The Last Embers of British Fundamentalism

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This article unearths the little-remembered history of British fundamentalist organisations of the Cold War era. These bodies constituted the last embers of an organised movement in Britain: the British Evangelical Council after 1953; the English Consultative Committee and the British Council of Protestant Christian Churches from the mid-1950s; the Christian Bible Unity Fellowship in the 1960s; and the British and European Reformation Fellowship in the 1980s. Based on archival and published material, the article argues that these organisations tried to render US-style fundamentalism into a new Anglicised version, but that each failed due to confessional disagreements and personal rivalries.

'Surely the British Isles have been numbed by the apostasy as no other country.' So wrote Carl McIntire, the chief organiser and life-long president of the global Christian fundamentalist movement in the Cold War era, the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), to one of his contacts in Britain in 1952.[1] 'The situation in England is indeed very dark', McIntire still felt four years later as he was being presented with a report on a recently completed tour of England and Northern Ireland by the second-generation Texan fundamentalist pastor George Norris.[2] While there were plenty of 'outstanding Christian men' to be found in the nations that he had been inspecting, Norris too had concluded that practically no one anywhere on the British Isles could be fully

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BEC = British Evangelical Council; BERF = British and European Reformation Fellowship; FIEC = Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches; FPCU = Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster; ICCC = International Council of Christian Churches; RL = *Reformation Link*; RR = *Reformation Review*; VfT = *Valiant for the Truth*; WCC = World Council of Churches

[1] Carl McIntire to Ivan S. Milsted, 13 Feb. 1952, Carl McIntire manuscript collection, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Princeton, NJ, box 19.
[2] McIntire to George Norris, 12 Dec. 1956, ibid. box 16.

relied on to give 'a strong vigorous testimony in the sense that we usually think of one here'.[3]

Exposed in these sentiments was the manifest reality of the rapid marginalisation of a once significant community of self-identified Christian fundamentalists in the British Churches that could scarcely have been foreseen just decades earlier. As has been shown by David Bebbington, David Ceri Jones and Andrew Atherstone amongst others, the British had played a crucial role in the fundamentalist movement's formative decades, both in the formulation of its doctrinal stances and in constructing its transnational advocacy groups.[4] Yet studies have also agreed that, by the latter 1940s, most conservative Evangelical Protestants in Britain were beating a retreat from those earlier associations and moving rapidly into the ranks of the less militant and doctrinally less rigid 'new Evangelicalism' that was modelled from across the Atlantic by the evangelist Billy Graham and the National Association of Evangelicals.[5]

Little attention has been paid to those men and women, admittedly few in number, who nevertheless persisted in tending the distinctives of Christian fundamentalism in Great Britain after the late 1940s and who tried to organise the like-minded and cleave them to global fundamentalist networks. As Bebbington and Jones have noted, 'a fundamentalizing impulse was still at work' in some British church circles, but only 'small and dwindling pressure groups on the fringe of the evangelical movement' continued to advocate for it.[6] But which, specifically, were these groups and how did they see the state of the British Churches in their time, what were the questions they asked to which a fundamentalist answer still seemed to be the only proper one, how did they envision their task and arrange for its pursuit, and why did they ultimately disappear?

These Cold War era British fundamentalist groups have been almost completely erased from historical memory, and they remain unfamiliar even to most specialists in the field. Taken together with such survivals from an earlier period as the Protestant Truth Society and the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, these Cold War era creations constituted in fact the last embers of an organised fundamentalist movement in Britain:

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[3] Norris to McIntire, 28 Nov. 1956, ibid.

[4] See David W. Bebbington and David Ceri Jones (eds), *Evangelicalism and fundamentalism in the United Kingdom in the twentieth century*, Oxford 2013.

[5] In addition to Bebbington and Ceri Jones, *Evangelicalism*, see David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s*, London 1989; Alister Chapman, *Godly ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical movement*, Oxford 2012; Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (eds), *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: the life and legacy of 'the doctor'*, Nottingham 2011; and David W. Bebbington and David Ceri Jones (eds), *Evangelicalism and dissent in modern England and Wales*, London 2020.

[6] David W. Bebbington and David Ceri Jones, 'Conclusion', in Bebbington and Ceri Jones, *Evangelicalism*, 371–6.

the British Evangelical Council (now Affinity) in its early years after 1953; the English (later British) Consultative Committee of the ICCC and the British Council of Protestant Christian Churches from the mid-1950s; the Bible Christian Unity Fellowship in the 1960s; and the British and European Reformation Fellowship in the 1980s. An accounting of the activities and theologies of these several long-forgotten organisations can meaningfully replenish our understanding of fundamentalism as a whole, both as a distinct set of doctrinal propositions and as an organised transnational movement.

Above all, such an inquiry enlarges our knowledge about fundamentalism's trajectories in rapidly secularising countries such as Britain, replete with church scenes and ascendant cultural and world view presuppositions increasingly inhospitable to militant and uncompromising defences of the faith that were above all doctrinally grounded, that is, propositional and rationalist. Secondly, an outline recounting of the named organisations' institutional trajectory and core message uncovers a complex field of transnational interchange where doctrinally fundamentalist British clergy and laity were empowered as an embattled community through the fellowship that they found abroad under the ICCC's auspices. Yet as they imbibed American emphases and attempted to render these into a British idiom relevant to their national and cultural contexts, they were also riven on confessional lines, due to personal rivalries and over the pre-eminent faith-inflected political issues of their time (anti-Communism, anti-Catholicism and the Common Market) that were prioritised differently in the disparate sections of this transnational movement.

With the exception of the Bible Unity Fellowship, each of these Cold War era groups were co-creations with Americans, part of the postwar attempt by US fundamentalists to forge a global united front of 'Bible-believers'. But, as is shown in Norris's comments, it proved difficult to find individuals who fitted all the Americans' criteria – not only biblical inerrancy, ecclesiastical separationism and anti-ecumenicism, but also militancy in speech and distinctly right-wing political engagement on issues of free market capitalism and Communism. These were the minima upon which US fundamentalists had settled, and they glossed over other issues of equal if not greater importance to many conservative Protestants, including those related to sacraments and to church polity. Consequently, even if the umbrella organisation formed in 1948 – the ICCC – did eventually claim fifty-five million members in some eighty-nine countries, it was always internally riven and its regional affiliates had to be given leeway in living out their own emphases.[7]

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[7] See Markku Ruotsila, *Fighting fundamentalist: Carl McIntire and the politicization of American fundamentalism*, New York 2016, 3, 90–6, and 'Transnational fundamentalist anti-Communism: the International Council of Christian Churches', in Luc van

In the case of the British groups, significant divergencies from the US template were evident from the start. While each of them grew out of the US recruitment and organising effort, was inspired by the example set across the Atlantic and prized the ensuing fellowship, each of these groups also incorporated distinctively British genealogies and approaches. Each recruited avidly in the Church of England and Dissenting communities, published periodicals and pamphlet series that disclosed British preoccupations, and engaged in polemics against liberalising trends in the Churches and against secularisation in public life, all this in a clearly British key. The early organisers were veterans of the pre-war fundamentalist movement, and even in that earlier era they had had clear conceptions of their own not always in line with those of the Americans, so boundary-making was important to them from the offset.

No one was as powerful among them as E. J. Poole-Connor, the founder of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) in the early 1920s, principal of All Nations Bible College since 1945, and long a leading light of the biblically inerrantist British Bible League. Poole-Connor was also the principal founder of the English Consultative Committee of the ICCC (just as he was the only British founding member of the ICCC itself), and he served on its executive committee until his death in 1962 at age eighty-nine.[8] It was he more than anyone who recruited the initial membership and popularised the cause. In many ways, the Consultative Committee (and its offshoots) represented a continuation of his efforts at collecting all conservative British Evangelicals into a single cooperative association. Even before the Second World War, these efforts had enjoyed only limited success, as the centripetal pull of confessional and denominational allegiances had often overwhelmed the search for common ground. It was to be even more so once Poole-Connor's project became associated with the Americans' doctrinally even more pared-down yet also more politicised agenda.

Incorporated in 1955 but in existence as an informal grouping since late 1948, the English Consultative Committee was, for these reasons, an association of individuals and congregations, not of Churches. At the height of its activities it had thirty-five congregations as members (mostly Strict Baptists), plus two exiled Eastern European churches. The premillennialist Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony was an associate member, as was the

Dongen, Stephanie Roulin and Giles Scott Smith (eds), *Transnational anti-Communism and the Cold War*, Basingstoke 2014, 235–50, as well as 'Importing fundamentalism: the Scandinavian Evangelical Council', in Arne Bugge Amundsen (ed.), *Vekkelsens rom*, Lund 2020, 175–90.
    [8] David G. Fountain, *Contending for the faith: E. J. Poole-Connor*, London 2005, 98–9, 129–40; E. J. Poole-Connor, 'The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches: its spirit and purpose', *Fellowship* i (Sept. 1957), 9–11.

Bristol and Clifton Protestant Society.[9] Leaders of the Protestant Truth Society, the Lord's Day Observance Society, the British Bible League and the Women's Protestant Union were active on an individual basis. Meetings usually had an attendance of between fifty and one hundred, and the Committee published two successive periodicals, the *Reformation Link* and *Valiant for the Truth*. The doctrinal basis was borrowed, *in toto*, from the Americans – the 'five fundamentals of the faith', first enunciated by US Presbyterians in 1910 and from 1948 also the core of the ICCC's doctrinal statement.[10]

Thus far did agreement reign across the Atlantic, but barely further than this. Poole-Connor insisted from the start that high-pressure and militant American methods, in particular, would be dispensed with, since they simply would not work in Britain. They were 'something foreign to our shores' and alienated many conservative Protestants, so more 'dignified' methods were needed. Poole-Connor could not accept, either, what he regarded as the Americans' inappropriate mixing of religion and politics. Instead, the Consultative Committee adopted his self-identified 'infiltration' model: working from within existing Evangelical bodies, persuading rather than militantly fighting, focusing on the inerrant Bible and disregarding all political issues.[11] Although most members were ecclesiastical separatists, it was further decided not to make separatism part of the agenda. On this, 'hasty and ill-considered decisions are to be deprecated', the Committee felt; it sufficed for each Christian to realise that they 'must not aid the enemy' and 'should help to the utmost of [their] ability and resources those who are engaging the foe'.[12]

Here already, at the outset, Cold War era British fundamentalists had dispensed with three of the five planks on which the Americans insisted – separatism, militancy and political activism. In the early years they concentrated instead on the two remaining planks alone – biblical inerrancy and anti-ecumenicism. On these, the Consultative Committee worked closely with Poole-Connor's friend Martyn Lloyd-Jones, then pastor at Westminster Chapel in London and president of the Inter-

[9] The members were twenty-five Strict Baptist congregations, four from FIEC and five Independent ones, one parish of the Free Church of England, the Polish Reformed Church in exile and the Latvian Lutheran Evangelical Church in exile: George H. Fromow, 'Report on the ICCC in Britain', *RR* x (Jan. 1963), 105.

[10] 'An explanation and an appeal', *RL* i (Jan. 1956), 1, 4–6; 'The International Council of Christian Churches English Consultative Committee', *RL* i (Jan. 1956), 16; Fromow, 'Report', 105; D. A. Thompson to McIntire, 6 Apr. 1960, McIntire collection, box 195; J. C. Maris, 'The ICCC in European countries', in *5th plenary congress, International Council of Christian Churches*, Amsterdam 1961, 22.

[11] E. J. Poole-Connor to William Harllee Bordeaux, 26 Nov. 1948, and Poole-Connor to McIntire, 12 May 1952, 17 Sept. 1958, McIntire collection, box 383.

[12] 'An explanation', 4.

Varsity Fellowship of Students. Had this cooperation with this highly influential man persisted, the trajectory of fundamentalism in postwar Britain might have changed materially. By the latter 1950s, however, Lloyd-Jones had sided with Francis Schaeffer, Carl McIntire's mentee and the ICCC's original recruiter in Western Europe but also one of the first to break away and to move into the new Evangelical fold. His revolt against what he felt was the cultural inappropriateness of American ways in the pursuit of fundamentalist goals in Europe attracted many a doctrinal fundamentalist in Britain, and they joined the exodus on these purely stylistic and methodological grounds.[13]

Before this turn of events, cooperation had centred on Poole-Connor's and Lloyd-Jones's shared effort at persuading the British branch of the World Evangelical Alliance (the earliest of all interdenominational Evangelical associations, created back in 1846) into abandoning their policy of 'benevolent neutrality' towards the ecumenical World Council of Churches (WCC). 'The out-and-out Evangelicals in this country are a feeble folk', Poole-Connor told his American sponsors when the effort failed and the Evangelical Alliance transformed (as he himself put it) into a doctrinally compromised 'halfway-house' to the World Council.[14]

With the infiltration model thus seemingly shown to be non-productive, attention turned to efforts at creating a separatist council of churches. This transpired through the British Evangelical Council (BEC), created in 1953. To it, Poole-Connor managed to gain the adherence, in addition to his own FIEC, of such influential figures as G. N. M. Collins and Murdoch MacRae of the Free Church of Scotland, Norman Porter of the National Union of Protestants, and W. J. Grier of the Irish Evangelical Church. Tellingly, the BEC would not identify explicitly as fundamentalist, no matter that its doctrinal standards were just that, for it still aspired to cast a wide net. This much was acceptable to the American sponsors of the new effort: they agreed to devolve all decision-making so that the British could 'use all the tact that might be needed' in their own cultural, historical and confessional situation.[15]

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[13] Markku Ruotsila, 'Francis Schaeffer in Europe: the early missionary years', in John Corrigan and Frank Hinkelmann (eds), *Return to sender: American Evangelical missions to Europe in the twentieth century*, Berlin 2018, 17–31.

[14] Poole-Connor to Bordeaux, 26 Nov. 1948, Bordeaux to Poole-Connor, 6 Dec. 1948, and Poole-Connor to McIntire, 5 July 1951, 8 Sept. 1958, McIntire collection, box 383; E. J. Poole-Connor, 'Religious co-operation: a halfway-house', *RL* v (Autumn 1957), 10–11.

[15] W. J. Grier to McIntire, 25 Sept. 1954, McIntire collection, box 13; Abraham Warnaar to Robert Dubarry, 4 Sept. 1959, box 18; 'Formation of a British Evangelical Council', *RR* 1 (Oct. 1953), 46–8; Fountain, *Contending*, 139–40; Fromow, 'Report', 108; D. G. Hart, *Calvinism: a history*, New Haven 2013, 268.

No real, functioning fundamentalist council of churches ever resulted. If in the Consultative Committee it was disagreements over American methods and emphases that rent the community, here it was the power of confessionalism and denominationalism that defeated unity plans. The Irish Evangelical Church withdrew early on out of deep doctrinal and stylistic disagreements. Most of the FIEC actually never participated. In other targeted communities, such as among the Strict Baptists, there seemed to exist 'lamentable apathy'. And the Free Church of Scotland, which never had a fundamentalist majority anyway, protested throughout on doctrinal grounds: it regarded the BEC's doctrinal standards as all too general and not sufficiently Reformed (even after, at its insistence, the ICCC added 'total depravity' to its doctrinal statement).[16]

Regardless, the BEC's early reputation was such that its rentals of venues (such as YMCA halls) were often precipitously cancelled even in the planning stages once the participants' identity was discovered. The church press reported that speeches given at their events were full of 'vulgar abuse' of the ecumenicists. Such highly influential clerics as the dean of St Paul's, W. R. Inge, even denounced the BEC as 'the Protestant underworld'.[17] A Lloyd-Jones takeover followed, and by the latter 1950s his followers had forced most Consultative Committee members out and embraced so clearly the new Evangelical model that the Council's originators began to refer to it as an 'apostate' body. Throughout it all, the BEC had remained 'almost unknown and inactive'.[18] Under the new Evangelicals, it would re-emerge as a not insignificant actor, but in its later stages (especially once it was renamed as Affinity in 2004) it lost its linkages to a clearly fundamentalist stance so thoroughly that few of its members would even have been aware of its original nature and purposes.[19]

The other, parallel attempt at forging a fundamentalist council of churches, the British Council of Protestant Christian Churches (BCPCC), was begun in 1952 during a trip to Edinburgh by the ICCC's American and continental European leaders. Like the other associations mentioned, it bound itself to the ICCC's doctrinal standards and was

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[16] Alexander Macleod to McIntire, 15 Aug. 1951, McIntire collection, box 10; Macleod to Warnaar, 11 Dec. 1952, box 131; Milsted to Warnaar, 30 Dec. 1954, box 19; Grier to McIntire, 25 Sept. 1954, 24 Mar. 1959, box 13; 'Regional conference of the ICCC', *Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* (Sept. 1952), 183–4; 'The "New Evangelicalism"', *RR* v (July 1958), 211–12.

[17] Grier to McIntire, 9 Apr., 6 May 1952, McIntire collection, box 13.

[18] Warnaar to Frederic Buhler, Aug. 1959, ibid. box 198; minutes of a meeting of the European section of the executive committee of the ICCC, 24 July 1959, box 366; Thompson to McIntire, 16 Jan., 26 Mar. 1960, box 195.

[19] J. P. Thackway, 'Affinity', <https://www.bibleleaguetrust.org/affinity/ > (accessed 26 Feb. 2021).

always intended to be the regional ICCC body. But if the British Evangelical Council's trajectory was from fundamentalism to moderate new Evangelicalism, the BCPCC moved from fundamentalism to ultra-fundamentalism. In the process, it too lost most of its appeal beyond a very narrow separatist circle. Largely inactive for most of its early existence, by the mid-1960s (when its small office staff was saved by a cash infusion from the US) it was practically defunct, but soon thereafter it was taken over by Ian R. Paisley of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (FPCU). Paisley promptly reanimated and refashioned it in his own image. Most of the remaining members were either FPCU or Strict Baptist.[20]

Even after this takeover, Paisley remained one of the main hindrances to creating a united front of fundamentalists in the United Kingdom. This is to say that personal rivalries and dislikes became the third rock upon which the post-1945 organising effort ship-wrecked, and most of these rivalries and dislikes revolved around this one indomitable man, Paisley. The Americans were most impressed when they first heard of his activities in 1951, for he seemed the perfect specimen of just the kind of aggressive propagandist for the cause that they were looking for.[21] But fellow-Ulstermen Porter and Grier had a long-running rivalry with him, and until the mid-1960s they prevented FPCU admission into the organisations named above. Both regarded Paisley as an opportunist who kept changing his views on theological issues, as too Arminian, too militant and too divisive in his US-style calls for separation. When Paisley started to organise political street protests in the 1960s, and especially after he was jailed for one march in 1966, the critics became even more insistent that his methods only brought disrepute to fundamentalism.[22]

Before Paisley's ascendancy and apart from Poole-Connor, the third most prominent figure in the organisations was the long-serving Consultative Committee chairman, Bishop Donald A. Thompson of the tiny Free Church of England. No friend of Paisleyite ways, he proved an

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[20] S. Wolstenholme to McIntire, 13 Mar. 1969, and McIntire to Brian Green, 3 June 1969, McIntire collection, box 185; Milsted to Ruth Trato, 2 Aug. 1973, box 90; McIntire to James North, 16 Feb. 1984, box 28; McIntire to Norman Porter, 5 Nov. 1987, box 5; 'British Council of Protestant Christian Churches', *VfT* vii (Jan.–Feb. 1967), 12; 'The British Council of Protestant Christian Churches', *The Revivalist* (Oct. 1989), 2–3.

[21] 'Beacon editor writes of meetings for ICCC in England and Holland', *Christian Beacon*, 24 May 1951, 1, 8; McIntire to Ian Paisley, 28 May 1951, 11 Mar. 1952, McIntire collection, box 147; Warnaar to Porter, 9 Dec. 1955, box 383; McIntire to W. R. McEwen, 9 Jan. 1963, box 201. See also Richard L. Jordan, *The second coming of Paisley: militant fundamentalism and Ulster politics*, Ithaca, NY 2013, 120–9.

[22] Grier to McIntire, 23 Apr. 1952, McIntire collection, box 13; Warnaar to McIntire, 28 Dec. 1962, box 206; Paisley to McIntire, 4 Feb. 1963, box 147; H. J. W. Legerton to Warnaar, 18 May 1964, box 366; Porter to Warnaar, 5 Aug. 1966, box 207; Jordan, *The second coming*, 120–9.

ineffective challenger, yet while his challenge lasted, it brought into high relief the difference between what the American sponsors wanted and saw as the only true fundamentalism and what the British tried to fashion in its stead. Thompson's Church, the result of a 1927 merger between the English section of the Reformed Episcopalian Church and some Countess of Huntington Connexion congregations (a merger he had proposed), was designated by none other than Poole-Connor as one of the last remaining truly fundamentalist Churches in all of Britain.[23] But while a staunch inerrantist, Thompson's and his Church's confessional distinctives were such that he could be as preoccupied with narrowly Anglican concerns as with specifically fundamentalist ones. Many a fundamentalist harboured distinct reservations about him because he insisted on wearing his episcopal robes and thus came across as something of a High Churchman.[24]

In 1964 Thompson and his inner circle split from the Consultative Committee and created their short-lived Christian Bible Unity Fellowship, the fourth effort at Anglicising post-1945 US-style fundamentalism. This group included men such as the Protestant Truth Society's John Kensit Jr and the Lord's Day Observance Society's H. J. W. Legerton. The split itself was born partly out of disgust over Paisley's growing influence, partly out of frustration with what they felt was the Americans' dictation. Thompson complained about the 'many things emanating from the American control by dollars which have troubled the majority of us Britishers', insisting that 'we could not be, even religiously, an American satellite'. More directly, at issue was his demand that the ICCC join in condemning the European Common Market, adherence to which was being debated in Britain just then. When the Americans sided with the ICCC's Dutch and French contingents instead and refused, they were accused of failing to grasp 'the true spiritual significance' of the Common Market. It was a Catholic scheme for the destruction of British and Protestant liberties.[25]

[23] E. J. Poole-Connor, *Evangelicalism in England*, London 1966, 259–61; John Fenwick, *The Free Church of England: introduction to an Anglican tradition*, London 2004.
[24] D. A. Thompson, 'A call to prayer and action on behalf of the Church of England', *RR* iv (July 1957), 236–43, and *Christ and his cross*, London 1958, 9–12; Norris to McIntire, 28 Nov. 1956, McIntire collection, box 16; Poole-Connor to McIntire, 8 Sept. and McIntire to Poole-Connor, 17 Sept. 1958, box 383.
[25] Warnaar to Poole-Connor, 23 Oct. 1953, McIntire collection, box 383; George Fromow to Warnaar, 26 Feb. 1964, box 366; Legerton to Warnaar, 18 May 1964, box 366; Warnaar to MacLeod, 1 Apr. 1964, box 207; minutes of ICCC executive committee meetings, 5–12 Aug. 1965, box 366; Warnaar to McIntire, 28 Sept. 1964, box 207; 'Plain Speaking', *VfT* i (Nov. 1964), 2–3; *The reports and messages of the 6th plenary congress of the International Council of Christian Churches*, Singapore 1965, 16, 19.

Politics, which British fundamentalists had tried to keep out until now, intruded in a way not planned or appreciated by the Americans, and further drove apart the sponsors and the sponsored. There were now three distinct groupings of fundamentalists in the UK competing for the allegiance of a very thin slice of believers, and between each of them and the Americans definite though very different kinds of tensions persisted. Then in 1983, one final transatlantic attempt was launched at uniting the splintered ranks – the British and European Reformation Fellowship (BERF), extant from 1983 to 1990. A project of Peter J. Gadsden, ICCC vice-president for Britain and a Free Church of England pastor at Bishop Thompson's old congregation in Bexhill-on-the-Sea, it was originally intended as a cross-Channel venture, but this part of the plan never really took off. It was also to be a challenger to the Paisley-controlled BCPCC which by now had become estranged from the global ICCC community.[26]

A 'fellowship of Bible believing Christians who hold dear the great Reformed Doctrines … [that] are being eroded away by the compromising ecumenical movement', the group welcomed 'all born-again Bible believing Christians' who adhered to its inerrantist, separatist and anti-ecumenical standards. Tellingly (once again), it did not identify publicly as a fundamentalist body (but rather as Reformed), for Gadsden felt that this word had been 'abused and misused' for so long that it had lost all descriptive value.[27] Unlike its predecessors, BERF never had constituent members either; it was just a fellowship of the like-minded with a handful of part-time activists, such as Gadsden, Peter Trumper of Clwyd, Wales (founder of the Vocal Protestants International Fellowship) and James and Janet North of Lewes, Sussex, editors of their limited-circulation *Focus* newsletter. While it published its own monthly *British Beacon and Protestant Guardian* and held 'Reformation Rallies' with the National Union of Protestants' M. A. Perkins and the Free Church of England's David G. Fountain, BERF operations were always quite limited, poorly funded (some cash did come from the US), and little known outside of its core inner circle.[28]

BERF's ambitious plans to issue a major new pamphlet series against 'Modernism, Romanism, false ecumenicism/charismatic movement, new

[26] Peter J. Gadsden interview with the author, 23 Apr. 2015; Hans Maris interview with the author, 16 July 2015; Trato to K. C. Quek, 28 July 1988, McIntire collection, box 9.

[27] Gadsden interview, 23 Apr. 2015; Trato to Quek, 28 July 1988, McIntire collection, box 9.

[28] Gadsden interview, 23 Apr. 2015; *The Protestant Guardian*, news release, Feb. 1984, McIntire collection, box 191; McIntire to Gadsden, Mar. 19, 1984, and Gadsden to McIntire, 8 Feb. 1984, 19 Mar. 1985 and 6 Sept. 1988, box 8; BERF general meeting minutes, 3 Feb. 1986, box 8; Gadsen to Trato, 15 Nov. 1988, box 185; Trato to Quek, 28 July 1988, box 9.

evangelicalism, non-Trinitarian theology, secular humanism, communism' never bore fruit.[29] As a fellowship, it could unscramble no better than its predecessors all the disparate confessional, cultural and personal tensions that had complicated the effort at building a united fundamentalist front ever since 1945. The centripetal pull of these factors was remarkably strong, given that in this BERF listing of enemies there was in fact summarised a doctrinal continuity of which BERF really did represent the very last embers. Those mentioned on its list were enemies also of all the Cold War era British fundamentalist groups that predated it, and nearly the entirety of all these groups' public conversation was cohered by polemics against these enemies. In this these groups did indeed constitute, taken together and in juxtaposition to the opponents here enumerated, a fundamentalist community of discourse, mutual empowerment and public witness.

That organisational unity never could be achieved was due to the factors already outlined. But doctrinal unity did exist throughout, more or less, and this unity did constitute a distinctively British version of Christian fundamentalism during the Cold War, one that shared many key tenets with the American powers-that-be in the broader transnational movement but never was identical with the US version. The affirmations shared across the Atlantic were biblical inerrancy and anti-ecumenicism. The distinctively British emphases, apart from methods and style, related mostly to politics and particularly to stances taken regarding Catholicism in public life. For reasons why this indigenised version of Cold War era fundamentalism failed to appeal more widely (and why the new Evangelicals' alternative fared better) we must turn to factors specific to the historical moment, to available means, and to the overarching contexts of cultural change attendant on secularisation in which all these small fundamentalist groups operated.

Each of the organisations so far examined carried the torch for fundamentalism first of all because each of them affirmed a very high view of the Bible's authority in faith and life, in short, a biblically inerrantist position. In his much-read *Evangelicalism in England* (1951) and in countless other writings produced under the auspices of the ICCC, Poole-Connor himself identified this as the core, the foundation and the first principle of all Evangelicalism – which, according to him, equalled Christian fundamentalism. At issue, he stressed, whenever anyone denied or doubted the inerrancy of any part of the Bible – be it its moral statements, its historical accounts or the authorship of any of its books – was not some 'mere "theory of inspiration"' but the 'reliability of our Lord and His apostles as teachers of the truth of God'. All doubts and denials were due to

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[29] 'The British and European Reformation Fellowship', n.d., McIntire collection, box 191.

'hostile forces in the spirit-world, "mustering their unseen array" against God and His Christ'.[30] This affirmation was the necessary and sufficient basis for each of the named organisations' critique of the powers-that-be in most British Churches and also among the new Evangelicals.

Secondly, inclusion and exclusion was determined if not always by ecclesiastical separation, certainly by personal separation. That is to say that Cold War era fundamentalists in Britain insisted on believers' personal separation from sin as well as from false doctrine, from the fallen world's preoccupations outside the protective canopy of their own Churches and from all non-inerrantist Bible teaching inside those Churches. Separatism of this kind was not, of course, an exclusively fundamentalist affirmation, but rather a non-negotiable cohering principle shared by all the varied strands of Evangelical and Pietist Protestantism ever since the Reformation.[31] On this, the Christian Bible Unity Fellowship spoke for all the rest when it insisted that only those could be regarded as members of the Body of Christ who had accepted the 'fundamental doctrines revealed in the Word of God' and were also 'born-again (as distinct from merely nominal) Christians' and so evidenced a 'holiness of life'.[32]

Anti-ecumenism was the third shared affirmation. Properly seen, this was but a function of separatism and inerrantism. Indeed, the very term 'anti-ecumenism' is itself misleading, for these fundamentalists only opposed the World Council of Churches' type of ecumenism and only because this ignored biblical inerrancy and failed to require personal (let alone ecclesiastical) separation. As Poole-Connor put it, fundamentalists stood for 'Scriptural ecumenicism', by which he and others meant the spiritual unity of the born-again who affirmed the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as set out in the 'five fundamentals'. They alone constituted the true, invisible Church. Spiritual unity would become visible only in the millennial age, it was held, yet typically it was still also accepted (as by the Christian Bible Unity Fellowship) that 'in proportion as this unity of the Spirit' became clearer to the minds of believers, 'fraternisation, and if possible the union of churches and societies (provided there is no sacrifice of fundamental truth) will be welcomed'.[33]

To British fundamentalists of the Cold War era, then, no less than to the American ones, the World Council was compromised on inerrantism as

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[30] Poole-Connor, *Evangelicalism*, 42–4, 209, 231–8; E. J. Poole-Connor, 'Mariner, beware!', *Bible League Quarterly* ccix (Apr.–June 1952), 1–5, and 'The revised standard version', *RR* 1 (July 1954), 33–41.
[31] Markku Ruotsila, 'Ecumenism and separatism', in David Ceri Jones and Andrew Atherstone (eds), *The Oxford handbook of Christian fundamentalism*, Oxford (forthcoming).
[32] 'The significance of the new name', *RL* xiv (Mar. 1964), 3–5.
[33] Poole-Connor, 'Behaviour', n.p.; *The World Council of Churches' cure for disunity: its nature and cost*, London 1956, 3–7; 'The significance of the new name', 3–5.

well as on pneumatology. For most of them, and particularly to those many who came from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, it was also on the wrong side of the end-times battles that most of them expected at any moment. It constituted, as the Consultative Committee's Ivan Milsted put it, 'a sea creature … a huge religious octopus characterised by an inclusivism never seen before in the history of Christendom'.[34] To E. J. Poole-Connor, it was the 'greatest menace to apostolic Christianity the latter days have seen; rivalling even the Church of Rome in the dangerous mixture of truth and error'.[35] Fully 'honeycombed with Modernism, Sacerdotalism, Social Gospelism and even Communism', as the *Reformation Link* had it, the WCC typified the Babylonian confusion of the end-times.[36]

Much more so than in the American or continental European fundamentalist discourse, strident anti-Catholicism figured prominently in these critiques of ecumenism. The Northern Irish for obvious reasons put a particular emphasis on this, but English and Scottish fundamentalists were never far behind. That their US counterparts showed a relative lack of interest was a sore point inducive of significant distrust. This was, in fact, a vital and an abiding point of contention, in many ways even more important than confessional and stylistic disagreements. Simply put: while most of ICCC subscribed to some form of anti-Catholic sentiment (it was often iterated in formal resolutions too), in the Euro-Atlantic space it was only the British, the Canadians and the French who elevated this sentiment over and above the priorities established by the movement's US leadership.

The ICCC's small French contingent, in particular, tended to narrate ecumenism almost wholly in terms of the 'Romanisation of Protestantism'.[37] Similarly in Canada, the British-born veteran fundamentalist leader T. T. Shields (an ICCC founding vice-president who greatly influenced many of the Britons here examined) kept insisting that fundamentalists should be 'far more afraid of the Roman Catholic menace' than, say, of Soviet Russia, and they should focus on battling these ever-busy Catholic 'reactionary forces from the pit', not on preparing for an imagined Communist attack that surely would never come.[38] On similar

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[34] Ivan S. Milsted, 'Ecumenical survey', *Good News* (Mar. 1955), 5–10.

[35] Poole-Connor, 'Religious co-operation', 11.

[36] 'An explanation and an appeal', *RL* 1 (Jan. 1956), 4; 'What is the difference between the International Council of Christian Churches and the World Council of Churches?', London 1956, 6–7.

[37] 'Union de défense protestante', *Cri d'Alarme* ii (July 1947), 4; W. H. Guiton, 'Le Plus Vite possible', *Cri d'Alarme* xiii (Oct 1950), 3; W. H. Guiton, 'Idolatry and tyranny', *RR* iv (Oct. 1957), 110–11.

[38] T. T. Shields to McIntire, 22 Dec. 1947, 14 Jan. 1952, McIntire collection, box 246; T. T. Shields, 'Shall king George VI or pope Pius XII rule Canada?', *Gospel Witness* xxx (15 Oct. 1951), 1–7; W. P. Bauman, 'Envoy to Vatican', *Gospel Witness* xliii (3 Sept. 1964), 6.

grounds, British delegates at ICCC congresses would propose that the word 'Romanism' be substituted for 'Communism' in resolutions adopted on the gravest dangers facing the Bible-believing Churches.[39] US fundamentalist leaders would definitely not go along with this: even if they too in public could thunder against 'popery' as idolatrous and tyrannical, behind the scenes they would still cooperate with Catholic conservatives against what they regarded as the greater threat of Soviet Communism.[40]

This willingness and set of priorities was anathema to British fundamentalists.[41] Subsequent to Ian Paisley's imprisonment in 1966 and the resumption of Irish republican terrorism after 1969, the Americans did start to align more with the British on these issues, and this soothed relations to some extent. Indeed, the ICCC even started to raise funds for Protestant Loyalist paramilitaries.[42] Yet even then, the ICCC's US leaders disapproved of the stridently anti-Catholic resolutions that the Paisley group pushed through at ICCC congresses.[43] At issue here were foundational sentiments about the religious grounding of British nationhood and constitution that simply were not relevant to fundamentalists in other countries. These were brought to the fore in the transatlantic disagreement over the European Common Market and in rival perceptions about the greatest threat of the moment (Communism or Catholicism) but actually coloured approaches and priorities throughout.

'The pagan, profligate, persecuting character of this daughter of the Scarlet Woman, and of her unscriptural and outrageous claims', insisted the *Reformation Link* in a typical passage, should forever be reproved because it was 'so unscriptural and so un-Christlike'. Also highlighted was the papacy's 'hatred of democracy, repudiation of representative government and the denial of freedom of speech and the Press', as well as persecution of Protestants in Catholic-majority countries. On the last point, Spain emerged as a particular focal point since the Consultative Committee activists Luis de Wirtz, a Cuban-born evangelist, and his English wife, Lidia Brooks de Wirtz, secretary of the Women's Protestant Union, carried on extensive operations there. In all, Paisley's *Protestant Telegraph* aptly summarised the shared sentiment when it insisted in 1966 that 'liberty is the very essence of Bible Protestantism' while 'tyranny is

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[39] *The reports and messages of the 6th plenary congress*, 16.

[40] Ruotsila, *Fighting fundamentalist*, 127–8, 137–9, 151–3, 192, 260–1.

[41] Legerton to Warnaar, 18 May 1964, McIntire collection, box 366; 'Plain speaking', 2–3.

[42] Jones, *The second coming*, 144–59, 182–9; 'Helpt ulsterse protestanten', *Getrouw* xxviii (Feb. 1975), 29; 'Hulp voor Ulster is Zelfhulp', *Getrouw* xxix (Feb. 1976), 243; Hans Maris interview with the author, 16 July 2015.

[43] McIntire to David Hedegård, 14 Jan. 1969, David Hedegård papers, Regional State Archives, Lund, Sweden, A IIa:5.

the very essence of Popery'. Thus, 'where Protestantism flourishes, Liberty flames. Where Popery reigns, Tyranny rules'.[44]

Nothing at all changed in this blanket denunciation after the Second Vatican Council had reformed aspects of the Catholic Church's doctrine, ritual and stances towards secular authority. To the British fundamentalists, this totalled only a 'change of tactics' that, regretfully, 'deceived many Protestants into thinking that Rome has changed her heart' when in fact 'Rome never changes', 'not an inch!' Both before and after the council, visits to Rome by archbishops of Canterbury elicited extreme condemnations (they were all 'guilty of high treason', thundered Brian Green, while Peter Trumper espied in this dialogue but a popish plan to 'take possession of Britain, and a large section of the Commonwealth').[45] Likewise, when a Jesuit priest was allowed to preach in Westminster Abbey in 1966 during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (the first time since the Reformation, as the Consultative Committee noted), the cry was about the 'Betrayal! of Britain's National Heritage' and the call went out for all those who 'love the old-time Gospel, [to] stand by what the Reformers believed and were burned for … Your Duty is to PROTEST!'[46] Finally, when Pope John Paul II visited Britain in 1983 and met the queen, BERF insisted that 'the Church of Rome is making a blatant attack on the Protestant Constitution … striking at the very root of our Protestant Heritage and Constitution'.[47]

Not only were the Church of England and other World Council member bodies constantly attacked on these grounds, but so were the new Evangelicals of the Evangelical Alliance and later of the Lausanne movement. Throughout, Billy Graham was a prominent object of these critiques, and later John Stott. Both were accused of having imported into the Evangelical ranks the same spirit of doctrinal compromise that had led the WCC churches into dialogues with the Vatican. In Graham's case this was said to be a particularly alarming and 'sad story of decline and

[44] 'Joint council of churches pope in the chair?', *RL* v (Autumn 1957), 7–9; 'The papacy – once repudiated, now honoured', *RL* vii (Feb. 1959), 26–32; 'Protestant viewpoint', *Protestant Telegraph,* 28 May 1966, 1. For the Spanish operations see Luis de Wirtz, 'Succouring Spanish sufferers', *RL* xii (Dec. 1962), 27–9; 'The situation in Spain', *Protestant Telegraph,* 6 Jan. 1968, 4; and English Consultative Committee, 'Refugee aid fund' (May 1961), n.p.

[45] Norman Porter, 'The Second Vatican Council', *RR* xi (Oct. 1963), 13–22; G. H. Mason, 'Vatican "semper idem" council – comments', *VfT* ii (Winter 1965), 5–9; Brian Green, 'Christians awake!', *VfT* vi (1966), 1–2, and *Unity with Rome? Seven reasons why true Protestants cannot unite with Rome*, Chiswick, n.d., 1–5, 10–14, 17; Peter Trumper, 'Runcie – Romeward', *British Beacon and Protestant Guardian* (Oct. 1989), 1.

[46] British Consultative Committee, *Betrayal! of Britain's national heritage*, n.d. [1966].

[47] James North, *The papal visit weighed and found wanting*, Lewes, n.d., 1–3; Stephen Scott-Pearson, '"Strengthen the things which remain"', *VfT* vi (May–July 1983), 8–9.

downgrade', given his 'original Fundamental stand'.[48] Increasingly from the 1970s onwards, the argument was couched in terms that linked the Vatican, the WCC and the new Evangelicals through the ascendant charismatic movement, against which all these British fundamentalists remained adamant and in which they saw a joint Catholic-ecumenical plot for undermining the 'faith once received'. In place of this kind of subjective experiential faith (and the showy mass evangelism events typical of Graham), the call continued to go out for 'true discipleship' grounded in doctrinal teaching.[49]

Finally anti-Catholicism was at the very core of the opposition to the European Common Market that all of the British fundamentalist groups shared. Whenever British adherence was being debated, the arguments offered against it were first of all anti-Catholic, only secondly premillennialist. So strongly did they feel that the British fundamentalists became at least as politically engaged on this issue as were those Americans on other issues whom they took to task for their ill-advised mixing of religion and politics. No other issue elicited as many polemical and petition campaigns from British fundamentalists as did the Common Market.

It was 'part of a sinister plot to bring this land under the control of the Vatican once again', they would intone. Therefore it was 'vitally necessary to avoid a line-up with Roman Catholicism and any surrender of Britain's sovereignty'. 'Our entry would be a forging of that unequal yoke which is abhorrent to the mind of God.' It would also mean 'an influx of residents from abroad – with a most unsatisfactory political, cultural, religious and racial mix-up!', and it 'would transfer the power of decision on many vital matters from Britain to foreigners, some of whom we may have little reason to trust'. 'Our Protestant English Sundays' would be gone too, to be replaced *via* the Vatican's EEC operatives by horse and dog racing, theatre and gambling on that day, causing God's displeasure and divine punishments on the entire nation, 'the strength of which is derived from the Protestant Reformation'. In short, 'the British constitution, the British public, British ideals, the British way of life are all come under

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[48] 'Billy Graham?', *VfT* iii (1965), 3–4; John L. Bird, '"With all boldness"', *Fellowship* i (Nov. 1957), 5–6; Stephen Scott-Pearson, 'Beware! Evangelicals', *VfT* vii (Aug.–Oct. 1983), 6–7; 'Billy Graham BCPCC report', *VfT* vi (May–July 1983), 3–6; 'Mixed multitude Evangelicalism', *British Beacon and Protestant Guardian* (Dec.–Jan. 1989–90), 2–3; 'The unchanging Gospel?', *Focus* (Apr. 1982), 1.

[49] James Payne, 'Strong delusions', *RR* xx (Jan. 1973), 86–103; 'The unchanging Gospel?', 1; North to McIntire, 4 June 1984, McIntire collection, box 191; Peter J. Gadsden, 'A popular 20th century heresy', *Protestant Guardian* (Winter 1984–5), 1–2; 'Mixed multitude Evangelicalism', 2–3.

the pick-axe of the EEC demolition squad … the Common Market would destroy our British Sovereignty and National Protestantism'.[50]

Like the Americans, these British fundamentalists certainly also spoke against Communism. But when so doing, they tended to stress its atheism, materialism and persecution of Christians, as well as its external aggressions and dictatorial methods. Rarely were they explicitly for unregulated free market capitalism (on the contrary, some would even state in print that they had no objections to Marxian goals being pursued by parliamentary means and trades unions). As to the Communists' influence in Churches, this was 'not a major issue in our British churches' as there were only 'very few' clergy there with an 'extreme Leftist position'. On rare occasions, as in 1956, the Consultative Committee did petition the Cabinet, imploring against meeting arriving Soviet delegations and suggesting that were the queen forced to grant an audience, she should wear mourning clothes and stand silent before the visitors.[51] This kind of petitioning, however, was very rare whereas the political effort against Catholic influences in British public life was recurring, passionate and sustained.

There were other political projects on which the British aligned more with the Americans. On one in particular they were actually the pioneers (together with their Scandinavian and Dutch counterparts) and their American friends were the followers. This was the case with the politics of traditional morality that eventually came to associated with the modern US Christian Right. But the fact is that this fight was first fought, and lost, in Europe; the Americans watched in the 1950s and early 1960s, then constructed a different methodology when these issues became salient in their country.[52] All British conservatives had to fight this fight against moral decay (as they saw it) from soon after the Second World War, and the fundamentalists among them traced recent developments (oftenest) to the teaching of evolution theory and (always) to refusal to teach biblical inerrancy. The Free Church of Scotland's Alexander Macleod was among the first (in 1952, at the BEC's founding conference) to list the phenomena of concern: 'the enormous growth of

[50] 'The European common market', *RL* xi (Mar. 1962), 34–5; 'The European common market', *RL* xiii (Aug. 1963), 29–33; Philip H. Rand, 'Christians awake!', *VfT* i (Nov. 1964), 13–14; 'Do you know…', *Protestant Telegraph,* 2 July 1966, 3; 'Britain and the common market', *VfT* ix (June–Aug. 1967), 10–11; Brian Green, *Should Britain enter the common market?*, Hounslow, n.d., n.p.; Payne, 'Strong delusions', 110–13.

[51] 'The Bible's verdict on Marxian Communists', 'Protest concerning visit of Russian envoys' and 'Comment on recent affairs', *RL* ii (Apr. 1956), 1–9, 10; 'Marxian Communism in the light of Holy Scripture, part 2', *RL* ii (Dec. 1956), 1–9; Milsted to McIntire, 20 Feb. 1955, McIntire collection, box 19.

[52] Markku Ruotsila, 'Globalizing the US Christian right: transnational interchange during the Cold War', *International History Review* xl (Jan. 2018), 133–54.

betting and gambling, the growth in crime and child delinquency, the loosening of the marriage bond and the increase in divorce, the prevailing ungodliness and Sabbath desecrecation'. 'The current is moving slowly and steadily in the direction of moral anarchy', Macleod stressed. Already in 1952 'modern society has reached a subpagan level'.[53]

Frequently condemned too was 'the ever increasing low moral standard characterising some of the literature, certain sections of the press, the advertisements, the cinema, the threatre and the empty-headed music hall entertainments of to-day'. In 1957, the Consultative Committee singled out the increasing prominence of 'defiling and corrupting influences such as characterised Sodom of old' and the recent proliferation of 'glossy-covered periodicals containing photographs of young women attired in the scantiest of clothing which are calculated to stimulate erotic emotions in those who purchase them … [and] which, in addition to carrying fiction and non-fiction articles, include a number of photographs, or coarse humour, which can only have the effect of stimulating unhealthy sexual desires and lust'. The call went out for prompt censorship by government authority.[54]

From the 1950s onwards, there were additional petition campaigns against abortion and pornography and, especially, for continued sabbatarian laws. This last-mentioned was of particular interest to the community throughout, given that its leaders included H. J. W. Legerton, who was also the head of the Lord's Day Observance Society. On this issue, rallies, boycotts and petition drives were common all the way to the late 1980s. Once an MP, Ian Paisley too took up the cause in the Commons and in Ulster.[55] The fundamentalists' voice, insisted the Consultative Committee's Ivan Milsted throughout, ought to be 'heard in all spheres and strata of society', for 'unquestionably God does call some of His people to witness for Him in the realms of politics, moral welfare'.[56] This, despite Poole-Connor's initial counsels against mixing religion and politics, was in fact the sense of most of the fundamentalists here examined.

[53] Alexander Macleod, 'The Evangelical Church and the modern social problem', 26 July 1952, McIntire collection, box 10; 'Evolution protest movement', *RL* iv (Mar. 1957), 22; 'The error of evolution', *RL* v (Autumn 1957), 11–12. See also Callum G. Brown, *The battle for Christian Britain: sex, humanists and secularisation, 1945–1980*, Cambridge 2019; Roger Davidson, *Sexual state: sexuality and Scottish governance, 1950–80*, Edinburgh 2012.
[54] 'Growing indecency of the printed page, of advertisements and of amusements', *RL* v (Autumn 1957), 1–3; Jordan, *Second coming*, 221–6.
[55] 'Sabbath desecrecation and Protestant betrayal', *RL* iv (Mar. 1957), 22–3; S. M. Houghton, 'Sunday observance and the Crathorne report', *RL* xv (Mar. 1965), 19–25; 'The Milsteds' Christmas letter', 1971, McIntire collection, box 190; Payne, 'Strong delusions', 78–112; H. J. W. Legerton, 'Pathetic but perilous!', *Focus* (Feb. 1985), 1–2; 'Sunday opening bill killed', *VfT* v (Feb.–Apr. 1983), 3–4.
[56] Ivan S. Milsted, 'Social policy or Christian conscience?', *Good News* (May 1955), 4–5.

Fairly early on, they became, just as their American sponsors wanted, politically engaged – only on their own issues, not those of the Americans.

Active, then, were all these latter-day British fundamentalists in all the public fora that they could possibly gain access to. But their message simply failed to penetrate beyond a very limited circle. This was partly because they lacked access to modern media and had to rely on old-fashioned and by-now ineffective means of spreading the word. Throughout, radio and television were almost totally closed to all of them (only H. J. W. Legerton sometimes gained access, as did Paisley in Northern Ireland). In terms of more traditional media, the Consultative Committee's *Reformation Link* did have a print run of some 15,000, but its subscribers apparently did not exceed one thousand.[57] BERF periodicals never could reach even that level.[58] Some of the pamphlets did fare better – such as the Consultative Committee's *Should there be a line up with the Church of Rome?,* which had a print run of some 80,000 and was sent free to nine thousand ministers.[59] But it was clear: little could be achieved with these kinds of numbers.

It also remains an open question whether the kind of attention that these fundamentalists did gain helped or hindered in communicating the substance of their case for a fundamentalist view of the Bible and its implications for public life. What did attract public attention were the recurring public spectacles arranged by Paisley and his younger acolytes, but these were extreme and unlikely to commend themselves to those not already onboard. An illustrative example was the stunt performed by the Sovereign Grace Evangelical Baptist pastor Jack Glass at the 1968 Scottish Churches Council meeting in Glasgow – where he hid himself in the men's lavatories and sprang into action from there, disrupting the meeting with his shouting and by holding aloft a placard that read, 'latest bulletin from hell – the WCC is doing well'. Earlier in central London, an anti-Catholic rally of his in Trafalgar Square, partly televised on ITV, had descended into violence when he was punched by a 'Roman priest, who was reported to have been drunk'. There was also a much-publicised protest in Rome while the archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey was taking communion. 'Archbishop Ramsey a Traitor to Protestant Britain', read the shirts worn by the protestors.[60]

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[57] 'The sixth annual public meetings', *RL* x (Summer 1961), 26; J. C. Maris to John Wilmot, 20 Sept. 1962, McIntire collection, box 208; Fromow, 'Report', 106–7.

[58] James North and Janet North to McIntire, 28 Mar., 4 June 1984, McIntire collection, box 191; Gadsden to McIntire, 6 Sept. 1988, box 8.

[59] Thompson to McIntire, 24, 28 June, 9 Feb. 1961, ibid. box 195; 'Should there be a line up with the Church of Rome?', *RL* xi (Mar. 1962), 39.

[60] Jack Glass, 'Report from Scotland', *Protestant Telegraph,* 5 Oct. 1968, 12; 'The truth about our protest', *VfT* v (1966), 4–6; 'What the papers said...', *VfT* v (1966), 10–20; Green, 'Christians awake!', 1–2.

While notable, the attention gained by such spectacles certainly was not what E. J. Poole-Connor or Bishop Thompson had wished for, and it likely turned off many an otherwise sympathetic conservative. Not that attendance was any better at the more run-of-the-mill rallies that others in the fundamentalist groups kept organising from the early 1950s to the 1990s in London and other major cities. These could sometimes attract over six hundred participants, more typically around fifty. In the 1950s W. J. Grier and Norman Porter had several hundreds attend their Belfast meetings and in the late 1960s two particularly active Strict Baptist pastors from Cambridge, H. R. H. Hill and W. H. Reeves, neared those numbers when touring East Anglia. But even a much-billed Reformation Day Rally in Trafalgar Square in 1967 could not attract more than one hundred participants.[61]

By 1990 even these kinds of rallies had mostly ceased. In that year the last of the attempts at uniting all the British fundamentalists – Peter Gadsden's BERF – wound down its activities when Gadsden moved to the United States to be pastor at the First Bible Presbyterian Church in Kansas City. Though he returned later, the organisation was never to be resurrected. The *Reformation Link* had disappeared by the late 1960s, and while its successor, *Valiant for Truth*, was continued into the 1980s, it was now part of the Paisley empire, not a British publication. BERF's other key figure, Peter Trumper, continued editing the newsletter of his Vocal Protestants International Fellowship until this too was discontinued in 2004.[62] After this, there was no real, self-identified institutional Christian fundamentalist presence left in Britain.

The arc of the successive, interlinked post-1945 attempts at rejuvenating an apologetically fundamentalist witness in Britain was unmistakeable. The initial attempt, as per Poole-Connor, at re-translating doctrinal fundamentalism into a properly decorous British idiom and at working from within the Churches and interdenominational associations already compromised (yet not, it was felt, beyond saving) simply did not work. The attempt at coaxing all conservatives into a new association was shipwrecked on the twin shoals of confessional disagreements and personal rivalries. By 1990, only the core inerrantist testimony remained, that plus anti-Catholicism and anti-ecumenicism, but only in isolated pockets. And even this minimum was now in the Paisley image, that is to say, much

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[61] 'The truth about our protest', *VfT* v (1966), 4–6; 'ICCC protests', *VfT* vii (Jan.–Feb. 1967), 5, 7–8; 'The Coventry crisis', *VfT* ix (June–Aug. 1967), 2–4; 'Regional news', *RR* xiv (Jan. 1967), 117–19; 'The ECC forward movement', *RL* vii (Feb. 1959), 1–4; 'Danger: sound the alarm', *RL* x (Summer 1961), 25–6; Grier to McIntire, 23 Apr. 1952, McIntire collection, box 13.

[62] Trato to Quek, 28 July 1988, McIntire collection, box 9; 'Bible-believing ministries of Dr. Peter Trumper', <http://www.kjv-asia.com/bible-believing-ministries-dr-peter-trumper/> (accessed 14 Feb. 2021); Gadsden interview, 23 Apr. 2015.

more militant, more separatist and more political – in short, more 'American' – than had been intended. Eventually even Paisley had to tone down the anti-Catholicism and the public spectacle-making.

Why did they all fail? Apart from the repeated fracturing and the mutual animosities both personal and confessional, and the unavailability of modern means of spreading the message, the failure surely cannot be explained except by noting the growing irrelevancy in a rapidly secularising post-Christian Britain of the kind of highly dogmatic and doctrinally oriented, above all propositional and rationalist defence of the faith that these fundamentalist groups had to offer. The dwindling numbers of British fundamentalists simply fell foul of the broader change in world view that attended rapid secularisation in Britain after the Second World War. That is to say that while all religious groups suffered from the loss of popular allegiance to religious authority, it was only the out-and-out fundamentalists who could not, by virtue of their non-negotiables, accommodate the turning towards the pronouncedly subjective postmodern spiritualities that took place in their time, nor the liberalisation in sexual mores or the loss of a popular sense of Britishness as fundamentally Protestant. The new Evangelicals could accommodate some of this – by their acceptance of the charismatic movement, their dialogues with Catholics and their partial bowing to the new identity politics of sexual, gender and ethnic minorities – but inerrantist fundamentalists could not.

If the last embers of Christian fundamentalism in post-1945 Britain exposed anything, then, it was the futility of attempting, as per E. J. Poole-Connor, to render US-style fundamentalism into a new Anglicised, non-militant yet doctrinally uncompromising version fit for a rapidly secularising country. This road led only to new Evangelicalism, as per John Stott, with its accommodating of the sensibilities of the secular age through the abandoning of separatism and militancy and, eventually, by relaxing doctrine. In Affinity, Lloyd-Jones's anti-ecumenism did survive but without inerrantism. There clearly was a niche also for the uncompromising militancy in all things that was Paisley's and that of his US friends, but this could not appeal widely. In post-Christian Britain, it was clear that precious few could understand the in-between options originally on offer from the Consultative Committee, the early BEC, the Christian Bible Unity Fellowship and the BERF.