

# **Worship in New Zealand Baptist Church Life: Dynamic Centre or Means to an End?**

## **Abstract**

This is the first of two articles that investigate the theology and practice of New Zealand Baptists at worship from 1880-2001. This first article looks at the period up until 1960. H.H. Driver and L. B. Busfield are early critics of the New Zealand Baptist practice of worship. The arrival of J.W. Kemp to be the pastor of the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle reinforced a popular pre-millennial, fundamentalist and evangelical theology which encouraged the Baptist family of churches to prioritise evangelism over worship, with the result that worship services came to resemble evangelistic meetings. J.J. North's Baptist Theological College trained men for ministry in this theological climate and henceforth ministers trained at BTC gave scant attention to the place of worship in the life of the church. In the 1950's voices were again heard, echoing Driver and Busfield in calling for the centrality of worship in the life of the church.

In 2001 I completed a thesis which investigated the theology and practice of New Zealand Baptists at worship.<sup>1</sup> I began my investigation suspecting that our strong commitment to mission and evangelism had been undermined by a lack of attention to worship. It was as if we were sending soldiers into battle on empty stomachs. I am convinced that the way we

1 S. O'Connor, 'Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi: An investigation into the liturgy and theology of New Zealand Baptists,' (unpublished Master of Theology Thesis: Auckland University, 2001.)

worship shapes what we believe and what we do. It follows that worship is of critical importance for the life and *mission* of the church. If we get our worship right, the rest will follow as Nile Harper writes:

The dynamic center of church is its worship.... It is in worship that we find our marching orders for engaging in the struggles for justice. It is in worship that we find the direction and strength to move into the community to serve both friend and stranger. In worship we are embraced by God's love and we are enabled to embrace one another. In worship... we become Christ's disciples for [North East Valley, Dunedin, New Zealand], and the world.<sup>2</sup>

The movement of Baptist churches in New Zealand has a weakness at its dynamic centre, the worship of the local congregation. An emphasis on mission is undermined if worship is downplayed.<sup>3</sup> Social service, evangelism and discipleship all require for their vitality that the dynamic centre of church life feeds the people of God and forms robust Christian faith.

This essay and the one to follow will offer glimpses into our history, hoping that by gaining some perspective on where we have come from we might be better enabled to plot a more faithful course into the future. The patterns of worship that we embrace today have been significantly shaped by our ecclesiological heritage. As will be noted throughout this essay, there has been voiced by a number of people concerns regarding worship within Baptist churches. Before being able to suggest ways to improve worship it is important to understand the historical context. What have New Zealand

2 Nile Harper, *Urban Churches - Vital Signs: Beyond Charity Towards Justice* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999) 28-9.

3 See also W.J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 181ff.

Baptists been doing when they gather for worship? What have they said about worship?

In this essay the first eighty years of New Zealand Baptist life will be examined to discern trends in the practise and theology of worship. As there are very few extant orders of service from the early periods, I will look mainly to what was said about worship in the public arena.<sup>4</sup> The chief source of public discussion is the columns of the *New Zealand Baptist*. Here the annual presidential addresses are recorded, as are the 'Union Sermons' along with occasional articles and editorials that deal with or touch on the subject of worship and a great many letters from clergy and laity expressing their opinions and concerns.<sup>5</sup>

## **I. 1880-1919: British influence mitigated by anti-catholic sentiment**

### **What was said about worship?**

In this period the Baptist 'denomination' was small yet expanding. Most of the clergy were trained in Britain and most of the laity were from the British Isles. British hymnbooks were used in the services and there was a continuity of style between the colony and the homeland. Our discussion in this section will focus on the thoughts of two influential men of this era, Reverend H.H. Driver and Reverend L. B. Busfield.

Driver was the editor of *The NZ Baptist* for most of this period;<sup>6</sup> he writes some significant constructive material on the

4 Orders of service were only rarely printed, and seldom considered worthy of keeping. The NZ Baptist Research & Historical Society holds a number of printed orders of service, from special occasions such as inductions, church openings, anniversaries and so on.

5 Up till 1910, the presidential addresses were recorded in the yearbook.

subject of worship. In 1888 he wrote a series of four articles on 'Our hymn book'. In the first such article in March of that year he makes the observation that, 'the life of the church of God has always voiced itself in song' and then he proceeds to give a brief history and theology of worship. Driver contends that the singing of hymns serves the church by expressing and enriching her life, encouraging faithfulness, emboldening action, and evangelising the lost. He also notes the importance of hymns in unifying the church, arguing that the singing of common songs across time, space, denomination and creed signifies the catholicity and unity of the church. 'Pentecost has repaired the mischief of Babel, and the innumerable company of the redeemed is composed of all nations and tribes and people and tongues.' In the following year Driver writes,

The worship of God is the highest exercise of the noblest powers of our renewed manhood ... the benefits of drawing near to God are more fully realised in the Sabbath worship of the sanctuary, when hearts and voices blend in gladsome praise.<sup>7</sup>

While extolling the virtues of hymnody, Driver wished for a far richer and more vital worship. He complained that Baptist worship lacked reverence, that people were infrequent in attendance, and lax in punctuality, all of which detracts from the high calling that is worship. He then expresses his own desire for reform in worship, which seems to entail a more liturgical and formal style without the 'bondage' of the prayer book. 'We all hold that prayer should be free and unfettered. We put no liturgy simple or ornate into the preacher's hand' yet Driver exhorts the pastor to be well prepared for his duties of

6 From 1903-1906 as Acting Editor (*NZB* March 1903, 33; November 1906, 22) and then as Editor from 1906-1915 (*NZB* November 1915, 209).

7 Quotes in this section from H.H. Driver, 'Our Sabbath Worship,' *NZB*, Jan 1889, 9-12.

public prayer. The pastor must prepare his own soul with personal prayer and the study of the 'Devotional parts of Scripture...and liturgies which for ages have enshrined the desires of thousands of the saintliest souls.' To combat irreverence, he recommends that the congregation be encouraged to kneel during prayer, which is 'far more becoming than the custom of sitting which is common among us.'

Driver's writing assumes that, in this period, public prayer and the leading of worship was the sole responsibility of the pastor and one which the pastor was expected to prepare for with all diligence and exercise with professionalism, passion and reverence. The centrality of God as subject of worship is underscored, 'The hymn is the sacrifice of praise to God, not a sermon addressed to man, nor a poem full of instruction pleasingly presented.' While hymn singing is not primarily catechetical, it is formational of Christian character. For this reason, the content of the hymns should be such as to encourage faith development; 'the hymns must also be ahead of the spiritual condition of the worshipper'.

In Driver there is a discernible desire to see the Free Churches recapture the heart of pre-reformation worship, without the trappings of ritualism, formalism and other excesses which the reformers had rejected. Driver's voice is one among many in New Zealand Baptist history who have wondered whether the baby (of Catholic worship) was thrown out with the bath water (of Papist excesses).

Driver's comments on the offering, the reading of Scripture and the Lord's Table are indicative of his position. He saw that the offering was an integral part of the worship, for worship at its heart was all about giving and the offering of finance was a symbolic expression of this. He recommended a wide range of Scripture lessons, the reading of which may be preceded by well-constructed introductions. He wrote, 'history and

prophecy, psalm and proverb, gospel and epistle should all find due place in our weekly services', so that the whole counsel of God and not the preacher's whim may be brought before the people of God.

[The sermon] important as it is ought not to be regarded as the central part of the service, to which all others are tedious preliminaries and secondly....The sermon rightly viewed is an act of worship, the Lord's table should be observed with reverent decency a hushed solemnity and a chastened gladness which will aid the disciples in their secret and sacred communion with the master.<sup>8</sup>

Driver considered that the current practice in the Baptist churches which he was familiar with were less than adequate and that some serious reflection and renewal was needed. For him the freedom of the Free Churches was a freedom to worship in the best possible way, rather than being bound on the one hand to a formal liturgy, or on the other hand to a rejection of anything that resembled formal liturgy: 'In the Puritan reaction from formal and soul-less ritualism the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme; if we could find "the golden mean" it would be for our profit and God's Glory.'<sup>9</sup>

Driver was not a lone voice in the wilderness. Rev. L. B. Busfield published an article in the December issue of the 1919 *Baptist*, entitled 'The service of the sanctuary', in which he sought to address the question 'Do our current forms of service accomplish that which we desire?' He wrote that it had been commonly held that the Free Church rescued people from 'forms and ceremonies cold and lifeless.' This was, at best, only half the picture. The Puritan atmosphere was dull and drab and 'today...we prefer to believe that beauty and stateliness may become the handmaids of God.' Busfield also criticised the lack

8 Driver, 'Our Sabbath Worship', 11.

9 Driver, 'Our Sabbath Worship', 11.

of reverence in the worship services, and the impropriety of certain behaviours encouraged by an overemphasis on informality.

The old jibe 'Anglicans go to church to worship God – nonconformists to listen to sermons,' was never really true, yet we do sorely lack the element of worship and if there is anything we can do to bring that desirable atmosphere into our churches we should do it.<sup>10</sup>

Busfield advocated a more formal liturgy. In order to help his congregation enter into the atmosphere of worship, he introduced a number of innovations to the beginning of his services that he recommended to all churches. The introduction of the first hymn by the pastor was, and still is, a common way of starting Baptist worship. According to Driver, starting the service with a hymn is 'bald'; because of the incessant chatting hearts are unprepared. He began his services at Ponsonby as follows:

Opening voluntary (played on pipe organ)

Doxology (Sung by congregation)

Call to worship (Scripture sentence or two)

Invocatory prayer

*Sanctus* (Holy, holy, holy...)

First Hymn.<sup>11</sup>

Busfield also advocated regular use of the *Te Deum*,<sup>12</sup> *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittus*, chanting of *The Lord's Prayer*, canticles and litanies, as well as the inclusion of modern evangelistic '*Sankey*' Songs. In a follow-up article in the

10 L.B. Busfield, 'The Service of the Sanctuary', *NZB*, Dec 1919, 187; Jan 1920, 10.

11 Busfield 187.

12 The *Te Deum* appears to have been popular in this period, Driver refers to it as 'our most noble hymn' - H.H. Driver, 'Our Hymn Book,' *NZB*, May 1888, 73.

January 1920 *Baptist* he promotes the public reading of Scripture, and recommends that occasionally it is good to omit the sermon in preference for reading a lengthy passage of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> On prayer he writes, 'there is in our Free Churches not only the freedom for extemporaneous prayers of the pastor, but also for a responsive liturgy in which the congregation can join'. Here he reminds his readers of the positive experience many churches enjoyed in using litanies developed during the Great War and used interdenominationally. The use of litany and a more liturgical style of worship was apparently more commonplace in British Baptist churches, something which Busfield endorses and recommends to the New Zealand Baptists:

A committee of Baptist ministers in the homeland have recently compiled a book of prayers and litanies for use in Free Churches. This is published by the Baptist Union, and is a sign of the times.<sup>14</sup>

It appears that Busfield may have been a little optimistic in his predictions of liturgical reform. Busfield, however, remains an important voice. The concerns that he raised at this time would be heard again nearly forty years later and many times since.

### **The practice of worship**

Reading the above discussion, it would be easy to form the conclusion that New Zealand Baptists in this period were moving toward a more liturgical style of worship. This is not the whole story. There were other voices, other factors having

13 This was a common Anabaptist practice - See J.L. North, 'Christian Worship,' Unpublished Probationary Thesis, NZ Baptist Theological College, 1965, 14.

14 Busfield 187.



an influence on actual practice. For one, the likes of Busfield, and Driver were part of an educated elite among the clergy. They had a wide range of experience and formal education, which contributed to their understanding of the nature and purpose of the church and her worship. These men had been exposed to the worship patterns of other churches and could see the benefits of adopting some of the more catholic aspects of worship. Secondly, there was still a strong suspicion of all things 'Papist'. Thirdly, there was a growing fervour for revivalism and its corollary, the camp meeting.

Because of the relatively small size of the Baptist Union during this period, personalities were able to make a significant impact. A. S. Adams, speaking at the 1906 conference in a discourse entitled 'The relation of the Church to the problems of the age,' acclaimed the victory of the reformers 'and our Baptist forbears' over the 'tyranny of pope and king'.<sup>15</sup> This victory had an important corollary for Adams in the worship of the free-churches. 'The Baptists in England were the first to establish the right of every man to worship God as conscience dictates in submission to the divine rule.' This anti-Catholic and anti-state-interference mindset was inclined to lump common-book prayer, the state-church of England and any form of liturgy or ritual, with Roman Catholicism (and, hence, the devil).<sup>16</sup> In 1913, Mr J. G. Fraser gave a lecture at the annual conference entitled 'Our Baptist Faith: By a layman.' This too was full of anti-Catholic sentiment and suspicion of 'popery'. Throughout the period under consideration a number of key Baptist leaders expressed publicly their intolerance of

<sup>15</sup> A.S. Adams, 'The relation of the Church to the problems of the age' *Baptist Union of New Zealand Yearbook*, 1906, 9-23.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Baptist pastor, Reverend Harold Elliot was the leader of the Protestant Political Movement during World War One and an avid anti-Catholic spokesman.

Catholicism, including even some of the most broadminded leaders in the Union.<sup>17</sup> So while Busfield and Driver expressed a broader view of ecclesiology and worship than was common, their effectiveness in significantly influencing the majority of Baptist people was mitigated by the prejudice and ignorance of the day. It seems that during this period the simple service dominated by hymns and climaxing in the sermon was the predominant model. While voices continued to be raised for liturgical reform, these were to be further countered by American fundamentalism and revivalism imported into this country in the nineteen-twenties.

### **The theology of worship**

There is an evident diversity of theology of worship in this period. Driver and Busfield have a relatively 'high' view of worship in that worship is an end in itself. The relationship between evangelism and worship does not appear on the public agenda. As of yet there appears to be no one suggesting that worship should be shaped so as to achieve missional objectives. The nature of the discussion tends to revolve around the issue of the freedom of the churches to choose their own liturgical pattern.

Much of the discussion on worship is concerned not with the theology of worship *per se* but with the implications of Baptist ecclesiology upon the practice of worship. While the imposition of a set liturgy from 'on high' is rejected it is recognised by some that formal liturgy has a place in preparing the pastor to lead worship and in guiding the order of the

17 See also Martin Sutherland, 'Pulpit or Podium? J.K. Archer and the Dilemma of Christian Politics in New Zealand,' *NZJBR* 1, 1996, 26-46, 40.

service. As there has never been an established church in New Zealand, the issue of non-conformity or dissent was never a real issue here. Baptist identity was in part formed around the notion of radical Protestantism,<sup>18</sup> and hence the anti-Catholic sentiment that led to a deep suspicion of set forms of liturgy.

## **II. 1920-1959: American influence results in swing to the right**

### **What was said about worship?**

In the period from 1920–1959 two extraordinarily gifted men significantly influenced the life of the Baptist churches in New Zealand. Joseph W. Kemp was called to pastor the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle in 1920. His ministry was to shape the lives of thousands of New Zealanders through his powerful preaching, popular Bible studies, the establishment of the Bible Training Institute (BTI), Easter camps, the Fundamentalist Conventions and the publication of *The Reaper*. In 1926 J. J. North became the founding principal of the Baptist Theological College (BTC), meaning henceforth most Baptist pastors were trained in New Zealand and the influence of England began to wane.

### **Kemp catalyses popular fundamentalism**

Kemp's appointment to the pastorate of the Tabernacle in the nineteen-twenties marked the beginning of a significant change in Baptist and the wider Evangelical church life in New Zealand. Kemp's ministry catalysed a growing and fervent anti-modern fundamentalism among the thousands of people he

18 See Martin Sutherland, 'Seeking a *Turangawaewae*: Constructing a Baptist Identity in New Zealand', *Baptist History and Heritage*, Vol XXXVI, Winter/Fall 2001, 1 & 2, 232-250.

influenced through the various ministries he initiated. Kemp was a graduate from the 'Moody influenced' Glasgow Bible Training Institute in 1895. New Zealand religious historian Jane Simpson wrote: 'Kemp imbibed something of the theological predispositions of Moody's soul rescuing, culture denying, individualistic Christianity with the complementary emphasis on pre-millennialism, dispensationalism and biblical inerrancy.'<sup>19</sup> Kemp brought into the New Zealand context the concerns of the American fundamentalist debate. The New Zealand church and press had shown little interest in this controversy, however Kemp was able to link any 'deficiency' in New Zealand Society to failure to adhere to strict biblical principles.<sup>20</sup> Simpson writes that Kemp 'represented the first turning point of the tide of evangelical cultural allegiance toward America.'<sup>21</sup>

### **BTI and *The Reaper* propagate evangelistic ecclesiology**

BTI was set up by Kemp at the Tabernacle to counter the tide of modernism in the church. A fundamentalist approach to Scripture was paramount and ministry training was focused on evangelism. *The Reaper* is the best window into the philosophy of ministry and theology taught at BTI. It is in the column entitled 'Practical Methods of Christian Work' that Kemp's attitudes to church are manifest. In the eleventh instalment, Kemp deals with 'Young Converts: Their Growth and Progress', and he advises the Christian worker (i.e. evangelist)

19 Jane Simpson, 'Joseph W. Kemp: Prime Interpreter of American Fundamentalism in New Zealand in the 1920s' in D. Pratt ed. *'Rescue the Perishing: Comparative Perspectives on Evangelism and Revivalism'* (Auckland: College Communications, 1989), 23-41, 25.

20 His sermons, radio broadcasts and articles in *The Reaper* attacked dance, film, sports and entertainment.

21 Simpson 28.

how to care for the newly converted soul. He advises that 'the young convert should be urged to join the Christian Church', but fails to offer any convincing argument that church membership or attendance is necessary (emphasis added).

*It is not suggested that one cannot be a believer and still remain outside the church*, but a careful study of the Acts of the Apostles, certainly gives us to see that believers were, in those early days, added to the Church of God.

Using material from Dr Dixon, Kemp continues in the same article to explain the benefits of church membership, the lack of any mention of worship is telling.

Dr. A. C. Dixon has pointed out seven reasons why every young Christian should join the church.

1. Because the church needs you – not yours as much as you.
2. Because you need the church. There is inspiration in elbow touch. The church's sympathy, faith, and hope will strengthen and inspire.
3. Because the church is an institution founded by Christ.
4. Because by a union with others you really multiply your influence for good.
5. Because a good man's influence out of the Church may count against Christ.
6. Because joining the church is a public confession of allegiance.
7. Because the church is the pillar and ground of the TRUTH.

Kemp exhibited a narrow focus on evangelism; the church exists, in his view, solely to aid this end. The church services of the time were strongly influenced by the revival meeting *ordo* wherein all that goes before the sermon and gospel appeal were mere preliminaries and preparation. Further exploration of *The Reaper* also points in this direction. For example, in his first treatment of church singing and music in *The Reaper* in October 1924 Kemp writes on 'The Ministry of Song'.<sup>22</sup> Firstly

22 Joseph Kemp 'Practical Methods of Christian Work', *Reaper*, Vol XXI, October 1924, 201-205.

he refers to historic examples of religious movements that were enlivened by song. Martin Luther's *Ein Feste Burg*, Moody and Sankey's revivals, along with the revivals of the Wesleys, Torrey and Alexander and the Welsh Revivals are cited as examples of the use of song to achieve spiritual revival. These examples serve as justification for employing a similar methodology. Once again the ministry of song is to aid the end of evangelism. The ministry of song communicates divine truth, 'breaks the fallow ground' in preparation for the sermon and allows that the soul might be brought near to God, that the Holy Spirit might make the hearer ready and that salvation of souls might be accomplished directly.<sup>23</sup>

Kemp struggled to find sound theological reasons for church attendance; his reasons tended to be pragmatic and focused on his primary passion of evangelism.<sup>24</sup> For Kemp the main reason for worship (i.e. singing hymns) was to prepare people for conversion. It is no surprise that BTI offered no courses in worship or ecclesiology. Worship was seen primarily as a resource for evangelism.

### **New Zealand Baptist Theological College**

In 1926, J. J. North became the founding principal of the BTC. His well-publicised anti-Catholic views<sup>25</sup> may have prevented him from seeing the need to train his pastors in ecclesiology or worship. Baptists, being evangelical, were concerned with the saving of souls; the nurture of souls through liturgy was regarded with suspicion as being high church and Catholic. Another factor that set the tone for theological

23 Kemp 202.

24 Kemp's reasons were evangelistically focused and pragmatic, not focused on God and hence not '*theological*.'

25 e.g., in J.J. North, *Protestant and Why* (Wellington: 1938).

education was the growing interest in pre-millennialism, which necessitated urgent evangelical endeavour. The Great War, the rise of communism, the depression, and the growing pleasure industry all confirmed for the pre-millennialist that the end of the world was near and that the most urgent task was evangelism, worship did not rate. Kemp was a founding College Board member and his views were sure to be influential. The underlying current of popular theology was Kempian and the college need to respond to its clientele by emphasising the teaching of sound doctrine, the preaching of the word and evangelism. There was no place or felt need for a course on worship.

Significantly, once the college was set up, the influence of fresh insights from pastors trained in England was minimised. Baptist pastors trained in Britain had usually been exposed to a wider range of ecclesiological practices and worship styles than those trained in New Zealand.<sup>26</sup> Thus, with fewer pastors coming from England, the influence of American fundamentalism had little to counter it in the churches. The popular fundamentalism of Kemp became the dominant theological position of most evangelical churches and consequently most church services took a form similar to that of an evangelistic meeting.

### **The call for reform**

It is toward the end of this period that two voices are heard which echoes those of Driver and Busfield in calling for the centrality of worship. Again we note that these voices came from those who had been educated outside of New Zealand or

26 Significantly the first principal of the Baptist Theological College, J. J. North, was himself trained in New Zealand.

had spent some time overseas or who had completed a university education before doing theological education. Little was written about worship at all by New Zealand Baptists in this period. The *NZ Baptist*, the probationary theses and the presidential addresses rarely touch on the subject, which suggests that these voices were atypical, and that the majority of Baptists clergy and laity were happy with the status quo. During this period, New Zealand was growing and developing rapidly. The population of the major cities was expanding at unprecedented rates, and new suburbs were springing up in the major urban centres. This was also a time of growth and development. The Baptist Union was experiencing a sense of prosperity and success, and under these circumstances the need to review worship patterns was not obvious to the majority of Baptists. Our two lonely voices sound unrepresentative, but they echo similar voices in an earlier period and they anticipate what will be a more popular opinion in a later period.

Mr W. R. Lambert, in his presidential address in 1952, argued that, 'the appeal of the Christian religion in New Zealand was low' and this in part was attributable to the state of corporate worship.<sup>27</sup> He contended with the *Shorter Catechism* that, 'The highest glory of our nature is the capacity to know and to worship God and to enjoy him forever' - when the gathering of the church expresses such worship the church is attractive. Lambert then makes some specific recommendations. The mood of worship needs to be concordant with its subject, because God is awesome, worship should be in holy awe. Worship needs also to be Word centred; 'worship needs the Word, for its inspiration, intelligibility and purpose, for Christian worship is instructed worship.'<sup>28</sup>

27 W.B. Lambert, 'The Supreme Importance of Worship,' *NZB*, Nov 1952, 242-3.



Lambert's view of the purpose of worship may be summarised as follows: God meets the worshipper at his/her point of need, gives grace to withstand troubles, and elevates the worshipper to see (partially) from God's perspective.

In 1959 Rev. Angus MacLeod, a Scotland-trained Baptist pastor, addressed the Assembly of the Baptist Union with a sermon entitled 'The Church of God'. In reference to the church as 'the royal priesthood', MacLeod elaborated on the role of the worshipper as priest. Priests come into God's presence to worship and then return to serve God by being priests in the world. *Leitourgia* and *diakonia*<sup>29</sup> are the two sides of the same coin of priestly duty. MacLeod comments on the gathering to worship God, using temple and priestly imagery:

Here in the Holy place we would bring all the activities of the week and offer them to God for his cleansing and redeeming. Here we would listen to what God has to say to his people; and here we would intercede with God for our fellow-man<sup>30</sup>

The worship of God continues into the workaday world as the worshippers leave the service of *leitourgia* and they begin the service of *diakonia*: 'After the service we would go into the world to be priests unto God. There in the world of commerce and sport and politics we would bring the Word of the living God and give ourselves in self-sacrificing service.'<sup>31</sup>

### **The practice of worship**

It is apparent that there was a fairly set pattern of liturgy throughout Baptist Churches in New Zealand during this

28 Lambert 242 (emphasis original).

29 My terms, not his.

30 Angus MacLeod. 'The Church of God,' *NZB*, Nov 1959, 291-2.

31 Macleod, 291.

period. The style informally known as 'the hymn sandwich' was lead by the pastors and run after the following pattern:

Introduction (Call to worship)

Hymn

Prayer (gathering, invocation)

Children's talk

Offering

Offering prayer (extempore)

Old Testament Reading

New Testament Reading (readings may be included in the sermon)

Prayer

Sermon (20- 30 minutes)

Hymn

Benediction<sup>32</sup>

The traditional mix of hymnody, extempore prayer and biblical preaching are the hallmarks of Baptist worship in this period. The pastor controlled the service. There was little congregational involvement apart from the singing of hymns. Most of the prayers were lead by the pastor extempore.<sup>33</sup> The pastor would lead the singing, read the Bible, pray the prayers, preach the sermon and then dismiss the congregation. Prayer books were frowned upon and seldom used - the exception being for funerals and weddings. On the whole, the only liturgical text besides the Bible was the hymnbook.

In conversation with pastors of the period, it was evident that certain patterns were common. Prayers of confession were infrequent,<sup>34</sup> as were prayers of intercession.<sup>35</sup> Observation of

32 This pattern would vary once a month when the Lord's Supper was included after the sermon, in which case the sermon would usually be shorter.

33 Often the deacons would lead prayers at the communion table.

the church year was limited to Easter and Christmas. Lectionaries were not used. The use of visual art, dramatic art, symbols, incense, vestments, candles, was almost non-existent. The most ritualised parts of the service were the two ordinances of baptism and communion and the collection of the offering, each of which was done in a stylised manner. Choirs were in common use to aid the singing and to offer interludes and build the atmosphere prior to the sermon. Baptist worship in this period may be characterised as verbal, Word and sermon centred, pastor lead, stylised yet with relative informality.

### **The theology of worship**

Baptist worship in this period was particularly influenced by the desire to make evangelism the primary focus of the church. It was during the Kemp years that New Zealand Baptist liturgy most clearly adopted an American revivalist style.<sup>36</sup> New Zealand Baptist ecclesiology and liturgical practises are still strongly influenced by the revivalism of American evangelicalism and that influence has resulted in a popular fundamentalism which is resistant to more mainstream and catholic expression of liturgy, theology and ecclesiology. Peter Lineman comments:

In the case of New Zealand, the lines of American influence existed, although they tend to have been overlooked because of the assumption that Pakeha New Zealand was culturally totally

34 Confession was thought to be an act of personal piety rather than public worship.

35 Intercession was a major part of the Wednesday night prayer meetings.

36 For discussion on the American revivalist style, from the Camp Meeting to the Seeker Service see Lester Ruth, 'Lex Agendi, Lex Orandi: Toward and Understanding of Seeker Services as a New Kind of Liturgy,' *Worship*, 70 (1996), 386-405.

under the shadow of the United Kingdom. In fact the mix was richer than this...<sup>37</sup>

While Kemp's liturgical recommendations may be appropriate for an evangelistic or 'revival' context, the evangelistic context must not be confused with the worship of the church. The *ordo* of the camp meeting should not supplant the *ordo* of the community at worship.

In writing about the revival campaigns of Moody and Sankey, Lineham notes, that their revivals had little long term influence on church growth, but that in that they 'did much to create a pattern of interdenominational evangelical culture, congregational, social and ecclesiastical attitudes. one should not ignore the significance of the revival in reshaping religiosity.'<sup>38</sup>

The religiosity shaped by Kemp maintains that evangelism is the primary task of the church, and that worship is a **resource** for evangelism. In this schema worship is not valued for its own sake, but only as a means to an end. Worship may be directly evangelistic in that the unconverted are brought to a church service where they are prepared to give their lives to Jesus. Or it may be indirectly evangelistic in that it strengthens the worker for the primary tasks.<sup>39</sup>

Lambert and MacLeod, writing near the end of this period, challenge some of the assumptions of this theology. Lambert sees worship as 'the chief end of man' rather than evangelism and he points out that lack of attention to the service of worship

37 P.J. Lineham, 'When the Roll is Called Up Yonder Who'll Be There?: An Analysis of Nineteenth Century Trans-Atlantic Revivalism in New Zealand and Canada,' in D. Pratt ed., '*Rescue the Perishing*', 1-22, 2-3.

38 Lineham 6-7.

39 See Kemp's reasons for church attendance above.

was having a negative effect on evangelism. Because the worship was dull and dreary it was unattractive and the populace was losing interest in the church. Underlying Lambert's theology is the belief that worship is the high point of existence and therefore worship should be engaging of all of one's life and not focused on the task of evangelism. Worship should be inspiring for daily living, intelligent to the modern mind, and purposeful for all participants. MacLeod makes a fuller statement, relating ecclesiology and liturgy, in which he places a high emphasis on worship. Worship is the centre of the Christian life, the time and place that the priests of God return to, in order to centre their life on Christ and receive resources to bring Christ into the world. Both of these men exhibit a passion for worship *and evangelism* yet see that placing primacy on evangelism may be self-defeating.

There is a continuum of 'worship theologies' depending on the emphasis placed on the evangelistic import of the gathering of the church. Those that see the church service as primarily for evangelism are closest to 'A'. At the other end of the spectrum are those churches that see the only function of the gathered church is worship. When the wider church is taken into account the continuum extends from 'A', 'the evangelistic meeting' at one end to 'B' the Catholic mass or Orthodox liturgy at the other end. Most Baptist churches are near the 'A' end of the spectrum, with Kemp's theology closest to 'A' and Driver's, Busfield's, Macleod's and Lambert's just a little further along toward the 'B' end. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that, during the middle part of the twentieth century there was a movement toward 'A' influenced by Kemp with just a minority of churches moving the other way along the spectrum. In a further essay, developments over the last forty years will be explored and some preliminary conclusions drawn.

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