

- technically a Particular Baptist institution it was not called a 'Baptist' church, since it aimed to accept newcomers into 'full and equal brotherhood without baptismal requirement, simply by being evangelical believers'. See Rimmington, 'Victoria Road Church ...', 74-6. The term 'Free Church', rather than 'Nonconformist Church' reflected a growing concern outside the Establishment for a more positive image. It was used initially at the Free Church Congress in Manchester. J. Munson, *The Nonconformists*, 1991, 169.
- 44 T.S.H. Elwyn, *The Northamptonshire Baptist Association*, 1964, 63.
- 45 LRO/N/B/154/2, 22 April 1896.
- 46 Payne, *Free Church Tradition*, 123.
- 47 Thompson, *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*, 15.
- 48 *ibid.*, 238.
- 49 F.M.W. Harrison, *It all began here: The story of the East Midlands Baptist Association*, 1986, 75.
- 50 *ibid.*, 87-8.
- 51 J.A. Coldwell and P. Grange, *The First Hundred Years of Kirby Muxloe Free Church 1883-1983*, Leicester 1983, 6-7.
- 52 *EMBA Minutes and Reports*, 1899, 15.
- 53 *EMBA Yearbook*, 1909, 21.
- 54 *ibid.*, 1914, 26.
- 55 Anon., 'The Rise and Progress of the General Baptist cause in this village'. This is undoubtedly the history of the cause in Thurlaston that Richard Barton was deputed by the church meeting to 'prepare ... for printing and ascertain the price' in 1864. (See LRO/N/B/330/1, 26 December 1864). Copy supplied by H.E. Barton.
- 56 LRO/N/B/154/2, 22 April 1896.
- 57 The Revd Charles Short, *The best means of overtaking the religious destitution of our large towns*. Address at Autumnal Session of the Baptist Union in Leicester, 6-7 October 1869. Published as a pamphlet, LRO Pamphlets 33.
- 58 Quoted from *The Condition of England in Wickham, Church and People...*, 179-180. See also Sellers, *Nineteenth Century Nonconformity*, 47-8. Sellers refers to the 'increasingly home-orientated direction of the life of the suburbs ... where the high-walled villas led in the cultivation of domestic privacy'.
- 59 See, for instance, G.T. Rimmington, *Education, Politics and Society in Leicester 1833-1903*, Hantsport, N.S., Canada, 1978, chapters 4 and 5.
- 60 LRO/N/B/LBA/26, 8-10 June 1903.
- 61 *Leicester Melbourne Hall Magazine*, June 1907.
- 62 Harrison, *It all began here*, 74.
- 63 *ibid.*, 88.
- 64 LRO/N/B/LBA/26 (EMBA minutes), 13-15 June 1904.
- 65 G.T. Rimmington, 'Leicestershire School Boards 1871-1903', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, LII, 1976-7, 53.
- 66 LRO/N/B/LBA/26, *passim*.
- 67 See Rimmington, *Education, Politics and Society...*, chapter 7, for details of passive resistance in Leicester.
- 68 Wickham, *Church and People...*, 179.

**GERALD T. RIMMINGTON** was Professor of Education at Mount Allison University, Canada, until 1981, when called to serve in the Anglican ministry, retiring as Rector of Barwell, Leicestershire, in 1995

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**CUMULATIVE INDEX:** The Cumulative Index covering *Baptist Quarterly* volumes 11-20 is now available on disc from the Treasurer, price £10-00.

If members would like to receive a copy of the ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, as presented at the Annual Meeting in July, these are available from the Treasurer.

Treasurer: Revd T.S.H. Elwyn, 28 Dowthorpe Hill, Earls Barton, Northants, NN6 0PB.

- Urwick, *Nonconformity*, p.20).
- 4 W. Urwick, *Nonconformity in Hertfordshire*, 1884, p.36.
  - 5 Lambeth Palace Library, MS 943 p.253.
  - 6 Michael Watts, *The Dissenters*, Vol.1, 1978, pp.7ff.
  - 7 O.E. Wright, *Baptists in Berkhamsted: Berkhamsted Baptist Chapel*, 1990.
  - 8 *Kensworth Church Book*, with transcript by H.G. Tibbutt, Hertfordshire Record Office: Off Acc.1162; Item 3831 (original), 3831A (transcript).
  - 9 Hertfordshire Record Office: Archive ASA 21/1.
  - 10 Hertfordshire Record Office: *Acta of the Archdeaconsry of St Albans for the year 1669*, Archive ASA 7/33.
  - 11 W.T. Whitney, 'Edward Harrison of Petty France', *BQ* 7, 1934-5, pp.214-20.
  - 12 ed. B.R. White, *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660: Part 3: The Abingdon Association*, 1974, pp.127, 181.
  - 13 *Kensworth Church Book*, page 15, Tibbutt transcript
  - 14 John Evans, *List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers 1715-1729*, p.49, in Dr Williams's Library.

**D.G. TURNER** *Member of Dagnall Street Baptist Church, St Albans, since 1955, and former deacon and church secretary; began serious historical studies with the Open University and the University of Hertfordshire on retiring from the Civil Service in 1980*

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**Yona Pusey**, *European Baptist Women's Union: our story 1948-1998*, EBWU 1998, pb 80pp, black and white illustrations, £3-00.  
**Hilde Sayers**, *The Transition from the old to the new Europe*, EBWU 1998, pb 26pp, colour illustrations, £1-75. Both available from Mrs Pusey, 50 Whitlow, Saundersfoot, SA69 9AE.

Yona Pusey, Secretary of the EBWU 1987-98 and now President, provides a useful summary history of work originating in post-war western Europe and gradually extending into central and eastern Europe and the Middle East. The record drawn from minutes is briefly amplified by personal memories, giving a flavour of cross-cultural work across the continent. Seven of the eleven past presidents contribute brief reflections. Hilde Sayers (successively EBWU treasurer, vice-president and president 1982-98) journeyed extensively in Eastern Europe. She gives a fast-moving overview of travels, often uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous, as an ambassador of the gospel, a champion of human rights, and bringer of practical aid, pausing briefly to offer pointers for reflection. This is not a history, rather a taste of history in the making. At a time when, in England at least, 'traditional' women's work is less prominent, it is no bad thing to be reminded of those who have expended less energy on banging the feminist drum than on building relationships and doing good in Christ's name.

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The Revd Anthony Cross was awarded the PhD degree from the University of Keele in July. His dissertation was on 'The theology and practice of baptism amongst British Baptists, 1900-1996'.

Jörg Swoboda with Richard V. Pierard (ed.), *The Revolution of the Candles: Christians in the Revolution of the German Democratic Republic*, Mercer University Press, 1996, pp.xxxii + 203.

Of all the changes which swept through eastern Europe in late 1989, none was more dramatic than the *Wende* in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The drama was heightened by the fact that, some acts of police brutality apart, it was almost entirely non-violent. Who of us will ever forget our own sense of disbelief and exultation on the night of 9 November 1989 when the Berlin Wall was opened and Germans on both sides of that dividing wall of partition literally embraced each other amid laughter and tears?

This book is an abridged version of the original German edition written in 1990 by Jörg Swoboda, then on the staff of the East German Baptist Seminary at Buckow and one of the Baptists most fully involved in the countless prayer-services and demonstrations for peaceful change. It is edited by Richard Pierard, who as a scholar from the USA had the benefit of close contact with the church scene in the GDR for a number of years, and translated by Edwin P. Arnold. Of course, it is a pity that it took six years for this account to appear in English, and it is now a commonplace to observe that the euphoria of 1989-90 has been followed by a sober struggle with hard realities and some disillusionment. But it still makes compelling reading, particularly the eye-witness accounts, diary extracts and contemporary sermons and prayers from people caught up in those tumultuous events in which hopes and fears, disbelief and joy, vied for the upper hand daily, almost hourly. This in itself makes it a highly important contribution not only to the general history of our times, but to Baptist history in particular, for in this modern Acts of the Apostles are stories of a number of Baptist women and men who at great risk and cost witnessed to the truth. We can and should be proud of people like Regina and Frank Sensel, Ingrid Ebert, Edgar Leopold, Siegfried Holtz and Jörg Swoboda himself - and his then twelve-year-old son Martin. Christian Wolf, the senior member on the Buckow Seminary staff, contributes an essay reflecting on the *Wende* which should be required reading for any student of the relationship of faith to the ambiguities of social and political change. Pierard and Arnold offer their own helpful insights as observers from abroad.

Despite the passage of time this reviewer, who himself visited the GDR and had a number of contacts with Baptists and other Protestants there for over a decade prior to 1989, finds that the *Wende* and the churches' involvement in it still pose major questions for us. The crucial role of the churches in the GDR was to provide the space for dialogue between the swelling ranks of protestors and the increasingly discredited political leadership - between those who on the streets cried out 'We are the people!' and those who still claimed, in the name of Marxist-Leninism, to be leading and protecting 'the people'. Without the formation of the 'Round Tables' at local and national level it is very doubtful if the change would have been peaceful, and without the courageous initiative of many church leaders those Round Tables could not have been formed. Equally, however, it is doubtful whether those initiatives could have been taken, if prior to 1989 those leaders had not tried to follow the difficult line of 'critical solidarity' or 'being the church within socialism', eschewing both sheer opposition to

the state and pious conformism. Trying to follow that line had brought criticism, not least from some circles in the west who saw it only as 'compromise', but in late 1989 it bore fruit.

A second observation is to note a paradox which still seems to be unresolved. There can be no doubt that one of the chief factors for change in the GDR, and leading eventually to its downfall, was the increasing and soon massive exodus of people to the west via Hungary and other east European countries. One of the merits of this book is that it exposes the acute tensions this generated within the church communities, especially at local congregational level. Most of those who spoke and worked for change in late 1989 believed it was wrong to emigrate: Christians had a vocation to stay, amid all the frustrations and dangers, and bear their witness to Christ, to truth and justice. But would change have happened without that exodus?

Or perhaps the question should rather be, what is the relation between the changes which were being called for from within the GDR in late 1989, and those which did eventually occur? The Christian voices recorded in this book were for a new society in the GDR, a *truly* democratic order where government listened to and served the people, not vice versa. Only relatively late in the day was all this overtaken by the call for unification with the Federal Republic. Perhaps this was inevitable, but it should not be forgotten that the voices which spoke out in the *Wende* were those of an idealism which did not necessarily wish to throw overboard certain principles of social order which had been cherished by many people in the GDR though all too often denied in practice by those in power. Where has that idealism gone in the 'new Europe'? To ask that question is itself reason for listening again to the voices of 1989 recorded here.

**KEITH CLEMENTS** *General Secretary, Conference of European Churches*

*The Church Book of Tunbridge Wells* transcribed, edited & published by Leonard J. Maguire, 1998, viii + 146pp. Private publication: Mr L.J. Maguire, c/o The General Baptist Assembly, 14 Gordon Square, LONDON. WC1H 0AG.

Better known as Speldhurst and Pembury General Baptist church, sections from the church book have been published previously but here the manuscript is transcribed in its entirety. Covering 1647 to 1836 (most entries 1686-1741), it is a collection of church meeting records, exchanges between churches and Association and miscellaneous documents dealing with trusts and land.

The impression inevitably tends towards a community dominated by discipline, as the majority of entries involve matters of censure. There is a pastoral quality to this, to reclaim the offender in a restored relationship rather than create an institution of moral perfection. Judgements were not confined to matters spiritual: concerns deserving censure included wife beating and abuse of apprentices. Lack of probity in business merited warnings and one brother was admonished for lobbying in favour of local incorporation. We see the tensions within a small and largely 'clannish' community as members are drawn to 'marry out' or absent themselves from worship. Sexual relationships outside marriage, drunkenness, lying and swearing required repentance;

horse racing, cricket and playing cards were condemned. With a tender heart and often much patience, the church felt the need to intervene between members in business or personal dispute, meeting with mixed success at reconciliation.

Discipline ought not obscure the context of a community sustaining word and ordinances in worship. Leaders were chosen. Members offered financial support voluntarily. The church was active in the alleviation of hardship - a farmer was recompensed for his storm-damaged barn, payments were made towards rent and child-rearing, a horse was purchased for a working man and distribution was made to poor people. Even the preacher received free bread and beer after service. Wider church concerns emerge in references to a dispute over the Lord's Prayer, to foot washing and eating meat with blood, to dealing with errant leaders, Association-related letters and much more in the county and beyond.

The members are listed, and the editor has provided a useful summary of contents and an index.

### STEPHEN COPSON

**Arthur Thompson**, *Living Stones: A History of Vernon Baptist Church, King's Cross*, 1996, 142pp, £5-50 inc.p&p, from Mrs E. Davis, 10 Yerbury Road, London N19 4RL (cheques payable to 'Vernon Baptist Church').

In 1860 Standen Pearce, formerly pastor of Silver Street, Taunton, was appointed pastor of Spencer Place, Goswell Road, the fellowship of which he was then a member. He was not altogether happy with Strict Baptist doctrines and in 1861 he left Spencer Place with a dozen members and rented the then empty Vernon Baptist Chapel. Despite his efforts, only a quarter's rent was paid and, having received no stipend, Pearce resigned in 1863 and returned to his native Somerset. The fellowship appealed to C.H. Spurgeon for help in finding a new pastor. He recommended an eighteen-year-old student at the Pastors' College. Spurgeon called him 'Young Strikealight': his real name was C.B. Sawday and he served the church until 1888 when he accepted a call to Melbourne Hall, Leicester. When the church knew that Sawday was leaving, they again approached Spurgeon who recommended another former student, J.T. Mateer, who had been an evangelist. This was important to the church as they were not anxious to draw a man from a pastorate where he was happy. During the later part of his ministry he suffered from ill health and in February 1896 he announced that because of his health he intended to go to Australia. However, he did not formally resign the pastorate until he had accepted a call from a Baptist Chapel near Melbourne, Australia. This time there was no C.H. Spurgeon to recommend a successor to the church. Immediately after Mateer left, three Baptist ministers all wrote recommending the Revd D.H. Moore, minister of Barking Baptist Church. There seems to have been no invitation to preach with a view to the pastorate. At the church meeting several members spoke of the great spiritual benefit they had derived from hearing Mr Moore at a Christian Endeavour Meeting and at an Open Air Service. The Vernon deacons made contact with the Barking deacons and the invitation came with their agreement. Some Vernon deacons

went to hear Mr Moore preach at Barking Tabernacle. He wrote to say that he would accept the invitation if it were unanimous. Such was indeed the case and he commenced his ministry in October 1896.

Mr Moore's concern for outreach to the poor and needy in the area led to the appointment of a deaconess who was paid £20 per annum compared with the minister's stipend of £250. Sister Dora (Hill), who served 1901-21, was the first deaconess and eventually became Moore's second wife. Often the church had more than one deaconess, the last completing her work in 1972.

In 1908 the church acquired the chapel lease: it fell to Moore to raise the £5,000 needed (equivalent to £1,000,000 today). The church was concerned with the time the pastor would have to spend raising this sum and so appointed an honorary assistant pastor. By 1911 Moore, suffering from strain, was given three months leave of absence. He led the church through the difficult years of the First World War but in 1921, following the unexpected death of his first wife in 1920, he was given leave of absence for one year to accompany his missionary son to India and engage in evangelistic work in Australia and New Zealand. In October 1922 he offered to resign the pastorate or to return to England if that were the church's wish. The deacons felt that, in view of the success of his work in Australia, he should remain there, but the deacons' recommendation that his resignation should be accepted did not attain the required two-third's majority. The result was cabled to Moore who promptly resigned. The Revd J.H. Willis Humphreys, serving as interim pastor on Moore's recommendation, was appointed pastor so there was no interregnum but the district teemed with derelict churches with the possibility of Vernon becoming another of them. Humphreys was the man to inspire the fellowship during the difficult inter-war period. The chapel was rebuilt after the District Surveyor had served a Dangerous Structure Notice. Humphreys was 68 at the outbreak of war and the church called a Spurgeon's College student, J. Leonard Lane, to be assistant minister and eventual successor.

It was only when Lane left in 1957 that the Metropolitan Area Superintendent was involved for the first time in making nominations for the vacant pastorate. Lane was followed by Henry Bryant (1959-79) and Humphrey Vellacott (1984-9). Arthur Thompson, having retired as Metropolitan Area Superintendent in 1989, became part-time Senior Minister, with Timothy Burns as full-time assistant (1990-95).

Vernon has played a significant role in the training of ministers. A number of men in the post-war years spent a year working at the church prior to entering Spurgeon's College. In the period 1977-84 a number of Spurgeon's students served as student assistants or student pastors. The author wryly remarks that 'they brought their own ideas for work among the young people. Generally, they started to run projects which flourished for a time, but then faded'.

In 1988 there were discussions about the possible development of the church site for a joint headquarters of the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society. Outline planning permission was obtained for a five-floor building, with the church on the first floor. After careful consideration the church decided not to proceed. Perhaps the greatest concern was that the church would be lost in the larger suite of buildings and people in the neighbourhood would not be aware of the existence of a Baptist Church

in Vernon Square. The King's Cross area has changed dramatically but, in the words of the author, 'Vernon Baptist Church needs to continue the ministry of gospel preaching, fervent praying and unconditional love'.

Thompson also gives information about the use of Vernon Chapel prior to 1860. It had been built and largely financed by the Revd Owen Clarke. Unfortunately, following his death, the Chapel was deemed to be part of his estate and the congregation was evicted. The pastor at the time was the Revd Samuel Wills (not 'Wells' as stated by Thompson).

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

**Zaqueu Moreira de Oliveira**, *Liberdade e Exclusivismo (Freedom and Separatism: Studies concerning the English Baptists)*, Horizontal Editora, Rio de Janeiro, and the Baptist Theological Seminary of North Brazil, Recife, 1997.

A review of a book concerning English Baptists, published in Brazil and written in Portuguese, may not immediately seem particularly relevant to the reader of this journal. This review is offered on two grounds: first, the clear importance of the *Baptist Quarterly* in the writing of the book, and second, the importance of the book in the development of Brazilian Baptist thinking concerning their identity.

The debt which the author, who is the Rector of the Baptist Seminary in Recife, owes to the *Baptist Quarterly* (rather pedantically usually referred to in full as 'The Baptist Quarterly, incorporating the transactions of the Baptist Historical Society') is shown by the listing of no less than twenty-three editions in the bibliography, in addition to frequent footnotes in the text.

The need for such a book is well illustrated by Pastor Darci Dusilek, President of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, in a foreword: 'I believe that *Freedom and Separatism* comes at an opportune moment in the sense of helping to establish the historical parameters of our Baptist Identity, which latterly is extremely anaemic, due to the state of historical and theological undernourishment of our people. In this sense this book is a compound of vitamin and protein.'

The first Brazilian Baptist Church was founded in Salvador in 1880 by two missionary couples from the Southern Baptist Convention. From that time onwards Brazilian Baptist thinking was strongly influenced by Landmarkism. It was only after the beginning of BMS work in Brazil in 1952 that a broader thinking was brought to bear upon the growing church. But as Dr Oliveira says, 'The great majority of our people (about 95%) know virtually nothing of our history - and this including the pastors and leaders of our denomination. About the English Baptists, from which we spring through the United States of North America, the ignorance is even greater' (p.13). He declares, 'if we do not know our origin, our future will become lost in obscurity' (p.14), and so for Brazilian Baptists 'it is essential that the adherence to the teaching of the Word of God, which inspired John Smyth and Thomas Helwys to attempt to re-establish the model of the New Testament church'

should be their motivation. He concludes his Introduction with the wish that 'we may be able to rediscover our identity, so that we may know from where we come and where we will be going'. 'The endeavour of the author is to make better known the origin and contribution of the English Baptists, in the knowledge that it was this people called baptist who, in spite of the sectarian mentality of many, spread the love of freedom throughout the entire world, to the point of becoming the pioneer group initiating a new period of worldwide evangelism and missionary action' (p.23).

He then offers three essays. The first deals with the life and writings of Thomas Helwys, 'this great man of God, who with great courage, to the point of being thrown in prison, where he died, led a small group, which later developed, becoming one of the greatest evangelical denominations in the world ... he was the first to defend in a published work religious freedom ... in addition the germ of a missionary vision is to be seen in Helwys, in his anxiety to transmit to the English people, the message of freedom, which for him was the truth of the Word of God'.

The second essay deals with religious freedom in its widest sense, 'this principal which characterized the Baptists, and which had in Smyth the first to defend it through an unpublished confession of faith'. The third essay is in many ways the most important and certainly, from the Brazilian Baptist viewpoint, the most controversial, in that it deals with the modern ecumenical movement, 'which has so affected Protestants from the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century'. Dr Oliveira sets out for Brazilian Baptists, who are largely opposed to all things ecumenical, the position of English Baptists, considering both the official position of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and 'the unofficial declarations of leaders of England [*sic!*] on this subject ...'. The author shows himself well briefed on the current English Baptist position, noting the current tendency of the English churches, which he obviously approves, towards the evangelical position, 'reaching as much as 80% among Baptists'. 'This tendency,' he comments, 'is demonstrated in the choice of leadership within the Baptist Union, including that of General Director of the Baptist Missionary Society, Alistair Brown' (p.171). Nevertheless, he appreciates that the growing evangelicalism of English Baptists has in no way weakened the position of the denomination towards the ecumenical movement, which 'continues to be that of participation ... in other words, the sympathetic slogan remains "unity in diversity"' (p.171).

In his concluding chapter, 'Final Considerations', Dr Oliveira begins to apply the principles of Freedom and Separation to the history of Brazil and the witness of Brazilian Baptists. The author, who received his doctorate from the Fort Worth Seminary in 1971 for a thesis on 'The Persecution of Brazilian Baptists and Its Influence on Their Development', is clearly well able to do this. He warns Brazilian Baptists of the danger that the intolerance to which they have in the past themselves been subject 'has left its influence in Baptist practice, when sectarian separation creates intolerant attitudes, which are assumed by some who exercise positions of



authority within the denominational structure. When this happens, the theory of liberty persists, but the practice is placed in danger, because there is the abandonment of that fine principle which the ancestors of our denomination so elevated and valued' (p.178). So Dr Oliveira urges the Brazilian Baptist denomination that 'this exaggerated separation give place to dialogue, without any compromise of our denominational identity'.

While there are matters with which we might wish to take issue, Dr Oliveira deserves our congratulations on the production of this study, which may itself prove to be a landmark in Brazilian Baptist thinking.

### E.J. CLARKE

**Donald E. Meek**, *The Scottish Highlands: The Churches and Gaelic Culture*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1996, viii + 69pp, ISBN 2-8254-1204-X. £3-75.

The author, the Professor of Celtic at the University of Aberdeen, is also the son of a Baptist minister on the island of Tiree. His commitment to the Christian faith, alongside his dedication to the cause of the Celtic languages, informs his case-study in the World Council of Churches pamphlet series on Gospel and Cultures. Taking the whole history of Christianity in the Highlands of Scotland for his field, he considers the relationship between evangelistic enterprise and the interests of a native tongue. Much academic study, together with a large body of imaginative literature, takes it for granted that the churches were inexorably hostile to Gaelic and the culture of the ceilidh house that it represented. While admitting that the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (founded in 1709) tried to suppress the language, Donald Meek shows that the relationship was more complex. There was in fact an 'interactive tension' between Protestantism and Gaelic culture (p.58). The Evangelical movement made the language a vehicle for its message and so did a great deal to create the contemporary form taken by its cultural expressions; on the other hand, the religious movement promoted a spirit of separation from the world that was not auspicious for the welfare of traditional folkways. The booklet includes suggestive incidental remarks such as that nineteenth-century Baptists were like Columba in his missionary strategy and that Bunyan was the most popular author in mid-nineteenth-century Gaeldom. These observations whet the appetite for more and it is good to know that the author intends to produce larger studies in the area. They will be important for understanding not only the Highlands but also the broader relationship between religion and culture. Meanwhile this pamphlet is an illuminating overview of the issues.

**D.W. BEBBINGTON**, *University of Stirling*