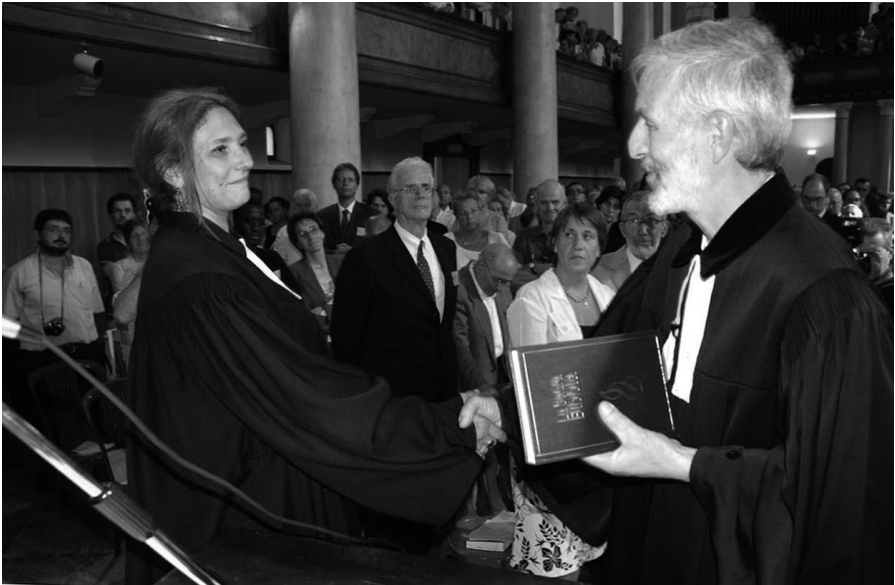


THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW



No. 111

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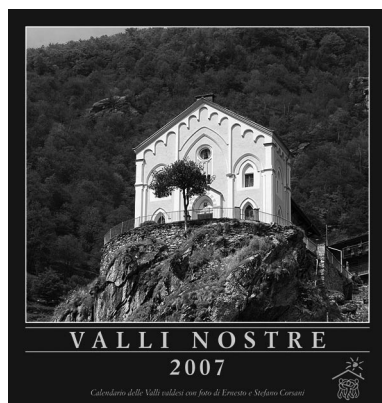
From the Editor

Dear friends,

Thank you as ever for your words of praise for the *Review* and for your support in money and prayers for the work of the Mission. As you know we are an interdenominational group of friends of the Waldensian Church supporting its work in Italy, particularly in areas that don't receive any help from public funding. Churches and places of worship as well as preaching and evangelisation rely exclusively on private donations and that is where we like to help. The new church in **Trapani**, opened last year, still needs help in sorting out some pending debts and we would like to carry on supporting the Confirmation classes for the youth of **Sicily**.

As I had anticipated in the last issue, **Daniele Pevarello**, who has been a pastor in Torre Pellice for over a year, has now arrived in Cambridge to research for a Ph.D in Theology at the Faculty of Divinity. **Will you help the Committee to top up his grant with some well-deserved and much-needed pocket money?** We are aiming towards being able to provide him with the sum of £25 a week. Every little counts!

Waldensian Calendars



If you have never bought one before this is the one you **MUST HAVE!** It has as usual stunning views of the Waldensian Valleys and Bible verses in 5 languages but also this year on the reverse pages, one by one, it has all the information one may need about **ALL THE CHURCH-RUN HOTELS AND HOLIDAY CENTRES IN ITALY. FROM PALACES IN FLORENCE AND VENICE TO STUNNING SEASIDE RESORTS TO LUXURIOUS YET AFFORDABLE HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN ROME, PALERMO AND OBVIOUSLY TORRE PELLICE, IN THE HEARTLAND OF THE WALDEN-**

SIAN VALLEYS. Colour pictures, details and contacts are included. Buy one for yourself and two or more for your best friends. Ideal Christmas 'little presents' and ideal first contact for those who have never heard before of the Waldensian Valleys, their inhabitants and their fascinating 800+ years history. **ONLY £6.50 p&p included! Order by sending a cheque, payable to 'Waldensian Church Mission', to Milvia Walker, 19 Forest Approach, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 9BW.** Tel. 0208 5051664. Don't forget to add your address.

Cover photo: The ordained Giovanna Vernarecci with Professor Ermanno Genre (photo Pietro Romeo).

From the Chairman

Dear Friends

Once again we've been able to disperse funds towards the work of the Waldensian & Methodist Churches in Italy. In particular, the committee decided to help the community of Cerignola in Apulia, where they are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the church. There, the work with the youth groups and the bible study groups has developed well, and a further grant we felt would help sustain it. We do thank you for your help in enabling us to do this. Your support is necessary and much appreciated by the folk there.

We also need to thank some people who have been on the committee for all the work they have undertaken, but who have now felt the need to resign. George and Sheila Dunn, who joined the committee in 1973, have resigned. They looked after all the pamphlets and books for us, and earned our gratitude for doing so. Another in particular is Revd Jonathan Calvert, who joined the committee 19 years ago. Having moved to Birmingham, he has found it progressively difficult to join in committee work, though he and his church will be remaining firm supporters. Someone else we also want to thank is Revd Dr Tim Macquiban, Principal of Sarum College at Salisbury. He has been on the committee for a long time, some 10 years, has served as its vice-chairman, and given valuable support. Dr Pamela Cressey, too, has needed to resign, after being with us for a shorter time. All of them are people whom we shall miss, and whom we are thankful to have had with us. In the meantime we are delighted that a long-term friend and supporter of the committee, Richard Newbury, has joined the committee, bringing with him all his knowledge and understanding of the Waldenses.

Sadly, we have just heard that Mrs Mary Ward, wife of the late Bishop Arthur Ward who was Executive Secretary for several years and then Patron of our committee, died on 31 August 2006. Her funeral was at the beginning of September. She will be remembered as a great supporter of her husband in his work with the committee, and we send our sympathy and prayers to their son and daughter Ian and Christine.

The AwayDay & AGM held in May at Salisbury this year produced interesting discussion in respect to the excellent talks given to us by the three speakers. We had hoped to break new ground in Salisbury, where the student we had been supporting had been studying under Revd Dr. Tim Macquiban and had become well known amongst the churches there. It was not to be, though, for the numbers were lower than expected. In 2007 we are planning to return to London for the event, and details will be announced in the Spring Review. Do come. It's an opportunity to meet new friends, and we look forward to seeing you. Keep us and all our work in your prayers.

God bless you all,

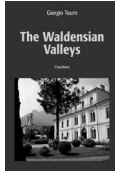
Yours

Eric Murray

AWAYDAY 2007

This will take place on 12 May at the French Church in Soho Square, London. Keep this date free and we'll let you have the details in the new year.

You'll have a chance to hear informed speakers such as Dr David Thompson from the Faculty of Divinity of Cambridge University and you'll be able to meet our 'Waldensian Scholar in Residence' Daniele Pevarello.



We recommend this new Guide of the Waldensian Valleys (Giorgio Tourn, Claudiana). Waldensian history village by village, peak by peak: plenty of anecdotes, colour photographs, maps and everything one needs to know is in this pocket-sized paperback. Only £8 (instead of £10) plus p&p to our readers (see back cover).

Italian Scholars in Cambridge

This is not in itself unusual, but it is unusual to have two very distinguished ones and both with a Protestant background. Daniele Pevarello is a graduate from the Waldensian Faculty of Theology and was the second pastor of Torre Pellice for a year and a half. He is a very gifted preacher and has been greatly appreciated by the community which is usually very difficult to please. It was a lucky (or better providential) coincidence that I was in Torre Pellice Church the day of his first sermon and that after the service we started talking and he revealed his plans about hoping to study in Cambridge. One day Daniele will be a wonderful minister but for the time being his ambition is to develop his research into the Ancient Testament from the perspective uniting Philology, Theology and Social History. He had been offered places and scholarships by the best Universities of half the world, from the most prestigious ones in the USA to the best in Germany and Australia, from Edinburgh to Paris, Lausanne, Manchester and Oxford, but his dream was to do a Ph.D in Cambridge at the Faculty of Divinity. After a year of applications, interviews, examinations in English, trepidation and anxiety he is now happily settled at Westminster Theological College and is a member of Clare Hall. He arrived with his girlfriend Debora Bonnes, who is also a Theologian, in the middle of September and is already working flat out at his research.

During the summer, while studying in the Waldensian Library in Torre Pellice, he met another young man who was also about to leave Italy for Cambridge and they struck up a good friendship. Stefano Gagliano is a Ph.D student at the famous University 'Normale' of Pisa and he is at present researching in Cambridge for about 6 months. His subject is Religious Freedom in Italy after the Risorgimento and Italian Unification in 1860. He is also the last student and the spiritual heir of Professor Giorgio Spini, whose unfinished work he is completing and making it ready for publication. I took a picture of the two together in the Summer and I am very pleased to publish what they have written in order to introduce themselves to our readers.

ESN, Editor

Having attended not less than a dozen different induction ceremonies and meetings, I have been welcomed at least a thousand times since my first day as a new graduate student at the University of Cambridge. The funny thing about those official gatherings, though, is that nobody asks you to reply. So I have chosen the pages of our *Waldensian Review* to introduce myself to all the readers and friends of the Waldensian Church and to say a big 'Thank you!' to all who have welcomed us so warmly.

My name is Daniele Pevarello and I am from Italy. I graduated at the Facoltà Valdese in Rome and I am an ordinand in the Waldensian Church. During the last two years I lived with Debora in Torre Pellice, where I served the Church and continued my pastoral training.

This year I was admitted as a Ph.D student at the Faculty of Divinity in Cambridge, where I will be doing research work in the Department of Jewish and Early Christian Studies. My subject is Christian origins and specially the cosmology of Early Christian believers: the way they spoke and thought of the world they lived in. It really is a dream coming true. Since I was a child I have always been interested in those who preceded us in following Jesus Christ and particularly in their everyday life and thought, in the way they dealt with the Jewish and Pagan beliefs of their neighbours and with family and moral issues.



Stefano Gagliano (left) and Daniele Pevarello outside 'Casa Valdese'.

Many thanks to Erica and Richard Newbury, who submitted my application and took care of the progress (and, with Dr David Thompson, provided all sorts of pastoral care during the interminable procedure of admission), to the Board of the Lewis and Gibson Scholarship, and to Westminster College, where we were offered accommodation in a cosy and pleasant flat right under the roof, where I really feel like Harry Potter.

Debora and I are now about to start our third week in Britain. We hope to get to know as many of you, 'Waldensian' friends, out there as possible during the next three years.

And if you happen to come to Cambridge please do not hesitate to come over for coffee: we still have two spare cans of Italian coffee!!!

*Ciao
Daniele & Debora*

Dear friends,

The Editor of the *Waldensian Review* has asked me to give a short account of what I am doing — so here goes. My name is Stefano Gagliano and I was born in Florence in Italy 30 years ago. I studied in this Athens of the Renaissance until 2005 when I graduated in history with a thesis about the Baptist missions in Italy from the Risorgimento to the Italian Libyan War; in other words from 1862–1912.

For the academic year 2005–2006 I won a scholarship from the Istituto Italiano di Studi Storici (Italian Institute for the Historical Studies) and moved from Florence to Naples. This Historical Institute, situated in the large and stately Filomarino Palace, was founded by Benedetto Croce, the great 20th-century historian and philosopher. In the 18th century this aristocratic Neapolitan family employed Giovanbattista Vico, one of the greatest Italian philosophers, to teach their two little princesses, who in 1799 were to become Revolutionaries who were to be killed by a group of royalist proletarian fanatics, called in the local dialect 'lazzaroni'. Nelson, the English Hero against Napoleon, was to encourage the Neapolitan King to finish this dirty work and because of this many others revolutionaries, both men and women, were to be killed by the 'gracious' hand of Ferdinand IV. Benedetto Croce, who considered Vico a master of the modern philosophical method and looked back to the Neapolitan Revolution as a time of freedom, bought this palace for himself and in 1947 he opened its doors as a place of study.

On completing my researches in Naples, I moved back to the north of Italy to study at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa (like Oxbridge) where I won a scholarship, and where I will continue my historical researches until 2008. However, for two academic terms I am now at the University of Cambridge as a Senior Member of Robinson College, so as to continue work on part of my Ph.D thesis on Italian Protestantism in the vanguard of the struggle for Religious Freedom.

In the 20th century, Italian Protestantism was at the forefront of support for the separation of Church and State and for the abolition of every exclusive ecclesiastical privilege. However, in 1929 the Fascist regime signed the famous Concordat with the Catholic Church. As a result Mussolini introduced a law that gave religious minorities the reduced status of being only 'forms of worship permitted by the State' and this proved a potent instrument for the persecution of the evangelical churches.

When Fascism and then the monarchy fell, the new Italian Republican Constitution in theory promised equal status to non-Catholics, but in reality Italian Protestantism suffered a new persecution under the Catholic Government of the Christian Democrat Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi. There followed a long Parliamentary and legal struggle to win equal rights for Protestants. Equal rights were finally secured for minority churches in 1955.

By the end of 2006 I plan to complete my editing of *Italia di Mussolini e Protestanti* (*Protestants in Mussolini's Italy*), written by the great Italian historian, Giorgio Spini, whose Assistant I was. I had studied with him for many years,

and it was from Spini that I learnt everything that there is to know about studying and writing History. This is why I am so proud to be revising this, his last work, for publication, for it is Spini who inspired me to make a ministry out of my historical vocation.

Stefano Gagliano

Adoramus returns to the Waldensian Valleys

The North London-based Christian Choir and Orchestra Adoramus returned to the Waldensian Valleys at Easter, following on from visits made to the area in 2001 and 2003. Concerts were held in the Waldensian Churches of Turin, Villar Pellice and Pinerolo, as well as in theatres in Villar Perosa and, at the invitation of the Brethren Churches, in Asti.

For most of the Choir it was a return visit, but this time most of the Orchestra were in the Waldensian Valleys for the first time. All 102 (including a number of family and friends) stayed at the Foresteria in Torre Pellice. In between concerts and long rehearsals there were visits to Val D'Angrogna, the Fort at Fenestrelle, Turin and the Waldensian Museum in Torre. Some of the more keen walkers also managed to fit in a day walking through the snow up in the mountains near Sestriere!



Adoramus Choir at Fenestrelle (photo A.Hawes).

The concerts were well received, especially in Villar Pellice and Pinerolo, where the churches were packed out with members of the audience arriving well before the concert began to ensure getting a seat! The concerts involved music by Mozart and Haydn as well as more contemporary pieces. In Turin and Asti the Choir had the privilege of being joined by noted Italian tenor Filippo Pina Castiglioni as Adoramus' tenor soloist had had to pull out at the last moment. In Pinerolo Cristina Cogno, a member of the local congregation, joined us as guest soloist.

On Easter Sunday the Choir sang and joined in worship at the Easter service in the Waldensian Church in Torre Pellice. Being an inter-denominational group, other members of the group joined worshippers at the Catholic and Salvation Army services in Torre Pellice too. The weather was warm enough during the afternoon on Easter Day to permit a rehearsal outside in the grounds of the Waldensian Church in Pinerolo.

The reason for the trip was primarily to bring the good news of the Christian message and to encourage Christians in the area, and just before returning to London the Director received a letter from a local lady saying thank you 'for the emotions that your voices, instruments and prayers have brought to me in the name of God'. Praise God!

Nicky Raddon

AWAYDAY 2006 IN SALISBURY



Tim Macquiban speaking at the AwayDay.

The AwayDay was held in Salisbury on Saturday 20 May 2006 at Salisbury Methodist Church. Obviously the location was not ideal for many and the attendance was disappointingly poor. A shame since the two Historical speeches (by Tim Macquiban on Gilbert Burnet and by Colin Smith on Gladstone and the Waldenses) and the talk by Richard Grocott about his experience as a Minister in Italy were definitely worth a long trip.

Gilbert Burnet and his travels round Europe in the late 17th century

Gilbert Burnet, church historian and latterly (1688–1714) Bishop of Salisbury, was born in Scotland in 1643. His father was a lawyer who hoped his son would follow him in that profession. But he transferred his studies to theology and entered the Church at a time when there were pressures to conform to the restored Stuart monarchy. Nonconformity was suspect and Dissenters hounded and persecuted. From early time Burnet fell in and out of favour,

starting with a policy of moderation towards Dissenters but then abandoning this in favour of scathing attacks on them to court royal favour. He described a nonconformist as 'a very ridiculous and contemptible creature'. Many of his friends in the Church were 'Latitudinarians', those who wanted a broad and comprehensive Church noted for its reasonableness!

From being a Professor of Divinity and royal chaplain in Scotland until 1674, he then moved south to assume important preaching roles in London which allowed him time for his studies and the writing of his 'History of the Reformation', justifying the Protestant and Established Church and defending it against Papal claims. His virulent anti-Catholicism did not endear him to King Charles II nor his Catholic brother James who was to succeed him in 1685. Burnet was implicated in Protestant plots to bar the latter from the throne and felt it wise on James' accession to flee abroad for safety. He only returned in 1688 in the year of the Glorious Revolution to land at Torbay with his friend William of Orange, whose chaplain he was, to support his rival claims to the throne. He was duly rewarded by the gift of the bishopric of Salisbury and preached the Coronation sermon on behalf of the Whig bishops.

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

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



The Revs Smith, Macquiban and Grocott with Prof. Spini and the Editor at Synod 2003.

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

Burnet comments favourably on those cities of Germany where there was peaceful co-existence of Protestants and Catholics, places like Cologne, Dusseldorf and Mannheim, shining examples of 'liberty of conscience'. But pre-eminent was the United Provinces of the Netherlands, 'a pattern to the world' under the guidance of young Prince William whose 'spirit of courage' was to put fresh heart into the Protestant cause in Europe, 'the bulwark of Christendom' against the Catholic absolute monarchies secured by his accession to the thrones of England and Scotland in 1688.

Burnet emerges as a complex character, an advocate of toleration yet fiercely anti-Catholic, desiring a broad church yet harsh towards dissenters. A man of letters whose reading of history saw the nature of the English nation and its reformed Church as crucial for the preservation of liberties not only in these islands but also as defenders of the liberties of oppressed protestants in Europe. In this respect he was a child of his time and a successor to Cromwell in standing shoulder to shoulder with minorities in France and Italy.

Tim Macquiban

Reflections on eleven years as a Mission Partner in Italy

When I begin to tell people that for eleven years, I lived and worked as a Methodist Mission Partner in Italy, one of their first questions is always – Why did you choose to go to Italy? My answer is always that I didn't choose to go there at all. In the spring of 1992, Carol my wife and I made a general offer for overseas work with the then 'Methodist Church Overseas Division' (MCOD) thinking that we might be sent to the Far East, since I had previously lived in Japan before coming into the Methodist Ministry. It was to our great surprise that we were asked to look at an appointment in Rome, where the English language Methodist Church at Ponte Sant' Angelo was looking for a new minister.

In the autumn of 1993, Carol, John (our then three-month-old baby boy) and I arrived in Rome where we spent five years serving a most fascinating multi racial community with members drawn from all four corners of the globe and many different walks of life. We were one of nine English speaking Churches in Rome and enjoyed extremely warm, cordial relations with the other churches covering a wide spectrum of churchmanship. My work also saw me representing Methodism within the Vatican and at various meetings and conferences in the eternal City. Living in Rome was at times a joy, who can not help but be moved by the history that lies behind so many of the eternal city's splendid historic buildings, but at other times Rome could also be a very frustrating place in which to live, the traffic, the pollution, the bureaucracy could be soul destroying at times!

Throughout our five years in Rome, we continued to study the Italian language and eventually got to the point where I could preach and lead worship in Italian. One day, Valdo Benecchi, the President of OPCEMI (The Board of the Italian Methodist Church) asked me to consider moving to an Italian language congregation at Padova in Veneto, the North East of Italy. In the summer of 1998, we made the move not only to a very different kind of Italian City, but also to a very different style of ministry. No longer was I serving expatriates, now my ministry was largely to Italian Protestants, many of whom came from families who could trace their Protestant origins to the work of nineteenth century missionaries. The congregation at Padova was largely white, educated and middle class and they expected a minister to offer them a rather cerebral approach to ministry. My style was rather different, Carol, John and I tried with some success to enliven this church with a more holistic approach to ministry. The photograph overleaf shows the Padova Church celebrating a 'Festa Del Raccolto' (Harvest festival) which we celebrated every year and was something of new departure for them.

Our second Church was at Vicenza; here a small struggling Italian community began to open its doors to the large influx of Ghanaians who were moving into the City, many from Methodist or Reformed backgrounds. During the exciting six years we served this community we saw congregations grow



considerably as we sought to develop a multi racial style of worship, often bilingual, in which Africans and Italians were able to learn from each other and enrich each others style of worship.

As our son began to get older, it became increasingly obvious to us that though he had enjoyed the experience of attending a 'scuola materna' (Primary School) in Padova, the end of his primary education at the age of eleven would be the obvious time for him and us all to return to England. So it was with heavy hearts that we left Italy in the summer of 2004 and came to live in Ashford, Kent, where I have become the Circuit Superintendent, John is doing well at the Boys Grammar School and Carol has found fulfilling employment.

We continue to look back on the eleven years we spent in Italy with great warmth and affection, we would not have missed it for all the world! We were lucky enough to purchase a small holiday apartment in Trentino before we left and so we return there a number of times every year, which allows us to keep in touch with many old friends. I have also developed a great sense of respect for the work of the Waldensian church in Italy, and so was delighted to accept an invitation to become a trustee of the English Waldensian Society.

Richard Grocott

Synod 2006 in Torre Pellice

The preacher of the opening service of the Synod, Rev Ermanno Genre, a Professor at the Faculty of Theology, underlined the necessity of stepping

lightly on our threatened Earth, of sharing fairly the increasingly scarce resources of food and water of the planet and of fighting injustice and poverty. The Christian Churches alone cannot solve the immense problems we all face but they can push governments in the right direction, bearing witness to the wonderful gift of sharing. The first sharing starts at the Communion table and the 'Eucharistic hospitality' among different Churches is a blessing. Therefore it is unfortunate that the Roman Catholic Church still keeps her distance from the others. The whole congregation blessed Giovanna Vernarecci di Fossombrone and thus ordained her a Waldensian minister. She is a successful lawyer, a mother of three from Genova, who was already a local preacher and will continue part-time with her job alongside with helping various Waldensian Methodist communities in the Liguria region.

After a few years of uncertainty brought about by financial and administrative upheaval the mood in the Waldensian and Methodist churches is now one of hope and confidence. The general tendency is towards a return to preaching the Gospel and evangelizing, leaving behind the overambitious projects of gigantic social works of the 1980s and '90s. The Moderator, Maria Bonafede, thanked the Lord for the small but encouraging signs of growth in the communities scattered all over Italy.



The Executive Secretary at Synod 2006 (photo P. Romeo).

The painful point in a country dominated, culturally more than religiously now, by the overwhelming presence of the Church of Rome is still the same, though: the lack of respect for religious minorities and of the need for a separation of Church(es) and State. With the growing and vociferous presence of Islam, Protestants, Jews and the other faiths now risk being squashed between two pre-Modern concepts of religion in what may result in a deal (or an ordeal?) between these Medieval theocracies once and again aspiring to dominate, in different ways, our souls and minds and our public and private lives. In this context the new approach to the 'hour of Catholic Religion' in every State School from Nursery school upwards now proposed by the Jewish communities, might change the hard line that the Protestant Churches have followed so far of simply withdrawing their pupils from it. The churches will analyse and discuss the proposal of the teaching of the 'History of

Religions' instead of just Catholicism or nothing.

ES

Elizabeth I, a woman at the origins of the modern world

The usual 'Claudiana Synod Evening' in which every year the Waldensian publishing house Claudiana presents a newly published book introduced by the author, this year was dedicated to Elizabeth I, *Elisabetta I, una donna alle*



The panel discussing Elizabeth I with Richard Newbury (right).

origini del mondo moderno, by Richard Newbury. Pastor Giorgio Tourn, theologian and historian, Roberto Coaloa, History Editor in the Sunday Cultural Magazine of the Italian equivalent of the Financial Time, *Sole 24 ore* and Claudio Pasquet, pastor and historian, discussed with the public and the author this illuminating and very entertaining book.

In Italy most people ignore everything even about their own religion; what everyone wrongly knows, though, is that Henry VIII, in order to divorce his wife and marry that terrible witch Anne Boleyn, furious with the Pope who wouldn't let him do so, decided to separate from Rome and created the schismatic Anglican Church. This book, which is aimed at the Italian market, makes it obvious that it was rather that Elizabeth I was the real founder of the 'middle way', thanks to which England managed to avoid the massacres produced on the Continent by the wars of religion. This, over the years, thanks also to the constant struggle of the Nonconformists, led to the open and tolerant society that these islands enjoyed before other parts of Europe and that we all so much value and cherish nowadays. Even more Elizabeth was incredibly successful in preserving intact the insecure little kingdom she had inherited at the young age of 25 and that when she died, nearly 50 years later, was a strong united country with a powerful Navy, a linguistic renaissance, a vibrant economy and an attitude of spirit and mind that is no doubt the forerunner of the modern ideas of freedom of thought and religion. If the Virgin Queen had married, England would have become the dowry to a foreign king, very likely a Roman Catholic who would have not accepted Elizabeth's decision of 'not opening windows in people's soul' nor that medieval relic and enemy of 'modern' centralised efficient monarchy: Parliament. Her question 'Why doesn't the King of Spain let his subjects go to hell the way they prefer to?' summarises her attitude about all religious belief, considering it to be a matter for individual conscience and a private concern between every human being and his or her Maker. The speakers and the author entertained the public with wit and irony and talked about this remarkable woman — the greatest monarch of England of all times — who, they all agreed, is the mother of the modern world and of us all.

Before the gathering in the Hall of Collegio Valdese, Claudiana — which in 2005 won a special Prize from the Italian Government for its contribution to Italian cultural improvement during its 150 years of activity since its foundation in 1855 — entertained the author and the speakers at the *Crota dl'ours*, (The Bear's Lair) the smaller, junior and cheaper version of prize-winning Michelin starred Restaurant *Flipot*, whose illustrated recipe book has just been printed for the delight of us all.

Democracy and the Freedom of Religion

This was the theme of the full to overflowing evening organised to commemorate two eminent members of the Protestant communities who had passed away since the previous Synod, Giorgio Peyrot and Giorgio Spini. Peyrot, a Waldensian Professor of Law, and Spini, a Methodist Professor of History since the end of WWII, dedicated their efforts and political engagement towards the pursuit of freedom of religion and speech and for the inclusion of equitable confessional civil rights in the new Italian Constitution, drafted in the years 1946–47. Once this was approved in 1948, they started the battle for the enforcement of these Articles and Laws, of which the most important, on the '*Intese*' [Agreement] between the State and faiths other than the Roman Catholic one, was applied for the first time only in 1984! On the other hand, however, the new Constitution had still included all the privileges accorded to Catholicism by Fascism under the 1929 Concordat between Mussolini's Fascist Regime and the Vatican.

A large panel of speakers was invited to commemorate the two great 'Giorgi' of which the small Protestant Italian world has been recently deprived. Academics and politicians were invited, but the attention of the public was concentrated on the three Waldensian politicians, Paolo Ferrero, hard left,



Public debate on democracy and freedom of religion in Torre Pellice church.

Valdo Spini, centre left and Lucio Malan, centre right (one of whom, Ferrero, is Secretary of State for Social Affairs in the recently elected Prodi Government). Despite different approaches to issues of Italian and international affairs and different views on how to solve the social problems created by immigration and the pressure on civil liberties posed by some extreme fringes of Islam, they all agreed on the fundamental starting-point which is the pillar of Protestant societies: that is, the freedom of the individual, which obviously includes women and the rejection of any violent approach towards other faiths and States (such as the annihilation of Israel stated by a Muslim group in Italy that calls itself 'moderate'). The Waldensian MPs also agreed on the need in Italy to fight for an end to the all too common 'clerical' influence and even direct involvement in politics.

ES

Celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Lord Protector's readmission of the Jews into England

In 2005 the Waldensian Community commemorated the Lord Protector for his help during the 1655 massacre; this year it was the turn of members of the Jewish community who joined with the Cromwell Association to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the readmission of the Jews into England. For this occasion, Cromwell Day was moved from the traditional Saturday to Monday 4 September. The day started with a guided tour of the Bevis Marks Synagogue, the oldest in London and the only one in Europe that has had continuous services for over 300 years. It was founded by 'Sephardic' Jews, originally from Spain and Portugal, where they had been persecuted and forced to flee, and soon it became a place of refuge for Jews from all over Europe. Maurice Bitton's illustrative talk was full of facts, anecdotes and wit and he was also very quick in answering a wide range of questions from the Cromwellian party. The magnificence of the synagogue matched the intricacy of the story of its community. Everything was fascinating from the chandeliers to the pews, from the beams donated by Queen Anne to the tale of the contractor, the Quaker Joseph Avis, who forwent his recompense because he refused to make a profit from building a House of God. Both Mr Bitton and Edgar Samuel, former Curator of the London Jewish Museum, who spoke in the afternoon, pointed out that most Jews came to Britain over the centuries as refugees and that this caused tensions not only with the locals, but also with the previously settled Jews. The Sephardic community was not over-enthusiastic about the arrival of the poorer and less sophisticated Ashkenazi 'cousins' from Eastern Europe, just as other communities today are disturbed by the mass immigration of their 'poor relations'.

Repairs to the Palace of Westminster still making the traditional gathering around the Cromwell Statue impossible, there was again a service in Central Hall led by Rev. Roger Greave from Cambridge, followed by Mr Samuel's speech on Cromwell and the Jews. Tea afterwards was a pleasant end to a great day!

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Government gives to Waldenses

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

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

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

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



WALDENSIAN CHURCH MISSIONS **Registered Charity No. 277255**

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The Waldensian Church

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

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

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

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

The English Committee of the Waldensian Church Missions

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

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

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

The English Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions

Established 1825

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

Chairman: The Rev. Eric Murray, 137 Elmbridge Avenue, Surbiton KT5 9HE. Telephone 0208-399-8740, email eric.murray@elmbridge137.freemove.co.uk

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

Hon. Treasurer: Mr Mark Stephens, 5 Woodgate Close, Woodgate, Chichester PO20 3TA. Telephone 01243-545877, email stephens.mlr@virgin.net

The Scottish Waldensian Missions Aid Society

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

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

The Irish Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions

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

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

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

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

You are My Witnesses: the Waldensians across 800 Years
by Giorgio Tourn and Associates — *£9 plus postage and packing*

The Waldensians' "Glorious Recovery" of their Alpine Valleys
The legendary "Recovery" with a brief summary of the previous 500 years
by Richard Newbury — *£1 plus postage and packing*

Love never fails
by Tullio Vinay — *£7 plus postage and packing*

The Waldensian Story: A Study in Faith, Intolerance and Survival
by Prescott Stephens — *Reprinting/available in Spring*

Guide of the Waldensian Valleys
All you need to know and see and plenty of stunning photographs
by Giorgio Tourn — *£8 plus postage and packing*

All these books are available from
Miss Nicky Raddon, 19 Sampson Avenue, Barnet EN5 2RN
Telephone 0208-364-8182

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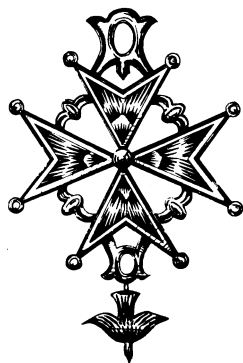
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be obtained from:**

The Huguenot Society, University College,
Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

Huguenot Cross T-shirts from:

Rev. Dr Clifford, Woodside Park,
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The Huguenot Cross, symbol of Protestantism all over Europe



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