Baptist Expansion in Colonial New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Baptists in colonial New Zealand followed two distinct paths in developing new causes. Particularly in Auckland and Dunedin a cautious sponsorship of new fellowships by one or two large churches proved an effective if slow method of expansion. In Canterbury a rapid proliferation of small churches took place in the 1870s. This approach, unique in New Zealand, reflected the special economic and demographic conditions of that province. This article argues, in addition, that key Canterbury leaders followed Methodist models of church extension, creating a very different pattern of development, which was eventually superceded by the more mainstream Baptist approach.

In 1842 the *Baptist Magazine* carried an extensive article on the prospect of settlement in New Zealand. Noting with sorrow a growing interest in emigration among Baptists, the magazine acknowledged the attractiveness of the New Zealand climate – 'peculiarly suitable to an English constitution' – and the assisted fares offered by the recently formed New Zealand Company. The only serious feature on the 'shady side' was the likely dominance of the Church of England, already present via the Church Missionary Society and now with a Bishop.

> Alas, that church! It haunts us go whither we will. At home it taxes us; it calls us schismatics, points at us with scorn, and frowns on our worship; it proclaims itself our great benefactress, boasts of its unparalleled tolerance, and tramples upon us contemptuously....East or West, North

> or South, there is no possibility of escaping it; if we sail for the antipodes, thither it vaults and meets us on our landing.[1]

In light of this religious disadvantage, and the practical difficulties of settlement, the author recommended Baptists consider relocating as already formed communities, pastor and all, for 'emigration might thus be deprived of half its pains and dangers'.[2]

Many English Baptists did elect to emigrate to New Zealand. However, only in one instance did they form part of an organised nonconformist company. The Albertland Special Settlement Association organised a 1000 strong party which departed London in 1862 to settle on the Kaipara harbour, north of Auckland. The venture met with little success and, within a decade many of the settlers had relocated elsewhere in the colony.[3] Being Baptist as such appears generally not to have played a key role in settlement. Most came with little more connection than the informal links by which individuals and families called for or followed friends and relations.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that significant regional differences may be observed in patterns of Baptist development in colonial New Zealand. In Wellington, the capital from 1865, progress was very slow. Baptists emerged much more quickly in the Canterbury, Auckland and Otago regions. Of the 25 churches which constituted the Baptist Union of New Zealand at its foundation in 1882, eleven (44%) were in Canterbury, seven in Auckland and two in Otago, with just five from the rest of the colony. Such figures might imply the

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[1] *Baptist Magazine* (1842): 353-60, 358.
[2] *Baptist Magazine*: 360.
[3] See J.L. Borrows, *Albertland* (Wellington: Reed, 1969).

dominance of Canterbury. Membership statistics, however suggest a different story. In 1885, when reliable figures first emerge, Canterbury churches had 720 members between them, Auckland was larger at 922 and Otago not far behind at 635.

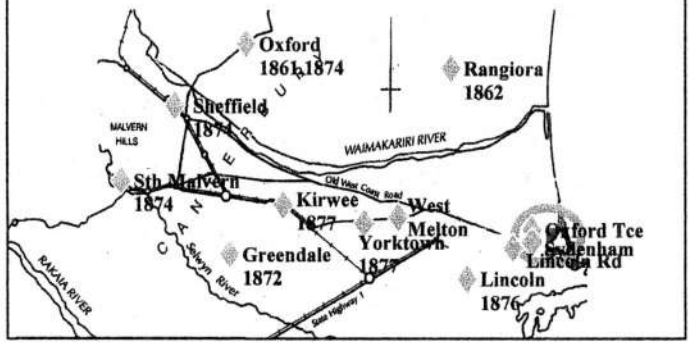
Canterbury clearly had a higher number of small churches. Moreover, they were distributed in a unique pattern. Seven of the eleven were outside the main towns of Christchurch and Timaru. By contrast, in Auckland only two of seven were in such rural settings. Both of the churches in Otago and all five of the those elsewhere in the colony were found in substantial colonial towns. Canterbury thus presents some intriguing points of difference. The pattern of small rural churches is, in fact, exceptional in New Zealand Baptist history. In this essay I will endeavour to trace the reasons for this unusual form of development. Canterbury's early Baptist history was influenced by economic and social factors which combined with the particularities of key leaders to encourage the brief flourishing of a unique culture of church settlement.

An irony of the apparent Baptist success in Canterbury is that this region, of any in the new colony, might have suffered the worst of the disadvantages identified by the 1842 writer in the *Baptist Magazine*. Canterbury was planned to be an ideal Church of England settlement. Formed in 1848 to manage the project, the Canterbury Association had the Archbishop of Canterbury as its President. Although the settlement was not a venture of the Church itself, Anglicans were to be accorded privileges of land purchase and there were designated funds for Anglican religious and educational purposes. The rhetoric greatly exceeded the eventual reality. No proof of Church of England membership was demanded and a lack of applicants together with a financial crisis led quickly to the relaxation of the original rules. Nevertheless, although 'Anglican Canter-

bury was never effectively policy', the Church of England had 'vaulted' to Canterbury in a manner more profound and thorough than in any other part of the new colony.[4]

Some Baptists, it is clear, slipped through the net. Nineteen were recorded in a census of 1851.[5] By the mid-1860s four churches had been formed – two in the main town, Christchurch and two in rural villages. However, in the 1870s no fewer than eight small rural churches were constituted. By 1880 only nine Baptist churches had been formed in the entire rest of the country. In contrast there were twelve in the central part of the Canterbury province alone.

Figure 1. The Baptist churches of central Canterbury



[4] J. Cookson, 'Pilgrim's Progress – Image, Identity and Myth in Christchurch' in J. Cookson and Graeme Dunstall (eds) *Southern Capital Christchurch: Towards a City Biography 1850-2000* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000), 13-40, 18. On the Canterbury Association and Settlement see W.D. McIntyre 'Introduction' to *The Journal of Henry Sewell,* Vol. 1. 1853-7 (Christchurch: Whitcoulls, 1980), 31-67.

[5] J. Hight & C.R. Straubel (eds) *A History of Canterbury,* Vol. 1: to 1854 (Christchurch: Canterbury Centennial Association, 1957), 248.

Seven of these churches were in what would become in 1876 the Selwyn County, an extensive local body area which took in the plains and foothills south and east of Christchurch – essentially the land between the major rivers Waimakariri in the north and Rakaia in the south. That a cluster of Baptist churches should appear together in this area is a remarkable but in many ways explicable development.

Until 1876 local government in New Zealand had consisted of large Provincial Councils. The Canterbury Province had been one of most extensive and successful of these. However, with the growing strength of central government, the provinces were deemed to be an impediment to progress and were abolished. Canterbury was divided into six counties and three boroughs. Selwyn was without question the most important of the counties. Although it was largely an administrative fiction, lacking integration or cohesion, within the boundaries of Selwyn lay significant resources and profitable industries. At this point in the 1870s it was enjoying a boom. The roots of this prosperity lay in the early years of the Canterbury Settlement. As Christchurch began to grow, its fuel and timber needs quickly exhausted the immediately available native bush. The nearest significant sources lay in the Malvern Hills, fifty miles to the West. From the mid 1850s coal was being mined to supply the town and by 1857 a rudimentary road (a 'coal track') had been cut to Sheffield. By 1875 this had been supplemented by a railway, reaching coal deposits in both the north and south Malvern hills.[6]

The plains too proved bountiful. Farming had been initially an extensive, pastoral activity, with wool the principal

[6] G.L. Popple, *Malvern County: A Centennial History* (Darfield: Malvern County Council, 1953), 63-4; 70-71.

product. However, the combined effects of a massive increase in the population plus a generous plan for the conversion of pastoral leases into freehold tenure created a land boom during the 1870s.[7] It was soon discovered that the plains could sustain huge crops of wheat. Canterbury became (and remains) the grain silo of New Zealand. For two decades from the mid 1870s the 'wheat bonanza' established Canterbury among the wealthiest parts of the country, with Selwyn county a key grain producing area.[8]

Baptists in England had not been particularly associated with either farming or mining. The picture does not appear to have been significantly different in New Zealand.[9] The strength of these industries alone does not account for the number of Baptist churches. More important is that Selwyn's prosperity coincided with a surge in its population. Indeed, as Graph One shows, Selwyn County for a time had the largest population of any single local body and more than matched even the combined borough clusters around the main centres.

The size of the local general population was clearly a factor in Baptist development. It would be anticipated that as the general population grew, so did the total of Baptists. However the figures suggest a more subtle pattern than a simple arithmetical progression. Indeed there appears to have been a direct relation between the population and the proportion of persons identifying themselves as Baptist. This becomes evident when

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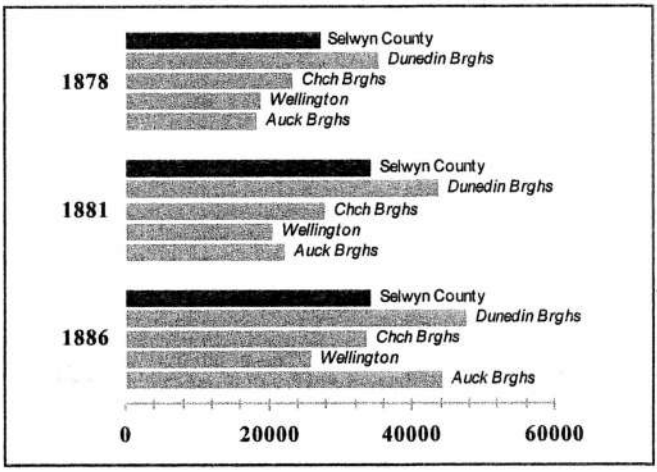
[7] The population of Canterbury more than doubled between 1868 and 1876. See W.J. Gardner, *A History of Canterbury*, Vol. II (Christchurch: Canterbury Centennial Historical and Literary Committee, 1971), 313.

[8] G. Cant & R. Kirkpatrick (eds) *Rural Canterbury: Celebrating its History* (Wellington: Daphne Brasell Associates Ltd, 2001), 61-79.

[9] See Brian Smith "Wherefore then this thusness:' the social composition of Baptist congregations in New Zealand.' *NZJBR* (1998): 71-83.

the population statistics in Graph One are correlated to the percentage of Baptists recorded in each centre. Graphs Two to Four reveal that the proportion of Baptists closely tracks the movement of the general population.

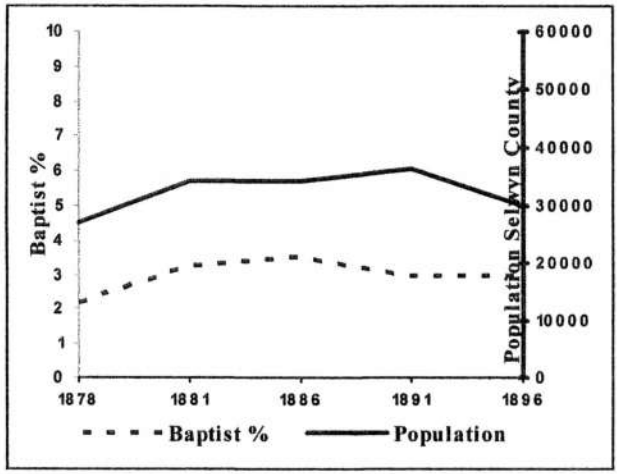
Graph One: Population Figures 1878-1886[10]



Graph Two shows the Baptist percentage together with the total European population for the Selwyn County 1876-1896. As the population grew towards the mid-30,000s then plateaued, the percentage of Baptists grew and levelled off in direct relation, peaking at 3.49% in 1886. The relationship appears to be breaking down by 1891.

[10] Source: *New Zealand Official Census.*

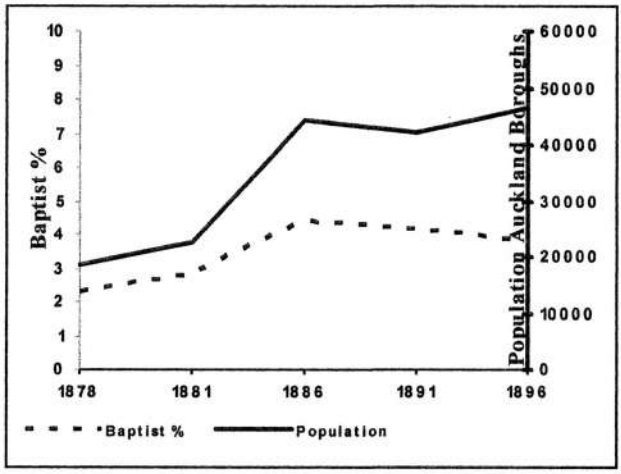
Graph Two: Baptists in the Population of Selwyn County[11]



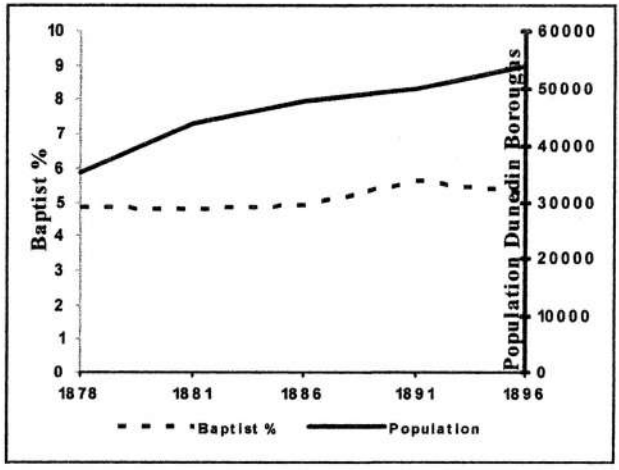
A similar pattern can be discerned in Auckland, where again the Baptist proportion tracks up as the population increases and levels off at a similar point. The relation reverses, however, in the 1890s, with a decline in the Baptist proportion as the general population is increasing. Historical, rather than demographic, factors may be at work here. Thomas Spurgeon's stellar ministry in Auckland ended in 1889 and his successor would split the church within a few years. In Dunedin (Graph Four), which starts with higher figures on both axes, the picture is again similar, although the link is less distinct. The trend in the Baptist proportion generally follows the population, once again until the mid 1890s.

[11] Source: *New Zealand Official Census.*

Graph Three: Baptists in the Population of Auckland[12]



Graph Four: Baptists in the Population of Dunedin[13]



[12] Source: *New Zealand Official Census*
[13] Source: *New Zealand Official Census.*

More statistical analysis is clearly needed before any demographic theory of Baptist development can be advanced with confidence. However these graphs and matching patterns in the statistics for Christchurch and Wellington indicate that there is some connection between increasing density of population and the proportion of that population who will identify themselves as Baptist. The graphs further suggest that the relationship may begin to break down as the population figure approaches 40 000. Some such point would, of course, be expected. Otherwise, merely if the population were to go on increasing Baptists might be expected to approach 100%!

The phenomenon may be a feature of developing regions and may be partially explained by the dynamics of autonomous gathered church polity. A critical mass of population would clearly be conducive to the emergence of Baptist churches. Until these were able to appear, potential Baptists may well have attached to other Christian communities. Something like this appears to have occurred in the farming district of Greendale in Canterbury where from 1865 a combined meeting was held, led by a rotation of Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Brethren and Presbyterian preachers. By 1872, however, the locality was developed enough for the Primitive Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Baptists to found their own separate entities.[14]

A merely population-based tipping point is not sufficient to explain the several fellowships in Canterbury. The bulk of the Selwyn County population was grouped at the eastern end, near the Christchurch boroughs, whereas the churches were

[14] T.W. Adams, undated manuscript reprinted in M. Sutherland *Baptists in Colonial New Zealand: documents illustrating baptist life and development* (Auckland: NZBRHS, 2002), 32-34.

found scattered over the plains. Nevertheless, a flow-on effect is unquestionable. The peculiarities of the land sales system, combined with the rapidly increasing population in Canterbury, necessitated 'village settlement' schemes, resulting in a surprising number of small communities dotted around the countryside. One historian has noted that, by the mid-1870s, along with roads and fences, 'other evidences of settled farming existence were most noticeable in [Selwyn and the strip immediately north of the Waimakariri]: the beginnings at road junctions of village clusters of church or chapel, school and library buildings, smithy and hotel'.[15] Economic circumstances and population density combined to generate small towns and a consequent demand for the small traders and artisans among whom Baptists have typically been found.

That the economic and demographic trends were a factor in the history of the small rural churches of Canterbury is certain. However such material issues alone do not sufficiently explain the atypical development pattern in this region. As the graphs show, Auckland and Otago had both population and high proportions of Baptists. Yet the development of Baptist churches in those regions took a very different form.

When the Baptist Union was constituted in 1882 there were seven churches in the Auckland region. Of these, only Minniesdale and Auckland had emerged independently. The other five were in one way or another formed at the initiative of the strong Auckland church. Typical was Cambridge, unusually for the region a rural church some 150 kilometres from Auckland city. In 1881, after a few months of informal Bible study meetings, a group took a step towards church formation, not by independently covenanting together, but by writing to

[15] Gardner, 312.

the pastor of the Auckland church 'asking him to let us know when he or any of [his] deacons should be visiting the Waikato district, so that we might embrace the opportunity of being formed into a Baptist church.'[16] This pattern of church planting under the sponsorship of an existing strong fellowship was also followed in Dunedin, where the city church enabled an independent fellowship at Caversham in 1873. Each of these two would subsequently facilitate a number of new causes in Otago.

In Canterbury in the 1870s the picture was very different. In this period there was no single strong church which gradually established others. The development pattern followed in Auckland and Dunedin is not evident. Another strategy was at work which led to the appearance of so many small causes in a short period.

Key personnel were fundamental to the differences between the developments at Auckland and Dunedin and those in Canterbury. The Auckland church had stable leadership and very effective ministries from experienced Baptist pastors. Phillip Cornford (minister 1862-76) was the son of a Baptist manse and came to New Zealand after missionary service and three English pastorates. He was succeeded by Allan Webb (1877-81) who had been trained in Australia and had already served as President of the Baptist Union of New South Wales. In Dunedin the key ministries were from two Stepney college graduates J.L. Parsons (1863-67) and J. Upton Davies (1872-

[16] Anon, undated record of the origins of the Cambridge Baptist Church in the first minute book. NZ Baptist Archive C. 1/1, reprinted in Sutherland, 46-8.

81) and an experienced Scottish minister John Williams (1867-72).[17]

With the influence of such committed Baptist leadership there is little surprise in the pattern of development at Auckland and Dunedin. It was essentially like that in Britain, where a premium on local church based evangelism had gradually supplanted revivalist methods which had enjoyed a vogue earlier in the century.[18] The New Zealand manifestation of this saw an emphasis on strong fellowships, gradually and cautiously extending the ropes on their tents.

In Canterbury this model was not followed. The reason may well have to do with the individuals who guided Baptist development there in the 1860s and 70s. In contrast to the minister leaders of Auckland and Dunedin these men represented a revivalist line of nonconformist thought. Indeed, a number of important figures owed their ecclesiology not to traditional Baptist emphases, but to Methodism.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Methodism experienced a series of secessions from the Wesleyan form. At the heart of these splits were issues of polity and practice, rather than credal doctrines. The Methodist New Connexion (1797) sought greater separation from the Church of England and more lay participation. Similar concern for lay participation but also for continued public revivalist preaching spurred the Primitive Methodists (1811) and the Bible Christians

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[17] See the biographical entries for these ministers in P. Tonson, *A Handful of Grain: The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of N.Z.* Vol. 1 – 1851-1882 (Wellington: NZ Baptist Historical Society, 1982).

[18] On the evolution of English Baptist methods away from mission societies towards and emphasis on the local church see J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the 19th Century* (Didcot: The Baptist Historical Society, 1994), 297-8.

(1815). In New Zealand the most important groups were the Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists.[19]

Key figures in Canterbury Baptist life had backgrounds in Methodist secession. This is not so surprising, when it is recognised that the secessionist groups each moved in one way or another from the hierarchical structures perceived to operate in Wesleyan Methodism towards more 'baptistic' models of church government and participation. For some individuals the transition would continue along these lines until they formally became Baptists. Exactly this religious progression may be identified among Canterbury leaders whose approach consequently mingled both Methodist and Baptist themes.

When the combined meeting at Greendale divided along denominational lines in 1872 the Primitive Methodists appointed Philip Hill as their preacher. The history of that denomination records that 'Mr Hill continued in the work until the end of [1873], when he withdrew from our Church.'[20] Hill then drops from Methodist history, to feature, albeit briefly, as a Baptist. His 'withdrawal' from Primitive Methodism was apparently by Baptist conviction, as he immediately reappears as the founding pastor of a Baptist group at Sheffield. Hill's

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[19] New Zealand Methodism lacks a satisfactory modern history. The best recent resource remains E.W. Hames *Out of the Common Way: The European Church in the Colonial Era 1840-1913* (Auckland: Wesleyan Historical Society, 1972). The outstanding treatment of the colonial period is W. Morley *The History of Methodism in New Zealand* (Wellington: McKee & Co, 1900) which, though heavily weighted towards the Wesleyan stream, is still the richest repository of detail for any Christian denomination of the period in New Zealand.

[20] J. Guy & W.S. Potter (eds) *Jubilee Memorial Volume or Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand* (Wellington: Primitive Methodist Book Depot, 1893), 197.

time was again short, however, as he died in 1876, leaving a congregation numbering seventeen.[21]

Hill's short ministry is merely symbolic of the significance of Methodism among colonial Canterbury Baptists. Far more important were the contributions of James Sawle and William Pole.

James Sawle (1835-1920) came to New Zealand from South Australia where he had been involved initially with the New Connexion Methodists but adopted Baptist principles out of an experience in a cooperative fellowship. He settled at West Melton on the Canterbury plains in 1870. There is no record of him receiving training, but he was the first pastor at Greendale and (concurrently from 1873) at West Melton and was a constant on the preaching roster for the region. From 1886 to 1892 he was minister at Ashburton (80 kilometres south of Christchurch). Sawle was a prime mover in the establishment of the Canterbury Association in 1874 and was its second president. As will be seen, the Association was itself a significant factor in the development of Canterbury Baptist life.

Sawle's energy was an effective catalyst for evangelism and church planting but even his contribution stands second to the remarkable ministry of William Pole (1814-79). Pole came to New Zealand in 1867, relatively late in life at 55 years of age, and seems to have been intent on establishing a farm. However he quickly found himself engaged in ministry. He was the first minister at Lincoln Road (1869-76) and was remembered to have been the first minister to preach at Baptist services in South Malvern, Sheffield and Greendale. Like

[21] *The Canterbury Evangelist* (August 1876): 16; (November 1876): 40.

Sawle he was a prime mover in the establishment of the Canterbury Association.

Pole is particularly interesting as he had an extensive career as a pastor before coming to New Zealand. However this career in England was initially as a Primitive Methodist. By 1837 he was engaged in a mission in Buckinghamshire where he developed a reputation as a powerful revivalist. From 1844 his work was as an evangelist in Huntingdonshire. Gradually however he became convinced of Baptist principles of church government and baptism and he was eventually baptised by Philip Cornford (later to be minister at Auckland 1862-76, but then in the town of Ramsey). Pole began a Baptist church in Buckden, Huntingdonshire which, significantly, quickly set up a number of preaching stations which later became churches. His obituary notes that, 'when he left to come to this colony there were more than twenty local preachers assisting him.'[22]

Pole had clearly not forgotten his Primitive Methodist approaches to evangelism. A similar pattern would be worked out in Canterbury. Indeed the central Canterbury Baptist causes of the 1870s look much like a Methodist circuit. It is a pattern not found among Baptists anywhere else in colonial New Zealand, even where the population was large enough to sustain a Baptist community. Any attempt to explain this anomaly must incorporate the coincidence of pivotal leaders like Sawle and Pole with secessionist Methodist backgrounds.

There was a further significant difference between the Canterbury situation and the rest of the colony – again undoubtedly linked to the emphases of the key leaders. Canterbury was the only region to set up an Association, prior to the formation of the Baptist Union.

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[22] See Pole's obituary *The Baptist* (April 1880): 46-50.

In 1874 the Hereford Street church in Christchurch proposed to the Lincoln Road church that they investigate a joint venture in church extension. Lincoln Road, under its pastor William Pole, expressed enthusiasm 'if it were intended to form an association of Baptist Churches throughout the Province.'[23] In December 1874 such a body was duly formed with the object 'to advance the cause of Christ'. First and second among the means to achieving this aim were 'promoting the formation of Christian Churches' and 'the sustenance of Evangelists'.[24]

Associations as vehicles for enhanced evangelism were important in England in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this form they were clearly a legacy of the influence of the evangelical awakening and 'the connexional organisation of the Methodists.'[25] In Canterbury this was reflected in the two major initiatives of the new body. In 1876 an evangelist was appointed. George Johnston would in the next two years itinerate around the province and report regularly on his work. He would be succeeded for a further two years by T.W. Smyth.

The second initiative was to begin a magazine which, in its various names over the next years would symbolize not only the motivations of the founders but also the gradual shift in focus which was to change the Baptist development pattern in Canterbury.

The first issue of the *Canterbury Evangelist* appeared in August 1876. The editor (Robert Morton, pastor at Hereford Street) eschewed sectarian bias.

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[23] A.H. Macleod, *The Canterbury-Westland Baptist Association: A Brief History*, (Christchurch: Canterbury-Westland Bapt. Assn, 1974), 3.
[24] MacLeod, 3.
[25] Briggs, 202-4.

> Though issuing from a Baptist source, we do not wish to incur the idea that it will be a strictly denominational magazine....
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> It is the intention of the promoters of the Magazine to make it of some utility amongst all evangelical denominations, meeting the wants of both saint and sinner. We do not by any means propose to represent the Baptist denomination as a whole, and therefore we are not responsible for any outside the Association, whilst, at the same time, we will gladly work with all who will work with us.[26]

This openness reflected the 'loose' Baptist ethos of Canterbury leaders. Key individuals like J.W. Sawle and William Pole may have been convinced Baptists but evangelical fervour was more significant to them than building a denomination.

By May 1877, however, a new tone was becoming evident. With the issue of that month the name underwent its first change, to *The Canterbury Baptist* . In explanation, the editorial talked of preserving truth 'sadly neglected by other denominations'.[27] This is the voice of a new editor. Charles Dallaston (1852-1934) was now at the helm. Dallaston had just arrived as pastor of the Hereford Street Church, the only large congregation in the province. A young man, trained at Spurgeon's Pastor's College, he would soon show himself to prefer the more classically Baptist methods, as had his contemporaries in Auckland and Dunedin. The magazine henceforth increasingly displayed this 'tight' approach. This would be a Baptist magazine first, and it would increase its role by moving beyond its immediate region. In January 1880 'Can-

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[26] *The Canterbury Evangelist* (August 1876): 1-2.
[27] *The Canterbury Baptist* (May 1877), 1.

terbury' was dropped from the title and the first major feature in the renamed journal argued that Baptist denominational existence was 'a necessity'.[28] By July the title had reached its final state: *The New Zealand Baptist*. In September 1880 another new editor, William Spencer, was secretary to the conference which resolved to form a colony-wide Union. The magazine soon came under the control of that new body.

The arrival of Dallaston in 1877 had signalled the beginning of the end of the Canterbury revivalist approach to church development. With the formation of the Union in 1882 the question of the future of the Canterbury Association was raised. The majority voted to continue its existence alongside the wider body. Dallaston however, voted against continuance and, without the support of his large church, the Association could not be sustained. In 1884 it was dissolved.[29]

But the Canterbury model refused to die straight away. Concern soon surfaced that the new Union was not facilitating home mission. There was sustained criticism on this theme from Canterbury laymen.[30] More telling however was the admission of the Wellington layman Thomas Kirk, President of the Union in 1892/3, that the mainstream methods had drawbacks. The conservative approach often meant that

> by the time sufficient Baptists have been drawn to the neighbourhood to form the nucleus of a new Church the opportunity has passed, the ground has been occupied by other denominations, and our people, being few in number, unite with them in work and worship.....

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[28] *The Baptist* (January 1880): 3.
[29] MacLeod, 5-6.
[30] See *NZB* (November 1887): 172-3; (December 1891): 184-5; (January 1892): 5.

Kirk also noted the Baptists' failure to utilize local preachers. He cited the example of the Methodists as one worth emulating in this regard.[31]

The areas of weakness Kirk identified in the general approach of the denomination had been the points of strength in the Canterbury model of the 1870s: an early, even if precarious, presence in new towns and the provision of itinerant preachers and evangelists. Significantly, Kirk gave this address in December 1892, the year in which regional Associations had reappeared in an effort to promote home mission. This time they were to cover the whole country. Canterbury, uniquely among these, reconstituted itself independently of the Union and placed extension and evangelism at its heart.[32] However, the initiative had been lost. Pole was dead, Sawle and other key figures were now old men. The effect on church extension was profound. In the fifteen years prior to 1884, eleven churches had been founded in Canterbury. In the following thirty years only four would be constituted, three of these in the first years of the Association's revival.[33]

How are we to assess these contrasting models? In terms of longevity and strength, the more cautious model might claim an advantage. In Dunedin particularly this was refined to the point that both Dunedin/Hanover Street and Caversham developed their own cluster or 'group' approaches with remarkably consistent results.[34] From 1870 to 1915 the Otago

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[31] *NZB* (December 1892): 178-9.
[32] *NZB* (October 1892): 158-9.
[33] Le Bon's Bay and Rangiora in 1895, Kaiapoi in 1897. The fourth was Linwood (1914) which was a plant on the Auckland and Dunedin model, from what had been Dallaston's church, by then at Oxford Terrace.
[34] See the discussions in P. Tonson, *A Handful of Grain: The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of N.Z.*, Vol. 1 - 1851-1882 (Wellington:

province had moved from one church to nine, of which the smallest had 43 members, the next 88 and the remaining seven over 100. In the same period Canterbury had moved from two churches to eleven, with six others having appeared and disappeared. Only three of the eleven had more than 100 members in 1915 and six were less than 50 in number.

On this basis, the Dunedin approach seems to have worked better. Yet all but one (Owaka) of the Otago churches in 1915 were in boroughs, with Oamaru the only one of these not clustered around Dunedin. Of the Canterbury cohort four were in country towns or districts, up to forty miles from Christchurch. Although these four were small and fragile (averaging only 30 members) three of these still survive. The Canterbury model might claim some vindication in establishing fellowships which have served rural districts for a century and a quarter.

What this study does demonstrate is the complexity and diversity of Baptist efforts to get established in a colonial society. An openness and flexibility of method could generate significant initiatives. Released from some of the historical constraints of their English contemporaries, New Zealand Baptists adapted for their purposes any models that might be 'of some utility' in a challenging new environment.

Martin Sutherland

N.Z. Baptist Historical Society, 1982), 69-73 and J.A Clifford , *A Handful of Grain*, Vol. 2 - 1882-1914, 33-38.