

## **Staking a Claim: Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933**

### **ABSTRACT**

It took Baptists 75 years to find a way to secure their own training establishment in New Zealand. The Baptist College which held its first classes in Auckland in 1926 was a tiny venture. Its success was by no means guaranteed and its challenges were many. This essay traces the first years of the college's operation. Key to its success was the personality and reputation of its Principal, J.J. North. North, however, was not universally approved. The 1920s was a decade of theological controversy in New Zealand and especially in Auckland. North had to negotiate his way through that maze, find a permanent home for the college and establish his own patterns of teaching and training. The onset of the Great Depression complicated the task still further. Despite these pressures, the new venture flourished in its own terms and laid foundations for a generation of Baptist ministers.

On Wednesday 3 March, 1926 the Baptist College of New Zealand was officially inaugurated at a service and a public meeting at the Auckland Tabernacle. It was, as are all such occasions, an opportunity for celebration and congratulation. The leaders of the denomination were present in force and there were greetings from Presbyterian Congregational and Methodist colleagues as well as from the new Bible College, until recently itself based in the Tabernacle buildings. Telegrams from supporters throughout New Zealand were read, prayers were offered and a the first group of students was proudly photographed by the steps at the side entrance to the Tabernacle.

### **A Baptist Manifesto**

Amidst all the ceremony the key figure was J.J. North. He avowed that listening to the effusive welcomes had been 'one of the most embarrassing hours of his life'.<sup>1</sup> Yet the opportunity to make his stamp on the new venture was not to be passed up. His address was reprinted in the Baptist under the heading 'A Baptist Manifesto'. It is an important insight into North and the dreams he harboured for the fledgling college.

North's first assertion was the need for local training. This was a concern he had been expressing for a quarter of a century. Imported ministers would never meet the needs of New Zealand Baptists as 'they are not racey of the soil.' The official training scheme had not proved adequate and to rely on the untrained was not satisfactory. Citing St Paul, Augustine and Martin Luther as evidence, North justified his cause. 'Let those who suspect college as homes of dullness and criticism reflect on the history of the past....He who rails at knowledge rails at God. No man is reverent unless he cultivates all his faculties. The imperative need of an educated minister is beyond challenge.'

This was doubly true for Baptists. In a pointed analysis North argued that unlike other denominations, Baptists could not rely on national identity or tradition to attract followers. 'The Baptist Church stands four-square on a "case",' and an effective preacher must 'both know Christ and know the thought currents that flow through his age.' The college, accordingly 'will be Baptist to the core'. There is a Baptist outlook, there are Baptist principles that run through the whole realm of theological thought. These will be emphasised. 'We have not founded a colourless College.' The principles turn on the Baptist respect for 'the sacredness of the individual'. There can therefore be no coercion into faith, in particular no choosing on behalf of children, 'for forced faith is heretical, though it be formally orthodox.' Along with their preaching, Baptists thus also fight for liberty of conscience and for better social conditions, both of which create the circumstances for 'true choice'. As far as students were concerned, North wanted whole people. He wanted 'to develop personality, and not simply furnish expert sermon-makers.'

The college, then, must reflect all these values.

The dream is of an institution, presently to be properly housed, which pulses with light and life and love, an institution to which the most chivalrous of the youth of our churches will be drawn,

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<sup>1</sup> NZB April 1926: 87.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

that they may adventure for Christ in the high places of that field which is the world.<sup>2</sup>

The new venture faced a number of serious challenges. North had earlier pointed this out to the readers of the *N.Z. Baptist*. 'The New Zealand Baptist College has at present no capital and no income. It does not possess so much as an office chair.' Premises and a library were yet to be secured and income of £1000 would be necessary.<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps a measure of the enthusiasm of the denomination for this bold project that none of these challenges would prove insurmountable. The library would gradually grow, mostly by donation. As will be seen below, the question of a dedicated 'home' for the college would be addressed earlier than was anticipated. The problem of income, though never relieved by a large endowment, would rarely threaten the operations of the college.

Would enough students of high calibre present themselves for training? The waning of the earlier official scheme had in part reflected a reluctance of students to commit to full-time training in Dunedin. Would the momentum of a new model and a new location be enough to attract the 'chivalrous youth' North sought?

### The First Students

Visitors to the Carey Baptist College site in Penrose today are immediately confronted with a near life-size picture of the first college students, taken at the inauguration in March 1926. The composition of this group is interesting and reflects many of the themes which surround the early years of the college.

The most striking figure in the photograph is also the most surprising. At first glance the presence of a woman among the foundation students at the theological college of an essentially conservative denomination is unexpected. The reality is a little less revolutionary. Thelma Gandy came from Wellington and was admitted to the college with a view to training for the mission field. There is no suggestion in the records that she might be a minister in New Zealand Baptist churches. Later in 1926, prospective missionary nurse, Margaret Livingstone would also study at the college before leaving for India. The studentships of these two women forced consideration of the question of 'Lady students'. In February 1927 the Committee recorded that 'some doubt having been expressed concerning the wisdom of mixed classes in

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<sup>2</sup> For North's Address see NZB April 1926:96-97, cf 87.

<sup>3</sup> NZB February 1925:29

our college, it was decided to consider each case on its merits.<sup>4</sup> This masterful decision not to decide typifies the college's approach to the question. On the one hand, there would never be a bar placed on women students; on the other, it would be nearly 30 years before the next woman student officially entered. It remained, as Thelma Gandy later reflected, 'essentially a man's world'.<sup>5</sup> Gandy completed her theological course but, largely for health reasons, did not proceed to the field. She became a teacher, never married and continued to support college students until shortly before her death in 1997.

Among the men a range of backgrounds, interests and subsequent histories is found. B.N. ('Bun') Eade and E.W. (Eddie) Grigg were both missionary students who had begun studies under the old scheme. Eade, originally from Hawera, would go on to distinguished service in India. Grigg, from the Ponsonby church, would serve briefly in India then enter New Zealand ministry. He would eventually withdraw for health reasons. Vic Hudson was from Palmerston North and, like Eade and Grigg, was presenting himself for missionary training. He was in his first year of study but would withdraw at the end of 1927 due to personal circumstances which made continuance impossible. Also coming in as a missionary student was Eric Batts. Batts, a member of Kemp's Auckland Tabernacle, had spent a year at the Bible Training Institute. He would later relate his discussions with Kemp about transferring to the Baptist college.

We sought the advice of our pastor again, fully expecting disapproval and insistence upon the completion of the Institute course. But no....He foresaw the possibilities and probabilities, the increased opportunities, the larger scope, and urged change.<sup>6</sup>

Batts too, apparently saw new possibilities and turned his attention to Pastoral Ministry, going on to serve in a number of churches in New Zealand.

J.T. (Jim) Crozier came from Invercargill but had spent a year at the Bible Training Institute. Apparently a determined individualist, Crozier was accepted with the proviso that he be counseled 'regarding the ideals of student discipline and relationship'.<sup>7</sup> He would become one of the sharpest thinkers in the denomination and would serve the Roslyn church for some 40 years. B.M. (Barney) Wilson, son of the Pastor at

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<sup>4</sup> College Committee Minutes (CM), 22 February 1927, f. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Letter, Thelma Gandy to R.J. Thompson, 18 February 1976, NZBRHS B.15 /54

<sup>6</sup> NZB October 1933: 298

<sup>7</sup> CM ff 64-5.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

Grange Rd, Auckland, was a third to come from a year at the B.T.I.. He would not complete the full course but would later have a ministry in Australia. R.L. (Len) Fursdon of Morrinsville completed a two years at the college, followed by a further two-year extra-mural programme of study. J.E. (Ewen) Simpson had begun study under the old scheme. Initially accepted for missionary work he, like Batts, Fursdon and Crozier, would have an important ministry in New Zealand.

North sought to integrate this group, with their widely differing training stages and needs, by means of almost individual attention in the first year. Importantly, of the nine foundation students, six were (at least initially) in preparation for overseas missionary service. As valued as this aim clearly was by the denomination, the proportion was a sign of the fragility of the new venture. The college was commencing just three students, one third, focused on Pastoral Ministry training. It was a sign that North would face an uphill battle as he sought to realise his vision.

### **The Odour of 'Modernism'**

Students would not be the only measure of North's challenge. The late 1920s were a time of great theological controversy among Christians worldwide. 'Modernism' was matched by the rise, particularly in the United States, of 'Fundamentalism'. The effects would soon be felt in New Zealand. Joseph Kemp, who had encountered the tension first hand in his American ministry, was a determined anti-modernist. North was temperamentally unable to stay away from vigorous debate and as editor of the denominational newspaper he could hardly avoid comment. During 1926 he made a number of references to the controversy. In June, describing it as 'the bitter fight of the day', he criticised the attitudes of both sides. However he made it plain that he felt that new discoveries in science, including 'the light on human origins,...have one way or another, to be accommodated to the indestructible faith of Christ'.<sup>8</sup> This sent disturbing signals to some of his correspondents, who sought a more definite denunciation of modernist error.<sup>9</sup> When North declared his approval of theistic evolution, lingering doubts as to his soundness hardened into outright suspicion.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> NZB, June 1926:152. See also NZB December 1926:336-337.

<sup>9</sup> See NZB, July 1926:189 and August 1926:200.

<sup>10</sup> NZB, August 1928:208-209.

In January 1927, emboldened by the promise of a new college site, North re-stated his vision for the college in terms not likely to allay fears of conservative critics.

The new college must be Baptist to the core, because it must be Christian to the core. We want to make men conversant with the great things of the Faith and we want that faith in its whole extent applied to the whole life of the whole man, and to the whole community. With windows open to all the light which comes from every quarter, and with a fine chivalry, and with an unaffected belief in the sincerity of men who differ from us, we want to see our College fulfill its mission.<sup>11</sup>

North could be as determined a 'valiant for truth' as anyone. He was especially hard on any weakness in preaching, lambasting on one occasion 'the "this is how it seems to me" heresy'.<sup>12</sup> This was not enough to remove the aura of modernism which would stay with him. Matters seem to have come to surface towards the end of 1927. At the Annual Conference in October, a powerful ally found it necessary to come to North's defence. The report of the college debate features an endorsement from Joseph Kemp.

Rev. Joseph W. Kemp made a speech that stirred the conference very deeply. He resented very deeply aspersions that had been made against the 'soundness' of Principal North. He declared that if North was a modernist, so in the same sense was he. He did not always agree in details with his friend, but they stood together for the great evangelical verities, and he would not hesitate to place anyone for whom he cared under the Principal for theological training.<sup>13</sup>

This boost from such an impeccably conservative source seems only to have blunted objections briefly. During 1928 North was again defending his position in the face of 'problems of college'.

We do not believe in a college in which men are taught to repeat the shibboleths of their tutors, and of their sect. We do not believe that orthodoxy can be administered in tabloid forms, and secured with smart little catch cries....We do not allow that the Christian faith is open to serious revision. It is a firm foundation, and it stands sure. We do feel in every fibre of our being the

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<sup>11</sup> NZB, January 1927:2

<sup>12</sup> NZB, March 1927:80-81.

<sup>13</sup> NZB, November 1927:330.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

urgent need of relating Christ and the implications of his Gospel to the thoughts and problems of our age.<sup>14</sup>

This was as clear a statement of his approach as North could make. Yet neither it nor Kemp's backing would ease the minds of those who saw modernism in anything not aggressively fundamentalist. North would never lose the confidence of the denominational leadership. As he grew older, he would become almost universally acknowledged and respected as a senior figure. The college, however, would have to endure a fluctuating but never disappearing reputation for unsoundness. This is evident in the comments made to Ayson Clifford when in 1933 he announced to his friends that he would be going to the Baptist College in the following year. One, a student at Kemp's Bible Training Institute, whilst encouraging Clifford to attend a revivalist mission being held in Dunedin at the time, added

I can imagine you getting so much on fire that you may even find that your place is in the 'B.T.I.' instead of the 'Bible Banging College'. I say, 'Come out from among them' & that applies not only to Churches where Modernists preside but also to all places where they have any authority at all.<sup>15</sup>

Bible 'banging' clearly meant something like Bible 'knocking' to this writer. Perceptions like this would have a profound effect on the college's history. Clifford was clearly cautious and later reported his first impressions of North's views to his confidants.<sup>16</sup>

The first years of North's Principalship, then, had their challenges. All, however, had not gone wrong. The outstanding area of progress was in the provision of premises.

### **The College on a Hill**

The lack of its own buildings was regarded from the beginning as a significant problem for the new Baptist College. It was far from obvious that a speedy solution would be possible. The denomination did not own any significant property of its own when the college was founded. North highlighted the premises issue at every opportunity. At the inaugural service in March 1926 it was noted that the Methodists had set themselves a target of £50 000 to build a college in Auckland.<sup>17</sup> Nobody

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<sup>14</sup> NZB December 1928:354-5. See also June 1929, 172-3.

<sup>15</sup> Letter, 'Bert' to Ayson Clifford 25 June 1933, f. 4.

<sup>16</sup> See Letter E.C. Wright to Ayson Clifford, 27 April 1934.

<sup>17</sup> NZB April 1926:87

imagined that the Baptists could be quite that ambitious. Nonetheless some plan would need to emerge. North had no intention of remaining in rented rooms at the Tabernacle forever.

In the end the provision of a college site came much quicker than had at first been hoped. At the committee meeting held on the day of the inauguration an anonymous gift of £2000 was announced 'towards securing a College property'.<sup>18</sup> The gift had come from 'an old friend' of North's: Robert Milligan of Oamaru.<sup>19</sup> It was hardly the £24,000 the Methodists had already raised, but it was a start. Although this was a significant fillip for the Committee's plans, there were few other obvious means of fundraising. Agreement grew that a significant building was needed.

A range of substantial properties were considered but the solution was found through another unexpected gift. H.M. Smeeton, who had been closely involved with the setting up of the college and who currently chaired the Committee, held the lease to a large property on the slopes of Mt Hobson in Remuera. With the limits of age becoming more obvious, he and his wife decided to build a smaller dwelling on a portion of the site and to part-gift the house and gardens for the purposes of the Baptist College. Echoing the concerns of North, Smeeton noted that the six articles of faith in the Baptist Union Incorporation Act embodied 'the truths that they as Baptists desire to see maintained and preserved in the work of the college.'<sup>20</sup>

'Binswood' (then 57 Remuera Rd) was offered with an acre of land. It had potential to accommodate up to 15 students plus provide a flat for the Principal, lecture rooms and library, dining room and quarters for a housekeeper. Yet it was not obvious that, even with the generosity of Smeeton, the denomination could afford such a large purchase. In quick order, wealthy supporters of the college were canvassed and a package put together and presented, more or less as a *fait accompli*, to the Committee on 3 December 1926. Perhaps not surprisingly, the proposal was unanimously accepted.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> CM 3 March 1926, f. 75. *NZB* April 1926, 85

<sup>19</sup> Milligan was a noted philanthropist in his district. He would later join the other donors of funds for the college site on Mt Hobson. In 1932 in a short history to mark the Jubilee of the Union 'an old student' listed the £2000 donor plus six others who enabled the purchase (*NZB*, October 1932, 303). The original £2000 was included in the combined total.

<sup>20</sup> CM 3 December 1926, ff 97-8.

<sup>21</sup> CM 3 December 1926, ff. 97-8.

### Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

The gift of the Mt Hobson site would be announced with great fanfare in the *N.Z. Baptist* in January 1927. The generosity of the donors would receive particular attention, with satisfaction expressed that they came from all over the country. The 'seven men' would enter the folklore of the denomination. Indeed the legend would take hold that they had requested that their names remain secret until all of them had died. So Sherburd and Silcock, in their Jubilee history of the college declared 'no group photograph of these men exists because they desired, during their lifetime, to remain anonymous.'<sup>22</sup> There is certainly no known group portrait, but this was likely more due to geographic distance than to modesty. The myth of preferred anonymity is exploded by the fact that the names of the seven were listed in the *NZ Baptist* as part of the official announcement of the gift. They were, in alphabetical order as first listed: F.W. Gaze of Auckland, W.H. George of Wellington, W. Lambourne of Auckland, M.W.P. Lascelles of Wellington, R. Milligan of Oamaru, Smeeton and T.E. Toneycliffe of Gisborne.

This was a significant group. Lascelles was the General Secretary of the Baptist Union. He, Milligan, Smeeton and Gaze each served at some time as President. Milligan had been an influential local body politician and philanthropist in North Otago. Sadly, Smeeton would die before the college moved into his former home.

The identities of the donors then, were no secret at all. What was withheld was the detail of the individual amounts given. This request for confidentiality was honoured at the time and it is appropriate to honour it still. A discount in the price compared to the market value was deemed to be Smeeton's contribution, with those of the other six (incorporating the earlier £2000 gift) contributing the cash difference.<sup>23</sup> There were 75 years to run on the lease. With the college only one year old, this must have seemed plenty of time. However, within twenty years concerns would grow that a more secure site be obtained.

A dedicated property, however grand, was only part of the picture. It was immediately realised that the cost of furnishing home so that it could operate as a college would be substantial. A budget of £1000 was agreed and a fundraising scheme immediately launched. A booklet, with scenes of the building was prepared and widely circulated. This would prove

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<sup>22</sup> Sherburd and Silcock, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Milligan added a further £1000 to enable the purchase of the Smeeton property. (See Correspondence regarding the purchase of the Mt Hobson house in NZ Baptist Archives B15/24 esp. Letter, Lascelles to Milligan, 17 December 1926.

very successful. Perhaps the concrete reality of a building was enough to galvanise hitherto quiescent donors. By October 1927 pledges of nearly £900 had been made and by the official opening on 29 February the full amount had been exceeded.

The need for ongoing financial support was recognised by the committee. As the special appeal for the college furnishings closed the first of a series of supporters schemes was launched. In February 1928 Baptists were invited to become 'Colleagues of the College.' It was the hope that 'these would undertake a prayerful interest in its work, would subscribe annually to its funds in March, and would receive occasional bulletins reporting its progress.' An initial proposal for an illustrated card featuring the college and its students was deemed too ambitious and more modest Christmas cards were sent out.<sup>24</sup> The results were disappointing. In February 1929 North surmised, 'we suppose that folk are still staring at that card, and wondering what they will send. Let the wonderment cease.'<sup>25</sup> The onset of economic depression made matters worse and the scheme languished. In 1932 a fresh start was made. The League of Associates' involved more active 'targeting' of likely donors. The philosophy was to identify those who with the means and the interest to be regular donors. By 1945 a total of 230 members had been enrolled, with an estimated contribution over the first twelve years of 'about £3000'.<sup>26</sup>

The Mt Hobson house was the single biggest material investment to that date by the Baptist Union of New Zealand. There can be no doubting the pride with which the denomination viewed its new college. The account of the opening day reads like a sales brochure.

The day was gloriously fine. Bright sunshine, a rain-washed atmosphere, and refreshed vegetation enabled visitors to see the ideal setting of our new and most important denominational home. The noble building, its ideal situation on the slopes of Mount Hobson, commanding a glorious view of the Waitemata Harbour and the islands of the Hauraki Gulf, and its fine appointments and elegant furnishings, came as a pleasing surprise to many of the visitors.<sup>27</sup>

On three levels, the building was set out to fully contain the activities of the college. On the ground floor what had been essentially a basement

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<sup>24</sup> NZB April 1928:105; CM 11 October 1928, ff. 117-118.

<sup>25</sup> NZB, February 1929, 35.

<sup>26</sup> See the note by E.P.Y. Simpson in the 1945 N.Z. Baptist College *Magazine*, 40.

<sup>27</sup> NZB April 1928:110.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

was converted into two lecture rooms, the larger of which doubled as the library. Library space was one thing, books were another. North provided his own library and Samuel Barry made his extensive collection of missionary literature available to students. However the college library remained poor for a long time. Gifts of such treasures as the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, the *Oxford Dictionary*, and various encyclopedias were assiduously acknowledged in the regular 'College Notes' in the *NZ Baptist*. A surprising gift (one, it is clear, the college had little idea what to do with) was received in 1933. This was several pages of a medieval manuscript version of the vulgate on vellum, donated by the Christian publisher A.H. Reed.<sup>28</sup>

On the first floor was the Principal's flat plus a reception room, dining room and kitchen. The second floor was divided into rooms, initially to house twelve students. A tennis court was built, both to enable exercise and promote fellowship. There was no doubt about the model of training which was to be followed. The resident students, all single men, were effectively to be the family of the Principal - taking breakfast and some other meals with the North's, being accountable for their comings and goings. This 'household' model of training would persist until the 1950s.

### Curriculum and Teaching

The shaping of the students was more than a function of their proximity to the Principal. A number of the features of the training at Knox (the model with which North was most familiar) were replicated in the new Baptist college. Most obvious was the expectation that most students would undertake studies at the Auckland College of the University of New Zealand during their four year programme at the Baptist College. E.W. Grigg came to the college with a B.A. and managed to complete a Master of Arts by the end of his first year as a Baptist student. North noted in his first report that 'all the students have done University work'. He had a particular commitment to political economy but was not too impressed with the classes the three first-year men had taken in psychology and logic. The college itself provided the more theological topics. New Testament Greek was a major focus for the senior students, with English Bible study in 1926 focusing on Luke and 'a typical O.T. Prophet.' A particular interest at this time for North was systematic theology, or what he described as 'the philosophy of the Faith.' The text

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<sup>28</sup> *NZB*, December 1933, 363.

for this subject was to be A.H. Strong (apparently chosen as a less controversial option to W.N. Clarke's more 'liberal' work).<sup>29</sup>

In his 1926 report North also gave an insight into his approach to teaching. 'Students have worked steadily at the major doctrines. The method of a prescribed text book, open conversation round each point, and final test of comprehension in examination has been followed.'<sup>30</sup> Writing in a tribute volume in 1944, D.H. Stewart recalled glowingly

Our Principal believed that the surest way to deepen the impressions made by contact with truth and knowledge was by each man being given opportunity to express what he had learned. And the discussion group method certainly helped each student to appreciate what he was learning, and made the various subjects absorbingly interesting.<sup>31</sup>

The style was remembered in similar terms by Ewen Simpson.

He allowed his students to argue with him in the course of lectures....There were numerous incidents like that, and they were important in the training process. If he were proved wrong on some point of fact he was quick to admit that he had learned something a student....When he frankly didn't know something he was ready to have any student provide the information, an attitude which impressed on our minds the importance of truth.<sup>32</sup>

The vigour and directness of North's teaching was not, however, universally appreciated. Even such an admirer as Simpson, could concede that 'not all students thrive under North's robust style'.<sup>33</sup>

There is a hint in North's first report of themes which would assume greater importance as his principalship developed. The first was preaching. This was an area which he always claimed for his own. His consistent aim was that the college would produce good preachers, and he worked hard to make this a reality. Stories of sermon class with North are legion, and legendary. The typical pattern was for a student to deliver his (only the men did this class) sermon, after which the other students would comment and critique the effort. Finally, North would arise and sum up, sometimes with a defence of the sermon more often with a pungent critique. Interestingly, those who endured these sessions

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<sup>29</sup> Simpson 8.

<sup>30</sup> NZBU *Handbook* 1926-7, 30-33.

<sup>31</sup> *Magazine*, 1944:21

<sup>32</sup> J. E. Simpson, 'John J. North, D.D.' in 'New Zealand Baptist Theological College: Sixtieth Jubilee Essays 1986', unpublished collection, N.Z. Baptist Theological College, 1986, 3-9, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Simpson, 7.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

generally testify that North, whilst unrelenting on what he saw as inconsistent or mediocre efforts, was not a cruel judge. At North's retirement, David Edwards would conclude that 'the great dread of our Principal's heart was that from that table there should go forth to proclaim the "unsearchable riches," a "middling" man of God.'<sup>34</sup>

A second important theme, mentioned only in passing in the first report, was that of 'poetry and literature'. This source of inspiration would become increasingly important in North's curriculum.

For most of 1926 North carried the college teaching on his own. By the end of the year, however, two significant helpers had arrived. A.J. Grigg had arrived as the first minister of the nearby North Memorial church in Remuera (named for J.J. North's father, Alfred). Described as 'an expert Grecian', Grigg took over the Greek classes for the final term. Also in Auckland, at the Mt Albert church, was John Laird. In 1927 these two men were appointed to the college as part-time tutors (initially for four hours of lectures per week). Laird concentrated mainly on Old Testament studies. He would conclude his regular teaching service to the college at the end of 1929, giving way to an expanded role for Grigg. Laird's lectures were thought to be somewhat simplistic. (Eric Batts recalled students baiting with such questions as where the window on Noah's ark would have been.) Grigg would develop a wider brief. From 1930 he became full-time tutor and would play a significant part at the college through the 1930s. Like Laird, Grigg's lecturing style was not favoured. Arthur Jamieson remembered his 'just reading to us from books'.<sup>35</sup> It seems likely that Grigg had to work very hard, it was expected that he would obtain outside tutoring to help fund his salary. He would leave in 1938 to become Principal at the Baptist College (now Whitley College) in Melbourne, Australia.<sup>36</sup>

Students of the college were, as had been the case with the old scheme, very much under the direction of the committee. N.R. Wood's student experience illustrates this well.

Nathan Rillstone Wood applied to the College Committee during 1926. He had a background in clerical work and had achieved matriculation. At the Assembly of that year six applications were

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<sup>34</sup> *Magazine*, 1944: 35

<sup>35</sup> Personal interview March 2002.

<sup>36</sup> NZB, June 1926, 141. Memories of Grigg and Laird are recorded in the 'New Zealand Baptist Theological College Sixtieth Jubilee Essays' (unpublished, 1986) held in the College library. On Grigg see also R. Otzen, *Whitley: The Baptist Theological College of Victoria 1891-1991* (South Yarra: Hyland House, 1991), esp. 100-102.

considered, with only Wood and Cecil Boggis accepted. Wood was notified by telegram and then a letter from the Secretary F.E. Harry. 'You have been accepted as a probationary student of the...college. I emphasize the word "probationary" that you may fully understand the position.'<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a personal letter from J.J. North and instructions from A.J. Grigg about necessary preparation for Greek.<sup>1</sup> When the college began in 1927 Wood was twenty. He would complete the typical four year course.

In his first year Wood was on the sports committee for the Students' Association and represented the college on the Bible Class executive. In 1928 he was a key mover in the bid to convince the Principal to issue Diplomas for the college course. The following year he was Secretary of the Association; Vice President in 1930. Over the four years Wood was examined and passes on the following formal courses

1927:	Logic, Junior Classical Greek, O.T. Introduction, Theology, English Bible, General Religious Knowledge
1928:	Ethics, Greek, N.T. (Revelation), Isaiah, Comparative Religion, General Religious Knowledge
1929:	Senior Greek, John's Gospel, I Corinthians, Doctrine, O.T. Prophets, General Religious Knowledge
1930:	Apologetics, English Bible, Church History, Economics, General Religious Knowledge

Non-examined classes in Psychology, Preaching and English Literature were also required.

At the end of 1930 Wood's services were sought by Ponsonby in Auckland (where he had been stationed during the year) and Linwood in Christchurch. It is clear that discussions were held with the churches on these placements, often through representatives at the Assembly. On the other hand it appears to have been assumed that the graduating students would be available to go wherever they were sent. Wood was notified that he was going to Christchurch by the Secretary in October 1930 and was in Linwood by the end of January. He was now on a further probation for two years, to be supervised by Rev. J.K. Archer of Colombo St. In 1931 an examination on the Greek text of Hebrews was required. Archer reported each year and in 1932 Wood was approved to be given full ministerial recognition.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

It is difficult to assess the academic work at the college in these early years but it seems the standard was not onerous. That a number of students successfully undertook University study indicates that the ability of individuals cannot be doubted. On the other hand the published results suggest few students of whatever ability struggled to pass. There were some moves towards tertiary benchmarks. In 1928 the Baptists joined an inter-denominational approach to the University of New Zealand for a bachelor of Divinity degree.<sup>37</sup> From 1931, in response to a letter from educationalist W.H. Newton, candidates were required to achieve University matriculation unless circumstances made this impossible.<sup>38</sup> A year later Newton, now a Committee member, expressed disappointment at the levels achieved in scripture (North's course, highest mark 78). Subsequently, not feeling that the Committee responded appropriately to his criticisms, he made suggestions for broadening the Scripture course, which had focused on Mark's Gospel. The Committee duly revised the prescription.

After discussion of the question of the amount of Scripture knowledge required of candidates, it was determined that fresh emphasis should be laid on a general knowledge of Scripture and that the Guild Text book (Robertson on O.T. and McClymont on N.T.) should be named in addition to Lindsay on Mark. An Examination Cttee consisting of Mr Newton and the Rev. J. Laird was appointed.<sup>39</sup>

A loose system of donated prizes attached to a number of courses. In 1932 the students expressed dissatisfaction with the impact of this on what was a small group. They wanted a level field.

[T]he students feel that competition among us is undesirable. A certain amount seems inevitable, but we would rather not compete for prizes. We value the books of course and suggest that donated book money be divided amongst the students. We would prefer to do our best without a specific prize.<sup>40</sup>

The clear fact is that the college was not intended to be characterised by its academic level. It was its function to produce evangelists, rather than scholars. It was envisaged, however, that 'Tracts for the Times' might appear. Apart from North's (admittedly extensive) journalism and a booklet for young Baptists the closest the college came to this aim during the early years was a series of 'Aids to Bible Study' published in

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<sup>37</sup> CM 13 October 1928, f. 121. The initiative came to nothing.

<sup>38</sup> CM 13 October 1931, f. 143.

<sup>39</sup> Auckland Committee Minutes, 4 April 1932.

<sup>40</sup> Students' Minutes, 26 September 1932.

the *N.Z. Baptist* from 1930 to 1937. These took the form of devotional comment or explanatory notes on scripture passages.<sup>41</sup>

### **The McMaster Doctorate**

North clearly had a powerful mind, but his capacity was for breadth rather than depth. Both tutors were more academically qualified than their Principal. Although in the early years he encouraged all students who were capable to undertake courses at Auckland University College North was suspicious of the value of theological degrees as such and was reluctant even to introduce a formal diploma for the college course. It is perhaps somewhat ironic, then, that from 1928 he would be known as 'Dr North', thanks to the expansionist generosity of Canadian Baptists and some careful behind the scenes negotiation in New Zealand.

In 1928, to mark the upcoming fourth congress of the Baptist World Alliance, McMaster University of Toronto (itself a Baptist foundation) proposed to award a number of honorary Doctorates in Divinity. Notice was received on Tuesday, 1 May that the offer included one for New Zealand Baptists. The expectation was that it would be conferred on the official delegate to the congress. The delegate that year was the General Secretary of the denomination W.R. Lascelles, who was to depart on Monday, 7 May. A flurry of telegrams and letters ensued in which a number of the practically minded businessmen on the executive doubted whether such a degree had any value. F.N. Andrews (chairman of the College Board), for example, expressed the view that 'our Yankee friends scatter degrees indiscriminately'. Nonetheless it was agreed that, if the offer was to be accepted, rather than to Lascelles the degree should go to J.J. North, as fitting his role as Principal. Samuel Barry's only reservation was over whether the Union would have to foot the bill for the robes!

Interestingly, North himself argued that he was the better candidate. In a letter to the acting Union Secretary W.S. Rollings he stressed his own academic achievements at Knox College and noted pointedly that

a D.D. would not sit easily on dear old Lascelles. Shalders and Andrews have written to say so. It is an honour however which this College could do with and would not be inappropriate (I suppose) for me to bear....I have been put in a rather anomalous position by the call to this work and such a degree would place the

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<sup>41</sup> The series began in May 1930, apparently prompted by a letter to the editor from 'Delegate Z' of Hororata in Canterbury seeking assistance in 'systematic Bible study'. See NZB April 1930, 117; May 1930, 154.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

College beside the Methodist and other Colleges in the public eye.<sup>42</sup>

On 11 June 1928 Eric Batts, President of the College Students Association, reported that he had approached North about diplomas for the college course, 'but had been told that nothing could be done at present in this regard. The Principal did not see necessity for diplomas at the present time.'<sup>43</sup> Two weeks later J.J. North received his honorary Doctor of Divinity *in absentia*, at a special convocation in Toronto. Ten other Baptist leaders from around the world were similarly honoured.<sup>44</sup> Ceremonies at the Auckland Tabernacle, then again in October at the Assembly, celebrated the event and a special photo of the robed Principal was issued as a supplement to the *N.Z. Baptist*.<sup>45</sup>

North and the members of the Union executive were undoubtedly right in the decision to favour the College Principal over the General Secretary for the honorary degree. However, we are left with a sense that the process, involving as it did no specific recognition by McMaster University of North's attainments, was rather hollow. Not until 1931 would the college students get their diplomas.

### A College for Evangelists

Beyond the classroom, students were frequently called upon to preach at churches around Auckland. Indeed the meetings of the students' association for the 1926 year were dominated by discussions as to how preaching fees were to be handled.<sup>46</sup> This was a real practical concern, as such payments were often the only income students received. This

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<sup>42</sup> See Letters to W.S. Rollings of F.N. Andrews (4 May 1928), S. Barry (undated) and J.J. North ('Friday' [4 May 1928]) in NZ Baptist Archive 01/... ; The matter of the robes was attended to by a gift from the Auckland Tabernacle, NZB, September 1928, 261. 'D.D.' was added to the masthead of the NZB after North's name from October 1928.

<sup>43</sup> 'Minutes of the N.Z. Baptist College Students' Association', 1926-1936, NZ Baptist Archive B15A/1, 11 June 1928.

<sup>44</sup> Among the other recipients was F.W. Boreham, formerly of Mosgiel New Zealand but by now in Armadale, Australia – see the *Record of Proceedings of the Fourth Baptist Congress, Toronto, Canada, 23-29 June 1928* (Toronto: Stewart Printing Service, 1928), 7.

<sup>45</sup> NZB, November 1928, 328.

<sup>46</sup> 'Minutes of the N.Z. Baptist College Students' Association', 1926-1936, NZ Baptist Archive B15A/1.

regular student preaching delighted North, who himself carried a heavy speaking load.

From the first year a tradition began whereby students were 'dispersed' to Easter Bible Class Camps. B.N. Eade was at Temuka in 1926, whilst North himself spoke at the northern Young Men's Camp at Henderson. The following year Thelma Gandy was at the Women's camp at Whangarei whilst seven of the male students were with the men at Wanganui.<sup>47</sup> In 1928 all the men attended the South Island camp at Timaru, leading Bible studies and doing the cooking.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps more stretching were the evangelistic efforts. North was particularly impressed with any initiatives of this type. The students were inspired in this area by the visit of the international missionary leader J.R. Mott in April 1926. This was Mott's third trip to New Zealand and he was received as a major figure. Baptist students attended the Auckland meetings and Thelma Gandy and Ewen Simpson were delegates to the Dunedin Missionary Conference.<sup>49</sup>

Gandy and Simpson were (at that point) candidates for overseas mission training. It was not imagined however that mission at home could be ignored. Public preaching would be a feature of Baptist college training for many decades. In August 1926 B.N. Eade recorded

We joined with the Bible Training Institute students in an open-air service and are engaging in similar but more personal work at the after-church meetings on the water front. This is difficult work, bring us into personal contact with all types of belief.<sup>50</sup>

From 1933 the Baptist students joined with the Salvation Army at a regular Friday night 'open-air' in Newmarket.

More targeted evangelism was also tried. In May 1928 a week long mission was held with the new cause at Royal Oak, Auckland, with house to house visitation. This inspired a more extensive operation in August/September, with missions in Morrinsville and Wanganui where the efforts of Cliff Reay revealed his gifts as an evangelist.<sup>51</sup> The following year the students combined with Baptists from the Bible Training Institute in a mission at Otahuhu. N.R. Wood noted that while this venture 'was not greatly used for winning men to Christ it did help

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<sup>47</sup> NZB, June 1927, 163; May 1928, 143.

<sup>48</sup> NZB, May 1928, 143.

<sup>49</sup> NZB, June 1926, 141, 144, 156-158.

<sup>50</sup> NZB, August 1926, 218.

<sup>51</sup> NZB, October 1928, 291.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

considerably the cause at Otahuhu.<sup>52</sup> In 1930 the entire student body took part in a mission at Mt Eden in Auckland. The secretary of that church reported in the *N.Z. Baptist* that 'we feel we cannot speak too highly of the evangelistic fervour which permeated every message delivered by the ten students, many of whom are truly gifted above average as evangelists.'<sup>53</sup> Within a few years, however, vacation missions were being regarded as an imposition by the students. At a meeting of the Students' Association in April 1932 it was recorded that

The fellows feel that missions during the short vacation are too tiring in consideration of the college curriculum. It was left to the prefect [M.J.Eade] to interview the Dr. It was thought that two Sundays should be long enough, considering how tired the fellows get.<sup>54</sup>

Tired as the 'fellows' might have been, the missions continued.

### **'The Élan of Community Life'**

The first two years of the college, when it was forced to use rented rooms and there was no residential option, presented difficulties in developing a sense of corporate identity. A Students' Association was formed and a corporate student life of sorts began (see box). Nevertheless North lamented that 'the élan which belongs to community life has been sorely missed.'<sup>55</sup> Some efforts were made to make up for the lack. Wealthy Auckland families provided recreational opportunities. The Speddings, for instance, hosted the first of what would become regular harbour cruises, on their launch 'Molly' in 1927.<sup>56</sup> Most fondly remembered were two short stays on Waiheke Island, in 1926 and 1927. On the first occasion, North and five of the male students spent a few days in fairly basic accommodation. In 1927 the Lambourne's of Ponsonby made available two dwellings in Cowes' Bay. The North's took one, while seven of the students 'bached' in the other. Eric Batts recorded an incident which took place during the first of these trips which hints at a powerful element in the college's atmosphere.

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<sup>52</sup> N.R. Wood, Students' Association Annual Report, 1929, 2. N.Z. Baptist Archive B.15A/10.

<sup>53</sup> *NZB*, June 1930, 184.

<sup>54</sup> Students' Minutes, 22 July 1932.

<sup>55</sup> *NZBU Handbook* 1926-27:32

<sup>56</sup> *NZB*, June 1927, 163.

### Students Together, 1926

What of the corporate student life? This is not neglected, although none realises more than the students themselves that a resident hostel or college can alone make this side of student life complete. We have formed a Students' Association, with constitution and rules. The clause under "Aims" reads thus: "The aims of the Association shall be the development of the spiritual and all other phases of College life, and the representation of the students in all matters affecting their welfare." We are trying to lay a worthy foundation for the future. Our College shall be to us a real Alma Mater.

Thursday afternoon is devoted to tennis on the courts of Mr Spedding; we thank him for this kindness. Afternoon tea is a regular function. Another happy event was the initiating by the seniors of the juniors into the mysteries of the society of 'Gorgonzolas'. The seniors also, alas! were later treated similarly. It was a real student affair. ('College Notes' NZB, May 1926, 118.)

Time came for bed. Two of us were in our little room. The wall that divided ours from that used by [North] scarcely reached the ceiling. We heard [him] enter his room. There were the brief minutes in which one prepares for rest and then the low voice of one in prayer. We could not help but hear....

'Gentle Jesus meek and mild,

Look upon this little child...'

The man we loved and respected, who introduced us to the intricacies of Greek and Theology, the reader of a thousand books, had the heart and faith of a child. That is greatness.<sup>57</sup>

Batts was writing on North's retirement, with no doubt a tint of rose to his spectacles. There were, on occasion, problems. North's slow response to the desire for diplomas rankled. In 1930 he proposed holding classes on Anzac day. An extraordinary meeting of the students on 23 April resolved that this should not happen. 'Discussion then centred around relations existing between Principal and students.' It is not clear who prevailed.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *N.Z. Baptist College Magazine*, October 1945, 26.

<sup>58</sup> Students' Minutes, 23 April 1930.

### Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

Despite the occasional clash of wills, student relationships and personal intimacy with North would form the outstanding features of many memories of training. This dynamic was institutionalized with the advent of the residential college. With the students now living together, the nature of their community life became a fundamental part of their training. Life on the large hill section which required development meant the organisation of rosters and duties. Planting slopes, tending livestock and shaping the tennis court were the stuff of non-classroom time. The Students' Association was responsible for this detail and for the devotional and recreational life of the students. There was inevitably some tension between these aspects of college life. Daily 'ping-pong' was an early initiative and this was quickly extended to deck tennis and became an opportunity to engage with students at the Bible Training Institute and at Trinity Methodist College. Regular 'fellowship meetings' with these two colleges would be a feature of student life on Mt Hobson. A 1928 proposal to make similar arrangements with Anglican students seemed to languish.<sup>59</sup>

A feature of the records of the college is that very little reference is made to the domestic staff. No photos of Annie Reigate the cook, Miss Leverett, Miss Kemp, or Miss Wallace will be found in the archive. Yet these women played a crucial role in community life and were held in great affection by students.

The first issue of a college magazine is recorded in 1928. Cecil Boggis was editor and he repeated the effort in 1929.<sup>60</sup> *College Days* was an in-house rag, meant only for the students and, sadly, short lived. A.L. Silcock was appointed editor for 1930 but no issue appeared. This no-show was roundly treated in the annual report of 1931.

What has happened to the editor we know not. We know he is still in N.Zed and that he is no ghostlike presence, for his bulk amazed folk at the conference no end! Probably the exigencies of married life have told upon him....We have greater hopes for this year under Mr Stewart's editorship.<sup>61</sup>

The optimism of this good-natured comment was misplaced. The magazine did not appear again until 1942. Even more unfortunately (for

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<sup>59</sup> Students' Minutes, 11 June, 27 July, 17 October 1928.

<sup>60</sup> Only one copy of *College Days: The Official Organ of the New Zealand Baptist College Students Association* survives. It is Vol. III, 1929. It is unclear whether it was annual, in which case it would have first appeared in 1927, or occasional, from 1928.

<sup>61</sup> Students' Association Annual Report 1931 f. 4.

the historian, at least) is that no copies of the Boggis issues of 1928-29 seem to have survived.

The nature and mood of a community of ten or so rapidly changes with new personnel. From 1929 a more serious tone is evident in the students' meetings. In March 1929 the devotional life of the college was given more definition. On most mornings students were to rise at 6.30 a.m. and from 7.10 a.m. have private devotions in their rooms. In addition to this

it was decided that the students have two devotional meetings each week. These to be held on Tuesday and Friday from 7.15 a.m. to 7.45 a.m.. The Tuesday meeting to be for the deepening of our own spiritual life and the Friday meeting to be devoted to general intercession.<sup>62</sup>

'Loose' behaviour was discouraged. Following the Easter camp of 1930 it was agreed 'that we watch ourselves in regard to slang [and] levity; with a mind to deepening our devotional life.' A further fifteen-minute prayer meeting each evening was commenced. Similar concerns were raised in 1931 and 1932.<sup>63</sup>

It was not just the students who had concerns about behaviour and the consequent image of the college. The origins of the college's restrictive approach to engagements and marriage can be identified in these early years. In 1932 Rev. W.S. Rollings wrote to the Committee 'regarding the love affairs of students' - particularly concerned at broken engagements. The matter had been brought to a head by a perhaps inevitable circumstance in which a student on summer placement in Wellington developed a relationship with a young woman in the church which he was serving. The student was already engaged to an Auckland woman, who, naturally upset at the turn of events, had written to the Principal. A report was commissioned and the student reprimanded. In response, the Auckland Committee resolved 'that with each acceptance into college, very serious representation should be made to the incomer as to relations with young women and advising against engagements during college days.'<sup>64</sup> The issue was tested again almost immediately, with E.P.Y. Simpson having to give assurance that his engagement had not been envisaged when he applied a few months before. The committee warned that 'no action suggestive of dishonour could be

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<sup>62</sup> Students' Minutes, 4 March 1929. On 18 June it was decided to drop the 6.30 a.m. gong, other than Tuesdays and Fridays.

<sup>63</sup> Students' Minutes 23 April 1930, 1 June 1931, 22 July 1932.

<sup>64</sup> Auckland Minutes 4 July 1932; 1 August 1932.

## Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

countenanced.<sup>65</sup> The constraint of romantic associations would be a feature of the college culture until the 1970s.

### Relations with the Norths

The college, especially through its Principal, took a close interest in the entire lives of the students. The emotional and relational impact of this 'household' model of training cannot be over emphasised. The students, mostly in their early twenties, were younger than the North's own children. As far as was possible with a larger group, they became a second family of the Principal and his wife. North would refer to them as his 'other sons'.<sup>66</sup> Again, this is evident in the recollections of those who were students in this period. Comments on both J.J. and Cecilia North are more than just respectful or affectionate, they are almost filial - more homage to beloved parents than tributes to teachers.

W.N. Flett remembered the more relaxed setting of Sunday evenings.

Those off duty moments, to my mind, were amongst the richest things in college....Many an impression gained then, in that warm atmosphere and cosy room with Mrs North dispensing coffee, has lingered, while others of the lecture room has (sic) been (oh shame!) forgotten.<sup>67</sup>

Students were especially protective of Mrs North. There were always domestic staff and the students had certain duties in the house, so the Principal's wife never had to carry the entire load. Nevertheless, Cecilia North was three years older than her husband and was not always a well woman. The strain on her of the college environment was noted by Ayson Clifford who wondered at her 'singular patience' with the rowdy inhabitants living above her flat.<sup>68</sup> A report of the college graduation in 1931 notes

Mrs North's position may be privileged, but it is not easy. For her there is little privacy and less quiet, for it is not natural for students to creep around like mice....But this gracious and kindly lady, who has been the best of mothers to her four sons, mothers uncomplainingly successive relays of students, who hold her in respectful affection.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Auckland Committee Minutes, 14 February (appropriately!) 1933.

<sup>66</sup> *Magazine*, 1945, 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Magazine*, 1945, 27.

<sup>68</sup> *Magazine*, 1945, 25.

<sup>69</sup> NZB December 1931, 373.

North deliberately fostered this type of relationship. He began an annual dinner which he hosted at Assembly for those who had trained under him. Though this tradition grew to be a highlight for many it did not survive the strained atmosphere of the denomination which would coincide with North's retirement.<sup>70</sup>

### **Governance and Finance**

The college began its 1933 programme with a full house of students and a growing sense of optimism and acceptance. Seven years on, the advent of a denominational college had placed new pressures on the administration of Baptist training. The old Students' Committee became the College Committee, retaining general responsibility for training and accreditation, though with the aim that the college would become the only path into recognised ministry among the Baptist churches.<sup>71</sup> In the mean-time it continued to oversee the Home Mission course, though it was revised in 1927. New internal structures were required. The full College Committee generally met only at the annual assembly, when its principal business was to receive reports and consider candidates. Three subcommittee were formed: an Auckland-based House committee and two others, focusing on finance and candidate selection. The Auckland committee, closer to the developing life of the college, would gradually become the dominant group, a trend which would eventually create significant tensions.

With the death of Smeeton, F.N. Andrews was appointed Chairman of the Committee. He would remain in that role until 1933. He and North appear to have worked very well together. Like his predecessor a successful businessman, Andrews was an effective advocate for the college. His skills were essential, given the tenuous financial state of the new venture and the wariness of some in the churches. Ewen Simpson recalled Andrews' pivotal role.

There was a wonderful rapport between Mr Andrews and J.J. and Mrs North, and from the denominational point of view that was extremely important. Mr Andrews himself was *persona grata* in circles where J.J. was still under some suspicion of modernism. He was an ideal man to provide liaison with the denomination as a whole.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See Simpson 'J.J. North', 9.

<sup>71</sup> *Yearbook*, 1927-28, 30.

<sup>72</sup> J.E. Simpson taped recollections 23 January 1981,

### Establishing a Baptist College in New Zealand 1926-1933

The college acquired its capital (site and plant) through generous donation, but the operational expenditure was potentially a more difficult area. The first budget for the college covered only seven months (March to September) but nonetheless projected expenditure of £1400 of which £350 would be a proportion of North's £600 salary, with £560 allocated for allowances to students.<sup>73</sup> At this point in its history the college received no funds directly from the Baptist Union, although the Missionary Society allocated a sum in proportion to its approved students. The budget depended heavily on the support of the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle which pledged £350 cash as well as providing rooms. In the event, with a number of generous private donations the college ended its first year with a substantial surplus of £271.18.4. This would come under pressure immediately. In 1927 donations were down. The advent of the Mt Hobson house enabled a reorganisation to take place. As accommodation was now able to be provided, North's salary was reduced by a third to £400, and student-related expenses declined. These changes enabled the college to maintain a fluctuating credit balance on its accounts.

As the world-wide depression squeezed the New Zealand market, further economies were required. North's salary reduced further, to £357 in 1932 then to £324 in 1933 at which level it would stay until conditions improved in 1935. The Tutor and domestic staff salaries were also reduced, though by lower proportion.<sup>74</sup>

A key source of funds through this time was the Young Men's Baptist Bible Class Union, which provided over £1100 between 1926 and 1933. But it was the Tabernacle Buildings Trust which by far provided the largest single portion of the college's income, averaging £400 per year. The Tabernacle church was also the largest contributor to the church collections. The college's connection to the richest church in the union was clearly crucial to its survival in these early years.

Why was the Tabernacle so well disposed to the new institution? The reasons are in part historical. In the 1880s Thomas Spurgeon imagined a college on site next to his new church. As buildings on that land, fronting Karangahape Rd, now provided income to the Tabernacle's trust it was deemed appropriate to make grants to the college.<sup>75</sup> There

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<sup>73</sup> The sources of these figures are the College Committee Minutes and the Baptist Union Yearbooks for the periods involved.

<sup>74</sup> CM, 9 October 1931 f. 142.

<sup>75</sup> The historical link was not lost on Andrews, who noted the aptness of the setting at the public meeting, held in the Tabernacle to mark the opening of the house on Mt Hobson on 29 February 1928. See NZB, April 1938, 113.

were also personal factors. Smeeton, Andrews and (when he shifted to Auckland) North were members of the Tabernacle and, as has been seen, the college enjoyed the full backing of its minister, Joseph Kemp. The Tabernacle's financial underpinning of the college was maintained through the 1930s. Its consistent support enabled the college to weather difficult early years and the depression. Attempts were made to diversify the support base and release the college from its dependence on one or two sources. These were only partially successful.

By the end of 1933 the college was entering a new phase. It had established its patterns and trained two full cycles of students. Key figures Smeeton and Kemp were dead and Andrews had resigned. J.J. North D.D., by contrast, was attaining new heights. He was completing a year as President of the Baptist Union (his second term). He was concurrently editor of the *N.Z. Baptist* and Principal of the denominational college. He had weathered theological suspicion and financial stringency as he struggled to establish the new institution. The next years would present their own economic, social and personal difficulties but, as he buried Kemp in September 1933, North had already entered a less troubled period as Principal. The years of his greatest impact as a church leader were arguably behind him, but his *mana* had never been higher. Over the next decade this reputation would become fixed. The college too would firmly secure its place in denominational life.

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