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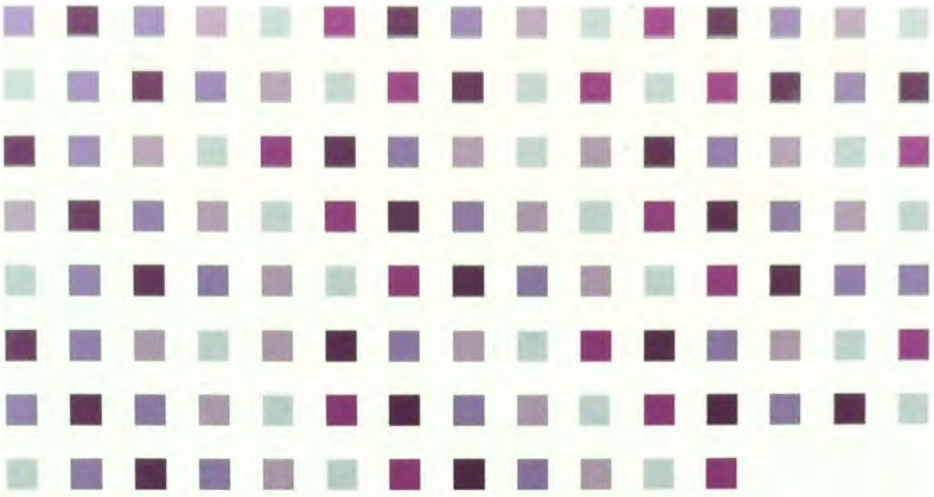


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Editorial

In 2015 the topics addressed at the meetings of the Historical Society included an individual, Andrew Fuller, an institution, the history of Irish Baptist Churches and an initiative, the story of the Salvation Army.

In March Pastor Harry Dowds set out the life of Andrew Fuller in four parts: as Master Theologian, Faithful Pastor, Zealous Evangelist and Humble Christian. Although he was not without personal failings yet he sought to excel in these four areas of Christian service. In highlighting the influence of Fuller's life and work Pastor Dowds noted:

> *"There is no doubt that Andrew Fuller was the most influential Baptist pastor, preacher and writer of his era yet sadly today he is all but forgotten."*

The meeting in May was well attended to hear Pastor Edwin Ewart present the 120 year history of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland. In 1888 the London-based Baptist Irish Society gave way to the Irish Baptist Home Mission which went on to channel a remarkable growth in Baptist Church membership as a direct result of evangelistic fervour and vision. The Baptist Union of Ireland was subsequently formed in 1895 at the May Assembly Meetings in Mountpottinger Church, Belfast. The main events and prominent individuals were all referred to, concludinging with a summary of the things which encourage and which challenge Irish Baptist Churches as we anticipate and prepare for the future.

The Salvation Army celebrated 150 years of work in 2015 and, in October, Dr James Davison presented an overview of those 150 years. The various individuals and events which led to the formation of the Salvatuion Army in 1865 and its subsequent history was both interesting and informative. Perhaps most amazing were the statistics regarding the width of the work of the Salvation Army geographically and the depth of the work socially and spiritually. Even today, all around the world, tens of millions of people every year benefit from the work William and Catherine Booth started 150 years ago.

As ever the variety of topics covered and the excellent presentations of each of our speakers was very much appreciated and greatly benefited all who attended.

John Gault

About Our Contributors

Harry Dowds

Following a period working in his father's business in Belfast, Harry undertook three years of study at the Lebanon Missionary Bible College in Northumbria and then worked for six years as a children's evangelist with BCM International. His first pastorate was in Craigavon (1988-95) and he is currently pastor at Stonepark Baptist Church, a position he has held since November 1995. Harry is married to Christine and they have a son, Jonathan (pastor of Upney Baptist Church, East London) and two daughters, Grace and Joy.

Edwin Ewart BA BD MMin MTh MPhil

Edwin Ewart, a native of Magherafelt, served the Churches in Letterkenny, Mountpottinger and Coleraine as pastor over a period of 21 years before coming to the Irish Baptist College in 2007 as Assistant Principal. He became Principal in 2010. He and his wife Alicen are members of Ballymena Baptist Church.

James Davison BTh MPhil PhD

James Davison is secretary of the Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, a member of the Irish Baptist Historical Society and a visiting lecturer at both the Irish Baptist College and Belfast Bible College. He is also a recognized teacher by Queen's University from which he was awarded his PhD in 2005. He is married to Violet and they have two grown up children, Paul (married to Julie) and Andrea, and two grandchildren.



The crowns don't seem to fit

Andrew Fuller:

Master Theologian, Faithful Pastor, Zealous Evangelist, Humble Christian

Harry Dowds

The date ... Monday 15 May 1815; the place ... Kettering, England; ... the occasion is the funeral service for Andrew Fuller, the local Baptist pastor. More than 2000 are in attendance in a small town with a population of only 3300. The preacher is John Ryland Jnr, a close friend of the deceased. During his sermon Ryland describes Fuller as, "perhaps the most judicious and able theological writer that ever belonged to our denomination." High praise indeed! [1]

But words of praise came for many others also and perhaps the most colourful testimony came from the great preacher Robert Hall Jnr who, in conversation with a friend shortly after Fuller's death, commented,

> "Do you remember what occurred at his birth the devils ran frightened to one corner of hell!" [2]

Some years later John Angell James wrote:

> "Fuller's works contain the most entire union of sound Calvinistic divinity ... Christian ethics ... and religious experience in the English language".[3]


Christmas Evans

Christmas Evans, the famous one-eyed preacher of Wales who benefitted greatly from Fuller's writings described him as 'the elephant of Kettering',[4] a graphic way of emphasising his theological rather than physical weight!

CH Spurgeon simply viewed him as 'the greatest theologian of the century'.[5]


C H Spurgeon

More tangible expressions of his prowess were seen in the awarding of two doctorates in his lifetime, in 1798 Princeton and then, in 1805, Yale presented him with Doctor of Divinity degrees.

Not everyone, however, viewed him with such favour; William Gadsby was scathing in his assessment of Fuller, referring to him as:

> "the greatest enemy the church ever had, as his sentiments were so much cloaked in the sheep's clothing".[6]

There is no doubt that Andrew Fuller was the most influential Baptist pastor, preacher and writer of his era yet sadly today he is all but forgotten.

Who was this man?

He was born 6 February 1754 in the village of Wicken, Ely, Cambridgeshire. His parents, Robert and Phillipa, were a godly couple who already had two sons, Robert and John. They were small time dairy farmers and that was Andrew's occupation for the first twenty years of his life. Perhaps this is why when describing him William Wilberforce said, 'He was the very picture of a blacksmith'.[7] In 1761 the family moved the short distance to Soham where they were members of the Baptist church with a Mr Eve as pastor. In later years Andrew spoke of Mr Eve as being tainted with "false Calvinism". To get a right understanding of Fuller it is vitally important to understand his view of Calvinism. He spoke of three types of Calvinism, one that was true and two that were false. He himself held to what he called "strict" Calvinism; that is,



> "One that really holds the system of Calvin. I do not believe everything that Calvin taught, nor anything because he taught it; but I reckon strict Calvinism to be my true system".[8]

Then there is what he referred to as 'moderat' Calvinism, such as was promulgated by Richard Baxter and which he viewed as being Arminian at heart and thus was false. Thirdly there was 'high or hyper' Calvinism which dissuaded preachers from indiscriminately urging sinners to come to Christ for salvation; rather, it caused them to look for a 'warrant' for faith before pointing them to trust the Lord Jesus. This warrant was the display of discernible evidence that the Spirit of God had begun a work in the sinner seen in a sensible conviction of sin or perhaps a text of scripture suddenly impressed upon the mind, and thus providing evidence that they were among the elect. As a result of the high or false Calvinism which Mr Eve embraced, although he was a good man, he had little to say to the unconverted.

Fuller's early life was marked by worldliness; lying, swearing, and cursing were all part of his daily conduct. Although he had little formal education he was a reader and his early teens found him reading John Bunyan and Ralph Erskine. On one occasion Erskine's 'Gospel Sonnets' made an impact on him:

> "I read and as I read I wept. Indeed I was almost overcome with weeping, so interesting did the doctrine of eternal salvation appear to me. Yet there was no radical change in my heart, these thoughts passed away and I was equally intent on the pursuits of folly as heretofore".[9]

Sometime later he was with a group of youths in the blacksmith singing bawdy songs when the words, "What doest thou here Elijah?" came into his thoughts, his conscience was pricked and he left the company and made his way home, but he went complaining against God for so troubling him.

One morning in early 1767, Romans 6:14, *"Sin shall not have dominion over you"*, suddenly sprang unbidden into his thoughts, because of the doctrinal atmosphere in which he was raised he looked upon this as a 'warrant' for faith and believed himself to have been converted. He initially had a great sense of joy but by nightfall he had returned to his old sins. In 1768, Isaiah 44:22, *"I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions"*, was impressed on his mind, this he took to be an indication from the Lord that he was saved but backslidden. Eventually in Autumn 1769 he came under deep conviction of sin, a great internal struggle ensued and while meditating on the words of Job 13:15, *"Though he slay me yet will I trust in him"*, he thought of himself as like Esther when she determined to go unbidden into the presence of Ahasuerus and he decided that he would cease looking for warrants and would instead simply cast himself on Christ. He did so and immediately he entered into the joy of true salvation.

Five months later Andrew, along with an older man, Joseph Diver, was baptised and both joined the church. Shortly after the baptism, Mr Eve resigned from the pastorate of the church and as a result Joseph Diver began to assist in the preaching. One Saturday in November 1771 Andrew was riding out on business and preaching to himself from Ps.30:5, *"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"*. Arriving for the church service the next day he was given a message by one of the members, "Brother Diver has by accident, sprained his ankle and cannot be at meeting today; and he wishes me to say to you, that he hopes the Lord will be with you".[10] Stunned though he was, he had little option but to preach the sermon he had been preaching to himself the previous day. The Lord helped him and he was asked to preach again but on this occasion he experienced no liberty and refused to preach again until 1773 when once again he stood in for Diver who was ill. His text was "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost". The Lord enabled him to preach with power and a number of young people were deeply impressed and later joined the church. He gradually began preaching more regularly and in the spring of 1775 he was called to be the pastor of the church. Although the church grew under his ministry it was not an easy pastorate. The people refused to build a larger meeting house although it was needed because of the increased attendances. Added to this his salary was never more than £13 per year and, although he tried other means to supplement his income, he struggled with debt and his health suffered. Eventually, in 1782 after long heart searching, he accepted the call to the Baptist Church in Kettering where he stayed until his death.



Soham Baptist Chapel

There were four areas in which Fuller excelled during his life and ministry:

Master Theologian

Although he had little formal education, Fuller was a truly great theologian. As we have seen CH Spurgeon called him "the greatest theologian of the century". How was this remarkable ability developed?

Beginnings of theological enquiry

Prior to his call to the pastorate at Soham, Andrew was the unwitting instigator of a bitter debate that erupted in the church. He rebuked James Levit, a fellow member,

for drunkenness. Levit's response was that he had no power to keep himself and this then led to a divisive argument within the church that eventually resulted in the pastor, Mr Eve, leaving. While the whole affair was to Fuller the "wormwood and gall of my youth"[11] it prompted him to question, study and reflect deeply on the related doctrines of the sovereignty of God and the consequent ability and responsibility of men.

Manner of his enquiry

While it was always Andrew's desire to stay within the boundaries of Biblical orthodoxy, he also was original in his thought ... he refused to be a mere follower of men. He expressed this in a quaint way:

> "My father was a farmer and in my younger days it was one great boast among the ploughmen that they could plough a straight line across the furrows or ridges of a field. I thought I could do that as well as any of them. One day, I saw such a line, which had just been drawn, and I thought; 'Now I have it'. Accordingly I laid hold of the plough and, putting one of the horses into the furrow which had been made, I resolved to keep him walking in it, and thus secure a parallel line. By and by, however, I observed that there were what might be called wriggles in this furrow; and, when I came to them, they turned out to be larger in mine than in the original. On this I threw the plough aside, and determined never to be an imitator."[12]

A deeper insight into the seriousness coupled with humility with which he pursued this course finds expression in his personal Covenant, which was not intended for public view, dated 10 January 1780:

> "Lord thou hast given me a determination to take up no principle at second-hand; but to search for everything at the fountain of thy word. Yet, Lord, I am afraid. Seeing I am as liable to err as other men, lest I should be laid aside from truth by my own imagination. Hast thou not promised, "The meek wilt thou guide in judgement, and the meek wilt thou teach thy way"? Lord thou knowest, at this time, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty. O, guide me by thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory."[13]

Influences

Although he was independent in thought he still had a number of godly men who greatly influenced him, they were a cluster of Johns! John Calvin, of course, was a major influence as we have already noted.

John Owen also figures highly in his thought:

> "I know of no writer for whom I have so great an esteem; it would be a faint expression for me to say I approve his principles ... I admire them."[14]

John Bunyan also was influential, as was John Gill. Two contemporaries also helped to develop Andrew's thinking, John Sutcliff & John Ryland Jnr.



John Calvin *John Owen* *John Bunyan* *John Gill* *John Ryland Jnr*

In order to gain some appreciation of the calibre of these men its worth reflecting on the latter's attainments. Born in 1753, he was educated by his father John Collet Ryland and also at Bristol Baptist Academy. The understandably proud father wrote of his son:

> "John is now eleven years and seven months old. He has read Genesis in Hebrew five times through; he read through the Greek NT before nine years old, he has read Horace and Virgil; he has read through Telemachus in French; he has read Pope's Homer in eleven volumes, Dryden's Virgil in three volumes, Rollin's Ancient History in ten volumes, and he knows pagan mythology surprisingly." [15]

Ryland Jnr went on to succeed his father as the pastor of the Northampton church where he was greatly used in the Lord's service. Probably the pre-eminent influence in Andrew's thinking, however, was that of Jonathan Edwards. In fact so great was this influence that it became a source of criticism as can be discerned in a letter written on 28 April 1815 to Ryland:

> "We have heard some, who have been giving out of late that 'if Sutcliff and some others had preached more of Christ and less of Jonathan Edwards, they would have been more useful'. If those who talk thus, preached Christ half as much as Jonathan Edwards did, and were half as useful as he was, their usefulness would be double what it is".[16]

It was Robert Hall Sen who introduced Fuller to the writings of Jonathan Edwards. At his induction, at Soham in 1775, Hall suggested he should read Edwards on the Freedom of the Will. Instead of obtaining the work by the great American he read

Veritus Redux by John Edwards, an Episcopalian minister. Eventually he realised his mistake and tracked down the correct volume and was soon immersed in the works of the correct Edwards.

Themes of enquiry

The mistaken beliefs of the high/hyper Calvinists had led to error in practice. Because they believed that only those who displayed a 'warrant of faith' should be urged or pointed to Christ ... therefore they did not make general appeals to sinners to turn to Christ for salvation. They would preach about the work of Christ and His glory, at times very movingly, but there were no direct addresses to sinners to flee to him for salvation. Reflecting on the state that had prevailed among Particular Baptists as a consequence of this Andrew wrote in 1796:

> "There was such a portion of erroneous doctrine and false religion among us, that if we had carried matters a little further, we should have been a very dunghill in society."[17]

Early in his pastoral ministry he began to wrestle with these issues and eventually this led to the publication of his best known and most influential work, *"The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation, or the duty of sinners to believe in Jesus Christ"*. By 1778 he had a first draft of the work but it was not until 1785 that he ventured into print, a second much revised edition was then published in 1801. While the work was not without flaws it nevertheless did much good. Fuller's great desire was to liberate the Gospel from the strictures placed upon it by the errors of high/hyper Calvinism and his book was undoubtedly used of God to achieve that goal.

Other works were produced which, although hardly known let alone read now, were of great benefit to many in Andrew's lifetime and after. *"The Gospel Its Own Witness"* deals with the errors of Deism and has much that is still relevant and of benefit today. *"The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared as to their Moral Tendency"* was also a help to many as was *"Strictures on Sandemanianism"*. It was the reading of the latter work that delivered Christmas Evans, the mighty Welsh evangelist, from the withering effects of that error.

Faithful Pastor

But Andrew was no mere theoretical theologian ... primarily he was a pastor and he treated the pastoral office with the utmost seriousness. This is displayed in his move from Soham to Kettering. As we have seen, his situation at Soham was difficult but he did not just get up and go as soon as opportunity came as if it was a chance to escape. In fact he wrestled with deep heart-searching for over a year about whether

to accept the call to Kettering. His close friend John Ryland Jnr observed:

> "Men who fear not God would risk the welfare of a nation with fewer searchings of heart than it cost him to determine whether he should leave a little dissenting church, scarcely containing forty members beside himself and his wife."[18]



Once at Kettering however he enjoyed great blessing. There were eighty-eight members when he took up the pastorate ... at the time of his death there were a hundred and seventy-four although a hundred and forty-six had died during that same period. Remarkably, the regular services on the Lord's Day had a thousand in attendance and there were also weekend youth meetings with more than a thousand present. Little wonder that the church building had to be extended twice and this in a village with a population numbering less than three-and-a-half thousand. He believed in expository preaching, the systematic exposition of the Word of God and during his time in Soham he preached through twenty-three books of the Bible. But this preaching was not merely like a dry, lifeless lecture, he had a high view of the act of preaching:

> "A pulpit seems an awful place! An opportunity for addressing a company of mortals on their own interests. Oh how important! We preach for eternity."[19]

His attitude towards the work of the pastor comes out clearly in these words:

> "The connection of pastor and people in dissenting churches is altogether voluntary. There are no bonds to bring them together or to keep them together, but love."[20]

His great pastoral heart is wonderfully revealed in a letter to a wayward church member:

> "When a parent loses a child nothing but the recovery of that child can heal the wound. If he could have many other children, that would not do it. Thus it is with me towards you. Nothing but your return to God and the Church can heal the wound."[21]

He had a tender affection and concern for even the youngest of his flock. When a new baby arrived in the home of some of his members he commented:

> "Now we have not only another body to provide for, but a soul to pray for."

His diary for 21 July 1784 contains the note:

> "Much affected today in visiting some poor friends; especially in going to see a little boy of seven or eight years old, in a decline, not likely to continue long. My heart felt for his everlasting state. Conversed with him a little on divine subjects."[22]

What a scene, the great theologian, busy pastor and preacher sitting and talking with a seven year old about his soul. Perhaps there is a lesson here for present day theologians and pastors.

As we shall see he pastored his flock even in the midst of his personal suffering. On one occasion he wrote to his close friend John Ryland Jnr:

> "Last night I preached a funeral sermon for one person and buried two others within nine days. Can I be supposed to be otherwise than dejected? We attend to our own health, but is it to be wondered at that we should be sensibly affected and very ill? To nurse a child with her affliction is great work for the hands; but to nurse altogether without hope is far greater work for the heart. 'But the hope of a better world' – True – and I never felt the worth of that consideration so much as now. Ten thousand worlds seem nothing in consideration of the hope of the gospel. Surely I know something more than I did of the meaning of 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!' and 'Underneath are the everlasting arms!' with many other passages."[23]

The child being nursed was his own dying daughter.

Zealous Evangelist

In Fuller's day it was the practice for ministers within Particular Baptist circles to write their own personal confession of faith. This would be read at their ordination and then at other times during their ministry. Andrew read his confession of faith at his induction to the pastorate at Kettering ... the fifteenth point reveals unambiguously his zeal for evangelism.

> "I believe it is the duty of every minister of Christ plainly and faithfully to preach the gospel to all who will hear it. And, as I believe the inability of men to spiritual things to be wholly of the moral and therefore of the criminal kind – and that it is their duty to love the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in him for salvation, though they do not – I, therefore, believe free and solemn addresses, invitations, calls and warnings to them, to be not only consistent, but directly adapted, as the means in the hands of

> the Spirit of God to bring them to Christ. I consider it as part of my duty, which I should not omit without being guilty of the blood of souls."[24]

This was not merely an abstract statement of belief; it was something that was carried into practice. During his years at Soham he did not confine his preaching to his own location and building, he preached in thirty-three different villages in the surrounding countryside.

The intensity of his earnestness and passion in evangelism is conveyed in these three extracts reflecting three quite different situations.

> "The sinner who has neglected the great salvation will not be able to escape nor hide himself from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, nor from the wrath of the Lamb. My dear hearers! Consider you condition without delay. God says to you today, if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts. Today may be the only day you have to live. Go home, enter the closet and shut to the door; confess your sins; implore mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ; Kiss the Son lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."[25]

What makes these words truly remarkable is the fact that they are the closing segment of a sermon preached on 27 April 1791 at a Minister's meeting at Clipstone! Again we read in a letter to Ryland:

> "Sometime ago I spoke at a child's grave and addressed the children. It appears that a little girl was wrought upon, who is since dead. At that time her father and mother were very ignorant. She talked much to them before her death. I hope the Lord has wrought upon her mother. She seems very tender-hearted, and in real earnest about the salvation of her soul. Her husband has opposed her coming to meeting, but in vain. He beat her but to no purpose."[26]

Perhaps most movingly of all he wrote to his own daughter, Mary:

> "You are a much greater sinner, my dear, than you are aware of; and an interest in the dying love of Christ is of far greater importance than you have ever yet conceived. But let not this discourage you. Though your sins be as scarlet yet the blood of Christ is sufficient to make you pure as snow. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Believe his gospel; commit your soul to him as a perishing sinner and you will be everlastingly saved."[27]

At the heart of all Andrew's evangelistic endeavour was the preaching of the cross.

He expressed this conviction in the opening paragraph of a sermon he preached from Phil.3:10:

> "The death of Christ is a subject of so much importance in Christianity as to be essential to it ... It is not so much a member of the body of Christian doctrine as the life-blood that runs through the whole of it. The doctrine of the cross is the Christian doctrine."[28]

It was during this sermon that he made the statement:

> "Every disciple of Jesus should consider himself as a missionary." [29]

During a visit to Ireland in 1804 he wrote to his father-in-law, William Coles,

> "The doctrine of the cross is more dear to me than when I went. I wish I may never preach another sermon but what shall bear some relation to it ... Some of the sweetest opportunities I had in my journey were is preaching Christ crucified ..."[30]

But the doctrine of the cross was also to have a practical impact on the lives of believers, he gave this exhortation to two missionaries:

> "Next to communion with your God and Saviour, cherish love to one another ... To do this you must often think of the dying love of Christ toward you ... My dear brethren, know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Be this the summit of your ambition."[31]



William Carey

This burning evangelistic zeal could not be confined to Fuller's immediate vicinity. It imparted to him a burden for a more extensive spread of the Gospel and that led to his close association with William Carey. The two men first met in 1782 at a meeting of the Northampton Association. Much later, on 27 April 1791 Fuller preached at the Clipstone Ministers' meeting. His text was Haggai 1:2 and he entitled the sermon; "The Instances, Evil and Tendency of Delay in the Concerns of Religion". In it he powerfully rebukes the tendency to say that it is not the time to do great things in the Gospel. He declared:

> "This plea not only affects the unconverted, but prevents us all from undertaking any great or good work for the cause of Christ, or the good of mankind ... The truth is if I am not mistaken, we wait for we know not what; we seem to think 'the time is not come, the time for the Spirit to be poured down from on high'. We pray for the conversion and salvation of the world and yet neglect the ordinary means by which those ends have been used to be accomplished ... Ought we not then at least to try by some means to convey more of the good news of salvation to the world around us than has hitherto been conveyed."[32]

In the following year Carey published *"An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens"*. On 30 May 1792 Carey preached his famous sermon from Isaiah.54:2-3 with the two headings, 'Expect great things; Attempt great things'. In the meeting that followed it was Fuller who proposed the resolution that 'a plan be prepared against the next ministers' meeting at Kettering for forming a Baptist society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen'. At that meeting on 2 Oct 1792 'The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen', later renamed 'The Baptist Missionary Society', was formed.

Andrew was appointed secretary of the infant society and amidst all of his other labours threw himself into the work. In this role he visited Scotland five times; Wales once and Ireland once. The statistics for one of his visits to Scotland reveal how arduous an undertaking this was. The visit lasted sixty days, during which time he travelled thirteen hundred miles and preached fifty times. Little wonder that in 1793 he was struck with what seems to have been a slight stroke and, as a result, suffered from temporary facial paralysis ... and for the rest of his life had persistent severe headaches. His attitude to his work on behalf of the society is beautifully summed up in a letter to a friend, probably Ryland:

"Our undertaking to India appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us and while we were deliberating, Carey, as it were, said:

> "Well, I will go down if you will hold the rope. But before he went down he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us at the mouth of the pit, to this effect – that 'while we lived, we should never let go of the rope'."[33]

All of this activity was not carried out in mere human strength but was saturated in prayer. Rather than Andrew's doctrinal convictions being a discouragement to prayer, he found them to be a great encouragement:

> "I used to think too, that the doctrine of election was a reason not to pray and I fear there are many who split upon this rock who think it is no purpose to pray as things will be as they will be. But now I see that the doctrine of election is the greatest encouragement, instead of a discouragement, to prayer. He that decreed that any one should be finally saved, decreed that it should be in the way of prayer..."[34]

Once again the writings of Jonathan Edwards proved to be an influence in this regard, particularly his *'Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer'*. The impact of this work was seen in 1784 when a call to prayer was issued with John Sutcliffe having the leading role but with Fuller's active involvement. Monthly prayer meetings for revival were begun and carried on for many years and were a means of great blessing.

Humble Christian

Above all else, however, Andrew Fuller was a humble Christian. This is evidenced in all areas of his life but nowhere more clearly than in his suffering, as he himself said:

> "We have no more religion than we have in times of trial ..."[35]

and his trials were great. In 1776 he married Sarah Gardiner and together they had eleven children ... seven died in infancy and, of the remaining four, two pre-deceased Andrew. During her last pregnancy Sarah developed a rare and tragic form of insanity. She knew that she was married and had a loving husband but she did not recognise Andrew as that husband ... rather she though he was her jailer keeping her imprisoned. On one occasion she escaped from the house and was found at the graves of her deceased children who she could remember well yet she had no recognition of her living children. On 23 August 1792 Sarah died giving birth ... and sadly the new little daughter also died a few days later. Andrew was distraught and, as he occasionally did, he gave expression to his emotions in verse:

I who erewhile was blessed with social joys,
With joys that sweetened all the ills of life,
And shed a cheerful light on all things round
Now mourn my days in pensive solitude.
There once did live a heart that cared for me,
I loved and was beloved in turn;
Her tender soul would soothe my rising griefs
And wipe away my tears, and mix them with her own;
But she is not; and I forlorn am left
To weep unheeded, and to serve alone.

I roam amidst the dreary woods – here once
I walked with her who walks no more with me.
The fragrant forest then with pleasure smiled,
Why wears it now a melancholy hue?
Ah me! Nor woods, nor fields, nor aught besides
Can grateful prove where grief corrodes the heart!

God of my life and guide of all my years,
May I again to thee my soul commend,
And in thee find a friend to share my griefs
And give me counsel in each doubtful path
And lead me through every maze of life
Till I arrive where sighs no more are heard! [36]

On 30 Dec 1794 he married Anne Coles, the daughter of a Baptist pastor, who proved to be a benefit and blessing to him but his suffering was not at an end. His son, Robert, had been a source of grief to him for many years. In June 1801 he joined the Marines and not long after the report came back that he had received three hundred lashes for a misdemeanour and had died. Andrew was heart-broken but then learned that it was a false report. Three years later however Robert did receive three hundred and fifty lashes but survived and somehow managed to find his way back to his father's home. There he was lovingly nursed back to health only to disappear again in 1805. In December 1808 he wrote home acknowledging his guilt and remorse. Andrew replied to the letter but the next news he received was that in March 1809 Robert had died off the coast .of Lisbon On the Lord's Day after he received the sad news he preached from Rom.10:8-9. The account of that service is heart-rending.

> "He said this was suited to sinners in the last extremity. 'Some are far from home and have no friend in their dying moments, to speak a word of comfort ... but this is near! When Jonah was compassed about by the floods, when the billows and waves passed over him, he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord heard him ...' Here he was obliged to pause and give vent to his feelings by weeping and many of the congregation, who knew the cause wept with him."[37]

In everything Andrew acknowledged his utter dependence on divine grace:

> "I saw no truth in me. I saw that God would be perfectly just in sending me to hell and that to hell I must go, unless I were saved by mere grace."[38]

He lived his life guided by what he called two divine maxims. 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart ...' and 'Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all thy might.'

Life was drawing speedily to its close but still he worked relentlessly. In early 1815 he was at his desk twelve hours every day in spite of being ill due to a liver disorder. The sermon he preached on 2 April was to be his last. On 11 April he commented to a visiting friend:

> "I have done a little for God; but all I have done needs forgiveness."[39]

The last letter to come from his pen was written on 28 April 1815 and very appropriately it was to his closest friend, John Ryland Jnr. It breathes the very spirit in which Fuller lived and in which he was to die:

> "I know whom I have believed and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. I am a poor guilty creature but Christ is an almighty Saviour. I have preached and written much against the abuse of the doctrine of grace, but that doctrine is all my salvation and all my desire. I have no other hope than from salvation

> by mere sovereign, efficacious grace through the atonement of my Lord and Saviour. With this hope I can go into eternity with composure."[40]

On the same day he affirmed to a visiting deacon:

> "If I am saved it will be by great and sovereign grace - great and sovereign grace."[41]



Andrew Fuller Memorial Window in Kettering Baptist Church

On 7 May, as the sound of singing filtered into his room from the adjoining church building, he said to his daughter Sarah, "I wish I had strength enough." "To do what father?", she asked. "To worship child," he responded. The family members who were present raised him up in bed and he remained like that for almost thirty minutes, apparently joining in the worship of those gathered so close to him. He distinctly said "Help me", fell back and with a sigh ended his earthly journey. In the words of Pastor Toller, the Independent Minister in Kettering:

"He died as penitent sinner at the foot of the cross."[42]

Flies in the ointment?

Of course Andrew Fuller was not without defects and these surfaced, as with all of us, in various areas of his life. He was not infallible theologically. As Tom Nettles has noted with regard to the second edition of *"The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation"* and especially his defence of it in his *"Reply to Philanthropos"*:

> "He flirted in vocabulary with the Moral Government theory of the atonement as propounded in early eighteenth century New England theology."[43]

This is undoubtedly the case and it occasioned some controversy in his own day and has done so since.

With regard to his personality it was said that he was admired rather than loved. Certainly he had an intensity of purpose that could, at times, be disconcerting. For example, on one occasion when visiting Oxford he remarked: "Brother I think there is one question which, after all has been written about, has not yet been answered ... what is justification?" The friend asked if they should return home to discuss the matter. Fuller gladly agreed with the words: "That inquiry is far more to me than all these fine buildings."[44] He had been a wrestler in his youth and his demeanour could, at times, still convey the sense that he was not a man to be trifled with. While making

a journey to Plymouth two young men sat opposite him. Their conversation was lewd to say the least and they made plain the immoral behaviour they intended to engage in at their destination. One of them made a few unsavoury remarks about what their serious companion might intend. "Mr Fuller, lowering his ample brows and looking him full in the face, replied in measured tones, 'Sir, I am a man that fears God.'[45] Needless to say there was silence for the rest of the journey. He could also be brusque almost to the point of rudeness. While staying with a married couple he observed that the wife was dreadfully unkind to her husband. 'Ah sir!', she said in conversation, 'We are poor creatures and can do nothing.' 'You are quite mistaken madam', Fuller retorted, 'You can do a great deal.' 'Why, what can I do?', she asked. 'Why madam, you can quarrel with your husband' was the sharp response![46] Still, all of that taken into account, we get an insight into the true affection there was toward him when we read of Robert Hall Jnr, on the day of Andrew's funeral, walking into a room, leaning on the fireplace and weeping bitterly. When the news of his death reached William Carey in India his response was simply, 'I loved him.'[47]

In the final analysis, what was it that motivated this great man of God in all his prodigious labours? We find the answer in his own words written to William Carey on 6 August 1803:

> "It is wonderful that God should do anything by such poor grovelling sinners as we are. One thing however is manifested by it, that the work is entirely his own, and if we should reach the kingdom of God at last, it will be by great grace. God has honoured us not a little by employing us in this great work; but as the honour does not belong to us, we must return it. The crowns do not seem to fit our heads; therefore they must be cast at the feet of Jesus. Such are the feelings of my heart."[48]



Fuller, Carey, Ryland, Pearse and Sutcliff feature on this nineteenth-century medal commemorating the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society

EPITAPH

ON THE LATE REV. ANDREW FULLER.

The following Inscription, written in Memory of the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, cut in Roman Capitals on a neat statuary marble Tablet, is placed in the Baptist Meeting-House at Kettering.

In Memory of their revered and beloved Pastor,
The Reverend ANDREW FULLER,
The Church and Congregation have erected this Tablet.
His ardent Piety,
The strength and soundness of his Judgment,
His intimate knowledge of the human heart,
And his profound acquaintance with the Scriptures,
Eminently qualified him for the Ministerial Office,
Which he sustained amongst them thirty-two Years.
The Force and Originality of his Genius,
Aided by undaunted Firmness,
Raised him from Obscurity
To high Distinction in the Religious World.
By the Wisdom of his Plans,
And by his unwearied Diligence in executing them,
He rendered the most important Services
To the BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY;
Of which he was the Secretary from its commencement,
And to the Prosperity of which he devoted his Life.
In addition to his other Labours,
His Writings are numerous and celebrated.
He Died May 7, 1815, Aged 61.

Notes

1 Michael AG Haykin, *The Armies of the Lamb (Joshua Press 2013)*, p23
2 Jeremy Walker, *The Life of Andrew Fuller*, Audio Recording 2014
3 Tim Shenton, *Christmas Evans*, Evangelical Press 2001, p245
4 p178
5 Haykin, p23
6 Peter J Morden, *Offering Christ to the World*, Paternoster 2003, p100
7 Michael AG Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul*, Evangelical Press 1994, p152
8 Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, Sprinkle Publications 1998 Vol 1, p77
9 Haykin, *Armies*, p61
10 Fuller, Vol 1, p6
11 Ibid p10
12 Ibid p111
13 Ibid p20
14 Ibid p39
15 John C Carlisle, *The Story of the English Baptists*, James Clarke 1905, pp162ff
16 Fuller, Vol 1, p101
17 Fuller, Vol 3, p478
18 Fuller, Vol 1, p19
19 Ibid p25
20 Ibid p529
21 Ibid p90
22 Ibid, p36
23 Ibid p55
24 Haykin, *Armies*, p279
25 Fuller, Vol 1, p151
26 Ibid p54
27 Haykin, *Armies*, p135
28 Fuller, Vol 1, p310
29 Ibid
30 Haykin, *Armies*, p191
31 Morden, p177
32 Fuller, Vol 1, pp146ff
33 Morden, p136
34 Haykin, *Armies*, p88
35 Fuller, Vol 1, p58
36 Fuller, Vol 1, pp61ff

37 Ibid p73

38 Haykin, *Armies,* p67

39 Fuller, Vol 1, p101

40 Ibid

41 Ibid, p102

42 Ibid, p104

43 Thomas J Nettles, *The Baptists Vol 1,* Mentor 2005, p256

44 Fuller, Vol 1, p111

45 Ibid

46 Ibid p112

47 Michael A G Haykin, *Ardent Love for Jesus,* Bryntirion Press 2013, p89

48 Haykin, *Armies,* p187



The Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland – the first 120 years

Edwin Ewart

The lecture will address four main themes:

Origins – examining briefly how the Union of Churches came into existence.

Events – providing a chronological summary with brief comment on some of the most significant events in the history of our work and witness.

People – many figures stand out in the history of our Union and Association as those who have made an outstanding contribution under God. Seven have been chosen to consider briefly.

Prospects – addressing the question: Where do we stand now as a group of Churches in this 120th anniversary year (on the grounds that responsible history must inform the present and guide the future)?

ORIGINS

One of the most significant events to impact upon Irish Baptist Churches was the Great Famine of 1845-49. It is estimated that numbers at that time were depleted by more than three thousand through death and emigration. Nevertheless, in the providence of God another remarkable event was to follow. Within ten years an evangelical revival took place in Ulster which brought thousands into the kingdom and also into Baptist Churches though especially in the north of Ireland. In 1888 the London-based Baptist Irish Society which had, for seventy-four years, consolidated the Baptist presence and witness in Ireland, gave way to the Irish Baptist Home Mission which went on to channel a remarkable growth in Baptist Church membership as a direct result of evangelistic fervour and vision.

The Baptist Union of Ireland was subsequently formed in 1895 at the May Assembly Meetings in Mountpottinger Church, Belfast.



Pastor John D Gilmore, the first General Secretary, reflecting on these meetings stated,

"*Harmony, concord, peace and goodwill reigned throughout. The consideration of a basis of doctrine, to be included in the new constitution and rules, was carried through in a spirit of earnest and united brotherhood, and in manifest loyalty to God and his word ... There are surely bright days and big things in store for the Baptist Union of Ireland.*" [1]

One of the key people who initiated and drove the decision to form the Union was the strong-minded Henry Gribbon, an elder in the Coleraine Church and a prominent businessman in the linen trade. Gribbon, together with Hugh D Brown, had been notable leaders in the life of the previous Baptist Irish Association and became no less so in the fledgling Baptist Union which they led and encouraged. The formation of the Irish Union and the consequent break in affiliation from the Baptist Union of Great Britain, reflected two things in the main:

- a growing sense of cohesion among Irish Baptists which had been evident probably since the time of the 1859 revival.
- growing concern about doctrinal issues in the Baptist Union of Great Britain which had emerged, particularly at the time of the Downgrade Controversy in the late 1880s. Sympathy with the position of C H Spurgeon was widespread

and H D Brown's attitude and close connection to the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle influenced many Baptists in Ireland.

Thus, in 1895, twenty-nine churches, five of them in the south, covenanted together to form the Union which for the next one hundred and five years formed the basis of fellowship and joint enterprise in mission and training and later in Youth and Women's work. Following its inception, the pattern of numerical growth in the Union was steady if not quite dramatic over the ensuing decades. Approximately one church per year was added, the great majority of these, until the end of the twentieth century, in the north of the island.

EVENTS

In 1945 the Second World War came to an end and Pastor R A Boggs, the Hon Secretary of the Northern Association, in his annual report, stated:

> *"In common with many others we would express our praise and thanksgiving to God that during the year that has gone, the dark clouds of war passed away, and the peoples of the world have come to know a measure of peace again. The Association is hopeful that this new dawn of peace may afford many opportunities of service to the churches ..."* [2]



These hopes were fulfilled in a number of ways in the late 1940s and early '50s. Perhaps, most notably, 'caravangelism', the brainchild of Frank Forbes (Secretary of the BUoI) made a significant contribution to the evangelistic work of the Union in monthly fairs and markets. The Home Mission Report for 1948[3] records the commissioning of the 'much prayed for caravan' during Assembly week, free of debt and with a credit balance towards the running expenses. In the same period the Home Mission sent out evangelists and colporteurs (men like Currie Brennan, James McManus, H A Ferguson & J C Reid) who, employing a variety of 'innovative' methods such as open air and cottage meetings, saw many of their fellow countrymen and women converted to follow Jesus Christ. This Home Mission work led ultimately to the formation of many Baptist churches in both the urban and rural settings in Ulster (for example, in these years the churches in Rathcoole, Cookstown, Dundonald, Larne, Stonepark and Ballygomartin were formed out of a total of some twenty-two in a twenty year period).



In addition, 1948 was remembered as *'the year of great expansion'*[4] so far as the College was concerned. The number of students which had been steadily increasing saw the addition of eight new men producing a total of eighteen in residence which necessitated extra sleeping accommodation being provided on the premises. Many of the churches, north and south, had the opportunity to hear the students preach and in notable blessing to the hearers.

A significant event occurred with the relocation of the College from Dublin to Belfast in 1963. This move was precipitated by 'changing conditions', not least the numerical predominance of churches and Ministry candidates in the north as opposed to the south. The notice of motion to the 1964 Assembly set out the name, objects, doctrinal position and administrative and teaching arrangements for the reconstituted College.



The College Committee had gone on record on the desirability of 'continuity between the old College and the new College'.[5] The former premises at Terenure Road, Dublin had been sold for just over £5,000 and the building at Sandown Road, Belfast had been purchased for the sum of £5,800. It was resolved to vote £100 initially for the purchase of basic books for the College library.

The Annual Report of 1973 comments on 'the political upheavals and terrorism that continued in Northern Ireland during another agonising year' of the troubles.[6] Churches and individuals were radically affected by this ... for example, the church building in Omagh was badly damaged by a car bomb which exploded at the Labour Exchange next door (a solemn harbinger of worse to come for that town in 1998). In these years, other churches (for example those in Craigavon and Cookstown) lost members to terrorism as members of the security forces were murdered by terrorists. Yet, in the midst of these events bringing human tragedy and suffering, Baptists took opportunities to show the compassion of Christ in practical ways. Above all, a gospel witness was maintained notably by churches in North and West Belfast most affected by the troubles in the early 1970s.



1973 was also a difficult year for the work of the Union in another way. In Peru the work of the Irish Baptist Foreign Mission which had been created in 1924 and had for

long captured the minds and hearts of Irish Baptists, found itself in difficulty. Serious problems arose between the Missionaries and some members of the Council of the Baptist Churches in South Peru. Ten years before, problems between the missionaries themselves had necessitated intervention from home and now the new set of issues was addressed through a visit by Pastor George Blayney, the Mission Chairman, and Mr Billy Hunter a committee member, fluent in Spanish, but it took some years for the problems which threatened the work to be resolved. The episode served to highlight the complexity of all cross-cultural mission and the crucial role of personal relationships in every form of Christian service.

At home in Ireland, in 1976, following a vigorous debate on the floor of Assembly, the College Committee (with the unanimous approval of the Union Council) made application for recognition with Queen's University. The merits and alleged demerits of an educated ministry and fears about a loss of autonomy were thoroughly aired and the decision was taken to press ahead. The approval was subsequently granted, took effect in 1977 and continues to the present day in a postgraduate relationship which has proved beneficial both to the College and to the local University.



Moving forward to the 1980s a significant feature of the life and witness of the Union was a period of renewed vigour in church planting under the auspices of Baptist Missions. This was encouraged by the vision of Derek Baxter, the Missions Secretary, and due in no small part under God to the evangelistic work of Pastor James C Henry. At this time the churches in Saintfield, Moira, Crumlin and Ballymoney were formed and these have remained healthy to the present day.

The year 1980 is recorded in Assembly Reports as being a memorable year. Financially and co-operatively the Union took strides forward and in gospel work there were many conversions, baptisms and additions to church membership. Baptised membership rose by more than two hundred and signs of real spiritual advancement were evident in many places throughout Ireland. The work of Baptist Missions saw progress in places as diverse as Cork and Donegal, Stonepark and Waterford. In Peru the Creelmans, Bowers, Mitchells and Sloans all reported encouragements with greater interest and attendance. The supportive efforts of Baptist Women for the Mission in Peru, Europe and Ireland and for the College were consolidated in this year and the ministry of Baptist Youth especially in camps and teams in nine churches throughout Ireland provided real impetus for the work of the gospel. The newly inaugurated Welfare Council began to supervise the work of the Orphan Society and Annuity Fund in both of which increases in donations and allocations were reported. The College saw fourteen new students starting their training making a student body

of twenty-eight, the highest for some years and, four years later in 1984, the membership total in our group of churches passed the eight thousand mark for the first time. The report for that year highlighted the important function of two funds:

- the Union Loan Fund through which Union Departments were supported in a generous way by churches and individuals and
- the Tithe Fund (later to become the Churches Pastoral Support Scheme) which had been set up to support Churches who could not otherwise have a pastor was recognised and wholeheartedly endorsed. This together with the Orphan Society and later Baptist Aid were to provide channels for the useful expression of Baptist practical support for those in need across the age spectrum and in situations of disaster around the world.



1987 saw the purchase of new administrative offices at 117 Lisburn Road. Previous accommodation at Fitzwilliam Street, and before that at Dublin Road, had ceased to be serviceable and these new offices provided bright and practical premises in a prominent locality. The speaker has happy memories of numerous committee meetings in the Board Room, not least the General Purposes Committee which operated monthly until its demise through reorganisation.

The 1990s will be remembered by many for the emergence of heated discussion at Assembly on the question of ecumenism. Prompted by their concerns about the activities of some churches and individuals, five churches brought a motion in 1990 charging the Union Council to issue a fresh statement on the matter and bring an amendment to the Union's Constitution making clear the stance of our churches against false ecumenism. This matter occupied the Assembly for a number of consecutive years. At these discussions, feelings ran high as church representatives held tenaciously to their various positions. Nevertheless, after what was reported as a 'lively and good humoured' [7] debate, the outcome was a reworked doctrinal statement adopted in 1993 which remains in place to this day. The relevant committee which produced the statement reported on its work as 'a labour of love' and the new basis provided an opportunity to go forward on the basis of the things commonly believed among us. It was clear that such movements forward were taking place in localities all across Ireland. In view of recent events, it is significant that the Baptist Missions Report of 1992 notes the commencement of a monthly Bible study in Nenagh and in Cavan a number of people asked for baptism and a decision was taken by the group there to formally constitute as a church.

1993 marked fifty years of organised youth work in the Baptist Union of Ireland and a

number of special projects took place to celebrate this half-century including a Golden Jubilee Youth Rally with Charles Price of Capenwray fame as the guest speaker.

In 1994 a Special Assembly was called to consider the reorganisation of the Union Departments. This emphasised representation and participation and comprised examination of issues such as requirements for Union Membership and the make-up of Department Committees. A further reorganisation took place in 2003 with regionalisation as its primary goal. In preparation for these discussions the Organisation Committee had spent long hours deliberating on the structures of our work and witness and the result was:

(a) a more streamlined committee structure which most of us are familiar with today;

(b) the removal of personal membership and the introduction of the Churches Council.

Department Secretaries became 'Directors' better reflecting the work they did. The General Purposes Committee is now the Executive Committee and all of this work was the outcome of what the Annual Report in 1994 described as 'the most widespread and intensive consultation process ever undertaken in our Union of Churches'.

1995 saw the centenary of the Union and this special landmark was celebrated by the production of literature including a tract designed to inspire reaching out to a new generation and a history of the Union of Churches by Joshua Thompson entitled *'A Century of Grace'*. In addition a video was commissioned to record the shared life and work of the Union and centenary rallies were held in Limavady, Knockconny, Cork and Dublin.

In 1999 the renaming of the Union to 'The Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland' took place at the Annual Assembly in Grosvenor Road Church, Dublin. This reflected a stated desire to use more comprehensible terminology, to better reflect the nature of the work Irish Baptists do together and to reconnect with historical roots when the term 'Association' was prominent.

2003 was a momentous time in the life of the Association of Churches with the opening of the Baptist Centre at 19 Hillsborough Road, Moira. The need for new accommodation and a rationalisation of the overall work of the Association bringing College and other Association Departments together under one roof has proved to be in the best interests of the work as a whole. The benefits have included: a closer working relationship between Department Directors and a broader appeal to the rural as well as the urban constituency.



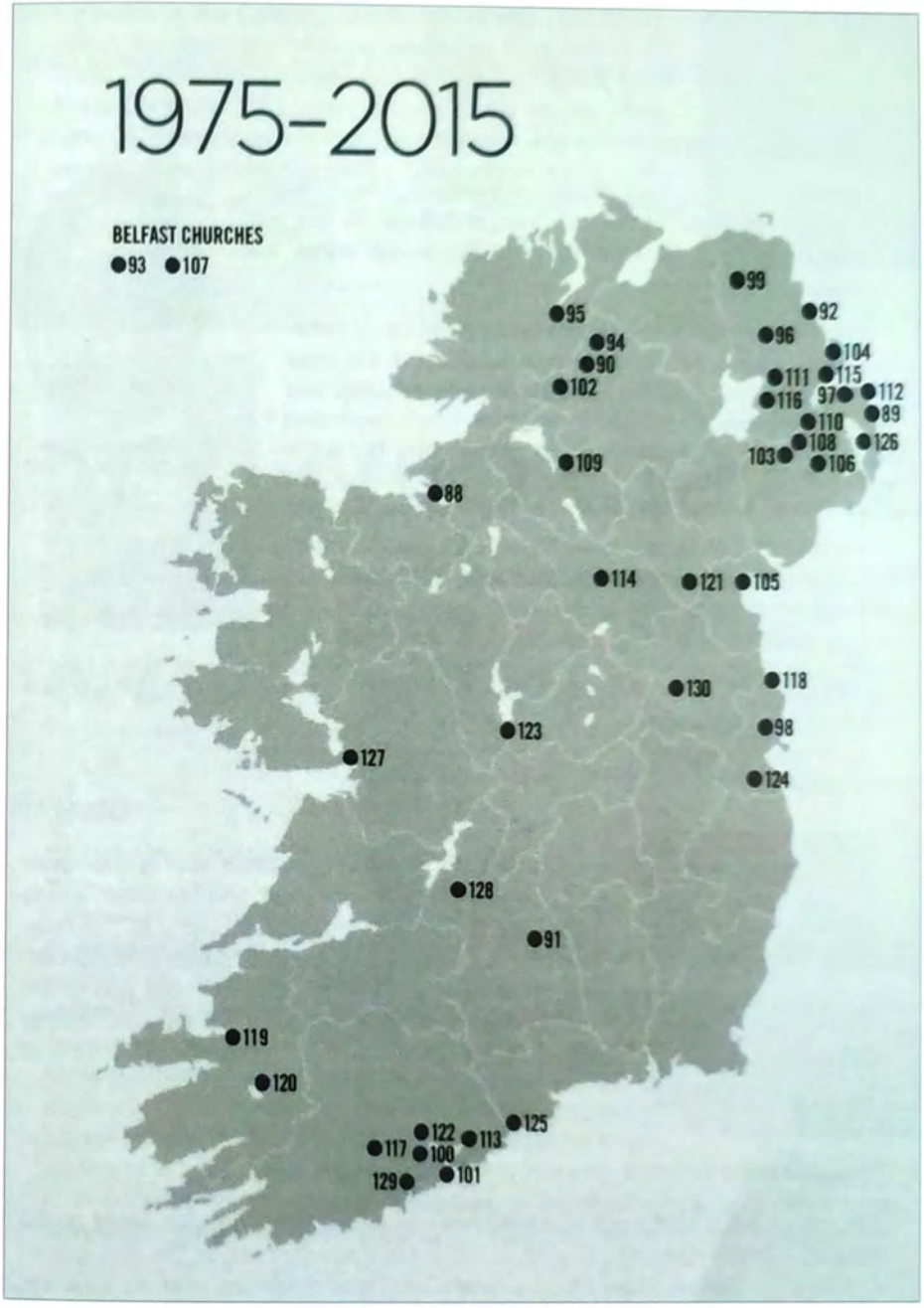


Then, in 2008, the commencement of the Ministry Preparation Course at the Irish Baptist College proved a landmark for our Training Department. This more vocationally oriented programme had first been discussed at the Assembly of 2004 and, following lengthy and detailed work by the College Management Committee and associated sub-committees, the course was launched in September 2008. It has operated very successfully to the present time contributing markedly to a reduction in the number of vacant churches in the Association.

More recently, a most heartening feature of Irish Baptist life has been the number of churches joining the Association from the Republic of Ireland. This was first observed in the 1990s when, as a result of a joint venture between Baptist Missions and the Cork Church, churches in Carrigaline, Middleton and Douglas were formed and the Cork-Kerry Project was born. The fruit of this has then been seen in the formation of churches in Youghal and Kinsale and further west in Lee Valley and Westside, Bandon. In the past ten years, five churches have joined the Association and in May 2015, the Churches Council welcomed into membership another five churches – Galway City, Killarney, Kinsale, Trim and Nenagh. It is clearly evangelistic passion and, with our forefathers, a profound understanding of the importance of the local church that has, under God, made these developments possible.

Key to map on page 37

88	Sligo	1975
89	Millisle	1976
90	Sion Mills	1976
91	Thurles	1976
92	Glenarm	1977
93	Calvary	1978
94	Dunamanagh	1978
95	Letterkenny	1978
96	Larntara	1981-2011
97	Ballycrochan	1983
98	Swords	1985
99	Ballymoney	1986
100	Westside	1986
101	Carrigaline	1987
102	Castlederg	1987
103	Moira	1987
104	Whitehead	1987
105	Dundalk	1988
106	Saintfield	1988
107	Cregagh	1989
108	Emmanuel	1989
109	Mullaghmeen	1989
110	Lambeg	1989-2013
111	Clady Water	1990
112	Donaghadee	1991
113	Midleton	1992
114	Cavan	1993
115	Greenisland	1996
116	Crumlin	1997
117	Lee Valley	1997
118	Balbriggan	1998
119	Tralee	1999
120	Killarney	1999
121	Carrickmacross	2005
122	Douglas	2005
123	Athlone	2007
124	Ballycullen	2007
125	Youghal	2010
126	Kircubbin	2013
127	Galway	2014
128	Nenagh	2014
129	Kinsale	2015
130	Living Hope, Trim	2015


1975–2015
BELFAST CHURCHES
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PEOPLE

In this section clearly only a selection of people can be mentioned, the first of whom must of necessity be:

Hugh Dunlop Brown



Prominent businessman, Pastor of Harcourt Street Church, Dublin and founder of the Irish Baptist College. In *The Irish Baptist Magazine of June 1918*,[8] J W Pearce states that Brown

> *"... was a born preacher, an orator of no mean order. His presence was powerful. Possessed of great natural ability, dignity, refinement and spirituality, and love the greatest of all."*

Fifty years later, Brown was still remembered with great affection by Irish Baptists. L E Deens wrote about him in 1968,

> *"... he found our Baptist Churches few, weak and dispirited, and by his faith and courage he breathed new life into the moribund cause and, under God, succeeded in greatly strengthening and extending the witness of our denomination throughout Ireland."* [9]

To this day H D Brown remains perhaps the most outstanding figure in the annals of Irish Baptist history.

Henry A Gribbon



A contemporary of Brown, Gribbon was a prominent businessman in the linen trade and an elder in the Coleraine Church. Jim Flanagan's history of Coleraine Church refers to him as virtually the pastor of the church there for a period in the late 1800s.[10] His part in the formation of the Baptist Union of Ireland has already been mentioned in this lecture.

L E Deens

Trained at the Irish Baptist College under Ambrose Bury, he was called to the pastorate of the Waterford Church in 1912 and thereafter served the churches in Cliftonpark Avenue, Carrickfergus and Grosvenor Road as well as teaching

homiletics in the College. Deens, along with H D Brown, shared the distinction of being elected as President of the Union of Churches on three occasions ... in Deens' case 1931, 1945 and 1962. Any reading of the history of our Union & Association will find Deens' name and influence looming large across the pages. 'His incisive mind, clarity of thought and generosity of spirit' [11] won him a lasting place in Irish Baptist life.



Frank Forbes



Having trained at the College in Dublin, Forbes pastored the churches at Lurgan, Ballykeel and Ballymena before becoming Union Secretary in 1937. He was to hold this office with great distinction until his untimely death in 1952. A memoir and appreciation in the Annual Report for that year recalls his deploring of dissension and assiduous labour for the healing of differences. The Report states that, 'the unity which exists today is due largely to his unfailing courtesy, wise counsel, sweet resonableness, and tireless efforts. He was a brother beloved, whose praise was in all the Churches'.[12] Mr Forbes' store of wisdom, fund of good humour and wealth of common sense were drawn upon for the help of others and the progress of the work of God.

R A Boggs



Pastored the Grange Church for six years and then for thirty-eight years was the pastor of Tobermore & Carndaisy. He exercised a hugely influential ministry in that part of Mid-Ulster, promoting the Baptist cause but also in his inter-denominational sympathies and, of course, in the wider life of the Union of Churches. Many committees benefitted from the wise counsel and winsome humour of Mr Boggs and his minute taking & reading of those minutes (as was then the practice) at the Annual Assembly Meetings will not be forgotten by those privileged to hear them. In later years many a young preacher groaned inwardly to see Pastor Boggs in the congregation as he would be sure to make some comment at the door after the service. Invariably, however, the comment was constructive and designed to build up and not tear down.

Norman A Shields



Finally, in our consideration here this evening, no history of our Union can fail to refer to the extensive influence of N A Shields. Mr Shields' lengthy tenure as Secretary and Tutor in the College, wider teaching & preaching ministry in the churches and prolific contributions to the Irish Baptist Home Mission and Irish Baptist Magazine, mark him out as a highly significant figure in the latter half of the twentieth century in the life of our Churches. A number of people here today, including the speaker, owe a tremendous debt to his ministry among Irish Baptists.

Others could of course be mentioned in some detail: people such as Joshua Thompson (Union Secretary for twenty-five years and esteemed historian of our Association work); College Principals, David Kingdon and Ivor Oakley; Nurse Sloan (described by Andrew Reid as 'something of a legend' in both Ireland and Peru)[13]; Sam & Mary Sloan & Hugh & Sadie Mitchell (true pioneers in mission); James Greenwood (who has given a lifetime of service to the committee life of our Association, especially in IBC); Jim Henry, (evangelist); J A Smyth, (a true Mr Greatheart in the mould of Bunyan's allegorical figure); Roy McMullan (pastor & teacher) these three all now promoted to higher service; Derek Baxter (Missions Director at a time of significant church growth in Ireland) and Rea Grant and Billy Colville (Union & Association Directors respectively under whose leadership so much has been achieved) ... but reflection on these men and women belongs to another time a few years hence when it will doubtless be told.

The point of all of this is that while it is God who works and brings about change, yet He delights to use people to fulfil His purpose. Therefore, in the spirit of Hebrews, we give thanks for those who have gone before us in the work of the Union and Association and have set us an example to follow, remembering that the Lord buries his workmen and women but the work goes on.

PROSPECTS

Where then does the work of the Association stand at this juncture, after 120 years?

1 It is obvious that urban decline in the inner city is a feature of our spiritual life that must be addressed. In Belfast particularly, which once was a bastion of Baptist witness many of our churches are ageing and declining in numerical strength. This

demonstrates that we simply cannot depend upon the advances of the past. A new generation calls for a new approach without tampering with the unchanging message of Jesus Christ crucified and raised from the dead. There are some signs that a few churches are recognising the need to think in a fresh way about their context and refocus on how best to reach into their communities and this should be encouraged.

2 On the other hand, growth in the south of Ireland has been a remarkable and encouraging feature of Irish Baptist life in the last ten years especially and this shows no signs of abating. A fresh wind of change has been blowing leading to the establishment of small fellowships which then become stronger churches and have been seeking Association links. The maps which appear in the recently produced *'120 Together (1895-2015)'* publication are a striking indicator of what God has been doing in this part of our island home.

3 In the third place it occurs to me that willingness to embrace new forms has been a positive aspect of the life and witness of our Association in the past. In 1945 the visionary L E Deens gave a Presidential address, entitled *'A Church Conservative and Progressive',* in which he stated:

> "... let us stand fast, unashamedly conservative where Christian doctrine and Christian living are involved. Don't allow yourself to be swept off your feet by any intellectual, ecclesiastical or social fashion. Don't be too ready to repudiate the faith of your fathers. Be at pains to acquaint yourselves with the biblical and intellectual grounds of our Baptist position and then, grounded in the truth, stand fast whatever winds may blow." [14]

And then, as the flip side of that coin, Mr Deens appealed for a willingness to welcome new light on the old book, a readiness to shoulder new tasks and embrace new methods. Said Deens:

> "The progressive church will be ingenious, adaptable, flexible, ready to scrap what is obviously no longer suitable or effective, ready to experiment with what gives any promise of winning the ear of an inattentive age for the gospel message." [15]

This resonates with something John Stott wrote more recently in which he says the contemporary church must not succumb to either total fixity (wedded to forms) or total fluidity (becoming open to anything).[16] Both of these extremes are to be avoided and I am pleased to say that there are signs that Irish Baptists are beginning to realise that secondary matters should not be allowed to hinder our work while retaining our gospel emphasis on Scripture and truth. We ought to remember that in the 1950s open airs, cottage meetings and 'caravangelism' were regarded as 'innovative' and frowned upon by some as evidence of a modernising influence!

4 Fourthly, there are multiple challenges which our churches face ... challenges of consumerism, secularism and postmodernism in the main, which are hugely complex and require wisdom and a great deal of prayer. There are challenges too for theological education and ministry training in which a rising generation of Christian young people appears to increasingly question the idea of spending three years at Theological College training for Christian service. The College is seeking to address this challenge with a flexible approach to training without losing that crucial sense of community which is one of our strengths.

Challenges and blessings constitute a twin phenomenon which has characterised the work of the Christian church down the centuries and Irish Baptists have been no different. Therefore, on this 120th Anniversary, thanksgiving is appropriate for all that God has done, in Ireland, in Europe and in South Peru, among men and women and young people, and refocusing of our vision is necessary.

The Annual report of 1989 [17] challenged church delegates to ask themselves ... Do we spend more time discussing authority, autonomy, association and administration than evangelism and the discipling of new believers? Any departure from or failure to preach the gospel, baptise believers and bring them into membership will mark the beginning of the end of an association of churches which God has raised up and blessed. The challenge remains ... let us face that challenge with renewed energy and confidence in the God who has begun a work among us and will surely bring it to completion.



Notes

1 Irish Baptist Magazine, 1895

2 BUoI Reports & Statistics 1945, p25

3 p9

4 BUoI Reports & Statistics 148, p31

5 Minutes of the Irish Baptist College Committee, Sep 12, 1963

6 BUoI Reports & Statistics 1973, p6

7 BUoI Assembly Handbook, 1994, p13

8 Vol XLII, No 6 June 1918

9 *Man of Stature, Hugh D Brown*, 1968, BUoI, p3

10 J J Flanagan, Coleraine Baptist Church, 1795 - 2002, p16

11 *Lord I Follow*, (Centenary Publication of the Irish Baptist College), p5

12 BUoI Reports & Statistics 1951, Memoir

13 A Reid, *By Divine Coincidence*, p70

14 L E Deens, *A Church Conservative and Progressive* (BUoI)

15 Ibid

16 John Stott, *The Living Church*, 2007, p20

17 1990 BUoI Assembly Handbook, p A7.



The Story of the Salvation Army

James Davison

Henry Morton Stanley in his 'spirited narrative of heroic endeavour' to find Dr Livingstone gives us a picture of Africa that enables us to understand why it has been described as 'Darkest Africa'. Stanley writes:

> "[We] marched, tore, ploughed and cut ... [our] way for one hundred and sixty days through this inner womb of the true tropical forest ... [It was a place] where the rays of the sun never penetrate."[1]

Here is darkest Africa by nature and its peoples were no different for "The little religion they knew", writes Stanley, "was nothing more than legendary lore and in their memories there dimly floated a story of a land which grew darker and darker as one travelled towards the end of the earth."[2] Here Africa is seen in a more frightening darkness, a spiritual darkness, a darkness that gives no hope.

Still there was another darkness; one that saw these human beings decimated as a result of their horrendous treatment by other human beings. It was nothing less than the exploitation of 'the domestic affections of the forest dwellers in order to strip them of all they possess in this world',[3] including their very persons. This way of living was regarded by the vast majority as the natural and normal law of existence, the survival of the fittest, but what a terrible picture of man's inhumanity to man.

Now one man, while reflecting on this devastating and horrendous presentation of life in the vast African forest, says: 'It seems to me only too vividly a picture of many parts of our own land. As there is a Darkest Africa is there not also a Darkest England.'[4] That man was William Booth and we find these comments in his *In Darkest England*

and the Way Out, first published in 1890, and they set the scene for our journey tonight as we seek to sketch the history of the Salvation Army.



William Booth c1862

But who was William Booth? William was born in Nottingham in 1829, the son of Samuel Booth and his second wife Mary Moss. His father, although not a great businessman, always endeavoured to manage sufficiently to provide for his family. This, to some extent, enabled William's parents to plan a reasonable education for him, but life for the Booth family came crashing down as a result of a creditor suddenly calling for the repayment of a debt. This resulted in William being taken out of school and apprenticed to Mr Francis Eames, a local pawnbroker. William was just thirteen years old at the time.

An invitation accepted

Life as an apprentice pawnbroker helped William develop a social conscience. It is recorded of him that: 'Day after day his young heart was crushed by the despair etched on the faces of those bringing their most prized possessions only to be given a pittance in return.'[5] But two years after starting his apprenticeship things were to change for William through a chance meeting with Boldie Newbold, a childhood friend. As they talked he asked after Will Sansom, another childhood friend, only to be told that he was at 'the meeting tonight'. "What meeting"? William responded.

He was informed that it was a meeting held in Broad Street Methodist Chapel, for Bible study and fellowship. It was more of an enquiry meeting; one that asked "How are you getting on with the Lord." As the conversation was drawing to a close Boldie invited William to attend the next meeting of the Bible class, an invitation which, to Boldie's great surprise, he accepted. William would become a regular visitor to the meeting, although, at times, he was distinctly uncomfortable. It is evident that the Spirit of God was stirring his heart and, as it continued, under fiery preachers like Isaac Marsden, William came to realise his need for God.



Broad Street Methodist Chapel, Nottingham

That realisation came to fruition one evening as William, now fifteen years old, made his way home from one of the meetings.[6] This new found desire to follow God spilled over into every area of William Booth's life. One example of this regarded working on Sundays, which he raised with his employer, Mr Eames, only to be told: "You can work with the rest of us or you can leave." As a result of following his conscience, William lost his job only to be reinstated a short time later with the agreement that he could finish work at midnight each Saturday night.

As William progressed in his Christian life:

> "He attended every chapel meeting possible, eagerly learning from the revivalist preachers who travelled the country in the 1840s. Hungrily he devoured every word they uttered, learning not only the truth they declared but also the techniques they employed to capture people's attention."[7]

One of the revivalist preachers who had a great impact on William was the Irish-American evangelist, James Caughey, but although William received much inspiration from Caughey, he still needed to be encouraged to start preaching and this came from his childhood friend Will Sansom and the Scarborough evangelist David Greenbury.

After a tentative start to his preaching career William took ill towards the end of 1846, but when he had fully recovered he joined the group of young Methodist preachers Will Sansom had formed. Together, these two young evangelists, and others, could be seen on many a street corner standing on a chair or some other improvised platform preaching the Gospel, their audience being those who did not venture into church services, as they were not really welcome; these were the days of rented pews and poor people could not afford such costs.

But William rightly believed that those poor wretches, who were coming to faith in Christ on street corners, needed to be taught. This led William to persuade a group of them to go with him to the chapel service one Sunday. On their arrival William, to the amazement of the stunned congregation, ushered them into the best pews. William was rather pleased with himself, but the minister, Rev Samuel Dunn, rebuked him and told him that he was to follow protocol next time he undertook such a venture.

Rebuke of this nature was something William was to face throughout his life as he followed his desire 'to see salvation come to all men and the kingdom of God extended in the world'. William's gifts as a preacher began to be recognised and he was appointed as a local preacher by the minister of Broad Street Chapel. He was seventeen at the time, but when he came to the end of his apprenticeship just two years later, in 1848, he became unemployed and was to remain so for the next twelve months.

London and Separations

This prompted the move to London. Soon after arriving in the capital William began work in the only employment he could find – the dreaded pawnbroker business. William began to attend the Methodist Chapel in Walworth and his name was soon added to the list of local preachers. But the long hours in the shop coupled with his preaching ministry began to take their toll on William's health and, as a result, William asked to be removed from the preaching list so he could concentrate on open-air preaching.

It was at this time that William became suspect in the eyes of his circuit minister of being more sympathetic to the expelled reformers; at this time the Methodist Church was having a major internal conflict on certain issues. This led to William being expelled from the Walworth church.[8]

Being rejected meant that William had lost the support of the church in which he wished to serve God but all was not lost for God brought Mr Edward Rabbits, a man of influence, into William's life. Rabbits 'recognized the potential in the zealous young evangelist [and] upon hearing of his expulsion from the Methodist movement, he invited William to join the reformers'.[9]

Opportunities to preach opened up for William among the reformers and it was, perhaps, at this time that he recognised more fully than ever before that he should be in full-time ministry. In a letter to a friend he writes:

> "In my present position I am unsettled - unhappy - my occupation is so contrary to my views that I am continually desiring something different - I feel it in my heart - on my soul from day to day that I would be a missionary of God."[10]

Rabbits was of the same opinion and during one conversation that centred upon William going into full time ministry he asked William how much he would need, each week, to live on. After a few moments of mental calculation William said "about twelve shillings a week." The response from Rabbits was startling: "Nonsense ... you cannot do with less than twenty shillings a week ... I will supply it for the first three months at least."[11] Soon after accepting Rabbits' offer William was added to the list of preachers associated with the reform wing of Methodism and appointed to give a series of sermons in their Binfield House Chapel.



Catherine Mumford

It was his association with Edward Rabbits that opened the way for William to meet Catherine Mumford. Catherine was born in 1829 in the Derbyshire market town of Ashbourne. She was educated at home due to her mother's desire to

'shield her daughter from worldly influences',[12] and this resulted in Catherine having few friends. Certainly she had no 'frivolous pastimes',[13] and was not permitted to read any fiction novels. In 1845 the Mumford family moved to London, via Boston in Lincolnshire, and a little later Catherine became a member of Brixton Methodist Church.

The 1840s was a time when division began to appear in Wesleyan Methodism and Catherine found herself in sympathy with the reforming group. This resulted in her not only being 'excommunicated from the body that had nurtured her in faith from the time she was born';[14] it also resulted in the loss of many friends who remained loyal to Wesleyan Methodism. But, 'History would prove ... that the greater loss was sustained by the organization she left behind in 1850'.[15]

After the withdrawal of her membership Catherine joined the Reforming Binfield House Chapel and it was there that she first met William Booth, as noted earlier. William had been invited to give a series of sermons in the Binfield House Chapel. The second occasion they met was at a tea meeting in a schoolroom in Cooper Street. After the tea meeting there was a service and near the end of it Catherine became unwell and, at the insistence of Rabbits, William escorted her home.

Following this second meeting there was no separating William and Catherine; they were formally engaged to be married just over a month later and were married three years later on 15 June 1855 when they were both twenty-six years old. Years later William would write: 'It seemed as if God flashed simultaneously into our hearts that affection which afterwards ripened into what has proved to be an exceptional union of hearts and purpose of life'.[16]



William & Catherine around the time of their marriage

The years of their engagement (1852-55) were years of struggle for the young couple but they were years that 'formed a partnership, based on a shared commitment to evangelization that would characterise their relationship for the rest of their lives'.[17] It was also a time of seeking to find a position for William that would enable him to exercise a more settled ministry. He had been appointed as an itinerant preacher to the reforming Spalding circuit in Lincolnshire. It covered an area of twenty-seven miles and he would remain with the circuit until 1854.[18]

With his separation from the reformers William joined himself to a small class of students for the Methodist New Connexion ministry under the guidance of Dr William Cooke. This lasted six months! William was no student: 'I was to study Latin and

Greek and other subjects which I saw at a glance could not help me in the all-important work that lay before me.'[19] During this time in London William was given many opportunities to preach in the New Connexion chapels. He also managed to have preaching tours of the Potteries and as far as Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

William had tried to be a student a few years earlier. It was at the time he left Mr Rabbits' reforming group in London and before he was appointed to the Spalding circuit. William began attending Stockwell Congregational Church where Dr David Thomas was the minister and where Catherine was attending. Here he was encouraged to enter the Congregational training college at Cottons End.

But it was short lived on account of William and Catherine's opposition to the Congregationalists' Calvinist doctrine of election. As Catherine expressed it:

> "The idea of anything like the selection of one individual to enjoy the blessedness of Divine favour forever and ever, and the reprobation of another to suffer all the pains and penalties of damnation, irrespective of choice, conduct or character on their part seemed to be an outrage." [20]

Hattersley says that the Booths 'flirtation' with the Congregationalists was nothing short of 'an act of extraordinary cynicism and the justification for such open opportunism was barely creditable'.[21]

Following William and Catherine's marriage in 1855 he was appointed as an itinerant evangelist at a salary of £100 per year with the Methodist New Connexion. This itinerant ministry ended in 1857 when he was appointed circuit minister of Brighouse, a small town near Bradford in Yorkshire. Here William laboured with a 'self-effacing devotion and Catherine began to learn about the life of the northern poor'. Hattersley continues: 'She [Catherine] described the life of a mill girl with a mixture of horror and disbelief that confirmed her own sheltered childhood'.[22] Such were the working conditions for young females that Catherine argued that there was 'no help for it but a law prohibiting girls under twenty from working in factories before nine o'clock'.[23]

The following year, 1858, William was sent to Gateshead, where he remained until 1861 with a good measure of success (in 1858 there were 92 members and by the time he left the number of members had reached 229). This was followed by his appointment to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1861. But things did not work out as William had hoped and he resigned from the Methodist New Connexion without taking up this appointment. As Bramwell Booth explained some years later:

> "When he [William] joined the Methodist New Connexion there was a distinct understanding with the authorities of that time that he was a minister for evangelistic work, in which he had already gained a great measure of success in various parts of the country. It was their subsequent refusal of that work which brought about the rupture." [24]

God's Gipsies [25]

With his resignation William, Catherine and their four children[26] moved back to London and stayed with Catherine's parents for a short time before accepting an invitation to go Hayle in Cornwall for a six-week evangelistic campaign. They would remain in Cornwall for eighteen months, often taking separate preaching engagements in different locations at the same time. From Cornwall they moved to Cardiff for another campaign which included holding their meetings in a circus tent. There were also visits to the West Midlands, the West Riding and other parts of England. The Booths' experience, in some parts of the North, however, led them to consider moving back to London with their six children.[27]



The Booth Family

Before they had finally decided to return to London, however, Catherine, early in 1865, received an invitation from the Southwark Circuit to preach for the Free Methodists of Rotherhithe. The invitation was accepted with great pleasure; it was a decision fully supported by William. Catherine's experience at these meetings, including the work done by the Midnight Movement among prostitutes made such an impression upon her heart it convinced her that London should be the centre of her work. Using London as their base, the aim was that William would continue with his itinerant ministry while Catherine concentrated her ministry in London.

The years from 1861 to 1865 were very difficult years financially for the Booths and, to make matters worse, the various Methodist groups closed the doors of their chapels and halls to them – indeed to all itinerant evangelists. But things were to change for the Booths as William walked home from a meeting in June 1865 through the Bethnal Green and Whitechapel slums to his home in Hammersmith. Coming upon an open-air meeting close to the Blind Beggar pub he stopped and, being recognised, was invited to speak a few words. We are told that his 'commanding presence and forceful words captured the attention of the passers-by'. And what they heard was 'sin denounced and the love of God proclaimed in a clear and powerful way'.[28]

Within a few days the organization holding the open-air meeting, the East London Special Services Committee, invited William to conduct their other meetings which were being held in a tent they had erected in a disused burial ground. William was engaged for six weeks[29] to conduct their meetings in Whitechapel by a weekly evangelical magazine called *Revival*.[30]

William commenced these meeting on 2 July 1865 and by the time they had come to an end he was convinced, like Catherine, that London's East End was where God

would have him minister. In his own words: 'I found my heart being strongly and strangely drawn out on behalf of a million people living within a mile of the tent'.[31] People who were 'totally ignorant of the Gospel and given up to all kinds of wickedness: infidels, drunkards, thieves, harlots, gamblers, blasphemers, and pleasure seekers without number'.[32]

The Salvation Army

With the conviction that God had called him to bring light to this part of 'darkest England', William hired the Assembly Rooms in New Road, Whitechapel, for Sunday services. This was the start of the 'East London Christian Mission' which was 'the foundation of an organization expanding in his lifetime to reach to the ends of the earth'.[33] How the premises were to be paid for was a matter of faith and God honoured that faith by bringing Samuel Morley into William's life.

In 1868 the Mission published its own magazine, *The East London Evangelist*, later named *The Christian Mission Magazine*. This matched the Mission's name change to 'The Christian Mission', as a result of its activities being extended throughout England and Wales, and north of the border into Scotland.

Details relating to the expansion of The Christian Mission in the subsequent years are very impressive: In 1868, three years after the Mission was formed, there were twenty full-time workers and many more committed helpers. This enabled them to conduct approximately one hundred and twenty meetings each week – these were held during the day and in the evenings of each day. Ten years later, in 1878, the year after the name of the Mission changed to 'The Salvation Army', there were one hundred and twenty-seven full-time evangelists and another seven hundred voluntary workers engaged in Mission work. It was now a national organisation and within another ten years it had become an international organisation.

It should be noted that there were other evangelical missions doing similar work, but the Salvation Army was different. For one thing their meetings were more robust. One newspaper reported it this way: 'their singing is unmistakably louder; their choruses undeniably longer; their prayers louder and longer; and the discourses louder, longer and stronger'.[34] (*Tower Hamlet & General East End Advertiser*, Nov, 1867 cited in Walker).

Then there was the brass band music to accompany its singing. This was to become one of its most public features as it developed a style of music totally foreign to the church of the late nineteenth-century. It was a style of music taken directly from the Music Hall and, as it developed, it was 'Soon ... accompanied by tambourines and ultimately timbrel brigades of modern Miriams with their own flourish of creative choreography'.[35]

But there was much opposition to the Salvation Army. On many occasions Salvationists were attacked by angry crowds and left battered and bruised. This opposition was encouraged mainly by pub landlords as they saw many of their clientele being converted. In one year, 1882, six hundred and sixty-nine Salvationists were assaulted, including 'two hundred and fifty-one women and twenty-three children'.[36] It was also reported that eighty-six Salvationists were 'thrown into prison'.[37] This included Ballington Booth for street preaching in Manchester and Captain Louisa Loch in Loche for a similar offence.



Ballington Booth

The Bishop of Carlisle and others, including Canon Farrar of Westminster Abbey, spoke out against the Army[38] and 'a public notice was posted in Salisbury announcing the formation of a society for the express purpose of bring to an end the Army's public work'.[39] That same year *The War Cry* reported that in Sheffield 'musicians and officers were a target for thousands of brutal roughs to curse, spit upon and covered [them] with mud, and wounded [them] with sharp stones'.

This, however, did not stop the Salvation Army's progress and by 1880 it had spread to Ireland, America and Australia; then to France (1881), Canada and India (1882), New Zealand and South Africa (1883), Germany (1886) and in 1890 officers were appointed to a number of South American countries. Today the Salvation Army operates in one hundred and twenty-six countries providing a variety of services in one hundred and seventy-five languages in its endeavours to win souls for Christ. Some of the latest countries include Poland (2005), Kuwait (2008), Nepal (2009) and Sierra Leone (2010).

The Expedition to Ireland

The 'Expedition to Ireland', for that is what it was called, began on 3 May 1880 when General Booth at a farewell meeting in London 'despatched' Captain Caroline Reynolds and four other ladies (Lieutenant Phoebe Strong, and sisters Elizabeth Spencer, Polly Flinn and Mary Ann Marshall) with the bold affirmation that they 'were not going to war against priestcraft, or Romanism, or Protestantism, or any other ism, unless it be sinfulism. ... She will point her guns against sin'.[40]

They arrived in Belfast on 7 May 1880 and after settling into their lodgings held their first meeting that evening in a small hall called the 'Bethel' in Craven Street. Meetings were held in the open-air on Saturday and Sunday with a number of souls coming to know Christ as Saviour and Lord. The Ireland Division website suggests that the first meeting was held in Felt Street off Sandy Row, but this is in conflict with the *War Cry* dated 15 May 1880.

After some days in Belfast and with the meetings progressing very well Captain Reynolds, Lieutenant Phoebe Strong and sister Polly Flynn moved on to Londonderry. They arrived on 1 June 1880 and held their first public meeting in a building on Strand Road known locally as the 'Rink'. But 'it was not a smooth affair — an account of the first meeting describes mobs of low rowdies of both sexes attended for the sole purpose of creating disturbance'.

Such was the opposition that the three Salvationists had to change lodgings nightly so that the hostile crowd would not know where to find them. Yet in 1881 a corps had been established in Belfast and Londonderry.

Today there are nineteen corps and seven social centres in the Ireland division which helps vulnerable and disadvantaged people through a range of initiatives. These include the Christmas Family Appeal, Bangor Befriending Service, Newry Knights, the hostel in Belfast and the children's brass band at Belfast Citadel Corps.

It is interesting to note that in 1886 Captain Reynolds told an interviewer that 'No-one will ever know what we went through'. Perhaps their colours (flag/banner) was the cause of some of their trouble: 'It had a green corner on it with a harp and *no* crown. We did not realise this was treason to Protestants. Then we had *orange*-coloured hymn books. The Orangemen gloried in that, but it brought all the 'fenians' down on us.'

Before moving on to consider the network of agencies the Salvation Army has developed, it is necessary to make mention of two things. The first is two important documents, produced by the Army, which could be called the Army's foundation documents and the second is the internal unrest.

Two Important Documents

The Doctrines of the Salvation Army and *The Articles of War: A Soldier's Covenant.*[41]



Its doctrines are set out in eleven brief statements: the authority of Scripture (s1); the Godhead (s2, s3); Christ as the Godman (s4); original sin (s5); atonement (s6); salvation (s7, s8, s9); sanctification (s10); and the eternal state (s11).

The Articles of War first state that the signee has accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and that they now, by God's grace, enter into a sacred covenant. The sacred covenant includes acceptance of the eleven Salvation Army Doctrines and a list of promises that the signee promises to adhere to.

Internal Unrest



Bramwell Booth

We noted above that by the early 1890s Bramwell Booth, as Chief of Staff, was running the organisation but his style of leadership caused some internal conflict. Ballington Booth and his wife, Maud, resigned their commissions in 1896 and formed 'The Volunteers of America', a faith based organisation. Herbert Booth and his wife Anne Ethel had similar complaints about Bramwell's leadership and resigned in 1902 after several successful years in Australia. 1902 also saw the resignation of Kate and her husband Arthur Booth-Clibborn who disputed Bramwell's decision to move them from France to the Netherlands and had differences with the Army's views on pacifism and faith healing.[42] Emma and her husband Frederick Booth-Tucker took on the leadership in America following the Ballington's resignation and remained in charge until Emma's tragic death in October 1903. Emma 'was hailed as a great orator, and under their leadership the US Army grew considerably.'[43] By this last quotation I assume it is meant that The Salvation Army in America 'grew considerably'.

The other Booth children played some role in the Salvation Army, except Marian, on account of her ill health but by 1903 only Bramwell and Evangeline held leading positions and their relationship eventually broke in 1929 over his leadership. In that year, 'A group of senior officers declared General Bramwell Booth unfit, removed him from office, and altered the Deed Poll to establish a system to elect the general'.[44] Edward Higgins was appointed as general; he was succeeded by Evangeline Booth (1934-39). Evangeline died in 1950

The Army's Social Work

From its infancy, social work of various kinds has been a fundamental ingredient in The Salvation Army's endeavour to win souls for Christ. By 1870 it had open depots for the sale of food to the poor and in 1874 an agency to rescue drunkards was started. Alongside these endeavours the Army was also engaged in the rescue of abandoned children and prostitutes – something that was very close to Catherine Booth's heart. In 1881 the Australian corps commenced a prison ministry, which was emulated by London the following year with the first prison-gate home being opened and many other enterprises would follow.

But it wasn't just an emphasis on neighbourhood social action. When we turn to actual military engagements like the Ashanti Wars of 1874, the Zulu War of 1879, and the Boer War (1899-1902) we find the Salvation Army providing practical and spiritual help to servicemen. The same is also true of other conflicts in the twentieth century.

Hattersley writes: 'Ever since the first mugs of tea and sandwiches were distributed to the 20,000 horse and foot who went to Table Bay, British servicemen have expected the Salvation Army to have its mobile canteens up in the front line'.[45]

A fundamental change took place in 1890, however, when the Social Reform Wing of the Salvation Army was established and it is not unreasonable to suggest that, from that time on, this side of the work has dominated the public perception of the Salvation Army. This was, perhaps, inevitable as a result of the publication in 1890 of William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out,* which set out his 'Work for All Social Campaign'. In this work we can see the true character of William Booth – a character that emphasised practical Christianity. But it first and foremost recognised the necessity to change the man, because it is the man, the natural man as seen in his character and conduct, which constitute the reasons for his failure

There were three strands to this social program: The City Colony, The Farm Colony and The Colony across the Seas. The first practical outworking of this social charter was the opening of the Industrial and Land Colony at Hadleigh in Essex in 1891. This was a fully working farm with its own market-gardens, orchards and milk production: it also gave training in basic building trades, household work and other handicrafts and some people were helped to emigrate overseas as farm workers. It continues today as a training centre providing skills development for adults with special needs. But there was much opposition to 'Work for All Social Campaign'; not least from many of the Trade Guilds of the day.

What of the Salvation Army today? Well, as noted earlier, it expanded into a global organisation with involvement in almost all aspects of social and welfare activity and today it operates in 126 countries providing a variety of services. However, in order to do that it had to be 'constantly adapting its strategy while never changing its principles' (General Johns Gowans).



The social and welfare services provided by the Salvation Army today are impressive (figures from the 2014 Year Book):

Community Development Programmes: 10,859 (beneficiaries: 1,087,781)
Residential Addiction Dependency Programmes: 281 (cap: 19,800)
Homeless Hostels: 407 (cap: 23,752)
Children's Homes: 224 (cap: 9,739)
Homes for Elderly Persons: 178 (cap: 7,482)
Mother and Baby Homes: 45(cap: 1,308)
Refuges: 64 (cap: 1,934)
Day Care Centres: 611
Non-residential Addiction Rehabilitation Centres: 91

Services to the Armed Forces: 86 projects
Disaster Rehabilitation Schemes: 180 (serving 1,035,396 people)
Prisoners visited: 230,113

General Hospitals: 21
Maternity Hospitals: 15
Specialist Hospitals: 7

Breakdown of Some Statistics:

In America each year the Salvation Army serves more than 30 million people. This includes supplying over 58 million meals, nightly shelter for 10.8 million people, treatment for 200,000 people in 142 rehabilitation facilities and more than 400 after school programmes.

In England and Wales, a total of 2479 potential victims of trafficking were referred to The Salvation Army for support between July 2011 and June 2014, by government agencies, including the police. 1817 of these individuals have been supported. During the third year of this programme 889 people were supported in safe house accommodation. This is an increase of 62% on the previous year and a 135% increase on the first year. Three types of exploitation are highlighted: sexual, labour and domestic servitude. The service supported clients from 74 different countries.

These endeavours are impressive and while they give some creditably to the perception many people have of The Salvation Army; that it is a social and welfare organisation, it is also true that it is an organisation that fights against sin and ungodliness. On these two fronts the Salvation Army is still an army at war, as it has been from its foundation, with no intention of laying down its weapons this side of glory.



William and Catherine Booth in later life



Notes

1 Henry Morton Stanley cited in William Booth's, *In Darkest England and The Way Out*, pp9-10

2 Ibid, p10

3 Ibid, p10

4 William Booth's, *In Darkest England and The Way Out*, p11

5 Trevor Yaxley, *William & Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths*, p51

6 Roy Hattersley in *Blood & Fire* seems to blend two incidents in telling the story of William's conversion (pp18-19): Praying with a friend in Lammas Fields in 1847 and his conversion in 1844 (p19)

7 Yaxley, p55

8 Hattersley states that the Walworth Methodist Chapel was associated with the reforming group (p37), but see Yaxley, *William & Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths*, p61

9 Ibid, p61

10 William Booth, cited in Yaxley, *William & Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths*, p62

11 William Booth, cited in Hattersley, *Blood & Fire*, p40

12 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p9

13 Ibid

14 Yaxley, *William & Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths*, p45

15 Ibid, p45

16 William Booth, cited Harold Begbie, *The Life of William Booth*, Vol 1, p131

17 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p14

18 During this time William and Catherine corresponded constantly and David Malcolm Bennett has brought together all available letters (447) and published them in 2003 (Camphill Publications)

19 William Booth, cited Harold Begbie, *The Life of William Booth*, Vol 1, p225

20 Catherine Booth cited in Roy Hattersley, *Blood & Fire*, p96

21 Hattersley, *Blood & Fire*, p50

22 Ibid, p96

23 Catherine Both cited in Hattersley, *Blood & Fire*, p96

24 Bramwell Booth, *Echoes and Memories*

25 Hattersley's phrase

26 William Bramwell (1856); Ballington (1857); Catherine (1858); Emma Moss (1860)

27 Herbert (1862); Marian (1864)

28 Ibid, p5

29 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p14 says 3 weeks

30 The owners of the magazine *Revival*—Samuel Morgan and Richard Chase—were members of the East London Special Services Committee

31 Cited in Hattersley, *Blood & Fire* p152

32 Ibid, p153

33 Yaxley, *William & Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths*, p123

34 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p14

35 Henry Gariepy, *Christianity in Action: The International History of the Salvation Army*, p23

36 Henry Gariepy, *Christianity in Action: The International History of the Salvation Army*, p30

37 Ibid

38 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p135

39 Yaxley, *William & Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths*, p178

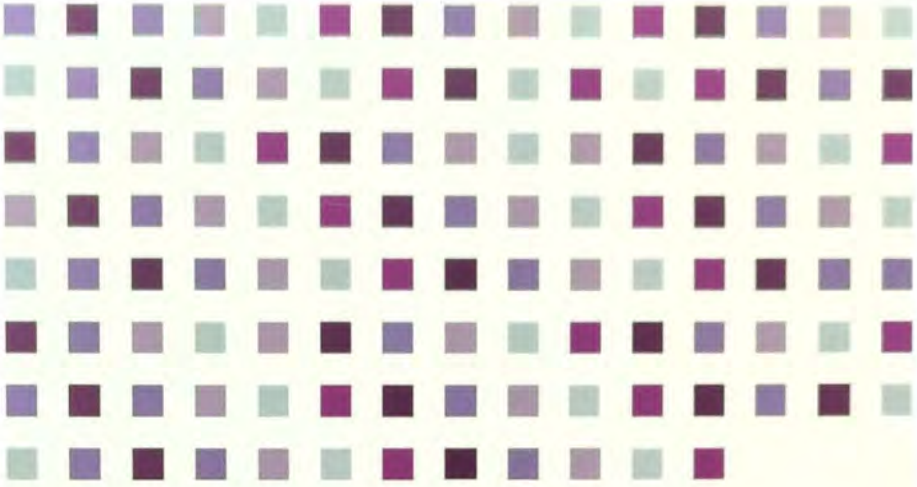
40 *The War Cry* 8 May 1880, p1

41 See Hattersley, *Blood & Fire*, p266 for details

42 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p236

43 Walker, *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, p236

44 Ibid, p296, note 7



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