

Newspaper Articles – 1945 – 1984

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1945 to 1984

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September 7, 1947 p3 – Dayton Daily News (Ohio) -"Just Christians" They Don't Bother with Denominations

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October 1961 – Phoenix Star – Informal Convention Works (Randolph, AZ)

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March 5, 1945
LIFE Magazine
Santo Tomás Is Delivered
 by Carl Mydans, pp. 25–31

TTT Admin's Background: On July 8, 1941, four Brother Workers laboring in the Philippines, along with many other American missionaries, priests and nuns were imprisoned in the Los Baños Internment Camp about 40 miles south of Manila. Three were from the California staff: **Willie Jamieson, Leo Stancliff and Herman Beaber**. Also taken captive were **Cecil Barrett**, who had immigrated to New Zealand, and **Ernest Stanley** from England.

American soldiers freed 3,700 US WW2 prisoners in Manila, Philippines

Photos of (worker) Ernest Stanley, "a missionary who worked as an interpreter during the talks between Colonel Brady and the Japanese."

See Photos: /photogallery/index.php?/category/269

Caption below photo: "February was a month of new battles for U.S. forces. The biggest battle was being fought on Germany's Western Front, where the Allies began a new winter offensive last week. The sharpest was being 'carried to the Japanese on the tiny island of Iwo, only 675 miles from Tokyo). The war passed great emotional milestones in February too. Manila was taken and its starving U.S. prisoners were rescued. In Manila the emotion ran highest at the place where the greatest number of imprisoned Americans were kept. This was Santo Tomas.

When the Americans first reached Santo Tomás on the night of Feb. 3, it was quiet and dark in the camp. There were a few scattered shots from the Japanese until tanks broke through the wooden fence. A few minutes later one of the internees appeared and said, "I'll lead you in." Among the first men into the camp was LIFE Photographer Carl Mydans. When Mydans walked into the main building, where he and his wife had spent the beginning of their internment three years ago, he was greeted by a hysterical crowd. The 3,700 Americans who had spent three years in Santo Tomás were finally delivered.

The men who liberated Santo Tomás had sighted on their objective from 60 miles away. Six days before the main U.S. forces entered Manila, Brig. General William C. Chase of the 1st Cavalry Division picked a mechanized squadron of 700 men to crash through the university grounds. Charging down the roads and carabao paths, the squadron brushed through most Japanese positions on the way. When it encountered heavy Japanese fire the men dismounted and worked with tanks to push through. Wherever the column stopped, ecstatic Filipinos came out with flowers and eggs for the soldiers. In the evening of the third day, the Americans broke into Santo Tomás.

May 1, 1951
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
 Established 1808.
 Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

THE WHITEST MAN I HAVE MET
The Waldorf-Astoria, New York

Dear Sir;—

The "whitest man" I have ever met, during all my life, whether in the jungles of West Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand, or the glorious sunshine of the Brazilian Amazon region, or in the monumental Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, periodically I have refocused, the man who taught small and often mischievous boys at the Episcopal Church, Enniskillen, decades ago.

Although a careless, restless and not over attentive youngster, I often gazed on our teacher—a man of striking appearance, of the handsome and healthy type, who radiates warmth and vigour. He was neatly dressed—right down to the finger tips, as cleanliness is often said to be next to Godliness. The purity of the man was not in his well-groomed appearance, but in the divine spirit (grace) that dwelt within . . . it almost hypnotised me. In later years, I recognised that here is a human being, who lives near to his Creator. I have not met him since. His name is **Edward Cooney**. He is a Fermanagh gentleman.

James Jackson Moore, M.D.

(Dr. Moore's old home is at Curraghroe, Lisnaskea.—Ed. I.R.)

The Dispatch, Lexington, North Carolina
September 5, 1953

**700 Now Attending "Irish" Camp Meeting
(Cid, NC Convention)
Not typed**

**March 29, 1957
THE OAKLAND TRIBUNE
700 ATTEND RITES FOR JOHN CARROLL
By Bill Fiset**

John T. Carroll has been going around the country telling friends about God ever since 1904.

And in his travels he made a lot of friends, and convinced a lot of people about the value of the New Testament.

He had so many friends and followers, in fact, that when the funeral for the 78-year-old preacher was held in Oakland yesterday, it was held at the Oakland Auditorium Theater and 700 were on hand.

Mr. Carroll—his friends explain that he never did consider himself as "Reverend"—was a non-denominational preacher ever since coming to the United States in 1904 from his native Ireland. Most of the last 53 years he spent traveling up and down the West Coast, but has preached his version of the Gospel also in Australia and India.

He really didn't have his own home. He lived with followers.

"He never asked a collection in his life," someone said at the funeral.

"His people gave him free will offerings." **Mr. Carroll** felt that God could be worshiped in the home, and so encouraged gatherings of friends and neighbours wherever he went.

Mr. Carroll died in the home of a friend in Long Beach Tuesday. Yesterday afternoon, from throughout California, came 700 of his friends and followers. Many were aged. Many were couples with small children. It was like any other funeral except where it was held and how many came.

Therold Sylvester of Los Angeles, said of **Mr. Carroll** that "had he chosen to live selfishly, for himself, think of the thousands who would have been robbed. You have gathered here as a tribute to a great servant of God."

William Jamieson, whose mission in life is the same as was **Mr. Carroll's** said **Mr. Carroll** has enjoyed the privilege of spreading the eternal Gospel as Jesus did."

A choir of eight sang hymns and the casket lay open at the front of the theater stage.

When the funeral ended the people filed out quietly. They grouped around as the casket was brought out and placed in a hearse.

Surviving are three sisters, **Miss May Carroll and Miss Francis Carroll**, who are staying with friends here, and Mrs. Richard Perrott of Berkeley.

Burial will be held tomorrow in Milltown, Wash., after another service to be attended by a lot of friends of **Mr. Carroll** living in the Pacific Northwest.

**August 30, 1958
The Vandalia Newspaper
Fayette County, Illinois
By Don Pennington**

**Scenes at the Christian Convention Held near Brownstown, Illinois
Christian group has been meeting at Biggs farm for 21 years
All available space is used to house 800 at the convention**

Every August for the past 21 years a Christian group has encamped at the Biggs farm on Route 185, about six miles southeast of Vandalia. Few people of Fayette County, however, really know just what the group is, as it has never fan-fared its activities extensively.

Last Thursday, I spent a few hours with members of the four-day convention. I found them very hospitable, very efficient in operating the gathering, and very devoted to their religious beliefs. At least 500 persons were in attendance at the opening day's session Thursday and more than 800 were there for the final day, Sunday. This is one of the three conventions held annually in this state. Others are at Mt. Sterling and at Seneca. Most of the people who attend the Brownstown meeting are from this state, although several are from other places such as Missouri, Kansas and Indiana.

AT THE CARL BIGGS FARM,

Annually, convention host Carl Biggs, gives all available to the visitors. The lower floor of the large machine shed on his farm seats all the visitors for several sessions of the convention. The two upper floors of this building are used for housing the visitors. All other buildings on the large farmstead, including the large farmhouse, are used for sleeping quarters. Many private family tents are pitched on the grounds and on trucks near the area. Two other large tents are used as dining halls. Of course, some visitors obtain housing in neighboring towns.

All operations of the conference are handled very efficiently. Various people are scheduled to prepare the meals; others volunteer to take care of the hundreds of necessary details involved in operating the four-day sessions. In general, complete families attend.

While a guest of the noon-day meal, I had opportunity to find out more about the religious group while speaking with various laymen and ministers. One such minister is Willie Hendy. Mr. Hendy (the ministers prefer that the term "reverend" not be used with their names) is a native of Ireland, and has been within the fellowship of believers since he was 16, soon after his arrival in this country. He has been a minister for more than 20 years, part of that time spent in Europe.

NO PARTICULAR NAME.

I found from him that it is difficult to attach a definite name to this particular religious group because it is not denominational and does not have a name other than the church or fellowship established by Christ. Although the most reasonable and natural terms to use would be the Church of Christ or Christian Church, these believers hesitate using these terms.

I found in my conversation that this group of Christian members of the faith feel their fellowship is, in effect, the continuation of the body of believers founded by Christ and carried to the people by the Apostles. The church institution does not exist in a tangible form; it has no buildings, owns no property; it exists only in the fellowship of believers and is based strictly upon the New Testament teaching of Christ and His followers.

Regular Sunday morning and Wednesday evening worship services are held in the homes of members of the fellowship. The group follows a cell-division plan; when one group becomes too large to accommodate in one home, a small group breaks off to start another growing unit. Of course, the units within the same community keep in close contact with one another.

THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

This cell-unit plan has led to the clustering of the fellowship in some communities and a sparsity of fellowships in others. Although found in practically every county in Illinois, the largest groups of believers are in the Noble, Benton and Mattoon areas.

Although the groups' members may be found in all the United States and in many foreign countries, there is no single governing board of any type. The only person with administrative duties apart from the local group is an overseer in each state, usually an older minister who assigns the ministers to particular areas. An extensive foreign-country mission program is carried on. Three or four of these missionaries attended the convention here.

MINISTERS IN PAIRS

Mr. Hendy, in his mildly accented voice, said that the ministers follow the Biblical admonition to go out in pairs. The ministers, often an older man and a young man, are assigned a certain geographical area in which to work at a particular time. The pair spends part of its time in communities which already have established groups; the remainder in areas which do not have Christian fellowships of this type.

The two may rent a public building and announce that meetings are to be held. A regular schedule of meetings may be begun in one of the homes as a result of their work. These meetings are not revival services as found in many churches. In fact, the emphasis is placed on a long-range training period for the potential converts instead of immediate decisions.

Mr. Biggs, on whose land the meetings are held, told me the group has been meeting there since 1935 when the farm was owned by his father. It has met here, usually during the last two weeks of August, every year with the exception of one year during the war. The nearby group of believers meets in the Biggs home during the year for their worship services.

REVERENCE IN SERVICES.

In addition to talking with several of the ministers, I was able to visit a small portion of one of the services. I was especially impressed with the amount of restraint and reverence which could be felt. During the service, most members carefully read from their Bibles the references made by the ministers during the instructional sermons. The meetings are void of any excessive boisterousness. The members of the faith rely on just two books for all their spiritual guidance –their hymnal and the Bible.

June 23, 1960
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
Established 1808
Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

EDWARD COONEY
A GREAT FIGURE PASSES

One of Enniskillen's most remarkable men, Edward Cooney, who turned his back on wealth to become a wandering preacher and the founder of a new religious sect, the Cooneyites, has died in Australia at the age of 93.

The second son of Mr. William Rutherford Cooney, who owned an extensive drapery business in High Street, Enniskillen, and who resided at Lakeview, Edward Cooney was a commercial traveller for his father's business. His parents were members of the Church of Ireland and Edward was baptized and brought up in that faith, but becoming very serious minded early in life, and through diligent reading of the Scriptures, he arrived at variance with the views of the churches.

Left the Church

He then left the Church of Ireland and commenced to preach the doctrines which he believed were correct. He was persevering and combative, sometimes even violently outspoken in his attacks on the clergy and the established churches. He impressed those whom he addressed at meetings throughout Ireland, in England, the United States, and Australia with his earnestness.

SPURNED WEALTH

Edward Cooney endeavoured to follow exactly in the footsteps of Christ, and he appealed to his followers to do likewise. He spurned wealth and property and although he was left a large fortune on condition that he returned to the Church of Ireland, he resisted this temptation and never accepted a penny from the extensive Cooney Estate, which was placed in trust.

Mr. Cooney led an austere life, dividing what meagre possessions he had with those who might happen to be in poorer circumstances than himself.

Having decided to leave the Church of Ireland, he proceeded to join with and lead an ever-increasing group of followers who were given various names, 'The Tramp Preachers,' 'The Pilgrims,' 'The Go-preachers,' and 'The Dippers,' the latter name being derived from the fact that those who were received into the faith were baptized by total immersion.

THE CONVENTIONS

Great meetings, or conventions as they were called, were held between 1908-'10 at Crocknacrieve, near Ballinamallard, the home of the late Mr. John West, and crowds of several thousand people travelled to hear the speakers. The conventions lasted for weeks and elaborate arrangements were made to provide meals and to accommodate those who stayed over-night. Teams of workers looked after the cooking, the transport, the sleeping accommodation and there was even a barber's shop. Everything was done voluntarily.

The 'Pilgrims' dressed sombrely, the women mostly in black, and were strictly segregated from the men. Many of the men wore beards.

ATTACKS ON CLERGY AND CHURCHES

In his addresses at the early conventions, Mr. Cooney used fiery language and was often violently critical and abusive in his attacks on the clergy and churches. He attacked both Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy and said that anyone who followed them was sure of going to hell. In later life he mellowed considerably and his addresses were more tolerant of other denominations.

Towards the end of his life Mr. Cooney spent a good deal of his time in Australia. His last visit to County Fermanagh was just over a year ago, when on a Saturday evening, seated on a chair on the Diamond in Enniskillen, with a rug around his frail figure, but still a striking character with his flowing white beard, he took part in a meeting with a group of his faithful followers.

July 14, 1960
Volume 84, #3701
LIFE OF FAITH
(A Weekly Magazine Now Called Parentwise)
Publisher: Elm House Christian Communications Ltd.
COONEYITES LOSE THEIR LEADER
By Sydney W. Murray

The death last month in Australia at the age of 93 of Edward Cooney recalls an unusual ministry which gave rise to one of the present day sects. Born in Enniskillen in the North of Ireland, **Edward Cooney** was brought up in the Church of Ireland, but gave up his connection with it, and also his regular employment, to go out in itinerant preaching throughout the country. He threw in his lot with **William Weir Irvine, a Scotsman** who had set out on a similar type of ministry some time before, when working in the South of Ireland.

On account of dissatisfaction with the standard of spiritual life in many country districts at the time, **Cooney and Irvine** denounced the existing denominations and sects, and particularly the ministers and leaders. The fiery eloquence and the strong personality of **Cooney** gave the movement an impetus which attracted many followers in the British Isles, and indeed in many lands. In Ireland alone the years 1908 to 1910 witnesses conventions or camp meetings near Ballinamallard attended by as many as three or four thousand people. These conventions lasted for weeks at a time, and the voluntary organisation looked after cooking, sleeping accommodation and transport arrangements.

The movement developed fairly well-defined features, although the leaders do not publish books or tracts for public circulation. There has been issued a hymn-book, mainly compiled from other collections but including some hymns of their own. Their preachers go out two-by-two without purse or scrip, tramping from place to place, and claim to obey the commands of Christ to the twelve disciples as set out in Matthew 12. They came to be called "Go-Preachers," "Tramp-Preachers," or simply "The Preachers." The name "Cooneyite" is generally applied to both the preachers and the followers of what its members call "The Jesus Way" or "The Lowly Way."

Converts are baptised by immersion, and must renounce their earlier religious connections, and sometimes their families as well. Converts can carry on their ordinary calling, but are subject to strict discipline. Although large gatherings are held on occasions, meetings for worship are held in the house of one of the leaders, where they "break bread." While the movement has spread to many countries, their concern for the distinctive message they stand for has not sent them to the non-Christian world, and pioneer missionary work has never been undertaken by their preachers.

In emphasising "The Jesus Way," the Cooneyites minimise the atoning work of Christ. Seldom is any reference made by their preachers to the blood of Christ, or to its efficacy to cleanse from sin; and their teaching on the new birth and regeneration is far from the New Testament concept of the doctrine.

In espousing this cause, **Edward Cooney** turned his back on a substantial family inheritance which would have been his if he had returned to his early religious faith. While the zeal and energy of the Cooneyites are to be commended, it is to be regretted that these are given in a cause which is considerably removed from the Evangelical faith.

October 1961

Phoenix Star, Arizona

INFORMAL CONVENTION WORKS, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN HOW.

RANDOLPH – Approximately 650 persons gathered last week for a religious convention and no one had been invited! Unusual? Not in the least, to those attending. The four day meeting was at the B. T. Dick ranch near Randolph, which has been the site for the annual convention since 1938.

"People were notified as to the date, and the rest just happens", said one of those attending.

The convention is of no particular religious organization and no one is actually in charge. No one organizes the convention, and those attending make their own arrangements. The food is brought by the individuals. One will bring a sack of potatoes, another will bring a sack of onions, another coffee, and so on. The work is divided without assignments; the food is cooked in large vats. Some will cook, some will serve, and some will clean up after the meals are finished. No collections are taken.

No one is asked to bring or to donate a thing, yet there is plenty of food for everyone.

Speakers come from over the nation and yet are not ministers or pastors of other churches. This year a speaker from South America and one from Norway spoke to the gathering in addition to 24 speakers from throughout the U.S.

The gathering represented people from throughout Arizona and Calif. They live in house trailers and tents on the premises and attended daily religious meetings held in one big tent. Beginning their day with breakfast at 7:30, the first meeting will begin at 10 a.m. The morning session ends at noon when lunch is served. The afternoon session begins at 2:45 and lasts until 5 p.m. when supper is served. The night session begins at 7 and ends at 8:45 p.m. when most retire.

Leon Stanton of Cottonwood was one speaker. "No one is paid and no one is in control," Stanton said. "There are no headquarters and it is sometimes difficult to convince others of this fact." "Our subjects spoken are of Jesus and the Bible, and our desire to serve God. This is what I believe makes the entire procedure operate so smoothly.

When we finish here we return to our respective towns and once each week hold services in each others' homes. The home where the service is held generally produces the speaker for that Sunday.

"I have belonged to the group since 1922 and still couldn't tell you how it works," said Stanton. Then the quiet spoken man quickly added, "But it does."

April 23, 1964
Volume 88, #3898
LIFE OF FAITH
(A Weekly Magazine Now Called Parentwise)
Publisher: Elm House Christian Communications Ltd.

WHO ARE THE COONEYITES?

John G. Eberstein

President of the Faith Mission

Your correspondent, Mr. Robert A. Little, makes the statement in connection with the Cooneyites that they are "*best known as 'The Pilgrims'.*" and later, that they are now referred to as "*The Pilgrims only.*" This statement is open to misunderstanding, "*Pilgrims*" being the name by which the workers of the Faith Mission are generally known, and by which they have been known since the beginning of the work in 1886.

This is no new thing. More than sixty years ago Mr. J. G. Govan, the founder of the Faith Mission issued the following statement, which was headed "*To Correct Misunderstanding*"

"As we continue to receive word that certain itinerant workers associated with Mr. Irvine and Mr. Cooney, frequently pass under the title of 'Pilgrims' or 'Faith Workers,' we wish it to be observed that the name 'Pilgrim' was adopted for our evangelists from the formation of the Faith Mission in 1886, and that the workers of this new association differ very widely in aims, principles and methods from those of our Mission."

The William Irvine to whom your correspondent refers, and who was associated with Edward Cooney in the beginning of this movement was a worker in the Faith Mission from 1895 to 1901. In that year he withdrew from the Mission, and the new movement came into existence, some of the members calling themselves "Pilgrims" as it appears they do still.

John G. Eberstein

President of the Faith Mission

Edinburgh 12

Impartial Reporter

March 21, 1968

Obituary of Mrs. Ruby Maud Dunn McLung [McClung]

Mrs. Ruby Maud Dunn McLung, of 33, Ulsterville Avenue, Lisburn Road, Belfast who died in Belfast City Hospital, on February 28th, was one of the original Cooneyites of Fermanagh.

She was the youngest daughter of the late Captain Henry Maxwell Corfield, and great-grand-daughter of the late General Maxwell Corfield, both of whom served in the British Army in India.

She was born in Hyderabad, India, where her father was then stationed. She met and married Francis David McLung in 1910, who was an officer in the British Army attached to the Ordnance Department. When he retired later that year they came to Ireland and bought a large farm at Nutfield, Brookeborough, Co. Fermanagh, where they resided for some years before going to reside at Skeogue House, Brookeborough.

After coming to Ireland at the age of 26 [1912] she and her husband met the late John West and his brother, William and they were all converted through the late Edward Cooney, Enniskillen, and followed his faith.

Mrs. McLung retired from farming in Brookeborough in 1942 and went to live in Belfast where she died aged 82. She was buried on March 1st at the New Methodist Cemetery, Maguiresbridge, the funeral being well attended by people who knew her from Belfast, Tyrone and Fermanagh.

She is survived by two sons, William and Wilfred, (Belfast); two daughters, Amy (Mrs. Thomas J. Ovens, Brookeborough), and Winifred (Belfast); five grandchildren and one great-grandson, Paul Craig.

Mrs. McLung's ancestral home was Extercombe Castle, near Taunton, in Somerset. The castle has been well preserved and is now an Old People's Home. Records show that about 200 years ago the Corfields were the landlords of almost all Somerset, Devon and Dorset. The Corfield family sword, dated the year 1300, is still on display in Taunton Museum.

NOTE: Her husband, David Francis McClung, passed away May 14, 1929, Brookeborough, Co. Fermanagh, N. Ireland, on whose property the Nutfield, Brookeborough, Co. Fermanagh, N. Ireland Convention was held in 1912. He was the son of Maxwell and Susan Jane (Wilson) McClung. Among his siblings were Wilson McClung (Annie), Overseer of New Zealand and Walter McClung (Chrissie) in South Africa; both were married Workers

November 8, 1981
North Penn Reporter
Lansdale, Pennsylvania
GEORGE WALKER DEAD AT 104
LONG TIME GOSPEL PREACHER

Services will be Tuesday afternoon for George Walker, 104, of White Oak Road, North Wales. He died Friday at North Penn Hospital, Lansdale, where he had been a patient the past week. Born in County Fermanagh, Ireland, he was the son of the late John and Jane Walker.

Mr. Walker came to Philadelphia in the fall of 1903 and was a non-denominational gospel preacher. He made many friends in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, and also across the U.S., Canada and other countries. He never married or maintained his own home, staying all his life in the homes of his numerous friends. In more recent years, he made his home with Mr. and Mrs. George F. Morris, of the White Oak road address.

He was preceded in death by six sisters and four brothers. Surviving are two nieces, Dorothy Forsyth of Hollywood, Ireland, and Rebecca Walker of Enniskillen, Ireland, and also grandnieces and nephews, all in northern Ireland.

The R.L. Williams Jr. Funeral Home, Skippack, is in Charge of Arrangements.

February 10, 1971
Belfast Newsletter
By Ken Nixon

COONEY: He tried to live like Christ

Today, just 10 years after the death of its founder, the Cooneyite sect still survives in Northern Ireland.

It is a curious survival, for this exotic off-shoot of fundamental Protestantism sets very strict standards of behavior and relied in its heyday on the personal magnetism of its founder, Edward Cooney, the Enniskillen man, who decided to live like Christ.

The members of the sect believe that the purity of Christ's teachings has been lost by the Churches, that worship has become too formalized through ritual and that the basic simplicity of Christianity should be restored.

They meet in small groups in the homes of members, favour modest living and black clothes.

It is strange that such a seemingly inoffensive creed should have attracted hostility in the past. During Edward Cooney's lifetime both he and his followers were jeered in many Ulster towns. Meeting halls were denied them and the sect was denounced from many pulpits.

Much of the opprobrium was drawn by the utterances of Cooney himself. He was not a man to mince his words and his attacks on established religion were vehement. On occasions he preached at people leaving church, pouring scorn on their clergy and their rituals.

ANGRY MOBS

Naturally many were angered when tongue-lashed by a wild-looking man with a long shaggy beard and they reacted violently. On several occasions Cooney was 'run out of town' by angry mobs. 'Cooneyite' was almost a term of abuse in many parts of Ulster, but today the word is more likely to raise an indulgent smile than a frown.

Edward Cooney was 34 years of age when he decided that he should live like Christ. He turned his back on the comforts of a prosperous home and took to the roads. For the remainder of his long life—he died at 93—Cooney traveled on foot and by bicycle all over Ireland, preaching. He refused gifts of money but accepted food and lodging where it was offered.

He took literally Christ's instructions to the rich young man...give your possessions to the poor. He literally believed the other instruction about 'if you have two coats, give one to a man who has none.' It is said that he once took off his coat and gave it to a tramp he found shivering by the roadside. Followers who remonstrated with him for being generous to the point of impoverishing himself, were sternly rebuked.

Cooney was the son of a wealthy Enniskillen draper, William Ruthersford Cooney. He was educated at Portora Royal School and at 17 was brought into the family business as a 'traveller.'

NO AVAIL

At this time and for many years later, Edward Cooney was a very active member of the Church of Ireland. He taught in Sunday School and was prominent in other church organizations. But in 1901, he left the Church of Ireland for good. He told his parents he was renouncing all his rights to the family business and that he was leaving home, taking nothing with him but a change of clothes. They tried to persuade him to change his mind but to no avail. Cooney set out to walk to Dublin, trusting that 'the Lord will provide.'

It is strange that Cooney chose the South of Ireland for his first attempts at fundamentalist preaching. With its large Roman Catholic population and wealthy Anglican community, the south has not the same non-conformist tradition as Ulster. Perhaps it is an indication of his stubborn temperament that he should first tackle the section of the country least amenable to his beliefs. His preaching brought no results in the South. Indeed his attacks on the priesthood landed him in serious trouble. More than once, he had to run for his life from hostile crowds.

The itinerant preacher later tramped the roads of England, Scotland and Wales, where he was largely ignored or laughed at as an eccentric crank. But it was in Ulster that his preachings took root, particularly, in the rural areas of Tyrone, Armagh and his native Fermanagh. He gained many followers, some of them disaffected members of the Church of Ireland, but mostly evangelically-minded people of no established church—the type who then (and, to a degree, now) make almost a hobby of tent missions and ‘revivals.’

Cooney’s simplistic approach to religion and his impassioned attacks on the clergy, had great appeal to many. A typical utterance was: ‘Both the Protestant and Roman Catholic are against me. When I speak against the RCs, the Protestants will listen. When I speak against the Protestants, the Catholics will listen. But when I speak for Jesus Christ, no one will listen.’

SCORNED

He scorned the sacraments of the established churches. ‘How did I start life as a Episcopalian?’ he once asked his audience. ‘The operation was performed when I was a baby. I was brought up to a clergyman who sprinkled me with water in a church...and, lo and behold, I was made an Episcopalian!’ Cooney’s idea of baptism was total immersion. And not the indoor form practiced by Baptist. He believed that Christians should be baptized as Christ was—in a river. These outdoor events attracted curious crowds and earned the sect one of its nicknames—the Dippers. Another name applied to the Cooneyites was “The Pilgrims.”

Cooney’s success reached a peak between 1908 and 1910. At Crocknacrieve, near Ballinamallard in Co. Fermanagh, he held conventions to which thousands of his followers came. They spent days listening to the leader and praying. Elaborate arrangements were made to lodge and feed them.

The late Mr. Egbert Trimble, editor of the ‘Impartial Reporter’ recorded his impression of Cooney: ‘He is a lone figure, remarkable for his luxuriant, shaggy, grey beard and his benevolent face...Personally, he is a charming man, is fascinating to listen to and is kindly and generous: if you have two coats, give one to the poor.’

In later life Cooney spent much time in Australia. He had been invited there by a follower who had emigrated. And it was in Australia that he died, in the township of Mildura, Victoria.

Edward Cooney last visited Northern Ireland in 1959, where he preached in Enniskillen’s Diamond. The crowd listened respectfully on this occasion; listened respectfully to the man who tried to live like Christ.

October 17, 1974

WHITTIER DAILY NEWS

7612 Greenleaf Avenue

Whittier, California 90602

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2,500 ATTEND FUNERAL RITES FOR MINISTER

About 2,500 people attended funeral services in Whittier High School auditorium Tuesday night for a former Whittier resident, **William Rankin Jamieson**, 93, of Oakland.

Mr. Jamieson was a minister of a nondenominational worldwide fellowship of Christians. According to Patterson and Snively Mortuary, Long Beach, the funeral was the largest they have conducted in 60 years.

Members of the non-denominational fellowship came in caravans from San Diego and Oregon and 100 members chartered a plane from San Francisco to attend the services.

A mortuary spokesman said 500 people here were waiting outside the auditorium door at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday and the services started at 7 p.m. Later, 300 people traveled to Redondo Beach to attend the interment in Pacific Crest Cemetery.

Mr. Jamieson was born April 28, 1881, in Scotland and died Friday in Westminster while visiting friends. He entered the ministry in 1905 and worked until 1926 as an evangelist in Oregon and Manitoba, Canada,

He was a missionary worker in China from 1926 to 1939 and he went to the Philippines from 1939 to 1945. While in the Philippines he was a war camp prisoner for several years.

He has resided in California since 1957. Mr. Jamieson never married, but had many close friends. In addition to his work in the ministry, he was a published poet.

October, 1984

The Orange Standard

Pages 10-11

EDWARD COONEY – 1867 – 1960

The “*outside-the-churches*” Christian groups of today are not a new phenomenon. They have their counterparts in the past. Then they were just a fundamentalist in theology, evangelical in preaching and teaching and oriented towards a deeper spirituality than they had found in the churches.

One of them with a seventy-five years history is the Cooneyites, otherwise known as the “Pilgrims” and the “Dippers.” The latter designation has not been confined to them. Other groups have been so described. And the word was used contemptuously in the way of the original use of “Christians” and “Methodists.”

Edward Cooney was born at Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, on February 11, 1867, the second son of William Rutherford Cooney, a successful businessman of the town and a devoted member of the Church of Ireland. Edward was brought up in that church. Converted at 17 he took so literally the patterns for living of Jesus and the first Christians, as he saw them, that in time he gave away his personal fortune to needy causes and resigned from the family business in which he had become a commercial traveller to answer the call to preach the Gospel without material ties and family entanglements.

Cooney determined to walk in the steps of Jesus and he appealed to his followers to do the same. “He spurned wealth and property and although he was left a large fortune on condition that he returned to the Church of Ireland, he resisted the temptation and never accepted a penny from the extensive Cooney estate, which was placed in trust.” (Obituary “The Impartial Reporter” June 23, 1960).

As he pauperized himself, he spoke of the reactions of his family and friends, “They cast me off! They would not notice me in poor clothing. Newspapers reviled me. Vile slanders were made against my character. To none of them did I take heed. They hurt me, but I had His example to guide me, and I put them on one side.”

ASSOCIATION

Edward Cooney was a preacher, persevering and combative, violently outspoken in his attacks on churches and clergy, with the ability to captivate an audience.

After some time as a freelance missionary he met up with William Irvine, a Faith Mission evangelist from Scotland who was having a most successful campaign at Nenagh, County Tipperary, in August, 1897. Many Protestants and Roman Catholics were being converted at his meetings. Irvine had concluded as Cooney had before him, that because the churches had wandered far from the faith and practice of the first Christians. Christian people should be persuaded that it was essential to live by the example of Jesus and his disciples.

The Cooneyites became targets of attack because of their hostility to the clergy and the churches which they denounced for worldliness and betrayals of the Gospel in how they responded to people in spiritual and material need. “The Cooneyites openly avow that their object is to up-root and destroy the church (which they do not allow to be a true Christian Church), and to set up their own system in its stead.” (Preface to **“The Cooneyites” or “The Dippers”** by Canon S. C. Armstrong, Rector of Templederry, Diocese of Killaloe, 1910. Armstrong adds, “They make a clean sweep of the ministry of all Christian bodies. The destitute tramp preachers, male and female, are the sent ministers of Christ, ‘and there are none other sent ones.’

CONCENTRATION

They were called “go-preachers” because they were prepared to go anywhere for Christ. The Cooneyites published their alternatives:

“The Jesus Way or The World’s Way.”

“Christ or The Churches.”

“His Apostles or The clergy.”

Cooney put the question, “Will you have fellowship with Jesus and Pauper, The Tramp Preacher, and the Tramp Preachers sent out by Him, or the clergy?” His view of ministry was of “Destitute go-preachers; Ignorant go-preachers.”

In a letter to **“Fermanagh Times” April 18, 1907**, he wrote, “He who goes forth to preach must ‘renounce all that he hath.’” (Luke 14:33). ‘Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple’ which means in his case, ‘sell all that you have and give alms.’ (Luke 12:33) Cooney added, “he must go forth in the way described in Luke 10,” and he quoted verses 3-12 on the sending out of the Seventy disciples. But the Seventy went not on a particular errand and their marching orders were for a specific and temporary purpose. Their preaching was to prepare the way for the visits of Jesus to the places to which they were sent.

In another letter to that paper **April 25, 1907**, he said “Some time ago I saw it was better to give the bicycle I had away, and now I got the use of a saint’s on the same terms as Jesus got the use of the colt. Cooney used the example of Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, to make a case. He described her as “the only one who scattered all” and went forth as one of Christ’s destitute preachers.” But there is nothing of that in the Bible. Cooney explained the source of his information, “The interpretation of the Scriptures was and is alone entrusted by Jesus to his destitute sent ones primarily, and in a secondary sense to those in fellowship with them.” (**Fermanagh Times, May 2, 1907**).

Armstrong saw in claims like this shades of the Creed of Pope Pius IV, “I do admit the Holy Scriptures in the same sense that the Holy Mother Church hath held and doth hold, whose business it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of theirs.”

In their condemnation of their ministries of the churches, the Cooneyites ignored the fact that the better off among the believers ministered to the needs of Jesus and the Apostles. They said, “He tramped about homeless, living on the charity of those whom God moved in pity to help him. As was Jesus Christ, so were all the preachers He sent out. Like their Master they went without purse...” Armstrong said of this, “And yet we are plainly told (in Holy Scripture) that our Lord and his Apostles possessed the means to pay for their necessities. They had a purse in which the common fund was kept.” Judas Iscariot carried the “bag.” (John 23:29) Armstrong adds, “what is wrong for the preacher must be wrong for every other Christian.”

DEPENDENCE

There is no order of “destitute preachers” in the Christian Church. Paul was determined to be a charge on no one. (1 Thessalonians 2:9). He laboured in Corinth with his own hands to earn a living as a tent maker or saddler. And in Rome he had his own rented house. (Acts 28:30). In 1 Corinthians 9:1-15 Paul says something different to what Cooney advocated when he refers to a “hired wage” for a minister of the Gospel. “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.”

Cooney’s plea for “ignorant preachers” was explained in “The Jesus Way”. “The clergy are college trained in human learning: Christ went out to preach straight from the carpenter’s bench.”

But Jesus had learning by the rabbis and the Scriptures and an aptitude for study which showed in everything he said. “Never man spake like his man,” John 7:46. “...of Christ, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:3).

Cooney also objected to an educated ministry on the grounds that the Apostles were untrained men. But how could they be untrained when they spent three years with Jesus as their teacher? And among the disciples were Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and Paul, educated men. Edward Cooney equated the Jewish priests with the clergymen of his day. His argument went, “Our Lord and his Apostles were opposed by the clergy of their day. Our Lord and the Apostles were right, and the ‘clergy’ were wrong. We are opposed by the clergy today. Therefore, it follows that we are right and they are wrong.”

In a letter to the **“Fermanagh Times” March 14, 1907**, John West, a colleague of Cooney added, “John the Dipper, Jesus the Dipper, Peter and Paul all Dippers—all were denied and cast out as evil by the clergy of the day.” Apart from the fact that Jesus baptized no one, there were no clergy in any sense in those days.

The situation which arose when Cooney gathered a following of disaffected church people contributed largely to the treatment he received and to the violence which did not always stop with verbal abuse. When feelings are aroused, violence of the tongue is often followed by violence of the hand. The reception he got would be different now. In our secularized age the preacher is unlikely to be attacked verbally or physically, for people no longer get excited about religion unless it has political overtones which engender disputation and strife.

Edward Cooney was an open-air preacher, an itinerant open-air preacher, an itinerant who went “where he pleased.” He and those who traveled in his way were often compelled to sleep rough, for lodging house keepers were loath to admit them because of their railings against the churches. He was jailed in Glasgow for persistently obstructing the movement of people and traffic by gathering crowds who wanted to hear or more likely to jeer him. He was stoned or beaten up in some places. In Suffolk he had his tent burned by a father who resented his son and daughter leaving home to join the Dippers.

In spite of, or because of, persecution the sect grew and grew. And the Cooneyite had success denied to many groups today, for while there were a few people of position in the membership, the working class were very much in the majority. An observer of the movement in 1907 said they have no money—like Peter, gold and silver they have none—and no property. They have no Sunday clothes, for if they had a second suit they would either give it away or sell it and use the money for their work. Their baggage is a Bible, a toothbrush and a change of socks.

GROWTH

By 1907 it was claimed that there were many thousands of Cooneyites in the world. Certainly they were to be found in Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, North and South America and Asia.

A world-wide conference of Cooneyite preachers was held July/August, 1907 at Crocknacrieve, Ballinamallard, County Fermanagh. Without money of their own, 500 of them and their families were enabled to travel from across the world to be present there.

The conference lasted for weeks and with adherents and sightseers, the attendance reached several thousands for the sessions. Everybody was fed and watered and housed if need be. Sympathisers were generous to the Conference organizers. One grocer and miller gave five tons of flour, a butcher a carcase of meat twice a week, farmers provided vegetables and butter and one lent 26 cows to supply milk.

The men slept in tents on the lands of John West’s Crocknacrieve and 120 women and children used the house and its outhouses for their living accommodation. The layout resembled an army camp. Those with competence were caterers, cooks and bakers and the orders of each day listed the names and chores of those involved in the many menial tasks which had to be done. There was even a barber’s shop.

Very few adults were exempted from duties of one kind or another. There were cycle minders for the bicycle shed had up to 800 machines at a time. The Dippers cycled everywhere. It was the cheapest means of transport available to them. The meals were served in a large marquee and while visitors were given a cup each, conference members drank two to a handleless mug.

The opening address by Edward Cooney affirmed his authority to preach and teach. He said, “I am commissioned by Jesus Christ to declare that you may have your sins remitted.”

ADMINISTRATION

Cooneyite administration was distinctive but not original. There was no head. All were equal. There were Deacons, Elders and Bishops for the purpose of discipline and the better ordering of the movement, But the titles bore no resemblance to how they were used in the churches. Membership was by confession of faith and it preceded baptism by total immersion.

There were baptisms in rivers all the year round. The first was in Ballycassady River. Because the intention to hold such services and ceremonies was never secret, many attended as sightseers. They were often impressed rather than amused by what they saw of

a commitment uncommon enough at any time. The principal baptizer was Robert Elliott, the Dairies, near Derrygonnelly, a strong man of powerful build. He immersed the candidates and ensured that they surfaced correctly.

ATTITUDES

The Cooneyite preachers were easily recognized by their flowing beards, while their ladies dressed in black and in fashion that had no regard for style or elegance. Marriage was generally within the membership and “*mixed marriage*” often brought disciplinary action and hurt in family relationships. Wherever there is such an attitude to marriage the effects are similar.

The Cooneyites went on strongly for years, but changes of attitude meant that the families of members made their way back to the churches their fathers had rejected or to membership in denominations which appealed to them.

In 1928, there was schism among the Cooneyites when Edward Cooney was excommunicated. William Irvine had been rejected in 1914, largely because of his dictatorial style of leadership. He had gone in voluntary exile in Jerusalem. Cooney said of his own experience, “*The division was caused by man ruling instead of God; God ruling again among us will heal the man-made breach.*” The breach was never healed.

The main body of the movement grew into a worldwide sect with hierarchial structures such as had been condemned in the beginning days. **It was known as the Christian Conventions in the USA and Canada; United Christian Conventions in Australia and New Zealand; the Testimony of Jesus in the United Kingdom; Les Anonymes in France and Namenlosen in Germany. But everywhere they were called “Cooneyites”** for most people were unaware of the schism of 1928.

CONTROVERSY

As a spur to the churches, the Cooneyites served a purpose. They compelled them to examine their attitudes in the face of the condemnations of Cooney whose words and appearance were reminiscent of John the Baptist. The Cooneyite emphasis on baptism required churchmen to study the Scriptures and Church History to refute the Cooney claim that baptism by total immersion of adult believers was the Scriptural and only way to administer the sacrament.

In his book, which is largely an examination of the baptismal controversy, Canon Armstrong shows that Infant Baptism was a method much used by the first Christians. He said, “There is not one sentence, not one word in which we discover the smallest trace of there being, or ever having been, a question of the introduction of Infant Baptism into the church.”

Our Lord's commission to baptize was in the setting of Infant Baptism, a Jewish practice adopted by the early church. Armstrong refers to the Scriptures. (Mark 16:15, 16; Matthew 28:19, 20). He adds, “pouring water on” or simply “sprinkling with water,” appears to have been the rule; dipping under the water, the exception, in the early apostolic times. He played with the thought, “Much water—God's blessing. Little water—no blessing.”

Armstrong supported his Biblical evidence with the submission, “It cannot be gainsaid that from the end of the fourth century on Infant Baptism was the universal and unquestioned rule of all Christian Churches.” Whilst Edward Cooney was a catalyst affecting the churches from without, there has always been those who stayed in to do that essential job of condemnation and persuasion. They were the reformers and evangelists and their work has been of inestimable value, for the churches have to be made aware of how far short they are from what they should be. Reality in religion has to be sought after continuously and assiduously.

It is always easy to drift into a complacency which destroys Christian work and witness that turns the churches aside to dissipate their energies on matters of little consequence, but which they allow to divert them from the great tasks to which they are committed.

Edward Cooney spent his later years in Australia. He last visited Fermanagh in 1959, a year before his death. Seated one Saturday evening on a chair in the Diamond, Enniskillen—frail as he was he still presented a striking figure—he took part in the meeting there. In later life, he had mellowed sufficiently to be tolerant of other denominations.

He died in Australia on June 20, 1960 in the 94th year of his age. Throughout his long life his sincerity, selflessness, courage and devotion to Christ were not to be questioned.

NOTE: The **Orange Standard** was a monthly Protestant magazine, being the official organ of the Loyal Orange Institution of England, published in Birmingham. The complete set is held by the British Library in London.