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

ABSTRACT

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

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

Phase One: 1952-1960

Denomination & Society

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

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

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

[2] In 1954 the New Zealand Government commissioned an enquiry into the sexual habits of teenagers. Official concern at the possible corrosion of

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

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

Welcoming a New Principal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[5] On Clifford's vice-principalship see Baptist College Board Minutes (BM) 1 November 1952. [N.Z. Baptist Archive].
[6] BM 1 November 1952, ff. 134-5.
[7] Baptist College Administrative Committee Minutes (Admin. CM) 30 October 1952. [N.Z. Baptist Archive].
[8] Admin. CM, 27 February 1953.

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

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

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

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

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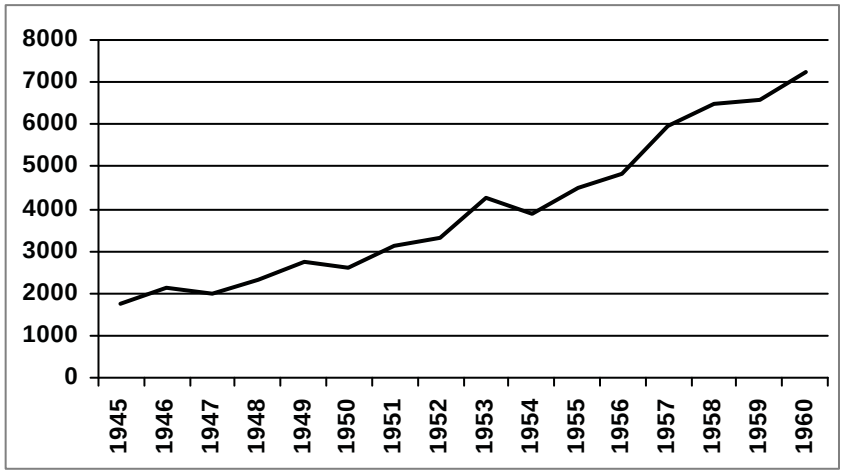
[9] *NZB,* March 1953, 54
[10] Ayson Clifford, Unpublished Memoirs 3.29. [N.Z. Baptist Archive].
[11] *NZB,* April 1953, 84.



1. Baptist College Operating Expenditure 1945-1960

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

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

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

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

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

Finding a New Site

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[14] Admin. CM 2 December 1952.

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

[16] The sale of the Mt Hobson house and the Vice-principal's house eventually raised £9853 and £3298 respectively.

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

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

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

Theological Study in a Wider Frame

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

[17] See the insert in the *NZB* July 1959 and *NZB*, September 1959, 232.

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

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

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

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[18] Roberts-Thomson, 'Annual Report' November 1953.
[19] See the report of the Board of Studies, Admin.. CM 31 January 1956 and Admin. CM 7 May 1956.
[20] Admin. CM 9 June 1958; 2 May 1960; 1 August 1960.
[21] See Principal's Report, Admin. CM 6 April 1961.

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

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

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

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

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[22] Admin. CM 4 September 1956 (Principal's Report) and 2 November 1956.
[23] Admin. CM (Principal's Report) 9 June 1958.
[24] Admin. CM 6 February 1956.
[25] See Baptist College Students' Association Minutes (SM) 1 March; 5 April; 4 October 1956; 3 October 1957.

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

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

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

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

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[26] Clifford Memoirs 3.37.
[27] Admin. CM 2 May 1955.
[28] Admin. CM 6 October 1958; CM 27 October 1958.

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

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

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

Deaconesses

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

[29] SM July 1957; 8 August 1957; 6 March 1958.
[30] SM 10 July 1958; 8 April; 4 June 1959
[31] SM 1 July 1954.
[32] SM 8 April, 4 June 1959.

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

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

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

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

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

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[33] *College Magazine* 1956, 21

[34] Admin. CM 7 August 1956.

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

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

A Changing Community

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

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

[35] Admin. CM 3 October 1955.
[36] BM 3 November 1954, f. 160.

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

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

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

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

[37] SM 3 March 1955.
[38] See e.g. Admin. CM 6 October 1958.
[39] Admin. CM 5 May 1958.
[40] BM 26 October 1959. See 'Report of Property Sub-Committee', Admin CM 6 August 1957.
[41] SM 7 November 1957; 1 May 1958; see also SM 5 October 1961 for an identical policy on smoking.

> they feel will be of personal spiritual profit, or for the better understanding of their ministry.[42]

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

Losing a Principal

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

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

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

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[42] SM 41 July 1960.
[43] Admin. CM 30 October 1956, f. 181.
[44] Admin. CM 5 May; 6 August 1957.

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

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

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

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

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[45] E. Roberts-Thomson, 'Buying Up the Opportunity' see Admin. CM 1 December 1958.

[46] Admin. CM 1 July; 1 September 1958; 2 February 1959 and Principal's Report 4 May 1959.

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

[48] Principal's Report, BM 2 November 1960.

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

Phase Two: 1961-1973

Increasing Complexity

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

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

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

[49] Baptist Union of N.Z. *Yearbook* 1970-71.

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

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

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

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[50] Clifford Memoirs 3.58.

[51] *NZB,* September 1973, 16-17; November 1973, 7; Clifford Memoirs 4.94.

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

Staffing

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

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

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

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

> is…the expression of confidence that you are the man for the next major step.[54]

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

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

The College in the Classroom

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

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[54] Letter Roland Hart to Ayson Clifford 7 July 1960. Clifford Correspondence, [N.Z. Baptist Archive].
[55] Admin. CM 5 September 1960.
[56] BM 31 October 1960; Admin. CM 3 July 1961. *NZB,* August 1961, 209.

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

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

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

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[57] This appears to have been a common pattern in colleges in Britain, see Payne *Henry Wheeler Robinson* 68.
[58] SM 3 July 1964; 19 April 1966; 14 April 1970.
[59] BM 1 November 1966. On the N.Z. L.Th see I. Breward, *Grace and Truth* (Dunedin: 1975) 109.
[60] Students' Executive Minutes 30 April 1971; SM 4 May 1971.

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

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

New Initiatives

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

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

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[61] *College Magazine* 1962, 28.
[62] SM 5 October 1967.

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

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

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

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[63] *College Magazine* 1963, 22.
[64] See proposals for the S.S. Course, BM 1 November 1966.

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

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

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

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

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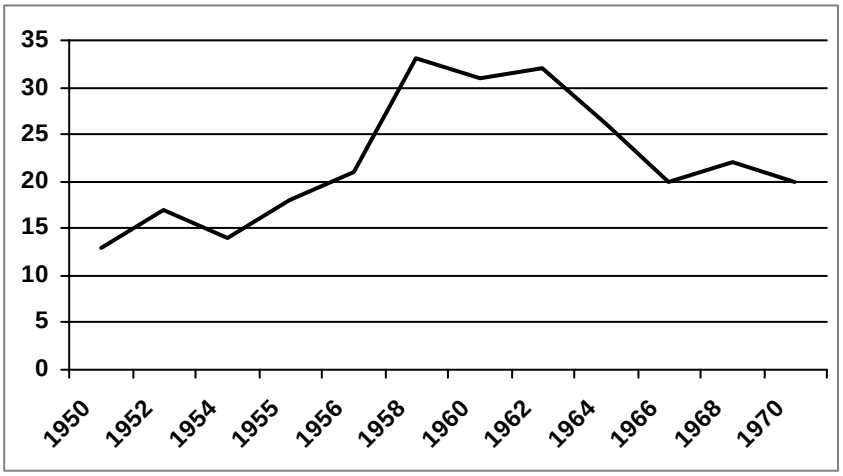
[65] Admin. CM 6 May 1963; 2 March 1964; 5 October 1964; 4 October 1965; 13 March 1967.
[66] Admin. CM 19 July 1957; 1 September 1958; 6 July 1959.
[67] K. Edridge. 'Training of Ministerial Students' Admin. CM 7 September 1959.

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

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



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

[68] Admin. CM 11 December 1961.

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

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

Community Life

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

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

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[69] Admin. CM 7 August 1961.
[70] Admin. CM 5 September 1961; Clifford Memoirs 3.59.
[71] See Clifford's Principal's Report, Admin. CM 2 October 1972.

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

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

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

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

[72] See Admin CM 7 December 1970; 5 April 1971 (Principal's Report).

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

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

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

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[73] Students Association Annual Report 1965.
[74] SM 19 April and 16 June 1966.
[75] SM 8 August 1973.
[76] Students' Assn Executive Minutes 29 Septmeber 1971.
[77] Students' Association Annual Report 1965.
[78] Students' Executive Minutes 28 September 1971; 27 June 1972; 11 July 1972.
[79] SM 28 July 1966; 11 & 26 June 1968; 10 August 1971.

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

> Of course the married student misses out on much of the 'life' of the college, as he attends only the hours of lectures….
>
> But there are wonderful compensations. The 'down to earth' practical experience of a pastorate. You can be up in the clouds of theological speculation at 12.30 p.m., and in the middle of a family row at Ramsbottom's place by one o'clock!' So the theory of the classroom is tested daily in the laboratory of the parish.[80]

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

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

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

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

Stumbling to a New Model

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

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[80] *College Magazine* 1961, 8.
[81] *College Magazine* 1969, 19.
[82] *College Magazine* 1970, 3.

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

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

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

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

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[83] See BM 29 October & 1 November 1963.

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

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

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

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

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[85] BM 29 October 1969.

[86] Clifford 'Statement to Assembly 1970 on Projected Developments' Admin CM 7 September 1970.

[87] BM 3 November 1971; 1 & 6 November 1972.

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

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

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

The End of an Era

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

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

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[88] Letter, Ayson Clifford to E.P.Y. Simpson, 19 April 1971. Clifford Correspondence.
[89] *NZB,* May 1971, 24. See also subsequent correspondence *NZB,* July 1971, 6 & September 1971, 7.
[90] Letter, Ayson Clifford to F.C. Mills, 19 October, 1970 (copy), Clifford Correspondence.

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

> I am convinced that there are a large number of church people who are either ignorant of the College, or negative to it and whose conception is of a remote, over-academic, unspiritual, unbiblical, unpractical, affluent institution….in some churches, prospective candidates are actively discouraged from applying and those who do are threatened with the dire results of attendance here…
>
> We have watched with concern the decline of other denominational colleges…. It would be foolish to say this could not happen to us.'[91]

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

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

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

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[91] Clifford, 'Memo on College Development (or Decline)' see Admin. CM, 29 May 1972.

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

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

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