

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

REVIEWS

John D. Rempel, *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Christology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck and Dirk Philips*, Herald Press, Waterloo, Ontario, 253pp.

At a time when interest in Anabaptism, both as an historical movement and as a theology which might be fruitful for us in today's church is growing, this book is a useful tool in deepening our understanding. John Rempel, a Mennonite pastor, began it as a doctoral dissertation - as such, it is in a similar category to *Baptists at the Table*, written out of the tradition being discussed, and to inform the present representatives of that tradition. The book clearly bears the marks of its dissertation origin: it is clearly laid out and each section is sign-posted and extensively justified. After an Introduction outlining both the parameters and definitions, each of the three individuals is treated separately and in great depth, with detailed analysis of influences, theology and writings, and a helpful summary showing their place in the wider context. The book finishes with a conclusion, examining shared insights of the three writers analysed and discussing the way in which their thinking has or has not been used in developing Mennonite theology. There are also suggestions from the author outlining his vision of a way forward.

This is not a book for a reader looking for an introduction to Anabaptist thinking about the Lord's Supper; it is an academic book and requires a great deal of concentration and a significant amount of background knowledge. For those who are already familiar with the general outline both of the on-going Eucharist debate in the sixteenth century and with the ways in which the varieties of Anabaptist thought developed, this book will be a further valuable tool in understanding the roots and branches of the variform Anabaptist tree.

As always, there are some concerns and irritations with the text. Some of the translations from German or Dutch are infelicitous, and the use of translations of Latin phrases is intrusive - the writer would have been better either to believe his readers to be capable of understanding his phrases, and have left them without translation, or, believing, as he apparently does that he could not have such an expectation, he should not be using the Latin at all. I am not entirely convinced either by the writer's characterization of the Christology of Caspar Schwenkfeld, one of the opponents against whom many of Marpeck's writings were directed. This necessarily also raises questions for me about his interpretation of the others with whom I am not so familiar. However, as an academic text book giving an analysis of otherwise inaccessible texts and a context within which to consider them, I believe this to be a valuable addition to the ever-increasing body of work on the various Anabaptist theologies which we must take into account if we are to make adequate assessment of this part of our radical heritage.

RUTH GOULDBOURNE *Tutor, Bristol Baptist College*

William H. Brackney and L. A. Cupit (Eds), *Baptist Faith & Witness: the papers of the Study and Research Division of the Baptist World Alliance 1990-1995*, 220pp, Birmingham, Alabama, USA, 0 96 25 634 0 7, 1995.

What have Baptists, world-wide, been thinking about over the last five years? These papers provide an answer. During the quinquennium ninety-six papers were considered by the six Commissions of the BWA's Study and Research Division; twenty-six of the papers are reproduced in this volume. The authors come from ten different countries, which is welcome, although twenty are from the USA, Canada, Australia and England and only six from other countries. Let us hope the next quinquennium draws a better balance.

Readers of the *Baptist Quarterly* are likely to turn first to the Heritage Commission section which has four papers: David Priestley writes on 'The Impact of Revivalism on Baptists in North America', Kojo Osei-Wusuh on 'An African's Perspective on the Believer's Prayer Life', and Faith Bowers on 'Outreach to the Young in Victorian London', one of a group of papers on youth ministry received by the Commission in 1994. The fourth, an account of Baptist involvement in the process of reconciliation in Nicaragua by Gustavo Parajon, is a remarkable and personal account of a major contemporary initiative by Baptist Christians. History turns up in other sections also. The Baptist Worship Commission (chaired by David Coffey) received a paper introducing 'English Baptists and their Hymnody' by John Briggs. For the Christian Ethics Commission William Brackney wrote on 'Exploration, Colonialism, and Mission: from Columbus to Carey'. Tony Cupit gave a paper to the Doctrine and Inter-Church Cooperation Commission on the role of Baptists in inter-church activity in Papua New Guinea, 1873-1973', in which he summarizes the missionary work of several denominations. The third British contribution by Paul Fiddes, given to the Church Leadership Commission, was on 'Authority in People-Pastor Relationships'.

Future historians will appreciate many of these papers for the record they lay down of the state of Baptist thought in the 1990s. Several of the papers define where we are now in our reflections on baptism and other doctrinal issues in the context of inter-church relations. The practical problems of rapid church growth are raised by Roy Musasiwa's paper on 'Equipping Leaders in Zimbabwe'. When church growth can be measured in hundreds of converts per day, how do we train the church leaders?

The papers are all short, but few words are wasted. At a published price of USA\$10.00 this volume is generously subsidised by the publisher, Samford University Press. Baptists both today and in the future should be grateful to them for making so much excellent material available.

BRIAN BOWERS, *Senior Curator, Science Museum, London*

Religions in the UK: A Multi Faith Directory, ed. Paul Weller, 650pp, £21-50, University of Derby/Inter Faith Network for the UK, Derby DE3 5GX.

This volume, the first of its kind to be produced for the UK, is, from the Bah'ai to the Zoroastrians, a monument to the religious pluralism of modern Britain. The directing intelligence behind this project is Paul Weller, some of whose work we published in this journal four years ago. The volume possesses all the strengths, and presents all the problems, of a Directory: on the one hand a mass of accumulated data is systematically assembled in a way that makes searching for information easy, but the detail of the information is such that keeping the directory up to date must present a mammoth task. The Directory has been produced to encourage creative inter-faith contacts and therefore the sensitive use of the information in the Directory is underlined. Following instruction on how to use the volume, how to establish fruitful contact with those of other faiths, and a sketching in of the Religious Landscape of the UK, there are ten chapters on different living faiths present in the UK.

Embraced within the volume are masterly thumb-nail sketches of the different faith traditions [providing uniform data on General Information, Origins and Development of the Faith concerned, Key Beliefs, Traditions, Life, Worship, Calendar and Festivals, Organization and Bibliography]. These I found very informative, providing both immediate information and help to delve more deeply. Each section then provides names and addresses for contact purposes.

Those wanting a quick guide to how Baptists can engage with such issues will find the Joppa Group's *A Baptist Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue* [Joppa Publications, 60a Birmingham Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5EG] helpful. Little more than twenty pages long, this pamphlet succinctly puts in Baptist perspective the main issues of Dialogue with other faiths with model clarity and economy of expression, and is gentle enough to encourage those who might feel the whole possibility of such activity intimidating.

JHYB

CHAPEL HISTORIES

R. E. Chadwick, *Sacred Ground, High Tradition: Salendine Nook Baptist Church 1743-1993*, 1993, 71pp; pb £3-00 inc. p&p, from Mr Brian Hebblewaite, 15 Norcross Avenue, Oakes, Huddersfield, HD3 4FP.

W. Oliver Wicks, *Harmony in Discord: A Church at the Crossroads: Stroud Baptist Church 1968-1994*, 61pp; pb £4-95 from Stroud Baptist Church, John Street, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

David Watts, *A History of Black Country Baptists*, 1994, 40pp; pb, £2-50 from author, 24 Sandhurst Avenue, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 0XL.

Sacred Ground, High Tradition marks the 250th anniversary of Salendine Nook Baptist Church, Huddersfield, and supplants previous histories by John Stock in 1874 and his son, Percy Stock, devoting most attention to the past 150 years. When formed in 1743, the church was firmly in the moderate Calvinistic camp at a time when many were attracted to a more extreme 'high Calvinist' theology which saw no point in appeals to the unconverted. It was deeply committed to closed communion: in 1862 two members tried unsuccessfully to have this debated, and as late as 1916 it was referred to as a 'stronghold of the stricts'. Deacons discussed this in 1919, but the table was not opened until 1937, and then eleven members resigned. Prior to the 1937 decision the church had begun to move away from the concept of the church as a gathered community of baptized believers. For example, the Finance Committee had from its formation in 1909 included representatives of the congregation. More striking still, since 1921 the church rules had provided for a third of those nominating a minister to be seatholders rather than members. Open membership, whilst acceptable to some, could not be achieved within the Trust Deeds, but in 1988 the church meeting voted by a large majority in favour of open associate membership.

For much of its life the congregation was mostly 'Nookers', whose roots in the church went back a lifetime or more, but by the 1970s the membership had begun to change, reflecting the greater mobility in society. The church did not find adjustment easy. In the 1980s, as elsewhere, there was longing for the more obvious outpouring of the Spirit. Tensions surfaced and some members withdrew. The church took part in 'Advance 87', the Yorkshire Association's three-year programme, aimed at developing more effective mission. The church is now seeking to map out a common vision for the future, and giving thought to the kind of premises required to meet the needs of the 1990s and beyond.

The book reflects painstaking research - there are no less than 254 footnotes - but some photographs are poorly reproduced. It is to be hoped that the publication of this history will indeed fulfil the author's hope that 'it will be an aid to understanding as the church seeks, guided by the Spirit, to discover God's way for the future'.

Harmony in Discord is a fascinating account of the effect of charismatic renewal on Stroud Baptist Church and subsequent rebuilding of the church fellowship after seventy members left with their minister, Revd James Baker, to form Stroud Christian Fellowship in 1981. Coming in December 1868, he sought to make the church 'an effective instrument for presenting the good news of Christ to the world outside'; when his efforts met a lack of success he turned for help to ministers involved in charismatic renewal and was baptized in the Spirit in December 1972. In 1977 he took advantage of the BU Sabbatical Scheme to spend nine weeks at Basingtoke Baptist (later Community) Church and one at Brandhall Baptist Church, Warley. On his return he developed an emphasis on house groups coupled with 'shepherding'. House group leaders were recognized as 'trusted shepherds of the flock, sharing pastoral care and leadership with the Minister', and group members were recommended to submit to the leaders.

A parting of the ways became inevitable in 1981 when Mr Baker wished to appoint

elders and transfer government of the church from the church meeting to a body of these elders. He also wished to appoint a co-pastor who was not necessarily an accredited Baptist minister. Sufficient church members remained who wished to continue a Baptist witness at the John Street site. In 1983 Revd Barry Vandy was called and his ministry has been one of reconciliation. In February 1990 members of the Stroud Christian Fellowship were welcomed to an evening service at John Street.

Harmony in Discord is an irenic book and contains a brief history of the Stroud Christian Fellowship by one of its elders. Future historians writing about the effect of charismatic renewal on Baptist churches will find this a valuable record of what happened in one church. Changes in worship patterns seem to have been introduced too rapidly. Mr Vandy, on the other hand, has sought to maintain a delicate balance in worship. In this he has been helped by a gifted pianist who joined by transfer five months into his ministry and 'did more than anything or anyone else to reconcile the anti-chorus, anti-clapping, anti-noise lobby to the singing of lively songs'.

David Watts has written a useful account of Baptist witness in the Black Country, defined as the four Borough council areas of Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall. From obscure beginnings in the 17th century he shows how Baptists established themselves in the 18th and reached a zenith of size and activity in the mid-19th. With regard to the future, the author remains decidedly hopeful. The reviewer hopes he will continue research on the history of Baptist witness in this area.

He draws attention to the closure of a number of Strict Baptist Chapels but does not discuss the reasons. Were they unable to adapt to changing circumstances? Certainly some have changed, for example, the worship at Spring Meadow Strict Baptist Church, which now has a ministry among Aston University students. He mentions that the church on the Brandhall Estate, Oldbury, 'forms a significant focus for charismatic renewal'. Interestingly, it was to the minister there, Revd John Bedford, that the Revd Jim Baker turned for advice. Bedford appears to have exercised some form of 'apostolic ministry'. It would have been helpful to know whether this church had links with any of the restoration church groups.

Watts does not mention the Old Baptist Union which had some slight involvement in the Black Country. The 'Stepping Stone Mission' at Dudley and its pastors were received into the Union in 1902 (*New Testament Christianity* 12, No.7, November 1902, 134). In 1911 Caleb Reynolds, minister of Old Baptist Union Chapel, Bacchus Road, Birmingham, began holding open air meetings at West Bromwich amongst the miners (C. Reynolds, *ibid.*, No.273, October 1911, 92). The work progressed under Edward Colston Day and the Providence Chapel, Sandwell Road, was leased (M. Noakes, *Divine Light and Truth*, No.295, August 1913, 63). Loss of young men and departure of women to munitions factories in World War I left the church unable to hire premises when the lease expired (Colston Day, *ibid.*, No.338, March 1917, 24), and the work presumably closed by August 1917 when Day and his wife were set apart for an itinerant ministry (*ibid.*, No.344, September 1917, 66).

MICHAEL J. COLLIS *Minister, Stafford Baptist Church, The Green*