

EVANGELICALISM IN VICTORIA – 1910.

Charles Perry Lecture. 2010. Ridley Melbourne.

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The purpose of this lecture is to look at the overall evangelical situation in Victoria in 1910, when Ridley Melbourne was founded.

Ridley College has from its beginning had an avowedly evangelical charter. Although students would be taught Christian theology, and prepared for Christian service, without requiring them to be evangelicals, yet the purpose of the College was openly declared to be to serve the Church of Christ from within what we might call the Evangelical Party of the Church of England.

Firstly, we need to look at the history of the Evangelical Party, which had such a formative influence on what happened here.

The Early History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England.

G. R. Balleine has given us an excellent history of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England,¹ starting with the Oxford Methodists, led by the Rev. John Wesley, but including a very small number of other evangelical clergy in the Eighteenth Century, such as John Newton, John Berridge and William Grimshaw, who mainly served in country parishes. This was the first generation of people in the Evangelical Party of the Church of England. There was also an American wing to this great movement, with the Rev. George Whitefield being involved in both British and American aspects. There were also important Scottish and Welsh components of the Movement which had far-reaching effects. It also included the rise of Methodism in Britain and America. Whitefield was involved in all of these, as well. This highly significant movement is now called the Great Awakening.

The Second and Third Generations of the Evangelical Party.

Balleine describes how the Evangelical Party developed dramatically, through such people as Isaac Milner and Charles Simeon, and through such groups as the Clapham Sect. Extremely important in this period were the parliamentary careers of William Wilberforce and others in his group, the business and benevolence of John Thornton, the writings of Hannah More, and the birth of the so-called “Great Societies” – such as the London Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society. This, roughly speaking, was the second generation of the Evangelical Party.

The Evangelical Party also had a marvellous third generation of growth and power, including many notable leaders, but who were all overshadowed by the towering figure of Lord Ashley, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. Here we have been looking at it all simply from the viewpoint of the Church of England. The growth and impact of the Evangelical Party in that period was simply phenomenal.²

¹ G. R. Balleine. *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England*. London. Church Book Room Press. New edition, 1951.

² Other very important histories of the Evangelical Movement in the Church of England include Leonard Elliott Binns, *The Evangelical Movement in the English Church*. London.. Methuen.. 1928,

A Wider Perspective, Involving the Other Denominations.

In this lecture we need a wider perspective than simply considering Anglican Evangelical history. So we will adopt the framework provided by the history of the Great Awakenings, and of revival movements since about 1738. The expert historian on this subject through the later parts of the Twentieth Century was the Irish/American scholar and evangelist, Dr. James Edwin Orr, and a very substantial literature now exists on this wide and diverse subject.

The beginnings of the Great Awakening in Britain can be seen as part of God's answers to the prayers offered at the Moravian missionary prayer meeting on Count Zinzendorf's estates at Herrnhut. This prayer meeting went on continuously, 24 hours a day, for a hundred years, following the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out on that congregation at worship in 1727.³

The one hundred years prayer meeting was called the "Hourly Intercession," and involved relays of men, women and children, when "prayer without ceasing was made to God for all the work and wants of His Church." The spirit of prayer came especially upon the children in the Herrnhut congregation. Although it was only a small village, over 100 of the people who lived in that village went to the mission field within the next 25 years.⁴

After John Wesley's heart was "strangely warmed" at the Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, on 24th May, 1738, the powerful growth of the Methodist class meetings in England was strengthened by the many hours spent in prayer by Wesley and his preachers through the following years. These times of prayer were recorded extensively by Wesley in his *Journals*.

The Concert of Prayer.

The history of modern revivals since the time of the first Great Awakening centres very much round what was called **the Concert of Prayer**, although other names might have been used for it at times.

The revivals in Scotland around 1744 prompted some ministers to issue a general call in the autumn of that year to the churches in Scotland proposing a scheme of united effort in public prayers for the coming of the Kingdom of God.⁵ One of these ministers was the Rev. John Erskine.

"The ministers called upon all who would collaborate with them to set apart for the next two years some time on Saturday evening and Sunday morning for united intercession and supplication, and especially to devote all or part of the first Tuesday of each quarter to this purpose."⁶

There was a very good response to this call in many of the principal towns of Scotland. After two years, the call was renewed for another seven years. Twelve ministers published a *Memorial*, dated August 26, 1746. It was entitled *A Concert of Prayer, To Be Continued For Seven Years*. Copies were distributed through Scotland and England, and five hundred copies were sent to America. The movement also

and John Henry Overton, *The Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century*. London. Longmans, Green and Co. 1886.

³ W. R. Ward. *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*. Cambridge University Press. 1992.

⁴ John Greenfield. *Power From On High. The 200th Anniversary of the Great Moravian Revival. 1727 – 1927*. London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. 1927. pages 29 – 30.

⁵ R. P. Beaver. "The Concert of Prayer for Missions." *An Early Venture in Ecumenical Action*. In *Ecumenical Review*. X. 1957 – 1958. pages 420 – 427.

⁶ *Ibid.* page 421.

spread through Wales and Ireland. Jonathan Edwards knew all of the ministers who had signed the *Memorial*, and the proposed Concert of Prayer captured his imagination. He wrote to the Rev. William McCulloch, in Cambuslang, near Glasgow, “I have taken a great deal of pains to promote this Concert here in America, and shall not cease to do so, if God spares my life, if I have opportunity, in all ways I can devise.”⁷

The most effective thing he managed to do was to write a book, which he called *An Humble Attempt To Promote Explicit Agreement And Visible Union Among God’s People, In Extraordinary Prayer For The Revival Of Religion, And The Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom On Earth, Pursuant To Scriptural Promises, And Prophecies Concerning The Last Times*.

The contents of this book were first preached to his congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts. It contained a long exposition of Zechariah 8:20 – 22. This chapter in Zechariah contains a prophecy about the future glorious advancement of the Church which has not yet come to pass. Edwards’s book called Christians to make common purpose in express and visible agreement, in extraordinary prayer in seeking that God would come and “grant the tokens and fruits of His gracious Presence.” It must not be a vague effort, but it must be a visible union, according to the Scriptures, formed by an explicit agreement and demonstrated publicly.

In the 1780s, the Lord stirred up a new movement of prayer in parts of England, and some local revivals began to appear. Forty years after its first issue, John Erskine re-issued his *Memorial*. He sent copies to many people, including Andrew Fuller and John Rylands, two Northamptonshire Baptist ministers, reinforced with a copy of Jonathan Edwards’s book, *An Humble Attempt*. These Baptists shared their burden with a colleague, John Sutcliff of Olney. It was Sutcliff who got the Baptist Associations in Northampton and Leicester counties to devote the first Monday evening of each month to “prayer for the general revival and spread of religion.” Andrew Fuller published a sermon on the subject, called *A Few Persuasives to a General Union in Prayer for the Revival of Religion*.

This arrangement of “the first Monday evening of the month” was the form which the Concert of Prayer took in the coming years.

By 1786, the Baptist Association of the Midlands adopted the challenge for a concert of prayer. Other Free Church Associations joined in as well. The Methodists recognised the importance of prayer meetings in reviving their work. They published an article entitled *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in the Prayer Meetings in the Present Revival*. The scattered Evangelical Anglicans showed interest in it also.

In this way, there arose a renewed interest in the Concert of Prayer in England in the 1780s, and local revivals began to appear in some of the Baptist and Congregational churches. The number of Baptist churches in the English countryside began to mushroom. Edwin Orr says, “By the year 1789, the general union in prayer was operating over a very wide network of prayer meetings for revival.”⁸

The Second Great Awakening.

The new floodtide of blessing in answer to these prayers in England first appeared in 1792, just after the death of John Wesley. At first, the revivals appeared mostly in Baptist and Congregational churches. Then the Methodists heard about

⁷ Ibid. page 422.

⁸ Orr. *The Eager Feet*. Evangelical Awakenings 1790 – 1830. Chicago. Moody Press. 1975. page 15.

what was happening, and redoubled their efforts at prayer, and by 1794, their prayers were being answered abundantly.

The Concert of Prayer was also heavily involved in launching the missionary movement from England at that time, in support of the newly formed London Missionary Society. In addition, Andrew Fuller became the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, which sent out William Carey.

The impact of this Second Great Awakening in England can be seen, for example, in the statistics of the Methodist Societies. In the 1780s the total membership of the Societies had grown slowly. In the 1790s they quadrupled.⁹

In the United States of America, what was called the Great Awakening in Virginia occurred around 1770. But in most of the country, following the American War of Independence, spiritual conditions were very low and poor indeed. Tom Paine said that the Christian Church was dying out, and in many parts, this seemed to be true.

In the United States, Edwards's *Humble Attempt* was republished in 1794, and a Baptist minister, the Rev. Isaac Backus, hearing of what was happening in England, began to call the churches back to the Concert of Prayer.¹⁰ There was widespread support for this effort, right through the country. The American version of the Second Great Awakening began to appear around 1798, bursting forth, first of all, in the north-eastern states of Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania and New York. These were revivals which were very well controlled by the ministers, because they feared the irrational outbreaks which had happened under the influence of James Davenport in the first Great Awakening, and which had done so much damage. Very few of the converts fell by the wayside. They were very well instructed before they were allowed to indulge a hope that they were converted.

A year or two later, in Kentucky and Tennessee, there were spectacular and emotional revivals which transformed that area of the United States into a veritable garden of God. Previously, it had proved impossible to administer justice in those areas. Dr. George A. Baxter travelled in the area. He affirmed:- "on my way, I was informed by settlers on the road that the character of Kentucky was entirely changed, and that they were as remarkable for sobriety as they had formerly been for dissoluteness and immorality. And indeed I found Kentucky to appearances the most moral place I had ever seen. A profane expression was hardly ever heard. A religious awe seemed to pervade the country. Upon the whole, I think that the revival in Kentucky the most extraordinary that has ever visited the Church of Christ."

Orr says, "The common folk were engulfed by the flood, leaving little islands of critical opposition or amused indifference among the upper classes who professed but rarely practiced an Episcopalian religion. Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians shared in the movement cordially, for everyone was so busy aiding converts that there was no competition."¹¹

Generally speaking, the Second Great Awakening continued in Britain and in the United States of America as long as the denominations maintained their practice of the Concert of Prayer for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is surprising how many times that American Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Congregationalists returned to practicing the Concert of Prayer, and repeatedly in response they found that the Holy Spirit was poured out on their work. So much did this happen that upstate New York became known as "The Burned-Over District." In one sense it was

⁹ Ibid. page 18.

¹⁰ Ibid. page 52.

¹¹ Ibid. Orr, page 63.

a derogatory term, because the stricter Calvinists thought that Arminian revivals would produce mainly blighted results. They considered that the district had been burned over again and again by false revivals and false fire, which would clearly produce false conversions. However, my book *Fire From Heaven* shows clearly that these revivals were wonderful works of God, and that they did not produce bad results or false conversions any more than the other revivals at that time.¹²

These revivals also spread through Europe. In the U.S.A. the movement continued through until 1830. In England, there were many Methodist revivals through these years, as well as powerful revivals in Scotland and Wales. Revivals also occurred after 1830 in many mission fields.

Another short period of revivals appeared in some parts of the world around 1840 – 1842. But the next main period of revivals occurred from 1857 through to the early 1860s.

The 1859 Revival

After the great example which had been set in 1792, whenever the temperature of spiritual life began to get low, and leaders became concerned, most of the denominations practiced the habit of calling their people together to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon themselves and their work. They renewed the Concert of Prayer. That is what happened again in the late 1850s. The answer to the prayers came first of all late in 1857 in New York, and the revival spread rapidly through the United States until a million conversions had been reported, and many churches had doubled or even trebled their membership. It appeared again in Ulster in 1859, and spread through the British Isles and Europe, resulting in hundreds of thousands of conversions. Indeed, the revival spread through many of the mission fields, and appeared also here in Australia.

Dr. Orr pointed to evidence which he believed showed that this great revival affected all of the Protestant churches here in Australia.¹³

There is plain documentation that the revival was very strongly felt amongst the Methodists in Australia. My book, *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia*, provides a wide range of this evidence.¹⁴ The Methodist church membership figures, however, did not grow at that time as much as one would have expected. One possible reason for this is that many of the converts left Australia for the newly-discovered gold fields in New Zealand within a very short time.

Following the revival in Australia there arrived two outstanding evangelists – “California” Taylor and Matthew Burnett. Both were Wesleyans. These two men continued the benefits of the revival into the future decades.¹⁵

My latest book seeks to show that Matthew Burnett was the greatest evangelist and social reformer we have had in Australia. He travelled around Victoria for nine years, and after a break in England, spent another six years working in Victoria, seeing many thousands of conversions, some local revivals, sixty thousand people sign the temperance pledge in his meetings, and the founding of a number of social

¹² R. Evans. *Fire From Heaven. A Description and Analysis of the Revivals of the Burned-Over District of New York, and Spiritual Deceptions.* Hazelbrook. The Author. 2004.

¹³ Orr. *The Fervent Prayer.* The World-wide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858. Chicago. Moody Press. 1974. chapter 14. See also Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas.* Minneapolis. Bethany Fellowship. 1976. chapter 8.

¹⁴ Evans. *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia.* Hazelbrook. The Author. 2000. chapters 2 (New South Wales), 6 (Tasmania), 9 (Victoria) and 15 (South Australia.).

¹⁵ C. Irving Benson. *A Century of Victorian Methodism.* Melbourne. Spectator Publishing. Co. 1935. page 129.

agencies to help people. He preached in every place in Victoria where he could gather an audience. After that, he travelled through South Australia for three years where he saw several notable revivals. He spent eight months in Western Australia, and a year in Tasmania. He spent two years preaching through New Zealand in every hamlet in the South Island, and in every town of size in the North. He spent three years preaching through New South Wales and Queensland. Some of his converts were notable drunkards. Others came from the dregs of society. He learned how to preach the Gospel to the masses, with good success. Over 175,000 Australians and Kiwis signed the temperance pledge in his meetings. In New Zealand, those who signed represented five percent of the population. Bishops, governors, attorneys-general, premiers, mayors, brewers, politicians, doctors and wealthy landowners chaired his temperance meetings. In those years, his name was a household word throughout Australia, and the local Press readily supported his work. Today he is forgotten by Christians, and by secular historians alike.¹⁶

This 1859 revival in England had a great impact upon the Church of England. One of the results of the revival was the rise of a long series of talented evangelists. They came from all denominations. Many of them were laymen. A few were British aristocrats. One outstanding result of this revival for the Anglicans, as well as others, was the formation in London, in 1864, of the Evangelization Society. This organisation planned to send quality preachers to any church which asked in order to conduct special evangelistic services. Any converts would be channelled back into the churches involved. This organisation started in a small way, but well before 1890 they employed eighty evangelists full time, and another hundred preachers part time, conducting such missions throughout the British Isles. It was financed by wealthy laymen who gave repeated substantial gifts to support the work.

English Revivals around 1875.

One further revival in the British Isles helped very strongly to prepare the situation in Australia before 1910. This was the revival which occurred in a number of parts of the British Isles through the ministry of the American lay evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey through the years around 1875.

G. R. Balleine said that “Two men less likely to set the country on fire could hardly be imagined.” But what happened? “Hundreds of men and women were thoroughly converted to God who before had been leading careless, colourless lives, and though a considerable number joined dissenting bodies, many threw themselves heart and soul into the life and work of the Evangelical parishes. And in hundreds, who were already Christians, a new zeal was kindled. They were lifted to a clearer consciousness of their Christianity. Their eyes were opened to the great reality of the facts of repentance and conversion. They had seen how souls could be won, and were all on fire to take their share in the battle, and the clergy found ready to hand numbers of lay workers eager to be employed in the open air or the mission service.”¹⁷

One of the best known Anglican evangelists in England to take up evangelistic work at that time was Canon W. Hay M. H. Aitken. In 1875, Aitken was a parish minister. D.L. Moody met him, and realised that Aitken had a much wider ministry than could be achieved in a local parish, so suggested to him that he should leave parish work and dedicate himself to widespread evangelism. In 1876, Canon Hay Aitken founded what ultimately became known as the Church Parochial Mission

¹⁶ R. Evans. *Matthew Burnett – the Yorkshire Evangelist: Australia’s Greatest Evangelist and Social Reformer*. Hazelbrook. The Author. 2010.

¹⁷ Balleine. Op cit. pages 198 – 200.

Society. Teams travelled around England holding evangelistic missions. One source of information says that in 40 years, the Society conducted 1,000 missions, and saw around 100,000 people brought to Christ.¹⁸

In the 1880s, women were not nearly as liberated as they are today. In Australia, there were two outstanding women evangelists. These were Mrs. Margaret Hampson and Mrs. Emilia Baeyertz, who both made major contributions to the evangelical scene here. There was also the American holiness preacher, Miss Isabella Leonard, who significantly lifted the impact of holiness teaching in New South Wales.¹⁹ Their work contributed significantly as preparations for the revivals which came later. Apart from these three, there were many other less well known women evangelists who gained many victories for Christ in churches around the nation.

The Presbyterians in Australia could grow by getting more people out from Scotland, and they did. The Anglicans could grow by getting more people from England. The Catholics could grow by getting more Irishmen. But the Methodists could not grow without having more revivals. In Australia, the Methodists of various colours were well aware of this, and they saw many local revivals through the second half of the Nineteenth Century in which many thousands of conversions occurred. That was their hope.

The Methodists in Australia, as well as in England, and around the world, were hungering and thirsting for revival. When a Methodist minister was elected to be President of the Conference for a year, he would state his theme and his hopes for the year. Repeatedly, these men would say that what they wanted to see was “A revival in every circuit.” They knew that Methodism had been born in a revival, and that it had grown by means of revivals. The new President believed that the only way it could grow during his Presidential year was by means of more revivals. Naturally, this had an impact on the other churches. It provided another demonstration that church growth by means of revivals actually worked, following upon the marvellous growth which had occurred in the previous revivals.

It was the whole ethos of English Anglican evangelicalism, quickened by the revivals of 1859 and 1875, which laid the foundations for the spiritual power which the Evangelical Party in Australian Anglicanism enjoyed as they approached the end of the Nineteenth Century. Strong evangelicalism within the Methodist and Baptist churches in Australia also had its effect upon society as a whole, and upon the other churches.

It was this spiritual power; this concern for the Gospel; this concern for the souls of men and women, and this concern to carry out the Great Commission, that made the evangelical Anglicans stand up against those in the Church of England who wanted to bring back into Anglicanism the vestments, rituals and theology of the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation.

A New Movement of Prayer in Australia.

A new Bible and Prayer Union was started in London by the Rev. T. Richardson in January, 1876, and the idea soon spread around the world. It grew rapidly in Australia through the 1880s, especially being fostered by the lay evangelist, Margaret Hampson, during her visits to Australia in 1883 and 1884, and it became very strong through until the First World War. For example, the membership of this Prayer Union in 1890 was around 6,000 in South Australia alone. While this

¹⁸ Website – Revivals in Merseyside. 1840 – 1940.

¹⁹ R. Evans, *Evangelism and Revivals in Australia. 1880 – 1914. (First Volume)*. Hazelbrook, 2005. chapters 1, 2 and 4. Also, R. Evans. *Emilia Baeyertz – Evangelist*. Hazelbrook. 2008.

Prayer Union was not primarily a movement of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it was a movement of prayer which easily included concerns of that kind.

These Prayer Unions became powerful factors in the evangelism of Australia for several decades, until the First World War.

One of these prayer bands which has been noted more than others was formed by a group of ministers in Melbourne, praying together each Saturday evening, not for a small or local revival, such as they had often seen in Australia, but for a *great* revival. The ministers in this group, about twenty, comprised the most active evangelicals from each of the Protestant denominations, and included several leading Anglican ministers. The group included only one layman. The group formed first in 1889, and they continued their praying at least until the revival came in 1902.

By the turn of the century, many thousands of people around the world were anxious to see another wide-sweeping revival, to quicken spiritual life, and to advance the Great Commission. Many people in Australia were a part of these prayer efforts.²⁰

The answer to their prayers began in Australia in 1901, when a Simultaneous Mission was held in Sydney. The Australian version of the Evangelization Society, called the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, had tried to arrange for D.L. Moody to visit Australia, but this effort failed. Moody was dead by the end of the century. Two members of the Society toured England to find an evangelist to invite to Australia, but they did not find one about whom they felt God's leading. They went to Chicago, and arranged for the American evangelist, the Rev. R. A. Torrey, to visit Melbourne and to lead a major mission effort in April, 1902. It was Torrey who invited Charles M. Alexander to come as his song-leader. Torrey organised substantial prayer support in the U.S.A. before he left his home. Cottage and Church prayer meetings were held in Victoria which included over one hundred thousand praying people in Melbourne alone. The mission created an impact which was considered to be a revival by those who were involved, and also by people all around the world who heard reports of it. For example, a mission leader in India, Pandita Ramabai, sent two representatives to Australia to see what was happening, and their report led to the outbreak of revival in India several years later.²¹

The Australian movement spread into many parts of this country, including a number of country towns in New South Wales through 1902 and 1903. For example, a united ten days' mission in the town of Singleton, N.S.W. produced five hundred professions of conversion. Many sparks from the fire appeared in successful aggressive evangelism, such as, amongst the Kanakas in Queensland. Charles M. Alexander in particular made an immense impact on Australia through his popular hymns and through his personality. He made a brief visit to Australia again in 1906 with his new wife. In 1909, and again in 1912, he came here with the Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman as the preacher. These evangelistic efforts had a considerable impact on the evangelical Anglicans in this country, as they did on all of the Protestant denominations.

After working in Australia in 1902, Torrey and Alexander worked in England for several years, and their work in that land was also recognised as part of the whole widespread revival movement that was working in various parts of the world at that time.

But the main answer to widespread prayers for revival came with the appearance of a very strange spiritual movement in Wales, in December 1904, which

²⁰ Evans. *Evangelism and Revivals in Australia. 1880 – 1914. (First Volume).* chapters 1 and 2.

²¹ Helen S. Dyer. *Pandita Ramabai.* Pickering and Inglis. Chapter 12.

became known as the Welsh Revival. It marked the start of a world-wide movement of revival, which spread to every part of the world during the next five or six years.²²

These revivals were all reported upon in evangelical literature in Australia, and created a deepening impression. They whetted the appetite of keen Christians to see such things happen here.

Church Statistics in Victoria, 1902 – 1912.

Over the period between 1881 and 1921, Baptist Union membership rose from 3,893 to 7,492. Churches of Christ full membership rose from about 2,500 to 10,293. Membership in the Congregational Churches in Victoria was 3,538, and by 1921 this rose to 4,783, and thereafter declined. The Wesleyans and Bible Christians combined had a full membership of 12,329 in 1881. By 1921 this had risen to 37,452. The Presbyterian membership in Victoria in 1886 was 15,876, whereas in 1921 it was 35,223. The Salvation Army did not appear in the census in 1881, but in 1931 their membership was 7,840 members.

Anglican census figures are usually based upon very much more nominal ideas of church membership than the dissenting denominations, and thus are almost worthless in making any comparisons. Committed membership figures are not available. The census figures for the whole of Australia for those professing nominal links with Anglicanism in 1881 (Tasmania 1891) was 881,175, whereas, by 1921 this number was 2,370,480. The population of the whole of Australia over that period was 2,250,194 (1881). It grew at a steady rate to 5,435,734 in 1921.²³

The growth of committed church membership in the Methodist Churches of Victoria and Tasmania between 1901 and 1910 has been the easiest for me to access.

In 1901, Methodist church members in Victoria and Tasmania numbered 22,189, with 868 on trial (Wesleyan only). In 1904 the Methodist numbers were 32,793, with 1,347 on trial. In 1907 the numbers were 34,392, with 802 on trial. In 1910 the numbers were 36,948, with 2,146 on trial.²⁴

Although the 1901 Wesleyan figures in Victoria do not include the Bible Christians (probably about 1,300), we can still see that a very healthy growth occurred over the three years from 1901 to 1904 [about 35%], and steady growth took place up to 1910. Whereas the 1921 figure given above shows only a relatively small growth through the years of the First World War.

A similar pattern of growth occurred in New South Wales. At the Methodist Union which occurred at the end of 1901, the Wesleyans contributed 11,759 members, with 564 on trial. The Primitive Methodists contributed 1,737 members, with 53 on trial. The total, therefore, was 13,496 members, with 617 on trial. In 1904, the Methodist members in N.S.W. numbered 16,032 members, with 1,068 on trial. In 1907, the membership totalled 18,287, with 703 on trial. In 1910 the membership totalled 20,452, with 967 on trial.²⁵

Again, we see an increase of about 35% in the period from 1902 to 1904. The increase from 1901 to 1910 was about 50%. This is excellent growth. The revival in Australia was basically a groundswell type of revival, although there were very noticeable, public, climactic events seen in the various evangelistic missions.

²² Orr. *The Flaming Tongue*. The Impact of [Early] 20th Century Revivals. Chicago. Moody Press. 1973.

²³ Evans. *Evangelism and Revivals. 1880 to 1914*, pages 426 – 427.

²⁴ *Minutes of General Conference*. 1900, 1904, 1907 and 1910.

²⁵ *Minutes of General Conference*, *ibid*.

Also, Evans. *Evangelism and Revivals, 1880 to 1914*, chapter 18.

While the Wesleyan Methodists in Victoria had seen excellent years of growth for several years around 1883 and 1884, there had not been steady growth, year by year, such as we see in this decade from 1900 to 1910. In the earlier years, even in apparently good years, the membership had sometimes declined.²⁶

Evangelical Anglican congregations in Australia would have benefited from this period of revival in Australia (1900 – 1910) in a similar way.

Anglican Evangelism in Australia.

From the days of D. L. Moody, Anglican parish missions had become widespread in England. A review of the *Official Year-Book of the Church of England* for 1884 revealed that the English Anglicans were copying the Methodists in using lay agency and revivalism extensively.²⁷

This pattern rapidly appeared in Australia, also. In New South Wales, in 1885, an eight days' mission occurred in Sydney, with meetings at St. James's Church. The Primate was very active in it. Meetings were led by suitable local clergy, and by visitors like H. B. Macartney and H. A. Langley from Victoria.²⁸

In Melbourne, 1888, the Bishop himself provided a report about mission meetings held in churches around the city, which was published in the *Daily Telegraph*.²⁹

Men like the Rev. H. S. Begbie transformed moribund city Anglican churches into vibrant congregations through his evangelistic preaching and hard work, producing results of which any Methodist would have been proud.

The Rev. George Grubb, an Irish Anglican evangelist, and spokesman for the Keswick Movement, conducted missions far and wide, mainly in Anglican churches, and helped found the Geelong Convention on the higher Christian Life in 1891. Grubb helped to set an example in evangelism, but such missions had already been supported and driven in Anglican churches in Australia by the highest authorities.³⁰

For about five years, from 1885 to 1890, the Melbourne Anglicans even had a Diocesan Evangelist, although this position eventually lapsed through lack of financial support.³¹ Apart from many missions conducted directly in Anglican parish churches, many united local missions also included parish ministers and their congregations. Many examples could be cited. When overseas evangelists came, in 1902, and in 1909 and 1912, Anglican ministers were included in the list of preachers leading district simultaneous missions, along with preachers from other denominations, and from the Evangelisation Society.

The Victorian Anglicans also had many enthusiastic laymen who were heavily involved in all kinds of work for the Lord. For example, many were involved especially in developing the work of the Church Missionary Society in Australia.

One of the most noteworthy of these Anglican laymen in Victoria was Mr. James Griffiths, owner of the Griffiths Tea and Coffee Company. He was a strong supporter of the Evangelisation Society here in Melbourne, acting on its Executive Committee for many years, and eventually becoming its President. He bought

²⁶ Evans. Op cit. chapter 5.

²⁷ *Methodist Recorder*. March 28th, 1884. pages 200 – 201..

²⁸ *Spectator*. July 3rd, 1885. page 326.

²⁹ Reprinted in *Spectator*. August 3rd, 1888. page 368.

³⁰ E. C. Millard. *What God Hath Wrought*, and *The Same Lord*, provide accounts of Grubb's missions in 1890 and 1891. Grubb also returned to Australia around 1908.

³¹ This was the Rev. W. G. Marsh, who took up an incumbency in South Australia after 1890.

properties to help house men trapped by the “demon drink,” and was also a strong backer of the fledgling Ridley College.³²

In these ways it is possible for us to get a clearer insight into the power, enthusiasm and commitment of clergy and laymen who belonged to the Evangelical Party in Victoria in 1910. They not only provided part of the overall context of evangelicalism during the first decade of the Twentieth Century, which was the hey-day of evangelicalism in this country, but they provided the needed incentive and support which made Ridley College a great possibility.

Three Points to be Especially Remembered

Apart from the general conclusion set out in the last paragraph, there are three things I want you to take away from this lecture.

Remember, we are viewing the history of evangelicalism by using the spectacles provided by Dr. J. Edwin Orr, using the vantage point of the history of revivals, and of the Great Awakenings, as he did.

1. Edwin Orr taught us, and most of us know, that revivals must not be confused with so-called “revivalism,” or with “revivalistic evangelism,” although in practice they can merge into each other.

Evangelism may be defined as human efforts to spread the Gospel. Efforts at evangelism which are organised by humans may often use techniques and methods which have appeared previously in revival movements. This is the real definition of “revivalism.” But this does not make evangelism into revival. In revival, there must also be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which will provide a far richer and deeper quality to the events which humans might have organised.

Revivals are special times when the Holy Spirit is poured out, and when He produces results of His own, and results in our work, which are extraordinary.

2. Jonathan Edwards taught us that the Key to the Growth of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth is to be found in making “An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God’s People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth.” This is not only **sound Scriptural teaching**, as Edwards showed us, but also **it works**. The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century evangelicals demonstrated repeatedly that it works. This is the message of all the great revivals in the Church’s history.

We ignore this Scriptural teaching, and this lesson from history, at our peril. I believe that ignoring this precept and example is the main reason why churches in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Europe, are as weak as they are today. The way to overcome this weakness today is to return to this Scriptural teaching and example.

About twenty years ago, the Australian Census showed that the number of people attending churches in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney had been growing significantly. I noticed that this brief period of growth coincided with efforts made by Bishop Dudley Foord to call together Anglican people to pray for revival in Sydney’s churches. The call to prayer lasted a few years. It lapsed, perhaps because Bishop Foord was not a young man, and nobody took his place. The growth also disappeared soon after. At the time, I thought that this was one of the most hopeful things that I had seen in Sydney for many years.

Here at Ridley College we have the beginnings of a Jonathan Edwards Centre. It is planned to be a centre for academic research, and for academic excellence.

³² V. Wehner. *Tea and Charity: The Life and Times of James Griffiths, Tea Merchant and Philanthropist*. Knox Historical Society, P.O. Box 8124, Ferntree Gully. Vic. 3156.

I hope and pray it will also provide leadership in promoting Edwards's vision of Extraordinary and United Prayer Amongst God's People for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which Jonathan Edwards believed was the Hope of the Church.

3. I have made a study of Nineteenth Century evangelists in Australia. The Nineteenth Century evangelists all preached and practised what they believed to be the theology of the Reformation, but with one important additional feature.

Regarding Reformation theology, they all believed that the Bible was fully inspired; that the Atonement achieved through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the source and the core of the Gospel, and that it was the fountainhead of all the authority and power which made their work possible. They all believed that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of life.

But there was an additional factor, which is more peculiar to Nineteenth Century popular evangelicalism, and which did not appear in the Reformation, although it is probably visible in Jonathan Edwards. The Nineteenth Century evangelists all believed that the events on the Day of Pentecost represented a specimen example of a revival, or outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which could be repeated today. The Nineteenth Century evangelists worked hard at their evangelism, whether they saw revivals happen or not. But they all wanted to see revivals, and knew that revivals would bring the best success to their work. Church growth by means of revivals was their key method.

These is another aspect to this point which I hope can be discussed without raising problems about definitions of terms, or fear about "second blessing" theories. The Nineteenth Century evangelists all believed that what many of them called "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit" was the secret of success in evangelism. No matter which denomination they belonged to, they believed the baptism of the Spirit provided the power for service that was essential for them to fulfil their callings. They all preached about it, and testified about it, although none of them spoke in tongues, nor did any of them advocate that such a thing was required. For example, Charles G. Finney taught that being baptised with the Holy Spirit was the most essential of all the qualifications needed by a preacher of the Gospel, or by any Christian worker. Moody, Torrey and Chapman all agreed with him, as did many others. Some of these preachers did follow "second blessing" doctrines, but most of them wanted a new blessing every day. Despite this, for many of the evangelists, their first experience of a special endowment of the Spirit did come to them as a crisis experience.

I could provide you with names of outstanding Anglican ministers who, in their own way, belonged to this tradition – such as Bishop Handley Moule, H.B. Macartney and C.H. Nash. I would even guess that Bishop Charles Perry himself probably belonged to this tradition as well. Today it is not normal to have a course taught in Theological Colleges on "How to be filled with the Holy Spirit." But perhaps that is more useful to the Church than many other things we might learn. We ought to profit from as much learning as we can get, and should teach as much as we can, but, today, we seriously need to learn again the lesson about being filled with the Holy Spirit as the most basic essential qualification.

Let us not simply return to the past, but go forward on the basic principles of the Reformation. But this must include being historically aware about the way God has led our Fathers since that time.

May the mantle of Elijah which fell upon our Fathers in the decade around 1910 also fall upon us today, and upon all the young Elishas at Ridley College.

Amen.