



# THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW



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## From the Editor

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This is not my usual letter to our beloved and faithful readers. I am of course going to thank you once again for your generosity, for your support, for your thoughts and prayers. I will of course as usual further on let you know about old and new friends, about old and new projects, about Italy and the Waldensian–Methodist Church.

To start with, though, I would like to draw your attention to the growing costs of printing and posting the *Waldensian Review*. We all agree it is an excellent way to keep in touch, we have fans in at least three continents and I would feel really sad if I had to stop editing and producing this little magazine which is by now an institution, this issue being the 115th! Nevertheless since the donations are dropping and I don't need to explain why our revenue in interest and investment is at the moment virtually nonexistent, we cannot justify spending a considerable sum of our small income on producing a newsletter which at the moment is far from generating the income one would hope for. The purpose of our Mission is after all to collect money to send to Italy to help the Waldensian Church. *Our choice has been to help in areas where the Church does not receive help from other sources; that is in evangelisation, church life, the maintenance and building of places of worship, in one word: Christian life.*

Many in the UK and elsewhere believe that the Italians are a pious people and their majority are devout followers of the Roman Catholic Church. This is not true! Many Italians are, as they have always been, pagan deep inside; a good majority freely decide to pick and choose what suits them out of what the Catholic Church prescribes. What I find more worrying is that, on the other hand, superstition and the worship of 'Saints' such as the very controversial Padre Pio are on the increase. Many, if they pray at all, do so to Padre Pio and not to Jesus! Secularism is on the increase, as everywhere in Europe, but there is a strong and growing need for spiritual enlightenment and support; the gap is huge and would be much better filled by the true knowledge of the Scriptures and the Good News of the Gospel rather than by reverting to witchcraft and astrology, or looking for illumination from exoteric **esoteric or exotic but not exoteric**?! cults or weird 'traditions'. In my opinion (and I am not the only one) Italy and a few other European countries still needs to discover and appreciate the Protestant way of being Christian, which among many other things, leads to a more liberal, open-minded, tolerant society, ready to accept changes in the form of a different style of life or of scientific progress. Above all most Italians still need to acquire the concept of individual responsibility, which is one of the foundations of the Reformation.

Giving to us (see p. 17) may help the new needs of Italy, which until 40 even 30 years ago was a poor country, especially the South. Now, though richer in

*Cover photo: Eric Murray, Milvia Walker, Nicky Raddon, Maria Bonafede (the Moderator) and Erica Scroppo Newbury at Synod 2009.*

earthly goods, it is even poorer, since greed and consumerism have taken over and generosity and altruism seem to have become very rare qualities.

I think that a mere list of needs would not be very pleasant to read; I know that most of you enjoy the news about our Committee meetings, our AGM speakers, about friends and churches in Italy, about issues concerning the Waldensian Methodist churches, publications, historical debates and so on.

**We must make sure though, that the *Waldensian Review* reaches only people who are interested in reading it. We are therefore trying to update our mailing list and it would be really great if we could receive your precious comments and suggestions as well.**

PLEASE take a few minute to answer these QUESTIONS:

1. Would you like to receive the *Waldensian Review* as it is now, once a year?
2. Would you prefer to receive two lighter and smaller issues a year?
3. Have you got any suggestions about how to increase the number of donations we receive?
4. Would you be interested in hosting a Waldensian event – dinner with talk and exhibition and/or DVD – in your church, community centre or cultural club?
5. Would you be interested in hosting a visiting Waldensian pastor?
6. Would you be interested in trips to the Waldensian Valleys and other parts of Italy?

Please answer by email to <ericascroppo@hotmail.com>. If you are not an email user, my postal address is on the front cover of the magazine

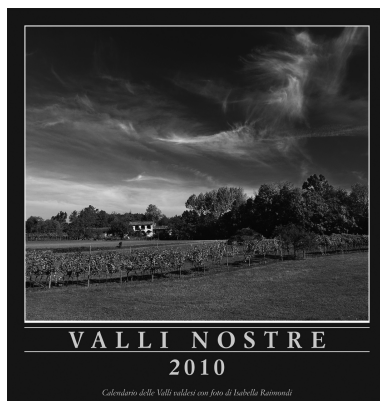
*Yours as ever*  
Erica Scroppo Newbury, Editor

## WALDENSIAN CALENDARS 2010

Once again very beautiful, with stunning views of the Waldensian Valleys and Bible verses in five languages. This year on the reverse of each month you'll find glimpses of Waldensian history through the centuries.

Unfortunately, due to rising production costs and the falling pound each one has to be posted for £7.50 (p&ap included). *Still, much less than the commercial counterparts and the profit is for a good cause.* PLEASE send cheques (payable to **Waldensian Church Mission**) to Milvia Walker: 19 Forest Approach, Woodford Green, IG8 9BW. Don't forget to include your address!!

You can have them sent directly to your friends. If you want to do it cheaply yourself you can roll them up in a little brown paper and save on postage. Once in place they will fall flat and make a special addition to your kitchen, study, hall...



## From the Chairman

Dear Friends,

This year I attended the Synod in Torre Pellice, and had the pleasure of meeting people from some of the projects we had been able to help with grants. It was good to hear how their work was taking shape, in particular the project in Sicily called *Catechismo circuitale*. This helps youngsters from different churches meet together, and find the encouragement and development which a wider Christian group can offer. We've now been able to offer them another grant to develop the work further.

The Riesi Church too needed help. They are well known for the work of their 'Christian Service' project and their stand to improve the life of many in an island much dominated by the mafia. It is the church's 130th anniversary. They began 20 years after the landing of Garibaldi 150 years ago. We have also been able to help Radio Beckwith's Christian work in the Valleys with a further grant. We've put by some money too for the ministerial student we are expecting to grant-aid next year.

The grants are much appreciated, as well as the historic links with England which this committee represents. So for all the help which you can give us, we are very grateful, and in these times of recession appreciate any amount which you can afford to send.

More of what was discussed and done at the Synod is in a further article, for it would be too long to include in this letter, but I know that you will be pleased to learn that two more very able candidates for ordination were ordained at Synod. They were Stefano D'Amore and Alessandro Esposito, while two ministers ordained abroad was received into the '*corpo pastorale*': Elymas Davidson Newell and Alison Walker, a British Methodist who is now in charge of the methodist church in Florence.

*God bless and keep you,  
Yours,  
Eric Murray*

## Synod 2009

Synod is always an exciting time. Meeting in Torre Pellice at the end of August, the weather is pleasantly warm, just right for meeting people, hearing how the projects we help are going, and listening to the debates and what is going on. This Synod was no exception. Of particular interest was the report on grouping the churches into regional circuits in a way to help mission and evangelical projects, and promote better use of resources. The stress was put on seeing the circuits as a spiritual matter, not just a geographical one. One Spanish speaker urged the use of cell groups amongst the immigrants, many of whom are Protestants, as a good strategy for supporting growth. He said that one report had estimated

that nearly 70% of those coming from Africa were Protestants. This linked up with the discussion on Church Unity, where it was felt that more progress was being made at local level in coping with the difficulties caused by ethnic cultural differences.

This year it was easy to see how much the mood of Synod was gripped by concern over the new Italian Immigration Law 2009. The way it was drafted, the mingling of the causes of immigration and state security, the effect upon church pastoral work, and the divisive effect upon society, aroused much concern. It was highlighted by Synod holding a march of witness, an open service of prayer, readings, songs, and meditation, together with a period of fasting (joined in by the diocesan RC bishop and others). A public proclamation was issued to the State and all churches, calling for a re-think on the issue of this new Law. Press and TV covered the Synod and the event. The regional paper *La Stampa* declared that the Waldensians 'have taken the road of Integration', supported strongly by many prominent people, e.g. Senator Lucio Malan (del Pdl), Monsignor Debernardi (RC bishop), Paolo Naso (leader of the programme '*Essere chiese insieme*' (Churches Together)). It was headed by a stirring opening Synod sermon preached by Pastor Daniele Garrone and based on the Word of the Lord declared by Jeremiah in the O.T., to the Jewish exiles taken captive to Babylon, 'Seek the welfare of the city!' (Jeremiah 29: 1-7, 10-14). It is clear to see why the President of Italy could write in his letter: 'the Waldensian Church is the Protestant Conscience of Italy'.



*Eric Murray and our future student,  
Luca Ghiretti.*

*Eric Murray*

## **Waldensian Awayday and AGM 2008**

On Saturday 1st November a rather larger than usual audience gathered at the French Protestant Church in Soho Square in order to listen to our distinguished speakers.

The first was Rev. Dr **John Polkinghorne**, KBE, FRS, Emeritus Mathematical Physics Professor at Cambridge University, former Master of Queen's College, winner of the Templeton prize for Science and Religion and one of the founders



of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion. The chosen title for his talk was 'God and the Universe' and he managed to address our varied audience, mainly of believers, but of very different levels of scientific knowledge, in a most comprehensible and convincing way.

Having been for 25 years at the frontline of Quantum Physics research, Sir John has a profound respect and love for science and can't see it at all as



*John Polkinghorne*

antagonist to a belief in God the Creator. Science and religion he believes are not incompatible but rather they complement each other; science does not have all the answers and indeed does not have the ambition to do so. Science is much more concerned about 'how' things work rather than about 'why' they do and it has no moral answers to any problem. There are thousands of questions to which science neither wishes nor wants to find an answer. Put this very simply: why is the kettle boiling? Because of the electricity, or because I want to make a cup of tea? Both answers are true and there is no need to choose between the two. And

what is music? Science can only define it as the impact of waves on the eardrums, but music is of course so much more. And a different experience every time that the same piece is played.

Both in everyday life and in the moral sphere, science has a very small, indeed minimal impact. The fact that the Earth rotates around the Sun and not the other way round is of no significance for most of us and does not affect our work, our feelings, our needs. On the other hand, the Universe seems to be there to be explored as an open book. To a believer science is possible because we have been given by our Creator the intelligence to understand and explore it. Therefore those Christians who are afraid of science or want to see the Bible as a scientific book treat God's revelation as a static, dogmatic set of rules and answers and this attitude is restrictive and disrespectful of Creation and of the immense freedom that permeates all, ourselves included.

The Universe is unbelievably special and complex, and what is amazing is that, since its beginning 14 billion years ago, it has never stopped becoming more and more complex and we are the most complex creatures so far. Our brain has not stopped evolving from the beginning and is the most complex thing of all.

A world with carbon-based life is very specific and peculiar and seems made on purpose for our life here. The chance of 'happy accident' of a world like ours developing, with the possibility of carbon-based life is infinitely small, one in a trillion. Carbon originates in one place only in the Universe and this

is during nuclear fusion inside a star. Every atom of carbon inside our body is made of dead stars. Even atheist scientists admit this peculiar sense of purpose and in order not to use the word God or Creator they talk about 'intelligence' or 'intelligent design'. His friend Fred Hoyle, who discovered the law thanks to which life exists and was himself a committed atheist, was forced to admit to Sir John, in his gruff Yorkshire accent, that 'The Universe is a put-up thing'. If just a fraction of a tiny particle was different life would not be possible.

The gift of life is a wonderful act of divine Love which is also a gift of freedom: as creatures we are allowed to make mistakes and the world is not perfect, because it is in permanent evolution. If we humans had made the world everything would have been beautiful, perfect but static, with no possibility of evolution and therefore no real life. In fact being just the way it is is the best about Creation despite its consisting also of darkness, pain, suffering, illness, wars. The tectonic plates are an essential part of the life of the Earth, but they are also the cause of earthquakes. This is not because God is not powerful enough, or does not love us enough. It is because in His unconditional love which He bestowed on all Creation, ourselves included, he granted us unlimited freedom. A world with the possibility of sin is undoubtedly better than a puppet theatre with well-programmed machines dominated by a cosmic Tyrant.

The next speaker was writer and broadcaster **Tobias Jones** whom our readers will know for his beautiful pages on the Waldensians in his bestseller *The Dark Heart of Italy*. He is also the author of *Utopian Dreams* which was the book of the week on BBC Radio 4 in Spring 2008. He came to tell us about the experience of researching for his second book and what this has led to.

Toby began by saying how happy and grateful he was to be able to talk to an audience of fellow Christians, for he often he finds himself speaking to a public hostile to belief. He told us then how, as a Christian, he felt drawn to explore the way modern communities [*itself an abused term that ought to be reclaimed and used in its original meaning and context!*] try to find the answer to the old question of how to live and practise the love of God every day of the week and not just on Sunday mornings.

Modern life is increasingly meaningless and isolated; 31% of households in Britain consist of a single person. The nuclear family does not present us with a much better position. With people increasingly isolated and uprooted, we must try and rediscover our roots in order to rebuild strong communities based on trust and communication; whereas now communication is more and more virtual and made in increasing isolation.



*Tobias Jones*

In 2005, with his wife Francesca and first daughter Benny, then just a baby, Toby went to live for several weeks at a time in about 20 different communities, both in the UK and in Italy, so as to try and find out what makes the best quality of communal life. They stayed in a variety of places and his favourite ones were the Christian ones which were without the ambition of being a 'museum for saints'. On the contrary, they were rather a school for sinners.

The best community for him must be, to start with, positive, then it requires a series of requisites which are:

1. Openness. The best communities have open gates, the ghetto feeling is not good. Even if the real modern ghetto is the one-room bed-sit.
2. Finality. With rules that must not interfere with choices.
3. Continuity, which is not only tradition but also commitment and regularity, which means also rules. They found that the places with no rules were the most despotic. Communities with clear rules are the best.
4. Purpose: essential.
5. Plurality: unfortunately nowadays it is nearly a rude word but a mix of ages, classes, abilities, past experiences is very important. You need children and old people alike. Many communities make the mistake of having people who are all the same and this does not work.
6. Belonging: you get a sense of belonging when you give up belongings!
7. Physical labour – especially if done together – is an important part of nurturing the individual soul. Physical work is as much about building bridges and creating the real sense of communal action.
8. A sense of the Sacred. In many communities you cannot feel anything of this. This is especially so in the ones with ambitions towards perfection.

The communities where they felt happiest were Christian, but not all Christian ones are the same. Toby's favourite place was, and still is, Pilsden in Dorset, where about 20–35 people work together on a farm and have 15–20 guests with troubled pasts and in need of finding themselves and a way out of their difficulties.

Since for Toby and his family the Christian community is the best place to be together, they have now decided to build their own small community.

Now, one year on, Toby and Francesca have sold their house in Bristol and bought a farm with 10 acres of woodland in Somerset and they are pondering what their community will look like. Benny is now nearly 5, Emma is 3 and if you want to know the sequel to *Utopian Dreams* look on the Guardian site for an article by him on 17th November, or google:

tobias-jones-woodland-commune

For the AGM Rev Richard Grocott talked about his experience as the British Methodist delegate to the Synod.

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## Adoramus

In April the North London-based choir & orchestra 'Adoramus' returned to the Waldensian Valleys for the fourth time. With concerts in conjunction with the Waldensian Churches, a Brethren Church and with Operation Mobilisation over 1000 people came to the five concerts

which featured a wide range of music from classical to contemporary and were held in Torre Pellice, Pinerolo, Villar Pellice, Staffarda Abbey.

The first concert in Villar Pellice was preceded by a meal hosted jointly by the Waldensian and Catholic communities and proceeds from the concert went towards the Relief Fund for those affected by the floods and landslide which had devastated the village in May 2008.

The second concert, in Canelli, came about as a result of Adoramus' link with the Brethren Churches in the Asti area and the small community of Canelli acted in faith and hired the local theatre for the concert despite never having heard the choir and orchestra perform!

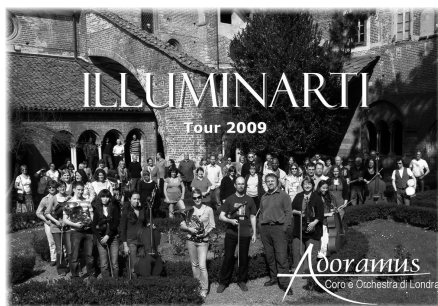
The three previous trips had seen very successful concerts in Pinerolo and, as the Waldensian Church there was too small for the number of people expected, Pastor Paolo Ribet and Roberto Morbo approached the Town Council about hiring the newly refurbished and reopened Teatro Sociale in the centre of Pinerolo. Their request was successful and the concert was given in aid of Uliveto, the Waldensian Home in Luserna San Giovanni for severely disabled young people.

Easter Day saw members of the choir & orchestra worshipping with various communities in Torre Pellice before the concert in the Waldensian Church. The 500+ audience was a real boost to the performers, many of whom were rather tired by this stage, but despite this they managed an encore! Proceeds from this concert were sent to the Abruzzo Earthquake Appeal.

The final concert was held in the superb Staffarda Abbey and was preceded by a sumptuous meal at the restaurant behind the medieval Abbey; many of the audience had already been to at least one concert before!

Five concerts in eight days did not leave a lot of time for sightseeing, but groups went to val d'Angrogna, Scopriminiera, Saluzzo, Pinerolo, Turin and the Waldensian Museum in Torre Pellice. The more energetic of the group spent Easter Monday on a higher level walk with a local guide through the Orsiera Rocciavre National Park where the views were spectacular, while others relaxed in the cafes of Torre Pellice, wandered through the market or slept!

All in all another full but enjoyable trip – if you are interested in hearing clips from the concerts, please visit our site: [www.adoramus.com](http://www.adoramus.com)



## England as protector of Protestant minorities: the early 18th century role of the SPCK Part 3

With information from their correspondents and agents, the leading members of the SPCK ran the Society. Although the SPCK claimed in 1703 to have 400 or 500 members,<sup>1</sup> active leading members were a small political elite mainly residing in London. I would name as leading members: Sir John Philipps of Picton Castle, an MP and gentlemen philanthropist; John Chamberlayne, not only a political figure as a JP in Middlesex and a gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Anne but also an internationally recognized man of letters; Henry Hoare, an influential private banker whose father Sir Richard was one of the first directors of the South Sea Company and the Lord Mayor of the City in 1712; Frederick Slare, a physician and member of the Royal Society;<sup>2</sup> William Melmoth, a bencher and treasurer of Lincoln's Inn; Edward Jennings, also a bencher of the Inner Temple and QC; Robert Nelson, a renowned theologian of the day; and Henry Shute, a lecturer of St Mary's Whitechapel and the minister of St Andrew's, Holborn. Anton Wilhelm Böhme, Pietist chaplain to the royal chapel at St James's Palace and a faithful protégé of August Hermann Francke, rapidly deepened his involvement with the SPCK since he joined in January 1709. With frequent attendance of Claude Grôteste, Sieur de la Mothe, a Huguenot minister, Böhme's presence was evidence of the ecumenical inclination of the SPCK.<sup>3</sup> From these members, it is easy to understand why continental Protestants found in the SPCK an intermediary through which to apply to the English authorities for help.

After the revolution of 1688–9, successive English monarchs officially and repeatedly made claims to be the guardians of Protestant Europe. From time to time, they offered financial support to their distressed brethren on the continent. For example, the Huguenots, the Vaudois, the Orangeois, the Palatines, the Armenians, the Reformed church in Oberbarmen, and a Latin school in Offenbach were among the recipients of Queen Anne's charity.<sup>4</sup> Yet charitable requests from abroad had become so frequent in the early 18th century that some of the English found them too many to cope with. Some applications were inevitably turned down. William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1726 wrote to a foreign friend who was considering an application for financial assistance that 'many are the applications that are made to us for help to erect churches in Germany; one at this time for a church at Durkheim; all which considered, I doubt very little will be gotten here for that you mention'.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the would-be recipients of aid still needed to recommend themselves to the English authorities in the hope of obtaining English charity. The English side, too, needed an agent who acted as a bridge between the English authorities and foreign applicants. Judging from its network, it is not surprising that the SPCK members came to acquire a general control over official fund-raising.

The minutes of the SPCK only occasionally mentioned news of the persecutions but this did not imply any indifference on the part of the SPCK towards the persecuted. The fact that some SPCK members came to be chosen as commissioners of the official fund-raising for the Orangeois, the Oberbarmen church, and the poor Palatines<sup>6</sup> often made their meetings look like those of the SPCK, and they apparently had considerable influence over the conduct of fund-raising.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, distressed continental Protestants consulted them as to whether they had a chance of obtaining a royal order for fund-raising or to raise charitable collections, and many of them were willing to undertake the long journey to the SPCK meetings in London. John Holling of Hanover, a foreign corresponding member, wrote to the SPCK in early 1714:

that the provost of Wolgast [in Pomerania] by name von Platen a Dr in divinity having collected some opinions there and other parts of Germany towards rebuilding the church in said town, which together with the whole town was reduced to ashes by the Muscovites, had desired him to enquire of his friends in England whether it might be advisable for him to go thither to solicit charities for this purpose, and particularly whether the Society would be pleased to countenance him therein; he sends with his letter a printed narrative in High Dutch representing the miserable condition of those poor people, the contents of which he desires may be communicated to the Society by Mr Chamberlayne [a leading member of the SPCK].<sup>8</sup>

This letter shows that the Protestants in the Baltic region were well aware of the role of the SPCK over the English charity business. To take another example, in 1716 George I ordered funds to be raised both for the Bohemian Brethren in Lissa (Leszno) in Poland and a Calvinist college in Enyad (Nagyenyad / Aiud) in Transylvania.<sup>9</sup> The Bohemian Brethren and the Transylvanians had possibly known about each other's petitions for charity and soon realized, at least on the side of Polish Protestants, that they were rivals for it. Daniel Ernst Jablonski, a leader of the Bohemian Brethren and an SPCK foreign correspondent, used his SPCK connection in order to ensure that the share of the Polish Protestants was greater than that of Enyed. On 11 April 1716, Jablonski in Berlin instructed Christian Sitkovius, his agent in London:

Although one must not be covetous in matters of grace, against his neighbours, fairness however demands that in the case of the collections in England we in Poland should have a larger share to keep than the Transylvanians. On this account, I am also writing [at once] to Doctor Caesar.<sup>10</sup>

Doctor Caesar was a minister of the German Reformed Congregation in London and also a member of the SPCK. The reply of Caesar was too formal to satisfy

Jablonski. Nor did the letters from other members seem to have calmed his anxiety about the share. Half a year later he could not resist suggesting to his agent, that he would press Caesar again though Jablonski was careful to stress that they must not 'talk too much about this, so that [they] are not looked on as unsatisfied misers and envious people'.

I wanted to write to Doctor Caesar on this occasion, but was prevented; I beg you to greet him officially, and to assure him that it will happen [as soon as possible]. This gentleman has distribution in mind only in general. Behold his words:

Moreover, in due time the sharing of such incoming collection money between you and the college of Enyed shall be according to all fair proportion, and be made in conformity with the decision of the most noble Lords and trustees.

Because Herr Caesar is not only an active instrument of these collections, but also a commissioner of the same, and indeed its secretary, he can also do a lot as regards the disposition ...<sup>11</sup>

From its foundation, the SPCK sometimes raised money privately for the Huguenot galley slaves in France, and also for some of the other continental Protestants.<sup>12</sup> In the course of the 18th century, the English government as well as the Church of England became so introverted and so insular that they turned down more frequently the applications for help from continental Protestants. It was on these occasions that the SPCK stepped in and organized relief fund-raising for them. Take, for example, the relief activities for the Protestants in Kieydan (Kedainiai) in Lithuania in 1730. The leading members demonstrated their experience in working on fund-raising for continental Protestants. While bankers connected with the SPCK, such as the Hoare family, took charge of the money, leading members of the SPCK, especially Sir John Philipps and Henry Newman, did their best to raise funds and looked around for help. Meanwhile Newman wrote begging letters, and Sir John Philipps visited his connections and friends. On one occasion, Sir Robert Walpole, the British prime minister and a relation of Philipps, was visited by him and 'went immediately and fetched him [Philipps] a bank bill for £50'. The Earl of Harrington, Secretary of State, was another 'generous and liberal' benefactor persuaded by Philipps. The SPCK seem to have also had contact with the Church of Scotland. Subsequently, a Sunday collection for 'Kieydan in Poland' was arranged in all churches in Edinburgh.<sup>13</sup>

In the early spring of 1706 the SPCK invited two Vaudois brothers, called Cyprian and Paul Appia, to its meeting. Having survived the massacre of the Vaudois in 1686 as small children, the brothers were sent to Lausanne, then Oxford, in order to serve the Vaudois community in the future. When they appeared at the Society, they had finished their education in England, ordained by the Bishop of London, and were on the way home to the Vaudois valleys as

their pastors. They must have impressed the Society's members, since they were presented with religious tracts 'as a testimony of the respect of the society'.<sup>14</sup> After the Appia brothers went back to the valleys, the SPCK continued to regard them as its corresponding members and furnished them with books. The Society even took care of the Vaudois students at English universities, including the nephew of Cyprian and Paul. The brothers cherished their relations with England and when Cyprian died in 1744, his nephew, pastor Daniel Joseph Appia, wrote in his obituary, 'Monsieur Cyprian Appia, Anglican Priest.'<sup>15</sup>

The SPCK kept up its network of relations with continental Protestants in the 1740s. Since the SPCK was governed by a few leading members, its personal connections were of vital importance. The first generation had strong European connections and an ecumenical bent, and was sufficiently worried by the international Roman Catholic threat to identify itself as a member of the Protestant vanguard; the generation that followed was more insular. Whereas it maintained its anti-popish activities, increasingly it cared more about national problems and ecclesiastical issues, and does not seem to have regarded the Roman Catholic threat as the urgent, uppermost danger to Protestantism. The memory of the Protestant crisis at the time of Louis XIV was fading by now, and the SPCK was losing its European perspective. Some continental Protestants, including the Vaudois, kept alive the memory of their link with the SPCK, however, and approached its members again in much later years.

*Sugiko Nishikawa*

1. République et Canton de Neuchâtel, Archives de l'Etat, LiasseVII/4/12.
2. According to Dr Charles Littleton, Slare was also a secretary of Robert Boyle.
3. Nishikawa, 'English Attitudes', pp. 193–209.
4. *Ibid.*, chap. 2.
5. Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Geneva, MSS. Inventaire 1569, fol. 141.
6. It is difficult to identify all the names of commissioners written on briefs which were issued by royal order to raise collections. Added to this, the full membership of the SPCK in its early years is unknown, therefore how many SPCK members were commissioners remains unclear. However, apart from titled nobility and prelates, at least 11 out of 18 commissioners for the Orangeois were probably SPCK members, 4 out of 13 for the Oberbarmen church, and 26 out of 34 for the Palatines.
7. See Nishikawa, 'English Attitudes', chap. 2. The commissioners and SPCK members who attended meetings between 20 and 24 May 1709 for the relief for the Palatines were Thomas Bray, Sir John Philipps, John Chamberlayne, Frederick Slare, Robert Hales, Robert Nelson, Henry Hoare, Justice Hooke, Henry William Ludolph, John Tribbeko, George Andrew Ruperti, William Dudley and George Watson. The SPCK membership of the other attendees, James Keith, Rupert Bridges and Mr Freske, is uncertain. There is no clue as to the identity of Mr Voace. *Ecclesiastical Records: State of New York*, ed. Hugh Hastings, 7 vols (Albany, 1902), III, pp. 1739–42.
8. SPCK, Abstract Letter Book, Received, no. 3853.
9. Nishikawa, 'English Attitudes', pp. 107–117.
10. Unitätsarchiv, Herrnhut, Correspondence of Sitkovius, NSC-10, Jablonski to Sitkovius, 11 April 1716.
11. *Ibid.*, 28 Nov. [1716]. See also 22 February [1717]; 23 March [1717].



12. For the records of collections for the galley slaves, see SPCK, Treasurer's Cash Book, General Designs, FT 5/1, fol. 282; SPCK, Minute Book, vol. 1, fols. 332–4; *ibid.*, vol. 2–4, fol. 37. They donated £122 17s. in June 1705.
13. Nishikawa, 'Across the Continent'.
14. SPCK, Minute Book, vol. 2–4, fol. 375. See also fol. 340. They became members on 30 August 1705.
15. Sugiko Nishikawa, 'The Vaudois Baptism of Henry Cavendish', *PHS*, 26 (1996–1997); 'English Attitudes', chap. 5.

## **Bill Cowhig (2 February 1915–1 May 2008)**

With the death of Bill Cowhig the Waldensian Church in Italy has lost a dedicated friend who, with his equally indefatigable wife Ruth, set up the URC Waldensian Fellowship, which established personal and practical links between the URC church and the Waldensian Church. It is typical of the practical nature of his faith that he felt a special fellow feeling with Pastor [and Senator] Tullio Vinay, the founder of first Agape at Prali in the Waldensian Valleys and then the Christian Centre in Riesi, in what was very much Italy's own Third World in Sicily. It is a witness to Bill Cowhig's dedication and determination that he taught himself Italian so as to translate Tullio Vinay's *Love Never Fails*, in which Vinay recounts his belief in faith as practical outreach.

Bill Cowhig certainly shared Tullio Vinay's credo of walking the walk rather than just talking the talk as he took to heart the prophet's injunction 'to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with his God'. Indeed, Bill Cowhig was humbly born, but by the time that he was gathered to the Father he had achieved much in so many spheres to be proud of.

The hard times, as he grew up the son of a South Wales miner in Porth in the Rhondda Valley, fortified his faith and character. Highly intelligent, he won a scholarship to Rhondda County School and from there went on to take a good degree in Science at Cardiff University, and then, there being no work, he read for a second degree in Maths. Eventually he found a research job with Thomson Houston Laboratories in Rugby, where he brought the rest of his family.

It was in Rugby where Bill met and married Ruth Macdonald who, after her Double First in English Literature at Girton College Cambridge, had turned down research to be involved in workers' education. During the war Bill was a 'boffin' working on radar at the RAF Research Centre at Malvern, but he turned down, on moral grounds, working on the development of the atom bomb. After a post-war move to Oxford and the birth of Mary, Roy and Andrew, Bill worked in research work in textiles in Manchester until his retirement in 1981, when he was awarded the Smith Memorial Medal.

However, Bill and Ruth were stalwarts of their local Church in Sale, where they made their home. Indeed, Bill was extremely active in the rebuilding of the church, the design and care of the garden and in the running of the church magazine.

Meanwhile from 1976 to 1986 Ruth was a member of the URC National Committee for mission and ecumenical work abroad, and in 1980 Ruth was sent to exercise her Italian language skills in visiting their fellow congregations in the Waldensian Church. She and the Waldensian Ministers she met became convinced that exchanges of church members of all ages were preferable to just churches touching 'at the summits' of Moderators. Thus was born the URC Waldensian Fellowship. Bill retired in 1981 and the following year, with Bill as Chairman and Ruth a Secretary of the Fellowship, the first busload from Sale and Manchester left for the Waldensian Valleys.

From now on Bill dedicated all his efforts to the Waldensian Fellowship project of contacts, visits and exchanges. He improved his Italian so that he could read *Riforma*, the Waldensian weekly paper, and translate significant articles for the Fellowship Newsletter, while also reviewing new publications by the publishers *Claudiana*. Via a satellite dish he videoed Italian TV programmes, including *Protestantissimo*. He then became adept at the Internet and used it to keep in touch, not only with his grandchildren, but with a network of 232 adults and 68 young people. Indeed, many Waldensian young people have improved their English and their cultural and Christian horizons through staying as part of the Cowhigs' extended family in their large and welcoming house and garden at 21 Priory Road in Sale.

However, as happens with so many English who experience the Waldensian Valleys, Bill and Ruth confessed themselves to be happier with the way of life of the heightened social and political engagement to be found in these committed parishes of this Cromwellian *Israel of the Alps*. Indeed, among 'ev'n them who kept thy faith so pure of old' should also be numbered Bill Cowhig and his wife of 68 years, Ruth.

RN

## Book review

*Louise. Canzone senza pause* by Eliana Bouchard. 2007. Bollati Boringhieri. 230 pp., €13.60.

It is very interesting and also rather puzzling that in the last decade or so two Waldensian women have written two successful historical novels based on French Huguenot women and the tragic events of intolerance and persecution around which their private stories intertwine. The first was by Bruna Peyrot, *Le donne della torre*, and told the sad saga of the more than 130 Huguenot women locked in the infamous Tower of Constance in Southern France between the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1686) and the new Act of Toleration of 1787. They had been made and kept prisoners, some for many decades, because they had refused to abjure the Reformed religion.

Recently, Eliana Bouchard with *Louise* has given voice to a heroine of the previous century, a witness and indirectly a victim of the very first major attack

against the French Protestants, sadly known as the 'Massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve' of 1572. The women of the Tower were mostly of humble origins with a few from a bourgeois background. Louise, however, belongs to the highest aristocracy as the daughter of the Admiral Gaspard de Coligny and the wife of Charles de Teligny, whom she has married before her 17th birthday. Both men having been killed, she fortuitously survived and was for years on the run throughout Protestant Europe. From Switzerland she ended up in the Low Countries, where she married William I of Orange, Stadholder of Holland, known as the Silent. She was to be the friend of important people in the history of Protestantism, such as the theologian Theodore de Bèze and Renata di Francia – who, by the way, was Italian – who provided help and refuge to many French and Italian Protestants on the run. Henri IV, who abandoned Protestantism because '*Paris vaut bien un messe*', but also ended the persecution of the Huguenots and the open war of religion with the Edict of Nantes (1598), was a close friend and would listen to her views. And of course she was to be the confidante and adviser of the many children left by her second husband, since he himself had also been killed by a Catholic fanatic, the Frenchman Balthazar Gerard who above all wanted the reward, but was captured and put to a slow and painful death.

Mauritius of Nassau, only 16 when his father was assassinated, became one of the greatest generals of the time and a mentor to his half brother, Frederick Henry, son of Louise and born just six months before his father's death. This noblewoman and the lesser-born persecuted in the Tower shared the same strong faith, the same sense of duty, the same loyalty to the 'new religion', which was so all-embracing and all-consuming that they foreswore any faltering, even if the price was to be incarceration or execution.

Eliana, who is by the way the daughter of pastor Gustavo Bouchard, whom many of you will remember as a touring guest of our Mission, has been researching documents of the time, and from the letters left by Louise de Coligny has recreated a female character of very modern sensibilities and feelings. Despite troubled and violent times, despite having been persecuted and having lost so many loved ones through treacherous massacre, and despite having been the mother and stepmother of valiant soldiers, she was not bitter or consumed with revenge but drew strength and calm from her unconquerable faith in the resurrected Lord, never abandoning her hopes and dreams of peace, freedom and toleration.

The whole book, though, is permeated by a suffused sense of resignation to impending destiny, and the reader may experience a feeling of subtle despair. It seemed that everyone close to her would be sooner or later murdered, Henry IV included.

What helped me in overcoming this sense of despair was knowing something that the book does not tell us because Louise herself never knew, having died before her son Frederick Henry married: this was that her progeny would be the rescuer of Protestantism and the builder of modern and tolerant Europe, since William III of Orange, later William I of England, hero of the Glorious Revolution and indirectly of the Waldensian Glorious Return, was her great grandson.

ES

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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.



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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 ericmurray137@talktalk.net

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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

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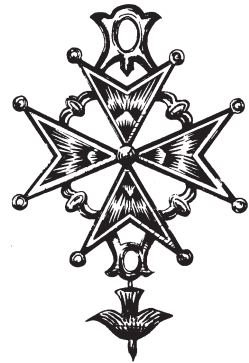
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