THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW



No. 148 **Summer 2026**

Editor: *Mrs Erica Scroppo Newbury, 85 St Andrew's Road, Cambridge CB4 1DH.*
Telephone 01223-315753, email ericascroppo@hotmail.com

From the Editor

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you for your continuing help with comments, suggestions, enquires, purchases from our website, **PRAYERS** and of course **DONATIONS**! Please keep looking at **www.waldensian.org.uk** for updates and new items. We are also on Facebook: ***The Waldensian Church Missions.***

Congratulations to members of our Committee and friends:



Simon Conway Morris, Emeritus Professor of Cambridge University, Palaeontologist and Evolutionary Biologist, has won the prestigious 2026 **Templeton Prize.** On top of being an old friend (and the second friend to win, after the very missed John Polkinghorne) he is a member of our same Church, St Andrew's, Chesterton. He'll be one of our guest speakers at our **Awayday** on 20 March 2027.



Rev. **Monica Michelin-Salomon**, whom we've known since she was a student at Collegio Valdese in Torre Pellice, has been elected **Moderator** of Glasgow Presbitery.

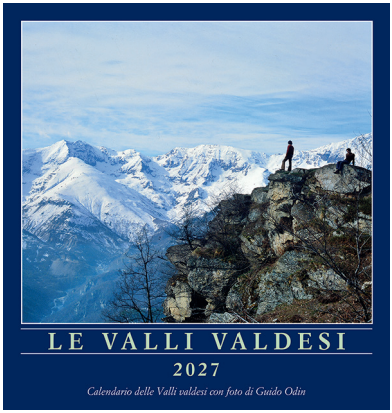


Rev. **Mike Thomason,** one of our trustees, has been appointed **Moderator** of the North Western Synod of the **United Reformed Church.** Mike grew up in the North West and got involved with the Waldensian Church through the URC Waldensian Fellowship.

Synod dates, **22–26 August 2026**:
Particularly important this year since after the 7 years of the mandate, Alessandra Trotta is leaving and a new Moderator will be elected.

Cover: From the 2027 Waldensian calendar. This rock is called ***The Head of the Prophet*** *… see article on Cà d'la Pàis, page 6.*

WALDENSIAN CALENDARS 2027



Features beautiful pictures of the Valleys by photographer **Guido Odin** – a dear friend who died in 2023 – together with bible verses and explanations also in English.
Available from October. Please order online from **www.waldensian.org.uk** or send a **cheque** for £19 (payable to **Waldensian Church Mission**) to: Rev. Mike Thomason, 3 Rosebank, Lostock, Bolton BL6 4PE. Buy two for £35. Even if P&P has again increased, we try to keep the price as low as we can. **FEEL FREE** to add something to support the **Mission** though!

Future student

We are very likely to have a student from the **Waldensian Faculty** coming to **Queen's** in **Birmingham** for his year abroad: **Elia Cortini**, encouraged by the experience there of Kassim Conteh (now Pastor in Angrogna). His family is Methodist, his father Salvatore was for 42 years the Director of **Casa Mia,** a community outreach for vulnerable individuals supported by *Diaconia Valdese*, helping locals and now also migrants in need. His mother, who unfortunately is no more, was also a Deacon and worked with Salvatore.



WALDENSIAN AWAYDAY

20 March 2027, Wesley Church, Christ's Pieces, Cambridge CB1 1LG
10.30–1 p.m.

Speakers: Professor Simon Conway Morris and **Bishop Christopher Herbert. Put it in your** (*hopefully Waldensian)* **2027 calendar!**

Centro Melantone/Melanchthon Centre

It is an ecumenical study and research institute for Protestant theologians or students of Theology in **Rome**. Founded in 2002 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Italy and the Waldensian Faculty of Theology, it offers academic courses, fellowships and conferences to students and pastors from all over Europe. ***Academic year/semesters***; ***Summer courses:*** intensive short courses on Church history, ecumenism and the Roman Catholic Church. Research & Fellowship: it hosts scientists, academics, teachers of religion often in collaboration with the Waldensian Faculty and the Dicastery for promoting Christian Unity.

Rooms and mini-apartments in Rome in via Aurelia Antica. **THEY WOULD REALLY LIKE HAVING STUDENTS/GUESTS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM**! Look on the **website: Centro Melantone**. Or send a message to the **Dean,** Prof. **Lothar Vogel**, at lothar.vogel@facoltavaldese.org

Sermon by Pastor Peter Ciaccio

at the opening of Synod 2025.

Text Matthew 1, 18-25: a long, interesting, deep sermon that can be found also in English … and in which the strong message starts from Joseph, 'Mary's husband and father of Jesus, undervalued by the "Marian" tradition that presents him as an old man "beyond the time of conjugal enjoyment", a very minor character in the Grand Story of Salvation. And yet, from the few verses we read, we realise he is a man of spiritual stature. He was a just man, says Matthew, which in the Bible means his life was conformed to the revealed will of God. And it is not by chance that Matthew's genealogy of Jesus is the genealogy of Joseph. He is already honest and doesn't want to be angry with Mary, whose life is going to be difficult enough with an illegitimate child. Given the times they were probably nearly strangers; still, while looking for another wife, he could have publicly shamed her, but chose not to, following what the Torah says. While he was organising his life as he felt was right, the Word of God comes to him in a dream, Jesus is to be born, he is the coming of Emmanuel, God with us, the ultimate manifestation of "God in motion", of a God who cannot wait, immobile and impassive, for us to discover his existence, but who comes to meet us.



Rev. Peter Ciaccio
(photo by Martina Caroli)

'This is the incarnation. When we talk about "incarnation", we usually think of what it means for us and for humanity; but do we ever think of what it means for God? He knows all about us, he knows us, but in Jesus Christ God experiences the ultimate empathy with our human experience …'

Reading all of it is highly recommended.

Jonathan Dean writes:



It was a huge privilege to represent the Methodist Church in Britain at the annual Synod of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches in Italy in August 2025. Torre Pellice is its own rather wonderful place, high in the mountains of western Italy, and somehow itself alive with the spirit of the remarkable Christians whose home, spiritual and literal, it has been for centuries. Because of the historical ties between British Methodism and our Italian siblings, both Methodist and Waldensian, the representative of the British Methodist Church attends with full speaking and voting rights. I was briefed before travelling by a good colleague in the London District who has previously served as the minister at Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome, and who retains a great love, both for Italy in general and this branch of the worldwide Church in particular. His insights informed the brief self-introduction which I was privileged to offer to Synod, along with other ecumenical guests, on the opening weekend.

The Synod felt like a passionate place, in every way: a deep love for God and all God's people pervaded all that was discussed and enacted. Despite the remote location for the gathering, I felt very much connected to the world and its travails and joys by this prayerful, prophetic group of Christians: a denomination whose hope and vision for the flourishing of all Creation extended far beyond its apparent smallness.

I will treasure for a very long time two periods of the Synod in particular. Firstly, our long and thoughtful discussions about the unfolding horrors in Gaza, rooted in prayerful, informed and compassionate concern for all the peoples of the region and in a desire to stand for justice for all. The long hours of agonising about how best to respond reflected for me the best kind of Christian concern. Second, on the day when we commended to God those who had died since the previous Synod, we sang them into God's nearer presence and eternal keeping with extraordinary beauty. Although I had no idea of the content of the words, the beauty of the music and the heartfelt love of its expression moved me to tears and will stay with me forever.

Huguenot Society lecture



On 11 March 'our' **Simone Maghenzani** talked at the East India Club in London about England's Engagement with the Waldensians from Cromwellian Rule to the Restoration Era. In 1655 the Catholic Duke of Savoy unleashed a massacre against the Waldensians in their Alps, known as the **Piedmontese Easter**. **Oliver Cromwell's** reaction positioned England as an International Protestant superpower; he ordered a national day of fasting, launched a massive fundraising campaign for the '**afflicted brethren**' and threatened military intervention. The event inspired **John Milton**'s famous sonnet '**Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints**', cementing the Waldensians in the English public consciousness. Diplomats and religious groups like the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge built institutional relief and intelligence pipelines into the Alpine Valleys. The lecture also followed the long and slow movement of the money that for various reasons — mainly bureaucratic — took ages to reach the recipients, and not all of it. Despite the various problems, though, even after the Restoration (1660 onwards) the English State did not discard its role as a Protestant protector, but diplomatic and financial engagements with continental religious dissenters were carefully re-engineered to fit the new, less radical framework.



A sumptuous dinner followed, during which I was delighted to meet old friends like **Sugiko Nishikava** and **Barbara Julien**.

E.S.

Sugiko Nishikava

I have met Sugiko many times, mainly in Torre Pellice, and I thought it would be interesting to know more about her. She is a **Professor** of British studies at **Tokyo University**.

1) *What did you study at University*? Western European History. I wrote a BA thesis at Tokyo University on Henry Bolingbroke, an early eighteenth-century politician, and his use of journalism. My interest

in English political culture of that period led me to write my MA thesis on the Huguenot journalist Abel Boyer.

I read a great deal of microfilmed newspapers and annals written by Huguenot journalists and I became interested in the influence that the Huguenots had on English politics and culture in the early modern period.

2) *How did you discover the Waldensians*? In 1992, while pursuing my PhD studies at University College London, I read the vast collection of letters addressed to Henry Compton, the Bishop of London (1675–1713) who dedicated himself to the relief of Huguenot refugees. During this time, I came across letters from Cyprian and Paul **Appia,** Waldensian brothers, which prompted my fascination with the Waldensian history.
3) *When did you first go to the Waldensian Valleys*? In 1994, staying in Foresteria valdese in Torre Pellice. I went to S. Giovanni church to look for records on the Appia brothers and I was deeply moved to be shown a parish register written by Cyprian. Then I was shown *Carta Appia* in the archives of Torre Pellice, where I was greatly helped by **Gabriella Ballesio**.
4) *What was the result of your research*? I wrote a short note for the Huguenot Society of Great Britain about Cyprian Appia's journey from the Valleys to Nice to baptise the famous British scientist, **Henry Cavendish**. At the time Cavendish's birthplace was unknown, so it was a bit of a discovery. **Randolph Vigne**, then the Editor-in-Chief of the Huguenot Society journal, liked the note and encouraged me in writing my PhD thesis. At the time I was struggling with my dissertation and losing confidence and Randolph's help was very appreciated.
5) *Have you written books*? Yes, however, while many are co-authored, I have only one so far that I authored on my own: it is the first book in Japan on the modern history of the Waldensians.
6) *What is your next engagement in England about*? I'll be giving a presentation at the Randolph Vigne memorial lecture, hosted by the **Huguenot Society** on 4 November at Lettsom House, London. Title: 'A citizen of the world: James Porter, a Huguenot ambassador to the Sublime Porte in the mid-XVIII century'.

E.S

Cà d'la Pàis

('House of Peace' in patois dialect)

The Head of the Prophet is a beautiful rock in the **Angrogna Valley** on the way to the Bagnau locality where Cà d'la Pàis is set. Ages ago this was the Summer house of a well-off family of Luserna S. Giovanni, who would get there transported by mules for a few weeks of breezy rest. It was then abandoned. During the Second World War, after the 8 September 1943 Armistice, the Italian Resistance Movement started (Giustizia e Libertà secretly meeting in Torre Pellice and giving life to Partito d'Azione!). **Jacopo Lombardini** – a Methodist preacher working in Convitto Valdese in Torre – together with a group of young people, many of them students of his, made Cà d'la Pàis their refuge. An excellent choice, since from that vantage point you could see and check the entire Angrogna Valley. In March 1944 the house was bombarded by the Nazis and the whole area was ransacked by Nazis and Italian Fascists. Lombardini, who was 52 and did not carry and never used weapons, was arrested, never talked under torture and eventually ended up in Mauthasen where he was executed on 25 April 1945.

Learning about these events, **Giuseppe** (Zizzi) **Platone** — who was Pastor in Angrogna from 1975 to 1989 — decided (together with many others) that the *little house* — as Lombardini used to call it — was worth rebuilding. The reasons were many. The main one was to honour the Resistance and Jacopo Lombardini, but also because it was in a wonderful place and the



perfect one where to have youth Summer camps and other Church gatherings. He therefore started talking about the idea to everyone: from German ministers with youth groups visiting the Valleys, to the Churches, to Tavola valdese, to ex-Resistance Groups, and found lot of enthusiasm and support.

The building site opened in 1984 and in **1986** the 'new' house was ready; it was inaugurated on 15 August (traditional celebration day in the Waldensian Valleys) with a huge gathering of people from all over. The preacher was **Giorgio Bouchard**, then Moderator, followed by choirs of young people from various parts of Europe, especially Germany, and international greeting and speeches. Ever since it has hosted (and it is still hosting this year!) Summer camps for young people from the various churches. I am very proud to say that my three children Viola, Tancred and Cressida, and my nephew Luca, were among the first guests.

This year marks its **40th anniversary**. There is a book about it in Italian and English, edited by G. Platone & M. Sappè, *Immaginate una casetta in alta montagna/Think of a Farmhouse in the Mountains* (see back cover).

E.S.N.

Pastor **Giovanni Bernardini**

who by the way has moved from Riesi to Venice, has sent this piece to us:

Dear readers of the *Waldensian Review*, dear sisters and brothers in Christ, we all need to pray together.

For a long time now, fear, a sense of uncertainty, and doubts about what is right and what is wrong have trapped society and our congregations in a nightmare. We need to pray so that we are not swept away by the currents, for it is through prayer that we knock on that door which we have been promised will be opened (Matthew 7:8); God opens that door, and that door leads to the faith that gives rise to hope… even when we are living through the darkest of nightmares.

The Gospel of John reminds us that we are in the world, but not of the world. We are here for the world! Our Lord and God, we gather in prayer to ask you to help us not to lose our faith in the face of evil, which seems to be triumphing over good. We are not of the world because our gaze looks beyond; we live looking towards your eternal Kingdom, the Kingdom promised and made manifest in our encounter with the Risen Christ. Christ continued to be the Teacher even after his resurrection (cf. John 20:16); for this reason, we know that Jesus continues and will continue to bestow his teachings upon us. Jesus, the Christ, the Risen One, the Supreme Teacher, teach us to be in the world with the same perseverance and determination to bring about change: where there is sickness, suffering, injustice and death, the Gospel that you proclaimed and that we proclaim brings healing, peace, justice and life. O God,

help and guide us in this mission which you have entrusted to us and which we wish to accept… only in this way can we be in and for the world. Amen.

On 11 May 2026, a group of German theologians associated with the Ecumenical Institute for Peace Theology published the 'Ecumenical Manifesto for Peace' entitled '*Wer Frieden will, muss mit dem Feind reden*' ('Whoever wants peace must talk to the enemy'). Taking this document as our starting point (which I invite all congregations to read), I would like to reflect with you on the role that our churches (and therefore we too) play in the pursuit of peace.

'The Churches fulfil their mission only as Churches of peace. Jesus' message of peace sets the Church in contrast to a society characterised by violence and injustice […]. In times of massive rearmament, the Churches should take an unequivocal stand in favour of military disarmament and […] the prohibition of nuclear weapons, and be a strong and clear voice for the elimination of enemy stereotypes'. 'Let us challenge the belief in the apparent necessity of violence and resist the temptation to act by force and to relativise the prohibition against killing. Let us serve life by defending the dignity and lives of all our fellow human beings and all living creatures, and by seeking ways to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.' 'Faith in the non-violent Jesus and in his message of the Kingdom of God frees us from the myth that peace is achieved through military force and threats.' Jesus 'did not shy away from conflict; rather, he resolved it without resorting to violence. And he knew violence. Many had already been crucified before him. His radical critique of power was punished by those in political and religious power with death by torture. We trust that faith in Jesus' victory over death through the Resurrection will also show us the right path: to promote peace through creative means and thus resolutely oppose the forces of violence' (*Wer Frieden will, muss mit dem Feind reden*, pp. 8, 40, 9, 11).

War — even simply talking about war — creates conflict and division within congregations because dialogue almost always ends with the identification of the 'enemy'. The 'enemy' is the 'bad guy' to be defeated… to be defeated by any means necessary. When the war between Ukraine and Russia broke out, within the area where I carry out my pastoral ministry, many sisters and brothers in the church admitted to having felt the desire to 'take up arms', and that it was only thanks to their faith, deeply rooted in the Bible, that they realised and accepted that such a reaction was contrary to the Gospel. To wage, promote, fuel or financially support war is to deny the message of the Gospel. Jesus does not say 'love someone' or 'love those who agree with you'; Jesus teaches and calls upon believers to love 'all their neighbours' (Mark 12:31). And this includes the enemy too. Following Christ allows for no exceptions; either you choose to follow Christ or you choose not to follow Christ. When Jesus called his disciples, he did not say to them, 'Take your time and come when you're ready'; instead, Jesus used the imperative: 'Follow me!' (cf. e.g. Matthew 8:22; 9:9; Mark 1:17; 2:14).

War corrodes; war consumes everything; violence scatters. War poisons and kills, as the many families here in Niscemi (Sicily) know all too well, as they watch their children fall ill and die due to the radiation emitted by the Mobile User Objective System (https://www.nomuos.info/), the US Navy's satellite communications system. Those who decided to 'plant war' here in Sicily deemed the human and environmental damage irrelevant. This speaks volumes about the logic of war, more so than many words.

When Jesus was arrested, he chose non-violence and healed his enemy (cf. Luke 22:50–51), but his disciples, faced with the risk of being drawn into violence, scattered: '… all the disciples deserted him and fled' (Matthew 26:56). For this reason, I wanted to begin by praying with you. As congregations, we must resist the temptation to scatter. We must remain united, grounding our actions and words in the unshakeable promise and message of the Gospel; only in this way will our witness be credible. Violence leads to escalation, love leads to justice, and justice leads to peace. For this reason, I invite every congregation to ask itself what it can do to promote opportunities for reflection and education on peace, disarmament and non-violence.

When I talk like this, some people tell me that I'm talking about dreams, fantasies and utopian ideals. I reply that they must have said something similar about Jesus too; perhaps some even said that Jesus was foolish to allow himself to be arrested in that way, to take a stand (like so many prophets before him) against those who did not put dignity, justice and peace first, but placed their own personal interests at the centre. But Jesus did not preach dreams, fantasies or utopian ideals; Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom, reminding us that it is 'here and now' that faithfulness to the Gospel is demonstrated: 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven' (Matthew 7:21).

Lidia Poët (1855–1949)

The first Italian woman with a degree in law was of course … a Waldensian born in Traverse, a hamlet above **Perrero** (Val Germanasca) in 1855. **Lidia Poët** came from a rich family locally known as the 'lords of the Valley'. There were six brothers and three sisters: when her brother Jean Henri opened his legal office in Pinerolo, the family moved there, also because the father had died. As a little girl Lidia was already stubborn and rebellious, very quick in defending her opinions and fascinated by books, reading everything she could put her hands on. At 13 she decided to study Latin, which wasn't usual for girls at the time. She obeyed the family who told her to study in order to become a primary teacher and then was sent to learn German and English



in Switzerland, hoping she would forget her obsession with Latin. It didn't happen, though, and privately she studied for the diploma required for enrolling in Law.

This she did in 1878 at **Turin University**: the only woman, the first in Italy. At the beginning it wasn't easy. All the young men were staring at her, often sending written messages. But she persisted undaunted — ignoring them and achieving great results in the exams. When she was supposed to study forensic medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, she asked the **Vice-Chancellor** if she could be spared attending in person, fed up as she was with the interest that she had attracted at the Faculty of Law that was only beginning to relent after two years. The Vice-Chancellor happened to be the famous criminologist **Cesare Lombroso**, who with a piercing gaze scolded her: 'When one starts, they have to go all the way, Signorina. I certainly won't exempt you from attending the lessons!'. Lidia acquiesced and in **1881** she **graduated** triumphantly with a brilliant thesis on the status of women. It advocated for their right to vote, and was dedicated to her mother and her brother Jean Henri, who had been her strongest supporters. Her graduation was witnessed by more than 500 applauding students and was reported in the newspapers, which published her portrait, adding that she wasn't a stiff spinster with a pince-nez but a young woman who got a degree in Law without giving up her feminine charm and glamour.

She then enrolled as a trainee solicitor in a firm in **Pinerolo** and worked for two years. Meanwhile she passed the exam needed to become an attorney general in 1883 with excellent grades.

All she needed now was enrolment in the **roll of Barristers** and **Solicitors**. After a very animated discussion and a vote of 8 people in favour against 4, she was accepted on 1 August **1883**. Despite women being already accepted as medics and scientists, practising law seemed different, and several people responsible for the admission were contrary. Hence, they appealed against it and after Lidia contested their decision, battles and fights

followed until, in June 1884, the whole story ended up in Rome in front of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Italy. MPs in favour noted that Poët came from those Alpine Valleys where her ancestors had fought bitter battles for the freedom of religion. Debates for and against followed until everything was postponed indefinitely in a typical Italian way …

Eventually she got enrolled in 1920, at 65! Meanwhile Lidia kept working for her brother and was active in Italy and Europe (the French Government nominated her Officier d'Académie), fighting for women's rights but also for minors and prisoners. During World War I she was a Red Cross **nurse** for soldiers, earning a **silver medal**.

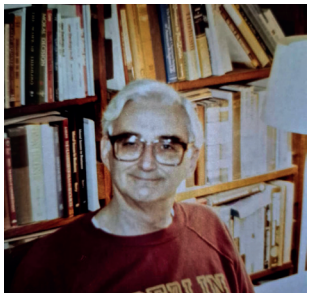
Wherever she went she made special friends: in Paris alone these included Victor Hugo, Maupassant, Verlaine …

She was active until the end, dying aged 95.

Italian TV made a Netflix series very loosely based on the true story. Not having seen it, I can't judge it.

ESN

Richard Sanner



In 2025 we lost a delightful friend, encountered a few times in Torre Pellice — where he represented the American Waldensian Society — and in the UK. Dick, who was nearly 95, had an intense life in different paths: teacher, college chaplain, pastor in the Presbyterian Church, and was also a good musician. Above all he was very open and friendly with everyone. He'll be greatly missed.

Giorgio Tourn (1930–2025)



Another pillar of the Waldensian Church and of the Italian Protestant world has left us. Born in **Rorà**, mountain village in Val Pellice, loved by **Charles Beckwith** who built a church there, he died in Rorà, having lived, studied and preached in various other parts of Italy and Europe. When Giorgio was 4 his anti-

fascist father decided to leave Italy for **France**, from which they came back after the beginning of World War II. French was always his favourite tongue, and at the time the spoken language of the Waldensian Valleys. The family found work in Turin at the Waldensian church of Corso Vittorio (another Beckwith church) and for some years that was his residence. He enrolled in the **Waldensian Theological Faculty** in Rome soon after finishing Secondary School with a group of contemporaries, all keen to help build 'the new Italy', after Fascism and war. During his years there (1949–55) he helped in various churches, including Palermo. He did his year abroad in **Basel**, studying with **Karl Barth** and **Oscar Cullmann** and serving the Italian Community that worshipped since the beginning of the twentieth century — and still does — in a lovely side chapel of the Basel Minster. His probationary year was in Milan and he was ordained in Torre Pellice at the opening of Synod 1955.

He was sent to be in charge of **Massello**, a small Alpine village in the Germanasca Valley, even higher (nearly 1200 m) than his native Rorà (nearly 1000 m). Meanwhile he also organised and led camps of mainly young people and served as Deputy Director of **Agape** (1967–69), the famous International Ecumenical Centre built above Prali by volunteers from everywhere, immediately after the war, following pastor **Tullio Vinay**'s idea.

He was then pastor in **Pinerolo** from 1969 to 1977 and in **Torre Pellice** (1977–89). 1989 was the 300th anniversary of the **Glorious Return** (of the Waldensians to their Valleys) and he organised and hosted most events, included the visit of the **President** of the Italian Republic, **Francesco Cossiga**. He also became the first Director of the newly formed Waldensian **Cultural Centre**.

Not only was he a great, incisive preacher, a wonderful teacher (he could talk as captivatingly to Sunday School children as to Theology Students at the Waldensian Faculty); he was also a delightful writer: regular contributor and Editor of *La Luce - l'Eco delle Valli valdesi*, later *Riforma*, of *Protestantesimo*, the magazine of the Faculty, of *Diakonia* … Above all he wrote many unforgettable books. Most concerned History and Theology, but he also wrote a much-cherished *Guide to the Valleys* as well as some novels. His last semi-autobiography, ***La mia Emmaus***, came out a few months before his death and was presented at Synod 2025.

His most successful and popular work was the ***History of the Waldensians*** *– The first 800 years*, which was translated into many languages, and published, as with all his other works, by **Claudiana**. Other notable works were the trilogy on ***Protestants***, and portraits of **Bonhoeffer**, **Calvin** and **Olivetan**. Among many more. *E.S.*

The Waldensian and Huguenots Trails





A network of paths across **France**, **Italy** and **Switzerland** follows (particularly in the Dauphiné and Piedmont areas) the footsteps of seventeenth-century Protestants fleeing religious persecution. It brings together institutional and private partners from Switzerland, Italy, France and Germany.

The itinerary is certified by the Council of Europe as an official '**European Cultural Route**' and it not only allows visitors to discover the heritage of the exiles and their economic and social history, but also leads to the revelation of breathtaking landscapes and numerous cultural and gastronomic delights.

The route, which covers more than 2000 km, is nowadays considered as 'European heritage to be safeguarded' and is judged by the Council of Europe '**a vehicle for communication and cultural exchange between European nations and cultures as a means of consolidating European identity**'.

The main itineraries are: **The Prison Route**, **The Exile Route** and **The Glorious Repatriation Route** and can be done in 40 stages, walking or cycling.

Collegio Valdese

Built in Torre Pellice from an idea of Canon William Stephen **Gilly** as a College for future Waldensian ministers to attend secondary school without going to Switzerland, in times when it was forbidden for non-Roman Catholics to go to 'normal' schools. Its original name was Holy Trinity College and it was designed by Charles **Beckwith** who also followed its erection. It opened in 1837 after the Emancipation it became a *lycée* and now it is a High school with different branches: classic, linguistic etc.

In 2025 it needed extensive repairs, with students and lessons moved elsewhere, and it is now fully restored.

WALDENSIAN CHURCH MISSIONS, VAUDOIS PASTORS FUND
& CANON ARMSTRONG BEQUEST - SUMMARY ACCOUNTS
Year ended 31/12/25

INCOME	***2024***		**2025**	
Individual Donations	*2129 00*		2059 30	
Tax Refund	*345 00*		465 00	
Legacies			5291 24	
Miscellaneous	*75 00*			
		2549 00		7815 54
Vaudois Clergy Trust			3410 78	
Publications	*913 18*		734 63	
Dividend & Interest	*4949 56*		5391 22	
		5862 74		9536 63
TOTAL		*8411 74*		17352 17
EXPENDITURE				
Payments to Italy				
Student	*86 55*			
Casa Unionista	*3401 89*			
		3488 44		
Review	*484 00*		488 50	
Deputation	*440 90*		529 71	
Sec/Post/Stationery	*2512 95*		2705 04	
Publications			835 87	
Sundries	*220 99*		304 50	
		3658 84		4863 62
TOTAL		*7147 28*		4863 62
NET INCOME		***1264 46***		**12468 55**
Opening Bank Balance		*34923 31*		36187 77
Income		*8411 74*		17352 17
Expenditure		*-7147 28*		-4863 62
Closing Bank Balance		*36187 77*		48676 32

NOTES

Income	Vaudois Clergy Trust 2025 - 2payments (2024 Nil)
Expenditure	Publications 2025 - 2 payments (2024 Nil)

Surplus funds allocated to funding theological student 2026/7

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 25%, 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 25% 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**

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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 1975 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, USA and in various European countries.

The English Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions
Established 1825

Patron: The Lord The Rev. Leslie Griffiths
26 Stroud Road, Croydon, London SE25 5DR
email lesliejohngriffiths@gmail.com
Chairman: Rachel Morris, email chair@waldensian.org.uk
Executive Secretary: Erica Scroppo Newbury
85 St Andrew's Road, Cambridge CB4 1DH
Telephone 01223-315753, email ericascroppo@hotmail.com
Hon. Treasurer: Mr Mark Stephens
5 Woodgate Close, Woodgate, Chichester PO20 3TA
Telephone 01243-545877, email marklynne5@btinternet.com

The Scottish Waldensian Missions Aid Society

Chair: The Rev. Mary Cranfield
The Manse, Daviot, Inverurie AB51 1AJ, Scotland
Secretary and Treasurer: Mr D.A. Lamb, SSC
36 Liberton Drive, Edinburgh EH16 6NN, Scotland
Telephone 0131-664-3059

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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by Prescot Stephens — *£25 plus postage and packing*

The Waldensians' 'Glorious Recovery' of their Alpine Valleys
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All these books are available from
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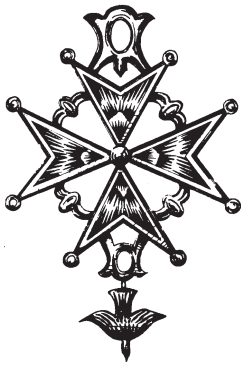

The Huguenot Cross, symbol of Protestantism all over Europe

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