

# The Pacific Journal of Baptist Research

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## CONTENTS

<i>Gordon L. Heath</i>	1
‘The Great Association Above’: Maritime Baptists and the War of 1812	
<i>Brendon Neilson</i>	23
The baptist Imagination of James McClendon	
<i>Sebastian Murrphy</i>	
New Zealand Baptists and the Great Depression of 1929-35: How the Baptists Responded during a Time of National Economic Distress	39
Reviews	55
Index to Articles 1995-2011	77

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# The Pacific Journal of Baptist Research

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## **‘The Great Association Above’: Maritime Baptists and the War of 1812<sup>1</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines the impact of the War of 1812 on Maritime Baptist churches and its influence on cross-border relations, as well as the convictions which shaped Baptists’ actions and attitudes towards Americans. The war between Great Britain and the United States might have engendered division between Baptists from opposite sides of the conflict, however, the evidence suggests that the spiritual connection between co-religionists transcended political differences. More specifically, this article argues that the ideological underpinnings of the lack of rancor between wartime Baptists was the conviction that Nova Scotian, New Brunswick and New England Baptists – regardless of national or imperial loyalties – were members of one large spiritual family that would someday be united in the ‘Great Association Above.’ Maritime Baptist devotion to a radical evangelicalism that was often otherworldly and unconcerned with secular affairs meant that their spiritual identity in that ‘Great Association’ trumped all temporal identities, and loyalty to that otherworldly association transcended earthly loyalties.

Maritime Baptist itinerant preacher Edward Manning’s (1766-1851) wartime diary reveals his compassion for his ‘American brethren’ and his revulsion for the ongoing war between Great Britain and the United States. On 9 January 1813 he wrote: ‘This day felt uneasy in the morning...but in reading and meditation found my mind sweetly led out after God and a sweet union to American brethren, notwithstanding the dreadful war that exists between the two powers.’<sup>2</sup> Postcolonialism has

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Pat Townsend for her help at the Baptist archives in Acadia, Wolfville. The Acadia Center for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies (ACBAS) graciously provided financial assistance for researching this subject.

<sup>2</sup> See diary of Edward Manning, 9 January 1813. All references to Manning correspondence taken from ‘Manning Correspondence,’ Box D1846.001, Box 1 (Acadia archives, Wolfville). See dates for specific letter. There are no copies of

made scholars sensitive to constructions of the ‘other,’ particularly in times of war. What is striking is that Manning’s wartime reflection suggests that Americans were not constructed as the ‘other,’ but as an ‘us.’ Other evidence indicates that Manning was not alone in his musing – other Baptists shared his amicable attitude towards Americans.

A number of socio-economic factors in the Maritimes contributed to an open border and relatively friendly wartime cross-border relationships. John Boileau portrays both wartime New Englanders and Nova Scotians as ‘half-hearted enemies’ who were primarily concerned with continuing their prosperous trade.<sup>3</sup> Family ties and a common heritage meant that Loyalists and Planters were American-born settlers (with American relatives still in New England) living in British territory. New England and Maritime messengers, missionaries, and itinerant preachers and pastors were often friends who co-labored in the difficult task of founding churches. The need for assistance was also a factor, for the smaller and poorer churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick relied on the support of New England missionaries and cross-border evangelists. While such dynamics contributed to why Maritime Baptists did not exhibit an ardent wartime hatred for the enemy, this research focuses on an important ideological reason for the cordial cross-border Baptist relationships.

Rev. Charles Inglis, the Church of England Bishop of Nova Scotia (1787-1816), described the period in which he lived as ‘these times of Democratic rage and delusion.’ Inglis was convinced that the democratic reforms in the United States and France were connected with the evangelical revivals sweeping through the Maritimes. As Nancy Christie notes, a culture defined by rank and deference to authority was giving way to evangelical ideals of individual self-expression, social equality, and democratic consent.<sup>4</sup> This emotional, revolutionary and democratic evangelical religion of the Allinites, Baptists and Methodists flourished in

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out-going mail, only in-coming letters. Fortunately Edward Manning comments on the war in his diary, although one wished he said more and that more of the diary had survived. Most of 1813 is missing, along with January and February 1814. Manning was seriously ill in early 1815, so there is limited material in that period as well. Note that when Manning and others speak of ‘Americans’ they usually mean New Englanders.

<sup>3</sup> John Boileau, *Half-hearted Enemies: Nova Scotia, New England and the War of 1812* (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Christie, ‘In These Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion,’ In *The Canadian Protestant Experience*, edited by George Rawlyk (Burlington: Welch, 1990), pp. 10.

the frontier situation, for as Goodwin notes, it was adaptive, provided comfort for those in hardship, and had minimum requirements for leaders.<sup>5</sup>

Radical evangelicalism was, as George Rawlyk argues, ‘the heart of Canadian evangelicalism.’<sup>6</sup> And Maritime Baptists were firmly in the ranks of radical evangelicalism. Their services were informal and often emotional. Itinerant ministry was commonplace, with numerous itinerants on the road preaching revival and seeking converts.<sup>7</sup> Regeneration, as Rawlyk notes, ‘was the pivotal and quintessential Christian experience,’<sup>8</sup> and Baptist preachers sought to make converts at every stop. They were also eager to baptize.<sup>9</sup> This passion for believer’s baptism meant that pastors and itinerant preachers took great pains to baptize, and the surviving diaries of itinerant preachers detail such events.<sup>10</sup> The radical evangelicalism of Baptists was so extreme that it ‘was able to cut itself free from largely secular concerns and preoccupation.’<sup>11</sup> It also provided an ideological framework for Baptist identity and relationships.

George Rawlyk states that he took ‘religious beliefs seriously’ in his exploration of radical evangelicalism among Baptists in Nova Scotia and

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Goodwin, *Into Deep Waters: Evangelical Spirituality and Maritime Calvinistic Baptist Ministers, 1790-1855* (Montreal/Kingston/London/Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010) pp. 5.

<sup>6</sup> George A. Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America, 1775-1812* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), pp. xv. See also George A. Rawlyk, ‘A Total Revolution in Religious and Civil Government: The Maritimes, New England, and the Evolving Evangelical Ethos, 1776-1812,’ In *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, edited by Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and George A. Rawlyk (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 137-155.

<sup>7</sup> Goodwin, *Into Deep Waters*, pp. 102ff. For a discussion of the broader context of itinerant ministry, see Stephen A. Marini, ‘Evangelical Itinerancy in Rural New England: New Gloucester, Maine, 1745-1807,’ In *Itinerancy in New England and New York*, edited by Peter Benes and Jane Montague Benes (Boston: Boston University, 1986), pp. 49-64.

<sup>8</sup> Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, pp. xvi.

<sup>9</sup> Baptists separated from the Church of England in the early-seventeenth England century in part due to their belief in baptizing adults who made a profession of faith, rather than baptizing infants who had it made for them.

<sup>10</sup> Goodwin claims that the Nova Scotia Baptist debates over baptism may have excited their passions even more than the debates for responsible government. See Goodwin, *Into Deep Waters*, pp. 127.

<sup>11</sup> Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, pp. xvi.

New Brunswick.<sup>12</sup> This article follows Rawlyk's example, for it is concerned with the ideas which shaped Baptist life and practice.<sup>13</sup> It argues that the ideological underpinnings of the lack of rancor between wartime Baptists was the conviction that Nova Scotian, New Brunswick and New England Baptists – regardless of national or imperial loyalties – were members of one large spiritual family that would someday be united in the 'Great Association Above.' Maritime Baptist devotion to a radical evangelicalism that was often otherworldly and unconcerned with secular affairs meant that their spiritual identity in that 'Great Association' trumped all temporal identities, and loyalty to that otherworldly association transcended earthly loyalties. The primary task of this transnational spiritual family was to spread the gospel and build the church, and the war between the United States and British Empire was deemed to be an unfortunate interruption.

Despite the significant historical research on the War of 1812, there has been little sustained focus on the impact of the war on the churches in British North America.<sup>14</sup> Ray Hobbs' research on Upper Canadian

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<sup>12</sup> Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, pp. xviii.

<sup>13</sup> This work focuses on the role of ideas, but of course there are other factors that shape political loyalties and actions. For instance, for an examination of the impact of government policy on political loyalties and identity, see Elizabeth Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, ca.1760-1830* (New York/London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> William Gribbin's study is the authoritative work on the subject of the American churches and the war. He notes how the war exacerbated tensions in the States that already existed between the various denominations, and was both a challenge and an opportunity to the various churches. He also makes it clear that there was no religious uniformity; in general, Baptists (especially in the Southern States) and Methodists were supportive of the war effort, whereas New England Congregationalism was 'the heart of religious opposition to the war.' See William Gribbin, *The Churches Militant: the War of 1812 and American Religion* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1973). For other works on the war and American churches, see Ralph Beebe, 'The War of 1812,' in *The Wars of America: Christian Views*, edited by Ronald A. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 25-43; William Gribbin, 'Covenant Transformed: the Jeremiad Tradition and the War of 1812,' *Church History* 40 (September 1971): pp. 297-305; William Gribbin, 'War of 1812 and American Presbyterianism: Religion and Politics during the Second War with Britain,' *Journal of Presbyterian History* 47 (December 1969): pp. 320-339; William Gribbin, 'American Episcopacy and the War of 1812,' *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 38 (March 1969): pp. 25-36; J. Earl Thompson, 'An 'Unnecessary, Unjust, and Inexpedient' War: Congregational Clergy Dissent against the War of 1812,' *Andover Newton Quarterly* 11 (September 1970): pp. 35-47; Lawrence S. Kaplan, 'A New Englander defends the War of

churches has been presented in various contexts, but his conclusions have so far remained unpublished.<sup>15</sup> James Robertson's 'Band of Brothers' examines Methodists in Upper Canada and some of the cross-border problems faced in that province.<sup>16</sup> Peter Brock explores the dilemma Mennonite, Tunker and Quaker settlers faced when pressured by the government in Upper Canada to support the war effort.<sup>17</sup> Gordon Heath deals with Upper Canadian Baptist wartime ideology as well the impact of the war on Upper Canadian Baptists.<sup>18</sup> In all these cases, however, the experiences of the churches in the Maritimes have been ignored. This research initiates an undertaking that needs to be widened to explore additional Protestant groups, as well as Roman Catholics.

The extant primary sources present challenges for a study of wartime Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptists. There were no denominational newspapers published at that time,<sup>19</sup> no printed Baptist sermons that survived the war, and limited Baptist commentary on the war in what has survived (copious amounts of information on baptisms and revivals in the diaries, but not much commentary on political events). Nevertheless, there are a variety of sources that are helpful. Local church minutes and association records provide important details.<sup>20</sup> Other records consulted include the diary and personal correspondence of the above-mentioned

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1812: Senator Varnum to Judge Thacher,' *Mid-America* 46 (October 1964): pp. 269-280.

<sup>15</sup> See Ray Hobbs, 'Religion and the War of 1812 in Upper Canada – Part One: British Military Chaplains,' unpublished paper. Interviews with Hobbs revealed a number of important insights, especially about Baptists serving in the militia.

<sup>16</sup> James Tyler Robertson, 'Band of Brothers: Connection and Tension within Upper-Canadian Methodism during the War of 1812,' paper presented to the Canadian Society of Church History, 2010. Robertson is working on a PhD dissertation at McMaster Divinity College that explores Upper Canadian churches and the War of 1812.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Brock, 'Accounting for Difference: The Problem of Pacifism in Early Upper Canada.' *Ontario History* 90, 1 (Spring 1998): pp. 19-30.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon L. Heath, 'Ontario Baptists and the War of 1812,' *Ontario History* 103, 2 (Autumn 2011): pp. 41-63.

<sup>19</sup> The first Baptist publication in British North America was the *Baptist Missionary Magazine of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick* in 1827. For a brief summary of the development of the religious press in Canada, see Gordon L. Heath, "Forming Sound Public Opinion: The Late Victorian Canadian Protestant Press and Nation-Building,' *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* XLVIII (2006): pp. 109-159.

<sup>20</sup> Local church records and the yearly association minutes (they were printed and bound for publication and circulation) are located at the Baptist archives at Acadia University, Wolfville, NS.

Edward Manning, an itinerant evangelist whom Daniel Goodwin declared to be one of the most important figures in Maritime Baptist history. Manning has also been called a ‘father’ of the Baptists in the Maritimes.<sup>21</sup> There are also the diaries of Henry Hale, an American Baptist missionary to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick<sup>22</sup> and of Ziba Pope, an American Baptist missionary to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.<sup>23</sup> The *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, an American Baptist publication, provides additional information about events in the Maritimes. These sources – limited as they are – do provide a window into the war, its impact on the churches, and the convictions of Baptists.

The first section below will detail the impact of the war on Maritime Baptist churches, with a particular focus on the war’s influence on cross-border relations. The second section considers Baptist convictions that shaped their actions and attitudes towards Americans. The evidence in both sections supports the contention that what formed Baptist cordial actions and attitudes towards their co-religionists was their conviction that all Baptists – whatever side of border – belonged to the ‘Great Association Above.’

## **I. The Impact of the War on Cross-border Relationships**

Baptists arrived in Nova Scotia with the Planters to take over land that had been vacated by the expulsion of the Acadians. Ebenezer Moulton (1709-1783), the first Baptist minister in Nova Scotia, arrived from New England and settled near Yarmouth in 1760. In the following years he preached in various locations and then established the first Baptist church at Horton (Wolfville). Other Baptists continued to arrive from the Thirteen Colonies (later the United States), and churches were begun in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Baptists benefited from the New Light revivals led by Henry Alline (1748-1784) and by the end of the eighteenth century the first Baptist association of nine churches was formed.<sup>24</sup> At the outbreak of

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<sup>21</sup> Goodwin, *Into Deep Waters*, ch.4. Manning was born in Ireland, but c.1769 his family moved to Falmouth, NS.

<sup>22</sup> Diary of Henry Hale is located at the Baptist archives at Acadia University, Wolfville, NS.

<sup>23</sup> Diary of Ziba Pope is located at the Vermont Historical Society. Thanks to David Bell at UNB for pointing me to this journal.

<sup>24</sup> On 23-24 June 1800 nine churches met at Lower Granville, Nova Scotia: eight were from Nova Scotia, and one from New Brunswick. See Renfree, *Heritage and Horizon*, pp. 53 for list of participating churches. An ‘association’ is the name of a

war, Baptists were primarily concentrated in the Annapolis Valley and South Shore Nova Scotia, and the St. John River Valley.<sup>25</sup>

This research supports John Moir's claim that 'regionalism seems to be the most important factor in determining the degree of American influences, both positive and negative, on Canadian Protestantism'<sup>26</sup> for the war did not impact the churches in the Maritimes as it did in Upper Canada. For instance, upon the outbreak of war, Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Sir John Coape Sherbrooke established a truce with New England; no molestation of peaceful towns and trade was to occur across the border (although the lucrative privateering business thrived in Nova Scotia).<sup>27</sup> This peace and open border lasted until 1814, when a relatively small-scale invasion of Maine was carried out from New Brunswick and by the sea.

There is conflicting evidence regarding the impact of the war on cross-border Baptist relations. Manning's journal, Ziba Pope's journal or association minutes indicate that the churches benefited from this peaceful situation, for revival and local church work seemed to continue unabated during the war: itinerant preachers and pastors travelled freely on land, services were held, revivals occurred, converts were made, people were baptized, the association met every year, and church property was unharmed. The circular letter from the 1814 association meeting states that the churches of the association 'witness nothing of the calamities of war' and they 'know but little of its effects.'<sup>28</sup> Not exactly a wise or pastoral statement to make if the churches had been struggling due to the war, and a statement that challenges contemporary assumptions about the negative impact of the war on evangelicalism.<sup>29</sup> In the years following the

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group of Baptist churches in geographical proximity that choose to associate with one another and work together on common projects. A group of associations often form a convention or denomination. A Baptist church does not have to join an association, but most did (and still do).

<sup>25</sup> Goodwin, *Into Deep Waters*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> John Moir, 'American Influences on Canadian Protestant Churches before Confederation,' *Church History* 36 (1967): pp. 440.

<sup>27</sup> See Boileau, *Half-hearted Enemies*.

<sup>28</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1814), pp. 8. The authors of this circular were Edward Manning and William Chipman.

<sup>29</sup> Christie argues that the 'spectacular expansion of popular evangelicalism was abruptly curtailed' (especially in Upper Canada, but also in the Maritimes) by the war. See Christie, 'In These Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion,' pp. 41. However, Rawlyk is closer to the mark when he notes that the war had a 'negligible influence on the religious culture of the [Maritime] region.' See Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, pp. 138.

war the churches continued to experience growth.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the war did lead to some adversity for the Maritime churches. The number of those attending the association meeting in 1813 was around half the number that attended in 1812, but since attendance figures waxed and waned before and after the war years it is not clear if the war was to blame for this decline in attendance.<sup>31</sup> Also, as will be detailed below, formal ties with American associations were broken during 1813 and 1814. Informally, personal relationships such as Manning's were hindered by the breakdown of cross-border communications and trade. And most distressing for Baptists was the global mission work that was stalled due to the war.

While the Maritime Baptist churches may not have been as dependent upon New England missionaries as were the churches in Upper and Lower Canada, they did have on-going relationships with their counterparts in the United States. The minutes of the association meetings show Americans Henry Hale and Daniel Merrill visited in 1810 (they were usually called 'messengers').<sup>32</sup> Isaac Case was the messenger in 1811,<sup>33</sup> and in 1812 the minutes show Henry Hale attended, brought greetings, preached, and served on a committee (more on Hale below).<sup>34</sup>

Arthur Lower states that during the war there was no break in communications between the Maritime Baptists and their counterparts in

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<sup>30</sup> Renfree, *Heritage and Horizon*, pp. 80. Interestingly, one positive benefit of the war was identified by a Baptist leader in Yarmouth at the end of the war. He suggested that the war had 'greatly aroused' the 'spirit of reading' and that it was an ideal time for Manning to proceed with his plans for beginning a Baptist magazine. See Manning Correspondence, Letter from Alexander Crawford, Yarmouth, 30 April 1815.

<sup>31</sup> John Mocket Cramp records that the distance to the New Brunswick location, and the costs associated with such a trip, deterred many Nova Scotia Baptists from attending in 1813. See John Mocket Cramp, *The Baptists of Nova Scotia* (np.: 1860-1863), pp. 118.

<sup>32</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1810), pp. 3. For more details on the visits of Hale to the Maritimes, see 'Extract of a Letter from Rev. Henry Hale, to the President of the Society, dated Salisbury, New Brunswick, May 30, 1811,' *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* 3 (September 1812), pp. 203-204. Cramp notes the frequent exchange of messengers, as well as the impact of the war on the exchange of these messengers. See Cramp, *The Baptists of Nova Scotia*, pp. 105.

<sup>33</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1811), pp. 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1812), pp. 6.

New England.<sup>35</sup> However, a closer look indicates that the war did interrupt cross-border communication. The association minutes for 1813 and 1814 make no mention of messengers from any American Baptist associations,<sup>36</sup> and in 1813 the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association decided to stop the corresponding letter with their 'sister associations' in the States, and no letter was sent in 1814.<sup>37</sup>

However, if there were any lingering resentments towards Americans after the war, there is no evidence of it in the association records. Not long after peace was declared, American participants Isaac Case and Enoch Hunting, both missionaries for the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society, arrived for the June 1815 association meeting.<sup>38</sup> Case brought with him the minutes of Cumberland, Bowdwinham and Lincoln associations to present them to the Maritime Baptists, and the Maritime Baptist association minutes record that they 'proved very pleasant.' A vote was taken at the association meeting to renew their correspondence with the American associations, and to reciprocate by sending David Harris and Nathaniel Cleveland across the border as messengers to the American associations. The re-establishment of a corresponding letter was also instituted in 1815.<sup>39</sup>

The minutes of the association meeting for the following year record the continuation of the normalizing of relationships between Maritime and New England Baptists. After a vote of approval, Isaac Case returned, along with Stephen Dexter, to act as messengers for their associations (it

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<sup>35</sup> Arthur Lower, *Canadians in the Making: A Social History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans Green, 1958), pp. 181.

<sup>36</sup> Saunders confirms this when notes that the Baptist Associations of Maine had exchanged delegates from c.1807 until 1840, and that the only two years where they did not was during 1813 and 1814. See Edward M. Saunders, *History of the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces* (Halifax: Press of John Burgoyne, 1902), pp. 154.

<sup>37</sup> A 'circular letter' was sent to the churches of the association, whereas a 'corresponding letter' was sent to other Baptist associations that shared a close relationship and common ministry. A corresponding letter (as mentioned here) was sent every year by the association to their New England counterparts as a way of expressing unity and communicating important news items. See *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1813), pp. 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1815), pp. 4. Case had a history of visiting the Maritime Baptists before the war. See 'Extract from the Journal of the Rev. Mr. Case, during his late Missionary Tour in Nova Scotia,' *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* 3 (September 1812), pp. 196-202.

<sup>39</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1815), pp. 11-12.

was recorded that the content of their reports ‘proved nourishing’.<sup>40</sup> It was also voted that, in the future, messengers from ‘sister associations’ simply take a seat without needing a vote. Isaac Case preached a sermon at the meeting, and both Case and Dexter served on a committee that dealt with a matter of local church discipline. The newly reinstated corresponding letter was also sent in that year.<sup>41</sup> These actions imply a formal normalizing of relations between the two Baptist groups. They also support John Moir’s contention that anti-Americanism was not a dominant motif in the postwar years, at least for Baptists,<sup>42</sup> and indicate that Maritime Baptists did not experience a post-war purging of American leadership like the Methodists.<sup>43</sup>

A few more comments on the above-mentioned Hale are in order. Hale was a missionary with the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society, and in 1812 he attended and participated in the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association meeting. The fact that war was declared on 18 June 1812, and the association meeting was held in Upper Granville, Nova Scotia, on 22-23 June 1812, meant that Hale was preaching during the early days of the war; however, it is unlikely that they knew that soon that the war had been declared.<sup>44</sup> In the weeks after the June association meeting he travelled throughout parts of Nova Scotia.<sup>45</sup> The entry for 1 July 1812 reads that he ‘tarried at the Mannings’ (with no mention of what they talked about). A few weeks later on 31 July 1812 he noted briefly in his journal that he visited with the ‘governor for permission to continue in the Province, and obtained it.’ He then continued his itinerant ministry traveling through Windsor, Newport and Falmouth in August, and then into New Brunswick in September. His diary entries end in September 1812, so there is no more record of his travels in the Maritimes.<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1816), pp. 5.

<sup>41</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1816), pp. 10-11.

<sup>42</sup> Moir, ‘American Influences on Canadian Protestant Churches before Confederation,’ pp. 440.

<sup>43</sup> John Moir, *The Church in the British Era: from the British Conquest to Confederation* (Toronto/New York: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), pp. 93.

<sup>44</sup> Isaac Brock in Upper Canada only found out about the declaration of war on 24 June 1812. See George Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada* (Montreal/ Kingston/London/ Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), pp. 47.

<sup>45</sup> See diary of Henry Hale, June to September 1812.

<sup>46</sup> A few years later the *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* printed a letter dated December 1813 that announced Hale had become a pastor of a church in the States. After the war there is no record of Hale returning to the Maritimes. See

example of Hale reveals that American itinerants in the early months of the war could continue to operate in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick – and with government approval. The example of Ziba Pope shows that, in places, such openness continued throughout the war.

Ziba Pope was an American Baptist itinerant preacher, who in April and May 1813, worked his way towards Boston, Massachusetts, and then northeastwards up the coast on a preaching tour: the language used in his journal was that he was attempting ‘to bring a Reformation’ to the towns in which he preached. Items painstakingly noted in his journal were locations, conversions, baptisms, and the activities of the churches (especially in regards to revivals). On 29 May 1813 he continued his preaching ministry in Machais, Massachusetts (what would become Maine). The next day he was in Little River, Massachusetts. On 1 June 1813 he continued northeast and crossed the border to the Island of Campobello, New Brunswick. If there was any difficulty crossing the border, he did not mention it in his diary. His ministry then carried on among churches and towns in Magaguadavic River, New Brunswick, and the surrounding area. In early September, 1813, he boarded a ship and set sail for Halifax. The hope that he expressed in his journal was that he would, like the apostle Paul in his day, convert the ship’s crew and passengers to Christianity. After seeing Halifax on 7 September 1813, the ship kept sailing to Newfoundland. He departed a few weeks later after an intense but brief preaching tour. His ship sheltered in Owl’s Head Harbor, Nova Scotia, and arrived back in New Brunswick on 21 October 1813.<sup>47</sup> Throughout this extensive trip, the only mention of the war was a reference to being boarded by a frigate off Shelburne on 16 October 1813. Pope returned to Nova Scotia again in 1814 and 1815, taking a key role in successful revivals in Barrington and Argyle.<sup>48</sup> If Pope’s journey is indicative of wartime cross-border relations, travel to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was not entirely prohibited, and that the Baptist churches

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‘Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Henry Hale, dated Sedgwick, Dec 11, 1813, Addressed to the President of the Society,’ *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, March 1814, pp. 25-26. Earlier on the *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* mentioned that he was to be supported by the Baptist Missionary Society as a missionary. ‘Baptist Missionary Society,’ *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, September 1813, pp. 349.

<sup>47</sup> See diary of Ziba Pope, April to October, 1813.

<sup>48</sup> See diary of Ziba Pope, June to July, 1814, and July to August, 1815. For a description of Pope’s visits in 1814 and 1815, see Michael Christie and Roland McCormick, *The Early Years of Barrington’s Free Baptists* (Yarmouth, NS: Sentinal Printing, 2007), pp. 19ff.

in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick needed and appreciated the presence of American itinerant preachers in their midst.

The surviving wartime correspondence of Edward Manning provides a glimpse of how the war affected his personal relations with fellow-Baptists in the States. One letter from a New Englander bemoaned the imminent war, warned Manning not to come to the States until hostilities were over, and concluded with a greeting to Manning's wife.<sup>49</sup> Another letter was from Rev. Daniel Merrill, Boston, dated 2 June 1812. Merrill was a Baptist minister in Sedgwick, Maine,<sup>50</sup> and had been a messenger at the 1810 Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association meeting. Part of it reads:

The legislature, of which I am a member, is now in session, and upon important business [ ]. They are about memorializing the general government, relative to the subject of peace, or war. I wish the differences between your government and ours may be so [ ] as to promote the good of both, and [ ] [ ] [ ] good. But I fear a contest is before us. However the differences may be between the governments among men, be it our concern to be in obedience to the government of God. Very considerable reformatations are, and [ ] have been, progressing in the states....[he then comments on books being sent to Manning]...I really am, with great respect and unabating affection, yours in the fellowship of the gospel of J.Cr, Daniel Merrill.<sup>51</sup>

This letter to Manning illustrates the common commitment to the Christian faith – and the book trade – of both Manning and Merrill. In the few wartime letters that do survive between New England and Manning, the interruption of the book trade was continually bemoaned.<sup>52</sup> Manning

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<sup>49</sup> Manning Correspondence, Letter from Thaddeus Hubberd, Eastport, 14 June 1812.

<sup>50</sup> Manning Correspondence, Letter from Daniel Merrill, Boston, 2 June 1812. Merrill was instrumental in the formation of the Baptist Colby College in Massachusetts. See Ernest Cummings Marriner, *The History of Colby College* (Waterville, Mass.: Colby College Press, 1963).

<sup>51</sup> See diary of Edward Manning, 2 June 1812. It is worth noting that despite his friendship with Manning and other Maritime Baptists, Merrill passionately preached to his congregants support for the war effort. See Gribbin, *The Churches Militant*, pp. 87.

<sup>52</sup> The next letter from Merrill to Manning that has survived was dated after the war, and the subject was about some reading materials that he was going to send to Manning in a load of other materials that were being sent by someone else. See Manning Correspondence, Letter from Daniel Merrill, Boston, 17 (or 11) April

made no mention of the loss of materials in his diary, but one letter from David Benedict provides a sense of how the loss of trade was lamented in the States.

I rejoice with you on the return of Peace. The War has been a serious evil not only to our country but to me in my book concern...I sent a number of subscription papers into your country, and anticipated a considerable number of subscribers, but I suppose owing to the War none were returned except from you....[he then invited Manning to Boston and to association meetings, and commented on revivals in his area]. Yours in the gospel, David Benedict.<sup>53</sup>

This brief glimpse of the loss of New England trade with the Maritimes was indicative of a much wider resentment among New Englanders regarding the war and its economic ramifications.<sup>54</sup> It also is a personal example of the impact of the war on the Maritime Baptist relationship with other New England Baptists, as well a glimpse of American Baptist openness to having visitors from the Maritimes attend their association meetings.

There was also movement southward during (or just before) the war. A summary of the 1813 annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society in Massachusetts that met in Boston on 26 May 1813 dealt with one of the missionaries that the society was supporting from Nova Scotia. The minutes read as follows: 'In addition to the above the Trustees have aided Brother Reis from Nova Scotia, who has been stirred up to leave his

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1816. See also Manning Correspondence, Letter from Lincoln Edmands, Boston, 22 September 1814; Letter from Th(?) Baldwin, Boston, 15 August 1815; Letter from Lincoln Edmands, Boston, 13 April 1816; Letter from Lincoln Edmands, Boston, 24 October 1816; Letter from David Benedict, Boston, 29 October 1816. The *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* also lamented the interruption of the trade: in one brief article it was noted that the privateer capture and sale of Bibles and other literature had hurt their ministry. See 'Miscellaneous,' *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* (December 1812), pp. 253.

<sup>53</sup> Manning Correspondence, Letter from David Benedict, Pantucket, date uncertain, but in 1816 file.

<sup>54</sup> For instance, see Harvey Strum, 'Smuggling in Maine during the Embargo and the War of 1812,' *Colby Library Quarterly* 19 (1983): pp. 90-97; Jamie H. Eves, 'The Poor People Had Suddenly Become Rich: A Boom in Maine Wheat, 1793-1815,' *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* 27 (1987): pp. 114-141.

family and country to preach the Gospel to the destitute in New-Orleans and adjacent parts of that country.<sup>55</sup>

## II. A Transnational Community with a Global Mission

While there were military, social, cultural and economic factors that contributed to relatively friendly wartime cross-border relationships, in order to understand the above examples of amiable cross-border Baptist relations and freedom of movement during a time of war, as well as the immediate reinstatement of formal ties at the war's end, one must take seriously Baptist radical evangelicalism that was often otherworldly and unconcerned with secular affairs. The belief was that a spiritual identity in the 'Great Association Above' trumped all temporal identities, and loyalty to that otherworldly association transcended earthly loyalties.

The radical evangelicalism that contributed to social and political differentiation between Nova Scotia and New England during the American Revolution<sup>56</sup> had a markedly different impact a generation later during the War of 1812, for in 1812 it contributed to cross-border unity that downplayed political loyalties. A common citizenship that transcended national boundaries was expressed in the above-noted phrase used to close the 1816 letter: 'we wish a continuance of your agreeable correspondence, and hope to meet with you in the Great Association above.'<sup>57</sup> A number of scholars have noted the cross-border links between denominations in the United States and British North America. Mark Noll notes the importance of not downplaying the 'significant commonalities

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<sup>55</sup> 'Baptist Missionary Society,' *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* 3 (September 1813), pp. 348-351. The Nova Scotia and New Brunswick association minutes indicate that there was an ordained minister named Edmund J. Reis from Saint John, New Brunswick. See *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1815), pp. 4. David Benedict's history of Baptists provides a brief narrative of Reis' ministry in New Orleans. See David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, and Other Parts of the World* (London: Lincoln & Edmands, 1813), pp. 416. Cramp notes that he was originally from France, but had been captured on a privateer and eventually settled in Yarmouth. He was converted and became a Baptist, and after 1807 began a preaching ministry. After his New Orleans experience, he moved to Baltimore in 1816. See Cramp, *The Baptists of Nova Scotia*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>56</sup> Gordon Stewart and George A. Rawlyk, *A People Highly Favoured of God: The Nova Scotia Yankees and the American Revolution* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1972).

<sup>57</sup> 'Corresponding Letter,' *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1816), pp. 10-11.

that have always bounded Canadian and American churches together.<sup>58</sup> Both Rawlyk and Christie have identified the strength of evangelicalism during this period, and how it was a dynamic cross-border movement.<sup>59</sup> More recently, Sam Reimer has identified a subculture that continues to exist across the border that, in many ways, transcends national boundaries.<sup>60</sup> In the War of 1812 one gets a glimpse of this type of dynamic evangelical subculture that united Baptists.

As for loyalty to the Crown, there are no indications of Baptist disloyalty in the Maritimes (unlike in Upper Canada where a number of Baptist ministers expressed seditious pro-American sentiments<sup>61</sup>). But what of nascent Canadian nationalism often associated with the war? The most passionate loyalty expressed was a cross-border ecumenism that testifies more to the power of the evangelical impulse rather than to any supposed Canadian nationalism. The 'Great Association above' was rooted in the conviction that all Baptists, American or otherwise, belonged to one family and had one providential purpose that transcended national boundaries. This study of Baptists and the war confirms and illustrates Rawlyk's claim that the radical evangelicalism of Baptists was so extreme that it 'was able to cut itself free from largely secular concerns and preoccupation.'<sup>62</sup> When secular or world affairs were commented on, God's providence was usually invoked.

World events were interpreted through the lens of providence, and perspectives were shaped by the conviction that God 'was a conscious agent who actively intervened in creation'<sup>63</sup> and would bless those nations that obeyed him and judge those that did not. The following extensive quote from Manning's diary taken from his comments after the announcement of Napoleon's defeat in 1814 illustrates how providence shaped his understanding of world events. On 24 May 1814 he wrote:

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<sup>58</sup> Mark Noll, 'Canadian Evangelicalism: A View from the United States,' In *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, edited by George A. Rawlyk (Montreal/Kingston/London/Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), pp. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Christie, 'In These Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion.'

<sup>60</sup> Sam Reimer, *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide: The Conservative Protestant Subculture in Canada and the United States* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

<sup>61</sup> Heath, 'Ontario Baptists and the War of 1812,' pp. 41-63.

<sup>62</sup> Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, pp. xvi.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Gauvreau, 'Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815-1867,' In *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, edited by George A. Rawlyk (Burlington: Welch, 1990), pp. 54.

Heard of the Defeat of Buonaparte and the Coronation of the French King and the success of the British Arms on the Continent of Europe. O that these successes may be a means of the establishing a general peace and permanent all over the world. Amen. O that the successes of the British nation tend [not] to puff them up with pride lest they fall into ruin and disrepute, For Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people. O that the American people may be induced to come upon pacific terms, that they may not return themselves by continuing a war that they precipitated themselves into lest their obstinacy prove their ruin. But the scripture prophecies are fast accomplishing that there should be wars and rumors of wars until the commencement of the Millenium, when the nations shall not learn the dire art any more, when warlike instruments shall be beaten into instruments of husbandry. Then shall the curse be removed and the earth be a paradise again. Then shall the watchman see eye to eye and all be of one mind, speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together with the same judgment, and no divisions among professing people of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen.<sup>64</sup>

His interpretation of global events was quite common among Christians in his day (whether evangelical or not): history was moving towards God's purposes, war was God's providential judgment of nations, and increased numbers of wars indicated that they were in the end times.<sup>65</sup> His caution against hubris and call for national righteousness was also widespread, for God was seen to strike down the proud and raise up the weak – nations and empires included.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See diary of Edward Manning, 24 May 1814.

<sup>65</sup> Maritime Presbyterian minister Thomas McCulloch (a friend of Manning) preached a sermon that contained similar themes. See Thomas McCulloch, *The Prosperity of the Church in Troubled Times, A Sermon Preached at Pictou, Friday, Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, 1814* (Glasgow: S.M. Mackenzie, 1882). Located at Acadia archives.

<sup>66</sup> Manning was willing to take part in services that celebrated the victory of British arms over the French. Nevertheless, however willing he may have been to take part in celebrating victory, and even thank God for the victory, he was careful to avoid getting caught up in unbridled passions that often went hand-in-hand with celebrations. The danger lurking in every celebration was that the pride that came with victory would lead to God's judgment against the British. See diary of Edward Manning, 27 May 1814; diary of Edward Manning, 27 October 1814. In this regards Baptists were not alone among evangelical Protestants. For a discussion of the connection between righteousness, sin, and the support for (and criticism of) empire in Britain, see David Bebbington, 'Atonement, Sin, and

The concept of national righteousness was rooted in the Old Testament notion of God's covenantal expectations for the nation of Israel. If the nation followed God's commands, God would bless the nation. If the nation sinned, then God would foil the plans of rulers and generals. In other words, the temporal success of the nation depended on its spiritual condition. This correlation between the spiritual health of a nation and its wars is clear in the association circular letter in 1813 (penned by Manning). After noting the sins and lack of faith of the churches, the letter goes on to say:

Dearly beloved Brethren, has not God begun to visit us with his rod? Does not the Holy Jesus say to his Churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, 'As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.' Be zealous therefore and repent. The present calamities arise not out of the earth, but are an awful accomplishment of Christ's own words. Wars and rumors of wars, famines, and divers calamities abound: All these are the beginning of sorrows. O! Brethren, let us all as out of one broken and contrite heart, cry mightily unto the Lord for strength to stand in this evil day; and when we have done all, to stand, having on the whole armor of God...If he send the sword, we may run in the name of the Lord and he will be our strong tower and safety.<sup>67</sup>

The conviction that God opposes the proud and brings success to the righteous led Manning and other Baptists to observe the day of fasting and prayer in the churches. On 1 January 1813 and 1815 he noted that he and others observed a day of fasting and prayer.<sup>68</sup> He did not say why in his diary, but the minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Association meeting in 1813 indicate the reason:

Voted, To advise the Churches belonging to this Community to observe the FIRST TUESDAY OF NOVEMBER, as a Day of Thanksgiving, and the FIRST DAY OF JANUARY as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer before the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased to remove the dreadful calamities of War, and cause

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Empire, 1880-1914,' In *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914*, edited by Andrew Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 14-31.

<sup>67</sup> 'Circular Letter,' *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1813), pp. 11-16. In this letter one gets a glimpse of an oft-repeated sentiment that the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick churches had a distinctive role to play in God's providential plans. See Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, pp. 133.

<sup>68</sup> See diary of Edward Manning, January 1813 and January 1815.

a more general spread of the Gospel, to establish Peace among all Nations.<sup>69</sup>

Manning did not say how many churches faithfully followed through with this directive, but church records indicate that Prince William Baptist Church, New Brunswick, did in 1814.<sup>70</sup>

Although it seems as though local revivalism continued unabated during the war in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the conflict had adversely impacted the global missionary efforts of the Maritime churches. What was most pleasing for Manning and other Baptists was that the end of the war meant that global mission work could continue unimpeded by the hazards of war.

The nineteenth century has been coined the ‘great century of Protestant missions.’<sup>71</sup> Until then British Protestants were relatively unconcerned about the spiritual condition of the non-European world.<sup>72</sup> Over the course of the nineteenth century, however, Protestant missions (and with them mission societies) grew from relative obscurity to a position of prominence within the church. British Protestant denominations were at the vanguard of this missionary movement.<sup>73</sup> In fact, ‘by the middle of the nineteenth century, the ‘missionary spirit’ was being hailed by contemporaries...as the ‘characteristic feature’ of the religious piety for which the Victorians were rightly renowned.’<sup>74</sup>

As for Baptists and missions, Brian Stanley observes ‘If you wish to mobilize Baptists (and evangelicals as a whole) on an issue that divides the nation down the middle politically, the way to do it is to persuade them that liberty to preach the gospel is at stake.’<sup>75</sup> His point is that the Baptist *raison d’être* is

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<sup>69</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1813), pp. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Prince William United Baptist Church Minutes, 1 January 1814, located at Acadia Archives, Wolfville.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Great Century, A.D. 1800-A.D.1914* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1941), 1. As Brian Stanley argues, however, numbers alone would make the twentieth century an even greater century for Protestant missions. See Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollon, 1990), pp. 83-84.

<sup>72</sup> Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, pp. 55.

<sup>73</sup> The next closest Protestant missionary-sending nation was the United States. See Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, pp. 83.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Brian Stanley, ‘Baptists, Antislavery and the Legacy of Imperialism,’ *Baptist Quarterly* 42 (October 2007): pp. 289.

to spread the gospel, and everything else gets subordinated to that all encompassing goal. There was considerable zeal for this missionary enterprise in both the American and Maritime evangelical churches (not surprisingly, since one of the defining characteristics of evangelicalism was its emphasis on conversion<sup>76</sup>). For instance, as Stuart Ivison and Fred Rosser note, the *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* continued to publish ‘work done by Baptists in Britain as though the two nations were at peace. The progress of William Carey’s mission to India was fully reported, and the magazine included long letters from Carey himself to friends in the United States.’<sup>77</sup> There was even the willingness to suppress personal views for the sake of harmony and the task of missions. Manning’s diary indicates that he believed the Americans were the ones responsible for the war, but in his public statements he made no mention of such opinions; mentioning only their shared friendship and goals as Baptists.<sup>78</sup> This missionary spirit can also be seen in the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Association circular letter of 1814 and the corresponding letters of 1815 and 1816.

In the 1814 circular letter, the end of the war with Napoleon was celebrated and in the same sentence the global mission work of the church was emphasized. In fact, it was argued that God’s providence had brought about the victory for the spreading of the faith – if only the churches would move away from their iniquity and coldness so much more could be done.<sup>79</sup> In that same year the denomination also began to make plans for overseas missions work; something that Harry Renfree calls a ‘milestone’ in the denomination.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> David Bebbington’s four-fold characteristics of evangelicalism are generally recognized as the most helpful description of evangelical identity: Biblicism, Conversionism, Activism and Crucicentrism. See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730’s to the 1980’s* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

<sup>77</sup> Stuart Ivison and Fred Rosser, *The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada before 1820* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), pp. 57.

<sup>78</sup> See diary of Edward Manning, 24 May 1814.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Circular Letter,’ *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1814), pp. 5-10.

<sup>80</sup> Renfree, *Heritage and Horizon*, pp. 62. Saunders states that the future described in the circular letter sent to the churches by Edward Manning in 1814 was filled with hope ‘because of the going out of missionaries to heathen lands, and the formation of societies to support them and to give general circulation to the scriptures.’ Saunders, *History of the Baptists*, 169. See also *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1814), pp. 4.

The corresponding letter of 1815 to their American co-religionists contained (not surprisingly) no mention of God giving the victory to the British, but there was mention of the providential opening of doors for all Baptists to spread the gospel abroad.<sup>81</sup> That corresponding letter to the American association reveals aspects of this missionary impulse: first, the breaking of Christian bonds due to war; second, the relief that the war was ended and normal relations could resume; and third, the global mission work that they were all a part of.

We rejoice that hostilities have ceased between the nations to which we respectively belong; which was the only cause of our discontinuing our correspondence with you, during the unhappy contest in which so many precious lives have been lost. That the gracious Lord hath caused the devouring sword to be sheathed; and restored the blessings of Peace to our American continent; which will admit of our resuming our agreeable, and we trust, profitable correspondence. Dear Brethren, it is a matter of great joy to us, that the gracious Lord hath put it into the hearts of so many of all orders of society in great Britain, and the other nations of Europe, &c. &c. &c. And that the dire calamities of war in Europe and elsewhere do not in the least, (upon the large scale) impede the progress of those Benevolent Institutions: But that all things that transpire in the Kingdom of Divine Providence, manifestly tend to open the door very wide for the word of our Lord to be published to all nations under Heaven, in their own tongues, wherein they were born. We likewise rejoice to find that our America Brethren shew themselves remarkably spirited in forming so many societies for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the strenuous exertions they are daily making; together with the united efforts of their Brethren, in other parts of the world promise under God to introduce

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<sup>81</sup> Commentary in the *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* indicates that this sentiment was shared by their fellow Baptists across the border. The *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* reported on the concern that Baptist Missionary Society had expressed at the beginning of the war regarding the impact of the war in missions. See *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* 3 (December 1812), pp. 219-223. At the end of the war, relief was expressed due to what it meant for missions. One article read: 'The return of *Peace* opens again those vast fields for missionary labour, from which we had been excluded by the terrors of war; and we confidently hope and expect, that it will also increase our means of sending the Gospel to the poor and destitute, wherever they may be found throughout our land. The return of Peace relieves us of another difficulty respecting our India mission. Our brethren can now go and return in safety.' See Editor, 'Return of Peace,' *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* 4 (March 1815), pp. 159.

the latter day's Glory. Their zeal in the end, will we doubt not, give the American Brethren a distinguished rank among the host of nations....We entreat that you may strive together with us in our prayers for us, for the Israel of God, and for the whole world that lieth in wickedness – that we may all be enabled to pray as our blessed Lord taught his Disciples to pray in substance; but particularly that short petition, 'they kingdom come,' Amen – so pray your unworthy Brethren in Christ.<sup>82</sup>

It was this commitment to the development of a larger kingdom – one that transcended national boundaries – that was powerful ideological motivation for the rapid reinstatement of relations after the war. And it was this commitment to a grand global enterprise that made the war between the United States and Britain seem - by comparison - immaterial.

The missionary spirit continued into the following years. The 1816 circular letter, as Baptist historian Saunders states, was 'highly seasoned with the spirit of missions,'<sup>83</sup> and was replete with calls for 'a shilling, a dollar, a guinea, a doubloon, or a hundred dollars annually (if they were able)' to support missions in order to 'wrest poor sinners from eternal woe and misery.'<sup>84</sup> The war had not diminished the passion for missions, in fact, its ending was deemed to have opened exciting new opportunities.

## Conclusion

While a number of factors in the Maritimes contributed to an open border and relatively friendly wartime cross-border relationships, this research focuses on an important ideological reason for the cordial cross-border Baptist relationships. It argues that the ideological underpinnings of the lack of rancor between wartime Baptists was the conviction that Nova Scotian, New Brunswick and New England Baptists – regardless of national or imperial loyalties – were members of one large spiritual family that would someday be united in the 'Great Association Above.' Maritime Baptist devotion to a radical evangelicalism that was often otherworldly and unconcerned with secular affairs meant that their spiritual identity in that 'Great Association' trumped all temporal identities, and loyalty to that otherworldly association transcended earthly loyalties. The primary task of

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<sup>82</sup> *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1815), pp. 11-12.

<sup>83</sup> See Saunders, *History of the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces*, pp. 169.

<sup>84</sup> 'Circular Letter,' *Minutes of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association* (1816), pp. 10.

this transnational spiritual family was to spread the gospel and build the church, and the war between the United States and British Empire was deemed to be an unfortunate interruption.

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## **The baptist Imagination of James McClendon**

### **ABSTRACT**

James McClendon (1924-2000) left behind him a legacy that was both decidedly 'baptist',<sup>1</sup> and thoroughly imaginative. This essay will explore how these two attributes (baptistness and imagination) came together to create a distinctive perspective for McClendon's theology. To achieve this task we will first explicate McClendon's understanding of 'baptist' and then come to a functional understanding of imagination. Finally we will discuss McClendon's baptist vision as an exemplification of his distinct imagination.

### **James McClendon 1924-2000**

James William McClendon Jr. was born in Shreveport Louisiana in 1924. As a child he was often ill, and confined to home; he was bright, and usually among the top in his class.<sup>2</sup> At quite a young age, McClendon was inwardly persuaded that faith in Jesus was appropriate for him and attended First Baptist Church in Shreveport with his mother. As a teen he was a member of the ROTC despite lacking any military skills. He describes himself as 'tall and shy and studious'.<sup>3</sup> He went to college at the University of Texas, and studied physics with minors in math and english. This degree was interrupted by his time in the Navy where he served as an electronics officer (studying at Harvard and MIT, and serving in the

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the word baptist, will be used in two ways as per McClendon's use. A small b baptist conveys a broad category of baptist convictions. A capital B baptist is used for naming explicitly Baptist denominationalism.

<sup>2</sup> James McClendon. 'How My Mind Developed', 1974. McClendon Collection; Archives and Special Collections, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 2.

Pacific, after peace was achieved). During the war 'Jim' was compelled to 'gospel ministry' which lead him to seminary (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Princeton Theological Seminary) and Graduate school (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary). He served as a pastor in Louisiana and Texas, as well as a short time in Sydney Australia, before moving to an academic career.

McClendon began his teaching in 1954 at Golden Gate Baptist Seminary in San Francisco. Due to some unforeseen circumstances and conflicts, McClendon chose to move on in 1966.<sup>4</sup> He was unable, though, to gain a job from a university or seminary within his denomination. This lead to an historic appointment at the (Jesuit) University of San Francisco, where McClendon was the first non-Catholic professor of theology at a Catholic institution in America. This ended up not being a long term appointment, due to McClendon's active opposition to the Vietnam War. After a nationwide tour of temporary employment in various institutions, McClendon landed in yet another ecumenical role at the (Episcopalian) Church Divinity School which belonged to the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley. By the time he had finally settled at GTU McClendon had acquired some of the most varied ecumenical teaching experience of any theologian working in America.<sup>5</sup>

Being Baptist, in a world that was not, had a profound impact upon McClendon. The Episcopal claim of being both and neither Catholic and/or Protestant was attractive to his development of his baptist identity.<sup>6</sup> This is how he felt about being baptist, yet he was not the same as the Episcopalians; he had distinct and separate convictions. Surely he thought, he could apply this same logic to his own tradition, and not just concede to being an ecclesial offshoot of the Protestant tree? McClendon told a story of how early American fishermen had a problem with their herring dying in their storage barrels after they were caught, but prior to arrival in the port, causing them to go bad. They discovered that if they put a small, spiny catfish in a barrel of herring it would guarantee their survival. The explanation of this phenomenon was that the catfish was so

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<sup>4</sup> This involved some theological debates within the Southern Baptist denomination, and McClendon's involvement in raising funds to send a student to participate in the civil rights movement.

<sup>5</sup> James McClendon. 'The Radical Road One Baptist Took.' *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 74, no. 4 (2000): 507.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

unpleasant the herring would simply not have the leisure to die!<sup>7</sup> McClendon uses this anecdote to explain both his role as a baptist in these non-baptist institutions and also as a role for the baptist churches amongst the churches ecumenically.

McClendon's discovery of John Howard Yoder enabled him to vocalize this move. Yoder's emphasis and knowledge of the Anabaptist movement during the reformation era enabled McClendon to discover that his suspicions of baptists being a unique entity were true. McClendon writes of his 'conversion' through Yoder:

I had undergone a second conversion, not as at my baptism merely to follow Jesus, but now to follow Jesus understood this way, Jesus interpreted by John Yoder's scornful passion to overcome standard-account thinking, Jesus who (among other things) rejected the Zealot option, who would not do harm even in the best of causes, even in his own. By then, as I have said above, I had become some kind of anti-war Christian... I was converted. I was (though I still have no love for the term itself) an 'Anabaptist' Baptist.<sup>8</sup>

Reading this book crystallized some convictions for McClendon about what it is to be baptist. McClendon explains:

Unspoken but implied, Yoder's Politics of Jesus gave a new relevance to the Anabaptists, those radical Reformers of 16th century Christianity I had been taught to disregard as my own spiritual ancestors. Now the radicals were important, the Politics implied, but not because they defined a trail of blood or a trail of baptistries--rather because these widely varied folk across the centuries had each caught some of the light of the Original Revolution (another Yoder title) and had sought in their day and way to live out the baptist vision anew. The fifteenth century Czech Brethren and the sixteenth century radicals had each done this independently; so had others in other centuries--among them General and Particular Baptists, Brethren, Campbellite Restorationists, South American basic-community Catholics. These had caught the vision, claimed it communally as their own, and lived it out afresh. So might I; so might we.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> James McClendon. 'On Being A Baptist In A Non-Baptist World', 1996. McClendon Collection; Archives and Special Collections, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

<sup>8</sup> McClendon. 'The Radical Road One Baptist Took.' 508.

<sup>9</sup> McClendon. 'On Being A Baptist In A Non-Baptist World'.

Out of a conviction that his life's task was to write a theology for this often overlooked theological perspective, McClendon takes an approach that is broadly baptist. Similarly, both 'catholic' and 'protestant' take on broader meanings than their proper noun capitalized variations. The lower cased versions of these words convey an attitude or broad methodological and doctrinal convictions and McClendon contends that baptist should have its place alongside these two other alternatives. He acknowledges the work of others in this tradition, highlighting some commonly accepted distinguishing features of this perspective: (1) Biblicism, (2) Liberty, (3) Discipleship, (4) Community, (5) Mission.<sup>10</sup> What McClendon sought was a vision that united all these elements; a distinct way of seeing, that enabled these to become distinctive ecclesial patterns. Observations and revelations on this baptist phenomenon lead McClendon to develop the baptist vision as a means of identifying the unity that exists within this tradition, and as a recovery of what those early anabaptist reformers had possessed. The way that McClendon approaches theology necessitates both a descriptive and a normative task, both the discovery and transformations of the convictions of the community.<sup>11</sup> This approach to theology evokes creativity and the allowance of the convictions of the community to combine with the current context, and shape the imagination of the community to live and think in faithful ways. With an understanding of McClendon's baptist vision will come a fuller understanding of his baptist-ness, but prior to that, an fuller understanding of imagination is required to see how it is particularly apt to theological method today.

God's view of things is not a perspective we are able to know outright. The acceptance that theology has an innate hermeneutical or interpretive task, has become widely accepted.<sup>12</sup> This has allowed creativity and imagination to begin to be accepted as an inevitable and often beneficial

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<sup>10</sup> For more detail see, James William McClendon. *Systematic Theology: Ethics*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Revised. (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 27-30.

<sup>11</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, 23. McClendon defines theology as "The discovery, understanding, and transformation of the convictions of a convictional community, including the discovery and critical revision of their relation to one another and to whatever else there is."

<sup>12</sup> See, David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981) 107, and Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove, Ill.; Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2002. McClendon himself affirms this in his definition of theology, where he includes interpretation, and transformation of convictions as part of its task. See *Ethics*, 23.

attribute to theology's task, especially when it comes to being contextually relevant in our pluralistic world. A theory of imagination will prove to be essential in understanding not only how this interpretive aspect functions, but specifically how McClendon's imagination works in his theological method.

## Imagination

Imagination has a long history- in academic discourse. Its understanding in the cultural and academic world has evolved a great deal in the past century. Theology, with its acceptance of the interpretive aspect of its task, must have an adequate understanding of imagination if it is to harness the potential of its use. In *Imagining God: Theology and The Religious Imagination*, Garret Green brings together insights into imagination, rationality and recent scientific advancements, and how these relate to help with theology's task. Green takes seriously the role that imagination plays in understanding, and delves into this often overlooked aspect of human thinking.<sup>13</sup>

Green uses philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn to explain the concept of a paradigm, and easily relates Kuhn's language with religious thought. A paradigm is the structure of models and images that form the logic of a scientific theory or method, which is similar to how the imagination functions. Throughout his work Green uses the example of Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit.<sup>14</sup> The image can be seen as a rabbit or a duck, depending on how it is seen, or depending upon the paradigm of the seer. The image either is seen as a duck or as a rabbit, and Green wants to argue that it is imagination that makes seeing both possible. Green proposes that we understand imagination as 'the paradigmatic faculty, the ability of human beings to recognize in accessible exemplars the constitutive organizing patterns of other, less accessible and more complex objects of cognition.'<sup>15</sup> Green works extensively to provide credibility to this view from both

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<sup>13</sup> Green, Garrett. *Imagining God: Theology And The Religious Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), see especially Chapter 1. Green does not explicitly cite McClendon nor McClendon Green, but there are significant overlapping convictions in their work.

<sup>14</sup> This can be found in, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), 194.

<sup>15</sup> Green, Garrett. *Imagining God*, 66. This is also what McClendon displays with his *Biography as Theology*.

within and outside of the theological realm, but what I want to highlight is how he argues from within the theological tradition.

Green is interested in the development of a Christian imagination that plays a paradigmatic role in the lives of Christians. One point that is important for him to clarify about this type of imagination is the distinction between image and imagine. 'One does not image God,' Green says, which would be a form of idolatry, 'but imagines God.'<sup>16</sup> This is the distinction between constructing some picture of God, and thinking of God according to a paradigm. This is an important insight that must not be forgotten, for idolatry is easily achieved. The temptation to say what God is, instead of saying what God is like, is often a merely a matter of semantics but performs a very different speech act.<sup>17</sup>

Green spends significant time and energy discussing what this paradigmatic imagination may look like according to the Christian faith. Through choosing faithful paradigms to structure the imagination, one can have freedom and authority in living truthfully and realistically.<sup>18</sup> This is not merely a personal reality; indeed, to be truly authentic to the faith it confesses, it must be a communal imagination. Green is convinced that the paradigms that shape people's imagination and their experiences in the world are more apt for revealing uniqueness in a person or a group, rather than the experiences themselves. He says that 'what is given to the believer, and therefore to the theologian, is not a foundational experience but a religious paradigm: a normative model of 'what the world is like,' embodied in a canon of scripture and expressed in the life of a religious community.'<sup>19</sup> Likely, people will experience life in slightly different ways, but what will be the same is the imagination with which they experience it.<sup>20</sup> It is the imagination that is more telling than the experience.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 93.

<sup>17</sup> This is used technically and refers to the concept that words are not vessels of meaning, but perform actions. We use words to direct, explain, declare, etc. and the words are actions. This philosophy is the lineage of J.L. Austin and his followers, of which McClendon is one.

<sup>18</sup> See, *Ibid*, 119.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 133, emphasis his.

<sup>20</sup> This potentially a difficult claim to defend, but what Green is concerned with arguing is that the paradigms (including metaphors, and convictions) that structure the imagination are more important to the conclusions of experience than the explicit experiences themselves. In a way that all experience is predicated upon the imagination that allows it to be understood.

This paradigmatic imagination surely has a lot to do with the form and method theology will take. Green holds that theology is a matter of interpreting the 'manifold aspects of that imaginative unity in order that its logic, the coherence of its elements, may be intellectually comprehended.'<sup>21</sup> Using the imagination in theology, then, is not only beneficial, but necessary, to be faithful in a changing world. McClendon brings this same concept under his term 'baptist vision' allowing the distinctive baptist convictions to lead to a distinctively baptist theology.

Green makes the case that not only is imagination central to human rationality but that it is especially apt in the discussion of theological method. Imagination can be the background of rationality and utilized to new potential.

Mark Johnson is a philosopher and linguist who works within the Anglo-American post-modern tradition.<sup>22</sup> Launching his career with the groundbreaking work *Metaphors We Live By* alongside George Lakoff, he set out on a trajectory that led to many publications exploring the connections of language, cognitive science, linguistics, imagination, ethics and meaning making. In his *The Body In The Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, Johnson argues for an increased awareness, and appreciation for the role of imagination in our reasoning. He advances three main claims: a) without imagination, nothing in the world could be meaningful. b) without imagination, we could never make sense of our experience. And c) that without imagination, we could never reason toward knowledge of reality.<sup>23</sup> Johnson has a similar approach to understanding imagination as Green does, in that they are both concerned in the ways that imagination structures how we understand and experience our lives. Johnson, however, goes more into the details of how the imagination goes about forming such structures.

Johnson is indebted to Immanuel Kant, whose insight into imagination is the starting point for much of this thinking. Johnson, though, claims that Kant was limited by the dualisms of his system of thought. The metaphysical split between the physical and the mental is an overwhelming force for Kant which Johnson sees as the main limiting factor in his conclusions on imagination.<sup>24</sup> Johnson views himself as moving beyond

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 148.

<sup>22</sup> I place McClendon and Green within this tradition as well.

<sup>23</sup> See, Mark Johnson, *The Body In The Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), ix.

<sup>24</sup> See, Ibid, Chapter 6, Especially 165-172.

Kant's thinking in ways which Kant's method would not allow. In other words, Johnson sees Kant's work on imagination as his greatest contribution to our understanding of meaning and rationality,<sup>25</sup> a conclusion that would have been impossible for Kant to make. Instead of seeing the metaphysical and epistemological dichotomies (within Kant's method) as absolutes, Johnson proposes seeing them as a continuum, with imagination as central in locating oneself on that continuum.<sup>26</sup> Rationality is the product of all of these structures taken together, each part bringing their own constraints and possibilities.

Johnson goes on to list five components of a theory of imagination. These are necessary an understanding of imagination that is comprehensive, they also speak to how the imagination is able to function the way it does:<sup>27</sup>

- 1) Categorization. A sort of prototype categorization is what Johnson has in mind rather than one that would seek a minimal amount of requisite conditions. The category of 'chair' would have a prototypical chair in mind, and relations to and fro this prototype could be identified as a chair. Novel chairs are taken into account and the prototype is revised due to new encounters.
- 2) Schemata. Both in terms of the image schema's Johnson proposes and in the sense that it is used in cognitive science, much of which still needs to be explored in more detail.<sup>28</sup> And image schemata would be a visual orientation used to structure thoughts, such as front and back. A rock does not have an actual front and back but we use this schemata to speak of and structure our thinking and language about its orientation. In cognitive science schemata is used to refer to the physical and neural connections within the brain. Images schemata are reinforced neurally through the connections and reinforcement of this way of thinking in a physical way.
- 3) Metaphorical projections. A metaphor provides a way for thinking that structures and allows projections into the future. Certain metaphors allow for possibilities that other metaphors would not allow. Taking on a novel metaphor and projecting its implication reveals innovations

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>26</sup> This is a very important move on Johnson's part and one which could have been made clearer.

<sup>27</sup> See Ibid, 171.

<sup>28</sup> There have been advances in this area since that time some of which are highlighted in Mark Johnson, *The Meaning Of The Body : Aesthetics Of Human Understanding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

creativity. Much of this thinking has been explored by Lakoff and Johnson as well as colleagues of theirs, but more insight is needed into the relationships between domains, as well as the constraints upon metaphoric projections.

- 4) Metonymy. Similar in many ways to metaphor, Johnson highlights both synecdoche (part-for-whole) and metonymy proper (salient or related attribute-for-whole) as especially important. Metonymy helps with efficiency within the imagination, and allows conceptualization of something by means of its relation to something else. An example would be referring to a person by calling them what they are wearing, e.g. The red hat said... A symbolic metonymy would be a dove referring to the Holy Spirit. Metonymy is crucial to the formation and revision of categories.
- 5) Narrative structure. The notion of narrative unity is crucial for an adequate account of imagination both due to the complex communal narratives people take part in, and also the phenomenon of using story to remember one's life. People tell the story of themselves in narrative form. Everyone is situated historically which is, by nature the story of the past.

These five requirements for an adequate and thorough understanding of imagination lead to an ability to gauge with accuracy whether a theorist takes seriously the role and potential of the imagination within human rationality. It must be stated that these five considerations that enable the imagination primarily happen automatically, or at least not in an explicit fashion. We organize and pattern our thoughts in this way whether it is made explicit or not. Part of Johnson's project is to make focal that which is tacit, in order to understand how the imagination is able to function the way it does. In Johnson's words, these attempt to give an account of the structure of human experience and cognition.<sup>29</sup> In a very broad sense, imagination structures our experience, which, 'involves everything that makes us human—our bodily, social, linguistic, and intellectual being combined in complex interactions that make up our understanding of our world.'<sup>30</sup> As we will see the baptistness of James McClendon pervades the social, linguistic, and intellectual structures, that form his unique imagination. This is seen most acutely in the vision McClendon proposes as the propulsion for his theological perspective.

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson, *The Body In The Mind*, 171.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, xvi.

### McClendon's baptist Imagination

McClendon proposes a 'baptist vision' as the unifying theological center of a distinct type of theology. McClendon hopes that this vision would describe the center of the life and belief of baptist practitioners. He elaborates that by such a vision,

I do not mean some end result of theological reflection, remote from the daily life of a rather plain people. Nor do I mean a detachable baptist Ideal—what baptists ought to be (but of course are not). Instead, by a vision I mean the guiding pattern by which a people (or as here, a combination of peoples) shape their thought and practice as that people or that combination; I mean by it the continually emerging theme and tonic structure of their common life.<sup>31</sup>

McClendon seeks this vision to be necessarily connected to the daily lives of its adherents, and that once 'acknowledged for what it is, the vision should serve as the touchstone by which authentic baptist convictions are discovered, described, and transformed, and thus as the organizing principle around which an authentic baptist theology can take shape.'<sup>32</sup>

As the heirs of the Radical Reformation,<sup>33</sup> and distinct from either Catholic or Protestant traditions, the baptist perspective represents a unique strand in the wider Christian tradition. This vision takes on two functions: as a hermeneutic, and as a temporal pattern. The hermeneutical side of the vision, McClendon argues, is the way scripture reads itself, and is expressed as a 'shared awareness of the present Christian community as the primitive community and the eschatological community.'<sup>34</sup> Taking his cue from Peter's use of the prophet Joel in Acts 2, McClendon sees this as the familiar pattern of how scripture is used in the bible. It can be summed in the phrase 'this is that,' a direct quote from Acts 2:16. Peter is using a passage from a former time (Joel 2:28-32) to understand and describe what is currently taking place. McClendon comments that 'we are here in the presence of a regular motif in biblical literature in which language about one set of events and circumstances is applied under guidance to another set of events and circumstances.'<sup>35</sup> This is how the bible should be read, he argues, and the way in which those in the 'baptist' tradition have

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<sup>31</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

commonly read Christianity's book. He summarizes the baptist vision in the second volume of his systematics thusly:

the way the Bible is read by those who (1) accept the plain sense of scripture as dominant sense and recognize their community with the story it tells, and who (2) acknowledge that finding the point of that story leads them to its application, and who also (3) see past and present and future linked by a 'this is that' and 'then is now' vision, a trope of mystical identity binding the story now to the story then and the story then and now to God's future yet to come.

The temporal aspect of the vision is labeled 'then is now'. This emphasizes the time aspect of applying logics from other (scriptural) times to the current time. One implication of this 'then is now' aspect is the foreshortening of time; this vision not only applies to the past, but also to the prophetic future<sup>36</sup>. McClendon's emphasis on narrative becomes vital at this point. He contends that what holds the various points in a story together is 'the linking of its parts into one narrative.'<sup>37</sup> Parush Parushev engaged with McClendon's baptist vision in his address at the Baptist Symposium, celebrating 400 years as European Baptists. He writes of this temporal aspect of McClendon's vision that a given community's task in uniting its narrative must look to the past as well as to the future. 'While looking backwards, it is not intended that the community should become retrograde, dissenting or sectarian. It is rather looking 'forward to the roots''.<sup>38</sup> The baptist vision sees 'the story of Israel, of Jesus, of the church, is intimately related to the narrative we ourselves live.'<sup>39</sup> Parushev continues, 'Similarly, looking forward is not a speculative futuristic exercise. It is an acute alertness that the story of the Kingdom of God proclaimed and lived out by the prophets, by Jesus and by his disciples, is still the story that shapes our lives today. Yet we choose to take different paths to lead us to the Kingdom.'<sup>40</sup> Therefore, one vital function of this vision is a way of 'constructing our experience by way of Scripture.'<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> McClendon *Doctrine*, 92.

<sup>37</sup> James McClendon, and James M. Smith. *Convictions : Defusing Religious Relativism*. Rev. ed. (Valley Forge Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1994), 176.

<sup>38</sup> Parush Parushev, 'Doing Theology In A Baptist Way' (paper presented at the Jubileum Symposium ajar Baptisme, 1609-2009, Vrije Universiteit, 16 April 2009), 7.

<sup>39</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, 36.

<sup>40</sup> Parushev, 'Doing Theology In A Baptist Way' 7.

<sup>41</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, 36.

McClendon's desire is to use this vision consistently and fully, saying that 'by this vision disciples live by the faithfulness of Christ who was and is and is to come, the first and the last.'<sup>42</sup> It is for McClendon the faithful way of understanding time in relation to the story of Christ.

Curtis Freeman has explained the difference that McClendon's proposal achieves:

From the perspective of standard-account Christians, the baptist vision seems to get everything backwards: Christian life before Christian faith, ethics before doctrine, convictions before reasons. This backwardness, however, is not merely a difference for the sake of difference. It reflects the reversal of perspective in 'the view from below' where baptists first learned to see things. McClendon reminds us that our radical foremothers and forefathers rarely acquired a majority consciousness that presumed to speak for everyone, due in no small measure to the fact that their heritage was rooted in soil watered by the blood of those who dared to differ.<sup>43</sup>

McClendon's vision enables his theology to be in posture and method distinctively baptist. It does this mainly because what it is describing is the structures of a baptist imagination.

This baptist vision he proposes can be seen throughout the Christian tradition. Indeed he uses examples from outside his Baptist tradition, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Lutheran) and Dorothy Day (Catholic) to display it in their living. Nevertheless, it is this baptist vision and its implications that McClendon claims are 'a necessary and sufficient organizing principle for a (baptist) theology.'<sup>44</sup>

If we take the imagination to be of central importance to the structure and formation of experience, and the baptist vision as a distinct way of construing experience based on a particular way of reading the Bible, then the Baptist vision, with an appreciation of the imagination, can be understood in a deeper way. In the language of Green, McClendon proposes a uniquely baptistic paradigm to structure the imagination. A distinctly baptist imagination will lead to a distinctly baptist experience of

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<sup>42</sup> McClendon, *Doctrine*, 92, emphasis his.

<sup>43</sup> Curtis W. Freeman, 'A Theology for Brethren, Radical Believers, and Other Baptists,' *Brethren Life and Thought* 51, no. 1–2 (Wint-Spr 2006): 107.

<sup>44</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, 33.

the faith, and the theology which informs it.<sup>45</sup> McClendon's vision reaches all the criteria of Johnson's understanding of comprehensive imagination. The vision includes aspects of categorization, schemata, metaphoric projections, metonymy, and narrative structure. Some of these are quite explicit to the vision, namely the narrative structure, and the metaphoric projections. The entire logic of 'this is that' and 'then is now' is only possible by way of metaphoric projection, and narrative unity. The other three are less focal but still present. It would be possible, and of some interest, to demonstrate how each of these categories is fulfilled in McClendon's vision, but it would not be adequate to the emphases of narrative and metaphor in the formation of experience. In the remainder of this article we will develop these two notions briefly, in order to highlight the imagination that enables and propels McClendon's unique baptist theology.

Firstly, McClendon's approach to metaphor enables much of this vision. As stated, the 'this is that' and 'then is now' aspect of the vision is an expression of a method of metaphoric projection. The logic and rational from a given situation in the text (that, then) is projected onto a situation here and now (this, now). In the more technical language of Johnson, the source domain (scripture, that, then) is mapped onto the target domain (here, this, now). Johnson and Lakoff affirm this approach, saying that all humans operate in this way: 'We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor.'<sup>46</sup> McClendon's vision may not promote specific metaphors, but rather, it sets up a method to view the 'great story' as taking on this role in forming the rationality of the Church.

McClendon does, however, advocate for the use of specific metaphors or images within lives and communities as a way of participation within this vision. Early in his work on biography, McClendon employed 'images', a concept which he was very influenced by Austin Farrer's *A Glass of Vision*, as metaphors which bear the content of faith itself.<sup>47</sup> Later in his

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<sup>45</sup> As stated above this is what McClendon saw was lacking in theology. A poverty of this baptist theology was one of the main motivations for undertaking the trilogy which took the final two decades of his life to complete.

<sup>46</sup> Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 158.

<sup>47</sup> See, Austin Farrer, *The Glass of Vision*. Westminster [London: Dacre Press, 1948, and McClendon, James William. *Biography As Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. (Eugene: Trinity Press International, 1990), 70-79.

work, McClendon takes a similar approach with his systematic theology, drawing upon pictures to project the logic and shape of his eschatology. 'Word pictures' and 'picture thinking' is what much of the New Testament evokes, McClendon claims. Drawing upon Wittgenstein, McClendon presents an approach to pictures that allows them not only to be descriptive, but formative. Different understandings and experiences of a variety of things are shaped by the 'picture' of how the world goes. Wittgenstein explains that once a picture is grasped, it is enough to change how the world is for that person. Wittgenstein's famous duck-rabbit is, again, used to illustrate this point. The line drawing can be seen as a duck or a rabbit.<sup>48</sup> Through this illustration, it is proven that there is immense possibility for difference in seeing one given image. McClendon notices that the pictures from the New Testament concerning the last judgement etc shape how we experience and think about them. Making important connections between these images, previous knowledge and how they relate to our current living is key in unlocking the potential of these pictures. 'It is making these connections (or failing to make them) that distinguishes biblical faith in the last judgement from mere fantasies that have no recognizable life consequences.'<sup>49</sup> Johnson, in his book on morality, (which for McClendon is inseparable from theology) writes that 'no account of morality can be adequate that fails to examine the extent to which our conceptualization, reasoning, and language about morality involve metaphor (and other imaginative devices)'.<sup>50</sup> It is my contention, then, that Johnson would endorse McClendon's approach to theology, rationality and ethics.

The final aspect of McClendon's theology that unites his whole baptist vision and allows his imagination to flourish into a unique and provocative theological corpus is his understanding of narrative. As one of the central categories for Johnson's requisites for imagination, narrative unites all of the others in a context of story. Johnson mentions explicitly the complex communal narratives we are born into, as well as the way that we narrate or construe our lives to fit in a narrative structure.<sup>51</sup> McClendon has been working with these observations in the theological world since the 1960's. McClendon proposes that 'the moral theologian's task will be to discover from the participant's standpoint how the story goes, what it means for

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<sup>48</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 194.

<sup>49</sup> McClendon, *Doctrine*, 77.

<sup>50</sup> Mark Johnson. *Moral Imagination : Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 61-62.

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, *The Body In The Mind*, 172.

one's child (or one's life) to be a gift from God, who the neighbor is, how one is taught the skills to overcome self-deception.<sup>52</sup> Observations of this type led McClendon to develop a method of biography as theology, which involves telling theological accounts of compelling lives, lived in a way which enables their communities to see their theology not in an abstract doctrinal way, but in an embodied way. This method can be seen throughout his work, and implies that the wider narrative, and particular narratives, are united. This unifying narrative approach to theology climaxes in the two narratives model of Christology which aims to set aside the more traditional metaphysical questions which skew this teaching. McClendon avers that all (Christian) narratives find their climax in the story of Christ.

McClendon's narrative approach has gained wide respect among theologians. Amos Yong claims that McClendon is the most ambitious theologian working with narrative.<sup>53</sup> In their book *Why Narrative?*, Hauerwas and Jones, point to McClendon's importance in the development of narrative theology, but it is relegated to a footnote, as they could not decide which piece to include.<sup>54</sup> And this distant inclusion of McClendon within narrative theology, has seemed to be the norm in treatment of McClendon's work. The all-encompassing nature of McClendon's narrative project allows for his theology to be imaginatively united and extended to all parts of life. It is through the narrative that McClendon's theology can be called systematic. The story of Scripture is read and understood so it includes its readers in its plot, inviting them to become characters in the same story. This is the power of McClendon's 'baptist vision'. I will conclude with how McClendon finishes his *Ethics*:

My story is inadequate, taken alone, and is hungry for a wider story to complete it... My story must be linked with the story of a people... Our story is inadequate as well: The story of each and all is itself hungry for a greater story that overcomes our persistent self-deceit, redeems our common life, and provides a way for us to be a people among all earth's peoplehood, their own stories, their own lives... truth entails

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<sup>52</sup> James McClendon. 'Three Strands of Christian Ethics.' *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 6, no. 1 (1978), 72.

<sup>53</sup> Yong, Amos. 'The 'Baptist Vision' of James William McClendon, Jr.: A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Response.' *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 39.

<sup>54</sup> Hauerwas, Stanley, and L. Gregory Jones. *Why Narrative? : Reading in Narrative Theology*. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997), 4.

character, [and] must find that truth in a community that is of necessity story-shaped, and to show that Christian morality involves us, necessarily involves us, in the story of God.<sup>55</sup>

McClendon's imagination, which is best discovered through his baptist vision, reveals a compelling theological perspective. It is decidedly baptist, with baptist posture, method, and convictions guiding and shaping it. It allows his theological corpus to be a fresh and unique call from this important ecclesial perspective, both to baptists, and to the wider Church. More could be said on these points and much has, but McClendon's legacy is still only being realized, and is starting to sprout fresh buds. Perhaps an imagination like his takes time to translate. His friend Stanley Hauerwas put it well in a letter to McClendon: 'You were so far ahead of the rest of us and the fact will certainly be duly noted in the long run.'<sup>56</sup> Perhaps we have not arrived at the long run yet, but McClendon's imagination reveals a theological perspective that is insightful and compelling, encouraging theologians to imagine once again.

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<sup>55</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, 351.

<sup>56</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, June 12, 1991. McClendon Collection; Archives and Special Collections, David Allan Hubbard Library, Fuller Theological Seminary.

## **New Zealand Baptists and the Great Depression of 1929-35: How the Baptists Responded during a Time of National Economic Distress**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Great Depression of 1929-35 marked a painful and difficult era in New Zealand history. As export prices plunged and unemployment figures soared, the churches could not ignore the suffering around them. New Zealand Baptists, known for their social activism, had been largely silent on political matters. However, as the economic outlook worsened and Baptists daily came face to face with desperate and hungry people, how were they to respond? This essay will map New Zealand Baptist responses to social issues and political agitation during the Great Depression. A shift from a markedly pietistic and individualistic response to a far more thoroughly politically active one took place. In the decade prior to the depression, two influential (and often competing) theological strands within the denomination may be identified. The impact of these will be explored in an analysis of which notes three phases: 1929-31, 1931-33 and 1934-35.

### **Baptist theology prior to the Great Depression**

The decade prior to the Great Depression was one of international theological controversy. Debates and disputes over 'modernism; and its conservative opposition in fundamentalism were not lost on the New Zealand churches. New Zealand was affected by these two movements, and the raw tension that they brought. As Martin

Sutherland notes, New Zealand Baptists were not a monolithic group.<sup>1</sup> A spectrum of theological positions can be identified

Joseph Kemp (1872-1933) was perhaps the most well-known leader of the fundamental expression in Baptist circles in New Zealand. Prior to his arrival in New Zealand in 1920, Kemp had spent some time in America and had forged relationships with leading fundamentalists over there. When he came to New Zealand, he brought that theological framework with him and subsequently translated it into the New Zealand context. Thus, Jane Simpson has observed that he was ‘the prime interpreter of American fundamentalism in New Zealand in the 1920’s.’<sup>2</sup> After his arrival in New Zealand, Kemp became a pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle and became an influential leader amongst the Baptist Union.<sup>3</sup> Kemp’s fundamentalism—coupled with an evangelistic zeal and emphasis upon revivalism—caused him to have a rather narrow view of the gospel. He was far more interested in human souls than he was in human social situations. As such, he often espoused a rather pietistic gospel denouncing the likes of alcohol, gambling and dancing.

John Tucker notes two more reasons for this narrow view of the gospel within the conservatives. First, premillennial theology was coming to the fore.<sup>4</sup> Premillennial theology asserts that morality will continue to decay until Christ’s return. Therefore, it is better to think about the soul and what one can do to prepare it for Christ’s return than it is to spend time thinking about easing the lives of others. Considering the horrors that had befallen the country in 1910-20’s period—horrors like World War One and the Influenza Epidemic—the upsurge of this theology is not surprising. A second influence was that the Keswick movement was steadily gaining adherents within Baptist circles. This movement, encouraged in

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Sutherland, *Conflict and Connection: Baptist Identity in New Zealand* (Auckland: Archer Press, 2011), 157-158.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Simpson, *Joseph W. Kemp and the Impact of American Fundamentalism in New Zealand* (Thesis: University of Waikato, 1987), 3.

<sup>3</sup> John Tucker, ‘A Braided River: new Zealand Baptists and Public Issues 1882-2000’ (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2010), 108.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

New Zealand by Kemp and other Baptist leaders, focused purely on the development of the Christian spiritual life.<sup>5</sup> It highlighted the importance of personal holiness. This 'spiritual' focus caused an almost militant response to the perceived moral decay that was occurring during that period.<sup>6</sup> Due to these factors—including the rise of fundamentalism—time and again throughout the 1920's the need for spiritual regeneration was constantly being articulated by many Baptists.<sup>7</sup> This kind of mentality led to an individualistic and moralistic worldview which had no real desire to engage with wider societal issues.<sup>8</sup> Tucker summarizes the period leading up to the depression by suggesting that Baptist churches generally were leaning 'in a more pietistic direction' and so 'found less time to debate broader social issues.'<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Laurie Guy asserts that many Baptists held to this narrower view of the gospel during this period.<sup>10</sup> This kind of thinking led those Baptists to challenge only societal norms that impinged upon individualistic morality like gambling, alcoholism, dancing and Sunday observance. It seems that this group held the balance of power within Baptist leadership when the 1929 economic crisis hit.

There was, however, another strand that held to a broader view of the gospel. This strand saw that the gospel had implications for all aspects of life including society, economics and politics. This is aptly demonstrated by the Baptist leader J.K. Archer (1865-1949). On arriving in New Zealand in 1908, Archer was bitterly disappointed with the lack of political engagement that New

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<sup>5</sup> Walter Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 654.

<sup>6</sup> Issues of dancing, drinking, gambling and the cinema were high issues of the day. See Tucker, *A Braided River*, 113.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Smith, 'N.Z. Baptists and the 'Labour Question,' *The New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research* 4, October 1999: 23.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 114. This is especially true of the North island Baptist churches where leaders like Kemp were more influential. See Martin Sutherland, 'Joseph Kemp and the Establishment of the N.Z. Baptist College, 1922-33,' *The New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research* 8, October 2003: 33-34.

<sup>10</sup> Laurie Guy, ed., *Baptists in Twentieth Century New Zealand: Documents Illustrating Baptist Life and Development* (Auckland: New Zealand Baptists Research and Historical Society, 2005), 90.

Zealand Baptists demonstrated.<sup>11</sup> However, he fully believed that the gospel had significant implications for all aspects of life, and so by 1918, Archer immersed himself in secular politics. This became the preferred conduit for his socialist gospel.<sup>12</sup> This kind of thinking led some Baptists to believe that the gospel has a wider dimension that challenges the status quo of society. However, even within this scope, very few Baptists chose to engage politically—unless it had to do with alcohol.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, even for those Baptists who held to a broad view of the gospel, actively being involved in issues of politics and economics remained outside of their scope.

### **New Zealand society before and during the Great Depression**

The Great Depression has left an indelible mark on the psyche and memory of New Zealand society. The decade leading up to the Great Depression was one of significant change. New Zealand was recovering from the trauma of World War One and the deadly Influenza Epidemic of 1918. There had been incredible technological change.<sup>14</sup> New Zealand also had found itself dealing with a turbulent economy which included three mini economic slumps in 1922, 1926 and 1928-29.<sup>15</sup> These brief economic setbacks, however, did not prepare the country for what was to come. On 29 October, 1929, Wall Street suffered a market crash which triggered a world-wide economic depression.<sup>16</sup> Tony Simpson called this depression and its effect in New Zealand ‘an

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<sup>11</sup> Sutherland, *Conflict and Connection*, 109. Brian Smith further notes that New Zealand Baptists have rarely been politically active unless it has had to do with drink. See Smith, ‘N.Z. Baptists,’ 23.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, ‘N.Z. Baptists,’ 23.

<sup>14</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 247-248.

<sup>15</sup> Laurie Guy, *Shaping Godzone: Public Issues and Church Voices in New Zealand 1840-2000* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2011), 214.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

unspeakable disaster'.<sup>17</sup> By 1933, exporting receipts were down 44% on what they were in 1929.<sup>18</sup> Unemployment figures went through the roof with around 100,000 people out of a job at the peak of the depression—that is about 40% of the male workforce.<sup>19</sup> To demonstrate the economic potency of this time, Michael King says,

The Court of Arbitration was given the power to lower wages and minimum rates disappeared. Old age and war pensions were cut and family allowances abolished. The result was unemployment for tens of thousands and reduced purchasing power for others. Shopkeepers began to go bankrupt as customers could no longer pay bills.<sup>20</sup>

The Depression had significant social ramifications also. Out of fear of having to feed another mouth, the number of abortions induced rose significantly to about one abortion for every five pregnancies.<sup>21</sup> The unemployment relief work that the government established was degrading and meaningless which caused further frustration and agitation. The overall affect—psychological stress, lack of food, fear of the future—caused major rioting in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.<sup>22</sup> These deplorable years are often called the 'sugarbag years' because some of those who were affected most significantly lived in clothes made from the hessian sacks used to hold sugar at the Chelsea Sugar Refinery factory in Birkenhead.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the government of the day has largely been accused of being too passive and markedly

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<sup>17</sup> Tony Simpson, *The Sugarbag Years: A People's History of the 1930s Depression in New Zealand*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Auckland: Godwit, 1997), 13.

<sup>18</sup> Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 243.

<sup>19</sup> Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), 347. Belich argues that these numbers are probably somewhat exaggerated. He claims that scholarly estimates range between 12-32% of the workforce were unemployed. However, if one were to include Maori and woman in their calculations, then the higher number is probably more likely. See Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 255.

<sup>20</sup> King, *The Penguin History*, 346.

<sup>21</sup> Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 256.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 257.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 255.

incompetent, and therefore largely ineffective at helping the people of New Zealand during this crisis.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the depression has been marked by some as the ‘great nadir of the twentieth century.’<sup>25</sup>

### Baptists and the Great Depression

Allan Davidson notes that the churches response to the Great Depression was largely palliative.<sup>26</sup> Even within churches with activist traditions such as the Methodists and Roman Catholics a significant majority of church members were not politically active.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, there was still a significant minority who sought to address the underlying conditions that gave rise to the absurd situation where there were such a large number of hungry people in a country of plenty. Kevin Clements provides a helpful analysis for understanding how churches in New Zealand responded to the Great Depression.<sup>28</sup> He splits this period into three distinct stages. First, the 1929-31 stage was a period where leaders of most denominations were complicit with the status quo. Churches were more focused on helping people at an individual level. They often had a more pietistic response proclaiming that individual morality should be upheld. Secondly, the 1931-34 stage marked a shift from this individualistic focus to focusing on social issues that were underlying the plight of the poor. This occurred especially in light of rising unemployment rates, civil unrest and rioting and

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<sup>24</sup> Guy, *Shaping Godzone*, 214.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 254. Some have argued whether the depression was in fact as severe as has been painted in the minds of New Zealanders and the history books that have been written. Whatever the nuances that come of these debates is not especially pertinent to this essay. What is more important is that there was clearly a depression which significantly impacted all strata of New Zealand society. The depth of suffering during this time cannot be underestimated. See Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 255.

<sup>26</sup> Allan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand* (Wellington: Education for Ministry, 2004), 109.

<sup>27</sup> John Tucker, *A Braided River: New Zealand Baptists and Public Issues 1882-2000* (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2010), 137.

<sup>28</sup> See K. Clements, ‘The Religious Variable: Dependent, Independent or Interdependent?’ in *A Sociological Year Book of Religion in Britain*, ed., M Hill, (London: SCM, 1971), 39-43.

community protests.<sup>29</sup> Church leaders concerned themselves more with questioning the status quo. Churches were under no illusion that they had the answers; however, they were not content with the current government policies.<sup>30</sup> Thirdly, during the 1934-35 stage, Christian leaders' values had changed considerably. This caused a marked shift toward articulating radical social and political change. This period is characterised by a call for a new economic order.<sup>31</sup> Whilst Christian leaders did not openly endorse the Labour political party, many of their attitudes were similar to the values of Labour. This was an important factor for Labour gaining parliamentary power for the first time in 1935. During this period—while not completely radical in their opposition to the government—<sup>32</sup> churches were far more outspoken and upfront in their challenge of the government. Therefore, Clements analysis demonstrates a clear shift in Christian attitudes as the depression persisted.

As much as this period was the 'nadir of the twentieth century', Tucker argues that it was also a watershed moment in history for New Zealand Baptists.<sup>33</sup> He claims that the heartache and depth of suffering in the Great Depression 'stimulated among Baptists a significant level of engagement with issues of social justice.'<sup>34</sup> This engagement, while not wholly unprecedented, was an important one for a denomination that has largely consisted of members with 'more prestigious occupations' with 'higher than average incomes' and that traditionally has had a higher degree of religious conservatism.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Brian Smith asserts that the Baptist tradition of individual conscience makes it difficult for Baptists to

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<sup>29</sup> Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, 109.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, 'N.Z. Baptists,' 37.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

<sup>33</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 136-137.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> Brian K. Smith, *Baptists and the Working Class in New Zealand* (Birmingham: Unpublished Thesis, 1990), 80. Brian Smith notes that the Baptists often shunned political engagement, unless it had to do with the issue of alcoholism (*Ibid*, 72).

witness and address systemic evil.<sup>36</sup> Hence, during the great nadir of the twentieth century, Baptist response—especially of Baptist leaders—to the Great Depression was a watershed moment as they responded to the horrors of the depression with a heart for social justice and involving themselves politically.<sup>37</sup> However, the Baptist leaders—save for a few—were not politically active until sometime after the depression had begun. For the remainder of this essay, through the frame provided by Clements, I will look at how Baptists responded to the Great Depression and the marked change in their public voice that occurred throughout these three stages: 1929-31, 1931-33 and 1934-35.

### 1929-31

Heretofore, I have attempted to juxtapose two currents within the New Zealand Baptists leading up to 1929. On the one hand, I have attempted to argue that a significant wing in the Baptists clung to a narrower view of the gospel—one that was primarily concerned only with personal morality. On the other hand, I have attempted to paint a picture of a group with a broader view of the gospel. However, even within this group, except for a few like J.K. Archer, politics was barely ever delved into. It seems that this more fundamental group held the balance of power as the Great Depression began. It is, therefore, within this context that we begin our exploration.

The reaction of the Baptists in 1929-31 can perhaps be characterized by two concurrent responses. The first rejoinder was a pietistic one. There was a call to intensify the efforts of winning

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<sup>36</sup> Smith, 'N.Z. Baptists,' 39.

<sup>37</sup> It has been well-documented that whilst political activism in the New Zealand Baptist tradition is not wholly unprecedented, it most certainly flowered during the first forty years of the twentieth century, especially in the face of economic discontent as we shall see. Unfortunately, this flowering only lasted a generation, and issues of social justice and politics fell off the agenda shortly after World War Two. See for example Martin Sutherland, 'Pulpit or Podium? J.K. Archer and the Dilemma of Christian Politics in New Zealand,' *The New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research* 1, October 1996: 26.

souls.<sup>38</sup> Kemp wrote in *The New Zealand Baptist* that churches should focus on evangelism as it is the true aim of the church.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the plight of the poor was sometimes blamed on the unholy acts committed by society. For example, an article titled 'How to save Money in Hard Times' appeared in the *Baptist* articulating that alcohol was a major cause of the pervasive lack of funds.<sup>40</sup> Thus, there were those who were more concerned with the infringements of personal morality than they were about the quickly expanding unemployment rates.<sup>41</sup> These kinds of 'pietistic' responses were a significant Baptist voice in the early stages of the Depression.

The second response regards how the church helped the poor at a personal and practical level. The Baptists rose well to the challenge that had beset the country. Baptist leader J.J. North asserted that 'a church which ignores the poor has forfeited the Christian name.'<sup>42</sup> For North, it was important to recognise that human beings are made up of both 'bodies as well as souls', and the church would 'do well to remember it'.<sup>43</sup> Time and again, Baptist leaders would call their members to give what they could to the desperate, hungry and cold.<sup>44</sup> As a result, there were some good initiatives established through this time, including the Auckland Baptist Social Service Association (ABSSA). The ABSSA persistently asked for provisions so they could distribute food, clothing and other essentials to families in need.<sup>45</sup> One poignant story tells of a woman whose son was so beaten down that he wished he was dead. One day he had trudged nine miles to get to a job only to find out that someone had beaten him to it. Even worse, on his way home he was caught in heavy rainfall which left him sick, stiff and in bed. However, after a visit from the ABSSA the young man perked up and said, 'Well, mother, the world is not such a bad place after all.

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<sup>38</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 121-122.

<sup>39</sup> *The New Zealand Baptist* [hereafter NZB], March 1930, 72-73.

<sup>40</sup> NZB, May 1931, 135.

<sup>41</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 122.

<sup>42</sup> NZB, August 1930, 241.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> For example, NZB, September 1930, 273 and NZB, October 1931, 293.

<sup>45</sup> See for example NZB, August 1932, 237 and NZB, July 1933, 205.

Somebody's been thinking of us.<sup>46</sup> Such groups as the ABSSA and the Dorcas Society alongside the willingness of the church to help the poor restored hope and gave help where it was desperately needed. It called for harmony amongst the Christian church in the face of worsening economic conditions. This palliative ministry was an important aspect of Baptist ministry for church and society, and an overarching one that lasted throughout the depression years.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, there were also a small few who—even at this early stage—were willing to look at the bigger picture and critique the prevailing systems of the day. Tucker notes that as early as 1929, North argued that only palliative measures would not solve the problem. Rather, a far more comprehensive course of action needed to be undertaken.<sup>48</sup> For North, there were bigger social issues that the church needed to address like unemployment and hunger.<sup>49</sup> He vehemently argued that the falling economic conditions were a direct result of human made systems and not the fault of any other factors like overpopulation.<sup>50</sup> North deplored that in a land brimming with plenty so many could remain hungry.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, during 1925-1931 when doubling as a Baptist minister and mayor of Christchurch, Archer spoke on behalf of the poor and unemployed.<sup>52</sup> He argued that the economic system needed to be drastically changed and resources should be distributed fairly and equally so that no one should lack any essentials.<sup>53</sup> Nothing short of a 'revolution' was needed.<sup>54</sup> However, the efforts and beliefs of these two men were clearly a minority.<sup>55</sup> Most Baptists were not ready to respond politically. Instead, the most common response was either one of pietism, blaming the current situation on things

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<sup>46</sup> This story can be found at NZB, October 1931, 299.

<sup>47</sup> Smith notes that, overall, Baptists responded well to the needs of the poor in this way. See Smith, 'N.Z. Baptists,' 39.

<sup>48</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 123.

<sup>49</sup> NZB, September 1929, 257.

<sup>50</sup> NZB, September 1931, 261.

<sup>51</sup> NZB, January 1931, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 124.

<sup>53</sup> NZB, August 1931, 231.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 125.

like alcohol or declaring that more evangelism would solve the situation, or they attempted to apply bandages where they felt they were needed. Few Baptist leaders—unlike Archer and North—were prepared to think deeper about the situation and challenge the systems at a political and economic level. It seems, however, that the work of these men created a foundation for a significant shift in the public discourse of the Baptists.

### 1931-33

Near the end of 1931, a strange current within Baptist life began to flow. More and more Baptists were coming to see that the existing political and economic systems added considerably to the plight of the nation.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the final public meeting of the Baptist Conference held in October 1931 was themed around the economic crisis. So many came to hear the addresses of J.J. North and J.K. Archer that more seats were needed.<sup>57</sup> These addresses called for the need for Christians to be active on this issue. They told their hearers that to think Christianly about economics is to begin with the Christian gospel and the principles it espouses. This public discussion was the beginning of a greater public involvement in critiquing the undergirding economic systems that framed the national economy.

This discourse began by asking what the problem was that had caused the crisis and how best to address it. As one would expect, there were those who concluded that what is most important is spiritual regeneration.<sup>58</sup> That is that human beings need to come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and be saved. Of course virtually all Baptists would rightly have agreed with this, but no longer could merely spiritual responses suffice. Instead, Baptists were recognizing that a deeper and wider response was required—one that required political engagement. Thus, as editor of the

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<sup>56</sup> This of course needs to be balanced. There were still those who clung to an individualistic and moralistic outlook. See Tucker, *A Braided River*, 128.

<sup>57</sup> *NZB*, November 1931, 340.

<sup>58</sup> *NZB*, March 1933, 69-70.

*Baptist*, North tried his hand at some economics in those pages.<sup>59</sup> A correspondent, A.D. Mead, was worried about North's 'unsound' economics.<sup>60</sup> North humbly admitted that he had no expert economic knowledge, and so he gave Mead or any other Baptist who had an understanding in economics the chance to write a series of articles in the ensuing editions of the *Baptist*.<sup>61</sup> Mead took up this challenge and wrote a series of articles entitled 'The Economic Teaching of Jesus'.<sup>62</sup> The dominant tone of this discourse focused on biblical principles, and how the love of Jesus can be a basis for an economic system. It was not a complete discussion on economics, nor did it espouse an alternative economic system. Rather, Mead attempted to create a biblical and theological basis for thinking about economics.

This kind of discourse particularly accelerated after the outbreak of riots in New Zealand. After the Auckland riots, North wrote against the timidity of the Christian church, and pushed some of the blame of the riots onto the church's lack of action.<sup>63</sup> Further, North publicly questioned the competency of the government concluding that the current Prime Minister Gordon Coates 'and his officials are not competent to make determinations that affect the wellbeing of thousands and the home life of tens of thousands'.<sup>64</sup> As such, two things were sparked in this growing discourse. First, there was an emerging recognition that churches needed to be more vocal. In a letter to the *Baptist*, Mead praised the churches for their attempts to alleviate the overwhelming pain, but he also challenged to church to be more active in addressing the underlying wound that gave rise to it.<sup>65</sup> Secondly, there was a growing disillusionment with the government's ability to handle the crisis.

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<sup>59</sup> *NZB*, January 1933, 3.

<sup>60</sup> *NZB*, February 1933, 42.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> These articles are found in *NZB*, March 1933, 81; *NZB*, April 1933, 106; *NZB*, May 1933, 152; *NZB*, June 1933, 169.

<sup>63</sup> *NZB*, May 1932, 131.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> See *NZB*, June 1932, 168. There were others like F.C. Brookbanks and J. Brown who argued along similar lines, but nuanced their conversations differently. See *NZB*, March 1933, 75.

Some even aligning themselves with the Labour Party because they felt that Labour policies reflected closely the values of the gospel.<sup>66</sup>

At a national level, it took the denomination some time to exercise its voice. It was not until the 1933 Assembly that the denomination officially addressed the issue of unemployment and slumping economic conditions. At this Assembly, the denomination made two important resolutions.<sup>67</sup> The first was a general statement acknowledging the plight of the nation. The second resolution dealt with the horrendous unemployment rates. Here, Assembly deplored Government's handling of the unemployment crisis, and 'respectfully' urged Government to 'explore various proposals' from public figures and bodies and in the meantime, to provide the necessities for families in deep distress.<sup>68</sup> As a statement of action, Assembly established a National Reconstruction Committee to assist in the process of thinking intelligently about a new economic order.<sup>69</sup>

During this period, the tide was clearly turning toward challenging economic structures. Andrew Picard has argued that whilst the churches worldview was perhaps too narrow and pietistic to be of any constructive value for the government, this changing tide sowed a 'discourse of discontent' with the status quo which later allowed churches to 'exert considerable pressure for social change.'<sup>70</sup> As the economic situation continued to decline, Baptists could not stand by and simply allow the situation to continue deteriorating. While it would be a mistake to conclude that the denomination was wracked with discontent, it would be fair to say that the seeds had been planted during this period—discontentment with churches simply standing by and discontentment with the government's management of the depression.

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<sup>66</sup> See NZB, June 1932, 169 and NZB, June 1933, 174.

<sup>67</sup> NZB, November 1933, 335.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 130.

<sup>70</sup> Andrew Picard, 'Church Responses to Social Issues in Depression New Zealand, 1933,' *The New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research* 9, October 2004: 46-47.

1934-35

By the tail end of the Depression, the foundations of discontent had been set and there was no lack of Baptist voices urging for a renewed economic system—<sup>71</sup>including some radical political rhetoric.<sup>72</sup> In an official report released by the National Reconstruction Committee, W.S. Rollings commented that the church can and should contribute to political change. He proposed that the denomination gather its ‘best brains together’ to ‘frame definite proposals that would look towards a final goal that would represent Christian ideals.’<sup>73</sup> Rollings argued that the church should bring a biblical and theological basis to the ensuing discussions around economic reconstruction. Such voices as these, however, tended to be too naïve to contribute a plausible alternative economic system.<sup>74</sup> They were often blanket statements that lacked the technical expertise and specificity to be of use to lawmakers.<sup>75</sup> In that sense, Baptists offered very little in the way of concrete solutions.

However, these voices were not wholly ineffective.<sup>76</sup> Instead, church leaders—including Baptists—were better positioned than most to help spread a change in values of society and justice because ministers ‘tended to be articulate, they had ready-made audiences, they were often close to the unemployed and they enjoyed a relatively independent position.’<sup>77</sup> In the *Baptist*, North asserted that it was a sin to be content with the existing political structure, and urged that Christians agitate for political and economic change.<sup>78</sup> This kind of exhortation further affected the discourse of discontent within the grassroots of society. Thus, even though churches lacked the technical economic nous to articulate a

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<sup>71</sup> There was a flurry of correspondence on this issue in the *Baptist*. See for example, *NZB*, April, 1935, 108; *NZB*, September 1935, 271-272; *NZB*, October 1935, 332.

<sup>72</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 133.

<sup>73</sup> *NZB*, October 1934, 299.

<sup>74</sup> Picard, ‘Church Response,’ 46.

<sup>75</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 132.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 132-133.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>78</sup> *NZB*, April 1935, 98.

sustainable system, they were effective insofar as they agitated for the government to do better.

This discontent ultimately helped pave the way for Labour's first electoral victory in 1935 and the subsequent welfare system that was instituted by that government. This occurred for two reasons. First, Baptist leaders unsubtly hinted that it had no confidence in the current government. North affirmed that it had passed no one's attention that the government's response to the Depression had been completely inadequate.<sup>79</sup> Accordingly, the 1935 Assembly passed a motion declaring that 'this Assembly is unable to believe that the problem has been adequately handled.'<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, in light of the upcoming elections, no 'candidate should be voted who does not give adequate undertakings in respect of this urgent national issue.'<sup>81</sup> Secondly, the values articulated by Baptists were most closely aligned with that of the Labour Party. Both churches and the Labour Party were concerned with the poor and their wellbeing. As a result, the Labour Party received religious endorsement from the churches.<sup>82</sup> As such, Baptists—along with other churches—had a privileged status within society accorded to them. They were able to be the voice of change on behalf of the unemployed, the poor and the desperate.

Once again, we can be under no false illusions that political agitation was the response of the majority of the denomination. Rather, it was only a minority that engaged politically and allowed the gospel to shape how they viewed all aspects of society, including economic reconstruction.<sup>83</sup> However, the Baptists leaders who did participate 'engaged more deeply with the questions thrown up by the Great Depression than many other church leaders.'<sup>84</sup> They showed a deep willingness to engage in political and economic matters. This was a move that was almost unprecedented within New Zealand Baptists. Therefore, the Great

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<sup>79</sup> NZB, November 1935, 342.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 354.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Tucker, *A Braided River*, 135.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 136-137.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 138.

Depression was—in an important sense—a watershed moment within the history of New Zealand Baptists; one that was imperative for both church and society.

### **Conclusion**

Baptists' responses toward issues of social justice and political agitation shifted markedly as the 1929-35 depression endured. Initially, they had a rather pietistic response and those who engaged in social justice—save for a few key leaders—were only concerned with palliative measures. However, as the depression endured, these responses more and more were concerned with engaging politically and seeking to address the underlying causes of the depression.

New Zealand Baptists do not have a reputation for political activism. However, during the years of the depression, when faced with the reality of desperate and hungry people, the Baptists found their voice. The values they articulated were important for society and needed to be publicly espoused. Of course the Baptists were only a small denomination in a context where religious influence was ever-decreasing in the public arena, but their response was nonetheless an important one and crucial for both church and society.

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## Reviews

**Myk Habets. *Theosis in the Theology of Thomas Torrance*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate. (x + 212 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-7546-6799-5]**

Myk Habets is Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand, and he offers a constructive look at Scottish Theologian, Thomas Forsyth Torrance's version of a so called 'Reformed' *theosis*. This book serves as the published version of Habets' doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Otago under Professor Ivor Davidson (now University of St Andrews). Habets' offering provides original insight into an, heretofore, undeveloped doctrine within the theological *oeuvre* of the celebrated career of Thomas Torrance. Habets summarizes the proposal of the book this way:

The Reformed theologian, Thomas Forsyth Torrance, represents an attempt to construct a soteriology that incorporates both Eastern and Western models of the atonement around the controlling metaphor of *theosis*. A close reading of his theology presents a robust and clearly articulated doctrine of *theosis* as a key way of expressing God's reconciling activity in Christ. As the true Man and the last Adam, Christ represents the *archē* and *telos* of human existence, the one in whose image all humanity has been created and into whose likeness all humanity is destined to be transformed from glory to glory. Through the Incarnation the Son becomes human without ceasing to be divine, to unite humanity and divinity together and effect a 'deification' of human nature, mediated to men and women who are said to be 'in Christ' by the work of the Holy Spirit. By means of a 'wonderful exchange' Christ takes what is ours and gives us what is his. For Torrance, this is the heart of atonement'(p. ix).

Habets starts with his Introduction, *Approaching T.F. Torrance and the Theme of Theosis*, which is necessary reading. Herein he provides preliminary definition for what *theosis* is, and then surveys the history of this pervasive doctrine through looking at key

theologians from not just the East, which would be expected, but also the West; which becomes a bridge to Habets' later development, insofar as Thomas Torrance is a Western theologian. Chapter 1, *Creation and Theological Anthropology*, enters into discussion by highlighting the import that *Christology* and *teleology* in relation to Creation play in contextualising Torrance's doctrine of *theosis*. Chapter 2, *Incarnation: God Became Human*, begins explicating the central foci which are pivotal for Torrance's *theosis*; that is, the Incarnation and the vicarious humanity of Christ. As Habets says, '[t]he Incarnation is redemptive and thus Christ's entire life is an act of 'divinisation'. Through the Word incarnate, revelation of God is given and received by means of Christ's vicarious humanity, and union with God in Christ is made a reality' (p. 16). Chapter 3, *Partaking of the Divine Nature*, serves as the touchstone for Habets' development of Torrance's understanding of *theosis*; it is here that Habets elaborates on how Torrance constructively engages a normally 'Eastern' doctrine of *theosis* by reifying it in a way that is both Reformed and Calvinian.

Chapter 4, *Community and Communion*, brings together the previously developed themes of the vicarious humanity of Christ as the *locus* wherein the divine and the human are brought together in the person of Jesus Christ; Habets does this by identifying the role that the Holy Spirit plays in Torrance's theology as the agent who brings humanity into union with Christ's humanity, the 'wonderful exchange'; it is here that ecclesiology and pneumatology are seen as central to understanding how *theosis* functions in Torrance's theology. Nevertheless, it is also here where Habets is most critical of Torrance's work. Habets identifies a particular deficit in Torrance's emphasis upon the Spirit's work, 'Had Torrance taken greater care to explain the relationship between the Spirit and Christ during Christ's earthly ministry...he would have been able to apply this more directly to the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life of the believer in these in-between times as we await the glorious return of the risen Christ. Unfortunately, such a discussion is absent and students of Torrance are left to work out such a practical theology for themselves' (p. 191). Nevertheless, Habets believes that Torrance leaves a wealth of resources for his students, in constructive and fruitful ways.

Habets concludes his work, *Conclusion: The 'Danger of Vertigo'?*, by bringing together the heretofore developed threads into a constructive whole which provides critical ground from whence

future Torrance students can fruitfully engage his Reformed doctrine of *theosis*. Habets is clear that Torrance, himself, was not altogether critical in developing his doctrine of *theosis*; nevertheless, Habets believes, that through his reconstruction, he has established the reality that Torrance clearly offers the Christian (and Western) Church a thorough-going (albeit, revamped) doctrine of *theosis* to be critically engaged by Thomas Torrance and Reformed scholars alike (p. 198).

Here I offer a few points of reflection. First, Habets' writing style is precise, cogent, and accessible. He writes for the scholar in this book, but also for the seminary student, and even the thoughtful lay person. Second, Habets offers a compelling case for the belief that at least for one 'Western' theologian, Torrance, there is an actual doctrine (not just theme) of *theosis* articulated; and while it has Reformed pedigree, it potentially provides ecumenical resources for Eastern and Western Christians alike. Third, Habets provides substantial bibliographic and index material in the end matter of the book that should serve those interested in further research in this area. Fourth, overall, Habets' approach is measured in tone; and while he is highly appreciative of Torrance's *theosis*, this does not cloud his ability to engage Torrance on critical ground. Habets holds his appreciation and criticism of Torrance with a charitable balance on either side.

The only critique I might offer would take the reader back to the Introduction. For myself I did not find this problematic, but I think some may desire more development in regards to the proposed doctrines of *theosis* present amongst the various theologians surveyed. Though, since this section of the book only serves as preliminary and somewhat suggestive to Habets' later work; I do not find this to ultimately be a substantial weakness. Others may disagree; they will have to read the book to find out.

I highly recommend this book for scholars, Seminary and Bible College students, and the highly motivated lay person in the Church. Myk Habets offers the Church of Jesus Christ a service by unearthing a rich doctrine of Reformed *theosis* from the English speaking, Scottish born theologian, par excellence, Thomas Torrance.

**Bobby Grow**

**Frederiek Depoortere. *Christ in Postmodern Philosophy: Gianni Vattimo, René Girard and Slavoj Žižek*. London/New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008 (160 pp.) [978-0-567-03331-4]**

Frederiek Depoortere is a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Faculty of Theology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. He is also a member of the research group 'Theology in a Postmodern Context'. To this effect most of his published work has been concerned with either evaluating and/or theologically engaging with the thought of post-modern figures such as Alain Badiou, René Girard, Merold Westphal, Slavoj Žižek, and Richard Kearney. He is quickly establishing himself as a thinker who can quite suitably situate himself amongst the currents of both continental philosophy and theology.

In this book Depoortere tasks himself with aggregating into three succinct chapters the role Christianity plays throughout the works of the Gianni Vattimo, René Girard, and Slavoj Žižek. There are two concerns that Depoortere uses to structure his discussion of these philosophers: 1) a concern for the relation made by the authors between transcendence and the incarnation of Jesus as Christ, and 2) the way in which Christianity is unique.

The book itself is broken up into five chapters; an introduction, one for each author respectively and then a final conclusion. His introduction provides an overview of what he intends to cover in his analysis, and why he is undertaking the task. The next three chapters are structured similarly; each opens with a brief biographical account of the authors and the works they have completed. This is followed by an analysis of the themes of their works that specifically engage with Christianity vis-à-vis the two concerns outlined above. The chapters end with an evaluation and critique made by Depoortere. The biographical accounts as well as the language used in these chapters make the book accessible to a wide range of readers – from students to scholars.

The book's evaluation begins with Gianni Vattimo who interprets the history of metaphysics and Christianity as a process of becoming non-violent – or weakening – through kenosis; the beginning of which is heralded by the ending of transcendence in the incarnation of Jesus. Transcendence, which also includes metaphysics, is disavowed in Vattimo as a way of thinking that perpetuates violence. Vattimo takes the Jesus' command to love as a formal command akin to Kant's categorical imperative and puts it to use as a process under which violence is diminished. Springing

from this Vattimo then suggests that Christianity has little unique to it except as a tradition that locates its roots in the incarnation of Jesus. God may be encountered in other religions and Vattimo inevitably argues for a move away from religious institutes – viewed by Vattimo as sources of violence – and towards the secularization of culture founded on love. Thus, there is very little, if nothing at all, unique to Christianity, and transcendence finds its demise through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter Depoortere moves to survey René Girard. The pervasiveness of Girard's thought is clearly brought to the fore as he is clearly shown to not only think creatively, but to also navigate his thought and its significance across the three fields of the social and natural sciences, and philosophy. Girard develops a theory of culture based on the principles of imitation, memetics, and the scapegoat mechanism. The principles of which account for the evolution, interaction, and, perhaps more importantly for Girard, a theory of violence inherent of culture – a result of the three principles above. It is from this position that Girard interprets the bible and establishes the uniqueness of Christianity in the incarnation of Jesus. The life and death of whom exhibits a negation to the violence inherent of culture.

Transcendence in Girard is not abolished as it is in Vattimo. Rather, it undergoes transformation according to the life of Jesus. Love becomes the new form of transcendence and views the incarnation as the revealing of a God who stands against violence, not just in culture but also in the way philosophy and theology postulate the metaphysics of transcendence. Thus, the incarnation becomes the meeting point in the thought of Girard that brings together a new transcendence founded in love as well as prescribing the uniqueness of Christianity as a religion that stands in negation to the violence of culture generated through imitation, memetics, and scapegoating.

The final philosopher is Slavoj Žižek; a Slovenian philosopher and Lacanian psychoanalyst. Christianity in the thought of Žižek is inextricably bound up with these elements of his thought as he subjects the incarnation of Christ to Hegelianism, whereby the transcendence of God ends in the revealing of Christ in the incarnation, who then removes himself as mediator by birthing again as the Holy Spirit. In effect, this means there is no Trinity but only the Spirit. The necessity of Christianity and its uniqueness, for Žižek, are both grounded in its ability to satisfy the concerns of his

use of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Žižek, whilst using Hegel and Lacan also draws primarily from the ideals of German Idealism and political theory as this is how Christianity is seen to fit in Žižek's thought. This also account for why there is only the Spirit. Transcendence also comes to an end in Žižek, and the uniqueness of Christianity is its ability to satisfy the psychoanalytic requirements of his spin on the thought of Jacques Lacan. The last chapter is the conclusion, and acts as a summary of all three authors.

Depoortere highlights the connections and influences made between the three philosophers. Girard is clearly made to be the key influence in all three. In regards to the two questions Depoortere is asking at the beginning of this work he answers by ultimately pointing towards Girard as the most promising route. Firstly, because unlike Vattimo and Žižek, didn't seek to entirely eradicate transcendence and provided necessary space for faith. And secondly, his work is congruent with recent developments in science. In other related, and more general, critiques of these authors Depoortere points out the charge of supercessionism present in the works. The way religious pluralism surfaces in the authors is also evaluated due to its position as an important agenda in theology at present.

This book does not necessarily offer anything new. There is no new argument being made by bringing these authors together, but rather, this is a clear, accessible aggregation of the role Christianity plays in the thought of three prominent philosophers. Its readability subsists in its easy to follow structure and jargon free language. Thus, it might be said the value comes through for those unfamiliar with these works, or interested in how Christianity is being used in academia. Those already familiar with these three authors might not find it as valuable.

**Jimmy Harvey**

**Gregory MacDonald (Ed.) *All Will Be Well: Explorations in Universalism and Christian Theology, from Origen to Moltmann*. Eugene, Or.: Cascade, 2011. (xii + 439 pp) [ISBN: 978-1-60608-685-8]**

The idea of universalism is one of the defining issues of our day and interest in it has increased tremendously over the last decade. This is due in large measure to Robin Parry (acquisitions editor for Wipf and Stock), who has authored a key work on the topic, *The Evangelical Universalist* (Cascade, 2006), and edited two works, the one under review and an earlier one with Christopher Partridge, *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate* (Paternoster, 2003). With such works as these, and others like Rob Bell's *Love Wins* (Collins, 2011), the topic of universalism has been brought out of the theological cupboard, has been dusted off, and is being re-examined today in the light of contemporary issues and arguments.

In Parry's earlier edited work, *Universal Salvation?* the contributors sought to evaluate and debate the central issues involved in holding universalist positions. Particularly prominent were the contributions and arguments of philosopher Thomas Talbot (*The Inescapable Love of God* [Universal, 1999]). *Universal Salvation?* clearly pointed out a number of competing theories or doctrines of universalism, and brought proponents and opponents together in critical dialogue. In *The Evangelical Universalist*, Parry outlines his own defence of a Christian universalism, which he defines as a 'hopeful dogmatic universalist' (p. 4). If the first volume was intended to put the topic of universalism back on the agenda (which it did), and the second volume was an attempt to establish the Evangelical credentials of such a position (which it did), then this third volume may be seen as an attempt to showcase the historical antecedents of universalism throughout the Christian tradition, to further recommend it to an orthodox, Evangelical audience. As Parry writes in the Introduction, 'It is my hope that, if nothing else, this book can play some small role in bringing into the light a diverse minority-tradition that deserves both more attention and more respect as an authentically Christian attempt at faith seeking understanding' (p. 24). It does!

In a 25 page introduction from Parry, (writing under the pen name of Gregory MacDonald), he attempts to situate universalism somewhere between heresy and dogma, and argues that it is not, and should never be, considered as formally heretical in that no

ecumenical council has ever anathematized it (he defends this position in light of the fifth ecumenical council of 553 which anathematized Origen). Universalism is, rather, a *theologoumenon*—a pious opinion that is consistent with Christian dogmas, they are neither required nor forbidden (pp. 11-12). Parry also shows how universalism appears spontaneously throughout church history, before going on to offer a genealogy of universalism. Parry's account of the 'family lines' of universalism includes a pietistic line (the De Benneville family tree); a Calvinist line (the Relly family tree), of which John Murray is perhaps the most famous advocate (and strangely missing from this collection); and a neo-Platonic family tree (the early church most obviously). Within such family lines are a diverse range of universalisms, many of which are mutually exclusive of the others. The contributors to this volume and the historical figures examined cover a broad sweep of such taxonomy.

Seventeen historical case studies are included in the volume, ranging from Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, through to Schleiermacher, Thomas Erskine, to Jürgen Moltmann. Also included are chapters on P.T. Forsyth and Karl Barth, both of whom denied they were universalists, and yet, in the opinion of many, their respective theologies lead inexorably in that direction. 'This book, however, is not merely a descriptive exercise that outlines what various individual Christian thinkers have thought about universal salvation. Each of our authors was invited to offer some brief assessment of the strengths and/or weaknesses of their subject's theology, and these brief evaluations are offered in order to further stimulate the theological engagement of readers with the issues' (p. 2).

For the most part the essays in this volume are erudite, concise, and stimulating. Tom Gregg opens the case studies with a survey of Origen's *apokatastasis*, showing especially how it is Trinitarian, and importantly, how his version of universalism does not undermine concerns with particularity. In the process Origen's doctrines of the pre-existence of souls, and Christ's *epinoiai* (titles) are dealt with in simple yet careful ways. Gregg is also able to show how Origen's work has inherent tensions within it, and how this may be accounted for, not least due to pastoral considerations. For instance, we read, that 'for pastoral reasons...he is prepared at times to point towards a limited salvation reserved only for believers...' (p. 44). Following Gregg, Baptist theologian Steve

Harmon examines Gregory of Nyssa's 'hopeful universalism,' something Harmon shares with Gregory, and shows how his version includes the biblical themes of judgement and the purifying role that punishment has in his theology. As with Origen, Gregory of Nyssa's hopeful eschatology is couched with pastoral reservations. As Harmon reminds us, 'In this connection there is much wisdom in the words of the nineteenth-century German pietist Christian Gottlieb Barth: 'Anyone who does not believe in the universal restoration is an ox, but anyone who teaches it is an ass'' (p. 63). As a summation of 'hopeful universalism' Harmon shares with us the following: 'As I sometimes tell my students, 'I will not be surprised if I discover in the resurrection that the God revealed in Jesus Christ has saved all people, but in the meantime we should not count on that'' (p. 63).

Parry's own chapter in the book examines the Universal Baptist position espoused by Elhanan Winchester (1751-1797), by all accounts a rather eccentric pastor, but one whose theology sat between Calvinism and Arminianism. Winchester argued for the reality of Hell but that it was a refining purgation and judgement that, after a very long time, would remedy the sins of all and allow them entry into eternal bliss. He based his theology not upon sentiment but upon an intense theology of union with Christ.

Other chapters canvass the universalisms of Schleiermacher (Murray Rae), P.T. Forsyth (Jason Goroncy), Sergius Bulgakov (Paul Gavriluk), Karl Barth (Oliver Crisp), J.A.T. Robinson (Trevor Hart), and Hans Urs von Balthasar (Edward Oakes), to name a few. This is an impressive line-up of contributors and each of the essays rewards the reader with accurate information and considered analysis.

Robin Parry wrote under the pseudonym 'Gregory MacDonald' in his monograph *The Evangelical Universalist*, to protect the reputation of his then employer, Paternoster. Now that he is no longer with Paternoster his identity has been revealed, however, he retained the name for *All Will Be Well* to make the connection in people's minds between the two books. Gregory MacDonald is a combination of Gregory of Nyssa and George MacDonald, two prominent universalists from history that Parry is obviously indebted to. As editor of this book Parry has done an outstanding job and the collection achieves what it sets out to do. From now on if one wants to reject a doctrine of universalism they will have to be very specific about what universalism it is they are actually rejecting, and

will have to deal honestly and explicitly with the biblical, theological, and pastoral issues surrounding such a universalism. Any work which enables the Christianity community to be more honest and more discerning is surely to be welcomed.

**Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006. (581pp.) [ISBN 0830825711]**

This volume is a culmination of Chris Wright's long standing work in the matrix of mission studies, biblical studies and hermeneutics. Having already appreciated his work on Old Testament ethics in *Living as the People of God*, his exposition of the justice dimensions of the book of Deuteronomy in the NIBCCommentary series, and his contribution to hermeneutics and mission in various shorter occasional pieces, I approached this volume with some anticipation. And I was not disappointed.

I feel comfortable with this book. I know what it's about and so I like it. By that I do not mean that it is bland and unchallenging; nor do I mean that I have already thought the thoughts of the author. What I am saying is that this book connects with my own struggles and questions about the nature and purpose of the Old Testament, and the connection between mission and Scripture. It opens up paths in directions that instinctively I want to be going in, but which I either could not have found on my own or would have taken much longer to find without this guide.

To my mind the key strength of this book is the way it demonstrates the missional nature of God, and that that nature is founded in the witness of the Old Testament. It does so in a manner that transcends the usual approach to studies on mission in the Old Testament. Such approaches generally amount to one of two things. On one hand, they may simply reject the notion of the Old Testament having much to say about mission at all, as is characteristic of the work of Schnabel, or they may treat it as a short prologue (some prologue) to the main thing, which is the New Testament and the age of the church; such is the approach of the otherwise enduringly excellent work of David Bosch. On the other hand, the attempt to find mission in the Old Testament may be little more than ingenious exegesis of the material in the service

of demonstrating that things went on in the Old Testament that, with the use of some smoke and mirrors, can be made to look remarkably like twentieth century Protestant evangelical voluntary missionary societies. Wright argues that this is not the point and goal at all of the Old Testament Scriptures. And it is just as well the Old Testament is much more than an apology for the voluntary missionary society, worthy as such organizations are, because there is very little of that in the Old Testament itself. At the same time, it is sobering to reflect on how recent, how unique to a particular set of world conditions, and probably ultimately how brief their appearance in the broad sweep of the history of God and God's church, contemporary Protestant evangelical understandings of mission are and will be. It is just as well that the Old Testament paints on a much bigger canvas. Wright projects that painting for his readers with the concept that the Old Testament is about God, and then shows how the portrait of God that emerges in its pages is of a fundamentally missional character. It is no accident that this volume feels more like systematic theology than biblical studies at some points. Incidentally, in that respect it is a welcome encouragement to dialogue between the two disciplines as well as an illustration of the mission imperative as an integrating factor in theological reflection. The emergence of the *missio Dei* is a critical result of this focus on the character of God. God is a missional God and God's people are formed to be engaged in God's mission. Wright looks at this character from a variety of angles in unpacking what the *missio Dei* might look like. I can only mention several that were highlights for me; other readers will have other favourites. The ontological discussion around the notion of 'the other gods,' what we do about demons, the possibility of human construction of other gods, and the nature of idolatry, is very valuable. Similarly the question of care of creation and the related concept of mission as building God's temple is persuasively argued for an evangelical audience. I appreciated also the accompanying work on eschatology and ecology, which caused me to reflect on the poverty stricken nature of so much contemporary Christian practice and understanding in this area. Not unexpectedly there is much valuable ethical material, and the extended treatment of the case of HIV/AIDS as a missional issue is moving and motivating. And there is a nice comment on the interaction of trajectories of universality and particularity alongside each other, as well as an (inevitably inconclusive) reflection on the line between cultural

relevance and theological syncretism. Wright's illustration of that issue is limited to a few examples in a way that asks readers to consider their own struggles with the issue.

While I welcome the substantive thesis of the book and most of its applications, I was left with some questions. Some of these relate to what the author says, and some, I confess, reflect the annoying habit of reviewers complaining about the absence of what they would have included were they writing the book. In the whole matter of gods and demons and idols I was waiting for a more extended interaction with Walter Wink's conceptualization of principalities and powers, but this did not occur. I still wonder how Wright would relate his work to the more structural and depersonalised understanding of evil adopted by Wink. The question of evangelism vis a vis mission as presented in this book also leaves a sense of incompleteness. Wright has a strong section on what he calls the ultimacy of evangelism in mission. At the same times he brings a strong apologetic in the Lausanne tradition that mission and salvation operate on a much broader front than evangelism alone. In my mind, a paradoxical tension remains between the ultimacy of evangelism and the pervasive nature of the *missio Dei*. To be fair to Wright, he probably reflects an ongoing struggle in the tradition to which most readers of this book will probably belong. As part of an excellent treatment of the nations Wright makes the point that the *ethnoi* should not be equated with the nation-states of today. In a day when globalisation and tribalisation struggle paradoxically with each other, I would like to have heard more on the contemporary missional response to that biblical fact.

But these are minor quibbles, and in any case not so much quibbles as challenges to further investigation. Mostly Wright evinces a magnificent grasp of the inexhaustible topic of the character of a missional God and its application to the twenty-first century. It is the nature of the case that there will always be more to say and investigate. That is Wright's challenge to his readers.

**Tim Meadowcroft**

***The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin.* Ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 (xvii + 352 pp.) [ISBN 978-0-521-01672-8.]**

Cambridge Companions offer some of the most up to date treatments of major thinkers and movements by world experts in their field. This *Companion* to John Calvin is no different as eighteen scholars present overviews and comment on his work. The *Companion's* stated orientation is to 'students and those with little or no background in Calvin studies' (p. xiii), and aims to present for students and scholars alike an overview of the 'premier theologian of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation' (p. xiii). The *Companion* succeeds in its goal. Divided into four parts: Calvin's Life and Context (2 chapters), Calvin's Work (9 chapters), After Calvin (3 chapters), and Calvin Today (4 chapters), the *Companion* offers a wealth of information, judiciously presented and meticulously arranged.

The first two chapters offer reliable guides into Calvin's life and context. Alexandre Ganoczy opens the *Companion* with a broad yet detailed overview of the reformers life and significance. This is a well written chapter that deserves to be read by all entering into Calvin studies, although the lack of references in this chapter was a little disappointing. William Naphy's chapter on Calvin's Geneva offers a fascinating historical sketch of the context within which Calvin worked as he details geographical, economic, political, and religious factors that made Calvin's life and ministry so difficult in Geneva.

The main section of the *Companion* on Calvin's Work covers his writings, exegesis, theology, ethics, preaching, piety, social-ethical issues, politics, and controversies. Many of these chapters were simply good basic overviews which succeeded in introducing those new to the field a solid overview, but provided nothing new to scholars of Calvin or those familiar with his work. Other chapters, however, stood out as particularly lucid and offered something distinctive and useful for students and scholars alike. One such example is John Thompson's chapter on 'Calvin as a Biblical Interpreter.' Thompson places Calvin the humanist within the late medieval period of biblical exegesis and the humanist movement back to the sources, and highlights both how and why biblical interpretation functioned in Calvin's life. He writes, 'All in all, it is easy to see why the early reformers...found biblical interpretation easier and more urgent than ever. Expository preaching and writing

was not a diversion from the cares of the world, nor a mere antiquarianism, It instead served the defence of the gospel, the salvation of souls, and it was a matter of life and death' (p. 59).

John Hesselink's chapter on 'Calvin's Theology' is another standout of the *Companion*. Highlighting the fact that 'there is more to Calvin's theology than the *Institutes*, Nevertheless, it is here that we find the reformer's thought expressed in its most comprehensive and ordered manner' (p. 75), he provides a walk-through the various editions of the *Institutes*, pointing out key features, developments, and theological moves. The first 1536 edition is dubbed the 'Lutheran edition' due to Calvin's reliance on Luther for both its form and content. It is also dubbed a 'false start' by others, a charge Hesselink considers unfair given the fact that much of the first edition remains in the final edition. With the 1539 edition Hesselink thinks Calvin 'comes into his own' with the wider scope of the project and the inclusion of key theological topics omitted in 1536. Throughout the successive editions up to the final and definitive 1559 edition, the scope and purpose of the *Institutes* remained the same but the growth is significant.

After this brief survey of the various editions Hesselink then provides commentary on the nature of Calvin's theology and its enduring significance. In the first place, it is not a dogmatics or systematic theology in the modern sense. Rather, it is a religious book, a book of piety which has the potential to nourish the spiritual life. Further, 'The *Institutes* is not a speculative system of theology deduced from some overruling principle such as the sovereignty of God' (p. 77). Hesselink claims the *Institutes* is primarily concerned with the knowledge of God and of ourselves. He then surveys the various proposals for the structuring of the *Institutes* and whether or not Calvin works from a central dogma. Hesselink thinks 'it is not very helpful to single out one of these emphases as being 'the' distinctive characteristic of Calvin's theology' (p. 79). Instead Hesselink follows several German theologians and looks for several characteristic features of Calvin's theology that distinguish him from others. Ten distinctive features of Calvin's theology are specifically noted by Hesselink: 1) an appreciation for the created order, 2) God's providential care for this universe and its inhabitants, 3) the polemic against idolatry, 4) one covenant of grace, 5) the significance of the humanity of Christ, 6) the *triplex munus Christi* (threefold office of Christ), 7) the knowledge of faith, 8) the Lords Supper, 9) the unity and

catholicity of the Church, and 10) civil government as an instrument of God. Each point is dealt with judiciously and Hesselink shows his familiarity and mastery of Calvin's theology and writes as a seasoned sage. This is one of the best concise summaries of Calvin's theology one could hope to find.

The final section of the *Companion* entitled 'Calvin Today' includes four essays assessing the enduring legacy of Calvin, his theology, and his progeny. The final chapter is especially useful in assessing Calvin resources published between 1990 – 2004. This is a fitting conclusion to an extremely helpful *Companion* that offers insightful essays, lucid surveys, historical and theological studies, and as such orients students to the life and works of Calvin admirably.

## Myk Habets

**Francis S Collins. *The Language of God. A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief.* London: Free Press, 2006. 295 pp. hb. ISBN 978 0 7432 8639 8**

*The language of God* argues persuasively that Christian faith and science are compatible. Collins opens this work with an account of his childhood within a liberal family in rural Virginia, his parents stimulating an inquiring mind. Entering Yale University as an agnostic Collins committed himself to the study of biology he applied himself to the study of medicine and, seeking satisfaction in helping others was challenged by a dying woman as to what he believed. The author now entered a period of agonising uncertainty as spiritual concerns intruded his thoughts. He was helped when he read *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (who had also been an atheist). His journey from atheism to belief in God follows as a fascinating story as he tells how this decision was based on faith in Jesus Christ.

The author posits the question whether, in this modern era of cosmology, evolution and the human genome it is possible to experience a richly satisfying unanimity with both a scientific and spiritual worldview. Accepting the common descent of all living creatures Collins rejects materialistic Darwinism. Just as family studies can demonstrate relationships, so genetic studies confirm human relatedness to the rest of living things. The author explains the human DNA profile, showing how it closely resembles that of

the chimpanzee and mouse. The author says that the eternal God is not threatened by scientific discoveries involving the natural world, for it was the Almighty who set physical limits just precisely right to allow the creation of galaxies, stars, the periodic table of elements, the planetary system, and life itself in its multitudinous and beautiful forms. The author throughout the book assents to a Christian worldview that believes in God and respects the findings of science.

Collins, with impressive scientific qualifications was appointed head the Human Genome Project, and therefore is uniquely qualified to present this elegant account of human genetics. The book details the captivating story of this complex task. Reflecting on the vast expanse of the DNA code of 3.1 billion letters arrayed across twenty-four chromosomes in each and every cell of our body the author deduced that this hidden four-letter code was known only to God. Collins then understood that this DNA code was the language of God that had an universal application in nature.

Collins believes that biology and medicine would be impossible to understand, and could not move forward, without considering this human relatedness to all other living things. He explains why Charles Darwin's framework of variation and natural selection is correct. The 'theory of evolution' does not imply uncertainty in scientific understanding.

This work challenges the reader to face the issue of science and her or his attitude to the Christian faith. In a lucid and readable style Collins explains why the principles of his faith complement the dictums of a science that he considers is trustworthy, progressive and self-correcting.

Collins then outlines the choices available to those seeking truth in this matter. Some persons like Richard Dawkins have resorted to agnosticism and atheism, sometimes aggressively employing evolutionary theory to counter theistic beliefs. The author considers the option of 'creationism' which, in his opinion, is hopelessly flawed and incompatible with our new knowledge and understanding of science. It is a blunder, Collins says, to mistake the Holy Scriptures for elementary textbooks in biology, astronomy, geology, or anthropology. Collins makes a case for all to be introduced to a reasoned and evidence based understanding of their Christian faith in concord with a scientific worldview.

The author likewise considers the option of ‘Intelligent Design’ and says it confuses the unknown with the unknowable, the unsolved with the unsolvable, a shortcoming that means it cannot qualify as a scientific theory. With great care Collins then shows why these latter postulates, accepted by some Christians do not equate with the truth discovered by science and should be left alone as they damage faith. The author says that part of the problem is that religious teachers and theologians often are uninformed about the findings of science.

Collins says “To the believer and scientist alike, I say there is a clear, compelling and intellectually satisfying solution to this search for the truth”. (p 195) The author calls this concept ‘Biologos’, the word of life, that incorporates an understanding of the origin of life and its subsequent development. Here God is allowed to have a rightful place in creation. This lesser known option warrants attentive study.

This book provides many answers for questioning minds. Collins says all should acknowledge the unimaginable intelligence and creative genius of God. The author justifies his claim that science and faith are reconcilable and do co-exist in harmony.

### **Ken Mickleson**

***The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology.* Eds. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 (x + 289 pp.) [ISBN 978-0-521-77662-2.]**

This *Companion* continues in the same vein as others in this series, offering an up-to-date and detailed survey of major thinkers and, as is the case here, significant periods in history. Eighteen chapters comfortably cover the Reformation period from late medieval theology through to the Council of Trent (approximately 1400–1650). The contributors will be household names to scholars and include a good selection of theologians and historians. Chapter entries include: Late Medieval Theology (Denis Janz), Lollardy (Wendy Scase), Hussite Theology (Thomas Fudge), Erasmus (Erika Rummel), Luther (Scott Hendrix), Melancthon (Sachiko Kusakawa), Lutheranism (Robert Kolb), Zwingli (Peter Stephens), Bucer (Ian Hazlett), The Theology of John Calvin (David

Steinmetz), Calvin and Calvinism (Richard Muller), Cranmer (Peter Brooks), English Reformers (Carl Trueman), The Scottish Reformation (David Wright), Anabaptists (Werner Packull), Pre-Tridentine Theology (David Bagchi), Trent (David Steinmetz), and the *Companion* concludes with a helpful chapter by the editors on 'Directions of Further Research.'

One of the more significant essays of the *Companion* is that of Richard A Muller, 'John Calvin and Later Calvinism: The Identity of the Reformed Tradition' (pp. 130-149). Muller's argument is that the early Reformed thinkers, such as Calvin, Bucer, Zwingli, and Bullinger, are in basic continuity with later Reformed thought, what Muller calls 'Reformed orthodoxy' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Differences and developments between Calvin and Calvinism, or more properly, the Reformers and Reformed orthodoxy, stem from method, context, and the need for more precision in later works of what was largely assumed in the earlier works. As Muller says, 'on this point it is simply that in the case of the Reformers, one must make a little effort to 'connect the dots', whereas the Reformed orthodox made sure, against various doctrinal adversaries, that the picture was presented in full' (p. 148). The level of doctrinal continuity extends, according to Muller, to include the differences between the infralapsarianism of Calvin and Bullinger and the supralapsarianism of Theodore Beza. According to Muller the only difference between the two positions is one of presentation and precision; materially they are the same. This will appear to be an odd claim to many who would argue, rightly in my opinion, that these are actually two different theologies of predestination. This does illustrate the lengths Muller goes to however to show continuity across the Reformed confessional tradition. Since the publication of this chapter Muller has gone on to publish a series of major works which further substantiate and elaborate on the central arguments presented here, most notably his four-volume *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Baker, 2003).

One other chapter deserves special mention and it is the delightful account of Scottish theology by David Wright (pp. 174-193). Wright's essay is as characteristically kerygmatic and pastoral in tone as the theology of which he is commenting upon (p. 175). Wright surveys key thinkers in Scottish Reformation history, most notably John Knox, along with the various confessions, catechisms, and theological treatises of the era, most notably the Scots Confession of 1560. Highlighting the continuity with continental

reform especially that of Geneva, Wright manages to capture perfectly the distinct emphases and feel of the Scottish Reformation and its key figures. This is a fine introduction to Scottish theology by one of its best contemporary advocates.

Each of the chapters in the *Companion* is lively and relatively concise making them easy to read. One of the reasons for this is due to the decision not to include any references of any kind in the essays, even when there are direct quotations from other's works. One drawback of this is that readers are not entirely sure where to look for further information, making the work rather odd and annoying. To compensate in some way for the lack of referencing an extensive bibliography is included, divided into topics, and an index which makes it possible to search across articles on selected themes; the Bible, for instance. Criticisms notwithstanding, *Reformation Theology* is another outstanding resource from the *Cambridge Companions* series and a welcome contribution to the field of Reformation studies. Those looking for a wide-ranging introduction to the backgrounds of Reformation thought, summaries of key Reformers' theology, and assessments of the development and reaction to the Reformation will find it here.

## Myk Habets

**Charles Partee. *The Theology of John Calvin*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008 (xvii + 345 pp.) [978-0-664-23119-4]**

The Protestant Reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) is one of the most influential figures in religious history. His life and theology have been scrutinized by generations and studies on his writings continue to flood the printing presses. And yet despite this, there is still an ill-informed caricature of Calvin by many Christians of an ill-tempered curmudgeon hell-bent on squashing all who dared think differently from him. Partee, Professor of Church History at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, is aware of these misconceptions and has written a book on Calvin's thought which goes some way to dispelling such notions. While Partee concentrates on the thought and theology of Calvin, in the process he makes direct and indirect comments about Calvin the man, the pastor, the husband, the father, and the Christian disciple.

This is a beautifully written book. Partee writes with the hand of a seasoned professional who knows what he is talking about. After lecturing and writing on Calvin for decades Partee proves to be a sure guide through Calvin's *Institutes*, Commentaries, letters, and tracts. Partee's aim in this book is twofold: to survey the full sweep of Calvin's theology, and to collect the benefits that accrue. As an historian Partee stays true to his discipline of historical theology and examines Calvin's thought in context, avoids anachronism, and deals fairly with his sources. The product is a lengthy study of Calvin's theology, especially of the *Institutes*, and the wider theological and historical contexts within which such theology may be understood. Only on one occasion does Partee explicitly move from historical theology to contemporary theology; in a section on mysticism and deification (pp.167-179). Taking up both themes, popular in current studies of Calvin, Partee shows how Calvin can, with some work, be characterised as a mystical theologian. However, when it comes to deification, Partee argues against all attempts to read Eastern Orthodox ideas out of Calvin's use of 'deification'. On p. 176, Partee even cites a Kiwi theologian who supports a reading of Calvin as advocate of a form of *theosis* and graciously disagrees with him. While Partee may have misunderstood said Kiwi his excurses on mysticism and deification are a welcome and informative sidetrack.

Two strengths of Partee's study deserve specific mention. Partee successfully shows how one of Calvin's central theological ideas is that of union with Christ and yet this does not occupy an integrative motif or formal principle of correlation for Calvin or his supposed theological 'system'. Throughout each section of the *Institutes* Partee successfully highlights how the theme of union with Christ is central to an understanding of each part of the whole. This allows Partee to make sense of Calvin's treatment of sanctification before justification, for instance. This is a welcome reading of Calvin and one which, in my opinion, is entirely correct. The second strength is related to the first and it is the place pneumatology plays in Calvin's – the 'theologian of the Spirit' - theology. As a distinctly Trinitarian theologian, Calvin's theology can only be fully understood when the mission and identity of the Holy Spirit is recognised. Through the four books of the *Institutes* and in the various other tracts and treatises Calvin wrote, Partee keeps pneumatology in focus and in so-doing shows some of the deeper structures of his theological vision.

On the basis of these two commitments; union with Christ and pneumatology, Partee is able to highlight how Calvin's theology is profound, pastoral, and practical. To illustrate, Partee reminds the reader that Calvin does not call his *Institutes a summa theologiae* but a *summa pietatis* – meaning a comprehensive and systematic confession of the love of God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ the Eternal Son, and effected by the work of the Holy Spirit (p. 297). What this means in practice is that Calvin attempts to be faithful to Scripture more than faithful to philosophical logic. This does not mean Calvin's theology is incoherent or contradictory, it is extremely logical. What it does mean is that when a decision is to be made between two ideas, both biblical, which are seemingly hard to reconcile, Calvin will assert both and resist the temptation to delve deeper than faith will allow. This is evident in his affirmation of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of the human person, for instance, or the eternal election of God to life and the 'accident' of reprobation. According to Partee, Calvin's theology 'is not a rational synthesis, it is a theological confession of the truth which is revealed in Jesus Christ, informed by Scripture, guided by tradition, certified by experience, and elaborated by reason' (p. 330). Once again Partee's instincts ring true and Calvin's voice comes through clearly and, I think, accurately.

Partee's work is one of the best introductions to and overviews of Calvin's theology to date and will quickly establish itself on the essential reading list of any course on Calvin or Reformed theology around the world for some time to come. Move over Wendel, Partee has arrived! It is also a very enjoyable work with *bon mots* for all. Enjoy.

**Myk Habets**



# INDEX to Articles

## 1995-2011

*New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research* 1995-2004

*Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 2005-2011

- Brown, I. 'My language brought me to Jesus': Brian Smith and Translation as Mission  
NZJBR 5 (2000): 53-65
- Brunell, F. Worship, theology and mission  
NZJBR 3 (1998): 41-69
- Christensen, D. Trends and Tensions in Theological Education  
NZJBR 4 (1999): 57-69
- Chatfield, Graeme Approaches to Ministerial training among New South Wales Baptists: Initial lines of Enquiry  
PJBR 2/1 (April 2006): 39-62
- Coker, Joe L. Social Conscience and Political Power among Nineteenth-Century English Baptists  
PJBR 1/1 (October 2005): 20-38
- Dickson, Don Conditional Immortality and New Zealand Baptist Churches 1880-1892: The Bradford Challenge to Baptist Orthodoxy  
NZJBR 6 (2001): 75-87
- Driver-Burgess, Roger Text and Sermon: Preaching *The Lord of the Rings*  
NZJBR 8 (2003): 77-93
- Driver-Burgess, Roger Tolkien's Literary faith  
PJBR 7/1 (April 2011): 24-45

- Edgar, S.L.                      New Zealand Baptists and the Ecumenical Movement  
NZJBR 1 (1996): 9-25
- Enticott, David                The Rills and Rivers of F.W. Boreham's Preaching  
PJBR 3/1 (April 2007): 3-20
- Evans, Margaret                Women in Ministry and Leadership in the Baptist Churches in New Zealand  
NZJBR 9 (2004): 49-71
- Gamman, Andrew               Ministerial Credentialing in the Baptist Churches of New Zealand  
NZJBR 7 (2002): 37-60
- Godwin, Colin R.               Ignorant Fundamentalists?: Ministerial Education as a factor in the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy in the Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec, 1927-1933  
PJBR.4/1 (April 2008): 5-31
- Guy, Laurie                      The cinematograph film censorship debate in New Zealand, 1965-1976  
NZJBR 3 (1998): 19-39
- Guy, Laurie                      'Romanists' for Rum, Baptists against Booze: Two Churches in the struggle over prohibition in 1919  
PJBR 2/1 (April 2006) 63-82
- Guy, Laurie                      'The Man from Wales': A Study of the Mission of Ivor Powell in New Zealand, 1955-1956  
PJBR 3/1 (April 2007): 21-46
- Guy, Laurie                      The Rise and Fall of the Sabbath in New Zealand 1860-2000  
PJBR 5/2 (October 2009): 5-38

- Habets, Myk                      Naked but Not Disembodied: A Case for Anthropological Duality  
PJBR.4/1 (April 2008): 33-50
- Harris, Brian                     Beyond Individualism: Stanley Grenz's Contribution to Baptist Theology  
PJBR.6/1 (April 2010): 5-19
- Heath, Gordon L.                'The Great Association Above': Maritime Baptists and the War of 1812  
PJBR 7/2 (October 2011): 1-21
- Johnstone, C.                     Sports and Success in the Light of Christ.  
NZJBR 5 (2000): 41-52
- Jones, C.D.B.                     The Long, Painful Birth of Baptist Maori Ministry  
NZJBR 1 (1996): 47-66
- Jones, C.D.B.                     Response to Steve Taylor on Pai Marire  
NZJBR 3 (1998): 84-89
- Kilpatrick, Rob                 *Missio Dei*: Mission in Bold Humility  
PJBR 7/1 (April 2011): 46-62
- Larking, Phillip.                'Bartian Theology': Mission and The Simpsons  
NZJBR 5 (2000): 85-96
- Larking, Phillip                 A.H. Collins' Ministry at Ponsonby Baptist Church 1893-1902  
PJBR 3/1 (April 2007): 3-21
- Liston, Greg                      The Dynamics of Trinitarian Worship  
NZJBR 6 (2001): 29-47
- Lorenzen, T.                      Baptist Heritage and Relevance Today  
NZJBR 2 (1997): 3-21

- Mackenzie, Alistair      Baptists Supporting Christians in the Academy: a Personal Perspective  
PJBR 7/1 (April 2011) 1-23
- MacLeod, A.H.            The Introduction of the Spiritual to New Zealand  
NZJBR 2 (1997): 47-57
- MacLeod, A.H.            The Rise and Fall of the Baptist Bible Class Movement  
NZJBR 4 (1999): 41-55
- MacLeod, A.H.            50 years of the N.Z. Baptist Historical Society  
NZJBR 6 (2001): 3-28
- McMichael, Mandy      Educating Baptists: The Legacy of Basil Manly, Jr.  
PJBR 2/1 (April 2006): 25-38
- Manley, Ken              William Potter (1836-1908) at South Melbourne Baptist Church (1863-1875): Questions of Principle, Propriety, Property and Prosperity  
PJBR 3/2 (October 2007): 3-24
- Morgan, Rhys            The Cell Church Model in New Zealand Baptist Churches NZJBR 7 (2002): 61-79
- Murrihy, Sebastian      New Zealand Baptists and the Great Depression of 1929-35: How the Baptists Responded during a Time of National Economic Distress  
PJBR 7/2 (October 2011): 39-54
- Neilson, Brendon        The baptist Imagination of James McClendon  
PJBR 7/2 (October 2011): 23-38
- O'Connor, Stephen      Dynamic Centre or Means to an End?: Worship in New Zealand Baptist Church life (Part I:1880-1960)  
NZJBR 7 (2002): 15-35

- O'Connor, Stephen      Revealing What We Really Believe: Worship in New Zealand Baptist Church Life (Part II: 1960-2001)  
NZJBR 8 (2003): 52-76
- Pierard, Richard      The Baptists as a Global Community  
NZJBR 6 (2001): 3-14
- Picard, Andrew      Church Responses to Social Issues in Depression New Zealand, 1933  
NZJBR 9 (2004): 24-48
- Picard, Andrew      A Conflict of Ideologies: New Zealand Baptist Public Discourse on the Vietnam War.  
PJBR 1/1 (October 2005): 53-70
- Picard, Andrew      Be the Community: Baptist Ecclesiology in the Context of Missional Church  
PJBR 5/1 (April 2009):27-69
- Prestidge, W.      Life Only in Christ: A Conditionalist Faith  
NZJBR 5 (2000): 3-22
- Pugh, Jeffrey      Trauma, God Image and Renewal of Terminated Pastors  
PJBR 3/1 (April 2007): 47-72
- Randall, Ian M.      'The Low Condition of the Churches': Difficulties Faced by General Baptists in England – the 1680s to the 1760s  
PJBR 1/1 (October 2005): 3-19
- Sexton, Jason S.      Stanley Grenz's Ecclesiology: Telic and Trinitarian  
PJBR 6/1 (April 2010): 20-43
- Smith, B.K.      'Wherefore then this thusness': the social composition of Baptist congregations in New Zealand  
NZJBR 3 (1998): 71-83

- Smith, B.K. N.Z. Baptists and the 'Labour Question'  
NZJBR 4 (1999): 23-40
- Smith, Jay T. A Trinitarian Epistemology: Stanley J. Grenz  
and the Trajectory of Convertive Piety  
PJBR 6/1 (April 2010): 44-64
- Sutherland, M.P. Editorial: Baptist Research - Why Bother?  
NZJBR 1 (1996): 5-8
- Sutherland, M.P. Pulpit or Podium? J.K. Archer and the  
Dilemma of Christian Politics in New  
Zealand.  
NZJBR 1 (1996): 26-46
- Sutherland, M.P. 'Down-grade with a vengeance': New Light  
on a Tabernacle Controversy  
NZJBR 2 (1997): 79-95
- Sutherland, M.P. Conflict and Cohesion in 1880s Cambridge  
NZJBR 4 (1999): 3-21
- Sutherland, M.P. A Baptist in the Nest: William Wade and the  
C.M.S. in New Zealand  
NZJBR 5 (2000): 67-83
- Sutherland, Martin Joseph Kemp and the Establishment of the  
N.Z. Baptist College, 1922-33  
NZJBR 8 (2003): 32-51
- Sutherland, Martin Baptist Expansion in Colonial New Zealand  
NZJBR 9 (2004): 3-23
- Sutherland, Martin Free Church Ecclesiology and Public Policy in  
New Zealand 1890-1914  
PJBR 1/1 (October 2005): 39-52
- Sutherland, Martin *The N.Z. Baptist as an Agent of  
Denominational Identity 1874-1960*  
PJBR 3/1 (April 2007): 23-39

- Sutherland, Martin      Gathering, Sacrament and Baptist Theological Method  
PJBR 3/2 (October 2007): 41-57
- Sutherland, Martin      Staking a Claim: Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933  
PJBR.4/2 (October 2008): 3-28
- Sutherland, Martin      Preface: Stanley Grenz and Baptist Thought  
PJBR 6/1 (April 2010): 3-4
- Sutherland, Martin      Hesitating too long: the New Zealand Baptist College, 1952-1974  
PJBR 6/2 (October 2010): 31-66
- Talbot, Brian            'Catching the Infection of His Zeal': Francis Johnston, a Baptist Voice in the mid-Nineteenth Century Scottish Evangelical Debate on the work of the Holy Spirit  
PJBR 2/1 (April 2006): 3-23
- Taylor, Steve            Pai Marire: Mission and cultures in technicolour  
NZJBR 2 (1997): 25-43
- Taylor, Steve            Scars on the Australasian heart: Anzac Day as a contextual atonement image  
NZJBR 6 (2001): 48-74
- Tucker, John            Heads in the Sand: New Zealand Baptists and the Tour Debate  
PJBR 3/2 (October 2007): 25-40
- Tucker, John            'A many-headed hydra': New Zealand Baptists and the Gambling Monster, 1890-1940  
PJBR 6/2 (October 2010): 3-30
- Turner, Harold.         Response to Steve Taylor on Pai Marire  
NZJBR 3 (1998): 90-91

- Walker, John                    ‘Duties of Manhood’: South Australian Baptists and Manly Character circa 1880-1940  
PJBR 5/1 (April 2009): 5-26
- Walker, John                    ‘A Holy Liberty in the Lord?’ South Australian Baptists and Female Gender Roles, circa 1870 to 1940  
PJBR 5/2 (October 2009): 39-62
- Ward, Kevin                    Against the Tide: Spreydon Baptist Church 1960 to 2000  
NZJBR 9 (2004): 72-115
- Whittaker, J.                    Can Our Children be Saved?  
NZJBR 2 (1997): 59-76
- Whittaker, J.                    Spiritual Direction in the Wider Context of Pastoral Care  
NZJBR 5 (2000): 23-39
- Wilson, Jonathan R.            Do Pietists Need a Doctrine of Creation?: God’s World in the Baptist Tradition and Stanley J. Grenz  
PJBR 6/1 (April 2010): 65-78



# *Conflict and Connection: Baptist Identity in New Zealand*

Martin Sutherland

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“Conflict was endemic in colonial Baptist life and would not be far from the surface for much of the twentieth century. Baptists wrestled with each other, wriggled to find space among the denominations and often regarded wider society with suspicion. Gradually, the more profound impulse for connection prevailed but the integrity of the emerging Baptist edifice faced severe tests. Mid-century conflicts were survived and a remarkably confident denomination emerged. However, the relative peace and success of the 'fifties meant New Zealand Baptists were poorly equipped for the upheavals to come. For most, by century's-end, any sense of Baptist identity was muted and confused.”

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