

Approaches to Ministerial Training Among New South Wales Baptists: Initial Lines of Enquiry

ABSTRACT

The author identifies a number of lines of inquiry, which when drawn together, it is argued, define the dominant approach to ministerial training among New South Wales Baptists by the end of 1920. These lines of inquiry include: the level of education required of ministers; the priority of preaching, evangelism, apologetics and Bible knowledge; the desire of centralised authorities to oversee the training of all those involved in preaching and teaching; the propagation of baptism by immersion only linked to closed church membership as essential to Baptist identity; the proclamation of Dispensational Premillennial teaching of the Second Coming; caution about any ecumenical approach that might compromise NSW Baptist identity; and lack of finances that affected the approach to ministerial training.

By the end of 1920 the approach to ministerial training in NSW had consolidated to focus on the production of preachers, trained to be effective as evangelists and apologists with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. They were not to be scholarly pastors. Five years of ministerial training was required to produce ministers who would propagate the NSW Baptist identity, which included baptism of believers only by immersion linked to closed church membership and proclamation of a Dispensational Premillennial understanding of the Second Coming of Christ. These ministers began as Home Mission agents and would continue after their graduation under the authority of the Home Mission committee.

This paper investigates the guiding principles that appear to have informed theological education among NSW Baptists from the beginning of the Baptist Union of NSW in 1867 to the resignation of the first Principal of that state's theological college at the 1920 Annual Assembly. From this preliminary investigation a number of lines of enquiry emerge that appear to inform future directions of theological education among NSW Baptists, especially as they are expressed in the various Principal's principles of theological education.

A number of conflicting themes can be identified in the approach adopted by NSW Baptists toward theological education in the early period up to c.1900, those themes becoming more extreme in their expression between 1900 and 1916. It is suggested that the dramatic failure of Rev Alexander Gordon as the first Principal of the NSW Baptist Theological College saw these themes coalesce in opposition to both Principal Gordon and his chief supporter Rev A.J. Waldock. The themes will provide the framework for a future paper on the philosophy of theological education that dominated the Principalship of G.H. Morling.

1867-1900: Early approaches to ministerial training.

What were NSW Baptists attitudes towards theological education c.1867? Fourth among the five Objects of the Baptist Association: 'the training of suitable men for the ministry', the second Object was 'to originate and strengthen the Baptist Churches without in any way interfering with the independent character of such Churches'.¹ While a number of intriguing lines of inquiry issue from the Objects of the NSW Baptist Association, the one that is of importance to this investigation is the order in which the Objects are placed. Is it significant? Does it reflect a priority in the thinking of the people who wrote and agreed to them?

At the second Annual Assembly of NSW Baptists in September 1868, the Rev Dr Hobbs read to the Assembly a previously published circular letter which was adopted by the Delegates for publication as expressing the view of NSW Baptists on ministry.² Hobbs noted the 'ever increasing' spiritual needs of the colony, the advances in infrastructures, particularly the railways, that are opening the way into the interior, and difficulty NSW Baptists face to 'maintain our present position, not to speak of these new spheres, without fresh supplies of Ministers'.³ These fresh supplies of Ministers could not be drawn from 'a Baptist College' as in England or America, as there were at that time no Baptist Colleges in Australia. Hobbs made clear he was not advocating Ministry by those who were theologically untrained: 'in the advancing state of education, it would be a dangerous thing to have an uneducated

¹ 'Basis or Constitution (of NSW Association of Baptist Churches)', *Minute Book 1867-78. NSW Baptist Association*, folio.7.

² 'Dr Hobbs -Circular Letter', *Minute Book 1867-78, NSW Baptist Association*, between folios 22-23.

³ Hobbs, 6.

Ministry'.⁴ There were fervent young Baptist men in the colony whom Hobbs urged to 'avail themselves of every facility for acquiring knowledge'⁵ to engage in ministry, and the primary focus of that ministry was to be evangelism. Yet Hobbs' view of ministry was not exclusively about the conversion of sinners, it appears to have included an aspect of correcting the errors of all who held different views on baptism to NSW Baptists: 'In all charity, but with all plainness, and firmness, it is our duty to point out to our brethren their errors in this matter. The truth on this point will not be taught unless we teach it, and errors will not be abandoned *unless we expose them* [italics in original]'.⁶ Dr Hobbs went on to quote approvingly from an un-named source 'We have no greater partiality for immersion than others, but we would baptize in ink if Christ commanded it'.⁷ For NSW Baptists the command of Christ to baptize by immersion was the basis for their evangelistic zeal concerning this doctrine.

The first line of enquiry concerning Baptist Ministry in NSW has been identified in the 'Circular Letter' of Dr Hobbs, the contrast of an educated ministry with the dangers of those who are theologically untrained. This educated Baptist ministry will be evangelistic towards those who are not yet converted, and will defend the Baptist position on full immersion Baptism.

Between April and June 1870 correspondence between Mr C. Amos, the West Maitland Baptist Church and the Committee of the Baptist Union of NSW demonstrates the tension between the autonomy of the local church appointing its own minister and the centralising tendency inherent in a Committee of the Baptist Union determining who was fit to 'exercise the functions of the ministry' among NSW Baptists. The West Maitland Church supported the application of Mr Amos to become a recognised minister of the NSW Baptist Union; the Committee declined his application, the specific reasons not being given. Nevertheless the West Maitland Church went ahead and appointed Mr Amos as their pastor! At that year's Annual Assembly Rev R. Morton, after decrying the spiritual weakness of NSW Baptists and their lack of evangelistic zeal, is reported to have cited with approval the saying 'There is a danger of being killed by an overdose of Congregationalism'.⁸

⁴ Hobbs, 6.

⁵ Hobbs, 6.

⁶ Hobbs, 7.

⁷ Hobbs, 7.

⁸ 'Annual Report of (3rd) Assembly, 12, *Minute Book 1867-78, NSW Baptist Association* between folios 34 & 35.

Rev J. Greenwood, later champion of educational reforms to secular schooling in NSW, the Chairman of the Committee for 1870-1871, in a somewhat more conciliatory tone stated 'A review of our past history in this land induces your committee to urge the importance of measures being taken to see that qualified men are accredited as ministers of our Body, and hopes at no very distant date to supply young brethren in every other sense qualified for ministerial work, those educational advantages which, whilst not held by us to be essential to usefulness, are highly desiderated as important aids'.⁹ Greenwood is also less belligerent towards other denominations, being optimistic about the rise of 'religious toleration and demise of established religion', and urged an interpretation of the basis of Union of NSW to 'allow maximum divergencies [sic]... where their lives prove that they are disciples of Jesus Christ'.¹⁰ Here is a second line of enquiry. Within Baptist circles in 1870 there appears to be disagreement about the degree to which Baptists can allow diversity within their own ranks on the basis of Baptist autonomy. Also there appears to be disagreement about the degree to which Baptists might work with other denominations. How should the training of ministers reflect this issue? That ministers should be educated, that much was agreed by the Committee, and some in the churches. But how were the ministers to be educated, and was there room for untrained men in positions of ministerial oversight to be accredited as ministers?

At the Committee meeting on 23 December 1870, 'Mr I.H. Palmer gave notice of motion for next meeting: "That it is desirable to consider the feasibility of training young men amongst us for the ministry."' ¹¹ This feasibility study took shape as 'The Baptist Education Institute of NSW' which began its work on 28 November 1871 with Rev James Greenwood as its President, and Revs A. Webb, F. Hibberd, G. Sheppard and A. Burdett as Tutors. The purpose of the Baptist Education Institute was to train ministers, evangelists and lay preachers. The first report of the President of this Institute in 1872 described the aim of the class as 'preliminary training for the work of ministry'.¹² The young men read on a weekly rotation system a sermon, paper or essay, the emphasis being on sermons, as the President reported thirty-two

⁹ 'Committee Report' Appendix, *Minute Book 1867-78, NSW Baptist Association, between folios 46-47*.

¹⁰ James Greenwood – Chairman's Address', iii, p.v, *Minute Book 1867-78, NSW Baptist Association, between folios 46-47*.

¹¹ *Minute Book 1867-78, NSW Baptist Association, folio 48*.

¹² 'Report of the Baptist Education Institute of NSW, 8', *Minute Book 1867-78, NSW Baptist Association, between folios 94-95*.

sermons had been read at the thirty-six meetings the Institute had held since commencing. While some improvement had been achieved the President and Tutors considered more could be achieved by introducing the study of English Grammar, and foreshadowing the introduction of Latin. Unfortunately of the 22 students enrolled at the time of making his report, the President had to acknowledge that on average only 9-10 students were now attending the weekly meetings.

While the theme of the Chairman's address to the 1872 Assembly was the 'divinely qualified ministry' emphasising the need for an educated ministry,¹³ there is no report from the Baptist Education Institute to that Assembly or to any future Assembly.

By 1876 the Executive Committee of the Union had shifted its emphasis from training educated ministers for the churches to commissioning evangelists to promote growth in country areas. In July 1877 *The Banner of Truth*, published 'under the direction of the Baptist Union of New South Wales', reported that the Executive Committee had appointed Mr T.H. Jagers in the capacity of Evangelist to the Bega and Moruya districts.¹⁴ Jagers' appointment occurred a 'little more than twelve months' since the Executive Committee 'began to make an honest attempt to meet the want of the vast interior' of the Colony.¹⁵ The first evangelist appointed was Mr Thomas Llewellyn who in 1877 was active in the Wellington district. Ministerial training was however not forgotten at this time, as the Executive Committee were in negotiation with Camden College, the Congregational College in Sydney, concerning the 'terms upon which our students were to be received ... and also the course of study'.¹⁶ The division between accredited ministers, evangelists and lay preachers appeared to be established as three separate streams. Tracing the interaction between these three forms of ministry provides another line of inquiry in the formation of attitudes among Baptists concerning ministerial training.

Tension about the use of the Baptist Evangelists Fund became evident during the 1885 Assembly when Mr White moved that the fund be closed and funds redirected to the Church Extension Fund. The record of the debate published in *The Banner of Truth* indicates that the city churches wanted access to the funds to assist church planting in

¹³ 'Rev Allan Webb – Chairman's Address', 9-14, *Minute Book 1867-78*, NSW Baptist Association, between folios 94-95.

¹⁴ *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 1, No. 10, July 1877, 4.

¹⁵ *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 1, No. 10, July 1877, 8.

¹⁶ *Minute Book 1867-1878*, NSW Baptist Association, folio 183.

Sydney.¹⁷ Planting churches in Sydney was a priority, and using Home Mission Agents as pastors to those churches became the accepted pattern to provide ministerial oversight. However, Home Mission Agents were not considered by the Union Executive to be fully trained and recognised ministers, they were apprentices proving their aptitude, who would then under the authority of the Union Executive be placed at either the Congregational or Presbyterian theological colleges in Sydney. One such candidate for the ministry is identified in the 1885 Assembly records, Mr D. Davis who continued his training at Camden College, his education being funded through the Student Fund in 1885.¹⁸ He was pastor of the Home Mission church plant at Woollahra, (received as a member of the Union at the 1885 annual session) and was assisted by lay preachers in his ministry.¹⁹

This fifteenth annual session (1885) was noteworthy for another matter, the strengthening of the Executive's powers over the appointment of ministers. In an editorial of *The Banner of Truth*, Rev F. Hibberd reviewed the achievements of the Annual Sessions of the Baptist Union of New South Wales since its inception in 1870.²⁰ His assessment of the state of the Union by 1873 was none too flattering: 'very fruitful in resolutions, but barren in performances'. The Union began to progress in the right direction according to Hibberd in 1875 when: 'Instead of being satisfied with public questions and communion with each other, the representatives of it began to see that a Union has powers and commensurate responsibilities, for which it is answerable to the Great Head of the Church'.²¹ Rev C. Bright, who had trained at Rawdon College, recently arrived in the colony to fill the vacant pastorate of the Bathurst St church, received glowing praise in the Annual Report of 1885.²² He also features in the minutes of the Annual Session, especially as the mover of two motions regarding Churches. The first concerned the admission of a congregation as a member church of the Union which required that the Executive Committee be consulted and a resolution taken by them on admitting churches. This was carried by the Annual Session. The second motion concerned the appointment of ministers: 'Any Church which receives monetary aid from the Union

¹⁷ 'Baptist Union of New South Wales: Fifteenth Annual Session: Minutes of Proceedings', *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 19, Nos 11-12, Sept-Oct 1885, 129.

¹⁸ 'Fifteenth Annual Session: Minutes of Proceedings', 131.

¹⁹ 'Annual Report', *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 19, Nos 11-12, Sept-Oct 1885, 141

²⁰ 'The Baptists in N.S. Wales', *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 19, Nos 11-12, Sept-Oct 1885, 121-122.

²¹ 'The Baptists in N.S. Wales', 122.

²² 'Annual Report', *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 19, Nos 11-12, Sept-Oct 1885, 141.

for the erection of a place of worship, or for other purposes, wishing to secure the services of a Pastor, shall be guided therein by the opinion of the Executive Committee, a meeting of which shall be called and a resolution taken on the subject'.²³ This motion was also supported by Mr White, and after debate was carried fourteen votes to eleven. The Executive Committee now had a clear mandate to influence the appointment of ministers of any church subsidised by the Union. A draft of the constitution for the Home Mission Society was published in the December edition of *The Baptist* in 1892, outlining the use of Home Mission Agents as church planters, rather than itinerant evangelists, who were accountable to the Home Missionary Society Committee,²⁴ and a Committee of Advice as approved by the 1892 Annual Session published its objects which reinforced the Union Executives role in facilitating 'the settlement and removal of Ministers' and reporting on the 'credentials of Ministers seeking admission to the Union'.²⁵

With such authority came responsibility to invest in the training of ministers. However, it was not until 1889 that the Executive formed an Examination Committee to undertake the testing of potential ministerial candidates. This morphed into the Education Committee in 1892, which examined its first students under its guidance in 1893, Miss Mary Morris and Mr Percy Nall, Sunday School teachers; Mr William Chaseling and Mr H. Halmarick, Home Mission Agents at churches at Cumnock and Plattsburg respectively.²⁶ In December 1892 the first half yearly report of a new Baptist Preachers' Society was printed in *The Baptist*, the new 'Organ of the Baptist Denomination in N.S.W.'. ²⁷ Two members of this lay preachers' society, Mr J. Parker and Mr F.B. Bryant applied to the Executive Committee to be received as ministerial students. Mr Parker had been supplying the pulpit at Leichardt and Granville on a regular basis and with the approval of the congregations. Neither of these men was listed presenting themselves for examination by the Education Committee. Yet the Committee had as its object the education of Sunday School Teachers, Lay-Preachers, and Candidates for the ministry.²⁸

²³ 'Baptist Union of New South Wales: Fifteenth Annual Session: Minutes of Proceedings', *The Banner of Truth*, Vol. 19, Nos 11-12, Sept-Oct 1885, 130.

²⁴ 'Draft Constitution of NSW Home Missionary Society', *The Baptist*, New Series Vol. 1 No.12, 3.

²⁵ 'Committee of Advice', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 1893, 9.

²⁶ 'Notices', *The Baptist*, New Series Vol. 2, No 12, Dec 1893, 190.

²⁷ 'Baptist Preachers' Society – First Half Yearly Report', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 1, No.12, 1.

²⁸ 'Proposed scheme of education for our students', *The Baptist*, New Series Vol. 2, No. 1, 7.

In 1893 the case of James Worboys' appointment as pastor of the Bathurst Church created some lively correspondence in *The Baptist*. In a stinging letter, signed 'S', published in the October edition, Worboys and the Bathurst Church were castigated for not consulting the Union Executive concerning Worboys' appointment as pastor. Further, Worboys was challenged that he had not undertaken any ministerial training prior to his appointment. The correspondent wrote: 'It would seem to be a proof of the existence and prevalence, among a certain class of prejudice against culture in the pulpit. It is true that ignorance has no sympathy with true culture. Often heard is the hue and cry which judges of a man on no other ground than that he is a scholar'.²⁹ A highly educated ministry was further endorsed by an un-named correspondent in the December edition, where preaching the Gospel as 'spiritual insurance' was contrasted with the high calling of ministry 'the building up of character into a beautiful and symmetrical whole'. In this preaching 'there is room for the play of the loftiest genius, and the richest culture'.³⁰ 'Simply a layman' responded in January 1894 arguing for Gospel preaching inspired by the Holy Spirit as the essential part of ministry, while conceding 'external aids to efficiency' as something a 'spiritual man' welcomes, yet such a man 'knows that it is not in these his great strength lieth'.³¹ Aiming at the 'inflexible Church polity' of the Baptist Union as defended by 'S', 'Simply a layman' argues for 'a little more elasticity and readiness to acknowledge the really essential elements of ministerial usefulness where they exist, even though the time and ability to pursue successfully a long course of study may be lacking. Ministerial status, whatever it implies, is doubtless a valuable possession, but ministerial efficiency may exist without it, and where that is the case it is neither fair, politic or Scriptural to withhold it'.³² In this exchange of views the lines are drawn between those whose philosophy of training valued high standards of education, and those who saw ministry as more reliant on the Spirit with an emphasis on preaching salvation to sinners.

1894 saw the first Education Committee, also known as the Student's Aid Committee, ministerial candidate recommended and accepted into the Victorian Baptist Theological College, Mr Charles Thomas Way, who was already working with approval as an evangelist

²⁹ 'Correspondence', *The Baptist*, New Series Vol 2, No. 10, 160.

³⁰ 'Culture in the Pulpit', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 12, December 1893, 185.

³¹ 'Culture and the Pulpit', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 3, No. 1, January 1894, 5.

³² 'Culture and the Pulpit', 5

with the Central Methodist Mission.³³ In the same edition of *The Baptist*, the Committee felt compelled, due to 'popular misunderstanding' to clarify the 'exact character and scope' of its work:

We are not appointed with the view of training young men for the Christian ministry. The members are not elected as Professors to teach promising young preachers theology, homiletics, and other sciences. Our special work is to guide the reading, supervise the studies and periodically examine the work done by students.³⁴

Students associated with the Committee were 'Home Mission workers, Sunday School teachers, Lay Preachers, and a few who hope some day to enter College where they may be trained for efficient Christian service at home or abroad.' There were four set texts for first year students of the Committee.³⁵ While the Committee was encouraged by the numbers of young men applying for ministerial training, the Secretary Rev E. Price felt constrained to point out that the desire for training 'cannot always be encouraged'. In the Committee's view high academic standards were the cornerstone to ministerial training, and many who 'offer themselves for ministerial labour ... shrink from those disciplinary tasks which alone can fit them for permanent and effective Christian service'.³⁶

When educationally qualified candidates presented themselves the Education Committee recommended them to attend theological college for ministerial training. However, not every such student went to a Baptist College, as the career of Mr Percy Nall demonstrates.³⁷ Other

³³ 'The Student's Aid Committee', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 3, No. 3, March 1894, 44; 'Executive Committee – Resume of Minutes', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 3, No.4, 60. It cost 1 pound 1 shilling for Mr Way's first term fees, though the Petersham Church agreed to pay the cost. 'Executive Committee – Resume of Minutes', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 3, No. 6. 87.

³⁴ 'The Student's Aid Committee', 87.

³⁵ Moule's *Outlines of Christian Theology* (first seven chapters); *The Old Testament and its contents* by Professor Robertson; *The New Testament and its writers* by Rev A. McClymont; and Stalker's *Life of St Paul* with slight variations in special cases. 'The Student's Aid Committee', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 3, No. 3, March 1894, 44

³⁶ 'Education Committee's Annual Report', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 3, No. 10, 162.

³⁷ Percy Nall was accepted as a ministerial candidate in January 1895, with a view to attending Camden College, but for un-stated reasons, was not able to continue his candidature at their college, nevertheless the Congregational College advocated his acceptance at the Presbyterian College, where he successfully completed his first year of theological studies, attending lectures

students for the ministry like Mr A. J. Waldock became Home Missionary agents under the direction of the Education Committee for the whole of their theological training.³⁸

There continued to be intermittent appeals in *The Baptist* for the revival of the role of Union evangelist,³⁹ and to foster the work of lay preachers.⁴⁰ By 1900 ministerial training was firmly in the hands of those who affirmed the priority of formal theological college education and the reality of centralised direction of ministerial training. Those churches that sought to appoint pastors who were not formally trained were under pressure to conform. However, there continued to be a lack of trained ministers in NSW and in some quarters the failure to utilise lay preachers and evangelists was considered a hindrance to the growth of Baptist work in the colony.⁴¹ Yet NSW Baptists did not discuss establishing their own theological college at this time to meet their need for trained ministers. Rather there was in 1897 discussion concerning the idea of a 'central college for the training of Australian students' which was still being fostered in 1902, though ultimately it came to naught.⁴²

1900-1916: The Rise of the Education Committee

In 1901-2 the Annual Session of the Union accepted some by-law changes to the constitution of the Education Committee that gave churches a role to play in the acceptance of candidates by the Committee and reinforced that accepted candidates were 'to conform to such

without charge. *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 4, No.1, 5; Vol. 4, No.4, 50; Vol. 4, No. 5, 67; Vol. 4, No. 11, 141.

³⁸ R.B. Henson, *And One Was a Doctor: A Life of Rev Dr A J Waldock*, Baptist Historical Studies No. 7, 13-15, 18. A.J. Waldock was recognised as a minister at the annual Assembly in 1897 having completed the prescribed course of the Education Committee, but not having attended any theological college.

³⁹ 'Correspondence -James Worboys', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 1 January 1895, 4.

⁴⁰ 'Correspondence – Anaxagoras', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 5, No.3, March 1896; 'Correspondence – Chas Howard', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 5, No. 5, May 1896. Howard pointed out that to his knowledge there had been three previous attempts to establish a lay preachers association, but all had 'for different reasons ... collapsed'.

⁴¹ 'More Labourers Wanted', *The Baptist*, New Series, Vol. 5, No. 7, 76. The author compares the effective work of lay preachers in Victorian Baptist work with the lack of lay preachers in NSW and the evident ineffectiveness of the NSW Baptist work.

⁴² A.C. Prior, *Some Fell on Good Ground*, The Baptist Union of New South Wales, Sydney, 1966, 231; 'Annual Report of Executive Committee', *1902-3 Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 12.

regulations as now exist, or may here after be framed'.⁴³ Was this a conciliatory move on the part of the Education Committee in the face of on-going tension over the level of education required of ministers? Rev W.A. Southwell, who had been outspoken about over emphasising education, presented the Annual Sermon at the 1902-3 Assembly in which he was exceedingly suspicious of higher learning and 'critical experts lapsing into infidelity',⁴⁴ a theme continued in 1904-5 by Rev W.R. Hiddlestone who broadened the attack from Higher Criticism to education generally: 'Philosophy, poetry, art, sociology, ethics etc are all well in their place, but not in the pulpit'.⁴⁵ An apparent resolution of this tension seems to have transpired by 1906-7. In the *1905-6 Year Book* the Education Committee reported an over abundance of applicants, many with such a 'rudimentary' knowledge of English that the Committee was forced to introduce entrance examination to eliminate 'inferior material', and to strictly confine its work to ministerial students.⁴⁶ In the same period a Preachers' Society was formed, so that in the *1906-7 Year Book* the Executive Committee reported that the Education Committee were *only* dealing with ministerial students, all other students of the Committee were now under the authority of the Preachers' Society.⁴⁷ With a more focused aim, the Education Committee established a new curriculum for its students, prepared a scheme to establish a Baptist College in NSW and to raise the educational standards of its students. In 1907 it was able to report that 'the much needed increase in the standard has reduced the number of inferior applicants'.⁴⁸

University education was now considered the desired norm for training ministerial candidates. Mr Herbert Priestly reinforced this position in his Presidential Address 'Our secondary needs':

⁴³ *1901-2 Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 16, 43.

⁴⁴ 'By Faith, not by Sight – Rev W.A. Southwell', *1902-3 Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 10.

⁴⁵ 'Annual Sermon', *1904-5 Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 12.

⁴⁶ 'Education Committee' *1905-06 Year Book Baptist Churches of NSW*, 61.

⁴⁷ 'Executive Committee' *1906-07 Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 22.

⁴⁸ 'Education Committee – Annual Report', 77. The entrance examination was now set at the level of the Sydney University Junior Standard in English and one other subject from the History of England, any language, or any branch of science. First year students were urged to take Logic and Science at the University of Sydney, while completing Baptist History and Doctrine (Bartlett's *Early Church History*; Rooke *On Baptism*), Church History (Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*); Second year students to study Theology (Denney), Introduction to the Old and New Testaments (Robertson & McClymon), Homiletics (Date), Christian Evidence (Row); Third year students: Theology (Dale on *The Atonement*), Ethics (MacKenzie), Psychology (James – smaller book), Apologetics (A.B. Bruce).

The days 'when want of learning kept the laymen low' are happily past. The school master is abroad, and the standard of education is now very much higher than a few decades ago. Every advance in the educational attainments of the pew makes a greater demand upon the culture and intellectuality of the pulpit, and if the Churches desire to retain their hold on the intellectual classes, those who are set apart to teach and to preach will need to be men of wisdom, understanding, and largeness of heart, honest, logical thinkers, and capable leaders. We have such men in our midst, would to God that we had more of them; men of broad views and sound judgement, fearless champions of the right, humble servants of the Great Teacher, and deep students of His Word. We need to realise that piety, although a primary and all important requisite in a preacher, can never take the place of incapacity for unless a man is thoroughly equipped for his work, mentally as well as spiritually, he may become an obstacle instead of an aid to progress.⁴⁹

The following year, Rev W.M. Cartwright, a member of the Education Committee, in his Presidential Address echoed the theme of Mr Priestly. While condemning the 'New Theology' and 'Higher Criticism', he nevertheless castigated those who supported a 'sickly pietism that imagines the Spirit to more effectively operate through ignorance than through knowledge'.⁵⁰ His summary might well act as a definition of the Education Committee's philosophy of ministerial training: 'there are abundant reasons for assiduously fostering a spirit controlled scholarship that shall be at the service of our churches'.⁵¹ By 1912 a ministerial candidate could expect to undertake 5 years of study, two under the Committee and Home Mission, and three years study at the Victorian Baptist College.⁵² By 1913 the Education Committee had 31 students under its care, ten of whom were students at the Victorian Baptist College where University study was an integral part of a students study programme, and those who showed aptitude at University were encouraged to 'do higher academic work'.⁵³

⁴⁹ 'Annual Sermon' 1907-8 *Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 31.

⁵⁰ 'Our work in the light of Today – Rev W.M. Cartwright', 1908-9 *Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 29.

⁵¹ 'Our work in the light of Today – Rev W.M. Cartwright', 31.

⁵² 'Education Committee Annual Report', 1911-12 *Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 90.

⁵³ 'Education Committee. Annual Report, 1914', *New South Wales Baptist Year Book and Handbook of Baptist Information 1914-15*, 84-86.

Nevertheless, lack of funds hampered the Education Committee's work to raise the educational standards of its candidates. In 1907-8 the Committee had 22 students under its care and only a grant of 7 pounds to fund its work. As Mr Barbour Secretary of the Committee pointed out: 'the funds for the Philosophy course at the University for one student amount to more than this'.⁵⁴

Alexander Gordon, secretary of the Victorian Baptist College till 1908, was an enthusiastic supporter of well trained ministers, and presented a 'position paper' at the inaugural Australasian Baptist Congress in Sydney, September 1908. The Congress resolved 'that ministerial candidates should have first passed at least four subjects in the matriculation or its equivalent, and that they should study secular university subjects as well as theological subjects'.⁵⁵ This Australasian Congress reignited discussion of the formation of an Australian Baptist College; however differences of opinion between Victoria and New South Wales saw the idea founder. Otzen implies that New South Wales Baptists decided to open their own college in response to what they felt to be a betrayal of an agreement reached with all the states in 1912,⁵⁶ while Rogers indicates it was in June 1915 when a letter from the Victorian Baptist Union proposed changes in the financial arrangements for the future training of NSW Baptist students at the Victorian College that precipitated the formation of the NSW Baptist College.⁵⁷

One who would continue from the Education Committee to the College Council was Rev B. Gawthrop. As President of the NSW Baptist Union in 1914 he took a mediating position between simply relying on a 'highly educated ministry' to do all the work of apologetics, soul winning, and teaching, at the same time urging the need for a 'teaching ministry' that could teach theology to the young people especially. While being careful to state he was not criticising or discounting 'simple gospel preaching', he challenged his hearers to the danger 'of conventionality and formalism which may dominate us in this matter of preaching and revivalism as much as in ritual'.⁵⁸

By September 1915 at the NSW Baptist Annual Assembly a constitution for the NSW Baptist Theological College had been debated,

⁵⁴ 'Education Committee Report', *1907-8 Year Book: Baptist Churches of NSW*, 79.

⁵⁵ M. Otzen, *Whiteley. The Baptist College of Victoria 1891-1991*, Hyland House, 1991, 49.

⁵⁶ Otzen, 63.

⁵⁷ R. Rogers, 'Alexander Gordon, M.A. A Christian gentleman', *The Baptist Recorder*, No. 91, May 2005, 4-5.

⁵⁸ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1914-15*, 25.

amended and approved, and Rev C.J. Tinsley had moved that Alexander Gordon be appointed Principal of the college for a three year term.⁵⁹ Tinsley admitted he had not always been a supporter of the Victorian Baptist College, but had through the 'able and self-sacrificing work of men like the Rev A. Gordon ...' experienced a 'radical conversion' to the work and ethos of the Victorian College.⁶⁰ Would this be a lasting conversion or would the ethos of his Pastor's College training re-emerge? Gordon was approached and accepted the invitation to be the first principal of the NSW Baptist College in a letter to the Union Executive dated 9 November 1915, arriving in Sydney 13 January 1916.⁶¹

1916-1920 The Principalship of Alexander Gordon

Gordon's first report as Principal focused the broad object of the College in its constitution from training 'students for the ministry of the Gospel' to training 'preachers – those whom God has called, and to whom He has granted gifts – preachers with visions of the greatness and glory and powers of the everlasting Gospel. We desire the College to secure an out-standing reputation on this basis ...'.⁶² Ministerial students, those in their third, fourth and fifth years of study, undertook some university studies along with their college studies:

- (a) Biblical Theology – The Person and Work of Christ Jesus; (b) Greek New Testament – the 1st Epistle of John; (c) Old Testament Exegesis – a portion of I Samuel and Habakkuk; (d) Apologetics – Revelation and Inspiration; (e) Christian Psychology – Prof. Stalker's book as an introduction; (f) Church History – the Reformation Period; (g) Church polity – the study of Baptist Church Principles; (h) Greek – the Grammar; (i) Bible Introduction; (j) Homiletics and Preaching.⁶³

Gordon had the assistance of Revs A.J. Waldock, B. Gawthrop and A.J. Packer, but not C.J. Tinsley who was unable to fulfil his desire to assist due to illness.⁶⁴ All these ministers were members of the College Council, A.J. Waldock being the President.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Rogers, 5.

⁶⁰ Rogers, 4.

⁶¹ Rogers, 5.

⁶² 'Principal's Report', *New South Wales Baptist Year Book and Handbook of Baptist Information 1916-17*, 83.

⁶³ 'Principal's Report: 1916-17', 82.

⁶⁴ 'Principal's Report: 1916-17', 82.

⁶⁵ 'Committees for 1916-17', *NSW Baptist Year Book 1916-17*, 117.

The report of the College Council focused on the welcome offered to the Gordons, and thanks offered to the Victorian Baptist College for the effective training of the NSW men sent there. A list of prize winners from the NSW students was also presented, one G.A (sic) Morling having won prizes for elocution and apologetics.⁶⁶ The emphasis on the importance of University training for NSW Baptist ministers is noted in a reference to the location of the Harris Street Church classrooms, 'within easy walking distance of the University'.⁶⁷ Training of candidates for Foreign Mission fields was added to the charter of the fledgling college, the Federal Mission Board being responsible for payment of their fees.⁶⁸ Further consideration was given to a proposal by the Inter-State Board 'to secure a uniform standard of ministerial education throughout the Commonwealth', an ideal the College Council was in favour of, but not in the form presented by the Board.⁶⁹ Evidently, the NSW Baptist College was confident in its understanding of what constituted ideal ministerial training and how it should be undertaken. The College saw itself as responsible for the theological training of both Foreign Missionary and home ministerial candidates, closely linked to a well grounded University level undergraduate degree. But did it still have some remnant of the early Education Committee philosophy concerning a much broader training for ministry, including the training of Lay Preachers?

The College Council reported the visit of Principal Gordon and the Secretary of the College Council, Rev A.J. Parker, to the Baptist Preachers' Society, commenting they hoped 'that much good will result from the conference'.⁷⁰ That year's annual report of the Baptist Preachers' Society, their 10th since reforming, also mentioned the visit. Their report indicated their vitality and usefulness to the denomination despite the small size of their society. Though the previous year they suffered the loss of four members through death, they had nonetheless provided preaching for 475 services: 335 in Baptist churches, the rest spread across Congregational and Methodist churches in the main.⁷¹ Yet all was not well. In November 1916, Higlett noted in his diary that on a visit to the Preachers' Society he found it 'out of harmony with A.J.

⁶⁶ 'Report of College Council', *NSW Baptist Year Book 1916-17*, 84-85.

⁶⁷ 'Report of College Council: 1916-17', 85.

⁶⁸ 'Report of College Council', 85.

⁶⁹ 'Report of College Council', 86.

⁷⁰ 'Baptist Preacher's Society – Report for year ending 31st August, 1916', *NSW Baptist Year Book 1916-17*, 102.

⁷¹ 'Baptist Preacher's Society – Report for year ending 31st August, 1916', 102.

Waldock and others'.⁷² Was this the first sign of differences emerging between the College's philosophy of ministry and others in the wider Baptist community, or simply that A.J. Waldock's plans for a more efficient and centralised Union of Churches envisaged the independent Baptist Preachers' Society to come under the auspices of an official department of the Union?

In the *1917-18 Year Book*, and again in the *1918-1919 Year Book*, there is no report from the Baptist Preacher's Society; while in 1919 the College's Principal with the approval of the College Council announced the successful commencement of evening classes for the training of lay preachers.⁷³ In his Annual report for 1919-20 Waldock makes mention of the 'faithful and devoted service' rendered to the Home Mission by the 'Lay Preachers' Auxiliary'.⁷⁴ In 1920-21 both the College Council and Principal's reports mention the on going work of the evening classes. 'The tutors for these classes are Rev H Cubis BA, (English), Rev G. A. Craike (Bible Study), and the Principal (Preaching). It is anticipated that these classes will continue to grow in numbers and usefulness.'⁷⁵

Among those people who viewed theological training of preachers with suspicion, this extension of the College's influence might well have been seen in a negative light.

In his second year as Principal (1917-18) Gordon introduced a 'series of innovations' to the College curriculum: the engagement of an elocution teacher, which was not achieved until the next year, when Mr A Bearpark Dimelow became the Voice Production tutor;⁷⁶ the setting of weekly written tests of expression; and a three year course in Bible Introduction, aimed at 'exact knowledge of the contents and definite teaching of the various books', an innovation Gordon attached 'considerable importance to'.⁷⁷ Otherwise the curriculum continued in broadly the same categories as the previous year, students also taking some subjects at Sydney University. Another innovation was a change in the by-laws that facilitated accepting interstate students for training.⁷⁸ A.J. Waldock, and A.J. Parker continued as tutors, while for a second year C.J. Tinsley could not teach Bible Introduction as he had hoped.⁷⁹

⁷² Rogers, 7.

⁷³ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1919-20*, 65.

⁷⁴ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1919-20*, 32.

⁷⁵ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1920-21*, 53.

⁷⁶ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1918-1919*, 66.

⁷⁷ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1917-1918*, 90.

⁷⁸ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1917-1918*, 88.

⁷⁹ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1917-1918*, 90.

At the conclusion of their report the College Council focused on the College as an academic institution for the training of those in ministry:

Our College is not simply an academy; it is that and more; it is an impassioned and organised attempt to set before our students the highest spiritual ideals of the Christian ministry, and to furnish them with the equipment most likely to make that ministry more influential and effective.⁸⁰

The Principal outlined his understanding of the purpose of the College as 'the training of men so that they shall go forth thoroughly furnished, wise and able exponents of the Word of God, constrained by the grandeur and power of the Gospel.'⁸¹ The view of ministry being propagated under Principal Gordon and the College Council was one committed to the proclamation of the Gospel based on the exposition of the Word of God that used all the facilities of the academy.

There were some changes in the College Council for 1918-19. A.J. Waldock was elected President of the Union for its Jubilee Year, and as such was not President of the College Council. That honour went to C.J. Tinsley. There was also a change in Secretary from A.J. Parker to H. Clark. Revs B. Gawthrop, W.P. Phillips and D. Steed were replaced on the Council by Revs W Cleugh Black, S. Sharp, while Mr F.P. Thompson replaced Mr R.J. Middleton.

Other changes included changes to the by-laws governing student training. Students would now spend four of their five years training for ministry at the College. 'One year at least is prescribed in the Home Mission field, with the first year examination at the close. The second year course will be superseded by a preliminary year in the College'.⁸²

There are hints in the Principal's Report that some pressure was brought to bear on the College about its philosophy of ministry training. Principal Gordon appears to defend the view that ministerial training is about diversity based on the individual student's gifts. 'The College is not a mould but a living school with the object of developing distinct personality in the ministry. At the same time the goal is one – the proclamation of the Gospel in all its grandeur and a burning enthusiasm for the extension of the Kingdom.'⁸³

⁸⁰ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1917-1918*, 90.

⁸¹ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1917-1918*, 88.

⁸² *NSW Baptist Year Book 1918-19*, 66.

⁸³ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1918-19*, 67.

There is also a defensive air to his remark concerning the students as preachers:

Their passion for preaching has not lessened, rather it has deepened. As a result of their studies, their apprehension of the Divine Revelation ay have grown, but correspondingly their confidence in proclaiming it and their sense of dependence on the Holy Spirit have also grown. Taken as a whole the quality of preaching power in the College ranks above the average, some giving exceptional promise.⁸⁴

Students continued to follow the curriculum, though Principal Gordon felt constrained to highlight that A.J. Waldock had not taught Church Polity that session, as it was scheduled 'every alternate year'.⁸⁵ Church Polity, however, did not appear in the curriculum for 1919-20 as it should if Principal Gordon's policy had been followed.⁸⁶ Was there perhaps another source of discontent with the College that Principal Gordon was facing, the propagation of non-Baptistic views of church governance? Was there an emphasis on ecumenical endeavour at the expense of NSW Baptist identity?

Henson suggests that A.J. Waldock was pursuing a centralising policy for NSW Baptists that challenged the principle of Independency strongly held among NSW Baptists. At the 1918 Annual Assembly Waldock proposed the formation of a Finance Committee to finalise all departmental budgets for the Union, and to have authority to assess the churches for their contribution. The proposal was shelved.⁸⁷ Was the Principal's comment about Church Polity a defensive one suggesting the College was not propagating Waldock's radical polity ideas? It does seem however, that issues of Baptist identity were causing concern, perhaps even among members of the College Council. In the College Council's 1920-21 report it states: 'The question of the policy of the College having arisen, it was remitted to a special select committee of the Council, consisting of the officers of the College, and the Revs W. Cleugh Black and A.J. Waldock.'⁸⁸ Issues of Baptist identity appear to be prominent in the review of the policy of the College. The College Council made two recommendations, the first to added to the curriculum two text-books, Cramp's 'History of the Baptists,' and Rooke on 'Baptism', the second to specifically include in the curriculum lectures on the History of the

⁸⁴ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1918-19*, 68.

⁸⁵ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1918-19*, 68-69.

⁸⁶ *NSW Baptist Year Book 1919-20*, 65.

⁸⁷ Henson, 48.

⁸⁸ *NSW Baptist Handbook 1920-21*, 54.

Baptists and Baptism, as well as books of the Old Testament and Second Advent teaching.⁸⁹ By 1920 perhaps Principal Gordon was also under suspicion of being too broad in his churchmanship. Rogers indicates that Principal Gordon had been consulted by members of the NSW Baptist Executive over the South Australian Baptist Church Union resolution in 1918,⁹⁰ but apparently was not consulted in December 1919 when the Executive vote to reject the South Australian proposal.⁹¹ In June 1920 when eight Baptists were chosen to represent NSW Baptists at a gathering of Sydney Protestants to discuss the 'menace of Rome', Principal Gordon was not among the chosen.⁹²

In 1918 this was in the future, and Alexander Gordon was elected to a second three year term as Principal of the College.

There is a sense in the College reports for 1919-20 that Rev. C.J. Tinsley as President of the College Council brought fresh energy and drive to that position, perhaps also some level of competition with Principal Gordon as to who would direct the philosophy of the College. Rev. C.J. Tinsley introduced a College Dinner as a fund raising event, which was underwritten by Mr W. Buckingham, a member of the College Council and deacon of Tinsley's at Stanmore Church, to the sum of 500 pounds. The College Council report notes the speakers at the Dinner as Tinsley, Waldock, F.J. Wyles (past student) and Pastor J. Hunter (present student).⁹³ Conspicuous by his absence is the College Principal. At the College Commencement service, the Principal is again conspicuous by his absence, Tinsley as President speaks for the College.⁹⁴

The University accomplishments' of the College students features prominently in both the Council's and Principal's 1919-20 reports. Not only do current students undertake University studies, but recent graduates are also completing their Bachelor of Arts degrees. Principal Gordon cites with a degree of pride from a letter of Professor Wood: 'I am somewhat amazed by this appearance of a group of theological students among the best of our scholars'.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, academic achievement is firmly located in the larger picture of ministry preparation as evidenced by the Principal's comment:

⁸⁹ *NSW Baptist Handbook 1920-21*, 54.

⁹⁰ Rogers, 8.

⁹¹ Rogers, 11.

⁹² Rogers, 9.

⁹³ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 65.

⁹⁴ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 65.

⁹⁵ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 68.

In conjunction with their studies at the College and the University, they preach regularly, and I rejoice to say that reports witness to the excellence of their ministrations. ... it lies in direct line with my objective – that the College shall maintain the reputation of sending forth men mentally and spiritually equipped, real, live preachers of the Word.⁹⁶

Rev W. Cleugh Black, who had re-joined the College Council in 1918-19, was also President of the NSW Baptist Union in 1919, and had commenced his Presidential address with some strident words against over emphasising academia: 'You will not, therefore, expect from me any scholastic contribution; you will not be called to follow along labyrinthine paths of learning'.⁹⁷ He goes on to 'repudiate those spies of Satan, those iconoclasts of hell, destructive critics'⁹⁸ who have especially 'derided and discredited' a premillennial view of the Second Coming of Christ. In the same sermon he attacks the present machinery of the denomination, 'to see whether the time had arrived to replace a creaking bar call Independency, by an interlocking system of Interdependency. In other words, I wish to advocate district Associations and Churches, to my mind, our only hope if the denomination is to carry out a vigorous and victorious Home Mission policy.'⁹⁹

In this sermon we see a number of lines of our inquiry coming together, a check on the degree to which ministry training is reliant on the academy, Baptist polity, and an emphasis on efficient evangelism primarily through preaching of the Gospel within the framework of a specific view of the Second Coming.

Growing tensions within the College Council leading up to the Annual Assembly of 1920 are another line of inquiry to be followed. Rev. W. Cleugh Black's attack on academia, coupled with W. White's 1927 comment that he 'regarded education as it related to training of ministerial students as like electricity, a very good thing if properly controlled but dangerous if it got out of control'¹⁰⁰ suggests not all on the College Council were in favour of too great an emphasis on University training. Tensions regarding the College's teaching of Second Coming doctrine may also be implicit in Rev. W. Cleugh Black's Presidential sermon. While it may not have been Principal Gordon he was attacking, given he presents Principal Gordon's position as more in

⁹⁶ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 67.

⁹⁷ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 1.

⁹⁸ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 3.

⁹⁹ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1919-20*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Rogers, 16.

line with the majority of NSW Baptists than A.J. Waldock or W. Higlett,¹⁰¹ the situation was exacerbated by Principal Gordon appearing to defend opponents of a Dispensational Premillennial position. As Chairman of the Advisory Council Principal Gordon censured one of the leading proponents of a Dispensational Premillennial interpretation of the Second Coming, Rev W. Lamb, who had been engaged in a heated controversy with a recent graduate of the College Rev D.R. Mitchell.¹⁰² The broad churchmanship of Principal Gordon had also been identified as an issue by the Executive of the Union, some of whom were also members of the College Council.

It is not possible to identify exactly where the 'question of the policy of the College' had arisen, but it found expression in the College Council report for 1920-21. The curriculum of Principal Gordon was endorsed with some additions, as have been noted above. The College Council report suggests that members had observed a falling off of support for the College by the regrettably low attendance at the College Commencement Service and the response of the Churches on College Sunday:

It is to be regretted, however, that some of the churches do not give that place to the advocacy of the claims and needs of the College which it justly deserves. The College Council desires to secure not only the financial help of all our churches, but also their earnest sympathy and prayers on behalf of the Principal, tutors, students and Council in this highly important and responsible work.¹⁰³

It is of interest to note that one of those Churches that did not record an offering for the College by the close of that financial year was Stanmore,¹⁰⁴ where the President of the College Council had been pastor since 1902. Nor had the College Council President paid his own annual contribution by the time the accounts were audited.

It would appear that between the writing and printing of the College Council report and 23rd September when Principal Gordon presented a letter of resignation to the Assembly immediately after the reception of the College reports, Principal Gordon had determined he had lost the confidence of the President of the College Council. He had consulted the Honorary legal advisor of the Union, Mr A.J.H. Palmer,

¹⁰¹ Rogers, 15-16.

¹⁰² Rogers, 16.

¹⁰³ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1920-21*, 53.

¹⁰⁴ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1920-21*, 61.

who also acted as Treasurer of the College Council, about the mechanics of resigning, and then had spoken with the President of the College Council, Rev C.J. Tinsley, who according to Principal Gordon informed him that resigning 'was the right course'.¹⁰⁵ Had Tinsley recanted his conversion to Victoria's approach to ministerial training due to pressure from other Pastor's College graduates such as W. Cleugh Black, or had Gordon's association with Waldock, and the associated pressures of curriculum matters such as teaching on Baptist polity, baptism, the Second Coming, suggested to him that the College Council could not pursue its mission if Gordon was to remain? Or was the failure of NSW Baptists to support the Union Jubilee Fund proposed in 1918, during under the Presidency of Waldock, and the associated failure to support an endowment fund for the fledgling College sufficient for Gordon to conclude that NSW Baptists had a different agenda for ministerial training to himself.

There were forces arrayed against Rev. A.J. Waldock, who were also members of the College Council: F.P. Thompson, Revs W. Cleugh Black and L. Sale-Harrison, along with W. White. In 1901-2 Sale-Harrison supported by W. White had lost a vote for election as Union Secretary to Waldock.¹⁰⁶ On September 14 1920 Rev. W. Cleugh Black presented a report on the state of the churches of the northern rivers that reflected negatively on the management of Waldock as President of Home Mission, the report received on the motion of F.P. Thompson and Rev Sale-Harrison. While Waldock successfully defended himself before a joint sitting of the Executive & Home Mission Committees, in ally Rev. W. Higlett noted in his diary 'A night of special meeting of Home Mission and Executive. Grave developments – a desire on part of some who desire to get rid of Waldock and Gordon from office.'¹⁰⁷

When Principal Gordon wrote his annual report he may have thought of it as a policy paper to win back the confidence of NSW Baptists. It is a stirring declaration of the philosophy and aims he had for the College.

The report focused on the preparation of individual men as independent, scholarly thinkers who would also be evangelistic preachers. He continued to introduce changes; he 'prescribed certain books for private study, my object being to help the students in acquiring facility in reading and forming their own judgments regarding what they

¹⁰⁵ Rogers, 14.

¹⁰⁶ Henson, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Henson, 51-52.

read.¹⁰⁸ Yet he appeared cautious when speaking of College students' attendance at University, noting a number of times in the report that 'not all' students attend University.¹⁰⁹

Yet his basic philosophy of ministerial education remained the same, echoing sentiments he has made as early as 1908:

In order to a clear understanding, it will not be out of place to first remind you of a guiding principle. All men have not the same gifts, nor are qualified to follow the same methods. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord." Hence the idea of the College is not to produce men after some single human type. There is only one standard type, the mind and spirit of the Lord, which leaves room for endless individual varieties. The purpose of the College is to provide the basis for a wide and practical knowledge of the Scriptures, to train the student to think for himself and to think rightly, to develop as far as possible the individual gifts, so that each man shall be at his possible best for the great work. At the same time, the goal is one – proclamation of the Gospel, its far-reaching applications to every avenue of life, and a real live enthusiasm for the extension of the Kingdom in the souls of men.¹¹⁰

With the resignation of Principal Gordon the various lines of inquiry have been played out to the point where it is possible to articulate the dominant approach to ministerial training among NSW Baptists, especially those who were members of Union Committees. Ministerial training was to be tightly managed by a combination of the College Council, Home Mission Committee and the Union Executive. The curriculum focused on the formation of preachers, evangelistic and apologetically equipped preachers who based their preaching on a thorough knowledge of the Word of God. University training was no longer considered essential, even desirable for the majority of ministerial students. Primarily the College existed for training ministerial candidates for churches in NSW, though mission candidates were also to be trained, and candidates from other States. While this was the primary function of the College, it nevertheless continued to pursue the philosophy of the earlier Education Committee to oversee the training of lay preachers. Teaching in the College was to clearly echo NSW Baptist emphases,

¹⁰⁸ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1920-21*, 56.

¹⁰⁹ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1920-21*, 56, 58.

¹¹⁰ *NSW Baptist Yearbook 1920-21*, 55.

especially closed membership linked to baptism of believers only by immersion, and a Dispensational Premillennial understanding of the Second Coming. The centralising of authority evident in the wider NSW Baptist setting since the inception of the Union found expression in the tightening control over ministerial students as the College worked with the Home Mission Committee to supply ministers for the expanded Baptist work both in urban and rural settings.

Was this approach to ministerial training among NSW Baptist to remain unchanged across the 40 years of Rev. G.H. Morling's principalship? To answer that question, a subsequent study will continue to follow the above lines of inquiry across the Morling years.

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