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## **‘A many-headed hydra’: New Zealand Baptists and the Gambling Monster, 1890-1940<sup>1</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

At the turn of the twentieth century New Zealand Baptists were at the forefront of a massive public campaign to suppress gambling. In alliance with other Protestant churches and women’s groups, they achieved considerable legislative success. By 1911 bookmakers were condemned to legal exile and the totalisator very nearly followed. But those victories were short-lived. From World War One onwards the anti-gambling forces suffered one defeat after another as the state gradually dismantled what had become a very tight regulatory regime. This paper traces Baptist involvement in the debate and examines the reasons for both the early success and the ultimate failure of this campaign. It argues that Baptists and their allies were defeated by the state’s reliance on the revenue it drew from gambling, by the patent failure of legislation to suppress the practice, and – perhaps most importantly of all – by the style of their campaign.

In his presidential address to the New Zealand Baptist Assembly in 1894 the Rev. Thomas Bray reported gravely, ‘Bookmakers, blacklegs, gamblers are everywhere’. The ‘awful vice’, he warned, is saturating the minds of young and old. Like a ‘monster’ or a ‘mighty giant’, gambling stalks the land, defying ‘the whole army of the living God’.<sup>2</sup> It is time, Bray thundered, for Baptists to arise and, in the power of God, slay the great monster. While gambling in New Zealand had long aroused concern among Baptists, and provoked widespread public concern from the 1870s, it was not until the 1890s that it became, within the

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<sup>1</sup> This article is largely drawn from the author’s doctoral thesis: John Tucker, ‘A Braided River: New Zealand Baptists and Public Issues, 1882-2000’ (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> T. Bray, Presidential Address, *New Zealand Baptist (NZB)*, December 1894, 177-181 at 178.

denomination, the focus of a sustained moral crusade.<sup>3</sup> For the next twenty years Baptists, along with other Protestant churches and women's groups were at the forefront of a massive public campaign to eliminate the evil in its various forms – gambling on games, horse racing, private sweepstakes and public lotteries. On one level, the emergence of this campaign in the 1890s was not surprising. In the late nineteenth century several powerful currents converged to push Baptists and other Evangelicals into the public domain and political activism.<sup>4</sup> A wider process of 'moral evangelism' was at work in New Zealand at the time.<sup>5</sup> But gambling, alongside drinking, was singled out for particular attention. In the minds of many Baptists, the 'gambling den' rivalled the 'tavern' as the greatest curse on the colony.

### **The Social Cost of Widespread Gambling**

Baptist opposition was driven, in part, by a sense that widespread gambling was injurious to the social and economic welfare of the community.<sup>6</sup> Baptist spokesmen were quick to point this out. 'The evil is widespread', wrote the Rev. Charles Dallaston, 'and wherever it travels leaves behind it desolation and ruin. It blights the fairest of the fruits of the nation ... It diverts energy from productive operation ... and is answerable for not a little of the crime that now blots our once fair escutcheon.'<sup>7</sup> The leading general in the Baptist anti-gambling campaign was J.J. North. He was clearly driven by humanitarian concerns. In his valedictory address to the 1945 Baptist Assembly he explained how an incident early in his ministry profoundly shaped his attitude to gambling:

The first visit I paid in my parish was to a tottering old woman, whom I can see as I write standing on the step of a very poor

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<sup>3</sup> This was also true of British Baptists: David Bebbington, 'The Baptist Conscience in the Nineteenth Century', *Baptist Quarterly* 34 (January 1991): 13-24, 20. In New Zealand the sudden mobilisation was evident in the pages of the *NZB*. Between 1880 and 1889 there were only 28 references to 'gambling', compared to 194 references in the period 1890-1898.

<sup>4</sup> On some of these currents see 'A Braided River', 9-12, 16-20.

<sup>5</sup> See James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001), 157-88.

<sup>6</sup> This was also true in Australia. See Ken R. Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity': A History of Australian Baptists*, vol. 1. *Growing an Australian Church 1831-1914* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 370.

<sup>7</sup> *NZB*, August 1901, 114-5.

cottage. This old woman had been robbed of the comforts that belonged to her by her son, an inveterate gambler, who sold her home over her head to cover his debts to 'bookies.' Anti-gambling, stimulated by that iniquity, became an obsession with me.<sup>8</sup>

According to North, gambling was 'the social dry rot of the world and the immediate cause of debauchery on the one hand and of hopeless poverty on the other.'<sup>9</sup>

Baptist spokesmen were sometimes prone to exaggeration, but widespread gambling was a common feature in colonial societies. And New Zealand was no exception. In the young colony gambling was particularly 'widespread' and 'exuberant'.<sup>10</sup> The early immigrants to New Zealand developed an enthusiastic sporting culture, of which gambling was an essential part. They gambled on cards, dice, billiards, running, 'pedestrianism'. 'In the goldfields, rough-and-tumble sports like boxing, wrestling, stone tossing, and tug-of-war dominated the miners' downtime, and gambling on them was prevalent.'<sup>11</sup> Later, bookies took bets in the shooting galleries and skittle alleys that were built alongside goldfield hotels.<sup>12</sup> Promoters pitted animals – from dogs to cockroaches – against each other, taking bets on the outcome.

Horse race gambling proved to be particularly attractive for many New Zealanders. From the earliest days there were concerns expressed about the grip it seemed to have on the colony. In December 1848, for example, the Rev. Richard Taylor of Wanganui was appalled when nearly the entire local European population of seven hundred attended the settlement's first race-meeting rather than celebrations of the Saviour's birth.<sup>13</sup> During the nineteenth century huge crowds flocked to major meetings. It became one of the country's most popular activities with men, women and children regularly attending race meetings held on weekends and during the week. Wednesday meetings were so popular

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<sup>8</sup> 'These Fifty Years: A Dose of Anecdote', *NZB*, December 1945, 303.

<sup>9</sup> 'Conscience and the ticket', *NZB*, December 1935, 374.

<sup>10</sup> David Grant, *On a Roll: A History of Gambling and Lotteries in New Zealand* (Wellington: Victoria University Press: 1994), 12.

<sup>11</sup> David G. Schwartz, *Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), 235.

<sup>12</sup> David Grant, 'The Nature of Gambling in New Zealand: A Brief History', in *Gambling in New Zealand*, ed. Bruce Curtis (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2002), 75-89 at 76.

<sup>13</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 51.

that schools even closed for the day.<sup>14</sup> A major catalyst for the growth in this form of gambling, both in New Zealand and Australia,<sup>15</sup> was the introduction in 1879 of the totalisator or the 'tote'. This was a machine which totalled up the money invested in a race and, after taking out a percentage for the operator, declared dividends by dividing the number of winning tickets into the remainder of the money. By giving the better honest odds, the tote proved to be extraordinarily popular. Horse race gambling boomed. Huge money was legally bet on races, whose popularity was phenomenal.<sup>16</sup>

Around this time there surfaced widespread public concern about the social effects of uncontrolled gambling. Only some provinces had anti-gambling ordinances and these were haphazardly enforced. In March 1874 the *Press* expressed concern about the Kaiapoi races where more than twenty spielers enticed boys and girls as young as eight to throw dice and gamble shillings and half-crowns on unders-and-overs.<sup>17</sup> In September 1879 the *New Zealand Herald* complained about the proliferation of spielers and touts in Queen Street who were 'forcing themselves' on innocent pedestrians and the *New Zealand Mail* condemned sweepstakes for the social harm they were causing.<sup>18</sup> The following year the *Otago Daily Times* observed that Dunedin was full of drinking, gambling and debauched youths.<sup>19</sup> Bookmakers and lottery promoters were all finding ready custom in streets, parks, hotels and workplaces. The *New Zealand Mail* was startled by 'the gambling mania now sweeping the country ... its vice even exceeds that of drunkenness.'<sup>20</sup> Parliamentarians voiced similar concerns, with debates focusing on the problems of sweepstakes or 'consultations', Chinese gambling, bookmaker 'aggression', lotteries, and open gambling by youth.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> David Grant, *Thoroughbreds, Trainers, Toffs and Tic Tac Men: A Cartoon History of Horse Racing in New Zealand* (Palmerston North: Dunmore, 2001), 12.

<sup>15</sup> Manley, *Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, vol. 1, 369.

<sup>16</sup> In 1880, for example, New Zealanders bet more than £500,000 on sweepstakes, bets and expenses at licensed meetings and more on unlicensed or 'tin kettle' meetings in remoter districts. Grant, 'Nature of Gambling', 79.

<sup>17</sup> *Press*, 6 April 1874, cited in Grant, *On a Roll*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> See Grant, *On a Roll*, 52.

<sup>19</sup> *Otago Daily Times* (ODT), 13 October 1880, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *New Zealand Mail*, 6 January 1880, as quoted in Grant, *On a Roll*, 54.

<sup>21</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 52.

In January 1881 a prominent sweepstake organiser, George North, absconded to the United States with £4,500 of punters' money bet on the Wellington Racing Cup. North's perfidy fuelled a growing public outcry against gambling.<sup>22</sup> In response to this growing public pressure for regulation, the government passed the Gaming and Lotteries Act in 1881. This legislation was piloted through the House by the Colonial Secretary, Hon Thomas Dick, a Baptist deacon and President of the Baptist Union in 1885. It banned all lotteries and sweepstakes, apart from those offering as prizes works of art, mechanical models or mineral specimens, to be held under strict conditions. It also banned off-track tote betting and public betting on sports contests, and made gaming and betting houses illegal. But bookmakers were not touched. The lawmakers predicted – incorrectly as it turned out – that they would be squeezed out by the competition of totalisators, which themselves were regulated, rather than banned.<sup>23</sup>

This, the first attempt to repress gambling nationally, was a resounding failure. Far from curbing the gambling evil, it had the opposite effect. The government's prohibition of local lotteries and sweepstakes seemed only to encourage New Zealand investment in Australian lotteries, the most popular of which was Tattersalls.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the ban on betting on sports contests had little effect. Police lacked the numbers, and sometimes the will, to catch law-breakers.<sup>25</sup> Bookmakers thrived. Off course, thanks to the Act, they had little competition. While betting 'shops' had been banned as gaming houses, bookies simply replaced them with 'agencies' (usually private rooms), which were legitimate. By the early 1890s it was claimed that ten times as much money was being invested through bookmakers off-course as through the totalisator.<sup>26</sup> Horse racing also continued to burgeon in the 1880s, despite the deepening recession.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Dick later explained that he had expected that the totalisator 'would do away with bookmakers to a great extent': *NZB*, December 1898, 186.

<sup>24</sup> By 1885 between £50,000 and £60,000 was being spent annually on Australian sweepstakes, a massive amount in the context of the economic depression of the time.

<sup>25</sup> The report of the 1898 Royal Commission of Inquiry into the New Zealand Police Force supported this view: *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), 1898, H-2.

<sup>26</sup> New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD), 1894, vol. 83, 288.

As the practice continued to spread, so too did concern about its impact on society. Many working-class families, already struggling in the face of the economic depression, suffered at the hands of husbands and fathers who lost their earnings in gambling dens or on the turf. In 1890 the Christchurch *Press* was outraged by ‘the frightful amount of gambling that is carried on, with no attempt to check it’. Gambling dens, it said, were ‘doing the work of hell most effectively in the way of demoralising and impoverishing many hard-working young men ... When are we to see some worthy effort made to suppress these abominations?’<sup>27</sup>

A number of leading politicians also voiced these kinds of concerns. In 1885 Sir William Fox contended that horse racing demoralised, pauperised and ruined ‘thousands who might be our best colonists’.<sup>28</sup> Prompted by the effect of gambling on their working class constituents, the Christchurch Liberal MPs Harry Ell and Tommy Taylor sought legislative reform.<sup>29</sup> Their call for reform was echoed elsewhere. In their report on the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the New Zealand Police Force, the commissioners suggested that the practice of betting as an occupation, or in connection with any other business, be made illegal.<sup>30</sup> In 1901 Police Commissioner J.B. Turnbridge described the growing number of street betterers as ‘pests to society’, and implicitly criticised the government’s failure to amend the law so that they could be arrested.<sup>31</sup> Baptists, it seems, were not too far off the mark in their estimation of gambling as a leading source of social misery.

### **The Evangelical Impulse to Eradicate Sin**

While compassionate humanitarianism drove many Baptists into the political fray, their battle against the gambling monster – as with the demon drink – was motivated by deeper theological convictions. For Evangelical Baptists ‘there was little reason for engaging in public life unless some outright evil had been identified, but once discovered it had to be eliminated.’<sup>32</sup> By the 1890s New Zealand Baptists had clearly identified gambling as ‘something inherently wicked’, something condemned by Scripture. In 1892 Alfred North declared:

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *NZB*, April 1890, 49.

<sup>28</sup> Sir William Fox, *The Political Crisis* (Marton: Rangitikei Advocate, 1887), 6.

<sup>29</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 74, 83.

<sup>30</sup> *AJHR*, 1898, H-2, xxv.

<sup>31</sup> *AJHR*, 1901, H-16, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Bebbington, ‘The Baptist Conscience’, 22.

True, there was no command 'Thou shalt not bet', but there was one, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and there was another, 'Thou shalt not covet'; and both of these involved the condemnation of betting. What did a man do when he made a bet? He tried to make money out of his neighbour, without rendering any advantage to his neighbour – he tried to enrich himself to his neighbour's loss.<sup>33</sup>

Among Baptists, gambling came to be seen as 'the purest expression there is of covetousness'.<sup>34</sup> It was 'a form of theft by consent'.<sup>35</sup> It was a denial of Christian stewardship because it squandered God's gifts in a selfish and harmful way.<sup>36</sup> Gambling led to idleness and 'an atheistic reliance on luck and chance'.<sup>37</sup> Even worse, it was closely entwined with the evil of alcohol. Drinking and gambling were 'twin devils',<sup>38</sup> an unholy sisterhood'.<sup>39</sup> Baptist discourse on the issue repeatedly stressed the 'essentially immoral' character of gambling.<sup>40</sup> It was 'absolutely indefensible on moral grounds'.<sup>41</sup> A minister who was reported as attending race-meetings had 'rubbed out the line which should ever separate Church and world'.<sup>42</sup>

Baptist spokesmen frequently argued that gambling was tainted by the sins of 'falsehood, fraud and extortion'.<sup>43</sup> There was some justification for these claims. Scams were not uncommon. Matches and races were frequently fixed. In rugby, for instance, there was skulduggery among club rugby players who put money on the opposition to win. In 1891 the game became embroiled in a betting and corruption scandal. The well-known half-back, Patrick Keogh, who had been a star of the 'Native' tour to Great Britain in 1888-1889, played such a poor game for

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<sup>33</sup> NZB, July 1892, 98-100.

<sup>34</sup> NZB, September 1935, 287-9.

<sup>35</sup> NZB, August 1901, 114-15; September 1921, 101; August 1923, 145-6; September 1931, 277; March 1936, 67. Australian Baptists also opposed gambling as a symbol of greed and a form of stealing; Manley, *Woolloomooloo to Eternity*, vol. 1, 368.

<sup>36</sup> NZB, September 1935, 287-9.

<sup>37</sup> H.H. Driver, NZB, December 1899, 177-82 at 180.

<sup>38</sup> T. Bray, Presidential Address, NZB, December 1894, 177-81 at 178.

<sup>39</sup> C. Dallaston, 'The Gambling Evil', NZB, August 1901, 114-15.

<sup>40</sup> NZB, August 1923, 145-6.

<sup>41</sup> NZB, September 1898, 129. See also William H. Edgar, *Auckland Baptist Association: One Hundred Years 1892-1992* (Auckland: NZ Baptist Historical Society, 1993), 54.

<sup>42</sup> NZB, February 1914, 21.

<sup>43</sup> NZB, August 1891, 118.

his Dunedin club that some spectators assumed he had money invested on the opposition to win. The Otago Rugby Football Union investigated. Keogh, the 'artful dodger', resigned after threatening to name other players who had bet money on the match. Other club players who admitted gambling on the opposition to win were banned. But reports of players deliberately trying to lose their games continued to surface.<sup>44</sup>

The primary reason, however, for Baptist agitation against gambling was the government's legalization of the totalisator in 1881. It had the effect, in the eyes of many, of condoning gambling. By its 'legal endorsement' the Gaming and Lotteries Act, gave it 'a certain seductive appearance of respectability.'<sup>45</sup> According to the Rev. T.A. Williams, 'the existence of the totalisator, with its State patronage and control, is a reproach to every Christian in the colony.'<sup>46</sup> Like slavery, it was an appalling blot on national life.<sup>47</sup> It had to be erased. With universal suffrage, it became the solemn duty of every Christian to press for abolition. So Baptists, along with other Evangelicals, called for a nationwide 'crusade' against the iniquitous 'vice' of gambling.<sup>48</sup> Successive Assemblies passed solemn resolutions urging 'all who aim at the moral uplifting of the people to employ their fullest resources in combating this elusive and insidious vice.'<sup>49</sup> The *Baptist* magazine called for every pulpit and platform in the Dominion to denounce this 'huge iniquity'.<sup>50</sup> It was 'the most devastating enemy that religion has,'<sup>51</sup> 'an enemy of the kingdom of God'.<sup>52</sup>

Not surprisingly, Baptists concentrated their energies on abolishing the totalisator. The central focus of their campaign was legislation to destroy 'the gambling machine'. Nearly every year the

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<sup>44</sup> Sean O'Hagan, *The Pride of Southern Rebels: The History of Otago Rugby* (Dunedin: Pilgrims South Press, 1981), 52-54.

<sup>45</sup> 'Betting and Gambling', *NZB*, July 1892, 98-100 at 100.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Gambling Evil', *NZB*, September 1898, 141.

<sup>47</sup> 'We believe', wrote J.J. North in 1935, 'that a day is coming ... when it will be seen that betting involves as real a dishonour to the idea for humanity as slavery itself.' *NZB*, September 1935, 287-9.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. *NZB*, April 1890, 49; July 1892, 98-100; September 1898, 129; November 1921, 130.

<sup>49</sup> *NZB*, December 1893, 189; Baptist Yearbook, 1904-1905, 45.

<sup>50</sup> *NZB*, December 1913, 226.

<sup>51</sup> *NZB*, March 1936, 67.

<sup>52</sup> *NZB*, January 1941, 10.

Baptist Assembly passed a resolution calling for its abolition.<sup>53</sup> Baptist leaders repeatedly launched petitions demanding its abolition.<sup>54</sup> But while the focus of their attention around the turn of the century was the totalisator, Baptists recognised that gambling took many forms, and its growth could be attributed to several factors. It was, in the words of one minister, ‘a many-headed Hydra. ... Against the evil, in all its forms, the Church of God must vigorously protest.’<sup>55</sup> Protest they did. In church meetings, in assemblies, and in print, Baptists made vigorous appeals to government to prohibit the publication of odds and betting details in newspapers, to isolate racecourses from telephone and telegraphic communication, and to give police sufficient powers to suppress street-betting. They protested against state permits granted to art unions, the transmission through the post of Tattersall’s correspondence, and the persistent advertisement by newspapers of prizes drawn through ‘Tatts’, as it was ‘constantly inflaming this destructive passion’.<sup>56</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the ‘marked increase’ in gambling – signalled by the large sums of money passing annually through the totalisator and the increasing numbers of bookmakers and ‘tote’ shops – Baptists were gripped by a sharpened sense of urgency. ‘Every thoughtful man in the community’, wrote J.J. North, ‘is alarmed at the spread of that Egyptian plague, the gaming mania.’<sup>57</sup> Baptist Sunday Schools and Bands of Hope adopted a pledge against gambling, similar to that used in the temperance campaign.<sup>58</sup> Baptists helped form Anti-Gambling Leagues in cities throughout the colony.<sup>59</sup> Their campaign to slay the ‘many-headed Hydra’ became increasingly intense.

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example, *NZB*, December 1892, 183; December 1893, 189; December 1895, 188; December 1898, 186; December 1899, 188; December 1900, 191.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. *NZB*, December 1898, 186; December 1901, 189; January 1902, 11; May 1902, 74; Supplement, January 1903, 8.

<sup>55</sup> C. Dallaston, ‘The Gambling Evil’, *NZB*, August 1901, 114-5.

<sup>56</sup> *NZB*, July 1892, 98-100; January 1893, 9; February 1894, 17; September 1898, 129; December 1900, 190; August 1901, 114-5. See also Baptist Yearbook, 1905-1905, 45; 1906-1907, 36-37.

<sup>57</sup> *NZB*, July 1898, 103.

<sup>58</sup> *NZB*, December 1898, 183.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Waking up’, *NZB*, September 1898, 129.

### **The Catholic Lotteries Controversy**

Around this time several other Protestant denominations also mobilised their forces against gambling, particularly the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the Salvation Army.<sup>60</sup> But while most Protestant churches were united in their opposition to gambling, Roman Catholics were decidedly indifferent towards this campaign. While they sometimes expressed concern about the social impact of uncontrolled gambling,<sup>61</sup> their experience of Protestant hostility caused them to have, at best, a lukewarm attitude towards Protestant reform movements. Their higher levels of working class representation also made them more strongly inclined to gamble. And their schools tended to rely on fundraising by means of lotteries at church bazaars.

This conflict between Catholic and Protestant attitudes towards lotteries became a flashpoint of controversy in 1906. In early May, having discovered that the Catholic Church had applied for 53 art union permits, J.J. North and the Presbyterian Minister James Gibb criticised the Church for identifying with the gambling community. Speaking for the Council of Churches, an umbrella Protestant public pressure group concerned with social issues, they urged the Catholic Church, in the public interest, to renounce the use of gambling for religious ends.<sup>62</sup>

North was 'the engineer and prime mover' in the Council's attack on Catholic lotteries.<sup>63</sup> As the Council's 'press-champion', he argued in the Wellington press on 9 May that gambling is wrong *in toto*, that is in everything.<sup>64</sup> The editor of the *Tablet*, H.W. Cleary, took issue with this very bold claim, and challenged the Council to both demonstrate by reference to Scripture – the primary authority for evangelical Protestants – why gambling was inherently sinful, and then to reconcile this claim with the fact that in the biblical record God himself commanded and permitted the use of the lot. Cleary admitted that lotteries were sometimes abused, but argued that that was no reason to abolish them altogether: 'Does the Council of the Churches stand for the principle of the abolition, as a 'vicious practice,' of everything that has been, or is

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<sup>60</sup> There were exceptions, most notably the Anglican Church.

<sup>61</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 February 1887, 9.

<sup>62</sup> For an excellent summary of the ensuing controversy from a Catholic perspective, see H.W. Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries: A Controversy between the Wellington (N.Z.) Council of the Churches and the Rev. H.W. Cleary, Editor of the 'New Zealand Tablet'* (Dunedin: NZ Tablet Printing and Publishing Co., 1906).

<sup>63</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 31.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

liable to be, abused? Well, what gift of God has been more grossly abused by many ill-conditioned persons ... than the Bible? Is the Bible, then, to be abolished?' Cleary concluded: 'There is no divine law to stop anybody from making an unconditional gift of a coin to the art union. It is hard to imagine a person speculating in raffle tickets at a bazaar with the mercenary spirit of making gain; it is done to help the object in view, or to oblige a friend.'<sup>65</sup>

In the absence of a reply from the Council, Cleary again challenged North to prove his claim that lotteries are sinful in themselves and under all circumstances by appeal to the ultimate authority for Baptists, Scripture.<sup>66</sup> Possibly because of the absence of any explicit universal prohibition of gambling in Scripture, North – unusually for him – held back. In his reply on 18 May he did not answer Cleary's primary challenge to supply Scriptural evidence for his claim that church lotteries are intrinsically sinful. Instead, he excused the use of the lot in the Old Testament on the grounds that 'the Old Testament is the record of a progressive revelation; it sanctions polygamy and slavery.'<sup>67</sup> Cleary subsequently accused the Council of 'palpably shirking the very issue which they themselves and their champion have raised.'<sup>68</sup> He also picked apart North's mode of accounting for the Biblical use of lots:

When the Creator ordered the Jewish land-lottery, He either knew, or did not know, that all lotteries are sinful 'in-toto' ... If He did not know, He is to be graciously excused – and let off with a caution – on the plea of ignorance! If He did know, then He sinned by ordering the performance of an act which under no conceivable circumstances could be other than sinful! For Catholics, either of these two alternatives is simply too horrible to contemplate.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> H.W. Cleary, 'Church Lotteries and Gambling: A Reply to the Wellington Council of Churches', *New Zealand Tablet* (NZN), 10 May 1906, published in full on 12 May in two Wellington daily newspapers, the *NZ Times* and the *Evening Post*.

<sup>66</sup> Cleary's letter appeared in the *NZ Times* and *Evening Post* (EP) on 17 May 1906. He agreed that the abuse of gambling was wrong, but insisted that Catholics were 'too sane to accept the extraordinary and fantastic consequences that would follow the adoption of the principle of the total abolition of innocent and legitimate use because of the abuse of some.' Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 25-30.

<sup>67</sup> See Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 31-32.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>69</sup> NZT, 24 May 1906, 19.

Cleary's challenges goaded the Council of Churches into publishing a manifesto in which the Council officially adopted North's view as to the total immorality of the resort to games of chance. Gambling is wrong, it argued rather obscurely, because it is based on chance, 'and chance is a false thing which it is the whole aim of civilisation to destroy ... In a gamble reason is shown to the door and the will and affections operate unhealthily. Gambling is therefore essentially unmanly. To engage in it is degrading.'<sup>70</sup> On 22 May Cleary's response was published in the Wellington daily papers. He observed acerbically that in the manifesto 'the Sacred Writings are not so much as hinted at'. The document was 'a salmagundi of unproved or ambiguous assertions' and 'question-begging epithets'. Teasing out the principles embedded in the Council's statement, he argued forcefully that those principles effectively undermined the Council's indictment against Catholic Church lotteries as inherently sinful. For example, the Council argued that lotteries were wrong because they were based on chance – 'intelligence is barred out'. But Cleary pointed out that the moment 'intelligence is barred out' of an act, that act is no longer a morally responsible one.<sup>71</sup>

Eventually North responded to Cleary's challenge by providing Scriptural principles that he said condemned gambling. It was condemned, he said, by the law of love, the command against coveting, and Paul's principle that 'if meat make [sic] my brother stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore...'<sup>72</sup> Cleary was unconvinced. Gambling did not *always* violate the law of love or the command against coveting: 'the vast bulk of those attending Catholic bazaars give their coins for the cause, and do not care a brass button whether they win or lose'. And Paul's words did not prohibit gambling in every situation. For one thing, he was not condemning anything that was 'in toto' sinful, and nor was Paul encouraging believers to forego the *right* use of something in order to avoid *abuse*.<sup>73</sup> In Cleary's opinion North's attempts to justify his claim that all lotteries were violations of the moral law had led 'to a lawyer-vine tangle of contradictions and absurdities'. The whole controversy has been 'a public exposure of the low educational level – the 'tea-meeting intellect' – of the Council of the Churches.' North and his colleagues had

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<sup>70</sup> *Evening Post* (EP), 19 May 1906; *NZ Times*, 22 May 1906. Reprinted in Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 37-38.

<sup>71</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 39-42.

<sup>72</sup> North's letter appeared in the *NZ Times* on 26 May 1906. See Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 43-44.

<sup>73</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 44-49.

'hung out false lights along the shores of life, where Revelation marks no reef or shoal.'<sup>74</sup>

Except in the minds of his devoted supporters, North came off second best in the debate. He asserted more than he was able to prove and, in the process, alienated a number of moderate observers. This, at least, was how the secular press saw it. In a leading article on the controversy the *New Zealand Times* concluded that Cleary had resoundingly defeated North:

In the field of practical aspiration it may be well to 'aim at the moon,' in the hope of 'hitting the steeple'; but in the realm of morals it is a grave error to indulge in absolute denunciation or propose drastic suppression, as such tactics invariably defeat the object of those who employ them. This was the mistake committed by the Council of the Churches in its crusade against gambling; it asserted more than it was able to prove, and its extreme attitude aroused the antagonism of moderate people.<sup>75</sup>

The *Free Lance* agreed that in the debate the honours rested with Cleary: 'You see the priest had just taken the trouble to know what he was writing about.' Napier's *Daily Telegraph*, while viewing gambling as a 'grave moral evil', rejoiced that the *Tablet* editor had given the Council of Churches 'a deserved scourging'.<sup>76</sup> One correspondent declared that as Father Cleary had 'walked rings around Mr North', it was the duty of Mr North to write one more letter to the press, apologise to Father Cleary, and make an honourable exit from the arena. 'Failing that', he wrote, 'I will put the following to music and have it sung in the music halls':

Sweet Rev North and dear Doctor Gibb,  
Both very voluble and both very glib,  
Muling and puling weak infants are they  
Thrashed by the priest on the 'Tablet' today.<sup>77</sup>

### **The Climax of the Anti-Gambling Campaign**

In spite of his defeat in this skirmish, North and his supporters did not slacken their efforts. The totalisator's ever-increasing profit<sup>78</sup> added bite

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<sup>74</sup> NZT, 6 June 1906, 17.

<sup>75</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 49.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>77</sup> *NZ Times*, 26 May 1906. Reprinted in Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 49-50.

to the anti-gambling cause, as did headline news that a defaulting bookmaker had been kicked to death by angry punters at Sydney's Flemington racecourse in August 1906.<sup>79</sup> Widespread public gambling continued unabated. 'Bookmakers were by now no longer confining their activities to public places. Their touts were knocking on the doors of residents in hotels, boarding houses, businesses and even private homes looking for custom.'<sup>80</sup> In light of this, both the judiciary and the police called for tighter legislation.<sup>81</sup> So the anti-totalisator campaign continued to gather momentum.

When the anti-gambling lobby in parliament introduced their annual bill to abolish the totalisator, a number of Protestant church leaders did their utmost to arouse support for the bill. J.J. North was particularly active. In support of the Anti-Gambling League he addressed meetings in and around Wellington. In September, with Dr James Gibb, Agnes Macalister, Wellington mayor T.W. Hislop and Harry Ell, he helped lead a delegation of over 60 religious and political leaders to the Prime Minister, Joseph Ward. They brought three specific demands: that the totalisator be banned, that racecourses be isolated from telephone and telegraph communication so that betting could occur on-course only, and that newspapers be prohibited from publishing racehorse betting information.<sup>82</sup> North wrote frequently to the newspapers. His letters were of 'such vigour and moment' that they attracted considerable attention and were widely printed.<sup>83</sup> One Wellington paper observed that in the anti-gambling agitation, a battle 'led largely by Christian ministers and laymen', J.J. North was clearly 'a leader of leaders'.<sup>84</sup>

As it turned out, the Abolition of the Totalisator Bill – always defeated by the powerful pro-gambling lobby in parliament – very nearly passed into law. It lost by only six votes. It had never before been so strongly supported in the house. This was, the *Baptist* joyously declared, 'a moral victory' that would cause the racing magnates to be 'greatly

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<sup>78</sup> During the 1906-1907 racing season the totalisator made a pre-tax profit of more than £1.8 million: Grant, 'Nature of Gambling', 80.

<sup>79</sup> L.H. Barber, 'The Social Crusader: James Gibb at the Australasian Pastoral Frontier' (PhD thesis, Massey University, 1975), 139.

<sup>80</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 83.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> EP, 10 September 1906, 5.

<sup>83</sup> NZB, June 1906, 294.

<sup>84</sup> E.W. Batts & A.H. MacLeod, *J.J. North: The Story of a Great New Zealander* (Auckland: N.Z. Baptist Historical Society, n.d.), 7.

disquieted'.<sup>85</sup> Baptist Assembly that year 'placed on record its joy at the awakening of the public conscience' and reaffirmed its commitment to abolish the totalisator which, more than anything else, had 'made a vice legal and respectable and...increased the volume and area of gambling.'<sup>86</sup>

Emboldened by this result, anti-gambling forces redoubled their efforts. In May 1907 North and Gibb led another delegation to the Prime Minister, urging the jailing of bookmakers with no right of appeal. Ward rejected the proposal. By August 1907 the WCTU had gathered 36,471 signatures on its petitions. But Parliament also received 311 other petitions with 36,219 signatures advocating retention of the totalisator.<sup>87</sup> Ward faced an awkward dilemma. He had spoken out in the past against gambling and could not ignore the growing strength of the anti-gambling lobby. But he was also conscious of the political risks of upsetting the powerful horse-racing lobby and of the financial benefits which accrued from the ever-rising income from the totalisator tax. With the country equally divided, Ward sought a compromise. Rather than ban gambling, he would confine it to the racecourse.

So control, not prohibition, was the object of the Gaming and Lotteries Amendment Bill he introduced in November 1907. Under the Bill tote shops were to be closed and sanctions against street and sports ground gambling toughened. Gaming houses – now defined to include clubs and premises where lotteries were held – were to be banned. Racing clubs were barred from accepting bets by telephone or telegraph, and newspapers would not be permitted to publish race dividends. And to eliminate large pay outs, recently introduced doubles totalisators would be banned. These proposals were restrictive, but the totalisator was allowed to survive. So were bookmakers, whose legal status was confirmed for the first time since 1881. Ward argued that reputable bookmakers should be licensed to work on-course 'under well defined conditions'.<sup>88</sup>

The new Gaming and Lotteries Amendment Act, the most significant gaming law since 1881, came into force on 25 November 1907. For Baptists and other Christian reformers these reforms did not go far enough. J.J. North in the *Baptist* and Assembly delegates lambasted the proposals as lame and insufficient. What was needed was the

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<sup>85</sup> NZB, October 1906, 373.

<sup>86</sup> Baptist Yearbook, 1906-1907, 36-37.

<sup>87</sup> *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 2 May 1908, 4.

<sup>88</sup> NZPD, 1907, vol. 142, 1163.

complete abolition of the 'tote' and the 'bookie'.<sup>89</sup> Their convictions were reinforced by the obvious failure of Ward's compromise solution. The law required that all bookmakers be licensed. But within months Police Commissioner Dinnie was complaining that clubs were not being scrupulous enough in checking the character or fitness of bookmakers applying to hold their licences, with the result that there were too many of them, mostly 'totally unfit'.<sup>90</sup> In the absence of competition from legal off-course betting, unlicensed bookmakers positively thrived. Avoiding licence fees, they could beat both the 'tote' and their licensed counterparts by offering better odds.

Initially, Ward was reluctant to take further action. But his inaction was challenged dramatically in June 1910. When sentencing two men for stealing from their employers to pay gambling debts, Auckland Supreme Court judge, Sir Frederick Chapman, described bookmakers as 'very close to the criminal class', criticised the government's refusal to outlaw bookmaking as 'one of the gravest mistakes the legislators of this Dominion have made', and called on the government to tighten the law 'for the sake of honesty and morality'.<sup>91</sup> This kind of judicial criticism of government policy was highly unusual. It provoked considerable excitement in the press and prompted renewed protests by opponents of gambling. The Wellington Citizens' Anti-Gambling League held rallies and distributed literature. On 19 July 1910 North, along with the Anglican Archbishop of Wellington (Bishop Wallis), Dr James Gibb, and Wellington mayor, T.W. Hislop, led a deputation of 300 to press Ward for the banning of bookmakers.<sup>92</sup> The Prime Minister admitted his 1907 legislation had failed to restrict bookmaking operations, and that the calling was now 'tarnished by rogues'.<sup>93</sup> Ward offered to put the issue to Parliament on a conscience vote, which he did on 21 July. Parliament voted by a massive 69 votes to four to end bookmaking.<sup>94</sup>

After further lobbying from North and the churches,<sup>95</sup> parliament passed the new Gaming Amendment Act in December 1910.

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<sup>89</sup> NZB, January 1908, 2; Baptist Yearbook, 1907-1908, 36.

<sup>90</sup> AJHR, 1909, H-16, 5.

<sup>91</sup> *Colonist*, 15 July 1910, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Bassett, *Sir Joseph Ward: A Political Biography* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993), 185; NZB, August 1910, 149.

<sup>93</sup> *Lyttelton Times* (LT), 19 July 1910, cited in Grant, *On a Roll*, 89.

<sup>94</sup> Bassett, *Ward*, 185.

<sup>95</sup> On behalf of the Wellington Anti-Gambling League, North issued a memo on the Premier's promised amendments to the Gaming Laws: NZB, September 1910, 168. At the annual Baptist Assembly in October he moved

Bookmaking became an offence on the racetrack as well as everywhere else. The new law also reduced the number of days a totalisator could operate annually to 250. Ward subsequently sought to have the totalisator banned as well. In the House he argued:

It [horse racing] has without a doubt run riot, and in doing so has given increased opportunities for the misspending of money by individuals who cannot afford to spend the money they have, and, who in many cases, rob their employers ... the whole matter calls for the interference of Parliament, in order that many of our women and young people may be saved from themselves.

Ward lost on a reasonably close conscience vote, the totalisator surviving by 40 votes to 32.<sup>96</sup> This was as close as the government ever came to outlawing the 'tote'. It was the high point for the anti-gambling movement in New Zealand. By 1911 gambling, if still widespread, was subjected to very tight regulation. Bookmakers were outlawed, other forms of public gambling were banned, and the totalisator, while it had survived – just – was now restricted. For Baptists and most Protestant churches, this represented a quite significant achievement against powerful vested interests.

The legislative success of the anti-gambling campaign can be attributed to several factors. For one thing, the cultural climate of the time was peculiarly hospitable to this sort of campaign. Widespread conceptions of New Zealand as a 'Better Britain' characterised by moral purity produced a press and parliament relatively receptive to anti-gambling advocates. Moreover, the Anglican Church excepted, the campaign was characterised by considerable unity of cause among the major Protestant denominations. In 1900, when the Presbyterian Church wrote to the Baptist Union suggesting united action against gambling, the Baptist Union President (Joseph Clark) and Secretary (A.H. Collins) both 'warmly commended' the proposal.<sup>97</sup> Baptists joined forces with other denominations in organising Anti-Gambling Leagues<sup>98</sup> and in the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which from 1902 took a leading role in the push to ban the totalisator.<sup>99</sup> Baptist

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a resolution reminding the government of the extreme urgency for anti-gambling legislation in the current parliamentary session: *NZB*, November 1910, 204; *Baptist Yearbook*, 1910-1911, 20.

<sup>96</sup> *NZPD*, 1910, vol. 149, 812.

<sup>97</sup> *NZB*, September 1900, 135.

<sup>98</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 78; *NZB*, September 1898, 129.

<sup>99</sup> In 1902 the WCTU established a special Anti-Gambling Department, with Agnes Macalister as its first superintendent.

ministers shared platforms with other ministers on public platforms, in compiling petitions, and in leading protest delegations.<sup>100</sup> In 1905, for example, the Baptist Union Executive obtained unanimous support from other evangelical churches for representations to the Press Association and the Newspaper Proprietors' Association regarding the need to suppress the publication of Tattersall's results and betting odds. In the face of this united protest a number of proprietors acceded to their request.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to this, the anti-gambling movement was blessed with some remarkably driven and capable leaders in the likes of Rutherford Waddell, James Gibb, Agnes Macalister and – among the Baptists – J.J. North. When, in 1901, Charles Dallaston declared in the *Baptist* that gambling 'is a many-headed Hydra' he went on to say that 'some Hercules is needed to cut off its ever-growing heads'.<sup>102</sup> In North the Baptists found their Hercules. On completion of his ministry in Wellington in 1913, the city's Anti-Gambling League pronounced that he 'had done more than any other man to bring about legislation for the suppression of the gambling evil'.<sup>103</sup> On platforms, from pulpits, in the press and before parliamentary representatives, North proved himself a truculent, articulate, courageous and energetic opponent of gambling. His fiery polemics and popular, pungent style of preaching and writing attracted a loyal audience.<sup>104</sup> It is no coincidence that Wellington and Christchurch both became centres of anti-gambling agitation during his pastorates in those cities.<sup>105</sup> He is, said Archdeacon P.B. Haggitt of Christchurch, 'a very efficient watchdog in our city. He has a very effective bark...and a bite! He can't help it. He's a sort of Christian Elijah'.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> E.g. *NZB*, December 1898, 186.

<sup>101</sup> *Baptist Yearbook*, 1904-1905, 45; 1905-1906, 32.

<sup>102</sup> 'The Gambling Evil', *NZB*, August 1901, 114-15.

<sup>103</sup> *NZB*, March 1913, 46.

<sup>104</sup> 'The Wellington Ministers' Association recognised North's public influence: 'Eager and alert in the vindication of all that makes for righteousness, fearless in the condemnation of all occasions of public sin and shame, he has with virile speech and facile pen acquitted himself as a man valiant for the truth, and again and again laid the community under a debt of gratitude for his timely and outspoken utterances.' *NZB*, January 1913, 6.

<sup>105</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 78-79.

<sup>106</sup> Batts and MacLeod, *J.J. North*, 47.

Martin Sutherland and Laurie Guy have commented, 'It is a feature of the history of New Zealand Baptists that dominant personalities have often had a determinant impact on the whole group. This is perhaps a natural outworking of being a denomination of small numbers and intimate relationships.'<sup>107</sup> North was certainly a dominant personality. As a successful and forceful minister, editor of the *Baptist* for thirty-three years (1916-1948) and first principal of the Baptist Theological College (1924-1945), he was the most prominent Baptist in the first part of the century,<sup>108</sup> and arguably the most influential leader in the history of the Baptist churches in New Zealand.<sup>109</sup> On this issue of gambling he had a 'determinant impact' on Baptist attitudes. He wrote articles in the *Baptist* magazine. He engineered petitions. He led delegations. He moved most Assembly resolutions against gambling. Within the Baptist movement North played a key role in mobilising its members against gambling.

### **Fighting a Losing Battle**

But 1910 proved to be a watershed, the end of an era. If the preceding decades had witnessed a vigorous evangelical offensive against gambling, the succeeding years were marked more by desperate defence. From the First World War onwards Protestants fought a losing battle as the government progressively untightened what had become a very strict regulatory regime.

There were several reasons for this shift in government attitude. One major factor in the liberalisation of gambling laws after 1910 was the acute need for funds during the military and economic crises that subsequently engulfed the nation. After the outbreak of World War One in August 1914, the number of lotteries, both legal and illegal, increased dramatically as people sought to raise money quickly for the war effort and for the families of war victims. The police tended not to prosecute

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<sup>107</sup> Laurie Guy and Martin Sutherland, 'Leadership: The New Zealand Experience since the 1960s', in *Leadership and Baptist Church Governance*, ed. Graeme Chatfield (Eastwood NSW: Morling Press, 2005), 134-46 at 140.

<sup>108</sup> Brian Smith, 'New Zealand Baptists and the "Labour Question"', *New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research* (NZJBR) 4 (October 1999): 23-40 at 33.

<sup>109</sup> Barry Gustafson, 'Intervention in the Public Square: Baptists and Politics in New Zealand 1916-1919', *Bulletin of the New Zealand Baptist Historical Society* 8 (1980): 2-7 at 4.

these lottery operators.<sup>110</sup> In October 1915 the government passed legislation which dispensed with the prize restrictions for lotteries that were organised to raise 'patriotic funds'. This simply regularised what was happening. But Baptists strongly denounced the raising of public money by lottery.<sup>111</sup> It was a 'great folly' to permit evil 'to be built into the fabric of a young and growing State'.<sup>112</sup>

The government's decision during the war to open the door to big prize lotteries for charitable purposes had ongoing repercussions after the war. Sports associations began to see the value of 'art unions' as quick and profitable money-earners. In 1924, for example, the Otago Rugby Football Union organised a lottery with £2000 in prizes which raised a then massive £30,000. Later, Canterbury's cricket and tennis associations combined to organise a Gigantic Art Union for a prize of £4000, the largest in the country so far.<sup>113</sup> Wartime lotteries for injured servicemen and their families might be one thing, but peacetime lotteries to enable sports – and racing – clubs to improve their facilities were quite another. The day after the tickets for the Gigantic Art Union went on sale in Christchurch, J.J. North and Bishop Julius led a deputation from the Council of Christian Congregations to the City Council to request a ban on the sale of lottery tickets on the streets. They failed, but their initiative hailed the beginning of a more widespread resistance.<sup>114</sup> When the Minister of Internal Affairs indicated his intention to limit the amounts that may be offered in future lottery prizes, Baptist Assembly expressed begrudging approval but urged that the best interests of the community would be served if the government stopped issuing permits for lotteries altogether.<sup>115</sup>

The government did not, however, comply. On 16 May 1929 Cabinet revoked the ban on the bigger 'gold nugget' art unions and, as a consequence, the £500 prize restriction for that kind of lottery.<sup>116</sup> North castigated the government for letting loose on the community again the plague of art unions for gold nuggets.<sup>117</sup> By choosing to license large scale lotteries the Minister of Internal Affairs had 'pointed ... a dagger at

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<sup>110</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 172.

<sup>111</sup> NZB, November 1915, 204.

<sup>112</sup> NZB, October 1916, 181-2.

<sup>113</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 176.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 176-7.

<sup>115</sup> NZB, November 1925, 291.

<sup>116</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 180.

<sup>117</sup> NZB, August 1929, 226-7.

the heart of his own nation'.<sup>118</sup> North was resolutely opposed to lotteries in any form, even to fund charitable purposes during the Great Depression.<sup>119</sup> According to him the doctors who launched a public lottery to aid cancer research had 'betrayed the nation'.<sup>120</sup> His fellow Baptists, it seemed, agreed. The 1931 Assembly protested 'unanimously and emphatically' against the government's increasing use of lotteries. They were a 'wanton extravagance' economically and a grave 'menace' morally. Indeed, 'the better the object of a lottery, the worse was its effect on the community'.<sup>121</sup>

As the Depression deepened, an increasing number of politicians advocated a state lottery comparable to those run overseas. Proponents cited four main advantages. A state lottery would increase national revenue through taxation. It would fund public institutions like hospitals, and put the funding of relief for the distressed and of charitable and philanthropic organizations on a sounder footing. It would act as a disincentive for New Zealanders to participate in overseas lotteries, particularly if the rewards were comparable. And, finally, it would be a counter-attraction to the bookmaker.<sup>122</sup> In 1932 the government chose to formalize a New Zealand 'Art Union' lottery, with a single contractor running it on behalf of the state. 'The subtext was: if you can't beat it, nationalise it'.<sup>123</sup>

Predictably, the Baptist Union expressed 'its deep sense of the peril threatening the nation through the spread of the gambling habit ... The licensing of lotteries is a retrograde step that impoverishes the nation'.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, the 1934 Assembly was 'convinced that the economic ills under which society groans are largely occasioned by the lust for unearned money,' a lust fed by lotteries.<sup>125</sup> When in April 1936 the Minister of Internal Affairs, Bill Parry, informed North, who was leading yet another Protestant deputation, that he planned to run a bigger state-run lottery to fund improvements to the health of the country's youth, the indefatigable North was outraged.<sup>126</sup> He roundly condemned Parry as

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<sup>118</sup> NZB, January 1931, 2; September 1931, 262.

<sup>119</sup> Andrew Picard, 'Church Responses to Social Issues in Depression New Zealand, 1933', NZJBR 9 (2004): 24-48 at 35.

<sup>120</sup> NZB, January 1931, 2; October 1931, 293.

<sup>121</sup> NZB, November 1931, 338.

<sup>122</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 199-200.

<sup>123</sup> Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 317.

<sup>124</sup> NZB, November 1933, 335.

<sup>125</sup> NZB, November 1934, 340.

<sup>126</sup> *Press*, 13 April 1936, cited in Grant, *On a Roll*, 201.

the 'most dangerous man in New Zealand politics'.<sup>127</sup> The proposal would have, he warned, 'volcanic' consequences.<sup>128</sup> Freedom would die.<sup>129</sup> This kind of emotional, inflated rhetoric might catch headlines, but it was hardly persuasive.

The Second World War witnessed a further expansion in the use of lotteries to raise funds for the war. The *Baptist* warned that this fresh spate of gambling represented a dangerous 'enemy within our gates'.<sup>130</sup> The New Zealand government was 'betraying' its own people.<sup>131</sup> The 1941 Assembly protested against the 'present orgy of gambling', and demanded the abolition of all art unions and lotteries.<sup>132</sup> But these protests were to no avail. 'Lethargy', wrote J.J. North, 'lies like a fog about Parliament House'.<sup>133</sup> The liberalisation of gambling laws after 1910 was, then, partly due to the state's acute need for funds during times of economic and military crisis. Through the 'fog', parliament came to see the gambling industry as less a 'giant monster', and more a 'golden goose'.

There was another, less selfish reason why the government progressively loosened the regulatory regime around gambling. The 1910 Act, like its predecessors in 1881 and 1907, had clearly failed to suppress gambling.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, it had the opposite effect. Restricting legal betting to the racecourse served only to encourage larger race attendances, which led to improved facilities and bigger stakes. This, in turn, led to an expanded horse-breeding industry, more intense racing competition, greater publicity for racing as a spectacle, and the 'alarming spread of gambling throughout the land'.<sup>135</sup>

Although from January 1911 'bookies' were formally excluded from New Zealand society, they did not disappear. Quite the contrary. In the absence of competition from legal off-course betting, 'bookies' positively thrived. The ban on publication of tips and dividends in newspapers only served to make bookmaking more attractive, as clients sought advice and information that was not otherwise available. The

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<sup>127</sup> *NZB*, December 1936, 366.

<sup>128</sup> *NZB*, April 1939, 98.

<sup>129</sup> *NZB*, January 1939, 2.

<sup>130</sup> L.A. North, 'An Enemy within our Gates: Our Legislators Impugned', *NZB*, January 1941, 10.

<sup>131</sup> *NZB*, April 1942, 98.

<sup>132</sup> *NZB*, November 1941, 339.

<sup>133</sup> *NZB*, June 1942, 161.

<sup>134</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 93.

<sup>135</sup> *NZB*, November 1921, 130.

police found that arresting bookmakers was barely worth the effort. Very few clients were prepared to testify against them. And very few juries were prepared to convict, no matter how compelling the evidence.<sup>136</sup> When Justice Chapman, for example, told a Wellington jury in May 1921 that there was very strong evidence that the accused was bookmaking, and ‘that they must remember their oath and not their sympathies’, they ignored him. The accused was acquitted.<sup>137</sup>

The government could see that restrictions on legal gambling were actually playing into the hands of bookmakers. Consequently, it chose to enlarge gambling facilities by extending the number of race days, clubs and totalisator permits. In the *Baptist* magazine and at Baptist assemblies, J.J. North led Baptists in vigorous protests against the government’s ‘wicked’ proposals.<sup>138</sup> North was forthright in his criticism of the government: ‘A materialistic blight seems to rest upon Parliament. Moral idealism has been abandoned for expediency.’<sup>139</sup> Perhaps, though, it was less materialism than realism.

Aware that the law was simply not working, private members also tried to make it easier for punters to bet legally. Twice – in 1927 and in 1930 – they introduced bills to allow off-course betting facilities, a doubles totalisator and the publication of dividends. Both bills failed, with Baptist Assemblies protesting vigorously against these initiatives.<sup>140</sup> In 1933 the government proposed to employ the post office as a licensed gambling medium.<sup>141</sup> And in 1935 it considered a proposal to license bookmakers. ‘We wonder,’ wrote North, ‘whether the public spirit that demanded social reform in other days is doing anything worse than hibernating. If it still lives, it is time it awoke and roared lustily.’<sup>142</sup> But however much North and his supporters might roar, their protests increasingly fell on deaf ears. As with the prohibition of alcohol, it was a losing battle.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *NZB*, March 1921, 26.

<sup>137</sup> *Press*, 7 May, 27 June 1921; cited in Grant, *On a Roll*, 101.

<sup>138</sup> Baptist Yearbook, 1912-1913, 26; *NZB*, November 1913, 206; Baptist Yearbook, 1920-1921, 25; *NZB*, September 1921, 101; *NZB*, November 1923, 224; November 1924, 249.

<sup>139</sup> *NZB*, September 1923, 166.

<sup>140</sup> *NZB*, November 1927, 331; November 1928, 332.

<sup>141</sup> *NZB*, November 1933, 335.

<sup>142</sup> *NZB*, August 1935, 230.

<sup>143</sup> In a national referendum in 1949 some 405,000 adults voted for an off-course totalisator and doubles-betting; less than 193,000 were opposed. The Totalisator Agency Board (TAB) was established the following year, the first

### **The Weakness of Evangelical ‘Agitation’**

A third factor in the ultimate failure of the anti-gambling campaign was the particular nature and approach of the campaign itself. Baptists and other evangelical Protestants employed a crusading technique – or ‘agitation’ – popular in Britain during the anti-slavery campaign of the 1830s. By tapping into evangelical hostility to sin they could mobilise mass support over a sustained period. By their outspoken, passionate and widespread protests, they could impress the authorities with the strength of their movement and shift political will considerably. However, this kind of shrill evangelical ‘moral crusade’ had its weaknesses.<sup>144</sup>

Firstly, because they identified sin as the enemy against which they fought, Evangelicals tended to be absolutist and intransigent in their stance, unwilling to compromise. ‘What compromise could there be with wickedness?’<sup>145</sup> Nigel Wright has observed this of British Baptists.<sup>146</sup> The same could be said of New Zealand Baptists in this campaign against gambling. Their demands were not open to negotiation. The complete eradication of this vice was the only conceivable option. So when, for example, parliament decided in 1894 to restrict totalisator licences to two-thirds of the number issued previously, this was not enough. The only acceptable outcome was the complete abolition of the ‘tote’.<sup>147</sup> But

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organisation of its type in the world. In regards lotteries, the national ‘Art Union’ was replaced in 1961 by a new £30,000 ‘Golden Kiwi’ lottery, upgraded in 1964 to the ‘Golden Kiwi Mammoth’. In 1973 the lottery chief was empowered to increase substantially the first prize. *Lotto* began in 1987 and in 1995 the government finally allowed casinos into New Zealand. According to some researchers, this massive liberalisation of gambling laws contributed to ‘the social disorganisation and social deprivation of many communities’. See Lorna Dyll, ‘Gambling, Social Disorganisation and Deprivation’, *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* 5:4 (October 2007): 320-330; Peter Adams, ‘The History of Gambling in New Zealand’, *Journal of Gambling Issues* 12 (December 2004): 1-15. <<http://www.camh.net/egambling/archivepdf/JGI-Issue12/JGI-Issue12-adams.pdf>> (11 January 2010)

<sup>144</sup> See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 136.

<sup>145</sup> David Bebbington, ‘Evangelicals, Theology and Social Transformation’, in *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives on Social Transformation*, ed. David Hilborn (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2004), 1-19 at 9.

<sup>146</sup> Nigel Wright, *Challenge to Change: A Radical Agenda for Baptists* (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1991), 199.

<sup>147</sup> NZB, December 1895, 188.

with this strict absolutist stance Baptists could come across as extreme and unreasonable. And their demand that all New Zealanders abstain completely from gambling alienated potential allies. This was obvious in the Catholic lotteries controversy of 1906. The editor of the *Tablet* indicated that Catholics were 'in full sympathy with any crusade, based on right principles and methods, against the sins and excesses of the gambling habit'.<sup>148</sup> But he was ultimately forced by North and his colleagues to resist their campaign as a hectoring 'busy-body attack' upon the Catholic Church. The 'extreme attitude' of Baptist anti-gambling campaigners 'aroused the antagonism of moderate people'.<sup>149</sup> It alienated potential allies.

A second weakness of evangelical mass movements was their tendency towards clamour and a bellicose tone. David Bebbington observes, 'There is a practical disadvantage in clamour, for it stiffens resistance among opponents. Denunciation is a poor way of making allies.'<sup>150</sup> Leading New Zealand Baptists, driven as they were by a powerful sense that they were fighting the very forces of wickedness, held nothing back in their criticism of opponents. The Catholic Church, in particular, came in for severe attack.<sup>151</sup> Baptist Assemblies<sup>152</sup> and leading Baptist spokesmen<sup>153</sup> frequently attacked the Catholic Church for encouraging the gambling spirit by its use of raffles and lotteries to raise funds. More often than not, North led the charge, as the Catholic lotteries controversy of 1906 demonstrated. He depicted the Roman Catholic Church as a shadowy accomplice standing behind or working in alliance with 'the gambling mania'.<sup>154</sup> It had 'taken this vicious misery under its official protection'.<sup>155</sup> For Baptists like North, Romanism was 'coupled' with gambling.<sup>156</sup> They were 'bedfellows'.<sup>157</sup> That church's policy on gambling showed how 'moribund' the Catholic conscience really was.<sup>158</sup> 'Rome ... is everywhere a drag on social progress, an

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<sup>148</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Church Lotteries*, 26-27.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>150</sup> Bebbington, 'Evangelicals, Theology and Social Transformation', 10.

<sup>151</sup> In Australia there was also a 'touch of sectarianism' to the Protestant campaign against gambling: Manley, *Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, vol. 1, 368.

<sup>152</sup> E.g. *NZB*, December 1890, 187.

<sup>153</sup> E.g. *NZB*, January 1901, 10.

<sup>154</sup> *NZB*, October 1916, 181-82; February 1917, 17; October 1925, 254.

<sup>155</sup> *NZB*, December 1917, 177.

<sup>156</sup> *NZB*, December 1945, 303.

<sup>157</sup> *NZB*, November 1950, 322.

<sup>158</sup> *NZB*, January 1920, 1; June 1931, 166.

incubus on the body politic.<sup>159</sup> This scathing denunciation of Catholicism and Catholic attitudes to gambling might have aroused some Protestants, but it was ultimately counterproductive. It also aroused the hostility of Catholics, and ‘helped to explain why Catholics were reluctant to condemn gambling.’<sup>160</sup>

Thirdly, the evangelical style of social crusade was often marked by ‘inflated rhetoric and exaggerated charges’.<sup>161</sup> To arouse widespread and outspoken protest, and so convince authorities of the strength of their movement, Evangelicals often deployed emotional and extreme rhetoric. J.J. North and his fellow Baptists were no exception. ‘No vice,’ they said, ‘is meaner or more debasing than the vice of gambling.’<sup>162</sup> It is ‘the caterpillar pest of the world’,<sup>163</sup> ‘the codlin moth in New Zealand life’.<sup>164</sup> It ‘undoes the sinews of the mind’,<sup>165</sup> ‘prostitutes reason’, encourages ‘worship of the goddess ‘chance’, and violates ‘the sacred rights of property’.<sup>166</sup> Baptist spokesmen tended to exaggerate the perils of gambling. It ‘cuts away the roots of good citizenship by creating in the hearts of its devotees a distaste, and in advanced cases, a disgust, for honest toil. ... gambling is the arch-enemy of industry in every form – physical, intellectual, social. Cut the nerve of industry, you make all progress impossible, and all decadence inevitable.’<sup>167</sup> ‘Rascality cannot be suppressed when the gambling fiend is abroad.’<sup>168</sup> ‘Nothing,’ insisted North, ‘so slackens the nerve of life and so subtly destroys industry and honesty and reality as gambling does.’<sup>169</sup> In expressing alarm at the increase in permits for art union lotteries, the Auckland Association of Baptist churches solemnly warned: ‘If our people are thus encouraged to bow down at the altar of luck, the moral fibre of the people will be weakened and the foundations of our civilisation threatened.’<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> J.J. North, *Roman Catholicism: ‘Roots and Fruits’* (Napier: n.pub., 1922), 148.

<sup>160</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 79.

<sup>161</sup> Bebbington, ‘Evangelicals, Theology and Social Transformation’, 10.

<sup>162</sup> *NZB*, December 1913, 226.

<sup>163</sup> *NZB*, November 1933, 325.

<sup>164</sup> *NZB*, May 1946, 126.

<sup>165</sup> *NZB*, May 1941, 134.

<sup>166</sup> *NZB*, January 1941, 10.

<sup>167</sup> *NZB*, April 1917, 58.

<sup>168</sup> *NZB*, September 1929, 258.

<sup>169</sup> *NZB*, November 1933, 335.

<sup>170</sup> Edgar, *Auckland Baptist Association*, 54.

This kind of apocalyptic language and argument was not ultimately persuasive. Hot-hearted passion was no substitute for cool-headed logic, as one Baptist layman subsequently recognised:

Gambling may, or may not be wrong in itself, but if we Baptists think it is, then please let us put forward some valid, sensible arguments against it, instead of the 'airy fairy' platitudes we sometimes hear from the pulpit. How could any intelligent man really believe that the purchase of a 5 cent raffle ticket from a boy scout is the first step on a downward path to degradation? ... We might easily convince an addict that moderation would be to his benefit – we will never convince a man who ... sometimes buys a savings bond or a raffle ticket, that he is committing a sin by so doing.<sup>171</sup>

What Baptists needed to do was enter the public square with compelling arguments to win the debate about what was best for the common good. This they did not do. They tried, for the most part, to force their convictions on their fellow citizens through political clamour and experienced what their forbears – Radicals and Dissenters – had insisted: moral convictions could not be forced on people.

Perhaps, then, the main reason for the unraveling of regulation was the simple fact that the majority of the population – and their parliamentary representatives – were not ultimately persuaded that gambling was always and everywhere wrong – wrong 'in toto'. In 1946 the Royal Commission on Gaming and Racing recommended off-course totalisator betting and the raffling of any goods, provided it was not for private gain. The Commissioners reasoned that gambling was a matter of personal conscience and not the business of the state: 'History,' they said, 'is redolent with examples of the unwisdom of the State attempting to adopt repressive or coercive measures in respect of matters of private conduct in opposition to the personal convictions of numerous sections of the community.'<sup>172</sup>

Prior to World War One, however, the State was willing to attempt such coercive measures. On a legislative level, Protestant churches achieved remarkable success in their fight against gambling. United by powerful evangelical impulses, inspired – sometimes cajoled – by gifted leaders like J.J. North, and assisted by a cultural climate hospitable to this kind of campaign, Baptists fought a sustained and passionate battle against the 'many-headed Hydra'. But the evangelical

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<sup>171</sup> L.E. Treliving, *NZB*, December 1970, 6-7.

<sup>172</sup> Grant, *On a Roll*, 127.

style of crusade employed by many Baptists, while able to raise mass support and shift political will, was not effective in the long term. As often as heads were cut off, they seemed to grow back. Slowly policy makers embraced the view that careful regulation to protect the most vulnerable was a better strategy than absolute condemnation and blanket prohibitions.<sup>173</sup>

**John Tucker**  
**Carey Baptist College**

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<sup>173</sup> For discussion of a similar trajectory in Britain see Rachel Lampard, 'Church Responses to Gambling', *Political Theology* 5:2 (2004) 219-230 at 225.

## **Hesitating too long: the New Zealand Baptist College 1952-1974**

### **ABSTRACT**

This essay examines the development of the model of training at the New Zealand Baptist College in the 1950s and 60s. The college, swept along in an optimistic decade, expanded confidently, but failed to revise its assumptions about the shaping of ministers. The 'Household' model with which it had started a generation earlier was continued essentially unaltered, even if in a new setting. When the need for significant change became more obvious and urgent in the 1960s the college acted too slowly, losing momentum - indeed, arguably, losing its way. By the time a new 'Community' model was finally embraced, the needs and aspirations of students, society and church were changing again.

New Zealand Baptists commenced their own theological college in 1926 under the strong guidance of J.J. North. In the principalships of North and his successor Luke Jenkins, training followed the 'household' model typical of small nonconformist seminaries. Ministerial trainees were expected to be single and to reside literally in the household of the Principal, learning as much by observation and sheer proximity as in the classroom. Under the charismatic North this had worked well. Jenkins, however, had a much tougher time. Post-war men sought a freer model, chafing in the tightness and constriction of cramped living quarters and restrictive policies. Jenkins, increasingly unable to retain the support of students and denomination, resigned with recriminations all around in 1952. This was not, however, the end of the household approach. The optimism generated in the 1950s deflected any calls for innovation. The college would change its location and many of its programmes but the fundamental model remained intact. When head winds began to blow through the 1960s the college responded slowly, reluctantly, missing key opportunities to construct a new way. The period thus falls naturally into two distinct phases, reflecting the changing times and the instinctive approaches of two Principals.

**Phase One: 1952-1960****Denomination & Society**

The nineteen-fifties was a decade of growing prosperity for New Zealand, and for the Baptist denomination. The country, spared destruction of infrastructure during the war, welcomed back its servicemen and women in the expectation of better times. This hope was largely justified. The now famous 'baby boom' began, with the population further augmented by large-scale post-war European immigration. New Zealand's largest market, Britain, was by contrast in need of massive reconstruction and consumed products from its former colonies at a great rate. The result in New Zealand was a boom, which created full employment and an explosion of home building and public works. New suburbs and towns appeared, each a potential site for a new church.

The decade saw the greatest proportional growth in Baptist membership in the twentieth century. In 1950 the total membership of Baptist churches was 10,165. By 1960 this had swelled to 14,789, an increase of 45%. With members go churches and, of course, the need for more ministers. Baptists began a large number of churches in the 1950s, two thirds of them in new suburbs.<sup>1</sup> Some others disappeared, but by 1960 there were 138 churches, up from 94 in 1950. Baptists were not alone in this growth. Most other Christian denominations benefited from a period in which society still looked to the church for certainties in a troubled world and when the return of traditional values was valued after the disruption of war. The good times for religion culminated in the 1959 mission of Billy Graham. If complacency crept in, it would be challenged by the emergence of youth culture, television, birth control and the Vietnam War in the 'sixties. There were seeds of this already evident in the 1950s,<sup>2</sup> but in general the churches did well.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Taylor has identified this trend, which was particularly evident in the Auckland Association. In the 1950s the Association launched fourteen churches - Henderson and Mt Roskill in 1950, Murray's Bay (Windsor Park) in 1951, Hillsborough, Howick and Papakura in 1952, followed by Glendowie-St Heliers (1953), Tamaki/Panmure (1954), Birkdale (1955), Owairaka (1956), Te Atatu (1957), Tikipunga (1958), with Glen Eden and Whangaparaoa both in 1959. Another centre for urban growth was in Wellington, especially the Hutt Valley and the Western Coast.

<sup>2</sup> In 1954 the New Zealand Government commissioned an enquiry into the sexual habits of teenagers. Official concern at the possible corrosion of

Also reflecting the trends of the day was a greater centralisation of Baptist life. When the pastoral oversight of the amiable Percy Lanyon came to an end in 1955 his successor as General Secretary was L.A. North, a graduate of the college and an advocate of a strong denomination. The college would be seen as a key component of that vision. North's commitment to ecumenism saw him serving the National Council of Churches in a range of capacities, notably as President 1959-60.<sup>4</sup> He sought, and largely achieved, a profile for Baptists which avoided them being dismissed as fringe sectarians. All this added to the confidence of the denomination.

The general buoyancy extended to the denominational college. The decade had begun with controversy and upset. Yet the trauma surrounding the resignation of Luke Jenkins in 1952 did little to restrain the growing self-belief. Indeed, ironically, it seems to have accelerated the effect rather than slowed it. It was as if the contrary post-war tides suddenly all abated at once. With the tensions surrounding the college apparently resolved, the more conducive societal environment could be enjoyed. A new Principal would benefit from a relieved enthusiasm for the college and its role in Baptist life. Ministers were in demand. The college periodically came under pressure to release students early or to modify the course. The goodwill of the denomination towards the college enabled the household model of training at least nominally to be sustained, but this would be its last hurrah.

### Welcoming a New Principal

Despite its initial intention to find a New Zealand appointee to succeed Luke Jenkins, the College Board quickly settled on E.J. (Ted) Roberts-Thomson. As had been the case in 1945, when founding Principal J.J. North had retired, no viable local candidate had a formal theological qualification. Roberts-Thomson had a Melbourne B.D. and came with

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moral standards was so great that a copy of the 'Mazengarb Report' (the commission was headed by O.C. Mazengarb, the senior partner in the Baptist Union's official firm of solicitors) was sent to every home in the country. See James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001), 504-507.

<sup>3</sup> For a description of wider church expansionism in the 1950s see Allan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Christianity and Society in New Zealand* (Wellington: Education for Ministry, 1991), esp. 159-162.

<sup>4</sup> See entry for L.A. North in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, 4 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000).

strong recommendations from Australian Baptist leaders. His appointment was endorsed by a vote of 176 to 1 at the 1952 Assembly. Ayson Clifford, who had been appointed tutor in the last years of North's tenure and had continued in that role somewhat unhappily under Jenkins, was raised from Tutor to Vice-Principal.<sup>5</sup> It had been anticipated that Jenkins would see out his term of appointment, which did not expire until the end of 1953. When Jenkins decided to conclude a year early the Board considered a range of interim solutions but was saved from implementing any of these by Roberts-Thomson's willingness to commence almost immediately.<sup>6</sup> His terms of appointment were virtually the same as Jenkins' had been, with the key assumption still being that he and his family would live with the students and that Mrs Roberts-Thomson would manage the household. Ayson Clifford, having witnessed at first hand the difficulties of the Jenkins years, questioned whether the live-in requirement was wise.<sup>7</sup> Little heed was taken, although, in an unrelated move, responsibility for the day to day financial affairs of the college was shifted away from the Principal's wife (where it had sat for Mrs Jenkins) and given to Clifford.<sup>8</sup>

Edward (Ted) Roberts-Thomson (1909-1987) had been born in England but was raised in Tasmania. Although from a Brethren background, he trained for ministry at the Baptist College of Victoria (now Whitley) in the 1930s. After a short pastorate in Tasmania he travelled to England to study at Bristol Baptist College, where he completed a B.A. in Theology together with an M.A. at Bristol University. This study began a lifelong interest in ecumenism and resulted in the publication of a book on the potential for cooperation between Baptists and the Disciples of Christ. On his return to Australia in 1940 Roberts-Thomson served in number of churches and spent time as a military chaplain. He completed a Bachelor of Divinity at Melbourne and in 1952 was serving at the Brunswick Baptist Church in Melbourne.

Stung by the almost total collapse of relations with Luke Jenkins, the Board was determined that its next Principal would be a success. In this they were aided by the Roberts-Thomsons. The family arrived in style, by flying boat on the Waitemata harbour. The new Principal and wife immediately took their place in Baptist life. Their easy manner and

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<sup>5</sup> On Clifford's vice-principalship see Baptist College Board Minutes (BM) 1 November 1952. [N.Z. Baptist Archive].

<sup>6</sup> BM 1 November 1952, ff. 134-5.

<sup>7</sup> Baptist College Administrative Committee Minutes (Admin. CM) 30 October 1952. [N.Z. Baptist Archive].

<sup>8</sup> Admin. CM, 27 February 1953.

informality was immediately noted.<sup>9</sup> Indeed the Roberts-Thomsons seemed to have had a talent for cordial relationships (although their close personal interest in students extended to shaping their table manners). Gwen Roberts-Thomson was a major part of this winsome combination. She is described by a number who knew her as a 'Queen of the Manse' type who was always able to provide efficient hospitality and encouragement.

Ayson Clifford immediately relaxed under his new Principal. 'He was genial, cheerful and kindly. He had strong opinions but expressed them in a most disarming manner. I soon found he welcomed my input into College life and Administration.'<sup>10</sup> Known affectionately as 'the Boss', Ted Roberts-Thomson was a personable, gentle figure who nonetheless took a lead in college and denominational affairs. His own experience gave him a keen insight into the Australasian evangelical culture and he was able readily to 'speak the language'. His interest in ecumenism nevertheless continued and during his tenure at the college he completed a doctoral thesis on 'Baptists and the Ecumenical Movement' which was later published.

The induction and welcome meetings at the Auckland Tabernacle in March 1953 picked up these signals. Recording the event, N.R. Wood declared that 'New Zealand Baptists have had given to them from God a man for Principal of whom they can be justly proud. He will, we prophesy, by his spirituality and quiet charm, capture the affection of all our people.'<sup>11</sup> Wood had been optimistic before. This time, at least on the last point, he would be right.

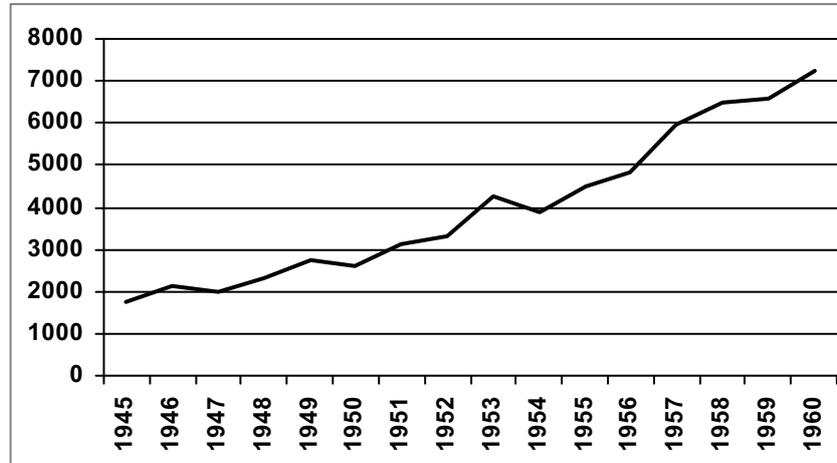
Roberts-Thomsen had arrived at a fortuitous moment. Not only was the mood of the denomination good but so also were the finances of the college. After the straightened years of the 1930s and war years the outstanding feature of the college accounts was the rapid and continuous rise in the total revenue and expenditure. The revenue for the 1945 year showed total income of £1765. This represented only a modest rise from 1928, the first year of the college's operation at Mt Hobson, when the income was £1449. From 1945 the figure rose steeply to be £3144 in 1950, £4229 in 1955 and £7749 in 1960. Thus the total quadrupled over fifteen years and multiplied by nearly 250% in the 1950s. Operating expenditure kept pace with this, moving from £1748 in 1945 to £7226 in 1960.

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<sup>9</sup> NZB, March 1953, 54

<sup>10</sup> Ayson Clifford, Unpublished Memoirs 3.29. [N.Z. Baptist Archive].

<sup>11</sup> NZB, April 1953, 84.



### 1. Baptist College Operating Expenditure 1945-1960

These figures are impressive but they are indicative of the general expansionism of the period. What is perhaps more pertinent is the gradual change in the mix of sources from which funding was obtained. The Randall estate, delayed in its ability to provide first by the effects of the Napier earthquake and then by depression, was by 1945 providing its full quotient of funding and it would continue to do so for the next twenty years. It was not able, however, to keep up the proportion of the total budget it represented in 1945. As no further major bequests or endowments came to the college, the rapid increase in total budget meant the shrinking of the Randall proportion, from 8.3% in 1945 to 3% in 1960.

This decline reflected, in part, the general Baptist Union practice of allocating all income from trust funds, rather than retaining amounts to maintain or even increase annual income. It also signaled the continued dependence of the college on annually donated income rather than endowment or fees. As had been the case from the beginning the college did not find ways of generating significant income which could be seen to be more or less within its control. Endowments did not build, and there remained a commitment to support students throughout their training, charging nominal fees and board but not expecting the student body to be net contributors to the college revenue.

For the most part this was regarded as a strength, rather than a weakness. The dependence of the college on the denominational donations was held to ensure that it was kept 'honest' and in reasonable

touch with the mood of the churches. Whereas in the early years these donations depended on the Auckland Tabernacle Trust and the Baptist Bible Class Movement, increasingly the denominational 'Forward Work Appeal' (which succeeded from 1949 the 'Triple Appeal') became the major source of revenue.<sup>12</sup> This took some time to build momentum. In 1950, with the end of subsidy through State rehabilitation grants for returned soldiers, the accounts needed to be rescued yet again by a timely donation from the Tabernacle Trust. As the 1950s progressed, however, support for the college was very strong. Not only was operating revenue maintained but, in addition, two major capital fundraising drives for capital building projects yielded over 45,000 between them.

In financial terms at least, the college was becoming more and more tied to the Baptist Union. The Forward Work appeal provided over half the budget in 1960. Moreover, from 1957, an annual grant direct from Union funds became a standard feature of the accounts. Such a grant had been made before, in 1939-40, but it was then a response to difficult economic circumstances left over from the depression and problems with the Randall estate. Now it would be a permanent feature which would come to dominate the accounts.<sup>13</sup>

### **Finding a New Site**

The college would need this financial strength. The need for an acceptable new Principal was not the only crisis being faced in 1952. The stresses of recent years and the projected needs of an increasingly confident denomination had at last added a sense of urgency regarding the need for better facilities. A number of leads had been pursued in the last few years of Luke Jenkins' time, but none had borne fruit. The Board was under no illusion that its challenges would fade away with the arrival of Ted Roberts-Thomson. A new record of seventeen students were in training. Some were asked to 'live out', and it was considered whether the new Principal and family might also be found off-site

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<sup>12</sup> The 'Triple Appeal' had helped fund the college, church extension and youth work. When the Maori work was added the title became inappropriate. This appeal has often struggled to meet its targets. The other major appeal the overseas mission focused 'Self Denial' appeal has generally fared better.

<sup>13</sup> A notable acknowledgement of the integration of College and Union was the move to include the college accounts with those of the Union from 1959. Until that time they had been reported separately.

accommodation.<sup>14</sup> In February 1953 a 'call to prayer' was issued to the churches. Once more the potential of the existing property on Mt Hobson was assessed and found to be inadequate. Attention turned again to other available sites. Three acres at Murray's Bay on Auckland's North Shore were rejected, as the aim remained to find a central location. By July investigations had focused on Dr Paterson's home at 63 Victoria Avenue. This property had been considered before, in 1951 when the asking price of £32,000 was considered too steep. However, the site was subject to planning restrictions at the time and two years later it was still on the market. After a new valuation and negotiation over boundaries the Board was able to purchase the large house together with approximately four acres for £18,500. This news was conveyed immediately to the churches. Prayer was sought and warning given that a major fundraising effort would be required.<sup>15</sup>

The Board had shown that it was capable of acting swiftly. It was of course able to benefit from earlier research but it is also clear that in 1953 it was operating in an atmosphere of hopeful goodwill in the denomination, freed from the widespread misgivings which had dogged the last years of Luke Jenkins' principalship. Every bit of that goodwill would be needed. It was estimated that the purchase and necessary alterations and additional buildings would total £35,000 of which only £15,000 was at hand or anticipated from the sale of existing properties.<sup>16</sup> An appeal for £20,000 was launched at the 1953 Assembly. This was acknowledged to be a very large sum. The response exceeded expectations. By the time the appeal closed, nearly £22,500 had been raised, including some £2000 from the consistently supportive Auckland Tabernacle Trust.

The plan was as ambitious as the appeal. Renovations to the main house on the new property provided a Principal's residence upstairs with two lecture rooms, offices, a library, dining room and kitchens on the ground floor. Crucially, students were no longer to live under the same roof as the Principal. The 'North Wing' (named not for its location but in memory of the first Principal) would have rooms and facilities for twenty students. A new house for the Vice-Principal was added and ministers eventually subscribed £500 towards a chapel constructed on the basement level.

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<sup>14</sup> Admin. CM 2 December 1952.

<sup>15</sup> See Admin. CM 6 July, 16 July & 4 August 1953 and the note to Churches of 6 August 1953 - Baptist Archive B15/50.

<sup>16</sup> The sale of the Mt Hobson house and the Vice-principal's house eventually raised £9853 and £3298 respectively.

The new site was operational from the start of 1954. However, as the new accommodation wing had not yet been built, students continued to reside in the house on Mt Hobson. Almost immediately, however, pressure came on for even more expansion. The introduction of the Deaconesses course and the continued increase in male student numbers made the college look small again. By 1958 four men were in relocatable huts placed in front of the North Wing. The Deaconess trainees were housed at a Methodist Hostel a few houses up the hill on Victoria Avenue. The decision was taken to build another accommodation block with space for sixteen students. This meant another major investment, in the order of £21,000. The college was thus going back to the churches for major fundraising within five years of the largest appeal to date, when assurances had been given that it would be 'a once in a lifetime' need.

The plan envisaged a new, large dining room attached to the main building and leading to two-story accommodation, with the women on the first floor and men below. 'Driver House' (later morphed to 'Wing') was named for H.H. Driver, the first New Zealander to be trained for ministry and who was involved at all levels of denominational life from the 1890s. The major building work was completed by the end of 1958. Fundraising, however, took somewhat longer. By the middle of 1959 less than half the cost had been promised. A special appeal day in July brought in a further £3750 and by the end of the year the full amount was almost completely covered.<sup>17</sup> The official opening was held during the 1959 Assembly.

Given that the term of the fundraising had coincided with a major appeal by the Bible Training Institute (which also drew greatly on Baptist loyalties) this was another impressive result. In seven years the denomination had found over £45,000 for capital projects at the college. Even this, however, was not the end. By the end of the decade Roberts-Thomson was warning of the approaching need to consider accommodation for married students. At stake was not merely more buildings, but a potential shift in the approach to training.

### **Theological Study in a Wider Frame**

Ted Roberts-Thomson had experienced a broader preparation for leadership in theological education than either of his predecessors. He had studied in both Australia and England and his Master's thesis began a process of broadening his appreciation of other denominations. He

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<sup>17</sup> See the insert in the *NZB* July 1959 and *NZB*, September 1959, 232.

brought to the New Zealand college a clear vision for standards and for the future of the institution. Under his guidance the college expanded and subtly changed its character. North's intellectual agenda was broad and vigorous, but his college was essentially for nurturing the key youth of a small faith community. Luke Jenkins sought to add more recognised academic standards. Roberts-Thomson wanted this and more. The college needed to be larger, better resourced, with a multi-faceted agenda. It is an interesting reflection on his skills and the times that he largely succeeded.

A symbol of the new mood and opportunity is found in the formal curriculum. Luke Jenkins had met stiff resistance from students when he sought to make the Melbourne College of Divinity's L.Th. the norm. One of Roberts-Thomson's first moves was to make this qualification compulsory – a decision which was accepted without any apparent question.<sup>18</sup> The college year was extended to accommodate the M.C.D. examination period and the college agreed to meet the costs of students. By 1956 there was some concern that the Melbourne curriculum was dominating the programme.<sup>19</sup> The L.Th remained the basis for the college course but in 1958 a shift took place to encourage qualified students into the New Zealand Bachelor of Divinity, which was held to be better integrated with the college programme. At the same time a new proposal, for an ecumenical Bachelor of Arts in Theology, emerged from the Theological Colleges Conference in Christchurch in May 1958. A plan, agreed by all colleges, was developed and discussions were held with the University of New Zealand and the nascent University of Auckland. Talks continued, though with the plan in danger of getting lost in the transition to regional Universities.<sup>20</sup> There was also resolute opposition to theology within the University of Auckland. In 1961 a greatly pared back proposal saw agreement for two Biblical History and Literature papers to be offered within the ordinary B.A. at Auckland.<sup>21</sup>

A potentially enriching addition to the training emerged in 1956 when Roberts-Thomson suggested that the board open the possibility of students studying a year overseas in the final year of their college course. This was approved, on the understanding that the college did not have to

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<sup>18</sup> Roberts-Thomson, 'Annual Report' November 1953.

<sup>19</sup> See the report of the Board of Studies, Admin.. CM 31 January 1956 and Admin. CM 7 May 1956.

<sup>20</sup> Admin. CM 9 June 1958; 2 May 1960; 1 August 1960.

<sup>21</sup> See Principal's Report, Admin. CM 6 April 1961.

pay!<sup>22</sup> Two students took up this option, to study industrial and rural evangelism respectively. Roberts-Thomson saw potential for students 'to gain not only general experience, but further degrees or diplomas in specific fields.'<sup>23</sup>

Staffing was a challenge throughout the 1950s. In 1956, despite the increase in student numbers, the introduction of new courses and the need to prepare for external exams, it was felt that a third full time faculty member was not yet needed.<sup>24</sup> The college came increasingly to rely on visiting lecturers. Cecil Boggis, J.J. Burt, Stan Edgar, Ridland Jamieson, Hugh Kemp, Selwyn Marlow, L.N. Rawlings, Les Rushbrook, Ewen Simpson, John Thompson and Bert Whitten helped out in various ways. Simpson gave a popular series on 'Modern Cults' in 1956. Pastoral Theology was provided by students attending classes under Dr D.O. Williams at Trinity Methodist College.

Not all the visiting lecturers were highly qualified or able to specialize in their fields. The result was an uneven range of courses. Tom Cadman was once summoned to the Principal to account for the complaint by a visiting lecturer that he was not taking any notes in class. His response was that there was nothing worth writing down! On the other hand, students' own attempts to promote intellectual rigour generally languished. For a time a theology club existed alongside a college branch of the Theology Students Fellowship. The two were merged in 1956 but even the combined group struggled, arranging the odd speaker but repeatedly reporting to the students that nothing had happened since the last meeting.<sup>25</sup>

A desire to escape this dilemma lay behind Roberts-Thomson's proposal that Ayson Clifford begin to concentrate on Old Testament studies. The college had followed a pattern typical of small institutions in which all staff were generalists. Since his appointment as Tutor in 1945 Clifford had taught a range of subjects, including Church History, Psychology, Comparative Religion, Greek and English. He had himself taken courses in Psychology, Philosophy and Church History. Not until 1950 did he begin to teach Old Testament exegesis. He became quite drawn to this area. However, his appointment as Vice-Principal on a

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<sup>22</sup> Admin. CM 4 September 1956 (Principal's Report) and 2 November 1956.

<sup>23</sup> Admin. CM (Principal's Report) 9 June 1958.

<sup>24</sup> Admin. CM 6 February 1956.

<sup>25</sup> See Baptist College Students' Association Minutes (SM) 1 March; 5 April; 4 October 1956; 3 October 1957.

staff of two indicated an expectation that the generalist approach would continue. Roberts-Thomson wanted to change that. He approached the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the American Schools of Oriental Research and arranged study periods for Clifford through each. With assistance from the ever-generous Tabernacle Trust, the college was able to send Clifford on a sabbatical year in 1955. It was, Clifford reflected, 'the most interesting year of my life.'<sup>26</sup>

Roberts-Thomson saw Clifford's study leave as more than a reward for ten years service. In May 1955, whilst Clifford was overseas, Roberts-Thomson proposed that 'in line with the future specialization of college tuition' Clifford's title be changed to 'Professor of Old Testament'. A further justification was given, that 'this would bring our college in line with other theological colleges in this matter.'<sup>27</sup> For similar reasons he mooted the addition of the adjective 'Theological' to the college's name.<sup>28</sup> The Clifford proposal languished and true specialization remained a dream for thirty years. The college name on the other hand was amended in 1960.

In the mean-time the Principal's own academic research had continued. In 1957 he was awarded a Doctorate in Divinity from the Melbourne College of Divinity for his thesis on Baptists and the Ecumenical movement. The topic followed on from his earlier Master's study. It also fitted with the general thrust of Roberts-Thomson's vision. The college needed to get bigger and have more staff so as to enable higher academic standards through concentration on chosen fields. Both staff and students needed to be exposed to international and ecumenical developments. The college should discover its place in the Christian world, beyond the confines of a small, colonial denomination.

With the purchase of the new site the dynamics of the household model came under pressure. Life began to change. Through 1954 residential students lived at Mt Hobson whilst taking classes at Victoria Avenue. The Roberts-Thomsons had moved into the first floor in the new college at the start of that year. The completion of the North Wing and the Vice Principal's house brought all of the college together for the first time since the early 1940s. The structure of college life was still based on the boarding school house model. Students were awakened by bells and took breakfast and lunch with the Roberts-Thomsons. A considerable element of formality lay over these meals. Students were

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<sup>26</sup> Clifford Memoirs 3.37.

<sup>27</sup> Admin. CM 2 May 1955.

<sup>28</sup> Admin. CM 6 October 1958; CM 27 October 1958.

rostered to sit at the top table with the Roberts-Thomsons, who took particular interest in the style and manners of students, regarding good etiquette as an essential skill in the pastorate. Ties were to be worn. (A rebellion which called for the recognition of cravats was soon quashed.)<sup>29</sup> In the evenings the Principal's family generally dined alone. On Sundays the convention was that students would be out of the college for as much of the day as practicable, to enable a bit more freedom for the Roberts-Thomsons. The cook, Ada Weatherall, also lived in at the college.

Inevitable changes came about, however, due to the separate living quarters. The students now had much more unsupervised time. The North wing consisted of a lounge and communal bathroom, plus twenty single rooms which doubled as studies. These were on both sides of a long corridor. It was basic accommodation. The students had to fight for tea making facilities. In the late 1950s power restrictions led to a prohibition on the use of heaters.<sup>30</sup> Most of the residents were students of the college, although boarders (generally Baptist university students) were brought in if there were vacancies. On Saturday nights, students could invite girl friends and fiancés to dinner, after which they might visit in the North wing common room. Annual Fellowship Meetings with the Bible Training Institute (B.T.I) and Trinity Methodist continued as they had since the early years. In 1955 the B.T.I. meeting was planned early in the year but 'a suggestion that the girls be invited was not approved'.

A tradition of annual retreats emerged. These did not begin as especially 'spiritual' events but usually consisted of borrowing a bach and relaxing for a weekend of 'organised chaos'.<sup>31</sup> By 1960 they had become serious affairs, requiring a visiting speaker. With the arrival of the Deaconess trainees a dilemma presented itself. Could they come to the retreat? In 1959 it was decided to invite them 'subject to the Principal's consent'. It wasn't granted.<sup>32</sup>

### **Deaconesses**

Although the college had never restricted its training to men, no women had been students since Thelma Gandy (26-28) and it was the unspoken

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<sup>29</sup> SM July 1957; 8 August 1957; 6 March 1958.

<sup>30</sup> SM 10 July 1958; 8 April; 4 June 1959

<sup>31</sup> SM 1 July 1954.

<sup>32</sup> SM 8 April, 4 June 1959.

assumption that 'the ministry' was a male domain. However, a number of churches had established staff positions for 'deaconesses' who might have trained at the B.T.I. and who were employed to assist with pastoral visiting. In other denominations, notably the Presbyterians and Methodists a trained order of Deaconesses had long been established. The Baptists took a while to follow their lead. Following a call at the 1952 Assembly to reconsider the role of women in ministry a Deaconesses training programme was instituted. In most ways this mirrored the men's course. It was governed by a Committee consisting of the College Board plus a number of women and there was an Auckland Administrative Committee consisting of the College Administrative Committee plus a smaller number of women. The academic programme was proposed to be a minimum of one year, though in content it was identical to that of the men. The only difference (in theory) was in practical experience, which was to be focused on pastoral care, women and children. There was no female faculty member and the Principal had the same responsibility for the Deaconesses as for the Ministry trainees.

The first Deaconess student commenced in 1956. Patricia Preest was a trained nurse from Auckland who had previously spent two years at the B.T.I.. She wrote of her decision to pioneer this course.

Why a deaconess? Because there are numerous small causes crying out for leadership. Why a deaconess? Because Ministers of big churches are overtaxed with work. Why a deaconess? Because my Lord Jesus Christ said 'Follow thou Me'.<sup>33</sup>

Pat Preest was joined in 1957 by Shirley Wilson and Joyce Wilby with Claire Gilbert in the scheme but working at the Oxford Terrace Church in Christchurch. Accommodation was found at the Winstone House Methodist Hostel, conveniently placed two doors up Victoria Avenue from the college.

The Deaconesses course was in some ways a strange programme. The New Zealand Baptist version was derived from local and overseas models. It provided a means of recognising professional ministry by women. In some cases work roles already filled were acknowledged through the new scheme. There was an early wave of interest. In August 1956 it looked as if there would be more applicants for deaconess than for ministerial training.<sup>34</sup> That it gave a valuable lift in status and visibility is without question, as is the contribution which the women who became

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<sup>33</sup> *College Magazine* 1956, 21

<sup>34</sup> Admin. CM 7 August 1956.

part of the scheme made to denominational life and mission. But it came late and was a half-way house that would eventually be overtaken by the question 'why not equal standing with men?' There seems to have been no clear philosophy behind it.

Nevertheless, the impact on the college was profound. The presence of women in the classroom, in some cases achieving the best marks and winning prizes, was a novelty. On average the deaconesses were an older group by about five years than the men. Those at the Methodist hostel were similarly older than the average Methodist students who stayed there. Their presence in the college required a certain lift in decorum, particularly with the very correct model of the Roberts-Thomsons always on display.

### **A Changing Community**

Other than the arrival of women, the most obvious example of change among the students across the fifties was the increase in numbers. The period was a time of almost constant growth (see chart). It was a sign of confidence in the college but it created headaches. Plans for extra accommodation were regular business items for the Administration Committee. Statistics and projections were pored over, in an effort to predict needs and demand.

Marriage continued to be a contested issue. Ron Finlay had trained as an already married man. Ken McCormack and Lewis Lowery, both already married, (the McCormacks with two children) were accepted for training in 1956 on the proviso that part-time pastorates could be secured. The college did not pretend to be able to house or support families. McCormack was stationed at Ponsonby, Lowery at Howick. This meant that neither could take part in the community life of the college. Roberts-Thomson called for a review of the whole question of married students but this produced little change.<sup>35</sup> For unmarried students, getting engaged was not a problem, although it was expected that the matter would be discussed with the Principal. The college board was very clear, however that arrangements for marriage should not be made until a student was placed in a church at the conclusion of his study.<sup>36</sup> The board negotiated placements with churches and needed to be sure that appropriate accommodation for a married couple was available. The students chaffed at this level of control. The difficulties

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<sup>35</sup> Admin. CM 3 October 1955.

<sup>36</sup> BM 3 November 1954, f. 160.

presented by having to wait for up to four years proved too much for some engagements. Approaches were made to the board to reconsider the policy. Again, there was no change.<sup>37</sup> A pattern emerged in which there was a batch of exit student marriages between December and February at the end of training.<sup>38</sup>

In 1958 Ayson Clifford addressed the question with a proposal to combine home mission interests and college training through an arrangement with the Auckland Association by which married students would be attached to struggling or new causes in the region. This would have institutionalised the arrangements made for Ken McCormick and Lewis Lowery in 1956. However, there was no suggestion of college accommodation, nor that this might be an option for currently single students with plans. The student pastorates 'must be reserved for mature married men and not for younger single men who would like to do their training in a state of married bliss!'<sup>39</sup> In 1959 the full Board reaffirmed a policy along these lines. A suggestion by the Administration Committee that any future plans give consideration to married quarters was rejected. 'It is the firm opinion of the college that single students, living in is the ideal in training men for the ministry.'<sup>40</sup> The issue would not go away, however. In August 1960, with a shortage of trained ministers becoming evident, the Board noted that three married students had applied for entry in 1961.

By the late 1950s the student body was changing in other ways. They had to resolve among themselves how they would regulate smoking and gambling in the common room.<sup>41</sup> A number became interested in emerging Pentecostal trends and some invited visitors to speak to students. On at least one occasion this was done without consultation with the faculty. Ayson Clifford felt that Roberts-Thomson dealt sensitively with the question. The students, however were not so sure. A meeting on July 14 (Bastille Day) resolved that

While we recognize the need and value of advice from those who are more mature and experienced, we deplore any denial of religious liberty through pressure applied to students to prevent them hearing, reading, being present or participating in that which

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<sup>37</sup> SM 3 March 1955.

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. Admin. CM 6 October 1958.

<sup>39</sup> Admin. CM 5 May 1958.

<sup>40</sup> BM 26 October 1959. See 'Report of Property Sub-Committee', Admin CM 6 August 1957.

<sup>41</sup> SM 7 November 1957; 1 May 1958; see also SM 5 October 1961 for an identical policy on smoking.

they feel will be of personal spiritual profit, or for the better understanding of their ministry.<sup>42</sup>

As the new decade opened up the college faced a range of new demands and pressures as the students evolved into the baby boom generation. As in wider society rapid and multifaceted change would have a profound impact on the Baptist training and ministry.

### **Losing a Principal**

Ted Roberts Thomson gave notice of his resignation as Principal in 1960. It was, to most in Baptist circles, a surprise. His Principalship had been peaceful whilst at the same time full of apparent change and expansion. Roberts-Thomson had been appointed for an initial five year term. Perhaps because things were going so well the usual practice of confirming reappointment a year ahead was not followed.<sup>43</sup> In May 1957 terms were proposed which offered an unlimited term. An important innovation was a recognition of the principle of a year's paid leave after eight years service (presumably for study purposes, although this was not specified). In addition to the salary, £200 was to be provided to assist with travel costs. However, after consultation with the full board the provision for travel costs was dropped.<sup>44</sup> Although this alteration may have rankled, the fact remains that Roberts Thomson had the full support of the denomination and that, further, he chose to conclude his Principalship at the very time that he would have been eligible for his study leave.

Some factors can be identified which may well have contributed to Roberts-Thomson's decision to resign. In December 1958 he proposed to that Board that the college purchase 3.5 acres of bare land adjoining the college property. This had just become available and was lauded by Roberts-Thomson as 'our amazing opportunity.' He likened the prospect to that currently before the New South Wales Baptists.

Next year that State with roughly our own Baptist constituency and only a slightly larger population, will see Baptists stepping into a new property planning unimagined things...they are anticipating in 1959 to provide accommodation and training at the College for ministers, Missionaries,...for Deaconesses, for Youth Directors in the churches, for Ministers Wives and fiancées, and

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<sup>42</sup> SM 41 July 1960.

<sup>43</sup> Admin. CM 30 October 1956, f. 181.

<sup>44</sup> Admin. CM 5 May; 6 August 1957.

for any who wish to obtain better training for Christian Service.  
Does all this point to what we may expect here in the future?<sup>45</sup>

The Board, troubled somewhat by the slow response to the Driver House appeal, took no action. This was deeply regretted by their Principal. In May 1959 he lamented 'it looks as if we have hesitated too long.'<sup>46</sup> It is clear that Roberts-Thomson had a big vision for the college. His earlier moves to align its title and practices with international conventions reflect that goal. That the board did not see itself able to grasp that vision as firmly as he wanted it to in 1959 was a disappointment.

Towards the end of 1959 the strain of the heavy work-load of the Principal began to exact a toll on both Dr and Mrs Roberts-Thomson. In March 1960 he was reporting to the board that medical advice suggested either relief through extra staffing or through resignation. The Board, which had been considering the possibility of an additional tutor for some time, acted swiftly to adjust duties and provide leave as soon as possible. By July a decision had been made to appoint a third tutor and to provide a Principal's house to relieve Mrs Roberts-Thomson of domestic supervision. By then however, Roberts-Thomson had been nominated to the Principalship of the Baptist College in New South Wales.<sup>47</sup> It was the prospects of this same college that he had praised in December 1958. Reflecting on this in his final report to the Board he revealed it had been on his and his wife's mind since late 1959 and that they had concluded that they must give 'what remaining strength we have' to helping establish the New South Wales College 'in its new premises and in building up its tradition of service there.'<sup>48</sup>

His perception of what would be possible in Sydney was undoubtedly part of the 'pull' to the new position. There seems to have been little, to 'push' him from the New Zealand college, other than perhaps a sense that the horizons were smaller, and that he may already have achieved there what he would. This, coupled with his health crisis, meant that Roberts-Thomson had run out of steam somewhat. As it transpired, the strong sense of call to Sydney he avowed would be cruelly knocked. His time in Auckland had been immensely successful for eight

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<sup>45</sup> E. Roberts-Thomson, 'Buying Up the Opportunity' see Admin. CM 1 December 1958.

<sup>46</sup> Admin. CM 1 July; 1 September 1958; 2 February 1959 and Principal's Report 4 May 1959.

<sup>47</sup> Admin. CM 7 March; 11 July 1960. See also the report of a sub-committee on staffing Admin.. CM 4 May 1959.

<sup>48</sup> Principal's Report, BM 2 November 1960.

years but new challenges were coming and renewed energy and commitment would have been necessary had he stayed.

### **Phase Two: 1961-1973**

#### **Increasing Complexity**

The optimism of the 1950s initially carried forward into the next decade. New Zealand reached a peak in its standard of living. The baby boom was affecting many aspects of society, from housing to education. Cities continued to expand and to draw in rural populations. The bulge in numbers did not have a serious impact on employment until the later 1960s. Terms of trade were good, television had arrived and more New Zealanders than ever gained access to tertiary education. Few foresaw that this heady combination of affluence and exposure to world trends and new ideas would lead to social revolution. Ayson Clifford certainly did not. His Principalship would be characterised by energetic efforts to diversify the college's offerings and to analyse trends in the denomination. The college continued to receive support from the *N.Z. Baptist* magazine and the College Board became one of the premier committees, with healthy competition for election. Yet, like most others, Clifford did not anticipate the extent of change in society at large. Despite his best efforts, by the end of the decade the college was languishing.

The denomination itself was facing significant challenges. The General Secretaryship of L.A. North continued until 1966. North's ambition was to secure a place for Baptists among the mainstream churches, as full partners in ecumenical dialogue. It was a high-level approach, well suited to the 1950s but not so attuned to the insurgencies of the next generation. North was not sympathetic to the emerging charismatic movement and ran a tight, almost authoritarian central office. By the late 1960s this style was seen to be failing. The Assembly of 1969 faced what North's successor Hugh Nees described as 'statistical disappointment and financial crisis',<sup>49</sup> leading to a major review of the denominational structure and moves towards decentralization.

Structural questions were often manifestations of other pressures. One of the first challenges facing Clifford was the reemergence of the Pentecostalism question. In 1961 a senior student returned from the

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<sup>49</sup> Baptist Union of N.Z. *Yearbook* 1970-71.

summer enthusiastic for the movement and keen to promote it in the college. Revivalist meetings promoting speaking in tongues were being held in Dunedin. In connection with these, Eric Batts of the Hanover Street church heard of claims that 'ten of our College students have rec'd the baptism and spoken in tongues'. His letter recounting this caused Clifford concern, as he had misgivings about the way the issue was presented and did not want the churches to gain an incorrect impression of the college.<sup>50</sup>

As the decade progressed hard-line Pentecostalism translated into 'Neo-Pentecostalism' which in turn morphed into the charismatic movement in Baptist churches. Nervousness over the issue meant that, when the students made the Holy Spirit the theme of the *College Magazine* in 1968 the Board deputised Clifford and Union General Secretary Hugh Nees to discuss the contents with the editors before it was prepared for publication. Key substantive articles on the subject were ultimately contributed by Stan Edgar, Angus MacLeod and Ernest Payne of England. Student voices on the questions were outweighed. Clifford was a member of a commission of the Baptist Union in 1969 which concluded that there was little ongoing place for 'neo-Pentecostalism' in the corporate life of Baptist churches. This reflected Clifford's own position. He was never comfortable with the Pentecostal style and its implications for ecclesiology. Late in his Principalship he took time to warn students of what he saw as its dangers. By 1973 the issue was becoming a defining question. Students organised seminars by leaders in the charismatic movement, at one point asking for an alteration to the lecture schedule so as to accommodate these extra-curricular sessions. In September 1973 the *N.Z. Baptist* published a sermon critiquing the movement by Gordon Hambly, who was associated with the college in a number of ways. Twelve of the college students, led by the Student's Association President for that year, Laurie Guy, responded with a letter calling for recognition of the strengths of the movement. The students' letter was moderate, seeking presentation of both sides of the picture. However it generated a rebuke from Ayson Clifford, who recalled that he was concerned in case 'only one side of the controversy should emerge from the college.' That Clifford reacted in this way reveals both his sensitivity to the issue and the distance between his position and that of a growing number of students and ministers.<sup>51</sup>

There were other trends which complicated the environment of the college. Theological liberalism was not common among Baptists,

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<sup>50</sup> Clifford Memoirs 3.58.

<sup>51</sup> *NZB*, September 1973, 16-17; November 1973, 7; Clifford Memoirs 4.94.

although a number of ministers individually became engaged with the debates of the nineteen-sixties. The heresy trial of the Presbyterian Lloyd Geering, Warden at Knox College, placed the issues in stark relief for many Baptists.<sup>52</sup> The college faculty were all open to critical scholarship but if they had radical theological views they tended to keep them quiet. The Board and the denomination were indeed very sensitive to such matters. In 1971 the college invited Henton Davies, Principal of Regent's Park College in England, to teach for a term whilst Bob Thompson was on study leave in 1973. However, a theological controversy blew up in England whilst Davies was President of the British Baptist Union and the Board, rather than risk being tainted by association, withdrew the invitation. After assurances that Davies had in fact criticised the radical Christology at the heart of the dispute the invitation was reinstated.<sup>53</sup>

### Staffing

With the departure of Roberts-Thomson and the decision to increase the faculty to three full-time members, the College Board faced the need to appoint a Principal and find two new staff. The Principalship was dealt with swiftly. In August the role was offered, without advertisement, to Ayson Clifford who, though with some qualms over his health and qualifications, accepted and took effective charge before the Roberts-Thomsons departed. It was seen as a logical move and was greeted positively in the denomination. Roland Hart, a Board member and at the time minister at Oxford Terrace in Christchurch, probably captured the view of most.

You have been the sheet anchor of our College through three periods of its history. The days when J.J. was failing in strength and administrative ability, the crisis of his successor, and the days of development during Ted's period with us. We now face a new era and my suggestion of your name for the position of Principal

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<sup>52</sup> In 1969 the Administrative Committee resolved to complain to the Broadcasting authorities that Geering was getting too much time on T.V.. Admin. CM 4 August 1969.

<sup>53</sup> The controversy surrounded the address by Michael Taylor, Principal of the Northern Baptist College to the 1971 Assembly of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. See I.M. Randall, *The English Baptists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2005), 365-382.

is...the expression of confidence that you are the man for the next major step.<sup>54</sup>

Two tutors were now sought. This was unprecedented. In its thirty-five years the college had never had more than two teaching staff. When Clifford had been appointed in 1944, the war conditions had made it necessary to limit applicants to New Zealand. The training of Baptists had been such that no potential applicants had formal qualifications in theology. The situation was better in 1960, although only marginally so among graduates of the college. The three obvious exceptions were E.P.Y. Simpson, who had established himself in the United States, Bob Thompson, who was completing doctoral studies in Zurich and Stan Edgar who now had a Doctor of Divinity from the Melbourne College of Divinity. Simpson was not available but it was not a clear cut matter of simply appointing the other two. The same meeting which decided the Principalship also agreed to offer one of the positions to Bob Thompson who, in response, reported his 'extreme willingness' to take up the role.<sup>55</sup> He might not be available, however, at the start of 1961, as he had to fulfill his commitments in Zurich and wished to visit Palestine on the way back to New Zealand. A boat journey home would delay their arrival until mid-year. A compromise was agreed by which the Thompson's would take the then less usual option of flying back after the Palestine visit.

Appointment was not so smooth for Stan Edgar. The appointments committee reported in October 1960 that 'it did not feel it could bring forward a name for consideration at this stage'. It thus was decided to advertise the third position and to delay commencement until 1962. In part this was due to need for extra accommodation and a third salary. However it was inevitably seen as a snub and did in fact reflect disquiet in some quarters as to Edgar's theological stance. These were in the end not decisive. Stan Edgar was appointed in July 1961 and commenced in 1962.<sup>56</sup>

### **The College in the Classroom**

There was an initial flurry of change to the formal component of the college programme when the new faculty came together. The curriculum

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<sup>54</sup> Letter Roland Hart to Ayson Clifford 7 July 1960. Clifford Correspondence, [N.Z. Baptist Archive].

<sup>55</sup> Admin. CM 5 September 1960.

<sup>56</sup> BM 31 October 1960; Admin. CM 3 July 1961. *NZB*, August 1961, 209.

for 1962 redefined some subjects and redistributed them across the three staff members. Nevertheless, it continued patterns typical of Baptist colleges in the Commonwealth. Clifford took over teaching systematic theology. North, Jenkins and Roberts-Thomson had also taught this subject as it was assumed that this integrative discipline should be the domain of the Principal.<sup>57</sup> All three men taught biblical languages and none was able to specialize in their fields of interest. Each was taking on subjects for which they had little preparation, making scholarship in their preferred areas very difficult. Despite this the expanded staff was now able to present a more rounded curriculum which gave much greater coverage of core academic subjects than had been possible before.

Beyond this expansion and reallocation there was little fundamental change. The pattern of internal examinations every term survived protests by students in 1964, 1966 and 1970.<sup>58</sup> The Melbourne College of Divinity L.Th continued to provide the structure of the academic programme. The Baptist College did not join with other New Zealand theological colleges in adopting a local L.Th. in 1967. The reasons given were that the new programme would require too much change to the college curriculum and that it required University Entrance, which the Melbourne equivalent did not.<sup>59</sup> The only substantive change effected by the students was the abolition of academic prizes in 1971. A Board counter proposal for a single prize for the 'most improved student' was firmly rejected.<sup>60</sup>

In 1967 students questioned the standard and relevance of lectures and sought a special meeting on the matter with Clifford. Lecturing at this time was informational and formal. Clifford traded a lot on his archaeological interests, with slides of 'Tekoa from the North, South, East and West' becoming a byword among students. Bob Thompson, deeply influenced by his own experience in advanced study, was compelled to communicate extensive European scholarship in his classes, quoting so many sources that some students switched off. Stan Edgar, like the others, suffered from having to teach across too many fields. Jim Skett provides one account of the student experience.

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<sup>57</sup> This appears to have been a common pattern in colleges in Britain, see Payne *Henry Wheeler Robinson* 68.

<sup>58</sup> SM 3 July 1964; 19 April 1966; 14 April 1970.

<sup>59</sup> BM 1 November 1966. On the N.Z. L.Th see I. Breward, *Grace and Truth* (Dunedin: 1975) 109.

<sup>60</sup> Students' Executive Minutes 30 April 1971; SM 4 May 1971.

The lecturer sails on, all sails set and the hatches well battened. The crew of 38 or so struggling to man the ship, the captain at the helm. It isn't long before the vessel begins to founder. All the crew are beginning to struggle, trying to keep up with the flood cascading over the rails. The first year men are putting up a good show, but they will go down with the ship. The second years are casting anxious glances at the boats. The Senior men have long ago jumped clear, and are swimming strongly for parts unknown.<sup>61</sup>

A notable extra-curricular initiative was the students-sponsored theology seminar. Here students might give papers (such as Ian MacDonald's on 'The Biblical Idea of the Soul' in August 1964) or would work through such significant works as Emil Brunner's *Dogmatics* or D.M. Baillie's *God Was in Christ*. This heavy diet did not suit everyone. In 1967 it was proposed that 'a series of smaller paperbacks' be studied instead.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps because of a loss of focus, the venture faded soon thereafter.

### **New Initiatives**

The steady growth of the 1950s was not continued in the new decade. The Deaconesses course failed to live up to its initial promise. Only five took the course in the 1960s and there were none after Diane Miller in 1968-9. Ministerial students plateaued. The extended college started to look like a white elephant. Ayson Clifford was not about to wilt under the pressure of these trends. A series of new initiatives employed the college facilities better, but also added to the pressure on staff and increased the complexity of the college's life.

The college had always seen its brief extending beyond ministerial trainees. Through the 1960s the staff maintained a schedule of deputation to the churches. The college was responsible for administering an Extra-Mural programme for home missionaries and probationary studies for its graduates. The Board still served as the gateway for accreditation of ministers in New Zealand Baptist churches. There were a number of attempts to widen the college's reach even further. The first was a series of summer courses, designed primarily for lay people but which could add to an individual's preparatory course. The first of these, open to North Island churches, was held at the college

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<sup>61</sup> *College Magazine* 1962, 28.

<sup>62</sup> SM 5 October 1967.

over the summer of 1962/3 with about twenty attendees. It was a considerable success, key to its appeal being 'the continual exchange of ideas among the students, the new interest that everyone acquired in the total work of the Baptist Union in its individual churches....'<sup>63</sup> A year later a South Island option was added, making two courses with a total of 42 present. Like the Deaconesses course, however, the summer programme soon exhausted its stored market. The 1965/6 South Island course was cancelled due to low numbers. A similar pattern of encouraging initial response followed by steady drop-off was encountered with refresher courses for ministers. The first of these was held at the college in 1965. By 1968 numbers were low, prompting postponement for a year. Once again the courses gradually petered out.

In 1966 the first mention appears of plans for a Social Services Course. This was a joint initiative with the Union's newly formed Social Services Department and was to be a theological preparation for social workers. Great hopes were held that this programme would attract interest from independent students, possibly from as far afield as Australia. The Social Services Course was designed to connect with existing courses at other institutions, such as a Certificate in Social Services and a Diploma in Criminology, both at the University of Auckland. Students would be expected to live at the college part of the week and then reside and work at a social service agency for the remainder. The direct input from the college was intended to be relatively small, as this was primarily an orientation programme for Christians planning to work in wider social service.<sup>64</sup> Trevor Fear coordinated the programme from the Social Services end, in conjunction with Ayson Clifford, who had long had an interest in the field. The course established a small but steady presence on the college programme, averaging four students per year from 1968-1973.

The Social Service Course was not regarded as competition for the Deaconess course. Indeed the Deaconesses Committee took part in the planning. It was seen as a way of reinvigorating the Deaconess programme, by drawing potential students who might then transfer to the longer course. This did not happen in significant numbers. The Deaconesses Committee gradually extended its brief to take an interest in all women students. The unofficial demise of the Deaconess Course and the new focus was formalised with a change of name to the 'Women Students Committee' in 1972. Although more successful than most, the

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<sup>63</sup> *College Magazine* 1963, 22.

<sup>64</sup> See proposals for the S.S. Course, BM 1 November 1966.

Social Services Course, like other innovations, flourished for a few years only to gradually decline.

Within the standard course, practical ministry experience remained crucial. An experiment in a 'collegial church' was tried. In 1962 the Congregational Church in Victoria Avenue found itself unable to sustain a ministry. The college entered a lease for the building on the basis that it would continue to hold services. Thus the 'Immanuel' congregation was formed, supplied by ministerial students. Although a number of students of the time gained valuable experience the cause itself did not thrive. A particular problem was staffing over the summer, when the students were traditionally at other churches. An attempt was made to bring the cause under one of the Auckland churches, to cover this gap. At the end of 1965 the Congregational Union shifted the building and sold the land. Immanuel carried on for a year in the college chapel but by March 1967 Clifford was reporting that it had been discontinued.<sup>65</sup>

The shape of the ministerial course itself was also addressed. Although the 'success rate' of the college had generally been high, in terms of effective ministers trained, growing numbers had led to some concern about the quality of applicants. From 1958 Denis McClure, an Industrial Consultant, had conducted a series of aptitude tests for prospective students. These became a standard part of the application process.<sup>66</sup>

In 1959 Board member Keith Edridge had proposed a new, three stage pattern to training. In this model the students would be accepted first for a 'Preparatory Year' after which they would have to be formally accepted for the subsequent three year 'College Course', which in turn would be followed as before by two years probation in ministry. Edridge's motivation was to ensure early but informed identification of any students not truly suited to pastoral ministry.<sup>67</sup> No action was taken on Edridge's proposal, but in 1961 Ayson Clifford instituted a similar restructuring of the training scheme. Procedures at both ends of the process were tightened. A 'Preparatory Course' was proposed to address the problem that 'many students come ill-prepared'. This was to be

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<sup>65</sup> Admin. CM 6 May 1963; 2 March 1964; 5 October 1964; 4 October 1965; 13 March 1967.

<sup>66</sup> Admin. CM 19 July 1957; 1 September 1958; 6 July 1959.

<sup>67</sup> K. Edridge. 'Training of Ministerial Students' Admin. CM 7 September 1959.

tailored to the needs of individuals.<sup>68</sup> Selection for the residential programme was shifted from the November Assembly to a special meeting in August. The Probationary course was reshaped with increased emphasis on supervision.<sup>69</sup> Most radical, however, was the division of the four year college course. The first two years became an 'Intermediate' course consisting of 'general training, with no commitment to a particular sphere of service.' At the conclusion to this student might apply to for entry to Ministerial, Missionary, Deaconess or Maori training. Fees would be paid for the intermediate course but not for the subsequent 'Graduate Course'.<sup>70</sup> The training process now had four stages instead of two. Of these the preparatory course, although good in principle, in reality was taken up by few. The two stage split in the residential course presented practical difficulties. The impact on a student of failing to gain entry to the Graduate Course, having given up a career and in many cases moved from another part of the country, sometimes with a family, placed pressure on the Board to accept borderline case. In the few instances in which students did not advance, the protests of other students, sending churches and the individual themselves could be loud.

These stricter procedures and structures may have had an impact on student numbers. In 1972 Clifford pointed out that the total number of applicants for training in the 1960s was 141, exactly the same as it had



*3. Student numbers 1950-1970 (excluding independent students)  
(source: NZBU Yearbooks)*

<sup>68</sup> Admin. CM 11 December 1961.

been in the 1950s. However, of these applicants, only 74 (53%) had been accepted, as against 98 (70%) in the earlier decade. Clifford's conclusion was that 'either there was a drop in the standard of those applying, or the selection process is more severe'.<sup>71</sup> This may have been so, although underlying the decline was also the tardiness of the Board in making full provision for married students, thus limiting the pool of applicants. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the growth in student numbers encountered in the 1950s was not continued in the 1960s.

The college had become a complex and busy organisation. The pressure on staff, especially on the Principal, was acute. The college had in a sense reached a point of institutional maturity. It had three full time staff who were its own graduates and whose combined qualifications were of the highest quality. Yet it was running on a near empty tank, scrambling to use its building to the fullest and to meet as many needs as possible. The Household model of training was effectively deceased but remained unburied.

### **Community Life**

The college's model was creaking and groaning under the pressure of growth and diversification. The Household approach had unraveled with the new location and expanded staff. The Principal and his wife were still, theoretically *in loco parentis*, but the students were no longer in the same building and some were living elsewhere. With the new appointments fresh strains were added. The Cliffords continued to live in their separate house. Bob and Shirley Thompson were offered a flat upstairs in the main building. The shaping forces were no longer overwhelmingly from Principal to students but increasingly included the influence of tutors and other students. The shared 'place' was still crucial - all staff and most students lived within sight of one another - but the sense of being one family faded. Students were formed in a matrix of relationships far more complex than that which had pertained in 1926 when J.J. and Cecelia North set up home with nine adopted 'sons'.

By 1970 Ayson Clifford was questioning the usefulness of retaining the vestiges of the Household model. The constant difficulty in finding domestic staff was wearing thin. Consideration was given to buying in TV Dinners and thereby doing away with the need for a cook.

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<sup>69</sup> Admin. CM 7 August 1961.

<sup>70</sup> Admin. CM 5 September 1961; Clifford Memoirs 3.59.

<sup>71</sup> See Clifford's Principal's Report, Admin. CM 2 October 1972.

Clifford wondered if the rooms could be converted into self-catered units. 'With a much smaller number of students now resident the work should be a good deal lighter but we continue to keep it heavy by taking in more and more boarders.'<sup>72</sup> The form of the model was being sustained beyond the substance. It had become clear that the Driver House extension had been undertaken to meet a fading market. In 1971 the Board reported twelve married students, with only eight single students, supplemented by eleven boarders. This, in a college with capacity for thirty-six single students.

Many of the routines of the college continued along familiar lines, but the homogeneity generated by the vast majority of single male students 'living in' broke down as the community became more diversified. This was not true in all respects. The gender bias, for instance, remained. The few Deaconesses were supplemented by female missionary and independent students, but the student body remained overwhelmingly male. It was also increasingly sourced from the North Island. South Island applicants for the Ministerial course gradually fell from over 30% in the 1940s to less than 20% in the 1960s. Nevertheless, where once the college had consisted of the 'Teddy Boys' plus an occasional married student, increasingly it was a mixed company. Single ministerial students gradually declined whilst married numbers, despite the barriers to entry, crept up. Independent students became more common as did boarders who, although they did not often take college courses, were in other respects full members of the residential community. A place was kept for a number of years for scholarship students from Asia.

At the beginning of the sixties a more or less formal stratification by year groups was accepted. This extended to the seating arrangements in lectures, with first years up the front, and fourth year students, some of whom had already by then completed the external requirements of the programme, taking up the back rows. The Senior Student would always be from the fourth year as, generally, would the *College Magazine* editor. This 'class structure' gradually eroded. Through the period the Students Association was constantly considering its rules and membership, with the status of boarders, Social Services students, independent students and student spouses coming up. A more open constitution was adopted in 1970.

Retreats continued as a feature of college life. The speakers at Waiheke Island in 1965 were L.A. and Frances North, who 'brought

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<sup>72</sup> See Admin CM 7 December 1970; 5 April 1971 (Principal's Report).

their own pack of cards'. A notable feature of this gathering was the presence of women students for the first time.<sup>73</sup> Not all institutions survived. The 'Open Airs' which had been a joint venture with the B.T.I. when it was situated in Queen Street survived the shift of the B.T.I. to Henderson but by 1966 the negativity with which they had always been regarded caught up with the practice and they were dropped.<sup>74</sup> In 1973 the much lampooned 'Misogynists Club' (essentially an umbrella for those single men not yet engaged) was laid to rest and its records burned.<sup>75</sup>

In 1971 the Students' Executive was pondering the 'deadness' of community life, which it associated with so many living off the site.<sup>76</sup> Neither were relationships with college authorities always warm. The faculty was respected and generally liked. However it was sometimes felt that Clifford did not communicate with students as well as he might. He could be intransigent, even dictatorial. As one student President lamented: 'students have often disagreed as to whether we should go round Ayson or over his head in policy-making decisions, but all agree that it is still as hard as ever.'<sup>77</sup> In 1971 the Student Executive proposed appointing a 'go between' to mediate between Clifford and the students. A year later it lamented a 'lack of closeness' between lecturers and students. Again a better liason was sought.<sup>78</sup> Relations with the College Board were even more problematic. The course structure by which students had to be readmitted after two years created a tension point if a student failed to progress. In 1966 the students complained at the Board's 'lack of initiative' in supporting married students. In 1968 matters had deteriorated further, with one student describing relations with the board as 'lousy'. A formal complaint over lack of communication was lodged at the full Board meeting in November that year. Little seems to have changed. Students continued to seek representation on the Board and to ask for faster, better information on matters which affected them.<sup>79</sup>

The biggest and most obvious shift was demographic. Married students were no longer an anomaly. They were fast becoming the norm

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<sup>73</sup> Students Association Annual Report 1965.

<sup>74</sup> SM 19 April and 16 June 1966.

<sup>75</sup> SM 8 August 1973.

<sup>76</sup> Students' Assn Executive Minutes 29 Septmeber 1971.

<sup>77</sup> Students' Association Annual Report 1965.

<sup>78</sup> Students' Executive Minutes 28 September 1971; 27 June 1972; 11 July 1972.

<sup>79</sup> SM 28 July 1966; 11 & 26 June 1968; 10 August 1971.

and faced a number of hurdles. Barry Hibbert came to college under the early pattern, holding down a pastorate whilst studying. This provided accommodation and some income, but meant the student was little more than a visitor to the college.

Of course the married student misses out on much of the 'life' of the college, as he attends only the hours of lectures....

But there are wonderful compensations. The 'down to earth' practical experience of a pastorate. You can be up in the clouds of theological speculation at 12.30 p.m., and in the middle of a family row at Ramsbottom's place by one o'clock! So the theory of the classroom is tested daily in the laboratory of the parish.<sup>80</sup>

Jim and Lois Patrick arrived at the end of the 1960s and found a flat near the college. By now there was more integration of married students. The Patricks did not have a pastorate in the way the Hibberts had. This created its own dynamic.

A married student does feel very dependent on, but none-the-less very grateful for, his working wife. A married couple going through college I feel, is a considerable asset to the Baptist Union, for in effect two are trained for the price of one.<sup>81</sup>

Ayson Clifford, reflecting in 1970 on the evolution of the college noted a key shift.

[The] increasing proportion of married men makes a community spirit more difficult to capture. Students are no longer here all the week. Extra-curricular activities become a Cinderella. Special thought is required to maintain community worship and group prayer. In the old days, it used to be said 'College life is good for a man. He gets his corners knocked off.' Today, unless this abrasive process is already done or is done by his wife, a man may go out into the ministry corners and all.<sup>82</sup>

### **Stumbling to a New Model**

Although the issue of married students' accommodation was raised a number of times in the late 1950s little had been done to address the growing need. The Board invested instead in the continued expansion of

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<sup>80</sup> *College Magazine* 1961, 8.

<sup>81</sup> *College Magazine* 1969, 19.

<sup>82</sup> *College Magazine* 1970, 3.

its current model, which assumed a steady growth in single students. Norm Reynolds recognised early that action would be needed. In 1962 he raised the matter with a proposal to move quickly to building new facilities or altering present ones. In 1963 he lodged a major report on the question of married students. Concerned at 'our apparent lack of a systematic approach to the recruitment of married men' he noted a general trend to younger marriages and that some overseas colleges had already had to address the issue. He proposed among other things that free accommodation be provided on the college site. Ayson Clifford responded with a memo cautioning the Board that an intentional shift towards married students might weaken the ethos of the existing training. He feared 'absenteeism and unpunctuality, reduction of cohesion of student body, disproportionate burden of student organisation on single men, resentment of single men at acceptance of married men of younger age, empty rooms.' Reynolds' proposals, blunted by Clifford's misgivings, resulted only in some loosening of entry provisions and a policy change to allow final year students having attained the age of 26 and doing a satisfactory course' to marry. No plan was made to supply married accommodation.<sup>83</sup>

The Anglican St John's College had had a similarly 'single-minded' history but it moved on the issue sooner. The first four flats for married students at St John's were opened in 1961, with another six built in 1966.<sup>84</sup> St John's had greater resources and more students overall but its willingness to anticipate the increasing demand from married students is a contrast to the slower progress at the Baptist college.

In 1964 two flats in Kelvan Rd, Remuera were made available to the college for rental. These were sold by the owner at the end of 1965, forcing the ball back into the Board's court. In 1966 three flats in Arney Crescent were purchased. Even then the plan was to offer only one to a student family and to rent out the other two to supplement married students' income. The assumption remained that married students would shelter themselves or take a student pastorate in Auckland which provided accommodation.

Married students were not the only accommodation issue. There was an obvious and increasing need for a new library facility. One of the lecture rooms had been adapted for the purpose when the college first moved to Victoria Avenue. A growing collection of books meant that

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<sup>83</sup> See BM 29 October & 1 November 1963.

<sup>84</sup> Allan K. Davidson *Selwyn's Legacy: The College of St John the Evangelist Te Waimate and Auckland 1843-1992* (Auckland: St Johns, 1993) 209-10, 218.

the stacks were encroaching on the teaching space. In 1965 a proposal for anew space was accepted but this had to be deferred when it became necessary to purchase the Arney Crescent flats. New shelving could only go so far to alleviate the pressure, especially as it was known that a major collection was to be coming to the college from E.P.Y. Simpson. A deadline of 1970 was agreed by which time a new, purpose built library would be constructed. In 1966 Auckland businessman Bruce Wilkinson made the first of his major gifts to the college, in the form of a commercial building, part of which Wilkinson himself leased. This was to be an income-producing asset for the college. However tenants were not always easy to come by. In 1969 one floor was let for a dancing studio (how attitudes change with commercial realities).

By the end of the decade the college had substantial property holdings. It occupied a large plot of land in a leafy suburb which included staff residences and single person's accommodation for nearly forty students. It had three flats near-by and an office building in the city. The value of the asset was impressive but its usefulness was low. Too much was held in the wrong classes of property. The college had plenty of bare land, a surfeit of hostel type accommodation and an investment property. What it needed was family housing and a library.

By now Clifford had acknowledged the inevitability of the trends. In March 1970 he called for yet another look at the question of married students. The rules about current students marrying were relaxed significantly. Permission was still needed from the board but the option was opened to all students and not just to those in their final year.<sup>85</sup> The thorny problem of accommodation was still difficult, especially as there was now the major project of the library to tackle. Clifford placed both needs before the Assembly in 1970, pointing out that rule changes meant that it was likely that 'in future three out of every four students will be married.'<sup>86</sup> Decisions had to be made. The library was deferred yet again. An appeal for \$40,000 for married accommodation was launched. By September 1971 it had raised \$26,000. At this point it was decided to sell the Wilkinson building, which realised \$200,000. In March 1972 a tender was let for three flats on the property. A year later rooms at the north end of North Wing were converted into two further self-contained units.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> BM 29 October 1969.

<sup>86</sup> Clifford 'Statement to Assembly 1970 on Projected Developments' Admin CM 7 September 1970.

<sup>87</sup> BM 3 November 1971; 1 & 6 November 1972.

Writing to E.P.Y. Simpson in April 1971 Clifford noted these developments with some ambivalence.

With the continually increasing proportion of married men we are slowly getting around to providing accommodation....This is something students have been agitating for, for some time. Oddly enough, now that we have decided to do it, and have all the plans completed,... several students are now not in favour of building flats. They say the college should be decentralized and scattered throughout the community. You will recognise the point of view. However, it comes at an awkward time, since all this was discussed last year before we went ahead with the plans.<sup>88</sup>

Clifford was alluding to an 'Open Letter to the College Board' from third year student Ivan Howie, which was about to be published in the *N.Z. Baptist*. Howie objected to the further enforcement of the residential model, suggesting that far from the college 'knocking off corners' (as Clifford had celebrated) it should free its students from its 'pressure to conform' and release them to the multitude of settings in the wider community. Howie's voice, though prescient, was not necessarily representative. In the same issue, sixteen other students recorded support for the new accommodation.<sup>89</sup>

### **The End of an Era**

The constant pressure of building inadequacies, low student numbers and changing times had an inevitable effect on Ayson Clifford. In October 1970 he informed the Board that he did not intend to remain as Principal until his retirement.

I believe that the time is close upon us when the College will need a younger man to guide the work into the future, a stronger man to meet the pressures that come upon us and a more learned man to set new standards of scholarship within the College.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Letter, Ayson Clifford to E.P.Y. Simpson, 19 April 1971. Clifford Correspondence.

<sup>89</sup> *NZB*, May 1971, 24. See also subsequent correspondence *NZB*, July 1971, 6 & September 1971, 7.

<sup>90</sup> Letter, Ayson Clifford to F.C. Mills, 19 October, 1970 (copy), Clifford Correspondence.

Clifford was running short of creative energy. In May 1972 he reviewed that situation of the college in a pessimistic 'Memo on College Development (or Decline)'. The most profound challenge he identified was 'Our Image in the Churches'.

I am convinced that there are a large number of church people who are either ignorant of the College, or negative to it and whose conception is of a remote, over-academic, unspiritual, unbiblical, unpractical, affluent institution....in some churches, prospective candidates are actively discouraged from applying and those who do are threatened with the dire results of attendance here...

We have watched with concern the decline of other denominational colleges.... It would be foolish to say this could not happen to us.<sup>91</sup>

Perhaps the most telling part of the memo lies in what Clifford did not include. There was no hint of any radical answers to these challenges. Although he listed nine suggestions for action they amounted to little more than tinkering with the present system, trying to do better what was already being done. There were no new strategies.

By the end of 1973 the college still had no new library but it did have eight flats for married students. There was a considerable way to go if all married students were to be accommodated but a clear shift from a single household to a community model had now been accepted. Howie's letter to the *NZ Baptist*, however, raised a disturbing prospect. Had the college responded too slowly to one trend only to miss the next one as well? The household model which had worked so well under J.J. North, only to have its limits exposed under Luke Jenkins, had been granted an extension in the optimistic climate of the 1950s. With hindsight it is clear that the Driver house addition of 1959 was a mistake. Instead of building yet more single persons' accommodation the college should have at that point pursued married quarters. The signs were already present that this was a growing need. Yet significant change in this direction had to wait nearly a decade and a half, by which time demand was already peaking, shortening the useful life of the new developments.

The college had not adapted well. Ayson Clifford was a safe pair of hands but he had probably come to the job and concluded it five years later than would have been ideal. His assumptions and expectations

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<sup>91</sup> Clifford, 'Memo on College Development (or Decline)' see Admin. CM, 29 May 1972.

were not flexible enough to manage the changes in both church and society in the later 1960s. Little lead was given on how to grapple with the moral and theological change of the time. His reluctance to move on married accommodation and his lack of sympathy with the emerging charismatic movement meant that the college did not respond early enough to those major shifts. He was not alone, of course - Baptist leadership as a whole struggled to contain the rapid diversification of the denomination – but the conservative approach constricted the college's development and sowed seeds for later tension with the churches.

Clifford's observation about other denominational colleges is worth noting. The ranks had thinned among smaller denominations. The Baptist College had shown remarkable resilience, even staying open with miniscule numbers during World War II. It had bounced back confidently after the paralyzing tensions of the Jenkins era. The 1950s, however, was an 'Indian Summer' for the Church in New Zealand, including the Baptists and their college in particular. The need to evolve, though recognized by some, was inadequately addressed in practice and policy. The college reached the fragmented 1970s with its traditions strong but its future uncertain.

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## Reviews

**Christopher L. Fisher. *Human Significance in Theology and the Natural Sciences: An Ecumenical Perspective with Reference to Pannenberg, Rahner, and Zizioulas*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010 (351pp) [ISBN 13: 978-1-60608-053-5]**

Christopher Fisher, with great attention to detail and creative analysis, explores the concomitant voice he hears coming from theological and natural scientific discourse, which respectively reveal the high view of human cosmic significance. That is, Fisher proposes that human beings are, in fact, ‘cosmically significant in some clear and precise ways that are visible to both theology and the natural sciences’ (2). Such a premise garnered my attention, and through balanced consideration of theological and scientific discourse Fisher was able to make it a worthwhile and interesting read.

The first part of the book has Fisher engaging three important theologians, as indicated in the title above. His selection of these theologians who offer an ecumenical perspective for Fisher’s problem is somewhat curious. However, one would be hard pressed to find a more engaged group of theologians found at the intersection of theology and science—‘each wrestles with the subject of human nature from a Trinitarian and incarnational perspective, and each is sensitive to related issues in contemporary thought and in the natural sciences’ (17).

His overarching conclusion from his investigation of these three great minds, is that one may discover in the theocentricity of the universe an anthropocentricity that is not only bolstered but wholly goaded by the incarnation (85). Humanity is proven to be valued, rather centrally vital to the work of God’s good creation and recreation, as evidenced in the unfolding of reality that gives rise to the communion between God and humanity—a reality who is the Christ (91). Moreover, in this theological discussion, Fisher is able to demonstrate just how adept Zizioulas, Rahner, and Pannenberg are at engaging critical developments in the natural sciences while staying true to the peculiarities of theological grammar and method culminating in the noted conclusions.

All in all, Fisher is able to work through each theologian with a level of mastery that is refreshing. That is, he is able to cover all of the theological bases with each participant while clearly articulating the

central positions, assessing certain theological and scientific implications, and admitting to the subsequent limitations inherent in the theological vision of each and the dialogue attained through interdisciplinary comparisons. Really, it is in this first section that Fisher's work is most engaging and his scholarly skill clearly established.

However, Fisher's treatment of the theologians is so good that when one gets to his second section, on the natural sciences, the flow of the book slows (and my interest waned). This is not to say that this section is at all weak or academically trivial. In fact, the second section of the book is as critically engaged as the first. The conclusions, however, are not as provocative or interesting. The most interesting part of this second section may be in its introduction, chapter 4. Fisher begins this section with cautionary conclusions regarding the limits of intersecting dialogue between science and theology. Fisher recognizes that prevailing attitudes and foundations for epistemic enquiry differ between these two sciences, yet he is critically hopeful that the two traditions may be able to concede on certain things so as to garner a ground fertile for open and advancing discourse. Yet, his hopeful position depends upon the natural scientist to accept the majority weight of concessionary actions.

Such a call for concessions, though interesting, is coupled with a seemingly foundationalist imperative that runs throughout the book, 'there should be some measure of coherence between the theological and scientific views' (19). The question that was not fully pursued, however, is this: 'Why should there be such coherence?' I think that without offering a more clear response to this question, the discussion of coherence may actually confuse the ground for good interdisciplinary dialogue and misrepresent what Pannenberg, Rahner, and Zizioulas may be striving towards—not a concession by natural and social scientists to accept theological claims, but consider their impact and influence, if true, on the observations being made in their respective disciplines.

I am compelled to think that each of the noted theologians would agree that a simple reiteration of secular society's truth claims will not compensate for the steady disintegration and fragmentation of social structures. That is, though theology 'must engage [natural and social science] consistently in direct dialogue' (91), it ought not to obscure that knowledge which is garnered from appropriate theological enquiry by suggesting the same conclusions may be seen through natural and social science. Rather theology must say something profoundly strange about such truths as they correspond to the divine Wisdom, the Word of God, Christ. That is, though natural and social sciences are incapable of explaining and/or contemplating the divine Wisdom, theology may be able to invite appropriate questions about the God who is for us,

humanity in a particular world explained by the worldly sciences, if you will, of biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, anthropology, etc. So with a pursuit of interdisciplinary dialogue, the goal ought not to be a complementary resounding of the proverbial gong to claim relevance but a critical reinterpretation of meaning in light of the God who has revealed himself in the person and mission of Jesus Christ, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of the Father—a critical reinterpretation to demonstrate the peculiarity of the theological voice along with the universal significance of its proclamation in a world that is described by natural and social scientific grammar.

Though somewhat critical of how the interdisciplinary argument of this book was constructed, Fisher has produced a very well written and scholarly considered piece, which deserves a careful read (and one that I will pick up again for further reference and consideration). In fact, though I may not agree with how the term of and/or enthusiasm for coherence was used in this book; I will admit that Fisher was careful to demonstrate how cosmic significance may be demonstrated in both the theological and scientific data. This task required a great deal of careful analysis and critical thought that is more than adequately demonstrated in this piece. Thus, this book will do well to further the discussion between the faithful and the secular sciences and should be one to include on the reading list of anyone interested in pursuing an understanding of contemporary conversations between science and theology.

**Ashley Moyse**

***The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies.* Eds. William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. (761 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-19-921299-6]**

Of the writing of books about John and Charles Wesley and Methodism there is no end. Arguably Richard Heitzenrater gives the best overview of the hundreds of books so far published (Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley* [Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2003], pp. 345-397). To this extensive list is now added *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* edited by William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby, essentially a tome about Methodism rather than the Wesleys. While Oxford went with *Methodist Studies*, Cambridge University Press in another 2010 publication, chose to focus on John Wesley (*The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, edited by Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers

[Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010]), in what amounts to a companion work. Much of the *Methodist Studies* handbook is taken up with a critique of what Methodists did and what happened to Methodism post the Wesleys. However, a reoccurring theme in most of the chapters is lament, rather than celebration.

Although I found the constant echo of lament tiresome, it has to be said that John and Charles Wesley never intended to create a separate Church or denomination. They were more intent on renewing the existing church from within and did this by founding a Protestant order. Not surprisingly, when Methodists established a new denomination after the Wesleys they found it nigh on impossible to translate much of Wesleyanism into denominational Methodism. It just isn't a natural fit and therein lies the reason for the lament. Personally I would have like to have seen more Wesley and less Methodism, especially in light of the sociological re-emergence of monastic and intentional orders.

The contributors to the handbook are an impressive lot. J.C.D. Clark surveys the eighteenth century context, Richard Heitzenrater looks at the founding brothers, Ted Campbell writes on the Wesleyan motif of the 'means of grace', Kenneth Collins expounds on 'Assurance', Stephen Long and Stanley Hauerwas probe theological ethics and David Bebbington, the last contributor, teases out the link between Methodism and culture. The editors also contribute; Kirby on Methodist Episcopacy and Abraham on Christian Perfection. In total, there are forty-two contributors framed in six clusters: the history of Methodism, Ecclesial Forms and Structures, Worship; Spiritual Experiences, Evangelism, Mission, and Ecumenism; Theology, Ethics and Politics. One notable exception to the list of contributors is the significant Wesleyan scholar, Randy Maddox of Duke University.

It is refreshing to note that the handbook is not a Euro-centric treatise. Pablo Andinach comments on Methodism in Latin American, Swee Hong Lim explores music and hymnody, Sergei Nikolaev the Orthodox challenge to Methodism in Russia and Simeon Ilesanmi on Politics in Africa. Of concern is that less than a quarter of the contributors are women. This hardly sits well with the progressive stance that John Wesley took on gender in his day.

If the handbook is somewhat weak on primary literature; namely the respective contributions of John and Charles Wesley, it is very helpful as a resource on contemporary debates within secondary literature on Wesley and Methodism. For the purposes of this review, three examples of this healthy in-house debate suffice. First, Jason Vickers, one of the editors, takes issue with John Cobb, a fellow Methodist scholar. Vickers frames Cobb (*Grace and Responsibility: A*

*Wesleyan Theology for Today*) as a process theologian who on the one hand is willing to embrace the language of the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds concerning Christ but on the other hand ‘reject what they take to be the substance-oriented metaphysics ‘behind’ that language’ (p. 565). A second example is that of Philip Meadows on William Abraham. In 1989 Abraham published an important book *The Logic of Evangelism*. In it he critiques the soteriological paradigm of evangelism that focuses on a personal salvation. Abraham prefers a more missiological paradigm that focuses on Christ as Messiah. Salvation is not the ends but the means, as it enables discipleship and realigning life around the purposes of the Messiah. Meadows suggests Abraham’s paradigm is as much an extreme position as that of the soteriological paradigm. He posits a Wesleyan paradigm that holds the soteriological and missiological in critical tension (p. 415). A third example of in-house debate again features Abraham, this time taking issue with two prominent Wesleyan scholars in Outler and Maddox on ‘perfection’. It is his view that both Outler and Maddox have softened Wesley’s position so as to make perfection more relevant or palatable to modern ears (p. 595).

If for no other reason, the *Handbook of Methodist Studies* is a good buy because it exposes current debates within Wesleyan and Methodist scholarship. Also of value is the way in-house Wesleyan scholars engage with those outside ‘the house’; for example, Jim Packer, Don Carson, and the Southern Baptists.

Many of the themes have been covered elsewhere and so there is nothing particularly new in this volume. Given the increase in published works on Wesley and Methodism it was always going to be difficult for Abraham and Kirby to furnish a ground breaking volume. A notable exception is Thomas Frank’s chapter on ‘Discipline’ (pp. 245-61). Frank admits to sparse literature on this subject, numbering ‘three or less in most every generation’ (p. 245). This dearth of scholarship on Discipline is surprising given how central this motif is to Wesleyan and denominational Methodism.

Students, pastors, scholars, historians, and missiologists will all profit from *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*. Much ink has been spilt in its 761 pages and I commend the work and words that have emerged.

**Mick Duncan**

**James R. Payton Jr. *Light from the Christian East: An Introduction to the Orthodox Tradition*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2007 (240 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-8308-2594-3]**

Payton's book introduces readers to the major themes of Eastern Orthodoxy while focussing particularly on the points at which East and West differ most in doctrine and practice. The title captures his intention to enlighten Western readers through a sympathetic presentation of Orthodox faith perspectives.

Beginning with a historical section on Latin and Greek mindsets, he contrasts the development of a pragmatic law based theological approach in the West that dealt with questions of guilt and legal standing, with a philosophical approach in the East that concerned itself with questions of light and dark, life and death, and the limits of human reason. Though somewhat simplified, this historical background helpfully sets the framework for later comparisons in doctrine. Although Payton acknowledges the significant differences within Western theology, including distinguishing Roman Catholic from various Protestant positions, he generally chooses one position to contrast with the East.

Payton observes that the dominant intellectual leadership of the Church through the period of the early councils was unquestionably Eastern. He also argues that the intellectually sophisticated East managed to maintain a healthy caution concerning human reason compared with Western medieval scholasticism where he says reason knew few bounds in its attempt to master the knowledge of God (he does not mention that the East also produced scholastic theologians).

Chapter Two answers some Protestant misunderstandings of Eastern Orthodoxy including the naive notion that they are 'a Greek version of Roman Catholicism' (p. 43). Payton notes that the Orthodox ironically consider Roman Catholic and Protestant theology to have much in common because both ask the same kind of legal questions, and both largely treat theology as a matter of establishing truth claims, which the East considers an inadequate approach. Two further Protestant misunderstandings of the Orthodox - that they are a relic of history shackled to tradition, and that they are compromised by an uncritical accommodation to pagan Greek thought - receive detailed responses from Payton.

Having criticised the West for its approach to doctrine, Payton outlines the Orthodox approach (Chapter Three) by placing emphasis on the Eastern insistence that theology is inseparable from contemplation, because 'knowing God means having an intimate relationship with him,

not just a wealth of data about him' (p. 60). With the Western medieval shift in theological training from monasteries to universities, doctrine was divorced from what the East still considers its proper mystical grounding in meditation and the practice of faith.

Chapter Four addresses a number of foreign concepts for many western readers. Apophatic (negative) theology, which declares what God is not, rather than presumes to assert what he is, is presented as a humble methodology that the West might learn from. There is also an explanation of Orthodox teaching on God's essence and energies (Western: *ad intra* and *ad extra*), which seeks to distinguish and define how God's transcendent being relates to his immanence and activity within creation.

The treatment of Orthodox doctrines of God, creation, humanity, and sin in chapters five and six contains a technical discussion of creaturely *logos* (Godward-directedness) and *skopos* (the goal of communion with God). The Orthodox see all created things as essentially orientated towards God who alone is their final fulfilment. The Fall frustrates this purpose, leaving humanity corrupted and led by creation rather than exercising their priestly role of leading creation towards its own *skopos*. Death follows for all, but guilt is personal (Adam's guilt is not ours), and our nature is not depraved (sin is a matter of persons not nature), neither is our will bound. East and West (think Augustine) perceive fallen humanity somewhat differently, although the West itself is not easily grouped under one banner.

Orthodox teaching on the 'accomplishment of salvation' (Chapter Seven) stresses the redemptive role of the Incarnation, the recapitulation of human nature in Christ the last Adam, and the resurrection of Christ the victor who defeats death - rather than Christ the crucified victim. Concerning the 'application of salvation' (Chapter Eight) they are less interested than the West in the order of salvation (justification—sanctification—glorification), and more interested in our union with Christ by which we participate in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4). Human deification (*theosis*) begins at the Incarnation and is made accessible to us through the Spirit and the sacraments. Salvation as deification is a process not an event for the Orthodox, who trust that they are 'being saved' (p. 146).

Reminding the reader that the Orthodox have asked questions overlooked by the West, Payton notes that rather than only consider what grace *does*, the East has contemplated what grace *is*. Their findings: Grace is not an 'influence' of God upon us, but grace is God himself at work within us (Chapter Nine). A chapter on ecclesiology (Chapter Ten) begins with criticism of the individualism that plagues the Church in the

West before describing the Eastern Church as a believing community constituted through worship (liturgy), with a sense of connection to one another in all places and at all times, including the departed saints.

Icons (Chapter Eleven) are explained by recounting their exegetical and christological defence during the ancient Iconoclastic Controversy. The authoritative relationship of Scripture and Tradition (Chapter Twelve) has of course been a major debate between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which Payton outlines before offering the Orthodox understanding of Scripture as part of the one authoritative source of Christian faith, Tradition. Prayer is the subject of the final chapter (Chapter Thirteen) which simply promotes the Orthodox Jesus Prayer: a rhythmic repetition of the phrase 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' What better way to learn to pray without ceasing, says Payton. What of other forms of prayer?, the reader might ask.

Payton's contribution to a Western comprehension of Eastern Christian thought and practice is to be celebrated for the fact that he patiently and carefully explains Orthodox perspectives, going into some depth where possible, while always keeping in mind how each new concept may sound to Western ears. This book truly teaches, reflecting the author's sensitivity to students and years of dialogue with the Orthodox.

However, the book does have its flaws. In order to contrast East and West, Payton unfortunately oversimplifies both positions in places, such as in his initial assessment of Western theology as obsessed with truth claims, while the East is portrayed as concerning itself more with knowing God directly. Admittedly to distil differences one must simplify complex positions, but sufficient nuance is still needed to avoid misrepresentation, which I'm not sure Payton always achieves. An observation that sin in Western Christianity is deemed a violation of rules, while the Orthodox consider sin a violation of a personal relationship with God (p. 119), surely presses his point on law and relationship too far. And yet, pithy contrasts, such as the difference between what grace does and what grace is, do helpfully highlight ways in which East and West have dealt differently with the same theological issue.

Because of the nature of his project Payton repeatedly emphasises what the West can learn from the East. Only occasionally does he highlight the fact that East and West have much to offer each other. One such example can be found in his closing comments on the 'application of salvation' (pp. 152-4) where he mentions that while the West might learn something from the East on deification, the East might equally

listen to the West on justification and sanctification. One or two further comments of a similar nature would have assured his readers that mutual appreciation could be the rule, rather than a rarity.

In places Payton simply berates the Western Church for its inadequacies. A harsh indictment of individualism in the West (pp. 167-72) dominates his comments on Western ecclesiology. The comments are too narrow and overlook the extensive theological attention paid by Western theologians to the problem he raises. He might have also balanced his remarks by noting that if the Church in the West is faced with the problem of individualism, Orthodoxy has its own ecclesial challenges: especially the problem of how to foster deep personal faith in members who see their Orthodoxy as little more than a matter of national identity - an issue confronting the Eastern Church in Greece and Russia for example.

Some of the Orthodox scholars Payton draws on readily acknowledge weakness in the Orthodox Church, as Payton's own note 3 on p. 194 shows. There, to his credit, he quotes Kallistos Ware on the Orthodox tendency to stagnate by uncritically venerating the past. Perhaps Payton might have supplied some critique of his own to sit alongside the praise he lavishes on the Orthodox. The reader is left with the impression that the Eastern Church not only has something of immense value to offer the Western Church, which is certainly true, but that their teaching and worship is thoroughly superior and preferable to most expressions of Western Christianity - a less certain point.

Payton's bias does not detract from the skilful manner with which he articulates his chosen Orthodox doctrinal perspectives and practices of faith. The selection of topics is excellent, and the clarity with which he presents each is impressive. He does indeed shed light on a tradition that has beauty, depth, and breadth in its theology and worship. Without a doubt the Orthodox have profound riches to offer Western Christianity, and for those wanting to understand and appreciate those riches (while considering points of poverty in their own tradition) this book is a valuable resource.

**Jim McInnes**

**Nancy Lee, *Lyrics of Lament: From Tragedy to Transformation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. (xii +196 pp). [ISBN: 9780800663018 0800663012]**

Nancy Lee's *Lyrics of Lament: From Tragedy to Transformation* is a timely reminder of the power and promise of lament across time, geography, faith, and culture. From Ancient Mesopotamian city laments, to laments for New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Lee gathers a vast spectrum of lament literature and demonstrates its unique ability to give voice to human pain and suffering in all its specificity and universality.

Chapter one introduces a variety of laments from various times and cultures, all of which have in common the understanding that a particular deity is behind the lamentable events. In this chapter Lee posits the role of women in composing and performing dirges and notes the continuing tradition of women lamenters/protesters in many cultures. Lee also observes the power that a lament for a hero figure can have in inspiring the followers of a political or reform movement. She further comments on the difficulty of lamenting for so many after the Shoah. In this chapter Lee identifies two major literary forms, that of the dirge and the lament prayer, that she maintains are common across religions and cultures. The chapter thus exposes the reader to some different types of lament and make some interesting comments upon them, but otherwise there's not a lot keeping the chapter hanging together.

Chapter two identifies features of lament and explores the difference between dirge and lament prayer. After Jahnow, Lee identifies the elements of the dirge as: death, and possibly cause of death; complaint about that death; weeping; accusation; call for vengeance/justice/a curse; call and response elements; address to the dead; questions; a summons to mourn; mourning of the incomprehensibility of the loss; the impact of the death on survivors; a reconciling motif; praise for the deceased; maybe a prayer to God (p. 52). Further features include personification (of city, nature, war, and death) (pp. 56-61), and contrast between then and now (pp. 61-65). Following Westermann, Lee's explanation of the defining features of lament prayer is much less comprehensive, comprising simply the 'expression of suffering or need, and the plea to the deity for help' (p. 65).

Chapter three grounds lament tradition firmly in the Hebrew Bible. Lee explores two major paradigmatic narratives where someone laments and God answers, in order to demonstrate the precedent for the efficacy of lament. Abel's blood crying from the ground; and the Israelite people in Egypt. According to Lee, 'The Exodus liberation narrative and

the lament psalms in the Tanak/Hebrew Bible/Old Testament provide the primary theological paradigm for lament genres' (p. 73).

Chapter four purports to examine the lament in the three Abrahamic traditions, and includes selections from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Koran. This chapter also contains a wealth of additional lament literature from other sources, particularly blues/jazz music and South African poetry, upon which Lee comments at length. This is curious, given the stated intention to focus on sacred literature in this chapter. Lee casts the net wide; perhaps, at times, a little too wide, including literature that others might not easily identify as lament. It may be simply that I am not familiar with the Koran, but I found Lee's defense of selected passages as lament literature for the most part unconvincing. For example, she quotes Sura 14:39: 'Praise be to Allah, Who hath granted unto me in old age Isma'il and Isaac: for truly my Lord is He, the Hearer of Prayer!' (p. 129). Lee earlier identified the key features of lament prayer as expression of suffering and plea for help, neither of which I find evident here (unless *any* prayer can be considered a plea for help of sorts!) While other passages she cites do clearly contain lament elements, it would have been helpful had Lee included some further explanations of *how* they demonstrate the elements of dirge or lament prayer she has previously outlined. As it is, her listing of various passages without including much in the way of context is not, for me, entirely satisfying.

Chapter five sets out to create links between lament, prophetic voices, and social justice. This chapter draws on Lee's previous work on voicing of lament in Jeremiah and in Lamentations (Nancy C. Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations* [Leiden: Brill, 2002], where, it should be noted, Lee flows against the tide of scholarly consensus by suggesting a return to the traditional ascription of (at least some of) Lamentations to Jeremiah). Lee argues on the basis of her selection of lament literature from Jeremiah and from contemporary resistance movements that lament literature is associated with prophetic individuals.

Chapter six highlights the role of lament in mourning an entire community of people, and again includes examples, both ancient and contemporary. Again, this chapter is a little fragmented, being as it is, mostly comprised of selections of lament literature without much in the way of comment to segue between them. However, the literature she has selected for the most part speaks for itself; and eloquently so.

Chapter seven explores the very real issue of the call for violent vengeance that appears in so much lament literature. Here Lee's political agenda comes to the fore. She argues that traditional lament forms must be innovated such that they protest violence and instead work towards

peace in the world, seeking what she calls 'higher spiritual principles.' She calls for 'Renaissance and People's movements' in reclaiming and revising lament forms to create new, non violent laments. The crucial part of this process for Lee is the involvement of individuals-in-community in creating and performing their own laments.

Chapter eight finishes the book with the twin realisations that children are often the greatest victims of disparity and violence in the world; and yet it is often children and youth who call for and lead movements for change. Thus while there is clearly cause for lament in the world, there is also, in Lee's final analysis, cause for hope.

One of the great gifts of this book is in the scope and breadth of lament literature Lee has collected, with selections of laments from ancient Mesopotamia right through to laments in contemporary culture. Lee's work draws on the best of scholarship but is still very accessible, not least because the text is interspersed with so many examples of lament songs and poems. These laments are often truncated, which leaves the reader wanting more. The website supplementing the book goes some way towards alleviating this, with links to full versions, readings, and performances of many of the laments Lee cites ([www.fortresspress.com/lee](http://www.fortresspress.com/lee)).

Lee states from the outset that she wishes the laments gathered here to speak for themselves; and they do, eloquently, in a veritable cacophony of voices. However, perhaps because of the wide variety and scope of laments she has collected, the book seems at times fragmentary, moving from one expression of lament to another with little in the way of explanation as to how the juxtaposed pieces hang together. This is perhaps because the work is neither a simple anthology of lament literature; nor a sustained academic study of lament literature, but falls somewhere in between. While making it accessible to a wide audience, this leaves the academic reader wanting a little more in terms of engagement; and the interested reader looking for expressions of lament wanting a little more in terms of completeness of each work cited. However, the variety and universality of the selection makes this book in itself a wonderful resource for those interested in exploring ways of expressing human suffering and pain that is common to us all.

Lyrics of lament, as the title and content would suggest, is not a cheerful read. It is at times relentless. And yet there is profound hope, hope that lament might change the world.

Lee's book is political. It is not a call to arms, but a call to *lay down* arms – a call to nonviolent resistance of injustice through the use and innovation of the lament tradition. Lament, for Lee, is at once an

expression of sorrow and a vehicle of protest, and she seeks change in political structures by the voicing of lament by people seeking justice in the world. Lee maintains that the innovation of lament by people utilising and recreating the lament traditions might promote lasting change toward peace in the world. This is, perhaps, an ambitious political agenda; but it is a worthy one. And when reading the collection of laments that have arisen from and seeded into movements for change it's hard not to wonder if there might be something in it.

This is a book to be dipped into time and time again. Its expressions of grief and lament resonate with all who share humanity. These laments in turn may inspire both our own expressions of grief, and solidarity with those whose mourn, gentling God's people to action in a hurting world.

**Miriam Bier**

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