

## Reviews

**Ian. M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1939* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999).**

This fascinating book surveys a whole range of approaches to spirituality within English evangelicalism in the interwar years. Some of the eight approaches such as the Keswick conventions, Pentecostal spirituality and the Oxford Group (later Moral Re-arming) are well known. Others such as the more liberal Anglican Evangelical Group Movement and the Methodist Fellowship of the Kingdom are less known. Randall's broad survey of evangelical spirituality was very useful in making comparisons between the various approaches and in reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses.

A very positive feature of Randall's book was his discussion of liberal evangelical approaches to spirituality. In the aftermath of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, we tend to forget that not all earlier evangelicals were fully conservative in their Christianity, and that there was a powerful liberal evangelical stream, majoring on love and seeking to engage with the world rather than retreating into an individualistic pietism. Within this stream a strong commitment to evangelism commonly remained. Leslie Weatherhead, for example, threw out challenges in 1933 such as 'When did *you* last lead a soul to Christ?' (p.127).

Most interesting to me were the chapters on the Keswick and Pentecostal movements, as these have been major shapers of New Zealand Baptist spirituality in the twentieth century. In the interwar years in England, Keswick faced major challenge from the young growing Pentecostal movement. The issue was an experiential Pentecostal 'power' baptism over against Keswick's 'faith' baptism – 'believe you have received'. Rather than move towards Pentecostalism, Keswick moved away, increasingly downplaying the significance of experience or a

second blessing, even though those aspects were prominent in the earliest phases of the Keswick movement. Under the influence of key leader Graham Scroggie, Keswick underwent a paradigm shift by the 1930s, focusing on the lordship of Christ rather than on a baptism of the Spirit. The legacy was a widening gap between the two approaches.

Reading this book repeatedly left me with the sense, if only these groups had cross-fertilised each other. None had a truth monopoly and all had strengths from which the others could have drawn. Randall suggests that it took the charismatic 'cocktail' movement in the 1960s to achieve this intermixture: 'a pan-denominational spirituality of the kind pioneered by Keswick but incorporating some aspects of Brethren ecclesiology, embracing a modified Pentecostal pneumatology and exhibiting the cultural relevance of the Oxford Group' (p.278). Was this, however, altogether true? Or did the Charismatic Movement also largely retreat from the world, putting it into the too-hard basket?

I would like to have seen more analysis of social and ecclesiastical context in Randall's book. At the same time I found the work personally gripping. It provoked in me a question for 2000: how does a church find or maintain its vitality at a time of social and spiritual downturn?

**Laurie Guy**

**Grady C. Cothen and James M. Dunn, *Soul freedom* . (Macon, Georgia: Smith and Helwys Publishing, 2000) pp. 129.**

'Baptists are a funny breed, a churchly crowd without a creed.' That's the way it is, and that's the way it ought to be, say Cothen and Dunn. Both authors are as Southern as Kentucky Fried Chicken and as Baptist as the Smith and Helwys title of