

THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW



No. 113

Summer 2008

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From the Editor

Dear Friends and Supporters,

To start with, profuse apologies for this edition coming out so late. A series of different problems have contributed to the delay—lost and corrupted files, misplaced articles, despair after these mishaps—so eventually we decided to skip the Autumn–Winter issue and ... here we are. In the previous issue, I asked readers to let me have some feedback. Thank you to those who did answer. However, only a few readers said they would be happy to receive the magazine via email. I am sure that, with the website we are being helped to build by a generous Cambridge undergraduate, many more people will enjoy the online version and go looking for us on the internet. A suggestion was made about giving the readers a little information on the contributors. This I'll be more than happy to do in the future. As usual, articles, letters, feedback are more than welcome.

The aim of the Committee is and has always been to help the Waldensian Church and its work in different ways: financing small and large projects; supporting a future Minister in the year abroad they all need to spend before being ordained; making other Churches and individual people aware of the fascinating centuries-long history of this small and brave group of Christians who later became a Church and managed to survive despite bitter persecution because of their faith and their trust in God. The *Waldensian Review* is a means of keeping in touch, creating interest and informing old and new friends of what we are doing and what is happening in the Church in Italy. It also describes the outreach your generosity makes possible.

Therefore, thank you for your donations and your prayers. You'll be pleased to know that in the autumn of last year, with your help, we were able to finance a small social project set up by the Waldensian church in a very derelict area



Pastor Daniele Bouchard broadcasting the weekly service..

of Naples. We have also once again helped the young people from church communities dispersed throughout Sicily to meet for Bible Studies and Church gatherings. We have also sent a contribution towards the funding of a Youth worker for the young people of the Church in Rome. Following the Spring Committee Meeting, we sent money to the

Cover photo: Pastors Bernardini and Ribet with the ordinands.

Young People's Group of the Church of Forano Sabina, south of Rome, where Peter Ciaccio is the Minister. In an area of high unemployment and degradation, Peter is stimulating the young people to organise themselves as a first necessary step in taking charge of their lives and thus gaining self-esteem and employability and hope for the future. We

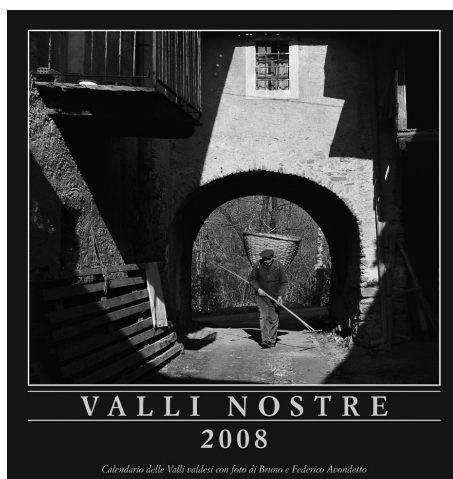


Volunteer using new Radio Beckwith equipment.

are looking forward to meeting some of Peter's young parishioners, as one of their projects is organising a trip to the UK to visit young people in churches here. Another cheque has been sent to Radio Beckwith (see photos) for some new equipment essential for keeping up the good work this dedicated group of people are doing for the whole community in the Waldensian Valleys. Their broadcast services, quality talks programmes and varied music programmes delight all, from those who are housebound to the young for whom the Radio is a focus point.

Waldensian Calendars 2008

Unfortunately the delay has meant that most calendars had been sold before Christmas by word of mouth, but we still have some. As usual they have spectacular views, Biblical quotations in five languages and extracts from Waldensian history on the back of each page. It would be a shame to miss this 2008 edition. Indeed, many people have started collecting past calendars. **You can still have yours for £2.50 (p&p included) instead of £6.50.** Please send cheques, made payable to *Waldensian Church Mission*, to **Nicky Raddon, 19 Sampson Avenue, Barnet EN5 2RN.**



From the Chairman

Dear Friends,

This year we are moving the AwayDay & AGM meeting from May to the very beginning of November, and holding it again at the French Protestant Church in Soho, London. The meeting there last May proved to be a success, but we are aware that for several reasons a gathering in the Autumn might be an even better option. So the traditional meeting will be held on 1 November 2008, at the French Church in London. Fuller details are in this *Review*, and we hope you find them equally pleasing.

One of the delightful things that came the committee's way was to hear of Peter Ciacio's ordination at the Torre Pellice Synod in August. You will remember that Peter was the student we supported here in 2004/5 as part of his training. We received a warm invitation to join him there for it, and in the event Mrs Erica Scropo Newbury, who was attending Synod, plus Richard and Milvia Walker were able to represent us, to his delight.

This year, after many years of being on the committee, Mr Albert Bertin has reluctantly decided that for health reasons he can no longer attend. From his articles for the *Review* you will have gained an insight into the considerable contribution he made. We shall miss him considerably and wish him well for the future.

We have continued with our support for Daniele Pevarello, whose PhD is progressing magnificently at Cambridge. All this is part of our support for



Confirmation classes from all over Sicily meet up every term thanks to your generosity.

the Waldensian Church. We have also been able to make worthwhile grants to other works in Italy and Sicily, as you will see in the Treasurer's report.

Often accompanying the legacies our Treasurer Mark Stephens receives are letters outlining the donor's long connection with the Waldensian Church and the Mission. We hope to publish some of these remembrances as a tribute to them and as a thank you for their support.

We trust you are all keeping well, and hope to see you at the AwayDay.

God bless and keep you,

Yours sincerely,

Eric Murray, Chairman

AwayDay 2008

AwayDay 2008 will take place on **Saturday 1 November from 10.30 a.m.** at the French Church in Soho Square, London. We'll let you have the details later in the year, but please write down this date in your Waldensian calendar. Two outstanding speakers have promised to be there: the **Rev. Professor Sir John Polkinghorne, FRS**, and writer and broadcaster **Tobias Jones**. Don't miss the opportunity to meet and hear them!

AwayDay and AGM 2007

On 12 May 2007 we had our traditional gathering, this time in the French Protestant Church in Soho Square. It was good to see many old and indeed some new friends, including two very young children. We had a panel of excellent speakers and the day was a great success. David Thompson (Professor of Church History at Cambridge University, Director of the Centre for the Advanced Religious and Theological Studies and former Moderator of the URC) started the day by speaking about Church Unity in Europe and gave us an interesting insight into this fascinating subject. Unity seems to have always meant and continues to mean different things in different ages, influenced by both the individuals and churches involved. However, there is genuine belief and hope when people of good will set to praying together.

Claudia Lupi Ricco, the daughter of two Waldensian ministers and herself now a Methodist minister in London, spoke about her experiences in the UK, comparing the Methodist ministry in the UK with the Waldensian ministry in Italy. That day she also shared with us the announcement us that





Daniele Pevarello.

she was expecting her second child, and I am now very happy to announce that she is now the proud mother of Isabelle (see family photo.) Her father, pastor Odoardo Lupi—now retired but still very active whenever required—talked



to us about his experience as a Chaplain in the Ospedale Evangelico of Ponticelli, a deprived area near Naples. Daniele Pevarello, who was junior Pastor in Torre Pellice for two years before starting his PhD at

the Faculty of Divinity in Cambridge, talked about his experience as a young non-ordained minister in several parts of Italy, from little places in southern Italy, to large cities in the north, to Torre Pellice, capital of the Waldensian world and his last appointment. It was a most enjoyable, instructive and joyous occasion, which was made even more so by the delicious Italian biscuits made by Debora, Daniele's fiancée.

ESN

Below: Eric and Erica.



Scottish Society visits Waldensian Valleys in April 2007

While in Torre Pellice in April we met a group of Scots led by David and Brenda Lamb and composed of friends of the Waldensian Mission Aid Society and members of the Dante Alighieri Society—like the British Council—of Edinburgh. We met them in church on Sunday and we were later invited to a most enjoyable dinner at Restaurant Centro, where a group of representatives of the Dante Alighieri from Turin had joined the Scottish group. They ended up their trip going to Turin, while on the previous days they had visited the Waldensian historical sites from Val d'Angrogna to Agape. They had a great time staying at Foresteria in Torre Pellice and they are now planning a trip this time to Rome for either this coming Autumn or Spring 2009.



Synod 2007

The ordination of new pastors as usual took place on the opening day of Synod. This time it was particularly exciting for us since 'our' student Peter Ciaccio was being ordained. Alongside him there were another young man, Armando Casarella, and a young woman, Laura Testa. Laura comes from Riesi (Sicily) and was born and raised in a Waldensian family known for their



The ordinands at Synod pronouncing their vows, with the Moderator in the background.

active commitment in the Church. She has had a great deal of experience in international Church gatherings, which led to her desire to study Theology. After her degree she spent her year abroad at Princeton University and has worked as a minister in Rome and Aosta. She thinks the most important duty of minister is to bear witness to the love of God through the love of all people. She is now the pastor of Ivrea, where she is very much appreciated and loved.

Armando Casarella comes from Avellino (near Naples), was raised in a Protestant family and for his studies abroad went to Sibiu in Romania, and has spent his training period in the Waldensian churches of Rieti and Caltanissetta in Sicily, where he is still serving. He felt called to become a minister when doing his civil service (an alternative to the military service that has recently been abolished) and has always believed that his first and main duty is to announce and preach with joy the love of God through His Son Jesus Christ.

Peter Ciaccio, raised in a Methodist Irish-Italian family, is well known to our readers. After his year in Salisbury, in September 2005 he married Eva, a delightful Waldensian girl, half Sicilian and half Danish, who works in



Peter Ciaccio with wife Eva and his family after preaching in Villar Pellice the morning before being ordained.

Rome for the Federation of the Protestant Churches. He is now the pastor in Forano Sabina and Terni, south of Rome, where, like all new Waldensian pastors, he has been 'on probation' for a couple of years. He has also been able to cultivate his other passion, cinema, and he has put this to good use in his ministry. The morning before his ordination he preached in Villar Pellice and a few members of our Committee (the Editor of the Review and Milvia and Richard Walker) managed to attend it.

The preacher of the opening service of the Synod was Pastor Sergio Ribet, who underlined among other things that the Pope, in proclaiming that the only real Christian Church is the Roman Catholic Church, was

not being a good example of ecumenism. Nevertheless, the preacher delivered a strong message of hope in good will and unity with cooperation and good intentions coming from below. This is anyway always preferable and obtains better results than directives 'from above'.

ESN

Falò 2008

On 17 February 2008 I had the privilege of taking part in a ceremony celebrating liberty. The Waldensians had been confined, ghetto like, in their alpine mountain valleys by the Dukes of Savoy for centuries. On 17 February 1848 Carlo Alberto, the ruler of Piemonte, signed a decree granting civil and political liberty which released them. A few days later a similar decree released the Jews from their Turin ghetto. It was another 20 years before religious freedom was granted. Every year, on 16 February, communities in the mountain valleys have torchlight processions and communities and individuals light bonfires in celebration of the decree and these can be seen burning on the mountainsides.

We set off from the centre of Torre Pellice, nearly 300 people of all ages carrying flaming torches, including children, to walk the two kilometres up the valley to nearby Coppieri where a bonfire was set up. It was a stirring sight looking back down the slope at the lights of the procession behind us. When we reached the fire we placed the flaming torches on the ground radially in a ring round the bonfire but clear of it. The fire was lit and we all stood around it, many deep, while the Waldensian 'anthem' was sung. Thirty litres of mulled wine had been prepared and was consumed. The British health and safety freaks would have banned the event, but parents kept an eye on the younger children who had torches and everybody behaved and nobody was hurt.

The bonfire is a work of art. Typically it starts with a pole about 25 feet long being placed vertically. Dry branches and bundles of brush are built up in a cone from a base of about 15 feet diameter, leaving a chimney around the pole. A large bunch of dry resinous pine tree material is tied to the pole at the top of the cone. The fire is lit there at the top by a man on a ladder. It takes in minutes, and the hollow centre acts as a flue. Once going, 12-foot flames issue like a blow-torch from the top and the fire burns for a long time.



The following day, the 17th, after the morning thanksgiving service over 200 people sat down to a communal celebratory meal. The church had been very crowded and the pastor, commenting on the shortage of space, suggest

that they should come next Sunday when they would find there was more room.

It was a moving series of events in which to join and be amongst friends.

Richard Walker

Accounts

Towards the end of this issue of the *Review*, on p. 14, you will find the 2007 accounts for the Missions. Many of you understandably will not find them the most interesting part of this edition. However I would just like to highlight a few facts which they reveal. In 2007 we received 2 legacies totalling over £2000 and we were grateful that the donors remembered the Missions in their wills. We were thus enabled to increase our support to various projects in Italy.

However, in most years we do not receive such donations, and our regular income from churches and individuals has remained static if not declining slightly over recent years, particularly if you take inflation into account. We are fortunate that our investments, mainly the Canon Armstrong Fund, fully cover our administration costs, thus allowing all donations to directly support the work in Italy. However, it would be good to be able to provide even more support to the projects which are brought before us.

Could I, therefore, ask that all readers consider whether they are able to forward a donation however small to further the work? My address is at the back of the *Review*. Every gift will be gratefully received. If you are a taxpayer, please ask for a gift aid form if you have not already completed one, and then additional income can be obtained from the government. Thank you.

Mark Stephens, Treasurer

England as protector of Protestant minorities: the early 18th century role of the SPCK

In May 1819 a modest plea for assistance was brought from Piedmont, a part of the Savoyard State in northern Italy, to a meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the SPCK, in London.

[The letter from Piedmont describes] the distressed situation of the Protestants in the plains [sic] of Piedmont, a people descended from the Waldenses in the ages preceding the reformation ... The government of England had ever been friendly and beneficent to them and had granted them pecuniary aids, which having been withdrawn, during the [French] revolution to their great inconvenience, they hoped to have

renewed, as they were now brought again under the government of the royal house of Savoy.

They then asked the SPCK to furnish them with 'some French religious tracts' and to help them to purchase 'some copies of the psalms of David with the music annexed'.¹ The letter surprised SPCK members, since the very existence of the Waldenses, or the Vaudois as they were called in the previous centuries, was unfamiliar to them. Moreover the Vaudois showed, in the subsequent correspondence, their deference to the Church of England and their wish to have an episcopacy. Deeply impressed by this, William Stephen Gilly, rector of North Fambridge, Essex, who attended the SPCK meeting as a member, started a nationwide fund-raising campaign for them. Soon he must have found out that discovery of pious Protestants in the depths of the most powerful Roman Catholic territory was after all not a discovery but rather a recovery of the SPCK's forgotten past.

Gilly's relief activities for the Vaudois are well known to many of us. My concern is the reason why the Vaudois in 1819 singled out the SPCK for their assistance. It relates back to the foundation of the Society in 1699 and its early works when the SPCK had been closely intertwined with continental Protestants and at least some of its leading members readily identified their own possible fate with that of their continental brethren, such as the Huguenots and the Vaudois. The memory of the foundation years was apparently lost on the SPCK's side in the course of the 18th century; it nevertheless continued among the valleys of Piedmont.

1

It is desirable here to mention firstly the religious and political complexities of England around the time of the SPCK's foundation. As a member of the Europe-wide Protestant community England had been engaged in a long battle against Roman Catholicism since the late 16th century which, if it cannot necessarily be described as an open war of religion, was at least a cold war. In the 1680s news about the continental Protestants poured into England, together with a large influx of Huguenot refugees, enhancing the English sense of a general crisis in Europe. Worrying news came not only from France: the Roman Catholic succession of the Rhenish Palatinate, the massacre of the Vaudois in Piedmont and, above all, James II's succession to the throne in Britain took place within a short space of time. The success of the counter-reformation in Poland-Lithuania, Silesia and Transylvania also loomed. For those who felt threatened by Roman Catholic progress at home and abroad, the revolution of 1688–9 was a providential event. A contemporary pamphleteer declared it to be the 'wonderful deliverance [of England] from French tyranny and popish oppression performed through almighty God's infinite goodness and mercy.' Sensing the watchful presence of God, some felt

an urgent need to proceed more vigorously with religious reform. Plebeian ignorance and loosening Christian morals were in particular believed to be used by the Roman Catholic to extend their influence. Therefore, projects to combat those problems among the poor and to make them part of a pious Protestant nation, led not only by clergy but also by lay people, burgeoned: voluntary societies for 'the reformation for manners' bloomed. This is what is often called the 'movement of moral reform.'

The SPCK has been much discussed in this context as the acme of Anglican evangelistic zeal, since most historians accept that it was one of the most influential and well founded voluntary societies throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. As all scholars agree, the SPCK was the brain-child of Dr Thomas Bray, a clergyman and commissary for Maryland of Henry Compton, Bishop of London. Under the authority of Compton he planned the design of counter-activities against the Roman Catholic missionaries and proposed to set up a Protestant version of the *Congregatio pro Propaganda Fide*. As is now well known, this plan was realized in the form of two societies, the SPCK in 1699 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the SPG, in 1701. Both promoted moral reform and tried to reassert the influence of the Church of England, at home in the case of the SPCK, and in the American colonies in the case of the SPG. Yet the SPCK was very conscious of the difference between itself and the SPG, which was more than geographical. While the SPG was as a corporate society put strictly under the control of prelates and other clergymen, the SPCK tried to keep its lay-oriented and private character, and because of this, the Society was ready to assist non-Anglican Protestants on the Continent when such help was needed. It should be noted that the SPCK retained a very pan-European aspect for at least the first three decades after its foundation. With a strong sense of being a member of the Protestant community, the SPCK made great efforts, sporadic as these may have been, to become involved with the Europe-wide reformation against Rome. From its very beginning the SPCK called for uniting Protestants against the 'progress of popery ... all over Europe' and it set out on the project of forming correspondence networks with continental Protestants.

... to be continued

Sugiko Nishikawa

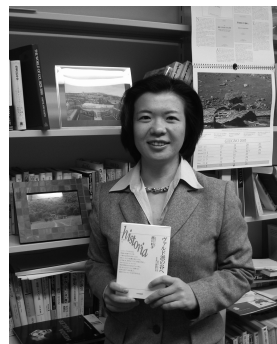
Notes

1. SPCK archives, London, *Minutes*, 1816–22, vol. 38, fol. 226, now transferred to the University of Cambridge.

Sugiko Nishikawa is a History don at the University of Tokyo and has written the first and so far only book published in Japan on the Waldenses and their more than 850 years' struggle for freedom of thought and of religion. We are very grateful to her and to the Huguenot Society for letting us publish this lecture, delivered to their Annual Meeting in 2002 and later

published in their *Proceedings* N 5 Vol XXVII. We ourselves have had the pleasure of meeting her both in London and in the Waldensian Valleys. As well as being a very learned young lady she is also a delightful person, and we really hope she will be able also to grace one of our own Waldensian AwayDays.

[I'll be happy to send the text complete with footnotes to whoever would like to see them.
— ESN, Ed.]



Norah Boyce

Norah Boyce has died at the venerable age of 94, remaining until her last breath clear of mind, practical and down-to-earth and full of that sense of humour and enthusiasm that made her so popular with people of all age and from all walks of life.

We ourselves met her in the mid 1980s during our summer holidays in Cambridge (in that period we used to live in Italy) at Wesley Methodist Church: she was on duty in the crèche. Our two children Viola and Tancred (Cressida was not then born!) were so enthusiastic about their new friend that they decided that Wesley would be our church in Cambridge. And so it was, during the year I spent on maternity leave when Cressida was born. 1987 was memorable because Rosemary Farrer, then Editor of the *Waldensian Review*, came to visit us in Cambridge, thus starting rolling a snowball that brought me to being the next Editor and the Executive Secretary of the Mission. The year was also memorable because Norah came to the Waldensian Valleys for Cressida's Christening.

It was love at first sight: Norah loved the Waldensian people, the Waldensian Church and the Waldensian Valleys, and the Waldensians and all the inhabitants of the Valleys loved her. I had already decided that the ideal place for her to stay was one of the first 'agriturismo' set up in Italy. It was perched on the top of an almost vertical slope among chestnut and hazel trees, and since everything provided was natural and organic it bore the charming name 'Bacomela' (applebug). The accommodation was very simple, being either in an old rustic farm or in a caravan. Norah loved the name, the place, the people running it (a couple of city dwellers with their children and some helpers, who had all turned 'green' without becoming weird). She chose the caravan and stayed for several months, becoming immensely popular with locals as well as with all the foreign settlers who, like her, found themselves perfectly at home in those special Valleys: the German junior pastor of Torre Pellice and her historian Dutch husband, the Dutch wife of the Headmaster

of Collegio Valdese, Diana Beerbohm, a retired Anglican missionary of great character, and many more. What made her unique was the fact that Norah walked everywhere, from one side of the Valley to the other, and one by one visited most of the historical Waldensian sites on foot, whether on hill and mountain tops or hidden in caves in the rocks. Most of the time she was wearing her sandals and then, when winter came and snow fell, with her solid walking boots. She never missed Sunday worship at 10, taking less than one hour to reach the main church in Torre Pellice and a bit more to climb back up to her caravan.

We often visited her (by car!) or she came to us, and the children played with her as if she was a friend of their age, claiming 'Norah is our friend, not yours!'. Seeing her leaping out of the bushes covered in foliage, pretending to be a lion, I realised that they were absolutely right: Norah was the very special friend of everyone she met. She went home for Christmas, but came again the following summer and stayed well into the chestnut and polenta season that she loved so much. By then we had moved back to Cambridge, and Norah became an enthusiastic supporter of the Waldensian Mission and of the *Review* and never missed one of the events we organised—if she was not away on her travels—or an opportunity to tell wonders of this unique People/Church where she had really found so many twin souls. She and they shared a similar cultural background, the same religion and a deep love of nature, natural medicine, natural remedies and all in a beautiful mountain setting. She told me so many times how at home she had felt and how happily she could have settled there.



Norah Boyce with Sebastian's first baby.

Norah always chose to be of service to her neighbour more than to please herself. She felt the Valleys did not really need her help and decided to be helpful in Romania, where she met Sebastian Ivan and 'adopted' him and, later, his wife. She helped them in bringing true their dream to study, live and work as doctors in the US. They are now settled there, have two children and will never forget their friend Norah. Neither

shall we.

ESN

Book Review

Il 'Santo Bottino': The circulation of Waldensian Manuscripts in 17th-century Europe by Marina Benedetti. 2006. Claudiana. €12.50.

Anyone who has been privileged to see and handle in the Cambridge University Library this Holy Booty whisked away to safety by Cromwell's Ambassador Samuel Morland will have been deeply moved and inspired. It consists of the books and manuscripts saved from the week-long bonfire of sacred books after the fall of Pra del Torno, the Waldensian Thermopylae, the natural fortress at the head of Val Angrogna in the Waldensian Valley of Piedmont. The 1655 confessional cleansing called the Piedmontese Easter was intended to eradicate 'the pretended Reformed religion' from the lands of the Catholic Duke of Savoy. This was already the age of printing and newspapers, but what inspired the contemporary Protestant historians and polemicists was, as Marina Benedetti's detailed and intelligent research shows, these documents of how Waldensian *barba* or uncles, trained in Pra del Torno, managed to minister to the scriptural and pastoral needs of an isolated flock stretching from Russia to Calabria.

If, however, one of these *barba*, usually travelling in pairs disguised as merchants, was found with one of these religious tracts on him, it was not just the book, often as small as a matchbox, that was to be burned. The Inquisitors seeking to shut down this internet of heresy concentrated their efforts in the elimination of the *barba* in their efforts to starve the heretics of preachers. The other half of the Holy Booty that Dr Benedetti studies is not the books by the Waldensians but the trial documents of the Inquisition's interrogations. These, too, are conserved in Cambridge University Library as well as in the libraries of Trinity College Dublin and Geneva University.

Dr Benedetti teaches the History of the Medieval Church and Heretical Movements at the University of Milan and shows us how these sources from both sides—the Waldensians and their Inquisitors—became the sources for religious controversies throughout 17th-century Protestant Europe and indeed down to the present. They also formed, and continue to form, the sources for histories of the Waldensians from Jean Paul Perrin's 1618 *Histoire des Vaudois* down to the present. These sources were, and continue to be, essential for documenting what was a naturally clandestine—in order to survive—underground movement. For those who read Italian, this admirable addition to the *Collana della Societa di Studi Valdesi* is an illuminating work not only of historical research and analysis but also of historiography.

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

INCOME		2006	2007
Churches	105.00		430.51
Individual Donations	1790.39		1221.50
Tax Refund	191.79		256.66
Penny Boxes	22.90		25.00
AGM	50.00		92.00
Legacies			2187.76
		2160.08	4213.43
Vaudois Clergy Trust			1122.26
Publications	486.50		381.50
Dividend & Interest	3769.21		4155.05
		4255.71	5658.81
TOTAL		6415.79	9872.24
EXPENDITURE			
Payments to Italy			
Student	192.00		1271.50
Coppieri			1500.00
Sicily Training Course	1000.00		1000.00
Rome Youth Worker	1000.00		1000.00
Trapani	500.00		1500.00
Naples Church			1000.00
Cerignola	1000.00		
Pachino	500.00		
		4192.00	7271.50
Review	830.00		838.00
Sec/Post/Stationery	2486.58		2439.62
Sundries	84.00		51.35
		3400.58	3328.97
TOTAL		7592.58	10600.47
NET EXPEND		-1206.79	-728.23
Opening Bank Balance		6336.86	6165.98
Income		6415.79	9872.24
Expenditure		-7592.58	-10600.47
Closing Bank Balance		6165.98	5437.75

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

GIFT AID DECLARATION

To: **Waldensian Church Missions, 5 Woodgate Close, Woodgate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 3TA**

I (title) (name)

(address)

.....

Postcode Tel. no.

would like all donations I make to Waldensian Church Missions from the date of this declaration to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I understand I must be paying income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount being reclaimed by the Missions. I understand that I can cancel this Gift Aid declaration at any time.

Signature of donor Date

The Waldensian Church

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

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

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

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

The English Committee of the Waldensian Church Missions

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

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

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

The English Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions

Established 1825

President: Mr 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

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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

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

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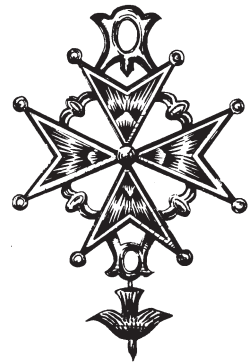
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