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HAWICK HOME MISSION

1873 - 1985

Urban mission preoccupied the churches of nineteenth-century Britain. Huge industrial cities, small market towns and all the categories of 'populous place' in between had to be reached with the gospel. From the time of Thomas Chalmers' pioneer work in Glasgow around 1820, various techniques of evangelism were explored, tested, adopted and pursued. One, partly inspired by Chalmers' example, was the creation of city missions, undenominational organisations for the visitation of the working classes. Glasgow began the earliest in 1826, Liverpool launched the first in England in 1829 and London followed in 1835. Their success led to imitation in smaller places. By the third quarter of the century, home missions were often springing up in towns with a population of less than 25,000. The wave of revival beginning in 1859 encouraged the movement; so did the Moody and Sankey missions of 1873-75. Gradually the organisations adopted more settled ways, acquiring rented or permanent halls as bases of operation. In the later nineteenth century they played a major part, alongside chapels, churches and denominational missions, in creating a Christian presence in urban Britain.

Hawick is an old Scottish town of 16,600 people situated in the Scottish Borders. It is world-famous for its textile industry which produces high quality garments and is basically a one-industry town. It has the largest population of all the Border towns and is known also for its Common Riding ceremonies which go back to the battle of Flodden. These ceremonies include a horse riding of the historic boundaries of the town lands. There are at present thirteen churches in the town, of which six belong to the Church of Scotland. The Baptist Church was founded in 1846 but can trace its origins back to 1798.¹ In December 1985 Hawick Home Mission closed down and handed over to Hawick Baptist Church the property and the Minute Books of the Mission. As an interdenominational foundation, the vast majority of the members were in no way Baptists, but there were always Baptists in the Mission. The property was situated just across the road from the Baptist church and the ministers of the church were often asked to speak, so a good relationship was built up which made the transfer of the property at the end an easier event than it might have been.

1. From Birth to Mission Hall, 1873-1884

A brief history of the Mission was produced in 1923 by James Tait and a similar account in 1943 by A. Jardine.² The account by A. Jardine records that in 1872 three young men - John Beattie, Willie Miller and Tom Bell - met together in an upper room to pray God's blessing on Hawick. Deeply influenced by the spirit of revival that had touched much of Lowland Scotland in recent years, they desired to obtain the services of the itinerant evangelists, J. G. Scroggie and W. D. Dunn. J. G. Scroggie was the father of W. Graham Scroggie, the famous pastor of Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, later to reside at Annan.³ The evangelists were working at Galashiels, the second biggest Border town and the main administrative centre today. The first attempt to persuade them to come to Hawick was not successful, but Tom Bell returned, beseeching their help and bursting into tears, we are told, saying, 'Must Hawick go to Hell?' The evangelists could not refuse this request. Meetings were held in the Exchange Hall. At first the response was small but soon the town interest was roused and large meetings were held, with an overflow in the parish church of St Mary's. Many came to Christ at that time, and it was said that there was a fear of God upon the town. For some seventeen weeks, night after night, the work went on and then the evangelists left. J. G. Scroggie recommended the formation of a Home

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Mission. It was agreed to call a meeting to discuss this suggestion. This took place on 1st March 1873 when some 46 people enrolled as members. A committee was elected, consisting of President, William Miller, Vice-President, John Beattie, Treasurer, Alex Tomlins, and Secretary, John Fowler.

Messrs Scroggie and Dunn paid a second visit and a large camp meeting was held at Netherhall where 2000 were present. Soon they secured the patronage of Lord Polwarth.⁴ His support was not only spiritual but also financial; his position gave the Mission standing in the community. In June 1873 he invited members of the Mission to spend the Common Riding Saturday at his home, Mertoun House. This became a regular feature of the Mission as the general attitudes which prevailed in the town during the Common Riding activities and celebrations were not considered helpful by many Christians.

The Mission, clear in its object, namely the dissemination of the Gospel of Christ, was governed by a constitution in operation from 1873-1985, which embraced a Basis of Union and six rules:

Basis of Union

The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, the unity of the God-head and the Trinity of persons therein, the depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall. The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of atonement for sinners of mankind, and His mediatorial intercession and reign. The justification of the sinner by faith alone. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body; the judgement of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked. The divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Mode of action - Tract distribution, Personal dealing, the establishment of district prayer meetings and the employment of any other means which the committee may be able to secure.

Rules

1. The business of the Mission to be conducted by a Committee including President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary; one third to retire annually, who shall be eligible for re-election. The President and Vice President to be chosen out of said Committee, and to hold office for the year. All business to be brought to a decision by two thirds of said committee.
2. The Mission shall have at least two meetings weekly - one for preaching of the gospel, and the other for prayer and praise.
3. Members of the Mission must be members of an evangelical church.⁵
4. The members pledge themselves to discountenance at once the putting forth of any doctrinal points that would in any way be the means of proselytizing any brother or sister in this Mission; and any member violating this rule will be liable to immediate expulsion from the Mission.
5. Members absenting themselves from the meetings for two months, without satisfactory reasons, will cease to be considered members of the Mission.
6. Any member leaving the Mission is requested to give a reason for so doing; and any member leaving the town should give notice to the

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Committee, so that they may intimate the same at the next meeting of the Mission.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper were to be provided by each member's own church and thus baptism in the vast majority of cases was infant baptism. By 1873 there were nine Presbyterian congregations in Hawick which supplied the bulk of the original members. The Mission was not thought of as a church until 1907; until then the members were drawn from fourteen churches. The Mission undertook to hold a Gospel Thursday evening meeting and a Saturday Prayer meeting, as well as the Sabbath evening meeting, supported by a choir of committed people from many churches to enhance the witness. In the previous histories of the Mission it is stated that in 1887 there was friction over the rules which the Mission had drawn up, and the majority of the committee resigned. A new committee was elected and continued the work.⁶

The work continued in hired halls for ten years but at the old year's soirée (a party accompanied by food and singing of solos, duets, humour and a message, with many taking part) in 1883 the question of buildings was discussed. At once £50 was promised towards the project. A building committee was formed and it was agreed to purchase Oliver's old Auction Mart at a cost of £451. This building was near the centre of the town in a small street known as Bourtree Place, close by a fast developing part of Hawick. In the Title Deeds those who witnessed the transfer of the Mart to the Mission were Magnus Sandison of 'Highlaws', Eyemouth, and the Revd John Grant of Eyemouth Baptist Church. Magnus Sandison restarted the Baptist cause in Eyemouth when he bought 'Sorella House' and transformed it into a Baptist chapel with baptistry and manse at his own expense. John Grant was called to lead this church and did excellent work as the congregation grew to between seventy and eighty. He resigned in 1886-87.⁷ The money to purchase the Mart was raised by public subscription. To erect a new hall would cost the large sum of £1300. The members raised £319 by a penny-a-week fund and £422 at a Christmas sale of work in 1890. The money was advanced when trustees were found, but the total debt was not fully cleared until 1894.

The new hall was large enough to have a soirée on old year's night in 1918 when 700 were present, all seated at trestle tables. There was also a small hall with a partition which could be pulled across to divide the accommodation. The hall was equipped with a gallery and six texts were painted round the walls. Toilet facilities and a committee room were also provided.

2. The Period of Advance, 1885-1905

This period coincides with similar growth in all areas of Hawick public life. The railway, which linked the town with England from 1862, was now bringing more trade to the town. The population rose from 11,356 in 1871 to 16,184 in 1881 and 19,204 in 1891 to drop to 17,303 in 1901 and 16,877 in 1911.⁸ The Baptists erected a new building in 1883. The Wellington Street Presbyterian Church was built in 1886. The Salvation Army met from 1887 in the Temperance Hall. The Hawick Public Library was built in 1904. A. Jardine in his *History* speaks of evangelistic efforts as a feature of the work at this time. In the period 1894-1923 he records the names of Dr McKillan of London, Mr Michael Peden, the Revd Mark N. Robson, Mrs Bayertz, Mr and Mrs Stewart Thompson, Pastor Fred Clark and the Albatross Crew, all of whom held outstanding campaigns that attracted large audiences.

In 1888 a new meeting was started at Newmill, about four miles from Hawick. The population here largely came from farms which had large numbers living and

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working on the land. A. Jardine's *History* states that 'at that time there was no speed limit and your one-horsepower vehicle could race along at such a speed that four miles were covered in about 35 minutes'. The numbers rose at the meeting in Newmill until by 1904 there were 60 to 70 in attendance.⁹

As the Mission stood for evangelism, it was expected that members would be involved in speaking and helping at the many evangelistic activities. In the summer an open-air meeting was held at the Millars Knows. Visits were made to hold services in the Lodging House in Baker Street, Drummardrig Home (the Poor House) and at the Sanatorium. The Mission had a Christian Endeavour Society, founded in 1896 by the Baptist Vice-President, George Pennycook, which by 1903 had a membership of 68. A tract society in 1901 had 77 members. Meetings for children were held on Sunday mornings and children were not expected to attend evening meetings unless accompanied by an adult. For the children's benefit, a magic lantern was purchased in 1891.

During this period of advance there were, however, several vexed questions. The Salvation Army had started a meeting in the Tannage Close, and it was felt that since the message preached was the same it might be feasible for some union to take place. Since the Mission consisted of so many Christians from so many churches, it was felt right that the Mission should give a lead in the evangelistic work of the town. The Mission felt that the rent paid for the use of the Salvationists' premises was too high, whilst it was not Salvation Army policy to join the other Missions, so no union took place. Temperance became of great importance to many in the Mission who had signed the pledge, but one of the Mission's committee members, R. M. Renouf, was connected with the liquor trade as he ran the Washington Hotel. Although, as he continually pointed out, he had broken no rule, during 1888 on several occasions at the regular committee meetings the matter of asking him to resign was considered. The June Minute of 1888 states, 'whereas it is generally admitted amongst all Christians that the drink traffic is one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of the gospel and one of the most fruitful sources of vice, immorality and ungodliness, we as a Mission and as Christian workers deem it our duty to express our abhorrence of it and to show no complicity therewith. Therefore we move that no person connected with it directly or indirectly shall be allowed to have any part in the direction or management of the Mission.' R. M. Renouf, insisting that this was not part of the rules as agreed by the constitution, refused to resign. It is interesting to note that on 10th September 1888 he was asked to close in prayer and later became the Mission President in 1904.

R. M. Renouf was a man of much persistence. Rule 3 of the original constitution clearly states that members of the Mission must be members of an evangelical church. He moved that this be deleted to read, 'Persons applying for membership will have their names read over at the close of the last Saturday evening prayer meeting of the month, and will lie over for two months; and if the deputation that waits on them consider them eligible they will then receive their card of membership.' Between 1892 and 1907 this matter was brought up eight times as it failed to obtain the support necessary. When this rule was finally passed, the Mission had *de facto* become a church for it had become the only spiritual home for some of its members. The sympathy of the churches and the attitude of some of the local ministers also had begun to change. In June 1892 a lack of interest in the work of the Mission among the ministers of the town was noted.

The Common Riding was not looked upon with any favour of the Mission as it had become an occasion for much more than local history and horse riding. The Mission objected to the large amount of liquor consumed at the time and also the gambling on the horse race at Moor meeting when on Common Riding Saturday the

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town went to a kind of picnic and there was an excuse for indulgence. An old Druid connection with some of the ceremonies, after all the town motto did say 'Glory to Tor' and 'Glory to Odin', was also a cause of objection. The church had been involved with the Common Riding as the Cornet, whom we might call the principal master of the Common Riding and the leader of the horsemen was kirked (given a blessing in church). Some in the Baptist, Brethren, Salvation Army and other churches felt that this Common Riding was a mixed affair. The Mission felt so strongly about the Common Riding that they agreed that no minister in Hawick would be asked to preach the Gospel in the Mission if he was involved in the Common Riding.

In terms of membership the Mission was subject to fluctuations caused by trade as people moved in and out of Hawick. In 1889 there was a roll purge when 68 names were removed, leaving a membership of 241. In 1893 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary there were 210 members, including 22 new members. In 1899 there is a report of 190 members, while in 1900 210 are recorded with 14 additions. It is known that the McKinley Tariff of 1890 in the United States had an adverse effect on trade from the Borders all through the decade.¹⁰ Trade certainly played a part but so did the attitude of local churches, as the Mission became more and more like a church. The desire for some in the Mission to change the time of the Sunday evening meeting to 7.30 p.m. was clearly to accommodate what was taking place in the local churches. Prior to 1902 the town churches had met for worship in the afternoon on Sunday but they had begun to change to 6 p.m., the same time as the Mission had its meeting. There was a lot of conflicting denominational loyalty. The motion to change the time of the evening service to 7.30 p.m. was defeated by 9 to 6. By 1904 the Mission was still looking with expectation for revival, but lethargy on the part of some members and absences from meetings were reported. The Mission had reached its peak; many fine meetings were still to take place but attendances had begun to decline.

Though the number of Baptists who were also Mission members was small in relation to the total Mission membership, there was sometimes conflict of loyalties and not every Baptist pastor was pleased to find some of the members having a Mission loyalty which was as great and as demanding as that of their own church. The preaching of the Baptist pastors was very acceptable to the Mission and all the Baptist pastors were at times asked to speak. As the Mission was only a stone's throw away from the Baptist Church, the question was bound to be asked of some of the Baptist members if this duplication was necessary, but this was not asked when both the Baptist church and the Mission were full Sunday by Sunday. There was room for them both.

3. The Years of Holding on, 1906-1918

It is sometimes hard to see at the time when a movement has reached its peak. There were indications before 1905 that all was not well. In 1900 the A.G.M. reported that Sunday attendances were only moderate. The ministers of Hawick were also complaining that there were empty places in their churches. The Mission annual picnic was down to less than 200 in 1905, yet there was still expectation that things were going to improve and that revival was round the corner. A new work was started five miles away at the British Army camp at Stobs, only recently brought into being with the modernisation of the army, where the Mission held evangelistic meetings among the soldiers. The A.G.M. of 1907 took up the complaint of lack of Sabbath attendance. Meetings held in one of the Lodging Houses as an evangelistic cottage-type of meeting were not encouraging. The Christian Endeavour had,

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however, in 1907 51 members but membership of the Mission stood at only 134. From 1890 to 1905 a trade depression had a different impact on each of the Border towns. In 1908 the Mission had again risen to 167 and in 1909 stood at 192. The Christian Endeavour had 76 members in 1909 and the meeting which the Mission carried on at Newmill had 50 in attendance. Optimism arose from the warmly received meetings conducted by the Revd Donald McNicol and the Revd W. Ashby from the Baptist Church. The open-air work of the Mission in 1910 was also encouraging, and it was still possible for there to be a gathering of 300-400 at Millars Knows Park once in a while, whilst in 1910 480 attended the annual social.

During the 1914-1918 War, though there was a constant threat that the hall would be taken over by the army, this proved to be an unnecessary fear. The Mission meeting at Newmill had to be discontinued at one point because of lighting restrictions in 1917. The Christian Endeavour was much affected by young men being away at the war and the Thursday meetings failed to attract outsiders. The Mission choir was much reduced in size. In contrast to the Baptist church which lost eleven out of a membership of 220, only five of the Mission young men were killed. The Mission continued to do the normal work but with fewer members.

4. The Inter War Years and the Second World War, 1919-1945

Many who served in the war did not return. Disillusioned, they felt that the Mission had no message for them. There followed a period of continual struggle, with the usual activities and open-air work being carried on. In 1922 on the evening of the Common Riding Sunday, when the town was in festive mood after the annual public holiday, the members formed up to make a great procession. Joined by the Baptists and the Salvation Army, they marched to the fair ground at the Common Haugh, a large, centrally located area which has been used as an army camp, a fair ground and now is a car park. The Open Air meeting which followed numbered hundreds. This practice became for many years the focal point for the meeting, being the area of Pinder's Circus readily granted by the Show people and well attended by them and by the local community.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Mission a small *History* was prepared by A. Jardine. He lists a number from the Mission who had entered full-time Christian work. There was Mr Thomas Peden, missionary to Cardiff, Mr Robert Scott who went to Carubbers Close Mission, Edinburgh, the Revd Hugh Shannon, the Revd William Aird and the Revd H. R. Bell served in Canada, and the Revd T. Anderson in Aberdeen. The Revd and Mrs Robert Waugh served in Corstorphine United Free Church, Edinburgh, the Revd and Mrs Hope Scott at Bowhill Baptist Church, Fife, and Mr and Mrs D. Moyes in Bradford. Mrs Wilkes served as a missionary, as did Robert Porteous in China.

By 1923 the Mission was losing some of its grand old workers: of the original committee of eleven only four survived. Lord Polwarth, the patron of the Mission, who had encouraged the work by his preaching, prayers and financial support, died in 1920. The majority of the members worked in the mills and none of them had any great financial support to give to the work. In 1923 electric light, first considered in 1914, was installed. The Mission had previously used gas; now a bright hall aided the work. Evangelistic campaigns continued to be held all through this period. The work at Newmill was discontinued in 1926 because of declining support in an area of reducing population.¹¹

A new departure for the Mission was the appointment of a Superintendent in February 1928. Mr Conneley, famous for his part in the Moray Firth Revival earlier in the decade, was appointed to serve with a salary of £200 a year, plus housing

allowance. Two hundred gathered for the induction in which the evangelist Jock Troup took part. Mr Conneley stayed only a few months in Hawick: housing and his desire to serve the Lord in other towns with Missions was the explanation given. Those who told me of the position of a later Superintendent told of his problem of relating to a Mission which had its own tradition: the committee wanted to run the Mission without giving the Superintendent very much authority. Accordingly, the Mission did not have a Superintendent again until 1957, although the question was discussed in 1938 and 1946. During this period all the usual Mission activities continued: Prayer Meetings, the open-air witness, the Christian Endeavour, the Thursday Gospel Meeting, visits to the Poor House, Sanatorium and Lodging House. A new heating system was installed in 1933, costing £160. The spirit of indifference since World War I was at this time hampering the work. A new independent Mission, starting in 1934 as a gospel outreach for women, opened a hall in 1937 and was known as the Mansfield Mission Hut. This was also bound to have had an effect on Hawick Home Mission.¹² The evangelistic outreach to Stobs Camp was once more undertaken in 1939, but the membership figures of 195 in 1910 and 107 in 1940 show continued decline in the work. The Mission had special meetings every year but clearly these made little impact.

World War II brought its own problems. From 1939 to 1941 there was the possibility that the hall might be taken over by the army. A. Jardine mentions sixteen members in the forces and another five were directed into munitions work. The Minutes also record donations to war charities. There was great difficulty in continuing the Christian Endeavour work and there were problems of getting children to Sunday School. Mr A. Waugh, a barber in the town, was the President elected on the 40th, 50th and 70th anniversaries. He held a variety of offices in the Mission during this long period and in a time of crisis it was natural that the Mission should look to such a trusted servant.

5. The time of change, 1946-1964: A regular pastorate

The air of optimism which swept the nation had its own impact on Christian affairs. The Mission had a special Campaign with J. Troup as evangelist in 1946. The A.G.M. of 1946 recorded that the Thursday meeting was well attended, with resulting conversions, as were the Saturday Prayer Meetings. Campaigners, a uniformed Christian organisation for young people, had been started and the work among the children continued. Open-air meetings were held from time to time in O'Connell Street. Again in 1948, during the evangelistic campaign conducted by the Revd I. Powell, there were reports of people coming to the inquiry room. The Christian Endeavour had been restarted but was not well attended. The numbers involved in these activities were not up to former levels, but there were still encouragements.

At the junction of Bridge Street and Weensland Road, very near to both the Baptist Church and the Mission, stands a large model sculpture of a Border Reeve on horseback, known as 'the Horse'. It is the scene of Common Riding activities. The Mission with Baptist support had been conducting an open-air work there for some time. In 1952 the Mission complained because the work was not being supported by the Baptists. The Mission proposed to discontinue this witness. The Baptist pastor, the Revd G. Spiers, however, asked that this work be continued and promised support. Hawick was at this period changing as a town, with people moving from the centre to the developing new housing area of Burnfoot. There was a need to examine afresh the role of the Mission and its evangelism. The old ways certainly had proved to be helpful earlier, but increased traffic soon drowned out open-air meetings. In 1952, very late in its story, the Mission started celebrating Communion.

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More and more the Mission looked like a church.

A desire to have fellowship with like-minded bodies caused the Mission to join the F.I.E.C. in 1955 and again it began to look for a settled ministry. The Mission called P. D. Chisnell to be Superintendent in 1957 and he continued in office for seven years, when he resigned to become the minister of St Monan's Congregational Church. There were problems in the acceptance of the new role of a Superintendent. Some committee members found it hard to change their customs. Mr Chisnell had the problem of changing a Mission, used to having many speakers, into a church with a continuing ministry. It would appear that the congregation was now becoming much more elderly and the Superintendent had to undertake an extensive pastoral role.

In 1958 a new pulpit was dedicated and the local M.P., Mr John Henderson, occupied the chair. High expectations were expressed for the future, but they were not based on proper realism. The Mission had hoped for some kind of coverage from the F.I.E.C. with visits and the same kind of activity as would be found in a denomination, but Hawick was well away from any area in which the F.I.E.C. was strong; accordingly, membership was questioned and in 1963 the Mission withdrew. The ministry of P. D. Chisnell covered a vital period, but as an evangelical church with other denominational evangelical churches doing the same work it found it hard to secure growth. Confusion remained: was the cause a mission or church? There was no practice of baptism and no membership figures were quoted in the Minutes for this period. After Pastor Chisnell left, the Mission elected a new President, Walter Glendinning, in July 1964 with only 26 votes returned, the majority in his favour.

6. Decline, 1965-1985

The Mission clearly intended to return to the ways of working before there had been a Superintendent, whether or not this remained a realistic option. With only a few members and only a poor response to its evangelism, the Mission was in a weaker state than when the work had started. An ageing membership was simply unable to carry on the evangelistic work. There was the problem of the property. A large hall was grand when filled, but this was no longer the case. The small hall was renovated in 1965 and the large hall was by this time being used only once or twice per year. Roof repairs were urgently required and little money was available to meet the cost. In 1967 the firm Lawsons offered to buy 2000 square feet of the hall for the sum of £2000, enclosing their part of the property with a new wall at a cost of £450. However, to sell the majority of the floor area of the big hall would leave a gallery cut off and facing nowhere. It would also leave an area between the new wall and the small hall for which no use could be seen. The Mission members deliberated as they would have liked £3000, but eventually they agreed to sell for £2000. The Minutes state that there was no one of the opinion that the large hall should be retained. In 1974 a further area was sold for £250 to give the purchasers easier access to what had become a bakehouse. The Mission property was now reduced to a small hall, committee room, toilet and an area behind the small hall of little use. There was also a gallery facing the new wall but having a large gap in between. Those who were left continued the work to the best of their ability. There were complaints about lack of prayer, but a women's meeting called The Bright Hour, started by Mrs Chisnell and continued by Mrs Stenhouse, had 98 members in 1968 and was the best attended of all the meetings.

In 1977 Youth With A Mission, an interdenominational and international training outreach for young people, obtained the use of the gallery and floored over the derelict area of what remained of the old hall below. The meetings to be held

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there, led by Mr W. Scobie from Y.W.A.M., were of a charismatic nature and were held as an after-church event. Some were to find Christ at these meetings and some made these meetings their only home. In 1981, under the leadership of Mr Scobie, who had left Y.W.A.M., a separate church known as 'The New Life Christian Fellowship' was set up and they changed their location to the Evergreen Hall. They were later to change their name when they joined the 'Abundant Life Ministries' to become the 'Abundant Life Church'. In 1988 they were able to buy the former Catholic Church in the Burnfoot part of Hawick, thus giving them a more permanent base. The Revd Charles Gellaitry, formerly of Portobello Baptist, Edinburgh, was by this time their leader.

The last full A.G.M. of the Mission was held in 1983. The local newspaper stated 'a marked reduction in numerical support, coupled with the fact that many members are now senior citizens, some of indifferent health has led to the decision to discontinue.'¹³ A further article appeared, called 'An Exile's Memories of the Mission', when Mrs Kerr, née Kennedy, of Dumfries told of her wonderful memories of the Mission as a young girl. She went on to relate how when she was thirteen the good fisherman, Jock Troup, came to preach. She was 'saved' that night in the lesser hall, along with many others. She was ashamed to say that as the years rolled on she had been guilty of 'backsliding', as her granny would have called it. She had been given ethics for life and could look back on many happy memories.¹⁴

There are no other Minutes until the final entry which contained the terms of the handing over of the property to Hawick Baptist Church which took place on the 1st January 1986. The generosity of this act cannot be overstated as the Mission building could have been sold, but the desire of the Trustees was to see the property continue in Christian use. The Baptist Church already used the hall for their Sunday School and the property being so near made it ideal as a new hall. The Baptist Church continued the Mission's 'Bright Hour' for women and united it with the already long-established Women's Own of the Church. Leadership was shared by Mrs Stenhouse from the Mission and the Baptist Pastor's wife, Mrs McNeish. There was also a joint committee for this meeting.

The Baptist Church had one of its loyal helpers, Mr B. Oates, who had the necessary knowledge to advise and help with any alterations which had to be made. The hall was extended by including what had been the derelict area. A new staircase was added for possible future developments of the upstairs floor. A new kitchen was made and new toilets developed out of the former committee room. The Baptists used the hall for their week-night activities and started two 'Mother and Toddler' groups. In all the work of renovation, it was the desire of the church to retain everything that could be useful. The text, 'Jesus Christ the same Yesterday, Today and Forever' was given a new facelift.

Many famous preachers have spoken in the Mission, from F. B. Meyer of Leicester to P. H. Barber of the Scottish Baptist Union. There is no doubt that it was held in great affection and many came to Christ through the work. The question as to whether it was a Mission supported by all the evangelical churches or a church was one which remained throughout its whole story. The Baptist Church which has now inherited this great heritage is aware of the trust given it and would hope to use the Mission to further the Lord's work in the town.

Home missions such as the one in Hawick form a reminder of the broader Evangelical context surrounding Baptists during the last two centuries. Baptists participated in the missions as members, leaders and superintendents, but they were normally in a small minority, whether north or south of the border. The missions were interdenominational. Indeed there was a tendency over time for them to become undenominational - self-

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consciously asserting their status, separate but equal, alongside the traditional denominations. Many others besides Hawick were drawn into the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, founded under a different title in 1922 to give a home to precisely such bodies as street-corner missions. The undenominational missions exerted a significant influence over the more conservative Baptist churches. Through transfer of members in particular, something of their ethos was reproduced among Baptists - Sankey's hymns, Keswick spirituality, prophetic speculation, aversion to denominational structures and commitment to the preaching of a simple gospel among the common people. The resulting piety, if sometimes blinkered, was often robust. It helped bring converts into Baptist churches and carried a significant number of recruits into the ministry. Although Baptists contributed to the life of the missions, the missions probably contributed more to the life of the Baptists.

NOTES

The introduction and conclusion to this article have been contributed by Dr D. W. Bebbington who prompted the author to write it.

1. D. W. Bebbington, ed., *The Baptists in Scotland*, Glasgow 1988, p.119.
2. A. Jardine, *The History of the Mission*, Hawick 1943, p.1.
3. J. G. Scroggie, *Story of a life in the love of God*.
4. A. N. C. Black, *Who Was Who*, vol.2, 1916-28, p.845. Walter Hugh Hepburn Scott, 1838-1920, Lord Polwarth, the sixth baron, was to be the representative for the peers of Scotland, 1882-90, Lord Lieutenant of Selkirkshire in 1878 and County Convener of Roxburghshire.
5. Rule 3 was changed to read 'Persons applying for membership will have their names read over at the close of the last Saturday evening prayer meeting of the month, and will lie over for two months; and if the deputation that waits on them consider them eligible, they will then receive their card of membership'.
6. Minutes of the Mission, 1887.
7. McIver, *Old Fishing Town*, pp.308-9.
8. Stanley Finch, '3rd Studied Account, Roxburghshire', unpublished. Hawick Library, p.68.
9. A. Jardine, *The History of the Mission*, p.4.
10. Bebbington, *Baptists in Scotland*, p.124.
11. T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950*, p.59, 1986 and pp.82-3; James Littlejohn, *Westrigg: the Sociology of a Cheviot Parish*, 1963.
12. *Hawick News*, Friday, 26 March 1937.
13. *Hawick News*, 29th November 1985.
14. *Hawick News*, 3rd January 1986.

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B. A. Ramsbottom, *Stranger than Fiction: The Life of William Kiffin*, Gospel Standard Trust Publications, Harpenden, AL5 3EL, England, 1989, 118pp.

The Kiffin manuscript has always been a document for discussion by historians, but in this presentation the author is properly concerned to let Kiffin, as far as possible, speak for himself. The remarkably long-lived Particular Baptist leader is revealed as pastor, preacher, wealthy merchant, controversialist and one-time Member of Parliament. Kiffin was a signatory to the 1689 Particular Baptist Confession and this brief biography is a good reminder of Kiffin and others like him, who issued that significant Baptist statement.

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