

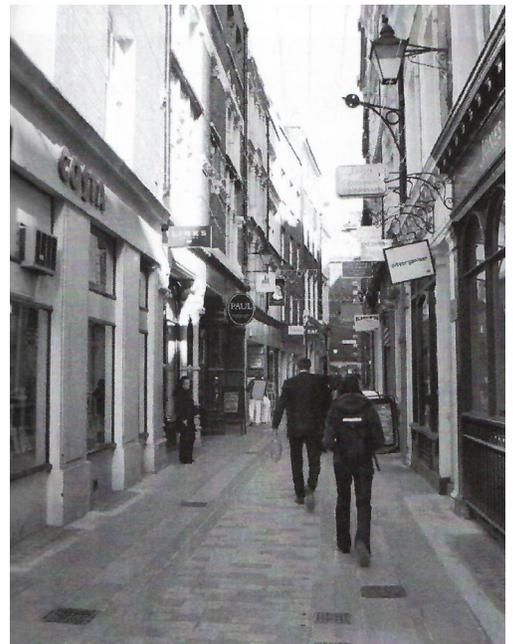
SUMMARY: The book Traces of the Kingdom provides an instructional insight to the probability that a form of the churches of Christ existed in England for most of the history from the first century until today. It additionally provides interesting insights to the Inquisition and to the availability of Bibles before and during the Middle Ages.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Year	Event
37-63	Christianity may have arrived in Britain
597	Augustine arrived in Britain and enforced Catholicism
1066	Norman conquest of Britain, strengthening the papacy
1511	William Carder of Tenterten was indicted for heresy for teaching what we believe.
1517	Luther nailed his theses on the door at Wittenberg
1520s	Churches of Christ in Kent and London were in fellowship for the next 150 years.
1530s	Bow Lane Church of Christ held to tenets which 300 years later would be called Campbellism.
1536	An international conference was instigated and financed by the Churches of Christ
1597	Epworth and Crowle Church of Christ baptized believers for the remission of sins
1646	Churches of Christ confession of faith issued in London
1809	Thomas Campbell delivered his "Declaration and Address" which marked the beginning of the Restoration Movement.
1906	Split in Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

We grew up with a clean simple explanation of history.
The Bible was written in the first century
The canon of the New Testament was settled in AD 400
The Catholic Church got a Pope in AD 606 and began to hide the Bible from regular people.
In 1517 Luther nailed 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church to start the Reformation.
In the 1830s the Campbells and Stones Started the Restoration Movement.
Between AD 606 and the Restoration movement the church continued to exist, maybe someplace in Ethiopia.

Turns out what actually happened is somewhat more complex than that. This article is going to report on what Keith Sisman researched and published in his book TRACES OF THE KINGDOM which is subtitled "One thousand Years of the Churches of Christ in England". Immediately the idea that Churches of Christ have existed



BOW LANE, LONDON, WHERE A CHURCH OF CHRIST MET IN THE 1530s, P. 311

in England for one thousand years should get your interest.

One point he makes is that the Roman Catholic Church was dominant from most of the Middle Ages and established what was right and wrong. If you taught something else, you were a heretic. This means that most writings about the Churches of Christ would be negative descriptions of heretics rather than a positive history.

Some of the derogatory names given to the heretics were Waldensians, Lollards, and Anabaptists. Keith Sisman undertakes to demonstrate that the history of the Waldensians, Lollards, and Anabaptists is generally the history of Churches of Christ. He may be stretching his conclusions a bit, but there is a lot of information to consider. It is a good book to read.

The following is a list quotations from this book, starting with the page number to the left:

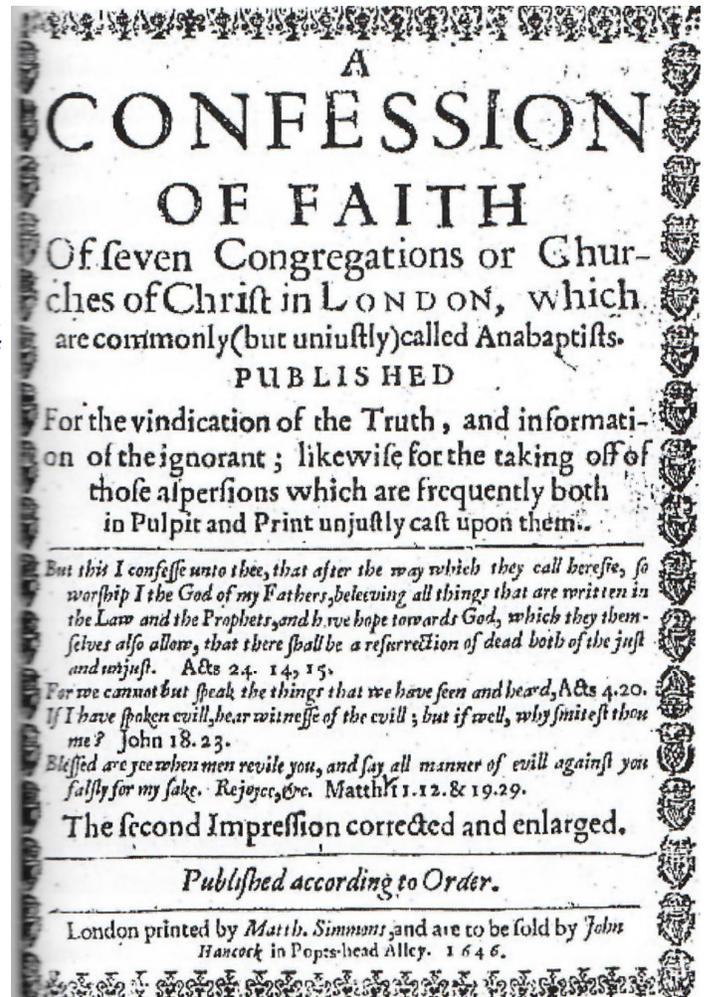
63 The earliest record of Christianity's arrival in Britain is the year 37, although other historians date it later around the year 58/63. Eusebius the fourth century church historian wrote "and some have crossed the Ocean and reached the Isles of Britain."

87 Many historians incorrectly date the arrival of Christianity in Britain as 597 with the arrival of Augustine. This is not true, Augustine's mission overthrew biblical Christianity where it existed, either destroying it or forcing it underground. Augustine (of Canterbury) did not introduce Christianity but Roman Catholicism, which was forced onto the converts, often at the point of a sword.

89 Doctrines of freewill continued in the western church until the sixth century, when they were condemned outright by the "Council of Orange, 529".

91 9th Century: With these wars and unrest, there is no reason why Christianity could not survive in England and Britain in isolated places.

92 It is fair to say the Romish Church was not able to exert its authority as much as it would have liked, but in 1066 this was to change. Duke William of



Normandy had papal backing for the (Norman) Conquest of 1066, invading under the Papal Banner. The papacy after the invasion became much more powerful in England.

4. 1646 – “a Confession of Faith of seven congregations or Churches of Christ in London.” By the time Wales came under English and Roman Catholic law, the Churches of Christ (Lollards) in Britain were expanding. (See above)

123 Names such as Waldensian were given by the Roman Catholic Church which used these accursed terms as derogatory statements of heresy.

123 Faber states the name may have been used as early as 1054. Another name used interchangeably with Waldensians is Lollard.

123 Peter Valdes, often incorrectly spelled Waldo, is often given as the originator of the Waldensians. He died about 1205.

134 Dr. William Wald, an Anglican priest and vicar of Shreham, Kent. Dr. Wald clearly states that by the 1150s (the time of Bruis), independent of the Roman Catholic Church, a “society” was meeting that denied infant baptism, who baptized believers for the remission of sins. Wald coined the term antipaedobaptist for those who rejected infant baptism. If we accept Wald’s statement, that prior to the 1150s no such congregation met, his statement still confirms that, 380 years before the Reformation, and 680 years before the Restoration Movement in the USA and Great Britain, such churches existed in the Middle Ages.

134 Two Waldensians, Hans Koch and Leonard Meyster, who were descended from Bohemian and Moravian Waldensians, were executed in Augsburg in 1524. From this time forward, in England and Europe, Waldensians and Lollards would be now by a new name, Anabaptist, of course derogatory.

135 Sufficient sayings have been handed down for us to see that indeed some within these groups held to first century Christian views.

148 The Lollard movement became in time Anabaptist, and this unity with the Anabaptist was hastened by the fact that their political principles were identical. The Anabaptist called themselves Church of Christ and we shall learn more of this later.



DOWNING PLACE, CAMBRIDGE Formerly Hog Hill, where a church of Christ met in the 1600 and 1700s, p 213

144 Waldensians are reported to have been present in Rochester, Kent in 1181, and again recorded in 1197.

- 144 Where we find Waldensians, we latter find Lollards, and even later the Anabaptist, who called themselves the church of Christ (It must be remembered that Waldensian and Lollards names were derogatory. These peopled called themselves Christians and the church, the church of Christ).
- 148 The Lollard movement became in time Anabaptist, and this unity with the Anabaptist was hastened by the fact that their political principles were identical. The Anabaptist called themselves Church of Christ, and we shall learn more of this later.
- 149 Of course, the Waldensians and Lollards referred to themselves as church of Christ. By the 1500s, we have records of the brethren themselves, rather than mere reports from their enemies, which by nature are derogatory. The evidence suggesting a continuation of the church from the 1150s to the late 1600, when Calvinism took the church into apostasy, cannot be easily overlooked and dismissed.
- 151 The question of whether the Waldensians are the same people as the Lollard and later Anabaptists (all derogatory terms) in England is fascinating. If they are, then we have churches of Christ in England that can be shown to have existed from the twelfth century until the time of the Restoration Movement in the 1800s.
- 151 Waldensian churches today use infant baptism and are Calvinist in doctrine, but this was not so in the period we are looking into.
- 155 We can ascertain with a high degree of certainty that churches of Christ in Europe existed for many centuries prior to the Restoration Movement, which started almost simultaneously in Britain and north America but independently.
- 179 Prior to the rise of anabaptists, in the same locations in Europe where the Waldensian heresies were propagated, up to 200,000 were condemned to death in witchcraft trial, in area where the Waldensians and later Anabaptists were most numerous.
- 196 This certainly helps to explain why those names of derision disappear suddenly with the reformation and the invention of a new derisory name – Anabaptist – springs up, where previously the Lollard and Waldensians were active.
- 196 Irvin Horst wrote that “it is striking to discover how generally Anabaptist supplanted Lollard as the name for English nonconformity from about 1530 until the end of Mary’s reign (1558).
- 200 The excitement caused by the early reformation resulted in discussions with Luther, and for a while he was popular with the churches of Christ, his books being distributed and disseminated widely. This has certainly has led to some members of churches of Christ, named Lollards, being identified as Lutherans.
- 204 On 29th April, 1511, six years before the Reformation, Luther nailing his “Ninety-five Theses of Religion” to the church door at Wittenberg, William Carder of Tenterden, Kent was indicted of heresy on a number of counts, listed below, including that “it was enough to pray to almighty God alone, and therefore we needed not to pray to saints for any mediation.”

- 1 That the sacrament of the alter is not the body of Christ , but material bread. (transubstantiation)
 - 2 That the sacrament of baptism and confirmation are not necessary, or profitable for men's souls. (Means they rejected the Roman Catholic rite of infant baptism)
 - 3 That confession of sins ought not to be made to a priest.
 - 4 That there is no more power given by God to a priest than to a layman.
 5. That the solemnization of matrimony (by a priest) is not profitable or necessary for the well-being of a man's soul.
 6. The sacrament of extreme unction (at death) is not profitable or necessary to a man's soul.
- 206 If not earlier, by the 1520s the Churches of Christ in Kent and London were in fellowship, despite persecutions, burnings, and imprisonment for the next one hundred and fifty years.
- 231 (It is interesting to note, that an international conference was instigated and financed by the English Churches of Christ in 1536.)
- 283 Maybe it is more than just a coincidence that immediately opposite the Abby was a meeting place, converted from several houses, owned by a church of Christ originating from and unknown date. The congregation is known to have been well established by 1623, and only much later did the congregation convert to Calvinism, (becoming part of the Baptist denomination).
- 313 In the early 1500s, in continental Europe, England, Wales and Scotland, we have Christians meeting who are separated from the Roman Catholic Church, which at this pre-reformation time is dominant. In fact, they had been meeting for many centuries in this clandestine way.
- 315 The enemies of these Christians called the Waldensians and/or Lollards, amongst other names. In the 1520s, these groups disappeared from history in continental Europe in continental Europe, and the Lollards (from history) in England as late as the 1550s (due to the catholic queen Mary retaining Romish doctrines).
- 315 In conventional histories in continental Europe, from the 1520s the Anabaptist appear, arriving in England from the 1530s to disappear later in the same century.
- 318 These people stood for the restoration of the apostolic church as opposed to reformation and died by the thousand in both Protestant and Catholic countries alike.
- 327 In the Middle Ages and to the reformation, the Catholic Church tried to gain superiority to secular authority. The Catholic Church presumed the power to excommunicate kings and have nations under the interdict of the Pope in defiance of Christ and His apostles, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be ordained of God (Rom 13:1)." Popes, cardinals, bishops,

- friars, priest had arrogated to themselves an exemption from the authority of the temporal sovereign and secular law.
- 347 Prior to the reformation, the Pope was not only head of the Catholic Church; he demanded submission from kings. The reformation still retained state religion but removed the power of the Pope.
- 348 It would not be until the Act of Toleration in 1689 that England would recognize the right to worship outside the state church.
- 348 Fish's work teaches the plan of salvation. ... This is not the teaching of Luther or any denomination; it is the pure gospel plan of salvation, preached nearly three hundred years before the Restoration Movement.
- 349 Anabaptists (Christians) were made Lutherans by historians, which is ridiculous, as Luther was busy hunting down Anabaptists and exterminating them.
- 361 Nonetheless, in England in the 1530s, the Bow Lane Church of Christ held to the tenets that three hundred years later, in the 1830s, would be termed "Campbellism."
- 365 It is without doubt that the true church of Christ flourished throughout England, during the time of Henry VIII and earlier, in spite of hundreds of Christians being killed by the cruelest of methods.
- 383 The Epworth and Crowle congregation, who baptized believers by immersion for the remission of sins, started in 1597. Whilst a Baptist church today, they were then associated with other congregations who denied modern Baptist doctrine calling themselves the church of Christ and meeting each Sunday for the Lord's Supper.

MAPS



224 The map above is an approximation of where the Waldensian heresy was being reported by the late 1100s.



225 By the late 1300s the heresy was being reported was Lollardy, as the map shows, it is an extension of where Waldensian heresy had been previously



226 This map shows the post reformation mid-1500s, the heresies were being reported was Lollard, Pelagian and Anabaptism, as the map shows, it is an extension of the Waldensian and Lollard areas of heresy, of the previous centuries.



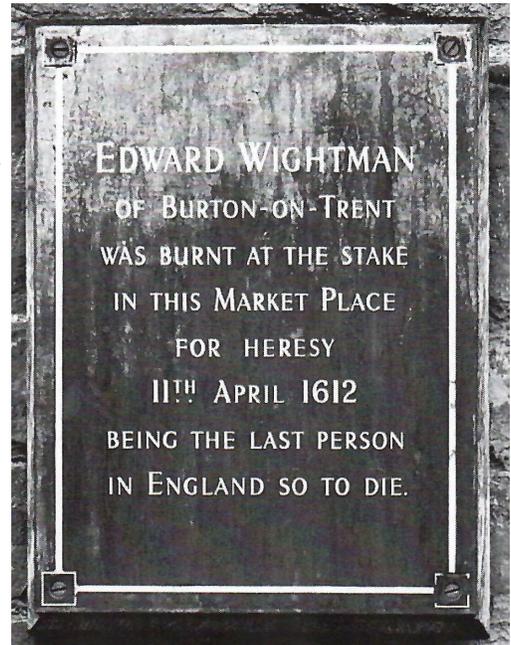
227 The final map is the mid-1650s where the churches of Christ met prior to becoming Baptist over the next two hundred years. As the map shows, it is an extension of the Waldensian, Lollard and Anabaptism areas of heresy of the previous centuries. The people termed by their enemies Waldensian, Lollard, Pelagian and Anabaptist on the maps called themselves the church of Christ, and as individuals, Christians. They baptized by immersion for the remission of sins. They rejected Augustinian theology of inherited depravity (original sin) teaching freewill.

AVAILABILITY OF BIBLES

- 151 It was also the churches of Christ who kept the Bible alive during the dark ages and early reformation period. In England, the Bible of the reformers and the later King James Version was based on the Tyndale and earlier Wycliffe Bible. Which the churches of Christ had a considerable responsibility in producing, as we shall see.
- 169 Prior to the Wycliffe (Lollard) Bible of the 1380s, there had been translations of the scriptures in England, but little is known of them.
- 169 The Roman Catholic Church in the year 1229, banned the Bible to the laity. It was proscribed on the list of forbidden books by the Council of Toulouse!
- 266 Tyndale. The work though, translating and distribution would be illegal, punishable by burning. Several translations were produced, the most notable in 1526 and 1534.
- 268 Tyndale did come from a Lollard background, was associated with the then Churches of Christ, who not only distributed his books, but whose members help finance his Bible translations. (294)
- 270 Tyndale: After a trial, conviction and imprisonment, he was executed in 1536.
- 287 Tyndale was a restorationist, not a reformer.
- 287 Tyndale's N.T. which first appeared in 1526, was translated directly from the Greek third edition of Erasmus and was far superior to Wycliffe's old Vulgate oriented Bible, which was now out of date and difficult to find.
- 298 Far from Roman Catholic versions keeping the Word of God safe, in this and other cases it has been the vernacular Bibles used by Christians which has remained faithful, a tradition kept by Tyndale and continued in the King James and New King James Versions. The Anglo-Saxon Gospel is dated to about AD 597 being translated from the Old Latin, which itself dates back to the Italic which is prior to AD 157.
- 298 The idea that there were not good Bibles before the age of printing is not correct. The Waldensians and Lollards had perfectly good translations of the scriptures.
- 300 It is interesting to note, and a point that seems missed by the higher critics of the Bible, is that the vernacular Bibles were not only very good, from the second century onward that have kept a consistency of text that remains to this day in the KJV and NKJV.
- 342 When Fish so commented, the consequences of owning a Bible included being burned alive.

THE INQUISITION

- 179 A holocaust took place in Europe over several centuries and the victims were mainly Christians and their families. Luther himself in his persecution of Christians made accusations of demonic indwelling.
- 184 Pope after pope issued orders not to spare those who were in league with the devil, but to put them to torture and cast them into the flames.
- 184 The earliest trials for sorcery by the Inquisition were held in Southern France about 1250, and the oldest Interrogatories of the Inquisition on the subject date twenty-five years later.
- 184 Perhaps no chapter in human history is more revolting than the chapter which records the wild belief in witchcraft and the merciless punishments meted out for it in Western Europe in the century just preceding the Protestant Reformation and the succeeding century.
- 194 The number executed (burned) over 300 years in Europe has been estimated at 200,000.
- 194 Eighty percent of those who died were women. And the areas in which they died were where the church of Christ could be found.
- 195 This disproportion is because women were more easily dispatched, without lengthy legal proceedings, as witches, while their menfolk were prosecuted and burned for heresy, more of a lengthy process.
- 210 William Sawtre (or Sawtre, Santree), was burnt alive in March 1401. He was the first Lollard martyr.**
- 231 In a letter to Menais and Mycnius of 1530, Luther stated Anabaptist should be executed.
- 233 In 1208 Innocent III established the Inquisition. In 1209 De Montfort began the massacre of the Albigenses. In 1215, the Lateran enjoined all rulers, "as they desired to be esteemed faithful, to swear a public oath that they would labour earnestly, and to the full extent of their power, to exterminate from their dominions all those who were branded as heretics by the Church."
- 235 Spanish Inquisition – 31,000 persons were burnt.
- 235 Netherlands, reign of Charles V - 50,000 persons were burnt.
- 246 In other words, the persecutions were by the Roman Catholics, Protestants and Anglicans in a holocaust lasting several centuries, meted out a cruelty considerably more evil than anything that Hitler implemented.
- 257 Firth was executed by burning alive, 4 July 1533, aged between 24 and 30....His trial and sentence of heresy was for his denying purgatory and transubstantiation.



- 289 Tyndale was tried on a charge of heresy in 1536 at Antwerp and condemned to the stake, despite Thomas Cromwell's intercession on his behalf. On 6 October 1536, Tyndale was first strangled, then burned, dying for translating the Bible into English.
- 357 Modern medical knowledge informs us that pain receptors in the skin, without which we are not able to feel pain, are destroyed in severe burning.
- 369 The last burnings of believers (Wrightman and Legate) took place during 1612. ... He was burnt at Litchfield on 11th April 1612, two hundred and eleven years after William Sawtre was burnt.**

It is interesting to note that a number (if not most) of the 200,000 people burned at the stake during the inquisition may be what we would consider members of the Church of Christ. It is surely not as simple as that, but if they were declared to be heretics for believing:

- 1 That the sacrament of the altar is not the body of Christ , but material bread, (transubstantiation)
- 2 That the sacrament of baptism and confirmation are not necessary, or profitable for men's souls. (Means they rejected the Roman Catholic rite of infant baptism),
- 3 That confession of sins ought not to be made to a priest,
- 4 That there is no more power given by God to a priest than to a layman,
5. That the solemnization of matrimony (by a priest) is not profitable or necessary for the well-being of a man's soul,
6. The sacrament of extreme unction (at death) is not profitable or necessary to a man's soul, and /or
7. Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins,

then we would certainly feel a kinship with them. If deeper study was possible, it is most likely we would disagree with them on some points, but the basics seem similar.

These statements by Keith Sisman are not what we are frequently told, but a lot of it seems to be what would have reasonably happened. This is posted for your consideration and study. If you would like to respond, let us know at info@occg.institute.