



2012 MORLAN ANNUAL LECTURE

From Plas Gogerddan to Cardiff Bay

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Morlan

Canolfan ffydd a diwylliant
Centre for faith and culture



Background

Morlan is a centre that aims to promote community life – culturally and spiritually, locally and further afield. It was established in April 2005 to create a bridge between the church and the local community and has developed into an important centre in the area.

But Morlan is so much more than just a building ...

It's a meeting-place – to create and discuss, to perform, to learn, to promote and encourage, to understand one another, to share and contribute ... a common ground between the church and all who live in our multicultural society.

Morlan is a welcoming and friendly place that reflects those principles that bind the human race and all races and creeds together. The trustees of Capel y Morfa, the Welsh Presbyterian Church that owns the centre, consider the establishment and support of Morlan as central to their mission.

Its various rooms – a large hall, two committee rooms and a coffee bar – can be hired for all sorts of events and activities, and it has the facilities for musical and dramatical performances. And it's a busy place! Prayer meetings, Welsh classes, dance classes, a lip reading group and youth club take place there on a weekly basis, and several local groups use Morlan as their 'home', holding regular meetings there. The place is used by both local groups and national organisations.

In addition, Morlan has its own programme of activities and events that it organises and hosts throughout the year on a wide range of themes – social, political, religious and cultural themes.

Between this programme of events and the activities of the hirers, all sorts of events take place at Morlan – committee meetings, conferences, plays, concerts, all sorts of fairs, public meetings, social events, lectures, debates and art exhibitions.

Morlan's first Annual Lecture was held in April 2010 during the celebrations to mark Morlan's 5th anniversary (*Religion and Politics: The Most Reverend Doctor Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales*). This was followed in 2011 by a lecture on the theme *Dying Well Matters* by Baroness Finlay. This is therefore Morlan's third Annual Lecture; it was delivered on 19 April 2012.

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1841 was the first time that an official census was held in these countries since the days of William the Conqueror, and browsing through the results is an entertaining and interesting way to while away a few empty hours.

For reasons that will become apparent soon enough, I was recently looking through the records of a parish not far from Aberystwyth, namely Trefeurig.

There are two things that strike you at once about Trefeurig in 1841; firstly that Penrhyn-coch was very impoverished, small and insignificant place, and secondly that only a handful of parish residents had been born outside Cardiganshire. Neither of these things could be said to be case today.

One of the few foreigners living in Trefeurig was Thomas Roderick. According to the census, he was born in “Scotland” and was a labourer.

Thomas himself could probably have been more specific regarding his birthplace, which suggests to me that someone completed the form on his behalf, and that he was illiterate, or maybe lazy! Literate or not, it is unlikely that either he or others of his class had the education or the knowledge to be truly political creatures.

One in seven men in the United Kingdom were entitled to vote by 1841 and we can be sure that Thomas was not one of them. It is therefore unlikely that the big questions of the day were of any concern to him as he eked out a living for his family.

According to family mythology, Thomas Roderick came to Wales to work as a keeper on the Gogerddan estate. I’m inclined to believe this mythology.

One of my earliest memories is standing on a chair as a small boy to recite the bloodiest piece of poetry in the Welsh language, to the delight of a group of elderly aunts. You may be familiar with it.

*I blas Gogerddan heb dy dad!
Fy mab erglyw fy llef,
Dos yn dy ôl i faes y gad,
Ac ymladd gydag ef.
Dy fam wyf fi, a gwell gan fam
It gollit' th waed fel dwfr
Neu agor drws i gorff y dewr
Na derbyn bachgen llwfr.¹*

[To Plas Gogerddan without your father / My son hear my cry / Go back to the battlefield / And fight with him. / I am your mother, and a mother would prefer / You to lose your blood like water / Or open the door to the body of a brave man / Than accept a cowardly boy.]

¹ *I Blas Gogerddan*, John Ceiriog Hughes

I don't foresee that this will be included on the list of Urdd recitation pieces in the near future!

One thing is for sure – if Thomas did work on the Gogerddan Estate, he did not last long there. He may have stolen a hare from the estate or even a kiss from one of the 'Pure Prices' but before long the whole family was working in the lead works. These were such a hell on earth that they made the coalmines of south Wales appear like heaven under ground – and so like many other Ceredigion families the Rodericks were lured by the Welsh Klondike in the Rhondda and did very well there.

By the end of the century the men of the family still worked underground but were people of status in Clydach Vale – they worked as colliers and hauliers – but were also chapel elders, Sunday school teachers, and in one case, a Liberal councillor.

The next generation saw the first Roderick going to college; another Thomas, although he was known as T.M. I would have called him Tad-cu [grandfather], had he not left us long before my time.

After studying at the Independents' College in Brecon, he was called to serve as a minister at Tabernacl Chapel in Cwmgors. There, he became one of a remarkable group of ministers – mostly Independents – who guided the establishment firstly of the Independent Labour Party and then the Labour Party in the area.

Niclas y Glais is the most well-known of those ministers – but he was not the only one, and as a result of the influence of these ministers, the intellectual foundations of Labourism in the anthracite coalfield was very different from the party in the rest of the South Wales coalfields.

I shall have more to say on this in due course, but firstly I wish to finish my family history!

Like Niclas, T.M. and some of the other ministers became disillusioned with the Labour Party. Niclas became a Communist, and ensured of course that he is the only person ever to secure tributes in *Y Tyst* and the *Morning Star*! T.M. and the others became increasingly sympathetic to Plaid Cymru.

Now, you've not come here today to listen to a lecture about genealogy – but I think that the political journey that I've described is fairly common in Wales, particularly among families with a Welsh-speaking nonconformist background. From ignorance and illiteracy to Liberalism through Labour to nationalism.

Without a doubt there has been a variety of political journeys. Here in Ceredigion for instance many families have unquestionably kept faith in the Liberal party while others have migrated directly from that party to Plaid Cymru.

Of course, many chapel families, especially maybe those who lost the language, reached the end of their political journey in the Labour Party and found a warm, welcoming home there. What interests me is this.

Despite all this political migration I do not sense that the fundamental social and political values of people from a nonconformist Welsh background have changed much since the nineteenth century.

The difference between today and then is that those people and values are now spread between three if not four parties. In the Victorian age they were united in one party – the old Liberal Party.

I shall come to the reasons for this and its effect in due course, but before doing that I should try to provide a definition of what I mean by Welsh nonconformist values.

The first thing to emphasise is that I am not talking about religious beliefs here. Political elections are my area of expertise, not religious selection – and I would not dare to venture into the field of theology.

I am talking about the political beliefs and ethical standpoints of families with nonconformist backgrounds. These of course developed from their forefathers' understanding of the gospel but they endure to this day, even in families that never darken the chapel door apart from attending funerals and weddings.

Having said that I do not want to venture into theology, I want to take one word of advice from the Gospel of St Luke, which is that by its fruit is the tree known.

Looking at the fruits of Nonconformism at its height enables us to perceive its fundamental values – values that still, to my mind, guide Welsh politics to a great extent today.

The first thing to say about the denominations is that they were fairly democratic bodies – be that at individual chapel level in the case of the Independents or at denominational level in the case of the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists.

There was a difference between listeners and members – and between members and Elders – but on the whole, this was not a credo that had a sacerdotal class who kept the secrets of the faith from its congregations. Rather, they were bodies that drew their leaders from among their congregations and where it was possible for the brightest – of men at least – to ascend to the big seat or the pulpit. The spirit of democracy is therefore one of the fundamental values of the people who I am discussing this evening.

Coupled with that these were people who valued learning and endorsed education. Think of the Sunday schools, the literary meetings, Gruffydd Jones' peripatetic schools or the campaigns to collect meagre pennies to build the College by the Sea and the College on the Hill.

They were also people who were proud to see people using that education to get on in the world. People such as David Davies, Llandinam or the James family of Pantyfedwen were admired, not envied – as long as they remembered where they had come from and gave something back.

The attitude to the Squire who had inherited his wealth – or the successful *entrepreneur* who mistreated his workforce – was a little different!

I shall give one example of what ‘giving something back’ involved. I have a friend who hails from a family who moved from Ceredigion to Cardiff in the Victorian era. They did not go into the milk business but into clothes and cotton goods, or ‘*Manchester Goods*’ as they were known. The business developed into a chain of shops that continued until the nineteen sixties.

The family still lives a comfortable life but my friend once asked his mother where all the wealth had gone. The answer came immediately. A shoebox was produced, full of the memorial keys that chapels would present to the families that had given most generously to their building funds. These chapels were here in Ceredigion, and that’s where the money had gone. The paterfamilias must have been a very popular man among religious ‘Cardis’ of the time. Whether or not that is true of his descendants is another matter!

The chapels did not just receive gifts. In the period before the welfare state, members of a chapel cause would support each other through life’s tribulations, formally and informally.

The chapels’ heyday was also the golden age of the welfare and mutual societies such as the True Ivorites, and the introduction of the welfare state may have something to do with the decline in the importance of chapels in twentieth century community life.

Over recent weeks here in Ceredigion the life of Henry Richard, the apostle of peace, has been commemorated. Certainly pacifism, or at least anti-militarism, is another of the values that could be added to the list – although it maybe should not be over-emphasised. After all those aunts who doted on the bloody poem of Plas Gogerddan were chapel people through and through!

Democracy, learning, respect for success, giving back and mutual support, pacifism – at least some of the core political values of Nonconformists.

There is also another one – the idea of living respectably or morally. This may be harder for us to understand today than the others, considering the moral liberalism of our age.

It is hard for us today for instance to understand the practice of banishing single pregnant girls, or a man who liked a pint. People were under tremendous pressure, hypocritical pressure at times, to conform to the social norm, and this is alien to us today.

This aspect of chapel life certainly provided easy ammunition for critics of chapels – from Caradog Evans to the present day.

I don't want to spend long on this – because this lecture is concerned with the perception of people from nonconformist backgrounds of their own values, and not other people's perception of them – but I will raise one question.

Is it credible that a religion that emphasised salvation, conversions and forgiveness was so unforgiving of individual failings?

Is it not more likely that stories like the one of the girl on the banks of the deep Dee river were myths or scare stories to frighten people and keep them on the straight and narrow?

Be that as it may. If Victorian nonconformist values arose out of religious beliefs, what was their effect on the politics of the time?

Well at the time, to all intents and purposes the Liberal Party was the political wing of the Nonconformists. It was through this party that political aims which corresponded to the beliefs of chapel goers were campaigned for, and where differences of opinion were settled.

The most obvious and renowned of these was the difference of opinion in relation to the constitutional future of Wales between those who desired home-rule in the ranks of the Cymru Rydd movement and the North Wales Liberal Federation, and the unionists of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Federation.

This dispute reached its climax at a bad-tempered meeting in Newport in 1896 when Lloyd George, the most prominent figure in Cymru Fydd, was denied the right even to address the audience.

The interesting thing about this dispute is what did not happen. No-one walked out of the Liberal Party, and there was no permanent split or obvious bad feeling within it. The response of the majority of home-rule supporters to the demise of their dream was to accept it – as if it were impossible even to imagine campaigning for any change without the united approval of the Liberal Party.

And there were plenty of other matters to campaign for which would keep the party united.

One of the main ones was an issue that has almost been forgotten today, namely land ownership. In nineteenth century Wales large swathes of land were still owned by large and small estates. The majority of the rural and urban population were tenants with homes and livelihoods that were dependent on the fruit of their labour or the fruit of their landlord's land.

Here are a few figures. In 1880 16% of farmers in England owned their farms. In Wales the figure was 10.7%. In Caernarfonshire it was 4%. No wonder that land ownership was such an important subject for Lloyd George!

The political importance of the land question was amplified by events in Merionethshire following the 1859 election.

There is some disagreement among historians as to how common it was for families to be evicted from their farms for voting Liberal in that election – but the stories became part of Wales' political mythology and added to the frequent demands for measures to broaden land ownership or at least to protect tenant rights.

Mrs Thatcher was not the first to appreciate the concept of a property owning democracy.

A not unrelated topic was the question of the established Church. If paying the English landlord a prohibitively high rent was not enough to enrage the chapel going Welshman, having to pay a tithe to that landlord's Church was likely to drive him crazy!

I have already mentioned the importance of education to Nonconformists and one element of the campaign for a basic education for every child was to ensure that this education would not be provided nor influenced by the Church of England – and bear in mind that it was the Church of England and not the Church of Wales.

Another subject that concerned chapel goers was temperance and keeping the Sabbath, and one of the early victories of Wales' Nonconformists and Liberals was the act to force pubs to close on Sundays. That act in 1881 was the first important piece of legislation to deal with Wales separately from England since the acts of union and some wanted to go further.

In a novel published in the 1890s called *Lady Gwen* by an author who called himself 'Welsh Nationalist' there is a prophecy which tells how Wales would be in the year 2000.

The eponymous *Lady Gwen* is the Prime Minister of the Dominion of Wales. Predicting that a woman could hold such a post was daring at the time – but the author was way off the mark in foreseeing that the first act of the Welsh Parliament would be to prohibit alcohol completely and that this would lead to celebrations that were even greater than those for national freedom!

Now the issues that I have mentioned, together with others, are either issues that were specifically Welsh or which had significant Welsh elements.

It is therefore natural that the party system in Wales was based on differences of opinion in relation to these Welsh matters.

The politics of Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century therefore were specifically Welsh with the two main parties representing the natural factions within Wales.

This was certainly the case in 1906 when the Liberal Party was at its height in Wales – the first time for the country to be Tory-free in its parliamentary representation.

But that election also showed signs of the change that was to come with the election of a handful of Labour and Lib-Lab members.

Within twenty years the politics of Wales would be transformed. The Labour party would rule across the industrial regions, the Liberal Party would be split and in the doldrums, and the Conservatives would have re-established a foothold on the Welsh benches.

But this was not a minor switch from one party representing the left – the Liberal Party – to another left-leaning party – the Labour Party. To my mind this change was much more fundamental.

Wales had shifted in a few decades from a political system that was specifically Welsh to one which reflected the pattern in England. After all, what were the issues that differentiated Labour and the Conservatives?

Certainly not specifically Welsh matters such as land, education, temperance and the disestablishment of the Church, but matters which were on the whole British in nature – ownership of industry and nationalisation, health provision, poverty and unemployment, imperialism and the response to the rise of fascism and communism on the European mainland to name but a few.

These were not Welsh questions – and Labour and the Conservatives certainly did not offer Welsh solutions.

Why did this happen?

Well there are several factors. It may be no coincidence that the success of the Liberals in 1906 had occurred in the shadow of the last big religious revival in 1904-05 and it is possible that the fall of the Liberal Party was partly a result of the start of the decline of the chapels.

In addition, this was a period of linguistic change in many areas, and in those areas that were fast being Anglicised, the new Labour Party was very open in its opposition to the Welsh language and the old Welsh way of life.

Indeed, in the valleys, where the chapels to all intents and purposes represented the only important social bodies not under the influence of the Labour party, that opposition is easily explained if not forgiven.

But there is another highly ironic factor that explains the change, which is that one of the reasons for the Liberal Party's demise in Wales was its own success.

Think of those specifically Welsh battles that I mentioned earlier.

Pub doors had closed on Sundays in 1881. Education for every child, almost wholly free from the grip of the established Church, had been won in 1896. As chancellor, Lloyd George had introduced taxes that would over time lead inevitably to the collapse of the big estates and the sale of land to tenants and, in the early twenties, the once fierce battle to disestablish the Church in Wales was won.

The greatest proof of the way that the battles that had been central to Welsh politics were now politically marginal come from a poet – but not a Welsh one.

During the parliamentary debate on the measure to disestablish the Church, F.E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead, described the measure thus: *“It is a bill which has shocked the conscience of every Christian community in Europe.”*

This is part of G.K. Chesterton's response to that comment:

*It would greatly, I must own,
Soothe me, Smith!
If you left this theme alone,
Holy Smith!
For your legal cause or civil
You fight well and get your fee;
For your God or dream or devil
You will answer, not to me.
Talk about the pews and steeples
And the cash that goes therewith!
But the souls of Christian peoples ...
Chuck it, Smith!²*

By the nineteen twenties and thirties, new issues and questions concerned the people of Wales – these were mainly British matters and therefore the party divide followed a British pattern.

In 1926 a small new party was formed for those who were still concerned with specifically Welsh questions – but the National Party of Wales was to remain a very small party for decades to come.

During the decades leading up to and after the Second World War occasionally a hot Welsh topic would arise – attempts to occupy land for military purposes or water supplies or questions of the status and future of the Welsh language for instance.

² *Antichrist, or the Reunion of Christendom: An Ode*, G.K. Chesterton

The interesting thing is this: every time such questions arose, the split in public opinion and the views of politicians was to be found not between the parties but down the middle of one of them – the Labour Party.

Now Labour members hate the journalistic shorthand that refers to the party's nationalist and unionist wings. They maintain that much more unites party members than used to be the case or than weakens them. This is true with reference to British issues, and these issues were the focus for most of the twentieth century. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that there are two traditions within Labour in relation to specifically Welsh issues.

One arises from the anthracite coalfields as I mentioned earlier, and there are similar traditions in parts of the north Wales coalfields, the slate quarrying areas and the unique tradition of the Anglesey Workers Union.

Associated with this tradition – the nationalist tradition – are names of Labour luminaries such as Jim Griffiths, Cledwyn Hughes, Megan Lloyd George in her final days and a host of other names who were less famous and are now forgotten.

Throughout this faction the nonconformist values that I have discussed were evident – loyalty to Wales and the Welsh language, democracy, mutual support, the promotion of education and the idea of celebrating success while expecting something back.

A list of even more famous names is part of the other tradition – the unionist tradition if you will – whose roots were in the coalfields of the south-east and in the cities. It is to this tradition that Aneurin Bevan, George Thomas and Neil Kinnock belong.

The relationship or the battle between the two Labour factions is crucial to the history of the devolution process in Wales.

In order to ensure any constitutional change at all there had to be compromise and reconciliation within the Labour party – Wales' majority party for most of the twentieth century.

Jim Griffiths managed it at the beginning of the nineteen sixties. The result was not only the establishment of the post of Welsh Secretary but also of a real department and responsibilities for the post.

Michael Foot's efforts to create unity in relation to the plans of Jim Callaghan's government were a failure. With Neil Kinnock thundering about the dangers of the slippery slope towards separation the fruit of that failure were seen on the first of March 1979.

Ron Davies's greatest achievement was to ensure unity in the Labour party – at least in public – in the months leading up to the 1997 referendum. Without that unity it is likely that there would not be an assembly. If just one Labour politician of any status had opposed the plan it is likely that the result of that vote would have been 'no'.

Now you are all doubtless familiar with Ron Davies's mantra that "*devolution is a process not an event*" but it's possible that not everybody appreciates the reasons why Ron believed that.

The truth is that he was well aware that the settlement offered to the people of Wales in the referendum was a poor one – riddled with weaknesses that would soon become evident. This was the best that could be expected in the context of Labour party internal politics.

The result of the splits was a settlement that had to be reconsidered, discussed and renegotiated throughout the Assembly's first decade. I won't relate the whole history – all the commissions and conventions, the various coalitions and the second referendum.

The point is this. Wales's constitutional status was an issue that arose from time to time during the twentieth century, but it has been a constant subject for discussion during the first decade of the twenty first century. In light of developments in Scotland, this is unlikely to change.

At the same time, as a result of devolution, there have been fundamental and increasing differences between public services in Wales and in England. The result of this is that an issue such as health – which used to be a British question in the days of Aneurin Bevan – is now a matter that has specifically Welsh elements.

And this brings me to the core of what I have to say tonight – the question that I want to ask.

If the party system in Wales changed as the political pendulum swung from matters which were Welsh in nature to ones which were essentially British, will it have to change again as the pendulum swings back? In other words, do the party divisions that currently exist in Wales represent the natural divisions within public opinion in Wales – as Welsh matters claim more and more consideration?

I am firmly of the opinion that they do not.

It appears to me that politics which are specifically Welsh are being reborn and that there is a natural bloc of voters who are currently scattered throughout the parties.

You can see them in the ranks of the four main parties. These are the descendants of the liberal nonconformist political tradition which has survived beneath the surface of the British party system for over a century.

Who are these people and what do they believe?

The picture will be familiar.

They are people who are aware and proud of their Welsh identity, who promote education, culture and democracy, who admire service to their fellow men and who respect success through effort but are suspicious of inequality and injustice.

They are passionately in favour of the welfare state and believe that good quality public services are more important than a penny or two off tax.

This description fits a substantial number of people in Wales – the majority possibly. This is the middle ground of Welsh politics and it is very different from the middle ground of politics in England.

As this old pattern becomes increasingly important in our politics it appears to me that our parties look more like political denominations every day. As in the case of the denominations, which party you belong to depends more on family background, area and language than on any particular ideology.

There are differences between them which are almost theological but not many of their supporters are aware of what those differences actually are and the differences within some parties are greater than the differences between them and other parties.

Consider this for a second. If Paul Davies, Elin Jones, Aled Roberts and Keith Davies were to sit down together, how much difference of opinion would there really be between them – at least when discussing specifically Welsh matters?

Does it matter? I think it does. We only have to look at the Republic of Ireland to see the dangers of a party system that depends on the divisions of the past rather than differences of opinion in the present.

In Ireland to a large extent what differentiated Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael was which side family members had been on during the Irish civil war.

In such a situation it is no surprise that politics has turned into a game of seeking power for its own sake – with the result that corruption in politics, in the words of an official commission, is *“endemic, well known and pervasive”*.

I’m pleased to say that I don’t think that such a situation will develop in Wales.

There are signs that the tectonic plates of our politics are shifting and that Wales’ party system will reflect natural divisions of opinion in time.

I don’t think that some new party will appear from nowhere as this process progresses. Rather, the parties have sensed where the middle ground is situated and they are shifting and scrambling to capture it. Sooner or later one of them will succeed.

I would like to say a word about the various parties before I finish.

It may seem strange even to think that the Conservative party could have any hope of inheriting the nonconformist tradition. They after all are the old enemy – but the party made a great effort under Nick Bourne’s leadership to gain at least some of the middle ground by making themselves more Welsh and moderating their position.

It would appear that this effort has come to an end with the election of Andrew R.T. Davies. It may start again under a different leader – and there could be a new leader sooner than people may expect.

Another party competing for this ground is the official heir of the Liberal Party, the Liberal Democrats. Its philosophy and many of its policies are certainly ones that correspond to Wales’s political tradition.

It is not the objectives that pose the problem but the accents. Most people do not realise how low the membership of Liberal Democrats is and how high the proportion of activists among those members. It is striking in party meetings how few Welsh accents are to be heard. It appears that a substantial number of the members are people who came to college in Wales and decided to stay here.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with that but I think that it makes it difficult for the party to portray itself as a truly Welsh party – and typically, in opinion polls party supporters include a substantial proportion of people who oppose devolution and the European Union – supposedly the cornerstones of the party.

So what of the Liberal Party’s illegitimate child – the party that persisted in discussing Welsh issues in the heyday of British politics: Plaid Cymru of course? I would venture to say that this party has for years succeeded in gaining most of the middle ground among Welsh speakers – its problem is to try to win over like-minded people who do not speak Welsh.

I sense that it was the desire to do this that convinced so many members of the party to support Leanne Wood in the recent election. Contrary to the way she is portrayed by some, the political position of the new leader is in fact very similar to her predecessors – the branding, the language and the personality.

I have talked this evening of nonconformist or liberal values, others in the history of Plaid Cymru would have called them collaborative values or even Welsh values. Leanne Wood chooses the term devolved socialism. There is not much difference between them in fact and time will show whether or not the rebranding will succeed.

Ironically, the last party that could compete for the liberal legacy is the one that deposed the Liberal Party – Labour.

In the Labour ranks, almost for the first time it is the nationalist wing with its stronghold within Assembly members that has its hands on the tiller. Reducing the number of Welsh Members of Parliament, which are on the whole unionist in nature, will strengthen that hold.

At the last Assembly elections Labour did all it could to portray itself as the national party of Wales – the true party of Wales – the party that stood Wales’s corner. For people like Carwyn Jones, this was no tactic. This is what they believe that Welsh Labour should be.

This does not mean that the unionist elements who are suspicious of devolution and the Welsh language have disappeared.

Privately one of the party’s young stars was heard to say: *“I’m willing to see Labour copying Plaid Cymru as a tactic, as in the 2010 election, but I don’t want to see it become a long term strategy.”*

Sooner or later, as I see it, one of two things is going to happen.

The nationalist wing of Welsh Labour may gain supremacy in the party. If so Labour has the opportunity to inherit the tradition which I have been discussing this evening.

If that does not happen, over a period of time, people who are of this mind will migrate to Plaid Cymru.

What is going to happen? I have no idea – but the coming years will be interesting and crucial ones in our politics.

Earlier this week I collected a memorial to T.M. Roderick from Tabernacl Cwmgors, which has closed ... but even if Tabernacl and so many other chapels are now dark and quiet, they still have an influence on me and on us – and on our politics as a nation.

*Vaughan Roderick
Morlan Annual Lecture
19 April 2012*