



THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW



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From the Editor

Dear readers and friends,

Recently I have received emails and phone calls from new people showing interest in the Waldenses and in the work of the Mission. Therefore I would like to make clear to everyone that WE DO NOT BELONG TO A SINGLE CHURCH or a GROUP and we don't have a membership. We are an interdenominational group of friends of the Waldensian Church, supporters of its work in Italy, gathered around the Waldensian Church Mission about which you can read a few lines at page 16 of this publication, or much more in some of the books advertised on the back cover. Everyone is welcome to our gatherings, we rejoice in your interest, your prayers and your financial support without which we would lose one of our main aims.

In 2005 we have helped Radio Beckwith to acquire a new mast with which they will be heard spreading the Gospel and presenting news and issues from a point of view rarely found in the Italian media: information and debate instead of indoctrination.

The church in Trapani (Sicily) is now in full use, but there are some pending debts. I would like to help this lively and welcoming community pay for the beautiful roundel that is the only outside feature defining the building as a Christian place of worship. Made of stained glass by a sister from the Waldensian Church in Riesi, it depicts the Waldensian symbol of the burning candle with the Latin inscription '*Lux lucet in Tenebris*', 'light shines in the darkness'. When the Mediterranean sun lights the façade, the coloured picture is reflected on the inside wall with a magnificent effect. **Will you help to find the £2000 needed?**

Daniele Pevarello, candidate to the ministry and at present covering a maternity leave in Torre Pellice church has won a place for a **Ph.D** at the Faculty of Divinity of the **University of Cambridge**. Our Committee has decided to support him financially and therefore we'll be asking again for your help. In the next issue you'll learn all the details of his studies.

Major Twitchen of the Salvation Army has sent me a delightful CD, *A Touch of Heavenly Harmony*, where he plays the piano. Listening to it makes everyone feel calm and refreshed.

Earlier in the year we received the sad news that Professor **Giorgio Spini**, the most famous Protestant in Italy and an eminent historian, had died at the age of 89. The Committee has sent messages of sympathy to his wife and children. I managed to bring the attention of the *Times* particularly to his war-time adventures and a great obituary was published on **14 February**.

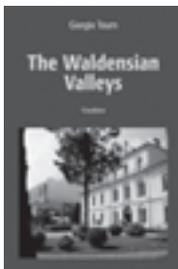


Cover photo: Pastor Pasquet and the Waldensian Choir on Cromwell Day.

The AWAY DAY will take place at **Salisbury Methodist Church** on **20 May** (St Edmund Church Street) from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tea, coffee, drinks provided, bring your own lunch. More details from T. Macquiban: 01722 424808.

Programme: 11 a.m. Tim Macquiban, *Gilbert Burnet, his European travels and attitudes to non-Anglicans*; 12 noon Richard Grocott, *My experiences serving as a Waldensian-Methodist minister in Italy*; 2 p.m. General meeting and reports; 3 p.m. Colin Smith, *'In the spirit of a pilgrim': William Gladstone's visit to the Vaudois and its after-effects*. **We hope many of you will come!**

We recommend this new *Guide of the Waldensian Valleys* (Giorgio Tourn, Claudiana). Waldensian history village by village, peak by peak: plenty of anecdotes, colour photo-



graphs, maps and everything one needs to know is in this pocket-sized paperback. **Only £8 (instead of £10) plus p&p to our readers** (see back cover).

From the Chairman

Dear Friends

The Committee has decided to target its resources towards young people in the disadvantaged South of Italy, where we agree with the Waldensian Church that social outreach should go hand in hand with spiritual mission. In Sicily we have been providing materials for evangelisation and confirmation classes, while we have helped the Waldensian community of Cerignola in the heel of Italy to buy a computer and build a website to help with evangelisation and access to all the online materials available in that world-wide parish that is the Internet and the confraternity of email. All this is made possible by your generosity.

Revd Richard Grocott and Revd Claudia Lupi Ricco are our new Committee members, enriching us with their wealth of experience of Italy. Our long-time President Prescott Stephens has agreed to continue in the post, though failing health has led him to resign from the Committee. His background knowledge and insight, his enthusiasm and his family's commitment to the Italian work, is something we would be loath to lose.

God bless and keep you, and please hold our work in your prayers,

Yours,
Eric Murray

Cromwell Day 2005

In 1655 the Waldenses underwent one of the bloodiest and cruellest persecutions suffered in their existence, sadly interspersed with bloody and cruel persecutions by the French and the Savoyard rulers who wanted to enforce the Roman Catholic religion on their territories. It is very unlikely that the Waldensian Church and people would have survived without the intervention of Oliver Cromwell and his double help. Firstly he halted the massacre through sending his ambassador, Samuel Morland, to protest directly at the court of Turin; and then, after declaring a day of prayer, fast and mourning for the slaughter of the 'Saints', as John Milton put it, Cromwell launched a national collection, parish by parish, which lasted almost a year and totalled the amazing sum for those times of nearly £39,000! The other Protestant countries did their best, too, from Geneva to Sweden to Transylvania, but there was only one real Protestant power left at the time and that was England with her Lord Protector. As one can read in the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, 'To some he was a hero, to some a villain'. However, the history of Europe, and certainly that of the Waldenses, would have been very different without him.

I am grateful to John Goldsmith, Curator of the Museum, who suggested that the English Committee of the Waldensian Church Mission and the Cromwell Society ought to join forces in order to solemnise the 350th anniversary of those events. That meant lots of meetings, telephone calls, emails at home and across the Channel and the Alps, lots



V. Newbury, C. Lupi, M. Walker, J. Wesely, R. Walker, C. Pasquet.



of worries and heartaches ... but in the end everything went smoothly and even the weather was just perfect.

On 3 September by 10.30 all the main Italian participants had converged on Central Hall: Pastor Claudio Pasquet and Senator Lucio Malan, both descendents of the 'Slaughtered Saints' and

Valdesine of Coretto, with Michael Foot in the right.

representatives respectively of the Waldensian Church and of the Italian State; *Il Coretto*, the youth Choir of the Churches of Val Pellice; Rev Claudia Lupi, her husband Pierre Ricco and their delightful baby Micol; my daughter Viola, and a few members of the Committee. After a very interesting guided tour of the Hall, the dressing of the ladies who had brought their Waldensian costume began. The quality of the singing and the beauty of the costumes were to be the outstanding feature of an outstanding event. One of the first people to arrive was Michael Foot, who had come especially so as to greet the Waldensian representatives and whose father Isaac, great Liberal and great Methodist, had set up the Cromwell Association. He told us that his father would have greatly enjoyed the Waldensian presence at the commemoration. Pastor Pasquet led the service (in 17th-century English!) and addressed the crowded congregation that filled the chapel with a brief description of the confessional cleansing known as the 'Bloody Easter' or the 'Piedmontese Easter'. Viola Newbury read Milton's sonnet, '*Avenge Oh Lord Thy Slaughtered Saints, whose bones/Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ...*' Professor Charles Carlton, from the University of North Carolina, in his lecture talked about Cromwell as a great soldier but also as a great pacifier after his victories. Senator Malan explained that nowadays he is no longer discriminated against and as a public figure he can represent Italy. However, this freedom was fought for, and the Waldenses and their freedom of conscience survived because they resisted and took up arms, which is a constant reminder that the precious and fragile values of our open, tolerant democratic society must be never be taken for granted.

The *Coretto* moved everyone by singing the Waldensian



Rev Pasquet, Professor Carlton, Professor Coward, Senator Malan.



A delegation of Waldensians and the Lord Protector who rescued their ancestors.

Hymn 'The Oath of Sibaud' and other ancient complines. After the service a delegation took a floral tribute to the statue of the Lord Protector in front of Parliament: an evergreen wreath was laid by Professor Carlton and Professor Barry Coward, President of the Cromwell Association, while Sen. Lucio Malan and Rev. Claudio Pasquet each took a potted clump of beautiful heather picked by Mrs Barolin on the Alpine slopes above Villar Pellice and brought all the way to London by Milvia and Richard Walker. Among the many distinguished guests were numbered Dr Gaunt, Secretary of the Cromwell Association, Dr David Thompson, head of the Cambridge University Faculty of Divinity, and Randolph Vigne of the Huguenot Society. After the photo shoot everyone had the opportunity to hear more about the Waldenses, meet old friends and make new ones in the cafeteria of Central Hall over a delicious cup of tea and cakes. **Everyone is invited to buy and consume the excellent Illy Coffee, since they generously sponsored a substantial part of this memorable day.**

The next day, Sunday 4 September, Pastor Pasquet preached at Burntash Methodist church in London, and during the afternoon service the young people of *Il Coretto* performed a history of the Waldenses through songs and hymns. Each period and group of songs was introduced by the Pastor and the result was fascinating and enjoyable for all.

ES

The opening of the new church in Trapani 17–18 September 2005

We have all been waiting so many years and at last this dream has come true! Three pastors spoke about the long, moving story behind what appears like a 'miracle'. In 1986 the *Tavola*, the Board of the Waldensian Church, sent Pastor Laura Leone to Sicily with the task of easing the closing-down of two communities of Trapani and Marsala which had been on the wane for quite a while and seemed by then beyond hope. A few years later, far from closing down, the congregation was growing in both places, but if in Trapani they had managed to find small, rather damp premises yet still looking like a church, in Marsala the growing community was worshipping in a garage. By the early '90s Laura had persuaded *Tavola* that all Marsala needed was a new church. Her enthusiasm was contagious and her example admirable, even if she claims to have only helped minds and souls to free themselves to receive strength and inspiration from Above. When in 1994 she left and was transferred to Venice, the new church in Marsala was well on its way. The new pastor of Trapani and Marsala, Giuseppe Ficara, meanwhile decided that now it was Trapani's turn to have a new church and started working at a project that turned out more complex and with so many difficulties on its path that several times its realisation seemed impossible. At one time the Italian bureaucracy was more than surreal: the town planners rejected the

project because in the city there were already too many churches!! Pity that they were all Roman Catholic.

Once again faith and perseverance paid off, even if it seems that every pastor who had conceived the ideas and taken care of the plan was destined to commit it to his or her successor who would then see it through. It was wonderful to hear the two ministers, Laura, who rescued the dying congregations, and Giuseppe, who nurtured them consolidating her terrific success against all odds, talk about their struggles and entrust the recently ordained pastor **M a r c e l l o** Salvaggio with reaping the harvest of the seeds they had sown with such great love! The building is remarkable because it has retained the structure and the flavour of its pre-renovation period, when it was the warehouse of an artisan work-



*The three pastors:
Salvaggio, Leone
and Ficara.*





This is the roundel I would like us to give Trapani church as a present.

shop. The main building material is red brick, which have been left as they were, if cleaned, and everything is extremely simple but highly serviceable as a place of worship. The church can be used for different purposes: simply closing or opening different sliding doors it is possible to have smaller separated rooms or one large one. The new church has received gifts from other churches: the solid wooden pulpit comes from the Waldensian Valleys and the hymn board comes from Rome. **I brought them the Communion trays and glasses do-**

dated by the Bolton West group of the United Reformed Church and sent to me by Rev. Mike Thomason. The hospitality of the local families, their enthusiasm, their warmth together with the devastating beauty of Sicily made our stay an experience we'll never forget. Everyone who has sent a donation and prayed for the realisation of this dream can now feel fulfilled, but please always keep the congregations of Trapani and Marsala in your thoughts and prayers.

Collegio Valdese commemorates its founder W.S. Gilly (1789–1855)

In order to remember the great benefactor of the Waldenses and the founder of the Waldensian Church Mission, Canon William Stephen Gilly, the Headmaster of Collegio Valdese in Torre Pellice invited Rev. Bill Pickering to talk about this remarkable figure. On 10 December the whole school gathered in the Old Library of Casa Valdese for an illustrated talk on the life and work of this seminal figure in 19th-century Waldensian history. The lecture pointed



*The organisers of Gilly's commemoration:
G. Ballesio, E. Scropo, C. and B.
Pickering, L. Geymonat, E. Canale.*

out at some lesser known aspects of Gilly's activities, such as his social and educational outreach in England and with the French Vaudois. The following day Gilly was remembered by a panel of speakers including Pickering, Giorgio Tourn — who underlined that without Gilly and Beckwith the Waldensian Church and people would not be what they are today — and yours truly, who recounted the story of the Mission.

Laundering the history books at the Reformation? Lord Acton and the Waldensians

The origin of the present-day Waldensians (Valdesi, Waldenses, Vaudois) has for a long time been the source of controversy. The religious beliefs, practices and church government that one finds today amongst the Waldensians bears a close resemblance to the Reformed churches of Calvinistic origins. Religious change, however, beset the Waldensians in the early 1530s as talks and interchanges took place between on the one hand, Swiss Reformers, such as Bucer, Farel and Oecolampadius, and, on the other, the Waldensians, led by Morel. The growing together of the two groups is actually or symbolically focused on the Synod of Chanforan of 1532.¹ The Waldensians were of much earlier origin and were a medieval, heretical sect. It seems generally agreed at the meetings with the Swiss Protestants that the Waldensians for one reason or another were inclined to adopt Reformed practices and beliefs.

A point of controversy that became prominent in the early nineteenth century, not least due to the popular and enthusiastic religious English writer, Canon W. S. Gilly (1789–1855), was how far had the Waldensians to change their ways in order to become a recognized Reformed church? Gilly assumed that there was virtually no change because the medieval Waldensians had adopted a religious position that was essentially Protestant. It was a view that had been held before but it was Gilly who propagated the idea to show that here was historical proof of the validity of the Reformed position. But more. For a time Gilly, like others before him, held that the beliefs and practices of the Waldensians went back even further, to early Christians hiding from persecution in the Alps. Much later these Christians linked up with the followers of Waldo. A few years before he died Gilly abandoned this position but did not forsake the proposition that Waldensians did not change their theology when they linked themselves to the Reformers. Scholars of more recent times, such as Cameron and Audisio, have demonstrated that the changes made as a result of the Synod of Chanforan were indeed radical in so far as the religious ethos of the medieval Waldensians was very different from that of the Reformers.² It means that there was no ‘real’ religious continuity of the Waldensians before and after the Synod. This, of course, is too simple a statement. Cameron has listed the changes from official documents but one would like to know precisely what changes were made at the local level and how they were implemented in the decades that immediately followed.

It was precisely into the nineteenth-century debate about the changes that the Waldensians allegedly underwent in the 1530s and after, that the historian, Lord Acton, entered. He wrote an article in 1863 which is not widely known and was published in an obscure and now defunct journal.³ It is somewhat surprising that, as a Catholic, he should plunge himself into this narrow Protestant controversy.

A word or two ought to be said about Acton's background as he is a figure who is not likely to be known much in Waldensian circles. He was born in 1834 in Naples and died in 1902 in the family home in Shropshire. Born a Catholic he was caught up in Liberal Catholicism on the Continent and tried to establish a following for it in England. His efforts were never successful. After the Vatican Council of 1870 at which he was present, he distanced himself from the church because he believed that if the pope were made infallible it would give him absolute power. Acton it was who coined the well-known saying, 'Power tends to corrupt: absolute power corrupts absolutely'.

He was of cosmopolitan and of aristocratic background. He was widely recognised as an erudite historian who became the Regius Professor of Modern History in Cambridge University in 1895 and held the post for six years. He was a liberal to his finger tips. Influenced by Burke and Kant, he was a follower and close friend of William Ewart Gladstone.⁴ As someone profoundly interested in church affairs, he was inevitably caught up in polemical arguments thrown across the Catholic/Protestant divide. He held that historians should have two aims. One was to ensure that the historian sought and communicated the truth and nothing but the truth. Hence there is the absolute need for historians to examine the veracity of evidence and challenge any false interpretation of it. The second goal was to write history according to absolute moral standards and to condemn what was evil. In this respect he considered all persecution as nothing but murder.

Only the first aim interests us here. Acton criticized Catholics for doctoring the evidence when it suited their purposes, usually in refuting critics by presenting a good image of the Church. He once wrote: 'It (Ultramontanism) not only promotes, it inculcates, distinct mendacity and deceitfulness. In certain cases it is made a duty to lie'⁵. He much resented the refusal of the Vatican to open its archives to scholars. In his search for truth, however, he was not convinced that it was only the Catholics who 'cooked the books'. Protestants could do exactly the same when it suited their case. The example that he gave was to be seen in the early historical accounts of the Waldensians written by Protestants. The title of his article, 'The Waldensian Forgeries', to which we have alluded, admirably describes his position — all churches have a tendency to hide the truth.

How Acton came to write about the Waldensians is not clear. He travelled a great deal in Europe and by this means added to his extensive knowledge of church history. One might speculate that he had read the popular books on the Waldensians written by Canon Gilly a couple or so decades earlier. More likely is the fact that he was acquainted with a controversy that took place in Berlin in 1861 associated with the scholars, Hertzog and Dieckhoff, who pointed to grave discrepancies in the received history of the Waldensians compared with what was known of this medieval sect from other sources.

Acton's article has a particular twist to it as one begins to understand why the history books were 'cooked'. At the time of the Reformation one of the arguments between Roman Catholics and Protestants revolved around the question as to where the 'true', ie. Protestant, church was before the Reformation, for Catholicism had abjured it. How could the Reformers proclaim truths about the church when it had no descendants? One simple answer put forward by some Protestants was that their antecedents were the Waldensians. They had in fact upheld Protestant truths all down the ages, at least from the time of the early church. To do this Acton argued that Protestants and Waldensians had to re-write history. They were to proceed along a path of forgery in demonstrating that Protestant faith and practice was very close to, if not identical with, that which was found among the Waldensians before the emergence of the Protestant Reformation.

Acton points to three culprits in this matter. There was J.P. Perrin, a pastor in Dauphiné, not a Waldensian, who in 1618–19 published *Histoire des Vaudois* in Geneva. This book was considered so important that it was partially translated into German in 1623 and completely into English in 1624. The book was followed in 1644 by another history of the Vaudois by P. Gilles, and yet another by J. Léger, in 2 volumes, published in 1660. The fabrications by Perrin were, with minor differences, repeated by the other two historians. Much of the fabrication was made by omitting important words from original sources which implied that the doctrines and practices of the 'old' Waldensians were in conformity with those of the 'new' Waldensians. The main issues turned on the doctrines of justification by faith; the number of sacraments; the Catholic church order of bishop, priest and deacon; purgatory; praying to the saints; idolatry; monasticism; whether one's faith and practice should be concealed or be open for all to see. In giving a *résumé* of the points to be noted which Acton raised, the following should be mentioned: the pre-Reformation Waldensians knew nothing of justification by faith, they accepted the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and the orders of bishops, priests and deacons. They made their confession to a priest and kept secret their faith and practice. Any educated Protestant will see that here is a number of vital issues that differentiated this medieval sect from systematised Protestantism, especially Calvinism.

Acton showed that the inaccurate or false evidence about the 'old' Waldensians was employed by Protestant historians of French background. Note that the three histories cited by Acton covered only 40 years. Later historians were not quick to correct their errors. Further, these three were paid by the Protestant church of France to undertake their work. The historians did not write as individuals with a mission but as paid servants. What they wrote became much used by Protestants of various kinds in centuries that followed.

The author of this introduction is not a professional historian but it would seem to him that what Acton wrote is supported by modern scholars. Fur-

ther, if it is the case, Acton's work in many respects pre-dates that of those scholars, such as Cameron and Audisio (see note 2).

Two general points are offered by way of conclusion.

1 The work of Cameron makes it convincingly evident that the Waldensians were never a coherently organized group with fixed credal statements and uniform practices. There were, in fact, wide and significant variations according to region and it is very difficult therefore to make generalisations about the Waldensians..

Because the Waldensians were not well educated — most of them were peasants and artisans, as were their *barbes* — very few authentic documents written by them have come into the hands of scholars. Waldensian beliefs are mainly recorded from interrogation of their members by Catholics under tense conditions, not least under persecution which might have involved torture. This is another reason why it is hazardous to make sweeping statements about the Waldensian beliefs and practices — something that Acton was inclined to suggest.

2 While Acton attacks both Catholics and Protestants for laundering the books, could it not be argued that this way of writing history was not uncommon amongst would-be historians or propagandists at the time? Such was the cut and thrust of religious polemics then that both parties readily resorted to these tactics. We condemn the falsification of historical evidence today but in the 16th and 17th centuries, it may well have been assumed to be fair game. Further, might it be that there is a parallel between laundering documents and persecution in this respect? Catholics and Protestants persecuted each other in very cruel ways but they both appear to have accepted persecution as a fact to be taken for granted. It was part of the cruelty of the times. The persecuted accepted their lot as a result of holding to certain beliefs. Only the Anabaptists spoke out against persecution.

Finally, only continual and painstaking historical research can bring light to bear on the truth of the controversies raised here. This was very much Acton's aim.

W.S.F. Pickering

Notes

1 For the complexities of this issue, see:

Cameron, E. 2000. *Waldenses. Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe*, ch. 9. Oxford: Blackwell.

2 See:

Cameron, E. 1984. *The Reformation Heretics 1480–1580*, Oxford: Clarendon.

Cameron, E. 2000. *Waldenses. Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Audisio, G. 2000. 'De pauvres de Lyon aux vaudois réformés', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 217: 155–66.

3 *Home and Foreign Review* No. 4, 1863.

4 By a strange co-incidence Gladstone visited the Waldensians as early as 1832. See *Waldensian Review* 109 (Winter 2006).

5 *Letters of Lord Acton, to Mary, Daughter of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone*, p. 147. London: George Allen (1904).

Book Review

An alliance across the Alps: Britain and Italy's Waldensians by R.D. Kernohan. 2005. 185 pp. The Handsel Press, £12.95.

R.D. Kernohan sets out to tell 'the story of the mutually rewarding encounters between British enthusiasts and a small but very determined Italian minority, the Waldensians'. Unlike most other British historians of the Waldensian story he chooses to concentrate on the period since the Napoleonic wars — in other words the lifetime of our own Waldensian Church Missions. It is interesting to know that Jane Austen's brother, Henry, was an early supporter, that Wordsworth wrote four Sonnets on the Waldensians, and that it was our first President who told Queen Victoria in her nightdress that she had become Queen. However, of real interest is the Scottish and indeed Irish outreach towards the Waldensians and Italian Protestantism that is so rightfully and fascinatingly brought to life with the context and analysis of an historian with a First from Balliol and the eye of a practised national journalist for the telling anecdote. As a writer on religious and historical themes and with the practical knowledge of being the editor of the Church of Scotland journal *Life and Work*, and not least as an elder of Cramond Kirk, Edinburgh, Kernohan is ideally placed to identify the riches and rivalries of the biodiversity of British Protestantism down to the present.

Thomas Guthrie was Moderator of the Scottish Free Church Assembly, a social improver at home but also founder of the international *Evangelical Alliance*, founding Chairman of the *Missions Aid Committee to the Waldensians in Scotland*, but also shocked to find that the Waldensians kept the Calvinist and not the Puritan Sabbath. 'Calvin's, and especially Luther's views of the Sabbath day', he wrote home from Torre Pellice in 1869, 'have wrought much evil. Let us speak tenderly of the faults of these great and good men: their views were probably more correct than were the terms in which they expressed them.' If this clergyman, so indefatigable on the other six days in helping the Waldensians take on the evangelical opportunities posed post-1860 national unification, sought to influence the Waldensians in the 'Free' way then with equal lack of success Gilly and Beckwith had tried to make the sturdy mountaineers Episcopalians. At a time when Pope Pius IX was declaring himself infallible this was a mark of how 'catholic' — universal — international Protestant connections could be. Indeed, for Kernohan the relationships between the Waldensian, Methodist and Baptist churches today is a lesson for British churches and the wider church.

Kernohan reminds us of the Scottish Connection and especially the 40 years of mission of Rev. Robert Walter Stewart, sent out as Minister and Bible smuggler in 1845 by the Scottish Free Church to the 'Scottish' port of Leghorn, from where such was his distinction working with the *Italian Evangelisation Committee* and *The Scottish Waldensian Aid Committee* that in 1874

he became from his Italian parish Moderator of the Scottish Free Church. For the Waldensian historians Giorgio Spini and Giorgio Bouchard, Stewart is respectively 'a kind of spiritual father' and 'a second Beckwith'.

I hope these 'tasters' will make you all want to read this informative and fascinating account of past British aid — by these and so many others chronicled here — to our sister church in Italy, and inspire us to be their worthy successors.

RN

Giorgio SPINI (1916–2006)



Giorgio Spini was born in Florence, a city that was then a quarter English and therefore Protestant. His grandparents had converted during the Risorgimento, the first being his grandmother who learnt to read in order to be able to read the Bible. His father, who spoke English and had been for work to Britain, which he considered as the Holy Land of Freedom and Civil Liberties, called his son Giorgio in honour of the king of the country he so much admired, George V. They were part of the Methodist Church and Giorgio grew up in an atmosphere full of respect for figures like Gladstone or the evangelical preachers of the Revival. For the Protestants in Florence, Fascism and the defeat of Liberalism was a calamity, and Giorgio aged 12 noticed and never forgot the sadness of his father and their family doctor, a Mazzini follower, that day in 1929 when Mussolini and the Pope

signed the Concordat between the State and the Roman Catholic Church. He did not become an antifascist; he used to say he had been on the other side of the barricade from day one. From an early age two things became a constant in his life. Firstly there was assiduous study, since the Spinis were not rich and Giorgio needed to win scholarships so as to be in a position to earn money as soon as possible; and secondly there was political activism in favour of freedom and liberalism. It was natural for him to become a member of the libertarian *Partito d'Azione* and later of the Resistance against the Nazis. With the pseudonym of Valdo Gigli he became the voice of Liberated Italy from Radio Bari. His knowledge of English allowed him to become part of the British VIII Army as an Intelligence officer. So after trekking down the Appennines all the way

from Florence to Apulia in 1943, he returned North in an open jeep under what seems to have been the longest, wettest and coldest of winters, and during the whole of 1944, moving into towns alongside the frontline troops who liberated Italy with the loss of 350,000 men. Just before liberating his own city of Florence, Second Lieutenant Spini managed to save some of the most outstanding paintings of the world, hidden in the cellar of the castle of Montegufoni. A regiment of Marhrattas had found them, and having heard that there was an Italian serving with the Allies, they asked for his advice: 'Are these old daubs worth anything?'. Giorgio Spini nearly fainted when in the dim light he saw the most famous masterpieces of the Uffizi: Paolo Uccellos, Giotto, Botticelli, that had been removed there for safety. He persuaded the colonel to put on a guard, and this is one of the many things we have to thank him for. In April 1945 he managed, during a few days of leave, to marry a girl with strong British connections, Annetta Petrucci, whose father had been one of the Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Florence, until it was closed by the Fascist authorities in 1936. Willy Petrucci, son of an Italian refugee in London in the 19th century and of a Scottish follower of Mazzini, then joined the Waldensian Church and here the two young people met.

When after the war our tough soldier went back to being a bookworm, soon to become a History don, one of his main concerns was to fight for the freedom of all confessions, as promised in principle by the new Italian Constitution. The other concern was to promote cooperation among the various Italian Protestant Churches. It goes without saying that, following his successful home experience, he was one of the main advocates of the process that built the Federation of the Protestant Churches in Italy and eventually led to the merger of the Waldensians and the Methodists.

Giorgio started his University teaching career in Messina, Sicily, and in 1960 he became Professor in Florence. In Italy he was widely known for writing the standard post-Fascist Sixth Form History text books. His main research fields have been the history of Protestantism during and after the Unification of Italy (when he died he was working on a book about Protestants under Fascism), Florence and the Medici family, and Puritanism in New England. He was a Visiting Professor at Harvard and Berkeley, member of the Waldensian Methodist Governing Council, and represented Italy at The General Assembly of UNESCO. He was awarded the highest honours, from the Golden Florin to being appointed Knight of the Grand Cross of the Italian Order of Merit. He was also a remarkable Methodist Local Preacher. Kind-hearted, generous, open-minded and forward-looking, his Anglo-Tuscan sense of humour will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are with his wife Annetta and his surviving children, one of whom, Valdo (in homage to Valdo Gigli!) is a well-known figure of the newly governing Centre-Left Coalition.

Erica Scropo

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

INCOME			2004			2005
Churches	804.62				1069.24	
Individual Donations	1592.92				1482.00	
Re Mrs P Stephens					630.00	
Tax Refund					569.74	
Penny Boxes	79.80				35.26	
AGM	72.00				64.10	
			2549.34			3850.34
Publications	185.50				400.87	
Vaudois Clergy Trust	1201.77				1396.77	
Cromwell Teas					408.00	
Dividends & Interest	3766.96				3603.17	
			5154.23			5808.81
TOTAL			<u>7703.57</u>			<u>9659.15</u>
EXPENDITURE						
Payments to Italy						
Pachino	500.00					
Sicily Training Course					1000.00	
Scicli	500.00					
Student	812.00				2521.00	
Radio Beckwith	3000.00					
Theological College					870.00	
Gilly Pedigree	300.00					
			5112.00			4391.00
Review	830.00				432.80	
Delegations	214.42				459.43	
Sec/Post/Stationery	2193.84				2246.76	
Cromwell Teas					540.00	
Publications	345.90				448.04	
Sundries	129.21				135.21	
			3713.37			4262.24
TOTAL			<u>8825.37</u>			<u>8653.24</u>
NET EXPEND/INCOME			-1121.80			1005.91
Opening Bank Balance			7458.66			6336.86
Income			7703.57			9659.15
Expenditure			-8825.37			-8653.24
Closing Bank Balance			<u>6336.86</u>			<u>7342.77</u>

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, 'Brook House', Hempstead Lane, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 3DL. Telephone 01825-762780

Chairman: The Rev. Eric Murray, 137 Elmbridge Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 9HE. Telephone 0208-399-8740

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

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

The Scottish Waldensian Missions Aid Society

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

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

The Irish Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions

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

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

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

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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- Change of address:
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PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE TREASURER AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

Publications

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

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

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**What the British found when they discovered the French Vaudois in the
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The Waldensian Story: A Study in Faith, Intolerance and Survival
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Guide of the Waldensian Valleys
All you need to know and see and plenty of stunning photographs
by Giorgio Tourn — £8 plus postage and packing

All these books are available from
Miss Nicky Raddon, 19 Sampson Avenue, Barnet EN5 2RN, Herts.
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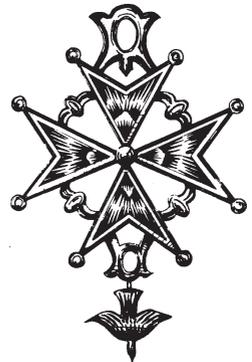
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The Huguenot Cross, symbol of Protestantism all over Europe



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