 1840s. These facts are accurate but, interwoven with this basic framework of his life, more than one myth has developed and it is therefore worth clarifying several aspects of his career with the help of several new sources of material.<sup>1</sup>

Strong's conversion seems to have been connected with his narrow escape from drowning when he was serving in the West Indies and his shore-going boat was upset in a squall. However, the account given by Henry Pickering is ambiguous as to the exact sequence of events and we learn that 'being saved [from drowning], he left the Navy, went to Oxford, where he was converted.'<sup>2</sup> We know from the university records that he matriculated in 1823 as an undergraduate at Magdalen Hall, but the circumstances of his conversion remain a mystery except that it was in 1824.<sup>3</sup> Certainly it was while he was at Oxford that he began to think about missionary service and it is from the records of the Church Missionary Society that we can learn fairly exactly of his circumstances at this time.

In March 1824 at the Gloucestershire county meeting of the CMS, Leonard Strong proposed one of the motions.<sup>4</sup> The Rev. Robert Strong, the vicar of Painswick was also there, but we cannot tell whether this was an uncle or his father, because by March of the following year when

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Leonard Strong was offering himself for service with the CMS, his home is given as Brampton Abbots in Herefordshire where his father was vicar. It may be that the family moved in 1825 or that Robert Strong was not Leonard's father.

The dangers which attend the writer who, by conjecture, seeks to embellish his account with some 'human' interpretation, are well illustrated from subsequent entries in the CMS records. David J. Beattie whose account appears to be a rewriting of Henry Pickering's brief biography, tells us that:

With the desire to become a missionary Mr. Strong entered the Church of England and, after studying at Oxford, was ordained as curate of Ross-on-Wye, but he was unable to settle down in this quiet parish. What Leonard Strong had seen of the West Indies' urgent need of the Bible filled him with an unquenchable longing to carry the Gospel across the seas.<sup>5</sup>

The inaccuracies of this account will become apparent.

At his first interview on 11 April 1825, Strong told the CMS committee that he had been a good deal abroad in the Naval Service and that he did not think 'a warm climate would agree with him.' After two years at Oxford, he could not take his degree till February 1827. His knowledge of the classics was slight and he would prefer to go out as a married missionary. He had read the Life of Henry Martyn and was now reading that of David Brainerd. Doubtless the committee were encouraged to learn that Strong was 'a Churchman on principle', that his mind had 'been seriously impressed for two years,' and that he was 'aware of the total devotion required in a Missionary.' It appears that Strong was not too enthusiastic about his studies in which he had 'read parts of Virgil, Horace, Xenophon and Herodotus' and had 'begun to learn Hebrew.' This must have been rather heavy going for a man of twenty-eight who had joined the navy at 12½. Strong informed the committee that he was 'ready to leave Oxford immediately' and promised to 'regard the Committee's directions as the will of God.' Accordingly the committee informed Dr. Macbride, the principal of Magdalen Hall, that they were impressed with Strong who 'has offered himself to the Society for its New Zealand mission,' and asked his advice concerning Strong's prospects.<sup>6</sup>

A few days later Dr. Macbride replied recommending Strong to leave Oxford, and on 20 May the Committee accepted him on probation, telling him to go home and pursue his studies 'under the superintendence of his father with a view to his being presented to the Bishop of London as Candidate for Deacon's Orders as soon as he can get three years' testimonials.' They also informed him that they did not object to his marrying 'but he must raise no matrimonial expectations in the mind of

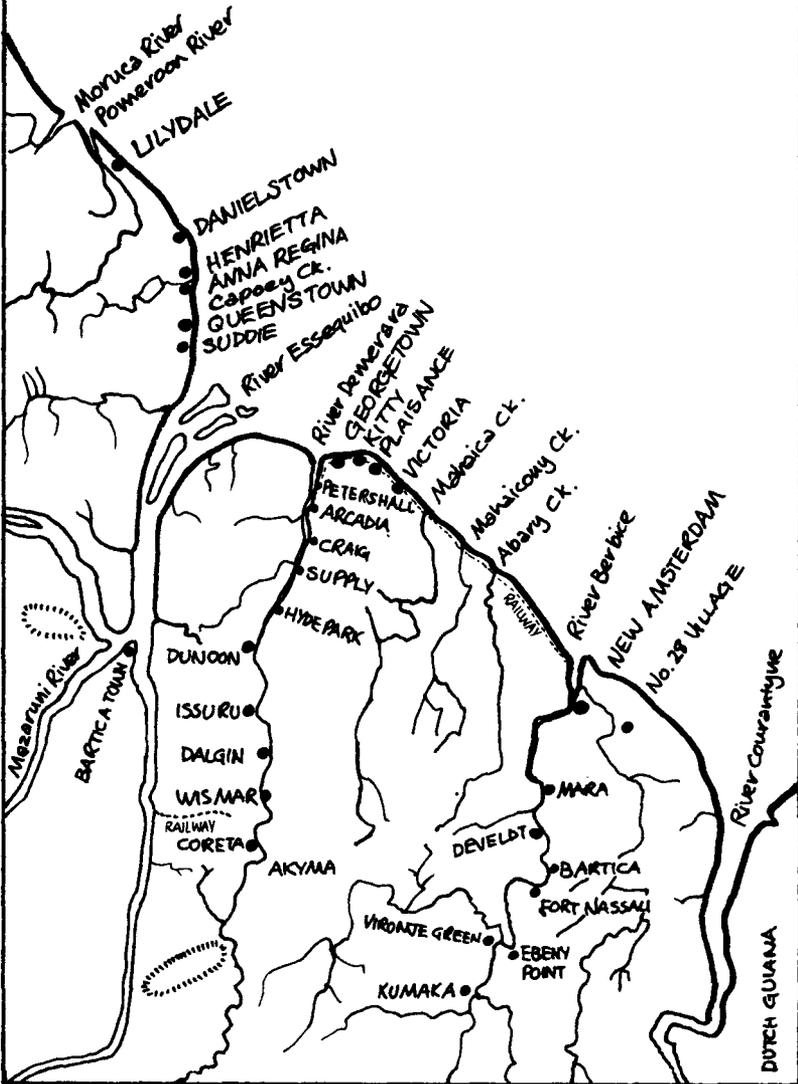
any female without previously obtaining the sanction of the Committee.<sup>7</sup>

In December, 1825, Strong was ordained a deacon but was given leave to live with his father until 21 May 1826 when he was ordained as a priest.<sup>8</sup> However, the situation was becoming more complicated because a week later the committee learnt that the father of Strong's fiancée, Mr. Reed, was strongly opposed to his going to New Zealand but that 'there is reason to suppose' that he would agree if the destination were changed to Demerara 'where Mr. Reed has considerable property'. A medical report indicated that there was no objection to his going to Demerara and a letter from Strong himself indicated that a certain Mr. Gladstone thought he could get a church built for Mr. Strong in Demerara and that 'Mr. Reed will be disposed to acquiesce in such an arrangement'. In a further interview, Strong said he was ready to co-operate in any plan 'best calculated to promote the glory of God' adding that his fiancée's father 'might possibly consent to his daughter's marriage with him in case he was appointed to a civilised country'. At this point, it was resolved that Strong should go to India or Ceylon and that Mr. Gladstone should be encouraged to persuade Mr. Reed to approve of this.<sup>9</sup>

It was only in a letter of 15 June (from Bowden Hall, probably in Ross-on-Wye although there is no official record of a curacy held here by Strong) that the missionary candidate explained the situation. His fiancée's brother was actually living in Demerara and wanted a minister to instruct his slaves. This was where Mr. Gladstone was ready to build a church, and if Strong wanted to marry Mr. Reed's daughter, this was the only place to which he could go as a missionary. The CMS bowed to the vested interests involved and resolved that if the Bishop of Barbados would license Strong, and if Gladstone would undertake to build the church, then that was where Leonard Strong would go.<sup>10</sup>

One cannot help feeling that circumstances had dictated Strong's final destination in an extraordinarily pragmatic way, especially as he had originally thought that a warm climate would not suit him and bearing in mind that Guiana has an equatorial climate with an average temperature of 79°F in cooler months. There can be little doubt that the Mr. Gladstone who promised to build Strong's church was W. E. Gladstone's father on one of whose properties in Britian Guiana a rebellion had been suppressed with ruthless cruelty in 1823. A scandal had arisen from the episode because a missionary with the London Missionary Society, John Smith, had died in prison while awaiting trial after his arrest for alleged complicity. John Gladstone vigorously supported the planters in the House of Commons claiming that the missionaries were troublemakers who had encouraged the rising. William Huskisson at

# BRITISH GUIANA



the Board of Trade took a similar line, saying that Smith had established an 'organised system of influence' and that it was necessary to replace the missionaries whose misguided enthusiasm had caused so much trouble, with clergy of the Church of England who would be 'more or less under the direct control of Government, kept so by the advantages which they hold, or expect to derive from it.'<sup>11</sup>

It would be inconceivable that Strong did not know all this, and it would appear that at this stage his motives were very mixed. Clearly he wanted to be engaged in missionary work, but his interest in Miss Reed seems to have taken over his judgment. This was not the only aspect in which he was deceiving himself. In a later account which is probably rather exaggerated but in which there must be some basis of truth, Strong describes his doubts at the time of his ordination:

My Christian friends were all in the Establishment. We all perceived the falseness of the Catechism and the Baptismal Service, etc., yet I thought there was no other way to get a door for preaching the gospel than by ordination in the Establishment ... I was shocked as the so-called bishop pretended to convey to me the Holy Ghost, and give ME power to remit and retain sins ...; I knew all that was wrong. nay, was a lie, but thought there was no other way of getting liberty before men to preach the blessed gospel.<sup>12</sup>

In August and September it was decided that Mr. Norton, a missionary who had been on furlough, should return to his station at Alleppic and that 'Rev. Leonard Strong do accompany Mr. Norton on his return and that the secretaries be authorized to provide their outfit and to take their passage'.<sup>13</sup> It is evident that whatever doubts the plantation owners may have had about evangelism among the slaves, these were envisaged as the objects of Strong's mission. He tells us that he and his wife went out 'burning with zeal to teach Jesus to the slaves', and when the CMS learnt that the governor of Demerara had presented him with a living in the colony, they expressed their satisfaction at the opportunity Strong now had 'for promoting the spiritual profit of the slave population'.<sup>14</sup>

In a further exchange before his departure, Strong asked the CMS committee that a Mr. Charles Carter (of Shepscombe, Gloucs.) should accompany him 'to take charge of a negro school', but their decision was to wait until they knew Carter better, and for this purpose he was enrolled as a student in the CMS college at Islington.<sup>15</sup>

It was, therefore, late in 1826 that Leonard Strong set sail for the West Indies and his first letter from abroad is dated 27 February 1827 and was sent from Nabaclis informing the committee that he had been licensed by the bishop to officiate in St. Mary's parish and that his brother-in-law was building him 'a temporary place of worship'. In a further letter of 12 March he reiterates his need for Carter's services as a schoolmaster, but

Carter only arrived in February of the following year, accompanied by John Armstrong of Manchester who was destined to work in Esse-  
quibo.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the connection with Gladstone (who regarded slavery as a providential institution to be exploited in hotter climates), Strong was evidently of a sufficiently independent frame of mind to risk the wrath of hostile planters. In January of 1828 he noted that 'there is strong prejudice against instruction of negroes on weekdays' even though there were openings for work among them.<sup>17</sup>

It is not the purpose of this paper to give an account of Strong's work in Guiana. His reports to the CMS were not very numerous because, technically, he was not serving in a missionary capacity. There were some accounts given by him particularly with reference to the work of Carter and Armstrong, and these were published in the *Missionary Register* from time to time.<sup>18</sup> Before his secession from the established church there was one incident of evident importance, to which reference must be made. Strong's original appointment was as rector of St. Mary's parish, but early in 1830 he seems to have so incensed some of the plantation owners that he was forced to change his location and become rector of St. Matthew's.<sup>18a</sup> In some published recollections he wrote: 'After nearly three years, the crafty policy of men succeeded in removing us from the district' and it was after 1830 that the Craig chapel was erected as well as several other church buildings.<sup>19</sup>

The ambiguity of his position in the Church of England was still a source of unease for Strong. Again, if his account written nearly thirty years later is reliable, his doubts were renewed when he was inducted as rector. Apparently he even then hoped that he need not express his unconditional assent but was told that if he could not he would have to go home, and that might open the door for 'an unconverted man' to take his place:

Then did my senior in the Christian faith bring before me my own father, a Christian clergyman, and a whole army of godly persons, ... as my examples, who all gave their assent and consent in words, though not in heart ... So ... I yielded, but with a bad conscience. I was installed, and I returned to my Christian wife, saying, "I am rector of this parish; I have now a field for labour in the gospel, but I am a *liar*". I could never shake this off from my conscience. We gave ourselves to the work. I never *taught the Catechism* or allowed it in the parish. I did not baptize the children of unconverted persons. I often left out parts of the Baptismal Service. I never read the whole of the burial service over the unconverted dead. Indeed, I never used the Prayer Book when I could help it.<sup>20</sup>

It is by no means clear what brought the matter to a head, but finally in 1837 Strong handed in his resignation. Previously, he seems to have had

good relations with dissenting missionaries in the area and there is a friendly reference to him made by a congregationalist missionary, John Ketley, who met him at Fort Island in October 1831, though the *Evangelical Magazine* in its inimitable way managed to misread the report and describe him as 'the Rev. Mr. Sting'.<sup>21</sup> Almost two years after Strong seceded, an account of his decision and the reasons for it was given in a pamphlet published in Exeter in 1839. From the fact that it was being sold at No. 1 Warwick Square, we gather that Strong's decision was soon known to Brethren in England, and although no copy of the tract is known to the writer, an abbreviation of it was printed in a Brethren periodical the *Inquirer*.<sup>22</sup> From the tract it would appear that his secession took place on amiable terms with everyone from the bishop and the governors of the colony to the local clergy, though he had to give up the Craig chapel which had been paid for partly out of his own pocket. It also emerges that in the years previous to his secession Strong had suffered severe illness and had lost at least one of his children 'by the country fever'. It is not clear why there was such a long delay between the resignation and the publication of the tract in England. It might have been surmised that it was only in this period that Strong became acquainted with Brethren attitudes with which his tract is full, except that the *Inquirer* is explicit that the pamphlet was published 'on the day of his resignation'.

Strong's objections to the establishment will all be familiar to anyone who has read Brethren literature of the 1830s. A national church cannot be the Church of Christ, printed prayers are unscriptural, the Prayer Book and the Catechism teach baptismal regeneration, the priesthood is not warranted by the New Testament, and there is no scope for communion with each other in the Lord's Supper as administered by the Church of England. Such complaints could indicate that Strong had merely become a nonconformist, but he moves on to more characteristically 'Brethren' ground when he claims that in resigning his position 'I leave *nothing* of her [ie the Church of England] *but* that which is *the world*'. He makes no suggestion that he will be associated with any other denomination, and the editor of the *Inquirer* stresses that 'Mr. Strong's purpose is to hold himself quite aloof from the various sects of dissenters'. In Strong's own words, which are very familiar in Brethren literature, 'Open communion [is] with *all who love Jesus* ... O that God's children may come out everywhere, though only two or three, and meet in Christ's name!'

The discovery that Strong seceded in 1837 may be a disappointment to those who cherish the myth of his having received enlightenment 'before the first public meeting of early Brethren at Dublin', or of his secession being 'contemporary with the beginnings of the movement in

Britain'.<sup>23</sup> It seems that this error originated in a slip of the late Professor Rendle Short who wrote 1827 for 1837. The consequences of this slip have been repeated for nearly seventy years, though the writer's uncle shortly before his death discovered the correct date independently. This explains the divided voice of the editors of *Echoes of Service* who in their magnificent volume *Turning the World Upside Down*, give the right date at one stage and revert to the myth of simultaneous revelation two hundred pages later.<sup>24</sup>

The mystery as to how Strong came across Brethren principles remains, though there is a clue in the life of J. Meyer (to whom we shall refer shortly), when his biographer mentions a plantation, Tamoth Manor, on the banks of the Essequibo, owned by a Mr. Barlow 'an Englishman and an adherent of the religious principles of the Plymouth Brethren'. John Barlow was an agent for the Bristol merchants, Davies and Co., and it is not inconceivable that Strong met him when moving up the Essequibo in May 1835. This, coupled with dissension between some of his fellow-workers, culminating in the resignation of his catechist, John Armstrong, in 1836, may have finally pushed Strong into secession.<sup>25</sup>

Shortly after his decision, it became apparent that any fears he had entertained about a possible diminution in his usefulness, were unfounded. The negroes particularly appreciated his ministry and with the final emancipation of the slaves in British territory, which took place on 1 August 1838, Strong probably found his own freedom of action increased. Meanwhile, Strong's contact with the Brethren in England had provided him with some reinforcements.

A practice that had become common in the 1820s and '30s was for Swiss missionary-students from the Basel Mission house to come to London to learn English and to study other subjects in the missionary institute of the CMS in Islington. Johannes Meyer (born in 1814) was sent to Islington after some years spent in the Basel Mission house, and arrived in September 1838.<sup>26</sup> The ecclesiastical climate at Islington was very different from what he was accustomed to, and as time went on he found the attitudes of his superiors in the institute overbearing and narrow-minded, while the liturgy of the Prayer Book was hardly to his liking.<sup>27</sup> Early in 1839 he broke off his connection with the institute but did not immediately go back to Switzerland. By chance, he came across a Brethren assembly in London and soon heard of an opportunity to fulfill his missionary vocation without submitting to Anglican regulations. A letter from Strong was read out one evening giving information of the work in British Guiana, and Meyer decided to take up the challenge. After a quick visit to his home town of Zofingen in the course of which he married a friend from his childhood days, Susanne Senn, he set sail

for South America and landed at Georgetown on 1 January 1840 after a journey of 53 days.

Such was the background of the 'rugged, independent type' whose evangelism first on the banks of the Demerara and later among the Indians inland at Kumaka, is briefly described by Dr. Rowdon in his history of the early Brethren, and more fully told in *Turning the World Upside Down* by the editors of *Echoes of Service*.<sup>28</sup> To complete the picture of the earliest work associated with Leonard Strong mention should be made of two others who were active in this field. One was a Mr. Aveline who arrived soon after Meyer. He appears to have been a businessman who brought gifts, sometimes, from George Müller in Bristol. Curiously there is no information available concerning the Mr. and Mrs. Barrington of Bristol who sailed with Strong back to Demerara after his furlough in 1843. Likewise we are ignorant of 'brother Mordal' except for the fact that he was a faithful worker in Müller's assembly and that he resolved to go to Demerara on the day that the Barrington's left, set out eleven months later in July 1844 and died in January 1845.<sup>29</sup>

The last of the early Brethren to come to Demerara was Thomas Tweedy who had seceded from the Church of Ireland in the early 1830s soon after his graduation from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1833. As a roving evangelist in Ireland he had decided that missionary work was his vocation, but partly on account of ill health and perhaps also because of discouragement from his family he remained in Ireland for some years. It was only in 1842 that he set out for Demerara where he arrived after 'a fine passage' of only 33 days. How effective was Tweedy's work as a missionary is hard to say, as his health was, at the best of times, fragile and the only account we have of his life is written by one who was not particularly interested in the spiritual side of his work. He married a local coloured lady, Elizabeth Thomas by whom he had two children. Henry died when still young, while Elizabeth became the caretaker of the chapel in Georgetown.<sup>30</sup>

It is thus apparent that Strong's identification with the Brethren in Britain was the means whereby a fair number of other missionaries were directed to British Guiana. Although there was no publication equivalent to the *Missionary Reporter*, or the *Missionary Echo* (precursors of *Echoes of Service*) there were evidently means whereby information of this sort did circulate among Brethren, otherwise the arrival of Meyer, Aveline, Tweedy, the Barringtons and Mordal in Demerara, all in the space of less than five years, would be an extraordinary coincidence. Any further information about John Barlow or Mr. Aveline who seem to have been important links in a Bristol-Georgetown axis, would be most valuable. It is particularly curious, and a point worthy of reflec-

tion, that the whole story of Brethren missionary work in British Guiana would probably have been very different if Leonard Strong had been more punctilious about his ordination vows, and if his father-in-law had been less particular about where his daughter would live when married.

## NOTES

1. The basic account is summarized in H. H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren 1825-1850* (1967), 185-186.
2. H. Pickering, *Chief Men among the Brethren* (1931<sup>2</sup>) 22. It is possible that a connexion between his escape from drowning and his conversion was assumed from the use Strong made in evangelism of a similar incident in 1852 when the H.M.S. Amazon was destroyed. See Leonard Strong, *The Burning Amazon and the Life-Boat*, London [1852]. A copy is preserved in the Guicciardini Collection, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence, No. 14-11-18. xxvi.
3. L. Strong, *A Personal Testimony to the Truthfulness of C. H. Spurgeon's witness concerning the evangelical clergy and the errors of the Prayer Book* (1864) 5.
4. CMS Minutes Book vii. 21. The books are in the CMS Archives, Waterloo Road, London SE1.
5. D. J. Beattie, *Brethren: the Story of a great Recovery*, (1940), 66. A similar account (signed J.M.B.) which probably appeared originally in the *Witness*, was published in Henry W. Case, *On Sea and Land, being an account of experiences in the visitation of assemblies of Christians in the W. Indies and British Guiana ...* (1910) 52-55.
6. CMS Minutes vii. 471-472.
7. *Ibid.* vii. 517-18. But he was visiting Oxford again in December, a week before his ordination as a Deacon. The Vice-Principal of St. Edmund Hall describes him in his Diary (14 Dec. 1825) as 'Mr Strong who is to be ordained next Sunday to proceed to New Zealand.' 'Diary of John Hill' St. Edmund Hall MSS 67/5 p.90 in the Bodleian Library Oxford.
8. *Ibid.* viii. 172, 349.
9. *Ibid.* viii. 331.
10. *Ibid.* viii. 361-362.
11. S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography 1764-1851* (1971) 189.
12. L. Strong, *Personal Testimony* 5.
13. CMS Minutes viii. 428, 450.
14. L. Strong, *Personal Testimony* 6; CMS Minutes viii. 483.
15. CMS Minutes viii. 497-498, 507; [D. T. Barry (ed.)] *Church Missionary Society: Register of Missionaries and Native Clergy* [1895, 1904] 25.
16. CMS Minutes ix. 133; *Missionary Register* (Feb. 1828) 140; *Church Missionary Society Register* 25.
17. CMS Minutes ix. 500.
18. *Missionary Register* (July 1831) 334-335; (Sept. 1836) 433-436.
- 18a. St. Mary's Parish appears to have been near to Victoria on the coast, east of Georgetown. St. Matthew's parish was a few miles inland at Peters Hall on the east bank of the River Demerara. See Case, *op. cit.* 53. There is a good, detailed map opposite p.38.
19. L. Strong, *Gospel Reminiscences in the West Indies: The Triumph of Grace* (n.d.) 13.
20. L. Strong, *Personal Testimony* 6-7.
21. *Evangelical Magazine*, NS. x (1832) 122.

22. *The Inquirer* ii (1839) 282-287. The original pamphlet was entitled 'A Letter to all the Brethren in Christ'. Any information as to the whereabouts of a copy would be appreciated.
23. D. J. Beattie, *op. cit.*, 65; F. R. Coad, *History of the Brethren Movement* (1968) 197.
24. W. T. Stunt *et al.* *Turning the World Upside Down: a Century of Missionary Endeavour* (1972) 25, 242. The myth has been further perpetuated in F. A. Tatford, *Dawn Over Latin America* (1983) 269ff. Rendle Short's account in *Principles of Open Brethren* (1913) 96 is imprecise but not inaccurate, whereas his *A Modern Experiment in Apostolic Missions* (1919) develops the myth of simultaneous revelation (43).
25. *Evangelisches Missions-magazin* (1859) 348; W. T. Stunt, 'History of Assembly Work in British Guiana' *Echoes Quarterly Review* viii (1956) 16; J. H. Bernau, *Missionary Labours in British Guiana* (1847) 81. Elsewhere Barlow was described as 'manager and planting attorney' of Messrs. Thomas Daniel, of Berkeley Square, Bristol, who had large interests in the West Indies, and he is said to have been living 'at Queenstown, Danieltown — on the next sugar estate to Queens-town (Phil Taymouth Manor)'. No date is given for his arrival. Case, *op. cit.* 94.
26. The details of Meyer's career can be followed by students of German only.\* Originally the story was told by A. Ostertag 'Johannes Meyer' in *Evangelisches Missions-magazin* (1858) 429-459, 521-552; (1859) 345-377, 425-450, 546-576. There is a portrait of Meyer, on page 520. Subsequent reworkings of this account are in P. Geysler, *Mit Eisernem Willen* (1905, 1923, 1927) and Hans Scheurer, *Mit Eisernem Willen*, (1940). See also Case, 110-18, where we learn that Meyer thought that a compass or watch was 'Babylonish' and refused to use them when travelling ... with dire consequences.
27. A similar episode had occurred a year or two earlier when Gottlob Schreiner, another Basel missionary student, had found the Islington rules 'unworthy of the Christian liberty and of the English character,' R. First, A. Scott, *Olive Schreiner, A Biography* (1980), 31.
28. H. H. Rowdon, *op. cit.* 186; *Turning the World Upside Down*, 243-244. Fulllest details can be found in Ostertag's account and in L. Strong, *A Brief and Simple Record of the Lord's Gracious Work among the Indians of British Guiana, by his servant John Meyer during four Years and a half* (n.d.). This work is cited by Rowdon but I have not seen it. Inexplicably there is no mention of Meyer in E. A. Chapman, *A History of the Brethren in British Guiana* (n.d.).
29. *A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller written by Himself*, First Part (1881<sup>8</sup>) 517. Further information (but not much) on these figures is available in Case, *op. cit.* 94-96.
30. Owen Tweedy, *The Dublin Tweedys: the story of an Irish Family 1650-1882* (1956) 9-11. A pamphlet of Tweedy's is preserved in the Guicciardini Collection in Florence. *On the Dealings of God with the Leprous Man, Leviticus xiii-xiv*. Signed T. T. T[weedy] Demerara, n.d. Only known copy in Guicciardini Collection, No. 14-7-8 ter. xiv. Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence.

\*I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Paul Jenkins, Archivist of the Basel Mission, for the great assistance he has given me in this and many other inquiries, and for the clues he gave me on Meyer. My knowledge of German is insufficient for me to have made use of the letters of Meyer which are in the Basel Archives; one of them is dated 31 March 1840 and addressed to Abraham Meyer. It is written in German but signed 'John Meyer with Missionary Strong at Petershall in Demerara, South America—by the care of Mr. Wigram, 23, Myddelton Square, Islington London'. Presumably the letter was sent with one of Strong's letters to Wigram who was to forward it to Switzerland.

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