



The Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches

**CONGREGATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS**

**Newsletter
and information for the churches**

Office Manager

Mr Anthony Harrison
P O Box 34
Beverley
HU17 0YY
(01482) 860324
efcc@efcc.karoo.co.uk

February/ March 2017

EFCC MISSION STATEMENT

**TO BE A FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES EFFECTIVELY
WITNESSING TO THE GOSPEL IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

We want to achieve this by promoting:-

- **Gospel Truth** Advancing Evangelical Christianity through Independent Churches.
- **Gospel Fellowship** Promoting fellowship and encouraging prayer, co-operation and mutual support for the churches as they witness to the gospel.
- **Gospel Independence** Bearing witness to the Scriptural principles of the autonomy of the local church and the freedom of believers in Christ.

Book Review

Michael J. Ovey. *Your Will be Done: Exploring Eternal Subordination, Divine Monarchy and Divine Humility*. London: Latimer Trust, 2016.

Ovey's monograph is based on a paper he submitted to evangelical bishops of the Church of England at the beginning of 2015. The format is similar to a doctoral thesis which may put some readers off what is otherwise a short and clearly explained book on an important but little understood topic. The cogent flow of thought builds a compelling argument, grounded in orthodox historical theology, for the eternal subordination of the Son of God.

Each chapter focuses on a particular argument contributing to the central thesis that the person who is the eternal Son of God is a true son, and as such submits to the Father, and is consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Ovey discusses this thesis in four interrelated contexts. First, the Arian controversy surrounding the council of Nicaea (325 AD), secondly, the biblical material, specifically the Gospel of John, thirdly, the Christological doctrine of dyothelitism, fourthly, the theological consequences for the issues of power, individualism and virtue. Many of these include interaction with two pertinent works of Kevin Giles on the eternal subordination of the Son. The bibliography and footnotes of Ovey's monograph serve to guide the reader to further reading in the primary sources, particularly in the Church Fathers.

Ovey very helpfully discusses the issue of the eternal subordination of the Son with reference to several significant theological problems that are less frequently debated than they were in previous centuries. These issues include divine monarchy and its concomitant heresy modalism, and the relationship between Christ's divine and human wills, and the will of the Triune Godhead. Unfortunately, the latter issue is not brought

to a sufficiently clear conclusion in chapter 6, but the former is beneficial and concise. Chapter 7 succinctly surveys the state of Western civilisation, and powerfully applies the central thesis in a way that clarifies many controversial issues in our churches and in our cultures.

Ovey draws our attention to the relevance of the doctrine of eternal subordination to the contemporary debate over the ordination of women, and the marriage relationship. Drawing on Augustine of Hippo, he asserts that loving authority and loving obedience within the full equality of the Trinity brings great joy and meaning when it is reflected in marriage, and in church leadership. Furthermore, when eternal subordination is understood correctly in the Trinity, it demonstrates that humility, obedience, and love, are rooted in the eternal Triune Godhead.

By way of critique, I would like to mention two shortcomings. First, Ovey's articulation of Arianism is slightly simplistic, however, a more nuanced presentation would be extremely difficult given the limited space of the monograph. Chapter 2 is the historical prolegomena to chapter 3 in which he treats Arianism almost entirely in the context of Nicaea. The second footnote of this chapter distinguishes between the Nicene Creed and its reformulation produced by the Council of Constantinople (381 AD). However, this critical distinction is not satisfactorily worked out in the main text, and the Nicene Creed produced by the council in 325 is often assumed to have been fully accepted as the statement of orthodoxy almost immediately.

Furthermore, Ovey frequently conflates the theologies of the two councils in a way that ignores the multifaceted and amorphous nature of fourth century Arianism.

Secondly, Ovey in general interacts with other works very charitably. However, in dialogue with Jurgen Moltmann, he draws from only two of

Moltmann's works according to the bibliography. This is not enough to present a full orb'd account of Moltmann's articulation of the intra-trinitarian relations, which results in a one-sided presentation of Moltmann's position. The focus of this dialogue is Moltmann's exploration of Christ's use of 'Abba' in the Gospel of Mark. Ovey argues that Moltmann uses this to exclude authority in the relationship between the Father and the Son. However, elsewhere in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, and in other works, Moltmann expressly articulates the obedience of the person of the Son to the Father in a way that inherently includes authority.

Overall, this book is highly accessible, despite the intricacy of its subject matter. Its timely arrival will, God willing, enable readers to come to biblical conclusions about a number of controversial contemporary issues, and to reach a more solid and coherent theological position that is built upon a rich understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. I would commend it to a wide-ranging audience, both as a reference book, and one that is well worth reading and re-reading.

Thomas Brand

Pastor of Binfield Heath Church, and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Durham

Published with kind permission from Affinity Foundations Journal.

Please note that book reviews are the opinion of the reviewer and not necessarily the position of the EFCC.

FORTHCOMING CHURCH EVENTS

If you send details to the office we will include them on the EFCC website

Change of details – we are grateful for those churches who keep us informed regarding changes. Please e-mail changes to David Smith efcc1@efcc.karoo.co.uk or send in by mail.

EFCC 2017 AGM 12th-13th May

Aldersholt Congregational Church

Details will be sent out in February.

Please find below a list of possible places to stay:

Premier Inns

Christchurch West Hotel	0871 527 8252
Christchurch East Hotel	0871 527 8250
Highcliffe	0871 527 9276
Lymington	0871 527 8692

Travel Lodges

Ringwood	08719 846237
Lyndhurst	08719 846200

Independent smaller B&Bs in vicinity

Aldersholt Mill	01425 653130
Augustus John	01425 652098
Wheelers Cottage	01425 650454

This is just a sample of some of what is on offer, believe it will be simpler and probably cheaper for folk to make their own bookings especially if booked in advance.

Value Prayer support for:

Trust Board meeting 21st February 2017.

EFCC Committee meeting 6th – 7th March 2017, Kings Park Centre, Northampton

EFCC Committee

Please note that Rev. Bill Harrow has stood down as Vice-Chairman of The EFCC Committee, the reason for this is for Bill to concentrate his time and energies at Puckeridge Chapel. Bill and Jan Harrow are involved in re-establishing the work at Puckeridge.

The EFCC Committee have agreed that Rev. Bill Calder will take on the role of Vice-Chairman in the short-term.

EFCC LADIES CONFERENCE

1st April 2017 10 am – 3.30 pm

Speaker: Jane McNabb

Venue: Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton.

Option of overnight stay on the 31st March.

Booking form with the Church Contact or use the one below.

(Note dates for **2018** 13th-14th April)

2017 STUDIES CONFERENCE 25th March (new date)

Dr Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AR

Full details mailed out in November.

Hope you will be able to join us, please return the booking form soonest to aid planning. Packed lunch required, drinks provided.

For Ministers and Church Officers and other leaders

IN-SERVICE TRAINING - Saturday 24th June 2017

Venue:

Droylsden Independent Church
Ashton Hill Lane, Droylsden M43 7UB
Fuller information to follow.

AFFIRMATION OF ONENESS – just a reminder to ensure the cards are returned as soon as possible.

National Living Wage -- Current rates

(see Gov website - <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>)

These hourly rates are for the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage from 1 October 2016.

Year	25 and over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
October 2016 (current rate)	£7.20	£6.95	£5.55	£4.00	£3.40

Website Login

We now have added a login on the website for church Contact/Secretaries that will give access to documents and enable you to submit church news for inclusion in the next issue of Prayer Concern. All we need is your e-mail address and a password of your choice to set up. Please contact David Smith with this information by phone or e-mail efcc1@efcc.karoo.co.uk

It has been suggested that we have available a page on the EFCC website that would be a "market place" for ministry resources. Resources that have already been used in churches and can be made available for other churches either free or at a reduced cost. For example, Holiday Bible Club materials (including resource books, videos some handouts) that could be used elsewhere. Or assembly resources for school ministries.

It could also be used for retiring ministers down-sizing their library.

To be sent into the EFCC office electronically for uploading

Devotions

We meet for prayer in the office at 9.30 a.m., please advise us of any prayer matters

Congregational & General Charitable Trust

(information received in the office)

Previously part of the Congregational and General Insurance Company, the Trust became independent of the Company in 2016.

To reflect our new status we have launched a new website:

www.candgtrust.org.uk

We are an independent grant-making charity. Our aim is to support churches, particularly those of the United Reformed and Congregational denominations, in the provision and repair of suitable buildings. Please encourage churches who are engaged in building work to apply to the Trust for help. Full details are on the website

Grant applications are now considered on a quarterly basis and full details of how to apply are on our website.

We would appreciate your support by advertising the above information on your website and updating any information you hold on file with the new addresses and contacts.

Trish Thorpe

Trust Administrator

Email: Trish@candgtrust.org.uk

www.candgtrust.org.uk

Correspondence should be sent to:

Trust Administrator

Congregational & General Charitable Trust

PO Box 1111

LINCOLN

LN5 0WJ

Congregational & General Charitable Trust

Registered Office: 33 George Street, Wakefield WF1 1LX

Charity Registration No. 297013. A Limited Company registered in

England No. 2114948

The CONGREGATIONAL FUND BOARD

(Founded 1695) (Reg. Charity)

Make grants to help

Ministers, including Student Ministers,
facing “sudden and exceptional expenditure”.

The Board also makes gifts to Aged or Infirm Ministers usually
upon Regional Minister’s Recommendation.

Gifts and Bequests welcomed

Details from the Clerk,

Rev. G. T. Holborn

4 Applegarth Mews, Crescent Street, Cottingham

East Yorkshire HU16 5SS

Tel: (01482)849647

Email: revtre2@revtre.karoo.co.uk

From October 2017

Rev. Ian Jones, 52 Orchard Close, Norwich,

Norfolk NR7 9NZ

Tel: 07940 384545

E-mail: revianjones@hotmail.com

All enquiries via the EFCC office who will contact the
Congregational Fund Board on your behalf.

Friday Evening 31st March – Saturday 1st April 2017

Friday Evening – Informal Fellowship

Saturday Day Conference

10.00am – 3.30pm

Speaker: **Jane McNabb**

from The Slade Evangelical Church, London

Topic: **“Wonderfully Made”**

(Made in God’s Image, Remade in God’s Image)

Venue: **Kings Park Conference Centre,**

Kings Park Road, Moulton Park Northampton NN3 6LL

£77 shared room Fri/Saturday (single room supplement £14.40)

The cost covers all refreshments and meals

£24 Saturday conference only includes lunch and refreshments during the day.

All the above costs are inclusive of a £5 Conference Fee

.....
.It would be helpful to have the booking forms by the end of January 2017

Name.....Church.....

Address.....

Tel.....Email.....

I would like to book for the EFCC Ladies Conference in 2017 (please tick requirements).

Friday and Saturday with shared overnight accommodation Yes No

Friday and Saturday with single accommodation Yes No

Saturday only Yes No

Please send your completed booking form with details of any dietary requirements and a deductible **£10 booking fee** (cheques made payable to EFCC) to Mrs Pam Harrison EFCC Office, PO Box 34, Beverley, HU17 0YY by the end of January 2017 to guarantee a place.