

BOOKS

New book looks at the legacy of Enniskillen preacher Edward Cooney – and a global church with no name

by CIARÁN FLAHERTY

A new book examining the “shrouded history” of a church with no name and the influence of one Enniskillen man on this church is now on sale.

‘Preserving the Truth: The Church without a Name and Its Founder, William Irvine’ was written by American, Cherie Kropp-Ehrig, who was born into this nameless church.

Plagued with many unanswered questions, she began investigating her church of origin – a difficult task, due to the scarcity of written material and academic research.

The book looks at how at the turn of the 20th Century, Irvine experimented with the restoration of the First Century primitive New Testament ministry and church, modelled on Matthew 10.

In Northern Ireland, the movement gained considerable impetus and flourished after Irishman Edward Cooney joined in 1901.

He was a son of the prominent Enniskillen family, Wm. Rutherford and Maria Cooney, a successful drapery merchant based at High Street (now the location of

Grahams).

His bold, powerful preaching attracted large crowds, gained converts – and also generated outrage, riots and publicity in Ireland.

The press dubbed Cooney the ‘Hot Gospeller’ of his time.

As Irvine’s right-hand man and as an outstanding, well-respected early leader, Cooney was frequently discussed and quoted in newspapers, including The Impartial Reporter.

In 1904, Enniskillen residents were shocked as thousands of converts arrived in their midst to attend a four-week convention held at Croknacrieve, Ballinamallard, on a member’s farm.

Conventions were used to recruit, to further indoctrinate converts, and to send out new missionaries. Then in 1914, Irvine’s senior staff mutinied and demoted Irvine, and in 1928, they excommunicated Cooney.

Loyal followers of Cooney split off and formed a separate group (confusingly, also referred to as Cooneyites).

After erasing their names, roles and actions from their history, the successive sect leaders decep-



Edward Cooney’s parents.

tively began to claim that Jesus was their only founder, and that their physical history was untraceable.

So successful was their cover-up that even today, many members are unaware of their doctored history and banished

founder.

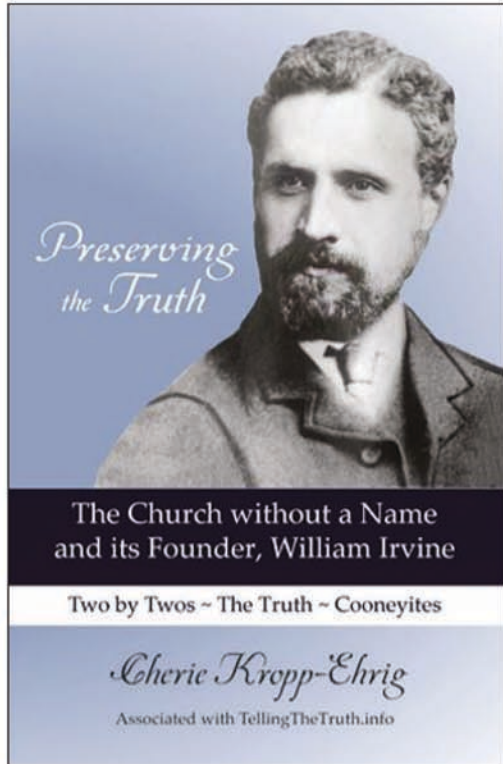
Determined to trace the origin of this worldwide sect, Cherie Kropp-Ehrig discovered its deeply buried roots in Ireland and historical proof revealing the long hidden founder/pioneers, Wm. Irvine and Edward Cooney.

She gives a lot of credit to The Impartial Reporter for this paper’s excellent coverage and for printing news articles about the sect at the time.

‘Preserving the Truth’ presents a fascinating glimpse into this unique, low-profile church, exposing many of its secrets for the first time, while providing and preserving countless historical details that were almost lost, such as its early development, outreach, key figures, pivotal events, teachings, traditions, schisms, scandals, excommunication, exoduses, tragedies, betrayals, riots, divisions and more.

This enlightening and interesting book will appeal to the curious and answer questions many have entertained regarding the beliefs and practices of this unassuming low-profile worldwide sect.

Order your copy at <https://tinyurl.com/7sfxtxj>.



Preserving the Truth: The Church without a Name and Its Founder, William Irvine by Cherie Kropp-Ehrig.