

THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW

Associazione "Più dell'Oro"
Centro Culturale Pascal

150° anniversario
dell'Unità d'Italia

**L'Evangelo
per fare gli italiani**
Dialoghi risorgimentali

No. 118

Summer 2011

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to our Summer issue which, as promised in the Christmas newsletter, is in the traditional form we've had for nearly two decades.

The first news is that unfortunately our chairman Rev **Eric Murray** has resigned from his post because of health problems. We have been very concerned for him and he has been firmly in our thoughts and prayers. Thank God we have recently learnt that he appears now to be better. In the meantime Rev **Tim Macquiban**, who had left the Committee in 2009 after being a member for 20 years, has come back and has taken Eric's place. Tim is now not only the minister of Wesley Church in Cambridge but is also the Superintendent of the Circuit, which means he is incredibly busy and we therefore are immensely grateful to him for helping us in this difficult moment.

On a brighter note, 'our' Italian student **Luca Ghiretti** spent a busy and successful year at Wesley House studying and training for an MA in Pastoral care with the Cambridge Theological Federation. Everyone was pleased with him – he obtained a merit in his finals – and he was delighted to have had the great opportunity of living and studying in Cambridge. We are very grateful to all who helped this project become true. Please continue to support with prayers and financial help our work for the Waldensian Church and its Mission to Italy, which is in need of a Reformation now more than ever.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you on **Saturday 8 October at our annual AWAYDAY**. Do come and listen to some great speakers, meet new and old friends, buy books, calendars, biscuits, hear news about Italy and the Waldensian Church.

God bless you all.

ESN, Editor

FROM the CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends,

It is good to re-establish contact with the Mission and the Committee for the next year or two. I am sorry to be taking over from Eric Murray in the circumstances of his illness but we are glad that there seems to be some improvement in his health. We all send him our very best wishes for further progress.

I look forward to seeing as many as can be at our annual gathering on 8 October for what sounds to be a very interesting time together. I myself have been privileged to lead a party from our church in Cambridge and others on a Martin Luther pilgrimage which included a visit to Herrnhut and the Moravian settlement, discovering some of the influence of another pre-Reformation group of Christians who have helped to shape the people of faith we are today. In June I went to Rome to celebrate with Methodists there 150 years of Methodist

Cover photo: Poster for a lecture series celebrating 150 years of Italian unity.

AWAYDAY 2011

8 October, 10.15–4.00, French Protestant Church, Soho Square, London

10.30 am With the 25th anniversary of the death of Primo Levi approaching, his biographer **Ian Thomson** will talk on 'If this is a man: the genesis of Primo Levi's first book'.

11.20 am Rev Dr **Tim Macquiban** will report on the conference on *150 years of Methodism in Italy* held at Rome University in June. A special date since it is also the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy.

1–2 pm Lunch (bring your own, drinks provided)

2 pm AGM

Richard Newbury and the Executive Secretary will report on the Synod, the Waldensian Church and the work of the Mission.

Mark Stephens will report on the financial situation.

Tea, bookstall, calendars and the delicious '*biscotti di Debora*'

Please PUT THE AWAYDAY IN YOUR DIARIES NOW since, in order to save all funds for the Mission, WE ARE NOT going to SEND reminders or INVITATIONS!

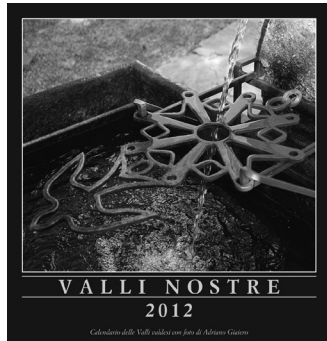
PLEASE NOTICE: Tottenham Court Road Station on the Northern Line will be closed until end of November!

WALDENSIAN CALENDARS 2012

Very beautiful, stunning views of the Waldensians Valleys and Bible verses in five languages. Still cheaper than commercial counterparts despite growing postal charges: £ 8.00 (p&p included)

Please SEND cheques (payable to Waldensian Church Mission) to **Milvia Walker, 19 Forest Approach, Woodford Green, IG8 9BW**. Remember to include your address!

You can have them sent directly to your friends: if you want to do it cheaply yourselves you can roll them up in some brown paper. Once in place they will fall flat and make a special addition to any kitchen, study, hall ...



Mission to Italy in the special year of the celebration of the Unification of the country.

It was good to follow the progress of 'our' Italian Methodist student, Luca Ghiretti who did his 'year abroad' at Wesley House in Cambridge. His studies and his stay were very profitable: he has gained greatly from his experience and he has contributed with his knowledge, warmth and wit to the life of the College and of many fellow students of the Federation.

We thank Erica and all the contributors to this edition, which I hope you will use to promote the work of the Committee and to get more support for us.

With best wishes
Yours, *Tim Macquiban*

AWAYDAY 2010

It was lovely to meet once again on 9 October; the speakers were excellent and everyone had a chance to talk to Luca, who had just arrived in the UK.

What I found difficult to believe was that, having read her book *Sisters of Zion* – I reviewed it in no. 116 of the *WR* – and having attended a previous presentation, listening to Janet Soskice telling us the amazing story of these two very gifted and determined ladies so much ahead of their times, was like learning something totally new. With images and power point display she made everything sound even more intriguing and entertaining. I wonder if she manages to tell a different story every time she is asked to speak! As I have already said the double biography of the twins Agnes and Margaret Smith, better known by their married surnames, Lewis and Gibson, intrepid travellers, founders of Westminster College in Cambridge, great linguists and discoverers of ancient manuscripts of the Gospels, it's a great read and the perfect gift to people who may like a thrilling travel book with spiritual depth.

It is also ideal for church (and non-church) book clubs and Janet, if free from academic engagements, is a perfect speaker for church (and non-church) groups. ASK me for her email if you want to contact her!

Our next and equally fascinating speaker was Mike Thomason, a URC minister who took a few parties of youngsters to Italy, where in 2003 he met his future wife, Sue, who was the interpreter for the Waldensian Fellowship in the trip to Elba. Mike and I had kept sporadically in touch and a few years ago I was intrigued when he asked me for a Valli Nostre calendar and a copy of the colourful guide to the Waldensian Valleys to be sent to a German address. He then thanked me and said that the Alpine views had been greatly appreciated by 'his men' while in the desert in Iraq, where he was serving as an Army chaplain.

Of his experience and of the Army chaplaincy he talked to us in a way that we all found very involving and deeply moving. After a few years of being an 'ordinary' minister, Mike felt called to become a 'Padre', which is not as simple

as one might guess. First of all there is the assessment for fitness, suitability, security; afterwards comes the training at Sandhurst, since they are supposed to be soldiers with a difference: they carry their own kit and they do everything their men do, but instead of a weapon they carry communion kit, wine, bibles, little crosses, New Testaments, even rosary beads ... anything that may bring solace and comfort to whoever is in need. They must of course also be trained to be able to support service men and women in all the difficulties that action implies. They will need to be spiritual leaders and moral guidance not from above or from far away but being in the battlefield side by side, risking injury, death or captivity like any of them. Some times the danger is so big that, as it happened during the First Gulf War, the Army did not want to send any chaplain to Kuwait. Eventually they did.

Meeting the spiritual needs of the military and their families is a unique role and a unique opportunity for evangelization. Many service men have never heard of the Bible: when they enrol the chaplain gives them a New Testament. They can keep it up to 14 weeks and afterwards if they do not want it they can give it back. Everyone keeps it, though, even if they have not read it; some ask for a copy of the full Bible and many follow the Alpha courses provided by the Army. Mike during six months did get only two back.

The extreme and testing conditions lived by the men and women in the battlefield and shared by the chaplain leads to a great degree of intimacy and trust. The chaplain is there by their side in the 'official' moments of prayers, services to the dead, comfort to the wounded but also for private counselling, often just for being a sympathetic listener. In the Army one soon realises that the Church is not simply a building, but it is the people of God and that Christ's Church has many faces and places.

Mike is adamant in dispelling the false stereotype of the blessing of the weapons and of the action of killing. 'We bless those who unfortunately must use the weapons'. Their presence is also a meaning of reinforcing the moral values intrinsic to the British Army, that does not encourage the use lethal force unless it is the only and last possibility.

The core values of the Army are: courage, discipline, respect of others, integrity, loyalty, selflessness, commitment and one of the tasks of the chaplains is to make sure they know.

The first Chaplain goes back to 1796, the first Jew was appointed in 1892, the first woman in 2002 and 2004 saw the first Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim chaplains.

Erica Scropo Newbury

Conference to celebrate 150 years of Italian Methodism

Our chair, **Tim Macquiban**, was invited to be one of 15 speakers (and the only one from Britain) at a conference sponsored by the Opera per la Chiesa Metodista in Italia. Held in the the Department for History, Culture and Religion



of La Sapienza University, surrounded by busts and statues of gods and heroes of old, it was a fitting surrounding for a groundbreaking conference marking the establishment of the Methodist Missions in Italy in the same year, 1861, as the formation of the Kingdom of Italy. We received a welcome from Professor Pavanello, Director of the Department, and Massimo Aquilante, Director of the Centre for Methodist Archives, highlighting the significance of the occasion and the place of Methodism

in the important changes in the mid-nineteenth century, paying tribute to Methodist historians such as Professor Giorgio Spini and the collaboration with the Waldensian Church in preserving the archives of Methodism in Italy. Professor Monsegrati introduced the day's lectures with one drawing attention to the work of Malan and the Waldensians and the help given to them by Beckwith and others in England. Dr Tim Macquiban followed this up with a look at the British Methodist Press, pointing out the mixed legacy of John Wesley in the socio-political arena but demonstrating the growing support for constitutional changes in Italy in favour of religious liberty and unification. Professor Vogel of the Facoltà traced the origins of Methodism in Italy, Silvana Nitti described the dreams that many Protestants had of a united Italy and Paolo Naso described the important work amongst Italian immigrants in New York. Dr Bob Williams, General Secretary of the Archives and History Commission, had brought significant examples of photographs of these Missions and the work of American Methodism in Italy, including one of the fascinating scrapbooks of Bishop William Burt dealing with his years in Rome. Debora Spini concluded with a visionary and passionate paper on Methodists in the public arena, describing the radicalism of aspects of the development of Methodism in Italy and the challenges to religion and politics in an age of post-secularism.

The links with those who assisted in the work of bringing a different religious dimension to Italy in an age of great change is clearly still valued. The work of historical research in making the case for the significance of Methodism however small a group within the nation, is to be applauded and supported. It is hoped that the conference papers will be published and, perhaps, translated into English. Alessandra Trotta, President of the Methodist Church in Italy, and

her colleagues are to be congratulated on a splendid conference to honour the first 150 years of Methodism in the country.

Here is the first part of Tim's lecture.

British Methodism and the stirrings of support for democracy and freedom in Italy in the 1840s and 1850s

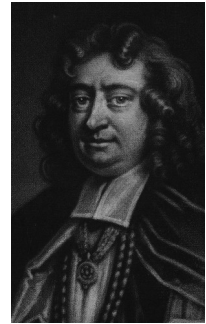
This paper will set the social, political and cultural context for Methodist Missions in Italy, out of an understanding of the prevailing Pan Evangelicalism and Anti-Catholicism of the period in British Methodism formed by those like Gilbert Burnet and John Wesley in the previous centuries. It seeks to understand the tensions in such support for religious and civil liberties from the ambivalence of Anglicanism and Methodism they exhibited towards political reforms and nationalist movements.

Introduction

The context out of which John Wesley formed his views of other religious bodies in the 18th century was the more latitudinarian spirit of the Hanoverian age (notwithstanding the Wesley family's own Jacobite leanings leading to accusations of crypto-Papism) in a more Lockean spirit of toleration, in contrast to the more absolutist Stuart spirit of persecution.

Gilbert Burnet

Typical of such a latitudinarian spirit was Gilbert Burnet, church historian and latterly (1688–1714) Bishop of Salisbury. He studied theology and entered the Church at a time when there were pressures to conform to the restored Stuart monarchy. Nonconformity was suspect and Dissenters hounded and persecuted. From early times Burnet fell in and out of favour, starting with a policy of moderation towards Dissenters but then abandoning this in favour of scathing attacks on them to court royal favour. He described a nonconformist as 'a very ridiculous and contemptible creature'. Many of his friends in the Church were 'Latitudinarians', those who wanted a broad and comprehensive Church noted for its reasonableness!



From being a Professor of Divinity in Scotland until 1674, he then moved south to assume important preaching roles in London, which allowed him time for his studies and the writing of his 'History of the Reformation', justifying the Protestant and Established Church of England and defending it against Papal claims. His virulent anti-Catholicism did not endear him to King Charles II, nor to his Catholic brother, James, who succeeded him in 1685. Burnet was implicated in Protestant plots to bar the latter from the throne and felt it wise, on James' accession, to flee abroad for safety. He only returned in 1688, the year

of the Glorious Revolution, to land at Torbay with his friend William of Orange, whose chaplain he was, to support his rival claims to the throne. He was duly rewarded by the gift of the bishopric of Salisbury and preached the Coronation sermon on behalf of the Whig bishops.

During the exile years, he wrote of his *Travels* (subsequently published), which is a good source of the feelings of this ecclesiastical figure towards fellow Christians on the continent. Not surprisingly, his attitudes were shaped by his hostility to the political aspirations of Catholicism and fear of powerful Catholic monarchs, particularly King Louis XIV of France. He desired to enlist the support of continental Protestants for the restoration of the protestant supremacy in England. In his earlier visit to Holland and France in 1664 he reflected that he had been brought up by his father to love liberty and moderation. In the *History of his Own Time*, the gentleness and toleration of Holland are contrasted with the autocracy and persecution he found in France, 'where nothing was free'. By the time of his return there in 1683, he detected not only a hardening of attitude towards the Papacy, but also against Protestants, whose days were numbered in an increasingly centralised and autocratic Catholic monarchy which could not tolerate dissent. He paints a picture of the poverty of many of its subjects. For him, the treatment of the poor was the keystone of political systems. He makes a comparison of the relative efforts of Rome and Geneva in their provision for the poor and concluded that Geneva was much better, contrasting the 'fruitfulness of Geneva and Switzerland with the barrenness which reigns over all Italy'. The Huguenots in France were what the Waldensians or Vaudois were in Savoy and Piedmont, a persecuted minority in need of support.

Burnet's views of the Papacy were shaped by what he called four 'ravenous and scandalous reigns of Popes'. These absolute monarchs feathered their families' nests. They spent their wealth on palaces and on adorning St Peter's, which Burnet criticised for over-decoration. The cupola was 'a gross indication of the idolatry of that Church'. As for relics, Burnet engages in the familiar Protestant diatribe against such things, heaping scorn on the piles of bones in the catacombs and churches.

Burnet sets himself up as an advocate and defender of toleration and the scourge of all forms of persecution. He describes in gory detail the troubles of French protestants hounded out at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 'stripped of all they had ... kept long from sleep, driven about from place to place ... starved, whipped and barbarously treated.' He describes scenes of the unconverted dead being allowed to be unburied and left 'to be devoured by wolves or dogs'. France's loss was Britain's gain as the economic and religious migrants moved north to strengthen our economy.

Burnet comments favourably on German cities where there was peaceful co-existence of Protestants and Catholics, places like Cologne, Dusseldorf and Mannheim, shining examples of 'liberty of conscience'. But pre-eminent was the United Provinces of the Netherlands, 'a pattern to the world' under the guidance of young Prince William, whose 'spirit of courage' was to put fresh

heart into the Protestant cause in Europe, 'the bulwark of Christendom' against the Catholic absolute monarchies secured by his accession to the thrones of England and Scotland in 1688.

Burnet emerges as a complex character, an advocate of toleration yet fiercely anti-Catholic, desiring a broad church yet harsh towards dissenters. A man of letters whose reading of history saw the nature of the English nation and its reformed Church as crucial for the preservation of liberties, not only in these islands but also as defenders of the liberties of oppressed protestants in Europe. In this respect, he was a child of his time and a successor to Cromwell in standing shoulder to shoulder with minorities in France and Italy. Burnet is perhaps typical of an established church desirous of supporting the freedom of peoples under Catholic subjugation, yet fearful, as the events in France proved, of democratic stirrings which could overthrow the status quo and stability from which it benefitted.

John Wesley

John Wesley was the product of the Enlightenment and not a revolutionary or social reformer. His social concern was one with his evangelism as he strove for social holiness as well as personal holiness of life. His desire was for the salvation of all, bodies minds and souls, in an Arminian spirit which some have reinterpreted as an egalitarian spirit in tune with the age of Revolutions in America and then France. But John Wesley was a high church Tory when it came to social and political freedom for all, as Jason Vickers has demonstrated in his recent book *Wesley: a Guide for the Perplexed*. It is comforting to find him emphasising the apparent contradictions between Wesley's theology (an Arminian gospel for all) and his praxis (a High Church Tory of the establishment church). So, for some, he is a reactionary conservative, and for others a progressive democrat. In the opening chapters, Vickers devotes space to the key questions: was Wesley loyal to the Church or a reluctant rebel? Was his movement a challenge to the establishment of his day? Was his Arminian theology a loyalist theology of joyful obedience or of the egalitarian freedom as a 'proto-liberal democrat'? Perhaps the best chapter is the one devoted to a discussion of his Honouring the King, including a critique of treatments of the theme by David Hempton and Ted Jennings, stressing the underlying principles from which Wesley argued rather than the commitments and actions which flowed from his ministry. Vickers makes the case for Wesley as a constitutionalist deeply committed to order and hierarchy rather than an individualistic liberal, closer to Burke than to Paine. The proto-Marxist liberation theologians who have made John Wesley their patron saint will find Vickers uncomfortable reading. Wesley is firmly embedded in the doctrine and liturgy of the Church of England, with a covenant theology of grace set in the context of constitutional rights guaranteed by the King in Parliament to whom Wesley owes his obedience as an enthusiastic supporter of the confessional state. To create conflicts between Church and State, Religion and Politics, God and the King, is to misrepresent Wesley.

John Turner, in his analysis of *The Rise of the Nonconformist Platform: Dissent, Methodism, the State and Politics 1791–1852*, traces the political leanings of post-Wesleyan Methodists. He concludes that the ‘Christian conservatism of Burke was more to the taste of many Methodists than the rationalism and doctrinaire acceptance of Jeffersonian ideals of liberty, equality and conscience’. And once we have begun to understand that, we can begin to understand the mixed legacy that the Wesleys left the Methodist movement, of social gospel radical activism yet deep political conservatism, which feared revolution and which encouraged most Methodists to defend the status quo or tinker with social institutions in an evolutionary way. The passionate opposition to slavery and also to the emergence of American independence, the work of the Strangers’ Friend societies as social welfare units outside the State and opposition to the New Poor Law, the professed loyalty to King and Country in defence of Methodist preaching and yet opposition to Catholic Emancipation and the widening of religious freedom to those who were not Protestant, were one and of a piece with the founder of Methodism who preached the Catholic Spirit and engaged in dialogue, and yet fuelled the incipient anti-Catholicism and Pan Evangelicalism that so characterised the 19th-century British response to events on the Continent as a mirror of its guilt and the challenge of a powerful Roman Catholic presence in its own backyard. The Irish Question was, of course, as David Hempton has demonstrated, the leitmotif of British politics in the period from 1815 to the First World War.

The Nineteenth Century – Methodism and Politics

‘Wherever you go now-a-days, the talk is of Italian politics, civil and ecclesiastical. What of Garibaldi?’

As my earlier detailed study of the British Methodist press and publications before 1861 has demonstrated, in the context of political and religious life there was an underlying sympathy for the peaceful process of Italian unification. And the leitmotif for this was the powerful fear of revolution and the resurgence of Catholicism. The presence of Italian exiles and of Cavour and Garibaldi’s visits to Britain helped to raise awareness of the issues and sensitivise British opinion in favour of Italian nationalism. Cavour’s visit in 1834 and his talks with Quakers and other nonconformists about social issues convinced him of the sense of the British model of society, based on security, administrative efficiency and a desire for reform in applying principles of social and religious freedom in evolutionary political democratisation. The extension of the Protestant Gospel would be an antidote to Catholic absolutism and the curtailment of religious and civil liberties. These were major factors in the decision to establish a Methodist presence in the peninsula. It was an emotional response from a growing Protestant, northern European power which feared the Ultramontanism of its southern neighbours. The British government supported the revolutions in Central Italy as a check against the French. As Mack Smith reflects, there was ‘widespread admiration for Garibaldi and for Mazzini’s idea of uniting the whole peninsula.’

Wesleyan Methodist sensitivity was easily aroused, as Hempton has shown in his study of Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750–1850 (1984). In such circles, John Milton’s poem *On the late massacre in Piedmont* was often quoted and learned by children at schools as a reminder of the dangers of tyranny and oppression of Catholicism, remembering especially the example of the Waldensians held before them:

.....their blood and ashes sow,
Oe’r all the Italian field, where still doth sway,
The triple tyrant

Methodist anti-Catholicism was not only a spur to social outreach work (such as the Strangers’ Friend societies, working in urban centres where there was a significant Irish and Catholic immigrant community) but also to foreign missions. Articles in the *Methodist Magazine* are full of references to missions set up to counteract the perceived world-wide conspiracy of the Jesuits. Nevertheless, there were other, more worthy motives, such as a genuine social concern in the process of evangelisation. Richard Watson, the Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary addressing its annual Anniversary meeting in 1833 said:

All our missionary enterprises, all our real attempts to spread Christianity abroad, do tend to increase our sympathies with the external circumstances of the oppressed and miserable of all lands.

This view was not, however, shared by all fellow Wesleyans, many of whose Tory sympathies recoiled from the democratic stirrings of the 1830s and 1840s. Government reaction to the Peterloo (Manchester) disturbances of 1817, the stirrings of Irish nationalism under Daniel O’Connell, and the formation of trade associations leading to the Chartist movement and labour union, was often supported by leading Methodists. Jabez Bunting, at the helm of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion for over 20 years, appealed to the Methodist anti-Catholic sentiment and the fears of democracy by those seeking respectability and stability for their religious status in society. It was he who reputedly said that ‘Methodism hates democracy as it hates sin.’ But he also espoused the concept of religious liberty for all in a letter of 1834:

I believe that a great majority of the most thoughtful and influential persons in our Connexion ... are friendly to the principle of an establishment, when connected with that of perfect religious liberty and protection to all denominations.

The period after Catholic Emancipation in 1829 saw the development of a popular Protestant backlash, fanned by Irish immigration accelerated in the 1840s by the Potato Famine and by the growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England as a result of the so-called Oxford Movement.

Nevertheless, the strong strand of a more Whiggish tradition within Methodism, particularly in its non-Wesleyan branches such as the Primitive and Free Methodist traditions, supporting religious and civil liberties remained. McLeod detects some social radicalism even among some Wesleyan Methodists, despite the essential Tory stance of the Connexion as a whole, in line with the

predominant social conservatism of mainstream nonconformity in an amalgam of political economy and evangelicalism. Most Methodists were mediators in social conflict, agents of social control, rather than the midwives of revolution on the barricades for freedom and liberty. Professor Spini recognised this feature of British religious life when he applauds ‘a Protestantism which is liberal, moral, philanthropic, zealous about popular education and keen on wider ecumenical collaboration ... such English Humanitarianism is as a blood brother’ in relation to Italian Protestant stirrings.

My study of the literature of the 1840s and 1850s has built up a picture of Rome as the enemy of truth and chief obstacle to the evangelisation of all peoples. In this climate, the political developments of the Italian peninsula, despite the setbacks of 1848–49 and the disappointment surrounding the supposedly ‘reforming Pope’ Pius IX, were watched and reported on with great interest in the religious as well as the political press. When Dr Dixon addressed the WMMS Anniversary meeting in 1849 and referred to the Waldensians, he ventured a rash prediction:

Who knows but that some of you young people may see a ‘Rome’ as a station on our Minutes?

He and others must have seemed surprised at the speed of change in the decade which followed.

I want briefly to sketch three of the main features of the response of the British Methodist press to the unfolding events leading up to the creation of the Kingdom of Italy, and to illustrate them with the experience of Italian exiles and those who visited Italy, demonstrating British support for a Methodist presence in this new theatre of Protestant missions, which this year celebrates 150 years of activity.

- It built on the Waldensian work which it had protected and nurtured and applauded.
- It fed off the popular anti-Catholicism of British society which warmed to the example of Waldensian witness as the main Protestant survival in a sea of error and superstition.
- It cautiously welcomed the political developments supporting the constitutional developments around monarchy rather than republic in the process of unification.

I will argue, in conclusion, that these responses to Italian unification and evangelisation were in line with the earlier strands of response to political developments by Burnet and Wesley.

[To be continued ...]

NB: the second part of Erica’s article on ‘Italy, the Crucifix and Europe’ will appear in the next issue.

AUGUSTO COMBA (1923–2009)



Augusto Comba was a good friend of our Committee, had great esteem for the work done for the Waldensians and the Waldensian Church by people who preceded us, such as Col Beckwith and Canon Gilly and above all was a great admirer of the free liberal society that was then and now the most valuable asset of the United Kingdom – and by extension to the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ world at large. In this, alongside with some rare ‘anglophiles’ such as Giorgio Spini, he cut an unusual and rather solitary figure in the Waldensian intellectual world which, on the other hand, seemed, and still seems, to lean towards France for political inspiration and toward Germany theologically.

Indeed, at least until not long ago, they seemed to consider the words ‘liberalism’ and ‘capitalism’ far more embarrassing and inappropriate than ‘marxism’ and ‘communism’.

Augusto was born in 1923 in Turin to a family of pastors and entrepreneurs and very young he enrolled in the Faculty of Theology. However he was soon called back to take charge of the family business. He eventually graduated in History, which was his great passion, especially the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe. On this he researched, wrote articles, pamphlets, books and taught for some years History of the Italian Risorgimento at Turin University. He was a great admirer of the great Italian thinker and patriot Giuseppe Mazzini and was drawn to study two not so widely explored aspects of Waldensian history: the role of its bourgeoisie and the links between the Italian Protestant world and Freemasonry. One thinks of the Mason Lord Shaftesbury using Masonic networks to smuggle BFBS [of which he was President] bibles. One of the first to campaign in favour of cremation – until recently illegal because of the rigid stance against it by the Church of Rome – he became one of the most famous and respected Masons, not only in Italy. This was due to the high moral figure he commanded and to his battles to keep the Society true to its aims and beliefs against the politically corrupt infiltrations that led to the infamous ‘rogue’ P2 Lodge, and because of his many publications on the subject. For his 80th birthday the Grand Orient gave him the highest honour, the ‘Giordano Bruno’.

Augusto was also a great contributor to Church life: he was organist and president of “Concistoro” in Turin and a lay preacher. An enthusiastic organiser of cultural events and conferences he is missed by everyone who knew him for his lucidity and precision as an academic, for his patience and kindness as a teacher and for his lovely disposition towards all his fellow human beings.

Erica Scropo

ALEC CARTER (1908–2010)



When, 23 years ago, I became Executive Secretary of the Waldensian Church Mission I knew a lot about the Waldensian Church, its history, its people, its outreach in Italy but nearly nothing about the Mission and even less about what I would be doing in my new role. Alec Carter was one the first people to greet and help me and his tall, imposing, amicable figure will always be in my memory, forever connected with my beginning in this glorious and noble Committee. His kind smile, his jolly attitude, his sense of humour together with his great gift in being extremely practical and in making everything seems so natural and easy even when it was not, made him the perfect Charity treasurer.

His advice was always full of wisdom and greatly respected: to me he was the symbol of the good Christian that does good deeds not because he wants to buy a place in Heaven nor out of duty but because that is the way he is and nothing makes him happier than giving for the work of the Lord.

He got involved in the Mission when his dear wife Audrey became Waldensian representative at Christ Church, Beckenham. They took part in several Waldensian trips to Italy, from the Waldensian Alpine Valleys to the South, making many friends for life. Eventually in 1983 he became Honorary Treasurer, a post that he kept until 1993. When he retired I couldn't believe he was the age he claimed: both Audrey and Alec looked so much younger!

Born in 1908 in Northwood he was the eldest of seven children; their father was a Police sergeant, Alec was a choirboy and at 11 won a scholarship at Bromley County Grammar School. When he went for his first (and only) job interview at Lloyds in London he was asked if he played any sports. 'Yes', he replied, 'cricket, right arm spin'. Their eyes lit up and the response was: 'Can you start on Monday?'

He met Audrey at Lloyds Sports Club and they married in 1937. At Lloyds he worked in various branches, eventually becoming what is now called 'Head of Human Resources'. He retired officially in 1968 but was asked to stay in various part-time capacities until 1990, after 66 years.

He joined Christ Church in Beckenham in 1958 and for over 50 years he engaged in what seemed a second career of involvement and service to the church and his congregation. He was familiar to many, first as a sideman and then as a churchwarden. He was a devoted and supportive husband and father. We are all grateful for the privilege of knowing him.

Best wishes to Audrey who will be 99 in September!

ES

Book review

Prescot Stephens (edited by Joy Stephens). *Laughing through clouds: an anthology of travel writing and short stories*. CAP, 2009.

There can be few writers who, looking back over the writing that has accompanied their lives, are not sometimes startled that they themselves actually wrote those words, but also that they show a pattern emerging of which they were often little aware at the time.

For the reader, too, this book reveals the writer and his life, while the different genres, the short stories, travel writing and poetry, evoke one whose life was informed by that other work of many genres: the Bible, a book which is constantly questioning our assumptions. Indeed it is a collections of books whose common theme is often one that poses us more questions than it offers pat answers.

A concerned young ordinand once asked Bishop Westcott: 'So you mean that there might be two sides to this question?' The founder of Westcott House in Cambridge replied: 'I usually find that there are at least six sides to any question!' Prescot Stephens' writings, parables even, show us this stony path, like the one that leads after a short walk of only two days to mission work with which Prescot's daughter Joy and her husband Duane have been transforming Nepalese lives. Yet 'A Bridge over the Kali-Gandaki' explores the potential mixed blessings of modernity. In 'Ground Elder', the poet sees himself as a fallen Adam, unable to dig out the ineradicably serpentine weed's roots.

Born in Canada, with a childhood in California and after schooling in England, Prescot Stephens travelled in Europe and the Middle East before RAF service as a bomber pilot in North Africa, Italy and over Germany, and his stories are witness to the poignant dilemma of one who knew the people he was bombing, as in the title short story, 'Laughing through Clouds': 'He remembered the wartime slogan: "Freedom is in peril; defend it with all your might". "One can defend freedom", he said speaking softly, "and lose one's soul – or part of it. One gets sucked into violence; violence against one's own nature".'

Prescot's attempts to love his enemy are all the more remarkable in one whose mother was a Christian Jew, and his finely observed story, 'Jacob's Blessing', blends Old Testament strands of exile and tribal obligations with the shadow of the Shoah. Indeed, Prescot's own father, the Quiet Captain, so revered by the Waldensians, used to tour England along with his mother, illustrating the origins of Christ's earthly teaching in the everyday working life in Palestine.

Prescot Stephens, in this perceptive, allusive but challenging collection, reveals himself to be, while self-effacing, yet very much his own man, and one who has revealed in his tales of war and peace, of the City, the African savannah and the Himalayas, that God's presence is revealed wherever we pursue our questioning.

RN

**WALDENSIAN CHURCH MISSIONS, VAUDOIS PASTORS FUND
& CANON ARMSTRONG BEQUEST - SUMMARY ACCOUNTS**

INCOME	2009		2010
Churches	320.51		820.51
Individual Donations	773.50		972.50
Loan			500.00
Tax Refund	193.21		190.39
AGM	110.00		
		1397.22	2483.40
Vaudois Clergy Trust	1317.21		1317.21
Publications	381.50		408.96
Dividend & Interest	3498.29		3493.91
		<u>5197.00</u>	<u>5220.08</u>
TOTAL		6594.22	7703.48
EXPENDITURE			
Payments to Italy			
Student			6253.46
Riesi	2500.00		
Sicily Training Course	1000.00		
Radio Beckwith	500.00		
Flood Relief	50.00		
		4050.00	6253.46
Review	950.00		428.00
Sec/Post/Stationery	2719.05		2349.01
Publications	312.86		
Sundries	156.60		90.35
		<u>4138.51</u>	<u>2867.36</u>
TOTAL		8188.51	9120.82
NET EXPEND		-1594.29	
Opening Bank Balance	5214.68		3620.39
Income	6594.22		7703.48
Expenditure	<u>-8188.51</u>		<u>-9120.82</u>
Closing Bank Balance	3620.39		2203.05

NOTES

Income - Churches - Includes £500 donation from URC towards student costs.

Income - Loan- this is from an anonymous private donor. No interest is payable and there is no fixed repayment arrangement.

Expenditure - Review and Stat/Post - 2 editions paid for in 2009, only one in 2010.

Government gives to Waldenses

Too good to be true? No! For every donation which you make to the Waldensian Church Missions, the Government will add a further 28%, providing you are a tax-payer.

Since 5 April 2000 the new Gift Aid scheme has replaced Deeds of Covenant and the process is much simpler. This applies to all donations of any size or frequency. Thus a gift of only £1 made once will be increased by 28% as will a monthly donation of £100.

All that is required is for the donor to complete a simple declaration in the form given below and to forward this to the Treasurer whose address is on the inside of the back page. Once this form has been completed it covers all future donations by the same person. Unlike Deeds of Covenant, you are not committed to regular giving for a number of years.

Some of you have already completed such a form, but for those who have not, I would urge you to consider seriously this opportunity for the Waldensian Church Missions to benefit from the Government's generosity, but more importantly, to enable our giving to our friends in Italy to be increased.



WALDENSIAN CHURCH MISSIONS

Registered Charity No. 277255

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Signature of donor Date

The Waldensian Church

It is the native Protestant Church of Italy whose origins pre-date the Reformation. It arose from an evangelical movement founded in the 12th century by Waldo, a rich merchant from Lyon, who was to inspire St Francis: he gave all away to the poor and started preaching the Gospel in the vernacular, which caused conflict with the Papacy. Travelling in pairs the Waldensian itinerant preachers, having learnt the Scriptures by heart, set off to found underground communities from Sicily to Russia. The ensuing persecution by the Inquisition drove them into their mountain fastness in the Alpine Valleys of northwest Italy, where they remain in what are still called the Waldensian Valleys. At their Synod in 1532 they voted to join the Genevan Reformation, a decision that brought even more persecution upon this exposed outpost of Protestantism. Their sufferings were recorded in Milton's famous sonnet "On The Late Massacre in Piedmont". Their survival down to the present has been a remarkable testament of faith.

The Waldensian community was emancipated in 1848, but did not reach full freedom until 1984. Since the Italian unification in 1860 they have established churches throughout Italy and, following emigration, in the USA, Argentina and Uruguay. In 1979 the Italian Methodist Church combined with them and they hold a common annual Synod, which is the controlling authority of the Church and takes place in Torre Pellice. The Churches of Rio de la Plata have their own Synod, Board and Moderator.

The 60 parishes have founded 120 outreach activities ranging from schools, hospitals, children's and old people's homes, radio stations, and ecumenical community centres, often catering for the needs of the most deprived and mafia-ridden parts of Italy, especially the disadvantaged South and the new immigrant communities.

The Waldensian Church has a theological college in Rome, a publishing house, Claudiana, and a weekly paper, *Riforma*.

The English Committee of the Waldensian Church Missions

This was founded in 1825 as a support group for the Waldensian Church in Italy. Since 1979 its finances, together with those of the Vaudois Pastors Fund, have been administered by Trustees under the terms of the Scheme drawn up by the Charity Commission and dated 18 January that year.

The Committee seek to arouse interest and financial support in England and Wales for the Waldensian Church. Twice yearly we publish a *Waldensian Review* and occasionally other literature. We also arrange meetings for Waldensian pastors visiting this country and support students of Theology who want to spend the compulsory "year abroad" studying in this country.

There are similar Waldensian support groups in Scotland, Ireland, USA and in various European countries.

The English Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions

Established 1825

President: Mr Prescot Stephens, 49 Byron Court, Stockbridge Road, Chichester PO19 8ES.

Chairman: The Rev. Tim Macquiban, 37 Maids Causeway, Cambridge CB5 8DE. Telephone 01223-352324, email minister@wesleycam.org.uk

Executive Secretary: Erica Scropo Newbury, 85 St Andrew’s Road, Cambridge CB4 1DH. Telephone 01223-315753, email ericascropo@hotmail.com

Hon. Treasurer: Mr Mark Stephens, 5 Woodgate Close, Woodgate, Chichester PO20 3TA. Telephone 01243-545877, email stephens.ml@tiscali.co.uk

The Scottish Waldensian Missions Aid Society

Chairman: Revd Ian Douglas, 49 Northesk Road, Montrose, Angus DD10 8TZ, Scotland.

Secretary and Treasurer: Mr D.A. Lamb, SSC, 36 Liberton Drive, Edinburgh EH16 6NN, Scotland. Telephone 0131-664-3059

The Irish Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions

Chairman: The Rev. Robert Dunlop, The Manse, Brannocktown, Co. Kildare, Republic of Ireland.

Convener: The Rev. J.S.B. Drennan BD, 92 North Circular Road, Belfast BT14 6TN, Northern Ireland.

Treasurer: Mr Derek Seymour, ‘Tanglewood’, Pottery Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Republic of Ireland. Telephone 01-2850776

The Waldensian Review is sent twice a year to those who are interested in the Waldensian church in Italy, its history and present-day work and witness.

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