

influence. Graham preached to at least 210 million people in over 185 countries (3). At his famous 1954 Greater London crusade, seventy per cent of the 38,000 who responded publicly to Graham's appeals were for first-time commitment, with only forty per cent being church members (usually nominal) at the time, and sixty-four per cent of the converts were attending church one year later (132-33). Overall, however, there is relatively little focus on this aspect of Graham's ministry – and little acknowledgement of its value.

Perhaps the harshest criticism of Graham is his political involvement, his getting involved with virtually every president from Truman onwards and his getting too close to some of them. This is especially the case with Nixon, whom he encouraged to run for president in 1968 (29, 102). Graham followed this up by announcing prior to voting day that he had already voted for Nixon by absentee ballot – doing the same for George W. Bush in 2000 (113). No wonder that there were guffaws in 1970 when Graham claimed that he was 'totally nonpartisan' (xi).

My focus on the lack of sufficient credit for Graham's role in vast numbers of individual conversions may suggest that I am largely negative towards the book. By no means is this the case. This book very helpfully highlights the weaknesses of preaching that is reductionist in its solutions (*all* problems are solved by coming to Christ) and that fails to address the issues of the day and declare the whole counsel of God. God bless old Billy Graham. Hopefully he will be pleased with a book that causes deeper reflection on the nature and task of the gospel. For it is to that that he devoted his life.

**Laurie Guy**

**Frank W Rinaldi. *The Tribe of Dan: The New Connexion of General Baptists 1770-1891: A Study in the Transition from Revival Movement to Established Denomination*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008. (xxi + 264pp.) [ISBN 978-1-84227-143-8]**

This book, based on the PhD thesis of its author, provides a comprehensive examination of the history of the New Connexion of the General Baptists. It thematically examines that movement from a number of angles including its theological emphases, sociological composition, organisational structure, evangelism and ministry patterns.

The book is particularly helpful in providing an in-depth outline of the events that culminated in the New Connexion as a whole being absorbed into the more comprehensive Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1891. Exploring the factors that directly and indirectly influenced that decision provided an excellent conclusion to the book.

On the other hand I felt the material on the movement's beginnings was less well done. The book portrays the New Connexion as having a separate and sharply delineated identity from the General Baptist parent body from its beginnings in 1770. It is as if a divorce took place then and the parties went their separate ways. It is only fairly late in the book that there is clear indication that this is not the total story, with two delegates from the Old General Baptists attending the annual assembly of the New Connexion in 1890 (190). Other Baptist histories covering the period of Rinaldi's book indicate far more contact: the general assembly of the General Baptists perceiving the New Connexion as a part of the General Baptists in the period 1786-1803 (Brown 99), and Dan Taylor having a leading role as chair and preacher at General Baptist assemblies until 1803 (Brown 105). In addition Briggs indicates some interchange of personnel (as delegates or preachers) between the two sets of assemblies between 1868 and the complete merger of the New Connexion into the Baptist Union (126-27). Rather than the black-and-white picture largely implied by Rinaldi's presentation McBeth's conclusion that 'between 1770 and 1800 the relationship between the Old and New Connexions remained ambiguous' (164) better fits the evidence.

It would have been good also for Rinaldi to have addressed more explicitly the extent to which Wesleyan influence shaped the New Connexion (particularly through Dan Taylor's ongoing ministry in the new body – noting that Taylor chaired all annual New Connexion assemblies bar one for forty-six years). Brown and Briggs seem very aware of this shaping (Brown 111, Briggs 204), but Rinaldi does not seem to me to sufficiently explore this angle. Given Taylor's early Methodism and given Wesley's societies' ongoing relationship with the Church of England as *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*, it seems to be a helpful category in exploring the self-identity of the New Connexion in its early years.

**Laurie Guy**