



General Secretary
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The authors' personal views are not necessarily endorsed by all the churches of the BEC.

Issue No. **37** – Autumn **1996**

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foundations

a journal of evangelical theology

published by the
British Evangelical Council



18th October 1996 ■

Schism and Lloyd-Jones ■

Then and Now: 1956-1996 ■

The Next Five Years ■

foundations



Price £2.00

Issue No. 37 Autumn 1996

Foundations is published by the **British Evangelical Council** in May and November; its aim is to cover contemporary **theological** issues by articles and reviews, taking in **exegesis, biblical** theology, church history and apologetics – and to **indicate** their relevance to pastoral ministry; its policy gives **particular** attention to the theology of evangelical churches which are outside pluralist ecumenical bodies.

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All MSS, Editorial Correspondance and Publications for
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Editorial

1966 and all that. It was 30 years ago in London, the 18th October 1966 to be precise, when the late Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones issued his famous call for Evangelicals to express their gospel unity at a church level in a wide association of evangelical churches. But there was disagreement and deep division. Sadly, the divisions remain and British evangelicalism is even more disparate and confused today than in 1966.

In this issue of *Foundations* we focus largely on the Doctor's 1966 address in order to understand its message and relevance for our contemporary situation. Unfortunately, many writers have misrepresented the occasion, but our concern is with facts, not fiction, and with principles, not personalities. Make no mistake about it. While the situation has changed significantly since 1966, yet the issues raised at the time are still relevant for us in 1996.

I have one word of apology. For reasons beyond my control, several of the articles relating to 1966 come from my pen. I assume full responsibility for any errors that may inadvertently have found their way into them. May we all be given grace, however, to grapple biblically, prayerfully and practically with these crucial matters. Thank you to those readers who have expressed appreciation for the last issue and we hope you will benefit just as much from this one.

Editorial changes

We are deeply grateful to Dr Eryl Davies for his valuable ministry in editing *Foundations* for the last 19 years. Other pressures have now made it necessary for us to relieve him and this will be the last issue produced under his care. Likewise Dr Hywel Jones' new responsibilities with the Banner of Truth have deprived us of his editorial help. New arrangements for the Editorial Board have not been completed as we go to press and details will appear in Issue 38.

Urgent Renewal Notice

This is the last in the present subscription series of *Foundations*. Readers who are supplied direct from the BEC office may ensure an uninterrupted supply of future issues by completing the enclosed Renewal Form. Issue 38 will appear in May 1997.

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1966: The Historical Background

Eryl Davies

The 1960s

For Evangelicals in England the 1960s were not to be a decade of revival but of controversy and, paradoxically, it was the question of unity which was a principal cause.¹...For Dr Lloyd-Jones the 1960s were undoubtedly to be the hardest decade in his life...The ecumenical movement was not only questioning the priority of truth, it was challenging the argument of Evangelicals that they could remain scattered in various denominations because their spiritual unity did not require any external oneness. By aiming to bring denominations together, ecumenism claimed to be working for a unity which was both spiritual and church based. It was to be left largely to Dr Lloyd-Jones to answer that claim and his answer was to reveal a fundamental split in evangelicalism.²

Iain H Murray

Significant Dates

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1960 | Church of England Evangelical Council founded. |
| 1961 | The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi. |
| 1962 | Addresses by Dr Lloyd-Jones on Christian Unity published by IVF under the title <i>The Basis of Christian Unity</i> . ³ |

Key points include:

- Exposition of John 17 and Ephesians 4.
- The term *Christian* needs to be defined biblically; this has priority over discussions concerning Christian Unity.
- The term *Evangelical* is synonymous with that of Christian.

December 1962	Puritan Conference.
---------------	---------------------

The message of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones was that the Puritans failed in 1662 not because of disagreement on fundamental doctrines, but rather because of disunity over secondary matters.⁴ "What is our view of the Church?...What is the Gospel?" were his two major questions. He continued: "Is it right that we should be more associated in general, and in our total life as Christians in the church, with people with whom we do not agree, than with people with whom we do agree about these central vital matters?"

December 1962	The storm breaks in Fuller Theological Seminary (established in 1947); doctrinal compromise and controversy.
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1962-1965

The Second Vatican Council.

“Perhaps the most important ecclesiastical event of this century.”⁵

Kenneth Hylson-Smith

“Vatican II...is the most important event in the history of the Roman Catholic Church since the Protestant Reformation”.⁶

Giuseppe Alberigo

Surprisingly, many Anglican Evangelicals “acknowledged that the Roman Catholic Church held many of the fundamental Christian doctrines so dear to Evangelicals, and the evidence of Biblical reformation was greeted with gladness”.⁷

Kenneth Hylson-Smith

Also note that the charismatic movement, which was interdenominational and focused on common spiritual experiences and gifts rather than theology, encouraged greater cooperation between many Anglican Evangelicals and Roman Catholics.

1963

Honest to God by John AT Robinson was published. A radical, unbiblical book based on German theologians Bultmann, Bonhoeffer and Tillich.

1963

Discussions between Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones and the evangelist Billy Graham. “I said I’d make a bargain: if he would stop the general sponsorship of his campaigns – stop having liberals and Roman Catholics on the platform – and drop the invitation system, I would wholeheartedly support him and chair the Congress. We talked for about three hours, but he didn’t accept these conditions”.⁸

1963

Mexico City where the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism met. “A new wind began to blow” here and the Gospel began to be politicised.

1964

Fountain Trust founded by Michael Harper. The purpose was to promote and encourage the use of the charismata within the historic denominations.

September 1965

The First National Association of Evangelicals (NAS).

The Assembly agreed to set up a Commission “to study radically the various attitudes of Evangelicals to the ecumenical movement, denominationalism and a possible future United Church”.

November 1965

Westminster Ministers’ Fellowship received and discussed a report of the September National Association of Evangelicals. Several members of the Westminster Fellowship, including Dr M Lloyd-Jones, agreed to speak to the Commission.

- December 1965** Puritan Conference on *Approaches to the Reformation of the Church*.
- Again the address by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones on *Ecclesiola in Ecclesia* was challenging and thought-provoking; it “broke new ground”.⁹ He examined several examples of attempts by believers from the Reformation onwards to develop a group of churches within a larger denominational, territorial church; Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones called them “little churches within a church”. According to Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones such people had given priority to expediency over Biblical principles and failed as a consequence to grapple Biblically with the crucial question relating to the nature of the church. They, as well as ourselves, have forgotten the doctrine of the remnant. He continued: “We are trusting to expediency and expedients and not saying that, if we are faithful, the Holy Spirit has promised to honour us and our testimony however small our numbers and however despised by ‘the wise and prudent’”.¹⁰
- January 1966** Westminster Chapel, London, where Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones was minister, refused on doctrinal grounds, to join the newly proposed Congregational Church in England and Wales that later merged with the Presbyterian Church of England to form the United Reformed Church.
- March 1966** Dr Michael Ramsey, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, made an official visit to the Pope in the Vatican.
- Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey issued a *Common Declaration* aimed at “a restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life” between their two churches. The first step was the establishment of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Council (1967-1968) out of which came the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) from 1971 onwards.
- September 1966** World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin chaired by Carl Henry. Contrary to some reports, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones was not present.
- 18-20 October 1966** The *Second National Assembly of Evangelicals*. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones’s now famous address was given in the first meeting on 18th October.
- October 1966** The Commission’s Report was published to coincide with the NAS.
- 1967** “...impossible to regard American evangelicalism as a single coalition with a more or less unified and recognised leadership”.¹¹
- February 1967** The *Evangelical Times* was launched as a monthly paper.

April 1967

Baptist Union Assembly received the published Report of its Council on ecumenism and referred to developing links between denominations and Rome. It warned against Lloyd-Jones's call to leave mixed denominations.

April 1967

The first National Evangelical Anglican Congress, Keele under the leadership of John Stott. Dr Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, preached in the opening meeting. This Congress confirmed, commended and popularized the new attitude on the part of evangelical Anglicans towards ecumenism. John Stott writes: "Evangelicals in the Church of England are changing too. Not in doctrinal conviction...but...in stature and posture...We have acquired a reputation for narrow partisanship and obstructionism...We need to repent and change".¹²

Iain Murray reminds us that it was "Ramsey who in the mid-fifties had criticised English evangelicalism as 'heretical' and 'sectarian', who expected to meet atheists in heaven, who took a liberal position on Scripture and a sympathetic view of reunion with Rome".¹³

1967

"House" or "New" Churches began to be established in different areas of England.

31st October – 1st November 1967

British Evangelical Council Conference held at Westminster Chapel, London, to mark the 450th anniversary of Luther's 95 theses being nailed to the door of Wittenberg Castle Church. At the last session of the Conference, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones spoke on *Luther and his Message*.¹⁴ Under the sub-title of his conclusion *The Lessons for Today*, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones insists that "the idea that Evangelicals can infiltrate any established church...and reform it, and turn it into an evangelical body, is midsummer madness. No institution has ever been truly reformed...This is the verdict of history...What then are we as Evangelicals to do...? ...We must heed a great injunction in Revelation 18:4 'Come out of her, my people!' ...Come out of it! But come together also, come into fellowship with all like-minded Christian people. Come into an association with all like-minded Christian people. Come into an association such as this British Evangelical Council, that stands for the truth and against compromise, hesitation, neutrality...Come out; come in!'.¹⁵

29th May 1968

Lloyd-Jones, convalescing after major surgery, informs his church deacons of his intention to retire late August from pastoral charge after 30 years ministry in Westminster.

July 1968

From the Fourth Assembly of the WCC at Uppsala, great efforts were made to involve the WCC and its member churches more completely in achieving social, political changes. "Events at Uppsala had signalled the direction".¹⁶

13 November 1968 Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones spoke on the question *What is the church?*¹⁷ at the BEC Conference in Liverpool. Herbert Carson also spoke on the question, *What is a Christian?*

References

- ¹ Iain Murray, *D Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith 1939-1981*, Banner of Truth, 1990, volume 2, p. 427
- ² Idem, p. 425
- ³ Reprinted in Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Knowing the Times: Addresses delivered on various occasions 1942-1977*, Banner of Truth, 1989, (see especially pp. 118-163)
- ⁴ Op. cit., p. 433
- ⁵ Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *The Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984*, T&T Clark, 1988, p. 343
- ⁶ Giuseppe Alberigo, *The Reception of Vatican II*, Burns & Oates, 1987, p. vii
- ⁷ *The Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984*
- ⁸ *The Fight of Faith*, p 440, quoted from an original interview between Carl FH Henry and Dr M Lloyd-Jones in *Christianity Today*, February 8, 1980, p. 29
- ⁹ Idem, p. 509
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ George M Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, Eerdmans, 1991, p. 74
- ¹² Keele '67, *The National Evangelical Anglican Congress Statement*, ed. Philip Crowe, 1967, p. 8
- ¹³ Op. cit., p. 539
- ¹⁴ Available in *Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Unity in Truth*, ed. Hywel R Jones, Evangelical Press, 1991, pp. 20-44. This is essential reading!
- ¹⁵ Idem, p. 43
- ¹⁶ H Hoekstra, *Evangelism in Eclipse*, Paternoster Press, p. 111
- ¹⁷ *Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Unity in Truth*, pp. 45-65

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Now what we are constantly being told is this, that we should work together, and evangelise together in particular, and not be bothered about these discussions about the nature of the Church and our different views. But this is a very false argument it seems to me. How can you evangelise truly unless you are agreed about the evangel? It seems to me to be a sheer impossibility. "If the trumpet yield an uncertain sound, who shall prepare him for the battle?" What is the gospel? I have often said that I am not surprised that the majority of people in this country today are outside the Christian Church. As they listen to the talks on the television and the wireless, and read in the newspapers, these contradictory statements that are made in the name of the Christian Church with regard the gospel of Jesus Christ how can they listen truly? The confusion in which they are to be found is a confusion that is caused by the Church herself and her discordant and contradictory voices. So I suggest that failure to be clear about the doctrine of the Church is one of the greatest hindrances to true evangelism at this present time.

DM Lloyd-Jones, What is the Church? in Unity in Truth

18th October 1966:

Its context, message and significance

Eryl Davies

It is important to understand what actually happened on the 18th October 1966. Facts are my concern here, not fiction however imaginative or prejudiced. Sadly, some have misunderstood and even misrepresented the message and motives of Lloyd-Jones on this occasion. A later article briefly illustrates what religious papers at the time reported and also how more recent books view the significance of the occasion. Facts are important and one major purpose of this article is to establish what Lloyd-Jones said and the context in which he said it. I also intend to pinpoint some areas of challenge, too, for the contemporary scene. We must continue to learn from 1966 and grapple with the questions and issues raised by Lloyd-Jones. These issues are relevant not because Lloyd-Jones articulated them, but because they involve Biblical and abiding principles which we ignore only at our peril.

I will employ a question and answer approach in this article. One reason for adopting this approach is that annually my students ask me many of these questions as we examine the subject of ecumenism in class. We ponder long on the subject and perhaps these questions are also your own questions. Another reason for adopting this style is that the information may be more digestible and interesting.

⇒ **Why should we bother to mark the 30th anniversary of this date?**

Well, it was, as we will see, an historic occasion which has had major implications for the nature, unity and future of evangelicalism in the United Kingdom. A major division occurred amongst British Evangelicals, especially between Anglican Evangelicals and their non-conformist brethren. It would be tragic if no-one marked this anniversary or failed to reflect seriously on its abiding significance.

⇒ **Who arranged the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) at which Lloyd-Jones spoke in 1966?**

The NAE was arranged by the Evangelical Alliance (EA). When the EA arranged the first NAE in 1965, its General Secretary at the time, Rev. Gilbert Kirby, acknowledged “we had considerable doubts as to the degree to which it would be supported”. However, they were reassured of the rightness in calling that initial NAE and the EA leadership also recognised the need for a second NAE in 1966.

⇒ **Why hold a second NAE? Was there a need?**

It is appropriate to allow Gilbert Kirby to answer these two related questions. In extending a welcome in the Conference Delegates' Handbook to delegates to the second NAE, Kirby explains: “It soon became clear at the last Assembly that the question of Christian unity was uppermost in many minds. Acting on the wishes clearly expressed

at the Assembly, the Alliance brought into being a Church Unity Commission, which has met on many occasions over the past months, and which is due to present a report at the forthcoming Assembly. Clearly we must give adequate time to the consideration of this vital subject..."¹

⇒ **Did the 1966 NAE spend all or most of its time discussing unity?**

No, not at all. Again, Kirby writes: "...indeed the first full day of the Assembly will be very largely devoted to it. On the Tuesday evening at the opening rally...it is expected that Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones will also speak to this theme. We feel it would be wrong, however, to devote the whole of our time together to one particular theme, important as that may be. On the second full day of Conference, therefore, we propose to devote our attention, first of all to certain current issues relating to moral and spiritual matters, and then to the Unfinished Task of Evangelism at home and abroad"² However, it is fair to add that the challenge and impact of the address by Lloyd-Jones in the first meeting overshadowed the rest of the Conference.

⇒ **Who attended the NAE?**

Delegates from local churches, Fellowships, Societies and Denominations affiliated to the Evangelical Alliance.³

⇒ **Tell me more about the Commission on Church Unity which was established by the 1965 NAE.**

During the first NAE in 1965 it was apparent that Evangelicals of all denominations were "vitaly interested"⁴ in the question of Christian unity. The purpose of the Commission was "to study radically the various attitudes of Evangelicals to the Ecumenical Movement, denominationalism and a possible future United Church". The 1965 NAE insisted that those elected to serve on the Commission should be "from within the membership of the Evangelical Alliance". The Revs Peter Johnston (CofE) and John Caiger (Baptist) shared the chairmanship of the Commission. Other Commission members included Canon Frank Colquhoun (CofE), Rev. TH Bendor-Samuel (FIEC), GCD Howley (Brethren), Rev. Godfrey Robinson (Baptist) together with the Executive secretaries, Rev. Gilbert Kirby (Congregationalist), Rev. J Hywel Davies (Elim) and David Winter (CofE).

⇒ **Is it correct that Lloyd-Jones attended the Commission?**

Yes, it is correct. In addition to Lloyd-Jones, several others members of the Westminster Fellowship also agreed to speak to the Commission. The following people attended in person at the request of the Commission :

Rev. Canon T G Mohan, CofE Evangelical Council
Rev. W M D Persson, CofE Evangelical Council
Rev. John A Job, Methodist Revival Fellowship
Rev. Hon Roland Lamb, Methodist Revival Fellowship
Rev. Ronald S Luland, Baptist Revival Fellowship
Rev. Stanley J Voke, Baptist Revival Fellowship
Rev. Geoffrey R King, Baptist Revival Fellowship

Rev. E S Guest, Congregational Evangelical Revival Fellowship
 Dr D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Westminster Chapel
 Rev. Alfred F Missen, British Pentecostal Fellowship
 Derek Warren, Christian Brethren
 Rev. H Jones, Free Church of England
 Rev. E Gregory, Free Church of England
 Rev. Dr J D Douglas, Church of Scotland
 Rev. Murdo A McLeod, Free Church of Scotland
 Rev. Kenneth H Bell, Presbyterian Church of England
 Rev. Iain Murray, Grove Chapel, Camberwell

⇒ **How did the Commission define key-terms like 'evangelical' and 'ecumenical'?**

The term “evangelical” was used “in its more restricted sense to denote ‘conservative evangelical’” while “ecumenical” was understood “primarily with reference to the World Council of Churches”.⁵ The Commission in using the term “United Church” understood it as referring to “a possible United Evangelical Church mentioned in the resolution passed at the 1965” NAE.

⇒ **What conclusions did the Commission come to?**

There were “definite conclusions”, namely:

1. “There is no *widespread* demand at the present time for the setting up of a united evangelical church on denominational lines”.
2. “There is a strong demand for the strengthening of the links between evangelical churches of varying traditions”.
3. “This does not mean that there could not be an effective fellowship or federation of evangelical churches at both the local and national level”.⁶

⇒ **Did the EA know in advance which subject Lloyd-Jones was going to speak on in 1966 and the burden of his address?**

Lloyd-Jones had previously shared in private with the members of the Commission his own views of Christian unity. He was then “asked to say in public what he had said in private”.⁷ In his opening remarks to the Conference, Lloyd-Jones announced that “My subject is Church unity, and I am speaking on this at the request of the Commission...It was the members of the Commission themselves who asked me to state in public here tonight what I am now proposing to say to you. So it is really their responsibility. They have already heard it, and they asked me to repeat it to you”. John Stott also knew in outline what Lloyd-Jones would say and was given ten minutes prior to the main speaker to state his own view on unity.

⇒ **Can you summarize the main message of Lloyd-Jones at the second NAE?**

Only with some difficulty! Obviously it is better to read and study the whole address for it is available to us in *Knowing the Times*.⁸ On the other hand, it can be helpful to summarize the address in order to feel its challenge and to reflect on its message again.

For convenience, I am dividing his address in three ways :

Introduction

In his introduction, Lloyd-Jones made several points. One, that the doctrine of the Church is prominent in the New Testament itself. Two, it is a “most urgent”⁹ and relevant subject especially because of the Church’s contemporary condition in the world. Three, the formation of the WCC in 1948 has created “an entirely new situation”,¹⁰ “such as has not been the case since the Protestant Reformation”. In 1966 he observed that Protestant denominations were “prepared to reconsider their whole position” which included a new and more favourable attitude towards Rome. Tragically for Lloyd-Jones, Evangelicals hardly ever discussed ecclesiology and always appeared negative towards ecumenism.

Questions

At the heart of the address were three major questions:

1. “Are we content, as Evangelicals, to go on being nothing but an evangelical wing of a Church”¹¹ and where the majority have liberal views of the Bible?
2. “Where are we to start in this whole matter?” Again, he observed a cleavage in which some merely wanted to “modify” and “improve” the situation rather than reform in the light of the New Testament. This raises “the question”,¹² what is the Christian Church? For Lloyd-Jones, the New Testament maintains that the Church comprises believers, “living people” who embrace the Biblical doctrines “essential to salvation”.
3. What is the sin of schism? Arguing from 1 Corinthians, he claims that “schism is a division among members of the true visible Church about matters which are not sufficiently important to justify division”,¹³ “holding the same doctrines but dividing over persons”. Only Evangelicals, therefore, can be guilty of the sin of schism so that to secede from a mixed denomination is not schismatic.

Challenge

- A “What reasons have we for not coming together?”¹⁴ Lloyd-Jones insisted that it was inconsistent to remain within a mixed denomination such as Anglican or Methodist.
- B “Do we not feel the call to come together, not occasionally, but *always*? It is a grief to me that I spend so little of my time with some of my brethren...I am a believer in ecumenicity, evangelical ecumenicity. To me, the tragedy is that we are divided...”¹⁵
- C “But have we a right to ask His blessing upon churches which spend most of their time in arguing about the essentials and the vitals of the faith? Surely, the Holy Spirit will only bless His own Word, and if those of us who believe it would only come together, stand together as churches, constantly together, working together, doing everything together, bearing our witness together, I believe we would then have the right to expect the Spirit of God to come upon us in mighty revival and re-awakening”.¹⁶
- D “There are great problems confronting us if we act on these principles. But has the day come when we, as Evangelicals, are afraid of problems?...we are living in tremendous times...in one of the great turning points of history...there has been

nothing like this since the Sixteenth Century. It is a day of glorious opportunity...

And who knows but that the Ecumenical Movement may be something for which, in years to come, we shall thank God because it has made us face our problems on the Church level instead of on the level of movements, and really brought us together as a fellowship, or an association, of evangelical churches. May God speed the day".¹⁷

⇒ **Is it true that Lloyd-Jones wanted a united evangelical Church?**

No, this is a misrepresentation of his message and call. It was not one monolithic evangelical church he wanted but rather a meaningful and real "fellowship or an association of evangelical churches". His independent approach to church government comes through here. Addressing the Westminster Fellowship in Welwyn in June 1965, he insisted: "I have not proposed a new church".¹⁸ However, there was confusion on this point, but it was not the fault of Lloyd-Jones. For example, it was a member of the Westminster Fellowship, Don Davies, who moved the EA resolution in 1965 that a Commission should consider "a possible future United Church" and this in turn was interpreted by the EA to mean "a united evangelical church on denominational lines".¹⁹ Nevertheless, it was not what Lloyd-Jones wanted. For example, in 1963 he expressed his hope for an association of churches in which there was a minimum of central control. In this context he admired Cromwell's quest for a unity between churches which still allowed differences over church government. "That is exactly my position on these matters", he declares, "I do not care whether a man is a Presbyterian or a Baptist or an Independent or Episcopalian or a Methodist, as long as he is agreed about the essentials of 'the faith'".²⁰

⇒ **How did John Stott respond to the address of Lloyd-Jones?**

As chairman, he had already been given several minutes earlier in the meeting to express his view of Christian unity but immediately after Lloyd-Jones had spoken, Stott made an *impromptu* speech which included the now famous lines: "I believe history is against what Dr Lloyd-Jones has said...Scripture is against him, the remnant was within the church not outside it. I hope no-one will act precipitately...".²¹ The effect was "sensational" and it "polarised"²² the meeting.

⇒ **What were the consequences of this meeting for evangelicalism in the United Kingdom?**

One immediate consequence was a deep division both between Anglican Evangelicals and many of their non-conformist brethren, but also among non-conformist pastors and churches. The latter division over secession sadly involved, in some cases, strained and even broken relationships while the former division took the majority of evangelical Anglicans in the direction of the WCC and further away from their non-conformist brethren. Another consequence has been expressed by Hywel R Jones: "The rejection of *evangelical* unity in 1966 has become an adoption of *ecumenical* unity in 1991".²³ Anglican Evangelicals also became more committed to their denomination and in numerous ways there was a weakening on the part of some to Biblical teaching.

This is what John Gunstone had in mind when he referred to Anglican Evangelicals as the “new Evangelicals”, being “comprehensive rather than exclusive”, “more relaxed theologically” and more Anglican than evangelical.²⁴ For some years, too, a strongly negative attitude characterized a few of the secessionists who affiliated to the British Evangelical Council, by that time already 14 years old. Thankfully, this has given way in recent years to a more positive quest for evangelical unity.

⇒ **To what extent was Lloyd-Jones responsible for the division among post-1966 Evangelicals?**

Some blame Lloyd-Jones almost completely for “rocking the boat” and dividing UK Evangelicals. They claim that he did this by introducing and pressing the ecclesiological dimension into discussions concerning Biblical ecumenism, especially the crucial question relating to the nature of the Church. This, however, is a superficial and misleading understanding of events. For example, Lloyd-Jones was grieved by the radical departure of the historical denominations from the Bible and their willingness to commit themselves to an unbiblical ecumenism. He rightly challenged Evangelicals as to whether they should co-exist and co-operate with those in denominations who blatantly denied and opposed the essentials of the Gospel. Furthermore, Lloyd-Jones correctly perceived that evangelical Anglicans were espousing a new open policy on ecumenism which further isolated them from other Evangelicals. In other words, he insisted from Scripture that Christian unity was grounded in the truth of God’s infallible Word and was, in its essence, spiritual rather than organizational. Lloyd-Jones was “enunciating principles”, confirms Iain Murray, “which could be seen to possess Biblical authority”²⁵ and, he adds, “no-one ever attempted to answer the booklet *The Basis of Christian Unity* from Scripture”. Rather than attempting to divide Evangelicals, Lloyd-Jones’s aim throughout was to call them from doctrinal compromise to a working expression of evangelical unity. Already, however, and prior to 1966, decisions had been made especially within Anglican circles and policies adopted which were decisive and had nothing to do with Lloyd-Jones.

⇒ **What kind of evangelical unity did Lloyd-Jones envisage?**

As indicated in his 1966 address, he wanted “a fellowship or an association of evangelical churches” expressed consistently according to the New Testament doctrine of the Church. To the Westminster Ministers’ Fellowship in late November 1966, he emphasised: “I am not going to organize anything...If I had wanted to start a denomination I would not have left it till now...I am not going to organize, lead or suggest anything. I trust I shall be a helper. I feel I have done what I have been called to do. The question is what are *you* going to do?”²⁶ In the July 1967 meeting of the Westminster Fellowship he addressed the urgent subject of the nature of the unity sought by Evangelicals who were opposed to developments in ecumenism related to the WCC. While Ecumenists have a minimum of doctrine, he complained that Evangelicals tended to go to “the opposite extreme”.²⁷ Lloyd-Jones then distinguished between doctrines which are essential and those which are not essential; the latter included baptism, Church polity and charismata. “I have never proposed a united evangelical church”, he concluded, “...I cannot see the impossibility of a loose fellowship including those who are Presbyterian, those who are independent, and those with varying views on baptism”.²⁸

When pressed, it was clear that Lloyd-Jones did not have any particular plan or blueprint for the expression of a new evangelical unity. Not only was his own understanding limited at this point, but he also wanted others to pray and consider Biblically the way forward. One thing is clear, Lloyd-Jones wanted a big umbrella-type fellowship of churches, including evangelical Anglicans, but in the circumstances had to opt for the BEC as providing the next best and widest possible fellowship between churches in the post-1966 situation.

⇒ **Did Lloyd-Jones repeat and/or develop his 1966 message?**

Yes, he did. One example is his address in 1967 on *Luther and His Message for Today*.²⁹ The editor's introduction to this address is helpful. First, the editor notes that one development is that the 1966 address was a major, positive call for Evangelicals to unite in a fellowship of evangelical churches whereas the 1967 Luther address "led up to an explicit call to them to secede from denominations which were moving towards Rome by their involvement in the ecumenical movement".³⁰ Second, the editor draws attention to the "Doctor's" expression "guilt by association" in the 1967 address. He was not advocating "second degree separation", but rather "putting an important question to those in the doctrinally mixed denominations who would be 'content to function' in the same church as those 'who deny the very elements of the Christian faith'".

Again in 1968 Lloyd-Jones addressed the BEC conference on *What is the Church?* partly because it was at the time "the greatest cause of division amongst Evangelicals in this country".³¹ In the 1970 conference, his concern was "wrong divisions and true unity" and emphasised the crucial difference between separation and schism. In his 1977 BEC address, the "Doctor" spoke under the title of *The Sword and the Song* and reviewed the ten year period from 1967-1977. Until 1967, Lloyd-Jones rightly claims that they were all engaged fighting "the old liberalism and modernism"³² with the help of Evangelicals in the mixed denominations, namely, those within the EA. Now, however, "the situation unfortunately has taken a very sad and a very tragic turn"³³ and, he adds, "in my wildest moments, I never imagined that the things which have taken place in the last ten years would come to pass. It is almost incredible". Lloyd-Jones goes on to describe this as "a real change and a definite shift in the whole position of Anglican evangelicalism"³⁴ in their views of Scripture, salvation, the Church, and also ecclesiastical relationships;³⁵ it represents an "extraordinary change". And it "has become very doubtful as to what an Evangelical really is. This is a sad, a tragic story".³⁶

Lloyd-Jones then probes the question as to why this has happened. "To me", he replies, "there is only one answer. It is that if your doctrine of the Church is wrong, eventually you will go wrong everywhere".³⁷ He went on to affirm that Evangelicals within the BEC must fight for the Bible, "the truth of the Gospel"³⁸ as well as a "true conception of the Christian Church".³⁹ Not only then was 1966 a tragic division; it was also for some evangelical Anglicans the beginning of compromise on major doctrines.

⇒ **Finally, are you suggesting that in some way we need to go back to the 1966 situation?**

Not really because the situation today has changed and we dare not live in the past. Nevertheless, although the situation has changed, the issues have not changed. As we have just seen, the post-1966 situation has deteriorated and there is considerable

confusion as well as uncertainty over major Biblical doctrines. We can, and must, learn from the 1966 call.

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- ² Ibid.
- ³ Idem, e.g. pp. 13-16
- ⁴ *Report of the Commission on Church Unity to the National Assembly of Evangelicals*, London, October 1966, p. 3, Evangelical Alliance
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶ Idem, p. 10
- ⁷ *Unity in Diversity*, Evangelical Alliance, 1967, p. 8. This publication includes the ten addresses given at the second NAE in 1966.
- ⁸ Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Knowing the Times*, Banner of Truth, 1989, pp. 246-257
- ⁹ Idem, p. 247
- ¹⁰ Idem, p. 248
- ¹¹ Idem, p. 251
- ¹² Idem, p. 252
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- ¹⁵ Idem, p. 255
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- ¹⁷ Idem, p. 257
- ¹⁸ Iain Murray, *D Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith 1939-1981*, Banner of Truth, 1990, volume 2, p. 505
- ¹⁹ See, e.g., the *Report of the Commission*, Evangelical Alliance, 1966, p. 10
- ²⁰ See *The Fight of Faith*, p. 511
- ²¹ Idem, p. 525
- ²² Idem, p. 526
- ²³ *Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Unity in Truth*, ed. Hywel R Jones, Evangelical Press, 1991, p. 19
- ²⁴ John Gunstone, *Pentecostal Anglicans*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1982
- ²⁵ *The Fight of Faith*, p. 559
- ²⁶ Idem, p. 530
- ²⁷ Idem, p. 545
- ²⁸ Idem, p. 547
- ²⁹ *Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Unity in Truth*, pp. 20-44
- ³⁰ Idem, p. 20
- ³¹ Idem, p. 47
- ³² Idem, p. 169
- ³³ Idem, p. 170
- ³⁴ Idem, p. 172
- ³⁵ Idem, p. 174
- ³⁶ Idem, p. 175
- ³⁷ Idem, p. 176
- ³⁸ Idem, p. 177
- ³⁹ Idem, p. 178

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18th October 1966:

I was there...

Stan Guest, then of the Congregational Evangelical Revival Fellowship

By 1966 I had been a member for some 12 years of the Westminster Fellowship. We met monthly under Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones and shared thoughts on many different subjects. From a letter I wrote to him on 2nd February, 1966, it is clear that, at the January meeting, he had spoken about “coming out” of the denominations. In my letter I said I was ready to do so but not yet persuaded that the time was “now”. I recalled his earlier advice that we should stay in as long as we can. I was preparing a statement for the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union in May.

I was present at meetings of the National Assembly of Evangelicals 1966 and was aware of the deep sadness and confusion felt by so many. This resulted in the Doctor closing the Westminster Fellowship for a time. My own personal position, however, had been greatly helped by the Doctor’s stand and this, no doubt, encouraged me to accept, in 1967, the position of Secretary to An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

Evangelicals in congregationalism had a situation to face in 1966 that was different from their brethren in other denominations. The Congregational Union of England and Wales was changing its form in very significant ways. After several years of discussion it invited churches to covenant together as *the Congregational Church of England and Wales*. This commenced in 1966 and it was a clear move towards the further step of uniting with the Presbyterian Church of England to form the United Reformed Church. This took place in 1972. It was hailed as an important move towards ecumenical oneness. Though it is difficult to see it as such when one realises that over 200 *more* congregational churches stayed out of the URC than the number of Presbyterian churches that went in.

Not all the churches that remained congregational did so on evangelical grounds. Many saw that the URC was, in fact, really a Presbyterian body. They compared, for example, the Congregational Union declaration of 1833 with the URC constitution. The former stated that in no way was the Union to assume authority or become a court of appeal. The latter had as its closing statement: “The decision of the General Assembly on any matter which has come before it on reference or appeal shall be final and binding”.

Evangelicals recognised these changes of church policy, of course, but they believed they had even stronger grounds for separation. For decades the CUEW had been drifting away from the final authority of Scripture and the true declaration of the Gospel. This had already led, in 1947, to the forming of a Congregational Evangelical Revival Fellowship, drawing together individual members of churches. The call to covenant as the CCEW required an affirmation of oneness in doctrine with those who were fully liberal in their teachings. There were churches who could not do this and, in 1967, there was formed an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

One question that had to be faced was whether or not simply to join the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches. Some churches did, in fact, take up joint membership. It was recognised, however, that churches would be more easily encouraged to take a stand if they could see they were continuing in a congregational denomination. One important consequence of this has been that, because an EFCC was legally recognised as a continuing

congregational body, it has received substantial funds from the former national and county Congregational Unions, thus preserving their benefit for evangelical purposes.

The call for wider evangelical unity was not ignored, however. The first EFCC constitution booklet stated: "In no way is it the intention to set up a permanent body as a separate continuing denomination. We see ourselves as a 'bridging Fellowship' until such time as the Lord may prepare the way for a wider grouping of Bible-believing Christians from all denominational backgrounds". Its first statement of purpose reads: "To seek the welfare and express the faith and the true unity of the whole Church of Jesus-Christ".

Basil Howlett, then at Hesters Way BC, Cheltenham

The scene is indelibly etched on my mind. The occasion was the opening night of the Second National Assembly of Evangelicals arranged by the Evangelical Alliance which followed hard on the heels of a Commission to "study radically the various attitudes of Evangelicals to the Ecumenical Movement, denominationalism and a possible future United Church". Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones had been asked by the leaders of the Evangelical Alliance to "say in public, what he had said in private" when speaking to them. The Central Hall, Westminster was full, the platform was occupied by evangelical leaders of various persuasions – two rows of them. At first, as far as physical stature went, Dr Lloyd-Jones was dwarfed by them, but as the meeting went on he seemed to become a giant!

I felt sorry for Derek Prime that night! He gave the introductory Bible Study on Philippians 2, and it was very good, but what followed was so electrifying that nobody had a hope of remembering what he said! The Rev. A Morgan Derham's remarks, which had eulogised the Doctor with feint praise brought forth the following response when he arose to speak: "It would be churlish of me not to thank Mr Morgan Derham for the remarks he has made, but I wish he had not done so; he has robbed me of my valuable time!"

This gathering must be seen against the background of the increasing liberalism and mounting ecumenical pressures of those days. Two dreadful books which undermined Gospel truth had but recently been published. *Honest to God* by John Robinson (the Bishop of Woolwich) closely followed by *Down to Earth* written by Howard Williams (then President of the Baptist Union). In most of the doctrinally mixed denominations, Evangelicals were, at best, marginalised and ignored, but often mocked and discriminated against. Many young, evangelical ministers were fighting for survival, and would often find that a denominational official was working in league with disaffected members, to get them out of their churches. Numerous good, evangelical, theological students, looking for a church, were passed over. The Ecumenical Movement was marching forward to conquer, with strident voice and big steps, but with little sympathy for those who stood in the way. Evangelical churches had little hope of getting sites for church planting; Ecumenical Centres were the talk of the day.

Against that backcloth, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones stood to make his impassioned plea for Evangelicals, who were divided up among the denominations, to come together "as a fellowship or association of evangelical churches", and to stand together for the Gospel. In actual fact, the words "separate" and "secede" were not mentioned. It was a positive appeal for Evangelicals to stand together, not just occasionally, but always. I went to the Central Hall, that night, disillusioned with the Baptist Union, desiring closer unity with Evangelicals, but scared about the way forward. How do you leave a major denomination and its security when you have a young family? Suppose the denomination evicts your church from its premises and throws you out of the manse! Yet as the message drew to a close I was convinced, along with others, that to be true to Scripture and conscience I had no alternative

but to ask God to give me the strength to do what was right, no matter what the cost. The preacher knew there would be a cost for many and sympathised:

There are great and grievous difficulties: I am well aware of them. I know there are men, ministers and clergy in this congregation at the moment, who, if they did what I am exhorting them to do, would have a tremendous problem before them, even a financial, an economic and a family problem. I do not want to minimize this. My heart goes out to such men. There are great problems confronting us if we act on these principles. But has the day come when we, as Evangelicals, are afraid of problems? The true Christian has always had problems. The early Christians had grievous problems, ostracized from their families and the threat of death ever facing them. They were not daunted: they went on, they believed, they knew, they would rather die than not stand for the truth.

Five years before, almost to the day, I had sat in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, trembling and gripping the seat, as I heard the Doctor preach for the first time, and was rescued from the emptiness of liberal theology. Now I was gripping the chair again! Oh that we had more preachers today who could make us tremble.

The chairman, John Stott, sensed that many men were being stirred to action and feared that some Anglican clergy might leave their church. Although he had already been given a ten minute slot earlier in the meeting to state his own views, he rose, at the end of the Doctor's address not to close the meeting, but to counter what had been said. Being a young, impetuous non-conformist at the time, I secretly hoped that Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones would get to his feet again and make mincemeat of the Anglican leader, but he was wiser and more gracious than I shall ever be...

In spite of the interjection, many of us left the Central Hall feeling that we were on the verge of something new and exciting. We honestly believed that if we left our mixed denominations it would not be a matter of going out into the wilderness, but into this new grouping of churches. We also felt, quite justifiably, that just as men were willing to make sacrifices to come out of mixed denominations, so evangelical bodies like the FIEC and the Strict Baptists, etc, would be prepared to make changes in pursuit of this greater evangelical unity. Sadly, it has not happened. Our failure to heed the appeal, in my view, is one of the greatest tragedies and disappointments of the past 30 years. I sometimes wonder whether the increased confusion and contention within evangelicalism, not to mention the comedy, is a judgement of God upon us because of our failure to take evangelical unity seriously.

Is it too late now? New factors, besides liberalism and ecumenism, have come into the religious scene, ranging from the ridiculous to the rigid. The difficulties will be enormous but should that prevent us from attempting what is right? After all, trying to live a holy life can be difficult. Am I wrong to dream that one day there might be a closeknit Fellowship or Association of Bible Churches with English, Welsh and Scottish branches, to include all who have a serious view of the Bible and a commitment to a robust evangelicalism? Dr Lloyd-Jones ended his appeal with the prayer "May God speed the day".

I thank God for the privilege of being at the Central Hall that night and of being allowed to live through those exciting, if scary, times. Just one small, almost trivial incident indicates how traumatic the Central Hall meeting was. Two days later, as the EA assembly continued, newspaper vendors were selling their wares outside the Central Hall. The paper they were selling was *The Christian*, and their sales cry was not "Late Final" or "Latest Football Results", but "Lloyd-Jones in *The Christian*!", "Lloyd-Jones in *The Christian*!"

Derek Prime, then at Lansdowne EFC, Norwood

My memory of the evening of Tuesday, October 18th, 1966, at the Central Hall, Westminster, is not as clear as I would wish it to be. I do not think that any person taking part imagined that it would prove to be so significant. Had we appreciated the consequences that were to follow, I for one would probably have taken greater note of the feelings and convictions I then possessed.

I have clear recollections, however, of our time in the vestry beforehand. I imagine that I had been asked to take part because I was in the middle of my year as president of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches. The atmosphere was warm and friendly. After prayer together, John Stott, the chairman, suggested that we make our way to the platform, and Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones asked John Stott, where he wanted him to sit. "Sit at my side", John Stott requested, to which the Doctor quickly responded, with a twinkle in his eye, "Which side? You have *two* sides, John!"

I had been asked to read the Scriptures early on in the meeting, together with some brief comment. Since the stated theme was Christian unity, I read the first half of Philippians 2, and commented on the passage in the light of the subject.

The address Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones gave is well documented, and what he said probably surprised few of us, but what took everyone by surprise, I believe, was the action of the chairman, John Stott, when, after the Doctor's address, he proceeded to repudiate what he had said. I sensed that this was unpremeditated and certainly not on the programme for the meeting. John Stott was clearly alarmed at the action some might be prompted to take. The lesson I clearly remember from that meeting, which has remained with me, is that a chairman should not be a principal contributor to a meeting, especially if the subject is one where strong feelings are held. The sympathy of many went out to the Doctor who had no opportunity of reply, and especially the sympathy of those who already identified with the Doctor's position or who were feeling the particular pressures of a false ecumenism in their church situations. I wonder if things would have been different – and the outcome better – if the meeting had been chaired by someone whose task had only been to chair, and not to represent a position or point of view?

It was a sad occasion because of my personal debt to and affection for both men. As a teenager, my school was adjacent to Westminster Chapel, and I was early introduced to the Friday Evening Discussion Meeting. Then as a young pastor, before moving to Edinburgh, I attended for twelve years the Westminster Fellowship. As a student, I was Mission Secretary for the first mission John Stott took for the Christian Union at Cambridge, a mission which was outstandingly fruitful as he preached the series of sermons from which came *Basic Christianity*. No two men, with their contrasting styles of effective expository preaching, more greatly influenced me with regard to my own understanding of preaching. I owe a great debt to God for their example.

There were many repercussions from the meeting, which others have written about. The Evangelical Alliance lost from its council godly men such as Theodore Bendor-Samuel and John Caiger, and the British Evangelical Council was seen as a preferred alternative for expressing evangelical Church unity. My personal regret was that I lost fellowship with many whose friendship I had appreciated and gained from since student days in the then IVF, particularly with evangelical Anglicans. Evangelical Anglicans and evangelical non-conformists expressed their identity and common concerns in many ways in the early years of my ministry, but that more or less ceased, and both went very much their own ways. It

has perhaps only been in recent years, principally through the Proclamation Trust's activity, that the divide has been bridged and fellowship re-established.

Leith Samuel, then at Above Bar Church, Southampton

Rev. Morgan Derham was the General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance (EA) when it undertook the task of enquiring whether or not there was a widespread demand for a united evangelical Church in Britain. An Assembly open to all Evangelicals registered with or recognised by the EA was arranged to meet in the Church House, Westminster, with two evening rallies in the Central Hall. John Stott chaired the first evening rally at which the speaker was Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who had discussed with the Council everything he was going to say. A rumour has circulated since that the message he gave took the Council of EA completely by surprise. Not so! They knew, and if they wished to, could have requested him not to say what he came out with. Revelation 18:4 was the Scripture on which the Doctor based his appeal. "Everything is in the melting-pot" is freely admitted all round. "For too long we have been content to go along as the evangelical wings of doctrinally-mixed denominations. Is this not the time to come together?" He did not advocate a new denomination, but "a loose federation of evangelical churches". When he finished, John Stott got up and, contrary to the generally understood role of a chairman, flatly contradicted the Doctor's thesis by saying: "The Doctor has Scripture and Church History against him", with no reference to any Scripture or incident in Church History. My host for the night, Tim Buckley of the London Bible College, said on the way home to Tooting: "Rugby and Cambridge. I can't understand it!", a reference to the chairman's behaviour.

I rang the Doctor at his home that night, and expressed my grief at the way he had been treated. I did not sleep much that night, because I had to introduce a proposition next morning in the Church House that a fund should be started to help ministers who felt their conscience, enlightened by Scripture, was telling them they ought to leave their doctrinally-mixed denominations. I mentioned in my introduction that the existence of the Church of England was an illustration from Church History of a withdrawal from an apostate Church.

Imagine my consternation when we received at the door of the Central Hall that night a copy of *The Christian*, containing David Winter's report of the meeting the previous evening with a heading across the front page saying: "The Doctor had called people out of their churches to form a new denomination". Rev. HF Stevenson was unwell on the previous night and had asked David Winter to double up for him, so the *Life of Faith* came out with a similarly startling heading the next day. In company with the Rev. Roland Lamb and a few others I submitted a letter to both papers asking the editors to correct the misleading impression of the previous week's issue. The small letter was duly printed by both journals on page 3, totally lacking the impact of the previous week's streaming headlines.

From personal conversations with the Doctor I gathered that he (and I!, let me hasten to add) were hoping that a banner would be raised at the Central Hall that we could all (true Evangelicals) in Britain come together under. I was informed by Dr Douglas Johnson, a close friend of the Doctor's, that John Stott apologised privately to the Doctor, but never made public that he was sorry for treating the leading Evangelical in the country in the way he had done.

The next year the Anglicans met at Keele and declared they were committing themselves to a future in the Anglican community. I wrote to John Stott asking him not to overlook his non-conformist brethren. He assured me this would not happen! But ten years later at

Nottingham they proceeded further in an Anglican direction: "This was not my scene" said the leading Anglican Evangelical to me straight after Nottingham!

On the non-conformist side, the BEC gathering in Westminster Chapel, October 3rd 1967, was a significant moment, 450 years after Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Church of Wittenberg, though the *impetus* of that great gathering was never maintained, alas!

Derek Swann, then at Ashford Congregational Church

I began my ministry at Ashford in January 1963. My predecessor, but one, the Rev. Gilbert Kirby had left to become General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance in 1957. Consequently, the Church had strong links with the EA. It was natural, therefore, that I should be present at the October 1966 meeting at the Westminster Central Hall as a Church delegate, and at the various public meetings of the EA prior to that.

All that Dr Lloyd-Jones said that night in October is now well documented. To some, his message came like a thunderbolt, but to those of us who regularly attended the monthly meetings of the Westminster Fellowship of Ministers over which the Doctor presided, it was not. For many months the question of the Doctrine of the Church, unity and schism had been thoroughly discussed, so we were familiar with the Doctor's position.

As Congregationalists we were forced in the early 60s, in ways others were not, to consider, and face up to, the subject of Church unity. The Congregational Union of England & Wales was actively working for the formation of the Congregational Church *in* England and Wales (this came into being in 1966), which was a spring-board for union with the Presbyterian Church of England, which would result in the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972. The majority of Evangelical Congregationalists were clear about what action they should take, but the discussions under Dr Lloyd-Jones were both strengthening and encouraging. At Ashford, as in many of our churches, the main issue was the Doctrine of Scripture. How could we possibly work with ministers and churches who held the view that "the Bible is not wholly free from error, confusion and contradiction, it must be read with fully critical attention if the Church is to discern the truth which is binding, and not to be in bondage to what is not binding".¹

A colleague had lunch with one of the leading men in the CUEW at the time, and warned that if loose views of Scripture continued to be embraced then Evangelicals could have no part in the proposed EC in England and Wales. His reply was: "We're ready to lose you, for the sake of wider unity". Not surprisingly the bulk of Evangelical Congregational Churches did not enter the new body. I must point out, as a matter of fact, that we did not come out of a body, rather we refused to join one.

To go back to the October 1966 meeting. When the Doctor finished his reasoned and passionate address, the behaviour of the Chairman, the Rev. John Stott, came as a shock. That otherwise calm and reasonable Anglican seemed to be visibly shaken by what had been said, and perhaps, fearful lest there should be a flood of Anglican ministers prematurely leaving the Anglican Church, spoke briefly, but strongly that both Scripture and History were against the position the Doctor had outlined. The atmosphere was electric and one had the sense that from that night onwards a division in evangelicalism was highlighted that would dominate the scene for years to come.

References

¹ *A Declaration of Faith*, First provisional draft, May 1964

18th October 1966:

What some papers and books have said

Eryl Davies

Evangelicals – *Leave your denominations*” was the startling headline on the front page of *The Christian* weekly newspaper on the 21st October 1966. While quoting extensively from the address of Dr Lloyd-Jones, the article was not strictly accurate in places. For example, part of the opening sentence of the article was: “An impassioned appeal to Evangelicals in Britain to leave the major denominations and to form a united Church was made by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones...”. As we have seen in earlier articles, Lloyd-Jones did not suggest or desire “a united Church”; his appeal was for Evangelicals to come together in a loose fellowship or association of churches. The article states that “many people to whom our reporter spoke after the meeting thought that Dr Lloyd-Jones was right in his arguments, but that nothing would happen unless men like the Rev. JRW Stott took the lead”.

David Winter, reporting the Assembly also in *The Life of Faith* of 27th October emphasised how the public rally “in dramatic fashion, dragged into the open a subject normally avoided in evangelical debate – secession. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones made an eloquent plea to Evangelicals to leave their denominations and join a United Evangelical Church and the Chairman, the Rev. John Stott, publicly (firmly but politely) disagreed with him...”. *The Baptist Times* (27th October) was more forthright, reporting “A sharp clash of views... with Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones seeming to be encouraging Evangelicals to secede from their denominations and the Rev. John Stott challenging his address by claiming that division was not the way forward... it was clear that Evangelicals are divided theologically...”.

A more supportive and accurate report was given in the *English Churchman* (28th October). Lloyd-Jones, the article emphasised, “was not putting forward some negative scheme into which we are to be reluctantly forced, but rather was pointing us to the glorious opportunity of taking positive action because we realise we ought to if we are to be true to our evangelical convictions... Anglican Evangelicals would appear, on the evidence of the Assembly to be the most intransigent on this matter... But is it not a misunderstanding to look at this problem only as one of secession? Does entry into a Scriptural union with other Christians deserve that name?... Who is really giving a definite lead in the Church of England at this time? Who will define the line beyond which we will not go? We have already surrendered on a number of issues which in earlier days would never have been accepted...”. This is well said and even more true of the situation in more recent years. It was the *Evangelical Times* from its launch in 1967 which championed the principles which Lloyd-Jones had identified and argued.

*Christianity Today*¹ in 1990 devoted twelve full pages to the subject of *The Remaking of English Evangelicalism* but only four sentences to what it calls the “major public showdown” in 1966 when, after Lloyd-Jones’s address, a “surprised” John Stott “rose and rebuked Lloyd-Jones and rallied Anglican Evangelicals to their churchly duty”.² Once again, the authors misunderstood the message of Lloyd-Jones by claiming that instead of addressing the subject of unity he “called instead for Evangelicals to leave the historic

churches". This is grossly misleading and inaccurate.

From this sample of Christian newspapers which reported the 1966 meeting, I want to turn to a sample of more recent books and note how these authors regarded the significance and nature of the Doctor's message on that occasion.

In his readable *Five Evangelical Leaders*,³ Christopher Catherwood devotes nearly four pages to this event which he calls *1966: Crossing the Rubicon*.⁴ He refers to "a change of emphasis" in his grandfather's thinking concerning the doctrine of the Church, but, as we have documented in earlier articles, this new emphasis was not sudden or unexpected but had been apparent for some time prior to 1966. One wonders how well the author understood the background to the 1966 address. For example, he claims that the Evangelical Alliance "had no idea how explosive the Doctor intended to be..."⁵ and refers to Lloyd-Jones's "vision of a United Evangelical Church".⁶ Later, Catherwood sees the "tragedy of the split" as being divided over what was "essentially an ecclesiastical issue".⁷ But the prior and major issue for Lloyd-Jones was the Gospel itself; it was from the Gospel that he insisted on the importance of the nature and unity of the Church. Soteriology and ecclesiology were inextricably bound up, not only in the thinking of Lloyd-Jones but also in the New Testament itself.

Kenneth Hylson-Smith's useful book *Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984*⁸ is disappointing in its treatment of 18th October 1966. Barely two pages are devoted to the subject⁹ and, unfortunately, it is based on secondary sources, primarily Christopher Catherwood's *Five Evangelical Leaders*.¹⁰ The author is correct in claiming that the effect of the disagreement between Stott and Lloyd-Jones "was immediate and long-standing".¹¹

Even less space is given to the subject by DW Bebbington in his *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*.¹² For Bebbington, this incident was "to dramatise a fracture in the evangelical world",¹³ but the call for Evangelicals to leave their mixed denominational churches "was dismissed by nearly all those in the Church of England as being... 'nothing short of hare-brained' and in other mixed denominations Lloyd-Jones was little heeded".

As expected, Hywel R Jones provides a detailed account of the "Doctor's relationship with the British Evangelical Council" in *Unity in Truth*¹⁴ which is a collection of addresses given by Lloyd-Jones in BEC sponsored meetings between 1967-1979. This is a valuable introduction which throws light on the "Doctor's thinking on the subject of unity as well as his decision to involve himself in the work and witness of the BEC". One paragraph is reproduced here because of its helpful reference to the now famous 1966 address:

It is worth pointing out that not once in this address did the Doctor use the terms "separate/secede". His call was to *associate* or *unite*. While it is granted that this necessarily involved secession, the basis of the call was the Gospel, the scope of the call was to those who professed to believe the Gospel and the purpose in view was the spread of the Gospel. It was therefore neither schismatic nor exclusivist, but truly Christian and evangelical. In addition, as the Doctor pointed out, it was timely because in the wider setting denominational attachments were being questioned and new alignments were being considered. Should not Evangelicals, of all people, take up the challenge, notwithstanding the difficulties, and seize the opportunity to stand together for God's truth?

This address, as well known, met with an immediate negative reaction. The positive response surfaced later, most noticeably in the Luther meeting. On 1st November 1967

over 2,500 people gathered in Westminster Chapel to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Luther's promulgation of his Ninety-Five Theses.¹⁵

Hywel Jones concludes that "It is still the case that the BEC is the only body of churches in the United Kingdom which 'cannot, on grounds of conscience, identify with that ecumenicity which lacks an evangelical basis'. It takes this position because it stands for the unity of all those churches which believe the one and only Gospel which saves".¹⁶

*Who Are the Evangelicals?*¹⁷ is an interesting account by Derek Tidball "tracing the roots of today's movements" in which he also shows the varied spectrum of contemporary evangelical belief and practice. Regrettably, Tidball only devotes three brief sentences to the 1966 incident.¹⁸ He does remind us, however, that "Evangelicals in other mainline denominations have trodden a path similar to Anglican Evangelicals. Among the Baptists, *Mainstream* was formed; among Methodists, *Headway* and among the United Reformed Church, *Gear*. In each, Evangelicals have become more committed to their denominations".¹⁹

In his autobiography entitled *A Man Under Authority*,²⁰ Leith Samuel provides some interesting background and insights regarding the 1966 address together with the response.²¹ He describes it as "that tragic night for British evangelicalism" and "a tragic parting of the ways... We needed unity at Church level but it was torn from our grasp".²² Leith Samuel insists that Lloyd-Jones "was not concerned primarily about changing structures. It was the purity of the Gospel that was of paramount importance to him". What Lloyd-Jones longed to see was "an umbrella" large enough to cover Anglican and Free Church Evangelicals.

Alister McGrath also refers to the 1966 event, albeit briefly, in his *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*.²³ McGrath claims that it "was widely seen to centre on the issue of separatism".²⁴ Again, McGrath is another writer who partly misunderstands the call of Lloyd-Jones in his 1966 address; for McGrath, it was a "passionate call" for Evangelicals in mixed denominations to "form a denomination of their own".²⁵ McGrath is correct in viewing the National Evangelical Anglican Congress at Keele in April 1967 as having "endorsed and consolidated"²⁶ Stott's opposition to Lloyd-Jones. He continues: "It sealed this development and marks the beginning of the positive role of evangelicalism within the Church of England". Keele was determinative and is "widely regarded as marking the end of a numerically significant 'separatist' party within Anglican evangelicalism...".

Over the past couple of years, I have been interested to meet Christians, even academics, who have spoken disparagingly of Iain Murray's two-volumed biography of Martyn Lloyd-Jones.²⁷ To me, their response is a superficial and prejudiced one. Allow me to reply to their criticism. Murray's biography is an official one, based largely on primary sources, and written by a man who knew Lloyd-Jones extremely well. He had served under and alongside the Doctor and then remained in close contact with him over the years. A competent historian and possessing an excellent grasp of the contemporary evangelical situation in the United Kingdom, Murray is eminently suited to write the biography of Lloyd-Jones. The second volume especially is "a primary text on evangelicalism in the twentieth century".²⁸ And this can be easily substantiated. No other serious book, for example, examines the background, context, significance and consequences of Lloyd-Jones's 1966 address in such detail or depth as Murray does in this second volume. Earlier chapters such as *Unity: Ecumenical or Evangelical* (pp. 427-450), *Conversations and Journeys* (pp. 453-471), *Cross-Winds* (pp. 472-492) and *1965: The Approaching Crisis* (pp. 495-511) are well researched and they are invaluable in providing a meaningful background to the three crucial chapters dealing with 1966 and the assessment of the controversy.²⁹

In his assessment, Murray counters the criticism that Lloyd-Jones was responsible for “dividing Evangelicals” by referring to the latter’s view that the main denominations were in an extremely serious theological and religious condition not “seen in England before”³⁰ and that Anglican Evangelicals had “deliberately introduced a new policy on ecumenism”.³¹ He shows how Stott had changed his position by referring to his former view expressed in his 1958 publication *What Christ Thinks of the Church*:³² “We cannot have Christian fellowship with those who deny the divinity of Christ’s person or the satisfactoriness of His work on the cross for our salvation...to preach any other gospel than the Gospel of Christ’s saving grace is to deserve Paul’s *anathema*...”.³³ Another criticism of Lloyd-Jones’s 1966 address that Murray considers is that he was creating a “new sectarianism”³⁴ and an exclusive form of unity. However, Murray shows effectively that Lloyd-Jones wanted “a third alternative”,³⁵ “a way forward...more honouring to God than an acceptance of the existing conditions”. The Doctor, we are reminded, “frankly accepted the limitations of his own understanding”,³⁶ he opted finally for a wider unity through the BEC “largely because, when he urged others to take on a more active role, none came forward with any alternative”. He himself did not want to assume the role of leader in the new wider association of churches. Was it a lack of interest in this aspect? Possibly, but “in part, also”, insists Murray, “it was because he knew that the *essential* need at this stage...was for on-going reformation and a true revival in *all* churches. Secession, as such, was no solution”.³⁷

In Murray’s view, Lloyd-Jones was “open to some criticism”³⁸ in this controversy. First of all, Murray thinks that the argument in places depended over-much on the Doctor’s interpretation of the contemporary situation so that it “looked more like a matter of judgement than of Biblical principle”. This, however, is open to debate but Lloyd-Jones put no pressure at all on individuals to secede. In my own experience, he discouraged me initially from seceding and wanted to know precisely which Biblical principles I was seeking to honour. It is also a fact that Lloyd-Jones left it to individual ministers and churches to decide the correct and wisest time for secession.

A second criticism in Murray’s opinion is that the lack of a clear plan in which to express this wider unity of churches post-1966 “had regrettable consequences”.³⁹ In this context, Murray sees that the question of “schism” was complex and somewhat difficult to relate to for Lloyd-Jones challenged “the adequacy”⁴⁰ of an inter-denominational evangelical unity expressed through an organisation like the Evangelical Alliance. This, however, served to focus “attention upon the *alternative*...” envisaged with the ability to exclude or discipline those who were in error. Furthermore, Murray suggests that on the Doctor’s view of schism, those who stayed outside the BEC were thereby guilty of the charge. “Some damage might have been averted”, Murray thinks, “if the alternative unity presented...in 1967 had been understood to be more fluid and open...”⁴¹ and if the Doctor had been less “hurried than he would otherwise have been”.⁴²

Murray’s assessment, of course, is itself open to criticism but I want to confine myself to two observations. One, it was not the Doctor’s Welshness or interpretation of the situation or his understanding of the sin of schism which were at fault, but possibly his and our failure to appreciate the stranglehold of Anglican sub-culture on its leaders thus making it difficult for them to contemplate the possibility of working outside their denomination. As Alan Gibson rightly points out: “With hindsight, most of us did not fully understand how strong was the grip of the ecclesiastical sub-cultures in which we had been brought

up. The 1967 Keele Conference showed how hard it was for Gospel men in the Church of England to contemplate working in any other context. Subsequent attempts to reduce the height of denominational walls, even between wholly evangelical free church groups, were not conspicuously successful. Some who agreed that the Doctor's appeal was based on Scripture principles found reasons not to act upon it".⁴³

My second observation is that the Doctor's 1966 appeal was rejected by Stott and other leaders, including EA officers, because they disagreed with its message. To blame Lloyd-Jones, and him alone, is to fly in the face of the facts. Again, I quote Alan Gibson who was present on the occasion and who attempted to submit a motion the following morning proposing discussion of the practical implications arising from the first meeting. "To our huge disappointment", Gibson writes, "the organising committee had decided that no such motions would be accepted. Responsibility for closing down any real consideration of steps towards evangelical church unity does not belong to John Stott alone. It lies also with the 1966 officers of the Evangelical Alliance who changed the advertised programme and denied the Assembly, set up for that very purpose, any opportunity for practical consideration of the issues the Doctor had raised".⁴⁴

A reference to two other recent publications conclude this article. Clive Calver and Rob Warner in their *Together We Stand*,⁴⁵ a volume marking the 150th anniversary of the Evangelical Alliance, deal with the 1966 division in a disappointing way. Once again some of the facts are wrong: for example, the 1966 address of Lloyd-Jones is supposed to have argued for "a single united evangelical church".⁴⁶ But that is clearly wrong. Nor is it helpful or accurate to speak of Lloyd-Jones's "impassioned eloquence... in the heat of the moment".⁴⁷ I am afraid that even in this book Lloyd-Jones is pictured as the culprit who shattered evangelical unity in Britain in 1966. When will those writing on this incident be at least fair to the facts? Please, please give us history and not fiction.

The second and final publication I refer to is *For Such a Time as This: Perspectives on Evangelicalism, Past, Present & Future*⁴⁸ which commemorates the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 and also serves as a tribute to Gilbert Kirby on his 80th birthday. Two chapters are immediately relevant to our theme. Peter Lewis writes on *Renewal, Recovery & Growth: 1966 onwards* and reports accurately the thrust of the Doctor's message. A useful outline is provided of later developments, namely, NEAC 1967, emergence of Tear Fund in 1968, Berlin 1966 and Lausanne 1974, the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, UCCF, Spring Harvest – Keswick, Evangelical Leaders Conference, evangelical unity and co-operative evangelism. Another relevant chapter is Alan Gibson's *The Role of Separation*. The title is misleading for it is a consideration of "principles of separation and cooperation among today's churches".⁴⁹ The chapter deserves careful study.

This sampling of papers and books which refer to the 1966 address by Lloyd-Jones is now complete. Other books like *Chosen Vessels* could have been referred to but, hopefully, the sample has been adequate to stimulate you to think and read some of the primary sources. But, please, get the facts right and then wrestle prayerfully as well as Biblically with the matters raised. We all still have much to learn from the Doctor's 1966 message.

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Schism in the writings of Lloyd-Jones

Eryl Davies

This article attempts to summarize the main teaching and challenge of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones on the important subject of schism.

The 5th February 1961 – One of his sermons based on Ephesians 6:10-13 dealt with the subject of schism. He maintained that churches eager to adhere believingly to Scripture faced a major problem: “How are we to draw the line between allowing heresy and apostasy on the one hand, and being guilty of schism on the other?”¹ Lloyd-Jones was clear concerning the answer and this can be expressed in the following way:

1. Only Christians who are agreed on fundamental doctrines can be guilty of schism.
2. Schism involves the division of Christians concerning non-essential or secondary matters.
3. New Testament commands concerning unity and warnings about schism are addressed only to Christians, those who enjoy Gospel unity.
4. Evangelicals have not taken these commands and warnings seriously enough and ecumenism has exposed this inconsistency.
5. The New Testament requires a unity of churches, not merely individuals or movements; Evangelicals need to express their claim to unity in a meaningful way at church level.

June 1963 – A major address based on Haggai 1 and given to the Westminster Fraternal touched again on the present situation, the evangelical commitment to movements and the failure of this strategy. He then addressed key questions, namely, the nature and marks of the Church before discussing “the true nature of schism”.² He does not discuss the latter subject in detail as his intention was “simply raising it as an issue”.³ Here are the main points:

1. The Protestant Reformers were not guilty of schism when they left the Church of Rome for they separated themselves from apostasy.
2. 1 Corinthians “is the *locus classicus* with regard to this matter”. Schism is “division in the true visible Church about matters that are not sufficient to justify division and separation”, e.g. personalities, learning, observance of days and meats, variations in spiritual gifts. The “sin of schism occurs when *such people* allow themselves to be divided from one another for inadequate causes and reasons”.⁴
3. “The trouble has been always that men have tended to approach schism in terms of the existing state of the churches instead of taking it right back to the New Testament conception of the Church and asking: Are we dividing that? We have allowed the opposition to govern our thinking on this question of schism, and...put ourselves into a false position. What I should ask myself is this... Am I guilty of dividing the truly spiritual New Testament Church?”⁵

June 1965 – Westminster Fellowship address from Psalm 74. “Two years ago”, Lloyd-Jones declared, “I tried to make a statement. I appealed for unity, a unity at the church level...I was convinced two years ago that many were not convinced of schism and so should be given the opportunity to be convicted...”⁶ He asks: “Is there any hope

of evangelical unity?...My conclusion is that there is no hope at all at the church level...because there is no agreement among Evangelicals..."⁷

18th October 1966 – NAE address in which Lloyd-Jones discusses schism after considering the nature of the Church. His view of the sin of schism is unchanged: "It is division among people who are agreed about the essentials and the centralities, but who separate over secondary and less important matters...that is the only definition of schism which can claim to be Biblical...the only people...who are guilty of the sin of schism are Evangelicals"⁸

July 1967 – Westminster Fellowship address majoring on the unity to be sought on the part of those opposed to ecumenism. Here Lloyd-Jones warned of a danger because while Ecumenists go for minimum and ambiguous doctrinal content, Evangelicals "tend to become too precise...the opposite extreme..."⁹ Major essential doctrines for him included the sole authority of Scripture in faith and practice, the Trinity, the devil and evil powers, the plan of redemption, the person and work of Christ, man in sin, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification by faith alone, sanctification. The non-essentials ("not so important as to divide us") included election, views on baptism, church policy, assurance, prophecy and gifts. "We must not break fellowship",¹⁰ he warned.

13th November 1968 – An address by Lloyd-Jones to the BEC on *What is the Church?*¹¹ The uniqueness, spirituality and unity of the true Church "makes schism a terrible sin. It is not merely that you disagree with others: it is that you are dividing Christ, you are dividing a body, you are dividing a family. And so the apostle brings out his mighty powers of ridicule in 1 Corinthians 12...For brethren who are agreed about the essentials of the Gospel, and who are sharing the same life, to be divided by history, tradition, or any consideration, is the sin of schism, and it is a terrible sin".¹²

4th November 1970 – The Doctor's theme at this BEC conference was *Wrong divisions and True Unity*¹³ and he distinguished between separation and schism. Again, he turned to 1 Corinthians and showed how the Corinthian Christians had a defective understanding of the Church and failed "to draw the line properly between" essentials and those matters which are "important but not essential".¹⁴ He describes the Corinthians as "standing and dividing on carnal matters",¹⁵ "intellectualism"¹⁶ and "false spirituality".¹⁷ Lloyd-Jones is adamant that the essentials "on which we must stand"¹⁸ include the Scriptures,¹⁹ the Fall,²⁰ God's plan of redemption²¹ and the Person of the Lord.²² On these doctrines we must stand "unflinchingly... even unto death, but be very careful about anything else you stand on, lest you become guilty of the sin of schism and offend a dear brother for whom Christ died. If you think he is mistaken, patiently, quietly, prayerfully, try to instruct him and to help him. And as you value your own conscience and always try to obey it, remember that he has got a conscience also and you must not cause him to offend it. Let us love one another. Let us bear with one another but hold the centralities, the first things, boldly, courageously and unflinchingly, together".²³

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I have been in the ministry and trying to preach now for getting on for forty-four years. I have seen strange things in the life of the churches, but I have never known such confusion as prevails at the present time. Of course, those of us who belong to this Evangelical Council are not a bit surprised that there is confusion among people who are not evangelical. They cannot but be confused. Indeed they are not evangelical because they are confused. So that does not surprise us. But, even in that realm, the confusion is more and more confounded than I have ever known it.

But what should be of particular concern to us is that we have to confess, if we are honest, that there is some confusion amongst us. This is serious...

This is important because the greatest need in the world tonight is for a united evangelical message. It is the only hope for mankind. It is the only hope for the world and, in general, it is the only hope for the church. The people are confused, utterly confused. All their famous 'nostrums' fail to give them healing. All the prophecies of the false prophets have been falsified. They are all just disillusioned. That is the real meaning of this calamitous drug-taking and alcoholism. I believe the world is waiting for an authoritative statement. And it can only have it from those who take a scriptural view of the way of salvation—that is from evangelicals. That is why it is so urgently and vitally important that there should be no confusion amongst us but that we should speak with a united and a certain voice concerning these vital matters.

DM Lloyd-Jones, Wrong Divisions and True Unity, in Unity in Truth

Then and Now: 1966-1996

Geoff Thomas

Thirty years ago at the Second National Assembly of Evangelicals organized by the Evangelical Alliance in London on October 19th, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones spoke for the last time for the EA on the theme of *Evangelical Unity* in the course of which address he asked his audience: "What reasons have we for not coming together?...My friends, we are not only the guardians and custodians of the faith of the Bible, we are the modern representatives and successors of the glorious men who fought this same fight, the good fight of faith, in centuries past...I believe that God is calling upon us to maintain this ancient witness, not occasionally, not haphazardly, but always, and to put it to the people of this country".¹

Have Christians grown closer and more co-operative in these past three decades? What is the social and spiritual situation in the United Kingdom at the end of the 20th century?

Social conditions in the land

There are many improvements in the world which have taken place over the past thirty years which make us glad that we are living at this time. Treatment of cancer and other diseases has vastly improved. Britain has become a more cohesive middle-class nation and the continual strikes and class divisions of the 60s are a bad dream. There is a general political consensus with little messianic hopes in the effectiveness of the Whitehall and Brussels decision-makers. Apartheid has ended in South Africa, Communism has been largely discredited and the West has won the cold war. A world war or even a European conflict seems the most distant of possibilities. Britain has become a more prosperous nation. Chicken and turkey are the cheapest meats: supermarkets the size of aeroplane hangers are filled with the highest quality and range of foods. Communications not controlled by Caesar are accessible to every man. It is cheap to call the USA and even Australia. Missionaries have access to the Internet. It has never been so inexpensive and convenient to travel internationally.

However, other social factors make us long for thirty years ago. There has taken place an unimaginable moral decline. Family life has taken a battering. One repeated statistic is that Britain has the highest divorce rate in Europe, while crime statistics are at an all time peak: we have more men in prison per head of population than any country in the European Community. There is a widespread fear of and familiarity with violence and burglary. The National Lottery has made 75% of the nation gamblers. Great Britain is awash with drugs. Alcoholism is a cruel widespread problem. Education has become a football kicked about by trendy politicians of both parties of government, and illiteracy has become an all-time high. Never was there such ignorance of the Bible and the Christian religion. Abortion on demand has resulted in the deaths of millions of healthy unborn children. The Northern Ireland situation is as unsolvable as ever. Militant homosexuals are tireless in their demands for the state's recognition of their so-called marriages. Feminism encourages the gender destruction of male and female rôles. Sport is harsher through commercialism, and sportsmen more superficial people. Christians

are being persecuted and murdered in Cuba, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Laos, Vietnam, China and North Korea.

The strengths of Reformed evangelicalism

Where do true evangelical churches stand today? Consider their strengths: a steadiness in their congregational lives. One knows of some hundreds of churches throughout the British Isles and if one entered their meeting-places on a Sunday morning, one could be at peace and be led in worship by ministers who fear God and have led congregations to honour their Lord. One would hear the Word of God opened up and dealt with responsibly. Most university towns have a free grace pulpit for students to hear the whole Counsel of God. There also has been an extraordinary explosion of publishing so that no Christian bookshop can find room on its shelves to stock all the fine commentaries, biographies, literature on the world and life view, family life, evangelism, and children's books that are now available. Consider those writers, all of whose books one would love to purchase and read, Sproul, MacArthur, Packer, Boice, Stott, Ferguson, Morris, Adams, Carson, Clowney, Chantry and Lloyd-Jones. Systematic theologies like those written by à Brakel, Turretin, Grudem (and soon the four volumes of Bavinck) have recently appeared. Definitive books like Iain Murray's two volumes of Dr Lloyd-Jones and *Revival & Revivalism* have filled a hole in the Church's understanding of men and movements. Soli Deo Gloria are reprinting Puritan works as if there were a competition to print them with a dozen other publishers, and sometimes there is. There is a fascinating range of monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly periodicals. About twenty good conservative magazines and papers are being published in Britain. Cassettes of the best preaching are available from many sources.

There is a choice of Reformed theological seminaries in which to study. For example, the Evangelical Theological College of Wales in Bryntirion has more students than the sum of all the "theologs" in every other seminary in Wales. The single Roman Catholic Seminary in Wales in Aberystwyth has closed down from lack of vocations. America, especially, displays such vigorous growth of conservative seminaries. There is also a network of conferences, stable and well attended – The Carey Ministers' Conference (January), The Banner of Truth Conference (March), The Caister FIEC (April), The Grace Assembly (May), The Bala Conference of the EMW Ministers (June), The Metropolitan School of Theology (June), The Aberystwyth EMW Conferences (August), and the Westminster Conference for Historical Studies (December). Ministers especially know one another, and with some of them on an international conference circuit the work of God world-wide is better known today than at any period.

About all the above there is a proper modesty and unassumeness. These churches all realise that (apart from some congregations in the Hebrides) a commitment to the Reformed Faith does not generate large numbers. Deciding whether they would have many members and much money and read about themselves in the newspaper those churches have decided to promote a growing love for the preaching and application of the whole Counsel of God. They know they could not have both, and faithfulness is valued as more important than influence. Calvinistic piety is not flashy or obvious.

The weaknesses of Reformed evangelicalism

One obvious difference between 1966 and 1996 is the figure of Dr Lloyd-Jones, or some equivalent preacher of preachers. Our greatest weakness is a lack of an awakening ministry in the nation. Where we deem ourselves strongest there, as ever, our impotence lies. This shows itself in the narrow choice of inspirational speakers for the big occasions, in the enterprise of church-planters here and abroad. The whole missionary enterprise has been hi-jacked by missionary societies so that men who go overseas never do what they do in this country, that is, preach in one local congregation in the language of the people and build up a church in loving the whole Counsel of God. Rather, virtually every missionary today administers or teaches local men how to pastor and preach. One consequence is the absence of expository preachers from the entire continent of Africa. They have been given no rôle models.

Then there has been in the British Isles in our circles the bringing low of congregations, Christian institutions and leaders. Churches have split, notable men have fallen into flagrant sin, congregations which once loved the whole Counsel of God have collapsed under false teaching.

The charismaticization of churches

There are three types of churches men can make choice of today – if one dares to set aside the vigour of many Roman Catholic congregations. There are the charismatic congregations with their fascination with supposedly spontaneous and body-led ministries. Then, secondly, there is the Willow Creek model of focusing worship on unchurched Harry and Sally as so using singing groups and drama spots to make the man in the street feel unthreatened. Thirdly, there is unadorned and faithful Reformed worship.

Both the charismatic and the Willow Creek models have influenced Reformed congregations. David Tomlinson writes, “There is little doubt that Spring Harvest is one of the most influential factors in the charismaticization of evangelicalism...it would be difficult to overstate its significance in the present positive climate”.² He adds that the March of Jesus “contributes to the overall sense of growing self-confidence among Evangelicals”.³ The umbrella under which all such things happen is the Evangelical Alliance. Clive Calver’s appointment to its leadership in 1983 “symbolized powerfully the way that the centre ground of evangelicalism was moving, for Calver is an unashamed Charismatic with New Church connections”.⁴

Even those churches which have not adopted pentecostal theology in the past thirty years have been affected liturgically. Nowhere more than in hymnody and conduct in worship is the gulf between Evangelicals of 1966 and 1996 displayed. In 1966 we were longing for some new hymn-books, and we had to wait a further ten years for *Grace & Christian Hymns* to appear. There was an indadequacy in the smaller evangelical collections such as *Christian Praise* and *Hymns of Faith*. There was a conviction that the treasures of hymnody found in past writers of deeply experiential piety would have an abiding pastoral, theological and doxological contribution to the Church of our age, and pervasive liberalism alone had been responsible for expunging them from denominational hymnbooks. So *Grace Hymns* appeared saying in its Preface: “The book contains many hymns which have fallen out of use but are worthy of a restored place in the Church’s praise”. And in the Preface of *Christian Hymns* the editors wrote: “There is the need for the rediscovery

and restoration of a considerable number of hymns from times of revival and evangelical awakening...From this treasure-house it has been our privilege to draw extensively, for many of the greatest hymns of the Church come from this period". The motivation in the choice of the hymns in these books was pervasive God-centredness. These two fine hymn books had barely appeared when a totally new mood entered evangelicalism, claiming that what was needed was not such hymns at all but rather *contemporary hymns*, necessarily wed to upbeat tunes, which the man in the street could identify with. And as almost every church seems to have more hymn-writers than preachers there was no stemming the flood of new hymns, tunes, and collections that swamped us. Spring Harvest became the proselytising agency for the new style of songs. If *Grace & Christian Hymns* had not appeared when they did what greater liturgical chaos would world-wide evangelicalism have been in, all in the name of "creativity" and contemporaneity in worship.

The new Christian

Ian Cotton has a new book entitled *The Hallelujah Revolution: The Rise of the New Christians*.⁵ He characterises the new Christian of 1996 as religiously Evangelical, instinctively irrational, politically liberal, economically socialist, theologically feminine (preferring a "gentle feminine Jesus over a macho, stern Jehovah"), vocationally "post-industrial", experientially "relational", and socially egalitarian (the new Christian is into mutual accountability groups).

Cotton describes this charismatic mindset thus: "We have the go-with-the flow attitude which De Bono characterized as 'water logic'. Instead of reason and order, we have instinct, vision, the Holy Ghost. Instead of step-by-step linear progression, we have the all-at-once, the miraculous. Instead of the verbal architecture of the sermon, we have the preverbal instinctiveness of 'tongues'. This is the distinctively modern end of the movement, where change, fluidity, uncertainty, and flexible boundaries are paramount".⁶

Most such "new Christian" churches are outside of the WCC and official ecumenical structures, despising that movement for its political agenda and cerebral ethos. Certainly something more than opposition to schemes of unity dominated by modernists is needed to unite Evangelicals in contending for the faith. Perhaps that was one weakness of evangelical beliefs in 1966 – they gave more credence to the power of the Ecumenical Movement than it merited. For true unity there must be a passionate love for the whole Counsel of God, not just a fear of the counterfeit.

The British Evangelical Council grew with a desire to strengthen its culturally and theologically marginalised member denominations, to take conservative churches out of their isolation and absorption with their own problems and perspectives and give them an opportunity to contemplate the nation-wide mission of the Church of Jesus Christ. Its member churches are separatists but not isolationists.

Men most sympathetic with the BEC feel that the Evangelical Alliance is inconsistent on modernism. How could a body that is opposed to liberalism allow its officers and member churches to retain their membership in denominations dominated by modernism? How can preachers remain in a unity of fellowship in the EA? Do they not realise that such equivocation creates deep problems of friendship and trust to other preachers? That issue has not gone away in the past thirty years. It is not likely to do so in the next millenium.

John Stott famously opposed Dr Lloyd-Jones' exhortation for churches to come together on the basis of historic Christianity, telling that EA conference, "Scripture is

against him, the remnant was within the Church not outside it". As he walked out of the meeting with Dr Lloyd-Jones he murmured apologetically that he was afraid that some of the Anglican clergy might have left their churches the next morning had he said nothing more. Stott spoke on behalf of the vast majority of Anglicans. They were staying in the Church of England. Yet when the issue of the ordination of women arose the Evangelicals were mute, even though that would mean 300 ministers would resign over the issue.⁷ The greatest difference in the Church of England in 1996 as compared to 1966 is the presence of 1,400 women priests, and a huge irretrievable lurch to liberalism.

Other evangelical Anglicans such as those centred on St Helen's Bishopsgate, considered that "only human traditions were holding brothers and sisters [i.e. Anglicans and Free Churchmen] at arm's length".⁸ So Dick Lucas's answer was to start yet another conference, the Evangelical Ministry Assembly "to repair some bridges of fellowship". So, Anglicans who never met in fellowship with their non-conformist brethren (except when they were invited to speak) at any of the well-established conferences at Leicester, Bala, BEC, Carey, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Aberystwyth, Westminster, etc. (even when they live in close proximity to those places), began yet another conference "to tackle the sad division between Anglican and Free Church Ministers".⁹ In other words, non-attendance at that conference indicated one was promoting division, and the extravagant claims were made: "God's hand was on Dick's brainchild and the conference has proved a major part of the evangelical year".¹⁰

The British Evangelical Council

The critics of the BEC will point to its alleged diminished influence in 1996 compared to the late 60s. They may grumble that it has assumed the position of an "isolationist porcupine", small, circumscribed and obscure instead of a vigorous and militant group calling Britain back to the old paths. Surely its pervasively Reformed identity has meant it has become marginal to what some might envy as the mold-breakers and trend-setters of ecclesiastical life in Britain. But the Word teaches us that God does not use the magnificent and mighty to achieve its ends, rather, as the apostle Paul wrote, God uses "jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power" is from Him only. In 1996 the evidence weakness of our human efforts and the all-sufficiency of God's grace means that the Reformed churches have a precious message and a unique task testifying to everything God has revealed. We may not judge the next thirty years in the light of our present experience.

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- ² Dave Tomlinson, *The Post Evangelical*, Triangle, 1995, p. 20
- ³ Idem, p 21
- ⁴ Idem, p. 18
- ⁵ Ian Cotton, *The Hallelujah Revolution: The Rise of the New Christians*, Prometheus Books, New York
- ⁶ Idem, p. 25
- ⁷ *The Times*, August 10th, 1996
- ⁸ *When God's Voice is Heard*, ed. Christopher Green and David Jackman, IVP, 1995, p. 18
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The Next Five Years

Alan Gibson

Futurology is an inexact science. Any uninspired prophecy can leave the unwary with egg on his face. No wonder the Book of Proverbs counsels that, *Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent* (17:28). Outside a general treatment of unfulfilled Biblical promises our only possibility of providing some insight into the future is to notice the present trends and to speculate about how they might develop.

In an earlier issue of *Foundations* (No 36, pp 43-47) I reviewed the Evangelical Alliance book, *Together We Stand*, and commented briefly on chapter 10, *The Futures of Evangelicalism*. The very fact that the two authors, Clive Calver and Rob Warner, felt it necessary to use the plural, *Futures*, shows how tentative all such speculation must be. I will now note more fully the (alliterated) sub-headings of their chapter. *Retaining the status quo*, is what they regard as an increasingly unlikely prospect. *Reassimilation* is considered a danger if senior evangelicals become increasingly distanced from one another as their energies are poured into their denominational duties. *Reform* is the hope that evangelicals will act to reform the existing and historic denominations. *Refragmentation* is a real but disastrous prospect, should evangelicals choose the easy and yet palpably absurd option of devoting their energies to warring with one another. *Remnant* is how the writers speculate that the corrosion of evangelical convictions of the majority would leave a remnant of the faithful and orthodox. *Realignment*, however, is what they expect to happen to the church scene under the pressures of accelerating compromise with the moral standards of the day. They suggest that there will be four main sectors, a resurgent Catholicism, a disestablished Church of England of mainly evangelical Anglicans, a theologically liberal Free Church and a network of believer baptising, charismatic streams. *Renewal* they see as being at a cross roads, the future depending on the readiness of older leaders to provide opportunities for their successors to emerge. *Revival* is recognised to be beyond our control, although if it comes British evangelicals are seen to have a potentially pivotal contribution to make.

There is already plenty of evidence that evangelicalism today is not a unified movement and we have to speak of a spectrum of evangelical opinion, covering a range of views and having very fuzzy edges. No one, then is talking about the future of an already stable movement. Quite the opposite. A paper to be presented at the National Assembly of Evangelicals in November 1996 expresses concern that contemporary attitudes to Statements of Faith are either to use them as flags of convenience which are not enforced too seriously, or to exploit them by an appeal to hermeneutics which justifies different, yet contrasting interpretations and mental reservations.

Neither will many disagree with the assumption that the next five years will not be the same as the last five. The church does not stand still. Times change and people, who comprise the church, also change. Events in society around us inevitably impact upon the church. What we are also unable to forecast are the unexpected novelties of the devils schemes or the extraordinary works of the sovereign Spirit of God.

Let me suggest, however, five of the more significant theological factors which I believe will influence evangelicalism, and particularly evangelical relationships, in the foreseeable future.

1. Confusion over justification

Recent scholarship professing to be Biblical has profoundly affected evangelical perceptions of the doctrine of justification. The 1992 Anglican-Lutheran Porvoo Common Statement uses the concepts and the language made familiar in the reports of ARCIC II in failing to treat justification as a distinct and forensic act. Instead it is conflated with sanctification and reduced to being only one, and not the most important, model of salvation found in Scripture. Any reader of the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians will recognise that this is not the way the Bible treats justification and it is highly dangerous. It opens the way for a wholesale review of the Protestant Reformation. While many evangelicals had previously been ready to co-operate with the Roman Catholic Church as co-belligerents in social witness they are now being told that formal church separation from it is no longer necessary. From being the objects of evangelism Roman Catholics are being portrayed as our partners in mission. In some quarters this has already become the orthodox evangelical view and those who dissent from it are patronisingly dismissed as being stuck in a sixteenth century time-war.

This re-appraisal of relationships with the Church of Rome is being fed by the vitality of the charismatic movement within that church and the emergence of the Evangelical Catholic Initiative in Dublin. The acceptance of the RC Church into the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland and the enthusiasm for evangelical involvement shown by Anglican and Baptist evangelicals are likely to further soften the former lines of separation. Added to this is the unresolved political dilemma in Northern Ireland, still being blamed on religious fundamentalists who insist on perpetuating what are perceived in the popular mind as out-of-date theological distinctives. Furthermore the British media frequently portray the Anglican establishment as woolly over ethical issues while RC morality is given an unrealistically ideal press for being so uncompromised! All of which suggests that the next five years are likely to see growing social and spiritual influence for the Roman Catholic Church and more problems for those of us who question that trend.

2. The open evangelical

Correspondents in the Church of England Newspaper in the early part of 1995 reflected on the Evangelical Leaders Conference held in January of that year, when the definition of evangelical was raised once again. Those committed to the inerrancy of Scripture were criticised and it was insisted that the true evangelical must leave room for the humanity of the Biblical writers. It was a controversy sadly reminiscent of the separation of the Inter Varsity Fellowship from the Student Christian Movement in the 1920s. The so called open evangelical is apparently ready to accept not only errors in the Bible but contradictions between Jesus and Paul, together with serious ambiguities about moral guidance. 1996 saw the publication of *Strangers and Friends*, written by a professing evangelical so open that he is able to grant biblical validity for homosexual practice.

Another recent and formative book has given focus to a whole movement. Since Dave Tomlinson wrote *The Post-Evangelical* in 1995 the concept has gained popularity and a conference was held in July 1996 on *Is there life after evangelicalism?* It is hard not to see here a baptised version of post-modernism, with its cultural relativism and plural concept of truths instead of truth. Mark Johnston's review of this book (*Foundations*, No 36, pp 40-43) shows how the hermeneutical principles it advocates are increasingly common in evangelical

institutions. This is not a domestic controversy among Anglicans for it goes to the very heart of our gospel authority. To say the least, co-operation between those wearing the same evangelical label but at loggerheads about their basic source of authority will become increasingly hard to achieve. Some suggest that these strains will prove too strong for some Anglicans, resulting in a reluctant evangelical secession. The more likely outcome, however, will be an evangelical church within the church similar to the two Anglican bodies in South Africa. Moves towards alternative episcopal oversight in the shape of Regional Advisers in the *Reform* group of Anglicans certainly point in this direction.

3. Uncertainty over the lost

Hell is an emotive subject. Its character is real and awesome. Our Lord himself repeatedly spoke of it in the most solemn terms. The eternal punishment of the wicked used to be a common element in evangelical statements of faith. Today's evangelicals, however, are not so sure about hell, as more and more question hell's unending duration and prefer to speak of some kind of annihilationism. Even highly respected evangelicals like John Stott hesitate to be dogmatic about this. The 1996 General Synod commended a report called, *The Mystery of Salvation* which the popular media saw as reducing hell to *nothingness*, leaving evangelical critics of the report in a minority.

Then there is the question of those who have never heard the gospel. Can those in other religions be saved without having heard the name of Jesus and consciously believed on him? The principals of two leading independent Bible Colleges, Peter Cotterell (now retired from LBC) and Christopher Wright (ANCC), think that they can and have published work to promote these beliefs. The mixed reaction to these views in mission circles is interesting, since both have themselves served honourably as overseas missionaries. Quite apart from the genuine fears about the implications of their arguments for the exegesis of Scripture, many of their mission colleagues foresee that the next generation of candidates must inevitably look outside the eternal consequences of unbelief for their motivation. The growing popularity of these views has yet to be felt in some evangelical missionary organisations. But it will come.

4. Worship styles

Evangelical worship culture has gone through considerable change in the last three decades. Since they reflect the context of contemporary society these changes are unlikely to slow down. What is called post-modernism refuses to adopt one overall style. The implications of this are especially painful for the serious-minded evangelical church committed to the centrality of preaching and refusing to dispense with what has stood the test of time. Even those committed to a liturgical pattern are now permitted so many alternatives that pick and mix services are almost universal. The understandable concern to be contemporary has easily degenerated into the tyranny of novelty. Christians return from major national events with songs, tapes and ideas which they cannot wait to share with their home church. What is nothing less than an almost total breakdown in respect for ministerial leadership has created space for these innovations to take root, with all the subsequent disruptions this can feed. No wonder local church unity is everywhere under strain.

Few features of evangelical life are more likely to cause separation between local churches than forms of worship. The exercise of charismatic gifts and the accompaniment of physical phenomena are almost universal in some sectors of evangelicalism. Many

regard them as the new orthodoxy and, given a little time, all but the evangelical Luddites will catch up. But where does that leave those with serious biblical questions about these worship styles? Can two walk together unless they are agreed? If we cannot pray together how can we work together, since prayer is itself the essence of our work? Co-operating in evangelism, in youth work, in leadership training, all these happen in the context of corporate worship. Without a sense of proportion about these very fundamental questions, further separation between gospel churches at different points on this spectrum seems inescapable.

5. Ecumenism and world faiths

Canberra was the setting for the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1991 and the evangelical responses were decidedly cool. What disappointed them was not only an absence of a real theology of the Holy Spirit at an Assembly devoted to that theme but the presence of so much overt syncretism, denying the uniqueness of Christ (*Beyond Canberra*, Regnum Books, 1993). As ecumenism becomes more free from its Biblical moorings we must not be surprised that the ship is sailing closer to these rocks. Domestically, Methodist discussions with the Church of England are said to be on course for a gradual integrating of ministries but full inter-communion may have to wait until Anglicans admit women bishops, since Methodists already have women in their equivalent of the episcopate. The Anglicans will vote first in 1997 and, if they agree to proceed, the Methodists will consider their options in 1998. The United Reformed Church already has 200 joint congregations with Methodists and has an observer at these talks.

Contemporary theology in the secular universities reflects the dominant world-view of humanist subjectivism, where every person's god is as good as the other and every person's truth is as valid as the other. Ironically, that very threat to Bible absolutes has driven some evangelicals to co-operate with any who stand for an objective Christian theology and has led them into a new rapprochement with Roman Catholics in the United States. The RC Church is, however, far from the monolithic body it once was and some of its academics, like Paul Knitter, are as close to universalism as the Hindus. Herbert Pollitt has amply documented the influence of this New Age thinking on the church (*The Inter-Faith Movement*, Banner of Truth, 1996). If the spirit of the age remains as strong an influence on the church as it has previously been then we can expect to hear a lot more of Creation Theology, well beyond sandal-wearing seminars at the Greenbelt Festival.

May I close by disclaiming any prophetic gift. I shall feel under no obligation to answer the bell to anyone arriving at my door in November 2001 with a copy of this article in one hand and carrying a large stone in the other.

(This article expands material the author earlier contributed to For Such a Time as This: Perspectives on Evangelicalism, Past, Present and Future, eds. Steve Brady & Harold Rowdon, Scripture Union, 1996, chapter 24)

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The Puritan Movement in England

Peter Golding

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar interest from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests...Perhaps the most remarkable body of men which the world has ever produced.

Lord Macaulay

Wherever the religion, the language, or the free spirit of our country has forced its way, the Puritans of old have some memorial. They have moulded the character and shaped the laws of other lands, and tinged with their devout shades unnumbered congregations of Christian worshippers, even where no allegiance is professed, or willing homage done to their peculiarities. It is a party that has numbered in its ranks many of the best, and not a few of the greatest men that England has enrolled upon her history.

JB Marsden, *History of the Early Puritans*

The Puritans, as a body, have done more to elevate the national character than any class of Englishmen that ever lived.

Bishop JC Ryle of Liverpool

Puritanism entered our bone and sinew; it gave an immense strength and discipline to our nation in the days of its grandeur.

Professor AG Dickens, *The English Reformation*

According to the church historian, Thomas Fuller, "Puritanism" as a recognised descriptive term first came into use about the year 1564. But who were the Puritans, and what was Puritanism? Surprisingly perhaps, these questions are more easily asked than answered.

I. A confused issue

In the words of Dr John Brown, "Puritanism was not so much an organised system as a religious temper and a moral force".¹ This is clearly borne out in the history of the period under review, for the term was by no means confined to those who separated from the Church of England, but included many who remained within her pale. However, as a modern writer puts it, "the definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' have been, since their earliest use in England, a matter of crowded debate and widespread confusion".² Ferguson puts it similarly: "The problem of defining the concept 'Puritan' in historical terms has been frequently and inconclusively discussed".³

That being the case, some consideration needs to be given at the very outset to an understanding of the Puritan ethos, and hopefully also to a working definition of Puritanism as an historical phenomenon. In doing so, one must not be influenced by a popular misconception "the assumption that the Puritans were primarily strict and dour moralists, kill-joys and even hypocrites." This is the most common modern sense of the word, but "to read it back into history is an error".⁴ As one of the greatest modern authorities in this field expresses it, "Puritanism...should be defined with respect to the Puritans, and not vice versa".⁵

The Methodists of the 18th century, and to some extent the Fundamentalists of the 20th, have both suffered from a similar misconception. No doubt there were some associated with the Puritan movement who fell into the above-mentioned categories, and the popular image dies hard, but to stigmatize Puritanism as a whole in that way simply will not stand up to historical investigation: and rigorous historical investigation above all is what is required here. For example, an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 3 August 1991 describes the Puritans as those who “enjoyed smashing stained-glass windows”.⁶ An earlier report on the recent emphasis on physical health and fitness in the US referred to it as “the new Puritanism in the workplace,” and “the new Puritanism which is flaunted even within the White House”!⁷ “Puritan” may well have been used as a term of opprobrium during the period under investigation (as will be shown), but only by its opponents and enemies, who were hardly unbiased. Anyone seeking to grasp the nature of Puritanism, therefore, has to free his mind from popular prejudice and misunderstanding.

The fact of the matter is that, like Christianity itself, Puritanism is an historical phenomenon; and as such, “it must be investigated on the basis of historical evidence,” and “can be determined only by an examination of (its) beginnings...”.⁸

2. The problem of definition

How then do we define Puritanism? John Adair writes: “In fact, ‘Puritan’ was one of several names applied by contemporary critics and enemies to ‘the hotter sort of Protestants’”.⁹ But although indicative of their zeal, this gives little information as to their distinctive outlook and beliefs, the rationale by which they were motivated. “The hotter sort of protestants are called puritans”, explains the Elizabethan pamphleteer Percival Wiburn in his *A checke or reproofe of M. Howlet’s untimely schreeching*,¹⁰ – but he was “innocent of the sophistication of later discussions of the problem”.¹¹ In similar vein, GR Elton in his history of *England under the Tudors*, describes these men as “puritans” because they wanted “a religion ‘purified’ of all the works of Rome”.¹² This too is inadequate. It provides a good definition of “protestant”, but is too simplistic as a description of “puritan”. In his introduction to a study of the Puritan doctrine of Assurance, a recent contributor to the Westminster Theological Journal raises the issue thus:

What was it that defined English Puritanism? Was it essentially a theological movement, emphasizing covenant theology, predestination, and a reformed church service? Or was the heart of the matter political, asserting the inalienable rights of conscience before God, the rule of natural law over arbitrary prerogative courts, the dependency of the king in parliament, the foundation of state authority in the people? Some modern research has pointed to a third possibility, that the essence of Puritanism was its piety, a stress on conversion, on existential, heartfelt religion.¹³

No small testimony to the creativity and far-reaching influence of the Puritans lies in the fact that a steady stream of works exploring Puritan contributions in these three areas continues to be produced. The fact is that because the English Puritans engaged in such a diversity of effort, it is inevitable that scholarship should appear to present such a fragmented picture of them. For instance, Prof. John Fiske, “who has been ranked as one of the two greatest American historians”,¹⁴ says:

It is not too much to say that in the seventeenth century, the entire political future of mankind was staked upon the questions that were at issue in England. Had it not been

for the Puritans, political liberty would probably have disappeared from the world. If ever there were men who laid down their lives in the cause of all mankind, it was those grim old Ironsides, whose watch-words were texts of Holy Writ, whose battle-cries were hymns of praise.¹⁵

For more detailed consideration of the political aspect, (in the 17th century), William Haller's brilliant study *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* should be consulted.¹⁶ To some students of the period, if Oliver Cromwell and his secretary John Milton were Puritans, then Puritanism must have been a political movement. To others, if John Owen was a Puritan, then it must have been a theological movement. While to still others, if John Bunyan was a Puritan, then it must have been a pietistic movement. To this kind of approach, it is almost inconceivable that such disparate people should not only be identified with, but be organically related to one essential movement. But the thesis of this study is that this fissiparous tendency in Puritan scholarship needs to be countered with what it is hoped to establish as the unifying principle, the definitive core of Puritanism. In a paper delivered in 1990 entitled, *The Nature of Puritanism*, AA Davies expresses this desideratum somewhat humorously as follows: "Like the National Debt, inflation, and the girth of the middle-aged, the meaning of the term 'Puritan' has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished!"¹⁷ Today, it is applied, usually with contempt, to people who are, or who are regarded as, "strict, precise, or scrupulous in religion or morals".¹⁸ John Adair speaks of "the Puritan within us", identifying five characteristics which he believes we have inherited from our Puritan forebears: the Puritan ethic of hard work (and virtually possessing redemptive value); the concept of marriage as a union of spirit, mind and body; cultural simplicity, whether of music, architecture, clothes, or preaching; the belief that scientific investigation is more important than traditional authority; and Puritan values such as involvement in public life, contractual responsibilities, political realism, and self-examination.¹⁹ Nor is this expansion of the term a modern phenomenon; it happened in the 17th century as well. For example, "Puritan" was used in a political sense of those who favoured the restricting of the power of the monarchy by parliament, or even those people "who opposed a Spanish foreign policy".²⁰ Archbishop Whitgift, James I, and even Prince Charles have been dubbed "Puritans"! When used religiously, the term included on the one hand "rigid Calvinists" who favoured the Synod of Dort (1618), and on the other any who sought, like Richard Baxter's father, to read the Bible when others were Morris-dancing etc. on the Sabbath, to pray at home, to reprove drunkards and swearers, and to speak sometimes a few words regarding the life to come.²¹

The truth is that, as Elizabethan society became more secular, affluent, and worldly, "the criteria for determining who was a Puritan became progressively weakened and widened so as to include most serious-minded Protestants who dared to question the freedom of Englishmen to say or do as they pleased on any day of the week".²² "He that has not every word on oath...they say he is a puritan, a precise fool, not fit to hold a gentleman company," wrote a certain Barnaby Rich.²³ By 1641, Henry Parker was complaining about people who enlarged the term to include "any civil, honest, Protestant", and then contracted it so that it was used of "none but monstrous abominable heretics and miscreants".²⁴ Such has been the inflation of the term that CH and K George have argued that the word "Puritan" is the *x* of a social equation: it has no meaning beyond that given it by the particular manipulator of an algebra of abuse.²⁵ However,

inflation needs to be brought under control, and we need to strip away subsequent accretions to the name in order to arrive at an accurate historical definition.

"Puritan" itself was an imprecise term of contemptuous abuse, which between 1564 and 1642 (these exact dates are given by Thomas Fuller and Richard Baxter²⁶) was applied to at least five overlapping groups of people: – first, to clergy who scrupled some Prayer Book ceremonies and phrasing; second, to advocates of the Presbyterian reform programme broached by Thomas Cartwright (Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge), and the 1572 *Admonition to the Parliament*; third, to clergy and laity, not necessarily non-conformists, who practised a serious Calvinistic piety; fourth, to "rigid Calvinists" who applauded the Synod of Dort, and were called doctrinal Puritans by other Anglicans who did not; fifth, to MPs, JPs, and other gentry who showed public respect for religion, the laws of England, and the rights of subjects.²⁷

The description of Puritans as "rigid Calvinists" first appeared in print in M Antonius de Dominis, *The Cause of his Return, out of England*.²⁸ The equation had already been made, however, in a private document drawn up by John Overall, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, some time between 1610 and 1619, in which Overall contrasts the tenets of "the Remonstrants or Arminians, and the counter-Remonstrants or Puritans".²⁹

In reply to Professor and Mrs George, then, "there was a specific, though complex and many sided, reality to which all these uses of the 'odious name' really did pertain". This was a clergy-led movement "which for more than a century was held together, and given a sense of identity too deep for differences of judgement on questions of polity and politics to destroy".³⁰

The introductory references to Puritan greatness may seem an unwarranted exercise in hagiography. Pillorying the Puritans, in particular, has long been a popular pastime on both sides of the Atlantic. "Puritan" as a name was, in fact, mud from the start. Coined in the early 1560s, it was always a satirical smear word implying peevishness, censoriousness, conceit, and a measure of hypocrisy, over and above its basic implication of religiously motivated discontent with what was seen as Elizabeth's Laodicean and compromising Church of England.

Later, the word gained the further, political connotation of being against the Stuart monarchy, and for some sort of republicanism; "its primary reference, however, was still to what was seen as an odd, furious, and ugly form of Protestant religion".³¹ In England, anti-Puritan feeling was let loose at the time of the Restoration, and has flowed freely ever since. During the past half-century, however, a major reassessment of Puritanism has taken place in historical scholarship, "Fifty years ago the academic study of Puritanism went over a watershed with the discovery that there was such a thing as Puritan culture, and a rich culture at that, over and above Puritan reactions against certain facets of medieval and Renaissance culture".³² In fact, North America has been in the van of this new assessment with four classic studies published within a period of only two years which ensured that Puritan studies could never be the same again. These were: William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (1938); ASP Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty* (1938); MM Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (1939), described as "magisterial" by Professor Patrick Collinson, himself author of another, more recent classic, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1991); and Perry Miller, *The New England Mind, Vol. I: The Seventeenth Century* (1939).³³

3. Recent reassessment

As a consequence, the conventional image has been radically revamped, and a plethora of more recent researchers have confirmed the view of Puritanism which these four volumes yielded. It is now generally acknowledged that the typical Puritans were not “wild men...religious fanatics and social extremists, but sober, conscientious, and cultured persons: persons of principle...excelling in the domestic virtues, and with no obvious shortcomings save a tendency to run to words when saying anything important”.³⁴ The great Puritan pastor-theologians (to go no further) – Owen, Baxter, Goodwin, Howe, Perkins, Sibbes, Brooks, Watson, Gurnall, Flavel, Bunyan, Manton, and others – “were men of outstanding intellectual power, as well as spiritual insight”.³⁵ “For more than two centuries, since Daniel Neal’s *History of the Puritans*, it has been usual to define the Puritan movement in terms of the power struggle that went on in church and state”;³⁶ and this, of course, is part of the truth, but it leaves the issue of Puritan motives unresolved. According to JI Packer, Dr Irvonwy Morgan supplies the vital clue. He writes:

The essential thing in understanding the Puritans was that they were preachers before they were anything else...Into whatever efforts they were led in their attempts to reform the world through the Church, and however these efforts were frustrated by the leaders of the Church, what bound them together, undergirded their striving, and gave them the dynamic to persist was their consciousness that they were called to preach the Gospel.³⁷

In other words, Puritanism was at heart a spiritual movement, passionately concerned with the glory of God and the life of godliness. It was this from its inception. So it was not, as William Haller often implies,³⁸ that the Puritan clergy turned to preaching and pastoral work as a means to the end of building-up a lay constituency strong enough to secure the reformation in church order which by 1570 they found was unattainable by direct action.

The truth is rather that, as Edward Dering’s John Knox-like sermon before Elizabeth in 1570 and the 1572 *Admonition* (to look no further) make plain, the end to which all church order, on the Puritan view, was a means, and for which everything superstitious, misleading and Spirit-quenching must be rooted out, was the glory of God in and through the salvation of sinners and the building up of lively congregations in which people met God.³⁹

The basis of this outlook was to be found in the Puritan view of Scripture as the “regulative principle” of doctrine and practice (and more especially of church worship and order – of which more anon). Puritanism, then, was in Packer’s words, “a movement for church reform, pastoral renewal and evangelism, and spiritual revival”.⁴⁰ In addition, and as an immediate expression of its zeal for the honour of God, it was a world-view, a total Christian philosophy and way of life. To summarise: the Puritan aim was to complete what the English Reformation had begun: to finish reshaping Anglican worship, to introduce effective church discipline into Anglican parishes, and to establish righteousness in the political, domestic, and socio-economic fields. So Prof. Basil Hall points out that we should use the term historically, as it was used by those who made it: i.e. of those “restlessly critical and occasionally rebellious members of the Church of England”,⁴¹ who desired the further purification of their Church, in membership, worship, and government.

4. The essential concern

Historically, then, the essential concern of Puritanism was that the Protestant Reformation begun in the reign of Henry VIII, and furthered under Edward VI, should be completed. Clearly, that is the way Thomas Fuller understood it in 1655 when, writing of the year 1564, he said that "Puritan" was an "odious" nickname of abuse thrown at those ministers who refused to subscribe to the liturgy, ceremonies, and discipline of the established Church urged upon them by the bishops.⁴² This understanding of the term was confirmed by John Gere in his *The Character of an old English Puritane, or Non-Conformist* (1646); by William Bradshaw in his *English Puritanism* (1605), and by Richard Baxter in his *Autobiography*.⁴³

If it is confined to this narrower sense, it will exclude the Separatists, who did not protest within but seceded from the national Church. However, "both Puritans and mainstream Separatists shared common ideas and ideals, and desired greater purity in the Churches and in the lives of their members".⁴⁴ The difference between them was initially one of "strategy, patience, and timing." The Puritans were patently much closer to the Separatists in a theological and spiritual sense than they were to the Roman Catholics, or even to the Anglicanism of Laud or Hooker. As Professor Hall admits: "perhaps nothing can now prevent most writers from describing Browne, Penry, Robinson, Milton, Cromwell, Bunyan as Puritans, alongside of Cartwright, Travers, Perkins, and Preston who were Puritans in fact".⁴⁵

Considered from this dual standpoint, Dr DM Lloyd-Jones, a modern "Puritan", was not self-contradictory in defining Puritanism in two different ways. On the one hand, "Essential Puritanism", he argued, "was not primarily a preference for one form of church government rather than another; but it was that outlook and teaching which put its emphasis upon a life of spiritual, personal religion, an intense realization of the presence of God, a devotion of the entire being to Him".⁴⁶ Elsewhere, in dealing with the perennial problem that people will persist in thinking of Puritanism as "just a narrow view of ethics, and of morality, and of conduct...as just a negative protest against pleasures, he adds:

But that is not Puritanism. The essence of Puritanism was a desire that the Reformation in the Church of England should be completed.⁴⁷

From this standpoint, Lord Macaulay gets to the nub of the issue. The Puritans, he says, were men "convinced that the reform which had been effected under King Edward (VI) had been far less searching and extensive than the interests of pure religion required".⁴⁸ From its beginnings in the early days of Elizabeth's reign (1558-1603), the Puritan movement had this clear objective. In the words of William Haller, one of the greatest modern authorities in this field, "The Puritans sought to push reform of government, worship, and discipline in the English Church beyond the limits fixed by the Elizabethan settlement".⁴⁹ When Elizabeth came to the throne, "the Reformation was secure but not complete. It was the Puritans' aim to make it complete".⁵⁰

It is true that in this purpose they failed, "and if this had been all, Puritanism would never have become the revolutionary force it proved to be in the life of the English people, and of people within the English tradition throughout the world".⁵¹ Certainly, Puritanism was much bigger than the desire to reconstitute the ecclesiastical organization of society. It was in fact "nothing but English Protestantism in its most dynamic form",⁵²

and before it had run its course, “it had transfused in large measure the whole of English life”.⁵³ Hence the Puritan movement developed down to the outbreak of revolution in 1649 not only as a campaign for reorganizing the institutional structure of the church, but also as a concerted and sustained enterprise of preachers for setting forth in pulpit and press a conception of spiritual life and moral behaviour. In this sense, Puritanism was not incompatible with any given ecclesiastical system, episcopalian, presbyterian, or congregational, and in so being, “it changed the face of both church and nation far more radically than all their ecclesiastical and political planning could have done”.⁵⁴ However, the Puritans were all of one mind in this, whatever their other differences, that from the ecclesiastical standpoint, the Reformation of the Church of England had, because of political expediency, been stunted before it could be conformed to the primitive simplicity of the New Testament model. “Neither the civil nor ecclesiastical powers, they maintained, had the authority to add to, subtract from, or modify the sufficient, definitive teaching of the New Testament in its pattern of Church government and Church life”.⁵⁵ “In sum, all Puritans were against any priest or ceremony being interposed between the Christian soul and its Maker,” says Maurice Ashley in his *History of the Seventeenth Century*.⁵⁶ The whole discussion can be summed up by another modern authority on this period, MM Knapen:

The term “Puritan” is used...to designate the outlook of those English Protestants who actively favoured a reformation beyond that which the crown was willing to countenance and who yet stopped short of Anabaptism. It therefore includes both Presbyterians and Independents, Separatists and Non-Separatists. It also includes a number of Anglicans who accepted the episcopal system, but who nevertheless desired to model it and English Church life in general on the Continental Reformed pattern.⁵⁷

Such was the Puritan ethos as it developed under Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I, and blossomed in the Interregnum, before it withered in the dark tunnel of persecution between 1660 (Restoration) and 1689 (Toleration).

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Book Review

Only One Way

Hywel R. Jones

Day One Publications, 1996, 144pp £5.99
ISBN 0902548700

The former Principal of London Theological Seminary, has written a useful book to argue that those who are not evangelised have no hope of salvation. It is one of the series being produced by the FIEC Theological Committee. The occasion for his book is primarily the publication of books by Peter Cotterell, the former Principal of London Bible College and Clark Pinnock, a lecturer at McMaster Divinity School, Ontario. They argue that there may be salvation for those who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the response to recent writings by professing evangelicals, that makes this a useful addition to older books on the subject such as those by Oswald Sanders and Dick Dowsett.

In a short first chapter, Hywel Jones, sets out his pattern for the book. He first tackles the interpretation of Acts 4:12, where he counters the suggestion that the verse does not mean that no one can be saved without conscious faith in Christ. In chapter 3 he looks at the *Ten Theses* which Cotterell presents in his book *Mission and Meaninglessness* arguing in particular against the view that God would be unjust to condemn those who have not had the opportunity to reject the Gospel message. Two further chapters deal with the so-called "Pagan Saints" in Old and New Testaments, who are advanced by Pinnock as arguments for the possibility of salvation assured to people who did not know the Christ or even the revelation of Yahweh. Moving on from the arguments of these particular scholars, Dr Jones then addresses other arguments that have been put forward by evangelicals as optimistic for the salvation of some

unevangelised people. A final chapter entitled *Finding Our Bearings* is a restatement of the classic evangelical position enshrined in the Reformed Confessions that there is salvation only for those who have faith in Christ. The only exception recognised by the confessions is "elect infants dying in infancy" and "other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word."

It might seem that there is little for readers of *Foundations* to criticise in this book. That would be a right conclusion. In general Dr Jones is fair to his opponents, but there are a few points which might be addressed.

In the search for the origin of evangelical equivocation on the implications of Acts 4:12, Jones suggests (p.13) that FF Bruce in his 1951 commentary "possibly opened a door to a weakened interpretation of this verse". The 1951 commentary was a very technical work on the Greek text. When in 1988 his fuller NICNT was published, Bruce was as clear on salvation being only through Christ as any one could hope. The criticism on the same page of Stott and Marshall for a failure to emphasise particular words in the verse, would seem to be an unnecessary multiplication of opponents rather than the identification of real error in respected commentators. The writings of Don Richardson (e.g. *Peace Child* and *Eternity in their Hearts*) are not noticed as seminal in developing evangelical acceptance of the possibility of salvation without hearing the Gospel. These are well criticised by Bruce Demarest in his contribution to *One God, One Lord in a world of Religious pluralism* (The Tyndale Study Groups lectures of 1991 to which strangely Dr Jones does not refer).

Dr Jones is generous to historical figures

when they express views which are in direct contradiction to his own. John Wesley is a man “whose evangelical zeal cannot be doubted”, but he also “regarded it as possible that some heathen might have been taught the essentials of true religion” (p. 7). This is dismissed as “human inconsistency”. Might not some of his living opponents be similarly affected? Calvin’s comments on Acts 10 are quoted in the Forward (why could not this have been in the more intelligible Torrance translation?), but it is only later that the continuation of his quote is noted where it becomes clear that Calvin viewed Cornelius as a regenerated man *before* he sent messengers to call Peter. He does not quote the part of Calvin’s comment that argues Cornelius must have been regenerate to have prayed an acceptable prayer. One wonders whether there was in past centuries quite such total agreement on this subject as Dr Jones would like us to think. Might it not be the case that the subject was never completely tackled in the context with which we are currently interacting. As David Wright says in his article on Vatican II (as part of the 1991 Tyndale Study Groups papers to which we have already referred p. 170) “The sixteenth-century Reformers had a very limited awareness of the world beyond the bounds of Christendom. It was sufficiently circumscribed to be capable of being managed, theologically, by notions such as common grace. Protestantism’s apprehension of that territory *extra Christum* has steadily expanded without, it seems, any corresponding expansion of theological horizons”. Whilst one wants to maintain the position that seems to be enshrined in the Reformation Confessions, a fuller apologia is necessary in the light of our modern interactions with the followers of other faiths. It is clear from Dr Jones book that some of the developed thinking of evangelical Christians has gone astray. However allowance should be made for some loose comments being intended to indicate a

sympathetic understanding of how difficult it is culturally for modern Christians to assert that there is “No other name...”.

Dr Jones’ argument is best when he is expounding scripture. His opponents have been guilty of taking verses out of their contexts in order to make them say what they want. It is very clear that no-one who understands the flow of Paul’s argument in Romans is going to assert that 2:14-15 means that those who haven’t heard the Gospel might be saved. The tendency to quote isolated verses as proof texts is not limited to those who hold erroneous positions. All must continually check that the use that is made of any verse of Scripture is completely justified within its whole context.

Dr Jones rightly asserts that a belief about the fate of the unevangelised will influence attitudes to the task of taking the Gospel to those who have never heard. Fortunately it is not always true that people with wrong ideas about the fate of the unevangelised have no interest in world mission. A number of modern young Christians, as a result of poor teaching, would place themselves in an “optimistic agnostic” position and yet they have a desire to take the Gospel to those who have never heard. Conversely it is sad to note that there are people within the FIEC and similar constituencies, who would faithfully affirm all that Hywel is arguing, and yet have no concern either to go to preach to those who have never heard nor to properly support those who are going. This praxis needs to be addressed by the FIEC as well as the theological thinking at which this book is aimed.

The book is attractively produced and the only point at which the printer seems have failed the writer is in leaving out the underlining he promises us in *italicised text*!

Ray Porter

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ISSN 0144-378X

Typeset by Quinta Business Services, nr Oswestry, 01691 778659
Printed in the UK by Horseshoe Press, Stowmarket
