

STUDIES IN
EVANGELICAL
HISTORY
AND THOUGHT

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUE CHURCH

Brethren and Evangelicals in
Mid-Twentieth-Century England

Foreword by
Harold Rowdon

Westminster Central Hall, London



'Indispensable for understanding both
Brethrenism and English evangelicalism
in the twentieth century'

Neil T. R. Dickson

ROGER SHUFF

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUE CHURCH

Roger Shuff holds that the influence of the Brethren movement on wider evangelical life in England in the twentieth century is often underrated. This book records and accounts for the fact that Brethren reached the peak of their strength at the time when evangelicalism was at its lowest ebb, immediately before World War II. However, the movement then moved into persistent decline as evangelicalism regained ground in the post war period. Accompanying this downward trend has been a sharp accentuation of the contrast between Brethren congregations who engage constructively with the non-Brethren scene and, at the other end of the spectrum, the isolationist group commonly referred to as 'Exclusive Brethren'.

Besides being the first scholarly study of Brethrenism in England for nearly forty years, the book will find a wider audience among present and former adherents of the Brethren movement in its various guises. It also offers useful insights for Christian leaders and other professionals who find themselves with pastoral care for people upon whom their encounter with the Brethren has had a profound psychological impact.

'Roger Shuff's even-handed historical analysis is full of surprises. He succeeds admirably in illuminating how the interplay between the various Brethren groups and cultural and religious change left the movement further diversified. His work is indispensable for understanding both Brethrenism and English evangelicalism in the twentieth century.'

Neil T. R. Dickson, Editor *Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review*

'This work combines careful scholarship with exceptional readability, and breaks fresh ground in its relation of developments among mid-twentieth-century Brethren to contemporary trends within wider Evangelicalism and British culture. I warmly welcome its appearance.'

Tim Grass, Associate Tutor in Church History, Spurgeon's College, London, UK

'This excellent study is the product of thorough research and offers a range of perceptive new insights into the various groups of Brethren in England. It breaks new ground in showing their distinctive features and their relationship to wider evangelicalism.'

Ian M. Randall, Lecturer in Church History and Spirituality, Spurgeon's College, London, UK

Roger Shuff grew up in Croydon, Surrey, and worked for the Lord Chancellor's department before training for Baptist ministry at Spurgeon's College. His BD dissertation surveyed the growth of exclusivism in the Brethren movement in which he was raised. In 1998 he became pastor of Westerham Evangelical Congregational Church and completed the doctorate on which this book is based at Spurgeon's College.

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Further commendation:

'The Brethren movement, with its high view of the church and its weekly Lord's Supper, grew from the 1930s to the 1950s contributing scholarship as well as impetus to a wider Evangelicalism. Its Exclusive branches, here identified as connexional, stood apart, but the largest grouping, the Taylor Brethren, were dragged into the public gaze by the policies of an authoritarian leadership. Many of the Open Brethren, here called independent, became absorbed into the Evangelical resurgence they had helped to create. Such is the story Roger Shuff tells - with judicious evaluation of the primary sources, a well developed sense of proportion and an eye for the unexpected.'

*David Bebbington, Professor of History,
University of Stirling, UK*

Copies of the book can be obtained through booksellers, or direct from the publishers:-

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