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The First Century of *The Churchman*¹

JOHN WOLFFE

In October 1879 *The Churchman*, which claimed to be 'commenced out of a single desire to promote the glory of God', first appeared.² Although there have been significant changes in the character of the periodical during its history it has now maintained unbroken publication for over a century, as a monthly until 1920 and as a quarterly thereafter. This achievement is not only intrinsically worthy of a commemorative article, but indicates that *The Churchman* is an important and largely untapped source for the history of Evangelicalism within the Church of England during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³ This article thus aims to provide a brief account of the magazine's own development and to relate this to the wider context of the position of Anglican Evangelicalism in the Church and nation.

The discernment of historical turning points is always a hazardous undertaking, but when the attempt is made, it can be concluded that the late 1870s were marked by more significant changes than other more instantly remembered phases in British history. When *The Churchman* began publication Disraeli's Conservative Government had been in office for nearly six years, but within six months it had suffered a crushing General Election defeat and Disraeli's own death a year after this removed one of the giants of the mid-Victorian political scene. In the month after *The Churchman*'s first appearance Gladstone initiated his famous Midlothian campaign, presenting to the electorate a classic indictment of allegedly imperialist foreign policies.

In economic and social life, too, 1879 was a noteworthy year. The slump which ended a quarter-century of rapid expansion had begun in 1875, but reached the bottom of the trough four years later when the trade union figure for unemployment was 11.4%.⁴ Recovery came gradually but growth remained sluggish for much of the remainder of the century. Depression was associated with two more long term trends of great significance. First, it was in the two decades after 1879 that Germany was able to overtake Britain in economic leadership of the world. Secondly, the relatively severe impact of the slump on agriculture seriously weakened the economic base of the landed aristocracy whose hold on political and social power had survived the early stages of industrialization and the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1885, but now looked increasingly vulnerable. The decisive

shift from a rural agricultural society to an urban industrial one was also evident in the continuing rapid growth of population, which reached 25.97 million in England and Wales in 1881. By 1891 53.5% of the population inhabited towns with a population of more than 20,000 and one person in seven lived in London.⁵ The political effects of these developments included a shift in the basis of support for the Conservative Party from the landed interest to commerce and industry⁶ and the emergence of the Labour Party at the turn of the century.

Such changes had profound implications for the Church of England which, particularly after the Third Reform Act of 1884–5, had to respond to a substantially changed political climate and a society in which the need for active ministry in the towns became ever more pressing. One work on the mid-Victorian Church sees the archbishopate of Tait from 1868 to 1882 as marking the end of a plateau of influence in national life and the beginning of substantial decline.⁷ Such a view should not be accepted in simplistic terms. The ability of the Church to stave off disestablishment in Wales until after the First World War and in England indefinitely was testimony to its continuing institutional vigour. At the grass roots numbers of Easter Day communicants continued to rise both absolutely and as a proportion of population until 1914,⁸ although as this figure may be as much a measure of changing devotional practice as of active commitment it should be treated with caution. Nevertheless the Church showed a considerable capacity to adapt to the urbanized Britain of the later nineteenth century: over a thousand new churches were built between 1881 and 1901⁹ and the growth of population was reflected in the foundation of new bishoprics at St. Albans and Truro in 1877, Liverpool in 1880, Newcastle in 1882, Southwell in 1884 and Wakefield in 1888. On the other hand the changing nature of politics meant that religious issues were not so prominently discussed as they had been in mid-century, but they still had considerable importance as was indicated by the agitation for Welsh disestablishment and in discussion of the 1902 Education Act.

For Evangelicalism, too, the late 1870s were years of uncertainty, but also of new beginnings. In part this was a reflection of a generational change: by 1879 Goode, McNeile, Stowell and Venn were all dead and Robert Bickersteth, Close and Shaftesbury only had a few years to live. Leadership was already in the hands of the next generation, including Christopher, Ryle and Thorold, and would shortly pass to younger men such as Chavasse, Moule, Wace and Griffith Thomas, the last two to be editors of *The Churchman*. Changes in personnel were associated with what has been termed a 'transformation' of the Evangelical party, a gradual withdrawal from the policy of ritual prosecution, a trend towards revivalism and holiness teaching, under the influence of Moody and Keswick

respectively, and a general reaction against the vigorous polemicism of the mid-Victorian period.¹⁰

As a new journal in 1879 *The Churchman* was in a strong position to respond to those changes and indeed significantly contributed to them. It clearly fitted into the gap in Evangelical literature left by the demise of *The Christian Observer* at the end of 1877, but there is no evidence of direct continuity between the two publications. Indeed it would seem that the early promoters of *The Churchman* had taken care to learn the lessons to be drawn from the earlier periodical's failure. While the fundamental character of a serious magazine espousing a firm but moderate Evangelicalism was similar, there were significant differences in presentation and style.¹¹

The Christian Observer had originally been founded by Zachary Macaulay and Henry Thornton in 1802 and in the heyday of the Clapham Sect in the first quarter of the century it had been the leading Evangelical periodical.¹² From 1828 however it found itself in competition with *The Record* and the more combative strain of Evangelicalism represented by that newspaper in the middle decades of the century. Thus the days of *The Christian Observer's* greatest influence were passing by the 1830s. Nevertheless it retained an adequate market: as a monthly it was a very different kind of publication from *The Record*, which was in a newspaper format and appeared two or three times a week. It also appealed to those moderate Evangelicals who were uneasy about the vigorously Calvinistic and anti-Roman tone of *The Record*.¹³

The eventual failure of *The Christian Observer* in the 1870s is attributable primarily to its failure to adapt to changing conditions. *The Record* was itself becoming more moderate¹⁴ and thus competing with *The Christian Observer* for the same market, while *The Rock* had been founded in 1868 as an organ for more extreme Evangelicalism. In 1873 the death of the *Observer's* editor Henry Venn was clearly a severe blow and in its last years the magazine's prefaces and advertisements struck a plaintively nostalgic note and made a virtue of refusal to accommodate to the 'passing hour'.¹⁵ Such sentiments might reflect admirable Evangelical integrity, but were hardly a prescription for commercial success. An advertisement in January 1875 could still muster an impressive number of well-known signatories, but these were predominantly men of the older generation and indicate that the magazine had become dependent on the support of a fast-dwindling band of the older clergy.¹⁶ Various expedients were employed. At the beginning of 1875 the magazine was amalgamated with *The Christian Advocate and Review* under the title of *The Christian Observer and Advocate*, but the marriage was apparently not a happy one as it ended at the close of 1876.¹⁷ *The Christian Observer* struggled on for one more year, but in December 1877 announced that it would in future appear as a

quarterly rather than a monthly. In the event even this proved impossible and the periodical ceased publication at the end of 1877.

The founding editor of *The Churchman* was a relatively young man, Walter Purton, who had been born in 1833. He was educated at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge and from the 1860s onwards combined the work of a parish clergyman in Sussex with religious journalism in London. He was editor of *The Record* from 1868 to 1876 and thus *The Churchman* had in fact a more direct personal link with that serial than with *The Christian Observer*.¹⁸ *The Churchman* first appeared in eighty-page numbers with a cover price of one shilling. It was published by Elliott Stock whereas *The Christian Observer* had been published by Hatchards. The title page stated that it was 'conducted by Clergymen and Laymen of the Church of England' and a particular effort was made to render the magazine attractive to the laity.¹⁹ Articles were generally shorter and less ponderous than those in *The Christian Observer* had been and theological essays, while usually scholarly by the standards of the day, did not assume specialist knowledge. *The Churchman* frequently also featured well-considered and incisive comment on ecclesiastical and general current affairs. There was a long review section in which Evangelical theological and religious works predominated but some other books were included. Taking the first issue as a sample, there was a full review of George Eliot's *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, whose epigrammatic quality was praised by the reviewer, although he was depressed by her attitude to revealed religion, and a short notice on R.L. Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*, which was thought to contain expressions 'neither witty nor wise'.²⁰ Except in the review pages articles were generally signed, thus strengthening the magazine's credibility, whereas *The Christian Observer* had adhered doggedly to the principle of anonymity.²¹ Contributors to the first number of *The Churchman* included J.C. Ryle, Edward Garbett and Edmund Hoare.

In his Preface to the first volume, completed in March 1880, Purton addressed the issue of the theological stance of the magazine. He acknowledged the wide variations of opinion among Evangelicals and continued:

It is inevitable that this should be the case in a School, of which a primary principle is the bounden duty of private judgment. Profound reverence for the absolute authority of the Word of God, and devout belief in Christ's promise of the gift of the Spirit of Truth, encourage an independence of judgment, which calls no man master.²²

He thus implied that adherence to Evangelical fundamentals was not only consistent with variety of opinion on secondary matters, provided this did not run to extremes, but actually required it.

During the next few years *The Churchman*, in its own eyes at least, achieved many of its objectives. By the middle of 1880 it had already attained a level of circulation substantially greater than that of *The Christian Observer* in its best years, although it was still anxious to extend its readership, particularly among the laity.²³ Five years later the Preface reported a steady increase in influence and it was thought that *The Churchman* was now established as a periodical of the laity as well as the clergy.²⁴ In the issue for August 1886 an address to readers surveyed the previous seven years. *The Churchman* saw itself as upholding the principles of the Reformation and playing a leading part in Church reform, advocating adaptation provided that this did not lead in a latitudinarian direction, as well as providing its readers with a range of literary, historical and cultural articles. It announced that the price would be reduced from one shilling to sixpence in order to assist rural clergy whose incomes had been reduced by the agricultural depression.²⁵ The price reduction however was accompanied by a cut in the length of each issue which now consisted of only fifty-six pages. One casualty of the compression was 'The Month', a regular feature providing comment on the previous month's events. While continuing after 1886 this became much more limited in scope.

Purton died suddenly in September 1892, but this does not appear to have caused a serious hiatus as a successor quickly emerged in the person of William MacDonald Sinclair, who had been archdeacon of London since 1889. Sinclair, while firmly opposed to the ritualists, was described in his obituary as more a 'crossbencher' than an Evangelical²⁶ and, to a greater extent than Purton, he was at pains to stress the moderation of *The Churchman* and its firm loyalty to the Church of England. In his first Preface as editor he commented:

Opponents within the Church can only be opponents in part, for by far the larger ground of our beliefs is common to us all alike.²⁷

It was desirable to define and preserve the position of those who believed the Reformation to express the mind of the Apostolic Church, but this should be done by sound learning, not bitter polemics. Sinclair thus hoped to render *The Churchman* attractive to 'moderate' churchmen as well as to Evangelicals and establish it as a major literary force in the Church as a whole rather than a mere party magazine. In 1894 however he acknowledged that, although the periodical was commercially viable, its circulation was still less than might be desired and two years later he responded to the suggestions of readers by restoring 'The Month' to greater length so that it could serve as a record of events and enhance the magazine's appeal.²⁸

The extent to which *The Churchman* in the 1890s served as a medium of communicating general information to its readership is

indicated by the proliferation of advertisements. For example the issue for December 1899 contained twenty pages of advertisements in addition to its fifty-six pages of text. Appeals from religious societies were prominent and numerous publishers also listed their wares. These were primarily works of a religious character, including in addition to many theological works, Eugene Stock's recent history of the Church Missionary Society and a collected edition of the Protestant tales of Emily Holt. There were however also more secular works, including a general advertisement for Nelson's New Century Library of novels and the 'Boys' and Girls' Own Annuals', thus indicating how at the turn of the century Evangelicalism was more willing to assimilate itself to its environment than it had been in the early Victorian period. Readers of *The Churchman* were also pressed to educate their children at Langland College, Eastbourne or the Misses Rodham at Weston-super-Mare, to invest their money in the Ecclesiastical Insurance Office and the Birkbeck Bank and to treat themselves with Whelpton's pills or Sozodont toothpaste.

Sinclair continued as editor until March 1901 and was then succeeded briefly by A.R. Buckland, who was also editor of *The Record* from 1887 to 1908 and was to become archdeacon of Norfolk in 1920.²⁹ A flysheet in the December 1901 issue re-asserted loyalty to the Church coupled with firm support for the Reformation settlement and firm but not embittered resistance to 'extreme Anglicanism'. It quoted a recent article by Handley Moule, who had become bishop of Durham in the previous October, which praised *The Churchman* for its capacity to address and stimulate educated but not expert readers. He emphasized Evangelicalism's need for a new generation of able writers to restate the Reformed Church position.³⁰

In September 1902 Henry Wace, the dean of Canterbury, assumed the editorship. In his hands and in those of his close friend and pupil, W.H. Griffith Thomas who succeeded him in May 1905, *The Churchman* maintained a firmly conservative Evangelicalism while cultivating 'intelligent loyalty to the Church of England'.³¹ Under Wace the periodical moved towards a more predominantly theological content, but this was a trend reversed to some extent by Griffith Thomas. These were years of growing circulation which was attributed to a revival of sympathy for 'the firm and central' position of *The Churchman*. This permitted an expansion in the size of the magazine while its price remained constant: in 1906 the page size was increased, larger type was introduced, the reviews section was expanded and more prominence was given to 'The Month'; in 1907 the number of pages was raised to sixty-four and in 1909 to eighty. It was stated in 1910 that *The Churchman* could be obtained by any bookseller, newsagent or even railway bookstall.³²

Griffith Thomas, whose tenure of the editorship of *The Churchman* corresponded almost exactly to his period as principal of Wycliffe Hall,

stepped down in the autumn of 1910 due to his departure for Toronto.³³ This led to a significant shift in the character of the periodical. The editorship was now shared between Dr. Dawson Dawson-Walker, professor of Biblical Exegesis at Durham University from 1910 and principal of St. John's College, Durham from 1912, and F.S. Guy Warman, then principal of St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead and later to be bishop successively of Truro, Chelmsford and Manchester. Dawson-Walker's more profound scholarship complemented Warman's vigorous activism.³⁴ They both belonged to the liberal wing of Evangelicalism and were prepared to publish articles representative of a substantially wider spectrum of opinion than their predecessors had done. Complaints were made that they were compromising the character of *The Churchman*. In reply the editors stated that they did not consider it their duty 'to admit articles of only one point of view' and implied that their inclusion of an article did not necessarily mean that they agreed with it.³⁵ They continued to assert that they were proud of the name 'Evangelical' and intended to adhere to a 'truly Catholic' churchmanship, 'proudly careful of the best elements in our Protestant heritage'. They sought to maintain a scholarship that was 'bold and fearless' but 'sober and reverent'.³⁶

While Walker and Warman thus gave rise to unease in conservative Evangelical circles, their editorship not unnaturally strengthened *The Churchman's* appeal among other groups in the Church. Even *The Church Times* now thought that it was at least 'worthy of attention'. In December 1913 a flysheet claimed an 'ever-widening circle' of readers and by this time the magazine was being circulated overseas, notably in Canada.³⁷

After Walker's and Warman's retirement in March 1914 the name of the editor was not announced on the title page as hitherto and, until the late 1940s, one does not discern the kind of strong editorial personality that had characterized the years before the First World War. Much of the period was covered by just two editors. Henry Charles Hogan, a layman and professional ecclesiastical journalist who was already editor of *The Record*, served from 1914 until his death at the end of 1924.³⁸ By 1931 the editor was Dr. G.F. Irwin, a former clerical secretary of the National Church League and Vicar of Wandsworth from 1929 to 1947.³⁹ The First World War marked the beginning of a difficult period for *The Churchman*, which in this respect reflected the wider problems of Evangelicalism and of the Church of England. For the first eighteen months of the war publication continued on the peace-time pattern, but then from March 1916 paper shortages forced reductions in length although these were compensated for to some extent by a smaller typeface.⁴⁰ More serious problems were occurring behind the scenes and in late 1917 there was a danger that the periodical would pass out of Evangelical hands. The Council of the National Church League, headed by Dean Wace, learnt of this and

raised the £300 necessary to purchase *The Churchman*.⁴¹ Thus began an association which has continued for the rest of the magazine's history, *The Churchman* passing to the Church Society in 1950 when that body was formed by the amalgamation of the National Church League and the Church Association.

While the take-over by the National Church League secured *The Churchman*'s future as an Evangelical periodical, it could not wholly protect it from the harsh post-war world. In March 1919, despite rising circulation, the price, which had been constant at sixpence since 1886, had to be increased to a shilling to cover steadily rising production costs.⁴² This measure however did not prove a sufficient response to the problem and in January 1921 *The Churchman* was forced to switch to quarterly rather than monthly publication, at a price of half a crown, although this had been reduced again to 1s 6d by 1924.⁴³ Although the number of pages was increased in partial compensation, this decision obviously meant that the quantity of articles published was severely reduced and *The Churchman*'s more infrequent appearance impaired its capacity to provide timely comment on current events. The effect was a growing preponderance of the theological material and a tendency to confirm the somewhat ghetto-like mentality of inter-war Evangelicalism.⁴⁴

The changes appear to have been well received at first, but by the early 1930s both rising costs and falling circulation were in evidence.⁴⁵ In part *The Churchman* was suffering in commercial terms from the more exclusively Evangelical character that it had assumed under the control of the National Church League at a time when Evangelicalism itself was passing through a period of numerical weakness. From 1919 the magazine had for the first time been described explicitly on its title page as an 'Evangelical Magazine and Review' and subsequently as 'The Evangelical Quarterly'. It was however external economic factors that from 1929 onwards caused *The Churchman* to slide inexorably towards crisis. During the early 1930s losses were running at over a hundred pounds a year, about a quarter of turnover.⁴⁶ While the National Church League was prepared to underwrite these for some time, when they were confronted with a general financial crisis in 1931, they cut costs by making the editorship honorary rather than stipendiary, stopping fees for articles and reducing the size of the magazine.⁴⁷ When these measures did not solve the problem they took a hard look at the position in 1936. Agreement was quickly reached that every effort should be made to keep the publication in being, so discussion concentrated on ways of increasing circulation. The eventual package of measures included a decrease in size to sixty-four pages and a reduction in price to one shilling, the inclusion of more 'lighter' material and the dropping of the subtitle of 'The Evangelical Quarterly'.⁴⁸ These steps however brought little improvement in the short term: circulation remained low and the financial

losses continued, albeit on a smaller scale than hitherto.⁴⁹

The Churchman passed its diamond jubilee in the month after the outbreak of the Second World War and in the April 1940 number the preface to the first volume was extensively quoted. It was observed that the periodical was in very much the same position as it had been at its foundation, trying to chart a safe course through the shoals of Evangelical opinion.⁵⁰ For the present however the more material perils of war pressed upon it, most tragically on October 14 1940 when Alfred Buxton, who had recently become acting editor, was killed in an air raid.⁵¹ As the war dragged on paper shortages again took their toll, forcing reductions in size, but between 1941 and 1944 circulation rose and, by the end of the war, the publishers were finding it difficult to obtain sufficient paper to meet the demand. Thus the hope expressed in *The Churchman* in the spring of 1942 that war would stimulate people to think more seriously about their religion seemed to be reaching some fulfilment.⁵²

At the beginning of 1947 *The Churchman* was re-shaped by Frank Colquhoun who had taken over the editorship as part of his responsibilities as editorial secretary of the National Church League. In July 1946 the National Church League had agreed to his suggestion that an editorial board be appointed to assist him.⁵³ This was chaired by Canon Max Warren and included G.W. Bromiley, C. Sydney Carter, Donald Coggan, F.J. Taylor and J. Stafford Wright and was thus representative of a range of strands of Evangelicalism. The subtitle 'A Quarterly Journal of Anglican Theology' was introduced in order, in Colquhoun's words, 'to secure the services of scholars who were of evangelical spirit but might not want to be labelled Evangelical.' The tradition of offering observations on passing events was revived in a modified form in the shape of a 'Contemporary Commentary' contributed to each issue by F.J. Taylor, later to be bishop of Sheffield. In general however the periodical under Colquhoun published serious theological scholarship with an organizing theme for each issue.⁵⁴

Under its next editor, John Pollock, who succeeded Colquhoun in September 1953, *The Churchman* moved in a more emphatically conservative direction, although Pollock states that he 'was careful not to make the definition narrow, or to allow the paper to be the battering ram of any small group'.⁵⁵ The editorial board was no longer in evidence and the policy of building each issue round a theme was discontinued. In Pollock's hands the journal showed a particular concern with the application of theology to contemporary problems and he used *The Churchman* as a platform to give enthusiastic support to Billy Graham in the mid-1950s, while also publishing articles that considered wider issues relating to evangelism. Meanwhile he continued vigorously to promote conservative scholarship, particularly through the reviews section.⁵⁶

Pollock went abroad in the spring of 1958 and his departure was followed by an editorial interregnum. The acting editor for 1958 was David J. Mitchell, the manager of the Church Book Room Press, who clearly had to struggle to maintain publication.⁵⁷ Thus when Philip E. Hughes assumed office as the next permanent editor early in 1959 he had initially to work to restore the confidence of readers and publishers.⁵⁸ He was successful not only in this but, in an editorship that lasted eight and a half years, he widened the circulation and influence of the *The Churchman*, seeking to make it a force in the Church of England as a whole. In the face of the troubled ecclesiastical world of the early 1960s Hughes gave particularly large amounts of space to in-depth editorial comment on current events.⁵⁹ He met Bishop Robinson's *Honest to God* with a forceful but not uncharitable article, acknowledging the writer's 'candour and sincerity', but charging Robinson with 'cavalier' treatment of the New Testament and describing as 'farical' his claim not to change the Christian doctrine of God.⁶⁰

Hughes left England for America in 1967 to be succeeded shortly in the editorship by Mr. Gervase Duffield, a publisher and active Evangelical layman, who initially took on the job on a temporary basis but in the event remained in office for five years. When he resigned at the end of 1971 the Church Society paid tribute to the manner in which the articles in the journal had 'reflected his breadth of vision and resourcefulness of mind.'⁶¹ He was followed by Robin E. Nixon, then on the staff of St. John's College, Durham, and there was a return to an active editorial board, chaired by G.J.C. Marchant, later archdeacon of Auckland, and comprising in 1972, R.T. Beckwith, J.I. Packer, A. Rogers, D.C. Spanner, J.B. Taylor, J.W. Wenham and K.M.L. Benson as secretary. During the 1970s the journal, although assisted by subsidies from the Church Society, faced rapidly rising costs: the price of an issue, which had been only four shillings (20p.) in 1970 had risen to £1.50 by 1980. These increases reflected not only the high inflation of the decade, but problems of maintaining the circulation of an academic journal which, while not uninfluential, was more widely read than purchased.⁶²

1977 and 1978 were years of particular difficulty and change. In the autumn issue of 1976 it was announced that *The Churchman* would in future be printed by Church Book Room Press, now known as Vine Books, in place of Stanley L. Hunt, who had served as printers for the past thirty-five years.⁶³ However the new arrangement proved to be fraught with technical difficulties and was abandoned after a year. At the beginning of 1977 the definite article was dropped from the title and in 1978 there was a reorganization of the editorial structure with Robin Nixon, now principal of St. John's College, Nottingham, continuing as consultant editor while Ian Cundy assumed office as review editor and Mr. Lance Bidewell as managing editor.⁶⁴ Nixon

however died very suddenly in October 1978. In a tribute Marchant described him as ably qualified for the editorship, combining 'the strengths of academic expertise with a deep commitment of pastoral and evangelistic ministry and their ecclesiastical structuring.'⁶⁵

After a brief hiatus C. Peter Williams of Trinity College, Bristol succeeded as editor. High costs and low circulation continued to dog the journal and in 1982 the readership were warned that the current year was a 'make or break' one: the number of issues was reduced from four to three and the annual subscription increased to £7.95.⁶⁶ These steps appear to have been an adequate prescription for commercial survival, but in 1983 troubles of a different kind came to a head when disagreements between the Editorial Board and the Church Society over editorial policy led Williams and most of the Board to leave the journal to found another publication, *Anvil: An Anglican Evangelical Journal for Theology and Mission*. Williams emphasized however that, while there was pain at parting, the prospect of two journals did not imply a split or animosity.⁶⁷ *Churchman* itself was reorganized at the beginning of 1984 with Gerald Bray as general editor, assisted by Richard Bauckham and Gordon Wenham and with four issues appearing each year once again. The chairman of the editorial board was Mr. Raymond Johnston, who was succeeded on his death in the autumn of 1985 by Roger Beckwith.

At the point where the past merges into the present it is appropriate for the historian to pause, to return to a longer perspective and to consider some of the views advanced in *The Churchman* over the years. Some matters of course were only topical in particular periods: questions relating to tithes and Welsh disestablishment received detailed attention in the years before the First World War, while women's ministry and the charismatic movement have been major preoccupations only since the 1960s. However fundamental problems of Anglican Evangelical identity, the nature of the response to be offered to Roman and Anglo-Catholicism and the relationship of the Church to the nation were discussed in *The Churchman* at all periods in its history, and it therefore becomes instructive to examine points of change and continuity.

Writing in the first issue of *The Churchman* in 1879, J.C. Ryle did not so much seek to define Evangelicalism as to take the definition for granted and consider the extent of the party's influence in the Church. He did, however, see the 'precious corner-stones of our system' as 'the blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the intercession of Christ' and justification by faith. Ryle pointed to some of the factors that were to make it more difficult for later generations to define the boundaries of evangelicalism: the presence of 'decidedly non-Evangelical men who . . . preach so much truth, that you feel "Cum talis sit utinam noster esses!"', the adoption of Evangelical

beliefs and modes of operation by others and a growing recognition that the Evangelical position was indeed consistent with historic Anglicanism.⁶⁸

In the years between 1910 and 1920 several attempts were made in *The Churchman* to offer definitions of Evangelicalism. For the more liberal Warman reverent study of Scripture and complete liberty of conscience were primary and from these fundamentals were derived the direct access of every soul to God through Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour and the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who accept Him.⁶⁹ Griffith Thomas and Wace, on the other hand, placed greater emphasis on the primacy of sin and Atonement and stressed that Scripture was supremely authoritative. Griffith Thomas underlined the centrality of evangelism while Wace dwelt on Evangelical opposition to confession, sacramentalism and schism. Both liberal and conservative Evangelicals had a conviction that their position represented the essential teaching of the Church of England and emphasized their loyalty to the principle of a national Church.⁷⁰

These points were still largely being echoed in the 1950s. Howard Mowll, the archbishop of Sydney, argued from an historical perspective that the essence of Anglican Evangelicalism was a direct personal relationship with God and conscious acceptance of the promises of Grace; Maurice A.P. Wood summarized the Gospel as being the sinner's need of salvation, Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and the necessity of a personal response to Him. Wood also dwelt on the importance of the Church, a theme that had been taken up even more prominently by W. Wilson Cash, the bishop of Worcester, who stressed the need to stand firmly for the Church of England as both Catholic and Reformed and warned against the sterility of Evangelical isolationism. In similar vein John Tiarks suggested that others in the Church were enabled to see valuable things which Evangelicals did not perceive.⁷¹

During most of its history *The Churchman* has thus given space to a variety of forms of Evangelical opinion and on occasions, particularly in the post-Second World War period, has explicitly examined the problem of Evangelical differences.⁷² The overall impression is that Evangelical identity has remained a pressing problem throughout the twentieth century and has not moved significantly closer to resolution. In the nature of the case the commitment of Evangelicals to a strong doctrine of Scripture and to the Reformation has made it harder for them than for other Anglicans to come to terms with Liberal and Anglo-Catholic movements in the Church and varying approaches to the consequent tensions have been expressed in the pages of *The Churchman*. On the other hand, when one turns to James Packer's treatment of the problem in 1978 one finds language strongly reminiscent of that of Ryle in 1879, an emphasis on the centrality of Christ and an appeal to the principles handed down from history.⁷³

Perusal of *The Churchman* in earlier years suggests however that despite the strong threads of continuity 'history' does not speak with a wholly unambiguous voice.

Attitudes to Catholicism, both Anglican and Roman, showed a similar consistency within tension. Even in its early years *The Churchman* took a moderate stance towards ritualists and Roman Catholics, offering measured critique rather than the polemical denunciation still widespread at that period.⁷⁴ It published articles on both sides of the Evangelical argument about the wisdom of prosecuting ritualists, but generally tended to the view that such 'persecution' was ill-advised.⁷⁵ Nevertheless there was a tenacity in asserting principles seen as central to the Reformation and a concern, particularly in the early twentieth century, about incipient romanization in the Church proceeding unresisted by Evangelicals.⁷⁶ In the 1960s Hughes gave changes in the Roman Catholic Church a cautious welcome, but still stressed that it was 'a monstrous authoritarian machine, relentless in its purpose, intolerant of change, insensitive to the claims of individuals and minorities.' He thought that the Second Vatican Council suggested that there was common ground with Roman Catholics in convictions about revelation, but still strongly took issue with the Roman insistence on the binding authority of the teaching office. Hughes emphasized that the fulcrum of dialogue 'must never cease to be God's revelation of Himself of His will in Christ Jesus, of which Holy Scripture by itself is the record and witness'.⁷⁷ In 1973 however Colin Brown was prepared, albeit with significant qualifications, to advocate co-operation at the local level while by 1978 James Packer, in the light of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, argued that the main enemy of the Gospel was now an humanitarian Christology and that Catholics were chief allies against it.⁷⁸

On the question of the Establishment of the Church of England it is the changing nature of the views expressed in *The Churchman* that is noticeable. On an abstract level there has been a general consistency of commitment to the maintenance of the constitutional link between Church and State, although in 1910 an article listed the disadvantages of Establishment including its lack of correspondence with contemporary realities, the unacceptable price demanded by the political defenders of the Church, the obstacle it presented to union with the Free Churches and the autocratic privileges that it gave to parsons.⁷⁹ More generally, however, one can see that the defenders of Establishment in the more recent years of the journal's history have claimed substantially less for it than was the case during the first four decades or so of the magazine's existence. The advocates of Establishment in late Victorian and Edwardian periods seriously advanced the claim that it secured in a concrete, not merely symbolic sense, the identity of the Church with an essentially Christian nation and that it gave a religious sanction and character to the acts of the

government.⁸⁰ During the First World War Professor W. Emery Barnes, in curious innocence of the multinational make-up of the United Kingdom, argued that national Churches were delegates of the universal Church and that the 'great *Fact*' of nationality must be recognized in the religious sphere by a Church appealing to the affections of all Englishmen, offering freedom within order.⁸¹ By 1946, however, F.W. Gilpin acknowledged that when the majority of people worshipped they did so 'ignorantly', although he thought that their residual loyalty to the Church was still a potent argument for the maintenance of Establishment. In general defenders of Establishment after the Second World War have been liable to dwell on its benefits for the Church rather than those for the nation, on the protection afforded against dominance by Anglo-Catholics and on the preservation of channels of influence and communication.⁸²

This shift, however unconscious, from the assumption that the Church of England was a truly national Church to the view that it was a denomination with important symbolic privileges was also evident in the general content and approach of *The Churchman*. Sinclair might write in September 1894 that 'with politics we have, of course, little to do'⁸³, but in practice the journal in his day defined the boundaries of theology and religion in broad terms, relating them to numerous aspects of national life. An article on the Golden Jubilee of 1887 maintained that the Empire was the gift of God, providentially designed for mission.⁸⁴ Sinclair himself wrote on the Boer War in 1899, asserting the responsibility of a great nation to fulfil its engagements and, presupposing the coherence of the nation as a Christian community, urged his readers to identify with their suffering countrymen. Subsequent military successes were seen as a cause for thankfulness to God, but also as a spur to national self-examination.⁸⁵ Similar assumptions about the religious character of the nation were made in *The Churchman's* comments on the deaths of Victoria in 1901 and of Edward VII in 1910.⁸⁶

Identification of Church, nation and people was most strongly evident in *The Churchman's* response to the First World War. When conflict broke out the journal had no doubts that the cause was a righteous one, that the Church of England had a great part to play in the struggle and that God was speaking to the nation through the war. By the second half of 1915 a rather more weary note was creeping in, but the basic assumption had not changed. The Church at home was charged with lethargy in contrast with claims that the men on the front were in an elevated spiritual condition. *The Churchman* argued that there was a direct relationship between the spiritual health of the nation and the material side of the conflict. Thus the perceived success of the National Mission in the autumn of 1916 seemed to provide hope for the war effort as well as for the spiritual condition of the people. When victory eventually came the hand of God in

response to prayer was clearly discerned.⁸⁷

The Churchman's response to the Second World War contrasted with its confident spiritual engagement in the earlier conflict. The war was, of course, not criticized, but the journal did not now so readily make the assumption that the cause of the nation was the cause of the Gospel. Comment on the war was generally confined to analysis of its impact on the Church at home, although some discussion of the spiritual antecedents of Nazism and on the plight of the German Churches was included.⁸⁸ A similar attitude to national affairs continued in the post-war years: contemporary problems were occasionally discussed, the most recent example being the General Election of 1987⁸⁹, but not in a manner which suggested the strong identification of Church and nation that had been perceived in the past.

This shift in *The Churchman* towards more theological and ecclesiastical preoccupations needs to be placed in a wider cultural context. In the late nineteenth century educated society had a much greater coherence than at a later date. The Victorian layman would read serious theology provided it was not presented in too technical a fashion while conversely many clerics had broad historical, literary and social interests. In its early years *The Churchman* was a representative part of that integrated culture. During the mid-twentieth century, theology, like all academic disciplines, became increasingly demanding and specialized, while the laity, endeavouring to develop the growing expertise required in their own professional or academic vocations, had less time to devote to it than hitherto. Thus during much of the latter part of its history *The Churchman* has found it very hard to maintain its original vision of serving as a bridge between the expert theologian and the wider Church and, although this endeavour has never been abandoned, it has tended to move towards a more purely academic character. In enabling it to survive while making this transition and adhering to something at least of its original character, the subsidies given by the National Church League and, latterly, by the Church Society have been of crucial importance.

This article began by emphasizing that *The Churchman* should be seen as a product not of the high noon of Victorian Christianity but of its Indian summer. On numerous occasions during its history the journal has seemed to be experiencing the icy blasts of autumn and winter. However, as John Henry Newman suggested in a very different context, the religious world like the natural world has the quality of cyclic regeneration.⁹⁰ While it would be rash to claim to discern a lasting 'second spring' in twentieth-century Evangelicalism, it must equally be acknowledged that signs of renewal have been strongly evident since the Second World War and have been fully reflected in the pages of *The Churchman*. Underlying the changes of its history and frequently precarious survival has been a basic

continuity of Evangelical witness. This must not be understood in narrow or simplistic terms: it has been both the strength and the weakness of *The Churchman* to give a platform to the different strands in Evangelicalism and, to some extent, in the Church of England as a whole, as they seek to communicate with each other, to define their own positions and establish common ground.

JOHN WOLFFE is lecturer in History at the University of York.

NOTES

- 1 I have incurred numerous debts in the writing of this article. In particular I would like to thank the former editors who responded to my requests for information, and the staff of the British Library, Lambeth Palace Library, Latimer House, Manchester Central Library and York University Library.
- 2 *The Churchman*, 1 (1879–80), p.v.
- 3 The numbering of the volumes of *The Churchman* causes some confusion. During the first seven years of its history, from 1879 to 1886, volumes covered only six months, from October to March and April to September. In October 1886 a new series was commenced, with volumes running for a year, from October to September. In 1906 these were changed to correspond with the calendar year. Thus the journal reached its centenary in 1979, but did not reach the hundredth volume of the sequence commenced in 1886 until 1986.
- 4 R. Blake, *Disraeli* (1966), p.697.
- 5 B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (1962), p.6; R. Floud and D. McCloskey, ed., *The Economic History of Great Britain since 1700* (1981), Vol.2, p.199.
- 6 J.P. Cornford, 'The transformation of Conservatism in the late nineteenth century', *Victorian Studies* 7 (1963), pp.35–66.
- 7 P.T. Marsh, *The Victorian Church in Decline* (1969), p.9.
- 8 A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (1976), p.29.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.29.
- 10 A. Bentley, 'The transformation of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England in the later nineteenth century' (unpublished University of Durham Ph.D. thesis 1971), *passim*.
- 11 This modifies the accounts of *The Churchman's* origins by Michael Hennell (who also misdates *The Christian Observer's* demise to 1872) in *Churchman* new series, 93 (1979), p.28, and Roger Beckwith in *Churchman* 100 (1986), p.3.
- 12 G.R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (1933 edn.), pp.152–3.
- 13 P. Toon, *Evangelical Theology 1833–1856* (1979), pp.6–7.
- 14 Balleine, *op. cit.*, pp.292–3.
- 15 *The Christian Observer* 72 (1873), p.iii; *The Christian Observer and Advocate*, 1876, pp.iii–iv.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 1875, pp.1–2.
- 17 *The Christian Observer* 73 (1874), pp.iii–iv; *The Christian Observer and Advocate*, 1876, insert dated 1 Dec. 1876.
- 18 *The Churchman*, new series, 7 (1892–3), pp.105–8; *The Times*, 21 Sept. 1892.
- 19 *The Churchman*, 1 (1879–80), p.iii.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp.74–6.
- 21 *The Christian Observer* 72 (1873), pp.iii–iv; 73 (1874), p.iii.
- 22 *The Churchman*, 1 (1879–80), pp.iv–v.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 1 (1879–80), p.iii.

- 24 *Ibid.*, 12 (1885), p.iv.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 14 (1886), insert in August number.
- 26 *The Times*, 7 Dec. 1917.
- 27 *The Churchman*, new series, 7 (1892–3), p.iii.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 8 (1893–4), p.iv; 9 (1894–5), p.ii; 10 (1895–6), pp.iii–iv.
- 29 *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (Oxford 1932), p.172.
- 30 Moule's article originally appeared in *The Churchman*, new series, 16 (1901–2), pp.1–3.
- 31 Flysheet in *The Churchman* for January 1904.
- 32 Flysheet in *The Churchman* for Dec. 1910.
- 33 *The Churchman*, new series, 24 (1910), p.721.
- 34 *The Times*, 29 Jan, 1934, p.19 (obituary of Dawson-Walker); 14 Feb. 1953, p.8 (obituary of Warman).
- 35 *The Churchman*, new series, 25 (1911), pp.641–3.
- 36 *Ibid.*, flysheet in issue for Dec. 1912.
- 37 *Ibid.*, flysheets in issues for Dec. 1912 and Dec. 1913; front cover of issue for Dec. 1913.
- 38 *Who Was Who 1916–1928* (1929), p.504; *The Times*, 2 Jan. 1925, p.12.
- 39 *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (1940), p.688; *The Times*, 8 Jan. 1951, p.6; L[ambeth] P[alace] L[ibrary], N[ational] C[hurch] L[eague] Finance Committee minutes, C.S. 65, 22 Sept. 1931.
- 40 *The Churchman*, new series, 30 (1916), p.161.
- 41 L.P.L., N.C.L. Executive Committee minutes, C.S. 57, Vol.2, pp.157, 160.
- 42 *The Churchman*, new series, 33 (1919), p.115.
- 43 *Ibid.*, new series, 35 (1921), pp.1–2.
- 44 Cf. R. Manwaring, *From Controversy to Coexistence: Evangelicals in the Church of England 1914–1980* (Cambridge 1985), pp.54–5, which is however overstated.
- 45 *The Churchman*, new series, 35 (1921), p.75; L.P.L., N.C.L. Literature Committee minutes, C.S. 67, pp.101–2, 20 March 1936.
- 46 *National Church League Annual Reports* (1930), pp.24–5; (1931), pp.10–11.
- 47 L.P.L., N.C.L. Finance Committee Minutes, C.S. 65, pp.15, 19, 35, 22 Sept., 14 Oct. 1931, 2 March 1932.
- 48 L.P.L., N.C.L. Executive Committee minutes, Vol.6, C.S. 61, pp.112–3, 117, 137, 26 Feb., 25 March, 23 Sept. 1936; Literature Committee minutes, C.S. 67, pp.102–5, 20 March, 1 May, 21 Sept. 1936.
- 49 *National Church League Annual Report*, 1938, pp.11, 24–5.
- 50 *The Churchman*, new series, 54 (1940), pp.83–5.
- 51 *Ibid.*, new series, 54 (1940), p.225.
- 52 *Ibid.*, new series, 56 (1942), p.378; 59 (1945), p.98; *The Church Gazette*, May 1942, May–June 1943, May–June 1944.
- 53 L.P.L., N.C.L. Literature Committee minutes, 22 July, 25 Nov. 1946.
- 54 Letter from Canon Colquhoun to the author, 27 Feb. 1988; *The Record*, 13 June 1947 (I am indebted to Canon Colquhoun for sending me a copy of this article); *The Churchman*, new series, 60 (1946), pp.146–7; n.s. 61 (1947), pp.2–4.
- 55 Letter from the Revd. John Pollock to the author, 20 Feb. 1988.
- 56 *The Churchman*, new series, 75 (1954), pp.3–11, 131–49; 76 (1955), pp.131–2 and *passim*.
- 57 *Ibid.*, new series, 72 (1958), p.52.
- 58 *Ibid.*, new series, 73 (1959), p.3.
- 59 *Ibid.*, new series, 81 (1967), p.170; letter from the Revd. Philip E. Hughes to the author, 6 Feb. 1988.
- 60 *The Churchman*, new series, 77 (1963), pp.79–83.
- 61 *Ibid.*, new series, 86 (1972), p.3.
- 62 *Ibid.*, new series, 88 (1974), p.244; 90 (1976), pp.243–4; *Churchman*. 92 (1978), pp.3–4.
- 63 *Ibid.*, new series, 90 (1976), p.243–4.

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- 64 *Churchman*, 91 (1977), pp.5, 101, 294; 92 (1978), pp.3–4.
65 *Ibid.*, 93 (1973), p.3.
66 *Ibid.*, 96 (1982), p.3.
67 *Ibid.*, 97 (1983), pp.196–7.
68 *The Churchman*, 1 (1879–80), pp.30–8.
69 *Ibid.*, 24 (1910), pp.750–8.
70 Griffith Thomas in *The Churchman*, 28 (1914), pp.295–309; Wace in *The Churchman*, 32 (1918), pp.11–20.
71 *The Churchman*, new series, 64 (1950), pp.134–66; 69 (1955), pp.5–15.
72 *Ibid.*, new series, 70 (1956), p.14; 77 (1963), pp.258–63.
73 *Churchman*, new series, 92 (1978), pp.101–11.
74 *The Churchman*, 2 (1880), pp.452–62; 3 (1880–1), pp.247–54.
75 *Ibid.*, new series, 3 (1888–9), pp.504–15, 572–3, 662–71.
76 *Ibid.*, new series, 7 (1892–3), pp.206–19; 26 (1912), pp.596–604; 28 (1914), pp.326–7 and *passim*.
77 *Ibid.*, new series, 74 (1960), pp.67–9; 80 (1966), pp.179–84.
78 *Ibid.*, new series, 87 (1973), pp.6–13; *Churchman* 92 (1978), pp.109–10.
79 *The Churchman*, new series, 24 (1910), pp.445–452.
80 *Ibid.*, new series, 1 (1887), pp.167–75; 24 (1910), pp.276–86.
81 *Ibid.*, 30 (1916), pp.551–557.
82 *Ibid.*, 60 (1946), pp.125–32; 64 (1950), pp.35–48; 79 (1965), pp.91–5.
83 *Ibid.*, 7 (1893–4), p.iv.
84 *Ibid.*, 1 (1886–7), pp.478–84.
85 *Ibid.*, 14 (1899–1900), pp.145–53, 428–37.
86 *Ibid.*, 15 (1900–01), pp.324–30; 24 (1910), p.401.
87 *Ibid.*, 28 (1914), pp.641–5, 721–4; 29 (1915), pp.561–8, 641–4; 31 (1917), pp.1–2; 32 (1918), pp.689–90.
88 *Ibid.*, 55 (1941), pp.61–8, 226; 56 (1942), p.378; 57 (1943), p.2.
89 *Ibid.*, 101 (1987), pp.99–100.
90 J.H. Newman, 'The Second Spring', *Collected Works: Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (1968), pp.163–82.