

## **Joseph Kemp and the Establishment of the N.Z. Baptist College, 1922-33**

### **ABSTRACT†**

The impact of Joseph Kemp on the early history of the N.Z. Baptist Theological College has not fully been acknowledged. A picture of a Baptist College under J.J. North as a moderate/liberal alternative to Kemp's conservative/fundamentalist Bible Training Institute has been accepted. This is an inaccurate impression. Until Kemp's death in 1933 he and North maintained great respect for one another. Moreover Kemp made pivotal contributions to the formation and establishment of the Baptist College.

Joseph Kemp (1872-1933) is remembered for a number of things – positively, as a great preacher and activist for evangelical truth; less positively, as a narrow controversialist and authoritarian leader. One important study names him as ‘the prime interpreter of American fundamentalism in New Zealand in the 1920s.’<sup>1</sup> He is justly renowned for his outstanding ministry at the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle from 1920 until his death in 1933 and for the founding of the Bible Training Institute (B.T.I., now the Bible College of New Zealand) in 1922. These achievements indicate the two worlds in which he

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1. J.M.R. Simpson, ‘Joseph Kemp and the Impact of American Fundamentalism in New Zealand,’ unpublished dissertation, University of Waikato, 1987, 3, 71.

principally moved – Baptist life and the Bible Training movement.

This essay is an exploration of the interface between these two worlds: Baptist and B.T.I.. Specifically, I will discuss Kemp's role in the early years of another college, quite different from the B.T.I., the N.Z. Baptist Theological College (now Carey Baptist College) which opened in 1926.

The parallel histories of these two institutions are interesting. At least at the beginning they were quite different in type. The B.T.I. was formed with interdenominational lay and overseas mission training in mind; the Baptist College was denominationally specific, preparing candidates for the Baptist Missionary Society and, predominately, for pastoral ministry among the Baptist Churches of New Zealand. One developed a reputation for fundamentalism, personified in Kemp; the other for modernism identified with *its* first Principal, J.J. North. The relationship between the college, now happily very good, has not always been so amicable. Yet both commenced in the Baptist Tabernacle in Auckland, Baptists have always been well represented among B.T.I. students, and many graduates from B.T.I. have gone on to the Baptist College. Moreover, their two dominant personalities were able to forge a close working relationship and, when Kemp died in September 1933, it was J.J. North who led the service. The disagreements and tensions of later years should not be read too simply into the first decade. A reassessment is overdue. Kemp generated one significant training institution; his significance for a second is worth exploring.

We must first gain a sense of the context which Kemp entered in 1920. Although small in number, New Zealand Baptists were not a monolithic group. Indeed, two clear streams, with parallels in Britain may be identified. The first, conserva-

tive theologically, was focused on Auckland. This reflected the emphases of Charles Spurgeon (1834-92), the remarkable Baptist preacher in London in the nineteenth century. The Spurgeonic stream peaked first in the 1880s with the presence of Charles' son, Thomas (1856-1917), as minister of the Auckland Tabernacle. Joseph Kemp suited this stream very well.

But Spurgeon/Kemp conservatism was not the only or even the dominant stream of New Zealand Baptist thought in the early twentieth century. A more moderate (though self-consciously Protestant) line was associated with the large city congregations of Hanover Street in Dunedin, Oxford Terrace in Christchurch and Vivian Street in Wellington. Alfred North (1846-1924), a key figure in the first decades of the N.Z. Baptist Union and Missionary society was at Hanover St. His son, John James (J.J.) North (1871-1950)<sup>2</sup> was minister successively at Vivian Street (1905-1912) and Oxford Terrace (1913-1926). He was also the vigorous editor of the denominational newspaper, the *N.Z. Baptist*. Though no true modernist, he rejected the fundamentalism of those he termed 'nagging literalists'.<sup>3</sup>

Baptists, then, could exhibit quite different characteristics, depending on where you found them. Auckland in particular stood out as more conservative than the southern churches. This geographic factor would prove of significance as, following the First World War, Baptists reconsidered how they trained their ministers.

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2. For North see E.W. Batts & A.H. MacLeod, *J.J. North: The Story of a Great New Zealander* (Wellington, N.Z. Baptist Historical Society, 1965); *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. 3 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996), 367.

3. *NZB* (December 1942): 322.

N.Z. Baptists had been preparing their own students for pastoral ministry since the 1880s. Formal classes were generally provided by the Presbyterian Knox Theological Hall in Dunedin. For the first twenty years of the scheme the key Baptist figure, as so often in this period, was Alfred North, also in Dunedin, who supervised the small number of candidates.

Early in the twentieth century the system began to fray. A number of modifications were attempted, notably a Home Missionary programme in which candidates completed set courses whilst serving in pastorates. J.J. North, Alfred's son and himself a product of the original format during the 1890s, was disquieted by what appeared to be a loss of interest in the main scheme. At the 1901 Assembly he sought reinforcement of the denomination's commitment to 'the education of colonial students for the ministry of the Gospel.'<sup>4</sup> His concerns were justified. The increasingly fragmented scheme became difficult to manage. The war caused significant disruption. Some students resigned, others sought permission to train in England, following military service. The armistice brought little relief. In particular the committee found itself unable to apply any consistency to Home Missionary training. Every meeting was forced to consider applications for waiver or variation of parts of the set programme. Special circumstances such as return from war service, age or marital status, or just plain refusal to submit to the discipline of the course made any claim to uniformity of training standards untenable.

By 1920 it was becoming obvious that significant change was needed. J.J. North called for a thorough reexamination of

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4. *NZB* (December 1901): 188.

the training scheme.<sup>5</sup> The underlying issues were broader than the individual circumstances of students. Perhaps the most fundamental factor was a shift in the Denomination's centre of gravity from the South to the North. In 1887, when Baptist training of ministers had begun the North Island had only 42% of the total Baptist membership. By 1920 some 53% were in the North; by 1930 the figure was 63%. Power was shifting accordingly. Auckland gained a notable dominance during Kemp's time. Of the twelve Presidents of the Union appointed between 1921 and 1932, seven were from Auckland, and six of them (including all four laymen) were from the Tabernacle. The key personalities were also changing. In particular, Alfred North's dominant influence had faded. He had left Dunedin for a brief pastorate in Calcutta, India in 1900. When he returned in 1902 it was to a number of short term positions in Auckland. J.J. North, was in Wellington from 1904-1914 and then Christchurch. When Joseph Kemp arrived in Auckland in 1920 he immediately established an influential presence at the Auckland Tabernacle. In 1922 he formed the Bible Training Institute which, although not intended as a college for training ministers, nevertheless provided a new, evangelical location for Biblical studies. The Dunedin focus of the training scheme no longer seemed so logical. By 1924 it was conceded that 'the prospective students belonged mainly to the Auckland province.'<sup>6</sup>

The effect of these developments is clear. A key change was the waning of the relationship with Knox Hall. When J.J. North announced plans to travel overseas during 1922, it was

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5. Minutes of the N.Z. Baptist College Committee (CM) (N.Z Baptist Archive, Carey Baptist College, Auckland) B15/104, 7 October 1920, f. 21.

6. W.S. Rollings in *Christchurch Press*, 14 October 1924.

suggested that the three current ministerial students might transfer for study at 'the new Bible School in Auckland'.<sup>7</sup> This option was resisted and, instead, it was agreed that one of the students would complete his studies in Dunedin and that the two others would be based in Christchurch. There they took courses at both the University College and the Anglican College House. However this was not regarded as satisfactory, particularly as 'a special Bible course' was not available to them. It was briefly considered whether they might be sent to the Baptist College at Melbourne for 1923. However this was too costly and the two instead transferred further north, to Wellington and the tutelage of Rev. F.E. Harry.<sup>8</sup>

It was recognised that such *ad hoc* arrangements could not continue. A fresh approach would be needed. At the 1923 Assembly in Wellington, the Auckland Auxiliary put up four resolutions reflecting the growing concern that the existing process was not serving the denomination's needs. Of these the first sought a tighter application process, the third and fourth called for a probationary system of at least two years following training. The second remit focused on the method of training itself. It proposed

that the matter of student training be again carefully considered and that our students be placed in some recognised College such as the Baptist College in Melbourne, with possibly a brief preliminary course at the Bible Training Institute in Auckland.<sup>9</sup>

There can be little doubt that Kemp was a prime mover behind these proposals. Although the remits were brought to the Conference by the Auckland Auxiliary, the Auckland Tab-

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7. CM, 12 October, 1921, f. 23.

8. CM, 12 October, 1922, f. 28.

9. CM, October 1923, f. 44.

ernacle had prompted initial discussions in that body. The first draft of the resolutions omitted the word 'possibly' from the above clause, suggesting a firm role for the B.T.I.. The adverb was introduced at the last minute, before the resolution was forwarded to the Baptist Union.<sup>10</sup> Even with this softening, the proposal would have had profound implications. Although it began by suggesting that training be 'carefully considered', in fact it called for specific outcomes. These in turn had their own problems. The practicality of sending students to Melbourne had been rejected once already and was certainly questionable. If the resolution had been adopted, the result would almost certainly have been that the B.T.I. would have become the *de facto* centre of ministerial training.

These difficulties were quickly spotted. Alfred North, attending his last Assembly and suspicious of Kemp's influence, deflected the proposal. Instead he suggested that the present arrangements continue for a further year but that a committee review the entire question 'and bring up to the next Assembly a report with definite and detailed recommendations.' A new committee was appointed, with its brief extended to administering the system for the year to come.<sup>11</sup>

The Auckland proposal may have been stymied, but there were two new faces on the committee who would play a pivotal role in the founding of the college: Kemp and H.M. Smeeton. Smeeton, a wealthy Auckland business man and local body politician, was a prominent member of the Kemp's Auckland Tabernacle. He would be President of the Baptist Union 1924/5 and chaired the new committee at key meetings

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10. See Minutes of the Auckland Baptist Auxiliary (N.Z. B.R.H.S. Archive, A.1), 15 May & 19 June 1923.

11. Baptist Union Conference Minutes (N.Z. B.R.H.S. Archive, B. 174), 12 October 1923, f. 679.

during 1924. When, in October 1924, the Conference returned to the matter, specific resolutions had been framed. These called for a) the founding of a Baptist College, b) that it be in Auckland and c) that special fundraising measures be implemented to pay for its operation and a property.

The session readily agreed to the first element, passing unanimously the resolution 'that it is desirable that a Baptist College should be established in the Dominion at the earliest possible date.'<sup>12</sup> However there was vigorous debate on the other matters, with particular concern expressed about the cost and the location. There were a number of issues at stake. For a denomination focused to this point further south, the establishment of a college in Auckland would represent a significant shift. More fundamentally, it would represent a move of the centre of gravity away from the relatively moderate churches of the south and towards the more theologically conservative Baptists of Auckland. An unidentified newspaper report among J.J. North's papers suggests that the location issue was key, and that Wellington was put forward as an alternative. The committee was asked to reconsider the issues over the weekend.

When the committee came together on the Saturday, it was faced with having to meet concerns over expense, location and theological balance. If there was to be a resolution some imagination would be required. It was provided by Joseph Kemp. Kemp offered a series of suggestions which met the concerns in one brilliant package. He proposed first that the Auckland Tabernacle be asked to supply facilities until a College building could be purchased. This neatly tied up the shift to Auckland, whilst meeting objections over cost, at least in

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12. Baptist Union Conference Minutes 10 October 1924, f. 701.



the short term. Theological tensions were potentially more difficult to address. Here too, Kemp decisively cut through a knot which might have strangled the project. The matter of principal had not publicly been addressed to this point. To allay any fears that he himself might exercise undue influence, Kemp proposed that J.J. North be invited to become the principal. To reinforce his point he offered the added concession that North 'might share in the teaching ministry of the Tabernacle Church in such ways and to such extent as may be mutually arranged between him and the Tabernacle minister.'<sup>13</sup>

In her study of Kemp, Jane Simpson suggests that he was himself seeking the principalship. No-one can tell what ambitions any leader harbours privately, but there is no evidence to support this view. At no point in the 1924 Conference or Students' Committee records is such a course so much as hinted at. North's name was the only one linked to the role and it was proposed by Kemp. In support of her case, Simpson cites reports of the proposed plan to the Tabernacle officers and members in the weeks following the public offer of the position to North. In particular she appears to have misread references to the suggestion that some form of cooperative ministry at the Tabernacle might arise.<sup>14</sup> As will be seen below, Kemp had a clear sense of the limits of that element of the arrangement.

The committee immediately recognised that Kemp had provided a way forward. The proposals were brought back to the Assembly on Monday 13 October, 1924. The revised plan was overwhelmingly endorsed. It was a big call, a fact not lost

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13. CM, 11 October 1924, f. 46.

14. Simpson, 70. cf. Tabernacle United Officers Minutes 5 November 1924; Members Minutes 12 November 1924.

on the gathered delegates. Indeed, the decision to found a Baptist College was the most significant move by the denomination since the founding of the Missionary Society in 1885. New Zealand Baptists would now fully train their own ministers.

It is important to note that the Baptist leaders saw this as more than an educational advance. Rev. W.S. Rollings, chair of the Committee, had in August promoted the idea of a college in revivalist terms.

A college in vital relationship on the one hand with the passion and purpose of the evangel, and on the other with the instruments and methods of teaching, preaching and evangelising, should compel many such to dedicate themselves wholly to the work of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

This theme was picked up again as Rollings presented the Committee's revised proposals. The newspaper report already cited noted his reference to 'an atmosphere of spiritual crisis.... There was a need for an aggressive and challenging ministry throughout New Zealand. He believed that God was awaiting an instrument for sweeping this land from end to end in an evangelical mission.' J.K. Archer, a radical minister who was at the time Vice-President of the NZ Labour Party and who had moved the first clause, now seconded the further elements of the proposal, noting in his speech that at the heart of the proposal was the fact that both North and Kemp 'should continue their influence in this great work.'

Kemp's interest in ministerial matters at the 1924 Assembly went beyond the matter of the college. He also presented detailed recommendations from the Students' Committee on ministerial recognition, a concern of the Auckland remits a

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15. *NZB* (August 1924): 171

year earlier.<sup>16</sup> The college, however, was the biggest issue. Significant questions remained. When would the college commence? Would it have a principal? Nobody, it seems, had checked with J.J. North, who declined to accept the offer immediately. The request of the Assembly would take some thinking and praying about. His ministry at Oxford Terrace was effective and highly regarded. He was already editor of *The NZ Baptist* newspaper. Whilst a powerful thinker and speaker and a prominent leader he was not a scholar. His own training had been under the previous scheme and he had no formal qualifications. He had never lived in Auckland and, at 53 years of age, was not at all sure that he wanted to start again in such a pioneering role. He immediately notified his father. Alfred North was now in failing health, but this did not prevent him from replying in pungent style.

The news not only interested me. It startled me. I did not imagine that our men would have enterprise enough to ask you, though we all know you are the fittest for the post!

You do not ask my advice. If you had, I could give you no counsel. Your present work is so big and successful that the quitting of it would involve very serious responsibility. If you do link up with Kemp, it will be necessary that the lines of co-operation should be most strictly defined. The element of control or direction must be excluded.<sup>17</sup>

J.J. North knew that the relationship with Kemp would be crucial. Indeed, the entire scheme would depend upon the ability of these two strong personalities to work together. He raised a series of issues with Kemp in a letter of 8 November,

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16. Baptist Union Conference Minutes, 15 October 1924, f 710.

17. Letter, Alfred North to J.J. North, 16 October 1924 (N.Z. Baptist Archive, North Collection).

1924. Kemp's response was direct, clarifying the proposed nature of their cooperation.

I would not have you think for a moment that all our Office Bearers are overwhelmingly enthusiastic over the idea. If they were living in Dunedin I should be inclined to think they were smitten with a good deal of Scottish caution. Some of them see rocks ahead, while others are keen for the College. There is, of course absolutely no thought of any official connection between you and the Tabernacle and on the other hand it is just as clear that there is no official connection between the College and myself, the two are held distinct and must remain so. We are coming with a recommendation to the Church that the request of the Conference for the facilities of the Tabernacle for College purposes be acceded to and also that the Tabernacle assume some measure of responsibility.

I feel sure you will be led aright and that your decision once made will be found the mind of the Lord. In the event of your coming to Auckland I am sure that whenever opportunity offered we shall be able to work together most harmoniously. The work of the pulpit would be as it usually is between two ministers and not a mutual arrangement.<sup>18</sup>

Without waiting for this reply, North had indicated his position to the committee. He had some proposals of his own.

1. I am ready to undertake as from March 1<sup>st</sup> 1925 the office of Principal.
2. I am ready to undertake during 1925 the superintendence and tuition of the students, on condition that I am allowed to remain here in Chch in my pastoral office, with

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18. Letter, Joseph Kemp to J.J. North, 11 November 1924 (N.Z. Baptist Archive, North Collection).

such rebates of local duty as this church is prepared to offer me.

3. I am ready to commence in Auckland in 1926.<sup>19</sup>

North was confident that this arrangement would meet his personal needs, mollify his church and provide adequately for the students. The committee, however, which had anticipated a start at the Tabernacle in early 1925, was unsettled by his response. An extraordinary meeting was called. The whole scheme seemed threatened. It was again Kemp, unable to be present but giving his views by letter, who was most willing to think outside the square. Why not locate the college in Christchurch, allowing North to continue in a joint role as Principal and Pastor at Oxford Terrace? The rest of the committee, however, was not prepared to move so far from the vision agreed at Assembly. The key elements of the plan endorsed in October, were the Auckland base and the call to North. These would not be compromised. If it was necessary to delay the opening of the college in order to secure those elements, then that could be faced. After 'full and frank discussion' it was decided to appoint North to begin in 1926 and that other arrangements be made for 1925.<sup>20</sup> The deal was now all but sealed. In April 1925, North and others met at the Tabernacle and negotiated with Kemp and the officers for the use of specified rooms and times.

In all this, Kemp had been a pivotal figure. It would be absurd to suggest that the formation of the Baptist College was in any way uniquely his initiative. But what must be acknowl-

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19. Letter, North to Rollings, 10 November 1924 (N.Z. Baptist Archive, North Collection).

20. *CM*, 19 November 1924, ff 55-60.

edged is that without him, it may very well not have been set up at all.

As Peter Lineham has shown in his research on the history of the Bible College, Kemp had a clear vision of what he wanted in a Bible Training Institute.<sup>21</sup> That within 18 months of arrival in New Zealand he was able to tap into other moves and organise a commencement suggests a remarkable commitment and activism. He seems to have had an equally clear distinction in his mind between the B.T.I. and the new Baptist College. In 1926, at the stone-laying ceremony for the new B.T.I. building, he stressed the interdenominational nature of the B.T.I. and readily conceded,

The Institute did not pretend to turn out students with the academic and intellectual training required in a minister of religion, but aimed at giving young people such knowledge of the Bible as would equip them for Christian work generally.<sup>22</sup>

He would maintain a differentiation of this type through to the end. Indeed it is clear that, although not trained in this way himself, Kemp was as committed to theological training for ministers as he was to Bible training. The college, he declared, 'should be the normal door of entrance into the Baptist ministry of this country', and ministerial students 'should be urged to secure degrees and become as efficient as possible for the great service to which God has called them.'<sup>23</sup> (In this, ironically, he was more open than North, who resisted formal qualifications as part of the training.) On more than one occasion Kemp encouraged students to move on to the Baptist Col-

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21. I am indebted to Dr Peter Lineham for allowing me access to his unpublished history of the Bible College of New Zealand.

22. *NZB* (January 1927): 5.

23. *NZB* (April 1928): 113; (November 1927): 330.

lege. An revealing example is found in the Tabernacle member, Eric Batts, who began at the B.T.I. but transferred to the Baptist College before completing the course. In 1933 he recalled an interview with Kemp when the opportunity to join the new Baptist College was presented.

We sought the advice of our pastor..., fully expecting disapproval and insistence upon the completion of the Institute course. But no. Here was a man of great heart and broad sympathies. He foresaw the possibilities and probabilities, the increased opportunities, the larger scope, and urged the change. His interest in the [Baptist] College never flagged. We might have expected a slight rivalry, but it was never evident with him. He held the two institutions in proper focus, and regarded them rightly, not as comparative works, but distinctive and, in a sense, complementary (sic), and to both, as principal to the one and committeeman to the other, he generously gave his whole ardour and support.<sup>24</sup>

Kemp's support was indeed noteworthy. He was a member of the Baptist College board from its inception until his death. He spoke regularly at college functions and promoted its interests. The Tabernacle Church featured prominently throughout this period in support of the Baptist College. However, the most outstanding aspect of the eight years of Kemp's continuing involvement was the relationship he established with J.J. North.

North and Kemp are often cited for their differences. Both inspired fierce loyalty and equally definite opponents. This polarizing effect has led to some surprise that the two men should have been able to work together. As noted, Kemp was on North's board. North in turn became an elder at the Taber-

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24. *NZB* (October 1933): 298.

nacle. The two regularly shared platforms and gave each other public compliments. There was nothing forced about this. They were in fact much closer than has been recognised. Both were supremely convinced of the correctness of their positions. For Kemp, the focus of his dogmatism was biblical authority and conservative morality. North's activism was focused on Baptist principles. Through the 1920s he increasingly contrasted Baptist respect for the individual with what he saw as the authoritarianism of Roman Catholicism. It was a subject on which, by 1933, it was noted North 'had made the ground his own'.<sup>25</sup> As he was not averse to extending his criticism to Presbyterians and Plymouth Brethren,<sup>26</sup> North was never likely to be the coalition builder that Kemp proved to be. The differences between the two men were, however, more of emphasis than substance. Kemp was a Baptist 'by conviction',<sup>27</sup> but his energies were directed elsewhere. North, conversely, was committed to biblical authority, although he sought to acknowledge 'many unsolved problems'.<sup>28</sup> Their interests and their constituencies were different, but their motivations were similar, and both men saw it.

This would prove crucial. Almost as soon as it began, the Baptist college came under suspicion of 'modernism'. North's vision for the college was of a place 'with windows open to all the light that comes from every quarter'.<sup>29</sup> Such attitudes raised alarm in conservative circles. By the end of 1928 North was having to respond to concerns about the 'problems of college'.

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25. *NZB* (April 1933): 100.

26. See e.g. *NZB* (October 1927): 302-4; (September 1933): 270-1.

27. *NZB* (October 1929): 293.

28. *NZB* (December 1942): 322.

29. *NZB* (January 1927): 2.



We do not believe in a college in which men are taught to repeat the shibboleths of their tutors, and of their sect. We do not believe that orthodoxy can be administered in tabloid forms, and secured with smart little catch cries.<sup>30</sup>

The focus of disquiet was North himself, who was open to critical methods, deeply interested in literature and scientific discoveries<sup>31</sup> and prepared to consider the challenges of evolution.<sup>32</sup> In keeping with Baptist principles as he saw them he resisted attempts to impose a creedal test on ministers, missionaries or teachers.<sup>33</sup>

With these attitudes, North does indeed seem an unlikely ally of Kemp. Yet Kemp's support, at least in public, was unwavering. Indeed it is in this that he made his most important contribution to the consolidation of the Baptist College. In endorsing so clearly and so often the notion of the theological college he had already made space for the institution, but he was equally adamant about the principal.

At the annual Baptist Conference in 1927, after theological concerns had emerged, Kemp made a telling intervention. The report reads as follows:

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

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30. *NZB* (December 1928): 354-5.

31. *NZB* (April 1930): 116-7.

32. *NZB* (May 1929): 142-3; (November 1937): 322.

33. *NZB* (July 1929): 194.

whom he cared under the Principal for theological training.<sup>34</sup>

Such expressions of total support would crop up a number of times in subsequent years. The importance of this backing cannot be overemphasized. Consistent endorsement from the acknowledged leader of conservative Baptists engendered at least a measure of confidence in the new institution and its teaching among a key constituency.

The support was fully reciprocated. North frequently praised Kemp in the pages of the *NZ Baptist*. In 1929 he supported Kemp's opposition to the ideas of H.D.A. Major, describing the modernist Anglican's views as 'most deplorable'.<sup>35</sup> When Kemp was unable, due to illness, to present his Presidential address to the Baptist Conference in October 1929, he asked North's nephew, L.A. North, to deliver it on his behalf. Not satisfied that this provided sufficient exposure, J.J. North made space available in the *NZ Baptist* through 1930 for a regular column, in which Kemp set out some of his most profound convictions.

The theme of both Kemp's Presidential address and the columns was evangelism. It is in their shared enthusiasm for this mission of the church that the interests of the two men found their greatest cohesion. Kemp's principal motivation was the winning of souls. Evangelism was 'the first, and in a sense, the supreme mission of the Church.' In responding to this charge, 'the modern divinity school...must not forget that its only right to exist... [lies] in its affording an effective training for the work of which evangelism is its crowning glory.'<sup>36</sup>

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34. *NZB* (November 1927): 330.

35. *NZB* (April 1929): 99.

36. Joseph Kemp, Presidential Address, *NZB* (November 1929): 330-334, 331 & 333.

Kemp clearly saw in North a similar dedication to the evangel. North, too, would write of revival, with particular attention to the need for fervent prayer. Indeed, on at least two occasions he singled out Kemp's Tabernacle prayer meetings as exemplary of the dedication necessary.<sup>37</sup> However, prayer was but part of the story. North was no less activist than Kemp. Evangelistic missions were a regular part of the Baptist college life.<sup>38</sup> In 1931, typically linking the question to denominational distinctives, North asserted: 'The Baptist Church is built by conversion. Without some token of conversion no one can become a member of a Baptist Church. We do not collect Christians. We make them. Miracles happen when the word is preached.'<sup>39</sup>

Jane Simpson makes an important finding in suggesting that Kemp's influence on Baptist life differed somewhat from his impact on the wider evangelical community. Specifically she argues that, whereas Kemp's anti-modernism was a key factor in the wider sphere, this was less significant in Baptist circles, where it was his revivalism which was most prominent.<sup>40</sup> The evidence from beyond Baptist life remains open to debate, but this picture certainly coheres with what we can say of Kemp's relationship with North. The two saw in each other a passion for souls. This shared commitment was enough to cement perhaps the most influential partnership in New Zealand Baptist history.

Individual personalities and key relationships are of profound importance in the history of small communities like the New Zealand Baptists. The creative convergence of the careers

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37. *NZB* (May 1927): 133-4; (April 1928): 97.

38. See e.g. *NZB* (August 1929): 228.

39. *NZB* (April 1931): 103.

40. See Simpson, 71, 76.

of Joseph Kemp and J.J. North is surely one of the great examples. North's tribute on Kemp's death began with the confession that 'to write adequately of J.W. Kemp is not easy. He was and is my friend.' It ended with the reminder that

his interest in our college has been unremitting. He believed fervently in the need of the fullest equipment for the ministers of the church today. He was a great and good man. We thank God on every memory of him.<sup>41</sup>

Joseph Kemp belongs intimately to the history of the B.T.I./Bible College of New Zealand. Not so intimate, but nonetheless significant, was his contribution to shaping a second institution. Geoff Pound has suggested that 'one almost forms the conclusion that Kemp took the credit for establishing the Baptist College.'<sup>42</sup> This is an imaginative reading of the evidence but it reflects an undeniable truth. Joseph Kemp did play a crucial role in the college's early years. Without his imaginative solutions at its genesis and his key support in its formative years, the Baptist Theological College, would have had a very different history, if it was to have had one at all.

### **Martin Sutherland**

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41. *NZB* (October 1933): 296-7.

42. G. R. Pound, 'Rev. Joseph William Kemp and the Auckland baptist Tabernacle 1920-1933', unpublished research essay, University of Auckland, 1978, 37.