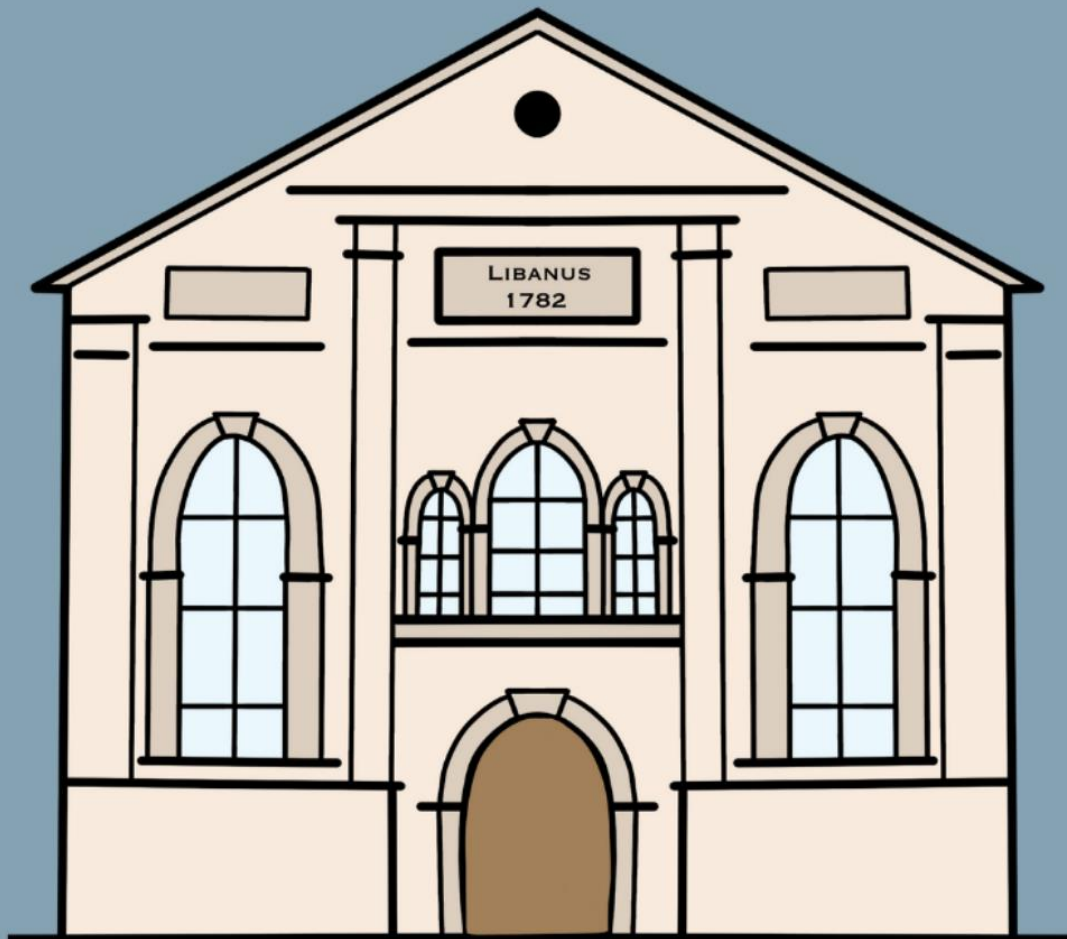


History of
Libanus Church
Morrison
1782-2007



FOREWORD

In compiling a history of a particular Christian Church, it is difficult to do justice since the remaining information and documentation generally deal with buildings of the Church and its Ministers. A local Church is 'a gathered company of the redeemed of the Lord' engaged in worshipping God, telling out the glorious Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ alone, and 'showing' this Gospel in their lives. One cannot convey the sincerity of faith (or lack of it), nor the true fellowship known by the people of the past, nor, above all, the great movings of God the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that the history of Libanus has contained all these, and it is hoped that we can trace and capture these features as we survey the history.

For convenience the account has been divided into three sections otherwise to have put all together would have been unwieldy and verbose. It is our desire that many will benefit from it, particularly the last section on Faith and Practice, and, even other Churches, find material that could well be implemented in this present day.

I am indebted to the following sources: 'Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru' Cyfnol II gan T.Rees D.D. Abertawe a J. Thomas Liverpool (1872) 'Y Cathedral Anghydfwrfiol Cymraeg' gan Trebor Lloyd Evans (1972) and History of Libanus 1873-1938 by Rev.Harold Davies. Grateful thanks are due to Mrs. Margaret Hudson and Mrs.Eirlys Evans of Cwmrhydyceirw for translation work, Mrs.Gillian Figg for art work, and others of Libanus for reading, correcting and typing the script. May the record be used of God to teach, correct, inspire and encourage the spreading of His Gospel of Saving Grace in the coming days.

May 1982

Early Beginnings

It is in about 1640 the story begins proper. A group of people met on the Sabbath and on weeknights, to read the Scriptures and to hold prayer meetings at Cilfwnwr Farm, one mile from the village of Llangyfelach. Soon, they moved to the adjoining farm, Tirdwncyn, in 1660, where they continued as a properly constituted Church until in 1762 the first Independent Chapel was built at Mynyddbach. The Morryston contingent, it is thought, had been holding regular weekly gatherings since 1682 at Tycoch old thatched cottage (which stood at the entrance to Bath Villas and Bath Road) mainly because they lived in the vicinity and were joined often by friends from Llansamlet, and the fellowship at Chwarelaubach, Neath.

These people were noted for their religious fervour, and with the rise of Methodism, prominent itinerant 'exhorters' visited occasionally Tycoch to preach since the old independent Churches were connected with the setting up of Methodist societies. It was not surprising that Tycoch soon became inconvenient, once the population of Morryston increased with the early beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. Copper smelting had begun in 1727 at Llangyfelach, and the Fforest works on the banks of Tawe, through the Duke of Beaufort and Sir John Morris, was commenced in 1754. So under the careful planning of Sir John Morris, and the construction work of Rev. William Edwards the bridge builder, Morryston developed from a village to a town designed upon the 'grid system'.

However, Rev. Lewis Rees, Minister and the people of Mynyddbach Chapel opposed the building of a cause at Morryston, essentially because it was indicative of a 'split' from the Mother Church. They favoured, as previous generations, one large meeting place for the Sabbath services, and 5 or 6 districts, where Sabbath evening and weekday gatherings could meet. Other reasons were, that it would encourage laziness and destroy true Christian fellowship and fervour. Walking many miles to worship on the Lord's Day Morning especially, was considered a proof of religious probity. They firmly believed it was not the spiritual needs of their highly populated district that prompted the desire of a new meeting place, but spiritual indifference on their part.

The First Chapel at Morryston

However, in the providence to God, through the energies of Rev. William Edwards, the people of Morryston were to have their desire. He was a man of great influence with the gentry on account of his skill and fame. Land in Market Street was leased from Sir John Morris of Clasemont for a shilling (5p) a year for 1,000 years.

Through the generous help of many friends, this preacher/ builder handed over the building to Mynyddbach Chapel and its minister, free of debt in 1782. The people of Morryston were provided with a place of worship, the first of any description. The condition was that no Sunday morning services be held, lest the congregation at Mynyddbach be affected, and to prevent it becoming a separate church.

The vision and discipline exercised by the Morryston fellowship is to be admired, many would have insisted on their rights. The name given to the new cause was prophetic in nature. One or

more stood on the little hill overlooking the Tawe area marking the orchards and gardens with the luxuriant growth of Wych-elms. It was like Lebanon to them, so praised in the Bible for its beauty and fruitfulness. The Church was named Libanus (Welsh for Lebanon) with the assurance that "the glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Isaiah 60 : 13). It was a very small square building, something like a country house barn; the floor was of mortar and sprinkled over with sand and a



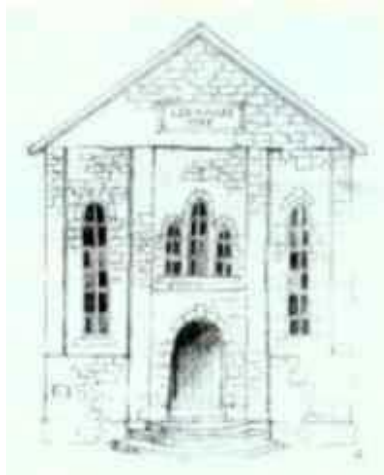
thatched roof. There were no seats but simple benches with a plain pulpit having two steps and a plain reading board in front.

Under the watchful eye of Mynyddbach's minister and people the cause of the Gospel grew and soon was too small. In 1796 Libanus was enlarged with seats installed instead of benches, only to be rebuilt completely by 1831 as a magnificent chapel of its day. Further industrial developments, the first tin works in Morryston, the Upper Fforest, was begun in 1845, contributed to the population growing to 2,000. So, in 1857 the present chapel was completed, and considered to be the largest and most up to date chapel in the neighbourhood, seating 700 people.

A New Future

Wales, the land of Revivals, in 1859 was to know one of its greatest awakenings with the whole of the principality touched. The newly built Chapel was once more proving too small, and with further developments in the area "the days were of unexampled prosperity. There was work for all, with good wages, security of employment" stated an article in the Cambrian newspaper. Land was obtained in Woodfield Street and a new Libanus completed in November 1872 to seat 1,450 people costing £14,000. Eyes turned toward Woodfield Street, and changes wrung in all directions, such that it fast became the main street of the town.

However, the prosperity meant a large immigration of population from all parts of the country, but mainly England, bringing the English language. Alongside, the Cambria News refers to "the idleness and dissipation of the mass of the workers". There was much profanity, drunkenness and Sabbath breaking. It is easy to imagine the consternation and grief all this caused, especially to the godly. But they did not sit down before the new paganism. It roused their missionary zeal and was a challenge to their faith. They believed in the power of the Gospel to "save to the uttermost". They believed in the Church as an elevated and civilizing power and resolved to reopen 'Hen Libanus' for the preaching of the Gospel in English.



The Year 1857

The names of Dr. Rees, minister of Ebenezer Church, Swansea and Rev. W. Emlyn Jones figure much at this time as pioneers in this forward movement. Such was the inroads on the Welsh language that possibly the language could die out, and the Christian faith with it. At strategic points in Swansea, English Churches were founded, and it helped that Rev. Emlyn Jones was "Home Mission Secretary for Wales" on behalf of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. A canvas of the English speaking people of the district was taken and such was the response that on 18th May 1873 Libanus was launched on a new future with "Tabernacl" the name given to the new Woodfield Street Church.

The Cambrian reports under the heading "Old Libanus Church, Morryston". "We understand that since the opening of the splendid new chapel of Libanus (Welsh), arrangements have been made for using the Old Libanus Church as an English Congregational Church and the first service will take place on Sunday evening next. Morryston is rapidly increasing in population and the large works are drawing together a great number of English workmen. The opening of another English place of worship is a boon, which many will doubtless appreciate".

Libanus was once more under the watchfulness of another congregation with the Rev. Emlyn Jones their minister who had now moved to the Tabernacl, conducting the 5 p.m. Sunday Service in English. This time the oversight was not too long, for in a short time two services were held, and the first English Sunday School formed so that it was eventually bought from the Tabernacl trustees for £1,200.

Although trustee appointments did not take place until 1895, they give indication of what strides the Church had made into society in 20 years. They were: William Williams, Maesygwernen Hall (Esquire); John Bernard Gabe. Pentrepoeth House (Physician); George Rowe, Hawthorn Villas (Manager Tin works); Lewis Bishop Lewis, Woodfield Street (Draper); David Evans, Woodfield Street (Ironmonger); Samuel Williams, Crown Street (Ironmonger); William Henry Bowen, Cymrhydyceirw (Chemical Works Manager); David William Evans,

Woodfield Street (grocer); Edwin John Bowen, Cwmrhydyceirw (Accountant); John Samuel Rosser, Pentrepoeth House William Lewis, Woodford Villas (Grocer) and John Alexander Deans, Woodfield Street (Assayer)".

The 20th Century

By the beginning of the 20th century, Libanus had established itself as a prosperous English Church, but prior to the 1904/5 Revival the 'New Theology' had begun to grip English Congregationalism taking away much of the evangelical zeal and the authority of the Scriptures. How much the Welsh pulpits were affected is difficult to assess, but God did graciously visit the Principality once more. Evan Roberts visited Morrision in December 1904 only to consider it one of six hard meetings, and it being the hardest of all. He is reported as having accused the people in coming to be entertained, half of them being asleep, and, needing all to pray and accept Christ, However, further accounts suggested that Morrision, although having escaped the revival meeting was soon ablaze. "The Spirit was long in coming, but it has set in now in earnest", was one report. How the Ministers of the Morrision area reacted is difficult to clarify. They were all present at the United Prayer Meeting at Tabernacl and may well have been fired themselves by the Revival. But the daughter of Rev. W. Dyfodwg Davies related that her father was 'not in favour of young people being out late in prayer meetings' and showed some disapproval when she spontaneously stood to pray in one meeting when her father was present.

Returning to events relating to Libanus, obviously, the Church was set on much activity and in 1907 a Schoolroom to accommodate 300 children was completed alongside the Church at a cost of £1,000. Constructed as part of this building was a fully equipped stage, thus leading the Church into first, Biblical oratorios, cantatas and then, concerts of all descriptions. An annex was attached to the Schoolroom for the young children at the cost of £200. The main Church buildings were to receive necessary redecorations and the present organ was installed at a cost of £800 in 1912. In the 1930's the frontage of the Church was redesigned, new windows installed and fully redecorated inside and out at a cost of £1,230.



Two new groups emerged in the Church's life, the Sisterhood and League of Young Worshippers. The Church could be described in 1938 as "well organized, peaceful and prosperous". With the advent of war, the demands and challenges were to prove to be strenuous and the spiritual resources tested and stretched. The prayer life of the Church waned, and although the early years after the war were opportunities for rebuilding true Christian fellowship in the Gospel of Christ, the foundations of the faith had been eroded, convictions

were low in velocity and people's minds turned to material comforts. Decline was to be evident in 1950 - 60, no regular ministry, and vision became dimmed and lacking.

However, the 1960's provided a new hope and the preaching and teaching of the Evangelical truths reappeared. The Prayer Meeting was reformed, Children's and Young People's meetings begun, a Young Wives Meeting, and a Men's Fellowship. These were hard days requiring much diligence as disappointment and frustration

often resulted. Eventually, God began to work, touching lives with His grace, and as the Gospel truths were received, new possibilities were born. In 1964 a Manse was purchased for £2,850 at a debt of £2,300 which was eventually cleared in 1973.



In 1966 the Church voted not to agree to the formation of the Congregational Church from the Congregational Union of Churches, and in 1969 it was decided to elect the Diaconate every 5 years. May 1973 saw the celebrating of 100 years of continued witness as an English Church with services unforgettable with Dr. D.M. Lloyd-Jones, London; Rev. and Mrs. Vernon Higham, Cardiff; Rev. Luther Rees, Llansamlet and Rev. Derek Swann of Middlesex. Lives were awakened, new contacts made such that the Church still small in membership were led to put the buildings in good order. Work began in September 1973 on the damp-ridden Schoolroom with plans drawn up by an architect, (brother-in-law to the Minister) to rebuild and redesign entirely.

The men folk rallied to this task until February 15th. 1976 saw its re-opening with a Service of Thanks-giving when the preacher was again Dr. D.M. Lloyd-Jones of London. The men were helped greatly by employing a plasterer, roofing contractor and flooring contractor. The cost incurred was £5,500 which was all met from the offerings of the people.



The Church building was next in the scheme, with its reroofing, new windows, redecoration and redesign of the frontage to counter the damp. Heritage year, 1976, brought a gift of £2,000 from the Swansea Council who were not inclined to the frontage alteration. However, in December 1981, after much discussion and applications, agreement was reached. The work coincides with the 200 years celebration, and hopefully is the final chapter in the scheme to put the House of God in order. Apart from this scheme, the Manse was also extended at a cost of £7,000 in 1978 to provide better facilities for its minister.

All this work, together with the retrieving of the spiritual condition has been time consuming, exhausting and inhibiting. One feels that much could have been avoided if the Church had not waned into spiritual lassitude and neglect. The Church is still small in membership (about 70), but the response, giving and support has been tremendously honouring to God. Along with these demands however, the Church began to raise her missionary involvement and has been tithing her weekly offerings since 1975. Concern to evangelise each age group saw in November 1977 the first of the Saturday monthly gatherings for Senior Citizens. She also was led to look to the new Wimpey Housing Estate near Morriston Hospital, and in January 1979 commenced a Sunday morning Sunday School in the Glyncollen Junior School.

Compared with her provisions and her early history, there is plenty of room for expansion and growth, but her eye is open to the future with the clear sounding Gospel as her founders had. Also ringing in her ears is the Scripture promise, "the glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee... and I will make the place of my feet glorious". When further history will be written, may it be that the fire of the Lord fell again on this faithful company and that Morriston once more will have known that "the Lord He is God, the Lord He is God".

The Ministry

The work and witness of a local Church is inevitably linked with its minister and officers, and Libanus is no exception as she has been led through the years.

As a Welsh Chapel

Under the careful oversight of Mynyddbach Chapel, Libanus was nurtured and established for 13 years by Rev. Lewis Rees. He was undoubtedly a man solidly based on the Scriptures and

the only true Gospel. In 1795 Mr. Daniel Davies of Llangeler was received on the retirement of Mr. Rees. It is worth noting that in a short time Mr. Davies saw a group of about 15-20 people leave because they were in favour of Mr. John Davies, Llansamlet, as "helper" to his father-in-law Rev. Lewis Rees, becoming minister. The arrival of Mr. David Davies was greeted with such respect that the group saw this as disrespect for Mr. John Davies. On the death of Rev. Lewis Rees relations became such that they left and set up services in the home of Mr. Evan Rees, Morryston, with Mr. John Davies, Llansamlet, administering the Sacraments. Hardly any "independent" preacher attended their services, but eventually they were by some Methodists and so joined with the Methodists erecting Philadelphia in 1802.

Under the leadership of Rev. Daniel Evans (1808-29) Libanus prospered and became established. With its rebuilding completed in 1831 as 'a magnificent Chapel' it is not surprising that in 1836 William Hughes of Amlwch became the first minister proper as the Church became separate from her mother's care. Although he left in 1841 due to some 'impropriety', undaunted the Church in 1845 invited William Morris, taking care of the Church at Landore also, but only to leave for Birkenhead in 1847. Little is known of their ministries, but undoubtedly it was under Thomas Jones of Swansea (1850-58) that Libanus became known nationally and the present Chapel built. He exercised a much respected and influential ministry until he left for London in 1858.

Rev. G. Herber Evans came from Brecon College in 1862 to exercise a popular and scholarly ministry until in 1865 he departed for Caernarfon. During the years of her Independence, Libanus saw and encouraged men in her ranks and many of excellent calibre are mentioned. Thomas Evans, Williams James, Thomas Richards and John Evans, having many gifts, with the latter of great intellect and a writer of hymns. David Dafydd and Daniel Evans were gifted leaders in the Church and Youth Prayer Meetings, whilst Richard Richards, Joseph R. Lewis, W.M. Davies and Joseph Joseph all trained for the ministry.

It was in 1869 that Libanus looked to W. Emlyn Jones with the powerful preaching of the Gospel, and it was at this time that a fine new building, double in size, was built in Woodfield Street, Morryston. Libanus was steered on a new course as well, as he served in the dual capacity of Minister of both the old and new, Welsh and English Congregations. He continued as Minister of Tabernacl until 1914, and obviously his presence and influence was a great inspiration to all.



As an English Church

Once more Libanus was to be independent, and in 1874 had its first English Minister in Rev. David Miles Jenkins only to leave for Park Road Welsh Church, Liverpool two years later. However, during his time at Morrision he became a great force for religion and righteousness, and he developed into one of the most popular preachers of the day. He was in demand as a 'Gymanfa preacher', and received every honour Welsh Congregationalism had to offer, being one of the founder members of the Congregational Union of Wales. He was a great theologian, modern in outlook and quite familiar with the latest developments in philosophy and science. Two of his sons became English Ministers and figured prominently, namely Rcv.s.S.R.Jenkins and W.Griffith Jenkins.

Rev. Benjamin Phillips came from Brecon College to Libanus in 1877 as a young man of 22 with much expectancy. His ministry was very prosperous and full of promise only to be cut short by pneumonia in the summer of 1880. His ability as a preacher is shown by the approaches that other Churches made to him. His widow married Mr. Williams, Maesywernen Hall and continued to work well in the Church, especially remembering the poor every year.



In 1881 Rev.Cynon Lewis settled as minister and soon impressed the Church as an able preacher and faithful Pastor. Under his tender and fostering care the Church greatly prospered until in 1888 he accepted the invitation to the pastorate of Stockwell Road, London. His son Mr.D.Stanley Lewis, a Bank Manager at Neath related "my own vivid recollections of his life and ministry are these, that consistently throughout he was definitely Evangelical in doctrine and spirit, and was keen in all his advocacy of Peace, Temperance and Anti-Gambling. He was particularly active in service with and for young people and children".



Short ministries seemed to be the pattern of day, but when the Church looked to W.Dyfowg Davies on completing his course at New College, London in the summer of 1888 this was to change. He was to engage upon the longest ministry known in Libanus' history, until his death in 1928 from pneumonia. He was a native of the Rhondda and for some years had served as a teacher under the Rhondda School Board until he felt 'called' to preach the Gospel and entered the Pontypridd Academy for preparatory training, and then to New College. The impression was that he was a forceful and instructive preacher and a friend to all. He gathered around him a prosperous Church crowded with worshippers, a feature being the 'family pew' with one family requiring 13 sittings!



A guild for young people flourished for many years which touched them religiously, educationally and socially. A large and active 'Society of the Good Templars' was founded, and many attributed their temperance principles to it. Many were the achievements under his direction as mentioned in the history, but he also exercised a wider ministry serving as a member of the Swansea School Board and Chairman of the South Wales Congregational Union.

Under his guidance young men offered themselves for the ministry who were: Rev.Caradog Morgan, John Morgan and Joseph Morgan (brothers all settling in the U.S.A.); Benjamin Harris (U.S.A.); T.W.Mason (Norfolk); Joseph James (Borne-mouth); Selwyn Davies (Stockport); and W.J.B.martin (London and U.S.A.). Obviously he wielded great influence and a commemorative tablet is in the Church.

After two years it was the Rev.Harold Davies who came from a pastorate at Gloucester to commence his ministry at Libanus on 1st. October 1929. He was a man of fine character and all-round ability and his manly Christianity and optimism made their impact upon the life of the Church. Many things were attended to, both materially and spiritually, the buildings were seen to and new meetings formed. He is described as " an eloquent and vital preacher, and whilst broadly evangelical is also modern in the best sense, and was a big appeal to thinking

people". He was well blessed, it seems, with statesmanship and tact with much winsomeness and social effectiveness. His ministry continued until his retirement on 26th. June, 1938 when he preached on Acts Chapter 20 verses 26- 27.

With the outbreak of war in September, 1939, it was a bold step to call Rev. H. Haydn Jones of Blaenavon in 1940. His task was to comfort and help in difficult times, and to rebuild in the proceeding years. American soldiers were accommodated in the Schoolroom and constructed the kitchen, but introduced entertainment in the evenings for many. With their departure and the return of many young people from the war, entertainment became the popular trend with a Youth Club figuring prominently.



Difficulties were inevitable, and Mr. Jones left in 1950 for the Church at Whitland. Days were difficult with people getting back on their feet, many were becoming satisfied with material things.

The Church seemed to be stripped of its essentials and little 'fire' of the Gospel as the power of God to save the to the uttermost remained. However, they were days of opportunity and in 1952 Rev Norman Caughley of West Cross was looked to with his Irish fervour and powerful preaching of redemption from Hell by the blood of Christ. Sadly the ministry only lasted one year and although some lives were touched by saving grace, the Church rocked on its heels and the future looked bleak.

Recent History

Libanus continued until 1961 seeing further decline and little prospect of a Minister, until they invited a student of Memorial College (now having moved to Swansea from Brecon) for a summer pastorate. Such was the experiment and the sincere zealous evangelical preaching that he was extended the 'call' to the Church when his college course ended. So Neville F. Rees commenced as Minister on 1st.July, 1962 and is still with us. The task was hard and difficult, things had run down everywhere, but he committed himself to lay the foundations of the true Biblical Christianity. This inevitably led to discussion, opposition, resignations, as well as heartache, tears and patience.



Slowly God began to work, some people professed conversion, the Sunday School teaching became Bible based and put into the hands of young believers. These grew in grace, and brought contacts to the services. No one can fully appreciate all that has gone on in these 20 years. Mr. Rees reports himself that there were scarcely two or three people who knew the truth of what he preached, others nodded approvingly or made little response, some spoke out against the truth. It was like a mission field.

This ministry has brought Libanus back to its early beginnings and vision. The Bible has been established as the sole authority, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ exalted. We thank God that in His grace "a gathered company of the redeemed of the Lord" now constitute the Church with the right spiritual emphasis. However, looking to the future, much remains to be done to establish the faith, and to reach out with the Gospel to meet the challenge of this new period. It is our prayer that the future ministry will be owned of God to build up His people and to direct many sinners into the way of everlasting life.

After 40 years in the ministry, God had new times for the life of church. As Mr. Neville Rees decided to go into retirement. This sparked a new search for a shepherd to guide his people at Libanus. During the five-year search for a new man. The Church was refurbished and given a new lease of life, connecting the main building to the school room, as well as updating the building. This period the church temporarily moved to Morriston Primary School; this united the church in its cause to be united in Christ. In 2007, the church called Stuart Dainty, to the Pastorate, along with His wife and two children. God is continuing to work in the area, but the story will never stop, until Christ Returns.

Faith and Practice

What were the first Christians like at Libanus, what motivated them, and what did they believe and practise? An examination of certain fragments enable us to see that they had a clear and single view of the Christian faith, a great concern for the unity of fellowship of the Gospel, a high view of behaviour, and were fired by the Holy Spirit.

Thomas Rees supplies us with the Covenant compiled by Lewis Davies of Tirdwncyn in 1700, revised by Samuel Jones and Lewis Rees with the approval of the congregation in 1759. It is obvious that the Morryston people adopted the Covenant in 1782. It reads as follows:-

We the undersigned people take the only true God with all our hearts, to be our God and our only hope, and the Lord Jesus as our Saviour and Salvation, and, we take the Holy Spirit as 'Sanctifier', and the teaching revealed by Him - that was sealed by His miracles and is now contained in the Holy Scriptures, in God's law - as the way for our faith and life. By genuinely repenting of all our sins, we intend through the grace of God to give true obedience to Him by endeavouring to be holy towards God and righteous towards men, and having the aforesaid love towards all God's people. We intend to keep communion with them against all the tribulations of the Devil, the world and our own flesh unto death.

We also agree with all our hearts to be and to continue to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ which meets at Tirdwncyn and over which our brother Lewis Rees is the shepherd and superintendent. We intend through the grace of God to listen intently to his teaching and the directives of his ministry; and, we promise to follow his Church rule according to God's Word. We intend to keep the aforesaid communion with this Church in every respect of the worship of God and to subject ourselves to the strictness of our fellow members, so that through this way we may be elevated in knowledge and holiness, and therefore be more fitting to continue our obedience to Christ and the good of the Church so that we will in this and everything else glorify God. Amen.

We need not emphasise that this Covenant was not entertained lightly, but with all seriousness and conviction, and they endeavoured to fully implement it in the way that the Church functioned. When Mynyddbach was built in 1762, the whole district worshipped on the Lord's Day morning, but met in circles (vicinities) in the evening and the weekdays to read the Scriptures, and prayer, to recount sermons and encourage one another in the faith. According to Thomas Rees, there were ten Evangelical Rules for Church life that they followed.

RULE 1: Concerning the life and Evangelical behaviour of our members

Be diligent in observing each other's ways and attitudes, ensuring that you do not offend neither Jew, nor Gentile, nor the Church of God (1 Cor. 10, v.31-33); and in all things answerable to the commandments of Christ and the glory of the Gospel (Phil. 1v.27; Heb. 12v.14,15; 1 Peter 1 v. 15, 16.). If any brother or sister sins it is your duty to chastise him/her, but with love (Gal.6v.1; Matt.18 v.15; Levit. 19 v.17; 2 Thess.3 v.15; James 5 v.19,20). But if the chastisement is not heeded and the sinner persists, it is your duty to take one or two with you to chastise him again until he repents, but if this is of no avail, you must then tell the Church (Matt.18v.17).

RULE 2: Concerning the unity of the Church.

You must work diligently and use all your strength to support and maintain the unity of the Church (1 Cor.v.10; Phil.2v. 13; 2 Cor. 13 v.11; Acts 4v.32; Ephes. 6 v.3), and to this purpose you should be watchful, and carefully keep the 'cause' from being harmed, and, beware of those who cause dissension in the Church (Rom. 16 v.17)

Beware of the sweet talk of the false teachers who hold heretical beliefs and who err against all true teachings (Acts 20 v.29; 1 Tim 6 v.3; Rev.2 v.14,15).

Should a member in any way be tempted by one of these heretics, it is our duty to plead with him/her, using every effort to prevent him from breaking his Covenant with the Church, of which he has become a member according to Ephesians, 4 v.16. If this task is too difficult for you yourself, your duty is to take another brother with you, to advise him/her. If that does not work your duty is to inform the Church of the person's troubles and then the Church should do its duty by him/her.

RULE 3: Concerning the worship of God in His Church

- i. Look at every member very carefully in case anyone within your sight (vicinity circle) is neglecting his duties in worshipping God in the public meetings that is, when he is praying or listening to the preaching of God's Word or listening to teachings that will lead him astray (Prov.19 v.27; 2 Tim.4 v.34).
- ii. Note also within your circle those who neglect to partake of the Communion Service (Acts 20 v.7; Acts 2 v.42 & 46; 1 Cor.11 v.1; 1 Thess.2v.14).
- iii. Also note if anyone in your circle misses special services for prayer in the Church (Hebs.10v.25;Acts12v.5-12).

RULE 4: Concerning the rules and worship of God in the family circle

- i. Look at the head of each family and see if he is upholding the worship of God in his family, that is, praying with them and reading the Holy Scriptures to them (Acts 10 v.1;Jerem.10 v.25; John 5 v.39; Rev.1 v.3).
- ii. See to it also that they take care, according to God.s Word to teach their children to fear the Lord and to have faith in Him (Ephes.6 v. 4; Deut.6 v. 6,7; Prov.22 v.6; 2 Tim.3 v.15).
- iii. Watch them diligently to see if they are keep-ing the Lord's Day holy, and that they respect it. See that no one in your circle is guilty of allowing their children or relatives to abuse the Lord's Day.

RULE 5: Concerning the care of the poor of the Church

Do your utmost to get to know the members of your circle, especially those who look outwardly to be poor and in obvious need of help from the Church (Deut.15 v.7; 1 John 3 v.17). Go to them personally and discuss with them their plight - make their position known to the Church, encouraging them by using quotations from the Scriptures, to contribute freely to the poor so

that their present needs are fulfilled, thereby relieving some of their burden in the day of their trouble (Gal.6 v.2; Hebs.13 v.3).

RULE 6: Concerning our own spiritual needs and tribulations

Ask yourself about another's tribulations, so that you can help each other, as Christians should (Acts 12 v.5). It is a corrupt member who does not sympathise with another's misfortune (2 Cor.11 v.29).

If one member is cast down - whose soul is disturbed - who is without hope, your duty is to support him according to your ability and knowledge, and to comfort and console him (1 Thess.5 v.14). Pray with him also, inform the Church of his condition, so that the Church may pray for him (Acts 12 v.5).

RULE 7: Concerning the work (employment) of our members

Be a good example of godliness to your fellow members (Matt.5 v.16). You must always be industrious in your daily calling (1 Cor.7 v.17). It is your responsibility to see that all the members of your circle have an honest occupation unless, of course, they are old or infirm, because idleness is one of Sodom's sins (Ezekiel 16 v.49). It is better to count such 'idlers' as Citizens of Sodom than to suffer them in the Church, it is against the rule of the Church to suffer them (2 Thess. 3 v.16).

We cannot promise ourselves any comfort by associating with these pretentious unruly types - only shame and disgrace in the years of their youth will we know, and they will be a heavy burden in their old age - so it's our responsibility to spot these people in time and to warn them.

RULE 8: Concerning the sick and the infirm

Your duty is to visit the sick and infirm (Job 2 v.11; James 5 v.14; Matt.25 v.36). It is especially your duty to visit those whose inner or external conditions or worries emphasise their tribulations - or whose circumstances make their troubles harder to bear - such as the poor, orphans, widows, strangers, and the like (James 1 v.27). After you yourself have fulfilled your responsibilities towards them you should make their illness and affliction known to the Church, so that the Church may pray for them (James 5 v.14-16).

RULE 9: Concerning the spiritual development of each other.

It is your duty to meet together for the spiritual fortification and development of each other (Jude v.20; Thess. 5 v.11; Malachi 3 v.16; Ephesians 4 v.16). For this purpose, the most suitable time is after the Sabbath services and everyone within your circle should:-

- i. Call upon the name of the Lord (Matt.18v. 19-20). Read God's Word (Acts 8 v.32). Recount sermons (Hebs.2 v.1).

- ii. Sing praise to the Lord (1 Cor.14 v.26)
- iii. Teach yourselves from the Scriptures to grow in love, knowledge, experiences, Christian talk, and to use the God-given gifts.
- iv. Everyone should contribute according to his ability, to the spiritual feeling of the service, because our time is short and the days are evil. Let us spend the time left to us, in serving Him who died for us. 0 let us not conform to the ways of the world, nor the ways of the carnal people who live in it!

RULE 10: Concerning marriage

Every member who proposes the Christian faith should make sure he marries "in the Lord" when God calls him to change his state (1 Cor.7 v.39; Genesis 34 v.14; 2 Cor.6 v.14).

If there is someone in your circle who is going to break this rule - who is talking about marrying a heretic or one who is ungodly or wicked in this life, or who is opposed to religion - then you should warn him of the consequences (Deut.7 v.4; Nehemiah 13 v. 28).

The miscreant should be warned of his misdeed and if this does not appear to work, then you should acquaint the Church of it.

From these rules we can see how that the Church was to function as one body (or family) with each member responsible for each other. There were the minister and the officials, but the whole Church acted towards this grand objective. In fact, to carry out the rules, ten questions were used when either the Church met at 'special' times, or, most likely, in their monthly or quarterly Church meeting, or even weekly in their own circle/ seiat type meeting. The questions were used, obviously, in order that the Church engages in positive prayer.

Ten Questions

Investigations or questions beneficial to ask Church officials, at special meetings, to find out whom in our midst are neglecting to keep these rules.

1. Do you know if there is anyone in your circle who is living contrary to the Gospel, or delinquent in their lives?
2. Do you know of anyone who is uneasy (restless) who is trying to dismate, to separate from the Church, within your circle?
3. Do you know of any member who is guilty of neglecting worshipping God in the public assembly or the Lord's Supper, or the special meeting, in your circle?
4. Do you know of any member who is the head of the family and who is neglectful of the worship of God in his family or leaves his children without instructing them in the teaching of the Lord, or who does not keep the Sabbath holy?
5. Do you know of anyone who is under a cloud or suffering from another unusual calamity within your circle?
6. Do you know of anyone who is living a pretentious life -who is an empty talker and idle - who is not in our honest calling, in your circle?
7. Do you know if any member is poor and who needs help from the Church? Have you talked to him about his condition?
8. Do you know if anyone in your circle is ill or afflicted?
9. How diligently do you meet to support one another at the end of the Sabbath (the Lord's Day) in fortifying yourself in the faith?
10. Do you know if any member is talking about marriage to an ungodly person or one who opposes, religion in your circle?

It is not surprising that from 1700 through the establishing of Libanus to the building of Tabernacle in 1872, the Church was 'kept' in the evangelical foundation outlined, which speaks much of the people's sincerity and favour, but also the effects of wave after wave of religious revivals in Wales during 1735- 1859. The Holy Spirit poured out, with the apostles' doctrine and practice, makes the Church a mighty weapon as seen on the day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2.

From the deeds of Tabernacle compiled in 1872 we are able to have a concise statement of faith to answer the question what Gospel was preached and taught then.

The Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and their Supreme Authority as the Rule of Faith and Practice.

1. The coexistence of three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Unity of the Godhead.
2. The fall and depravity of man and the absolute necessity of Grace and Power of the Holy Spirit for regeneration and sanctification.
3. The Incarnation of the Son of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, His atonement for the sins of mankind, and the free justification of all who believe in Him.
4. The predestination into eternal life according to the gracious purpose of God of a multitude that no man can number, which in no way interferes with the moral freedom of man and his duty to seek his own salvation and that of others.
5. The immutable authority of the Law of God as the rule of human conduct.
6. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgement, when the wicked shall go away to everlasting punishment but the righteous into life.

Since 1872

Congregationalism nationally was to suffer at the hands of the New Theology at the end of the 19th. Century and this filtered through to the Welsh pulpit. The effects of the 1859 Revival had waned, and the 1904/5 Revival did not arrest the situation as far as Morriston was concerned. Evan Roberts referred to Morriston as hard. As for Libanus the Schoolroom with its fully equipped stage, shortly caused the Church to take a new image. A social and entertaining emphasis came to be evident, with the religious and spiritual life contained to the Sunday with a small nucleus in the Prayer Meeting.

Sacred music appeared increasingly with conductors appointed. The liberal Theology certainly took the Church away from its evangelical doctrine and practice, and with 'doubt' in the community and a lack of charity and certainly in the Church, decline was inevitable.

Bringing the record to present times, a re-building of the altar of 'the Lord has been necessary by bringing back the 7 'stones' of 1872 or the 10 of 1759 to stand once more where our fathers stood. Libanus has affiliated herself to both the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches and the Evangelical Movement of Wales, accepting the Confession of Faith of such bodies and applying it to the Church officers. A basis of Membership too had been embraced which comprises of 6 questions put to the prospect candidate in a meeting of the Church.

The task has not been easy, but the putting of the house in order is fundamental to the evangelising of the community. We look now for the same fire to fall that ignited the souls of our founders to make Libanus again that fruitful place, the Lebanon of God.