John Tucker

A Braided River

New Zealand Baptists and Public Issues 1882-2000

International Theological Studies

Contributions of Baptist Scholars

Volume 5

Peter Lang

As both dissenters and evangelicals, Baptists have had an intriguing and often complex relationship with society. This book casts light on that relationship by tracing the history of Baptist involvement in public debate within New Zealand. It analyses ten significant public debates to have occurred since the 1880s, comparing the Baptist contribution with that of other denominations. By showing how Baptist approaches to public issues have changed over time, this study provides significant insights into the evolving nature of Baptist identity. It argues that evangelical theology fundamentally shaped the Baptist movement's engagement in public debate. On the other hand, it also shows how Baptist involvement was influenced by the interaction of various theological ideas and a changing social environment. A particular feature of this book is the way it places the story within a wider transnational context, highlighting early English influence on the New Zealand Baptist movement and the growing impact of North American Baptist models of church in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Volume 5

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ISBN 978-3-0343-1372-8

9 783034 313728

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Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · Frankfurt am Main · New York · Oxford · Wien

Bibliographic information published by die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at ‹http://dnb.d-nb.de›.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library, Great Britain

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

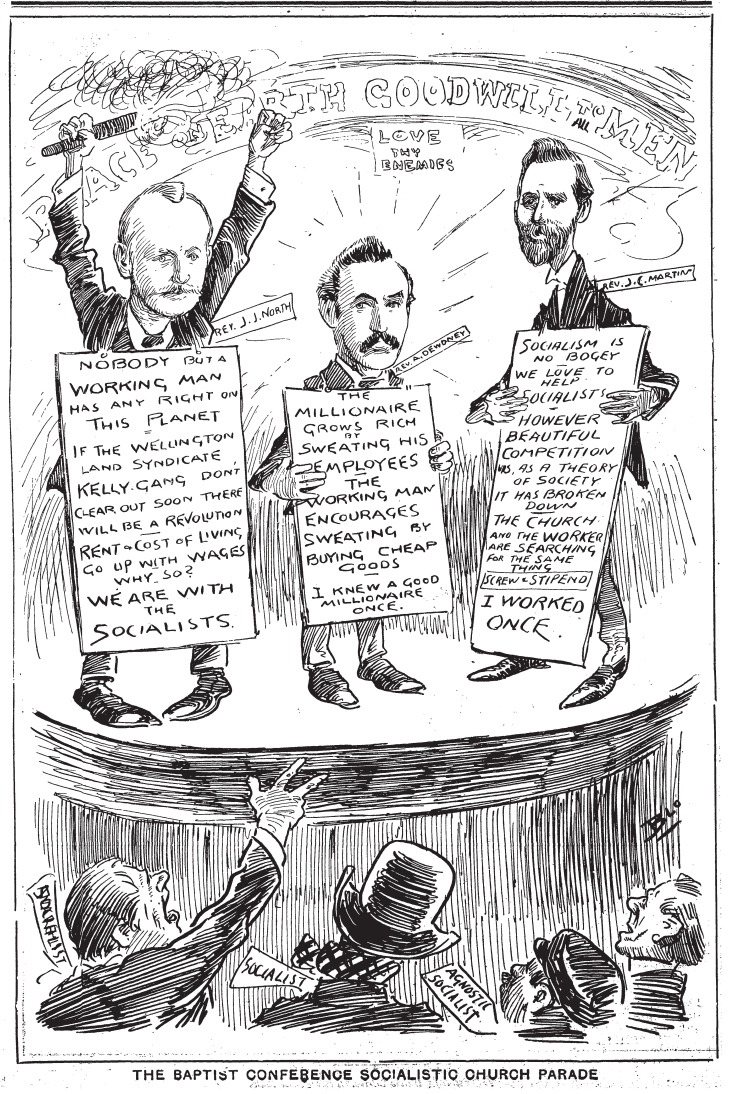
Tucker, John,
A braided river : New Zealand Baptists and public issues 1882-2000 / John Tucker. – First edition
pages cm. – (International theological studies ; v. 6)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1372-8
1. Baptists–New Zealand–History. 2. Christianity and politics–Baptists. 3. Christianity and politics–New Zealand. 4. Church and social problems–Baptists. 5. Church and social problems--New Zealand. I. Title.
BX6326.2.T83 2013
286`.193–dc23

2013026106

ISBN 978-3-0343-1372-8 br. ISBN 978-3-0351-0608-4 eBook
ISSN 0946-1507 br. ISSN 2235-6827 eBook

Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland
info@peterlang.com, www.peterlang.com

Printed in Switzerland



THE BAPTIST CONFEBENCE SOCIALISTIC CHURCH PARADE

Three leading Baptist ministers, Revs. J.J. North, Arthur Dewdney, and J.C. Martin, are lampooned for their public speeches at the 1907 Baptist Assembly expressing sympathy for the plight of New Zealand's working classes. (The *New Zealand Observer*, 19 October 1907, p.13. Source: National Library of New Zealand)

Contents

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the support and assistance of many people.

Thanks are due, firstly, to Laurie Guy and Tim Cooper, who supervised the PhD thesis on which this book is based. For their constant encouragement and wise advice I am deeply grateful. Laurie was also very generous in sharing with me the fruits of his research, and this helped shape my thinking in many places.

In the course of this project I have drawn heavily on the archives and the library at Carey Baptist College. The librarians there – Liz Tisdall, Damir Trupinic and Siong Ng – have been unstintingly generous with their time and assistance. I am also indebted to Katherine Milburn from the Hocken Library, the team at the Presbyterian Archives at Knox College, and the staff of the John Kinder Theological Library, the Canterbury Museum Library, the Alexander Turnbull Library, and Holy Cross Catholic Seminary.

I am also very grateful to those leaders and personalities within the New Zealand Baptist movement who consented to be interviewed for the purpose of this project. One of them, Brian Smith, kindly provided me with updated versions of the *Digital Baptist*, a word-searchable digital copy of the *New Zealand Baptist* magazine.

Martin Sutherland and Paul Windsor also deserve special mention. Without their encouragement it is unlikely that I would have undertaken this project in the first place. I am also particularly grateful to friends from Milford Baptist Church for the generous support which enabled me to complete it.

Finally, I want to thank my family. My mother, Audrey, has expressed her support for this project in many practical ways. My children, Emma, Sophie and Daniel, have been delightful companions on the journey. And my wife, Lorraine, has been, as always, exceedingly gracious and warmly encouraging. I dedicate this book to her.

Abbreviations

AJHR	*Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*
ANG	Official archives of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia
AS	*Auckland Star*
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
BNZBHS	*Bulletin of the New Zealand Baptist Historical Society*
BM	*Baptist* magazine (English)
BQ	*Baptist Quarterly*
BUNZ	Baptist Union of New Zealand
CPL	Canterbury Public Library
CML	Canterbury Museum Library
CW	*Challenge Weekly*
EP	*Evening Post*
ES	*Evening Standard*
HL	Hocken Library
JKTL	John Kinder Theological Library
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
LAGANZ	Lesbian and Gay Archives of New Zealand
LT	*Lyttelton Times*
MAC	Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand
MW	*Maoriland Worker*
NCC	National Council of Churches
NZB	*New Zealand Baptist*
NZBRHSA	New Zealand Baptist Research and Historical Society Archives
NZBU	New Zealand Baptist Union
NZH	*New Zealand Herald*
NZJH	*New Zealand Journal of History*
NZJBR	*New Zealand Journal of Baptist Research*
NZL	*New Zealand Listener*
NZMT	*New Zealand Methodist Times*
NZO	*New Zealand Observer*

NZPD	*New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*
NZS	*New Zealand Sociology*
NZT	*New Zealand Tablet*
ODT	*Otago Daily Times*
PCANZA	Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Archives
PGA	Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand
PJBR	*Pacific Journal of Baptist Research*
PQC	Public Questions Committee
PS	*Political Science*
RCCSA	Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion
RCGA	*Reports of Committees to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*
WCC	World Council of Churches

Introduction

The President of the Baptist Union in October 1906 was Mr A.S. Adams. A prominent Baptist lawyer and later Supreme Court Justice, he chose as the subject for his presidential address, 'The Relation of the Church to the Social Problems of the Age'. 'By one school of Christian thought, he observed, 'the Church has nothing to do with questions of political or social economy or public morals', the work of Christ 'is concerned with the individual and not with society'. According to this view the Christian's responsibility is to 'preach a Gospel of separation and future blessedness' and to 'persuade men [and women] to flee from the wrath to come'. Adams, for one, did not agree. A prominent temperance activist, he declared:

> To see men and women and children cursed by social conditions alike dishonouring to God and man; institutions hoary with age and iniquity, holding the people in political, mental and physical bondage; men debased lower than the beasts of the field by sensual indulgence; the strong tyrannising over the weak; the helpless held in chains of misery … It cannot be that the good God has placed us where we are, in sight and hearing of all the world's suffering, with hearts to pity, tongues to speak, and brain and hand to think and act, and no clear call to smite iniquity in His name, and strike hard for righteousness in government, in the social order, for reform of abuses and destruction of evils.[1]

For his part, Adams was convinced that the gospel message was more than the forgiveness of sins through the atonement and the promise of a future rest. It is, he argued, 'a Gospel for to-day as truly as it is a Gospel for the after life.' Consequently, the churches must 'recognise that their mission is to conquer the world for God. … Public questions affecting morals come directly within the scope of their immediate action.'[2]

As Adams' address suggests, the Baptist movement in New Zealand has flowed along two streams. One stream consisted of those who believed

1 A.S. Adams, 'The Relation of the Church to the Social Problems of the Age', *New Zealand Baptist Handbook*, 1906-1907, 9-23 at 9-10. The *Baptist Handbook*, published annually by the Baptist Union of New Zealand since 1883 has from 1932 been entitled the annual *Yearbook*. It will be referred to, hereafter, as the *Baptist Yearbook*.

2 Ibid., 15.

that the church should have nothing to do with political or social issues. The other stream consisted of Baptists who believed that their faith compelled them both to seek the salvation of lost sinners through personal evangelism and to work for the renewal of society through social action. This book explores the efforts of that second stream to engage in public debate. Baptist involvement with social and political issues has attracted considerable attention overseas.[3] Within New Zealand, however, it has received relatively scant academic treatment. Other, larger, denominations have received far more analysis in regards to these kinds of questions.[4] Perhaps this reflects a difference in priorities. It is certainly a product of size. New Zealand Baptists have been a relatively small group, and their voice has often been drowned out by larger denominations.[5] However, they have played a role – sometimes, for their size, a not insignificant one. It is a story worth telling.

It begins in late nineteenth century England. While the first Baptist church in New Zealand was formed in 1851, the Baptist Union of New Zealand was not established until 1882, when Baptist numbers in the colo-

3 See, for example, Jerry Sutton, *A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2008); Rod Benson, 'On Moral Mission: Evangelicalism, NSW Baptists and the Question of Social Responsibility', in *Mission: The Heart of Baptist Identity*, ed. Graeme Chatfield (Sydney: Morling Press, 2009), 117-37; David Bebbington, 'The Baptist Conscience in the Nineteenth Century', *Baptist Quarterly* (BQ) 34 (January 1991): 13-24; D.W. Bebbington, 'Baptists and Politics Since 1914', in *Baptists in the Twentieth Century: Papers presented at a Summer School July 1982*, ed. K.W. Clements (London, Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 76-95.

4 A number of substantial studies, for instance, have examined the Presbyterian Church's involvement in social issues: Maureen Garing, 'Against the Tide: Social, Moral and Political Questions in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1840-1970' (PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1989); J. Fraser Paterson, 'An Historical Analysis of Issues within the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1945-1985' (MTh thesis, University of Otago, 1985); John Evans, 'Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990 with Particular Reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches' (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1992). There is no equivalent exploration of Baptist engagement in public debate in New Zealand.

5 This is evident, for example, in Laurie Guy's recent groundbreaking survey of church engagement with public issues in New Zealand: Laurie Guy, *Shaping Godzone: Public Issues and Church Voices in New Zealand 1840-2000* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2011).

ny began to expand rapidly.[6] Most of this growth was driven by immigration from England. This was significant. English Baptists at the end of the nineteenth century were very active politically. Their engagement in social and political issues was due partly to profound changes in their social environment.[7] At the dawn of the nineteenth century, English Baptists tended to avoid public issues because they occupied such a marginal position in society. Their numbers were very small, they lacked political enfranchisement and representation, and their long experience of discrimination at the hands of the state had bred 'a principled objection to political involvement'.[8] However, during the first half of the nineteenth century, as the waves of the evangelical revival were being felt, Baptists grew at a rate that greatly outpaced that of the population as a whole. Their rapid growth, coupled with their dense distribution in large industrial towns, put them in a position to benefit enormously from political reforms occurring during this period.[9] The Reform Act of 1832 affected both the distribution of parliamentary seats and voting eligibility requirements in ways that were extremely favourable to Baptists. A second Reform Act in 1867 boosted their political strength still further. It expanded the franchise to embrace almost all middle and working-class men in towns, again increasing the number of Baptist voters. So by the latter part of the nineteenth century, English Baptists, in alliance with other Nonconformists, became a significant political force. Not surprisingly, 'the political temperature of the denomination rose'.[10] With a sense that they now had the potential to provoke change, Baptists became increasingly active in public debate.

These social and political developments in England were also accompanied by significant changes in the theological environment. The 1870s and 1880s witnessed the emergence of what became known as the 'Non-

6 Between 1874 and 1896 the numbers attending Baptist churches grew from 1610 to 5652 and the number of adherents mushroomed from 6355 to 16,037. Allan K. Davidson and P.J. Lineham (eds.), *Transplanted Christianity: Documents Illustrating Aspects of New Zealand Church History* (Auckland: College Communications, 1987), 183-5.

7 For fuller discussion of Baptist engagement in social and political issues in the nineteenth century see Bebbington, 'Baptist Conscience' and Joe L. Coker, 'Social Conscience and Political Power among Nineteenth Century English Baptists', *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* (PJBR) 1:1 (October 2005): 20-38.

8 Coker, 'Social Conscience', 23.

9 Ibid., 23-24.

10 Bebbington, 'Baptist Conscience', 16.

conformist conscience'.[11] It was characterised by the belief that the spheres of religion and politics were not separate spheres, and that the state should intervene in society for moral purposes. This represented a significant theological shift. Earlier in the century 'Nonconformists had contended that coercion could induce only an appearance of moral behaviour, and so was worse than useless. The gospel alone could make people lead truly upright lives.' But by the 1870s and 1880s Nonconformists increasingly recognised that 'if the law could not make people moral, it could certainly make them immoral. While the statute book registered the moral progress of the nation, in that it reflected public opinion, it could also guide opinion.'[12] Law, in other words, was educational as well as coercive. Consequently, with this new found confidence in the ability of the state to improve the moral tone of society, English Baptists and their fellow Nonconformists pressured government to address a number of social issues.

Another powerful theological motivation to participate in public debate was the popular postmillennial eschatology of the period. This theology taught that the kingdom of God would be realised on earth by the steady advance of Christian values. If, as postmillennialists optimistically taught, 'the present age was to merge imperceptibly into a millennium of peace and justice', then there were good grounds for the church to exert her energies in political campaigns.[13] So for both social and theological reasons, English Baptists in the latter part of the nineteenth century became increasingly involved in a range of public debates and political campaigns.

Along with other Nonconformists, they tended to focus primarily on social issues that could be mended by reforming individual behaviour. Campaigns against intemperance, gambling and sexual impurity attracted most of their attention.[14] But these were not the only issues on which Baptists spoke. They invested considerable energy in campaigning for full religious equality before the law, not just for themselves,[15] but also for Jews,

11 For a comprehensive study see David Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1982).

12 Ibid., 13.

13 Bebbington, 'Baptist Conscience', 18.

14 Ibid., 19-20.

15 J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century,* vol. 3, *A History of the English Baptists*, ed. Roger Hayden (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1994), 385-9.

Roman Catholics, even atheists.[16] In imperial affairs Baptists were also active. They supported, for example, the campaign to suppress the opium trade to China.[17] They played an important role in the controversy regarding Governor Eyre's violent suppression of riots by the black population of Jamaica.[18] On industrial and labour issues, Baptists were sometimes quite outspoken. The Baptist press, for instance, threw its support behind striking miners and gas stokers in the 1870s.[19] Charles Spurgeon, the leading Baptist minister of his day, gave his support to agricultural labourers and striking dock workers in their respective disputes.[20] And in the 1880s, admittedly out of concerns about sexual promiscuity in overcrowded slums, Baptists took up the cause of housing reform.[21]

During this period a number of their leaders articulated a broad vision of Christian mission. According to John Clifford, one of the leading English Baptist ministers of the late nineteenth century, the relation between 'Jesus Christ and Modern Social Life' was 'the supreme question of the present hour'. God's plan, Clifford said, was to build a regenerate society by both renewing individuals in Christ and renewing structures through them.[22]

Hugh Jackson writes that 'England, Scotland and Ireland were not left behind when people left for Australasia; they carried home with them in their hearts and minds.'[23] This appears to have been the case with English Baptists. N. R. Wood observes that a number of key leaders transplanted their active social vision in New Zealand soil:

> Baptist life in [colonial New Zealand] was fortunate in the early leaders who came from Britain. They brought to the developing life of our churches the best emphases of British Baptist life. They steered our churches away from barren scholasticism and

16 Timothy Larsen, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 154-5, 192-3.

17 Briggs, *English Baptists*, 389.

18 Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, 169-88.

19 Briggs, *English Baptists*, 397.

20 Ibid., 399.

21 Ibid., 392.

22 John Clifford, *Jesus Christ and Modern Social Life* (London: E. Marlborough & Co., 1872), 3, 5, 31. Cited in Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2004), 179.

23 H.R. Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860-1930* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 1.

> from fanatical conservatism. They came to New Zealand when British Baptists, in common with English nonconformity, were a power in the land … [Leaders like J.K. Archer] brought the social insights that made John Clifford a force in England.[24]

But to what extent did these insights take root and bear fruit in New Zealand? Some scholars have commented that when Baptists engaged in public debate they tended to limit their concerns to issues of personal morality like sex, alcohol or gambling. Martin Sutherland says, for example: 'Though Baptists have sounded their trumpets on a narrow range of moral issues, less obviously "religious" causes have created more confusion than action.'[25] Brian Smith agrees: 'With values largely individualistic, moralistic and middle class, Baptists have exhibited no great passion for social justice, or desire to change the structures of society.'[26] Is that true? That is the first question which this book attempts to answer: To what extent did New Zealand Baptists attempt to reshape their society through public debate?

A second question is this: What were the forces that influenced involvement in public debate? Peter Lineham and Allan Davidson state that 'too often in New Zealand notions of theology have been excluded from the story of Christianity in this country'. Beliefs 'can motivate people to profound actions …. [I]t is the ideas of Christianity which form its strongest and most intractable source'. But they further note that 'Christian ideas are also in constant flux'. They 'never develop in isolation from wider cultural and intellectual changes.'[27] This book adopts that perspective. It will pay attention to both theological ideas and social context, exploring the interaction between the two and showing how both shifting theological currents, and developments within the wider social environment, affected the flow of Baptist discourse. To illuminate distinctive dynamics within the Baptist movement, I will also draw occasional comparisons with other denominations, particularly the Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican and

24 Editorial, NZB, September 1964, 221.

25 Martin Sutherland, 'Pulpit or Podium: J.K. Archer and the Dilemma of Christian Politics in New Zealand', NZJBR 1 (1996): 26-46 at 43; see also Laurie Guy (ed.), *Baptists in Twentieth Century New Zealand: Documents Illustrating Baptist Life and Development* (Auckland: NZ Baptist Research and Historical Society, 2005), xiv.

26 Smith, 'Baptists and Labour', 23.

27 Peter Lineham and Allan Davidson, 'Reflections on the Place of Theology in the History of Christianity in New Zealand,' paper presented at Religious History Association of Aotearoa-New Zealand Conference, Auckland, 2004, 1-3.

Catholic churches.[28] And I will attempt to make connections with overseas contexts.[29] A feature of twentieth century New Zealand Baptist life was the extent to which it was influenced from overseas.[30]

Thirdly, this book examines the effect of that engagement. What did it achieve? Have Baptists, in alliance with other churches and groups, made an important contribution to public debate in New Zealand? Were they, as Martin Luther King, a Baptist minister, once put it, 'thermometers that record or register the temperature of majority opinion'? Or have they sometimes, in conjunction with other denominations, been 'thermostats that transform and regulate the temperature of society'.[31]

Before we begin to answer these questions, let me make some brief comments about the scope of this volume. This book does not pretend to be an exhaustive treatment of Baptist attitudes to public questions in New Zealand between 1882 and 2000. It is necessarily selective, at two levels. First, it does not cover every public debate in which Baptists had an interest during this period. There is not enough space. So you will find no discussion, for example, of the debates about religion in schools, Sabbath observance, the enfranchisement of women, film censorship, or the Treaty of Waitangi. But the ten debates that I have chosen to concentrate on are representative of these other issues in that they serve to illustrate how Baptists have generally engaged in public debate. And by sharpening the focus in this way we are able to pursue a depth of analysis over a long period, tracing key themes and shifts in the changing nature of Baptist identity in New Zealand.

Secondly, this book does not purport to analyse in detail every significant Baptist voice. While it draws on a range of oral interviews and archival material, it relies most heavily on published statements by Baptists, such as

28 These are, historically, New Zealand's four largest denominations. Their engagement in public debate throughout the period in question is also well-documented.

29 A shift in recent historiography away from narrowly focused studies towards more complex narratives has been reflected in attempts to identify larger trends and connections across cultures, to relate the local to the national and international. Hugh Morrison, 'Globalising and Localising: Conceptualising the Practice of New Zealand Religious History for the early 21st Century', paper presented at the Religious History Association of Aotearoa-New Zealand Conference, Auckland University, Auckland, 28 November 2008.

30 Guy (ed.), *Baptists in Twentieth Century New Zealand*, xiii.

31 Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 23.

resolutions by the annual Baptist Assembly,[32] statements by the Baptist Union's Public Questions Committee, correspondence by the denomination's leaders, printed sermons by leading ministers, and especially material in the denominational magazine, the *New Zealand Baptist*, the oldest continuously running religious periodical in New Zealand.[33] Consequently, the focus of attention will be on the contribution, through denominational structures, of leading Baptist ministers and prominent lay people. Their statements, it has to be said, did not always represent the majority position among grassroots Baptists. Correspondence within the pages of the *Baptist* suggests that in the Baptist Union there was often a significant distance between public discourse and popular opinion. This was the case in most denominations, where the people who were prepared to participate in public debate constituted a small minority.[34] But it is that minority, and what we can learn from their public statements – not popular opinion within the pew – with which this book is concerned.

Most of the voices in this book, therefore, are male. This does not mean that there were not significant female Baptist voices contributing to public debate in New Zealand. There certainly were. Women like Lily May Atkinson[35] and her sister Cybele Ethel Kirk[36] played leading roles in organi-

32 Representatives of the member churches of the Baptist Union of New Zealand have, since 1882, met annually in October or November. Initially this meeting was known as the annual 'Conference'. In recent years it has been called the 'Gathering'. Throughout this book it will be referred to as the annual 'Assembly'.

33 Since its conception as the *Canterbury Evangelist* in 1876, the NZB has occupied a profound place in the history and development of the New Zealand Baptist movement. Its circulation has never been large – 600 in 1900, 2000 in 1930, 3000 in 1950, 5000 in 1960, 11,000 in 1975, with a peak of 11,500 in the early 2000s. However, it has served as both mirror and magnet to the denomination, both reflecting and directing Baptist opinion and discourse. See Martin Sutherland, 'The NZ Baptist as an Agent of Denominational Identity 1874-1960', PJBR 3:1 (April 2007) 23-39.

34 Rex J. Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding: Conservative Christians and the Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 3.

35 Atkinson (nee Kirk) was from 1895 until 1921a member of the executive committee and vice president of the New Zealand Alliance, the country's leading prohibition organisation. She also held a variety of offices within the Women's Christian Temperance Union, including dominion president (1901–6). Beyond this, she served as vice president of the National Council of Women of New Zealand (1901-2) and as president of the New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children (1903-11).

sations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National Council of Women and the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. As such, they were influential both in the campaign for temperance and the struggle for civil rights for women. Mabel Annie Newlands was a long and active member of the Labour Party, the first woman to be elected president of a divisional council of the party. Dame Vivian Boyd held a number of influential public roles as a member and later chairperson of the Consumer Council (1975-1988), President of the National Council of Women (1978-1982), and chair of the Abortion Supervisory Committee (1979-1980). But the reality is that women were largely absent from positions of formal leadership within the Baptist movement until the 1970s and 1980s. So their voices have not been preserved within denominational records as much as male voices.

Outside denominational structures, a number of Baptist men also made a significant contribution to public debate. Thomas Dick was a prominent political figure in the late nineteenth century, serving as Colonial Secretary, Minister of Justice and Minister of Education. Gilbert Carson was Mayor of Wanganui and served in both the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council. Andrew Walker played a significant role in the formation of the New Zealand Labour Party, serving as national president and the first secretary of the parliamentary Labour Party caucus, while J.K. Archer was the first Labour Mayor of Christchurch (1925-1931) and a member of Parliament's upper house.[37] On the opposite side of the political spectrum, Sir Peter Tait was a National Party member of Parliament and mayor of Napier for eighteen years. Sir Lance Adams-Schneider and Graeme Lee were both National Party cabinet ministers.

Besides these politicians, several other Baptists have raised their voice outside formal denominational structures. As principal founder and organiser of the Protestant Political Association, Howard Elliott had a profound

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36 As paid secretary of the Wellington branch of the New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children (1924-1937), Kirk was an effective lobbyist for changes to the laws affecting women and children. She campaigned for women to serve on juries and for the right of married women to paid employment. Kirk was also president of the National Council of Women of New Zealand (1934 to 1937) and president of the WCTU (1946).

37 Sutherland, 'Pulpit or Podium'; N.R. Wood, 'John Kendrick Archer: Baptist Minister – Christian Socialist, 1865-1949', *Bulletin of the New Zealand Baptist Historical Society* (BNZBHS) 7 (October 1970): 1-22.

– though bitterly divisive – influence on public and political opinion during the latter part of the First World War.[38] Charles Mackie, who founded the National Peace Council, was one of the early leaders of New Zealand's pacifist movement. A.S. Adams and O.C. Mazengarb were prominent lawyers who played significant roles in national debates around alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity.[39] Others, like Angus MacLeod, who served as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches from 1974 to 1984, spoke frequently on a range of issues through ecumenical channels. These voices all feature in this story, but their contribution – along with that of their female colleagues – deserves at some point a fuller, separate treatment. This volume, however, will pay particular attention to statements by leading Baptist ministers and laypeople through denominational channels. And to commence this study of Baptist involvement in public debate, we will start with the one debate which perhaps more than any other aroused the attention and participation of New Zealand Baptists – the debate over the 'demon drink'.

38 Barry Gustafson, 'Intervention in the Public Square: Baptists and Politics in New Zealand 1916-1919', BNZBHS 8 (1980): 2-7; P.S. O'Connor, 'Sectarian Conflict in New Zealand, 1911-1920,' *Political Science* (PS) 19:1 (July 1967), 3-16.

39 J.A. Clifford, *A Handful of Grain: 1882-1914*, vol. 2, *The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of New Zealand*, ed. Angus MacLeod (Wellington: Baptist Historical Society, 1982), 85.

1. Christ or Moloch: The Prohibition Crusade, 1882-1930

> The drink monster commits his crimes, devours the virtue of womanhood, steals the strength of manhood, robs the heritage of childhood, builds filthy lucre fortunes on dead men's bones and cements them with the blood of broken hearts, by our permission.[1]

In late 1922, on the eve of a national referendum on prohibition, the acting editor of the *New Zealand Baptist*, W.S. Rollings, issued a stirring summons to his fellow Baptists. 'They stood now', he said, 'in the Valley of Decision'. No 'citizen who bears the name of Christ can be in doubt where duty lies. … God help men to discern on the ballot paper the Cross of Christ over against the unclean altar of the Moloch drink. And God grant that the Cross may triumph!'[2] It very nearly did – if the cross could be equated with the cause of prohibition. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries New Zealand Baptists became passionate participants in the public crusade to prohibit the sale of alcohol. But this was just one among several crusades to occupy their attention.

A sensitive social conscience

Barry Gustafson has argued that the Baptist Union, by the early decades of the twentieth century, was 'very conscious of its social and political responsibilities'.[3] The focus of Baptist Assemblies – and the content of

1 NZB, November 1922, 222.

2 NZB, December 1922, 240.

3 Barry Gustafson, 'Intervention in the Public Square: Baptists and Politics in New Zealand 1916-1919', BNZBHS 8 (1980): 2-7 at 3. See also Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party 1900-1919* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1980), 121; Martin Sutherland, 'Pulpit or

presidential addresses – during this period seems to support this assessment. At the Baptist Assembly of 1905, the Rev. J.J. North entitled his address 'The Socialism of Jesus: being an argument drawn from the Social Activities of the Christian Faith'. He argued that, 'It is the glory of our Christian faith that it clasped in one the service of God and the service of man; even as God and man are one in Jesus Christ … you can no more separate social activity from Christian faith than you can untwist light and heat plaited in a sunbeam.'[4] Speaking at the Australian Baptist Congress in Sydney three years later, North reiterated his message: 'We shall shame the Gospel we profess if a narrow spirit be upon us … We must not taunt the democracy with the language of Canaan. We must see that our sympathies are as large as the sympathies of Jesus, and that hand in hand the spiritual voice and the social service shall go.'[5]

North, who would go on to become arguably the most influential leader in the history of the Baptist movement in New Zealand, was no lonely voice in the wilderness. His successor as President of the Baptist Union was A.S. Adams, who devoted his Assembly address to the same subject. 'The clamant need of the day,' he argued, 'is for an army of Christian men and women, informed upon public questions, who shall stand squarely for the right, and by precept and example claim the polling booth and Parliament … for God.'[6] In his presidential address to the 1908 Assembly, the Rev. F.G. Buckingham reiterated this theme: 'We know exactly how to regard the cry of "Let politics and other matters alone in the pulpit." Politics and other matters make up a large part of the life of the men and women with whom we have to do, and we should touch all these matters on the moral side.'[7]

For much of the early twentieth century, Assemblies held 'open Parliaments' in which to probe and pronounce on social and political issues. Outside of Assemblies, a number of Baptist ministers felt compelled to

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Podium: J.K. Archer and the Dilemma of Christian Politics in New Zealand,' NZJBR 1 (1996): 26-46 at 26.

4 J.J. North, 'The Socialism of Jesus: Being an Argument Drawn from the Social Activities of the Christian Faith', *Baptist Yearbook*, 1905-1906, 13-25 at 24.

5 J.J. North, address to the Australian Baptist Congress, Sydney, 1908, printed in NZB, October 1908, 184-8.

6 A.S. Adams, 'The Relation of the Church to the Social Problems of the Age', *Baptist Yearbook*, 1906-1907, 9-23 at 18.

7 *Baptist Yearbook*, 1908-1909, 9-25; reprinted in NZJBR 8 (October 2003): 29-30.

address social and political problems in the pulpit. Others held public street meetings to outline the church's attitude to these kinds of issues. In 1908, for example, the Wellington Baptist ministers held meetings for the lunch hour crowds on the city's waterfront, where they answered 'knotty questions' on all kinds of social problems.[8]

This flowering of social and political consciousness can be traced to the convergence of several developments. First, it seems that the 'Nonconformist conscience' that emerged in Britain in the last third of the nineteenth century, was successfully transplanted in New Zealand soil by Nonconformist immigrants. The central tenets of the 'conscience' – that there was no strict boundary between religion and politics, that the state should promote the moral welfare of its citizens, and that all politicians should be of the highest character – were clearly articulated by Baptist ministers like Alfred North, J.J. North's father. Arriving in New Zealand from England in 1882, he contended:

> The assumption that politics are too worldly for the Christian man to deal with is to the last degree absurd … The more sensitive his conscience is, the more desirous he is of getting God's will done, the more should he be concerned that right principles should govern the public life of the people … Our legislators should above all be men worthy of confidence – if they are not that in their private life, they cannot be as members of Parliament or of the Government.[9]

Accordingly, North said, 'it comes altogether within our scope to call upon Christian men, in loyalty to Christ and for the good of our community, to take their part in political life.'

The social conscience of New Zealand Baptists was also being fed by other theological currents, such as postmillennial eschatology. This view, that God's kingdom was gradually advancing in the world and would ultimately triumph over evil as the church exerted her energies to that end, filled some Baptists with an optimistic zeal for social and political engagement:

> The days are hastening towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God amongst men. By sure, if slow, movement, the forces that make for righteousness are making way… [W]e are encouraged to work as well as pray for that glad consummation of the power of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ, whom God hath exalted to be a

8 Clifford, *A Handful of Grain*, 105.

9 NZB, July 1887, 104.

> Prince as well as a Saviour… Our citizenship is truly in heaven, and we shall in due time enter into the enjoyment of it, but in the waiting time we have a citizenship here and now, in which to serve God by serving our fellow men… His authority extends to every province of human energy. To make that authority effective and supreme is the duty of the true Christian, who must live in the world and not apart from it; in the world, but not of it; a force to leaven and purify.[10]

When in 1906 it was charged by some that Christianity held a creed 'that the world was doomed, that the sooner one got out of it the better, and the less one had to do with it the better', the *Baptist* responded by denying this 'travesty of the Christian position' and presenting evidence that 'the forces of Christianity are arraying themselves as never before against every form of legalised vice.'[11] So despite their focus on the world to come, a number of early New Zealand Baptists were convinced that the gospel had profound implications for the shape of this world.[12] They took an active interest in social and political concerns.

This interest was probably also grounded in political realities, a sense that in New Zealand Baptists had opportunities they could only dream of back in England. Timothy Larsen observes that significant numerical growth and political reforms among Baptists in nineteenth century England generated a psychology of optimism and a new attitude to politics: 'A reforming ethos was nurtured by a rising belief in their own self-importance and power: they now saw themselves as a force in the land that had the potential to provoke change.'[13] This, it appears, was also true of New Zealand Baptists at the turn of the twentieth century. Baptists, at 2.3% of the population in 1896, were by no means a large denomination in New Zealand, but they were present in greater proportion than in England. And they were growing, fast.[14] In addition to this, New Zealand society was much more egalitarian than English society and the political structures much more democratic and inclusive than in England. In 1893 New Zealand was the first nation in the world to grant universal suffrage to women and men. In arguing that Christian citizenship is to become a vital force in society, Ad-

10 *Baptist Yearbook*, 1906-1907, 9-23 at 10-11.

11 NZB, October 1906, 1.

12 Brian Smith, 'Baptists and the Working Class in New Zealand' (MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1990), 65.

13 Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, 146.

14 For census figures of church affiliation see Davidson and Lineham (eds.), *Transplanted Christianity*, 183, 185, 250.

ams observed, 'There is to-day an opportunity for its display such as never has been in the world's history. In the times of our fathers, reforms were passed at peril of life and fortune, and under conditions which were almost hopeless.' But in New Zealand 'the fullest opportunities are given to all'.[15] In several significant public debates Baptists sought to utilise those opportunities – particularly in the debate over prohibition.

The curse of the demon drink

An early report on life in Dunedin advised that three social evils were particularly prominent: 'Now abideth drink, gambling and impurity, but the greatest of these is drink'.[16] Heavy drinking appears to have been a very prevalent social problem in colonial New Zealand. This was typical of most settler societies. But New Zealanders were particularly noted for their high level of alcohol consumption.[17] Anthony Trollope wrote of his visit to the colony in 1873, 'I must specially observe one point as to which the New Zealand colonist imitates his brethren and ancestors at home – and far surpasses his Australian rival. He is very fond of getting drunk'.[18] By the turn of the century around 30% of all arrests related to the charge of being drunk and disorderly.[19] This did not include those cases, like physical assault, where alcohol may have been involved but was not the prime reason for arrest. Divorce records were 'ridden with domestic violence by men against women, often oiled by drink.'[20] And while court records might not register it, money spent on drink was often lost to the poorest families that could ill afford to lose it. So the misuse of alcohol was quite rightly seen by many as a major contributor to crime, suffering and social disorder.

15 *Baptist Yearbook*, 1906-1907, 9-23 at 17.

16 Ibid., 110.

17 Davidson and Lineham (eds.), *Transplanted Christianity*, ch. 4

18 See Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, rev. ed. (Auckland: Penguin, 2000), 221.

19 Anthony R. Grigg, 'Prohibition, the Church and Labour: A Programme for Social Reform, 1890-1914', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH) 15:2 (October 1981): 135-54 at 137.

20 James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001), 172.

As a result between 1880 and 1920 a huge debate enveloped the country over attempts to control and, later, prohibit the sale of alcohol. In fact, prohibition became 'the dominant political and social issue in the country'.[21] '[There is] no subject,' commented Prime Minister Massey, 'about which so much feeling is shown as is the case in anything connected with the licensing laws of the country.'[22] The campaign for prohibition was spearheaded by the New Zealand Alliance, along with associated bodies such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).[23] These organisations drew their primary support from the churches. One study shows that 59% of 403 prohibitionist leaders between 1894 and 1914 were ministers of religion. Of these only 7% were Catholic or Anglican.[24] The prohibition movement was, therefore, largely a Protestant – but not Anglican – church movement. Groups like the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Salvation Army tended to regard prohibition as '*the* reform crucial for the redemption of New Zealand'.[25]

The overwhelming majority of Baptists shared this conviction. They played an active role in the campaign, supplying some of the leading generals for the prohibition forces. A.S. Adams, was known as 'the brains of the prohibition party' and served as President of the New Zealand Alliance for six years.[26] Lily May Atkinson was vice president from 1895 until 1921. She also held a variety of offices within the WCTU, including President (1901-1906).[27] Baptist Assemblies and the *Baptist* magazine regularly fulminated against the demon drink. Baptist congregations held public meetings to promote the prohibition cause. By the early twentieth century, Baptists saw

21 A.J. De La Mare, *Drink or Drought: Liquor Licensing and the Prohibition Movement* (Invercargill: Craig Printing, 1981), 12.

22 Jock Phillips, *A Man's* Country? *The Image of the Pakeha Male, A History*, rev. ed. (Auckland: Penguin, 1987), 55.

23 The WCTU was founded in the United States in 1874 and reached New Zealand in 1885.

24 Anthony R. Grigg, 'The Attack on the Citadels of Liquordom: A Study of the Prohibition Movement in New Zealand, 1894-1914' (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1977), 73; Grigg, 'Prohibition, the Church and Labour', 140.

25 Davidson and Lineham (eds.), *Transplanted Christianity*, 181.

26 Clifford, A *Handful of Grain*, 85.

27 Frances Porter, 'Atkinson, Lily May', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/mi/biographies/2a17/atkinson-lily-may> (12 February 2013).

themselves as one with the New Zealand Alliance and its mission to achieve prohibition.[28]

The mobilisation of New Zealand Baptists

But this was not always the case. When Baptists first came to New Zealand in the second half of the nineteenth century,[29] they came with divided attitudes on the issue of alcohol. This was apparent in their disagreements over the use of alcoholic wine for communion,[30] and an early ambivalence towards temperance agitation. Both reflected ongoing division among the English Baptists from whose ranks they were mostly drawn.

Throughout the nineteenth century the vast majority of English Baptists held an open attitude towards alcohol. In 1860 only about a sixth of Baptist ministers were said to be abstainers. By 1886 the proportion had risen to about 1,100 out of 1,900, still far from an overwhelming majority. As late as 1897 an attempt by 'zealots' to have total abstinence declared a qualification for office at the Baptist Union autumn Assembly was firmly rejected.[31] It was not until the early twentieth century that total abstinence became normal.[32] This initial ambivalence towards alcohol was reflected in

28 This is underscored by a letter from C.W. Duncumb, Baptist Assembly representative on the Executive of the New Zealand Alliance, to Baptist churches on 17 March 1931: 'It becomes increasingly obvious that unless the Churches provide in particular the personel [sic] of the local leagues, and that spiritual dynamic by which alone a spiritual evil can be fought, then the work won't be done at all. Let us remember that WE are the New Zealand Alliance, with the responsibility and privilege, under God, of carrying this moral and spiritual campaign to victory.' Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, Correspondence 1927-1934, Aotearoa New Zealand Centre (ANZC), No. 63, Box 20, Canterbury Public Library (CPL), Christchurch.

29 The first Baptist church in New Zealand was established at Nelson in 1851.

30 Paul Tonson, *A Handful of Grain: 1851-1882,* vol. 1, *The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of New Zealand*, ed. Angus MacLeod (Wellington: Baptist Historical Society, 1982), 79.

31 Bebbington, *Nonconformist Conscience*, 46.

32 Briggs, *English Baptists*, 330; Ian Randall, *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 4, *A History of the English Baptists*, ed. Roger Hayden (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society,

English Baptist attitudes to temperance. While temperance agitation was evident among Baptist churches by the 1830s, progress was slow. Even into the 1870s the *Freeman* (predecessor of the *Baptist Times*) carried an advertisement for Irish Whiskey.[33] The editor of the *Baptist Magazine* was still aware in 1874 that he would be criticised for discussing the temperance question in a religious journal.[34] By the 1870s, however, Baptist attitudes to temperance were changing. Joe Coker claims that by the 1870s temperance was 'the leading social concern of Baptists in England'.[35] Some younger Baptist leaders, with John Clifford prominent among them, began to speak for the United Kingdom Alliance, the main political arm of the temperance movement.[36]

This trend was mirrored in New Zealand. In the 1870s and 1880s New Zealand Baptists began to embrace enthusiastically the cause of temperance. The campaign against alcohol took organised form first among children: in late 1877 the Christchurch Church established a Band of Hope.[37] In the early 1880s a number of Baptist churches founded temperance societies.[38] In May 1883 the Rev. Charles Dallaston introduced the Blue Ribbon Army to his congregation.[39] Around that time the Dunedin Church started a Blue Ribbon Total Abstinence Society, and could boast over a hundred teachers and children on the roll of its Blue Ribbon Sunday School mission.[40]

By the 1883 Baptist Assembly it was evident that Baptists were throwing their support behind the temperance cause. Gilbert Carson, a leading Baptist layman and politician, declared that the churches 'went hand in hand with the advocates of this good cause'; they 'were all one on this ques-

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2005), 57; David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 243.

33 Briggs, *English Baptists*, 67.

34 Bebbington, *Nonconformist Conscience*, 46.

35 Coker, 'Social Conscience', 29-30. According to the *Baptist Magazine* (BM), June 1874, 359, temperance was 'by far the most important of social questions, intimately bound up with the interests and progress of Christianity'. See Bebbington, 'Baptist Conscience', 19.

36 Bebbington, *Nonconformist Conscience*, 48.

37 Smith, 'Baptists and the Working Class', 66.

38 Temperance Societies were established in Dunedin in 1881 and in Invercargill in 1882: Tonson, *Handful of Grain*, 17-18.

39 Smith, 'Baptists and the Working Class', 66.

40 NZB, March 1884, 45.

tion'. Thomas Spurgeon, pastor of the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle and son of the famed British Baptist minister, C.H. Spurgeon, assured the forces of temperance of Baptist support.[41] From February 1884 the temperance movement was given wide publicity in the *Baptist*, the denominational magazine, which published a regular 'Temperance Notes' column.[42]

Initially Baptists hoped that they might achieve a drink-free society by persuasion alone. People were encouraged to sign 'the pledge': 'I promise, with God's help, to abstain from all alcoholic liquors as beverages.' In this, they again reflected their English cousins. Coker observes that in the 1870s English Baptists, in concert with other Nonconformists, wielded significant political force. And the temperance question was more prominent than ever on the national scene, with many nonconformist and evangelical groups pushing for legal prohibition of alcohol. Baptists, however, refused to support their campaign. In 1870 a meeting of the Baptist Union passed a resolution insisting that, while they 'deeply lament[ed] the terrible evils resulting from intemperance', the best means for ending this evil was not legal prohibition. Rather, the resolution stated, 'the chief agencies for securing the much-needed reformation must be found in the spread of education, in moral suasion, and in the growing influence of Christian truth'. Similarly, in 1874 no mention of prohibition occurred when the Baptist Union finally established its own denominational temperance society, the Baptist Total Abstinence Association. 'While Baptists were convinced of the importance of temperance for the well-being of both individuals and society, they did not think the state had the right to impose such moral discipline on its citizenry.'[43]

At its October 1876 meeting the Baptist Union of Great Britain received 'memorials' from temperance organisations urging it to take a stand in support of prohibition legislation currently before Parliament. Methodists, Presbyterians, Evangelicals within the Church of England, and many other denominational bodies and temperance societies had endorsed the bill. Baptists, it appeared, were 'the lone holdouts within British nonconformity.' Rather than give any official endorsement for the prohibition bill, they passed a resolution reasserting their conviction that intemperance was 'a great and widespread evil, ruinous alike to the bodies and souls of men',

41 NZB, November 1883, 363.
42 NZB, February 1884, 30.
43 Coker, 'Social Conscience', 23-27, 36.

but left it as 'the solemn duty of its members to do all in their power' to suppress intemperance.[44] When English Baptists did express some desire to see the liquor traffic restricted through legal means, it involved strengthening the licensing laws.[45] Prohibition, however, was a step too far. It was not until the twentieth century that English Baptists really embraced the cause.

While New Zealand Baptists also hoped initially to achieve a drink-free society through persuasion alone, by the mid-1880s they had turned to political action. Concern about the level of alcohol consumption led Parliament to establish significant controls on the sale of alcohol with the Licensing Act of 1881. In introducing the Act, the Hon Thomas Dick, Minister of Justice and a prominent Baptist layman, explained that while licensing was necessary to protect the public, he was personally opposed to prohibition, the kind of which had recently been adopted in the state of Kansas.[46] However, his attitude, and that of his fellow Baptists, quickly hardened. Just four years later, as President of the Baptist Union in 1885, Dick declared:

> The Church of today must take to its heart the duty of combining and massing its forces against that gigantic atrocity, that diabolical conspiracy, that nameless "monstrum horrendum" of Christian civilisation that mothers nine-tenths of the woes and sorrows which blight and curse out modern age – the traffic in intoxicants. How long shall the face of our Christian age blister with this worse than pagan shame?[47]

Dick noted that just a 'few years ago the Churches ignored this subject'. But, he observed, 'the fact has rapidly gained ground that one of the greatest evils against which Christianity must contend is the evil of intoxicating drink. Moderate measures have been tried with it; mild arguments have been used … but it has been found that this will not do.' With prophetic zeal, he declared:

> The intoxicating cup must be dashed from every hand; the moderate drinkers must become total abstainers, in order to save their brethren and to keep ours from falling. The liquor traffic must be destroyed root and branch, and the land cleared of it as of some deadly disease. This, it is now very largely acknowledged in Christian churches,

44 Ibid., 37.

45 For examples see Bebbington, *Nonconformist Conscience*, 48.

46 Conrad Bollinger, *Grog's Own Country: The Story of Liquor Licensing in New Zealand*, 2nd ed. (Auckland: Minerva, 1967), 32.

47 NZB, November 1885, 161-5 at 164.

> has become a positive duty …. This seems to me a work which it becomes us as a Union to do our utmost to help forward. By petition to the legislature, at the polling both, by example, by speech and pen, we should individually and unitedly throw ourselves into the work of saving our fellows from the ruin, body and soul, which has been caused by the drinking customs of the past.[48]

The following year the scattered forces of the temperance movement formed themselves into a national body, the New Zealand Alliance, whose primary aim, as stated in its constitution, was 'the abolition and prohibition of the liquor traffic in New Zealand by the direct vote of the people'.[49] Thomas Dick became a member of the executive committee.[50] He and his fellow Baptists quickly gave it warm support. They continued to support measures regulating the consumption of alcohol. In 1889, for example, the annual Baptist Assembly recorded 'emphatic and earnest protest' at breaches of Sunday closing clauses in the Licensing Act.[51] But their goal became, increasingly, the legal prohibition of alcohol.[52]

Local prohibition: the no-license campaign

Initially the prohibition campaign was focused on prohibition at the local level. In 1893 the Liberal government passed the Alcoholic Liquor Sales Control Act. This enabled voters, in a referendum to be held every three years, to ban the sale of drink in their electorates if 60% of local residents voted for that option. The introduction of effective local veto legislation marked the beginning of a new era in New Zealand's liquor licensing system. Through the provision of triennial liquor polls it encouraged the development of a highly organised prohibition movement. Baptists were disappointed with the requirement of a 60% majority for 'No License' to be carried. However, on the principle of 'better half a loaf than no bread', the

48 NZB, November 1885, 161-5 at 164-5.

49 Alliance constitution quoted by John Daniels, 'Prohibition', in A.H. McLintock, ed., *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, ed. A.H. McLintock (Wellington: R.E. Owen, 1966), 872-7 at 874.

50 NZB, May 1887, 76.

51 NZB, January 1890, 11.

52 NZB, August 1890, 113.

Baptist magazine urged Baptist electors to vote for it, and drive out the drink traffic.[53]

Throughout the 1890s the *Baptist* continued to support the no-license option, the tone of its language increasingly strident. By January 1900 the no-license cause was a religious 'crusade', which the editor could equate with 'righteousness and truth'.[54] The following year the *Baptist* claimed that temperance was 'the clear and urgent duty of every follower of the Lord Christ'.[55] It had become a 'Holy War', 'the great battle'.[56] Before the 1902 poll it published an appeal from A.S. Adams, then President of the New Zealand Alliance: 'The bugle-call is sounding the advance; the Lord of the Church is marshalling His forces for the conflict, and it is time that all who owe allegiance to Him should recognise their duty to God and their neighbours, and respond to His call.'[57] On the eve of the 1905 poll the *Baptist* carried on its front page the emphatic reminder: 'Remember! Remember! The 6th of December. Vote out the beer, spirits and wine. To the poll you must go, Be it rain, hail or snow, And be sure you STRIKE OUT THE TOP LINE!'[58]

Commitment to congregational autonomy and freedom of conscience might suggest that most New Zealand Baptists would tolerate diversity of opinion on the question of alcohol.[59] But, as Laurie Guy has observed, 'liberty of conscience has sometimes been a vaunted myth in Baptist history because the collective Baptist body has worked out what the Bible says on a topic and other viewpoints are frozen out.'[60] Increasingly this was the case with alcohol.

In the first decade of the century hardly a year passed without the annual Baptist Assembly passing a resolution against the 'drink evil'. In 1901 the Assembly unanimously passed a motion expressing the assembly's conviction that 'the total abolition of the liquor traffic is the only effective

53 NZB, March 1894, 1.
54 NZB, January 1900, 1-2, 12.
55 NZB, June 1901, 82-3.
56 NZB, November 1902, 161; January 1903, 9.
57 NZB, August 1902, 114-6.
58 NZB, December 1905, 176. Emphasis original.
59 Especially as the Bible is ambiguous in regards alcohol. Compare, for example, Psalm 104:15 with Proverbs 20:1. See, too, Paul's acknowledgement of liberty of conscience in dietary matters in Romans 14:1-4.
60 Laurie Guy, "'Romanists" for Rum, Baptists against Booze: Two Churches in the Struggle over Prohibition in 1919', PJBR 2:1 (2006): 63-82 at 65.

remedy'.[61] No-license motions were passed with 'absolute unanimity' in 1902 and 1903. The 1904 Assembly reaffirmed 'its earnest conviction that the only effective method of dealing with the drink evil is by the No-License vote', and urged 'all the Churches connected with the Union to do their utmost to secure the success of that vote throughout the Colony next year.'[62] At that Assembly another motion called for the creation of 'The New Zealand Baptist Total Abstinence Society,' both for carrying on aggressive work in the interests of temperance but mainly for the purpose of encouraging total abstinence on the part of the individual. Interestingly, the motion was defeated, largely 'on the ground that there was felt to be no need for it.'[63] Baptists were already aggressively, and overwhelmingly, committed to total abstinence – and prohibition.

This was made even clearer the following year, when the Assembly programme actually included a No-License demonstration calling on the 'people of New Zealand in the name of Christ to vote out the liquor traffic'.[64] According to A.S. Adams, this special crusade meeting 'voiced the enormous conviction of the churches, which is uncompromisingly on the side of no-license.'[65] Three years later the *Baptist* magazine could observe that Baptist churches were wholeheartedly behind the no-license vote: 'We doubt', wrote the editor, 'if any denomination is more unanimously and enthusiastically sympathetic towards this great cause than our own. We have received reports … from all over the colony, telling of the energy and skill with which our ministers are leading this magnificent crusade.'[66]

Increasing success at the triennial licensing polls spurred Baptists to intensify their efforts in that direction. Over this period the no-license vote moved steadily upwards. In 1902, for the first time, the national vote in favour of continuance of the liquor trade was less than the vote for abolition. This led the New Zealand correspondent for the *Sydney Bulletin* to confidently assert, 'I hereby pronounce prohibition as inevitable as death in Maoriland.'[67] Baptists activists, like A.S. Adams, agreed: 'Victory is in sight,

61 NZB, December 1901, 189; January 1902, 12.
62 *Baptist Yearbook*, 1904-1905, 45.
63 Ibid., 41.
64 NZB, November 1905, 174-5.
65 NZB, December 1905, 185.
66 NZB, December 1905, 185-6.
67 Gordon McLauchlan, *The Story of Beer: Beer and Brewing – A New Zealand History* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1994), 99.