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 liberalism to British ethics. 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 dog, John Laine, the correspondent who was associated with the IVF from its inception 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. He assisted him, he recruited some of the most able and energetic graduates of his generation, and did so with the wisdom that he had himself at the centre of a national up roar, when the Cambridge Inter-Colle gate Christian Union (CICCU) invited the US evangelist Billy Graham to speak at its triennial mission to the university in 1953. 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: "If it not true that our religious leaders made it plain 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, in 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 world during which he served with the British 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 forms 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 (NESS). 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 1962.

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 1980s.

Long before this Hurt had switched to nights and moved over to the management side and become Foundry Manager in 1979. He took retirement from The Times in 1986, glad to return to the pleasant availing holidays, which he and his wife had always enjoyed, and tending the garden at their house on the island of Jersey. As a long-supporter of Arsenal, he followed the doings of his team on television and radio alongside his wife until almost the end.

He was survived by his wife Jean Margaret Catherine Bland, from Shetland. She died in 1999 and 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

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 new technology which my old trade union brother Albert Hurt had a vital role, converting the combined labours of rotogravure, Linotype and compositors into a form which could be taken to the printing presses. Albert Hurt — known to all as Bert to his friends and his family — was at The Times for more than 30 years. He became Foundry Manager at the paper in the late 1950s.

It was a world with its own arcane vocabulary, of forms, aprons, plates and founts, of linotype and metal and metalwork, of metal, hand pumping, soldering, trimming and melting metal and metalwork. By the early 1980s, however, the entire process was changing.

The hot-metal Linotype machine used to set type on Times since the 19th century was replaced by computer input and related 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 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