

# Oliver Barclay

Well-connected evangelical whose work with college Christian Unions helped to shape the religious landscape of postwar Britain

Oliver Barclay left a gentle but distinctive mark on religious life in Britain and even beyond. For five decades he was an influential, effective and well-connected activist in evangelical Christian circles. A reflective mild-mannered man, known for his shrewd judgment, he cut his teeth working for the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, which pioneered Christian Union groups in universities throughout the UK.

A scion of the banking family, Barclay also found time to write thoughtful and well-received books on topics ranging from evangelicalism in Britain to the ethics of pacifism. He was a founding editor of the journal *Science and Christian Belief*.

The invitation to join the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) came in 1945 after Barclay had finished a doctorate in zoology and was exploring a teaching career in a Chinese university. Instead, he was persuaded to join the small staff of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions, based in Bloomsbury. The movement (now the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship) had been founded in 1928 by university Christian groups who felt that the Student Christian Movement of the day gave too little priority to biblical teaching and evangelism. More liberal churchmen and academic theologians, fearful of what they regarded as "fundamentalism" viewed the IVF with suspicion, if not derision.

Barclay's letter of invitation from Douglas Johnson, the IVF general secretary, was warm and expressive. Before asking Barclay to join, Johnson had consulted senior members of the IVF's council, including a big donor, John Laing, of J. W. Laing Construction. Laing, Johnson said, showed "unreserved support and went off like a rocket!" (Johnson was given to underlining and to multiple exclamation marks, his style in marked contrast to that of Barclay, who was moderate to a fault.)

From 1953 Barclay was responsible for giving overall direction to the fellowship's work in the universities; to assist him he recruited some of the most able and energetic graduates of his generation. Almost immediately he found himself at the centre of a national uproar, when the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU) invited the US evangelist Billy Graham to speak at its triennial mission to the university in 1955. Barclay's lifelong friend from student days, John Stott, Rector of All Souls Church, Langham Place Lon-

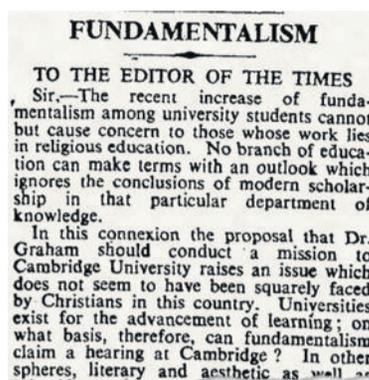


don, would be Graham's chief assistant. Mainstream churchmen were aghast. Canon H. K. Luce of Durham, protested in a letter to *The Times*. Universities exist for the advancement of learning, Canon Luce contended. In other fields, an approach which took no heed of modern scholarship "would be laughed out of court". Why should religion be any different? Luce's conclusion was unequivocal: "Is it not time that our religious leaders made it plain that while they respect, or even admire, Dr Graham's sincerity and personal power, they cannot regard fundamentalism as likely to issue in anything but disillusionment and disaster for educated men and women in this twentieth-century world?"

A lively correspondence ensued, running in *The Times* for several weeks; it was later collected and republished in booklet form. Supporters of Graham

and his mission insisted that the gospel he preached was "in accord with true scholarship illuminated by revelation". Canon Luce was accused of snobbery, and of underestimating the intelligence and judgment of undergraduates. Barclay's friend John Stott wrote to argue that it was wrong to associate "fundamentalism" with "extremes and extravagances" or to equate it with obscurantism; in those senses, Billy Graham was not a fundamentalist at all.

As the correspondence over the Billy Graham visit showed, Barclay and the IVF were at the centre of a debate within the postwar British churches about the nature of Christian belief and the purpose of organised religion and theological scholarship. Student Christians — some of them the religious leaders of the future — were undoubtedly in the vanguard of an evangelical revolution which would eventually reshape the



Barclay, left, was at the centre of a national uproar after the Cambridge student Christian Union invited Billy Graham to speak in 1955. Canon H.K.Luce wrote a disapproving letter to *The Times*, above, prompting an extended correspondence

Church of England. Consequently, in his Bedford Square office in the 1950s Barclay received a regular stream of visitors, all wanting to hear the latest thinking from the student Christian Unions. They included such heavy-weight figures as the industrialist Laing; Professor Sir Norman Anderson, an Islamicist who chaired the General Synod House of Laity; G. T. Manley, Cambridge Senior Wrangler in the year when Bertrand Russell came sixth; and D. J. Wiseman, DSO and Bar, Professor of Assyriology at UCL.

Around the country, Barclay's itinerant team, known as Travelling Secretaries, worked among students in the Christian Unions, which were often the largest voluntary societies on the campus. Under Barclay's leadership, they supported the committee members, as older friends, helping them "think theologically" and plan strategically. In the process Barclay, once described as "a paragon of the understatement", became one of the best-networked leaders in evangelical circles.

Oliver Rainsford Barclay was born in 1919 in Kobe, Japan, son of Joseph Gurney Barclay of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and great grandson of the MP and brewer Thomas Fowell Buxton, a member of the Clapham Sect. He was educated at Gresham's School in Holt, Norfolk, and at Trinity College, Cambridge.

By 1947 the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) had been formed, with ten national student

movements, China being the largest. The British IVF, with its modest but ambitious publishing house and a biblical research centre in Cambridge, acted as a model for sister movements around the world. Barclay served on its executive committee from 1959, taking the chair from 1971 to 1979. He would typically take his most promising staff for a walk, to explore the idea of pioneering work in other countries, which many of them went on to do. IFES now has a presence in 157 nations.

Barclay steered the IVF through the first great phase of postwar expansion in British higher education. In 1975 he advocated a change of name to the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF), in recognition of the breadth of work in polytechnics and colleges of education. In his retirement he was active in founding a research council to oversee the theological research arm of the fellowship, and in 1989 he became founding editor with Brian Robins of the journal *Science and Christian Belief*; this traced its beginnings to an initiative Barclay took in his student years to bring together a few friends engaged in scientific research.

Barclay's books included *Whose World?* (written under a pseudonym A. N. Triton) and *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995*, in which the history of the movement was traced from an insider's unique vantage point. In the 1980s he edited a book series entitled *When Christians Disagree*, himself contributing to the volume on *Pacifism and War*. It revealed that, now better informed than in his student years when he had espoused the pacifist convictions of his Quaker forebears, he had moved on to adopt the "just war" theory.

In 1949 he had married Dorothy Knott, a consultant surgeon at the Royal Free Hospital. She died of cancer in May 1964, leaving four children. Later that same year, Barclay succeeded Johnson as IVF General Secretary. The following year he married Daisy Hickey, a family friend. Their next-door neighbours in Highgate, North London, were Denis and Edna Healey.

Barclay is survived by his second wife and by the four children from his first marriage. His youngest son, John, is Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University.

Oliver Barclay, scientist, student worker and evangelical historian, was born on February 22, 1919. He died on September 12, 2013, aged 94

# Albert Hurt

Foundry manager of *The Times* who presided over the last noisy days of hot-metal before the paper's production went digital

In the far-off days of "hot metal" newspaper production, a newspaper's foundry had a vital role, converting the combined labours of reporters, typesetters and compositors into a form which could be taken to the printing presses. Albert Hurt — known to all as Bert — was an integral part of this process at *The Times* for more than 30 years. He became Foundry Manager at the paper in the late 1970s.

It was a world with its own arcane vocabulary, of formes, aprons, platens and flongs, resonant with hot oil, molten metal, hand pumping, soldering, trimming of waste metal and remelting. By the early 1980s, however, the entire process was changing.

The hot-metal Linotype machine used to set type on *The Times* since the 19th century was replaced by computer input and (limited) photo-composition which produced paper galleys of text. These were cut up by compositors and

pasted on to page-sized boards. These would be photographed and converted into a photosensitive polymer plate from which a mould was created.

These tentative steps had still not achieved the goal of direct input to the production process by journalists. Finally the technology of the old order was dramatically succeeded at *The Times* and its fellow News International publications in 1986 by a great leap into the electronic age for journalists, launched almost overnight from new premises in London's docklands. By then Bert Hurt had retired as manager of the Foundry.

Albert Richard Hurt was born in London in 1923 and educated at Harrow County School which he left at 14 to begin a seven-year apprenticeship with an electrotyping and stereotyping company, in Shoe Lane, off Fleet Street, where his father worked. This training was interrupted by the outbreak of the

war during which he served with the Royal Corps of Signals at home and in Europe after the Normandy landings. Demobbed in 1947 as a sergeant, he returned to his London apprenticeship.

In 1952 he joined *The Times* in the Foundry Department, where at first he helped in the process of making the flexible moulds from the formes of type from which the printing plates would eventually be created.

For some years he also served as Father of Chapel (head of the office branch) for his union, the National Society of Electrotypers and Stereotypers (NSES). It was reputed to be the "smallest and richest" of the industry's trade unions in the days before it was subsumed into the National Graphical Association in 1967. The powerful NGA was subsequently to play a leading role in challenging management; its refusal to adopt new technology led to a series of stoppages

that plagued Fleet Street until the mid-1980s.

Long before this Hurt had switched to nights and moved over to the management side. He was promoted to Foundry Manager in 1979. He took retirement from *The Times* in 1986, glad to enjoy more time with his family on caravanning holidays, which he and his wife had always enjoyed, and tending the garden at their Surrey home. A lifelong supporter of Arsenal, he followed the doings of his team on television and in the pages of *The Times* which he read almost until the end.

He married in 1952 Jean Margaret Catherine Blance, from Shetland. She died in 1999 and he is survived by their daughter.

Albert Hurt, Foundry Manager of *The Times*, 1979-86, was born on April 19, 1923. He died on September 1, 2013, aged 90



Hurt, centre, showing the Queen round his domain at *The Times*