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Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

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THE FETTER LANE SOCIETY, 1738

ON 24th May 1988 the Methodist Church celebrates the 250th anniversary of John Wesley's "conversion", from which it can trace its history. This article marks the 250th anniversary of a separate, though linked, event, which was to be of great importance for the history of the Church: on 1st May 1738 the Fetter Lane Society was founded.¹

Four years later this society was to give birth to the first congregation of the Moravian Church in England. From it, more directly than from the Oxford Holy Club, the Methodist societies and the church which they became claim descent. During that *annus mirabilis*, 1739, the Fetter Lane Society was the hub of the Evangelical Revival in England.

Despite its importance, the brief history of this society has never been considered in its own right. Always it has been viewed either as a prelude to the history of the Moravian Church in Britain, or, more commonly, as part of the story of John Wesley, regarded from a Methodist standpoint, and largely examined through Methodist sources. Wesley's own role has often been exaggerated. This article seeks to examine the beginning of the Fetter Lane Society for its own sake and more objectively, making use of all the surviving evidence.²

Moravians in England, 1728-37

The context of the Fetter Lane Society's foundation was a visit to England by Peter Böhler, Wenzel Neißer, Georg Schullius and Abraham Richter, four members of the Moravian Church, from February to May 1738, but this was by no means the first contact between the Moravian Church and England.

During the decade since 1727, Moravians had visited England at least four times. In that year Herrnhut, the settlement begun by protestant

¹ In the text days are given old style, but years are counted as beginning on 1st January.

² For a note on sources and a key to abbreviations and locations, see Appendix.

exiles from Moravia on Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf's estate in Saxony, was formed into a religious community which was seen as reviving the traditions of the mediaeval Czech *Unitas Fratrum*. The church into which this community grew is known in English as the Moravian Church.

In coming to England, the Moravians' purpose had never been to win either converts for Christianity or new members for their Church. The delegation of three which visited London in 1728 sought only to establish fellowship with those who were already children of God: they wanted to tell those "who have the open eyes of faith" what God had done in Herrnhut.³

Negotiation for the establishment of a Moravian settlement in Georgia was Spangenberg's sole concern when he visited London in 1734-5; the two parties of settlers came through England simply because it was from England that the ships for Georgia sailed. Again in 1737, when Zinzendorf himself visited England, negotiation with the Georgia Trustees was one of his two motives; the other was to seek the view of the Church of England about his proposed consecration as a bishop of the *Unitas Fratrum*. Unlike those who had come before, Zinzendorf did preach in London, but only to some Germans who attended his household worship, ten of whom he formed into an independent society.⁴ At the close of these first ten years no Moravian had preached to Englishmen, and there was still no member of the Moravian Church in England.

1738: The Purpose of the Visit

When Böhler, Schuliuss, Neißer and Richter arrived in London on 7th February 1738, their purpose was an extension of that of previous visits, but no different in kind. The visit opened a new chapter, however,

³. R13.A1.2: Zinzendorf *et al.* to S.P.C.K., 1728. C. W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist* (London, 1957), p.35, was surely wrong to interpret this phrase as meaning that their visit "had something of a missionary character". A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1962), p.120, notes, "they were not evangelists in the strict sense"—even this perhaps does not go far enough. E. Beyreuther, *Zinzendorf und die sich allhier beisammen finden* (Marburg, 1959), pp.244-8, by dealing together with the journeys of these messengers and those of revivalists and evangelists, which took place at the same time, fails to distinguish clearly between them. His concluding comment on the English visit: "Doch war der erste Anfang in England gemacht, und Töltzschig selbst fand später sein Arbeitsfeld in England und Irland" (p.248)[yet the first beginning had been made in England, and Töltzschig himself later found his field of work in England and Ireland], wrongly implies a missionary nature in this first visit and a connection between it and the subsequent work of the Moravians in England.

⁴. The Lutheran court chaplain Ziegenhagen declined Zinzendorf's offers to preach in the German Chapel Royal: R13.A18.12,13: F. M. Ziegenhagen to Z, 6, 8 Feb. 1737. J. M. Greber's statement, *Abraham and David Roentgen: Möbel für Europa* (Starnberg, 1980), p.22, that he preached in the *Hamburger Kirche* rests on a misreading of L. Röntgen, *Das Erste Buch meines Lebens* (Rotterdam, 1845), p.10. The Society was not formed "as a result of visits in 1728 and 1735" and did not make "contact with the Church of England societies especially the one in Fetter Lane"—which did not exist at this time—(pace E. G. Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688-1791* (Oxford, 1986), p.336).

because it led to the founding of the Fetter Lane Society, whose *Rules* were agreed "by the advice of Peter Böhler", a Moravian.⁵ Although the society was not formally a Moravian one, I shall argue that from the first it was intended by all participants to follow the Moravian way. It also marked the beginning of a new stage, since from that time there was a permanent Moravian presence in England.⁶ Nevertheless, neither of these eventualities could be foreseen in February 1738, and they were certainly not intended.

The four Moravians came for differing reasons, but none of these involved the founding of a society for Englishmen in London. The previous year, a group of Georgia Trustees and Associates of Dr. Bray⁷ had invited Zinzendorf to supply two catechists to instruct the negroes of the settlement of Puryburg in Christianity: Böhler and Schullius were to undertake this commission, and Neißer was to accompany them and visit the Moravians in Georgia.⁸ Richter, a forty-nine year old former merchant from Stralsund, was to visit the remnant of the German society founded by Zinzendorf.

In addition to these tasks, Böhler, a twenty-five year old theology graduate of Jena, was to make contact with the students of Oxford. Later in life, he wrote that he had been commissioned to visit the students "and preach the Saviour to them",⁹ but at the time, Zinzendorf may well have had more in mind the establishment of fellowship and communication with other Christians envisaged in 1728, when the Long Vacation had prevented the three delegates from delivering the letter to the University of Oxford which Zinzendorf had entrusted to them.¹⁰ In any event, this was to be a brief visit undertaken while awaiting the departure for Georgia.

The German Society

The work of taking in hand the German Society was begun immediately: the day after he arrived, Neißer went to look for its members. Of the original ten, he found that only six still met together.¹¹ This was intended to be a society following the Moravian pattern, and it will be worth examining it in some detail, in order to identify those

⁵. These exist in two versions (R13.A19.2): a manuscript ('A'), and a printed copy ('B'), also printed in D. Benhan, *Memoirs of James Hutton* (London, 1856), pp.29-33. Both are reprinted in W. M. Trousdale, "The Moravian Society, Fetter Lane—London". *Proceedings* xvii, pp.29-35. A has 30. B 33 rules.

⁶. G. A. Wauer, *Die Anfänge der Bruderkirche in England* (Leipzig, 1900) p.116, incorrectly spoke of a gap of 15 months in 1738 and 1739.

⁷. "Dr. Bray's Associates for founding clerical libraries and supporting negro schools", founded, like the more famous S.P.C.K. and S.P.G., by Dr. Thomas Bray (1656-1730).

⁸. In fact he received on 25th April a letter calling him back to Germany. *BD*: 6 May.

⁹. *M*: P. Böhler, *Mitteilungen aus der Brüder-Gemeine*, (1931), v, 156.

¹⁰. R13.A1.3: Z to Oxford University, 1728; R13.A1.10: Ziegenhagen to Z, 31st July, 1728.

¹¹. *ND*: 19th February.

distinctive features which one might expect to find in a society organised by Moravians.

Firstly, it was a precondition of membership that would-be members accept the fundamental Moravian approach to the Christian life. Although it had been founded by Zinzendorf, that was not yet the case with this society. Neißer noted, "They are all still under the Law, and want to become good and lovely, before they come to the Saviour."¹² The Moravians held that God accepts people as they are: that is, as sinners. One should not struggle to achieve holiness through one's own efforts (that would be both unnecessary and impossible), but "become a sinner", that is, accept one's sinfulness, simply believe, and await the salvation which is the gift of God's grace and cannot be earned by works or merit. During the first few days, the society members found this teaching difficult to accept, but soon they began to come round.¹³

Once the basic approach had been accepted, the second step was to organise the members into bands. These groups were a distinctive feature of the Moravian Church, having begun to be formed in Herrnhut in 1727, and usually consisted of between three and eight people.¹⁴ Their chief purpose was neither revival nor fellowship, but in them lay members of the community trained each other up in faith and morals.¹⁵ They were marked by total frankness on the part both of the member describing the state of his soul, and of his fellow members in their criticism of him. Thus they had something of the function of the confessional—(Spangenberg saw them as promoting the private absolution advocated by the Augsburg Confession¹⁶)—and anticipated to a degree modern forms of "group therapy".¹⁷

By 10th March the society had been organised into a band, with general meetings held twice a week. Two weeks later, daily meetings were being held: band meetings on three evenings and prayer meetings on the others. The meeting on Easter Sunday, 2nd April, was attended by thirty people.¹⁸ That afternoon a lovefeast was held for the band members. Such fellowship meals were a third distinctive feature of the Moravian Church, having also begun to be held in Herrnhut in 1727, and were a revival of the primitive *agape*.¹⁹

¹² *ibid*

¹³ *ND*: 23rd, 24th February.

¹⁴ H.-C. Hahn, "Lebensordnung und Gemeinschaftsbildung in Alt-Herrnhut" in H.-C. Hahn and H. Reichel (eds.), *Zinzendorf und die Herrnhuter Brüder* (Hamburg, 1977), pp.68ff.

¹⁵ G. Schmidt, "Die Banden oder Gesellschaften im alten Herrnhut", *Zeitschrift für Brüdergeschichte*, iii (1909), 153.

¹⁶ quoted by H.—C. Hahn, "Die Banden Alt-Herrnhuts", *Civitas Praesens*, xviii (1966), 11.

¹⁷ See D. L. Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* (Nashville, 1985), pp.127-133, 148f.

¹⁸ *ND*: 21st Mar. *BD*: 6th, 13th Apr.

¹⁹ A. G. Spangenberg, *Zinzendorf* (Barby, 1773-5), iii, 446. J. T. Müller, "Die Singstunde der Brüdergemeine", *Monatsschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst*, viii (1903), pp.197f. argued cogently that the lovefeasts were not intentionally a revival of primitive practice.

Because its membership had grown to fourteen, it was now necessary to divide the band into two, and this was done according to sex, age and marital status. Such division was a fourth distinguishing feature of the Moravian Church ; it enabled pastoral care to be directed to the particular needs of each group and allowed members to share their concerns with others in similar situations. As yet, all the members were men, but they were formed into one band of ten young single men, and one of four married men.

After negotiations and arrangement for their Georgia undertaking, the daily meetings of this German society were the main commitment of the four Moravians, none of whom could speak English.

John Wesley

As we have seen, Böhler had an additional commission : to visit the students of Oxford. For this purpose he was to make use of John Wesley, fellow of Lincoln College. In view of Wesley's important role in the founding of the Fetter Lane Society, it will be necessary to examine the background to his willingness to help Böhler.

Wesley had first come into contact with the Moravians in October 1735, when he sailed to Georgia on the same ship as the second group of Moravian colonists. He arrived back in London just four days before Böhler and his companions reached the city.

Wesley had been impressed by the Moravians during the voyage to America, particularly by the calm faith they displayed in the face of a storm, but far more important was the degree of contact he had enjoyed with the Moravian colonists during his two years in Georgia. Much of that time he spent in the main settlement of Savannah, where the Moravians also lived ; indeed he lived in their house for most of the first year.²⁰ In Spangenberg, another Jena theology graduate, Wesley had a peer with whom he could converse in Latin, but he was also able to hold frequent long conversations with the other Moravian leaders. Perhaps more significantly, he often participated in the full round of Moravian services of singing, prayer, Bible reading and religious discourse. An ordination by Bishop David Nitschmann, originally a carpenter, which he witnessed, left a deep impression. He was moved by "the great simplicity, as well as the solemnity, of the whole"²¹ which seemed to be the very embodiment of the spirit and practice of the primitive church he so much admired. On 3rd May 1736 he began to translate Moravian hymns into English ;²² a week later John Wesley, the leading Anglican clergyman in Georgia, requested reception into full membership of the

²⁰ J. Nelson, "John Wesley and the Georgia Moravians", *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society*, xxiii (1984), 28. See also M. Schmidt, *John Wesley*, i (Eng. tr. London, 1962), p.156.

²¹ *JWJ* : 28th Feb. 1736.

²² R14.A6.D5 : Töltschig's Diary (*TD*) : 14th May 1736. cf.M. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.166, n.6.

Moravian Church.²³ The request was refused, but it indicates how favourably Wesley was disposed towards the Moravians.

The Holy Club

Wesley heard on the day of their arrival that the four Moravians were coming to London, and awaited them at the house of the German merchant Francis Wynantz, who had hosted the Moravians in 1734-5 and acted as their London agent until 1737.²⁴ He took them over to Westminster and found them lodgings close to the Rev. John Hutton's house, where he was staying.²⁵ Ten days later he and Charles escorted Böhler to Oxford.²⁶

In Wesley, the Moravians had a link to Oxford's well-known and important religious group, the Holy Club, which he had led until his departure for Georgia. Holy Club members and their contacts in London were to form one of the elements of the Fetter Lane Society, so it will be appropriate to look at them through Böhler's eyes. The approach of this high church group was diametrically opposed to that of the Moravians. Holiness was sought through acts of self-denial: those followers of the Holy Club who remained in Oxford²⁷ fasted not only on Fridays, as the Prayer Book directs, but also on Wednesdays, meeting at three to "pray their formularies", eat bread and butter and drink tea.²⁸ John Gambold, now vicar of nearby Stanton Harcourt, had "really mortified himself" and "looked just like a mystic", Böhler observed.²⁹ He disliked the fact that "they always pray out of their printed book, one prayer after another",³⁰ (the meeting also included singing and reading). On the other hand, the members of the group were aware of their sinfulness and felt a need for salvation. When they were to share a bed, Gambold "made his auricular confession"³¹ to Böhler, displaying a readiness to accept spiritual direction.

The Oxford Band

Böhler's closest contact was with three younger students: Robert

²³ TD: 21st May, 1st June 1736: cf. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p.35, n.73.

²⁴ R14.A2.49: I. Hollis to D. Nitschmann, 1st Feb. 1734/5.

R14.A2.55,57,58: F. Wynantz to Z, Mar.-Apr. 1735.

R13.A3c.29-37: Wynantz to Z, July 1735-Feb. 1737.

For Wynantz, see H. Schwartz, *The French Prophets* (London, 1980).

²⁵ JWJ: 7th Feb.; ND: 18th Feb.

²⁶ JWJ: 17th Feb.; BD: 28th Feb.

²⁷ Wesley reported, "On my return to Oxon this month I found not one of those who had formerly joined with me, and only three gentlemen who trod in their steps": *Letters*, i, p.533: JW to Lady Cox, 7th Mar. 1737/8. Böhler, however, records meetings of the Holy Club type as well as of a group of common people, to whom a student read something edifying each day: BD: 8th Mar.

²⁸ BD: 7th, 12th Mar.

²⁹ BD: 6th Mar.

³⁰ BD: 2nd Mar.

³¹ BD: 6th Mar.

Watson and Henry Washington of Queen's College, and John Hutchings of Pembroke, all Holy Club members.³² Hutchings would have met Böhler through the Wesleys, but Watson and Washington do not seem to have been among the several students who gathered in John Wesley's rooms on his first Sunday evening back in Oxford.³³ They accosted Böhler in the Bodleian Library, after Wesley had returned to London. It was typical of the Moravians that Böhler should respond to an approach, rather than make one himself.

Watson believed that he had to partake of Holy Communion if he wanted to be converted, a Holy Club view which Böhler rejected,³⁴ but clearly he and the others accepted the Moravian understanding, because after Böhler had explained to them the "main points of fellowship" they decided to form a band, which would meet three times a week.³⁵

On 10th March Böhler arrived back in London; because the ship was not yet ready to sail, he had been able to stay in Oxford for three weeks, longer than originally planned. Ten days later he returned for a brief visit of just four days. Hutchings and Watson gave him letters for Zinzendorf, which he had pressed them to write.³⁶

The London Background

In order to understand the founding of the Fetter Lane Society fully, it will also be necessary to sketch some aspects of the religious situation in London in the later 1730s. The most active members of the Church of England at parish level were to be found in the religious societies.³⁷ In these, young tradesmen met together "to encourage each other in practical holiness".³⁸ Once a week, on Sunday or Wednesday, sometimes in the church vestry but more often in a tavern, private chamber or rented

³² see V. H. H. Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley* (London, 1961), pp.256, 258, 264.

³³ *BD*: 2nd Mar.: Wesley spent three nights in Oxford on this first visit since his return, not just "a few hours" (*Letters*, i, 533, n.7).

³⁴ *BD*: 14th Mar.

³⁵ *BD*: 9th Mar. John Wesley was not in Oxford at this time, and cannot be credited alongside Böhler with the establishment of this band, as by F. Baker, "The People called Methodists: 3. Polity", R. Davies and E. G. Rupp (eds.), *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, i (London, 1965), pp.219f.

³⁶ *BD*: 4th Apr.; R13.A18.8: Hutchings to Z, 12th Mar. 1737 (O.S.); R13.A18.9: Washington to Z, 23rd Mar. 1737/8.

³⁷ For the religious societies, see J. Woodward, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in the City of London* (5th ed., London, 1724); *Orders belonging to a Religious Society* (London, 1724); S. Wesley, *A Letter Concerning the Religious Societies* (London, 1724); G. V. Portus, *Caritas Anglicana* (London, 1912); J. S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies* (London, 1921); F. W. B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies, 1520-1799* (St. Leonard's-on-Sea, 1963); D. Pike, "The Religious Societies, 1678-1738", *Proceedings*, xxxv, pp.15-20; 32-38; J. D. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival", in G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh (eds.), *Essays in Modern English Church History* (London, 1966), pp.144-6; D. L. Watson, *op.cit.* n.17, pp.68-74; J. D. Walsh, "Religious Societies: Methodist an Evangelical, 1738-1800" in *Studies in Church History*, xxiii (Oxford, 1986), pp.279-302; H.D. Rack, "Religious Societies and the Origins of Methodism", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxxviii (1987), pp.482-595.

³⁸ Woodward, *op.cit.*, p.112.

room,³⁹ they used a liturgy of prayers taken or adapted from the Prayer Book, read from works of “practical divinity” and might sing a psalm.

After an annual meeting to elect a steward and a treasurer, there would be a dinner, the proceeds of which were distributed to the poor.

At this time, the religious societies were no longer in the limelight, but James Hutton’s description of them as spiritually dead should not be read as meaning that they had ceased to meet regularly or had lost their concern for holiness.⁴⁰ William Holland estimated that there were thirty or forty such societies in the City and suburbs of London,⁴¹ and there seems to have been something like an association of societies, which assembled to hear quarterly sermons.⁴²

Hutton was educated at Westminster School, from which his father, a non-juring clergyman, took in boarders. It was when visiting former school-friends in Oxford that he met Charles Wesley, who introduced him to John. Samuel Wesley lived near to the Huttons’ house in College Street, so the Wesleys visited them when they were in London, and stayed with them in October 1735, prior to their departure for Georgia.⁴³

Wesley sent his Georgia diaries to Hutton, who read them in various societies; when people responded by giving Hutton money, he formed an association for assisting the poor, which soon had between two and three hundred members.⁴⁴ A religious society was already meeting under his father’s direction in the house in Westminster,⁴⁵ but now James Hutton, awakened by the Wesleys, formed his own society, meeting on Wednesday evenings. It was separate from the old religious societies, but composed of members of them, who attended their own societies on Sundays.⁴⁶ He was also a leading member of another new society, which had a room in Nettleton Court, Aldersgate Street.⁴⁷

Soon, some former members of the Holy Club came to London. Thomas Broughton became curate of the Tower in 1736,⁴⁸ and George Whitefield took his place there for two months that summer.⁴⁹ During that time Whitefield was invited to expound the scriptures in some of the religious societies, and to preach in some of the parish churches.⁵⁰ At the beginning of December 1736 Charles Wesley returned to England

³⁹ G. V. Portus, *op.cit.*, pp.20f.

⁴⁰ *Hutton I*, p.178f.

⁴¹ *Holland*.

⁴² W. Berriman, *A Sermon Preach’d to the Religious Societies in and about London at their Quarterly Meeting, in the Parish Church of St. Mary le Bow* (London, 1739).

⁴³ *Hutton I*, p.180f.

⁴⁴ *Hutton II*, p.206.

⁴⁵ *M*: E. S. West (d. 31.12.94); W. Nash (d. 3.12.53).

⁴⁶ *Hutton I*, p.182; *II*, p.206.

⁴⁷ *M*: J. West (d. 7.8.98) in *The Messenger* (1875), p.293. D. Benham, *op.cit.* n.5, p.12, makes five distinct societies out of these three, and also puts the house in Islington (1739) in the period 1736-7.

⁴⁸ L. Tyerman, *The Oxford Methodists* (London, 1873), p.334.

⁴⁹ A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, i (London, 1970), pp.104ff.

⁵⁰ *Holland*.

and renewed his acquaintance with Hutton, and when Zinzendorf came to London the next month, he introduced Hutton to him.⁵¹

Whitefield returned to London in August 1737 to await his sailing for Georgia. He was invited to preach at the 6 a.m. communion services held by some of the religious societies, and that led to an invitation to preach the quarterly sermon of the societies in Bow Church on 28th September.⁵² Soon he became a popular preacher, and was asked to preach charity sermons: by November he was doing so twice or thrice every Sunday, and a similar number of times during the week.⁵³ Whitefield's sermons led to a growth in Hutton's society, but also made Hutton's circle more acquainted with the members of the older societies, into which Whitefield's preaching may have breathed new life.⁵⁴

On 3rd January 1738, Charles Wesley, his brother-in-law Westley Hall and John Hutchings from Oxford were with Hutton and members of his group at Gravesend to see Whitefield off on his voyage.⁵⁵ Hutton noted that "the London and Oxon Methodists come to my house and sing Psalms".⁵⁶ By now Hutton was a bookseller, living at his shop at the Bible and Sun, Little Wild Street, west of Temple Bar. There the scriptures were often expounded by John Thorold (later 8th baronet), Wesley's predecessor as fellow of Lincoln. He was a friend and patron of the Holy Club, who lived at Windsor and had a town house in St. James' Place.⁵⁷ Prayers were said for Whitefield and for Ingham, who, having returned to England in July 1737, was now beginning to preach in Yorkshire churches from his family home in Ossett.⁵⁸

There thus existed in London in February 1738 a small network of societies formed as a result of "awakening" by the Wesleys and Whitefield. These societies had contacts with the larger and older religious societies, to several of which their members belonged, and in which Whitefield's preaching had created a readiness for renewal. This newer network of societies was linked, particularly through James Hutton, with the Oxford Holy Club and its former leaders, John and Charles Wesley, who, in turn, were among the Moravians' main friends in England.

The London group was already very well disposed towards the Mora-

⁵¹ *Hutton I*, p.182.

⁵² G. Whitefield, *The Benefits of an Early Piety. A Sermon Preach'd at Bow-church, London Before the Religious Societies, At one of their Quarterly Meetings, On Wednesday 28, 1737.* (London, 1737). G. Whitefield, *The Christian's Companion* (London, 1738) includes another "sermon Preached . . . before the Religious Societies, at one of their General Quarterly Meetings, in Bow-Church, London, In the Year 1737."

⁵³ Dallimore, *op.cit.*, p.114; *Letters of George Whitefield, 1734-1742* (Edinburgh, 1976), pp.30f: 14th Nov. 1737.

⁵⁴ *Hutton I*, p.183f.

⁵⁵ *Letters*, i, 526: C. Wesley to JW, 3rd Jan.

⁵⁶ *ibid*: Hutton to JW, 3rd Jan.

⁵⁷ *Holland*. For Thorold see: W. M. Williams, *The Friends of Griffith Jones* (London, 1939).

⁵⁸ *Holland*.

vians, having read favourable descriptions of them sent by their friends in Georgia ; now Ingham and the Wesleys had returned to tell them more. On 31st December 1737 Thorold wrote to Zinzendorf.⁵⁹ This was a typical way in which those who heard about the Moravian Church made a first step towards a closer relationship, as for example John Wesley did while in Georgia, and Hutchings and Watson were to do in Oxford.

Contacts with the English

One might therefore suppose that Böhler and his companions would quickly have made themselves known to Hutton and his group, but this was by no means the case. As we have seen, they had come to negotiate with the Trustees and prepare for the journey, to make contact, through the Wesleys, with the students of Oxford, and to care for the German society in London. Work among Englishmen in London was no part of their plan, and none of them could speak English.

The following narrative will show that the Moravian visitors at first displayed no desire to become involved with the London group, that it was not until almost the end of the visit that Böhler was persuaded to take an interest, and that the decision to form a band was taken only a week before the event.

Böhler's first recorded meeting with Hutton was on 1st March, when he arrived in Oxford with letters from Böhler's companions.⁶⁰ After Böhler's return to London ten days later they met several times, but his commitment to the German society made him decline an invitation to the Sunday evening religious society at Hutton's father's house, where eighty people were expected.⁶¹ That week Böhler took Thorold Zinzendorf's reply to his letter,⁶² and on the following Wednesday he was at Hutton's house when his society gathered, and so met some of the members.⁶³ Having visited some of them in their homes, on Friday Böhler attended a full meeting of the group, at which twenty people were present ; he noted that they regarded Thorold "as a teacher". The Moravian was invited to speak, which he did. Thus, five and a half weeks after their arrival in London, one of the Moravians had spoken to a group of Englishmen there.⁶⁴

Further visits to individuals followed,⁶⁵ yet work with the English was by no means a priority. Although it was unclear how long they still had in London, Neißer and Böhler left three days later for a second visit to Oxford,⁶⁶ rather than arranging further opportunities to speak to the group as a whole.

^{59.} R13.A3.12.

^{60.} *BD* : 12th Mar.

^{61.} *BD* : 23rd Mar.

^{62.} *ND* : 21st Mar. ; *BD* : 24th Mar.

^{63.} *BD* : 26th Mar.

^{64.} *BD* : 28th Mar.

^{65.} *ND* : 29th Mar. ; *BD* : 30th Mar.

^{66.} *BD* : 31st Mar.

The two Moravians returned to London on 25th March, but it was not until a week later, on Easter Eve, that Böhler and Schullius went to visit Thorold.⁶⁷ Before the Moravians had come to London in February, the Hutton-Thorold group had begun a "prayer watch" in imitation of the Moravians, each member taking an hour of the day.⁶⁸ When Böhler told the group about the watch kept in Herrnhut through the night from Easter Eve to Easter Day, they planned to imitate this too. The Moravians were invited to join them, but Böhler declined, complaining that the English were keen to imitate the Moravians, but only in externals, not in matters of faith.⁶⁹

During that week an event of importance had taken place. Richard Viney, a tailor who could speak German, had been attending the meetings of the German society. On 28th March he had "come to grace". A Swedish member of the group, Örström, employed a journeyman named John Holmes, who was in turmoil about the state of his soul: he was visited, and on Easter Day he also "received grace". These were the first English people to identify completely with the Moravian Church.⁷⁰

Although the Moravians had learned on 28th March that they could stay in London and join their ship in Portsmouth, it was only on the Wednesday of the following week that Böhler went to visit John Bray, one of the members of Hutton's group. As it was a Wednesday, Broughton and other members began to arrive for the evening meeting. Böhler was invited to stay, but again declined, because of his commitment to the German single brethren's band.⁷¹

The next day Böhler went to see Hutton, but chiefly to enlist his help in purchasing provisions. Underway, he was taken to see one of the brethren. Soon others began to arrive and there was an *ad hoc* meeting, Böhler speaking. The following Wednesday, Hutton accompanied Böhler to a society (probably a new band) which Viney held every evening at nine; Holmes' brother was also present. On the Friday all four Moravians visited a Quaker meeting, having been invited by some Quakers with whom they had been in frequent contact.⁷²

That evening, Böhler went to a society meeting, where Thorold prayed and he spoke. It was at this point, nine and a half weeks after the Moravians' arrival in London, that Böhler began to take a serious interest in the Hutton-Thorold group. The events which immediately led to the founding of the Fetter Lane society took place in the following fortnight, in the "extra time" gained by the unexpectedly late departure of the ship and the possibility of joining it in Portsmouth. The contacts which now developed were unsought by Böhler: the pressure came

67. *BD*: 12th Apr.

68. *BD*: 16th Mar.; R13.A17.22: B. Ingham to J. Thorold, 28 Apr.

69. *BD*: 12th Apr.

70. *BD*: 8th, 9th, 13th Apr.

71. *BD*: 8th, 16th Apr.

72. *BD*: 17th, 23rd, 25th Apr.

from the English, although he was happy to respond. He wrote in his memoir,

At the beginning of April . . . we returned to London. Then the movement among the English grew and grew. They invited me here and there, and wherever I went, soon a little group of eager souls gathered around me, who asked me again and again to tell them something of the Saviour. Indeed their passionate insistence went so far, that I allowed myself to be introduced into different societies . . . and talked there as well as I could in English.⁷³

A Decision is Made

On 19th April, Böhler spoke to one hundred people in a religious society, having been invited two weeks before ; by request he addressed seventy in another society the following Monday ; the next Sunday he spoke in a third.⁷⁴ Each day, Böhler visited members of the Hutton-Thorold group and of Viney's circle. Sometimes he addressed formal meetings, sometimes impromptu gatherings in the house of Viney, Hutton and Bray.⁷⁵ When his English was inadequate, Viney translated his German or Hutton his Latin.⁷⁶

From 19th to 26th April John Wesley was in London. Böhler had spoken much with him in Oxford, and during this week they conversed on all but two days, Wesley moving towards the Moravian position.⁷⁷ Charles Wesley arrived on 28th April, but was taken ill that evening : Böhler visited him.

Not all the members of the Holy Club were drawn to the Moravians. Broughton, as we have seen, had been attending meetings of the London group, but although he was not as outraged as Charles Wesley by John Wesley's talk on 25th April of instantaneous conversion, he could not accept the sermon Wesley preached that evening in his church, St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, and decided to preach a further sermon in reply.⁷⁸

Böhler had decided on 24th April that he should attempt to form those who had come under his influence into a closer group, and establish bands. It should be noted that this decision arose out of the situation which had developed : it had been no part of the Moravians' plan.⁷⁹

⁷³ *M* : Böhler (*loc. cit.* n.9), pp.157-8.

⁷⁴ *BD* : 30th Apr., 5th, 11th May.

⁷⁵ *BD* : 1-12th May.

⁷⁶ *Hutton I*, p.185.

⁷⁷ *BD* : 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th May.

⁷⁸ *CWJ* ; *BD* : 8th May.

⁷⁹ *BD* : 5th May ; M. Schmidt's view (*op.cit.* n.20) that "(Böhler's) aim was to reproduce in Oxford a copy of the Herrnhut congregation" (p.233) and his "main concern in London, as it had been in Oxford, was to organise "bands" after the Herrnhut pattern" (p.244) cannot be accepted.

The Society is Founded

Because he was ill, Charles Wesley could play no part in the project, while John Wesley had yet to come to that full acceptance of Moravian teaching without which his participation would be pointless. It was, therefore, only by chance that John Wesley was present in Hutton's house on 1st May; he had left London five days before, but had been called back because of his brother's illness, arriving at Hutton's, where Charles was staying, only that evening.⁸⁰

Böhler had invited some of those who had come under his influence to gather at Hutton's at nine that evening. He discussed with them the principles of fellowship, and they agreed to form a band.⁸¹

The Nature of the Society

The exact nature of the Fetter Lane Society (as it was later called) has received widely differing interpretations. At this point we can now stand back and examine their accuracy. Some have seen it merely as a continuation of Hutton's previous society,⁸² but Wesley himself recorded, "This evening our little society began", while Hutton's account makes it clear that the "Fetter Lane" group was distinct from his earlier new society: some of its members had been members of the latter, and other members of his society were to join later, but it was not a continuation of it, or even a reconstitution.⁸³

Many have described the Fetter Lane Society as a Church of England society, rejecting any Moravian identity,⁸⁴ but for others it was "not at all Anglican". Martin Schmidt regarded it as a compound of elements and commented, "Curnock seems to me to claim too easily that it was a Church of England religious society."⁸⁵

⁸⁰ U. F. Damm, *Die Deutschlandreise John Wesleys* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ev.—meth. Kirche, xviii, Stuttgart, 1984), p.11, is wrong to conclude that Wesley's involvement was a natural consequence of his "close relationship" with Böhler.

⁸¹ *BD*: 12th May.

⁸² J. E. Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church* (2nd ed., London, 1909), p.293: Böhler "changed the whole character of the Society"; J. S. Simon, (*op.cit.* n.37), p.196, spoke of a "change . . . in its constitution"; E. G. Rupp, *op.cit.*, p.356: "Though this was for some time a religious Society within the Church of England, Moravian influence became increasingly important and on 1st May Peter Böhler and John Wesley revised its rules."

⁸³ *JWJ*: 1st May; *Hutton I*, p.185.

⁸⁴ G. A. Wauer, *op. cit.* n. 6, p. 93: the spirit of the society was Wesley's spirit; W. G. Addison, *The Renewed Church of the United Brethren* (London, 1932), p.86: it broadly "remained an ordinary Religious Society"; J. E. Rattenbury, *The Conversion of the Wesleys* (London, 1938), p.209, "The Society Wesley formed [sic!] on May 1st, 1738 . . . was such a Society" (an exclusively Anglican religious society); C. W. Towson, *op.cit.* n.3, p.62: the Society "was a Church of England Society". F. Baker, *op.cit.* n.35, p.217, rejects the descriptions "Moravian and Methodist", believing that it was "clearly for Anglicans only, fashioned after the pattern of the Religious Societies."

⁸⁵ G. V. Portus, *op.cit.* n.37, p.207; M. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.245, n.1.; cf. *JWJ*, i, p.458, n.2

It is true that it was not strictly a Moravian society : none of the original members had been received into the Moravian Church, and all of them described themselves as “members of the Church of England”, one of them being a priest.⁸⁶ In this sense it can be described as a society within the established church. To call it an Anglican religious society would, however, be totally inappropriate. The old religious societies had rules confining membership to Anglicans, requiring attendance at Anglican worship, and placing their administration under the direction of Anglican clergymen. The Fetter Lane Society had no such rules. As an older man, an Oxford fellow and a priest, Wesley naturally had pre-eminence, but there was no provision that an Anglican priest should be the director.

The society was in fact Moravian in foundation and in character, even if initially still Anglican in membership.⁸⁷ It was founded “by the Advice of Peter Böhler”—no mention is made of Wesley’s advice.⁸⁸ Wesley was a founding member, but only by chance, although he would doubtless soon have joined. He may have influenced the form of the rules, but their spirit was that of Böhler. Charles Wesley was ill in bed and Henry Piers miles away when the society was founded.⁸⁹

There were already numerous religious societies, and many of the initial members had already been involved in Hutton’s society, which was of a new and distinctive type. If this new society were to be merely another Anglican society, it would be unnecessary, since so many alternatives existed. The fact is that it rested on different principles from all previous societies : principles of the Moravian Church imbibed from Peter Böhler.

It is interesting that only two rules were initially agreed :

1. That they will meet together once in a Week to confess their Faults one to another, and to pray for one another that they may be healed. (This follows the text of James 5.16.)
2. That any others, of whose sincerity they are well assured, may, if they desire it, meet with them for that purpose.⁹⁰

This was a band after the Herrnhut pattern, which we have already identified as one of the marks of a Moravian society. It was foreseen from the start that growth would quickly lead to the division of the society into separate bands for youths and men, which would meet weekly, combining for a monthly meeting : when this occurred it did

⁸⁶ *Rules* : A (cf. n.5).

⁸⁷ cf. L. T. Daw, “The Moravian Society, Fetter Lane, London”, *Proceedings* xvii, p.98f.

⁸⁸ *Rules*. D. Pike, *op.cit.* n.37, pp.37f., implies a much greater role for Wesley : “the first society for which he was responsible . . . shows strong traces of (Moravian) influence.”

⁸⁹ *JWJ*, i, p.458, n.2 : “The founders were John and Charles Wesley, Piers, vicar of Bexley, and a few others”. Towlson (*loc.cit.* n.84) and H. D. Rack (*op.cit.* n.37, p.583) are among those who have followed Curnock in involving Charles Wesley and Henry Piers and relegating Böhler to the role of an adviser.

⁹⁰ *Rules*.

not, therefore, alter the character of the society, which was from the start different from that of the religious societies, which did not have a maximum size, let alone one as small as ten, and were not divided into groups.⁹¹

The idea of confession was, as we have seen, not foreign to members of the Holy Club,⁹² but a society based on the Moravian form of pastoral care, group confession, was novel. Horneck had, it is true, provided for discourse about the spiritual concerns of the members of religious societies, but only if time allowed, and only as a voluntary additional activity.⁹³ Here mutual confession, followed by prayer for forgiveness and the healing of the soul, was not just a feature, but the *raison d'être* of the society.

Wesley, as we have seen, had not been expected at Hutton's house that night. Those whom Böhler had chosen were "all people of our mind"; he was pleased to find that this could now be said of Wesley too.⁹⁴ Willingness to adopt Moravian practice was not enough: acceptance of Moravian teachings about salvation was an essential prerequisite for membership of this group—another mark of a Moravian society.

Wesley was now "a seeking, poor sinner". Some of those who banded together had already had an experience of faith, while others, such as Wesley, were "waiting for faith".⁹⁵ The rules of the old societies had required prospective members to be investigated as to their manner of life and aimed to "promote real Holiness of Heart and Life".⁹⁶ In this new society one had to be assured of the sincerity of prospective members, not of the quality of their lives. Rather than a commitment to pursue holiness, the unwritten requirement was admission to oneself that one was a sinner and could not achieve holiness by one's efforts at religious exercises.

Another mark of the Moravian society was the division into bands by sex, age and marital status, a division unparalleled in the religious societies. It was intended that the bands of this society should be formed on those principles; one would be for youths and one for men.⁹⁷ Women had not yet been admitted.

As if to confirm their dependence on Böhler, seven of the nine original members, together with eight others, wrote to Zinzendorf the next day,

⁹¹ *BD*: 12th May. Samuel Wesley's Epworth society did have a maximum size of twelve, and there was provision for new groups to be formed around two of its members who would separate from the first society, which retained priority in matters of policy. The division was not, however, effected to produce separate groups for people of different ages or marital status. *cf.* R. P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley and the Oxford Methodists, 1725-35" (Duke University Ph.D. thesis, 1972), p.20f.

⁹² *cf.* n.31.

⁹³ G. V. Portus, *op.cit.*, p.257.

⁹⁴ *BD*: 12th May.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Woodward, *op.cit.* n.37, p.111.

⁹⁷ *BD*: 12th May.

asking that Böhler be sent back to England as soon as he returned from America. Wesley's *Journal* has no entry for that date, but it is interesting that he was one of the two members who did not sign the letter.⁹⁸

The Society Grows

Having lit the touchpaper of a revival, Böhler and Schullius left for Portsmouth three days after the founding of the society.⁹⁹ During the ensuing weeks the numbers of those who found peace and assurance of faith and forgiveness, grew. On 10th May George Stonehouse, vicar of Islington, was "convinced of the truth",¹⁰⁰ a week later William Holland had an experience of release while Charles Wesley was reading aloud Luther's Preface to *Galatians*, which Holland had taken to show him.¹⁰¹ Four days later Charles Wesley himself "found rest to his soul".¹⁰²

Wednesday, 24th May was the day on which Wesley "went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street". There has been much dispute about the nature and location of this society, but the previously mentioned society in Nettleton Court¹⁰³ seems most probable, for Wesley would be most likely to visit one of the societies belonging to the Hutton-Thorold group, rather than one of the older religious societies.¹⁰⁴

Wesley was not converted to Moravianism that evening.¹⁰⁵ He had, however, already accepted the Moravian understanding of salvation, and this was the experience envisaged by that understanding. His record of the event indicates the importance of Moravian influence: he felt his heart "strangely warmed"—Zinzendorf's was a *Herzensreligion*; he trusted "in Christ, in Christ alone for salvation"—(and did not strive to achieve it by self-discipline and attendance at worship); he was given an "assurance"—he *felt* that he was justified; his sins, the burden under which the Holy Club members and their friends had laboured, had been "taken away"; he had been saved "from the *law* of sin and death": being "under the law" was precisely how the Moravians described those who did not accept their approach.

Soon Charles Wesley was to be instrumental in three other "conversions": during the first week of June John Brown, Isaac Burton and Joseph Verding had similar experiences. Meanwhile the new society had continued to meet. Böhler and Schullius had received news ten days after their departure that the society had been divided into bands as

⁹⁸ R13.A9.22: Hutton *et al.* to Z., 2nd May. *cf.* R13.A3.16: J. Thorold to Z., 18th May.

⁹⁹ *JWJ*: 4th May

¹⁰⁰ *JWJ*.

¹⁰¹ *CWJ*: 17th May; *Holland*.

¹⁰² *JWJ*: 21st May; *cf.* *CWJ*: 21st May.

¹⁰³ *cf.* n.47.

¹⁰⁴ *JWJ*: p.475, n.1. It was therefore not a Moravian society, but neither was it "one of the old religious societies of the Church of England", as suggested by D. Pike (*loc.cit.*).

¹⁰⁵ *cf.* Wauer, *op.cit.*, p.94.

planned, and this was confirmed by the addition of three rules, apparently on 29th May.¹⁰⁶ If this was done at a meeting that evening, then John Wesley was not present, since he had left for Dummer that day and was out of London until 12th June.¹⁰⁷

The Lure of the Continent

On 7th/18th May a party of twelve people arrived in Heerendyk, the Moravian community in the Netherlands. Led by Richard Viney, the first Englishman to join a Moravian band, it included, as well as his sister, wife and four children, John Holmes and his brother George, and a German, Michael Göz.¹⁰⁸ probably accompanied by his journeyman Thomas Senf.¹⁰⁹ Later that month another German, Christopher Henry Müller, returned to Germany with Neißer.¹¹⁰

In early June a further group followed.¹¹¹ Gottlob Hauptmann,¹¹² Adolph Anspach, a twenty-six year old distiller and confectioner from Berlin, and three Swedish members of the German society, Ulrich Bähren, Lorentz Gunberg and Andreas Örström with his wife Jane, were probably accompanied by a Swedish widow Helena (Stewart?).¹¹³

Watteville wrote that Viney and his companions came because "they did not believe they could progress outside the Congregation."¹¹⁴ These were not the first to go from England to the Continental congregations: John Christian Jacobi, verger of the German Lutheran Chapel Royal, had been so impressed by his meeting with the Moravian colonists who passed through London in 1735 that he had made the long journey to Herrnhut that year to see it for himself.¹¹⁵

^{106.} *Rules.* The date is not given in A.

^{107.} *JWJ.*

^{108.} R10.A.a.9.2.59: Watteville to Zinzendorf, 28th May 1738: *Rijksarchief* Utrecht, *Archiv Brüdergemeine Zeist, Prediger-Archiv* (PA) II R.8.0.1: Watteville, "Bericht vom Anfang des Werkes des Heilandes in Holland, vom Juli 1737 bis 1742".

^{109.} *Gemeentearchief* IJsselstein, *stadsbestuur voor 1811*, inv. nr. 363: lists of Moravians in Heerendyk: May-July 1738. I am indebted to P. M. Peucker, Zeist, (Utrecht University) for the sources listed in n.108-9, and for the suggestion that "Ulrich" and "Lorenz" in the original Germal society list should be treated as Christian names and identified with the two Swedes mentioned here. The twelfth member of the party was an unnamed woman (AB110.A3.C18: Viney to ?), perhaps the maid Jane Floyd who arrived in Heerendyk between May and July (list as above).

^{110.} *M*: Christopher Henry Müller (d. 26.2.51); R13.A4.26: Richter to Z, 23rd May (N.S.).

^{111.} R13.A4.33: Richter to Z, 14th June (N.S.), sent with "Örström, Ulrich, Lorens, Hauptmann, Adolph" and Baron Oxe's unnamed housekeeper (perhaps the Swedish widow "Helena Stouwert", also listed (R13.A19.1) (*loc. cit.* n. 109) as in Heerendyk by July).

^{112.} A. Dresdener who had been a member of one of the German bands in London (*BD*: 13th Apr.) and accompanied Wesley on the journey to Herrnhut (*JWJ*: 15th July).

^{113.} *loc. cit.* n.109.

^{114.} PA II R.8.0.1: *ut supra*: "sich außer der Gemeine fortzukommen nicht getrauten".

^{115.} *Missionsarchiv der Franckenschen Stiftungen*, Halle, 2G10.55: F. M. Ziegenhagen to G. A. Francke, 13th June 1735; R13.A2.59: J. C. Jacobi to D. Nitschmann, 20th Aug. 1735.

Johann Töltschig, who had led the Georgia Moravians for part of the time the Wesleys and Ingham had spent there, reached London on 26th May *en route* for Germany.¹¹⁶ Ingham decided to accompany him, and on 7th June Wesley did the same, confirming a previous intention.¹¹⁷ They boarded ship on 13th June.¹¹⁸

Wesley recorded, "We were eight in all : five English and three Germans."¹¹⁹ The former were John Brown,¹²⁰ Joseph Verding,¹²¹ and probably a fourteen year old turner's son, Christopher Massen,¹²² the latter the celebrated cabinet-maker Abraham Roentgen, who had joined the German society after hearing Böhler,¹²³ and another German, Hintz.¹²⁴

The Germans and Swedes who went to the Continent included the six loyal members of Zinzendorf's original German society, as well as several of the most important newer members, (the core, as Richter observed¹²⁵) while the English society lost potential leaders in Wesley and Viney, and others, such as Brown, who might have become key figures. Immediately after their foundation, therefore, the two societies were deprived of vital personnel.

From the outset, then, a typical response to contact with the Moravians in England was to set out for the Continental congregations : Marienborn and Herrnhag in Wetteravia, Heerendyk and Herrnhut. For some the visits would only be temporary, to familiarise themselves with Moravian practice ; others had no immediate thought of returning. Richter was not the last Moravian to attempt to dissuade English adherents from crossing the Channel.¹²⁶

This centripetal tendency was to distinguish the Moravian Church in England from Methodism, which might be described as centrifugal.

116. R14.A6c.4a : J. Töltschig to Moravian Church, 2nd June (N.S.).

117. *JWJ*. It is uncertain whether Ingham or John or Charles Wesley said during the voyage to Georgia that he intended to visit Herrnhut (M. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.148). Wesley had certainly told Böhler as early as 17th/28th Feb. 1738 of his intention. (BD).

118. *JWJ*.

119. *JWJ* : 14th June.

120. *Holland*. Brown, Wesley's other companion on the journey to Herrnhut (*JWJ* : 15th July), was not yet a Moravian (*pace* U. F. Damm, *op.cit.* n.80, p.13.).

121. *Holland*. Verding, one of those "converted" under Charles Wesley's influence, was certainly with Ingham in Marienborn in August. (AB88.14.2 : Ingham to Fetter Lane Society, 11th Aug.)

122. Also in Heerendyk by July (*loc.cit.* n.109).

123. PA II R.8.0.1 (*cf.* n.108). For Roentgen, see : H.—W. Jannasch, *Herrnhuter Miniaturen* (3rd. ed., Hamburg, 1976) pp.47-54 ; G. Philipp, "Wirtschaftsethik und Wirtschaftspraxis in der Geschichte der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine" in M. P. van Buijtenen, C. Dekker and H. Lecuwenberg (eds.), *Unitas Fratrum* (Utrecht, 1975), p.408, p.440, n.54 ; H. Huth, *Roentgen Furniture. Abraham and David Roentgen : European Cabinet-makers* (London, 1974) ; L. Röntgen, J. M. Greber, *op.cit.*, n.4.

124. Eng.MSS.1076.21 : T. Moore, "Beginnings of the Revival in Yorkshire" ; R13.A4.33, 34 : Richter to Z, 14th, 16th June (N.S.) ; PA II R.8.0.1.

125. R13.A4.35 : Richter to Z, 21st June (N.S.).

126. R13.A4.42 : Richter to Z, 18th July.

Moravian community life with its liturgical framework exerted a strong pull on many who heard of it; in time the London congregation would similarly draw members from other parts of the country, and the other English settlements in turn attract people from outlying areas to move into them. The motivation was, of course, not always solely spiritual: in Viney's case economic considerations played their part, since his master had dismissed him for being "a religious dog", and he feared the workhouse.¹²⁷

The Summer

Töltzschig had stayed only three weeks, and Richter, the only remaining Moravian, could speak no English at first. Potential English leaders such as Wesley and Viney had also gone, and John Thorold, who had played such an important part in Hutton's earlier society, spent the whole summer at his other home in Windsor.¹²⁸

Therefore, although the society had no president, James Hutton continued to be the pivotal figure. It was to him that Wesley, Ingham, Thorold and Oxford friends such as John Hutchings sent communications for the society.¹²⁹ The meetings took place in his house, under his leadership.¹³⁰ In Charles Wesley's *Journal*, however, pride of place was given to John Bray, who was not even mentioned in the *Accounts* of Hutton and William Holland, perhaps because of his later defection from the Moravians.

Charles Wesley had remained in London, but moved, while still very ill, from Hutton's shop to Bray's home in Little Britain. He had clearly fallen completely under the influence of this "poor ignorant mechanic".¹³¹ His note that "Mr. Bray is now to supply Böhler's place" led Schmidt to suppose that the brazier was "Böhler's representative in England, and after his departure, his successor", but it was in Charles Wesley's own life, more than in the society as a whole, that Bray was to have such an important place.¹³² As the clergyman, it was Wesley who spoke and acted, but his *Journal* shows how often he did so under instruction from his mentor.¹³³ On 1st September he recorded: "After prayer Mr. Bray told me, God plainly forbids my return to America, by my success here." He promptly abandoned his intention of going back.¹³⁴ Wesley's friend John Byrom was also impressed by Bray,

^{127.} *BD*: 30th Apr.

^{128.} *AB*.104.A3.11.1-12: Thorold to Hutton, 15th June-29th Oct.

^{129.} *Letters*, i, 561: JW to Hutton, 4th Aug. *AB*.88.A3.14.2: Ingham to Hutton, 11th Aug. *AB*.88.A3.13.4: Hutchings to Hutton, 23rd July.

^{130.} *Hutton I*, p.186.

^{131.} *CWJ*: 11th May.

^{132.} *ibid.*; M. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p.243, n.1.

^{133.} c.g. *CWJ*: 10th June.

^{134.} *CWJ*.

believing that “the poor brazier . . . talked more like a bishop, in one sense” than the bishop of Ely.¹³⁵

More than half of June and a further week of July were spent by Charles Wesley at Blendon Hall, near Bexley, home of the sugar merchant Thomas Delamotte, J.P.,¹³⁶ whose son had accompanied the Wesleys and Ingham to Georgia. Here he was able to add a further element to the society by winning Mrs. Delamotte, Elizabeth, Esther and William, a Cambridge undergraduate, for the new teaching, as well as the vicar, Henry Piers, and his wife.¹³⁷

Also drawn into the society were Mrs. Martha Claggett (another who had been awakened by Böhler)¹³⁸ and two of her daughters, Elizabeth and Susannah, who lived in Holborn but also had a country house in Essex. In both cases Charles Wesley was instrumental in strengthening the links between these families and the society. From the end of August he went on most days to Islington, where George Stonehouse, another former Holy Club member, had recently become vicar. In his case also, Charles Wesley cemented the relationship with the society. By the beginning of September, Charles Kinchin, another Holy Club friend, now rector of Dummer, was his “inseparable companion”.¹³⁹

Most of the prayer meetings which Wesley records during these months took place at Bray’s house, where he was staying, or at that of the Syms family.¹⁴⁰ At the latter, Wesley expounded the scriptures to two and three hundred people on Sunday evenings at the beginning of September.¹⁴¹ It would seem that the previous pattern of a number of interlinked groups had continued, many of the “meetings” being impromptu gatherings, or, perhaps, meetings of the new bands.

As we shall see, John Wesley later depicted the Fetter Lane Society as founded by him and taken from him by the Moravians from October 1739 onwards, but this interpretation, which historians have followed, needs correction. No account has been taken of Richter’s continued presence in London. Although the Moravian’s lack of English was a handicap at first, he began to learn in late July and to attend all the English society’s meetings. He was even asked to visit and examine some of the members. By the end of August, however, disagreements had caused this close involvement to cease.¹⁴²

¹³⁵ *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byron*, ed. R. Parkinson (Chetham Society, x1, 1856), p.208.

¹³⁶ A. Dallimore, *op.cit.* n.49, pp.357f. His wife’s memoir calls him Peter: *M*: E. Delamotte (d. 27.12.71).

¹³⁷ *CWJ*: 8th-14th, 16th-28th June; 4th-8th (11th), 25th-27th July.

¹³⁸ *M*: M. Claggett (d. 10.5.73).

¹³⁹ *CWJ*: 4th Sept.

¹⁴⁰ John Syms (or Sims) (23) and his brother Peter (22) were butchers. Their house in Leadenhall St. was presumably kept by their mother, as both were bachelors. *M*: J. Syms (d. 11.8.57); P. Syms (d. 26.3.87) - separate in MCH.

¹⁴¹ *CWJ*: 3rd, 10th Sept.

¹⁴² R13.A4.47, 48, 49, 51: Richter to Z, 3rd, 6th, 26th Aug., 8th Sept. (N.S.).

In the interim the original band of nine men had grown into a society of about thirty or forty, and by September the meeting was sometimes attended by a hundred men and women.¹⁴³ The members included a core of young tradesmen with a few artisans, drawn both from Hutton's previous group and from the older religious societies, but also a group of young clergymen, former Holy Club members now resident in London. Through them, wealthy mercantile and gentry families had also become involved. The ingredients had been assembled, but not yet kneaded together.

Chaos and Order

John Wesley and John Brown returned from Germany on 16th September, but this event seems at first to have plunged the fledgling society into turmoil, rather than forging unity. In a letter to Zinzendorf Wesley spoke of "misunderstandings which had arisen" during his absence, and "strifes . . . whereby the enemy had gained . . . an advantage over the little flock".¹⁴⁴ The *Journal* refers to "misrepresentations" of his sermons, so Curnock assumed that his many conversations on 22nd September were to counter these, and Frank Baker has interpreted the letter to Zinzendorf similarly, referring also to "dissensions within the various religious societies".¹⁴⁵ In fact, the problems were much more serious and much closer to home.

Richter heard on 21st September that many of those who had received grace had lost it, and now regarded it as deception. On the 22nd Wesley was having to take action; Richter himself spoke for an hour to Bray and another older man, who both said that they had had grace but lost it again. Interestingly, they based their arguments on the statements of the Herrnhut Moravians, as recorded by Wesley. At their insistence, Richter attended the society meeting held by Charles Wesley in Bray's house, but his offer to visit the six bands individually was met with silence: all were in confusion, and Bray's band had fallen apart. An uproar in the meeting a few days before had led to widespread rejection of the society's teaching, and almost to its dissolution.¹⁴⁶ Differences continued, so that almost two months later Ingham could only report that they were "now mostly over".¹⁴⁷

Nine days after Wesley's return, further rules were added to the five made in May.¹⁴⁸ Both the religious societies and Herrnhut offer precedents for such detailed statutes, but it cannot be a coincidence that these

¹⁴³ R13.A4.43, 48, 49: Richter to Z, 21st July (40), 6th Aug. (50), 26th Aug. (39) (all N.S.); *Hutton I*, p.186 (30-40); *JWJ*: 17th Sept. (32); *Letters*, i, 572: JW to Herrnhut, 14th-20th Oct. (42 at his return).

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp.573ff: JW to Z, 14th-30th Oct.

¹⁴⁵ *JWJ*: 21st, 22nd Sept; *Letters*, i, 574, n.1.

¹⁴⁶ *RD*: 3rd Oct.; R13.A4.56: Richter to Z, 11th Oct. (N.S.)

¹⁴⁷ R13.A17.25 Ingham to Töltzschig, 17th Nov.

¹⁴⁸ *Rules*.

were made so soon after Wesley's arrival. As early as July Richter had hoped for changes after his return.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the content of these rules should not be ascribed to Wesley. Most of the features of the society were purely Moravian, and it is not even clear that Wesley introduced them to England, even though his experience of some Moravian practices on the Continent may have made him welcome their adoption at home. The lovefeasts now provided for had been held by the society during his absence, doubtless suggested by one of the Moravian visitors.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, the continual intercession had been a feature of Hutton and Thorold's group before Wesley's return from Georgia.¹⁵¹ Another Moravian feature was the Prayer Day, the Moravian name for the whole day (usually a Saturday) spent once a month listening to letters from Moravian congregations and emissaries.

When these additional rules were agreed on 25th September¹⁵² a Moravian was in fact present, namely Abraham Richter. He was pleased at the "Herrnhut-style" bands and prayer day, but noted that Wesley and Hutton were "reserved and secretive" towards him.¹⁵³ Perhaps Wesley was already opposing too much assimilation to Moravian practice, and resented the presence at the conference of a Moravian to support such moves. Two days later Wesley began, but did not complete, a letter containing some severe criticisms of the Moravians;¹⁵⁴ his zeal for promoting imitation of them in the weeks immediately after his return should not be overestimated.

The society continued to grow rapidly, and by mid-October numbered fifty-six.¹⁵⁵ In the meantime, James Hutton's house had become far too small. Version A of the *Rules* includes one made on 20th September, enjoining the leaders of the bands (which met separately twice a week) confer at Bray's house on Wednesday evenings (before the plenary meeting of the society), although it was apparently at Hutton's that further rules were made five days later.¹⁵⁶ The bands were still meeting at Bray's on Sunday 15th October, but four days later, Wesley mentions "the room" for the first time.¹⁵⁷ This room, which the society had hired,

^{149.} R13.A4.48 : Richter to Z, 6th Aug. (N.S.).

^{150.} R13.A4.43 : Richter to Z, 21st July.

^{151.} *cf.* n.69.

^{152.} A.6 is dated "Tuesday Sept. 20" ; A and B date the remaining rules "Monday Sept. 26". In fact 20th Sept. was a Wednesday and 26th Sept. a Tuesday. On the latter Wesley, Hutton and others left for Windsor in the early hours, and spent the night there. Wesley does record a meeting of the bands on 25th Sept. (*JWJ*), and this is confirmed by *RD* : 6th Oct.

^{153.} *ibid.*

^{154.} *Letters*, i, 566f : JW to Moravians, 27-8 Sept.

^{155.} *Letters*, i, 572 : *ut supra*.

^{156.} *Rules* : A.6 ; *JWJ* : 25th Sept.

^{157.} *CWJ* ; *JWJ* : 19th Oct. *Hutton I*, p.186 and *Holland* merely date the hiring of the room to the period after Wesley's return.

was at the head of one of the courts in Fetter Lane,¹⁵⁸ and thus the society received its name.

Of the autumn of 1738 James Hutton wrote, "the brothers Wesley visited us from time to time".¹⁵⁹ Neither was by any means a constant presence in the society; John spent six of the twelve weeks between his return and the end of the year in Oxford, Charles three and a half there and one in Bexley. Both were still able to preach in several London churches and speak in numerous societies, and these engagements also prevented their commitment to the Fetter Lane group from being total.¹⁶⁰

On 31st October Benjamin Ingham arrived back from his five month stay on the Continent.¹⁶¹ Like Wesley's two months before, Ingham's return was soon followed by the making of further rules, which again tended to add to the Moravian features of the society. Both extant versions of the *Rules* suggest that all but the first five or six were made in September, but the correspondence between Wesley and Hutton shows that many were only established in the month after Ingham's return, when Wesley was in Oxford. It is also clear that he resisted, with only limited success, several of the proposals.

A letter of 23rd November from Hutton informed Wesley of the decisions of a general meeting of the bands.¹⁶² Hutton's appointment as "register" merely confirmed his position as the person to whom communications for the society were sent; as a bookseller he was in any case an obvious choice, since many country friends wrote to him to order books.

According to Simon, Wesley was president of the society, Hutton taking his place when he was absent, while Baker has seen him as the clerical director envisaged in the rules of the older societies, but Wesley himself denied that he had held any position of authority, describing himself as "but a single, private member of that Society."¹⁶³ Hutton's letter confirms this, reporting a decision to cast lots as to whether a president

¹⁵⁸. (E. Seymour-Cooper), *Our Oldest Chapel* (London, 1904), pp.11f., using *M*: Molther (*Gemeinnachrichten* (1873), pp.603ff. W. G. Addison (*op.cit.*, p.84) thought the society met in this room on 1st May, while M. Schmidt, *John Wesley*, ii(i) (London, 1971), p.9, believed it met from the beginning in the old dissenting chapel rented from March 1740, and that "through John Wesley's advent and leadership a nonconformist congregation was brought back into the Church of England, without having to give up its peculiar characteristics."

¹⁵⁹. *Hutton I*, p.186.

¹⁶⁰. U. F. Damm (*op.cit.*, p.23) argues that work in Fetter Lane was Wesley's chief task for the rest of the year, the society being both his "home", as Oxford had been previously, and a congregation under his leadership.

¹⁶¹. R13.A17.25; Fu.82a.2: Ingham to Töltschig, 11th Nov. This must be new style, since Ingham writes that he had gone to Richter first and not yet met any of the English group, while Wesley records a meeting with Ingham on the afternoon of 31st Oct. (*JWJ*).

¹⁶². *Letters*, i, 585ff: Hutton to JW, 23rd Nov.

¹⁶³. J. S. Simon, *op.cit.*, n.37, p.200; F. Baker, *op.cit.*, p.220; JW quoted in A. Dallimore, *op.cit.*, p.174, n.1.

should be chosen to preside over meetings for a year, and, if so, who it should be.

Broughton had advised caution in admitting new members, so it had been decided that their names should be considered by the bands. The proposals in the letter do not tally precisely with those laid down in the *Rules*, which must represent the final form.¹⁶⁴

It was to those proposals which reflected Moravian influence that Wesley particularly objected. As we have seen, women were already associated with the new society; by mid-October eight women were organised into two bands, and the number of bands soon grew to six.¹⁶⁵ The London religious societies were all-male bodies, so, although some exclusively female groups existed,¹⁶⁶ the Fetter Lane Society was original in organising groups of women and of men within one society. In the Moravian Church "choir separation" (separation of the sexes) was being emphasised ever more strongly, so it is not surprising that the plenary sessions of the new society, when men and women met together, became regarded as undesirable as Moravian influence grew. A fear of giving another cause for offence to possible opponents of the society was certainly also a motive for the rule which now provided for a separate meeting for women, which might be attended by their husbands but no other men, held in the society room for two hours before the weekly general meeting.¹⁶⁷ Wesley reluctantly accepted the change.

G. A. Wauer thought that the provision for a continual fast by three members of the society each day was a mark of Wesley's influence and reflected the Holy Club concern for fasting.¹⁶⁸ In fact the change from Wednesdays and Fridays to a continual fast served to Moravianise the practice, since the individual's fast, promoting his own holiness, became an indispensable component of the church's continuing worship, only having meaning as part of the whole. Wesley's comment is very significant in the light of later disputes :

Are we members of the Church of England? First then let us observe her laws, and then the by-laws of our own society. First secure the observance of the Friday fast. Then I will fast with you, if you please, every day in the week. Only let us except Sundays and the solemn festivals, to fast on which is contrary (to say no more) to the laws of our own Church.¹⁶⁹

The rule was nevertheless made, as was another requiring members to stand when addressing the meeting, to which he also objected.¹⁷⁰

Wesley also seems to have admitted defeat over the introduction of the Moravian office of "monitor". Two members were to be chosen by lot

¹⁶⁴ *Rules* : A.19-24 ; B.21-26.

¹⁶⁵ *Letters*, i, 572 : *ut supra* ; *ibid.*, p.591 : JW to Hutton, 26th Nov.

¹⁶⁶ e.g. one in Oxford : *BD* : 13th Mar.

¹⁶⁷ *Rules* : A17-18 (absent from B).

¹⁶⁸ G. A. Wauer, *op.cit.*, p.93.

¹⁶⁹ *Letters*, i, 595 : JW to Hutton, 1st Dec.

¹⁷⁰ *Rules* : A.29 ; B.29 ; A13 ; B.15. *Letters* ; i, 595 : *ut supra*.

for the responsibility of telling "everyone what faults are in him, concealing his informer".¹⁷¹ Initially he asked for the point to be reconsidered, arguing on one hand that band-members would no longer feel a duty to reprove their fellows, and on the other, that "a general monitor commissioned by God to reprove every one of his brethren you have, so long as you have any priest or deacon among you."¹⁷² When this failed, he agreed to let the matter rest, and confined himself to opposing the provision that the person reprov'd should not be allowed to defend himself.¹⁷³ It may be that his viewpoint won over in the end, since the monitors are not mentioned in either version of the Rules.

It was, then, only at the end of 1738 that the Rules of the Fetter Lane Society achieved the form in which they have been preserved.¹⁷⁴ The young society had not yet reached a point where its constitution could be regarded as fixed, indeed as early as 7th January 1738 Charles Wesley was "offended much at some orders which Bray, etc., were imposing on the society",¹⁷⁵ but by the end of the year the framework for its future growth had been established.

The Gathering Completed

Similarly, it was not until the end of the year that the constellation of personalities who were to be involved in the Society's life was completed. Ingham's arrival at the beginning of November has been mentioned already,¹⁷⁶ five weeks later, on 8th December, George Whitefield reached London.¹⁷⁷ Hearing the news, John and Charles Wesley hastened back to the metropolis to greet him.¹⁷⁸ On the evening of his arrival, Whitefield attended the society meeting in Fetter Lane;¹⁷⁹ although he preached in seventeen churches and expounded in numerous societies during his time in London,¹⁸⁰ the Fetter Lane Society was the fixed point to which he returned on Sunday evenings, sometimes as a leader, but usually as just another participant.¹⁸¹

John Thorold had made occasional visits to London since May, but

¹⁷¹ *Letters*, i, 586 : *ut supra*.

¹⁷² *Letters*, i, 592 : *cf.* n.165 ; *cf. ibid.*, pp.592f : JW to Hutton, 27th Nov.

¹⁷³ *Letters*, i, 595 : *ut supra*.

¹⁷⁴ The *Rules of the Band Societies* printed in J. Wesley, *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies* (5th ed., Bristol, 1747) should be dated to the end of 1739, when Wesley began a separate society in London, not "Dec.25, 1738".

¹⁷⁵ *CWJ* : 7th Jan.

¹⁷⁶ *cf.* n.161.

¹⁷⁷ *GWJ* : 8th Dec.

¹⁷⁸ *JWJ*, *CWJ* : 11th Dec.

¹⁷⁹ *GWJ* : 8th Dec.

¹⁸⁰ Dallimore, *op.cit.*, p.219. This includes a church in Oxford and St. Peter's in Bexley.

¹⁸¹ *GWJ* : 8th, 10th, 24th Dec., 1st, 5th, 7th Jan. But *GWJ* only has entries for 15 of the 33 days in London ; Whitefield was, for example, also at Fetter Lane on 23rd Dec. (*RD* : 3rd Jan.).

seems to have returned for a longer stay at this time,¹⁸² as did three other former Holy Club members, now ordained, Charles Kinchin, John Hutchings and Westley Hall. The society had, of course, continued to grow—the men's meeting on 23rd December, at which Whitefield spoke for ninety minutes and prayed for a further thirty, was several hundred strong, and gatherings of three or four hundred were not unusual.¹⁸³ Space does not permit the naming of the many who joined the society during the autumn and later played prominent parts, but an exception might be made for William Seward, a thirty-seven year old widower of gentry stock, by now a successful stockbroker,¹⁸⁴ who had been introduced to Charles Wesley on 13th November and “testified faith” five days later.¹⁸⁵ He went with Hutton, Ingham and Holland to meet Whitefield at his return,¹⁸⁶ and soon became his travelling companion and assistant.

One further ingredient has been missed. During the autumn Abraham Richter¹⁸⁷ had attended meetings of the English society from time to time, as well as exchanging visits with its leaders, but relations had at times been strained; it was Ingham's return fired with enthusiasm for the Moravians which brought about Richter's fuller integration. During the first week Ingham attended two German lovefeasts.¹⁸⁸

In response to suggestions by Böhler and his companions that Moravians should be sent to London and Oxford to look after both the German and English groups in those cities,¹⁸⁹ the Marienborn Conference had decided in June that Richter should remain for the time being, Georg Piesch and his wife joining him after an interval.¹⁹⁰ They arrived with Ingham at the beginning of November.¹⁹¹ Within two days Hutton had asked forgiveness for his behaviour hitherto. The Moravians were invited to breakfast with the English leaders at Bray's, and a unity lovefeast, attended by twelve English and twelve Germans, was held. Ingham invited the Moravians to the Fetter Lane meetings and lovefeasts, and thereafter Richter and Piesch often attended them and exchanged visits with leaders such as Ingham, Wesley, Thorold, Hutton and Bray.¹⁹²

It is significant that although conversations with both Moravians are noted in Wesley's diaries,¹⁹³ neither was mentioned in his published *Journals*. The facts about the strong and increasing Moravian influence on

¹⁸². He visited Richter on 5th/16th Sept. (R13.A4.55: Richter to Watteville, 20th Sept. (N.S.)). He wrote to Hutton from Windsor on 29th Oct. (AB104.A3.12) but was in London by 19th Dec., when he expounded at Fetter Lane. *RD*: 30th Dec.

¹⁸³. *RD*: 3rd Jan. 1739; R13.A4.61: Piesch and Richter to ?, 11th Dec.

¹⁸⁴. Dallimore, *op. cit.*, p.251.

¹⁸⁵. *CWJ*: 13th, 18th Nov.

¹⁸⁶. *Holland*.

¹⁸⁷. *cf.* p.00.

¹⁸⁸. R13.A17.25 (*cf.* n.147).

¹⁸⁹. *c.g.* *BD*: 14th Mar., 6th May; *ND*: end.

¹⁹⁰. R2.A1.3b.

¹⁹¹. R13.A17.25 (*cf.* n.161).

¹⁹². R13.A4.59,60: Richter, Piesch to ?, 14th, 25th Nov.

¹⁹³. *c.g.* *JWJ*: 6th Nov., 18th Dec.

the society since its foundation did not fit the picture he sought to create of a society founded by himself and Böhler jointly, but turned against him by Moravians who began to influence it late in 1739.¹⁹⁴ Neither Richter nor Piesch had enough English to address the English meeting, but it is clear that there were frequent contacts between the English and German groups. Richter's letters and diaries show that he was well-informed about developments at Fetter Lane, and was invited to attend and often asked for advice by individuals. A link was provided by John Paul Brockmer, a native of Hamburg, whose English wife was a member of the society.¹⁹⁵

End and Beginning

A fitting climax to this important year in the history of the Church of England was provided by the events of its last week. It began with a lovefeast at Fetter Lane on Christmas Eve, attended by Wesley, Whitefield and the two Moravians, as well as many others, which continued until four in the morning.¹⁹⁶ Such Moravian activities took place alongside others showing Holy Club concerns: Holy Communion was celebrated every day of that Christmas week. Even the prayer meetings consisted of prayers read from a book.¹⁹⁷

Then, on 1st January 1739, the society gathered for another lovefeast. Seven clergy—the Wesleys, Whitefield, Ingham, Kinchin, Hall and Hutchings—and about sixty other members were present. Curnock remarked that “not a single Moravian minister” was there, but although a break in the Moravian diary does not permit certainty, it is quite likely that the two Moravians were present as they had been the week before.¹⁹⁸ Again, the lovefeast continued through the night, and at about three in the morning, Wesley recorded, “the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground”.¹⁹⁹ This “sudden effusion of the Holy Ghost”,²⁰⁰ was comparable to the experience of the inhabitants of Herrnhut at the communion service in Berthelsdorf on 13th August 1727, from which the life of the renewed Moravian Church could be traced. Like that event, this was as much a beginning as a conclusion: it marked the beginning of a year when the Revival would overflow the confines of the Fetter Lane Society and spread into other parts of England.

194. *JWJ*: i, 430: Preface to the *Second Extract*, 29th Sept. 1740, para.8.

195. *RD*: 28th Dec.; Benham, *op.cit.* n.5, p.90.

196. *JWJ*, *GWJ*.

197. *RD*: 27th Dec. (O.S.).

198. *JWJ*: ii, 121, n.2.

199. *JWJ*: 1st Jan. 1739.

200. *Holland*.

Conclusions

That marvellous year must be treated elsewhere, since the theme of this article has been the foundation of the society, and that was now complete. It remains to draw out some of the important characteristics of the society, as revealed by this examination.

The picture which emerges is of a society mainly composed of Anglicans, but founded by a Moravian and intended to embody Moravian principles and practice. Its foundation had not been intended more than a week before it took place, and was the result of a combination of circumstances. From the outset the society displayed important Moravian features, and these were added to during the year. Although John Wesley played an important part in events, and was a leading figure in the society, his role has been exaggerated. He attended the inaugural meeting by chance, and spent five of the first eight months away from London. Although he was consulted about changes, and some of them reflected his concerns, many were made despite his opposition, or at least without his enthusiastic support. The marked development of the society in a Moravian direction which was already evident in the autumn of 1738 should not be attributed too much to enthusiasm on Wesley's part after his return from the continent, and more weight should be given to the presence of first one then two Moravians in London at this time. In this perspective, the events of 1739 will make much more sense.

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APPENDIX

Abbreviations and Locations

R	(= <i>Rubrik</i>) <i>Unitätsarchiv</i> , Herrnhut, G.D.R.
MCH, AB	(= Archive Book) Moravian Church House, London.
Eng.MSS.	John Rylands University Library, Manchester.
Fu.	Fulneck Moravian Church, Yorks.
<i>JWJ</i>	John Wesley's <i>Journal</i> , ed. N. Curnock (London, 1938).
<i>CWJ</i>	Charles Wesley's <i>Journal</i> , ed. T. Jackson (London, 1849).
<i>GWJ</i>	George Whitefield's <i>Journals</i> (Edinburgh, 1985).
<i>Letters</i> , i	John Wesley's <i>Letters</i> , i, ed. F. Baker (Works, xxv, 1980).
<i>Holland</i>	William Holland's <i>Account</i> (MS in MCH)
<i>Hutton I, II</i>	James Hutton's <i>Accounts</i> (R13.A2a.1,2), translated by J. N. Libbey, <i>Proceedings</i> , xv, pp.178-189; pp.206-214; xvi pp.10-14. His transcriptions of the German originals, and of <i>Holland</i> , are at Eng.MSS.1076.2,6.
<i>BD, ND, RD</i>	Diaries of Böhler and Neißer (R13.A4.1, 2; transcripts Eng.MSS.1061.1,2); Richter's diary (R13.A4.63). All dates new style.

M

Memoir, recorded in the *Diary* of the Fetter Lane Congregation and/or in the volume *Extracts from the London Archive* (both in MCH), unless otherwise stated.

A Note on sources

The most accessible source for the three months leading up to the foundation of the Fetter Lane Society is **JWJ**, but its value can be overestimated. Wesley was absent from London for the whole of March and all but a week of April. The manuscript does not survive, and the diary is incomplete. The **Journal** was published on 29th September 1740, two and a half years after the events, but only two months after his withdrawal from the society, which influenced its contents. **CWJ** is also of use, but he too was out of London until the latter part of April, and was seriously ill for some of this period.

Of the Moravian sources, most use has been made of the three historical accounts, which also pose problems. **Hutton I** was probably written in 1741, when it ends (it claims to go “up to the present days”). Spangenberg noted that “it was written in such a hurry, that much is missing from it, and some of it is not accurate.” Three years had elapsed since 1738, and again, the breach with the Methodists clearly influenced it.

Holland was written for the Moravian General Synod of July 1745, up to seven years after the events we are considering. Its aim was not chiefly historical, being written to support Holland’s argument for remaining within the Church of England by demonstrating that the Fetter Lane Society had been a society of Anglicans. Similar reservations apply to **Hutton II**, which concludes in 1747 and may have been written in light of disagreements at the synod.

All of this suggests that more attention should be given to **BD**, **ND**, **RD** and the letters of Neißer, Schulius and Richter, truly contemporary records immediately dispatched to Germany. The Moravian view they naturally represent is arguably more important than Wesley’s. Their selection and presentation of events did however probably take Zinzendorf’s expectations and likely reactions into account.

A comparison of **Hutton I**, for example, with these sources suggests that he tended to magnify the part played by Neißer, who had commissioned his account. Even some of his factual statements are dubious. Neither Böhler nor Wesley mentions his presence when they met, and Wesley’s statement (**JWJ**: 7th February 1738) that he found them a lodging near Hutton’s father’s house, apparently confirmed by **ND** (18th February 1738) seems to contradict Hutton’s note that “they were lodged for a while at the house of (his) father” (**Hutton I**, p.184). Such differences, although of little importance in themselves, make Hutton’s account seem less reliable.

The **Society Book** of the Fetter Lane Society for the period 1738-1741 does not survive, but the sources mentioned above are supplemented by a wealth of material from the Moravian archives in Herrnhut, London and the various English congregations.

I wish to thank all who have given me assistance or hospitality in connection with my research in the libraries and archives mentioned above. I am particularly indebted to *Unitätsarchivarin* I. Baldauf and Mrs. J. Halton, Provincial Librarian, to Dr. J. D. Walsh for his careful supervision, and to my father for word-processing the article.

NEWS FROM OUR BRANCHES

THE Rev Tom Shaw has served our Society with dedication and skill for many years and now that he has relinquished the office of Branches Secretary, it is an opportunity to send him an affectionate greeting and our warmest thanks for all that he has done.

Reports and journals from our Branches reveal an encouraging picture. The quality of the journals is probably higher than ever before, partly due to modern technology and Word Processors, and many important and interesting articles are offered—long and short, professional and amateur, clerical and lay. Our Branch officers display considerable imagination in the visits and lectures they organise. There are many local amenity and special interest groups and experience has shown that these would welcome contact and cooperation with us, perhaps in the form of an occasional shared visit or meeting.

A number of our Branches have formed collections of books of local and general Methodist interest, which fulfil two roles. First they make available many of the standard works. Second they often contain local material of great rarity. The following is a preliminary list to provide a brief guide but enquiries should be addressed to the Branch Secretary or the local officer noted. A project to be commended to all Branches is a listing of their material of local interest. The Branches Secretary would welcome fuller details of any Branch Library and a copy of any printed catalogue.

BRANCH LIBRARIES

BRISTOL

The Branch library consists of runs of the Journals of all the other Branches and attempts are being made to obtain back-numbers to fill gaps. This collection is integrated with the library of the New Room in The Broadmead, Bristol, and is an important part of it. In recent years the New Room library has been rearranged, binding done and shelving provided and a brief description of its facilities may be welcomed, although it is not solely a Branch library.

It consists of 1945 bound volumes, including 490 bound periodicals and 655 pamphlets. It includes 250 copies of the works of John Wesley, many being eighteenth century editions, 100 biographies and critical studies of Wesley, 285 biographies of other Methodist preachers (including non-Wesleyans), 475 histories of Methodism including 310 circuit and chapel histories, 100 hymn books and 66 Barkerite pamphlets. There is also a complete run of *Proceedings*, a complete run of the *Wesleyan Methodist Minutes* and long runs of some other Minutes and Magazines.

There is an alphabetical card catalogue by broad subject heading but a detailed dictionary catalogue will gradually replace this. The library is open Mondays to Saturdays 10-1 and 2-4 (not Wednesdays in the winter) but prospective users are advised to consult the Hon. Librarian, Mr. J. Spittal, The Shieling, 162 Church Road, Frampton Cotterell, Bristol, BS17 2ND, Tel. (0454) 773158.

CORNWALL

A Branch library of some 750 volumes is housed at the County Library, Clinton Road, Redruth, and is available for use during library hours. The collection comprises general Methodist works and items relating to Cornish

Methodism. There are part runs of Minutes and Magazines, including a long run of the *Bible Christian Magazine*.

CUMBRIA

A very small collection of books, centenary histories, and photographs is housed in a Carlisle chapel. Cataloguing is in progress.

LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE

A collection of some 540 items is housed in a chapel at Audenshaw near Manchester. Most items are local histories with some standard general works. There is a catalogue in booklet form. Prospective users should consult the Librarian, Mr. K. Whittaker, 193 Lumb Lane, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34.

EAST MIDLANDS

A collection of some 300 volumes is held by the Secretary. Includes local histories from Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire. Cataloguing is in progress.

WEST MIDLANDS

A collection of general Methodist interest is deposited with the Birmingham Reference Library, including other Branches' Journals and Lectures and some local material. Material is listed in recent Branch Bulletins.

NORTH EAST

A small collection of books is housed in a chapel in Newcastle Upon Tyne.

SHROPSHIRE

A small collection of books and other Branches' Journals is housed at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Library, in which Methodism is a specialist subject.

YORKSHIRE

A substantial collection of some 5000 items housed in the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, "Claremont", Clarendon Road, Leeds, LS2: it is available during opening hours. It includes copies of most Yorkshire chapel and circuit histories, many local circuit plans, Methodist post cards and class tickets and biographies of Yorkshire interest. Works of general Methodist interest include runs of Minutes and Synod material. The Branch Secretary has a catalogue and should be consulted by prospective users of the collection. New acquisitions are fully described in the Branch Bulletin.

SECRETARIES AND DETAILS OF LOCAL BRANCHES

BRISTOL

90 members
Bulletin : Nos. 48-50 received
Secretary : Rev. Hubert A. Pitts, BD, 25 Wynyards Close, Tewkesbury, Glos., GL20 5QZ

CORNWALL

266 members
Journal : Vol. VII No. 7 received
Secretary : Mr. W. E. Walley, Park View, Ponsanooth, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 7JA

156	PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CUMBRIA	105 members Journal : Nos. 20-21 received Secretary : Mrs. Jean Coulthard, 32 Croft Road, Carlisle, CA3 9AG
EAST ANGLIA	46 members Secretary : Rev Elizabeth J. Bellamy, BA, 8 St. Andrew's Close, Holt, Norfolk, NR25 6EL
IRELAND	174 members Bulletin : Vol. I Nos. 3-4 received Secretary : Mr. John H. Weir, 5 Aberdelghy Gardens, Lambeg, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT27 4QQ
ISLE OF MAN	58 members Newsletter : Nos. 6-7 received Secretary : Mrs. Thelma Wilson, Westend, 28 Droghadfayle Road, Port Erin, Isle of Man
LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE	175 members Secretary : Mr. Alan Rose, BA, 26 Roe Cross Green Mottram, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 6LP
LINCOLNSHIRE	100 members Journal : Vol. 3, No. 10 received Secretary : Mr. Harold Jubbs, 3a Church Road, Upton, Gainsborough, Lincs., DN21 5NR
LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES	88 members Bulletin : No. 36 received Secretary : Mr. Nigel McMurray, 146 New North Road, Islington, N1 7BH
EAST MIDLANDS	60 members "Heritage" : Vol. II, Nos. 5 and 6 received Secretary : Rev. Sidney Y. Richardson, BA, BD, BSc, 22 Garton Road, Loughborough, Leics., LE11 3RQ
WEST MIDLANDS	71 members Bulletin : Vol. 4 Nos. 9-10 received Secretary : Dr. E. D. Graham, BA, BD, 34 Spiceland Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1NJ
NORTH EAST	205 members Bulletin : No. 48 received Secretary : Mr. Bryan Taylor, 22 Nilverton Avenue, Sunderland, Tync & Wear, SR2 7TS
PLYMOUTH AND EXETER	80 members Proceedings : Vol. VI No. 9 received Secretary : Mr. R. F. S. Thorne, JP, 31 St. Mary's Park, Ottery St. Mary, EX11 1JA
SCOTLAND	Journal : No. 18 received Correspondent : Mr. S. Davies, 81 Abbey Road, Scone, Perthshire, PH2 6LL

SHROPSHIRE

40 members

Secretary : Dr. Barric S. Trinder, MA, 20 Garmston
Road, Shrewsbury, SY2 6HE

YORKSHIRE

230 members

Bulletin : Nos. 50-51 received

Secretary : Mr. D. Colin Dews, BEd, MPhil,
4 Lynwood Grove, Leeds, LS12 4AU

R. F. S. THORNE

THE ANNUAL LECTUREwill be delivered in Wesley's Chapel, London
on Monday 27th June 1988 at 7.30pm

by THE REV. JOHN MUNSEY TURNER M.A.

**Subject: 'Victorian Values: whatever happened
to Wesley's Scriptural Holiness?'**The chair will be taken by
the Rev. Dr. Gordon S. Wakefield, M.A., M.Litt.The Lecture will be preceded by TEA for members at 5pm
and the ANNUAL MEETING at 6pm.Those who intend to be present at the Tea should send their names
to Dr. E. Dorothy Graham, 34 Spiceland Road, Birmingham,
B31 1NJ, by 10th June.

A Ploughshare of Prayer by Helen Lee is a further contribution to the burgeoning study of Methodist genealogy. The main focus is the Lyth family of York, who had links with the Hills and the Burdsalls. Many became missionaries, of whom the most celebrated was David Hill (1840-96). Copies are £1.20 post free from D. C. Dews, 4 Lynwood Grove, Leeds, LS12 4AU.

Between 1892 and 1907 the *Methodist Recorder* published a series of annual supplements which always included some Methodist local history. A topographical index to these "Winter Numbers" has now been compiled by Mr. C. J. Spittal, the honorary librarian of the New Room, where there is a complete set of these publications. Copies are available there @ 50p plus postage. Local historians in particular will be grateful for this practical aid to their studies.

The Wesleys and West Yorkshire (20 pp.) includes a fresh look at the Aldersgate experience by J. M. Turner, a survey of the impact of the Wesleys on the area, and a map of a suggested "Wesley Safari". The enterprise of the West Yorkshire District in producing this souvenir is to be commended. Copies (£1.50 post free) from John Hargreaves, 7 Hyde Park Gardens, Haugh Shaw Road, Halifax.

BOOK NOTICES

Die Predigt durch Laien in der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche damals und heute, by Karl Heinz Voigt. (EmK heute Heft 51. Christliches Verlagshaus, Stuttgart, 1987. Pp.39.)

If ever there is a large scale ecumenical agreement, it will be the signal not for the millennium but for a great many pamphlets like this interesting piece by one of the historians of the German Methodist churches, in which the contracting parties explain to each other what they can recollect of the rationale of their ways, and mull over what to do next. Dr. Voigt finds the various traditions united in the Evangelical-Methodist Church have in fact a Methodist heritage, and are obliged to maintain a single preaching ministry sustained by men and women, ordained and lay members, and to preach the New Birth (hear this, ye latter-day English). The difficulty is that people will regard lay preaching as a second-class ministry, and if asked to think again, complain of being inflicted with either "profile neurosis" or revived confessionalism. The author tries manfully to provide for parity of esteem with disparity of role, the ordained ministry undertaking expository preaching, laymen more experientially orientated. The difficulty, in Germany as in England, is that nowadays the people theologically best equipped for the former are commonly lay people; indeed the problem here is compounded by ministers coming out of college unacquainted with even the distinction between exhorting and preaching (let alone the New Birth), and prepared to claim at least sartorial succession with styles of ministry which have no place in the Methodist tradition at all, while laymen prate about the need for a new "order" and appear to covet metamorphosis into Protestant monks. The next stage in the nonsense will be a non-stipendiary ministry, gloriously arrayed. If it is true that there are about thirty New Testament concepts for the proclamation of the gospel, preachers lay and ordained (not to mention congregations) ought to be ready (a) to admit that there are styles enough for all and (b) to confess (i) that there are probably a couple of dozen rarely heard among us, and (ii) that the less said about "profile neurosis" or the new confessionalism (and its tailors) the better.

W. R. WARD

Steeple on the Prairies—A Pen Sketch of Midwestern Primitive Methodism by Charles W. Tyrrell. (The Primitive Methodist Church in the USA, 1987, pp. 169, \$5.00 plus shipping (96c by boat, \$4.12 by air mail).)

It may come as a surprise to many of our readers on this side of the Atlantic to know that after 55 years of Methodist Union in Britain there still exists a Primitive Methodist Connexion. It is to be found in that land where denominations flourish as sand on the seashore—the United States of America, and the book under review tells the story of one of the three conferences. The author is a Presbyterian minister yet "a child of the Primitive Methodist parsonage", so he lovingly warms to his subject.

The first chapter tells of the origins in this country—Bourne, Clowes and others—and how, from a Primitive Methodist Society among the lead mines of Teesdale, there went out to Illinois a band of prospectors, lead by a certain John Leekley who began the first P. M. Society in Midwestern America. (The first missions being established by the Tunstall and Hull circuits in 1829 in New York City and Philadelphia.)

The rest of the story is one of constant struggle against the hardships that beset a pioneering cause. Preachers had to travel over difficult terrain without the aid of modern forms of transport. They had to endure long periods away from home, often in makeshift hospitality. However, they gathered together and shepherded a little flock in widely scattered areas and eventually moulded them into a Connexion with the characteristics of Methodism writ large over all they did. It is amazing they preserved their identity for so long.

Dr. Tyrrell has dug wide and deep, as his well-documented and very readable book shows. It is worthy of attention not only in the States, but wherever there is a regard for the pioneering spirit of early Methodism in whatever country it is found. Copies are obtainable from WY-VAL, 40 E. Northampton St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa., 18702, USA.

JOHN C. BOWMER

The West Country preachers. A new history of the Bible Christian Church (1815-1907) by Michael J. L. Wickes. (Privately published in wrappers, 1987, pp.104 + 4pp. plates incl. bibliography and index. £3.75 inc. p & p from 30, One End Street, Appledore, Bideford, Devon, EX39 1PN)

Since 1819 most historians of the Bible Christians have been Methodist ministers and/or called Thorne. Although qualified in neither respect Mr. Wickes has written a readable account at a modest price; the only general history of this denomination in print. The manner of its production may be a pattern for the future. The text was composed and edited by the author on his Amstrad Word Processor; then the machine's own printer printed out the text "camera ready", complete with headings and page numbers. The Jamaica Press of Hartland reduced the text to finished page size, printed it and bound it up.

Mr. Wickes' little book skims lightly across the history of this denomination, relying for much of his material on such relatively accessible authors and printed works as F. W. Bourne, Court, *The Jubilee History* and *The Maiden Preacher*, but amongst familiar stories can be found new material and insights.

The author is now a professional genealogist. His profession takes him to the record offices of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall where there are extensive deposits of Bible Christian circuit records but he has made no use of these riches. However he shares with us his research in other fields and the results make interesting reading. For example, the family relationships of the Thornes from Shebbear have never been clearly brought out, even by the hagiographers of the past, and Chapter Two supplies this need very well, with references to baptismal registers and the will of old John Thorne. Acknowledgement of the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census is now almost obligatory in local histories and Mr. Wickes obliges with a brief but interesting analysis of North West Devon and North East Cornwall. He concludes that in this area in 1851 the Bible Christians were numerically stronger than the Wesleyans.

Appledore, where Mr. Wickes now makes his home, comes into the story as the port from which some Bible Christian missionaries sailed to Canada. Tucked away in Irsha Street there was a little Bible Christian chapel but this closed in 1907 after an existence of less than 50 years: a reminder of the vulnerability of this denomination even on the edge of the North West Devon heartland.

ROGER THORNE

The Conversion of the Wesleys : 1738 Reconsidered, by John Lawson (Moorley's Bookshop, Ltd., 23, Park Road, Ilkeston, Derbys, DE7 5DA, 1987, pp.37, min. price £1.50)

Those who are this year celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the experiences of the Wesleys in May 1738 sometimes hesitate whether to describe them by the usual word "conversion". In this lecture, which is Occasional paper No. 2 of the Wesley Fellowship, Mr. Lawson does not exactly solve the problem how to speak of 1738, for on page 27 he speaks of John's "conversion, if that is indeed the right name for it", but he discusses it in a most interesting way, and his main thesis is that what had been a train of ideas in the head became also a disposition of the heart ; both head and heart are necessary for sound evangelical religion.

Another way of posing this question is to ask when we should date the beginning of Methodism. Mr. Lawson tells us that when the celebration of the centenary of Methodism was being discussed, some suggested that it should be measured from John Wesley's ordination, but this was refused on the ground that "At that time Mr. Wesley was not converted" ; therefore the centenary was celebrated in 1838 (p.20). My belief on the contrary is that it was celebrated in 1839, and measured from the foundation of the first societies in Bristol and London. This would harmonize with the point which Mr. Lawson himself makes that Wesley continued to have ups and downs of peace and joy till he began to preach in the open air and was then astonished by multitudes of convulsive conversions (*Journal* April 2-29, 1739). "It was then, and only then, that his own experience of liberation came to its climax" (p.30).

Mr. Lawson rightly points out that the word "sin" can be used in a sense which makes freedom from sin impossible in this world, but he then equates perfection with freedom from sin in the sense of a voluntary transgression of God's law, acknowledged to be such at the time (p.33). This common account of Wesley's view goes back at least as far as Newton Flew, whether as an apologetic defence of it or more often as a criticism. But in my opinion an examination of Sermon XV, on The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God, in which this definition of sin occurs, and of Sermon XXXV, shows that freedom from sin in that sense belongs to all who are "born again in the lowest sense". How then are we to define the deeper sin from which the perfect Christian is freed? The answer is that he is freed from evil thought and evil tempers. It may well be argued that Wesley was too optimistic about both stages, but at least he is freed from the implicit charge that he held an almost Pelagian view of sin.

This is a stimulating work of a well-filled mind, well worth reading.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE

The Journal of John Wesley : A Selection ed. Elisabeth Jay (O.U.P., 1987, pp. xxviii + 290 £19.50 hardback, £4.50 paperback.)

Having been without an attractive modern abridgement of Wesley's *Journal* for too long, we now have two to choose from, Christopher Idle's (Lion Books, 1986, reviewed in *Proceedings* xlv, p. 127), and this one by Elisabeth Jay. Costing around the same amount in their paper-backed versions, and having an identical number of pages, can either be said to be the better buy? Idle's is more compact, easier to handle, and clearer to read, with a spacious layout and the text divided by year. It is also better indexed. On the other hand, while the Oxford edition (in paperback) suffers from rather murky paper, small type, and a somewhat

stolid-looking flow of text with no divisions, it does have the very real advantages of something like 15,000 more of Wesley's words, and longer individual entries, than its rival. Moreover, Elisabeth Jay provides a Wesley chronology, nineteen pages of introduction (against Idle's three), nine pages of notes and three appendices, two of which contain lengthy accounts by Wesley of his relations with Sophie Hopkey and Grace Murray (the latter unfortunately becoming "Grace Murphy" in the page headings at about the point in the story when she and Wesley visited Ireland together!).

Christopher Idle might be said to have offered a sparkling aperitif for the *Journal*, while Dr. Jay gives a substantial helping of the meal itself. Oddly enough the latter approach both helps and frustrates the more serious reader who appreciates the fuller text yet needs even more guidance than Dr. Jay provides to answer the questions it raises. And the editorial work is not always impeccable. Apart from "Grace Murphy", the first Tyneside entry (pp.71-74) cannot be recognised as such without knowing that Chowden and the Fell are in Gateshead; and Hindley Hill is misspelt (p.275). Moreover it would have helped readers new to the *Journal* to explain that the entry of 23rd January 1771, familiar though it is, actually refers to Wesley's separation from his wife, who is referred to only as - - - .

However, these are minor faults in what is a highly commendable edition, which apart from its other merits is worth the purchase price for the introduction and appendices on their own. In the former, Elisabeth Jay, in a very illuminating fashion, analyses the purpose and nature of the *Journal* and goes a long way towards explaining what a curious document it is and how it needs to be read, while never underrating its importance. Among all this there are many sharp insights into Wesley's personality. The appendices, and especially that on Grace Murray, will for many readers be a revelation. Dr. Jay draws on the account of the relationship with Grace written by Wesley himself and published by J. A. Leger in *John Wesley's Last Love* (1910). It was in fact published earlier, in an edition by C. Hook (1848), as a *Narrative of a remarkable transaction in the life of John Wesley*. In its mixture of swirling emotions, uncertainties, equivocations, and soul-baring there is nothing like it in the rest of Wesley's writing. Here we see the human, vulnerable John Wesley, so carefully concealed from our gaze in the *Journal* itself. Dr. Jay might usefully have added to the appendix some extracts from the long poem which Wesley wrote on the episode, and which was attached to the end of his account of it.

GEOFFREY MILBURN

Less Than Conquerors : How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century by Douglas W. Frank. (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, pp.310, £12.25; distributed by Paternoster Press, Exeter.)

Douglas W. Frank is Associate Professor of History, Trinity College, Deerfield, Illinois. He has accumulated a mass of detail for this critique of the basic assumptions underlying the emphases of evangelicals in America during the early twentieth century. Although most of the material is familiar to those who have read the standard works which deal with this aspect of American Christian history, the approach is different. Herein lies the point of interest as well as the question which the reader is bound to ask—"For whom is the book really written?"

The latter question arises from the method adopted—of including long portions

of biblical material with comment throughout the book as parallels with the account. This is because the author, whilst not writing autobiography, is attempting to "find" himself and to discover the relatively immediate background of the Christian tradition to which he belongs and in which he was nurtured. He deliberately ignores "evangelical liberals", Pentecostal groups, the black evangelicals and the evangelical community in the South on account of the boundaries suggested by his personal interest. The focus of interest is to detail three of the most popular responses of American evangelicals to their loss of power: dispensational premillennialism with its sense of the move from being a godly majority to being a godly minority; "Victorious Life" theology, with its aspiration to moral perfection with a "technique of relaxation rather than the rigor of moral struggle"; finally, the taste of "the old triumphalism" embodied in the popular revivalism of Billy Sunday. The epilogue touches upon the resurgence of religion as a whole, including evangelicalism, during the 1970s. Frank sees these systems as having obscured the gospel and the Christ they sought to commend.

It is not difficult to see why "trusted, friendly critics" tell the author that his tone is negative—for, whilst he finally declares that even in our unfaithfulness we serve God's purpose, Frank also admits that he does not predict that he and his evangelical church will become "lamenting, confessing Christians" who rather than "adding to the world's divisions by proclaiming its superiority to sinful humanity" would "find its uniqueness as a people of God in recognising, . . . , its solidarity with those who are not the people of God". Thus, his instinct is that "the 'go for it' confidence of the Reagan years will end with the Reagan years."

Despite its puzzles, the unusual approach makes the book commendable to the "lay evangelicals" and historians and theologians whom the author hoped to address. The book is ruthlessly honest and a contribution to our understanding of the evangelical tradition on both sides of the Atlantic.

DAVID H. HOWARTH

BRIEF NOTICES

The Travelling Preacher: John Wesley in the North-East 1742-1790 by Geoffrey Milburn (1987, pp.102. Copies obtainable from the author at 8 Ashbrooke Mount, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 7SD. £2.40 including postage)

The ten short and informative chapters of this book have been adapted from broadcasts on BBC Radio Newcastle. We are indebted to Geoffrey Milburn for the use he has made of original sources from early North Eastern Methodism. Here is genuine insight into what it was really like to see the Wesleys and the first Methodist preachers at work. We learn as much about those who received the whole gospel for the whole person as we do about those who offered it. We are properly reminded that, despite his forty-eight visits to the North East, Wesley was never the sole agent of the mission, outreach and social involvement of the Methodist movement. Not the least rewarding part of the book is Geoffrey Milburn's reworking of the Orphan House and Grace Murray saga. This publication is a good buy, both as a study document for historians and as a first reader for those who know nothing about the beginnings of the Methodist story in the North East.

C. NORMAN R. WALLWORK

The John Wesley Story by Robert Poulter. (Methodist Publishing House, 1987, pp.100, £3.00)

This is a lavishly illustrated account of John Wesley for children. It has good print and tells the story well. Some may think the pictures are sometimes too dramatic, the storm on the way to Georgia, for example. Most are excellent, as in the encounter with "the serious man". The book concentrates on the drama of Wesley's life up to 1742. It remains an excellent introduction for children of all ages, who have learned to read but like pictures. This reviewer's seven year old son is much in favour of it.

JOHN H. LENTON

The Wesleys and the Early Dorset Methodists, by Barry J. Biggs, Woodsorrel Publications, 1987, pp.iv, 68 plus 12 pp. of illustrations. £2.25 post free from Wavering Lane, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4NX

It has to be said that even by the end of Wesley's long life Dorset Methodism was still thin on the ground and confined to fairly isolated pockets. Until the formation of a Blandford Circuit in 1794, the Dorset societies remained outliers of the widespread Salisbury Circuit. This fact enables Dr. Biggs to contain his account within a small compass, but at the same time to go into interesting detail, and also to give due attention to the social and ecclesiastical setting of early Methodism in the county. He does so with skill and insight. The book is attractively produced, helpfully documented and indexed (Hallelujah!) and is altogether a worthy successor to J. S. Simon's volume of 1870.

JOHN A. VICKERS

Brightly Gleams our Banner is the title of an 82 page book written by Dennis Gilbert. It is a local study of Methodism in Sturton by Stow, near Lincoln, and traces the story from 1771 to the present day. Much of the narrative centres on local people and many are listed in the book, hence it is in some ways a piece of family nostalgia, but very readable nevertheless. It has 17 photographs and is printed in excellent type. It is obtainable from the author at Thorpe House, Sturton by Stow, Lincoln, LN1 2BP at a cost of £3.00 including postage.

WILLIAM LEARY

NOTES AND QUERIES

1407. METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH CLASS TICKETS

During a visit to Mineral Point, Wisconsin, USA, in summer 1986 I visited Pendarvis, part of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Amongst a collection of Wesleyana in one of the old miners' cottages I came across a series of old class tickets. There were a number of Wesleyan Methodist origin which had been issued in the Redruth and Camborne Circuits in Cornwall between 1824 and 1835 and were issued to members who later emigrated to the U.S.A. to work in the lead mines at Mineral Point.

In addition, however, there were Methodist Episcopal Church Class Tickets

issued to Elizabeth and Samuel Thomas. This type of ticket seems to be unknown in England and I wonder if there are any other known Methodist Episcopal tickets.

Also of interest are records, held by the Museum's Site Director, Mark Knipping, of "trials" within the Church at Mineral Point which indicate some of the early attempts to bring discipline into the life of the Church.. The rapidly growing Church had to set its standards, harsh though they may have been.

J. CHRISTOPHER LEDGARD

1408. "ENDLESS SONG"

Two references have recently been made in *Proceedings* to the hymn beginning "My life flows on in endless song". Dr. J. C. Bowmer (xlv p.190) wonders if Mrs. Elsie Cooper wrote the hymn, as the title of her book was taken from it. Mr. A. A. Taberer (xlvi, p.92) rejects this suggestion and points out that the verses appeared in Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* and in *Favorite Gospel Songs* (Chicago, 1894) being described as anonymous in both cases.

May I mention that in *Hymns of Consecration and Faith* (which has had a long association with Keswick and similar conventions) the words are attributed to F. J. Hartley. The number of the hymn is 221 in the new and enlarged edition compiled by Mrs. Evan Hopkins and published over 60 years ago.

T. FRANCIS GLASSON

1409. SOUTH LONDON MISSION: INFORMATION WANTED

The centenary of the South London Mission will be celebrated in 1989. To mark this event I have been asked to write a book on the Mission's history. If any readers can supply information or photographs, I shall be glad to receive them at 6 Everthorpe Road, London, SE15 4DA.

JOHN D. BEASLEY

1410. PROTRACTED MEETINGS

I can perhaps throw light on the problem raised by Paul Bolitho in his Query 1398. I have found references to "protracted meetings" in the mid-nineteenth century, especially in Cornwall. Reading between the lines of reports, they would appear to have been a form of mission or revival services. They seem to have taken the form of a series of meetings in the chapel, going on for several days and running right through the nights without intermission; people came and went; there was revival preaching and prayer and I have no doubt, hymns, and conversions were expected and experienced. They were by no means only a Primitive Methodist phenomenon; I fancy those I have read of were mostly Wesleyan. No doubt the Bible Christians had them also.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE

LIBRARY TICKETS

Will all members holding Library Tickets please return them to the Librarian as soon as possible. If a new ticket is required, please send s.a.c. Tickets not returned will be cancelled forthwith.