

EDINBURGH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

The Edinburgh and Lothians Baptist Association Fraternal 1947-1987¹

The years 1947 to 1987 witnessed an overall membership decline of over 21 per cent within the churches of the Baptist Union of Scotland, although the decline within the Edinburgh fraternal was only 9.5 per cent, whereas Glasgow experienced a decline of 51 per cent.² It was a period in which the pastoral ministry experienced many of the changes within church and culture,³ which in turn produced stresses and strains as ministers grappled with the challenges of a period which Grace Davie has described as 'Believing without Belonging'.⁴

Ministers' fraternals have not received the attention which they deserve in terms of understanding the thoughts and feelings of those at the cutting edge of Christian ministry both within and without the life of the church. Confidentiality and a common professional and spiritual bond have made possible greater openness than would have been normal in other Baptist gatherings.⁵ As well as discussing personal problems connected with their own calling, fraternals wrestled with theological issues relating to baptism, black theology, charismatic renewal and pastoral questions, such as those relating to divorce and homosexuality.⁶

Times of meetings Throughout the period, the Edinburgh and Lothians Baptist Association fraternal met on a monthly basis from September to June, initially at 2.30 p.m. for discussion followed by tea,⁷ but from 1968 at 10 a.m. for 'tea and biscuits and fellowship',⁸ normally within the city of Edinburgh. Until 1961 the fraternal met in various manses, although on occasions the host treated the fraternal to tea at the Lyceum Restaurant,⁹ the Brown Derby Restaurant in Hanover Street¹⁰ or MacKies in Princes Street.¹¹ In May 1961 the fraternal decided to use the YMCA in St Andrew Street for its monthly meetings, with 'a meal costing 2/6 per person'.¹² A year later they moved to the 'inner hall at Dublin Street, where there was an open fire and where tea could be served at 1 shilling per member', and in 1974 the venue moved to the Bristo church building.¹³ The monthly meetings on Mondays became a means of relaxation, spiritual renewal and theological reflection. In this way, the members of the fraternal were renewed in body, mind and spirit as they experienced many of the stresses and strains of pastoral ministry.

Purpose of the fraternal Over the forty years the fraternal agonized over its principal purpose in meeting. In 1949, T.C. Anderson, minister of Broxburn, commented on the nature of the fraternal as a place 'where we meet for mutual fellowship and prayer'.¹⁴ In 1951 the fraternal decided to 'discontinue' the 'Wednesday morning prayer meeting' which met on a weekly basis, although in 1962 they began to meet on Monday mornings in Dublin Street where 'seven members ... were much encouraged ... and ... enjoyed liberty in prayer'.¹⁵ In January 1963 the fraternal decided to begin their meetings at 2.30 and spend the first half-hour in prayer.¹⁶ The early years of the fraternal from 1947 to 1974 were

dominated by theological papers and it was not until April 1974 that the first 'open meeting' allowed the fraternal opportunity 'to share their problems with one another'.¹⁷ However, it was only in June 1976 that a special meeting of the fraternal decided to give 'more opportunities for sharing and discussion' and adopted a three-month cycle of 'sharing experiences', having a 'discussion paper led by a member of the fraternal', and inviting a guest speaker.¹⁸ The fraternal returned to the same problem in March 1985 when Alistair Brown encouraged a 'stronger emphasis on sharing and fellowship', and Harry Sprange expressed his belief that the fraternal ought to be 'a real place of caring for and praying for one another' and not, according to Derek Murray, 'a business meeting'.¹⁹ The change reveals a significant shift over the years from theological reflection to personal experience. The fraternal were reflecting the way in which the churches in which they were ministering were moving.

Membership of the fraternal The key to membership within the fraternal was inclusion on an accredited list of Baptist ministers. Until 1978, membership was limited to Baptist ministers, either within pastoral charges, in retirement or engaged in other activities while remaining on an accredited list. This included Baptists who lectured at New College in the University of Edinburgh, such as R.E. Clements and James Perkin.²⁰ Other academics who were members of the fraternal included Fred Cawley, former Principal of Spurgeon's College from 1950, who retired to Edinburgh and was a member from 1955 until his death in 1977.²¹ Professor R.A. Barclay also attended the fraternal during periods when he was home from Serampore College in India.²² He spoke on 'Syncretism' in October 1950, a talk which 'stimulated discussion by nearly all the 17 brethren present',²³ and was present again in November 1963 when Matthew McLachlan, Scottish Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, spoke on 'modern syncretism'; the 'final contribution' was an 'eloquent word from Barclay'.²⁴ The numbers of those attending the fraternal recorded in the earlier minutes declined as ministers found expression of Christian fellowship in various para-church organizations within the city. In this way a distinctive sense of Baptist identity may have been lost.

Edinburgh and the wider fellowship of Baptists Although the fraternal centred its activities within the Edinburgh area, it did not remain indifferent to the wider fellowship of Baptists. Indeed, in May 1949 invitations were sent to the Glasgow, Fife, and Stirling and Clackmannanshire fraternal to attend a special conference in Edinburgh where William Manson from New College spoke on the 'Theology of Worship' and S.W. Hughes, President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, addressed the subject of 'the ecstasy of worship'. It seems that the meeting was intended to fill the gap which arose because the Ministers' Retreat did not take place and the *Scottish Baptist Magazine* made much of the fact that the 'Edinburgh ministers bore the cost of all the meals and accommodation'.²⁵ It was at a time when the Evangelical Baptist Fellowship, set up to oppose what was regarded as 'the Downgrade of Modernism in the Baptist Union of Scotland, emanating from

unsound teaching in the College',²⁶ held a conference on the afternoon of the opening day of the Assembly²⁷ from 1947 to 1950. Any tensions which existed within the Union, however, do not appear within the fraternal minutes. The Baptist Ministers' Retreat took place in Kirm, Dunoon, in 1948, in Netherhall in Largs in 1950, and in Troon in April 1953,²⁸ and members of the fraternal occasionally attended the Summer School in Oxford, although when the dates for 1950 were mentioned 'there was no push of applicants', despite the modest cost of £2 5s 0d with the promise that travelling expenses 'will be found'.²⁹ Occasionally links were made with other fraternal for day retreats. A retreat was arranged for 1967 when invitations were sent to the Lanarkshire and Fife fraternal and the decision was taken that the focus would be 'devotional with an emphasis on the pastoral ministry'.³⁰

Baptists and the wider Christian world Until 1962, most speakers at the fraternal came from their own numbers, although occasionally other Baptists were invited to address the group. In 1962 R.A. Finlayson became the first non-Baptist to address the fraternal; he spoke on the Free Church of Scotland. During the paper he surprised the brethren by claiming that Baptism within the Free Church was 'believer's baptism' because only those who were in full communion could present their children for baptism and the baptism was 'given to the parents'. The minutes record that 'fraternal members were intrigued by the ingenuity and subtlety of the argument, although 'no conversions [were] recorded'.³¹ Other speakers who came to the fraternal included Leonard Small,³² Charles Duthie,³³ Professor G.W. Anderson,³⁴ A.V. Campbell,³⁵ D.P. Thomson³⁶ and Richard Holloway.³⁷

In October 1952 Mr Dovey gave a paper on 'The World Council of Churches' which 'led to a compulsive discussion among the brethren',³⁸ and in September 1953 a discussion took place on the purpose of the WCC when 'a full of interesting discussion took place which no doubt helped many of us to clarify our own ideas'.³⁹ These discussions reflect the debate within the Baptist Union of Scotland. When the WCC was formed in 1948, the Scottish Baptist representative had recommended that the Union affiliate to both the World and the British Councils of Churches. That October the leadership pressed a motion on this: the first vote was tied (79:79), whereupon a second standing vote was taken and the motion passed (81:80).⁴⁰ In 1951 a motion came to the Assembly that 'The Baptist Union of Scotland withdraw from affiliation with the World Council of Churches'; attention was drawn to the narrow majority in 1948 and the doctrinal basis of the WCC was criticized. The Assembly voted to continue affiliation by 218 to 113.⁴¹ Following a further debate in 1953, a Committee of Enquiry reported to the 1954 Assembly. Two delegates from Charlotte Baptist Chapel moved that the committee be given a further year to report as long as they gave both a majority and a minority report and that these be sent to the churches not later than May 1955; this fell by 263 to 111.⁴² In 1955 the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland announced that Charlotte Chapel had withdrawn from the Union - after two elders of the Chape

had produced a minority report and circulated it to the churches. The majority report recommended remaining in affiliation for seven more years, but another motion to disaffiliate was moved and, by a vote of 197 to 176, this won the day, withdrawing the Union for seven years from the WCC.⁴³ In 1964 the issue was re-examined: they concluded that nothing had changed in the WCC and voted 284 to 50 to remain out.⁴⁴

Theological reflection Back in the fraternal, theological papers on a variety of subjects normally occupied the monthly gathering. On occasions, such as May 1973 when Bruce Milne spoke on 'Recent Theology', many members 'felt that we were swimming in very deep waters' although 'we nevertheless enjoyed and benefited by sharing in the scholarly presentation of the subject'.⁴⁵ At the conclusion of the fraternal in September 1962, 'there was a sudden and complete disappearance of all members of the fraternal' to attend the Gifford lectures, 'except the Chairman and Secretary' who 'had also hoped to attend but were providentially prevented'.⁴⁶ Controversial subjects, such as Election, raised their heads every so often, although in 1951 'this topic was nipped in the bud by the arrival of the tea and cakes and the conversation gradually died down into mouthfuls of mutterings' as the fraternal were occupied in 'nibbling the last few crumbs of a luscious meringue'.⁴⁷ In October 1963 the fraternal secretary wondered if a paper by R.E. Clements on the 'Evangelical understanding of the Old Testament' would raise divisive issues but, when the speaker declared that 'the bible is more than history, the bible is God breathed scripture, the bible is the word of God', 'the modest doctor came perilously close to receiving a cheer'.⁴⁸ In November 1981 David Wright, lecture in Church History at New College, spoke on 'The Doctrine of Scripture and Evangelicalism', a paper which had been given as the Tyndale Historical Theology Lecture in Cambridge in 1978. Ironically, Bill Porch, minister of Bristo, quoted 'Duke McColl, President of the Southern Baptists, as expressing gratitude that the controversy which can be bitterly divisive had not split the Convention'.⁴⁹ Eventually he 'brought the discussion to a close just as it was about to explode'.⁵⁰

A discussion in October 1960 on R.E.O. White's book, *A Biblical Doctrine of Initiation*, led to a 'vigorous discussion which made it clear that to some, a simpler and less elaborate view of baptism was more congenial',⁵¹ an indication that within the fraternal there were signs of contrasting churchmanship, both high and low. Despite the ambivalent attitude of some members towards theological discussion, a paper presented in 1962 by Fred Cawley on 'Jesus and Paul' led to the comment that 'there was an eloquent stillness as the Doctor brought his disquisition to its climax. There was a presence in the midst'.⁵² Theological reflection had made its impact on the spiritual formation of those present.

The Theology of Baptism The 1950s and early 1960s witnessed an extensive investigation by the Church of Scotland into the subject of baptism, with a Commission set up in 1953 under the convenership of T.F. Torrance. The Commission published a series of reports in the Church of Scotland General

Assembly papers from 1956 to 1963, including an assessment of Baptist teaching in 1959.⁵³ The fraternal entered into an extended discussion on the subject, beginning in April 1956 and continuing for ten consecutive meetings, coming to a conclusion in September 1957. The fraternal obviously felt that the position of Baptists was coming under threat in the context of Presbyterian Scotland. The initial discussion centred on the report on New Testament doctrine which appeared in the General Assembly of 1955.⁵⁴ The fraternal took the opportunity of meeting with Professor Torrance and felt that the main issue which divided Baptists from the Church of Scotland was 'the definition and description of the nature of the Church' and that the 'idea of the "gathered church" was the solution'.⁵⁵ The fraternal remained convinced throughout their discussions that 'the Report had not challenged our position seriously, and could be countered very effectively, by sound Biblical exegesis'.⁵⁶ William Whyte, minister of Portobello, led the discussion on seven occasions, engaging in a detailed analysis of the report which he referred to in his Presidential Address in October 1960, concluding that 'Infant baptism is a gross denial of all evangelistic activity ... it is a denial of the Gospel of the Grace of God. We believe that infant baptism has no place whatsoever in the New Testament'.⁵⁷ This debate was widespread within the denomination and between May 1960 and January 1961 seven articles on the subject of Baptism appeared in the *Scottish Baptist Magazine*.⁵⁸

Charismatic Theology On 5 November 1970 the fraternal began to discuss the subject of Charismatic Renewal at a meeting in Granton where Ken McDougall, minister of New Prestwick Baptist Church, had held a three-day 'inner mission' and came to 'share ... the Holy Spirit's working in his life and ministry'.⁵⁹ The nature of the discussion which followed persuaded Ernest Barnes⁶⁰ that there was a 'deep interest being shown in this important subject', and they decided to use the 'fraternal meetings in 1971' to explore the biblical and pastoral implication more fully. 1971 saw papers given by Gilbert Ritchie,⁶¹ John McKendrick,⁶² Charlie Gellaitry,⁶³ and Bruce Milne.⁶⁴ The theological perspectives of the speakers indicate that the fraternal was concerned to receive a balanced presentation of the subject. In April 1974 Gordon Strachan⁶⁵ spoke on 'The Present Growth and Expansion of the Charismatic Movement', expressing the view that the Church was being 'called to think again of the supernatural power of God and to question Calvin's assertion that these gifts ceased in the early years of Christianity'.⁶⁶ In December 1978, Ian Cowie, from the Christian Fellowship of Healing in Edinburgh, spoke on the ministry of 'Healing', indicating that the gifts of prophecy and tongues could be seen as being included in this ministry and that 'the ministry of healing was part of the total ministry of the Church'.⁶⁷ Throughout the 1970s the fraternal reflected the impact which the charismatic movement had on the life and thought of the church, but endeavoured to react positively to its call for the spiritual renewal of ministers and congregations.

Evangelism The fraternal shared the aims and objectives of the Edinburgh

Association in seeking to 'initiate new churches within the district'.⁶⁸ As early as April 1949 there was 'considerable discussion' within the fraternal 'regarding sites for Church extension in outlying city areas'.⁶⁹ In 1951 the fraternal discussed the 'depressing statistics anent the numerical decrease in Congregationalists and Baptists between 1947 and 1949' and spoke of the need for 'a simultaneous mission', although later discussion revealed that there were 'differences of opinion as to matter and method' of evangelism.⁷⁰ The post-war period saw a growth of council estates in Edinburgh and churches identified opportunities of evangelism in Muirhouse and Drylaw in the north, Moredun in the south-east and Wester Hailes (Longstone) in the east, as they continued the work of church extension begun in Granton in 1940.⁷¹ In 1953, however, the fraternal concluded that 'the growth of new housing schemes had further loosened the very tenuous connection of the working class with the church'.⁷² These early endeavours centred around Sunday School work.⁷³ Later church extension adopted a different pattern of planting from a local church, seen, for example, when Charlotte Chapel showed intent of purchasing 'a redundant church building' in East Lothian to 'plant a congregation of about 30 to form the nucleus of a fellowship and observe future development'.⁷⁴

Evangelistic endeavours within the city faced many obstacles and not every effort was successful. In February 1951 the fraternal discussed the 'new cause at Moredun' and drew up a list of ministers who would 'conduct Sunday morning services'.⁷⁵ In December 1952 George Hardie, Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland, spoke enthusiastically of the opportunities which the Moredun district, a large council estate, offered for church growth. He spoke of the leadership being 'of staunch Baptist persuasion and, with a strategic site for a suitable building already reserved, anticipating with confidence the unfolding of their venture in the realm of church extension'.⁷⁶ Tensions arose in 1955 between the association and the fraternal over how often worship should be conducted by an ordained minister. The association was convinced that the presence of a minister would be 'a means of great encouragement to those who are trying to establish the cause'.⁷⁷ While members of the fraternal were willing to help on a monthly basis, to officiate at the communion service, the fraternal urged the Association to 'keep the situation at Moredun constantly before it in a sustained effort to endeavour to build up the church'. 1966 saw an 'Independent Review of the Work at Moredun which spoke of 'a cause that has taken a long time to take root'.⁷⁸ A report of the Church Extension Committee in 1969 indicates that the 'Moredun Fellowship continues to bear its witness, and plans are being laid for an evangelistic campaign over a protracted period. The situation seems full of promise under the driving and enthusiastic leadership and with growing Association support'.⁷⁹ The 'visitation programme ... provided a good many new contacts' and in 1970 'discussions had been held about the possibility of constituting a church membership',⁸⁰ but two years later in 1972 Andrew MacRae, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland, reported that 'The Moredun fellowship has discontinued its witness after

many years, mainly because of the removal from the district of key personnel in the work'.⁸¹ The cause was handed over to the Brethren.⁸²

The fraternal discussed issues relating to Evangelism on numerous occasions. In October 1951 James Taylor, minister of Portobello, gave 'an exhaustive but by no means exhausting paper on *The Theology of Evangelism*', in which he stressed the necessity of an 'enthusiastic heart' being 'supported by a well-informed mind ... for evangelism without theology produces an arrogant superficiality'.⁸³ The context of this paper was the movement for 'Baptist Advance', an initiative of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, supported by the President of the Baptist Union of Scotland, Harold J. Fraser. Eight associations and thirty churches became involved in evangelistic activities.⁸⁴ Charles Simpson, minister of Stenhouse, in a paper on 'Child Evangelism' in February 1956 spoke of 'the supreme value of child conversion and the centrality of children's work in the church's programme'.⁸⁵ The 1950s witnessed a resurgence of evangelistic activity in connection with the Billy Graham crusades and in March 1956 the fraternal discussed the 'current criticism of the world-renowned evangelist Billy Graham' in connection with the 'valuable effects of the rightful use of emotion in religion'.⁸⁶

1965 witnessed a city-wide interdenominational crusade and Philip Hacking, minister of St Thomas' Episcopal Church in Corstorphine and Chairman of the Crusade Committee, spoke to the May fraternal and encouraged its members to become fully involved in 'reaching people where they are - in industry - schools and homes'.⁸⁷ The Crusade was led by Stephen Olford, minister of Calvary Baptist Church in New York, and lasted from 9 to 30 October, during which time nineteen public meetings were held in the Usher Hall. Baptist involvement was strong. Two members of Charlotte Chapel, Ian Balfour and Fergus Brown, acted as secretary and treasurer of the committee.⁸⁸ 46,000 people attended the public meetings, and 'about twelve hundred people, mostly young, were counselled, of whom about half made a first-time profession of faith'. It was perhaps the most sustained evangelistic event in Edinburgh since Moody and Sankey. In September 1966, John McKendrick spoke on 'Baptist witness in an expanding city', when the 'obvious concern ... about new housing areas' was mentioned, and in October the fraternal discussed the Billy Graham Crusade in Earl's Court when there had been a 'strong response among young people'.⁸⁹ In January 1968 Alex Hardie, pioneer minister in the Longstone area of Edinburgh, gave an account of work in a socially deprived community, where he was involved 'with the people's social problems - many of whom were living in real poverty'.⁹⁰ Just at this time, the Baptist Union of Scotland held a 'Conference on Evangelism' in Stirling University with 115 churches represented, and a programme of 'Simultaneous Evangelism' was launched.⁹¹ Three years of preparation, proclamation and preservation took place between 1968 and 1971 as one hundred churches became involved.⁹²

Throughout the minutes of the fraternal several papers were presented on the topic of Revival, seen by T.C. Anderson, minister of Broxburn, as 'our greatest

need' in November 1949.⁹³ In November 1951 John McBeath of Inverness encouraged the fraternal to be confident that 'big things were just around the corner'.⁹⁴ At the conclusion of a discussion on a spiritual awakening in Canada in 1972, the fraternal ended with the comment that their hearts had been 'strangely warmed',⁹⁵ an indication that the spiritual needs of the communities in which they ministered was uppermost in the minds and hearts of these men and that they shared a common longing for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon their country.

Baptist Missionary Society The wider work of the Baptist Missionary Society was well represented within the fraternal, especially when Matthew McLachlan, Scottish Representative of the Society, was a member of the fraternal from 1957. The level of commitment by local churches in the post-war years to the work of the BMS was evident in the giving of the Bristo congregation in 1947 which amounted to £360, at a time when the ministerial stipend stood at £255.⁹⁶ In 1963 and 1967 A.S. Clement, General Secretary of the BMS, spoke to the fraternal,⁹⁷ and frequent talks were given by the Representative and other visitors on the work of the Society in different parts of the world. In 1949 James Watson, BMS Scottish Representative and formerly a missionary in China from 1905 to 1937, spoke of his experiences, even mentioning that Mao Tse Tung had 'sent a representative to him to enquire what power it was which had sustained the Church during its time of persecution'.⁹⁸ In 1968 George Young, minister of Adelaide Place in Glasgow and former missionary in China, spoke of experiences in both these situations, 'the interest being centred on the work in Glasgow'.⁹⁹ In November 1964 the fraternal 'noted the news of the tragic events in Congo'.¹⁰⁰ In April 1975 Derek Prime spoke of a three-week visit to Calcutta, when he had taken part in a BMS missionary retreat as well as speaking at a Keswick Convention in India.¹⁰¹ In 1982 Bishop Tandy of the Church of North India spoke to the fraternal.¹⁰² Matthew McLachlan spoke of a visit to Brazil in January 1976,¹⁰³ and in March 1978 David McClenaghan, a BMS missionary trained at the Scottish Baptist College, spoke of the work of the Society in Brazil.¹⁰⁴ The fraternal could never have been described as parochial in its interests, although the presence of the Scottish Representative of the BMS undoubtedly kept the society uppermost in the minds and hearts of its members.

Pastoral Ministry On many occasions, the fraternal discussed the nature of Pastoral Ministry. In March 1950 Campbell Dovey, minister of Morningside Baptist Church, stated his conviction that pastors needed 'always to be at their post, ready to serve, night or day ... teaching ... to expound and interpret the Word of God ... blessing the people at every solemn meeting'¹⁰⁵ - an indication that Dovey held to a High Churchmanship. In May 1952 Denis Lant, minister of Dublin Street, spoke of the 'difficulties of the ministry' and the 'spirit of anti-clericalism' which he had encountered as the 'man in the street fought shy of the minister with a professional garb, such as a clerical collar'.¹⁰⁶ In 1962 Allan Wright mentioned the 'increasing practice of ordination, which until recently was widely neglected' as increasing the

'minister's authority'.¹⁰⁷ The whole question of ministerial identity arose in 1971 when Peter Webb addressed the question of 'Frustrations within the Ministry'¹⁰⁸ and raised questions concerning the 'role of the minister' and 'implications for' our current context. Many of these discussions took place within the context of documents which were being produced by the Baptist Union of Great Britain on this very subject.¹⁰⁹ The Edinburgh fraternal was not alone in the struggles of identity being faced in the midst of an increasingly secular society.

Women in Ministry The question of women in pastoral ministry was brought before the fraternal in September 1950 when the Revd Gwenyth Hubble, Principal of Carey Hall in Birmingham, presented a paper.¹¹⁰ In 1953 George Graham, a minister without a pastoral charge in Edinburgh, spoke on 'Should women preach?' although the minutes give no details of any discussion which followed.¹¹¹ In March 1976 Mrs Hart, an elder of Cramond parish church and a member of the Scottish Churches Council, spoke of her experience within the Church of Scotland where 'there are only eight women ministers of which five are in parishes' and concluded that 'men have been making mistakes for long enough - it is time for women to be given the chance'.¹¹²

Pastoral Ministry and Cultural Changes The challenge of engaging in pastoral ministry within a changing culture became apparent in September 1977 when a member of the fraternal raised the issue of two people within his congregation, both separated from their partners, but living together.¹¹³ Issues relating to marriage reappeared in October 1979 when the fraternal discussed 'divorce or threatened break down of marriage among ministers and candidates for the ministry'.¹¹⁴ The fraternal had been contacted by a minister in Fife, alleging that 'a pretty strict line was going to be taken by the Ministerial Recognition Committee at the Assembly'.¹¹⁵ The fraternal decided that they did not have enough information to make representation to the Union 'but that, having been forewarned, there were those who were prepared to speak strongly on the matter'.¹¹⁶ The Kirkcaldy Assembly engaged in 'a fairly lengthy debate' on proposals which viewed 'breakdown of marriage' as 'normally' being a 'bar to approval for Baptist ministry';¹¹⁷ eventually the 'proposals were clearly carried by the Assembly' on a motion which was seconded by the fraternal secretary.¹¹⁸ In 1979 also the fraternal discussed the issue of having 'an admitted homosexual in membership'. The minutes of January 1979 indicate that this was not an isolated instance as several ministers mentioned other known cases.¹¹⁹ The fraternal concluded that 'any discipline administered should be done with the utmost discretion and carefully minuted in Church records' and that 'any charge of immorality likely to be regarded as defamation of character should be avoided', although some expressed the view that 'other actions - not as obviously "sinful" - were nonetheless equally unacceptable in a Christian Church'.¹²⁰

Conclusions The minutes of the fraternal reveal the interests and attitudes of a significant section of Scottish Baptist ministers over a forty-year period. As they

experienced the encroachment of a secular society on the membership of their churches, they returned on many occasions to the themes of evangelism, church planting and revival, not in desperation but with a clear confidence in God's power which they were convinced could alone make a significant difference.

There are indications, however, that as the years passed the commitment of the ministers of Edinburgh to the life of the fraternal did not remain as high as in earlier days. Furthermore, the importance of giving primary attention to theological reflection, evident in the papers presented on a monthly basis until the 1970s, gave way to times of personal sharing on areas of individual spirituality and practical concern.

The Edinburgh fraternal continues to meet on a monthly basis,¹²¹ indicating that ministers still value the friendship of their colleagues. The meetings of the fraternal have been the source of spiritual renewal to many pastors who have ministered the gospel in Edinburgh and Lothians in the second half of the twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 This paper was first delivered to the Scottish Baptist Historical Project on 8 November 1997. It is based upon five volumes of fraternal minutes and relevant material from the *Scottish Baptist Magazine* (hereafter *SBM*) 1947-87. The minutes are deposited in the archives of the Baptist Union of Scotland in Glasgow. The author was a member of the fraternal from 11 December 1978 to 13 October 1980 while a minister of Galashiels in the Borders Association and again from 1988 to 1994 when minister of Livingston (Ladywell) Baptist Church.
- 2 Sunday school figures of churches in the Association dropped over the period by 77.7%. For a fuller description of church decline among Glasgow Baptists, see David Watts, 'Baptists in Glasgow: The Twentieth Century Challenge of Urban Growth and Decline' in *Baptists in the Twentieth Century*, ed. K.W. Clements, BHS 1983, pp.4-14.
- 3 Examples of the secularization of society can be seen in the concern expressed by ministers at Sunday Football taking place in February 1974, Vol.4.60; the decline of Sunday evening services in April 1974, Vol.4.64; the increase of alcoholism, drug addiction and gambling in March 1972, Vol.3.241-2.
- 4 Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging*, Oxford 1994.
- 5 The confidential nature of the minutes has been respected in this paper.
- 6 See Edinburgh Fraternal Minutes, Vol.1.69-72, 157; 2.190.
- 7 In February 1952 the meeting began at 3 o'clock, the 'paper to begin no later than 3.30 and tea at 4.30, Vol. 1.148.
- 8 Vol.3.153.
- 9 Vol.2.78.
- 10 Vol.2.113.
- 11 Vol.2.132.
- 12 Vol.2.159.
- 13 Vol.2.193-4. One meeting was held from September to December 1973 in the Scripture Union offices and then the undenominational Mission at Carrubbers Close was used but 'difficulty in parking' led the fraternal to meet in the Bristo Church. Vol.4.31, 55.
- 14 Vol.1.49-52.
- 15 Vol.2.214.
- 16 Vol.2.218.
- 17 Vol.4.64.
- 18 Vol.4.161-3.
- 19 Vol.5. See typed minutes for the meeting of 26 March 1985 inserted at the end of the book.
- 20 R.E. Clements became Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages in New College from 1960-67, before moving to Cambridge University. Perkin was Assistant Lecturer in New Testament from January 1963 until he moved to McMaster University in Canada in 1965. Vol.3.71.
- 21 Cawley worked with the BMS from 1912 and came to Scotland in 1921 as minister of Falkirk. During this time he obtained a BD from London University and a PhD from New College which was published under the title of *The*

- Transcendence of Jesus Christ* in 1936. He moved to England to Camberwell and was appointed to the tutorial staff at Spurgeon's College and succeeded to the Principalship in 1950. He became a member of Bristo and eventually moved into the Tor nursing home where he died in June 1977.
- 22 R.A. Barclay came from the Bristo church, studied at the Scottish Baptist College, Edinburgh University where he graduated with honours in Semitic languages, and post-graduate study at King's College London. He ministered in Broughty Ferry and Govan 1925-9, when he was invited to become Professor of Old Testament Studies at Serampore. In 1951 he returned to minister in Alva and then moved to Leeds University 1952-67, retiring to Dunbar where he died on 17 September 1970. See 'In Memoriam', *SBM*, November 1971, p.13.
- 23 Vol.1.91.
 24 Vol.3.18.
 25 Vol.3.37-8.
 26 D. Murray, *Scottish Baptist College: Centenary History 1894-1994*, Glasgow 1994, p.21. In 1949 an Evangelical Baptist Fellowship Bible College met in Queen's Drive, Glasgow.
 27 *SBM*, November 1950.
 28 Vol.1.73, 170.
 29 Vol.1.44.
 30 Vol.3.116. In 1966 the fraternal joined the Lanarkshire fraternal at their retreat in Peebles when the speaker was Stanley Voke. Vol.3.97. The writer remembers a retreat in Galashiels when a heated debate, not recorded in the Minutes, on 'Hell' took place. The debate centred on the question of conditional immortality.
 31 Vol.2.208.
 32 Small, minister of St Cuthbert's Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, spoke on 'The Work of the Ministry in the Modern Situation' and believed that the answer to the needs of the day was 'Preaching' and criticised 'eight minute sermons'. Vol.3.2.
 33 Duthie, then Principal of the Congregational College and Principal Elect of New College, spoke on P.T. Forsyth. Vol.3.32.
 34 Anderson, a Methodist and Professor of Old Testament in New College, spoke on 'The Old Testament doctrine of the Remnant'. Vol.3.54.
 35 Campbell was then Assistant Chaplain to the University and spoke on 'Guilt: where Psychology and Religion meet'. Vol.3.90.
 36 Church of Scotland Evangelist.
 37 Holloway, then Rector of Old St Paul's in Edinburgh, spoke on a subject he was due to introduce at the WCC in Nairobi dealing with issues relating to Scientific Rationalism. Holloway later became Episcopal Bishop in Edinburgh and Primus of Scotland.
 38 Vol.1.167.
 39 *ibid.*, 188.
 40 The representative was the Revd Alexander Clark, minister of Motherwell. See *Scottish Baptist Year Book* (hereafter *SBYB*) 1949, 124.
 41 *SBYB* 1952, pp.121-2.
 42 *SBYB* 1955, pp.120-1.
 43 *SBYB* 1956, pp.122-3.
 44 *SBYB* 1964, pp.132-3.
 45 Vol.4.42.
 46 Vol.2.205.
 47 Vol.1.126.
 48 Vol.3.14.
 49 Vol.5.154.
 50 *ibid.*, 155.
 51 Vol.2.132 'with kind permission of Mrs Russell Jones, the discussion continued through the service of tea'.
 52 Minutes for 26 February 1962 in Vol.2.186.
 53 *Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1959, Edinburgh, pp.629-62.
 54 *ibid.*, 1955, pp.609-62. This was followed by a report on the Fathers in 1956 (pp.605-46).
 55 Vol.2.50-1.
 56 Vol.2.53.
 57 *SBYB* 1961, pp.9-10.
 58 The articles were written by A.B. Miller (two), Peter Barbour, A.W. Argyle, H. Cook, R.E.O. White and Jim Taylor.
 59 Vol.3.196.
 60 E. Barnes was minister of Granton Baptist Church. Ken McDougal was a Methodist minister 1958-69, then became minister of New Prestwick Baptist Church 1969-73, when he founded a community in Argyll on the west coast of Scotland near Lochgilphead.
 61 Vol.3.200-3. Paper on 'Person of the Holy Spirit' by the minister of Stenhouse Baptist Church.
 62 Vol.3.207-10. Paper on 'The Work of the Holy Spirit'.
 63 Vol.3.217. The title is not given. Gellaitry was minister of Portobello Baptist Church who later joined the leadership of an Independent Charismatic fellowship in Hawick in 1983-4.
 64 Milne gave a paper on 'Pastoral Implications of the Gifts of the Spirit' while he was minister of Livingston Baptist Church, prior to moving to

- Spurgeon's College as Tutor in Christian Doctrine. Vol.3.231-2.
- 65 Following a period in the ministry of the Church of Scotland, Strachan completed doctoral studies at New College on Edward Irving and in May 1974 began working as Artistic Director, Netherbow Arts Centre in Edinburgh.
- 66 Vol.4.69-70.
- 67 Vol.5.12.
- 68 Article by Peter E. Purkiss on 'The Edinburgh and Lothians Baptist Association', *SBM*, August 1965, p.5.
- 69 Vol.1.30.
- 70 Vol.1.117.
- 71 The work at Granton began with a membership of 19 and by 1952 reached 90. See *SBM* December 1952, p.4.
- 72 Vol.1.176.
- 73 See *The Baptists in Scotland*, ed. David W. Bebbington, Glasgow 1988, p.106.
- 74 Vol.4.221. This venture did not actually take place although Charlotte Chapel planted a similar church in the Barnton area of Edinburgh in 1987.
- 75 Vol.1.114.
- 76 *SBM* December 1952, p.4.
- 77 Vol.2.17-8.
- 78 *SBM* June 1966, p.3.
- 79 *SBYB* 1969, p.34. The group was led by George Borthwick of the National Bible Society. See *SBM* August 1968, p.11.
- 80 *SBYB* 1970, p.32.
- 81 *SBYB* 1972, p.32.
- 82 *The Baptists in Scotland*, p.106.
- 83 Vol.1.137.
- 84 *SBM* January 1951.
- 85 Vol.1.42. The place of children in the church occupied the fraternal on several occasions from 1950 onwards when subjects such as 'Juvenile Applicants for Baptism of ages 10-11', Vol.1.92-3; 'The Child in the Church's Programme', Vol.1.182; 'Children and Communion', Vol.5.83, 136, were discussed.
- 86 Vol.2.44.
- 87 Vol.3.81-5. The catalyst for the mission was Alan Redpath, minister of Charlotte Baptist Chapel and a close friend of Stephen Olford.
- 88 See 'Edinburgh prepares for Stephen Olford Crusade' and 'The Edinburgh Christian Crusade' by Peter E. Purkiss in *SBM* September 1965, p.4, and December 1965, pp.9-10. Both Ian Balfour and Fergus Brown were Edinburgh lawyers.
- 89 Vol.3.114-7.
- 90 Vol.3.147-8. The work in Longstone developed as a building began in October 1971 with £31,000 being given by Charlotte Chapel (the parent church) and Longstone members, the bulk of whom originated from the Chapel membership.
- 91 *SBYB* 1969, p.36.
- 92 *SBYB* 1970, p.35.
- 93 Vol.1.49-52. In April 1950 William Grant of Watford once again spoke on Revival and its effect on 'social uplift'. Vol.1.79. Grant began his ministry in 1929 in Shotts, Lanarkshire; in 1952 he returned to Scotland, to Thomas Coasts Memorial Church, Paisley, but returned south as General Superintendent, East Midland Area 1957-68.
- 94 Vol.1.142.
- 95 Vol.3.235.
- 96 *SBM* June, July 1948.
- 97 Vol.3.10, 143-4.
- 98 Vol.1.42.
- 99 Vol.3.162.
- 100 Vol.3.53.
- 101 Vol.4.109.
- 102 Vol.5.197-202.
- 103 Vol.4.134-7.
- 104 Vol.4.229-32.
- 105 Vol.1.69-72. The secretary made it clear that Dovey carefully 'avoided ... any reference or appeal for a further increase in the minimum salary for Baptist ministers'.
- 106 Vol.1.156-7.
- 107 Vol.2.190.
- 108 Vol.3.223.
- 109 Three of these documents - 'The Meaning and Practice of Ordination among Baptists' (1957), 'The Doctrine of the Ministry' (1961), and 'Ministry Tomorrow' (1969) were published in *Baptist Union Documents: 1948-1977*, ed. Roger Hayden, BHS 1980.
- 110 The paper was entitled 'The Inheritance of the Saints'. Vol.1.131-3.
- 111 Vol.1.186.
- 112 Vol.4.149. In 1984 the Baptist Union of Scotland rejected a motion which called on the churches to recognize the ordination of women to the ministry and in November 1997 a motion which called for the right of Baptist churches to call a woman as pastor did not achieve the 66% majority needed. The issue is likely to come before the floor of the Assembly again in 1999. See *SBM* December 1997 and February 1998.
- 113 Vol.4.204.

- 114 Vol.5.41.
 115 *ibid.*
 116 *ibid.*
 117 *SBYB* 1980, p.97.
 118 The secretary was Charles Gellaity. See *SBYB* 1980, p.91, and footnote 63 of this article.
- 119 Vol.5.19.
 120 Vol.5.20-1.
 121 The present writer is still technically a member of the Fraternal as he lives in West Lothian and spoke recently on 'Trinitarian Theology', January 1998.

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A.R. Wilson, *The History of the Christadelphians, 1864-1885: The Emergence of a Denomination*, Shalom Publications, PO Box H223, Australia Square, NSW 2000, Australia, or from 80-82 Apedale Road, Bignall End, Stoke on Trent ST7 8PH, 594pp. £48-95.

The line which divides sect from denomination is not always easily defined. Whereas Bryan Wilson's various publications helpfully introduce the sectarian, the classic definition of denomination remains that of H.R. Niebuhr. The history of Christadelphianism is plotted against these two markers, not only in the period here discussed but in its subsequent development in the twentieth century. Its origins were within the Campbellite tradition, itself an offshoot of the Scotch Baptist lineage. Thus the Churches of Christ, Christadelphians and part of the British Baptist tradition all share some common heritage.

The shaping influences in early Christadelphianism were John Thomas MD, who came to have violent arguments with Alexander Campbell, and Robert Roberts. Together Thomas and Roberts provide the distinctives to early Christadelphian thought, here clearly and fully analysed. Almost a third of the book is given to appendices which reproduce many of the sources and illustrate Christadelphianism's own self-perceptions in these early years. Indeed, the account makes for interesting comparison both with other ecclesiastical programmes seeking to recover Christian primitivism, as also mainstream protestant denominations in the UK and USA sharing similar origins.

The interweaving nature of the story is nowhere better seen than in the career of J.W. Thirtle, who appears first as editor (or sub-editor) of the *Staffordshire Sentinel*. Thirtle early came to be regarded as a Christadelphian of superior intellect; this first led to respect but later to controversy, especially that over Inspiration. Dr Thirtle later became, in Wilson's words, 'part of an evangelical No-man's Land between Christadelphians, Baptists and Evangelical Anglicans'. No-man's land or not, Thirtle served as Treasurer of the Baptist Historical Society from 1911-21 and as late as 1927 is shown as a committee member, actively engaged in the work of the Society. He is one of the few people to receive an obituary in this journal (1935, page 287), contributed by no less a person than Wheeler Robinson, who pays tribute both to his services to the Society and to his linguistic abilities. He concludes: 'His loyalty to the Gospel was associated with what is generally known as "fundamentalism", but this did not hinder him from hearty co-operation with men of a like loyalty who did not share his own ways of interpreting Scripture', applying to him also the tribute, 'his life was profoundly dominated by Christian verities, and he was peculiarly interested in Baptist history'. Sectarianism and denominationalism here live very close together.