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2007 - 2008

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in Ireland

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Pastor John Gault

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The Baptist Centre, 19 Hillsborough Road, Moira, BT67 0HG Northern Ireland

tel : (028) 9261 9267 *fax* : (028) 9261 0150 *e-mail* : IBC@thebaptistcentre.org

Editorial

Throughout 2007-08 we have again been reminded of the rich heritage and abiding lessons that the history of the church has provided for us, which should produce in us both deep gatitude for the faith and fauithfulness of our spiritual forefathers but also a solid determination to carry on the good work to which they gave themselves.

Our contributors have taken us from the community to the national to the international, from the local church to missionary work to theological debate that has shaped the beliefs and practices of the church for almost four hundred years.

The fifty year history of Stonepark Baptsit Church was summarised by Jim Graham, who, through the reminesences of former pastors, recalled notable individuals and events from the history of the church. The continuing growth of the church reveals that the early emphases on preaching the Word and seeking the lost has continued to the present day.

Brain Thompson presented a fascinating account of Edward Nangle and the Achill Island Missionary Colony. Nangle's passion, zeal and rugged determination should be an inspiration and a challenge to all Christians to persevere in the Lord's work regardless of obstacles and opposition.

Jim Davison's paper on the Westminster Assembly focussed our minds on the dabate that were reached concerning the autonomy of the local church. The decisions which emerged from the debate have influenced our understanding of the structure and nature of the church worldwide. This is not only an important historical record but highlights the importance of sound doctrine to ensure that the our church life and work and missionary activity are built on a solid foundation.

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About Our Contributors

Jim Graham has been a member and office bearer of Stonepark Baptist Church for many years and served as President of the Association of Irish Baptist Churches in 2005-06.
He was born in Enniskillen and from childhood had been taught the way of salvation and was converted to Christ in 1980 at a mission in Ballinamallard conducted by Pastor Harvey Shaw.
Jim is married to Yvonne and has a daughter, Heather, son-in-law Geoff and grandson David and he maintains an active interest and involvement in the work of Irish Baptist Churches and Baptist Missions.

Dr Jim Davison is a member of Great Victoria Street Baptist Church (Belfast), a member of the Irish Baptist Historical Society and a visiting lecturer in Church History at the Irish Baptist College and Belfast Bible College. He was awarded his PhD from Queen's University, Belfast, in 2005.
He is married to Violet and they have two grown up children Paul (who is married to Julie) and Andrea.

Brian Thompson was converted through the youth ministry in Hamilton Road Baptist Church, Bangor. He and his wife served with the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission in Peru from 1957-59 but, because of serious family health problems they returned to Bangor where, in 1963, he became the founder secretary of the Rosemary Park extension. Since 1982 he has worshipped with the Ballycrochan church.
Having retired from business, he has spent the last five years studying and writing about church administration and also the history of the Achill Island Missionary Colony.

'From small beginnings . . .'

A history of Stonepark Baptist Church Co Fermanagh

by Jim Graham

In a quiet corner of Fermanagh, set back from the main Enniskillen to Belfast road, sits Stonepark Baptist Church. In the town land of Eskeragh, Brookeborough, this church has endeavoured to faithfully proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the initial outreach work in the 1950's, the formal constitution of the church in 1956 and a continual programme of evangelism, this congregation has continued to grow.

The present members of 'Stonepark' wish to give all of the praise and glory to God; as well as acknowledging the dedication, hard work, sacrifices and support (both financial and through prayer) of many families. We also must acknowledge the support of so many people in our Association of Churches who assisted the workers and helped with the furtherance of the work of God in Fermanagh. We give thanks to God for the founder members of the Church; for their example, encouragement and guidance over the years to those who were younger in the faith. We also record our gratitude to the evangelists, pastors, church members and their families who faithfully served the church.

It is not possible to record all the names of people or the churches concerned, however in the following pages there are accounts and contributions which indicate how the work in Fermanagh began and continued through the years.

This is the story of the people of God who, through Bible study, prayer and seeking God's guidance, have persevered from those early days with the desire to evangelise and make known to others the Way of Salvation.

Early Days

The pioneering evangelistic work, prior to the formation of the actual church at Stonepark, was carried out by several key individuals. As with all outreach

and church planting endeavours, there must be a strong desire by local people to support the work of these evangelists.

Mr John McCrea

In 1948 Mrs Ella Compton recalls two men calling at her home at Stonepark Cottage, Eskeragh, Brookeborough . . . where the text John 3 v16 was cut out in the hedge and still remains today. She observed them looking at her husband's car and thought they were from a Government department. It transpired that one of the men was Mr Albert Gale from Brookeborough Village and the other man was Mr John McCrea. Mr McCrea told Mrs Compton that her brother Thomas Oliver, who was studying at the Baptist College prior to going to India, had asked him to call with her. Mr Gale had a keen interest in the Gospel and had wanted John McCrea of the Irish Baptist Home Mission to hold meetings in the area.

A short time later a Gospel Tent Mission was held on the lawn which belonged to the Hurst brothers, William and Alfred, at Stonepark Cross. This tent mission was very well attended with people coming from near and far and a number of people were saved . . . and it was the first tent mission of many which was to be held in the area over the next number of years.

It was largely through the labours of John McCrea that Co Fermanagh was opened up to the Baptist cause. In discussion with the committee his request to return to the county was granted on several occasions, using the Home Mission caravan - which was based at Mr Hurst's farm - and working the markets and fairs. In 1949 he found that the strain of living in the caravan began to affect his health and he had to be relieved of his responsibility. He then became Pastor of Kilkeel Baptist Church and later rejoined the Mission in 1952. He held a further mission at Gardiner's Cross, Lisbellaw, prior to becoming the Pastor of the Baptist Church in Lisburn.

The Home Mission committee recognised Mr McCrea's wide experience and gifts and were sorry to part with him. They stated, however, that the needs of Co Fermanagh still burdened their hearts and that it figured in their plans for the future.

Mr Herbert Ferguson, Colporteur

Herbert Ferguson, or 'H A' as he was known, worked in the Clogher Valley and Stonepark area from 1948. He resided in a caravan in Mr Hurst's yard . . . his wife also stayed there on occasions.

To the people of Stonepark he was a quiet, dedicated and hardworking person who spent years living in a caravan and fending for himself. His work was understandably lonely and sometimes demanding, yet he was a great help to the church in the early years. It is recorded, regarding his service at Stonepark, *"that he, along with others, prepared the way for the foundation of the Stonepark church. He was a quiet and diligent worker."*

His report for 1956 contained the following details:

2529 homes visited; 3000 tracts distributed; 96 Bibles sold;
1233 Scripture portions sold; 1566 books and booklets sold;
Conversations and Bible readings with 723 contacts

" . . . I give God all the praise, for His Word will not return void"

James McManus, Evangelist

Mr James McManus was an Evangelist with the Irish Baptist Home Mission and held missions in the Tyrone and Fermanagh area over the years. He too resided in a caravan in the Hurst's yard.

During 1953 James McManus and Pastor C J Keenan conducted five missions in the Clogher Valley at Fardross, Cavanakirk, Timpany, Aughentaine and Drumlough. James also conducted a further mission at Carrickapolin, Brookeborough.

He was greatly respected as he moved around the area and his love of and interest in pipe bands provided him with many opportunities, particularly when he conducted missions in Orange Halls. This pioneer work was lonely, difficult and demanding with little encouragement apart from those brothers and sisters in the Union and the small group of believers emerging in the Stonepark area. It was, however, his support and encouragement to the small group of believers in those early days that will long be remembered and spoken about.

Mr Kenneth McCluskey

Mr McCluskey and his family, who came from Portadown, were a great help to the believers at Stonepark. As he travelled around the churches he made known the needs of the group and because of this a considerable amount of money was later raised through the appeals presented by him. He continued to support and physically assist the work in Fermanagh in the years that followed and he proved to be a dear friend to the folk at Stonepark.

In 1954 the Home Mission committee decided to place the Forbes Memorial Hall on a site on the Corlough Road, opposite the location of the present church building. This site was owned by the Hurst brothers, William and Alfred. Sunday evening meetings continued in the hall and were taken by Church members, evangelists and pastors from local churches, including W Spence (Dungannon), S Henry and J Smyth. Good numbers attended the meetings and people were saved.

Pastor Joshua Thompson, the Secretary of the Irish Baptist Union, was also a great source of help and encouragement to the believers at Stonepark. The committee of the Irish Baptist Home Mission was also very sympathetic to the work in Co Fermanagh and gave assistance in every possible way.

While these meetings continued, a nucleus of believers, with Baptist convictions, felt the need to establish a church based on New Testament principles. A decision was later made to form a Baptist Church at Stonepark, Co Fermanagh.

Memories and Reflections of the Early Years

by Mr Tom McDaniel

From earliest times Fermanagh was no stranger to Christianity. This is evident on some of the islands of Lough Erne and other places throughout the county where sites of ancient churches and monasteries are still to be found. In the eighteenth century John Wesley visited the county and on various occasions he preached the gospel in its towns and villages. As a result many Methodist churches were formed and by the mid-twentieth century it is probably true to say that Methodism was the major Protestant religion of Co Fermanagh. The county appears to have been untouched by Baptists up to that time.

I came to Enniskillen in 1948 but there were no Baptists Churches in Fermanagh at that stage. There was one Baptist, with whom I came into contact, who had come from the Coleraine district. He had married a girl from Enniskillen who was a Methodist, so he went along to the Methodist Church in Darling Street, Enniskillen, and became involved in the work there.

Some time afterwards, probably 1949 or 1950, I heard of a tent mission being conducted in the Stonepark area, near Brookeborough, and I went along with a couple of Christian friends. The evangelist was John McCrea of the Irish Baptist Home Mission. He had been invited to hold meetings in the Brookeborough area by Mr Gale who, although not a Baptist himself, had

sympathies towards the Baptist purpose. These meetings were quite successful in that a number of souls were saved. Later, other missions were held in the County, in Enniskillen and other places, conducted by Pastor Keenan and James McManus and later by James Henry. However, the mission at Stonepark was the one that introduced the Baptist beliefs to Fermanagh.

by Pastor J A Smyth

On 1 March 1948 I was appointed to the temporary staff of the Irish Baptist Home Mission. As colporteur I worked in the Clogher Valley under the supervision of the late Mr H A Ferguson. We worked happily together for one year after which I entered Bible College. At that time Mr Ferguson did a lot of visitation in the Stonepark district. It was Mr Ferguson's initial work, followed by the evangelism of the late Mr John McCrea, which led to the formation of the Stonepark Church.

In the providence of God I returned to the Clogher Valley/South Tyrone area on 1 September 1956 to serve as Pastor of Knockconny Baptist Church. My immediate predecessor, Pastor W Beatty, had conducted Bible studies in the portable hall erected near Stonepark. Two of the members of the young church, in the persons of Mrs E Compton and Mr T McDaniel, were originally from the Knockconny district.

Some of the members of the Knockconny church contributed their labour and time to help in the erection of the new building at Stonepark. I conducted a number of Bible studies in the early days and, motivated by evangelistic fervour and assisted financially by the Home Mission, Pastor J Irvine (Dungannon), Mr H A Ferguson and I conducted open air meetings in the fairs and markets then being held around the Stonepark area.

Pastor Spence from Dungannon joined us when he resumed the Pastorate of the Dungannon church vacated by Pastor Irvine. There was great fellowship and co-operation between the pastors of the churches in the Clogher Valley/ South Tyrone area and we assisted each other. We lent our help to the evangelism carried out by the Stonepark church, and in those days three-week missions were common and united help was much appreciated.

by Mr John Woolsey

In the early 1950s a Gospel Mission was held at Stonepark under the auspices of the Irish Baptist Home Mission. The evangelist was Mr John McCrea and God blessed the work with salvation.

When the mission concluded it was decided to continue Sunday evening Gospel services using one of the Forbes Memorial Halls. I remember as a young man travelling often from Dungannon to preach at those services. The people who were stalwarts in that work were Herbie Ferguson, the Home Mission colporteur, Jack and Ella Compton, Willie and Alfie Hurst, Tom McQuade and Tom McDaniel.

The Home Mission Colporteur, or 'H A' as we knew him, spent lonely years in Fermanagh travelling the roads and lanes for miles around. He was a familiar sight with his suitcase of Bibles and books strapped on the bicycle carrier tirelessly visiting the homes of people to bring them the Gospel.

Willie and Alfie were characters in their in own right, men who loved the Lord and were practical in their support of the work of the Gospel in Fermanagh. They provided the site upon which the original church building stands and devoted themselves to the work. The early years were a struggle and I know of one preacher who arrived at the hall after travelling from Dungannon to find H A and Willie present. After waiting sometime Willie said to the preacher 'I think you may begin'. So he did and preached to the two of them!

Jack & Ella Compton must never be forgotten for their faithfulness and loyalty through many difficult years. Their home was always open and many were the meals enjoyed and great was the fellowship after services in the hall. Jack was a bit of a topiary artist and had carefully trimmed the hedge in front of their home to present John 3 v 16 to the gaze of all travellers on what was the main road to Enniskillen. I have warm memories of evening gatherings around the fireside in the Compton home before we set off on our homeward journey to Dungannon.

by Pastor W James Byers

My association with the Stonepark work and subsequently with the Stonepark Church goes back more than fifty years. I was living and working in Dungannon at that time.

The late Jack Compton was secretary. I recall the Hurst brothers. . . we met in their drawing room from time to time. Mr Harold Ferguson, a Colporteur with the Irish Baptist Home Mission, had been allocated to assist with the new work in Co Fermanagh. The Tubmans and the McQuades were families that I remember in the congregation. Mr Gale, who had a Mission Hall in Brookeborough, was a regular attender at the morning meeting. He was a good man with a fine testimony in the district.

My programme usually commenced on the Friday evening when I spoke at

the house meeting held in the home of the late Baskin Boyd, a local businessman in Fivemiletown. Saturday was spent in house to house visitation. We often went to Enniskillen on Saturday evening to assist in the Open Air meeting there conducted, by the Irish Evangelistic Band.

The areas that I covered on foot in the district were:

... every home from Stonepark to Brookeborough (both the old and new roads);
... every home from Fivemiletown to Stonepark;
... the village of Brookeborough;
... the area around Ashbrooke;
... and the area to the east of the present building.

'From a little acorn a mighty oak to grow'. From small beginnings in the Forbes Memorial hall a flourishing work has been established. This is the Lord's doing and it is wonderful in our eyes. To Him be the Glory!

Constitution of Stonepark Baptist Church

On 8 November 1956 a meeting was held in the Forbes Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. Pastor B H Weir (Chairman Home Mission), Messrs J Thompson (Secretary Baptist Union of Ireland), J A McCrea (Lisburn) and Kenneth McCluskey attended by invitation.

Pastor Weir presided over the proceedings and the Church was constituted. The following people were the founder members of Stonepark Baptist Church:

Mr George Bates George and his wife lived in Brookeborough and he was saved at a mission held at Stonepark. He transferred to the Baptist Church in Enniskillen in 1966.

Mr Jack Compton Jack was saved at one of the early missions held at Stonepark. The preacher on that occasion was J A McCrea. Jack lived in Stonepark Cottage with his wife Ella, son Brian and daughter Joan. He was the first secretary of the Church and also was treasurer, offices which he held for a number of years. Jack was later elected to the position of Elder.

Mrs Ella Compton Ella originally came from Knockconny and was saved in 1947 under the ministry of Pastor Wilson.

Miss M C B Crawford Bridget worked as a nanny in Ashbrooke House, the residence of the Brooke family. She returned to England in 1964.

Mr Herbert Ferguson 'H A' was a colporteur working in the area on behalf of Irish Baptist Home Mission. He was involved in Christian outreach in Fermanagh and Tyrone from 1948 and was instrumental in the formation of the Church. He assisted with the work at Stonepark until he transferred to Lisburn in 1966.

Mr William Hurst Willie was saved at an earlier mission held at Stonepark, and it was on the lawn of his property that the first tent mission was conducted. He later donated the land on which the original church building was constructed. He was the first treasurer of the church.

Mr Tom McDaniel Tom was saved in 1947 under the ministry of Pastor Jim Irvine. He lived in Enniskillen with his wife Iris and family but due to work commitments they moved to Dungannon in 1961. After a time he returned to Fermanagh and continued in membership until he transferred to Enniskillen Baptist Church in 1966.

Mr Tom McQuade Tom, who resided in Lisnaskea, came from Virginia, Co Cavan and it was at a mission conducted by Mr Sommerville Large in Omagh that he became a Christian. Tom served as a Deacon in Stonepark from 1964 until 2001. Being the only foundation member attending Stonepark, Tom had the honour of 'turning the key' in the new church building on 5 October 2002, a duty he performed with great delight.

Meetings continued in the Forbes Memorial Hall . . . however a request had been received for the Hall to be transferred elsewhere for other outreach work. Mr William and Mr Alfred Hurst gave an area of ground measuring 29yd by 22yd at Stonepark for the erection of a permanent church building. When spoken to by Dr Joshua Thompson (Secretary of the Irish Baptist Union) concerning the cost of the site he was informed "that the cost had been paid at Calvary".

On Wednesday 22 May 1957, Stonepark Baptist Church was received into the Baptist Union of Ireland by the President, Pastor R Clarke. Mr Jack Compton and Mr Tom McDaniel attended as representatives of Stonepark.

A building was erected on the site and was opened by Mrs K McCluskey (Portadown) on 25 May 1957.

General Church Business

The first general church meeting tool place on 30 November 1956 in the Forbes Memorial Hall. Mr H Ferguson was the chairman and Mr Jack Compton and Mr William Hurst were elected as Secretary and Treasurer

respectively. At this meeting it was agreed to approach the bank for a loan of £150. A draft Constitution was also accepted. The topic of appointing Elders and Deacons as the Oversight of the church was also discussed but it was agreed that in the meantime the eight foundation members should act in this capacity.

The second general meeting was held on 30 May 1957. A request was also made to the Irish Home Mission for James McManus (Evangelist) to come to the area for three months to conduct Gospel Missions. A Mission was arranged for Garvary and others proposed for Tamlaght and Enniskillen.

At the third general church meeting on 6 March 1958, a Building Committee was formed to complete the outside of the building. The committee comprised Messrs Ferguson, Hurst, Tubman and Compton. Mr Tom McDaniel was elected to be entirely responsible for the interior decorations.

Over the next number of years the small group was assisted by Mr Ferguson, Mr Harry Geddis (Windsor Baptist), local pastors and members of other churches. They continued to preach the gospel message and reach out to the people of Fermanagh and Tyrone. It is apparent when reading the minutes of these early committee meetings that the issues they faced were varied and included topics such as . . .

◊ Finance: Building fund; supporting missionaries and mission societies; expenses for visiting speakers. There was a strong desire to give to and support the work of the Irish Baptist Home Mission and the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission, with a substantial amount given to the work in Eire.

◊ Request for services of pastors, evangelist and other church members to assist in the work of supporting them in Mission, Open Air Work, Door-to-Door and visitation. Many of these people stayed in the Compton home.

◊ Building work: Ongoing work to the inside and outside of the church building, including the addition of a new porch, ante room and baptismal tank.

◊ Organising Services: eg Harvest services, Gospel Missions, Bible teaching & special events.

The members worked together and grew in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Aside form the decisions on practical issues, the group also rejoiced in new people attending the fellowship and joining the church as well as dealing with the pressure from those in the community who were not sympathetic to the Baptist church.

Baptismal Services and other notable occasions

12 October 1957 Welcome Home service for Raymond Compton, missionary with Quaebo. Pastor James Smyth was the chairman and the speakers were Messrs A Gale, T McDaniel, H A Ferguson and the Compton Brothers.

31 October 1957 Presentations to Mr James Byers, Dungannon, on the occasion of his marriage and to Pastor J Smyth, Knockconny, for taking the weekly Bible studies from May - October 1957.

30 December 1957 The treasurer, Mr W Hurst, reported a credit balance in the bank with nothing outstanding against the church building, leaving the church free from debt. The erection of a wall, entrance pillars and gates at the road, spouting and other sundry items amounting to approximately £100 had yet to be completed.

26 July 1959 Presentations to Miss M Carrothers and Miss J Compton by Mrs M Clingen on behalf of the congregation.

14 February 1958 The first Baptismal Service was carried out in Knockconny when Mr J J and Mrs Tubman were baptised.

6 November 1958 Baptismal service was held in Dungannon Baptist Church when Mr & Mrs A Clingen were baptised by Pastor J Irvine.

31 May 1959 The first baptismal service was held in Stonepark. Miss Vaughan and Mr T Stinson were baptised by Pastor James Smyth (Knockconny).

9 October 1959 Members and friends gathered to present Mr Tom McQuade with a wedding present. Tea was provided.

As a new decade approached many changes occurred as the work of Stonepark became more established. In 1960 Cecil Bradley came to work with the church and was followed over the next thirty-one years by Pastors R Grant, C Lutton, R Hodgen, E Betts, W Colville and H Dowds. The word of God was faithfully proclaimed in the area.

Stonepark Baptist Church 1960-1961

Reflections by Pastor Rea Grant

My introduction to the friends at Stonepark took place at the end of my

second year as a student at the Irish Baptist College. I had applied for summer work with the Irish Baptist Home Mission and was allocated to work with Mr James McManus, the IBHM evangelist, who was conducting missions in the surrounding area on behalf of the Stonepark Church. This involved me in doing door-to-door visitation, open-air witness and sharing in a tent mission held in a field just off the main road between Stonepark and Fivemiletown.

I completed my college course in June 1961 and almost immediately began working for the IBHM. I was sent to do the pastoral work of the church at Stonepark and evangelism in the area, along with Pastor Jim Smyth of Knockconny Church and other pastors. We conducted open-airs at the fairs and markets supported by Mr Ferguson, the Colporteur. Some of the men from the church held open-air meetings in places like Lisnaskea and Roslea and other towns and villages.

The membership of the church at that time was about twelve with a Sunday morning attendance of fifteen to twenty. The evening gospel service at 8pm was quite well attended drawing in a number of people from around the area. The prayer and Bible study was on a Monday evening mostly attended by the members and on many occasions the twelve were present. My accommodation was in a caravan loaned by Mr A Clingen and sited in the farmyard of the Hurst brothers.

Early in 1962 the Home Mission suggested I should move to the south of Ireland to work with the Waterford church. The friends at Stonepark asked that I should continue with them. Into this situation came an invitation to preach from a church in Scotland. After much thought and prayer I felt led to accept that invitation and so in May 1962 I moved to Glenburn Baptist Church in Paisley, Renfrewshire and for over forty years I have been a pastor serving churches within the Baptist Union of Scotland.

I have been greatly blessed in serving within the pastoral ministry and I look back to the beginning of it all that as a raw recruit I was greatly encouraged and helped during my short time in Stonepark. I have very happy memories of those days.

A little reflection on those days . . .

The late fifties and early sixties were difficult days along the border areas and groups of full-time 'B' specials patrolled the border roads using ex-army Bren gun carriers. Returning late one night from my home at Dromara, Co Down to Stonepark, near Fivemiletown a red light flashed and I stopped. Opening

the window of my old Ford Ten I could just make out a figure in the darkness. "Not again, this is the fifth time I've been stopped tonight", I said. Just then a voice from the ditch shouted "That's the pastor from Stonepark, tell him to go on otherwise he'll try and convert us!"

I think the young man who spoke had family connections who came to the Sunday evening gospel service and may well have attended on occasions himself.

I am thrilled to hear of all that has happened over the years at Stonepark and I trust and pray that even greater times lie ahead. May the Lord continue to bless richly the Fellowship.

Stonepark Baptist Church 1962 & 1963 to 1967

'Who has despised the day of small things?' Zechariah 4:10

Following the formation of Stonepark Church in 1956 the small group of members worked hard at establishing good relationships with God's people for miles around and made many friends. However, despite a certain amount of goodwill, the planting of a Baptist Church did not meet with widespread approval and so the maintenance of its witness called for the utmost patience and discretion on the part of the members.

When I came to Co Fermanagh on Monday 18 June 1962 on a Summer Appointment with the Irish Baptist Home Mission, I was a 21 year-old evangelist who had graduated from Belfast Bible College on the previous Friday afternoon.

Pastors J A Smyth (Knockconny) and W Spence (Dungannon) met me in Dungannon that Monday morning and brought me to Stonepark. I discovered that I would be living in a small caravan parked in the corner of the late William and Alfred Hurst's farmyard, directly across the lane from the original church building. The caravan and a bicycle that was showing its age constituted my basic equipment.

I learned that the two Pastors had been conducting a Gospel Mission at Tresna, near Tempo. To my complete surprise I was told that I would be the preacher from that night forward . . . and they would be going back home to their warm manses.

When meeting time came I discovered that a Mission Hall at Tresna had been demolished in a storm some time previously, leaving only the wooden

floor behind. A 'portable hall' had been brought on to the site and the meetings were held in it. The replacement hall was a wonderful contraption on wheels! The word 'unfolded' rather than 'erected' describes how it was made ready for use.

The meetings at Tresna were poorly supported. My notes show that numbers were 12, 14, with a maximum of 18. The mission ended on Friday, 29 June.

The Church and Congregation in 1962

The phrase of Zechariah the prophet comes to mind because at that point in the church's life it really was *'the day of small things'.*

On Sunday, 24 June I discovered that the congregations numbered about twenty people (including a few children) and that the church had eleven members. Clearly the church's future would depend on evangelism.

A number of those good folk have since gone to be with the Lord and I believe that my friendships with the others are as warm and firm as ever. To mention names is a risky thing because there is the danger of omitting to mention some equally worthy people. I cannot imagine that anyone will be offended if I mention the late Jack Compton, his wife Ella, their son Brian and daughter Joan. I think of them and write about them in the warmest possible terms because of their kindness to me. Many a good meal and comfortable night I had in their home in Fivemiletown.

Jack's knowledge of the Tyrone/Fermanagh border area and beyond enabled me to meet many local believers in a short space of time. I soon knew where all the Faith Mission Prayer Unions met because we attended them together. The church's circle of friends kept on growing.

For the remainder of June and July I focussed on the services at Stonepark and on visitation on behalf of the church.

In August I was joined by Noel McCullens, a member of Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, Belfast and a student at the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow. Like me, he also had applied for a summer appointment and been sent to Stonepark.

We held a Gospel Mission at Lisboy (between Brookeborough and Clabby) in a field owned by the late Mr Campbell of Clabby. The meetings were held in the portable hall and local interest was most encouraging. Attendances ranged from 17 to 71 over three weeks.

Following the Mission Noel went back to BTI in Glasgow and I moved to Waterford Church on another Home Mission appointment from September 1962 until February 1963. At the end of that time I found myself between a rock and a hard place. Waterford Church wanted me to stay, Brannockstown Church had requested the Home Mission to send me there, and Stonepark had asked that I be returned to them. The Home Mission Committee very kindly gave me complete liberty to reach a decision and I finally accepted the appointment to Stonepark.

1963

My first priorities were to find lodgings and a car. I rented a flat from Nurse Johnston at Churchill House in Brookeborough. I bought a 1953 Austin A40 Somerset . . . perhaps not the most economic car but it was all I could find at the time. It proved itself when, fitted with an extra strong tow-bar, it was used to haul the aforementioned portable hall around Fermanagh and far beyond.

The salary of a Home Mission Worker (temporary employee) in those days was £375 per annum plus a Motor Allowance of £75 per annum. Pastor Joshua Thompson, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland, wrote to say that following my forthcoming marriage on 28 May the salary would increase to £430 per annum as from 1 June.

In addition to settling in to the pastoral and pulpit work in the church I began searching for suitable places to hold gospel missions using the portable hall. I was absent at certain times doing Home Mission deputation when invited by the churches.

The following items gleaned from my annual reports to the Home Mission for 1963 and subsequent years testify that we seized every opportunity the Lord gave us to further His work and that He blessed us far beyond our asking or thinking.

21 April – 12 May Mission at Ramult, Fivemiletown.

28 May ... Wedding Day Rea Grant and Ruth Campbell were married in Londonderry Baptist Church on Tuesday, 28 May 1963 with Pastor Joshua Thompson officiating.

16 June – 10 July Mission at Anderson's Cross, mid-way between Clabby and Tempo.

20 – 27 July Pastor Smyth and I led a party of young people from the Stonepark, Knockconny and Omagh Churches for a one-week camp at Rostrevor in co-operation with the Southern Baptist Association Camp.

10 October Commenced a weekly Cottage Meeting at Tempo in preparation for a mission in the area.

13 October Commenced Sunday School in Stonepark with seven pupils.

10 November – 15 December Mission at Carrowkeel, one mile from Tempo on the Enniskillen Road.

30 December Special Parent's Night in Stonepark. Children from the Carrowkeel Mission and the Sunday school were involved.

As the year ended I made a list of people who attended Stonepark Services on a regular or occasional basis and was amazed when I counted some 52 names. My findings confirmed that friendship and goodwill are very important factors in promoting the Lord's work.

1964

January The Grants moved from Churchill House, Brookeborough to a Council house at 15 Hillview, Lisnaskea.

26 January Four baptisms in Stonepark.

17 – 21 February Preparatory visitation for Mission at Largy (mid-way between Tempo and Enniskillen). The hall was located in the garden of the late Miss Ford's cottage.

21 February – 23 March Meetings continued for 5 weeks.

13 April J J Tubman was elected as Elder and the Deacons were W Hurst, T McQuade, A Clingen and J Compton.

13 – 17 April Preparatory visiting for Lackaboy Mission, on the Tempo Road about 2 miles outside Enniskillen.

19 April – 17 May Attendance at Lackaboy ranged from 17 to 66.

9 – 12 June Preparatory visitation for Gortmesson Mission, on the Watemeary Road, Enniskillen.

14 June – 12 July Attendances ranged from 12 to 48.

12 – 21 August SBA Camp at Bettystown, Count Meath.

4 October Seven Baptisms in Stonepark . . . some of the candidates were converts from missions held earlier in the year, and several others, who were influenced through the missions, had expressed a desire to be baptised.

16 October Stonepark Youth Fellowship commenced. By the end of the year it had 13 young people attending.

27 – 30 October Preparatory visitation for a mission in Ballyreagh Methodist Hall WHICH was very kindly granted by the Trustees.

1 November – 4 December Attendance was good from the first night and continued like this for four weeks. In the fifth week attendance dropped when the weather became very cold.

1965

For some time those members of Stonepark Church who lived in Enniskillen had been thinking of establishing a Baptist Church in that town. They met in various homes on Wednesday nights to pray about holding a mission in the town and the formation of a church.

On 10 February, the matter of church extension in Enniskillen was discussed at the Annual Meeting in Stonepark. The mind of the church was that 'such extension would be wise, and the natural follow-up to the Gospel Missions that we had conducted in the Enniskillen area but numerous attempts to find a venue for a mission all ended in failure.

25 April Three baptisms at Stonepark. One of the three was a woman of seventy years of age. The three plus another girl baptised in 1964 were added to membership on Sunday, 23 May bringing the membership of the church over twenty for the first time to 22.

3 – 8 May The Menace of Mormonism . . . The late Pastor Jim Henry, then recently resigned from Larne Church, was deeply concerned about this

problem. Together we planned a short series of meetings at strategic places in Fermanagh.

11 July – 15 August A mission was planned at Cornafanogue, near the junction of the Maguiresbridge/ Tempo and the Brookeborough/Lisbellaw roads. The portable hall suffered major damage when being towed on to the site. Temporary repairs took four days to complete after which it was towed to the Hurst farmyard at Stonepark and parked as close to the church building as possible.

10 September The topic of having a cemetery next to the church building was raised at a Business meeting. (This matter continued to be discussed for the next forty years).

29 October A branch of the Baptist Women's Auxiliary was formed in Stonepark. It became an outreach to women not connected with the Church.

1966

24 – 29 January Preparatory visitation with Pastor James McManus for a Mission in the YMCA, Enniskillen. We visited 1055 homes.

30 January – 20 February Attendances ranged from 22 – 96.

27 February Regular Baptist services commenced in the YMCA Committee Room.

22 March **Formation of Enniskillen Baptist Church** At a special service six members of Stonepark signed the Minute Book as founding members of the Enniskillen Church. Pastor T J McNabb (Union President) was Chairman and Pastors J Thompson (Union Secretary) and L E Deens (Home Mission Secretary) also took part.

April – June **An initiative in Lisnaskea**

Always thinking about extending Stonepark's area of influence I wondered about some gospel initiatives in and around Lisnaskea.

One day a young man called at our home in Lisnaskea. He was a young Methodist evangelist searching for the local Baptist pastor. His name was Jim Murdoch . . . now well known to Irish Baptists.

Jim was on a temporary appointment to the Lisnaskea Circuit of the Methodist Church. We very quickly agreed to assist each other in gospel outreach during his appointment.

July & August While the Grants were on holiday in July, two students from the Irish Baptist College gained experience in supplying the pulpits in Stonepark and Enniskillen. Their names were Walter Entwistle and David Boadle. Walter supplied Stonepark and David supplied Enniskillen.

9 October – 8 November In connection with Enniskillen Church a mission was held at Springfield, Enniskillen on a site kindly granted by Mr Spence.

1967

In February I received a confidential letter from the late Pastor W H Rea, pastor of the Lisnagleer and Cookstown Churches. He had planned to retire in a few months' time and was pursuing an initiative of his own to find a successor

I supplied the pulpits in Cookstown (11am & 7pm) and Lisnagleer (12.30pm & 5.30pm) on Sunday, 5 March and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. A unanimous call to those churches followed very quickly.

On Sunday, 19 March I gave Stonepark and Enniskillen Churches three months' notice of my resignation from the Irish Baptist Home Mission, and as pastor of the two churches. Simultaneously I notified the Home Mission Committee.

Enniskillen Church said farewell to the Grant family on Tuesday, 20 June and Stonepark on Wednesday, 21 June. We moved to Cookstown Manse on Thursday, 22 June, together with our children David, Irene and Ian who had been born in the Erne Hospital, Enniskillen.

Pastor Charles Lutton

Pastor Lutton worked at Stonepark between August 1967 and October 1967. He was attached to the Irish Baptist Home Mission. He was involved in pastoral work and outreach with the church and also assisted with the work in Enniskillen. Throughout this time he resided in the caravan in the Hurst's farmyard. Over the years and during times of pastoral vacancies, Pastor Lutton has returned to preach at Stonepark. He is remembered fondly by the

congregation as a person who encouraged them in the things and work of God and as someone who had a friendly and welcoming personality.

Stonepark Baptist Church 1970 – 1978

Reflections by Pastor Robert Hodgen

My time at Stonepark began in January 1970 and concluded in August 1978.

The night of our induction was a 'never to be forgotten' occasion. The party from Ballygomartin had hired a coach in which my wife Madge and I also travelled. We left around 6pm arriving at Stonepark about 8.30pm, an hour or so late! The coach we hired had a governor on the ignition and could only travel around 35-40mph. I gathered the congregation had almost sung through the Redemption Hymnal! Such a night – the church was filled to overflowing. I do remember however, Pastor Charlie Lutton gave the address emphasising the need to "have a big conception of God whom you serve" . . . and that has never left me.

Our pastorate at Stonepark was a happy one and although I came from the city we settled into the country quite quickly.

It was a joy to minister to those faithful people, the prayer room was usually well-filled on a Monday evening, the Sunday morning service was encouraging and at the evening service the church was almost full with many coming from other churches.

Bless God during our stay we had the joy of pointing a number to the Saviour, baptising and receiving them into membership. A number are still at Stonepark today while others are serving in other churches. One can humbly say the Lord's work at Stonepark never suffered from our being called there.

Our pastorate was a busy one, having to pastor the Enniskillen assembly as well as Stonepark. It seemed everything had to be duplicated with four services each Lord's day, Monday evening Prayer and Bible study at Stonepark, Tuesday evening Prayer and Bible study at Enniskillen, Women's meeting once a month at Stonepark and later commencing WMA at Enniskillen.

Life certainly was not dull! There was visitation most days and helping out wherever I could. I recall one day fitting the rain drain to an old lady's house, which would have given you a real shower had you visited her if it was raining!

The Lord alone knows how many children were led to the Saviour during children's missions which were led by Leslie and June Knipe, later helped by Iris Williamson and Jimmy Jennings with Bill Hicks driving the old diesel bus. I shall always be indebted to Bill & Doreen Hicks. Bill always saw that my car was kept on the road whenever it needed attention and dear Mrs Beatty was always on hand with a cup of tea. I cherish to this day the memory of John James Tubman and his wife, a godly couple, who lived up the road from Stonepark. Then there was big Alfie Hurst, Jack and Mrs Compton and their daughter Joan who played the organ. Jack and Jimmy Jennings led the singing on Sunday evenings, allowing me a little breather after rushing from Enniskillen for the 8 o'clock meeting. Tom & Deenie McQuade, always to be relied on, never missed a meeting and shortly after arriving from Belfast gave my daughter, then 10 years of age, a lovely little corgi dog which we treasured for the next 16 years . . . this was such a comfort to a little girl who was missing her friends in the city. Then there was Victor & Mary Crowe, and on one occasion dear Victor once referred to himself as 'the only singing crow in Fermanagh'.

These friends, most of them unknown to me prior to coming to Stonepark, all became close friends – it was a privilege to serve them. A dear brother, Mr Gale from Brookeborough, said to me on one occasion 'these people are the salt of the earth, a godly people in an ungodly world' referring to the members of Stonepark.

Time and space does not permit further reminiscing, but today as I recall the past I thank the Lord for directing our paths to Stonepark, and as we hear of the Lord's doings in that part of His Vineyard, rejoice in the knowledge the work is progressing and His Kingdom being extended to His Glory.

September 1979 – January 1991

In September 1979, after completing three years at the Irish Baptist College, Edward Betts came to work with the Stonepark Church. This coincided with the first anniversary of his marriage to Joyce. They lived in a caravan on Mr Robert Boyd's farm at Tattynuckle, Fivemiletown. It was two years later, in June 1981, that he accepted a call to the pastorate of the church.

From the outset of his ministry Pastor Betts was involved in pastoral work, organising Gospel missions, children's outreach, open air work, door-to-door visitation and 5-Day Clubs. Over the years these special times of outreach took place in Fivemiletown, Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler, Maguiresbridge, Clabby and Stonepark church, using tents and portable halls. As well as people from our own church being involved, teams from the NBA, CEF, BYE

teams and pastors also assisted. A two-week tent mission for children was held in Fivemiletown in May 1985 led by R McClure from Newcastle, assisted by Harry and Christine Dowds and a BYE team.

In 1980 Pastor Betts, along with Addison and Margaret Clingen, became involved in a Bible study group in Cavan. These meetings were held fortnightly and continued for the next six years. The Stonepark fellowship was fully supportive of Pastor Betts in this outreach both through prayer and practically. Pastor Ian Grant, in his article *'Early Days in Cavan'*, says the work by Pastor Betts "was to become the seed bed for the first ever Baptist Church in Cavan some years later".

From 1986 until 1991 outreach work, in the form of Coffee bars and Sunday Gospel services, took place in Lisnaskea in a building in the Market Yard owned by Mr Addison Clingen.

During Pastor Bett's ministry the numbers attending the church services and the Friday night children's and youth meetings steadily increased. Between 1985 and 1990 major decisions were also made regarding improvements to the church building and the proposed purchase of other property.

In February 1990 the extensions and renovations, which cost £10,000, were completed and the minutes record that thanks were expressed to 'Johnston Builders' for the work which was carried out, and particularly to a member of Stonepark, Johnny Johnston, for his advice and commitment to the project.

A decision was also made to purchase the bungalow and grounds opposite the church, at a cost of £26,200. When the transaction was completed in 1988 the premises was used for the children's and youth meetings.

In May 1990 the first formal 'Mission Policy' document was compiled. This outlined Stonepark's dedication to supporting missionary societies and in particular, the work of Baptist Missions in France, Peru and Ireland.

Towards the end of 1990, Pastor Betts resigned from the pastorate at Stonepark and in January 1991 he, along with his wife Joyce and children, Ruth, Jonathan and David went to Peru as missionaries with Baptist Missions. After language study Edward & Joyce worked in Puno. However, living in the high altitude began to affect Edward's health so they moved to Tacna. The family returned home to Northern Ireland in August 1993.

Edward became the Pastor of the Tandragee Baptist Church in 1996 and it was during his ministry there that he became ill and passed into the Presence of his Saviour on 23 May 2002.

Edward Betts was a man with a friendly smile and firm handshake. He had a great love for God's Word and always sought to bring the Word of God to the people and to proclaim the Gospel message.

After Pastor Betts went to Peru in 1991 the Church was vacant for approximately three-and-a-half years and during this period visiting preachers, along with some of our own men, took Sunday and midweek services. Pastor Ted Kelly from Sligo Baptist, also took a number of men's meetings which were used for outreach purposes. The men of the fellowship were also challenged regarding our relationship with God. This was a helpful and necessary challenge as we prepared for service during the vacancy.

Over the following period of time we welcomed three Baptist Youth Evangelism (BYE) teams, comprising young people from various Baptist churches, including Newtownards, Portstewart and Ballymena. Each BYE team lasted for one week in the summer . . . a busy and intense week of fellowship and outreach which focused on children and youth. Two of these teams were led by Pastor Mike Ewan and the other by Gerald Titmus. These were times of great encouragement to the Church and to our own young people. Involvement with the BYE teams helped our young people to grow in their own faith and to later become involved with Child Evangelism Fellowship, BYE Teams, 5-Day Clubs, Day Camp and our own weekly youth work on Friday evenings. A number of the visiting BYE team members have gone on to serve the Lord as Pastors and Christian workers and as a Church we follow their work and remember them in prayer.

Due to the lack of facilities and space a decision was taken to adapt the bungalow by removing some interior walls to make one large room which became the main area for the Friday night children's meetings and the midweek prayer meetings. A new hall, measuring 30ft x 20ft, was also built to the rear of the bungalow on the site of an old garage and outhouse. Most of the work done to these buildings and the construction of the new hall was done by the voluntary labour. Tot and Bill Hicks, George McMaster and the late Jim Morrow and other members and friends were involved. The new hall cost £7,803.20.

On 13 December 1993 the Church members met and issued a call to Pastor Billy Colville to the Pastorate. He accepted this call and was inducted as Pastor of Stonepark on 3 September 1994.

On 24 March 1994 the Church met and agreed to purchase a site to build a Manse a short distance from the Church. The site at Eskeragh, Brookeborough, was purchased from Mr & Mrs McLaughlin. It was a considerable period of time before Outline Planning permission was granted.

There was an appeal made to other churches in the Baptist Union to assist in the funding of this manse and we are grateful for the assistance and support we received. The manse was completed in November 1995 at a cost of £72,000.00.

On 6 June 1994, the church received a request from the Baptist Union asking that Pastor Colville continue as Secretary, pro tem, of the Baptist Union of Ireland. This request was granted by the church. However, it was not long before Pastor Colville resigned from the pastorate at Stonepark and began a full time appointment as Secretary/Director of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland.

Stonepark Baptist Church 2004-2005

Reflections by Pastor Billy Colville

For the Colville family the move to Stonepark brought a whole new experience of life. Having lived all of life in the environs of Belfast city there were many very noticeable changes. There was the darkness at night. Yes it does get dark in Belfast as well, but there is always ambient light from street lights, houses etc. Step out the back of the Stonepark church at night and it was pitch black and the car was difficult to find! Then there was the distance. Shops and everything had always been in walking distance from home, perhaps a mile or so but no more. The local shop became a 10 mile return journey, church 20 miles, a visit to the local hospital 40 miles, a large supermarket 40 miles, the Belfast hospitals 150 miles and visitation never took less than 20 miles. The Screeby manse was a fantastic experience, probably the nicest family house in which we have lived. For the children driving up Screeby Road at night was a fun filled experience of squeals as we dodged the rabbits and pheasants that played chicken in the car headlights.

The pace of life also changed dramatically as everything slowed down. This became a very welcome and therapeutic change for someone used to living in the fast lane. People were so much friendlier. Yet underneath all this outward idyll there was still the same of need of sinful humanity. That need did not change between the city and the country.

Church life mirrored these cultural changes and was a very happy experience of a family working together. There was also a real sense of the love of the word of God among the people of the church. Good preaching, not that the church got it every week, was deeply appreciated. Prayer was a priority and

the proclamation of the gospel a joy. Two outreaches in a year were unheard of in my experience.

Perhaps my most unforgettable experience was the funerals, two in one year . . . Jack Compton and John Clark. In the city a funeral would be all over in two hours. Here there was the arrival of the remains at the home when a word was expected, and then a funeral which could last for the three or four hours between the house/church and the graveside. Probably the most unforgettable experience was John Clark's funeral. It started at 2pm in the church, which was packed to over flowing. We arrived in Fivemiletown about four o'clock to find an enormous crowd waiting for us in the gathering gloom. There were 200-300 people at the graveside. The short word of a Belfast funeral graveside to a handful of people suddenly had to give way to opening the word and proclaiming the Christian hope to many who had not even been to the church service. So, unprepared and depending upon the Lord, we turned to Amos and amidst the gathering gloom reminded ourselves of the one who is able to turn the darkness of death into morning.

All too soon the experience was over, 12 short months. It was only a deep sense of the call of God to another task that dragged us away from Stonepark. It would have been so easy to stay. Why the time was so short we await eternity to find out. However, for me it was an unforgettable and invaluable experience for the role I was to take up.

It is very encouraging when members of Stonepark become involved in the wider work of the Association of Baptist Churches and other missionary societies. Over the years we have contributed to BYE Teams, Missionary Teams to France and various other committees.

Missionaries

Elizabeth Ashmore worked in Eritrea, North of Ethiopia, from 1973 – 1980. Due to the rise in communism Elizabeth had to leave the area but continued missionary work in an Arab country.

Barbara Jennings worked in Spain in 1973 as a nanny and mother's help to Paul & Audrey Reid and their family. She also ran an English speaking 'Good News' club at the American Bible College in Castell De Sels.

Edward & Joyce Betts and their family went to Peru in January 1991. They served the Lord in the Puno region and in Tacna, being involved in pastoral work, evangelism, children's outreach, women's work and teaching in the Institute and churches.

Karen Hicks There was a special commissioning service for Karen on 29 August 1998 as she began work with 'Universities & Colleges Christian Fellowship' (UCCF) in North Wales. She then moved to Cyprus in 2001 where she worked in Nicosia and Larnaca under the auspices of 'International Fellowship of Evangelical Students' (IFES). Karen returned home to Fermanagh in 2005 after her marriage to Dixon Gulli.

Tot Hicks attended the Irish Baptist College for three years. From June 2004 he worked on outreach connected with Stonepark and on 10 April 2005 he was officially commissioned by Stonepark as an Associate Evangelist to work with the Northern Baptist Association.

Pastors

Colin Gervais, a former member of Stonepark, became Pastor of Shankill Baptist Church on 22 August 2001. He had moved from Stonepark to Portrush Baptist Church with his parents prior to entering the Irish Baptist College.

George Morrow, a member of Stonepark, attended the Irish Baptist College. He then received a call to the Pastorate of Omagh Baptist Church. On 12 April 2003 Stonepark held a Commissioning Service for George, his wife Heather and daughters Jane, Rachel and Sarah. He was inducted as Pastor of Omagh Baptist on 15 May 2003.

David Wright, a member of Stonepark, was called to the Pastorate of Banbridge Independent Methodist church. He began this post, with his wife Neelia, on 6 January 2006.

Chairpersons

Yvonne Graham was Chair of the 'Baptist Women's Fellowship' from May 2000 – May 2001.

Jim Graham is currently the Chairperson of the Peru Committee of 'Baptist Missions' and has been involved with this committee for the last ten years. He visited Peru in 2000 as part of a Summer Team and had the opportunity to see the work of the Mission at first-hand.

Tot Hicks was the Chairperson of the 'Northern Baptist Association' during 2002 – 2003.

Presidents

Jim Graham was President of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland from May 2005 – May 2006. This was a 'first' for Stonepark and indeed the Fermanagh churches! Jim took as his theme for the year the words found in Philippians 2:15 *'Shine as lights in the world'* and Micah 6:8 *'What does the Lord require of thee?'*

Pastor Harry Dowds became President of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland in May 2006. At the commencement of his year Harry outlined his calling to pastoral work and his utter belief in the necessity of churches working together in association. The honour and huge responsibility of becoming President was also something that he felt keenly. A scripture text that influenced him much is found in John 3:30, *"He must increase, but I must decrease".* His hopes for his presidential year are: 'that Christ will be in the place that is rightfully His, exalted and glorified, and that we will be in the place that is r ightfully ours, bowed at His feet in loving adoration and worship'.

Deacons

Jack Compton		13 May 1964
William Hurst		13 May 1964
Tom McQuade		13 May 1964
Addison Clinge		13 May 1964
Leslie Knipe		24 January 1968
Victor Irwin		15 October 1975
James Jennings	*Treasurer*	15 October 1975

Billy Gow		
Victor Crow		27 February 1978
William Hicks		27 February 1978
John Johnston		16 April 1980
George Morrow	*Secretary*	3 March 1983
Norman Johnston		3 March 1983
Tot Hicks	*Secretary*	19 October 1983
Jim Graham		6 April 1988
Ronnie Whittaker		6 April 1988
George McMaster		15 April 1992
Julian Bleakley		29 March 1993
Walter Boyd	*Secretary, current Treasurer*	11 May 1998
Robin Massey	*Secretary*	
John Cairns		

Elders

J J Tubman	23 April 1964
Jack Compton	15 October 1975
Tot Hicks	6 April 1988
Jim Graham	10 February 1993
Ronnie Whittaker	19 February 1993

Stonepark Baptist Church in 2006

It is good and important to look back over the years and see how the church and congregation have progressed. It's also vital to review where we stand today and where our priorities for the future lie. Church life can be busy and all-consuming but without God at the heart of our activity, our work is in vain.

In September 2006 the membership was fifty-six, with ages ranging from late teens to early eighties. Approximately 140 people, including children, meet on Sunday mornings with 75 meeting on a Sunday evening for the Gospel Service. There is a wide variety of work taking place within the church including the weekly Bible Class & Prayer Meeting, Crèche, Sunday School, Youth Bible Class, Children's Meetings, Youth Fellowship, CD/Tape ministry and monthly Baptist Women's fellowship meeting. We've had Preacher's Classes, Reading Clubs, the Summer Day Camp, 5-Day Clubs, open air meetings, door-to-door visitation, monthly outreaches in Fivemiletown and Brookeborough and some of our men have assisted with preaching in other Baptist Churches.

We are made up of many members with those who play a more prominent and perhaps public role supported and assisted by others who are faithful in prayer and encouragement. We acknowledge and give thanks for those who have assisted us in the past and worked along side us.

As a church we look to God to lead us in the future and to guide and direct all of our plans. May we always be responsive to His Word and teaching.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Jude v 24, 25.

The Concept of the Autonomous Local Gathered Church at the Westminster Assembly

Jim Davison

One of the most significant events in English church history is undoubtedly the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which first met on 1 July 1643 and continued through 1163 sessions until 22 February 1649. John R de Witt is right when he says,

> *"The Westminster Assembly represents the high watermark of English Puritanism, and was the culmination of all the organizing, agitation, and preaching which had characterized this movement within the national church during the preceding one hundred years."*

The continuing significance of the Assembly's work may be understood by reference to the documents produced by the Assembly which are still the confessional standard of mainstream Presbyterianism worldwide . . . even after 350 years. They have also had an influence on the confessional standards of other denominations, particularly the 'Confession of Faith'. Each of these documents in its final form had acceptance from the Divines except the one on the 'Form of Church Government', which was the first document produced by the Assembly.

It is a combination of those propositions debated and passed by the Assembly over many months which was then formulated by two editorial committees before it was presented to Parliament on 15 November 1644. The debates on church government began on 17 October 1643, following a Fast Day to inaugurate this new phase of the Assembly's work, and they were without doubt the most acrimonious of the debates among the divines.

In this paper the major emphasis will be on the Assembly's debates on church government and the contribution of the five 'Dissenting Brethren' to those debates. The five men were William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye and Sydrich Simpson. In these debates under their leadership the Independent/Congregational theory of the Church and its government took a very definite form.

Their concept of the local 'gathered' church was one of 'visible saints' only

and with authority vested in it and not in a higher ecclesiastical body. This represented a very definite break with the state-church ecclesiologies of their day, but they vigorously denied being Separatists or having any connection with them. What they argued for was a middle way between Separatism and Presbyterianism, based on the *sola scriptura* principle.

The period in which the Assembly met has, with justification, led Christopher Hill to describe it as, "the decisive century in English history, the epoch in which the Middle Ages ended". For Hill, the "decisions taken during this century enabled England to become the first industrialized imperialist great power." and ensured that it should be ruled by a representative assembly". Although Hill is referring to the century in general he further states that "within the seventeenth century the decisive decades are those between 1640 and 1660". The same point was made in the seventeenth century by Thomas Hobbes (d 1679): "If in time, as in place there were degrees of high and low, I verily believe that the highest of time would be that which passed between the years 1640 and 1660."

This assessment, by Hill and Hobbes, of the two decades between 1640 and 1660 cannot be seriously questioned. Many significant events took place during these two decades, but the major event was the Civil War, a war between King and Parliament. While there had been civil wars in England before the seventeenth century, "in the seventeenth century for the first time a defeated king was denounced as a traitor, put on trial in the name of his people, found guilty and executed".

What caused the Civil War has been debated by historians from the seventeenth century to the present time with many different causes being identified and defended . . . not always, it has to be said, without bias. One cause which most historians agree did play a major role in bringing about the Civil War was religion. Indeed, it is reasonable to say that "any adequate interpretation of the English Revolution must give full place to questions of religion and church government". Hylson-Smith presents a similar view: "the most important underlying forces leading towards conflict were the process of protestantization and religious pluralism".

To understand the full implication of the religious dimension we would need first consider the history of the religious dimension for, as Robert S Paul reminds us, "the call of the Westminster Assembly was set within the complexities of the peculiar ecclesiastical situation that came from the English Reformation ... a situation that was peculiar to England and from the legacy of the way in which England had become a Protestant country." This approach would certainly identify a continuous stream of thought desirous of

church reform on the *sola scriptura* principle, which culminated in the calling of the Westminster Assembly.

The importance of religion is highlighted by the fact that a Parliament which was engaged in an unprecedented constitutional conflict with the King gave time to religious matters. This may seem incredible to twenty-first century minds, but to have acted any differently in the seventeenth century would have been impossible. The simple reason being that the continuance of ordered society was as yet inconceivable without the Christian Church, and the Church was inconceivable except as a single comprehensive institution uniform in faith and worship.

The Calling of the Assembly

In February 1642 the House of Commons began to move toward the realization of its proposal, with knights and burgesses being ordered to suggest the names of such ministers as would be fit to serve in an assembly of this sort. It was resolved on 26 March that the 'Grand Committee' for Religion, which had been established in the first weeks of the Long Parliament, would meet "to consider what is fit to be done for the present in the matter of religion, and what will be farther necessary to be done in the future". On 8 April the House of Commons adopted the following declaration:

> *"The Lords and Commons do declare, that they intend a due and necessary Reformation of the Government and Liturgy of the Church; and to take away nothing in the one or the other, but what shall be evil and justly offensive, or at least unnecessary and burdensome: And for the better effecting thereof, speedily to have consultation with godly and learned Divines."*

The Lords gave its assent the following day and when the nominating procedures were completed a bill was introduced for the summoning of the Assembly. By 1 June 1642 a bill had passed both Houses of Parliament calling an assembly to convene on the 1 July 1642. This, however, was frustrated by the King's refusal to lend his assent. After a year and five such failures a sixth bill was passed on 20 May 1643 and sent to the Lords. The Lords approved the bill with some amendments and the Commons approved the amendments on 7 June. On 12 June 1643 the bill was finally passed as an Ordinance and put into effect without the King's assent.

Three things are to be noted in the Ordinance . . .

(a) The doctrinal mandate of the assembly restricted its discussion to "the liturgy, discipline and government of the Church", and to the

"vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions".

(b) The assembly would act only in an advisory capacity and those participating in the assembly would have no "jurisdiction, power, or authority ecclesiastical" other than that expressed in the Ordinance calling the assembly. Parliament would retain control and would have the final word.

(c) Before the direct involvement of the Scots in English ecclesiastical controversies Parliament sought a new settlement of religion that would be "most agreeable to God's Holy Word" and in "nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland".

Membership of the Assembly consisted of ten members of the House of Lords, twenty members of the House of Commons and one hundred and twenty divines. The Assembly first met on 1 July 1643 and, on average, between sixty and eighty attended regularly. The Assembly may be divided into four ideological groupings according to their views on church government . . . Erastians, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Independents. This is significant for it emphasizes their general doctrinal agreement, which was Calvinistic. Likewise their "differing views on how the church should be governed did not yet represent various denominations".

Negotiations with the Scots resulted in the adoption of the 'Solemn League and Covenant' by both nations and brought the Scottish army unequivocally into the military conflict. It also brought Scottish Commissioners into the arena where doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions were being fought out . . . the Westminster Assembly. It should be noted, however, that the Scottish Commissioners were not delegates to the Assembly. Although they participated in its debates, they were in fact representatives of the Scottish people, "to treat with the English Parliament in the settlement of the details of that religious uniformity which the two nations had agreed with one another to institute".

It was the Independents who opposed the establishment of Presbyterianism in England, not because they wanted to obstruct the reform of the Church, neither was it out of malice. Rather, it was because they believed their understanding of church government was *jure divino*. In other words, the phrase "according to the Word of God", for the Independents, required a Congregational not a Presbyterian discipline. They asserted the independence of the local congregation of true believers from any higher ecclesiastical authority or the civil magistrate.

The Early Work of the Assembly

The early work of the Assembly centred on a revision of the Thirty-nine Articles, but with the adoption of the 'Solemn League and Covenant' in both England and Scotland the way was clear for the Assembly to begin the work for which it had been established. On 12 October, while the Assembly was considering Article sixteen of the Thirty-nine Articles, a new order came from Parliament to the Assembly ordering it to take up the matter of church discipline and government.

For the next fifteen months the Assembly would devote itself to reforming the discipline and government of the Church of England. These debates would be very different from those on the 'Thirty-nine Articles', which to a great extent tended to be non-controversial and very moderate in tone, no doubt because the vast majority of the Assembly were Calvinist in doctrine. But their doctrinal oneness did not extend to the issues now to be debated.

Work began on 17 October and the next two days were given to some preliminary issues. The first issue to arise regarded the order of proceeding; whether they should begin with discipline or with government. After much debate it was finally decided that the Assembly should begin with church officers. The reason for this approach may well have been the belief that by it the inevitable confrontation between the Presbyterians and the Independents would be postponed, which in turn would provide an opportunity for the desired mutual goodwill to develop.

The Assembly next agreed that the three committees it had earlier established should continue, with each committee considering the same topic and presenting its findings to the full Assembly. No time was lost as the committees set about their tasks, for on the next day, 19 October, the second and third committees reported their findings.

Debate on the first two reports began on 20 October and almost immediately a major difference arose. This resulted from the preface to the second committee's report. Goodwin objected to it on the grounds that it anticipated the Assembly's work. He stated that "the opinion of some is that all power being in Jesus Christ he has given it to officers and from them to the church ... Other men go another way".

The 'other way' meant by Goodwin was the Congregational way . . . from Christ to the local church or to the local church with its officers. Burgess denied that presbytery was implicit in the preface. When, however, the debate progressed to consider the second question posited by the third committee, the differing views became more evident. After some debate the

following offices were approved as Non-Perpetual Offices: *Apostles*, *Prophets* and *Evangelists*.

The Perpetual Offices proved to be much more contentious.

> The *Pastoral Office*, along with that of *Teacher (Doctor)*, were agreed with the proviso that these two offices could be further debated at a later stage in the Assembly's proceedings.
>
> *Ruling Elders* ... with no satisfactory meeting of minds on the subject, despite the "elaborate grammatical and terminological analyses of the passages" cited, a committee was formed on Friday 1 December "to take the matter in hand and prepare it for an accommodation" . . . to "draw up things", which all could agree upon.
>
> *Deacons* ... compared to the debate just ended the discussion on the office of deacon was in some respects an anti-climax.

On 14 December Burgess reported that "it was the office of a deacon to take special care to distribute to the necessaries [needs] of the poor." The debate centred round the relevance of Acts 6:1-4 to prove the proposition. It was not the scriptural foundation of the office that was at issue, but whether it was permanent or not. The differences which arose from this debate led the first committee to formulate two statements; one declared that, "the office of a deacon is perpetual in the church." Palmer accepted that the two texts "do hold out such an office, but not in perpetuity" and he made two further points:

(i) that poor-relief was the responsibility of the state rather than the church;

(ii) that there is no necessity for poor-relief, as many congregations do not have anyone poor.

Henry Wilkinson senior made a very valid point when he said, "there is a perpetuity of the necessity of this office; '*the poor you have with you always*'". Goodwin made the point that Christian charity was different from normal human charity: "the poor in the church require more provision than the law of nature dictates, for

(i) Nature provides for them as men, but they are also to be considered as members of Christ;

(ii) God has enhanced the providing for the poor to the dignity of a duty, service and sacrifice." In support of Goodwin, Gillespie said, "the magistrate looks to them not as the distressed members of Christ. Human charity and Christian charity [are] very different."

> The perpetuity of the office was approved, with Acts 6 and I Timothy 3:8-9 as proof texts.

The Assembly also rejected the idea that deacons were to assist the minister in preaching and administering the sacraments and moved on to consider widows (deaconesses). The second committee had stated that: "The widows that we read of in I Timothy 5:3, and elsewhere, are included under the name deacons." Bridge, Goodwin and Simpson argued for the inclusion of deaconesses in the church. They were supported by Seaman and Gillespie, but were opposed by Burgess, Herle, Marshall, Palmer and Temple. The debate lasted most of the day and when the vote was finally taken the issue was voted affirmatively by one vote.

The above vote brought to an end the debates on church officers, and although the debates reveal a real desire for unanimity and mutual goodwill there are clear indications of the differences which lay beneath the surface. Two other issues which highlighted these differences were irregular ordination and the gathering of churches outside the parish system.

On 20 November a number of London ministers voiced their concern to the Assembly regarding the 'gathering of churches'. Nye insisted that "there may be a need of gathering churches" from out of parish churches, which was "proper and wholesome." Behind this comment we should recognize, as R S Paul notes, "the concern of the Independents about the purity of the Church, which made them reluctant to regard every parish in the Church of England as a true church".

Robert Baillie, while acknowledging the ability and candour of the Independents, well expresses their fears: "The Independents being most able men, and of great credit, fearing no less than banishment from their native country if Presbyteries were erected . . . [were] watchful that no conclusion be taken for their prejudice." Baillie was well aware that for them any Presbyterian system, which entailed a single national church on the parochial/territorial basis and a hierarchy of church courts, would be no different to that of the Laudian regime, and identified the Independents as those in the Assembly from which "great and dangerous differences" would come.

At the commencement of the year 1644 the world of the Assembly was turned upside down, by the publication of the Independents' *An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament*. What had caused them to publish it at this precise time is uncertain, but George Yule may be right when he suggests they had come to realise that:

> *"Their hopes of the majority of the Assembly vindicating their way as the form of government for the Church of England would not be realised, and that it was now an urgent necessity to gain toleration for their position within the forthcoming established Church. [For] once it was established on anything like the Scots pattern their position of semi-separation from this establishment would be liable to persecution."*

In the midst of the furore caused by the publication of *An Apologeticall Narration* the Assembly turned its attention indirectly to the issue of ordination. It was raised in connection with the apostolic office on 2 January when Bridge, Simpson and Carter junior, among others, objected to the first of three propositions which had been tabled by the second committee. The proposition stated that "The apostles themselves had power to ordain officers in all the churches, and to appoint evangelists to ordain."

Two issues were raised by the Independents:

(i) Was the power to ordain unique to the apostles?

(ii) Could this power be transferred? These questions reflect not so much "the Independents' fear of Presbyterianism as their fear of sacerdotalism" . . . there were still some conservatives in the Assembly "who hankered after a system of government closer to the traditional order of the English Church."

How the first proposition and two of the supporting texts (Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5) were debated was but a foretaste of what was to come in the formal debate on ordination itself. As in the debates on church officers, the first proposition was reworded to accommodate the different parties, but this could not be done with Scripture.

Indeed, how these texts were interpreted could have extremely important practical consequences. If they could be used to justify an absolute power of ordination in the apostolic office, which could be transferred to the permanent offices of the church, then "such a theory of ministerial succession could very well lead to a hierarchical system not very different from the earlier establishment." It was this concern which caused the Independents and their supporters to strongly raise their voices.

The actual debate on ordination began on 10 January, the day after Temple reported on behalf of the third committee five propositions, which it had considered:

(i) what ordination is;

(ii) whether it is necessarily to be continued;

(iii) who can ordain;

(Iv) who may be ordained;

(v) he manner of ordination.

To the first the committee reported that "Ordination is the solemn setting apart of a person to some public office in the church." Some sought to make this very general definition more detailed, but it was agreed as presented. Inclusion of the word "necessarily" in the second proposition triggered a debate over which kind of necessity was intended by the committee. Ultimately, the difficulty was overcome by removing the debatable word and replacing it with the word "always" . . . "Ordination is always to be continued in the church."

On 15 January, the issue of who can ordain was raised. The Assembly agreed that in the New Testament ordination was performed by apostles, evangelists and preaching presbyters. This was achieved with very little debate, although the third office caused some contention. Richard Heyrick sought to have the word 'preaching' removed and Nye suggested that the wording of the proposition seemed to imply that one presbyter may ordain as one apostle might.

The difficulty with all this was that the offices of apostle and evangelist no longer existed in the church, which left the act of ordination solely in the hands of the preaching presbyters. In an effort aimed at confirming this position the third committee proposed that, "Because apostles and evangelists are officers extraordinary, and not to continue in the church, and since in Scripture we find ordination in no other hands, we humbly conceive, that preaching presbyters are only to ordain." Although this ruled out ordination by bishops by virtue of their apostolic succession, which the vast majority of the Assembly divines desired, it also ruled out ruling presbyters from laying on hands in ordination.

As might be expected the Independents opposed the latter point, and did so to such an extent that they were invited to submit their own statement to the Assembly. Two days later, 19 January, Nye reported for the Independents that:

(i) Ordination, for the substance of it is the solemnization of an officer's outward call, in which the elders of the church, in the name of Christ, and for the church, do, by a visible sign, design the person, and ratify his separation to his office; with prayer for, and blessing upon, his gifts in ministration thereof. Acts 6:3, 6; Numbers 8:3, 10-19; Acts 8:1-3.

(ii) The power that gives the formal being to an officer should be derived by Christ's institution from the power that is in elders as such, on the act of ordination, as yet we find not anywhere held forth in the Word.

This definition, which "put the *act* in the hands of elders (ruling as well as preaching) while specifically locating the *power* of ordination in the congregation as a whole", was not acceptable to the Assembly. As the original definition was not acceptable either, it was agreed to delay a decision in respect of who had authority to ordain.

This was a very crucial session in the Assembly for two reasons:

(i) The evidence from the debate indicates that a real shift to the Presbyterian position had taken place;

(ii) Before considering the Independents' first proposition the Assembly received two reports, which when debated would bring the final breach between the Independents and the Presbyterian majority. Burgess reported from the first committee concerning presbytery two propositions: "(i) The Scripture holds out a presbytery in a church; I Timothy 4:14; Acts 15:2, 4, 6. (ii) A presbytery consists of ministers of the Word, and such other public officers, as have been already voted to have a share in the government of the church."

The first two of the four subordinate propositions were agreed without any debate on 21 March, but the third and fourth, which dealt with the role of the congregation and the actual mode of ordination, caused some concern before they too were agreed. While it was accepted that a congregation had the right to reject a minister, the point of issue was how much discretion the congregation should have in the matter. Burroughes argued that it should be the people recommending.

Rutherford came near to this when he stated that "the act of electing is in the people; and the regulating and correcting of their choice is in the presbytery." No fewer than fourteen proposals were made for changing the wording of the statement, with the Assembly finally affirming that the congregation had power of veto, but not power of selection. It was agreed, after a short debate, that ordination was to be enacted "by imposition of hands and prayer, by those preaching presbyters to whom it belongs."

Presbytery - The Preamble

On Friday 19 January, in the midst of the debate on ordination the Assembly, as noted earlier, received a report from Burgess' committee which stated two propositions: "(i) The Scripture[s] hold out a presbytery in a church; I Timothy 4:14; Acts 15:2, 4, 6; (ii) A presbytery consists of ministers of the Word, and such other public officers, as have been already voted to have a share in the government of the church." A third proposition stating that, "There may be many congregations under one presbytery, as in the church at Jerusalem" was tendered at the next session on Monday 22.

When the Assembly finally took up the issue of presbytery at the beginning of February 1644 the first two propositions were passed without a debate. The reason for this is clear . . . they were worded in such a way that both the Independents and the Presbyterians could interpret them as they pleased. But this could not be done with the third proposition, for it went to the very heart of the controversy between the Independents and the Presbyterians. It was of such significance that "it may justifiably be considered the rock on which the entire project of church reform foundered."

De Witt rightly comments, "It brought into collision two forces both of which were thoroughly committed to a settlement of the church question upon a basis that was in accordance with the Word of God." It was here that the *sola scriptura* principle became the immovable rock which smashed the Puritan dream of uniformity of religion.

All in the Assembly agreed that the congregational eldership was the primary seat of government in the church, but the third proposition sought to move beyond that and "build upwards from congregational authority to presbyterial and synodical." This was similar to the Scottish church, which the Scots considered the best reformed church in all Christendom. In the Scottish church there are four kinds of governing bodies:

(i) Congregational elderships, which they call "Kirk sessions";

(ii) Classical presbyteries or classes;

(iii) Provincial synods, and

(iv) National synods, which they call "national assemblies" or "general assemblies."

In theory there was another level of a synod, the international or ecumenical synod.

A "Kirk session" consisted of the minister(s) and ruling elders of a single

congregation and with authority being exercised only within that congregation. It was subordinate to the authority of the classical presbytery, which consisted of the ministers and ruling elders of a number of neighbouring congregations. The classis was recognised as the ordinary court of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but in certain circumstances it too was subordinate to the provincial or general assembly: the latter being empowered to declare on doctrinal issues and to impose censures. Such was the direction in which the third proposition was intended to take the Church of England.

The opening skirmishes took place on 2 February when the Independents sought to have the paper on church government presented by the Scots debated, but this brought a response from Gillespie to the effect that they were content the Assembly should take its own order and not be tied to theirs. Nye then objected to the words "may be" in the proposition as the Assembly was charged to identify "what ought to be." Goodwin and Burroughes supported Nye by arguing that the institution of government and not the warrantableness of it should be debated. In response Vines said "may be" was used by the committee rather than "must be" to enable each side to bear with the other and not give offence.

With these opening shots the Assembly resolved that the proposition should stand as it was and that the Independents first bring their case against it.

Presbytery - The Negative Argument

The third proposition may only have been a single sentence ("There may be many congregations under one presbytery, as in the church at Jerusalem"), but the time spent debating the issues arising from it occupied the Assembly for many weeks. The "Grand Debate" began on Monday 5 February when the Independents opened their case against Presbytery and for the next fourteen sessions did their utmost to defeat the proposition. Following this the Presbyterians presented the positive case for presbytery and this took another seventeen sessions. This approach was new to the Assembly and may have been a disadvantage to the Independents, as they had to present an argument against a form of church government which had not yet been debated.

Thomas Goodwin fired the first salvo when he stated that, "[P]resbyterial government, over many congregations is inconsistent with [S]cripture and principles acknowledged by reformed churches." Goodwin reasoned that if elders from different churches coming together make one presbytery classical, then every one of those elders bears a relation, as elders, to each

of those churches. This, for Goodwin, could not be, because it creates an imbalance between elders and deacons by making the authority of elders greater in extent than deacons; for deacons cannot bear a relation, as deacons, to other churches. Also in writing to the church at Philippi, Paul wrote to both the elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1), which proved that deacons were deacons to all whom elders were elders. And this being the case, "we must subject our purses to all the deacons as our souls to all the elders."

Goodwin's third reason was the status of the minister in the other churches. If he was both pastor and ruling elder in his own congregation, what was he to the other congregations in the proposed presbytery? Here Goodwin argued that "the extent of the pastor's power is to one flock, as his whole flock, which he is able to feed and rule constantly." Goodwin based his argument on the grounds that authority to rule was derived from preaching, and that jurisdiction is founded in the ministry, so that the one can be no larger in scope than the other.

It would also be unreasonable that the minister of one church should exercise ruling authority over another church, on the principle that "he who feeds me not should not rule me," an argument which, as Goodwin reminded the Assembly, Reformed divines used against prelates and Pope. Then in regard to a lawful call Goodwin made two points:

(i) If the elders be elders to all the churches in a classical presbytery then they should be chosen by all the churches, and be paid by all of them.

(ii) If a minister was to be an elder to all the other churches then he should be ordained in the presence of all. Neither of these two points was practised in any of the Reformed churches and for Goodwin this revealed an inconsistency in their polity.

There were two main points in Goodwin's argument:

(i) The nature of office;

(ii) The scope of jurisdiction.

Marshall sought to show that Goodwin was fundamentally wrong in assuming that local congregations were complete churches. Marshall emphasised that "the whole Catholic church is one body, part triumphant and part militant." The militant is an aggregation of all the members, therefore, according to Marshall, "the parishes in England have the essence of churches, but they are not complete churches." This was a very important distinction, but it

showed an inconsistency in the Presbyterian position for although they sought uniformity of religion in the three kingdoms (England, Scotland and Ireland) they did not envisage having one governing assembly over them.

Burroughes brought forth the second argument against presbytery from I Corinthians 5:3-4:

> *"I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already (as though I were present), concerning him that has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."*

With the introduction of this text the debate moved from debating in abstract syllogistic terms to debating focussed on Scripture exposition. The passage clearly refers to church censure, but who was to carry it out, and before whom was it to take place? As both parties agreed that all church censures should be imposed in the presence of the church members, the key to understanding the passage was how the phrase "gathered together" was interpreted.

According to Burroughes it had reference to a single congregation as it was inconceivable that all the congregations in Corinth could assemble together in one place. In the context this interpretation was a very legitimate one, but the Presbyterians did not accept it. For them the phrase did not refer to the church, but to the elders and it was they who carried out the censure.

Goodwin opposed the Presbyterian interpretation and insisted that those "gathered together" were the whole congregation for the following reasons:

(i) The instructions were not meant for the elders only, because the apostle wrote to all the saints (1:2).

(ii) The sinner was to be removed "from among you" i.e., the congregation (5:2).

(iii) The entire church was forbidden to fellowship with the sinner (5:11).

(iv) The apostle commanded the Corinthian Christians to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (5:13). Bridge then stated that the text referred to sexual immorality "among you" (5:1) and emphasised this could not mean the presbytery only.

These endeavours by the Independents were aimed at putting into the hands of the members of a single congregation the power of excommunication. It

was Goodwin who stressed that the people have a legitimate interest in excommunication beyond that of their mere presence when church censure was being imposed: "The people having consciences of their own, must have their own power referred to, though the elders only have the authority." To ensure the Independents were distinguished from the Brownists, Goodwin insisted that the congregation was not empowered to excommunicate apart from elders, but "where there is a difference among the people, the elders should explicitly draw forth the suffrage of the major part".

It was also noted by the Independents that each time the phrase "gathered together" is used in the epistle it refers to the whole church (cf 11:17, 20; 14:23, 26). It was clear what the Independents wanted something more than mere presence yet less than full jurisdiction, but it was a larger role for the congregation than the Presbyterians would admit.

Gillespie responded by stating that I Corinthians 11:17, 20; 14:23, 26 refer to worship and not to jurisdiction, as chapter 5 did. Then from I Chronicles 13:1 -4; I Chronicles 29; and II Chronicles 1:2-3 he sought to prove that "sometimes all the congregation are put for the elders." After two days of debating Goodwin's proofs, like his previous argument, were rejected by the Assembly. So too was Burroughes' argument after a debate.

The third argument against presbytery was introduced by Goodwin on 12 February. He stated that "If any one congregation have such an interest as to be present at excommunication, then every congregation in the presbytery has the same interest, all the presbytery being considered as one church." Rutherford responded that only the congregation in which the excommunicate had enjoyed fellowship had a "especially *primario* concern." In support Seaman said, "the congregation must be present at the pronouncing of the sentence, and that all the other congregations under the presbytery must be acquainted with it".

Later Seaman would declare that "the decree and the act of excommunication are acts of power, and the people have nothing to do in it." In this last statement we have precisely the point at issue, namely, where the seat of authority resides, and for many "whatever their views on church polity, [they] were determined to maintain the unique status and authority of the ordained ministry". Goodwin gave five answers to objections to his argument, but to no avail.

What was propounded in these answers "centred in the belief that there is an integral unity between Word, sacraments and discipline. This was the primary relationship which the Independents held between the local eldership and the covenanted congregation". For Goodwin, government and

obedience relate to each other and the highest obedience is to the guides of the church. In support of his argument Goodwin cited I Thessalonians 5:12-13; II Thessalonians 3:14; Hebrews 13:7, 17, and argued that what was being exhorted was obedience to the elders because: (a) they had spoken the Word to them, and (b) they watched over their souls.

Once again the majority in the Assembly rejected the stance taken by the Independents and desired to move to the proposition, but William Bridge sought to present another argument against presbytery from Matthew 18:15-18.

Bridge's main point was that the government which is according to the mind of Christ and his revealed Word is that every particular congregation consisting of elders and brethren should have complete power of jurisdiction within itself; "but the government mentioned in the proposition is not so". According to Bridge the church referred to in Matthew 18 established his argument because within that church there was complete power of jurisdiction, for here was the highest power of censure - excommunication - given to it by Christ, and there was no appeal from it for it is ratified in heaven.

Before going on to prove his argument Bridge first indicated that the *ecclesia* in Matthew 18 did not represent a civil court, as the disciples would not have any authority there. It was not the Jewish church, for the Sanhedrin was at that time corrupt, and in any case its highest censure was the death penalty. Neither did the term 'church' refer to any particular person such as a bishop, for the phrase "whatever you bind" is plural.

It was not a national church or the universal church for if such were meant Christ would have used the phrase "all or many" instead of "two or three." Finally, it was not a classis for the word *ecclesia* is never used in this way in the Old or New Testaments. In the Old Testament ordinarily the word refers to a congregation of people, and of the forty-eight times *ecclesia* is used in the New Testament it is never once used for a presbytery.

In developing his argument Bridge sought to demonstrate:

(i) The offending brother was a member of a congregation.

(ii) The ordinances were in the jurisdiction of the church not the presbytery.

(iii) Authority (power) resided in the church. Expanding on the third point Bridge argued that, if the presbytery is the church's representative, "then the power will be in the people and not only the power, but the exercise of the power, because what is in the

> representing [party] must be first in the represented [party]." By arguing in this way P J Smith understands Bridge to be "laying the groundwork for the future exemption of Independents from the Presbyterian regime. Foreseeing the eventual establishment of presbyterial government, the Independents would insist that presbyteries exercise an authority no higher than that enjoyed by every particular congregation.

Before bringing his detailed argument to a close Bridge explored the relationship between a congregation and a presbytery. According to Bridge to admit that congregational censures could be appealed to a presbytery, as the Presbyterians did, was in fact to admit that congregations possessed the authority to act in the first place. Further there was no guarantee that decisions made by a classis would be more error free than congregational decisions.

Bridge finally concluded his argument by stating that

> *"Here [in Matthew 18] and elsewhere a particular congregation is called a church, and such a church as is to be told in case of offense, and this by institution. Therefore, unless there can be showed an institution from Christ, to take away this power [of congregational censure], it may not be done. This seems to me to be taken away by ... presbyterial [government]."*

Bridge's arguments were exegetical, logical and practical, and occupied most of 16 February, with the next three sessions being devoted to debating them. In support were Goodwin and Nye and in opposition were Marshall, Calamy, Gillespie, Selden and Coleman. Marshall was the first to respond. He denied that the Presbyterian system was contrary to Scripture and argued that in Acts 15 Presbyterian government is clearly taught. For Marshall the word *ecclesia* was used in a number of different ways in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament "the word 'congregation' does certainly signify the elders and rulers, and not the body of the people." Calamy too demonstrated different ways that the word *ecclesia* was used in Scripture, and stressed that the word most generally referred to more than a single congregation.

One argument used by the Presbyterians to establish the meaning of *ecclesia* was its use in the Old Testament, but Goodwin, with some justification, insisted that the Jewish church and the Christian church were distinguished by Christ. Here Goodwin argued that we should "interpret what is meant by churches by what follows [rather] than what goes before." In this way Goodwin was able to insist on the "priority of synagogue organization and worship for Christians over the Temple hierarchal structure."

Later Goodwin asked how the churches in primitive times, when there was but one church with an eldership, had lost their original powers when churches began to multiply. This brought the response that "in [a] multitude of counsellors there is strength," to which Goodwin replied, "let them be counsellors and we have done." In Goodwin's comment we have the nature of Congregational synods: they were to exercise spiritual persuasion rather than to exercise executive power in governing, as the Presbyterians.

In the final argument against presbytery Philip Nye sought to demonstrate that the third proposition was "both a logical absurdity and a practical impossibility." Nye first questioned how a single congregation, which the "divines of Scotland and the Netherlands" acknowledged to be "a true integral church with intrinsical government," could be subordinate to a presbytery? This for Nye was to place a presbytery over a presbytery, which would indicate two distinct presbyteries, but Scripture "holds not forth two presbyteries or jurisdictions." Undoubtedly the more important part of Nye's speech was his attack on Presbyterianism on quasi-political grounds: "The gathering of a vast spiritual body, to rule by their own laws both the outward and inward man, is inconvenient to the peace of the kingdom." Nye feared:

> *". . . that ecclesiastical power would rival civil power and that the national church would become a 'formidable' threat to the magistracy. Ecclesiastical tyranny would be inevitable, and the church would become a kingdom within the kingdom.... With two vast, co-terminous governments within a single geographical boundary, it was certain that the ecclesiastical body will interest themselves in the civil power."*

Lord Saye intervened and said, "When you fall into consideration of conveniences or inconveniences, you will spin it out to a great length. You must consider whether the Word of God holds out an institution or not." . . . and if there was no institution identifiable in Scripture "the state would have to appoint that which is most conducive to godliness". "Bring forth those Scriptures upon which they lay this foundation" and let the different opinions be clearly stated. In Saye's view this had been done by the Independents, but not by their opponents: "on the other side there is a double opinion".

Soon after Lord Saye's speech Nye's argument was voted down by the Assembly and this brought to an end the case against presbytery. It was a long and hard debate and as it progressed the chasm dividing the two parties appeared daily to be growing wider. It was predictable that no matter how long the discussion continued it would not end in agreement or even in accommodation. Neither would toleration be tolerated by the Presbyterian majority.

Presbytery - The Positive Argument

The Presbyterians began their defence of the third proposition on 22 February 1644. The Presbyterians would develop their argument, that many congregations may be under one presbytery, from the example of the New Testament churches, and especially the church in Jerusalem. If they could prove this then *jure divino* authority would be established for their church polity, but their arguments would be opposed at every point by the Independents. There were two main points in the Presbyterian argument:

(i) The number of believers in Jerusalem dictates that there were multiple congregations there.

(ii) Those congregations were unified by being under one presbytery.

Their position is well summarised by P J Smith:

> *"The large number of believers, the presence of many apostles, and the diversity of languages all indicated that there were more congregations than one in the city of Jerusalem. This was true both before and after the dispersion mentioned in Acts 8:1. Yet in matters of government, these several congregations were ruled by a single board of elders, as demonstrated by the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). This provided clear proof, from apostolic example, that many congregations may be under one presbyterial government."*

Thomas Temple was the first to attack the Presbyterian position when he argued that "there was but one congregation at Jerusalem: for they neither dwelt apart, nor met apart, nor had distinct ministers .... [and] they had no presbytery fixed to preach to any place." Vines, Palmer and Lightfoot strongly defended the Presbyterian position. So too did Gouge, Seaman and Marshall. Then it was the turn of the Independents to oppose the Presbyterians.

Among the asserted by the Independents were:

(i) The Jerusalem church was not a formed church; but like the church in the wilderness, which was not formed as it was in Canaan.

(ii) The multitudes did not refer to permanent residents in Jerusalem. Therefore they were not members of the church in Jerusalem.

(iii) The church did meet in one place - the Temple (Acts 2:46).

(iv) The Jerusalem church cannot be used as a model as its officers were apostles, hence extraordinary officers.

(v) Elders are mentioned only after the dispersion in Acts 8:1.

(vi) It must be proved that acts of government (ie admonition, censure and excommunication) were performed by the alleged presbytery in Jerusalem.

(vii) The Jerusalem congregations, unlike the English parish system, were free associations and this made the Jerusalem church system irrelevant to England.

(viii) Doctrine not discipline was the issue considered by the Jerusalem council in Acts 15.

At the end of the first day's debate the Assembly voted that all the believers mentioned in the early chapters of Acts were members of the Jerusalem church. By evaluating their first point solely on the numbers recorded in the early chapters of the Book of Acts (1:15; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:6-7), the Presbyterians sought to make their case a very logical and virtually irresistible one. But as de Witt insightfully writes: "it was surely a singularly sterile, fruitless, and unconvincing argumentation which in order to prove its point must depend on a mere counting of heads for the establishment of the unity or plurality of the church in one city." Sadly this was the position to which exegetical literalism had pushed both the Presbyterians and the Independents.

With this first plank in the Presbyterian platform now laid in place and well and truly nailed down the Assembly turned to debate whether such a large number could ordinarily meet together in one place for acts of worship. If the Presbyterians could prove that there were multiple congregations then the second plank in their platform could be nailed down. From a purely logistical view point, based on the numbers endorsed by the Assembly, it is almost impossible to see the Jerusalem church meeting ordinarily in one place at any one time.

There can be no doubt that the result of the above vote placed the Independents at a clear disadvantage, which is evident by the arguments now used by them. Goodwin accepted that the church at Jerusalem was swelled by many thousands, but insisted, on the basis of Acts 2:46 that the church nevertheless met in one place. Goodwin also argued for the unique status of the church as it was under the superintendence of the apostles.

In support of Goodwin Burroughes urged, more than once, that their opponents must "prove that they could not ordinarily meet" in one place. Bridge also suggested that the absolute phrase "could not" in the proposition might be put in more temperate terms. Many of the leading Presbyterians

opposed the Independents. On Friday 23 the Assembly voted that "the numbers of believers in the Church of Jerusalem, was more than could ordinarily meet in one place, in one time, in the exercise of worship and government." It was also agreed that "the many apostles and other preachers present in the Jerusalem church import there were many congregations."

In all there were nine separate votes in the Assembly in support of the argument that there was more than one congregation in Jerusalem, for the simple reason that "as the Independents raised objections to the argument as stated, new refinements were devised to meet those objections." In the end the argument had become very complex in the exegetical struggle for supremacy, but the outcome was never in doubt, due more to the majority in the Assembly being Presbyterians than to the strength of their argument. The end result nevertheless was that the second plank in the Presbyterian platform was nailed in place and the Assembly moved on to debate whether these many congregations were under one presbytery.

The first proof offered by the first committee in support of many congregations under one presbytery was that these congregations "are called one church" in Acts 8:1; 12:5; and 15:4. At this point Marshall moved that this might be agreed as "none would deny that the believers at Jerusalem were one church", but in response Goodwin made two points:

(i) *"It was not yet proved that they were one church in regard of government."*

(ii) The proof texts all refer to the period after the dispersion recorded in Acts 8:1, and this dispersion had altered the Jerusalem church dramatically in size and character.

To counter the second point Herle submitted Acts 2:47; 5:11 and 8:1, to show that "church" in the singular was used in reference to the multitude.

By the 5 March these three texts along with Acts 12:5 and 15:4 were approved by the Assembly as supporting the argument that the Jerusalem church was one church both before and after the dispersion. Then in response to Goodwin's first point Palmer argued that "If these many congregations in Jerusalem be called one church, and the elders in that church are mentioned, then were they under one presbytery." Goodwin interposed that "these places speak of elders not of a presbytery." What was required according to Goodwin was proof that "there was an association of these elders into a presbytery."

These comments by Goodwin sparked a debate, which lasted three days, on

whether the apostles had acted in their capacity as apostles or as ordinary elders. Rutherford sought to distinguish the apostles' roles in this way: ". . . (a) The apostles did baptize and govern the church, as ordinary pastors; but baptizing and governing through all the world, this they did as apostles. (b) That what the apostles did in *'collegio'*, they did as elders; and what they did extra, as speaking with tongues and doing miracles, they did as apostles."

This did not satisfy Goodwin who stated that "the ground whereon they baptized in the whole world, they did in Jerusalem; ergo as apostles: and the interest whereby the apostles were governors through the world and here, was the same." Marshall then stressed that "the thing done by the apostles and the place where done, are to be distinguished; in the place they acted as apostles, but the thing done they did as elders." Bridge commented that "If the apostles did act as presbyters, then, after the churches were planted, they ceased to be apostles, and they were subject to the presbytery as a part to the whole (but how can an infallible be subject to them that are fallible?)"

As the debate continued during March the Assembly voted that the mention of the elders meeting together in Acts 11:30 and 21:17-18 was for acts of government and this proved that the several congregations were under one presbytery. Acts 15 was added for the same purpose. Three more decisions during the month of May further strengthened the Presbyterian platform of government. First it was agreed that where "Christians multiply to a greater number than can ordinarily meet together for the worship of God, it is lawful and expedient that they be divided into distinct and fixed congregations."

Here was another debate in which both sides went to the extreme in an attempt to gain supremacy, with, according to Wayne R Spear, "some glaring instances of begging the question by the Presbyterians." In the end "the battle for the theological possession of 'the church of Jerusalem' had been won by weight of numbers" on one side.

Edward Nangle and the Achill Island Missionary Colony, 1800-1886

by Brian Thompson

Introduction

Edward Nangle has often been the subject of strong criticism, which for some historians, geographers, travel and religious writers has, over time, become institutionalised. Depending on their religious background many have focussed on Nangle's strong independent character and his clear expression of his anti-Catholicism. Limited credit, however, has been given to the exceptional, self-sacrificial, work carried out by Nangle, his family and his colleagues in Achill Island and in the parish of Skreen. Edward Nangle was undoubtedly an impressive character who was endowed with many natural and spiritual gifts. He was also a 'man of his time' who reacted readily to those who opposed him.

Achill Island

Windswept Achill Island is the largest of the Irish Islands. It is situated inside the County Mayo Gaeltacht area of the province of Connaught. In 1898, the Irish naturalist Robert Praeger described Achill thus:

> *"Achill, windswept and bare, heavily peat covered, with gaunt brown mountains rising here and there, and a wild coast hammered by the Atlantic on all sides but the east, has a strange charm which everyone feels, but no one can fully explain."* [1]

The vivid natural characteristics of the island have been well recorded by many artists, including the world famous paintings of Paul Henry. His father, Robert Mitchell Henry, was the pastor of Great Victoria Baptist Church, from

1858-75.[2] Paul's maternal grandfather, Thomas Berry (1805-77), was born in County Sligo, trained in the Western Baptist Seminary in Ballina and ministered in Coolaney, Abbeyleix and Athlone. He was fluent in the Gaelic and is reported to have preached the Gospel on Achill in the early 1800s.

Although Achill Island is a place of outstanding beauty, in the 1800s it was neglected by its landlord, the civil and the religious authorities. The Irish road building programme had not yet reached the island in the 1830s and there were only horse tracks connecting the small settlements.

John Barrow states:

> *"The population on Achill Island before the 1830 famine was reported to be between 3000 and 4000; that the people had been able to support themselves with their potatoes, crops and a few animals but that the famine had brought them to the point of starvation."* [3]

The 1841 census recorded an increase to 4,901 inhabitants but little credit is given to the work of the Missionary Colony for the increase in those ten years.

Land Ownership

By the late seventeenth century, the majority of the Gaelic Lords and the English aristocracy had lost their estates through the imposition of the Irish Penal Laws. The laws placed severe restrictions on the ownership of land by the Catholic gentry, the Presbyterians and also the Protestant dissenters.

Kenneth McNally draws attention to the Cromwellian land settlement of the 1652-4 which drove the rebellious and dissidents to the poorer quality land west of the Shannon. He notes that 'Connaught, bleak and inhospitable, received many refugees from Ulster' and also draws attention to the dominance of Ulster surnames found on Achill Island.[4]

The basic aim of the English government was to anglicise the Irish nation and to protect the established Church of Ireland. To avoid losing control of their estates many land owners changed their allegiance from the Roman Catholic to the Protestant 'faith'.

One such was Neal O'Donel, a descendant of a powerful Ulster clan in County Donegal. In 1780, O'Donel was rewarded for his new allegiance with a baronetcy and he bought the 7,700 acre estate at Ashford Castle in Cong. In 1783, he was able to buy the much larger Burrishoole estate which included the majority of Achill Island. His son and heir, Neal Beg O'Donel,

developed the estate and created employment in the Newport area, especially in the linen industry. In 1796, the Government granted up to 60,000 spinning wheels or looms and encouraged the Irish landowners to plant flax for their tenants to spin and weave. At that period John Trotter wrote that 'Newport was a thriving community and O'Donel was a generous landlord'.[5]

The 4th Baronet, Richard O'Donel (who subsequently anglicised his name to O'Donnell), further developed the estate by mechanising the linen industry, some of the machinery for which was manufactured in Belfast. He employed over 1,000 men and women in his various enterprises and estates. However Achill was left undeveloped.

In the 1820s, Sir Richard was involved with the evangelical section of the Church of Ireland and, later, the developing Brethren movement. The Rev John Nelson Darby travelled through the area in the years 1827-34 when he was still considering his separation from the established church. In 1831, Edward Nangle was introduced to Sir Richard and he promised to help him secure some land on Achill Island.

It is important to realise that, at this time, large estates were not so prevalent in County Mayo and that not all the landlords were absentees nor unsympathetic to their workers, as is often recorded. It should also be recognised that, although the social class arrangement was clearly divisive, some modern historians have 'challenged the assumptions of nationalist historiography and have offered a re-interpretation of landlord-tenant relations'.[6]

Irish Religious Societies

During the early nineteenth century, many prominent evangelicals associated themselves, their families and their finance, with the emerging missionary societies. Examples include the La Touche bankers, Bewleys' coffee shops and the evangelical section of the Guinness family. The Church of Ireland and the embryonic Brethren groups benefited much from many influential churchmen and the evangelical tutors associated with Trinity College.

In 1792, The Association for the Discountenance of Vice and the Promotion of Religion was formed. Its purpose was to distribute Bibles, prayer books and religious tracts, all at reduced cost. By 1825, the Association had organised around 250 schools (six in Ulster) which were attended by both Protestant and Catholic children. The various Hibernian Societies and the

Kildare Place Society followed. In 1814, the Baptist Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland was established.

To counteract the initial resistance to the acceptance of the 'Protestant' Bible, the evangelicals groups circulated the 1610 Douay Catholic New Testament. This was later followed by the Coyne edition which carried the imprimatur of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, which helped to bring better acceptance. In addition, Coyne omitted some of the explanatory notes which evangelicals found offensive: for example, 'do penance' for 'repent' (Matt 3:2, 4:17). The translation was based on that of Jerome, rather than on the original Greek text which was used for the 1611 King James Version.

The Roman Catholic authorities reacted to the above by launching The Irish Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (later known as the Catholic Book Society) in 1827. In 1834 they formed the Catholic Society of Ireland to distribute free or relatively cheap religious literature and also the Catholic Bible in Irish.

Education in Ireland

Records of the free schools in Ireland date back to at least 1570 when the Diocesan Free Schools were instituted by an Act of Parliament. In 1608, the Privy Council of King James I chartered five Royal Schools: Dungannon, Portora, Armagh, Raphoe and Cavan. Two more such schools were established in 1629, after the death of James, one in Wicklow and one in Offaly. These schools were endowed with a number of free places for needy children and were required to have an Englishman as Headmaster. The Erasmus Smith and the Blue Coat Schools followed, with similar rules to assist the under-privileged.

The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland was founded in 1811. By 1818, it became known as the Kildare Place Society with three 'model' schools in Dublin and, later, a Teacher Training Institute. By 1830, the Kildare Place Society was supporting 1,634 primary schools, which were considered by the Commission Inspectors to be well organised and efficient. These schools were open to Protestants and Catholics, and any religious element was required to be taught outside school hours. The Kildare Place Society initially had the support of the Catholic authorities, but Archbishop John MacHale later accused it of proselytising and withdrew the Catholic association.

The National Board of Education was established in 1831 in order to

counteract evangelical activities by the development of a liberal secular Primary School system. All teaching was to be conducted in English; Irish history and the Irish language were forbidden. Archbishop John MacHale initially supported the National System, but only to counteract the influence of educationalists such as Nangle. However, he later withdrew his approval.

Edmund Ignatius Rice was widowed at an early age and left to care for his disabled young daughter. He abandoned his successful business and founded a school for the poor in Waterford, as well as a further five including one in Cork and one in Dublin. He also founded the first Catholic lay order for men, known as the Christian Brothers Congregation.

Maynooth College was founded in 1785. Some of its early trustees and visiting lecturers were Anglicans. The College received state financial support until 1869 when all government aid for denominational education was withdrawn. The financial support for Maynooth from the Government was a source of continual aggravation to Edward Nangle and others evangelicals.

Scriptural Schools

In tandem with the social relief work of the evangelical groups many sought to educate, evangelise and bring the Bible to the people in their native language. However, some of the landlords looked on this activity with some suspicion and the Catholic authorities accused them of proselytising. Also the 'high church' or 'liberal minded' churchmen did not favour any encroachment into their parishes by those with an evangelical message.

Prominent amongst the educational societies was the Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Ireland, which was founded in 1814. The work of the Society included the financial support of schoolteachers until the National School system was inaugurated in 1831. Roy McMullan writes that in its inaugural meeting it was agreed that:

> *". . . the principal object of this Society be to employ Itinerants (Irish speaking) in Ireland, to establish schools and to distribute bibles and tracts, either gratuitously or at a reduced price."* [7]

Pastor McMullan also notes that the Committee of the Baptist Irish Society was 'influenced by far higher than sectarian motives', sought to teach 'the ordinary person ... to read and reason' and wished 'to unite with other Christians'.[8]

The Irish Society (for promoting the Education of the Irish through the

medium of their Own Language) was founded in Dublin, in 1818. The Society quietly extended their Scriptural school programme and by 1825 had established fifty-one schools, with over nine hundred pupils, in the Kingscourt area of County Cavan. By 1840, at least one hundred thousand pupils, both young and old, were being taught in fifteen hundred schools throughout the Irish speaking districts of Ireland (including Achill Island). The Society mainly employed Irish speaking teachers and Scripture readers, many of whom were Catholics.

The Irish Church Missions was founded by the Rev Alexander Dallas, an Englishman. Following up on his earlier interest in Ireland he founded ICM in 1849, with the support of some of the Anglican Bishops. By the time of his death in 1869 the Mission controlled twenty-one churches, forty-nine schools and four orphanages. Unlike the Baptists, the Irish Society and the Achill Mission, ICM did not major in the use of the Gaelic.

Irene Whelan writes of this period in *The Bible War in Ireland* that 'the countryside was awash with missionary agents and itinerant preachers'.[9] One such missionary agent was Edward Nangle.

Edward Walter Nangle (1800-1883)

His section of the Nangle lineage is notable. Edward was descended from an influential Catholic family in Ireland, individual members of which had held the position of Baron of Navan throughout the previous six centuries. Nangle's father was married three times and two of his brothers were priests. His second wife (recorded as being a godly woman) was a Protestant and the resultant three children were raised in her faith. She died when Edward was nine years of age and, in 1812, he was boarded at the Royal School, Cavan.

Edward Nangle and his brothers were educated with some who later became prominent in Irish society and religious life, including General Sir John Pennefather and Bishop Robert Daly. Edward later admitted that, although all his schools had been led by a clergyman, he had never been taught to read or memorise Scripture.

Initially Edward went up to Trinity College to study medicine, but he was encouraged to switch courses so that he could 'go into the church'. He then realised that he would need to understand something about the Bible and so he obtained a copy. We read in Henry Seddall's biography:

"It was the reading of the Bible, he says, with the light of God's Holy Spirit

shed upon it that brought about what in his case was a real conversion of heart and mind." [10]

After graduating with a BA and an additional course in divinity Nangle was ordained as a deacon in the Church of Ireland for the curacy of Athboy, in his home parish. Seddall records that the Nangle family then 'became the objects of the most violent hatred' and that the local priests denounced Edward Nangle by name as a 'mischievous heretic' and a 'gloomy fanatic'. Edward stayed in Athboy only a few months, moved to Monkstown, and was then ordained a priest for the parish of Arva in County Cavan.

Whilst ministering in the widespread parish, Nangle came into contact with many local people who had been influenced by Methodists. He was attracted by their evangelistic enthusiasm and Arminian theology with its stress on the revival of 'personal religion'. In addition, Edward was impressed by the hard work of the Methodist evangelist, Gideon Ouseley. Ouseley, the son of an Irish gentleman from Galway, was reported to preach up to twenty times per week, both in English and Irish, and to ride around 4,000 miles a year on horseback. He itinerated throughout Ireland for forty-seven years, until his death in 1839. [11]

Later, the strong Calvinistic ministry of William Krause greatly influenced Nangle and Seddall records a consequent 'change in Edward's basic doctrinal views'. However, Seddall also noted that Edward 'did not approve of the undue prominence which Mr Krause in his preaching gave to the doctrine of election'. Nangle held that the doctrine should not 'be so thrust forward as to allow human responsibility to be lost sight of'. Krause was born in the West Indies, brought to England as a child and served in the British Army at the Battle of Waterloo. In 1821 he came over to Ireland for the wedding of a former fellow officer and there he was introduced to 'the society of believers sound in truth'. His friend's sister gave him a Bible which had copious marginal references. This became his constant study and we read that a strong desire arose in his heart to enter the ministry, although fifteen years were to pass before it was accomplished. Krause was refused ordination in his English diocese and returned to Ireland to study at Trinity. He was also appointed as moral agent (chaplain) for the estate of Lord Farnham in County Cavan. [12]

In 1840, two years after his ordination, Krause moved to the position of 'official preacher' in the Bethesda Chapel in Dublin. Bethesda had been one of the 'free' chapels in Dublin until they were fully licensed by Archbishop Magee in 1825. Alan Acheson states that in that period 'two-thirds of Dublin's church population are estimated to have attended the voluntary churches'. [13]

Edward Nangle's work in Arva was onerous. Seddall notes that 'Publicly, and from house to house', he testified 'repentance towards God and faith toward the Lord Jesus'. Nangle often travelled over his wide area by horseback. On one journey, whilst meditating on the character of God as displayed in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, Edward received a manifestation of God's love and concern which no language could describe.

In 1827, after two years' labour, Edward Nangle suffered serious health problems. The difficult living conditions, overwork, relative inexperience, and evangelistic enthusiasm, all contributed to the neglect of his health. Thus, Nangle resigned his position, forfeited his £75 stipend and returned to his father's house near Athboy.[14] However, Nangle's father was in a poor financial state and consequently Edward was cared for in the home of the local Doctor James Adams. It was not a mental break-down but the doctor reported to a visitor that 'physically there was no hope of life. One lung was gone and the other was going but spiritually he was possessed of eternal life . . .'. Edward Nangle's spiritual strength was indeed his deliverance.

It was in that house that Edward met his first wife, Elizabeth Warner, and the doctor's brother, Dr Neason Adams. Neason removed Edward to his medical practice in Dublin and there nursed him back to health. In 1828, Edward and Elizabeth married and holidayed in Harrogate and the Highlands of Scotland. Perhaps it was there that Nangle obtained one of Charles Anderson's books titled *Historical Sketches of the Ancient Native Irish and their Descendents.* Seddall reports that he was so impressed by Anderson's notes on the Irish and the neglect of teaching them in their native language that . . .

> *"He, at once, threw aside his Hebrew grammar and lexicon which he had been diligently studying, and applied himself with great earnestness to the acquisition of the Irish language, determining at the same time that if it pleased God to restore him to health he would devote himself to the service of Christ among some portion of the Irish-speaking population."* [15]

Christopher Anderson, the founder pastor of Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, was closely connected to the missionary work of William Carey in India but had been prevented from joining him through his own weak health. Anderson was a frequent visitor to Ireland and was associated with the Hibernian schools and the Baptist Irish Society. In 1852, Nangle give Anderson a fulsome obituary in the Achill Herald and wrote that: 'it is worthy of being noted, that his book . . . originated the Achill Mission'.[16]

Nineteenth Century Achill Island

In the early nineteenth century, Achill Island had been forgotten by all except traders, affluent shooting parties and tourists. In 1830, Edward and his wife were involved in the evangelical scene in Dublin when he heard of the abortive attempt by Baptists to set up a school on Achill. In 1831, at the request of the Dublin Famine Relief Committee, they accompanied a relief steamer loaded with maize which was being sent to the area.

Throughout the stormy four day passage around the North of Ireland, Nangle preached to the crew and passengers. In Westport, he left his heavily pregnant wife and journeyed out to Achill with a Scripture Reader to investigate the state of the islanders. The native populace had been reduced to terrible living conditions by the 1831 famine and had no spiritual ministry. There were no resident priests and the elderly Church of Ireland rector lived forty miles away in Westport.[17] Nangle was welcomed by many as they travelled across Achill and he determined:

> *". . . to devote myself to missionary work among the native Irish on the plan of the United Brethren (Moravians); and these encouraging appearances, which in the sequel proved to be, with few exceptions, deceptive, along with the intense destitution of the islanders both temporally and spiritually, decided me in fixing upon Achill as the field of my intended enterprise."*

Edward Nangle then returned to Westport where he was introduced to the landlord, Sir Richard O'Donnell, who promised to help him secure some small leases of land for his proposed venture.

The Achill Island Missionary Colony

On returning to Dublin, Edward Nangle brought together a group of influential men to form a Committee. Their declared purpose was to build up a Christian community, to evangelise and teach in the native Gaelic, and to help develop better farming and improve the infrastructure of the neglected island. Not everyone agreed with his project – one popular evangelical minister met him on a Dublin street and told him that it was a 'wild goose chase'.

When the Achill Mission Committee had finally secured some land at Slievemore Mountain a land steward was sent to the island. Seddall notes that the ground was so swampy and soft that the locals said that 'a hare could hardly walk over it'. The advance party drained the land and built the first two stone and slated houses.

In the interim period, Nangle was temporarily employed by the Home Mission in the Ballina district. Frank Nangle, a great grandson, later recorded that Edward Nangle, in those years:

> *". . . demonstrated his abilities as a vigorous and effective organiser as he and the committee completed the many preliminary arrangements which were necessary to ensure that the Achill Mission would be established on a sound footing . . ."* [18]

In late July 1834, the Nangle party travelled to Achill Island and, on arrival at Doogort Strand, they were welcomed by the customary bonfires. Their accommodation was very limited in the early years; both early houses were shared with various people – Edward and Eliza Nangle, their three daughters, Mrs Nangle's sister, the Colony Steward and his family, the Assistant Missionary, the Schoolmaster, two Scripture Readers and later Dr and Mrs Neason Adams. Food was scarce, there was no meat on the island and Newport was the nearest market town, twenty five miles distant. There were no proper roads on the island, only horse tracks. Seddall wrote that 'Mr Nangle's adventures more nearly resembled those of Robinson Crusoe on his desert island...'

Two days after their arrival, and true to his calling, Edward Nangle preached the Gospel to the local people. By the end of the year he had organised the first Scriptural based day school. Forty-three children attended the first day and fifty-three on the second.

Nangle was supported in his work by assistant missionaries, school teachers and Scripture readers. They travelled throughout Achill on foot and to the neighbouring islands by boat. Joseph Duncan was the first assistant missionary but, after two years, he moved off Achill, due to ill-health. Joseph Baylee replaced Duncan and was reported to have frequently travelled from Dugort, to Dooega, across to Achillbeg Island and then back to the Colony ... a distance of thirty Irish miles. In each place Baylee taught a Bible chapter to the adults, catechised the children and prayed with all gathered. Baylee left in 1838 to become the founder Principal of the Church of England College in Birkenhead. Thomas de Vere Coneys then held the position of assistant missionary in 1838-40, after which he was appointed as the first professor of the Irish language at Trinity College Dublin.

In 1835, medical support was offered by Dr Neason Adams. Neason and his wife Isabella had been so challenged by Nangle that they left a successful medical practice and their grand house in St Stephen's Green Dublin and came to live and work on Achill in a voluntary capacity. Neason was then

fifty-eight years of age and he stayed until some time after Isabella's death in 1855.

Such were the calibre of men and women that Nangle drew together to work with him on Achill. It is recorded that all were highly respected by the people for their caring interest and valuable ministry.

Opposition

The varied ministries of the Achill Mission soon drew considerable opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop John MacHale came under some pressure from his superiors and he placed militant minded priests on Achill and Clare islands.[19] MacHale was recognised to have a determined, often intolerant character. He entered into correspondence with the Government and the English and Irish press complaining about the Mission activities. The Scriptural Schools and the organisation of a counter National School system became a dominant issue. However, MacHale's intemperate letters also served to draw attention to the developing work on Achill and many visitors were drawn to the remote western island. Nangle had initially found the people to be 'full of kindness and good-will' but they were soon encouraged by the priests to practice 'exclusive dealings' and not sell food to, or work for, the newcomers. There followed many recorded and verifiable examples of the people being incited to violence.

Four months after the Colony was opened the two Scripture readers were assaulted as they travelled across the island at night. In 1835, a visitor to Achill wrote:

> *"The parish priest of Newport visited Achill Island and stirred up the local people against the missionaries and the Scripture readers. The next day, which was a Sunday, 'The people were desired to have their pitchforks well sharpened . . .' That Sunday the colony steward was attacked in his own dwelling and the labourers were informed that 'if they ventured beyond the Sound of Achill, they should bring their coffins ready made with them'. "*

The same visitor also wrote:

> *"Mr Nangle deemed it necessary to wear arms about his person when on the road, and on one occasion when travelling over to Newport attributed his preservation, under providence, to this precaution, and to an escort of police which had been ordered to accompany him on his return to Achill."* [20]

In 1837, Joseph Baylee was severely beaten when on a visit to Clare Island. His skull was split open to the bone with a blow from a heavy iron bound cudgel. He carried the scar to his grave.

In July 1837, Archbishop John MacHale visited Clare Island with the purpose to protect the islanders from being mislaid by the 'venomous fanatics'. He was accompanied by thirteen priests ... a formidable phalanx to encounter just a school-master and a Scripture reader. Both men were later stoned by the infuriated crowd and removed back to Achill by the Coastguards. Two days later, Baylee returned but he too was driven off.

In these difficult days Nangle complained to the relevant authorities and received support from such as Lord Roden of Tullymore. A police station was then set up at Cashel and a Petty Session Court at Achill Sound. Later, a detachment of police was positioned inside the Slievemore Colony.

Frances Reynolds was a Chief Officer in the Achill Coastguards and supported the Colony. In 1837, he testified, with others, before a House of Lord's Select Committee about the opposition. Reynolds was married to a catholic woman who, after hearing him denounced from the pulpit on several Sundays, walked out of the chapel during mass. In December 1838 at 2am, Reynolds was coming off shift when he was attacked with stones. On entering a nearby house his skull was fractured with a spade and, despite the medical care of Dr Adams, he died. The accused couple were later released due to lack of evidence.

The Achill Missionary Herald and Western Witness

The Mission was gifted a printing press in 1835. It was described as a 'curious typographical adventure on a remote western island' and was equipped with English, Hebrew, Greek and Irish typefaces.

Edward Nangle had some ability in publishing. Eighteen months later, he produced a monthly magazine, assisted by two experienced printers. In later years some of the orphans were trained to assist. The paper usually covered twelve to sixteen closely typed pages, had a print run of up to 3,000 copies with a wide circulation, and ran for 32 years. The aim was to *'bear a faithful and uncompromising testimony against the superstition and idolatry of the Church of Rome; it shall also proclaim the glorious truths of the Gospel'.*

The magazine included many finely argued long articles by Nangle, news from Ireland and abroad, adverts (including wine sales) and detailed financial

statements. Little stirred in religious circles that Nangle did not comment on. He was a master publicist.

The Achill Press also printed many tracts, booklets and cloth bound books including imprints of *An Introduction to the Irish language* and a second edition of *Neilson's Irish Grammar.*

Doctrinal Basis

Edward Nangle held firmly to the doctrines enshrined in the *Thirty-nine Articles.* He was a strong churchman, believing that the established church had apostolic authority. He held to a 'high' view of Scripture, wholeheartedly embraced reformed theology and totally rejected the teachings of Rome. Nangle took part in the extended public debates of his day with Catholic theologians. He challenged the 'high' church and 'liberal' churchmen; took issue with the early anti-clerical views of John Darby and also wrote, in 1845, about the separation of Darby and Newton in Plymouth. Edward Nangle expressed his eschatology in historic pre-millennialism. He believed that the Great Famine was an expression of God's judgement on the sin of the nation.

Edward Nangle had a strong social conscience which he fully worked out in service for many in the West of Ireland. In the 1840s, he encouraged his parishioners to support pioneer missionary work in north-east China and in Patagonia. Auxiliary societies for the Hibernian Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society were organised in the Colony. He was a founder member of the Evangelical Alliance and in later years the YMCA was organised on Achill.

Orphans

The Orphan Institution was established in 1838 to give care and education to fourteen children, both Catholic and Protestant. It was supervised by the Assistant missionary, Mrs Neason, and the house parents. The numbers grew to around 100 children who were housed in some thirty thatched cottages.

The orphans were incorporated into the day schools at the Slievemore Colony and some were educated to the entrance level required for the Kildare Place Teacher Training College. Some of them later became Scripture Readers or ministers in the Church of Ireland.

In 1872 the Orphan Home was closed, mainly due to the improvement of

family life and the decreasing number of orphans on the island. The fourteen remaining children were then transferred to the care of the Rev Hyacinth D'Arcy and his sister at the Connemara Orphanage in Clifden.

Colony Extensions

By late 1836, the Colony settlement had been extended to include a separate meeting hall to seat 140; seventeen houses were built for families who had sought protection; another eight cottages were built, two of which were rented to local families who had joined the Colony.

In 1839, the Slievemore Hotel (now Apartments) was built to accommodate the increasing number of visitors who had added Achill Island to their West of Ireland tours.

In 1837, the original Slievemore land was found inadequate to sustain the growing number of eighty-three people involved. Sixty originated from the island and twenty-three were Colony staff or were tradesmen brought in to help. Some members then moved to Inishbiggle Island and other farm land at Ballycroy, on the mainland, both leased from Sir Richard O'Donnell. Scriptural schools were also built there.

In 1845, a further 1,444 acres was leased at Mweelin, six miles from Slievemore. There, a smaller colony, consisting of twelve stone buildings, schoolhouse and church was built. One of the retrained, Irish speaking, priests supervised the work. Up to sixty older students, drawn from many of the Scriptural schools across the island, were trained at Mweelin for possible entry to the Kildare Street Institution.

In 1848, forty acres of land was secured at Achill Sound on which a church, manse and Scriptural school were erected. The Rev Charles Seymour was appointed rector for Achill and was based at Achill Sound.

A manse was also built at Dugort for the Nangle family and the foundations were laid for St Thomas's church at Dugort, but it was not finished until 1855. The land surrounding the church was later developed for farming.

The post 1855 picture also shows the buildings which progressively filled up the left-hand street ... now the Gray's Guesthouses. As more buildings were built, the use of some of the original buildings was rearranged. Altogether, there were: separate schools for boys, girls and infants, complete with library and a steam operated kitchen; a print shop; a house for the converted priests; separate houses for each of the families, Coastguard officer, Police and cottages for the orphans. Also built were farm buildings and offices, general store, hospital, dispensary, grain and wood mills.

Ill Health

During all the above developments, Edward and Eliza Nangle experienced many family and health problems. They had eleven children; five of those born on Achill between 1835 and 1847 died very young. Both parents had to withdraw from Achill for periods in 1848-50 through illness. In 1848, the Rev Charles Seymour was appointed rector for the island and was based at Achill Sound. The administration of the Colony business was delegated to the Steward.

Eliza eventually died in Dublin in 1850 and was brought back to Achill for burial beside her five infants, on the side of their beloved Slievemore Mountain.

Irish Famines

In the early nineteenth century there was considerable political and agrarian agitation in Ireland. Various periods of famine were followed by that of the Great Famine of 1845-49. John O'Shea, quoting from the Freeman's Journal, writes about the early 1820 period:

> *"The people of Achill . . . perish in such numbers, that they are found on the roadside, lying dead and conditions were so bad that the living were scarcely sufficient to bury the dead."* [21]

The 1830-31 famine was accompanied by an epidemic of cholera, but the Great Famine of 1845-49 was the most severe and many died or emigrated. Between October 1846 and March 1847, the British Government were reported to spend £9,250,000 on grain depots, soup kitchens and public works.[22] It was reckoned that by 1847, about £1,500,000 was subscribed from American sources, including those who had emigrated from Ireland. Thirteen American vessels were chartered (including two warships) to transport donated food and clothing to Ireland. In 1847, the Jewish Rothschild banking family organised The British Relief Association, raising £500,000 in England and overseas. Queen Victoria also generously contributed.

Nangle and Adams had strong social consciences and frequently queried whether the official relief programs, including the provision of Workhouses and roads, were adequate or even correctly administered. Their appeals for grain, seed, winter coats and footwear, drew in remarkable volumes of aid from evangelical supporters. Sadly however, in its distribution, they were unfairly accused, by their religious opponents, of Souperism and Proselytism.

In her book *The Great Hunger*, Cecil Woodham-Smith gives no credit for the tremendous relief work for which the Colony took responsibility on Achill Island. [23]

Souperism and Proselytism

The derogatory term 'taking the soup' was actually coined in earlier years. Bishop Le Peor Trench had organised, financed and worked in kitchens which distributed soup in Connemara in the 1820s. In 1831 'a benevolent lady' opened a soup kitchen in Dingle and the local priest forbad the starving from benefitting. Those who disobeyed him were named and labelled as 'Soupers'. The historian Desmond Bowen, in his book *Souperism: Myth or Reality*. challenges the myth that relief supplies were only dispensed to Catholics who were prepared to convert and attend Protestant services. [24]

Edward Nangle did not accept all who came to him to 'convert'. Proof of true repentance was required before 'confirmation' was agreed. Initially employment on the Colony land was restricted to only one family member and wages were kept low to encourage a wider employment outside of the Settlement. In the Great Famine, although food distribution was rationed, special meals were given for up to 2,000 children (both Catholic and Protestant) who attended twenty-one Mission Schools on the Island. The children's' parents were required to give their permission for their children to be taught the Bible in the schools.

Fourth and Final Extension of the Colony

In 1850, after the death of Eliza, Edward Nangle returned to Achill and was appointed rector. The administration of the Colony had been placed in the hands of the Steward, whilst he had been away in Dublin. He occupied the newly built large rectory - the church of St Thomas was not completed until 1855.

In 1851, Sir Richard O'Donnell was bankrupted (as were many others) and the Mission bought the major part of his Achill Island estate. They then sold on about forty percent to other supporters. In becoming the major landlord on the island the new Mission Trustees became embroiled in many rental disputes. Miriam Moffitt, a modern church historian, questions the wisdom of such a purchase, with its resultant problems and aggravation.

Archbishop MacHale visited Achill again and then bought a small portion of

land at Bunacurry where the Franciscan Order built a Friary. It later became a farm co-operative but the main building now lies in ruins, inhabited only by the cattle.

Financial Problems and Decline

After the large purchase of land income diminished. The famine had passed and the English were taken up with movements on the Continent. The incomes of many Societies reduced severely, including the Irish Church Mission. Support from the Quakers, the Rothschild's and Queen Victoria had mainly dried up.

On Achill a large number of unpaid rents were cancelled. The rental income (which was acknowledged to be fair) was then severely reduced by the new Irish Land Act. The development of the National School system also reduced the attendances at the Scriptural Schools. Emigration, which had been a continual Irish problem since the 1830s, continued throughout the century. The transfer of the founder and the loss of his management skills may also have contributed.

Edward Nangle in Skreen and Retirement

In 1852, Edward Nangle married his second wife, Sarah Fetherstonhaugh, and they moved to the parish of Skreen in County Sligo. It is recorded that she created a happy home for them and also the remaining children from Edward's first marriage. Four more children were born in Skreen and Edward ministered there until his return to Achill in 1879.

On Achill, a rector was appointed and the responsibility for the Mission Schools passed to the Irish Church Missions. A board of Trustees, with local agents, was placed in charge of the property and farms. Edward Nangle continued to be involved, was appointed a trustee, and visited Achill for several months each summer. In July 1868, on a visit to Achill he found one hundred and twenty pupils (aged 6-70 yrs) with ten teachers in the Colony Sunday School. At the noon service in St Thomas's two hundred and eighteen people attended, seventy-one at the Parish church at the Sound, twenty-six at Cashel Schoolhouse, and forty-two on Inishbiggle Island.

However, Nangle continued to appeal for funds for the Achill Mission and that practice caused a breach of fellowship with the Irish Church Missions and their agreement only lasted from 1852-54. In 1873, Edward retired from his

ministry in Skreen, but stayed on in charge of the two schools that he had developed. In 1873 and 1875, Nangle again visited England to raise finance for the Achill Mission and in 1879 he, his second wife, Sarah, and her sister, returned to live at Dugort. That winter, Achill Island experienced very severe weather and Edward's health was weakened.

In his last days on Achill, Edward Nangle wrote:

> *"The Lord has enabled his poor old servant to leave* ***footprints on the sands of time*** *in Achill and Skreen. Who will take up the work, and follow the well-worn Gospel plough, when this poor ploughman has sunk to his rest? The work* ***will*** *and* ***must*** *go on. I am pleading on and praying to a Covenant God. I plead the oath, the promise, the blood. He will never deceive, never disappoint."* [25]

In 1880, Edward Walter Nangle had to be moved to Dublin where he passed away on 9 September 1883. He was buried in the Protestant section of Dean's Grange Cemetery, County Dublin.[26] His funeral was attended by a large number, many of whom had travelled from other parts of Ireland. Sadly, today, he is mainly forgotten and his grave in Dublin lies unattended.

In 1883, the Achill Mission schools were incorporated into the work of the old established Irish Society and in 1886 the property of the Colony was sold. That part of the story remains to be told.

It is our responsibility to record the sacrificial labour of those who have gone before. May such history give us even more incentive to support those who currently minister in difficult and remote places. In evangelical circles we have much to recall, to teach to our children and for which to give thanks.

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