

Newspaper Articles-1931-47

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1931 – 1947

Revised November 17, 2025 • **Companion page — also listed on [Newspaper Articles-Before 1959](#)**

Newspaper Articles for 1931 – 1947

About

The Church Without a Name, The Truth, Two By Twos, Cooneyites

1931 Ontario – RE Millbrook, Ontario, Canada Convention

July 9, 1931 – The Impartial Reporter – Convention at Greenhill, near Brookeborough, on property of Albert Pogue

December 11, 1931 – The Great Falls Tribune, Montana – Tom Lyness seriously wounded in Bozeman by Irate Husband

July 13, 1933 – Impartial Reporter – Brookeborough Convention (N. Ireland)

1934 – Cooneyite: A Warning ~ *Cooneyiten: Eine Warnung* (German publication) by Gideon J Gerber

June 27, 1940 – Impartial Reporter – Edward Cooney

July 11, 1940 – The Impartial Reporter – Convention at Gortaloughan

May 10, 1941 – [Phoenix] Arizona Republic – Edward Cooney

May 15, 1941 – The Impartial Reporter – The Cooneyites

March 10, 1947 – The Palestine Post, page 2 **OBITUARY** of Wm. Irvine

March 16, 1947 – William Irvine Had to Go (Announcement of Death of William Irvine)

March 20, 1947 – Notice of **Probate** of Last Will of Wm. Irvine.

May 25, 1947 – A Man They Were Proud to Know

September 7, 1947 – "Just Christians – They Don't Bother About Denominations"

Milbrook Convention, 1931

Ontario, Canada

Arriving by train and motor from U.S.A., Quebec, and from many parts of Ontario, approximately four hundred delegates were in attendance at the three day annual convention of a religious body. The members of which claim they have 'no name', though the simple word 'disciple' is apparently the designation most favor.

The gathering being held for the third successive season at the Harry Riley's farm over the weekend, opening Friday at 2:30 p.m.. and convening again the same evening. The genuine religious enthusiasm and interest of the devotees of this sect is proved by the fact that they sit patiently and apparently with a real fervor of enjoyment, through sessions lasting from two and a half hours to three hours daily on Saturday & Sunday, in addition to the two on the initial day of Convention.

A big tent with separate entrances for the men and women, who sit in distinctly separate sections during the meetings, as there is no mingling of the sexes throughout. The Convention is amply supplied with seating accommodation for the delegates and for any visitors who may come. Many carloads motoring from the village and surrounding country side, and all being heartily welcomed to the meetings.

Two other large tents on the grounds serve as dining halls, one for men and others for women, while near by sheds are equipped as kitchens with workers in either cases of the same sex, as the occupants of the respective tents.

Sleeping accommodation for the women delegates is arranged for in the farm house of Mrs. Riley and J. Inns the latter a short distance across the fields, and for the men the barns and other out buildings were fitted in a manner that they could be used comfortably as sleeping apartments during the two or three nights while Convention lasted.

A community of goods is one of the endorsed in actual practice by the disciples though no definite information regarding defraying the necessary and somewhat heavy expenses of the Convention would be divulged.

However the fact was quite evident that those who had shared equally and gladly with those who had not. No offering is taken at any of the meetings.

Such personal adornments as jewelry, silk hose, sleeveless dresses, or bobbed hair were conspicuous by their absence. But into the meetings the delegates came supplied with Bibles, hymnals, and in many cases with note books and pencils in order to carry home choice selections from the addresses for quiet study and meditation in the weeks ahead.

This religious body claims it has no bishop, or other elected or appointed head, different leaders taking charge of the informal sessions of the Convention. The one on Sunday afternoon being Arnold Schaffer, a worker in Germany, now home on furlough. Another worker from a distant field was Jack Jackson from South America. Christian names were used as the delegates speak of one another, no prefixes of any kind being heard among the adherents.

"Hymns Old and New" is the book used for singing, printed in Scotland, there is no instruments, but congregational singing is hearty and melodious, the majority of the worshippers seeming to know the words of the hymns announced by heart.

After an opening hymn or two, for which the audience remain seated, testimonials are asked for, and so ready is the response that usually two or three are on their feet at once waiting, their personal experience of salvation through Christ. The request for prayers is met in the same manner, one after the other leading without a moment being lost through waiting or hesitation.

At the Sunday p.m. service after prayers and testimonies which lasted more than an hour, two of the women delegates took the platform and spoke earnestly with a hymn between. They were followed by two young men who also had a personal message based on Scripture passages.

The leader Mr. Schaffer continued the exhortation and like others urging faithful witnessing in speech and conduct. "All that the Lord hath said unto us, will we do" was stressed as the ideal for daily living.

Several car loads of the delegates motored to Rice Lake early on Sunday morning for a baptismal service. Those wishing this solemn rite signifying their desire by standing when the request was made at the Saturday eve. meeting.

The 1932 Convention will in all likelihood be held again on the Riley farm, the practice being for a number of workers to arrive three or four weeks ahead of time to put up tents and have every thing in readiness before the opening day when the delegates begin to come in large numbers, and many from distant points.

There is no formal closing such as a benediction, at the closing saying seven o'clock the next meeting at the conclusion of the p.m. gathering, and the delegates rise and go quietly out. Large gasoline lanterns light the tent for the evening meeting.

My Grandmother ended this in the middle of the page, if there was more she didn't copy it.. This is very hard to read, as it is on onion skin paper, and falling to pieces. I am trying to find the newspaper this might have been published in.

By the way, Milbrook is about a 20 minute drive from my home now, and I was baptised there in the early 1940's. One of the Riley girls, Lorna, went into the work. She would be a little older than I am.

Thought you might be interested in this, I think this must have been written up in a newspaper, or maybe was suppose to be. However I found it with some poems etc. all in my grandmother's hand writing.

July 9, 1931
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
 Established 1808
Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

WITH THE 'SAINTS'
FERMANAGH CONVENTION SCENES
RELIGIOUS FERVOUR
GEORGE WALKER BACK

By W.E.T.

I spent last Sunday with the Saints, or 'Christians' as they call themselves. Other people call them 'Pilgrims' or 'Dippers.' For the past week the annual convention of those of the Fermanagh confraternity was being held at Greenhill, near Brookeborough, where Mr. Albert Pogue placed his house, out-offices and lands at the disposal of those attending.

Sunday was naturally the day of the largest attendance. From all parts of the county, men and women fore-gathered for the three services or 'meetings,' and special 'buses' were chartered to carry those who could not get by motor car.

I DO PENANCE

Seated in the large marquee tent, I was jammed between a mass of humanity. Fully 600 were there, seated on wooden forms with backs, listening for hour upon hour to addresses and prayers, and the singing of gospel hymns. The tent was filled 15 minutes before the hour to commence each meeting. So crowded were the afternoon and night meetings that wooden forms were placed in the

aisles. These had no backs, were six inches in width, and by the nature of the ground the angle at which the edge of the seat pressed upon the tender part of one's anatomy, more accustomed to a soft seat, was most uncomfortable. How some of the people endured this for two hours, sitting all the time, I knew not. I was one of those unfortunates.

CLERGY AND CHURCHES TABOO

How earnest everyone appeared to be! What religious enthusiasm! And yet what a difference to the conventions and meetings of 25 years ago. The clergy were not mentioned once. Not one reference was made to the Churches. No personal abuse. No hell's fire and damnation. No blood and thunder. Not one word was said to hurt the feelings of the most susceptible. Eddie Cooney at one time a leader in the movement, now an outsider. Dethroned! Eddie, at present in Fermanagh, was not there! He ploughs his lonely furrow in the same old way—denunciation of all and sundry, abusing the Churches and the clergy, and counting only himself and those that agree with him to be on the right straight path for heaven.

A FERMANAGH PREACHER

At the morning meeting, which continued for almost three hours, the principal speaker was **George Walker, a native of the Coa District of Fermanagh**. 'George,' as he is called by everyone—not even the leaders get the courtesy title 'Mister'—is a polished speaker, of refined appearance. As a young man, when in the late Mr. W. R. Cooney's establishment in Enniskillen, he was a good looking youth and he has preserved his good looks. His address was learned, interesting, and full of force. He was in the place once occupied by **Wm. Irvine, the pioneer of this great movement, a man of magnetic power, rugged, a strong personality, a forceful speaker**, and at one time worshipped as a leader of men and women. George Walker spends most of his time in America, but has not got the American twang. He will shortly visit the Continent. He has a charming manner. What is more, he is an anti-Prohibitionist.

'SAINTS' AND 'WORKERS'

In the afternoon George Walker again occupied a seat on the platform with **Jack Forbes**, of Dublin, and Jim Dunlop, from the 'Ould County Down.' We had singing, then a lot of praying by various persons, as the spirit moved them. Testimonies followed by seven men and two women—some delivering almost a short sermon. A solo was sung by 'a sister'—about eight verses of a hymn. Jack Forbes spoke, and recalled the convention of 24 years ago [1907] at Mullaghmeen, Tom Betty and the baptisms in Lough Erne. He spoke also of those present as 'saints' and 'workers,' and delivered a fine address upon a passage in Genesis 24.

A WOMAN GETS IT OVER

The one great difficulty was to hear all the speakers. Some, when leading in prayer, spoke in such a confidential tone, that their words could only be heard by those in the immediate vicinity. It was a relief to hear **Jennie Clarke**, of Newtownards. Her voice rang throughout the large tent with seeming ease. Talking or singing in a tent is a great strain. Canvas deadens the resonance of the voice.

The evening service was like the others, only the speakers talked about themselves and their families, their religious experiences, and how they succeeded in getting 'saved.' The prayers were not all begging—but prayers of thankfulness. The singing was hearty, and a good example to the churches. Everyone sang, whether he or she had a voice or not. Some near me were seldom within three tones of the note. Never mind. They put their heart into it, and that was the main thing. A Dutchman was one of the speakers. **Nat Dickson**, who once had a business in the house now occupied by Mr. Graves, in Forthill Street, Enniskillen, was the central figure on the platform.

STRENUOUS WORK

It was a hard day's work. One needs to be in training to endure it. Three hours in the morning! Two hours in the afternoon! At the evening meeting, after we had five or six addresses (I lost count of them), a New Zealander spoke for 45 minutes!! **Jim Dunlop** asked us to sing a hymn, and he took pity on our legs, and asked us to stand for the last two verses. What a respite! And I had taken care to get into 'the stalls' for this meeting.

Jim then referred to some of the coughing, which he said was catching, and was spreading through the assemblage. There was, he complained, a spirit of heaviness. If it continued he could not speak. He saw people half asleep—(we had just listened to a number of addresses, and one of 45 minutes from the New Zealander). If that went on, he said, he felt he could not do much good, although he sympathised very much with those who had been sitting all day in that heavy atmosphere. His hearers sat up at the rebuke, and Jim continued for 20 minutes telling us all about himself and his conversion.

Each meeting ended abruptly at the close of the main address with the words, 'Next meeting will be at—o'clock.' No prayer. No benediction. One of the brethren had prayed early in the day: 'Save us from all form and ceremony.'

HOW THEY WERE FED

The 600 who went to Greenhill on Sunday were fed! It worked like clock-work. Lyons of London could not have been more expeditious. A dinner of stewed meat and vegetables was served, and in the late afternoon, tea was also served in the large out-offices to all. It was wonderful to see the pyramids of butter and the hundreds of loaves of bread and pots of jam. For those that were staying at Greenhill, a large tent housed the men and in the out-offices the women slept.

'JUST TOO BAD'

Two points struck me. **The men and the women sat apart. Even the bridegroom was torn from his bride.** As the Americans say 'Wasn't that just too bad?' And the dress of the saints—black is popular with the women, and the men wear black ties. Rather mournful. Why should not religion be bright and cheerful in all respects? Black has a depressing effect on the eye and therefore reacts on the brain.

It was a great day despite the rain. Seven hours of singing, praying, and speaking. It required enthusiasm to stand it, and these saints went home telling each other 'I'll see you at the meeting in the morning.' Another day's hard 'labour in the vineyard.'

July 11, 1940
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
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THE 'SAINTS' UNITE
CONVENTION NEAR ENNISKILLEN

At any time, and in any place where a large number of people are quiet, are concentrated on one objective, it is impressive. In this way the assembly of about 300 people in the fine large tent at Gortaloughan, three miles from Enniskillen, makes an impression. The occasion was the annual convention of a sect which calls itself 'The Saints,' which took place from Friday till Sunday last.

About a tent there is sub-consciously a mental link with gaiety of some sort—a circus, a booth at a fair, a wedding reception, a garden fete, so that at first the quietude of this tentful of people struck a note of surprise. For they were amazingly still, **the sexes in their own sections.** Possibly grass does deaden any shuffling of feet, possibly the benches were more comfortable than ordinary church pews, but there were no irritating movements of a bored people.

On a raised dais were three men, not remarkable in any outward way, though to be in this more exalted position they must have been leaders. Hymns were sung at intervals, these intervals being spontaneously decided by one of the leaders as various speakers in the congregation sat down. Such were not addresses or speeches, but testimonies, mostly quite inaudible to a large section of those present. All those who gave their testimony were wrestling with poor miserable words, trying to make them fit and express the great joy they felt. 'It is nice that God can get so many together like this.' This is almost childish in words, and in no way adequate to the very real sincere emotion that struggled for expression.

For such a large crowd unaccompanied by any instrument and not conducted in any way, the singing was good. It was on the slow side and each note was carried on to next, so that no one had to make any decisive musical interval; this may have kept the whole in tune and up to the starting pitch. For people who are accustomed to sing so much, it was odd that no musical ability in harmonising was heard.

From anything that the writer heard it would be very difficult to know anything of the belief of this large sect. The words 'God,' 'Lord,' 'Christ,' and 'Jesus,' were used very loosely, yet most of the men and women were quite expert in their Bible knowledge. One speaker was almost bumptious in his lumps of facts, so-and-so was to be found 14 times, and another instance i.e., sheep were referred to 500 times, and this speaker slung about chapters and verses with such arithmetical fluency that it entirely took from whatever point he was trying to stress.

Scientists say that there is no such thing as time in reality, only it suits us to mark out days, years, etc.—within this meeting there was no time, for speakers took what they wanted without any thought for others, or so it seemed. One wondered if any of those farmers would allow Sir Basil, or the tillage or horticulture man, go on talking for endless periods without calling a halt. It must be conceded that nothing could exceed the attention and concentration of the congregation, as if they were hypnotised by words.

All down the ages 'speaking under inspiration' has been a recognised form of spiritual ecstasy, but those who were the focus of attention had none of the signs of this. As plain men they gave of what they had, in a plain way to plain people, no forced voice, no shouts, no bullying. The soft sharp ring of rain on the tent was heard at times, quite small children and even infants made a certain amount of trifling noise, but none of these outward things registered on the listeners.

Much was said about sheep, and in a farming community it did arise in the mind the question as to what a sheep farmer would have said to this monologue. Neither farmers nor butchers find anything very uplifting or aesthetic about animals. But words and more words have a hypnotic power.

Added to this the air was devitalised rather, needing fresh oxygen, and a head or two did nod. An exceedingly interesting study this tentful of people, some turning leaves of the Bible, some taking notes in pencil, all enthused with religious fervour, but its trend not very clear to the outside observer.

1934

Cooneyites: A Warning**Cooneyiten: Eine Warnung**

By Gideon J Gerber

Publisher: G. J. Gerber, Dalton, Ohio

For approximately 6 weeks in June/July 1924 two preachers held meetings in Orrville Ohio. The author of this publication was invited to attend. He remarks that the doctrinal errors were carefully concealed to begin with and goes on to confirm that he believes this to be a sect. Many Christians who were present along with the author were certain that these preachers were acting in good faith and passing on what had been revealed to them.

The main preacher was **Andrew Ramsey**.* The author posed several questions to him, believing that this was completely in line with Scripture: *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure* (1 Timothy 5:22).

Some of the characteristics of the Cooneyites: They refer to themselves as **the Jesus Way**.

1. The Two by Two "method." The author cites various examples of where the Scriptures indicate that it is sometimes acceptable to go singly, but in any case, the Scriptures cited by the sect have taken the "commission" to go Two by Two out of context; it is not for all time. In any case, no one should pass judgment on such a matter. Guidance should be sought from the Holy Spirit. As this sect has no literature and denies being a sect, most people have no idea what their true doctrine is. The preachers even go so far as to say that **the Bible is a dead book that can only be brought to life when spoken off/interpreted by those in the Two by Two ministry**.

2. William Irvine, the founder – explained just as we understand it.

3. False interpretation of Scripture. Matthew 10:1-15; Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-12 are cited as the reason for the Two by Two ministry. On the basis of these scriptures, the Two by Twos judge all other preachers, i.e. condemn them as false, failing to recognize that the commission was not for all time.

4. Jesus Way, This Way. These are some of the ways the preachers refer to themselves. No scrip, purse, etc. Most importantly, however, they omit the costly blood of Jesus and the way of the cross! Following a method will not bring salvation.

5. Can true servants of God ever be so perfect that they have the right to boast of themselves? No. True servants of God do not boast of themselves. They proclaim what Jesus has done for mankind in taking our place and paying with His own blood on the cross for our sins and give Him the thanks and glory. The Two by Two preachers boast of their homelessness, poverty etc. Where is the godly humility in that?

6. Does the Word of God permit a preacher to own his own home? Mr. Ramsey says that no true preacher can. He claims that Philip, who had a house, was not a preacher (!) but in Acts 21:8 Philip is described as an evangelist, i.e. a preacher who opened his mouth and spoke the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. Ramsey in desperation then cites the rich young ruler, Luke 18:22, in an attempt to prove his point.

7. Was Christ born with a sinful nature? The sect says that Christ was not a spotless lamb but had himself to fight in order to conquer his sinful nature. The Two by Two preachers in Ohio spoke not of the infallibility of Christ, the spotless lamb, but of themselves as the only true servants going Two by Two and being the only true church.

***1922-1930 Andrew Ramsey was overseer of Ohio & West Virginia**

Andrew Ramsey's name was on the Workers lists for:

1907 Pittsburg & Chicago US. Conventions (Pennsylvania & Illinois)

1912 Baltimore US Convention in Pennsylvania

1926-27 Ohio & West Virginia

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June 27, 1940

THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

Established 1808

Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

WHERE OUR PEOPLE WORSHIP

IN AN UPPER ROOM

EDDIE COONEY

Certain larger towns and cities frequently have a pamphlet published entitled 'What's on,' giving the list of entertainments for the current week. Were this idea used in Enniskillen one would find mention of the programmes of the two Cinemas—and 'Eddie Cooney'! Strangers might at first imagine this was some new entertainer or comedian, and possibly they would not be very far wrong,

for he does entertain and he can be quite a comedian. He has practically no accent, and he never spoke anything but excellent English.

AN ITINERANT PREACHER

This man, the son of the late Mr. Rutherford Cooney, merchant of Enniskillen, left home 40 years ago to become an itinerant preacher. Now he is 74 years of age, of attractive slim build, pleasant visage, noticeably youthful for his age, despite the white beard, and his voice is a great asset. On these evenings he addresses whatever people assemble in a fair sized room that is situated above Miss Haire's shop in Enniskillen. No publicity, no printed notice gives any clue to these meetings, but the door on the street level is open. And it is even doubtful if the meeting is truthfully within the scope of these articles entitled 'Where Our People Worship,' because although prayer was given at the conclusion, and the subject matter is entirely biblical, yet it is only one man haranguing others. No reading of portions of Scriptures, no hymns gave the audience any chance to take part; it was simplicity itself—Eddie Cooney preached.

The room held ten benches and 23 people were present. Three windows gave on the street and this upper room had a floral wallpaper. No texts or sacred pictures lent any aid. But the speaker needs no aid. His egotism is stupendous, the same mentality as some of the dictators in prominent places today. Eddie Cooney is right, Eddie Cooney knows. Just as Hitler impresses his crowds by heavy impassioned speech, so does Eddie Cooney 'put himself over.'

AN ASSET

Voices today are a source of interest. Through the B.B.C. and the screen we are susceptible to their power. We are cognisant of their focus, their charm, their tenderness. This preacher has a fine physical vehicle for his words, and he can speak with softness and good tone. He can laugh as an actor, can at will imitate some foible of human nature as when he acted rich people being shown into church by the verger, or the fake conversation of the girl who feared if she 'followed Jesus' she would not get a sweetheart. Voice and facial expression respond very freely to the mental idea. With this variety he could never be dull, but this cleverness of 'putting things over' was spoilt by excessive shouting. The room was a normal sized 'best room' in the town, and the shouts were almost deafening—certainly capable of giving a headache. The writer told the speaker that if he were going to shout like that with the whole volume of his fine voice in an indoor meeting, he ought to supply the congregation with aspirin! Surprisingly, showing a sweet disposition, he said he was sorry.

THE ADDRESS

There was no text, but sleeping in a barn, preaching on the Custom House steps in Belfast, talking in a Theological College in Melbourne, smelling an uncertain egg in London—all this formed part of the discourse. Sheep-shearing in Australia and baptizing in Belfast Lough, also had their part in this long harangue. Several statements were delivered with exceptional force 'God has planned the husband you are to get'; 'One must be on fire like Isaiah to save souls, to touch hearts'; 'If your religion is one by which you get (gain) you will go to hell'; 'the majority is always wrong'; 'the people in Enniskillen were doped and sleeping'; 'Joy is only real that is based on certainty.'

ORIGINAL ANALOGIES

Several of the analogies used by Eddie Cooney were most original, for instance Jesus is portrayed as a lamb, a lamb has wool, and this 'wool' will make people eternally comfortable, both here and hereafter. Similarly a ring is a symbol of eternity. When the Prodigal Son wore the ring his eternal life showed in his life and acts. There was a great repetition of the phrases 'become a disciple,' 'follow Jesus,' 'surrender to Christ,' but at no time did the speaker indicate in plain terms what he really meant. Although it was quite obvious that Eddie Cooney despised clergymen who went to College, yet he had to show his own learning by showing up the real meaning of 'believe' which connotes 'to live by,' also he felt called on to put right the mis-translation from the Greek of 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth good will to men,' for according to his private college education this should read 'Peace on earth to those who are pleased to do well.'

FIGHTING SPIRIT

As the address lasted about an hour and a half, without any break, much ground was covered. The war, with invasion imminent in this country, was spoken of, (again the egotism). 'Probably Hitler will kill me first.' No one was to fear those that killed the body. The fight going on today between God and the Devil was bigger than our fight with Germany, and it is quite evident that Eddie Cooney enjoys this fight. Life would be very dull for him without this contest! The word 'Peace' was never uttered!

In conclusion this long monologue was brought to a most telling and impressive close. The dramatic instinct is strong. Speaking of the act of Stephen the first martyr, Eddie Cooney hoped that if Hitler came and he was killed, he would use the same concluding words as the martyr, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'

Impartial Reporter
July, 1933
'The Saints'
Brookeborough Convention

800 at a service
Tom Betty on Platform

I had often heard of a Pilgrims' Convention; now I can say I have seen one. Call these religious enthusiasts what you will, it was a wonderful sight.

On Sunday afternoon last I visited the closing meetings of a four days' Convention held at Greenhill, near Brookeborough.

A huge marquee, situated in very picturesque surroundings, was the centre towards which hundreds of enthusiastic worshippers or 'Saints' as they call themselves were drawn. As I drew near the sound of singing reached my ears, and fearful lest I should be late I hurriedly entered the tent where I was fortunate in obtaining a seat. It was only a wooden form and I was tightly wedged between two 'saints' on it for two hours. But I forgot my discomfort in the interesting proceedings which followed.

Three speakers ('workers') occupied a platform which overlooked a concourse of at least 800 people. Following the hymns, which were sung heartily and with deliberation, single voices raised in prayer were heard intermittently from different parts of the assembly; not long, sad and tedious with repetition, but short and earnest.

A period followed during which testimonies were heard – first from a female voice, thin and wavering; then a broad Scotch accent told of the almighty salvation; a young University student spoke vehemently, and young and old gave their personal experiences.

The central figure on the platform, benign and whiteheaded, was none other than Mr. Tom Betty (a brother of the late Dr. Moore Betty, of Enniskillen). His face and voice both vouchsafed sincerity as he urged the numerous testators to be as brief as possible.

'You will do it for me,' he said, 'for if I didn't get a show in Fermanagh where else would I get it?' He spoke of the bond of brotherhood which linked them with Canada whence he had recently returned: of the many experiences they had had across the ocean, and the success with which they had been attended. He presented his brother worker, 'John,' a Dutchman, who spoke in perfect English, for a considerable time. His speech was fluent and his personality was one which held one's attention.

The central figure again stood, this time prefixing his address with a solo rendered in a clear voice, in the chorus of which he was enthusiastically assisted by the huge congregation. The meeting closed shortly afterwards, having lasted fully two hours.

And so to Tea.

From the tent then issued the band of Pilgrims, this time intent on more material matters, and mingling with the throng I found myself led to a huge barn wherein was laid tables laden with food. The stupendous task of feeding so huge a gathering was accomplished in a marvellous manner, and everybody had his hunger appeased in the quietest and most efficient manner imaginable.

The Closing Meeting.

The evening meeting, at which there was a change of workers on the platform, commenced at seven o'clock. The tent was quickly filled, but this time I was quick and secured a more comfortable seat. The women, of whom a great number were bareheaded and wore the collar and tie typical of the 'sect,' entered by a separate entrance.

Hymns were again sung. They were announced in an American accent by Mr. Armstrong, a 'worker' who left this country 28 years ago, and a brother of Mr. W. Armstrong, draper, Enniskillen. Beside him sat a Mr. Kitson, formerly of Derrygonnelly, who had lived in America for 21 years and who later spoke with great effect.

Miss Sarah Rogers, also from the Derrygonnelly district, sang a solo in a strong contralto voice, and after several of the workers, who had not yet spoken, had addressed the assembly. Mr. Kitson dwelt on the vision of Ezekiel and the promises made therein.

The rain pounded on the canvas and at times nearly drowned the voice of the speaker. He spoke earnestly and with great appeal, and the time sped quickly as his address proceeded.

Mr. Armstrong, tall and sinewy looking, brought the meeting to a close with a very interesting address. I experienced a feeling of regret that the end was so near when the closing hymn was being sung.

The singing throughout was unaccompanied, the service was devoid of ritual, but there was an atmosphere of sanctity in that crowded tent, and I left my first Convention feeling the richer for my experience.

By J. B. (a visitor)

Arizona Republic (Phoenix)
May 10, 1941, page 31
Itinerant Preacher Leaves Monument in Birmingham
(Special Republic Dispatch)

BIRMINGHAM. May 9—Some where in the world today is an old Irishman with a Christ-like beard of whom many an ex-drunk here would like to have news.

So would some business leaders and churchmen. For Edward Cooney left a memory monument in Birmingham during the year he was remolding the lives of down -and-out derelicts. Maybe he is in his native Ire land. It might be Spain, Tasmania , New Zealand or South Africa, for those have been the haunts of the itinerant preacher for nearly two score years.

He blew into town in 1938 and asked Dr. Henry M. Edmonds, Presbyterian pastor, who is chair man of the city parole board to permit a certain habitual drunkard to be placed in his charge for two weeks. "What do you propose to do?" Dr. Edmonds asked Cooney.

"I'll take this man out on a farm where the hubbub of the city is not," Cooney replied, "and where there is a soothing routine to life from dawn to dusk; where he can eat and sleep and dig a ditch and talk about himself and God. And also where I can keep him from getting a drink."

Cooney didn't have farm himself, but he knew a friend he once had helped who had a farm. So Dr. Edmonds paroled the drunk to Cooney.

"Two weeks later our paroled drunk came back a greatly changed man," Dr. Edmonds recalls. "That was the way he Irishman worked. Short and wiry, bearded like the traditional Christ, he frequented park benches to strike up acquaintance with the bums.

"He spoke to those men of religion. He put the fear of God into them, and once he started on a man he stayed with him day and night." The bums flocked to Cooney. He restored their self-respect. He got them jobs. He arranged a place for them to eat and sleep by selling businessmen on the idea. He built a thriving rehabilitation center.

But soon the old Irishman became restless under the routine of keeping records and making business arrangements. He began talking about far-off places, and in 1939 he left. He wrote one letter from Toronto, Canada, saying something about leaving aboard a ship.

But the rehabilitation center he started is expanding under the direction of a preacher who took up Cooney's work. Soon there will be a farm where alcoholics can get away from the city's strain.

"I don't know whether Cooney would come back," Dr. Edmonds says, "but I know he would like to see that farm."

Impartial Reporter
May 15, 1941
The Cooneyites

Dear Sir,

There is a cult of people out here who are commonly known as the 'Two by Twos' or the Cooneyites. I understand that this sect originated in Ireland under two men, Irvine and Cooney.

In a tract which I read on them, I was told that one of their first missions was held in the town of Nenagh in Tipperary. So last June I wrote a letter addressing it to the pastor of any Protestant church in that town. Just recently I had a reply from him, part of which reads as follows: 'These people are also known (most frequently in these parts) as 'Dippers,' because they practice baptism by total immersion. His particular teaching first appeared in and about the town of Enniskillen, in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, some 40 years ago. Irvine and Cooney were early propagators of it, and some articles appeared in the Enniskillen local paper over the name of the editor, Mr. Trimble, repudiating this teaching.'

Out here these people deny connections with either Irvine or Cooney and claim that they always existed right from the Apostolic times. I am, therefore, endeavouring to get testimonials, in writing, from people in Ireland who have actually heard these two men speak, or who have other unanswerable evidence that these two men, Irvine and Cooney, were indeed the originators of this little false cult who claim that they are the only true Christians, and that the only escape from hell is through being converted through hearing one of their preachers by word of his mouth.

Yours truly

Walter W. McNaughton
Peace River Bible Institute
Sexsmith, Alberta, March 25, 1941

Impartial Reporter Editor's Note: ***There have been religious fanatics at all times, and Messrs. Irvine and Cooney were two of them—meaning well, but troubling themselves more about what the Apostle Paul meant instead of devoting attention to the Saviour's 'royal law.' Mr. Edward Cooney was the real leader. He is still alive, and as we have written about his work already it is not necessary to repeat it. He was and is a sincere, conscientious, fanatic, who has lived the life he preached. He followed what he believed to be the mind of the Apostle Paul instead of the greater teaching of the Lord Jesus, who was not narrow-minded but went to the Temple and worshipped with others in the synagogue. The pamphlet written by Mr. Trimble many years ago on their palpable errors and want of Christian charity is now out of print but it had a very large circulation. Ed. I.R.

TTT NOTE: The author of the above letter, Mr. Walter McNaughton, founded the Peace River Bible Inst in 1933 in Sexsmith, Alberta, Canada. The school is still in existence. Read more about the **Peace River Bible Institute** on their website:

<http://www.prbi.edu/OurHistory>

The Palestine Post, page 2
Monday, March 10, 1947
OBITUARY

Mr. William Irvine

A correspondent writes:

A well known figure in Jerusalem passed away with the death yesterday after a long illness, of Mr. William Irvine of Kilsyth, Scotland. Mr. Irvine died in his 84th year after having resided in Palestine since 1919, where he came in pursuit of his beliefs. He will be

remembered by many who knew him as the kindly old white-haired gentleman seen on his daily walk between the Post Office and the Old City walls. He died with the full faith of better things to come. The interment will take place at the Zion Cemetery at 2:30 p.m. today.

March 16, 1947
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
Established 1808
Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

WILLIAM IRVINE DEAD
THE APOSTLE OF THE 'PILGRIMS'

WILLIAM IRVINE is dead. His name means nothing to the younger generation, but those who can recall the great 'Pilgrims' or 'Dipper' conventions in Co. Fermanagh of about 30 years ago, will recall the tall, hatless figure of Wm. Irvine, who was at that time the 'teacher' and leader of the 'Pilgrims.' His rugged face, his dynamic personality, his strong and impressive address, swayed the thousands who gathered from all parts to hear him. The women folk adored him as a saint, and listened to him with rapt attention as if they were hypnotised. He was a lovable man and a real Christian.

A recent issue of the 'Sunday Post' contained an appreciation of **Wm. Irvine** which will be read with interest by those who remember him. It was as follows:

'I was a soldier in Jerusalem. Maybe that makes you think of armed combats, of Arabs and Jews, and strange scenes and customs. But my most vivid memory is of a tall Scotsman with a great head of white hair. Every morning I saw him striding out of the Holy City towards the Garden of Gethsemane. He wore a deerstalker's cap, heavy jacket, shorts, and suede sandals. He greeted nearly everyone he met with a smile and a word of encouragement. And they felt the better for meeting him. You knew at once there was something remarkable about the man.

'He was William Irvine. Sixty years ago, at 35 years of age, he was general manager of William Baird and Company's Boswell Collieries in Lanarkshire. He was only in his twenties then, and on the way to the top of his profession—a directorship. But he felt a higher call. He gave up his job. He founded in his native Kilsyth a movement, which is still active. He did not believe in churches of stone. A tent, or the open air, was all he wanted. He told his message with simple earnestness. Having founded his church in his native village, he felt he had to go with his message to foreign lands. He set out as a free-lance missionary. He went to Ireland, United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, the Colonies. He became known all over the world as 'The Man with the Mission.'

'He lived frugally. His needs were slight. Money had no value for him. 'I have nothing,' he said. 'Yet—I lack nothing.' 'He quoted from Luke, 'Go your way. Behold, I send you forth, as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse nor scrip nor shoes, and salute no man by the way.' Between the two great wars he settled in Palestine. He received letters from all corners of the earth where his message was still remembered. During the second World War he became a favourite of the British troops. They called him Jock.

'Then last Sunday I learned that in Jerusalem William Irvine had come to the end of his pilgrimage. He died, a single man, aged 84.'

March 16, 1947
The Sunday Post
Lanarkshire, Scotland

WILLIAM IRVINE HAD TO GO

I was a soldier in Jerusalem. Maybe that makes you think of armed combats, of Arabs and Jews, and strange scenes and customs. But my most vivid memory is of a tall Scotsman with a great head of white hair. Every morning I saw him striding out of the Holy City towards the Garden of Gethsemane. He wore a deerstalker's cap, heavy jacket, shorts, and suede sandals. He greeted nearly everyone he met with a smile and a word of encouragement. And they felt the better for meeting him. You knew at once there was something remarkable about the man.

He was William Irvine. Sixty years ago, at 35 years of age, he was general manager of William Baird and Company's Boswell Collieries in Lanarkshire. He was only in his twenties then, and on the way to the top of his profession—a directorship. But he felt a higher call. He gave up his job. He founded in his native Kilsyth a Pentecostal movement, which is still active. He did not believe in churches of stone. A tent, or the open air, was all he wanted. He told his message with simple earnestness. Having founded his church in his native village, he felt he had to go with his message to foreign lands. He set out as a free-lance missionary. He went to

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Then last Sunday I learned that in Jerusalem William Irvine had come to the end of his pilgrimage. He died, a single man, aged 84.'

NOTE: Reportedly, the above was written by a young soldier named Irvine Noble, who was still living in 1997.

**The Palestine Post, page 2
March 20, 1947**

In the District Court of Jerusalem, Probate application No. 51____. Citation for Probate in the matter of **The Will of William Irvine**, deceased. Petitioner Theodore Krikorian, represented by B. Geichman, Advocate, Zion Bldg, Jaffa Road, Jerusalem. In virtue of an order of the District Court of Jerusalem, bearing date of this day, I do hereby cite all and all manner of persons to appear in the said court in 10 days from date hereof and show cause, if any, they have why the last will of William Irvine, deceased, should not be proved, approved and registered to Theodore Krikorian, the executor named therein, as in default thereof the Court will proceed to grant the same accordingly. Dated this 15th day of March, 1947. (Sgnd) F. Saadeb, A/Registrar.

***The Sunday (Palestine) Post, (now The Jerusalem Post)*
May 25, 1947, page 6**

A Man They Were Proud to Know

I read in "The Sunday Post" about the death in Jerusalem of my old friend, William Irvine, the missionary.

I met the grand old man in Palestine in 1927, and became one of his most intimate friends. He bestowed gifts freely on the poor and humble. During one of the worst winters within living memory, he bought as many warm coats as he could afford, and distributed them to Arab children in Jerusalem.

Your article says William Irvine founded a Pentecostal movement in Kilsyth. If the mission still exists, I would suggest members erect to his memory a simple plaque in St. Andrew Chapel of the Scottish Hospice in Jerusalem. This would be in keeping with the founder's character, of which simplicity was the key note.

Many, like myself, have experienced the great influence of William Irvine's teaching. They must feel a keen sense of personal loss in the death of this fine old Scot who laboured so long and courageously in the Christian field.

(Signed) James S. Ritchie, Chief Inspector of Police, H. Q. Nairobi, Kenya

**Dayton Daily News
Dayton, Ohio
By Margaret Taylor, Staff Writer
September 7, 1947, p3**

"JUST CHRISTIANS" THEY DON'T BOTHER ABOUT DENOMINATIONS

Well-scrubbed children squirmed on the hard benches. A woman on the back row, a paper-backed hymn book in hand, swatted at a fly which buzzed determinedly around her black-stockinged legs. A woman on the front row jotted notes in a small notebook.

One man dozed while his wife scanned the open Bible on her lap. A mother and father took turns walking the baby outside the backflap of the tent. The others were completely absorbed in what the speaker was saying. A blind woman echoed his every word with her lip movements.

The church-goers were conventional enough. The sermon was like other sermons, but the church organization and the surroundings in which its members were meeting were unconventional.

The sermon was being delivered by one of the members in a large tent pitched on the farm of Lester Houston of near Morrow, Ohio. Around the large tent were smaller ones. One a dining tent. Somewhere, sleeping quarters for the men. The farmhouse and the homes of friends in Morrow had been converted into living quarters for the women.

The four-day convention has brought members from all parts of the Southern Ohio to Morrow. They are the members of a religious organization which has no name and no church building, members of a group which they believe has always been in existence.

They call themselves "Christians," speak of their fellow-members as "friends," and of the church as a non-denominational organization. They seek to follow the example of Christ, who had no denominational name for His followers and no church building.

They meet in friend's homes throughout the country. They are a peace-loving, family-loving group with ideas of brotherly love, which they try to put into practice, as well as preaching.

They have nothing to hide, but they seek no publicity. The existence of the group is unknown to most Daytonians, yet some of its most zealous members belong to the Dayton organization. They meet quietly, and any one is welcome to attend. The final meetings of the convention at Morrow are being held today.

The man on the platform in front of the tent began his concluding remarks. The people on the hard benches stirred. It took him more than the allotted time to finish the sermon. When he was through, some of the friends hurried from the tent. Others lingered. Then a bell sounded above the hum of conversation. Even the lingering friends hastened up the hill to answer the call to Dinner.