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The Rills and Rivers of F.W. Boreham's Preaching



A lake near the current site of the Theydon Bois Baptist Church in England, where F.W. Boreham served as student pastor.

ABSTRACT

Frank William Boreham (1871-1959) had a significant influence on Baptist churches throughout New Zealand and Australia. He was a noted essayist, author and minister, who served Baptist churches in Mosgiel (N.Z.), Hobart (Tasmania, Australia.) and Armadale (Victoria, Australia.) This article is devoted to examining Boreham's earliest sermon manuscripts, taken from a collection held by the Baptist Union of Victoria. No other scholarly research has been done to date on these works. The sermons derive from Boreham's period as a minister in England from 1891 to 1894, prior to him leaving for New Zealand in 1895. These sermons were delivered at a variety of locations around London, such as: Brixton and Theydon Bois. The task of this research has been to examine what kind of influences were prevalent in the manuscripts. The paper finds that the following factors shaped Boreham's early preaching: a love of nature and stories, a desire to be

practical, a strongly evangelistic theology, ministry models such as F.B. Meyer, Joseph Parker and C.H. Spurgeon, training at Spurgeon's College and experience as a Student Minister at Theydon Bois. The conclusion drawn is that at this early stage, Boreham had not yet found a way to bring his distinctive personality and preaching style into his messages. It would not be until F.W. Boreham started his ministry in New Zealand and Australia that he would allow his unique voice to be shared from the pulpit.

Introduction

Reflecting on his earliest years as an impressionable boy and adolescent in the nineteenth century, the Baptist minister and writer F.W. Boreham (1871-1959) once commented that, 'my life resembled a lake into which many rills and rivers were emptying themselves, yet which had no outlet for its ever-accumulating waters.'¹ In time, F.W. Boreham would find a means of expression, using the pulpits of the Mosgiel, Hobart and Armadale Baptist churches, and his pen to write editorials for the *Otago Daily Times*, the *Hobart Mercury* and the *Melbourne Age*, together with fifty-five devotional books. During his ministry at Hobart from 1906 to 1916 this outlet became well formed and clearly shaped through the landscape of Boreham's life.² He had discovered a unique way of preaching and moulding his influences together.

This article will not be devoted to the development of Boreham's polished preaching style, or his many essays and editorials, but rather will explore his rills and rivers. It will aim to examine the early factors that shaped F.W. Boreham's preaching from his days in England and the discernable impact they had upon his early sermons. These formative years from his birth in 1871 to his leaving England in 1895 were to have a significant bearing on both the style and the content of his later preaching in New Zealand and Australia. Boreham believed that the first twenty years of his life left an indelible imprint upon him.³

¹ F.W. Boreham, *My Pilgrimage: An Autobiography* (London: The Epworth Press, 1940), 70.

² Boreham said that: 'It was at Hobart that I found myself. From the moment at which I entered the pulpit for the first time I realized that I was preaching with a confidence and an enjoyment that made my ministry a perfect revelry.' In: Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 183.

³ Boreham wrote that 'Southey used to say... however long a man's life, the first twenty years are by far the bigger half of it.' *My Pilgrimage*, 91.

The majority of the seventeen manuscripts used in this research were taken from a student pastorate that Boreham undertook at Theydon Bois, a small village outside of London, in 1893-4, but there are also sermons from 1891-2. These earlier sermons were delivered at the church near the Wandsworth Rd Railway Station, the Park Crescent Congregational Church in Clapham, Kenyon Baptist in Brixton and at Forest Row. These sermons provide a valuable cross-section of F.W. Boreham's early ministry and reveal a variety of rills and rivers that were beginning to mould Boreham's preaching style and substance. Some of these influences were evident from the beginning as controlling factors throughout the manuscripts. Others were more like rills- barely formed and just starting to take shape.

Nature.

Frank William Boreham was born to Francis and Fanny Boreham on the 3rd of March 1871. He was raised in the village of Tunbridge Wells, Kent, which is located an hour's train ride south of London. The captivating beauty of F.W. Boreham's surroundings in the Kent of his childhood was to have an influence upon his preaching. He encountered nature in a variety of ways.

The experience of walking to church had just as profound an effect on him as did each service itself. It was a place to encounter God. His father Francis was a keen walker, and on many occasions he would find a new way to walk to the Sunday worship service. Each moment in nature was an experience to be savoured for the young man.⁴ It was sacramental, a place resonant with God and grandeur. The family also went out for walks on Saturdays. Francis⁵ would season these hikes by means of using his 'racy conversation about nature.'⁶ The key was to observe one's surroundings.

Later, when Boreham returned to Tunbridge Wells on a trip from New Zealand, he described its surrounds as follows:

⁴ He wrote that: 'We always set out...in a perfect fever of curiosity and every step of the way was made brimful of interest.' - in F.W. Boreham, *The Other Side of the Hill* (London: The Epworth Press, 1917), 113.

⁵ His Father worked in a local legal firm and the family grew up in relative comfort. Their home at 134 Upper Grosvenor Road had eight rooms and two stories. Crago, *The Story of F.W. Boreham* (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1961), 19.

⁶ Crago, *The Story*, 21.

Its sylvan valleys, bespangled with primroses and bluebells and violets, its fragrant hedgerows aglow with the hawthorn and the honeysuckle; its exquisite parks carpeted with an infinite variety of ferns and flowers; its verdant and undulating common...its magnificent forests; its romantic walks; its arching avenues; its giant rocks and dainty mosses...⁷

These are the notes of someone who as a child was an observer, who paid attention to his environment. However, although nature was an influence on his preaching, it did take time to develop. It was not so much that he referred to nature extensively throughout these manuscripts, as nature taught him to be curious.

Boreham valued the instinct of curiosity highly.⁸ It was to become an invaluable tool both for the preparation and content of many sermons. He was able to draw spiritual merit or value from a simple phrase or word. His sermons sought to probe the hidden depths of spiritual matters.

The natural world gave Boreham a curious spirit. It was detailed and contained surprises that could be discovered around the next corner. For Boreham the scriptures held a similar kind of detail. He was able to take, and sometimes even twist, a single phrase or sentence from a text into several different meanings. He had a photographer's eye for minutia, for hidden shapes and colours. Of course sometimes this would not exactly accord with what the text itself was saying. For example on the 10th of December 1893 he preached a sermon at Theydon Bois⁹, which was based on a simple sentence of scripture: 'Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord.' (Deut. 6:12). From these six words he constructed five points: 'to forget God: is to miss the chief object of life, is Satan's most subtle temptation, is to abandon hope, is to forget all that's worth remembering, is impossible.'¹⁰ One sentence had been not only expounded, but expanded as well, to cover a variety of topics. It had unfolded and opened up into new possibilities, like so many things in nature.

⁷ F.W. Boreham, *Loose Leaves: From The Journal of my Voyage Round the World* (Mosgiel: 'Taieri Advocate' Office, 1902), 44.

⁸ Boreham commented that 'the world owes more than it can ever acknowledge to the instinct of curiosity, and so do I.' F.W. Boreham, *The Home of the Echoes* (London: The Epworth Press, 1921), 25.

⁹ F.W. Boreham. 1893. 'Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord.' Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 10 December, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

¹⁰ Boreham, 'Beware!'

Stories

While Francis Boreham imparted to his son a love of nature, his mother gave him a passion for stories. Fanny Boreham revelled in tales from the Bible and beyond. As a storyteller, she had a profound influence upon her young son's impressionable mind.¹¹ Every Sunday night Fanny would recount her tales around the fireplace. Here characters would come to life.

This regular Sunday night ritual fostered a deep love of storytelling in F.W. Boreham, that would later become a vital feature of his own preaching style. He saw his mother as a masterful story teller, who was able to hold her small audience spellbound. Faith and stories were linked for Boreham right from the very beginning. From his mother he learnt that stories were able to animate and inform faith- to give it life.¹²

F.W. Boreham often enjoyed introducing dramatic tales into his sermons. When he preached on the text that 'there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ,'¹³ he drew his listeners in by having them picture a courtroom setting. He summoned up the image of a hushed courtroom waiting for a verdict- guilty or not guilty. Every person in the court was on the edge of their seats. Satan stood as chief prosecutor, sins were the convicting evidence, the jury was each person's conscience and the final sentence from the Judge was: 'depart from me.' Even reading the manuscript it is easy to imagine the gavel being delicately poised above the judge's head as he was about to deliver his verdict. Just at the moment of condemnation Christ entered the room to release the congregation from its 'chains, fetters and manacles.'¹⁴ They were to be free forever.

¹¹ In this regard Boreham shared something in common with one of his models for ministry, George Augustus Selwyn, an early Bishop in New Zealand. In his biography of Selwyn, Boreham commented that 'it is altogether impossible to exaggerate the importance, as an essential element in the formation of his character, of those early conversations between mother and son.' She fired him with 'apostolic passion and dauntless devotion.' F.W. Boreham, *George Augustus Selwyn: Pioneer Bishop of New Zealand* (London: SW Partridge & Co. Ltd., 1911)23

¹² Some of these stories stayed with Boreham for the rest of his life. He wrote for example that 'the conception of the cross that is always in my mind in preaching and in writing is the conception that took shape within me at the fireside in those days of long ago' Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 30.

¹³ F.W. Boreham. 1894. 'No condemnation.' Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 20 May, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

¹⁴ Boreham, 'No condemnation.'

For a story to be effective, as well as being emotionally engaging, it must also draw a gripping conclusion. It needs suspense. F.W. Boreham's courtroom tale gathered in momentum, like the pages of a murder mystery. It was a creative, fresh way of telling an old story. It rushed towards resolution. Boreham had learnt this art of animating a good story from his mother.

Some stories had more life than others, as well. The ones F.W. Boreham remembered were those that moved him emotionally. He wrote that when his mother spoke of the cross she could bring him to tears.¹⁵ Emotion became an important way of telling the story.

These strong feelings were particularly contained in the story of Jesus' death. Four days before leaving for New Zealand F.W. Boreham preached at the Tunbridge Wells Tabernacle.¹⁶ The title of his address was 'who bore our sins.' Time and again throughout his message he used the story of the cross. He spoke of Jesus' burden in carrying the cross and of his thirst. The congregation was taken to Calvary and Gethsemane. The story of the cross was not just dramatic, for Boreham it was the central story of faith. It was the believer's manifesto and continued to have an impact upon his early preaching. It was his central motif.

The cross was also positive and laden with hope. The gospel story had resolution. At this stage of his ministry Boreham loved a story with a happy ending, like those that his mother told around the fire at Wroxton Lodge. When he reflected back on these tales he said that they were drawn from an age of 'chivalry and...gold,' and were 'remote and rainbow-tinted.'¹⁷

This desire for rainbow-flecked tales, coloured Boreham's reading of the Bible and his presentation of it in his sermons. Stories of triumph, rather than tragedy, from the Scriptures sat more comfortably with him. As a result, Boreham was not always faithful in his interpretation of a given text. For example, when he preached on Ezekiel chapters 1 to 3 he spoke of what it meant to serve God effectively. His final point was the 'secret of successful service.'¹⁸ However, he had little in his manuscript

¹⁵ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 30.

¹⁶ F.W. Boreham. 1894. 'Who bore our sins.' Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 2 December, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

¹⁷ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 26.

¹⁸ F.W. Boreham. 1891. 'Some secrets of successful service.' Sermon, Wandsworth, United Kingdom, 20 December, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

about the cost of service, which is the major thrust of the passage itself. There is no mention in Boreham's manuscript of sermon topics about how 'briers and thorns' would surround Ezekiel or that the prophet would 'dwell among scorpions.'¹⁹ Instead Boreham skipped these verses of tragedy and trial. He rushed ahead to chapter 3 verse 14 that contains a vision of God's glory. While Boreham finished by speaking of how faithful service could be successful, in this sermon he brushed over some important themes in the text itself. At times in these earlier manuscripts Boreham seems afraid of speaking the hard word to his congregation or of detailing a message that in any way could be construed as being negative. He wanted a certain type of story- one with a happy ending.

George Jones and the Emmanuel Church

Boreham's preaching was also cultivated by factors outside of his family home at Upper Grosvenor Road. He was influenced by the context and the faith of those around him. The village of Tunbridge Wells had a strong evangelical heritage.²⁰ The names of streets and sites around the town, such as Mount Sion and Mount Ephraim, bore out this vibrant Christian past.²¹ Francis and Fanny Boreham lived out this heritage by attending the St John's Church and later the Emmanuel Church on Mount Ephraim, near the family home of Wroxton Lodge.

During his years in Tunbridge Wells from 1871 to 1887, Boreham's minister was Rev. George Jones, who served at the Emmanuel Church from 1849 to 1888. Boreham's impressions of church were not always favourable under George Jones' leadership. He struggled to see a purpose in the preaching of his church minister. He reflected that the sermons at Emmanuel under Jones' tenure 'seemed so hopelessly remote from real life and from the pleasures and pursuits of the week.'²² He continued that he was not able to detect much application or purpose in many of the messages that he heard at the Emmanuel Church.

¹⁹ KJV. In each of these sermon manuscripts Boreham cited from the King James Version of the Bible.

²⁰ The Archbishop of Canterbury remarked in 1888 that 'Tunbridge Wells was a kind of sacred city... They looked upon it from without as a kind of modern Jerusalem.' As cited in: Alan Savage, *Royal Tunbridge Wells: A History of a Spa Town*. Revised by Charlie Bell (Tunbridge Wells: Oast Books, 1995), 151.

²¹ Crago, *The Story*, 17.

²² Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 47.

This desire to have a practical purpose and to be useful was a driving force in Boreham's sermons in England. He wanted his messages to make sense and to have a clear application. The earliest sermons from his time in England have little biblical context. Instead he was nearly always anxious to get to the main point and apply the biblical narrative to real life.

At times this stress on usefulness would be at the expense of mentioning God. The first sermon with a structure centred on God was given in Christmas 1893.²³ Up until this point Boreham's sermons looked at the 'we' of the congregation. There are many examples of this, throughout his topic headings, such as: '*we* are to have life, *we* are to enjoy newness of life, *we* are to walk in newness of life.'²⁴ Boreham was desperate to connect with his listeners and to give them simple, clear and achievable applications.

His earliest efforts from 1891 to 1893 might be labelled: leaves from a manual on Christian living. Here Boreham explored how Christians should: serve, walk in newness of life, be saved, know the Lord, remember God, live out the fruits of the Spirit and speak. These topics were useful and practical, but they were not always accurate exegetically. They were concerned with the issue of right living and holiness.

Dwight L. Moody and Evangelistic Preaching

A visit of Dwight L. Moody (1837-99) to Tunbridge Wells had a profound influence on F.W. Boreham.²⁵ In contrast to the preaching of George Jones and others at the Emmanuel Church, Boreham found Moody's sermon easy to understand and to apply.²⁶ Dwight L. Moody

²³ F.W. Boreham. 1893. 'A Saviour and a great one', Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 24 December, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

²⁴ F.W. Boreham. 1892. 'Walk in the newness of life' Sermon, Clapham, United Kingdom, 12 June, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

²⁵ He later recalled Moody's visit to Tunbridge Wells by writing that he could still picture 'The temporary platform on which he stood; the great black crowd; the languor of the sultry summer's day, the smell of the grass; the American twang in the preacher's voice; the text; the line of reasoning; the telling illustrations and above all, the passionate appeal- those all come back to me.' FW Boreham, *The Uttermost Star and Other Gleams of Fancy* (London: The Epworth Press, 1919), 179.

²⁶ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 51.

was the child of a bricklayer and his language was plain and direct.²⁷ His stories moved Boreham. The American evangelist's mood changed with the content of his sermon. Boreham recalled that: 'he became sometimes impassioned and sometimes pathetic.'²⁸ This was preaching not as a lecture, but more as a performance. The goal was conversion.

The impact was that Moody's sermon contained much of the evangelistic theology, which was adopted by F.W. Boreham. For example in one sermon Moody stated that: 'As I was coming along the street today I thought that if I could only impress upon you all that we have come to a vineyard, to reap and to gather.'²⁹ Moody's sermons, at times, lacked Biblical content and context and were more based on personal experiences. He drew from a strong atonement theology that saw the world as being 'diseased.'³⁰

Boreham trawled Moody's preaching style and content. He shared Moody's conviction that the goal of a sermon was to bring people to the point of conversion. In a series of lectures on the subject of preaching he extolled ministers to:

Keep fresh in your memory the details of your own conversion: revive as frequently and vividly as possible the recollection of every conversion brought about by your ministry...and inflame your devotion at least once a week by reading some classic record of a notable conversion.³¹

This focus had a profound impact on Boreham's sermons. On two occasions prior to Christmas in 1892 and 1893 he chose to preach on the topic of salvation, rather than focus exclusively on the details of the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke. In 1892 at Forest Row while he began by exploring the details of the angelic declaration,³² his understanding of this cry was related to the whole ministry of Christ, not just his birth or incarnation. Here the text was used to apply to the death

²⁷ F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1110.

²⁸ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 52.

²⁹ Dwight L. Moody, *The Best of all his Works* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 14.

³⁰ Moody, *The Best*, 15.

³¹ In F.W. Boreham, 'The Bevan Lectures, 'The Preacher's Aim', *The Australian Christian World*, Vol. XLII- No.28, Melbourne, July 10, 1931, 8.

³² The statement was 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men,' in F.W. Boreham. 1892. 'Christmas Sermon.' Sermon, Forest Row, United Kingdom, Christmas 1892 (no exact date provided), Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

of Christ on the cross. This address was loaded with the crucifixion, from the beginning to the end. At the start Boreham said that the incarnation was ‘only surpassed by Calvary.’³³ His emphasis on evangelism was all-encompassing.

Theological themes came into sharper focus during his final months at Theydon Bois. He spoke of sin on a variety of occasions. He tackled the theme of eschatology in a message delivered at Theydon Bois on June 17, 1894.³⁴ In this sermon the stress was on offering instruction about Christ’s second coming. This address provided a number of details about Boreham’s eschatology.

In his later manuscripts, from 1894-5, Boreham also did not seem to be as conscious of the need to connect immediately with the congregation. Instead, headings within each sermon often came directly from the Biblical text. For example, in a message on Christ stilling the storm at sea,³⁵ he spoke of ‘the alarm of the disciples, the action of the master and the result.’ In this way the application could be drawn directly from the passage itself.

This reflected one other development in his overall style during this time, which took shape during 1894. It was that he became increasingly able to combine his two main themes: right teaching and right living. In a sermon with an eschatological theme,³⁶ he started by providing his teaching on the essence of Christ’s return. He finished with a note of application by speaking about the implications of his coming, for each person. In a sermon delivered first in late 1894 he started by looking at the cross theologically,³⁷ but then closed by asking every Christian to treasure what Christ had done for them. In these sermons he was able to move from what he saw as right teaching to right living, to draw his application from his understanding of a given text.

London - New Preaching Models.

When F.W. Boreham came to London at just sixteen years of age in 1887, he found it to be both thrilling and terrifying. He was

³³ Boreham, ‘Christmas Sermon.’

³⁴ F.W. Boreham. 1894. ‘Behold! I come quickly.’ Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 17 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

³⁵ F.W. Boreham. 1894. ‘Peace! Be still.’ Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 10 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

³⁶ Boreham, ‘Behold! I come quickly.’

³⁷ F.W. Boreham. 1894. ‘Who bore our sins.’ Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 2 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

overwhelmed by the sheer mass of people in the capital. This led to a crisis of identity,³⁸ which he sought to resolve both by finding a deeper faith and looking to strong Christian examples of successful ministers.

Boreham was converted shortly after arriving in London. Although he had undoubtedly experienced God at Tunbridge Wells,³⁹ he was to credit his shift away from the family home as bringing about significant development in his faith. It represented his spiritual awakening. It also gave him the chance to learn from a number of powerful and well-known Christian leaders. His mind was impressionable.⁴⁰ He sought out other preaching models, to supplement Moody's influence upon him. One of the first in London to leave such a stamp was F.B. Meyer (1847-1929.) Meyer had a profound impact upon Boreham's life.⁴¹ In particular, Boreham was taken by Meyer's practical emphasis on holiness.

F.W. Boreham enjoyed Meyer's preaching because he captured his attention and his feelings. Meyer would use his emotions throughout his Bible classes. At times he would leave his seat and exclaim: 'O my brothers, I want you always to remember *this!*'⁴² Boreham joined one of Meyer's classes with hundreds of others. The topics were closely related to F.B. Meyer's own spiritual experiences. There was a practical undertone to his preaching. Meyer argued that God's word should be applied to 'each individual in the audience.'⁴³

Another person to leave an imprint on the young preacher's sensitive mind was Dr Joseph Parker (1830-1902), who spoke regularly at

³⁸ Boreham wrote that: 'London took my breath away. It appalled me. I had never imagined such pushing, jostling multitudes. I remember standing in the heart of the world's metropolis, under the very shadow of St Paul's, and shivering in the thick of the crowd at my own utter loneliness.' In: Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 58-9.

³⁹ He even felt something of God's presence was symbolised by the tower at his church. He said that 'I was awed by a dim, subconscious sense of the vast, the sublime, the infinite that towered above me.' In: F.W. Boreham, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 114.

⁴⁰ Boreham reflecting back on this stage said that: 'My mind must have been as impressionable as a sensitive plate. The least thing swept me off my feet.' in Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 61.

⁴¹ One example of this is that F.B. Meyer wrote the Introduction to Boreham's first book. In: F.W. Boreham, *Won to Glory: A Review of the 24th Chapter of Genesis* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1891).

⁴² Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 65.

⁴³ F.B. Meyer, *Expository Preaching: Plans and Methods* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1954), 73.

the City Temple Thursday Service in London. The lure was again the attractiveness and emotion of the speaker. Parker impacted his audience. Boreham did see faults in Parker and his pronounced preaching style, but he also learnt from him.⁴⁴

Parker's specific legacy for Boreham's preaching was that he taught him the value of re-iterating what he said.⁴⁵ Repetition was imperative to Parker both within the same sermon and in terms of delivering the same sermon twice.

Right from the very beginning this technique of repetition had a marked effect on F.W. Boreham. He was concerned with repeating his main themes, so as to drive his point home. For example, in the earliest sermon from 1891, Boreham formulated six headings, all around the theme of service. These were: the basis, attitude, enticement, authority, spirit and secret of service, for every Christian.⁴⁶ This duplication within the delivered sermon itself would have made the point clear to the congregation at Wandsworth Road. It gave Boreham a sharp focus. Such a concern for repetition is consistent in a number of sermons from this period.

The reason for highlighting certain words and themes over and again was simple. Boreham believed that every sermon or form of verbal communication had a certain degree of 'leakage.'⁴⁷ That is, the hearers would only capture a limited portion of what was being said and because of this the pulpit was the place for ideas to be stressed and repeated. He agreed with Parker that the more that a preacher's content was re-affirmed, the more the congregation would retain it.

C.H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a further preaching model from his early time in London. Spurgeon's reputation as a thorough and informative teacher of the Scriptures was well established, but he did not captivate F.W. Boreham. He never felt fully engaged with what Spurgeon was saying.⁴⁸ In Boreham's eyes, Spurgeon lacked the raw emotion,

⁴⁴ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 98.

⁴⁵ Boreham commented that Dr Parker 'taught me- as also did Dr Meyer- the high art of repeating myself.' - *My Pilgrimage*, 98.

⁴⁶ Boreham, 'Some secrets.'

⁴⁷ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 100. Boreham listed the causes of leakage as being: 'the acoustic properties of the building, the ears of the congregation, sultry conditions' and that 'minds will wander.'

⁴⁸ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 64.

drama and performance of Moody, Meyer, and Parker. His presence was not so much compelling as rational and eloquent.⁴⁹

One key platform for Spurgeon's messages was that, in his own words, they 'should have real teaching in them and their doctrine should be solid, substantial and abundant.'⁵⁰ This left Boreham feeling dry and concluding that the fires of passion in Spurgeon's preaching had diminished, as he reached the end of his career at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.⁵¹

Despite these misgivings, some of Boreham's later sermons from this period indicate a similarity to Spurgeon's style of drawing application from the main theological point of a text.⁵² He also shared Spurgeon's stress on evangelism, and the cross. Like Spurgeon, Boreham preached from a variety of texts each week and they both preached from single passages.

A common thread running through each of Boreham's preaching models, like Spurgeon, was that they all sought to bring about change in their listeners' lives. This was also a driving factor behind Boreham's sermons and influences, as well. For example, his stress on usefulness, evangelistic theology and repetition were all designed so that his sermons would have an impact upon his congregation. His desire was that his sermons should be remembered.

Spurgeon's College.

The influence of F.W. Boreham's preaching models was consolidated by the period that he spent in theological training. After his baptism in 1890, Boreham was encouraged to apply for Spurgeon's at the insistence of his Minister, Rev. James Douglas. He started college on 9th of August 1892. Together with the experience of working as the Student Pastor of

⁴⁹ F.W. Boreham, *Arrows of Desire: A Book of Essays* (London: Epworth Press, 1951), 99.

⁵⁰ C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1954), 70.

⁵¹ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 64.

⁵² There are numerous examples of this in Spurgeon's Sermon Notes. In a sermon on Lot's wife for example, he made the point that Lot lingered. Drawing from the text he reminded his congregation that 'when our worldly occupation is incessant and takes up most of our thoughts, we are hindered from decision.' In: C.H. Spurgeon, *My Sermon-Notes. Genesis to Proverbs. A Selection from Outlines of Discourses Delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1887), 9.

Theydon Bois it was to have a significant influence on his preaching, in a variety of ways.

Every day a student of the College would be expected to deliver a sermon that was critiqued by fellow students and faculty.⁵³ When Boreham undertook this exercise he was complimented for his style of delivery and for the 'light and popular touch about his utterances.'⁵⁴ However, his presentations were not seen as being without fault. In particular, students said that his high-pitched voice and monotonous delivery required further work.⁵⁵ It is impossible to gauge from the manuscripts whether Boreham made these changes in his manner and delivery. What can be shown is that during his time at Spurgeon's College his reference to stories and his use of theology, did change markedly. Both became more detailed. This was in keeping with the overall movement of his sermons from 1892.

A vital part of College training was the discussion of sermon plans and outlines.⁵⁶ Boreham's earliest manuscripts were simple, outlining just one or two main points and filling them out with three or four illustrations. After completing training at Spurgeon's College, the last sermon that he preached in England was far more detailed. It had a greater emotional direction and the impact of it was heightened as Boreham went along. It was loaded with atonement theology⁵⁷ and finished with a poem by W.E. Aytoun. He had carried out the plan for sermon outlines given to him at Spurgeon's.

Another decisive influence from Spurgeon's was the lecturer Dr A.T. Pierson. Boreham loved Pierson's unmistakable sense of enthusiasm. In part, he was taken by Pierson's energetic delivery.⁵⁸ He was also impressed by his attitude. He commented in *My Pilgrimage* that Pierson was dubbed M.R. by his students. This was because any topic that he addressed was considered to be 'most remarkable.' The impact of this was that it led Boreham to see the importance of stressing vital subjects. They were to be emphasised as well as repeated. For Boreham

⁵³ Boreham noted in *My Pilgrimage* that this was the usual custom for each week.

⁵⁴ Crago, *The Story*, 50.

⁵⁵ Crago, *The Story*, 50.

⁵⁶ Ian M. Randall. *A School of the Prophets. 150 years of Spurgeon's College*. (London: Spurgeon's College, 2005), 18.

⁵⁷ In this sermon Boreham stated that 'Sin must be punished, sin and men are inseparable' but that 'he (Christ) bore the reproach of sins'. In: F.W. Boreham, 'Who bore our sins.'

⁵⁸ Boreham asserted of A.T. Pierson that 'he magnetized us all.' Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 94.

the emotion involved in highlighting a vital point was always the hook to draw him in to a sermon or lecture. The mood was just as important as the material. This was evident when F.W. Boreham and a group of students went to hear Pierson preach and were amazed that he could retain the interest of six or seven thousand people at a time.⁵⁹

This sense of issuing a superlative mood and emphasising certain points was not lost on Boreham. Many of his sermon headings from this period were laden with exclamation marks such as: 'Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord,'⁶⁰ 'Peace! Be still,'⁶¹ 'Behold the King's Spear!'⁶² or 'Behold! I come quickly.'⁶³

Through much of his ministry, and influenced by models such as A.T. Pierson, Boreham endeavoured to maintain his energy and emotion in the pulpit. Towards the end of his time at Theydon Bois Boreham's sermons did become more emotional. As he began engaging with theological rather than practical topics, the emotional pitch of his sermons seemed to shift as well. Themes such as Christ's second coming were laden with feeling.⁶⁴

For Boreham, the cross remained the place of deepest emotion. In his last sermon on English soil at Tunbridge Wells, Boreham concluded by speaking of what the cross meant for each of his listeners.⁶⁵ It was a passionate appeal. He wanted the Christian to value it, the unconcerned to know that they were treading under the foot of the Son of God and the anxious to be comforted that Christ had borne their sins.⁶⁶ The increased emotional pitch of these sermons may have reflected Boreham's own conflicting feelings about leaving home for the uncertain territory of Mosgiel in New Zealand. He was to leave his friends, his family and his wife-to-be, Stella, back in England. In his autobiography, F.W. Boreham makes little mention of the anguish that he may have experienced prior to leaving home. The only hint of it may be in these sermon manuscripts.⁶⁷ In his final English sermons it may have been

⁵⁹ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 94.

⁶⁰ Boreham, 'Beware! Lest thou'.

⁶¹ Boreham, 'Peace!'

⁶² F.W. Boreham. 1894. 'Behold the King's Spear!' Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 11 November, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

⁶³ Boreham, 'Behold! I come quickly.'

⁶⁴ Boreham, 'Behold! I come quickly.'

⁶⁵ Boreham, 'Who bore our sins.'

⁶⁶ Boreham, 'Who bore our sins.'

⁶⁷ T. Howard Crago did mention this sense of uncertainty in his biography of Boreham, as he wrote of 'the pain of wrenching himself away from all he held dear.' In: Crago, *The Story*, 63.

Boreham's own anxiety, rather than A.T. Pierson's influence that led to such a strong sentimental undertone.

Ministry Experiences and Confidence

One reason for F.W. Boreham being so impressionable and influenced by his preaching models and Spurgeon's College was that his confidence was not fully developed. Instead of finding his own unique outlet as a way of preaching, he looked to other ministers and lecturers as his examples. He sought guidance from those who he perceived had achieved a degree of spiritual influence and success. Boreham's belief in his ability as a preacher was not yet fully formed.

When he was first invited to preach at the Park Crescent Congregational Church in Clapham for five months in 1892, Boreham said the experience was like: 'a soldier... who found himself in the frontline totally unarmed and unequipped.'⁶⁸ Regardless of his own perceived limitations and lack of confidence, Boreham continued to preach. He became the student pastor at Theydon Bois, a small village in Essex located around twenty five kilometres north of London, on the 2nd of August 1893.⁶⁹ There are some hints of his self-assurance developing during this era. For example, when a service was held to celebrate the successful fund raising venture that enabled the congregation to purchase a new organ, Boreham spoke on the life of Robert Moffat. The topic was *Daybreak in Darkest Africa*.⁷⁰ The message was accompanied by a picture that Boreham had completed with crayon and paper.

This unique and original approach suggests that Boreham grew in self-belief over his early years, through experiences such as ministering at the Park Crescent Congregational Church or the Theydon Bois Baptist Church. His sermons also became more audacious, direct and creative. It is interesting to contrast a sermon given in 1894 with that from 1910 on the same text.⁷¹ In 1894 his sermon centred on the theme 'A word fitly spoken.' The headings were: 'The word spoken should always fit the speaker and the hearer, fit words must be fitly spoken, some words rarely or never fit.' When he delivered this message at Hobart in 1910 his theme had been changed to 'Lips like Lilies.' This was a much more adventurous and imaginative approach to the same text. Over the space

⁶⁸ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 90

⁶⁹ Crago, *The Story*, 51.

⁷⁰ Crago, *The Story*, 53

⁷¹ F.W. Boreham. 1894. 'A word fitly spoken.' Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 4 February, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

of sixteen years Boreham's confidence had developed to the point where he could launch out in his own unique style. Creative sermons like *Daybreak in Darkest Africa* would no longer be anomalies. There were also some signs of his confidence continuing to develop during this period.

While limited at first, Boreham became better equipped at telling people the whole story behind a passage. His sermons were more direct. For example, when speaking from Revelation he said that one of the reasons for Christ's return was 'vengeance' on those who had not accepted his cross in faith.⁷² He was also able to preach in 1894 on 'a way of salvation' and a 'way of damnation.'⁷³ These themes suggest that while Boreham was not yet able to bring the full range of his inventive talents to a text, he was learning to share a hard word with his congregation. This would be a slow process that would take years to complete. When Boreham arrived at his placement in Mosgiel in New Zealand, in 1895, he still commented on how 'ridiculously young and inexperienced'⁷⁴ he felt.

Conclusion: A Derivative or Distinctive Preacher?

The main factors shaping F.W. Boreham's early sermons were derived from other prominent ministers. Boreham's distinct voice was muted and shackled. He looked to his ministry models for a pattern to follow. His sermons were useful in a way that F.B. Meyer's were direct pleas for holy living, drew on rhetorical devices from Joseph Parker and contained the heavy evangelistic tone of Dwight L. Moody. They also bore similarities to C.H. Spurgeon's preaching, in terms of his selecting a one off text each week and drawing points of application from the theology imbedded in a given passage. These rivers of influence were therefore largely derived from other sources. They were flowing from places far from home. While F.W. Boreham had found an outlet for his faith through preaching, he was largely speaking through the voice of different ministers.

It was his experience at Spurgeon's College that slowly developed Boreham's original approach. For in time, it would be the secondary influences that would replace the primary ones in his preaching. The rills would become rivers. In this way, Boreham's sermons would be

⁷² Boreham, 'Behold! I come quickly.'

⁷³ F.W. Boreham. 1894. 'Salvation or Damnation.' Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 25 November, Preacher's handwritten sermon manuscript.

⁷⁴ Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 115.

remembered for their: pervasive use of nature, creatively crafted words and focus on history and biography.

These small, distinctive notes were just beginning to be heard in his sermons from 1891 to 1895, as his confidence grew. His life, ministry and preaching would be a work in progress, as it is for each of us. F.W. Boreham once wrote that: 'each person on the planet is a novelty, is absolutely unique.' He continued that each person 'sees as nobody else sees.' Therefore they must 'paint or preach or pray or write as nobody else does.'⁷⁵ They must be themselves, but this takes time.

For F.W. Boreham it would not be until he reached Hobart in 1906 that he learnt to preach in a way that was not derived from Parker or Spurgeon, Moody or Meyer. Here he used material and a manner that was more in keeping with his Tunbridge Wells upbringing. At Hobart he could allow nature or his own creative application of the Scriptures to sing through a sermon. It is only with time that we can learn to paint or preach or pray or write as nobody else does. It is only with confidence that the outlet of our lives can flow in its own unique direction.

David Enticott
Whitley College, Melbourne

⁷⁵ F.W. Boreham, *I Forgot to Say* (London: The Epworth Press, 1939), 133.

‘The Man from Wales’: A Study of the Mission of Ivor Powell in New Zealand, 1955-1956

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Ivor Powell’s two years of evangelistic crusades under the auspices of the Baptist Union of New Zealand in the mid-1950s. It notes their highly organised and strongly denominational flavour. Early Baptist euphoria at 2729 crusade ‘decisions for Christ’ was much more restrained in a survey fifteen months after Powell left New Zealand which indicated that relatively few of those ‘converts’ were in Baptist church membership. The article notes the narrowness of Powell’s preaching approach and suggests that conversion is commonly more of a process and more relational in nature than the crusade approach assumed.

Colin Brown, in his history of the New Zealand National Council of Churches, identified three mid-twentieth century approaches to evangelism: (1) evangelistic meetings pressing for personal decisions; (2) witness through social action; (3) processes of education and nurture.¹ Notwithstanding the dangers of over-generalisation I would suggest that in 1950s New Zealand Baptists were strongly oriented towards the first approach, the Methodists were starting to veer towards the second approach, and there was a strong tradition among Presbyterians supporting the third approach (though significant sections of that church remained attached to the first approach).² The Baptist Union’s

¹ Colin Brown, *Forty Years on: A History of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand* (Christchurch: National Council of Churches, 1981), 101.

² While the Methodist denomination had traditionally focused strongly on evangelism of individuals through direct appeal, the mood was starting to move strongly away from that. Thus the Methodist Church supported the 1959 Billy Graham crusade only on a split conference vote after a divisive debate. Then in the early 1960s the Methodist Church declined to support the subsequent 1969 Billy Graham crusade. The general orientation of seeing evangelism in a more instructional frame is perhaps reflected in historian Allan Davidson’s comment on the fact that the Presbyterians generally had an ‘emphasis on learned preaching’ and also that they ‘always had some ambivalence towards evangelism and avoided proselytism’: Allan Davidson, ‘1931-1960: Depression, War, New

sponsorship of Ivor Powell's evangelistic missions in New Zealand throughout 1955 and 1956 was one of a number of examples of its ongoing commitment to 'crusade' evangelism. Was it effective?

Although Powell came to New Zealand as an outsider, his Welshness was an asset – he was both exotic and from 'home' (from Britain). These factors made it easy to promote Powell's meetings by urging people to hear 'the man from Wales'. Some came to hear him simply for that reason.³ Actually, Powell himself had been away from Britain for more than six years – he came to New Zealand from three years of evangelism in Australia and prior to that, three and a half years evangelising in South Africa.⁴ And after his two years in New Zealand, Powell moved on to evangelism with the Canadian Baptists.⁵

New Zealand Baptists (along with society as a whole) had a deep attachment to Britain in the 1950s. An example of this can be seen in the 1953 'thank you' response from both the queen and the governor-general for the New Zealand Baptists forwarding on the passing of their annual assembly loyalty pledge to the reigning monarch.⁶ The Welsh/British connection made it easy to promote Powell in 1950s New Zealand.

Baptists in New Zealand had been keen on evangelism from their beginnings there in the middle of the nineteenth century. A century later, the 1950s was a decade of particularly strong Baptist evangelistic focus. Intermixed with this was a Baptist goal of advancing the Baptist denomination. In 1947 the Baptist Assembly sought a 10% growth in Baptist membership in the following year:

Our Churches are...called in the name of Christ to the task of making their whole membership 100 per cent effective, with the object that, by a concerted effort in evangelism, 1,000 new members may be won in the year 1948.⁷

Life' in Dennis McEldowney (ed.) *Presbyterians in Aotearoa, 1840-1990* (Wellington: The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), 103-43, 109, 124. Presbyterian and Methodist denominational divergence from Baptists was much more marked in the 1950s than it had been earlier. My view is that the seeds of that divergence were starting to emerge to a significant extent in the 1950s.

³ See one example in *New Zealand Baptist* (NZB), October 1955, 240.

⁴ NZB, March 1954, 65.

⁵ NZB, May 1956, 66.

⁶ NZB, February 1953, 33.

⁷ Special report on evangelism (adopted by the Assembly): *New Zealand Baptist Union Handbook* 1946-1947, 19.

The outcome was growth of only 2%.⁸ Failure to achieve their ambitious goal did not daunt them – in fact the failure does not seem to have been publicly voiced or reflected on. Instead a national Board of Evangelism was set up at their annual assembly in 1948.⁹ The Board's initial major strategy was the promoting of team-based evangelistic crusades using New Zealand preachers.

Reports of Powell's evangelistic success in South Africa aroused New Zealand Baptist interest as early as 1950. Securing Powell's services took some time because the Australian Baptists were already in the queue for Powell's ministry; so New Zealand had to wait.¹⁰ Even so, Powell and the New Zealand Baptists committed themselves to the 1955-1956 visit as early as 1952, two and a half years prior to the event.¹¹

Powell was vigorously promoted and eagerly awaited. The New Zealand Baptist Board of Evangelism began the promotional side of the visit as early as May 1951 by starting to buy in supplies of Powell's booklets.¹² From 1952 the Board got in copies of the *Australian Baptist* magazine in order to run occasional reports of Powell's Australian ministry in the *New Zealand Baptist* to keep Powell's name before New Zealand Baptists.¹³ The itinerary for Powell's visit was mapped out sixteen months prior to his arrival.¹⁴ A brief call to prayer was issued to all New Zealand Baptists for the campaigns sixteen months before they got underway, followed up by a circular letter along the same lines to all churches six months later.¹⁵ The 1953 Board of Evangelism annual report concluded with the words: 'If the Board may leave one word with our folk for the coming year, it would be this: PRAY AND PREPARE FOR THE IVOR POWELL CAMPAIGNS – 1955-1956.'¹⁶ To heighten

⁸ The goal was difficult to measure anyway, partly because the statistical year ended on 31 August. My calculation of 2% is gained by considering both additions to membership by baptism and net membership growth for the two years 1947-1948 and 1948-1949 and halving those figures to get 1948 figures.

⁹ NZBU *Handbook* 1949-1950, 91.

¹⁰ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 3 July 1950, 4 September 1950, 2 October 1950, 6 August 1951: New Zealand Baptist Archive (NZBA): MA 059.

¹¹ Board of Evangelism report to the annual assembly 1952: Baptist Union Handbook 1952-1953, 86.

¹² Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 7 May 1951, 4 February 1952: NZBA: MA 059.

¹³ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 31 March 1952: NZBA: MA 059.

¹⁴ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 3 August 1953, 5 October 1953, 6 November 1953, 7 December 1953: NZBA: MA 059.

¹⁵ NZB, September 1953, 195; minutes of Board of Evangelism, 1 March 1954: NZBA: MA 059.

¹⁶ NZBU *Handbook* 1953-1954, 89 (emphasis original).

Baptist awareness a number of articles appeared in *New Zealand Baptist* in 1954.¹⁷ Any Baptist not getting in behind the crusade faced the risk of criticism and shame. Six months into the campaign *New Zealand Baptist* carried the following snippet:

WHERE IS IVOR POWELL NOW?

A visitor from overseas asked this question of one of our ministers. Despite the fact that a report is posted to every minister following every mission, this man could only say, 'I haven't any idea!' It is the duty of every N.Z. Baptist to follow with interest and prayer the work of the Man from Wales in our midst.¹⁸

In his two years in New Zealand Powell preached throughout the country. His typical 'campaign' was to preach for fifteen days (including three Sundays) at one venue before moving on to the next campaign the following Sunday.¹⁹ Some campaigns were held in Baptist buildings; but many were in public venues to cope with large crowds. Meetings commonly drew several hundred people but on occasion the number could be in the thousands.²⁰ Powell's focus was centrally towards evangelism. He variously described the response of inquirers/converts as 'professing faith in Christ', 'accepting the Lord Jesus as their Saviour' and 'making the great surrender'.²¹ Decision language was also commonly used – responders 'made the great decision'.²² Was it conversion?

At times Powell had the sense to recognise that 'real conversions' could not be assessed on the spot: 'When I come back in two years and see how many are working Christians in the church, I will tell you [how many real Christians there have been]'.²³ At other times, however, he

¹⁷ For example, *NZB*, March 1954, 65; July 1954, 154; August 1954, 184; September 1954, 200.

¹⁸ *NZB*, August 1955, 188.

¹⁹ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 31 March 1952: NZBA: MA 059.

²⁰ *NZB*, July 1955, 160 (re Invercargill); *NZB* October 1955, 240 (re an Auckland City Hall rally in conjunction with the Mount Albert campaign); *NZB* June 1956 142 (re Hamilton).

²¹ Ivor Powell reports to the Board of evangelism re Nelson, Levin, Tawa-Linden, Wellington Eastern Suburbs, Shackleton Road, Tauranga, Rotorua, Whangarei, Lower Hutt: NZBA: MA 060, B17/3.

²² See, for example, Powell's reports on the August 1954 Mount Albert campaign, the November-December 1954 Napier-Hastings campaigns and the November 1955 Christchurch central campaign: NZBA: MA 060, B17/3..

²³ *NZB*, August 1955, 182.

would describe the responders as ‘converts’.²⁴ Only thus could he encourage the baptising of initial responders in an area before the crusade ended there. This concept of instantaneous conversion and of initial decision/faith equating to conversion would have meshed well with New Zealand Baptists. A few years earlier the New Zealand Baptist Union Council had issued a statement on evangelising New Zealand, which included the affirmation, ‘When a penitent exercises faith in Christ *at that moment* Salvation becomes his’.²⁵ The difficulty is that while conversion may well be ‘at that moment’ conversion, how is that confidently known ‘at that moment’?

Powell’s method of soliciting public response was to invite people to meet him in an inquiry room. All who made this move were counselled by Powell. This could sometimes mean the counselling of twenty or more people in a comparatively short space of time. Powell nevertheless insisted that he could and should handle the counselling completely on his own – a fact that provoked resentment from some Baptists who felt that people from the local church of the area should be involved. Altogether Powell recorded 2729 people, excluding children, as having made the great decision for Christ through his ministry in New Zealand – a very sizeable figure.²⁶ New Zealand Baptist seemed euphoric at the results. One-third the way through the New Zealand missions the Board of Evangelism reported:

We believe it can be said without hesitation that the campaign thus far has been one of the highlights of our Baptist history in this country; results to date have fully justified the great expectations of our people for these missions.²⁷

A year later the Board still held that viewpoint:

Practically the whole of our time [in 1955-1956] and energies have been devoted to the oversight of the Crusade being conducted by our good friends, Rev. and Mrs. Ivor Powell. It has been a year of unprecedented opportunity for gaining new strength in our Churches, both by the addition of many new converts, and in the great spiritual uplift received by our members. We believe it is true

²⁴ For example, Ivor Powell report number 1 (re Timaru): NZBA: MA 060, B17/3.

²⁵ ‘Report on “The Baptist Churches and the Evangelising of New Zealand”’: NZBU *Handbook* 1946-1947, 162. Emphasis added to ‘at that moment’.

²⁶ See Powell’s handwritten records of decisions in NZBA: MA 060, B17/3.

²⁷ Annual report of Board of Evangelism 1954-1955: NZBU *Handbook* 1955-1956, 71.

to say that both of these objects have been very largely achieved in many parts of the country. Seldom in the history of our denomination in New Zealand has there been such a widespread response to the Gospel message, presented, it should be said, in a most attractive way by 'The Man from Wales'. Reports from every quarter agree that these Missions have been the most effective and compelling presentations of the Gospel experienced in this country for many years.²⁸

Wrapped up in Powell's focus on evangelism was his desire to grow Baptist churches, as did New Zealand Baptists themselves. When Powell began his ministry in Australia he reported to the New Zealand Board of Evangelism:

I came to find great suspicions and many 'wet blankets'. Now thank God, all the ministers are thrilled: all the churches are packed to the doors, and what is more to the point, every mission results in baptisms and additions to the local church.²⁹

This desire to promote the Baptist cause left Powell ambivalent as to venue – church buildings or public hall? On the one hand 'outsiders will attend a meeting in a City Hall when they absolutely refuse to enter a church'. On the other hand 'converts won in a central hall are apt to be left high and dry. . . . The Baptist [sic] declare that they do all the work whilst others get the results! The Man from Wales is a Baptist and whilst I shall never try to steal sheep from other denominations, I am still a BAPTIST. I shall hope that most of the converts will join my church. That is why I like preaching in churches.' The Board of Evangelism comment in circulating Powell's letter containing those statements was: 'It will readily be seen that the Missioner is a Baptist and his missions are run primarily for the strengthening of our Baptist churches.'³⁰

Powell's very strong denominational focus markedly limited the extent to which his crusades could be interdenominational. The purpose of his campaigns was not simply to make converts but to strengthen Baptist churches. Thus Powell's exhortation in June 1955 was: 'Let us work and pray, and preach until all New Zealand knows there is a Living Christ among the Baptists.'³¹ Baptist churches themselves were alert to

²⁸ Annual report of Board of Evangelism 1955-1956: NZBU *Handbook* 1956-1957, 79.

²⁹ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 1 September 1952: NZBA: MA 059.

³⁰ Undated circular letter (1954) from Powell to the Baptist Ministers of New Zealand: NZBA: MA 060, B17. Emphasis original.

³¹ NZB, June 1955, 129.

this aspect of the Ivor Powell crusades. Thus Rev. Eric Batts reported in relation to the Dunedin crusade:

Our Baptist position in Dunedin has been greatly strengthened by forthright and definite preaching of the Gospel and by Mr. Powell's courageous enunciation of our Baptist and Protestant emphases.³²

Powell vigorously promoted Baptist perspectives. The Christchurch campaign organisation, in writing to potential follow-up visitors, noted that each convert had received from the missionary two booklets: *After Conversion What?* and *Confessing Christ* (baptism).³³ Further Baptist emphasis was expressed in Powell's encouraging churches to hold adult baptismal services as a climax to his campaigns. Prior to his arrival in New Zealand Powell wrote to all the Baptist ministers in New Zealand:

I value the opportunity to speak about believer's baptism. The actual baptising is always done by the minister, but if he can prepare beforehand a few candidates, and have them in readiness for such a service at the end of the campaign, that provides the opportunity for me to expound the truths most dearly held among us. I hope every mission will end in this way.³⁴

Given this predetermined encouragement to hold baptismal services as a final act of the crusades, Powell was a little disingenuous in writing of the South Dunedin mission: 'Toward the end of the campaign *it became evident* that once again *it would become necessary* to close with a Baptismal Service'.³⁵ Not all Baptists supported the holding of baptismal services in this manner, the matter being raised, for example, even prior to his arrival, at the annual Baptist Assembly in 1953.³⁶ Apart from hesitation concerning the administering of baptism too quickly to converts, the practice must have meant that other denominations were less likely to support the campaigns. What the Presbyterian Church thought of the following public report from Dunedin is uncertain, but

³² NZB, May 1955, 107.

³³ NZBA: MA 060, B17.

³⁴ Undated circular letter [1954] to the Baptist ministers of New Zealand. No wonder that with those sorts of comments the Board of Evangelism circulated the letter as CONFIDENTIAL with the comment: 'It is quite conceivable that some matters falling into the wrong hands might be misconstrued and misrepresented.' NZBA: 060.

³⁵ Ivor Powell report number 3 to the Board of Evangelism: NZBA: MA 060, B17/3. Emphasis added.

³⁶ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 1 February 1954: NZBA: MA 059.

the overall reaction but may be guessed as being less than wholeheartedly warm in relation to the following item: 'One young man who sought and found the Saviour was already a theological student in training for the ministry!'³⁷

When the Waihi Baptist Church inquired of the Board of Evangelism whether they could hold an Ivor Powell crusade on an interdenominational basis, the clear answer was: 'the Board is not able to sanction such a Mission, as it would not meet the wishes of Mr. Powell'.³⁸ Thus if other churches wanted to support a Powell crusade they would be supporting a Baptist crusade. In some places the Brethren and/or Salvation Army churches were strong supporters.³⁹ In Nelson the Anglican Church gave strong backing to the crusade.⁴⁰ To quite an extent though, Baptist churches 'carried on this mighty offensive alone'.⁴¹ The Rotorua crusade reported that 'co-operation from the leaders of other denominations was not encouraging'.⁴² It is a moot point, however, whether the lack of co-operation is to be blamed on those churches or on the approach of the Baptist crusades.

In the crusades, there was no truck with the Roman Catholic Church. Catholics were beyond the pale, in urgent need of conversion. Hence Powell's narrative:

I am always reluctant to pin-point individual cases of conversion for I fear lest this would make them a target for the evil one. However, my readers may be stimulated to pray if I mention that one man, to use his own words, 'born and bred, and brought up a Roman Catholic' saw his need of Christ, renounced his former faith, and stated that he would like to become a Baptist. Another lady, who had already received special tuition in preparation for membership in the same church, also discovered her need of the Saviour, and finally stated her desire to be a Baptist.

Powell's strong Baptist emphasis and his holding of baptismal services within his crusades must have created difficulties for churches of

³⁷ *NZB*, May 1955, 107.

³⁸ Correspondence reported in minutes of Board of Evangelism, 6 September 1954: NZBA: MA 059.

³⁹ *NZB*, March 1956 66 (re Tauranga), *NZB* June 1956, 142.

⁴⁰ Ivor Powell report number 5 (re Nelson): NZBA. Given Powell's narrow Baptist approach, it is revealing that in describing Anglican co-operation Powell stated: 'For the first time in years, I enjoyed the prayerful co-operation of certain other churches'.

⁴¹ *NZB*, June 1956, 142.

⁴² *NZB*, April 1956, 94.

other denominations. The report on the Hanover Street mission included this description:

The campaign concluded with a great Baptist Rally in which the church was packed out. All local churches were well represented, beside a great number of others who had become interested during the course of the campaign. Five believers were baptised, and then in response to a stirring appeal by the missionary ten others, one man and nine women, came forward and were baptised forthwith. Of the women, seven were nurses in the hospital, one a specialist sister. All gave evidence before their baptism that they were sincere and convinced Christians. Several are of other denominations. It was a moving climax to a memorable campaign.⁴³

Given the strength of Presbyterianism in Dunedin, there would likely have been a Presbyterian or two amongst the several 'of other denominations'. I wonder how a Presbyterian minister would respond when a parishioner rang him the following day and said she had been moved at the Powell meeting and had been baptised then and there. And I wonder whether he would be recommending Powell crusades to his fellow ministers.⁴⁴

In terms of content, Powell's evangelism was narrow in its focus. In an article in *NZ Baptist* Powell contrasted two forms of evangelism. One focused on national and societal issues, the other on 'repentance' and the change of the individual heart. It did not seem to occur to Powell that both approaches could have validity and that his clearly preferred second approach may have been too narrow on its own.⁴⁵ Powell's understanding of conversion assumed that it was instantaneous and that it involved rejection of alcohol, smoking, gambling and dancing and change in sexual mores.⁴⁶

⁴³ *NZB*, May 1955, 107. See also *NZB*, July 1955, 160 re the baptising of 31 people at the Invercargill crusade, with 16 of them responding for baptism during the service itself.

⁴⁴ The host church, Hanover Street Baptist, was likely uncomfortable about the matter – in responding in 1958 to a survey on the Ivor Powell mission it noted that it did not like the final baptismal service: NZBA: MA 60, B17/3.

⁴⁵ *NZB*, April 1956, 88.

⁴⁶ Powell's stance on alcohol can be seen in his article, 'I'm glad I'm a Baptist' in *NZB*, March 1956, 62, where he is clearly critical of a Fiji preacher who drank alcohol. See also *NZB*, May 1956 116. His negative views on gambling and dancing can be seen in his article on 'Modern Evangelism', in *NZB*, April 1956, 88, where he is critical of churches that sponsor 'dancing and whist drives'. In

Powell's preaching was folksy and highly imaginative in approach. It was populist, not the 'learned preaching' of the Presbyterians.⁴⁷ His sermons were essentially colourful retelling of biblical stories, very commonly those of the Old Testament.⁴⁸ The story-telling nature of his preaching meant that he could draw it quickly to a close when his wife stood up unobtrusively at the back to signal that he had spoken long enough!⁴⁹ His description of the creation of Eve exemplifies the way he would embellish the biblical narrative:

She was lovely; she was indescribably charming; as dignified as befitted the queen of creation; as refreshing as the morning dew. Her eyes were lit with enquiry and pleasure as she scanned her surroundings. Her movements were graceful and effortless, and when she spoke, pleasure thrilled the Creator's heart. She was fascinatingly beautiful; she was good, and very desirable. 'And the Lord God brought her to man.' Poor Adam, he was dumbfounded! He wondered if this were a dream; if this goddess would disappear immediately he awakened. Then he rubbed his eyes. She was still there, and her friendly smiles added charm to her attractiveness. Poor man, he was shy; he was an inexperienced boy; he had never had a sweetheart. And then love was born in his soul. The wedding took place within the sacred precincts of God's open-air cathedral. God, the Father of the bride, gave her away; man's best Friend, the royal Surgeon, stood at the groom's side; and the Holy Spirit was the officiating minister. And when the service ended, the choirs of heaven sang their anthems.⁵⁰

Powell was very aware of the need to draw an audience. One way to do this was to show films. Powell had put together several documentaries of overseas countries he had visited and these seemed to

the same article he stated: 'I have never yet known an all-night prayer meeting to thrive in a church where dances are held. They cannot co-exist. One will kill the other.' A strong expression re sexual mores comes through in Ivor Powell mission report number 18 (re Tokoroa): NZBA: MA 060 B17/3.

⁴⁷ On this see footnote 2.

⁴⁸ Comment of Rev Brian Smith to the author 1 February 2006. Brian Smith, principal emeritus of Carey Baptist College, heard Ivor Powell preach several times in Christchurch during Powell's New Zealand campaign. See also the report of the Wanganui Baptist Church in *NZB*, October 1956, 264.

⁴⁹ Memory of Margaret Kimpton on her survey form handed to Laurie Guy 10 March 2006.

⁵⁰ Ivor Powell, *Bible Pinnacles* (London: Marshall Morgan, 1952), 1-2.

have pulling power.⁵¹ Another way to draw people to his main meetings was to hold supplementary meetings within community organisations. In the case of the Christchurch crusade in October 1956, Powell was scheduled to speak at a Rotary Club, at a Christian Businessmen's luncheon and at the YMCA youth time.⁵² In Timaru Powell was interviewed on the local radio station on Welsh rugby.⁵³ In Hamilton when he addressed a Rotary meeting, Rotarians teased him about Welsh rugby history. Powell's response jokingly criticised New Zealand rugby that he had seen, and asserted: 'If I had picked a team from my Baptist women, I would have spanked the lot of them'⁵⁴. The comment was reported in national newspapers and Powell got to speak on radio on the matter. Powell claimed: 'As a result of that sporting talk, many hundreds of men attended my services, and thanks be to God, many of these were won to Christ.'⁵⁵

The campaigns were handled in a well organised fashion. Powell himself was highly organised, writing a report of his ministry each month for the Baptist Board of Evangelism and for the pages of the *New Zealand Baptist* magazine. He also wrote several general articles, probably to keep his mission and presence before New Zealand Baptists, on subjects such as the missionary challenge, Christmas, 'I'm glad I'm a Baptist', modern evangelism, and Pentecost.⁵⁶ Significantly, there was little if any focus on wider society and its concerns.

Powell was at one with the New Zealand Baptist denomination in his highly organised approach. The denomination expected every Baptist in New Zealand to throw their weight behind the campaigns. The stress on organisation required each Baptist minister immediately at the conclusion of a crusade to file a report focusing on their local church (in order to foster publicity for the ongoing ministry). A public rebuke was given to two ministers/churches for 'tardiness' when their reports were not produced immediately.⁵⁷ There was awareness too of the importance

⁵¹ Board of Evangelism annual report 1954-1955: NZBU *Handbook* 1955-1956, 71.

⁵² Christchurch evangelistic committee minutes: NZBA: MA 060, B17/3.

⁵³ Survey response letter of Rev. R.L. Fursdon to Rev. Eric Batts 14 May 1958: NZBA: MA 060, B17.

⁵⁴ *NZ Herald*, 10 May 1956, 12.

⁵⁵ Ivor Powell's report (number 19) on the Hamilton crusade: NZBA: MA 060, B17/3.

⁵⁶ *NZB*, May 1955, 103-4; December 1955, 290; March 1956, 62; April 1956, 88; May 1956, 116.

⁵⁷ *NZB*, September 1956, 224.

of follow-up of the new converts. Thus the Hamilton Central minister, when reporting great response from the crusade there, then commented:

Finally the great test is ahead of the local Church, but we are carrying on the offensive with a well-planned and eager follow-up ministry, determined there shall be no hole in the sack.⁵⁸

Were the campaigns successful? This is a matter that is difficult to measure. Given, however, that a significant emphasis was not only to produce conversions but also to boost local Baptist churches, we can look at a sampling of Baptist churches where crusades were held to assess their baptismal figures for the 1950s. One difficulty is that often several Baptist churches co-operated in a combined crusade. There is little way of knowing whether crusade attendances stemmed largely from the primary host church or much more evenly from a number of the involved churches. For the table on the next page I have selected crusade-host Baptist churches that were more at a distance from other Baptist churches, on the basis that crusade baptismal and numerical outcomes would reflect more in that particular Baptist church (acknowledging that the sampling will therefore focus more on provincial centres). I have selected churches where there was sizeable public conversion response to see more easily whether that response shows up in subsequent baptisms and membership additions. These, then, are statistics of annual admissions to membership by baptism:⁵⁹

The figures may suggest that there was major increase at Whangarei, New Plymouth and Nelson as a result of the Powell crusades there. They equally suggest minimal increase at Manurewa, Rotorua, Wanganui and Tauranga. The figures for Hamilton and Te Awamutu are less easy to interpret. The table suggests that there was no necessary correlation between reported conversions and subsequent baptisms and church membership. In all cases the number of baptisms was far less than the number of reported conversions. In some cases the Powell campaign made a major difference; in other cases little difference at all.

⁵⁸ NZB, June 1956, 142.

⁵⁹ The figures come from the monthly reports of Ivor Powell himself. Powell did not include responses from children in his overall conversion figures. The way he reported matters suggests that he counted as converts all who came forward to go into the inquiry room unless through personal counselling he considered they were a 'rededication' rather than a conversion: NZBA: MA 060 B17/3. The emboldened figures indicate which year Powell's crusade was held in their church.

CHURCH (‘decisions’ at Powell mtngs)	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Whangarei (67)	7	16	6	8	7	27	12	9	13	12
Manurewa (117)	16	5	0	0	7	4	5	3	8	5
Hamilton (208)	20	24	37	7	45	37	21	13	21	19
Te Awamutu (61)	2	9	1	14	8	14	11	14	1	4
Tauranga (42)	12	16	13	16	1	9	16	12	3	10
Rotorua (52)	0	0	5	5	1	6	2	6	4	6
New Plymouth (102)	5	3	16	No Rtn	15	26	10	8	22	24
Wanganui (84)	1	9	9	2	5	7	0	2	1	0
Nelson (179)	10	6	15	9	48	9	3	8	13	22

This mixed outcome is reflected in the outcome of a Board of Evangelism survey done fifteen months after Powell had left the country.⁶⁰ The Board asked each church officers’ court to answer the following questions:

1. We would like to know if it is your considered opinion that the mission in your Church was justified.
2. Are there definite accessions to your membership as a direct result of the mission?
3. Was the type of mission acceptable to your Church?
4. Are there any outstanding lessons you have learned that you would like to pass on to the Board for their information?⁶¹

In all, Powell had conducted about 27 full-length crusades in various locations. Most involved more than one Baptist church. 35 survey replies came in from local churches (about one-third of all the New Zealand Baptist churches). Taken as a whole, the New Zealand Baptist church officers’ long-term view of the crusades would have to be described as ambivalent.

⁶⁰ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 3 March 1958: NZBA: MA 059.

⁶¹ Minutes of Board of Evangelism file: NZBA: MA 059.

In response to questions whether the crusade they were involved in was justified and whether the crusade approach was acceptable most responded in the affirmative. However, in response to the question of accessions into membership, 12 indicated no such accessions. Most of the no-new-accession churches were not host churches (churches of the local area in which the crusade was held). However host churches Tauranga, Tawa-Linden and Wanganui also gave that response. In all, 15 host churches (about half the total number of host churches) responded to the survey. Several reporting membership additions from the Ivor Powell crusade did not quantify that in any way. A table of host churches that in some way quantified the results is indicated below:

Host church	'Decisions for Christ' from the local Powell crusade	Subsequent crusade-related accessions into membership (1958 survey data)
Timaru	24	1
Tawa-Linden	14	0
Miramar	18	0
Wellington Central	113	'Less than 6'
Mount Albert	170	'A few'
Hastings	60	4
Tauranga	42	0
Tokoroa	40	2
Hamilton	208	12, plus about 17 in other nearby Baptist churches
Te Awamutu	61	9, plus 3 in Otorohanga Baptist
Belmont (North Shore)	69	3
Wanganui	84	0
Epuni & Taita (Hutt Valley)	137	3 at Taita; 0 at Epuni
Oxford Terrace (Christchurch)	159	7, plus c.7 at other Baptist churches
Greymouth	28	1

This shows four of the host churches indicating no accessions into membership as a crusade outcome. One, the Wanganui Baptist Church, seems to have been aware immediately after its crusade with 84 public commitments to Christ, that most of these did not indicate new and thorough conversions:

The response to the appeal made by Mr. Powell was very satisfactory, although it was really the people of our own church who received a tremendous uplift which should prove a wonderful stimulus in the days to come.⁶²

Most of the churches which did have accessions to membership stemming from their crusade stated a small numerical increase (between one and six). Greymouth reported that their one increase was the son of one of their deacons. Three churches reported double figure increases: Te Awamutu (12), Hamilton (12, plus c.12 in other nearby Baptist churches) and Caversham (18-20). While Ivor Powell recorded the 15 host churches above as having a total of 1267 adult 'decisions for Christ', this later survey indicated only about 60 accessions to membership in those churches from the Powell crusade, with likely a similar or lesser number in other Baptist churches. Factoring in the other Baptist churches also participating in the crusades, this may suggest accessions into Baptist membership of maybe 10% of the total 'decisions for Christ'.

Few of the responses were euphoric in tone. Nelson was one of those few, stating, 'The only weakness we could find was in Ivor Powell's determination to handle his personal work alone.' Avondale was another: 'Not in 25 years have I seen such positive results from any mission'. Most responses, however, were cautious. Often the positive affirmation related more to the profile it gave to the Baptist church rather than to the growth of that church. The comments of Rev. Roland Hart, minister of the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church in Christchurch, are an example of this perspective:

We would list the value of the campaign as chiefly witness to the city. It was a demonstration of Baptist strength and of Baptist teaching which had a marked effect on the whole city.⁶³

The most negative response came from the Tauranga church, which had 'no definite accessions to membership':

⁶² Wanganui Baptist Church report in *NZB*, October 1956, 264.

⁶³ NZBA MA 060 B17/3.

In this particular mission rather too much was made of the films and of merchandising the Evangelist's literature. . . . It would be appreciated and create greater harmony if an Evangelist would co-operate more with local church government in the organisation of a Mission.⁶⁴

This sharply contrasts with a Tauranga report immediately after the mission was held:

Without fear of contradiction it can be said that Mr. Powell is one of the sanest and safest evangelists that has conducted evangelistic campaigns in our land. There has been and will be the minimum, if any, after-mission problems in the Ivor Powell campaigns. In Tauranga there are none.⁶⁵

A number of the other church responses were unhappy with the crusade meetings commonly being held away from church premises in a larger public hall.⁶⁶ The Belmont response summed up that perspective:

A strong feeling here [is] that any such mission should be Church-centred at all costs – it would make the difficulty of tying in the new convert to church life much less.⁶⁷

It is interesting to note rather more negative responses from churches in 1958 that had been much more positive in 1955. Rev. R.L. Fursdon, minister of the Timaru Baptist Church, 1949-1965, is an example of this. Initially Fursdon was very positive about the crusade. Immediately at its end he was rather overwhelmed by how significant it had been (though recognizing that it was 'hard to assess the real results' so soon). He wrote:

It is not easy to sit down calmly and write a report of the Ivor Powell Mission. To say that it has been a stirring time is to put it mildly. . . . The whole church has been very much affected. Mr & Mrs Powell quickly gained the attention and respect of all. Ivor Powell . . . holds the audience spellbound. . . . Do not stint the publicity & advertising – it pays dividends & Ivor Powell will deliver the goods. I anticipate that Hanover St [the culminating location for the Dunedin crusades that followed the Timaru

⁶⁴ NZBA MA 060 B17/3.

⁶⁵ NZB, March 1956, 66.

⁶⁶ See responses of Rotorua, an unnamed congregation, Wanganui, Ponsonby, Tawa-Linden and Belmont.

⁶⁷ NZBA MA 060 B17/3.

crusade] will not contain the crowds when Ivor Powell has been there a month.⁶⁸

Ivor Powell's own report at that time on the Timaru crusade was similarly positive:

My first crusade in the Dominion has just terminated. . . . The mission . . . brought me into contact with my first New Zealand Baptist Church, and I loved what I saw. If subsequent campaigns bring to me as much pleasure as did this initial effort, then I shall forever thank God that He permitted me to visit this country.

In my opinion we did not really touch the outsiders until the mission was nearly at an end; our meetings were packed with hungry Christians. As the news spread through the district, the drawing power of my films began to make an impression. Toward the end of the second week interest deepened and strange faces began appearing in the services. In order to make the most of the new opportunity I offered to stay longer in the town, and the campaign was extended to Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the third week. Right to the end, the meetings were crowded to capacity, and nightly, souls responded to the challenge of the Saviour.⁶⁹

Fursdon was still pastor of the Timaru church when the survey was undertaken three years later. In reporting that the church had had only one accession to membership (other denominations also benefiting), Fursdon recognized that 'Mr Powell's literature, bookstall and films greatly helped the campaign & he knew how to attract the crowds'. In fact 'throughout [the] whole campaign the building was packed to capacity'. However, Fursdon was more critical of Powell's preaching style and content:

His use of graphic word pictures was excellent but it lacked an adequate presentation of the Gospel – Man's sin, God's mercy, lavish Redemption, the Cross, the Risen Church [sic] and the Holy Spirit's power. He relied too much on personal anecdotes to illustrate his addresses. It may have been our fault, but somehow we lacked the sense of God's Spirit in our midst.

Fursdon also expressed reservation about the way Powell handled the counseling of those who had responded in the meetings: 'His manner

⁶⁸ Mission report letter, Rev. R.L. Fursdon to Rev. A.J. Jamieson 10 February 1955: NZBA: MA 060.

⁶⁹ NZB, March 1955, 57.

was abrupt'. He was also negative with regard to the baptismal service that occurred at the end of the crusade:

We are not happy about converts being baptized at [the] end of campaign, or for people to come forward to be baptized 'on the spot'. There should be preparation of candidates and the matter of membership should be clearly stated.

Fursdon must have sensed that his comments may have been ambivalent and 'damning with faint praise'; so he stressed in closing his letter that his comments were 'confidential'.⁷⁰

The crusades had impact in many lives, even if the figures initially reported by Ivor Powell cannot be taken as an accurate indication of long-term change. One example of such change is indicated in a 2006 communication from the wife of a retired Baptist minister:

A very significant event happened in our family at one of the Services, my Father, Frank Holmes committed his life back to the Lord. The change was instant and I remember him giving up smoking straight away and becoming a very enthusiastic serving member of the church.

Ivor Powell also spoke at Finlay Park Easter Camp with over 500 young people in attendance. I remember that as the best out of many wonderful Easter Camps. At that time I had not committed my life to the Lord. Roy Bullen [the Rotorua Baptist minister] used to try and get the opportunity to talk to me and my friend about Jesus but I always evaded the issue. I would say to my friend, 'Just tell him I'm not good enough.' That never did put him off. However, Roy Bullen's efforts were not in vain and I gave my life to the Lord with many other young people at the Sunday night Service when Ivor Powell preached so powerfully.

Mrs. Jack Beck [wife of the Baptist minister at Morrinsville] counselled me and I truly was born again.⁷¹

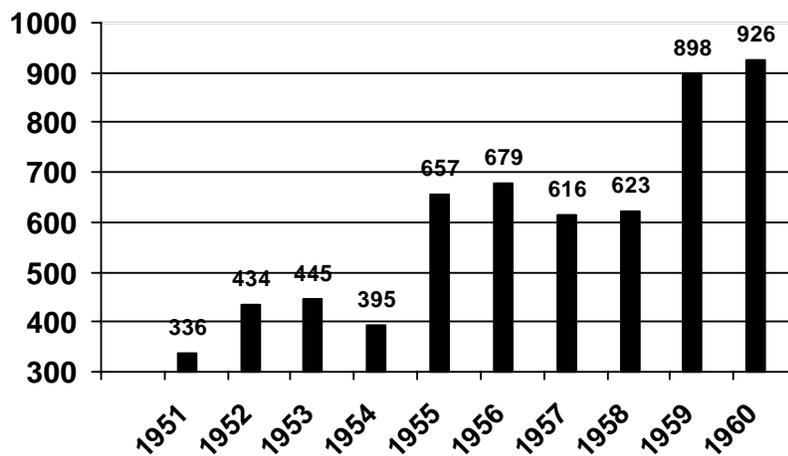
Despite such individual voices, data from individual churches may suggest that the Ivor Powell crusades contributed little to the growth of New Zealand Baptist churches. However, statistical data relating to the denomination as a whole could be read as countering this more negative view. The following graph may suggest that Ivor Powell's ministry in

⁷⁰ Letter R.L. Fursdon to Rev. E. W. Batts dated 14 May 1958; NZBA: MA 060. Rev. R.L. Fursdon died in 1989. The lapse of time since his death suggests that it is now appropriate to make public this aspect of his correspondence.

⁷¹ Email, Beverley Coad to Edgar Rout, 16 February 2006.

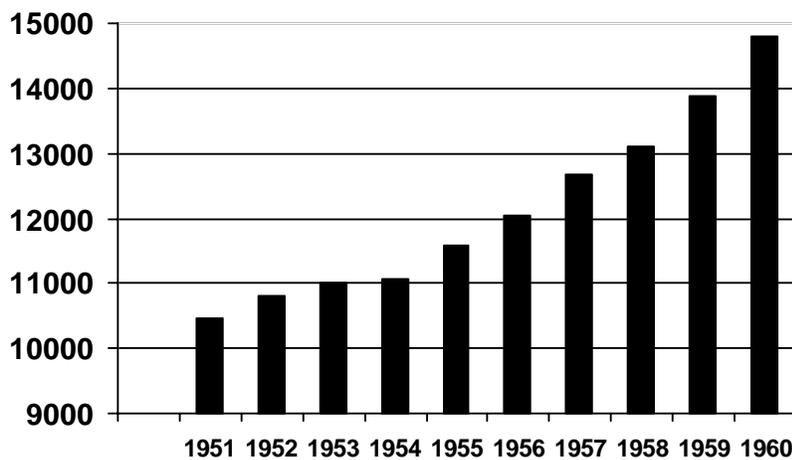
New Zealand ushered in significant annual increase in the number of baptisms performed in the Baptist churches.

Baptisms for membership 1951-1960⁷²



The overall membership figures for that period reflect a similar pattern of growth.

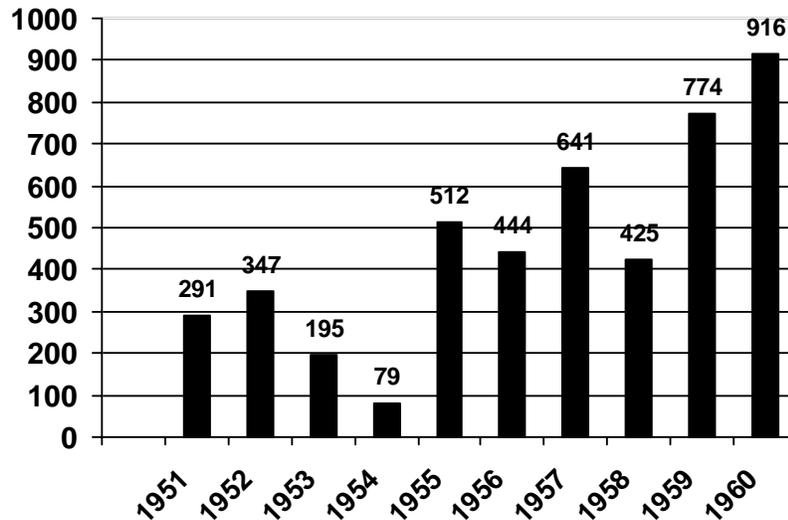
N.Z. Baptist total membership 1951-1960



⁷² This and the following two charts from NZBU *Handbooks*, 1951-1960.

The figures for annual increase in membership bring out very clearly that major growth shift began in and after the years of the Powell campaigns.

Annual increase in Baptist membership 1951-1960



These three graphs point to major increase, roughly from 1955-1956. Of itself this does not indicate any direct link with the Ivor Powell crusades. In fact, similar growth in other churches which were not majorly involved in the Powell crusades or in evangelism of that style suggests that much of this growth was linked to wider trends of the 1950s. Thus in a *Dominion* article in 1954, the Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches all reported large congregation numbers, along with general buoyancy and quickening societal religious interest.⁷³

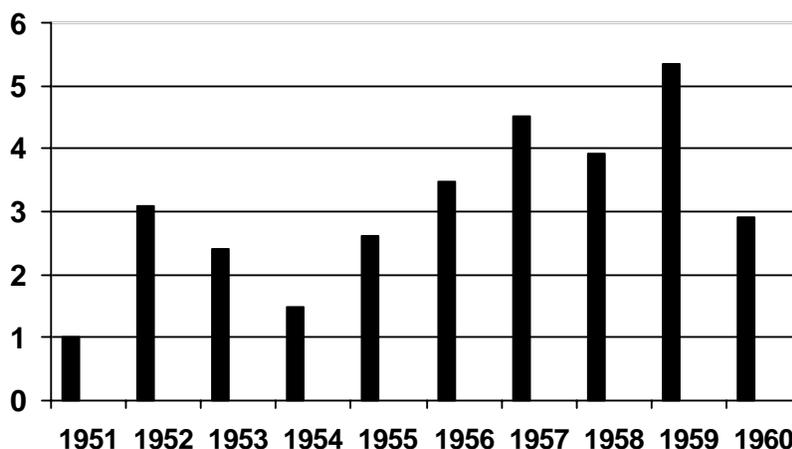
Post World War Two New Zealand was numerically a relatively good time for New Zealand churches of most denominations. At least until 1960 most churches grew at an excellent rate.⁷⁴ The following table

⁷³ 'Quickening of Interest in the Church Evident', *Dominion*, 30 September 1954, 11.

⁷⁴ J.A. Evans, 'Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990 with Particular Reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches', PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1992, 88; J. Veitch, 'Lloyd Geering and the Great Debate: A Water-shed in New Zealand Religious History', in International Religious Studies Conference, August 1983, *Religions and Change* (Wellington: 1983), 568-93

shows that the percentage increase in membership of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in the years 1951-1955 was typically 1-3%, while the percentage increase 1956-1960 was typically 3-5%. Only in 1967 did that church experience its first annual decline in the number of its communicant members since 1939.⁷⁵

Percentage increase in communicant membership roll of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1951-1960⁷⁶



Although the Methodist Church suffered the greatest decline of the major churches in twentieth-century New Zealand,⁷⁷ its membership underwent major increase in the 1950s.⁷⁸ The following graph shows that in the years 1951-1954 the annual increase in membership was typically

at 571; Veitch, '1961-1990: Towards the Church for a New Era', in D. McEldowney (ed.), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa 1840-1990* (Wellington: Presbyterian Church of N.Z., 1990), 144-82 at 144; H. Mol, *The Fixed and the Fickle: Religion and Identity in New Zealand* (Dunedin: Pilgrims Press, n.d. [1982]), 81, 84.

⁷⁵ *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*, 1967, 306a.

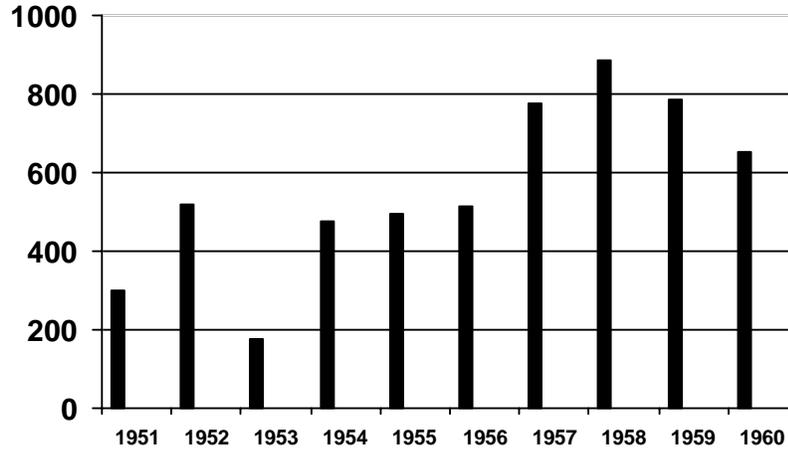
⁷⁶ *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*, 1950-1959.

⁷⁷ P.J. Lineham, *New Zealanders and the Methodist Evangel: An Interpretation of the Policies and Performance of the Methodist Church of New Zealand* (Auckland: Wesley Historical Society, 1983), 5. See Methodist comment on the church's decline in E.W. Hames, *Coming of Age: New Zealand Methodism 1913-1972* (Auckland: Institute Press, 1974), 132-3, 154.

⁷⁸ Lineham, 26, 45. W.S. Chambers in *The Winds of Change: A Short History of the Methodist Church in North and South Canterbury from 1950-1975* (n.p., 1976), 10, indicated that Methodist membership was at its peak in North Canterbury in 1967, while the membership in South Canterbury peaked nine years earlier.

170-500 persons, whereas in the years 1955-1960 the annual increase in membership was typically 500-900 persons:

Annual increase in the church membership of the Methodist Church of New Zealand 1951-1960⁷⁹



What this shows is that the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches all experienced significant numerical growth in the 1950s and that in each case the growth was significantly higher in the second half of the 1950s than in the first half of the 1950s. Why this similar pattern in the three churches despite their increasingly divergent attitudes and practices in relation to evangelism? The key is likely the baby-boom era, which is commonly reckoned to have begun in 1947. Many baby-boom children were in their early primary school years in the mid-1950s. These children caused a surge in Sunday School rolls and in some cases this brought parents back into church. Overall, there was a mood in the immediate post-war period in New Zealand of people wanting to settle down. This made the 1950s an era of families and major population growth. In that context people were inclined to be more religious. Whether Ivor Powell had come or not, marked Baptist membership growth would likely have occurred around that time.

Let us return to the question, what happened church-wise to the responders of the Powell crusades? One answer could be that they were already affiliated with other churches. Powell's policy was that those already affiliated with other churches be referred back to that church. In responding to the 1958 survey, the secretary of the Wellington Central Baptist Church, where 113 decisions had been recorded, wrote:

⁷⁹ *Minutes of the annual conferences of the Methodists Church of New Zealand, 1950-1959.*

The Missioner's emphasis on converts giving their own Church affiliation so that they could be contacted by their own Minister was also a splendid approach which had the effect of getting the support of other denominations at the meetings. . . . Although definite accessions to our membership did not number more than half-a-dozen, many other Churches, both Baptist and others must have benefited.⁸⁰

In terms of numerical increase, the Hamilton Central report stated that 'other denominations have also gained many', while the Timaru report indicated that 'other denominations benefited'.⁸¹ At the Avondale crusade 9 of the 20 responses were already connected to the Baptist church there and the others appear to have had affiliation with other denominations.⁸² Potential Baptist gain at Tokoroa was higher – 31 out of 40 conversions came under the care of Baptists (20 at Tokoroa itself).⁸³ The Greymouth report indicated that only six of the twenty-eight recorded decisions had Baptist connections. Powell's report on the Napier crusade noted 'keen interest among non-Baptists' such that 'Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans and Brethren . . . every night . . . brought to our services unsaved people'. Powell rejoiced in the Napier decisions but wished 'more of these had been brought by our own Baptists, for naturally I like to see our own church being strengthened'.⁸⁴ Thus churches of other denominations may have received many of the converts.

Another factor may have been that many of the responders were already in fact within the Baptist church and regarded either as already being a Christian or in process of becoming so. Their church might then either not remember them long-term as a convert of the mission or else recognise that they would later have made that response irrespective of whether the mission had been held or not – they were already in process of moving in that direction.⁸⁵ One researcher's conclusion in relation to

⁸⁰ NZBA: MA 060, B17.

⁸¹ NZBA: MA 060, B17.

⁸² Letter Rev. Jack Jensen to Rev. Eric Batts dated 14 March 1958 in response to the Board of Evangelism survey on the Ivor Powell mission: NZBA: MA 060.

⁸³ NZB, May 1956, 123.

⁸⁴ NZB, February 1956, 43.

⁸⁵ This point has been made concerning the Great Awakening in eighteenth century America, based on figures showing that in Connecticut the same proportion of society joined the church in the period 1730-1750 as did so in the period 1700-1730. See Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 97. See also Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1957), 103-105. For similar

the much later Luis Palau Crusade of 1987 in New Zealand was that Palau was preaching to the already converted – his audiences seem to have been drawn almost entirely from the churches.⁸⁶ Powell's detailed descriptions of individual conversions indicate the presence of unchurched people in his 1955-1956 crusades, but it seems likely that much of his audience was also already church.

In terms of subsequent church attendance, the reality is that many of those recording decisions subsequently went nowhere. Awareness of the risk of this is indicated in the frequent stress during the crusade of the importance of follow-up. The Greymouth survey comments gave prominence to this dimension:

A few weeks after the Mission, the Pastor of the Church left for another work, and his leadership and drive were not available to lead the people in the follow-up work. . . . The outstanding lesson in Greymouth is that it is futile having a Mission without organised follow-up work, and without a Pastor, or capable leader to organise follow-up work.⁸⁷

A high drop-off rate seems reflected in 1958 survey comments. Of the 35 returns, ten stressed the need for crusade meetings to be held in the local church building (essentially because there was greater likelihood of the responders continuing to go to that church) and six spoke of the need for better follow-up (reflecting high falling away after the Ivor Powell crusade).⁸⁸ Rev. Arthur Gibbs from Point Chevalier articulated such a perspective:

We appreciated Ivor Powell's ministry but feel we would not again be happy sharing in such a campaign outside our own district. A number of people made decisions at both [Auckland] campaigns who live in our district but we have not been able to get them to church since.⁸⁹

perspective on the early twentieth-century, large urban evangelism of Billy Sunday see William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 431-2.

⁸⁶ Bryan Gilling, 'Convinced Christians Convincing Convinced Christians', in Douglas Pratt (ed.), *Rescue the Perishing: Comparative Perspectives on Evangelism and Revivalism* (Auckland: College Communications, 1989), 77-93; also 52.

⁸⁷ Survey response letter of Rev. Roy Bullen, 15th April 1958: NZBA: MA 060 B17.

⁸⁸ NZBA: MA60 B17.

⁸⁹ NZBA: MA60 B17.

Given that the long-term numerical results of Ivor Powell's crusades seem small, should the Ivor Powell crusades be credited with any of the positive change at all? To that the answer is probably 'yes'. I have indicated how keenly New Zealand Baptists focused on the crusades both before Powell's arrival and during their occurrence. Much of the initial reported Baptist attitude to the crusades was extremely positive. Through the denominational monthly magazine, New Zealand Baptists focused enormously on the Ivor Powell crusades over three years, 1954-1956.⁹⁰ This further fostered a climate of evangelism. New Zealand Baptists were strongly evangelistic in the 1950s. For example, the Auckland Baptist Association utilised Rev. Roland Hart as full-time evangelist from 1952 to 1954. Baptists were very keen to retain Powell for a third year of evangelism beyond his two-year commitment. When that proved not to be possible, the denomination began moves, even before the final Powell crusade had occurred, to appoint a full-time national evangelist.⁹¹ Eventually this led to the Baptist Union having a full-time evangelist, 1959-1967. The evangelistic motivation also meant that Baptists were heavily involved in the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade and the earlier graphs in this paper represent further major growth upswing in that time period.

The Ivor Powell crusades are best viewed in the context of a more responsive 1950s and as part of a wider evangelistic response of various churches, but especially of the New Zealand Baptists, to that responsive climate. In addition, the high profile that Ivor Powell was given provided further impetus to the already highly motivated Baptists and this in turn aided further growth.

A great deal of Powell's preaching, however, was to the already converted. And much of it depended on apparent converts persevering with the decision they had made, helped by the best follow-up program that could be organised. The major concern about follow-up suggests not that it was not done but that it still often failed because of lack of an existing relationship with the responder. This may suggest that the crusade model of evangelism barely worked even in the 1950s. It was heavily dependent on existing relationships with committed Christians. Where those were not present, the drop-off rate was very high indeed.

⁹⁰ For the Board of Evangelism, preparation for the 1955-1956 mission was the main task of the Board in 1954: minutes of Board of Evangelism, annual report 1954: NZBA: MA 059.

⁹¹ Minutes of Board of Evangelism, 1 November 1956: NZBA: MA 059.

This suggests that conversion is commonly more of a process and more relationally based than the 1950s Baptist approach assumed.

Laurie Guy
Carey Baptist College

Trauma, God Image and Renewal of Terminated Pastors

ABSTRACT

This study is based on an analysis of the narratives of pastors who have previously experienced high levels of distressing conflict in pastoral leadership of Australian Baptist or Churches of Christ churches. All of these had chosen to leave or were ejected from their pastorates as a direct result of the ongoing conflict. Through a close analysis of their narratives which were shared during a number of semi-structured interviews, some prominent themes emerged lending themselves to analysis and the refinement of theory. A model of pastoral response to conflict emerged. The pastors can be grouped into three categories of response to the conflict. This was not determined by whether they returned to ministry or 'abandoned their call'. All persons maintain an abiding sense of call to ministry. The issues that discriminate between them reflect also whether they have been able to move on from the distress of conflict that centred upon themselves. A Model of pastoral response is proposed that integrates three variables that determine this emotional outcome: the pastors' preferred God Images, their underlying theological worldview, and their natural response to anxiety. There is also some evidence that this natural response to anxiety and their preferred God images relate directly to the adequacy of their parental images and their primal holding environment. Typical denominational responses to such persons appears to be inadequate and a significant complication in the process of post-traumatic healing. The proposed model would therefore suggest effectively care for such pastors necessitates a backwards reading of these pastoral narratives as a source of exploration and reconstruction for those concerned and the pastors themselves.

Introduction

This study is a summary of intensive qualitative research performed a few years ago involving persons who had been pastors from Baptist or Churches of Christ congregations within three states in Australia. The purpose of the investigation was to engage in grounded research whereby their recollections of their experiences were used as a fulcrum to launch a theory of pastoral reactions after significant church based conflict. This involved an interplay between theological frameworks and a few psycho-dynamic lenses leading to a proposal for a course of pastoral care of such pastors. The specific ground of this research was to

ascertain the impact of high-level conflict upon a pastor's sense of identity, and whether this produced a reappraisal by them of their sense of being called into church leadership as their ministry. Although conducted intensively by in-depth interviews the results provided by the rich data included some surprising and counter-intuitive outcomes when read using the interplay of categories from a Bowen 'family systems theory' lens and the notion of 'Helpful/un-helpful God Images' emerging from pastoral theology and 'object relations theory'. The theory that emerged could have significant implications for those who care for such persons, denominational interventionists and especially those preparing persons for the pastoral vocation.

Dimensions of the Study

Twelve pastors eventually volunteered their time for interview. Initially, it was not uncommon for a degree of reserve to be expressed by those participants who did not already know me, and a couple expressed suspicion that I might in fact be 'a front for the denomination'. This is a sign of the persisting feelings of disapproval for their perceived treatment by the denomination at their hour of need.

The characteristics of these persons included that they were ordained pastors who had been through a typical denominational training and accreditation process and yet had been involved in a church situation where conflict had become so intense that they had either had their pastorate terminated, or had chosen to resign. Of the twelve¹ who volunteered, seven left ministry while five continued. One of these, Randal Lane has recently retired prematurely due to ongoing stresses associated with the role. As is evident from the exchanges below, some of these persons heal, or perhaps mature through the conflictual experience whereas others bear marks of longer-term trauma and a lack of resolution. The incidence of healing or trauma did not coincide with the decision to return or abandon pastoral ministry.

The churches sampled were quite varied regarding demographics and the espoused spirituality. All these churches shared the common ecclesial structure of a congregationally governed church with the pastor co-labouring ostensibly with a group of 'lay' co-leaders as the 'first

¹ There were certainly more than twelve pastors in these denominations who fitted the required categories. But only twelve were willing to endure the process of an interview.

amongst equals'. The related narratives of these pastors suggested that this ideal was rarely the reality experienced by the church or pastor.

Pastors were interviewed at least once in an in-depth interview that was to take in the order of 50 minutes. All participants without exception responded well over the allotted time so that the average was close to 70 minutes. Some were followed up at the stage of transcription to clarify details. Usually pastors flowed with further narratives of stress and conflict at those times.

Dramatis Personae

The following names are pseudonymous but are provided to personalize the readings.

Name	Location	Church Type: Age, Size and Theology	Period of Appointment	Perceived Reason for Disruption by (Ex) Pastor
Gregory Trethuen	Older Suburban	Small Established 50 Members Liberal	Jan - Oct. 1995	Theological Incompatibility with Elders, Church boundaries and Ethical Stances.
Lex Verney	Regional City	Established Middle Size 100 Members. Conservative.	Jan - Sep. 1993	Caught between polarized factions over issues of worship style and attention given.
Ron Shearer	Historic Rural Township	Established Small Church < 50 members Fundamentalist.	1989 - 93	Triangulation in family conflicts. Divergent views of mission priorities. Inappropriate Leadership style.
Louise Bardon	Inner City	Small Aging Established Conservative	1990 - 92	Change in Styles of Leadership and Worship. Role of woman as Pastor.
Ryan Mailey	Growing Suburbs	Established Large Church 300 members, Charismatic- Conservative Evangelical Mixture	1991 - May 1995	Serious conflict with assistant Pastor and his followers in Leadership. Charismatic pressure group resurfaces

Daniel Hutton	New Rural Township	Newer Middle Size Church 100 members, Charismatic.	January 1995 - December 1995	Conflict with Strong Power Brokers over style and vision.
Henry Kenmore	Growing Suburban	Growing Large Church >300 members, Evangelical.	Early 1989 - March 1997	Leadership style change required by key leaders to appease disgruntled interest groups.
Dale Chester	High Welfare/ Wk-Class Bayside Area	Smaller Established Church, 50 members. Evangelical.	Feb. 1989 - June 1996.	A new group in leadership resents the changes in worship style and ministry focus.
Barry Lawrence	Isolated Country	Small Church in Growth boom. 20- 80 members.	1986 -87.	Small leadership team fears and opposes the int. of new worship style.
Randall Lane	Growing Outer Suburban Area	Large Evangelical Established Church 300 Members Mixed Evangelical/ Charismatic.	1990 - July 1997.	Clash with support base of ambitious Yth Past. over extent of charismatic influence in worship.
Graeme McLeish	Industrial City	Recently Planted Church, 50 Members. Conservative. Evangelical	February 1987 - March 1993.	Conflict with New Power brokers over influx of 'unsuitable' new converts. Issues of personal style and mission priorities.
Ken Archer	Rural Township	Small Established Church 50 members Conservative	Jan.1986 - May 1987	Difference with key 'lay leaders' over Mission priorities, Ecumenism and exit of wealthy supporters.

At the Narrative Surface: Themes and Distinctions

All pastors shared the common personal experience of significant traumatising conflict that centred upon them and involved a disapproving opposition orchestrated by strong and usually long-term

members of some standing in the church. This traumatic period induced the sorts of circumstances that either resulted in the pastor taking the initiative to terminate their own tenure, or, matters were taken out of their hands and political processes of the church were activated with the result that the pastor was removed from their pastorate by vote. The participants and their narratives were able to be compared according to whether the pastors chose some degree of control by choosing to exit or lost control in the context of conflict. Pastors' responses were also compared according to whether they chose to leave ministry altogether or return to the pastorate in some other context.

Counter Intuitive Recollections

Three features of the shared narratives were startling to myself initially as interviewer. Firstly, the stories involved tales of severe traumatising clashes between pastors and uncompromising figures within the churches with a significant determination to cross all but the most physically violent boundaries of common decency to evict the pastors. Dishonesty, distortions, backroom politicking, election rigging, libellous allegations and threats were common-place in these 'free-church community' narratives. So bitter were the conflicts that many of the pastors had difficulty even beginning to verbalise their stories to myself and those that did often told of stresses and significant persistent physical symptoms that had continued to bedevil them even ten years since the traumatic period. Pastoral and family grief then followed the exit from friends in the churches, homes and friendship networks. According to conflict consultant Speed Leas,² these conflicts reached such levels where systemic anxieties within the church were too high³ for the churches themselves to be able to resolve these among themselves.

² Speed Leas *Moving Your Church Through Conflict*, New York, Alban Institute, 1986. Leas model does not presume that conflict moves linearly through stages or phases from minor disruptions to outright violence but can leap from one low levels skipping intermediate phases and become high level conflict without warning. This has to do with the level of fighting that a protagonist finds 'comfortable' within their biological family.

³These 'levels' are a composite of three variables which are both distinct and clearly observable in the behaviours of parties to conflict. These include the precision or articulation versus the emotionality of the language used by opponents, the rigidity of group boundaries formed by the coalitions that may form during the conflict and, the degree to which the intention of a conflicted party reflects a spirit of goodwill as opposed to vindictiveness toward the opponent. Leas level 4 or 5 where the coalitions are firm and relationships produce a degree of toxicity within the system.

People within such systems cannot detach from the conflict despite its emotional ‘toxicity’.

A second remarkable feature was that despite the varied contexts and lengths of pastorates, there was a quite limited range of ‘plot features’ that emerged in the narratives and some surprising omissions. The contexts and precipitating history varied greatly from church to church, but one had the impression when reading the plot lines that the characters and their ‘moves’ had been transferred across from one church to the next to continue the conflict in a new context. Space does not permit the exposition of the features, but of the twelve factors all pastor’s stories shared seven and most commonly nine of these features.⁴ None of these had anything to do with a charge of pastoral incompetence. If anything it is their competence that makes them a more difficult ‘target’ of their proponents who have to explore more aggressive measures to exert significant pressure upon them.

Thirdly, there is little difference between the conflict levels experienced, in terms of the scope or the variety of strategic politics faced by the individual pastor who resigned as opposed to the one who endured through the painful process of termination. The most significant result was that those who left ministry altogether actually experienced *fewer* of the behavioural indicators of conflict in an absolute sense and, their accounts of the incidents showed that their conflict experiences never quite reached the destructive levels experienced by those who chose to express their sense of call elsewhere.

These narratives suggest that if we are to understand the nature of the impact of conflict upon a pastor’s response to conflict and their reconstruction post termination one has to look at factors more intrinsic to the individual pastor, their intra-psychological issues and the nature of the inter-psychological forces beneath the surface of the church culture rather than rational-surface level explanations.

Beneath the Narrative Surface

As we step away from a content analysis to an analysis of the emotionality and thought processes of the pastors themselves, it was

⁴ The most common of these included the pastor taking a role within prior unresolved conflict, disapproval concerning the wife’s role or chosen vocation, a misinterpretation of the terms of the call, differences over a perceived change to the style of worship, a perceived broadening of the missional priorities of the Gospel etc. These descriptions and data can be supplied to interested parties.

apparent that there were three distinct groups within the sample. These groupings relate not so much to the outcomes; whether or not a person returns to ministry, but whether or not a person is able to emotionally heal and move beyond the trauma of conflict related termination. In fact it is possible for a person to be motivated to re-enter ministry precisely because they were still enmeshed with persons in the original site of conflict. The response of some was to become more closely attached to the denominational structures and advisory boards, keen to prove themselves as pastors by 'throwing their hat into the ring' for another opportunity of call to a new church.

It is clear though that re-entry into ministry by no means implied that they have been able to move beyond the conflict let alone become more solid selves through the experience. Others remaining within ministry showed little evidence of the capacity to reflectively interpret the experience let alone interpret this period through the eyes of faith. It became apparent that there were three corresponding means by which these pastors coped with the pains and losses associated with their traumatic terminations. These persons can be categorized by their reactivity within the trauma and where they displace their pain and anger over their dismissal.

These persons may be distinguished according to:

- (ii) The role or level of responsibility they naturally adopted at the height of the conflict.
- (iii) Their evident emotional connection with key figures in the conflict, the opponents whose efforts led to their demise
- (iv) The way that the consciously articulated their image of God and the nature of the relationship that they perceive they had with the God during as the conflict reached unmanageable proportions and
- (v) The primary symptoms exhibited in the present when recollecting and attempting to make sense of the traumatic period

Unhelpful Postures and Responses

Edwin Friedman and other 'disciples' of the Bowen Family Systems Theory⁵ specify that a mark of the emotionally mature is the capacity to

⁵ Edwin Friedman *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, New York, Guilford, 1985, Ronald Richardson *Creating a Healthier Church: Family*

recognize the limits of one's responsibility for another person's emotional state within a family or emotionally connected group. The less differentiated tend to find themselves over-functioning for the group. They blame themselves for the anger and anxiety of powerful 'system parents'.

There were two groups that were particularly traumatized by conflict. These are termed the Non Reflective Externalizer (NRE) and the Overfunctioning Internalizer (OI) group. These are contrasted with those whom I term the 'Reflective Realist' (RR) who have emerged 'stronger' for the experience.

The Overfunctioning Internalizer

The OI underestimates the capacity of the congregation to handle the responsibility of resolving conflict publicly. Thus they seek to take the brunt of the attack upon themselves rather than utilize the political processes of the church to resolve their differences openly and ethically.

Greg Trehuen's tale of conflict centred around a lack of support from his eldership concerning a church discipline matter that clearly required direct confrontation. In response Greg has relinquished his natural leadership style absolutely if an opportunity for ministry arose again.

I've had to change a lot. Circumstances affect my thinking a fair bit. I'm a lot more realistic when I used to be idealistic. I'd have certain expectations and standards but those people I worked with have different standards. I've learnt to be less insistent that other people accept my standards. But previously I was unconsciously assuming, or at least projecting a way of operating that they would have to accept my viewpoints. I needed to just learn that if people won't accept these principles then I have to have less expectations.

His anxiety here demonstrates a mode of pastoring that is virtually an abandonment of leadership when faced by opposition. This sense of having a lack of options when confronted with opposition is typical. Another pastor Ron Shearer recalled this sense of being 'stuck' with

Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1996, Peter Steinke *How Your Church Family System Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, New York, Alban Institute, 1993

impossible options. He found himself in a situation where his pastoral and his family's personal boundaries were continually transgressed. In the context of recollecting a time he called for help from a denominational representative he revealed:

I would have liked someone to tell some of these power brokers off. "Sack the lot of them!" Perhaps I'm too chicken to do so. But instead of me doing it myself, ... maybe I need to be more assertive there ... The problem could be within me ... perhaps the College could run an assertiveness course. ... So, perhaps if I was more assertive, more political, I could be more assertive and say "No, I've got God on my side. This is right, we're not just into conversions, we just throw the seed and let God win the people to Christ, so just sit down and shut up and lets get on with the job!"

"Did you want to say that?" I asked him.

"Oh I wanted to but I felt I couldn't. ... Because I'm a passive person in a meeting and I don't want to upset people. Then there's another problem too. I would say the wrong thing or it would come out wrong and then other people, ... They'll have a better come back to me. Perhaps I lose confidence in whatever I can debate a person like that in public and they'll have a better come back than me and I'd be stuck.

Such things reveal issues that could easily fall under the Family Systems heading of personal 'differentiation'. This is a less than satisfactory arrangement as these pastors even a decade after the events cannot mention these opponents without experiencing a degree of distressing emotions. Their general emotional mood is one of confusion or a lack of resolution and understanding of their experiences. Elapsed time does not bring clarity and they are generally fearful of further conflicts and therefore have withdrawn from a pastorate where this is likely to recur, or, if re-entering ministry through a new pastorate, they fear that the spectre of violent opposition may again return to attack them again without premeditation or justification. In general the OI imbibes the criticisms from their opponents to a large extent, and adjust their ministry persona to suit. Sometimes this resulted in over-functioning and taking on too many responsibilities to appease their critics. Generally these persons are the most likely to leave ministry, or, if they remain, to focus on more limited and manageable roles. If they still attend church, they tend to keep their distance from the denomination perhaps as a sign of a sense of being disapproved.

The Non-Reflective Externalizer

The (NRE) type, exhibited a different sort of over-functioning, often taking on too many physical roles to try to 'turn the ship around' or 'make the church work'. They had a deep sense of injustice because they had like the biblical Martha, poured themselves upon the 'altar' of ministry, even more so when being accused of various indiscretions by their opponents. Like the OI the NRE are enmeshed with figures years after the events that led to their termination. Seeking vindication they broaden the scope of their focus upon the denominational figures who in their minds' eyes were not forthcoming with enough support or defence against their foes, or have not assisted their re-entry into ministry with sufficient commitment. Unlike the OI the NRE often struggles to even begin to express their grief and bitterness even to the neutral researcher being 'jammed' emotionally with powerful emotions such as indignation, blame, and anger that has possessed them for years. Unlike the OI, they not see that there is any adjustment that they could have made or should now make to their ministry 'modus operandi'. Instead they appear fixated toward gaining vindication for themselves and consequently they become enmeshed with denominational officials, especially when these do not seem to be representing their case well before prospective new church vacancies.

Theologising on the Run

Remarkably, both the OI and NRE types exhibited a similar limited range of options when it came to theologising about the nature of God's role within the whole situation of conflict and termination. In recent times helpful theories have developed regarding the 'helpfulness' of the God image that persons have for reparation and a healthy emotional functioning.⁶ For instance a 'Needy God Image' can lead to over-functioning if the pastor thinks that God relies upon them to help fulfil God's purposes. A pastor with a 'Caretaker God image' expects God to intervene and eventually solve their difficulties in response to a reasonable life of faith. A 'God Image' of 'Tutor' would be found where

⁶ M E Cavanaugh "The Perception of God in Pastoral Counselling" *Pastoral Psychology* 41(1992) 75-80, M Sarot "Pastoral Counselling and the Compassionate God" *Pastoral Psychology* 44 (1995) 185-190, R Lamothe "Hatred Hostility and Faith: A Theological Perspective" *Pastoral Psychology* 44 (1996) 185-197, D J Louw "God as Friend: Metaphoric Theology in Pastoral Care" *Pastoral Psychology* 46(1998) 233-242

a pastor interpreted their sufferings as testing to bring personal growth. The difficulty with such an image is coming to terms with the inexplicable severity of the termination experience. Sarot suggested that classical theological images of God as either 'passible' versus an image of an 'uninvolved God' would each bring its own trauma. It is all a matter of degree. A God who never participates in suffering may be as ineffective as God who cannot detach and overbalances into the suffering of his subjects. Needless to say the difficulties faced by these pastors certainly reflect these sorts of images. Their complications do not stem from the fact that they abandon their God so much as their images do not sustain them in the chaos of conflict.

One significantly traumatised pastor who re-entered ministry still bears physical symptoms of trauma, tremors mixed with depressions. Henry Kenmore interpreted his suffering saying ...

... God needed to move me here [the new church]. He needed to move me out of there and he could see that it needed a volcano to get me and so he sent along a volcano. That's the only way I can rationalize it. I don't feel as though I have been destroyed as a man of faith and a pastor. I have been rocked. Yes. But not destroyed.

Ron Shearer shows sign of a Tutor image too but mixed with an impassible image

I felt like David against Goliath and even though I have got God on my side, uhm, we're kind of defeated and the power brokers are having their way! I know that He's the 'Crucified God' who identifies with the struggling, and these things aren't his fault ... the reality of evil, ... uhm. Yes, OK. I did question though that God knows what he's doing, that sort of theology. ... What he let happen he was not in full control of. Because 'I believe god is sovereign, he's in control. He wasn't' doing this suff deliberately, or, maybe he was! And maybe he was just doing this to me to make me more assertive or more political? I was very mixed up when I came out of ministry on this issue. Is God doing anything? And I suppose I still am ..."

Such circuitous thinking from these two groups of pastors generally presupposed that the meaning of this ministry episode should be obvious, not mysterious. Whatever Image these pastors operate with interpreting their experience, the nature of the relationship perceived between the pastoral self and the God Image for OI and NRE types was what one could term a 'conditional', or even a 'contractual' arrangement.

It is as if this assumption serves as an 'operating system' onto which their chosen theological content is 'downloaded'. The cosmos for such persons was thought to be a self-evidently clear, linear, mechanism for the dispensation of justice. There is little sense of a 'not yet' eschatology where wrongs now have to wait by faith to be righted a later aeon. These pastors had a sense of entitlement or a science of natural justice, whereby, if they had functioned faithfully, or 'over-functioned' above and beyond the call of duty, then they surely had every right to expect that God would vindicate them after a limited 'saga' of conflict and even bless them. At least he would remove their foes from their positions of influence. When this does not occur the OI are left confused, bewildered with a disturbing shadow cast over the image of God. Yet, the NRE are just as 'committed to ministry' if not more so than before their 'termination'.⁷

Alternatively this double bind of dependency upon and accountability to the God Image, explain both the passivity and resignations of some pastors; the OI group, and also the fixated determination of the NRE group. Such matters are a serious signal that critical pastoral debriefing is needed lest these persons continue in ministry with the potential for anger to be vented in inappropriate situations in the future.

Furthermore, the long-term pastoral depression and anger turned inward could explain the significant physiological disturbances that followed these persons out of ministry or into their next pastorate. Some OI developed symptoms after the onset of proceedings to terminate them that included a depressed affect, sleep and digestive disorders, migraines and one even suffered from a brain tumour. Greg Trethuen

⁷ One also senses from the occasional oblique remark that their 'non-reflectiveness' masks a new despising of God akin to Neiburhr's concept of the 'evil imagination'.⁷ La Mothe suggests that where irrational levels of anxiety results in significant hostility, transference of primal experiences of powerlessness and absolute dependence may be occurring. If this psychological route is taken along with a tendency to absolutize one's images of God uncritically, then this God Representation may be met with significant unconscious distrust and hostility. This emotionality triggers significant anxiety in a paradoxical bind. "If my images of God die, I die too!" Such hostility from the faithful servant cannot be overtly projected against the Superior Being who has been a significant sustaining object in the holding environment of the individual. This discomforting anxiety may be dealt with in two ways: displacement of anger toward other bi-standers so as to maintain a secure self, or, a mechanical parody of loyalty that masks a brooding distrust, passivity, or outright hostility toward God.

describe the whole period when his church leadership rejected him as “like carrying around one large big black ball of pain that was with [me] all the time”.

The Ever-Present Family of Origin

Such evidence of major personal distress could logically stem from a deep sense of abandonment reinforced by the banishment from one’s ‘spiritual family’ without just cause. Such an inner contest reflects dynamics transferred from experiences entrenched from the family of origin. Sometimes in the course of the interviews the pastors themselves would make these connections, obviously for the first time as they ‘heard themselves think’. Henry Kenmore for instance, despite the unjust treatment he received from the determined few, refused to take the option of having the charges laid against him aired in a public church meeting. Henry took on board too much in presuming that he was responsible for making these powerful figures and presumes that the church is not competent to resolve its conflicts in open dialogue. I asked him why, given the fact that he knew he had strong and loving support in the church, he did not allow the church meeting to judge the charges of his opponents had decided it was time for him to leave. He responded by saying ...

Right, I had that choice, didn’t I? But I thought to have a meeting like that would be pitting people against each other over me. And as I chatted to a few people in denominational leadership, they thought it was best not to get people entrenched against each other over me. They said it would not help my cause, because I could go on from a meeting like that, even if I had ninety nine percent approval from the people. But you’d still know that those against you would be even more angry now; even more angry, because you had sort of, stood up to them because they were against you. And so the most loving thing to do would be to just leave.

He chose resignation as the best way to “keep the peace”. Henry speaks and behaves as if he is not a full member of the church family or that the rights and privileges of all members somehow do not apply to him. He shares with many of the intervening denominational officials a simplistic premise that conflicts are just a matter of ‘differences of opinion’, ‘personality clashes’ and the like. He negated the historical church data that included significant deceit, conspiracy and unreasonable

demands that would have scandalized a rational tribunal had he only felt the right to own and to air his grievances.

At one stage I woke up a couple of weeks back and turned to my wife and said “I know what I’m going to do to get this monkey off my back once for all. I think I will write a letter to the church apologizing ... apologizing for the hurt I’ve caused the church. And she said “You! Apologize to the Church?!” Would you please tell your counsellor what you have just said to me?”

In later counselling he made the connection between this over-functioning and his role within his family of origin which was characterised by aggressive conflict between both his parents. The counsellor responded in Henry’s words ...

“Thank you for giving me an insight into your past. Have you always taken the blame for things? And I said “Yes I think I have”. “I’ve always taken the blame for things in order to mend relationships and to er, make other people feel good.”

As Henry recounted this, a cathartic moment opened up as Henry made a significant connection between present unconscious actions and roles played within his family of origin.

That’s right. Peace at all Costs! I’m doing what my dad did and this is what I used to hate him for! ... or despise about him. Much in all as I really loved him and thought very highly of him. In this particular regards with a very dominant mother he used to just cry out for peace at all costs and do just about anything to stop the trouble. And, er, it usually failed in the attempt. But here I am doing the same thing!

Partly due to pragmatic advice from the officials, Henry takes his over-functioning tendency, compounded grief and depression with manifest physical tremors with him into his next two church placements. While still committed to Henry, his wife has not followed him into ministry and will have nothing to do with either churches or denominational figures to this day.

Barry Lawrence made a similarly ‘cathartic connection’ during interview where he revealed the connection between his life search for a violent father’s approval and his own thrice repeated reaction to resign in the face of disapproval from older church ‘elders’.

Anyway, shortly after that I went to him and said to my Dad, who had done things like hit me and knock me out and all that sort of thing, out of his own frustration I think, ... Then I went to him

and after things had settled down a bit and I said “I know that we obviously won’t see eye to eye. We won’t always understand each other, ... But I want you to know that I forgive you for anything, any complicity. I want to ask you can you start to work towards restoring a relationship.” He turned to me and said “Its too late.” ... That was half my life ago and it has continued on, and I have spent my life trying to win my fathers approval, to try to get him to accept me because I am different to him! I think as I’ve been working through it over the last few months that I have yet to see God as (any) different? I see God as my Father! Do you understand what I am saying! ... I see Him as an autocrat and someone whose approval I have to work to earn! Even though I know I won’t, there’s nothing of me, ..., that I can ever do that will win His approval per se.

These pastors’ stories repeatedly showed the overlap of internalised God representations in their unconscious world with the images of their parents. Their reactions, spurred on by theological-ideational justifications, made for an almost automatic transference of the dysfunctional patterns in response to parenting and roles played within their family of origins into their later life in the family of the church.⁸

Helpful Responses and Postures: The Reflective Realists

The RR’s, can be distinguished by their ability to take on board the criticisms of their opponents without letting them erase their sense of significance as unique selves with their own unique styles of leadership. The painful period is taken as an opportunity to reflect realistically upon their distinctive ministry contribution and gifted individuality. Louise Bardon saw the horrible experience as a chance to reflect deeply about her reasons for being in pastoral work and to clarify her real passions and gifting.

I do not ever see myself in a big church ... but the community, the smaller group is my sustaining vision. To translate into a denominational expression is, well I’m not sure that’s where my heart is now. And that’s not something I would have said once. ... At the moment I would see my place as in aged care chaplancy. That is my role now. I really see it as worthwhile. I never want to

⁸ The only difference between the OI and NRE pastors in this regard was the capacity to see this connection for themselves in hindsight.

again get entangled in the routines of what some call ‘ministry’. Its really, well frankly, ‘crap’ as far as I can see; that sense of justifying yourself to people all the time. I mean I work hard enough!

A capacity to distance herself from automatic reactions and the intentions of others is a sign of significant emotional freedom.

Graeme Mcleish sees that his current rural position and ministry in general provides a real match for his personal uniqueness.

I still often think of other things and careers I might take. Particularly on Monday mornings! But no, I get a lot of affirmation from my ministry and I feel, ... ‘cos I did have a lot of people resign from that church and say “You’re a great bloke but you are not cut out for this job.” And I guess I’ve had to work through all that inside myself and I look back at my whole life and I can’t see any job that suits me more! I have a lot of idiosyncrasies and I think the pastorate accommodates them. ...

Also, reflection upon his previous ministry has resulted in a perspective that indicates a significant increase in differentiation. His new appreciative pastorate is in stark contrast to the determined opposition that sought to remove him from his earlier one.

For those in this group the experience has been formative despite the significant pain induced. And most critically there is a significant distinction in their view of God. In contrast with the NRE and OI types, these pastors reveal images of God that allow for a far less clearly trusting view of God’s Image. Their ‘universe’ functions through a ‘covenantal’ perspective. That is the RR can accept that God’s sovereign ways are beyond their scrutiny. It was striking also that these three pastors drew less from philosophical theological categories and more from a sensitive biblical Theology of ministry. Moreover, they identify closely with and are sustained by those images of the prophets and apostles whose experiences of opposition and rejection paralleled their own. Louise Bardon drew solace from the promise of God to the prophet Ezekiel to “make his forehead hard against the forehead of his opponents” (Ezek. 3.1-11) She also felt a security in her relationship to lay some responsibility for her pains at Gods feet.

And I felt Like Jeremiah, that’s why I love Jeremiah: “You seduced me and I was seduced! And now you know I’ve got this burning ... and I can’t stop it. I’ve got to speak about it.”

Graeme Mcleish drew comfort from the experiences of the Psalmist from the Psalms of lament.

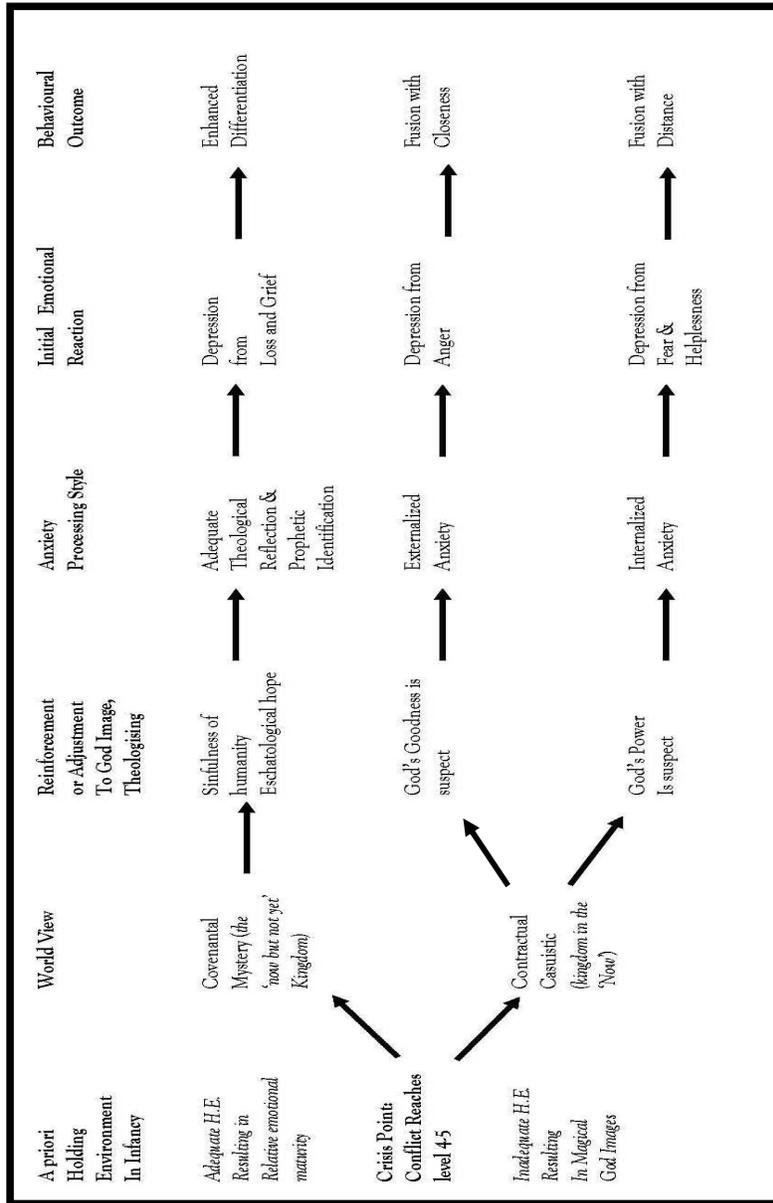
And the half [of the laments that turn positively] ... speak of doing all the right things, going through the pain and God doesn't come through with an answer! And they had no warrant to praise God unless God gave them warrant. ... They refused to indulge in fantasy or unreality. And so I did the same thing. ... Psalm 39 which speaks of a friend which plotted against him. "His words were sweet on the outside. Yet underneath they were treachery!" And I found that Psalm in particular extremely helpful. And in a way it helped me process my grief.

Human sin and God's sovereignty can coexist in a world where God and God's spokespersons have a history of suffering and vindication. Simplistic theological formulae provide no solace for the Reflective Realist. The formative or distorting impact of conflict-induced trauma leading to termination from these exponents reflects the particular structure of their world-view which determines their innate style for dealing with the anxieties that arise within them.

A Theory of Pastoral Cognition in Conflict

In the light of the above I would propose a tentative theory in the form of a series of stages of cognitions that separate out one type of pastoral response from another. It is represented in the diagram overleaf. It should be noted that this presentation tends to imply that these cognitions happen in a neat linear sequence when in fact such issues are interconnected, somewhat instantaneous and reflect an inter-play of pre-conscious God representations with emotional reaction and rational conscious decision making. Hopefully this presentation may give those seeking to care for such persons the capacity to infer 'backwards' from outward manifest behaviour to underlying world-views and God images and styles used by the pastor when processing their anxiety.

Reading from the right of the theoretical diagram we see there are three significant responses to traumatising conflict as ministry outcomes. Some pastors seem to become more solid selves as a result of the pain of these experiences. They learned to display a degree of emotional stability and to reflect dispassionately upon the incidents and characters in their past painful episodes. They recount periods of grief and loss and a disappointment in the inadequacy of the response from denominations.



Then there are those who appear still fused with the characters and located emotionally still within the distressing episodes of trauma. Some express this fusion in a determination to re-enter ministry, to seek vindication through a new appointment, to seek some sort of redress from the denominational administration. They tend to be reactive toward

the denominational structures that may facilitate this process, or if these doors do not open new pathways into ministry, their energies are diverted into blaming those in the denomination they perceive as responsible for their obstruction. In the interviews, one could not miss the palpable anger that is just beneath the surface of the recollections of these persons, even if they like Dale Chester, have now 'proven themselves' in a fruitful new pastorate. Although they become more dependent and draw 'closer' to the denomination, their anger is diverted outwards by the NRE type and the denomination is 'fair game' in this sort of script.

The second subset of this expression of emotional fusion tends to result in a 'con-fusion' and an internalising of the jibes and barbs from the period of conflict. The OI group generally move away from ministry and the denomination feeling themselves inadequate for the task, yet paradoxically still called and responsible to heed the call to ministry. This is a 'fusion with closeness' type response.⁹ These people lack the cynicism of the NRE toward the denomination but are often crushed in a secondary sense by what they perceive to be judgemental attitudes from the official institution regarding their capacity for fruitful ministry. They display a fearful affect; that they may be "broad-sided" by an attack from unforeseen opponents if in ministry, or, if not, that they may not ever be robust enough to handle another appointment.

Such responses would be simply curiosities of the phenomenon of pastoral conflicts if it were not also possible to correlate their internal emotional theatre to underlying theological and family scripts. To investigate these, we step back behind the responses to their anxieties to the impact of their experience upon their theology and read forward. Behind the fearful emotionality of the OI type is a suspicion that God's power may indeed be suspect. At least there is a shaking of the foundational holding environment provided by a faith in a God whose sovereignty is manifest and unambiguous. The NRE responses relate more to the personal attributes of God's Being; God's wisdom, goodness or grace being revised by their sorry experiences. Both of these views are difficult to address pastorally 'by frontal assault' as they are sustained by a type of theological grid, a world-view, held at the level of theological assumptions. They assume that this aeon is a stage in which God's purposes are worked out. When setbacks occur, these sagas find the zeniths in the vindication of the just in this place and time. I have termed this a 'contractual' worldview. The present pastorate sets the time limits in which their faithfulness will and must be rewarded. Not to do so

⁹ Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church*, 102

would lead to significant questions being raised about either God's goodness or the scope of his influence. This linear thinking is surprising given the level of formal theological training of those who operate out of this sort of theology. Greg Trethuen displays such a 'contractual' perspective here.

It would be meaningless if I couldn't use what I've learned. If I have no vocation, it would be an absurdity! ... If I was somehow told that I was never allowed to minister again, I would in fact wonder if there was a God; if there was a purposeful universe then surely a part of the process of suffering is to learn so we can help others learn? "Failure is never final" they say. The fact that I bomb out doesn't mean it's the end of the road. That would not be consistent with the idea of a good or loving God!

A vulnerable fragile grip on his own faith in God due in part to such a 'contractual' presupposition born of a direct connection between an God as Tutor image, an expectation of imminent vindication and his own call to ministry. No wonder his emotional outlook was so bleak and black.

In contrast, the RR lives within a hopeful and healthier cosmos. Paradoxically, they are able to find solace for their loss and grief, and rise out of their depression in part because they tend to have a healthier realism about the nature of sin and evil within the church. They can accept a world in which pathological forces can "take the day" trusting simultaneously in two foci: God's eschatological longer-term time scheme for involves righting of current wrongs, and a personal identification with persecuted prophetic servants in the Scriptures. Indeed their sufferings served to heighten their fellowship with Christ and therefore affirm their 'bona fides' as authentic servants of God. The capacity the RR group to have engaged in considered biblical reflection sets them apart from the other two whose theological reflection tends to be non-existent, contrived and 'after the fact'.¹⁰

For OI and NRE there is no consolation in theology.¹¹ It is this level of conscious theological assumption, that undergirds the type of over-functioning or under-functioning responses of these pastors as they

¹⁰ The only instances of the role of scripture in their thinking was a couple of instances where Pastors used the Scripture mystically and thought they had a direct promise from Christ communicated in the form of a text that "jumped out at them" (Henry Kenmore, Dale Chester). But this is far from a stable sustaining world-view.

¹¹ A Rizutto *The Birth of the Living God*, University of Chicago Press 1986.

process their experiences resulting in either an externalised or internalised perspective. Yet this fails to sustain them. This then serves as a limiting 'template' into which more or less adequate operating theology is 'down-loaded'. Then the family of origin programming most likely explains the 'valency' of the pastor's chosen God Image; which makes it an attractive but deficient source of consolation. Preferred God Images both reflect and reinforce the anxiety processing style inherited from the pastor's family of origin. Such things are in train well prior to the supposedly 'formative' processing of the denomination or theological education, and may well affect the capacity for adequate theological reflection by these pastors. I conclude therefore with some Implications of this theory for denominational practices.

Denominational Role Playing: Culpability and Responsibility

That all groups, even the RR group who have moved beyond this conflict express at least a disappointment toward the denominational level of intervention, and post traumatic support is suggestive of a reality that requires significant self examination on the part played by denominational interventionists. Space does not allow for this feature to be expounded here. But the uniform and unprompted response of these pastors reflects an official denominational response that often was non-existent, at best naïve in their understanding of how the levels to which the conflict would develop, and usually far too enmeshed with both churches and key figures within the conflicts to provide any moral leadership within these relational systems.¹²

The lack of differentiation or impartiality of the executive is not reflected by avoidance and distancing. The office bearers of these denominations did not seem to recognize that they have a significant psychologically symbolic role akin to a parent figure relative to both churches and these pastors. This certainly has been presumed through *the processes* of formation that lead to ordination where the promotion of the pastor through the system is in the hands of often boards whose response reflects itself a form of 'paternalistic' or 'autonomistic' parenting. Compliance is total or the pastor in training can 'take it or leave it'¹³ But beyond the pastoral placement it is as though accreditation

¹² Frequently the wrong types of persons were 'sent into' these situations. These "bean counters" barely masked their ulterior pragmatic motives under the cloak of official 'peacemaking'.

¹³C Cosgrove and D Hatfield *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind Church Fights*, Nashville, Abingdon, 1994, 73.

was just viewed as a gate through which the ordinand passed beyond which the responsibility of wider church to church-leader then ceased from that point of time.

But, according to the ‘radical ecclesiology’ that under-girds such a system this ordaining or accrediting is an ‘ordination’ in which all involved espouse that in the actions of men God is doing “in and through human action”¹⁴ it is through such processes the wider churches affirm on behalf of the wider church through the mandating of Christ and the discerning of His pastoral call upon these lives. That such processes are effective can be seen here from the fact that despite their present circumstances, all these pastors still espouse a sense of being ‘made to minister’. To the same degree, the pastors vocational possibilities communicated through this formative process is that they have been welcomed into a fraternity who will reward the ‘hurdle jumping’ or preordination disciplines with a vocational security. If denominations such as these want such persons to adhere to such free-church ‘corporate mysticism’, they are morally bound with a degree of responsibility for the behaviours of their member churches.

This role comes with the responsibility to confront pathological persons within their ranks. Fear of unspoken reprisals or churches withdrawing their denominational support is most likely unfounded.¹⁵ A differentiated response at times like this would force the church to sift the presenting from the pretext issues before the watching eye of the other churches in their association, represented by the elected officials involved. Whatever the case, a just free-churchmanship demands a reciprocal commitment on the part of the association that must match that of the ordinand. When denominational officials absolve their lack of responsibility to respond as nurturing parents within the denominational system at such times in the name of ‘congregational autonomy,’ they are trading off their own security for the long term well being of pastors. Instead of really choosing church welfare over pastor welfare they in effect are reinforcing the sorts of cultures that will in fact erode the

¹⁴ John Howard Yoder *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World*, Scottdale, Herald, 6.

¹⁵ It has not been noted, but to this insider, Baptist churches, in contrast with other ecclesiologies have an incredibly secular-utilitarian view of the pastor resulting in unrealistic and often unfair performance expectations, as represented by the recent spate of such churches employing rigorous review devices such as the 360 degree review. A review without a pastoral ‘holding environment’ lacks a theology of electing grace and is a sure recipe for burnout and abandonment. The erosion of a radical perspective on ordination in recent years for the more secular ‘accreditation’ moves in the same merciless direction.

future of these church families. Moreover, a denominational 'quietism' serves only to reinforce the standing of both neurotic cultures and neurotic individuals within the systems whose own shadow agendas inhibit the 'freedom' of these churches in the first place. When pathological agents within these churches are allowed to go unchecked from one pastoral generation to another, they only become experts in inducing pastoral pain and bullying. Paradoxically, groups such as these then become accustomed to their 'dance' and become dependent upon the neurotic and paranoid elements within them to serve their own primal fears and anxieties. There is nothing like a good crisis within a group espousing high ideals to generate dependency upon the paranoid within their ranks and to reward this with the charismatic mantle of 'leadership'.¹⁶

If, as these persons attest, their identity is entwined with a complete sense of call to pastoral leadership, the corresponding sense of abandonment by denomination is tantamount to a failure of an adequate 'holding environment'.¹⁷ If the mutual promises and affirmations of ordination are all suddenly vacuous pledges, and the loyalty only goes one way, the person of the pastor can suffer significant inner contradiction as a self. Feelings of worthlessness can either immobilize some or generate fanaticism in others. If the calling of a pastor is inseparable from their sense of identity, their own images of God are insufficiently sustaining, then the terminated pastor may believe that the whole fabric of their psyche is disintegrating. Like an infant they are being dropped from the arms of the church, the denomination and even the grace of God. "if my images die, I die". Those entrusted with care of such pastors need to be prepared to sustain and support such persons with wisdom and sympathy so as to provide an alternative and dependable holding environment for that which has crumbled and made for such a complex of distressing symptoms and need to be accepted before the fearful prospect of the examination of one's worldview and God Images can begin in earnest.¹⁸

¹⁶ Manfred Kets De Vries *Organizational Paradoxes: Clinical Approaches to Management*, 2nd Edition, New York, Rutledge, 1995, 11, 76-78.

¹⁷ A term deriving from the field of 'object relations' psychology as particularly developed by DW Winnicott *The Family and Individual Development*, London, Tavistock Institute, 1965 and expanded in its ecclesial manifestations in WW Meisner's *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984.

¹⁸ This also points to the need for a rethink of ministry formation. A combination of good biblical theology needs to be supplemented by forms and reflective processes that really place the ministry candidate in realistic situations

Conclusion: Six Implications for Post Termination Aftercare

This study and the discriminations implied by the theory suggested have some implications for those entrusted with the care of such pastors.

- i. The ultimate purpose of such a process would be to help them become more differentiated selves, less emotionally conditioned by the variations of strong figures within their church lives and to emotionally detach from the scene of their past experience that continue to inhabit their field of vision and also serve them well as cultivators of differentiated maturational church cultures in future. This is consistent with the tenets of family systems theory.
- ii. But in contrast to family systems theory that address anxiety as a present family system dysfunction, God images and worldviews stem from and interplay with primal developmental issues. The narratives shared here suggest that focussing upon the family of origin issues of these pastors alone would not represent the sustaining psychological structures of their persons as believers. These pastors should be assisted to work through their angers and disillusionments back through to the examination of their assumptions and their theological foundation for ministry. In fact this should happen prior to ‘accreditation’¹⁹. This is more than just seeing if they can espouse the ‘official party line’ or the denominational shibboleths.
- iii. This task requires the pastor be given safe spaces for examination of their experiences and interpretations throughout and beyond the traumatic times. Through such a process the adequacy of their God Images, the possible confusion of these with internalised parental representations and the limitations of particular worldviews need to surface.

where they have real responsibilities. Only then can they effectively ‘join the churches emotional system’ and experience first hand the constraining forces of anxiety and learn about their own reactions and rationalizations before their vocation begins in earnest. The sheer horror of all their stories would also be a strong argument in favour of psychologically testing all pastoral persons to assess the stability of their persons and their capacity to handle the rigours of leadership in a differentiated manner. Academic credentials alone are no measure of such things or of the theology out of which a pastor will operate under extreme stress.

¹⁹ But this is unlikely to happen if churches continue the vogue habit of ‘doing their own thing’ or ‘appoint talent from within’ without reference to the wider church processes of ordination and sensitive spiritual direction within this.

- iv. For such a process to be at all effective however, the persons involved must be able to provide for the pastor an alternative and effective 'holding environment'. The pastor needs to be able to trust those who take responsibility for such issues. If these persons are seen as representatives of an abandoning denominational parent this is hardly likely to be the case. Merely outsourcing pastoral care of bruised pastors is very much a second best to taking such critical moments as opportunities to demonstrate the mutuality of the pledge of pastor to church expressed by ordination/accreditation.
- v. One should be wary of interpreting the stories these pastors tell simplistically or superficially. The presenting symptoms of either anger with closeness to the denomination, or, self doubt and distancing behaviour should not imply the pastor has lost a sense of pastoral calling or convictional basis for their ministry. Those who show an eagerness to 'jump back on the horse' of leadership may well not be that ready but could be forestalling the expression of their anger until later times. Their fixations with and within ministry reflect longings for vindication that need to be challenged. Those who self-disqualify need to discover that possibly their position has to do with their self under construction rather than their true qualifications.
- vi. Finally, and most importantly, it would seem to be a critical component of both the formation of pastors in training as well as those in ministry leadership to have some critical instruction in the processes of reconciling dialogue such as are outlined in Matthew 18. 15-20 and exemplified elsewhere in the New Testament. Tragically none of these pastors had any sense of the historical foundations of such a critical process as the 'rule of Christ' for their forbears or could comprehend its theological origins in Christ's vision of the new humanity. The capacity to express their own offence and to confront those who offend the peace of Christ in our churches is dependent upon a view of reality that is real, objective and discussable and a trust that the church is competent to cope with this judicial responsibility (2 Cor. 6.1-8). Although much has been said elsewhere about the centrality of such processes for radical congregationalism²⁰, the experiences of these pastors and such a radical ecclesiology

²⁰ See the first penetrating Chapter of John Howard Yoder's exposition in his *Body Politics*.

would suggest that the spiritual maturation and emotional differentiation of such persons and the churches they serve would only be enhanced by these churches learning the process habit of surfacing the covert politics and sinfulness that is at the genesis of these pastoral tragedies and indeed of all evil.

Jeffrey Pugh
Bible College of Victoria

REVIEWS

Steven R Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision*. Studies in Baptist History and Thought vol. 27. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006. (275pp)

Studies in Baptist History and Thought seeks to discuss, examine, and explore the many dimensions of Baptist tradition in order to contribute to its ongoing intellectual vigour. With this in mind, Steven Harmon's monograph will prove to be one of the more important contributions towards this end. Harmon (Associate Professor of Christian Theology at Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek, North Carolina, USA) develops the thesis that Baptists have much to contribute to the Christian Church but must first learn from the Great Tradition in order for Baptist insights to be enriched and developed. He thus develops a postmodern Baptist hermeneutic. He formally contends that, 'the reconstruction of the Baptist vision in the wake of modernity's dissolution requires a retrieval of the ancient ecumenical tradition that forms Christian identity through liturgical rehearsal, catechetical instruction, and ecclesial practice' (ix). Harmon is a patristic scholar and thus looks to that era for the significant resources upon which Baptists should draw in order for them to become enriched themselves and also to contribute more effectively to the ecumenical endeavour.

The basic thesis which Harmon develops is the retrieval of tradition as a resource for constructive theology. He applies this to the academy, Baptist communions, and the local congregation. By 'catholic' Harmon does not simply appeal to the rather amorphous 'universal church' but more specifically to the sense of 'catholicity' created by an adherence to the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Harmon calls this a 'qualitative catholicity' (p204) which entails a call to 'visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship' (p202). This does not mean the dissolution of denominational identities but rather the acknowledgement of diversity within unity. Why look to a Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Christianity? Because all Christian communions can agree that Nicaea and Constantinople (and Chalcedon) express historic orthodox Christianity, and yet it does not enshrine any one denominational form of that Christianity; it is something to which all communions have a shared agreement on. Additionally, Nicaea-Constantinopolitan theology is dominated by the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology and it is

from this basis that Harmon believes real ecumenical endeavours can find success. For historical precedent for this Harmon appeals to the Oxford Movement and argues for a similar type of programme to exist within contemporary Baptist thought and life. He also surveys and notes the similarities to this programme within Mercersburg Theology, the Berneuchener liturgical renewal, and *nouvelle theologie*.

In several chapters Harmon appeals directly to church pastors and provides something of a practical 'how to implement this in church' strategy, while in other chapters he appeals directly to the academy and argues that if a Baptist catholicity is not taught it will not be caught. He provides some examples in other contexts from which Baptists may learn, most notably the methodology of Karl Barth. Barth presents a good case study in Harmon's opinion due to his respect for the Great Tradition, especially the patristic thinkers, and the fact that Barth ended up affirming the legitimacy of believer's baptism. In addition to these examples, chapter six uses the Book of Hebrews as a case study in how to read and apply Scripture when the interpreter draws upon the patristic thinkers for resourcement.

What Harmon explicitly suggests local congregations can do to practice Baptist catholicity includes observing the full Christian year, the adoption of a common lectionary, a movement toward celebrating communion regularly; weekly if possible, corporate recitation of the ancient creeds, patristic forms of prayer, confession of sin and declaration of pardon, the singing of the occasional patristic hymn, passing the peace, and a familiarity with the great lives of the saints (pp159-172). In short, Harmon appeals to implementation of the ancient practice of *lex orandi, lex credendi* in Baptist congregations. But why? Why must Baptists focus their attention on what the Christian Church holds in common and why must there be a return to a valuing of the *communio sanctorum*? Because only this can counter the contemporary dominance within Baptist congregations of the Enlightenment's antagonism to tradition which has resulted in the anti-traditional hermeneutic represented by the slogan often found within Baptist circles of 'no creed but the Bible'. As Harmon states: 'In consciously dispensing with the horizon of tradition, modern liberal and fundamentalist Baptists traded the deeply textured and richly variegated horizon of the historical Christian tradition for the comparatively flat and monochrome horizon of supposedly traditionless reason, itself a tradition of sorts, albeit a very thin one' (p5). Seven marks thus distinguish a catholic Baptist theology: 1) tradition as a source of authority, 2) a place for creeds in liturgy and catechesis, 3) liturgy as context for formation by tradition, 4) community as locus of authority, 5) a sacramental theology (including the retrieval of

all seven Roman Catholic sacraments!), 6) constructive retrieval and resourcement of tradition, and 7) a thick or deep ecumenism (pp7-17). Harmon's monograph is his effort to contribute to the resourcing of which he speaks.

While Harmon's work is invaluable to Baptists and simply must be consulted by pastors and teachers alike, it does suffer from a number of problems. Nine of the ten chapters in the work have been previously published as journal articles and edited as one monograph with the final chapter, "What keeps you from becoming a catholic?" A personal epilogue', the only previously unpublished essay. As such the work suffers from a high degree of repetition: the thesis of the work, the problems with contemporary Baptist thought and life, the recommendation of the retrieval of patristic sources, the appeal to Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan theology, and the 'no creed but the Bible' phrase appear all too frequently and tend to frustrate the reader. In trawling through Baptist creeds and confessions in order to show the continuity between Baptist thought and life with the Great Tradition the links are forced and the 'solution' Harmon wishes to suggest to the reader acts as the filter through which the tradition is passed. On closer inspection it would appear that the only tangible link between Baptist faith and life with the Great tradition, especially patristic theology, is found in seventeenth century Baptist creeds and confessions. And being the first generation removed from the Reformation that is entirely understandable. The fact that the evidence is extremely slim for patristic or reformational theology in post seventeenth century Baptist creeds and confessions may say more about the movement than the existence of this theology in the seventeenth century.

Harmon is a patristic expert and as such this aspect of the work is the richest and most suggestive. However, Harmon does make a few odd moves here and there. Harmon recommends the removal of the *filioque* clause, added to the Nicene Creed (AD 381) in AD589 and causing so much division since, but fails to interact with any of the literature on it or ecumenical proposals which have sought to find an acceptable solution, such as the one found between the World Council of Reformed Churches and the fourteen Eastern Orthodox Churches, in Geneva on 13 March 1991 (see T.F. Torrance, ed., *Theological Dialogue Between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*. Vol. 2 [Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1993], 219-226). A second area of concern is the lack of pneumatology in the volume. Harmon speaks often about the authority of the Word and the mediation of tradition but speaks very little about the role and authority of the Holy Spirit. This does tend to weaken his argument. This may be due to Harmon's apparent familiarity with early

Nicene theology as opposed to later Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan theology and the theology of the Reformation. On the latter Harmon appears to be particularly weak. This is evidenced, for instance, in his unusual treatment of the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura*. Harmon critiques this phrase and equates it with the Baptist sentiment ‘no creed but the Bible’ (what is really in effect *nuda Scriptura*), and in its place offers what he believes to be the correct term, *suprema Scriptura* (p32, 45, 86). The problem is *suprema Scriptura* is not a reformation phrase. For the magisterial reformers, *sola Scriptura* expressed the authority of the Word of God but was never considered to exist apart from the empowering presence of the Spirit of God. Harmon fails to make the connection between the Word and the Spirit here and thus tends to misunderstand the phrase and the theology of the reformers at this point. As far as I can work out; the phrase *suprema Scriptura* was coined by Bishop Colin Buchanan, an Anglican, to speak of the Scripture’s material sufficiency in an attempt to navigate a *via media* between Puritan and Roman Catholic doctrines of Scripture. The phrase was then developed by James Leo Garrett, Jr. (emeritus, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) in his 1990 work *Systematic Theology* volume 1, to argue for Scripture as the final authority as opposed to the only authority. Thus Garrett and Harmon confuse *sola Scriptura* with *solo Scriptura* and adopted *suprema Scriptura* as a solution. This misunderstanding of the tradition is unfortunate when a work like Harmon’s is attempting to construct ecclesial networks.

Despite these repetitive setbacks Harmon’s thesis is compelling and cogently made. He provides ample evidence to support his claims and leaves the reader in no doubt as to his intentions: to bolster Baptist identities and mission in such a way which respects Christ’s Church and seeks to contribute to its further advancement in a postmodern milieu. Harmon’s call for Baptist catholicity deserves a wide reader and an even wider acceptance. He joins a growing chorus of voices that are appealing to tradition as a way to advance the Christian Church, uppermost amongst them are Baptists such as D.H. Williams (Baylor University, Waco, Texas) and S.R. Holmes (University of St Andrews, Scotland). I am as convinced as Harmon is that this is the path to follow and if we do not it will be to our peril. Baptist pastors, and those teaching in Baptist academic institutions, must read this work and seek ways in which they can lead Baptists into the kind of catholicity Harmon speaks of.

Myk Habets
Carey Baptist College

***Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology.* Edited by Paul Louis Metzger. London: T & T Clark, 2005. (225pp.)**

Trinitarian Soundings is an outstanding work in which seventeen scholars contribute essays which take the Trinity as the ground and grammar of theology and proceed to re-evaluate traditional systematic *loci* from that perspective. As such this volume offers a rare and much needed survey of what a systematics may look like when it is self-confessedly trinitarian and thus Christian. In addition, the volume is dedicated to Professor Colin Gunton (Kings College, University of London) who sadly passed away 6 May, 2003. Each of the contributors was a student, colleague, or beneficiary of Gunton's profound learning and influence and that is reflected directly or indirectly in each of the essays. In addition, most essays interact with the theology of Karl Barth, so much so that at points one wonders if this is a tribute to Barth or to Gunton. Upon deeper reflection Christian theology which takes seriously its trinitarian nature can hardly be discussed without interacting with Barth and Gunton, two of the key architects of trinitarian theology in the twentieth century. The focus on Barth thus adds value to an already invaluable work.

Fifteen essays, a foreword, and an afterword, make up the contents of the book. The fifteen chapters are largely original essays commissioned for this volume, the exceptions to this being an essay by Baptist theologian Stanley Grenz on theological anthropology taken from his recent work *The Social God and the Relational Self*, an essay by Gunton himself on Divine attributes taken from *Act and Being*, and an essay by Miroslav Volf (Yale Divinity School), 'The Trinity and the Church', from *After our Likeness*. In the Foreword, Bruce McCormack (Princeton Theological Seminary) offers a rare personal reflection on the friendship and admiration that existed between himself and Gunton. This was especially appreciated given the fact that the various essays elaborate on how trinitarian theology must not only be rigorously rational but also robustly relational. McCormack thus provides a fitting, but brief (4pp), foreword to what follows. The Afterword, by Robert Jenson (Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology), also brief (4pp), offers a few words of polite critique in relation to some key Guntonesque themes, namely the differences between a Lutheran and a Reformed way of theologising. This mild critique, while interesting, did appear out of place in an afterword of a volume of this nature. It would have been better, in my opinion, if Jenson had turned his immense theological insights into a more articulate interaction with an aspect of Gunton's work such as *Act and Being*. But then again, perhaps he was not invited to do so.

In the Introduction Metzger states: 'Given the scarcity of systematic theologies done in a Trinitarian fashion, this multi-author exploration of systematic theology from a Trinitarian perspective suggests a path to follow in the formulation of each particular doctrine represented in the volume' (p6). By and large the essays do achieve this purpose as they range over prolegomena, revelation, Scripture, theology proper, creation, anthropology, sin and grace, christology, atonement, epistemology, church, sacraments, eschatology, and ethics. It will not be necessary to work through each *seriatum*. Instead, the following essays stood out for particular interest.

Chapter One: 'Prolegomena' by Murray Rae (Otago University) opens the volume in splendid fashion with an articulate and original exploration of a trinitarian scaffold which makes the construction of theology possible (his metaphor, p9). Through seven theses Rae develops an approach to the theological task that is more *pathos* than *poiesis* (p13), *a posteriori* than *a priori*, trinitarian and dynamic than monist and static. Evident throughout his essay is the influence of Barth and his axiom that 'revelation is reconciliation', shades of the theology of Thomas Torrance, and the unmistakable hand of Gunton. Rae offers useful definitions of theology, its task, method, and content in a chapter of only 20 pages and establishes a trinitarian prolegomena which the other essays in the volume build upon.

Paul Blackham (All Souls Church, London) contributes an essay on 'The Trinity in the Hebrew Scriptures', and while his essay does not contribute anything that can really be said to be new it certainly presents a succinct yet rich elaboration of the Trinity in the Old Testament. Blackham contends that 'When we begin from a tradition that sees a non-trinitarian divine essence as the starting point for a doctrine of God, it is no surprise that the integration of the Three Persons becomes a genuine theological difficulty' (p36). Instead, adopting the *a posteriori* approach advocated by Rae, Blackham surveys the issue of the visibility or otherwise of God in the Old Testament, especially within the writings of Moses. Blackham's study concludes that 'An unmistakable feature of this Pentateuchal doctrine of God is that the LORD God can *appear* even though it is also stated that the Most High God may not be seen. At face value this would naturally lead to the confession that one of the divine Persons can be seen and one of the divine Persons cannot be seen' (pp39-40). From this analysis Blackham shows the legitimate exegesis of such church figures as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Martin Luther, John Owen, and Jonathan Edwards, who argue that formal trinitarian doctrine is simply a theological elaboration on the plain teaching of the Old Testament. Blackham concludes with what some may consider to be

a controversial statement: ‘The Great Trinitarian theologians of the past were exegetes of these Scriptures, and it is as we sit and learn from that most brilliant and careful trinitarian theologian, Moses, that we can go further and deeper into the God of Israel who is the Most High, the appearing LORD, and the Spirit’ (p46).

One of the weaker essays is that of Demetrios Bathrellos (Institute of Orthodox Theological Studies, Oxford) on the sinlessness of Jesus. The basic thesis of the chapter is that Jesus is God incarnate and thus God cannot sin, even in an incarnate state. Bathrellos concludes that ‘Jesus’ humanity shares in the life of the Trinity’ (p114) and draws on Councils and Creeds to confirm the orthodox belief that Jesus is divine and human in constitution, and sinless; despite the fact that his incarnation was into a fallen world. Bathrellos limits Jesus’ engagement with our sin to external factors; he grew tired or physically suffered, and ultimately died. The basic point Bathrellos constructs is that Jesus is God incarnate and as such is in intimate communion with the Father, and it is this which safeguards his sinlessness. What Bathrellos does say is good; it is what is not said that is disturbing. In an essay on ‘The Sinlessness of Jesus: A Theological Exploration in the Light of Trinitarian Theology’ one wonders where the Spirit is. Bathrellos fails to articulate the role of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation, the mediation of communion from the Father through or by the Spirit to the incarnate Son, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the life of Christ. While Bathrellos does make some space for the concept of anointing there is no development of what may generally be termed a mutual love model of the Trinity. At best Bathrellos presents a binitarian god. In light of the nature of the present work this article is patently non-trinitarian at best, at worst anti-trinitarian and one wonders how it may it past the editorial eye of Metzger.

The final essay I wish to comment on is that of Kelly Kopic (Covenant College, Georgia), entitled ‘Trajectories of a Trinitarian Eschatology’. Kopic’s approach is to ask the critical pastoral and theological question: ‘How are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit united in the eschatological movement of reconciliation?’ (p190). In order to focus this question one looks to the act of God *ad extra* and focuses on Jesus. ‘A Trinitarian eschatological vision of communion with God...will see the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and return of the Christ *as the very point of eschatology* – the distinctively Christian hope in God’ (p196). Kopic then moves through a discussion of the Kingdom of God, the Last Adam christology of Paul, and the nature of the resurrection body. Throughout the essay Kopic develops themes which deserve far more

attention and development and as such fulfils Metzger's stated purpose of the work as providing paths for others to follow.

With *Trinitarian Soundings* we have one of the first in what is surely to become an entire industry of books which seek to move beyond reconstructions of trinitarian models to working out the implications of starting with the Trinity in Christian theology and respecting its contents as the ground and grammar of the systematic task. This is essential reading for pastors, academics, and interested others who are looking for an accessible yet profound survey of trinitarian options in systematic theology.

Myk Habets
Carey Baptist College