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BAPTISTS AND HIGHLAND CULTURE

T.W. Meyes, "Baptists and Highland Culture," Baptist Quarterly 33.4 (October 1989): 155-173.

Baptists in Scotland have a long connection with the Highlands. Gaelic preachers who adhered to Baptist principles began to appear in the Highlands at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The critical year for the emergence of Baptist witness in the region seems to have been 1801. It is possible that Baptist missionaries were active in the eastern fringes of the Highlands before 1801, but the development of the movement in the Gaelic-speaking areas cannot be said to be earlier than that date.

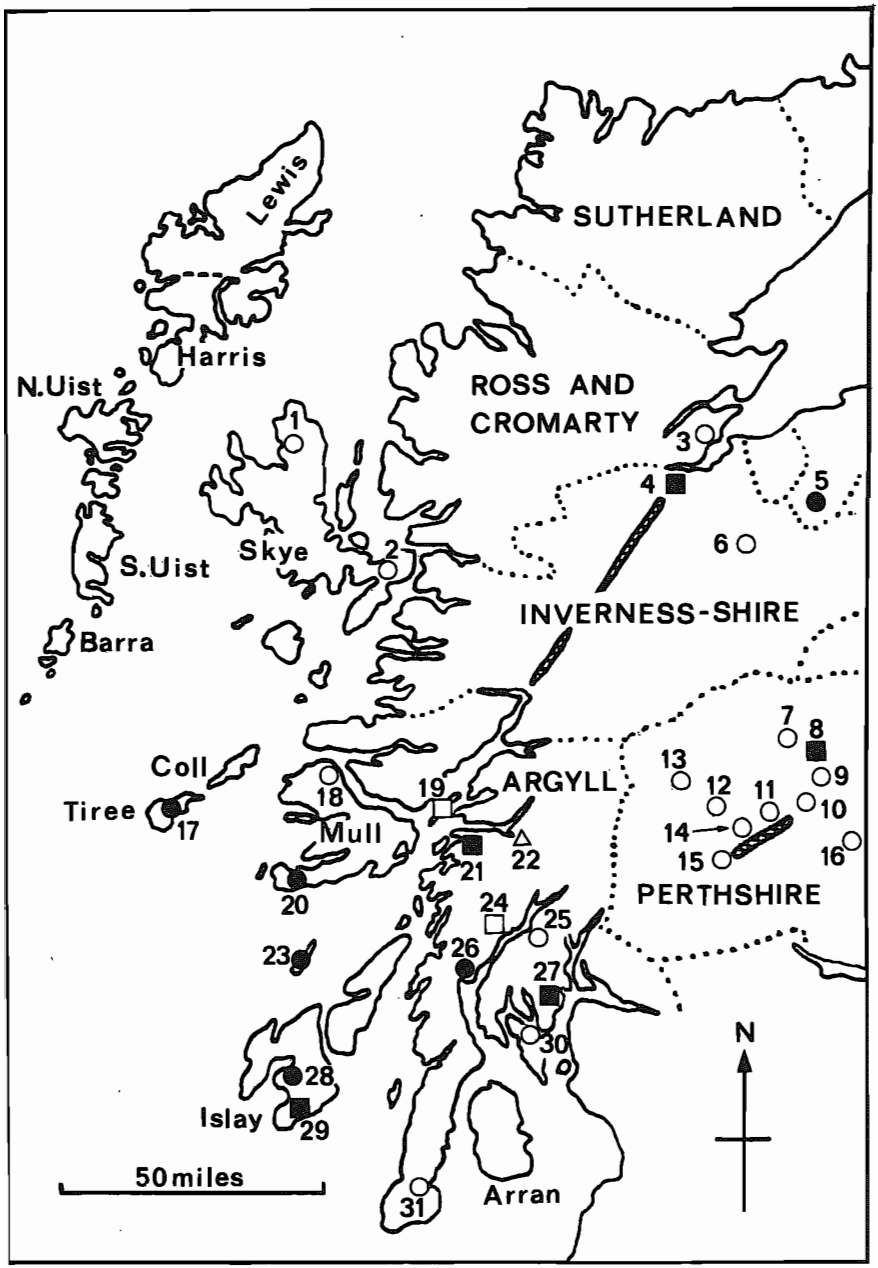
What was significant about 1801? Two happenings are relevant. First, this was the year when Baptist principles were adopted by those who became the earliest promoters of Baptist missionary activity in the Highlands. The leading pioneer in this field was Christopher Anderson, a Lowlander from Edinburgh, who was closely associated with church-planting in the Highlands as early as 1805. Three years later Anderson established a little society to promote Highland mission, and he was also ordained as the pastor of a Baptist church at Richmond Court, Edinburgh, which was to grow into Charlotte Baptist Chapel.

In 1801 also, two tough Gaelic-speaking Highlanders, fired with missionary enthusiasm, became Baptists. These were Donald McArthur and Dugald Sinclair. Donald McArthur was a fisherman operating in the Firth of Clyde, but he gave up this occupation in order to preach extensively as an evangelist. He formed a Baptist church in Bute in 1804, and became a powerful, if idiosyncratic, evangelist, who travelled around the Clyde islands and the shores of Loch Fyne. Dugald Sinclair, a native of Mid Argyll, was baptised in Glasgow in March 1801, and immediately began to preach in the Highlands, probably in his native district. In 1805 a small church, with Donald McVicar as its pastor, was formed at Bellanoch, near Lochgilphead, not far from Sinclair's home territory. In 1810 Sinclair joined the society formed by Christopher Anderson, and with its support he planted the seeds of the Baptist churches which still survive in the Inner Hebridean islands of Mull, Colonsay and Islay. Sinclair also visited other islands and parts of the mainland, and he can be regarded fairly as the founding father of Baptist witness in the Inner Hebrides and mainland Argyll. McArthur emigrated to North America about 1810, and Sinclair did likewise in 1831.

It is not known what induced these two Gaelic speakers to become Baptists. It is possible that they were in contact with Baptists in the Lowlands. Nevertheless, McArthur is said to have reached this position by independent study of the Scriptures, and the same may well have been true of Dugald Sinclair. It was a very bold and decisive step in a region where the Established Church held sway.[1]

The second point worth noting about 1801 is that this was the year when the whole Bible became available in Scottish Gaelic. The translation had been in the making since 1755. Now it was possible for Highlanders to have the Bible in their own language, provided that they could read it. This was an important consideration. Very few Highlanders could actually read Gaelic, and those pioneering Baptists, Christopher Anderson and Dugald Sinclair, were closely associated with the foundation of the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools, which was instituted in 1810 and began its work in 1811. The society aimed to make the Highlanders sufficiently literate in their own language to read the Gaelic Bible. In fact, it can properly be said that Christopher Anderson was the driving force behind the Gaelic school movement.[2]

This movement, based on the Gaelic Bible, had a massive impact on the Highlands. Not only did it create a major bond between Evangelicalism and the Gaelic language; it was also the main source of the type of Evangelicalism which is today, rightly or wrongly, associated pre-eminently with the Highlands - an Evangelicalism which stresses faithfulness to the Scriptures, which inculcates a godly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MAP

SYMBOLS

● ○ Churches founded between 1800 and 1850

■ □ Churches founded between 1851 and 1900

▲ △ Churches founded between 1901 and 1905

Churches now closed are represented by voided symbols.

KEY

1.	Uig	17.	Tiree
2.	Broadford	18.	Tobermory
3.	Fortrose	19.	Lismore
4.	Inverness	20.	Bunessan
5.	Grantown-on-Spey	21.	Oban
6.	Kingussie	22.	Taynuilt
7.	Blair Atholl	23.	Colonsay
8.	Pitlochry	24.	Furnace
9.	Tullymet	25.	Strachur
10.	Aberfeldy	26.	Lochgilphead
11.	Fortingall	27.	Dunoon
12.	Glenlyon	28.	Bowmore
13.	Rannoch	29.	Port Ellen
14.	Lawers	30.	Port Bannatyne
15.	Killin	31.	Campbeltown
16.	Dunkeld		

Note: In the early nineteenth century attempts were made to form churches at Dunoon, Inverness and Oban. These initial causes failed to take firm root, and the present churches date from the period 1880-1900. It is noticeable that the churches founded in the periods 1851-1900 and 1901-1905 were mainly in towns or large villages. The activity of the period 1800-1850 was largely concerned with the rural

fear and reverence in worship, and which is linked with widespread revivals in the course of the nineteenth century. The movement deeply penetrated the Established Church in the Highlands, and laid the foundation for the emergence of the Free Church in 1843.[3]

It can thus be seen that Baptists appeared in the Highlands as the representatives of a new wave of home missionary activity which, by 1850, had succeeded in forging close links between Evangelicalism and Gaelic culture. This wave had been stimulated in the closing years of the eighteenth century by the developments in foreign missionary interest in Britain, and it was channelled into the Highlands primarily by the work of Robert and James Haldane. The Haldanes set up an itinerant society, the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, which supported Gaelic-speaking missionaries who were of Independent (or Congregational) persuasion. They tramped through most of the Highlands on missionary tours, but made their mark most effectively in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Perthshire, where a group of Independent churches was established. In 1808 the Haldanes became Baptists, and the majority of Perthshire churches followed their example. In this way, the Baptists established two power-bases within the Gaelic-speaking Highlands, the earlier one in Argyll (associated with McArthur and Sinclair) and the later one in Perthshire. Argyll and Perthshire were to remain the principal strongholds of Highland Baptist activity.[4]

It is noticeable that the first Baptist churches in the Highlands were established in the southern and eastern districts, very close to the so-called 'Highland Line', which marked the limit of the Gaelic-speaking area. This is probably significant, since Perthshire and Argyll were among the first parts of the Highlands to feel the cultural influence of the Scots- and English-speaking Lowlands. As Baptist churches emerged in those early years, they tended to appear most rapidly at points of strong interaction between Lowland and Highland culture; the farther one went into the Gaelic heartland, the harder it was to establish Baptist churches, even in areas where Baptist missionaries were active. It took only four years to establish the Baptist church which was constituted at Bellanoch in Mid Argyll in 1805; it took fourteen years to establish the church which was constituted in Tiree, on the outer edge of the Inner Hebrides, in 1838. In some areas in the far north, such as Lewis, Baptist churches never took root, although Baptists attracted a strong following in the island in the late 1820s.[5]

Of course, there were other, non-cultural, considerations which helped or hindered the emergence of Baptist churches. One of these was the availability and deployment of Baptist missionaries. The failure to establish a Baptist church in Lewis was caused partly by the removal of the Baptist missionary in Stornoway, John Mackintosh, who was instructed by James Haldane to go to Lochgilphead to replace Dugald Sinclair in 1831. Mackintosh was reluctant to leave Lewis because the work looked so promising, but Haldane prevailed upon him.[6]

In the Highland parishes generally, the most important factor which controlled the acceptability of Baptist missionaries was whether adequate provision was being given to the people by the Established Church. Highland parishes were notoriously large, and included extremely difficult terrain. In Perthshire and Argyll this problem was acute in the early nineteenth century, and it was compounded by a preponderance of Moderate, non-Evangelical ministers in the parishes. A growing desire for church provision, especially of an Evangelical kind, propelled some Highlanders towards the new Independent and Baptist churches. Sometimes they stayed with these churches only for a limited period, until they had satisfactory provision in the parish church. Provision by the Established Church improved markedly after 1824, when about forty so-called Parliamentary churches were constructed by an Act of Parliament, many

of them in the Highlands. In the rural areas where parish provision remained poor, where there was a strong degree of community isolation, and where there was economic uncertainty exacerbated by oppressive landlordism, Baptist missionaries found a ready response, and churches were established, sometimes with deep and lasting roots. Most of the Baptist and Independent churches in the Highlands were formed and constituted between 1805 and 1838, and foreshadow the Disruption of 1843, when the Free Church of Scotland emerged from the Established Church, with massive Highland support. The formation of Highland Baptist and Independent churches represents a series of small, localised 'disruptions'. It is noticeable that Baptist churches remained strongest in those parts of the Highlands where the Free Church was weakest (such as Argyll and the Inner Hebrides).[7]

Adjusting to Gaelic Culture

Although the movement which established the earliest Baptist churches in the Highlands owed much to the Lowlands and consequently to non-Gaelic culture, it was, in practice, recognised very quickly that it could not make any impact on the Highlands without being attuned to Highland culture. The movement soon became 'indigenised' in the Gaelic-speaking areas, and it is clear that the emerging churches gathered very considerable support from the ordinary people of the rural class. It is very noticeable that the Baptist cause in the Highlands flourished best in a rural, Gaelic-speaking environment, and that it had little appeal in towns, except those in which there were substantial numbers of immigrant Gaelic speakers who were already sympathetic to the Baptist cause. This, it may be noted, is the reverse of what became the general pattern in Scotland. The strongest Baptist church in the West Highlands in the nineteenth century was in the Inner Hebridean island of Tiree, with 160 members in 1874-5; the weakest cause was probably that at Oban, which was very nearly abandoned in the 1860s. The Oban cause was reinvigorated, and in effect re-started, in the 1890s.[8]

In the nineteenth century one of the great strengths of the Baptist movement was its identity with Gaelic rural society. In time, this became, tragically, one of its great weaknesses. Emigration removed large numbers of Gaelic-speaking Baptists,[9] and there is a very clear link between the decline of Gaelic culture and the decline of Baptist churches in the Highlands. The cultural connection between 'grace and Gaelic' is all too obviously demonstrated in the Baptist context. As the English language gained dominance, the adjustment to English culture was made earliest and most successfully in the larger towns, such as Oban and Lochgilphead. Elsewhere, Baptist churches have suffered a slow and very painful decline. In Highland Perthshire, where Baptist churches were once comparatively numerous (eight), there are none today; the witness is, however, continued at Pitlochry, where a mission station was set up by the Highland churches, and where the work has grown to prominence in the twentieth century. As the cultural framework which supported the Highland churches was weakened progressively by social instability, no satisfactory replacement framework was erected, at least in the rural areas.

Statistics show that Baptists had established a total of 31 churches in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands by 1905; of these only eleven survive today. This represents a total loss of about 65% of churches. The loss of Gaelic-speaking members is probably much higher. In 1844 it was reckoned that there were 1000 Gaelic speakers in membership in Highland Baptist churches; it is doubtful if there are as many as 50 Gaelic-speaking members in all the Highland churches today. Loss of Gaelic-speaking membership since 1844 may therefore be in the region of at least 95%. The decline of Gaelic ministerial provision is even more stark. In 1869 twelve Baptist

churches provided Gaelic Sunday services once a day. The Tiree church was the last to do so, and its regular Gaelic services ceased in 1965.[10]

At this point, however, let us consider the happier side of the picture, namely the ways in which Baptist missionary enterprise expanded and consolidated itself in the Highland cultural context in the nineteenth century.

The first development of note was the establishment, in 1827, of the Baptist Home Missionary Society for Scotland, which was designated in 1829 as being 'Chiefly for the Highlands and Islands'. This society drew together the various small-scale bodies which had been operating in the years from 1808 to 1827 - Christopher Anderson's Scotch Itinerant Society, the Haldanes' enterprises, and the Baptist Highland Mission. If such an amalgamation had not been achieved, it is doubtful whether Baptist work in the Highlands would have survived beyond 1850, given the massive changes which swept the region from the mid-century. The establishment of the 'Home Mission' acknowledged two important points. First, it acknowledged that individual Highland churches could not be expected to sustain, on their own account, a missionary thrust into the Highland area; supporting the work there had to be a broadly-based organisation, which drew finance from churches outside the Highlands. A Travelling Agent, Lachlan Mackintosh, was appointed in 1831, and he gathered finance from churches and interested bodies in the Lowlands, in England and in Ireland. It is noteworthy that in this period half the cost of maintaining the society was contributed by Baptists in England, and the other half by Lowland Baptists. In short, Baptist mission in the Scottish Highlands in the nineteenth century was sustained by British, and not merely by Lowland, interest in the region. The second point which was acknowledged by the establishment of the Home Mission was that the Highlands were distinctive - in their culture, as much as in anything else. In fact, the cultural differentiation of the Gaelic-speaking Highlands was a key factor in attracting support for Highland missionary activity; as long as the Highlands remained predominantly Gaelic-speaking, there was a 'foreign' field on the British, English-speaking doorstep.[11]

The cultural distinctiveness of the Highlands led to the second major development which aided the work in the Highlands. Indeed, this was the crucial development - namely, the training and maintenance of a substantial number of Gaelic-speaking men, who acted both as missionaries and as pastors of the churches, their principal designation being 'missionaries'. It is apparent that the Independent movement initiated by the Haldanes, who knew no Gaelic, very quickly 'went native' in Perthshire and in Strathspey, with the result that Gaelic-speaking missionaries were being produced in these parts by the closing years of the eighteenth century. Gaelic-speaking Baptist missionaries were very few in number until 1808, when several Independent missionaries in Perthshire and Strathspey followed the example of the Haldanes and became Baptists. The men from Perthshire, Strathspey and mainland Argyll were the founding fathers of the Baptist movement in the Highlands, and they compensated for their small numbers by going on long preaching tours of the Highlands, from Kintyre to Cape Wrath. The number of missionaries grew gradually in succeeding years, and in 1827 the Home Missionary Society had nineteen missionaries on its roll, the majority of whom were Gaelic-speaking.[12]

One of the features of the Baptist movement in the Highlands is that, as it took root in different regions, several localities produced their own supply of Gaelic preachers. The foundational examples of Perthshire and Strathspey have already been noted. The same pattern can be seen even more clearly in the West Highlands. Thus, in the island of Tiree, where a Baptist church was founded (by a missionary from the neighbouring island of Mull) in 1838, the church was pastored by a succession of Tiree men from 1851 to 1965, with the exception of the years 1928-39 when its pastor

was (again) a native of Mull.[13] Such close identity with particular localities meant that pastorates were often very long and very stable; in the nineteenth century pastorates of at least twenty years' duration were quite normal, especially when the pastors were natives of their localities. It is noticeable that the ability to produce native-born preachers has been a major factor in the survival of Baptist churches in Highland localities. Districts which, for some reason, did not produce (or continue to produce) their own pastors (e.g. the island of Skye) and had to depend on men from fairly distant localities were among the earliest to lose their churches. The pastors were, of course, closely identified with their people, and until the Home Mission ceased to exist in 1971, very few Gaelic-speaking pastors moved to Lowland charges. The small number who moved south did, however, play key roles in the wider work of the denomination.[14]

The pastors of the Home Mission in its hey-day were characterised by a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice which we can scarcely envisage today. Some not only gathered the original churches but also built, single-handed, the first chapels. Alexander Livingstone, a native of Lismore who planted the island's Baptist church in the 1860s, wrote as follows to the Home Mission in 1862:

> I trust you will overlook the shortness of my letter, when I mention that it is quite a task for me to write, as my hand is blistered quarrying stones for the meeting-house, for I am not able to employ others. So long as the Lord will give me strength, these hands will do what they can to forward the work.[15]

When the supply of such Gaelic-speaking men began to decline sharply after 1900, they were difficult, indeed impossible, to replace. In the mid-nineteenth century the Home Mission had about eighteen such men on its books, but by 1912 the number had dwindled to seven, of whom five were natives of a single island, Tiree.[16] Out-migration from the Highlands removed not only the people but also the natural leaders who became pastors.

Contributing to the Culture

If Highland culture helped to shape Baptist witness in the region, it is important to ask how Baptists approached Highland culture, and whether they left any distinctive marks on it. Were they hostile to the culture, and did they seek to destroy it? Or were they sympathetic to certain aspects of the culture, exercising a selectivity with regard to those domains which they chose to support and those which they chose to condemn? If we look at the evidence, it would appear that the latter conclusion is probably justified. We shall consider the evidence in three areas of culture: (a) language and literature, (b) song and poetry, and (c) social customs and institutions.

It is perhaps helpful to note, by way of background, that in the eighteenth century the Scottish Highlands had already been the scene of vigorous missionary activity, and that the various missionary bodies had had to come to terms with Gaelic culture. The principal missionary agency in those years was the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. The SSPCK was mainly a school-based organisation, which set up schools in Highland parishes, and also supported catechists. It was strongly Presbyterian, and until the late 1760s the eradication of Gaelic, and its replacement by English, was one of its main aims. Cultural and religious integration of the Highlands into the wider British scene was the overall goal. In 1767, however, the society published the New Testament in Gaelic, and in 1801 it published the final volume of the Old Testament in Gaelic. This indicated clearly

that the SSPCK had come to regard its own English-based teaching method a failure, and to appreciate that the Gaelic language could be used for educational purposes, at least as a stepping-stone to the acquisition of English. A more sympathetic and pragmatic approach to the mother tongue had thus developed by the end of the eighteenth century.[17]

In addition, the Established Church in the more northerly parts of the Highlands was setting the tone for the type of Evangelicalism which came to dominate Highland Presbyterianism after 1800. It strove to inculcate moral rectitude, Sabbath observance and temperance (especially at social events), and it tried to eradicate superstition and pagan customs. Its attitude to indigenous, secular literature was sometimes supportive, sometimes ambivalent, and sometimes hostile.[18]

As we shall see, Baptists tended to espouse the same general concerns, with perhaps one very marked difference - namely, that the conversion of the individual to Christ was the foundation of any 'reformation of manners'. Thus, Baptists made very little of the moral issues (illegitimacy, fornication etc.) which dominate Kirk Session records; their main interest was to communicate the Gospel by whatever means, and to leave the moral reformation to its transforming power. Discipline for 'lapses' was exercised within the gathered congregation of believers, and for that reason Baptists did not adopt a policy of 'moral policing' for Highland society as a whole. In general, they chose to accept, and to develop for their own purposes, aspects of Highland culture which could be used constructively in the missionary context, and they condemned mainly those general features which could be seen to stand against the progress of the Gospel or to harm the individual.

(a) Turning first to the attitude of Baptist missionaries to Gaelic language and literature, we find that, in the nineteenth century, they were wholeheartedly committed to the use of the mother tongue in communicating the Gospel. Indeed, as we noted earlier, they spearheaded the Gaelic school movement, which aimed to make Highlanders sufficiently literate to read the Gaelic Bible. The initiative in forming the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools was taken by Christopher Anderson in November 1810, after he had returned from an itinerating journey which had taken him as far north as Beauly. Anderson was shocked by the small number of Highlanders who could read their native language, and he realised that preachers could make little headway unless their congregations could read the Gaelic Bible for themselves. His observations for the eastern Highlands were confirmed by Dugald Sinclair, who had travelled round the western Highlands at the same time. The society which Anderson founded was interdenominational, and this was its great strength. It was able to locate Gaelic schoolteachers in many Highland parishes with the active support of ministers of the Established Church. These ministers tended to show hostility only when the schoolmasters took to preaching, an activity which they were not allowed to pursue, according to the rules of the society. The Edinburgh Gaelic School Society was remarkably successful throughout the Highlands, and revivals broke out as a result of the work of the teachers.[19] Overall, however, the society had a Presbyterian slant, since it tended to recruit most of its staff in the Presbyterian areas, and Baptist schoolmasters were not very plentiful. Nevertheless, we know of at least two Baptist schoolmasters, and it has to be admitted that they both blotted their copy-books and took to preaching, with the result that three Baptist churches were founded. Alexander Grant, who was originally stationed as a Gaelic schoolmaster in the island of Shuna (1819-21) before being removed from the island, established two Baptist churches in Mull, and Duncan MacDougall, who came to Tiree as a Gaelic schoolmaster in 1824, founded the local Baptist church.[20]

Although few Baptists were employed as Gaelic schoolteachers, most Baptist

missionaries taught Sunday Schools at which literacy was promoted through the reading of the Gaelic Bible. The following description of the Sunday School held by James Miller, who became pastor of the church in Uig, Skye, in 1831, is typical of the nineteenth century:

> When the congregation is dismissed he teaches a Sabbath-school. Most of the children read the Scriptures in Gaelic; answer questions from the passages, and repeat portions of Scripture which they have committed to memory.[21]

Sometimes schools of this kind operated during the week as an adjunct of the church, and on occasion the missionaries would act as scribes, writing letters for those in the community who could not do this for themselves.

In spite of their ability to write in Gaelic and English, it cannot be said that Baptist missionaries made much of a contribution to the development of Gaelic prose literature in the nineteenth century. Part of the reason for this lay in their missionary activity and their ceaseless itinerating, which left little time for literary pursuits, especially those which involved original thinking over a sustained period. The main area of prose literature in which they had a creative interest was the translating of tracts, and here they tended to perpetuate a fashion which had begun in the mid-eighteenth century, when English Puritan literature was first disseminated in the Highlands. As the work of the Gaelic school movement took effect, people wanted to read other literature besides the Bible, and tracts were in considerable demand. Dugald Sinclair was made aware of this on a visit to Mull in 1814, when he wrote:

> On this occasion, as often before, I was convinced of the propriety, and even necessity, of having a large proportion of tracts in Gaelic, if good is to be expected by distributing tracts in the Highlands. Often have I also desired to have a little leisure for the work of translation. The peculiarly impressive and energetic manner in which Divine truth may be conveyed and applied to the conscience in the Gaelic language, as well as the uncommon attachment of the Highlanders to their native tongue, to say nothing of its being the only language in which divine things can be conveyed with any probable prospect of success, to nine-tenths of the people, renders this object truly desirable.[22]

We do not know whether Sinclair ever found the time to translate tracts; Gaelic tracts were produced anonymously, and therefore the evidence eludes us. However, it seems highly likely that he and his fellow missionaries would have made some contribution to the genre. We do know that, in the later nineteenth century, some of Spurgeon's sermons were translated into Gaelic by a Baptist pastor, Alexander MacDougall.[23] Tracts and sermons were, of course, relatively small items and were, therefore, manageable within a busy timetable. They were also thoroughly practical in their application. It is probably significant that it was a layman who translated the only Gaelic prose work of any appreciable size from a Baptist writer in the period before 1850. This is a translation of G. H. Orchard's *Brief Sketch of the History of Baptists in Britain*, a popular work published originally by the Baptist Tract Society.[24] The translation was made in 1845 by Archibald MacFadyen, a native of Colonsay, and it doubtless had the same apologetic purpose as the original text, namely to get rid of the Anabaptist 'smear' and prove that the Baptists had a respectable pre-

Reformation pedigree! Not surprisingly, tracts and books such as this did little to satisfy the desire for Gaelic literature which was generated by the Gaelic schools, and the initiative in developing indigenous Gaelic reading material passed to the Established Church. The principal writer of Gaelic prose was the influential Church of Scotland minister, Dr Norman MacLeod ('Caraid nan Gàidheal'), who published two periodicals aimed at introducing Gaelic readers to a wider range of writing than that offered by translations of tracts and sermons.[25]

(b) One of the reasons for the small contribution of Baptist pastors to Gaelic prose is undoubtedly the comparatively humble status of prose in Gaelic society. It was not regarded as highly as poetry, which was the principal medium of expression. The prestige of poetry is probably reflected in the extensive contribution which Baptists made to Gaelic poetry. Indeed, it can be said that Baptist pastors were pioneers in the development of the body of experiential hymnology which is found in the Gaelic Evangelical world. The tradition of composing hymns of experience, focusing on the joy of salvation and urging the unconverted to seek it, took deep root in Strathspey and Perthshire. In Strathspey its chief exponent was Peter Grant, the pastor of the Baptist church at Grantown-on-Spey. Grant's hymns enjoyed an extraordinary popularity throughout the nineteenth century, and are still sung in the Gaelic-speaking areas.[26] They acted as a model for other composers, and the tradition is attested in most districts where Baptists were active. It is noticeable that the Gaelic hymns were composed pre-eminently at times of revival, and that they are closely associated with the emotional release which the revivals brought to the people. Collections of Gaelic verse by Baptist composers also tended to be published and re-published at times of revival. When these collections are examined, it is apparent that the hymns often utilised the tunes and forms of secular songs, and in this way they were able to permeate the Gaelic communities to a remarkable degree.[27]

(c) The manner in which Baptists employed secular tunes in the composition of hymns indicates very clearly that, at appropriate points, they were prepared to achieve a working compromise with Gaelic secular tradition. Gaelic songs were closely associated with the custom of the *cèilidh*-house, the *cèilidh* being the occasion when people from a community met together to hear news, tell stories, recite poetry, sing songs, swap proverbs and generally to enjoy secular fellowship. Baptist missionaries soon learned that the *cèilidh*-house could be used for religious purposes; in 1810 Dugald Sinclair used a gathering of this kind in Kintyre to tell the story of the conversion of Alexander Stewart, a Moderate minister in Moulin, Perthshire, who experienced Evangelical conversion as the result of an evening exhortation by Charles Simeon, then visiting the area.[28] It was a spiritual 'wonder tale', to be set beside the tales of supernatural transformation which were no doubt familiar in the district. Indeed, it seems likely that the Highland *cèilidh*-house had its religious equivalent in the very popular cottage meetings which flourished in areas touched by Evangelical fervour. Baptists made extensive use of such meetings throughout the nineteenth century; preaching, testimony and Gaelic hymns were the staple ingredients of their gatherings.

We should not, however, regard the cottage meeting and the *cèilidh* as mutually exclusive. While attitudes to secular tradition probably varied from one missionary to another, there were undoubtedly Baptist missionaries who operated in both the secular and the religious contexts. For example, Duncan MacDougall of Tiree, the founder of the island's Baptist church, was a well-known and respected authority on secular Gaelic songs, and could 'prompt' the poets when they forgot their lines. He himself was also a religious poet of some note.[29] Indeed, the manner in which

MacDougall embraced both sacred and secular cultures may have contributed to the success of the local Baptist cause in its early years. Although MacDougall may have been a man of unusual objectivity, there is no evidence that other Baptist missionaries mounted a campaign to destroy Gaelic secular traditions. While they sometimes expressed the view that time devoted to secular traditions could have been better spent in reading the Bible, they offered an alternative religious culture which was indebted to Gaelic secular culture in several respects.[30]

The evidence suggests that Baptist missionaries were pragmatists of the first order when it came to choosing their stance relative to Gaelic secular tradition. The crucial consideration was whether people could be reached with the Gospel by adapting or employing the secular tradition to that end. The same criterion is apparent in the manner in which the missionaries chose their open-air preaching locations. Where the people were accustomed to gather, there the preacher could find an audience. Spas and wells with allegedly healing properties, for example, were favourite locations. While disagreeing strongly with the superstitions which were often associated with such practices, missionaries were prepared to use the wells as object-lessons to carry an Evangelical, Christian message. This is suggested in the account given by William Tulloch of how he and his companion preached at the well of Strathfillan, Perthshire, about 1838:

> In Strathfillan there is a pool greatly venerated by the inhabitants, which is believed to cure insanity &c. The patient is plunged in the consecrated pool. On a certain day of the year, numbers resort to it from various quarters. May these votaries of superstition be cured of their ignorance, and led to a fountain of real efficacy, even the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.[31]

The famous wells in the northern Highlands afforded particularly good opportunities for evangelistic preaching. Dugald Sinclair preached at the well at Strathpeffer in 1810[32], and Peter Grant preached there in 1828. Grant's account, which combines Old and New Testament perspectives, underlines the strategic nature of the site, and the cross-cultural nature of the encounter:

> When we arrived we found the place like Bethesda for a multitude of sick people lay there. We intimated a meeting for 7 P.M. About 150 assembled. We took for our text Zech. 13.1 and endeavoured to direct their minds to the fountain opened in the house of David, even the blood of Christ. It was the most interesting meeting that we ever addressed. The assembly consisted of people from almost every part in Scotland, from the infant to the man of grey hairs - from the beggar to those of high rank - protestant and papist - some bred for the ministry, others for the priesthood - some exceedingly ignorant, some truly pious... As many of them did not understand Gaelic, they pressed us to stop another day, and preach in both languages, which we did. About 300 assembled, and heard with great attention.[33]

In 1840 William Hutchison of Kingussie wrote in similar vein:

> I frequently go to preach at Rothiemurchus Well. There is not a more important station in our northern district. Hundreds come to

the well on the Lord's-day, and multitudes through the week.[34]

However important the wells may have been, superstition, associated with residual pagan customs or legitimised by the physical needs of people in the era before scientific medicine, was one area of traditional Highland culture to which Baptist missionaries were implacably opposed from the very beginning of their labours. It is also apparent that they would not tolerate oaths and swearing, especially by God and the 'saints' (for instance, the Virgin Mary), and would try to alert guilty parties to their spiritual danger.[35]

The manufacture and abuse of alcohol were likewise practices which often drew their rebuke for a variety of reasons. In the island of Islay in 1813, Dugald Sinclair encountered a distiller of illicit whisky intended for smuggling. The distiller mistook the missionary for an excise officer, and Sinclair chided the terrified man with the words: 'One evil in that practice is, you do not pay duty to Government for your smuggled goods. Another evil is, you violate the law of your Maker, by your disobedience to the supreme magistrate.'[36] Interestingly, Sinclair did not draw attention to the deleterious effects of alcohol. This concern appears to have become more prominent with the spread of the temperance movement, and after 1830 missionaries sometimes co-operated in ventures to inculcate temperance and abstention in particular districts. Thus, in 1832, John MacPherson of Breadalbane, Perthshire, reported that a Temperance Society was active in the region, and that 'ardent spirits' had been 'banished from families, funerals, christenings, etc.'[37] Such interventions serve to show that Baptist missionaries, while sympathetic to many aspects of Gaelic secular culture, were concerned with the physical as well as the spiritual well-being of people, and acted to eradicate those customs which they considered to be illegal (in terms of the law of the land) or physically or spiritually harmful.

Churches in a Changing Culture

It will be seen from the foregoing evidence that Baptists were fairly comfortably 'at home' in Highland culture until at least the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, by 1850 they were operating in a society which was being progressively disrupted, but their operation was being funded from outside the Highlands, thus cushioning the churches from the worst effects of external circumstances and giving a misleading picture of their intrinsic evangelistic capability. Emigration was increasingly common, and, by the end of the century, this had severely damaged the viability of a number of churches, especially in Highland Perthshire.

Rural depopulation has continued to erode the size of the churches into the present day. Yet, even in rural areas of the Highlands where the population has remained relatively substantial, such as the island of Tiree, Baptists have experienced a noticeable decline in their membership figures.[38] Can rural depopulation be held responsible for everything? Or could it be that at least part of the problem lies in the changing culture of the Scottish Highlands and the effects of that change on approaches to Highland evangelism among church members and their supporters in the Lowlands?

The nineteenth-century evidence shows that Baptists operated very much within a society and a culture which set great store by the corporate life of the community. A community identity was important, and Baptists were attuned to the rhythms of Gaelic-speaking communities. Their pastors were often men who belonged to those very localities which they served. They were prepared to respect the conventions of these communities, and they saw the task of evangelism in terms

of the community. This can be seen in the choice of locations for preaching, and also in the principal means of church growth in the nineteenth century - namely, revival. It is probably a fair generalisation that the main aim of most Baptist missionaries in the nineteenth century was revival. Without revival, the work of the missionaries was extremely hard, and often involved massive expenditure of time and effort to maintain relatively small churches.[39]

Revival can be seen as a spiritual movement which functions very much in terms of communities, with the spiritual impulses being transmitted through families and villages. Once the fire of revival is lit, it travels through the community. The membership figures of Highland Baptist churches, from the very beginning, show that they grew dramatically in times of revival.[40] Indeed, these churches appear to have owed much of their existence to revivals, since the revivals replenished memberships which had been depleted by social change. When revivals became rare in the twentieth century, membership began to decline, and even to plunge. The supply of Gaelic-speaking pastors also came to an end, since the revivals were the main means of producing such men. Indeed, it would seem that the decreasing frequency of revivals has kept pace to some extent with the declining fortunes of the Gaelic language, and it is possibly significant that the most recent major revival in the Highlands occurred in Lewis in 1949-53.[41] Both revivals and language are linked into the area of culture through the networks of the community. Where the Gaelic community remained strong in the twentieth century, Baptist churches were able to function effectively, with cottage meetings, missions and revivals, accompanied by the composition of Gaelic hymns on the nineteenth-century pattern. This is demonstrated most clearly by the Tiree church, which retained its vigour until the eve of the Second World War, and then entered a period of sharp decline.[42]

As Gaelic has regressed in the Highlands, English has, of course, come to replace it. Accompanying the English language, and largely underpinning it, is a culture which is different in many respects from Gaelic culture. Its force derives not only from economic factors but also from the use of the mass media, especially since the Second World War. Highland Baptists, noticeably in the rural areas, have not been able to harness this new culture to any appreciable extent. One reason may be that it operates much more in terms of individual response, and that it is associated with a secularised mind-set in which the individual conscience is more important than the conscience of the community. Where this new culture is lying uncomfortably alongside the old Gaelic culture, surviving Baptist churches which were once vigorous are in a state of paralysis and decay, as if they are caught on the horns of a dilemma, and unable to evangelise the new hybrid community. By contrast, in towns such as Lochgilphead and Oban, where English was the dominant language in the second half of the nineteenth century and where the churches lost their link with Gaelic before 1900, there are today Baptist churches which are robust and vigorous. In some islands, such as Mull and Islay, where there is a noticeable 'new' population of 'incomers' and retired people, there are signs of some recent advance, led by non-natives who are able to break through the impasse caused by Gaelic social and cultural decay.[43]

If it can be argued that Gaelic culture and its distinctive community life was the environment best suited to rural Baptist churches in the Highlands, it cannot be said that Baptists have been in the forefront of the fight to retain the language or the culture. The reason for this is not necessarily indifference to language; more probably, it reflects the perspective of the churches, which were so thoroughly indigenised in nineteenth-century terms that their members and pastors may have been unaware of the nature of the changes taking place around them. Rather than face the changing world by producing trans-cultural models of evangelism, the

churches tried to maintain the older pro-Gaelic model until the new culture broke in upon depleted memberships, unable to meet the challenge of the new world. There were also wider issues of survival which affected the people, and the implications of emigration and out-migration took precedence over questions of linguistic affiliations. In the nineteenth century Highland Baptist churches, true to their missionary origins, viewed emigration as an opportunity to take the Gospel to foreign lands. In the twentieth century the same perspective was maintained, and pastors took such comfort as they could from the observation that they were supplying young people for the Lowland city churches. There was, of course, a strong element of truth in this, but latterly the 'reservoir concept' appears to have acted as a justification for small memberships rather than as a stimulus to further evangelism. The view that revivals would stimulate the churches and that economic forces would subsequently remove the converts was accepted as the natural order of events. In 1929, Edward Campbell, then pastor at Broadford, Skye, wrote as follows:

> Great souls lie slumbering in these hamlets who, when touched by the Divine fire, will be transformed into strong pillars not necessarily for our country chapels but possibly for our city churches. The sound of the multitude flocking to worship may seldom beat upon the drums of our ears, but the Master who condescended to speak to the individual has taught us not to despise the few.[44]

There was a tragic inevitability in such an argument, and its consequences were stark. In 1944 the Broadford church closed, the first of five Highland churches to do so in the next twenty-five years. As the fires of revival died down, individual Highland churches did try to increase their evangelistic capability, but they tended to adopt the structures of those in the Lowlands, rather than develop methods that were more suited to the emerging bicultural world of the Highlands. The Annual Reports for the 1930s show an increasing tendency for pastors to look to the Lowlands for inspiration, and the organisations which were sustained in Lowland churches (Bands of Hope, Boys' Brigade etc.) came to be replicated in several of the island churches, mainly those closest to the mainland.[45]

The developing Lowland perspective of the Highland churches was encouraged by the organisations which maintained Highland missionary activity. Although the Baptist Home Missionary Society for Scotland was pre-eminently concerned with the Highlands, it was not its aim to support Gaelic or Highland culture. It was first and foremost a missionary organisation for the spreading of the Gospel, and the preservation of Gaelic or the formulation of language policy was not part of its remit. The Society never developed an institutional loyalty to Gaelic. It was prepared to use Gaelic preachers where they were necessary for evangelism, and it expressed its concern when the supply of such preachers began to run dangerously low in 1923.[46] Thereafter, however, the society came to rely increasingly on preachers who could use only English. The pragmatic approach, which served the culture well when Gaelic was strong, operated against it when the language weakened, since it tended to favour the introduction of English. If the Highland communities could not produce Gaelic-speaking pastors, it could readily be argued that, as the churches could function with pastors who spoke only English, there was no need to insist on the desirability, far less the necessity, of Gaelic preaching.

It is an interesting question whether the incoming pastors were handicapped in their work by their lack of Gaelic. Gaelic was still widely spoken in the West Highlands in this period, and a knowledge of Gaelic would have provided access to

many areas of community life. It is also possible that, without Gaelic, the new men could have been uncomfortable in the Highland cultural context. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that their post-1930 Gaelic-speaking colleagues fared markedly better in stemming the decline of the churches or in promoting effective evangelism. The comparatively short pastorates of Lowland men in Highland charges (on average, four to five years) is not necessarily an indicator of their cultural insecurity, but part of a wider pattern. Even Gaelic-speaking pastors were serving for much shorter periods in the West Highlands by the 1930s and 1940s; pastorates of more than ten years were by then unusual among the native ministers, and periods of four to five years were not uncommon. This suggests that the Home Mission as a whole was going through a period of transition to conform to Lowland 'norms', and that there may have been underlying tensions affecting all ministers within it. If Lowland pastors were uncomfortable in the Highlands, the indigenous pastors may have been uneasy with the 'Lowlandising' of the Mission.[47] The emerging pattern of short pastorates and lengthening vacancies may have contributed to the difficulties faced by churches when they tried to pull through the problems posed by social and cultural change, and outreach may have suffered, making the churches progressively more isolated from their communities. In times of vacancy there tends to be a reversion to older patterns and to less overt evangelism, particularly within churches which all too often regard the pastor as the principal church worker and sole evangelist.

As Gaelic language and culture declined in strength after 1900, the concept of the Highlands as a distinctive Baptist missionary area was gradually abandoned, and Highland home mission was integrated into the broader Scottish context. The incorporation of the Home Missionary Society within the Baptist Union of Scotland in 1931 is a significant indication of the new alignment. Financial considerations hastened the process. As the cultural distinction between Highlands and Lowlands became less meaningful, financial support for the Home Mission from outside sources tended to decrease, especially when English funds came to an end after 1938. In May of that year the denomination established its first annual Highlands and Islands Sunday, which was specifically intended to offset the decline in contributions from England by appealing more strongly to wider Scottish sentiment. The first publicity leaflet for the appeal laid stress on the migration of people from the Highland churches to those in the Lowlands:

> Nor must we forget that many of these people in due course come South, and are exposed to the allurements and distractions peculiar to city and town. For such there is no safeguard comparable with a firmly grounded Christian faith and habit, acquired before they leave their home and kindred. In the past many have brought with them a rugged vitality and native intensity of spiritual conviction which have enriched many of our lowland congregations. We are therefore in many instances but repaying a debt when on Home Mission Sunday we bring a generous gift for the support of the Gospel at the outposts.[48]

This debt of manpower was not easily repaid at the physical or financial level. Even with Lowland support, the Home Mission was scarcely able to pay its way in the 1950s, and the remaining Highland churches were brought gradually within the evangelism programme of the Baptist Union of Scotland.[49] The Home Mission Committee of the Union was disbanded in 1971. Union support for the churches has, nevertheless, remained high, particularly in the maintenance of pastors, since few Highland churches have become financially independent.

The abandoning of the concept of the Highlands as a specific mission-field reflects not only the loss of earlier cultural distinctiveness but also the concomitant physical penetration of the region by Lowland cultural influence in the twentieth century, a penetration made possible by improved communications with the outside world. In particular, the Highlands have become a holiday-area, firmly etched on the tourist map of Great Britain. The beginnings of the tourist trade can be discerned in the late nineteenth century. By the 1890s Baptist churches in Islay had become conscious of the need to provide special English services for visitors who had attended morning worship in Gaelic and had no familiarity with the language. This pattern was spreading noticeably to other islands by the 1920s and 1930s. The presence of summer visitors was welcomed by the churches, both for the encouragement provided by increased numbers and for the assistance given to local pastors by those on holiday from the mainland. More recently, in obtaining pulpit-supply Highland churches which are experiencing long vacancies have been helped by the presence of pastors who are on holiday in the area.[50] This method has helped to maintain a summer supply of preachers for Colonsay, and the Tiree church has also been assisted in this manner. The greatest value of such support is that it gives much-needed relief to local lay preachers and leaders, whose diligence is often a key factor in the survival of the churches. In the long term, however, it is deficient in much the same way as short pastorates, since it offers help only for brief periods, and does not promote church life or effective community evangelism.

The pattern of tourism in the Highlands has not, however, remained the same since the beginning of the twentieth century, and Baptist churches have witnessed, on the whole, considerable fluctuation in the numbers of visitors who provide active support in the summer. Tourist interest in the island Baptist churches has probably declined since the 1930s and 1940s. In August 1959, Hector M. Meek, lay-pastor of Tiree Baptist Church wrote: 'There have been lots of visitors in Tiree too, but unfortunately they were not the class interested in a Baptist Church.' This contrasted with the situation at Oban in the same year, when the pastor reported good summer attendances.[51] Since 1959, the tendency has been for island visitors to come in a more self-sufficient manner, renting houses, cottages and flats, rather than patronising hotels and guest-houses. A more recent and growing development has been the purchasing of holiday cottages by people from the Lowlands and from England. The islands are also attracting an increasing number of resident incomers, often retired people, who first become familiar with the area through holidays. The evidence suggests that only a very small proportion of these new residents have an active interest in the Baptist churches. Nevertheless, when even a few such people become involved in a local Baptist church, that church can reap considerable benefits in leadership and personnel. Yet it remains to be seen how far such developments will reinvigorate the churches in the long term and help to stem chronic numerical decline of memberships. The churches can easily absorb help and leadership from outside, but their viability in the future will depend on whether they can reach the new population, as well as the local people, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In a sense, a mission-field has been brought to the churches, if they could muster the resources and develop the methods to spread the Good News in terms appropriate to the twentieth century.

Conclusion

The Highlands have always presented a challenge to churches of all persuasions. The problems confronting Baptists have been by no means peculiar to them; it is likely that an investigation of the main Presbyterian churches active in the Highlands would

uncover similar difficulties and similar responses. Difficult terrain, scattered communities, economic and social instability, the drift of young people to the centres of industry and employment - these have been the realities of life in the north and west. For the Baptists, however, changes in culture and society have perhaps been reflected more acutely in their churches than in the larger Presbyterian bodies, for the reason that Baptist churches, being in theory wholly independent, have had to rely very heavily on the resources of their communities, to the point of having to seek Gaelic-speaking pastors by internal recruitment from a relatively small geographical area. Their fortunes have therefore been intimately bound up with the ebb and flow of their localities and their ability (or inability) to evangelise their communities. As the heartlands of Highland Baptists have always been closer to the Lowlands, the change-over to English in church services has come more quickly than in the more northerly Presbyterian churches. The majority of Baptist churches in the Highlands appear to have functioned most effectively before 1900, when they were operating mainly within the Gaelic cultural context and able to recruit their own Gaelic-speaking pastors.

Since 1900 the Highland churches (with the exception of those in the mainland towns) have failed to establish themselves in a manner which promotes stability or growth of memberships within the increasingly Anglo-Gaelic culture of the region. Expectancy has dropped as revivals have subsided and young people have migrated elsewhere. The view that the Highland churches were 'feeders' for the larger city congregations was prevalent among the pastors and leaders of the Home Mission for much of the century, and although it was used to promote the interests of the Highland churches in the Scottish context, it has undoubtedly acted against the purposeful development of the churches within their own Highland communities. In addition, the churches have had a long-standing administrative link with the Lowlands, and this has perhaps produced a degree of 'external dependency' which has not always encouraged the growth of self-sufficiency.

In the final assessment, however, it has to be noted that the Highland Baptist churches have owed their existence very largely to generous financial support by missionary agencies and the Baptist Union of Scotland. Without this backing they could not have sustained their work in the Highland communities. To be effective, such support has had to balance external funding with local initiative, and those in a supervisory capacity have doubtless been well aware of tensions between the central supporting body and the churches. Local inertia and unbending traditionalism can be as big a problem as 'external dependency'. Living fossils of the nineteenth century will find it difficult to communicate the Gospel in the late twentieth century. For evangelistic enterprise to function meaningfully, there can be no substitute for a truly 'local' church, supported from outside if necessary, but in tune with the social and cultural patterns of its locality, and, under strong leadership, prepared to alter its strategy to meet the needs of a changing world.[52]

NOTES

1. An outline of the development of Baptist activity in the Scottish Highlands can be found in my contribution to D. W. Bebbington, ed., **The Baptists in Scotland: A History**, Glasgow, 1988, pp.280-308, where there is full citation of primary sources. For D. McArthur and D. Sinclair, see ibid., pp.281-5.
2. See further D. E. Meek, 'Evangelical Missionaries in the Early Nineteenth-Century Highlands', **Scottish Studies**, 28, 1987, pp.1-34, and especially pp.14-17.
3. In addition to Meek, 'Evangelical Missionaries', see V. E. Durkacz, **The Decline of the Celtic Languages**, Edinburgh, 1983, which contains (pp.96-153) a fine chapter on 'Evangelical Religion and the Rise of Literacy in the Mother Tongues'.
4. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.35-7, 281-7. Meek, 'Evangelical Missionaries', pp.26-30, shows the distribution pattern of these early churches. The link with the foreign missionary movement is discussed ibid., pp.8-11.

5. For Bellanoch, see Bebbington, op.cit., p.283; for Tiree, see D. E. Meek, **Island Harvest: A History of Tiree Baptist Church 1838-1988**, Edinburgh, 1988, pp.3-7; for Lewis, see the **Annual Reports of the Baptist Home Missionary Society for Scotland** (henceforward **BHMS Reports**), 1829, pp.20-4.
6. Letter from James A. Haldane to William Tulloch, 12 October 1831, in the Archives of the Baptist Union of Scotland, Glasgow. Mackintosh's uncertainty about leaving Stornoway was interpreted by Haldane as prevarication, but it is understandable in the light of the difficult task of establishing churches in the north-west Highlands.
7. For some discussion of the factors contributing to the emergence of non-Presbyterian Dissent in the Highlands in the period 1810-30, see D. E. Meek, 'Dugald Sinclair: The Life and Work of a Highland Itinerant Missionary', **Scottish Studies** (forthcoming).
8. The Oban station was reported as being 'in a poor condition' in 1859, and the lack of a chapel was thought to be 'greatly against the success of our cause in that quarter': see **BHMS Reports**, 1860, p.21.
9. See D. E. Meek, 'Evangelicalism and Emigration: Aspects of the Role of Dissenting Evangelicalism in Highland Emigration to Canada', in Gordon W. MacLennan, ed., **Proceedings of the First North American Congress of Celtic studies**, Ottawa, 1988, pp.15-35.
10. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.42, 280, 282-3. The numbers of other churches providing once-a-day Gaelic services in 1869 were as follows: Established Church, 235; Free Church, 166; Catholic Chapels, 36; Episcopalians, 9; Congregationalists, 3. See **Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness**, 3-4, 1875, pp.xvi-xvii. Note that the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland as a whole has fallen from 254,415 in 1891 to 82,620 in 1981, a decrease of 67.7%. See D. S. Thomson, ed., **The Companion to Gaelic Scotland**, Oxford, 1983, pp.109-14.
11. Ibid., pp.36-7, 286-7; Meek, 'Evangelicalism and Emigration', pp.33-4.
12. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.286-7.
13. Meek, **Island Harvest**. There were close social and economic links between Tiree and Mull, especially the Ross of Mull.
14. Those who moved south and rose to denominational prominence before 1900 were the sons of the celebrated first-generation preachers of the Highland movement: William Grant, son of Peter Grant of Grantown-on-Spey, became the full-time pastor of Bristo Baptist Church, Edinburgh, and a President of the Baptist Union of Scotland, 1880-81; William Tulloch, son of William Tulloch of Blair Atholl, became the first Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland, 1869-80, and a President of the Union, 1882-3; and John McLellan, son of Donald McLellan of Glenlyon, was missionary at Blair Atholl, c.1860-68, before moving to Cupar, Fife, and then to Duncan Street, Edinburgh. He became the Union's tutor in Systematic Theology, 1883-92, before the foundation of the College. In the twentieth century, only three or four Gaelic-speaking men have moved to Lowland charges, the best known being Edward Campbell, who was pastor latterly at Bellshill, and who served, until 1971, as Convener of the Home Mission Committee of the Baptist Union of Scotland.
15. **BHMS Reports**, 1863, pp.21-2.
16. These were D. Bell (from Islay), F. W. Taylor (from the Ross of Mull), A. MacDougall, D. MacArthur, A. Brown, A. Macdonald and A. MacArthur (all from Tiree). See Meek, **Island Harvest**, frontispiece.
17. See, in general, John MacInnes, **The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland 1688-1800**. Aberdeen, 1950; Durkacz, op.cit., pp.95-153; and D. E. Meek, 'The Seminal Significance of Highland Missions in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', **Records of the Scottish Church History Society** (forthcoming).
18. MacInnes, op.cit., pp.41-78, is helpful in this field.
19. Hugh Anderson, ed., **Life and Letters of Christopher Anderson**, Edinburgh, 1854, pp.114-6, 125-34; Durkacz, op.cit., pp.112-33.
20. **Annual Reports of the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools**, 1819, p.62; 1821, p.65; 1824, p.51; G. Yuille, ed., **History of the Baptists in Scotland**, Glasgow, 1926, pp.113-9. Note that Grant was at Shuna, and not at Scarba, as stated in Yuille, op.cit., p.119. For Tiree, see Meek, **Island Harvest**, pp.5-7.
21. **BHMS Reports**, 1831, p.7.
22. Dugald Sinclair, **Journal of Itinerating Exertions in Some of the More Destitute Parts of Scotland**, 6 vols, Edinburgh, 1814-17, V, p.8.
23. Bebbington, op.cit., p.295.
24. The tract was in its third edition by 1842. Orchard was an apologist and polemicist who wrote a number of tracts, including a **Sketch of the History of Foreign Baptists**, 1842.
25. A. Clerk, ed., **Caraid nan Gaidheal: A Choice Selection of Gaelic Writings by Norman MacLeod, D.D.**, Edinburgh, 1910 edn.
26. H. MacDougall, ed., **Spiritual Songs by Rev. Peter Grant**, Glasgow, 1926.
27. The collection of hymns by Daniel Grant, pastor of Tullymet Baptist Church, shows all of these features. It was first published in 1842 and reprinted in 1862, both years reflecting peaks in periods of revival in the district. The collection contains Gaelic hymns which were intended to be sung to such tunes as 'The Lass o' Glenshee', 'Bonnie Dundee', 'Katherine Ogie' and 'Duncan Gray'. See **Laoidhean Spioradail le Daniel Grannd**, 2nd edn., Perth 1862. For further discussion of Baptist hymnology in the Highlands, see Meek, **Island Harvest**, pp.24-9.
28. Stewart's conversion took place in 1796, but the story was evidently of such importance to Evangelicals as to be considered newsworthy fourteen years later! See Sinclair, **Journal**, I, pp.24-5.
29. I owe this information (derived from Tiree tradition) to the kindness of Dr Margaret Mackay of the School of Scottish Studies,

University of Edinburgh. See also Meek, **Island Harvest**, pp.24-6.
30. This is probably true of other denominations operating in the Highlands. The idea that Evangelical bodies consistently opposed Gaelic secular tradition in all its forms is certainly not borne out by the Gaelic evidence, although it is (hitherto) firmly entrenched in the minds of some commentators.
31. **BHMS Reports**, 1838, pp.9-10.
32. Sinclair, **Journal**, I, p.19.
33. **BHMS Reports**, 1829, pp.9-20.
34. Ibid., 1840, p.9.
35. Sinclair, **Journal**, III, p.29.
36. Ibid., IV, p.13.
37. **BHMS Reports**, 1832, p.5.
38. Bebbington, op.cit., p.302, fig.15.2.
39. Cf. the summary of Alexander Brown's account (1895) of his labours as a missionary in the Ross of Mull: 'The population was very scattered, and some had to be reached away from the main roads by climbing dykes, jumping ditches and crossing bogs. This work of visiting was important and interesting... On Monday and Tuesday following he would stay in the district, visiting among the twenty-five families there, and holding cottage meetings. He was sometimes astonished that there were no more definite results from those cottage meetings...'. See the **Scottish Baptist Magazine**, 1895, p.293.
40. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.290-3.
41. C. N. Peckham, **Heritage of Revival**, Edinburgh, 1986, pp.161-80.
42. Meek, **Island Harvest**, esp. pp.45-8.
43. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.303-4.
44. **BHMS Reports**, 1929, p.19. For nineteenth-century attitudes to emigration, see Meek, 'Evangelicalism and Emigration', pp.32-3.
45. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.299-301.
46. Ibid., pp.297-8.
47. Pastorates of an average length of four to five years were very common in Britain from at least 1911, according to figures presented by Dr Kenneth Brown in his paper, 'Patterns of Baptist Ministry in the 20th Century', presented to the Summer School of the Baptist Historical Society at Dunblane on 23-26 June 1988 (See BQ 33, Apr.1989).
48. This leaflet was written by James Hair. In several respects its style resembles that of a tourist brochure from the 1930s, and the portrayal of the Highlands is tinged noticeably with the romanticism of that era.
49. Bebbington, op.cit., p.301.
50. Ibid., pp.299-301. For the influence of visitors at the Kilnave station of the Bowmore (Islay) church in 1898, see **BHMS Reports**, 1898, p.25.
51. Letter from H. M. Meek to G. C. D. Jeffrey, 18 August 1959. Copy in writer's possession.
52. An earlier draft of this paper was presented to the Summer School of the Baptist Historical Society at Dunblane on 23-26 June 1988.

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in the space of a page is just a bit too much. And in any case, it is not really a recommendation that a book was compulsory reading for President Nixon's cabinet (Toffler rather than Bunyan, alas). But if one sticks with the book, it develops a more coherent expository-cum-reflective style which works well as a trigger to thought and re-reading. He is particularly good at characterising the mixture of fearfulness, coping with hostility and sheer effort on the one hand, with the experience of forgiveness and friendship on the other, which is so important to Bunyan's truthfulness and appeal. There are times when John Taylor backs away from Bunyan's position, as in the piece on The Arbour (flesh), where he advocates a Benedictine rhythm of work and rest more than a Puritan horror of sloth. But it is not an airy modern dismissal of Bunyan: there is a serious evangelical (not in the party sense) spirituality behind the project. As he admnits, it is odd to make a Lent book from a man whose church kept neither Christmas nor Easter; but it works most of the time.

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