

Thesis
3615

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**THE HISTORY OF
THE OPEN BRETHREN
IN SCOTLAND
1838-1999**

**Ph.D. thesis
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ABSTRACT

The thesis is a history of the Open Brethren in Scotland. Its aim is to analyse the development of the movement incorporating its social history. A sequence of chapters traces the expansion and contraction of the movement and its internal development from its inception in 1838 until 1999. After an introductory chapter in which the aims and methods of the work will be set out, Chapter 2 examines the largely Bowesite movement of the 1840s and 1850s. Chapter 3 analyses the crucial decade which followed the 1859 Revival. In these chapters external growth and internal development are studied in conjunction with each other. The period of greatest increase for the movement was the late Victorian period and Chapter 4 analyses expansion until the outbreak of World War I. The Brethren were in their most developed form in the inter-war period of the twentieth century and this phase had an after-life until the mid-1960s. Chapter 6 examines patterns of growth and decline from 1914 until 1965 with, in addition, an investigation of the ethos of the movement when it was in its mature form. Complementary to Chapters 4 and 6 are Chapters 5 and 7 in which the internal development of the movement is examined for the respective periods. The classic era of the Brethren might be said to have ceased in the mid-1960s. Chapter 8 is devoted to an investigation of the spirituality of the movement from the 1830s until that decade and Chapter 9 to the relationship of the Brethren to culture and society for the same period. Chapter 10 examines the contemporary movement from the mid-1960s, analysing internal development and changes in membership size, spirituality, and attitudes to culture and society. The conclusion, Chapter 11, draws together the central themes of the thesis and presents some assessment.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and that the work which it embodies has been done by myself. I confirm that the work has not been included in another thesis.

Signed Neil Dickson

**TO MY PARENTS
TOM AND JESSIE DICKSON**

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ABBREVIATIONS

- A - *Aware*
 AT - *Assembly Testimony*
 BAHNR - *Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review*
 BJS - *British Journal of Sociology*
 BM - *The Believer's Magazine*
 BP - *The Believers' Pathway*
 BQ - *The Baptist Quarterly*
 'BQB' - *'The believer's question box'*
 CBA - *Christian Brethren Archive, University of Manchester*
 CBR - *Christian Brethren Review*
 CBRJ - *Christian Brethren Review Journal*
 CMHU - *The Christian Magazine and Herald of Union*
 CW - *The Christian Worker*
 DEB - *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860, (ed.)
 Donald M Lewis (Oxford, 1995)*
 DNB - *Dictionary of National Biography*
 DSCHT - *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology,
 (eds) Nigel M deS Cameron et al. ((Edinburgh, 1993)*
 H - *The Harvester*
 HA - *Hamilton Advertiser*
 HS - *Herald of Salvation*
 JEH - *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
 JCBRF - *Journal of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship*
 KS - *Kilmarnock Standard*
 LR - *The Latter Rain*
 MÉ - *Le Messager Évangélique*
 NA - *The Northern Assemblies*
 NEI - *The Northern Evangelistic Intelligencer*
 NI - *The Northern Intelligencer*
 NT - *Needed Truth*
 NW - *The Northern Witness*
 OA - *Orkney Archive, Kirkwall*
 OLOT - *Our Little One's Treasury*
 PT - *The Present Testimony*
 PWHS - *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*
 'QA' - *'Questions and answers'*
 R - *The Revival*
 RSCHS - *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*
 S - *The Scotsman*
 SCH - *Studies in Church History*
 SHR - *The Scottish Historical Review*
 SSW - *The Sunday School Worker*
 TSA - *The Third Statistical Account*
 TP - *The Truth Promoter*
 W - *The Witness*
 'WW' - *'Witness watchtower'*
 'YBQB' - *'The young believer's question box'*

CHAPTER ONE

A GREAT RECOVERY:

INTRODUCTION

Brethren: the story of a great recovery
— book title by David Beattie (1939).

In 1927 Thomas Caldwell disarmingly explained to the Inland Revenue the lack of accounts for the new building planned for the Brethren assembly to which he belonged, then meeting in the Co-operative Hall, Kilmarnock:

I may say we don't keep a note of what goes on in our meeting and it was arranged that all should do their best to give and raise a good sum so that we should start and build and the only way we get money is the one gives say £5 another say £10 and so on we have no sale of work or anything like that. One brother may hand me some money and he gets a receipt from me and when I have £40 or £50 I take it to D&D Carruthers [Kilmarnock solicitors] and what they do with it I can't tell but they give me 5% less tax. So I trust this will explain matters.¹

Perhaps the picture of financial naiveté in writing to a tax officer is intentional, as unusually for a Brethren member Caldwell made his living from investments.² However his attitude towards record keeping was entirely typical of them. Accounts, minutes of elders' meetings and roll books were rarely kept or even needed because of the absence of central institutions which required returns to be made and the informal way in which affairs were transacted. The standard history of the Scottish church in the nineteenth century noted that 'The Brethren have been reserved on their Scottish history'.³ Access to their past has been a problem, not only for historians in general, but also for Scottish Brethren themselves.

1. Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, IRS 21/1811, Thomas Cochrane to the Inland Revenue; I am indebted to Dr Elizabeth C Sanderson for this reference.

2. Oral information, 10 August 1997.

3. Andrew L Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843-1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), p.57.

PERSPECTIVES

The Brethren movement grew out of Protestant Evangelicalism and shares its religious characteristics. In a definition which has won wide acceptance the features of the latter have been formulated by D W Bebbington as being: conversionism, the call for a change of life; activism, an energetic expression of the individual's faith; biblicism, a high regard for scripture; and crucicentricism, belief in the cardinal importance of Christ's atoning death.⁴ These attributes were conspicuous in the Brethren movement which first emerged in Dublin during the late 1820s. The impulse soon spread to England with early influential churches (or 'assemblies' or 'meetings') existing at Plymouth and Bristol. In 1848 the movement split into 'Exclusive Brethren' (also known as 'Close Brethren'), who followed the former Anglican priest, John Nelson Darby, and 'Open Brethren'.⁵

In the popular mind the Exclusives form the group which is most often associated with the name of the movement. In Scotland they grew at fairly much the same time and in the same kind of places as their Open counterparts.⁶ By 1860 they had only two or three assemblies, which met in private houses,⁷ but the 1859 Revival and the awakenings which followed it proved a turning point for them, and by about 1878 they had

4. D W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), pp.2-17.

5. For this division, see below, pp.56-7; the standard histories of the movement are: W Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 1st edn (London [1901]); H H Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren* (London, 1967); F Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: its origins, its worldwide development and its significance for the present day*, 2nd edn (Exeter, 1976).

6. For an example, see Neil Dickson, 'Open and closed: Brethren and their origins in the North East', in James Porter (ed.), *After Columba—After Calvin: religious community in North-East Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1999), pp.151-170.

7. Andrew Miller, *The Brethren: a brief sketch of their of their origin, progress and testimony* (London [1880]), p.83.

seventy-five meetings.⁸ Their 1885 address list recorded 115 assemblies, three more than the previous year, and probably they attained their maximum number of congregations about then, for many of their meetings remained small and only survived for their founders' generation.⁹ The Exclusives adopted a relatively centralised control and the principle of assemblies being united in their judgement of disputes. As a result, they splintered into several bodies. The largest group throughout Britain was sometimes called the London Exclusives because of the importance of the decisions made by meetings at the assembly in the capital. In Scotland, the Stuart Party, which seceded in 1882 as a protest at the increasing rigidity of Darby's successors, was eventually largely absorbed into the Open Brethren.¹⁰ Better represented in the country was the Glanton Party, a 1908 secession which placed greater emphasis on evangelism.¹¹ Scottish Exclusives probably shared in the post-World War I growth enjoyed by their assemblies in Britain as whole, and possibly continued increasing in membership until the 1950s.¹² The estimate made in 1960 that in Scotland the London Exclusives had 3 to 5 000 members and the Glantons about 1 000 was probably made close to the period when they had achieved their maximum strength.¹³ Their numbers in the north-east fishing communities have been greatly exaggerated; however, with the exceptions of Aberdeen and Peterhead, their meetings there have always been small.¹⁴ The London Exclusives are intensely secretive. 'We

8. Andrew Miller, *Short Papers on Church History*, 3 (London, 1878), p.660.

9. *References [January 1884]* (n.p., 1884); *References [January 1885]* (n.p., 1885).

10. See below, pp.157, 241, 288-90.

11. For Exclusive divisions see Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren*, 2 vols (Denver, CO; 1936); Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, pp.209-22; B R Wilson, 'The Exclusive Brethren: a case study in the evolution of a sectarian ideology', in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism: organisation and ideology in social and religious movements* (London, 1967), pp.287-342; Roger Shuff, 'Open to Closed: the growth of exclusivism among Brethren in Britain 1848-1953', *BAHNR*, 1 (1997-8), pp.10-23.

12. Shuff, 'Open to Closed', pp.17-23.

13. John Highet, *The Scottish Churches: a review of their state 400 years after the Reformation* (London, 1960), p.37.

14. Dickson, 'Open and closed', in Porter (ed.) *After Columba*, p.160.

shun everything that would draw attention to ourselves in an outward way... The path of obscurity, unknown to the world, is ours', one researcher was told in the 1950s.¹⁵ There has been a sharp decline in their numbers, especially after 1970 when one of their leaders, James Taylor Jnr, attained some notoriety due to an alleged sexual scandal. They have subsequently fragmented into four small bodies, with perhaps just under 1 000 members,¹⁶ and they are increasingly withdrawn from society.¹⁷

It was the Open Brethren which eventually became the larger section in Britain. They are a looser grouping of independent churches, and the lack of a credal statement has led them to debate their own distinctive practices. Writing in 1913 Arthur Rendle Short, a Bristol surgeon, felt there were four which distinguished them: believer's baptism, weekly communion at which open ministry was allowed, no ordained ministry and reception to the Lord's table of all believers.¹⁸ In 1961 F F Bruce, a native of Scotland who held a chair in biblical criticism, reduced Short's list to three by combining the second and last items.¹⁹ A different list was produced in 1990 by Australian evangelist Kevin Dyer. His Brethren distinctives were multiple eldership, the autonomy of the local church and open communion. By this last Dyer meant freedom for the members to participate in worship, and he relegated association with other

15. Anonymous Kilmarnock Exclusive assembly member quoted in John Strawhorn and William Boyd, *TSA Ayrshire* (Edinburgh & London, 1957), p.256.

16. Dickson, 'Open and closed', in Porter (ed.), *After Columba*, pp.151, 157, 162; Peter Brierly (ed.), *UK Christian Handbook Religious Trends No.1—1998/99* (London & Carlisle, 1997), p.9.4; in this last source, the Glantons are estimated as having some 500 members (this estimate and the one in the text above were supplied by the present writer).

17. Bryan R Wilson, 'A sect at law: the case of the Exclusive Brethren', in *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: sects and new religious movements in contemporary society* (Oxford, 1992), pp.87-102.

18. A Younger Brother [i.e. Arthur Rendle Short], *The Principles of Open Brethren* (Glasgow [1913]), p.77.

19. F F Bruce, 'Who are the Brethren?', *W*, 91 (1961), pp.406-7; later printed as a pamphlet of the same title and as Appendix 1 in *idem, In Retrospect: remembrance of things past* (London & Glasgow, 1980), pp.313-17.

Evangelicals to a 'secondary issue'.²⁰ Recently two historians have tried to isolate the controlling principle of the movement from which all else flows: Harold Rowdon has maintained that this is its determination to derive its practices from scripture; a view criticised by James Patrick Callahan who has substituted primitivism, the ecclesial veneration of the earliest model.²¹

However, the section of the movement analysed in the present work, the Scottish Open Brethren, does not quite fit any of these offered definitions. As will become clear, from the 1860s onwards (the seminal period for the movement in Scotland) there were assemblies which did not receive all Christians to the Lord's table.²² Even among those who did, 'Christians' is too broad a term: it is unlikely, for example, that a Roman Catholic would have been accepted. More properly it was pan-evangelical ecumenism which a section of Scottish Brethren maintained, and by the mid-twentieth century this view was not conspicuous in many places.²³ The movement itself refused to use a name.²⁴ However, although the vocabulary of the movement is often used in the present work,²⁵ the customary title 'Open Brethren' has been retained and, unless obvious from the context, it is to

20. Kevin G Dyer, *Must Brethren Churches Die?* (1990) UK edn (Exeter, 1991), pp.28-30.

21. Harold H Rowdon, 'The problem of Brethren identity in historical perspective', *Biblioteca Storica Toscana*, 11 (Firenze, 1988), pp. 159-174; James Patrick Callahan, *Primitivist Piety: the ecclesiology of the early Plymouth Brethren* (Lanham, MA; 1996), pp.ix, xiv, 21, 32.

22. See below, p.109.

23. See below, pp.287-95.

24. John Bowes, *The Autobiography: or the history of the life of John Bowes* (Glasgow, 1872), p.361, quoted below, p.65; cf. 'QA' N W, 12 (1882), p.32; R T H[opkins], 'Thoughts on Deuteronomy', *ibid.*, p.131; W B C Beggs, 'The teaching of church principles', *BM*, 53 (1943), pp.7-8.

25. The exceptions are the occasional use of non-Brethren synonyms in the interests of stylistic variety and more economical expressions for 'coming into fellowship' or 'those in fellowship' such as 'to recruit', 'to join' or 'member'. Strictly speaking, the Brethren as a *Gemeinschaft* had no concept of institutional membership but the periphrastic Brethren phrase has not generally been preferred; likewise the use of their own vocabulary of 'believers', 'brethren' or 'saints' does not (as was intended) distinguish between Brethren and Christians in general.

their Scottish section that 'Brethren' will refer.²⁶ But it should be noted that the former title was often a misnomer in Scotland.²⁷ The practices which are taken to distinguish the Brethren are those in the Short-Bruce list modified in the light of Dyer. They are: the autonomy of the individual assembly; believer's baptism; a weekly Lord's supper at which the worship was from among the members; and no ordained ministry.²⁸ The Brethren have remained a movement, independent congregations which have no controlling central institutions; believer's baptism was the practice which ensured the assembly would be a gathered church; the weekly Lord's supper ('the morning meeting' or 'breaking of bread') with its spontaneous worship was the most distinctive service; and although

26. The need to refer to the movement as a whole gave rise to various solutions among the Brethren: sometimes 'the meetings' (e.g. L W G Alexander, 'Decadence or revival', *W*, 46 (1916), p.136) but more usually, with or without a capital, 'Assemblies' (e.g. Tom Wilson, 'Conservation', *BM*, 85 (1975), pp.316-7, quoted below, p.440). Some used 'Brethren' in inverted commas, and David Beattie adopted this last for his *The Believer's Magazine* series on which his book, *Brethren: the story of a great recovery* (Kilmarnock [1939]), was based (the inadvertent dropping of the inverted commas led to complaints, 'Editorial note', *BM*, 45 (1935), p.77). However, there were those willing to use 'Brethren' *simpliciter*, and this was the solution adopted by Thomas Stewart Veitch, *The Brethren Movement: a simple and straightforward account of the features and failures of a sincere attempt to carry out the principles of Scripture during the last 100 years* (London & Glasgow, [1930]). 'Plymouth Brethren' is widely used to refer to the movement, but this term was regarded unfavourably by Scottish Brethren at least: see Veitch, *The Brethren Movement*, p.33; A Borland, 'Things most surely believed among us', *BM*, 72 (1962), pp.106-9.

27. In a forthcoming University of Wales thesis on the Brethren in England in the twentieth century Roger Shuff prefers the term 'independent Brethren' for the Open Brethren. This distinguishes them by their organisation from the other sections of the movement, which have degrees of federation, and not by their attitude to reception at the Lord's table, which as Shuff points out, could vary; in an earlier paper he has also shown that the 'exclusivism' of the Exclusives was initially directed against the Open section only: Shuff, 'Open to Closed', pp.10-23.

28. The definition adopted is phenomenological rather than prescriptive: it describes what has been encountered historically rather than enjoining an ideal. Dyer's redefinition of the commemoration of Lord's supper is accepted as his addition of congregational autonomy, but as not all Scottish assemblies had identified elders (see below, p.187), Dyer's first characteristic of a multiple eldership is rejected. The definition adopted above would also fit the Scotch Baptists and some independent mission halls (sometimes called 'breaking of bread' missions). The former are difficult to distinguish from the Brethren on the basis of practices (see below n.41 for an example of the two bodies being confused); they were, however, different in terms of mindset—the former being influenced by eighteenth-century values and the latter by nineteenth-century Romanticism. Mission halls were the product of the same spirituality as the Brethren, but they often appointed formal office bearers; as will become apparent in the present work, they readily transferred to the movement.

Table 1.1 Analysis of Jimmy Paton's library, c.1950

	Open Brethren	Exclusive Brethren	Other Christian	Unidentified
Books	70	102	32	6
Bible translations	2	2	9	-
Multiple author commentaries	-	-	3	1

Source: writer's collection, II., Jas. Paton, 'Where Is It?', MS notebook, c.1950.

itinerant evangelists, Bible teachers and more recently resident full-time workers have been used, no distinction exists between clergy and laity. The present work does not attempt to isolate one guiding principle. For the Scottish movement, as will become clear, the appeal to the Bible and its description of the practices of the primitive church were certainly important. But there were other historical and cultural factors which shaped the movement in Scotland. One of these has again been identified by D W Bebbington—the influence of nineteenth-century Romanticism in a heightened sense of the supernatural.²⁹ But among other components to which attention will be paid are the revivalism of the movement and the cerebralism of its members.³⁰ Different elements within Brethrenism created stresses which had profound implications for its development.

The Open Brethren were always aware of the wider Christian Church. Table 1.1 analyses a handlist from the early 1950s for the library of Jimmy Paton, then a plasterer and slater from Stevenston, Ayrshire, and a leading preacher in the movement.³¹ Only five Brethren works—by J R Caldwell, John Ritchie and Exclusive Andrew Miller—in the collection were by

29. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.74-104; see below, pp.89-90, and Chpt 8 *passim*.

30. For the former, see below, pp.43, 58-9, Chpts 3 & 4 *passim*, and pp.230-38; and for the latter, Chpt. 8 *passim*.

31. Writer's collection, II., Jas. Paton, 'Where Is It?', MS notebook, c.1950; the writer is indebted to the late Mr Paton for the gift of this item.

Scots. Although the movement in Scotland gave Brethren theology a distinctive cast, it inherited its doctrines ready made and there were few Scottish authors. The largest group of writers included in the library were moderate Exclusives, a fact which is due to Paton's predilection for William Kelly, Darby's leading disciple who in 1879-81 had separated from him. With thirty-five works Kelly was the best represented writer.³² However, some 19.4 per cent., about a fifth of the books, was by Christian writers from outside the movement. The most collected writer here was the Baptist F B Meyer with seven items, but also included were Presbyterian James Moffat, the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, R C Trench, and a New Testament commentary issued by the Methodists. In addition the three best represented Open Brethren writers, Sir Robert Anderson (ten works), H A Ironside (six works) and Andrew Jukes (three works), all left the movement.³³ As Paton belonged to the school of west of Scotland preachers who emphasised assembly distinctives in the mid-twentieth century, this collection of Christian writers from outside the Brethren might be taken as a fairly minimal one.³⁴ The proportion in some other libraries would be higher.

The Brethren also saw themselves as but the latest in a long line of Christian bodies who had upheld primitive Christian practices.³⁵ Anti-

32. By 'moderate Exclusive Brethren' is meant pre-Stoneyite London Exclusives, the Kelly-Lowe and Glanton Parties and the North American Grant division. In addition to Kelly, J G Bellet with 14 works and J N Darby with 12 works are well represented; if the books in multi-volume works are counted singly, then Darby has 17 items and C H Mackintosh 12.

33. Ironside's pastorate of the Moody Memorial Church, Chicago from 1929-48 is felt by the present writer to have effectively taken him outside the movement, although in his *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement* (1945) he continued in dialogue with it.

34. James Paton's library continued to grow considerably and the present writer is indebted to him for the gift of a number of items used in this research; for the school of preachers to which he belonged, see below, pp.290-4.

35. The most complete historical account of this view is by the English missionary to Europe, E H Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church: being some account of the continuance through succeeding centuries of churches practising the principles taught in the New Testament* (London & Glasgow, 1931).

Catholicism led Exclusive Andrew Miller, a Scottish merchant based in London, to include the Albigensians in his three-volume *Short Papers on Church History* which appeared in 1873-8.³⁶ Miller's work, until the second half of the twentieth century the only history of the Christian Church read among Brethren, chronicled 'the silver line of God's grace in true Christians'.³⁷ In Scottish ecclesiastical history he was positively disposed to St Columba and the Culdees, because of what he perceived as the anti-Romanising influence of the Celtic church, and in later centuries he favourably noticed John Knox, the Covenanters, Ebenezer Erskine, the Cambuslang Revival, and the Disruption.³⁸ The Celtic church was also the subject of an anonymous children's book published by Open Brethren publisher John Ritchie, and in addition he reprinted a number of works relating to the Covenanters who were especially revered in the movement's account of Church history.³⁹ Others also saw Brethren predecessors in John Glas, the Relief Church, the Paisley Pen' Folk (independents who met in a Paisley pend),⁴⁰ the Northern Separatists (Evangelical secessionists in the Highlands),⁴¹ and the Scotch Baptists—the

36. Miller, *Church History*, 2 (1876), pp.246-7; in a note Miller stated he had changed his view that they were Paulicians and he now held they were orthodox; cf. [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 16 (1906), p.71.

37. Miller, *Church History*, 1 (1873), p.4; in 1928 Open Brethren publishers Pickering & Inglis reprinted Miller's history in an edition revised and with additional material by William Hoste; in 1964 they published it as a one-volume edition with additional material by Kingsley G Rendall which was in print until the late-1970s

38. Miller, *Church History*, 1, pp.495-6, 499-501, 506-7; 3(1878) pp.563-6, 616-17, 619-21, 624-6, 661-5.

39. Anon., *In Scotia's Wilds: the story of how the gospel entered the land of the thistle and wrought its wonders among the ancient dwellers there* (Kilmarnock, n.d.); among the works on the Covenanters Ritchie published were Anon., *Tales and Sketches of the Covenanters* (Kilmarnock, n.d.); Robert Pollok, *Tales of the Covenanters* (1833), John Ritchie edn (Kilmarnock, n.d.); and J H Thomson, *The Martyr Graves of Scotland*, (ed.) Matthew Hutchison (Kilmarnock, n.d.); for other non-Brethren material issued by Brethren publishers see the appropriate section in the Bibliography below, pp.530-2.

40. For this group see, Anon., *Reminiscences of the "Pen" Folk, by one who knew them* (Paisley, 1871).

41. For these groups, see John McLeod, *By-Paths of Highland Church History* (Edinburgh, 1965), G N M Collins (ed.), pp.78-135 .

last even being mistaken for early assemblies.⁴² In 1926 when publisher Henry Pickering wanted to print works bolstering Fundamentalism he began with two nineteenth-century books, one by the Evangelical Anglican T D Barnard and the other by High Churchman H P Liddon.⁴³ The Brethren did not see themselves as being isolated in the history of the Church.

Nevertheless they gave themselves a unique position. They took as their due the compliment, made most recently by Gordon Donaldson, that they 'presented the most clearly recognisable re-creation... of the primitive church of the days of the apostles'.⁴⁴ Thomas Veitch, a solicitor from Linlithgow, was stating a truism of their historiography when he asserted in *The Brethren Movement* (1930) that Martin Luther had restored 'the forgotten truth of justification by faith alone' and the Brethren had restored 'forgotten truths concerning His Church and its Scriptural fellowship and worship.'⁴⁵ James Patrick Callahan has argued that Brethren were primitivist but were anti-restorationist, wanting to follow the original ecclesiology but believing it was impossible to establish that pattern in its entirety in contemporary conditions.⁴⁶ Pessimism over restoring the Church marked Exclusive thought, given expression in the

42. T Wilson, 'A little light recovered', *BM*, 108 (1998), pp.358-60; Veitch, *The Brethren Movement*, pp. 104-5; anon [title missing in extant copy], *NI*, 3 (1873), pp.109-110; anon., 'Fragments from the "Northern Radicals"', *NI*, 4 (1874), p.151; C J Pickering *et al.*, *1865-1965: the Half-Yearly Meetings of Christians in Glasgow* (n.pl. [1965]); the mistaking in this last work of the Glasgow Scotch Baptist congregation for an early nineteenth-century pre-Brethren assembly is due to the reprinting among Open Brethren of Anon. (ed.), *Letters Concerning their Principles and Order from Assemblies of Believers in 1818-1820* (1820) rpt (London, 1889), which is a correspondence among Glasite churches that included several letters from Baptist churches in Scotland.

43. T D Barnard, *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament* (1866), Pickering & Inglis edn (Glasgow [1926]); H P Liddon, *The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (1866), Pickering & Inglis edn (Glasgow [1926]).

44. Gordon Donaldson, *The Faith of the Scots* (London, 1990), p.134; cf. James Anderson, *Our Heritage* (Kilmarnock, 1973), p.13.

45. Veitch, *The Brethren Movement*, p.12; cf. Callahan, *Primitivist Piety*, p.113.

46. Callahan, *Primitivist Piety*, pp.183-208, 216-42; in a review of Callahan T C F Stunt has criticised this distinction as hard to identify, *BAHNR*, 1 (1997-8), pp.119-20.

phrase of J N Darby 'the Church is in ruins'.⁴⁷ Miller commented that in the Brethren there was no thought of 'reconstituting' or 'restoring' the Church 'to its Pentecostal glory', the snare into which Satan had trapped Edward Irving. He ended his *Church History* gloomily, observing that corporate Christianity had been penetrated by evil and counselling an 'intensely individual' faith with Christians breaking bread among those gathered to Christ's name.⁴⁸

Darby's language was occasionally echoed in Open Brethren writings.⁴⁹ But one group which emerged within the latter that decisively rejected his phrase were those who absorbed the teaching of the magazine *Needed Truth*.⁵⁰ In 1892-4 they seceded to form the Churches of God, perceiving themselves as a remnant rebuilding the House of God on earth.⁵¹ However, J R Caldwell, the influential editor of the Brethren magazine *The Witness*, was scornful of this notion, maintaining that although some have thought that 'there may be a reconstruction of the Church such as will surpass in character and permanence even the apostolic Churches', such "'High Church" claims' were misplaced.⁵² But Caldwell clearly believed there was a congregational ideal which could be reclaimed in the present, a pattern he sought to elucidate in *The Charter of the Church*

47. Shih-An Deng, 'Ideas of the Church in an age of reform: the ecclesiological thoughts of John Nelson Darby and John Henry Newman, 1824-1850' (University of Minnesota Ph.D. thesis, 1994), pp.42-8.

48. Miller, *Church History*, 3, pp.655, 669, 670.

49. T C [ochrane], 'The One Body', *NA*, 10 (1873), pp.37-40; [A J Holiday], 'The Church in ruins', *BP*, 8 (1887), pp.104-6.

50. C M Luxmoore, 'Department of question and answer', *NT*, 5 (1892-3), p.161.

51. Charles Morton, 'the House of God forsaken', *NT*, 3 (1890-1), pp.82-8; David Smith, "'Remnant Days'", *NT*, 6 (1894), pp.225-30; for an account of this secession in Scotland, see below, pp.196-211.

52. J R Caldwell, *A Revision of Certain Teachings Regarding the Gathering and Receiving of Children of God* (Glasgow [1906]), p.9; Caldwell's views were criticised by W H Hunter, *The Gathering and Receiving of Children of God: a review of a recent booklet* (Kilmarnock, [c.1906]), pp. 17-18, as being "'the-Church-is-in-ruins do-what-you-like" theory'.

(1910), his exposition of 1 Corinthians.⁵³ Publisher John Ritchie did not accept that the Church was in ruins, but, he noted, its original 'unity and power' had gone, 'never to be restored'.⁵⁴ Awareness of other Evangelicals tempered Open Brethren claims, but nevertheless in their own eyes the movement was—declared the title of a history by David Beattie published in 1939—*Brethren: the story of a great recovery*.⁵⁵ In a more modest assessment F F Bruce saw it as an example of 'Reformation according to the Word of God'.⁵⁶

Another commonplace of Brethren historiography was that the movement was a work of the Holy Spirit, and support for this was found in the seemingly spontaneous generation of the movement in several places.⁵⁷ When writing on Scottish Brethren, Beattie—a native of Langholm, Dumfriesshire, who owned a monumental sculptor's business in Carlisle—was able to cite several examples of independent growth.⁵⁸ His original contribution to British Brethren historiography was in moving away from the Dublin-Plymouth-Bristol axis to study the growth of the movement elsewhere. As well as using printed sources, he wrote to individual assemblies asking them what they knew of their origins. From

53. John R Caldwell, *The Charter of the Church: revised notes of an exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2 vols (Glasgow [1910]).

54. [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 16 (1906), pp.142-3; *idem*, "The Way, Which They Call Heresy: remarks on Mr. W. Blair Neatby's book, "A History of the Plymouth Brethren" (Kilmarnock [c.1901]), pp.22-3; cf. *idem*, 'Revival times and work in Aberdeenshire', in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist of the North of Scotland and United States of America* (Kilmarnock, [1903]), p.169; and below, p.223.

55. The second printing of this book states it first appeared in 1940; but the writer has seen a copy which was given as a present at Christmas 1939; it originally appeared as a series which commenced in 1934 in *The Believer's Magazine* (see above n.26)

56. F F Bruce, 'Church history and its lessons', in J B Watson (ed.), *The Church: a symposium* (London, 1949), p.179.

57. Miller, *Church History*, 3, p.645; Veitch, *Brethren Movement*, p.30; Beattie, *Brethren*, p.viii; Hy Pickering (ed.), *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, 2nd edn (London, 1931), p.iv: the favourite example of spontaneous generation was that of Leonard Strong of Georgetown, British Guiana; however T C F Stunt, 'Leonard Strong: the motives and experiences of early missionary work in British Guiana', *CBRJ*, 34 (1983), pp.95-105, has shown this example originates in a misdating.

58. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp. 202, 211, 266, 265.

the replies he received he was able to chart the spread of the movement throughout Britain.⁵⁹ A perhaps unconscious effect of this methodology was to demonstrate how much of the movement's history has been devolved, residing in the affairs of individual congregations. It is, in effect, an exposition of the autonomy of Brethren assemblies. John Ritchie used the independent growth to distance himself from the movement's earlier history. In a review pamphlet of W Blair Neatby's *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (1901), for long the standard account, Ritchie sought to inform Neatby that thousands in the movement in Scotland had no knowledge of earlier events but were merely being obedient to the word of God.⁶⁰ Ritchie, who joined the movement through the independent accession of the north-east assemblies, was insulating himself from what he felt were previous mistakes, but in this contention he was echoing Brethren in his native region who did not take as a guide the movement in England and their principles of open communion.⁶¹ When in the aftermath of the Churches of God division some argued for association with other Christians, Ritchie was able to present their views as a departure.⁶² Quite different was Veitch's *The Brethren Movement* which concentrated on origins in Dublin and the south of England and the subsequent arguments over a restricted communion. It was essentially a plea for returning to what he termed '*the scriptural principles and Catholic fellowship of believers*'.⁶³ Veitch, in common with others of a more open persuasion, was ready to admit to Brethren failings in the past.⁶⁴ But doctrinal and ecclesiastical purists showed a marked coolness to their

59. Unfortunately Beattie's correspondence was destroyed shortly before the present research was undertaken.

60. Ritchie, "*The Way...*", pp.19-20.

61. J A Boswell, 'The Open position', *NT*, 12 (1900), pp.74-5; F F Bruce, *In Retrospect*, p.2.

62. See below, p.226.

63. Veitch, *Brethren Movement*, p.104.

64. *Ibid.*, p.102; cf. Alexander Marshall, "*Holding Fast the Faithful Word*": or *whither are we drifting?* (Glasgow [1908]), pp.38-9.

history, especially when it involved inconvenient facts. For example, the eschatological opinions of Bristol pioneer George Müller, which differed from the majority view, were deemed to be irrelevant by one writer for 'Our chief concern should be to discover... what the scriptures teach.'⁶⁵ Tradition was a poor second-best to the Bible.⁶⁶

Since the Second World War the Brethren movement has increasingly been polarised between those who wish to continue in isolation and those who want varying degrees of contact with other Christians. History has continued to be contested. The appearance in 1968 of English Brethren member Roy Coad's *A History of the Brethren Movement* brought criticisms from Scotland that there was a bias in it towards the 'more open-minded' brethren.⁶⁷ The Glasgow-based Gospel Tract Publications began in 1981 a series of reprints of early Brethren writers and from 1987 reprints of the biographies of earlier Brethren leaders. These publications were entirely cynical in their attempt to manipulate history, deliberately excising any reference to an open communion.⁶⁸ James Anderson, a lecturer at Ayr College, attempted to find a middle way, compiling two volumes of profiles of leading Brethren who had died during the 1970s and 1980s which included individuals of both tendencies.⁶⁹ But a mediating position was increasingly difficult to hold as his booklet *Our Heritage* (1973) showed. It gave an account of traditional features of Brethren life illustrated from history and called on the young to cherish

65. [Andrew Borland], 'George Müller's second advent teaching', *BM*, 64 (1954), p.95.

66. See below, p.220.

67. A B[orland], 'Review', *BM*, 78 (1968), p.283.

68. This bowdlerising includes a paragraph from Henry Pickering 'John R Caldwell', in *Chief Men*, pp.150-4; a paragraph from Tom Rea (compiler), *The Life and labours of David Rea, Evangelist: largely written from his own MSS* (Belfast, 1917), p.210; and all but a page and a half of a chapter from John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author and pioneer* (Glasgow [1929]), pp.127-141.

69. James Anderson (ed.), *They Finished Their Course* (Kilmarnock, 1980); *idem*, (ed.), *They Finished their Course in the Eighties* (Kilmarnock, 1990).

them.⁷⁰ But he was writing in the context of radical change which many of those whom he addressed would embrace. A different perspective on church history was offered by F F Bruce who wrote in 1950-2 a non-partisan popular history of Christianity until the seventh century, entitled in its one-volume edition *The Spreading Flame*, which was informed by his considerable scholarship.⁷¹ One other popular work was *The Evangelicals* (1989) by John Allan, an Anglo-Scottish church youth worker, which traced the roots and worldwide growth of Protestant Evangelicalism.⁷² These last two works demonstrated the ecumenical strain which was present in the Brethren and that in the post-war era was becoming more pronounced. Scottish Brethren academic historians of the period also have not written on the Brethren. The sole exception was an article by J A H Dempster on Scottish Brethren publishers which appeared in 1986. The study took a critical look at their productions but utilised an insider's understanding.⁷³ Other writings have contributed to Scottish history on the Reformation, architecture, business, religious publishing and women.⁷⁴ Most notable here is Margaret H B Sanderson whose

70. Anderson, *Our Heritage*; the material in this booklet first appeared as articles in *The Believer's Magazine* during 1971.

71. F F Bruce, *The Spreading Flame: the rise and progress of Christianity from its first beginnings to the conversion of the English* (Exeter, 1958): this is a revised one-volume edition of three works published from 1950 until 1952; in addition Bruce published the following significant historical works: *History of the Bible in English*, 3rd edn (Guildford and London, 1979); *Israel and the Nations: from the Exodus to the fall of the Second Temple* (Exeter, 1963); *New Testament History*, 3rd edn (London & Glasgow, 1980); for Bruce, see below, pp.308-9.

72. John Allan, *The Evangelicals: an illustrated history* (Exeter, 1989).

73. J A H Dempster, 'Aspects of Brethren publishing enterprise in late nineteenth century Scotland', *Publishing History*, 20 (1986), pp.61-101.

74. See, John A H Dempster, *The T. & T. Clark Story: a Victorian publisher and the New Theology with an epilogue covering the twentieth-century history of the firm* (Durham, 1992); *inter alia*, Sam McKinstry, *Rowand Anderson: 'Scotland's premier architect'* (Edinburgh, 1991); *idem*, *Sure as the Sunrise: a history of Albion Motors* (Edinburgh, 1997); *idem* and Gavin Stamp (eds), *Greek Thomson* (Edinburgh, 1994); Elizabeth C Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth Century Edinburgh* (London, 1996); *inter alia*, Margaret H B Sanderson, *Scottish Rural Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1982); *idem*, *Cardinal of Scotland: David Beaton c.1494-1546* (Edinburgh, 1986); *idem*, *Mary Stewart's People* (Edinburgh, 1987); *idem*, *Robert Adam and Scotland: portrait of an architect* (Edinburgh, 1992); *idem*, *Ayrshire and the Reformation: people and change, 1490-1600* (East Linton, 1997).

insight into Ayrshire Lollardy as being a 'lay-orientated "do-it-yourself" element' is clearly influenced by her Brethren background, and she has written sympathetically of both sides in the Reformation struggle—something almost impossible for earlier generations of Brethren.⁷⁵ There always had been Scottish Brethren interested in secular history: David Anderson-Berry, a Scottish physician practising in London, instituted a gold medal for an essay on an aspect of Scottish history which from 1930 was awarded by the Royal Historical Society;⁷⁶ Beattie, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (Scotland), wrote two works on Border history;⁷⁷ and Robert Rendall, a Kirkwall draper, made significant archaeological discoveries in the 1920s and 30s.⁷⁸ But the post-war involvement was more marked. The recent writers were typical of a broadening which has affected a section of the movement.⁷⁹ The latest phase of Brethren historiography again demonstrates the tensions current within the movement.

SOURCES

The problem of sources alluded to in the first paragraph of the present chapter is an immediate one in researching Brethren history. A range of printed and oral sources has been drawn upon. Brethrenism valued literacy and had several publishers who serviced the movement in

75. Sanderson, *Ayrshire and the Reformation*, p.41.

76. The competition, known as the David Berry Essay, was instituted in memory of Anderson-Berry's minister father and was originally for an essay on James Hepburn Earl of Bothwell to be awarded by The Society of Antiquaries (Scotland) but an alteration to the terms of the will were sanctioned in 1930 to permit the Royal Historical Society to offer it for an essay on the reigns of James I to VI and then varied in 1978 to include any period of Scottish history with the prize being a sum of money.

77. David J Beattie, *Prince Charlie and the Borderland* (Carlisle, 1925); *idem*, *Langsyne in Eskdale* (Carlisle, 1950); for Beattie's other work, see below, pp.309, 399.

78. Neil Dickson, 'Robert Rendall: a life', in *idem* (ed.), *An Island Shore: selected writings of Robert Rendall* (Kirkwall, 1990), pp.17-49; for Rendall, see below, pp.309-10, 399-400.

79. See below, pp.423-5.

Scotland.⁸⁰ The production of these firms has been researched, especially three magazines issued by them which are the principal primary sources for Scottish Brethren history: *The Truth Promoter*, *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine*.⁸¹ Among much else, these journals carried news of evangelists and assemblies which are invaluable in tracing the growth of the movement.⁸² Brethren congregations could be commenced on the initiative of one or two individuals and were as easily discontinued; in addition schisms were frequent. It is not always easy to determine if meetings had a continuous history and even the assembly address lists which are extant from 1895 onwards were not always accurate.⁸³ It is most usually the magazines which provide notice of a congregation's founding or discontinuation or even evidence of its continued existence in, for example, news of an itinerant evangelist's movements.⁸⁴ *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine* also carried brief obituaries that preserve much valuable material which would otherwise have been lost. These notices are an additional source for the commencement of assemblies as the circumstances and date would often be recorded in a founder's obituary. And they often listed the significant spiritual events in an individual's life—in Brethren eyes the year or age when its subject was converted (or 'saved') and joined a meeting (or 'came into fellowship'). Although such a

80. See below, pp.182-4, 341-5.

81. However, not all copies of these magazines are extant: the final years of *The Truth Promoter* (1870-5) are missing from Dundee City Library which holds the only run of the magazine known to the writer; and the first volume of *The Witness* (1870/1) is missing with 1872-6 contained in a single mutilated volume; also there are gaps in the preservation of parts of this magazine: the British Library run of the magazine preserves the news sections for 1879-89 (with some gaps) and 1907-80; see also below, n.87.

82. If a reference in the present work is only to a magazine page number, then it is to such an item.

83. The earliest known lists for 1886 and 1887 are not extant.

84. By the application of Occam's razor, assemblies have not been unnecessarily multiplied: unless evidence exists to the contrary, it is assumed they have had a continuous history; the exception to this are assemblies which existed before 1859 where the contrary rule is applied: because of the differences which there were between many pre- and post-1859 assemblies, it is assumed that the former were discontinued unless there is evidence demonstrating a continuous existence.

source has considerable limitations, a computer data base of all members of Scottish assemblies who received an obituary in *The Witness* (the principal Brethren review) was compiled.⁸⁵ From this data base it has been possible to abstract numerical series which, in the absence of total membership numbers that many counted sinful to compile,⁸⁶ allow the growth of the movement to be estimated.⁸⁷ A separate computer data base

85. This was done on an Apple Macintosh Performa 475 using ClarisWorks 2.1.

86. On the basis of 2 Samuel 24: 10.

87. The obituaries in *The Witness* were used from 1907 until 1978. They were evidently being published before 1907 but the section of the magazine in which they were printed has not been preserved until the British Library began binding the monthly issue in its entirety, and after 1978 Scottish deaths were rarely reported. The data base of Scottish Brethren members compiled from the obituaries contains information on 8 285 individuals. However, their accuracy is severely limited, not least because being obituaries they either do not have data for those still living in 1978 or, when the series starts, those already dead. In addition some obituaries are exceptionally brief—women especially might not have much more recorded than their date of death. Furthermore, whether an individual had an obituary recorded was dependent on such factors as their status within the movement (thus men were more likely to have one than women) or where they lived (larger congregations tended to be more punctilious in submitting an obituary than smaller, remote ones). Also years or ages were sometimes prefaced by such formulae as 'more than', 'about' or 'almost', and a year of birth had most frequently to be calculated from age at death. Not all conversions, particularly earlier ones, recorded in obituaries were as a result of Brethren evangelism and this fact was not always stated. In 291 cases the date of conversion and the date of joining differ and in many of these cases the conversion is probably a non-Brethren one for usually these dates, except in the case of children, tended to be close to each other. In addition, the average age of conversion is falsely raised as a childhood conversion, an exceptionally common phenomenon in the Brethren, was either noted as being such with no precise details given or was not recorded at all.

Growth series abstracted from the obituaries are probably at their most accurate for the period 1872 until 1923 for conversions and 1882 until 1928 for Brethren membership. These dates were arrived at by calculating the average ages of death, conversion and joining for those receiving an obituary in the years 1907-13 (the average for several years, omitting World War I) and the decade 1969-78: these were respectively 62, 26.9 and 37.2 for the former period and 75.4, 25.1 and 25.5 for the latter; however the lack of recording of childhood conversions probably means an extra five years should be subtracted from the latter conversion date: the years between which the data achieved maximum accuracy were then calculated from 1906 and 1978. The years of conversion and of joining are available for 4 609 individuals (55.6% of the data base) of which the year of conversion is available for 2 668 individuals, of which 23.4% (623 individuals) are indicated as being approximate; and the year of joining is available for 2 427 individuals, of which 32.5% (788 individuals) are indicated as being approximate. It is clear that the data must be used with caution, but correlated with other sources, abstracted series can give a suggestive picture of Brethren growth. In stacked graphs estimating growth (i.e. Figures 3.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 6.1) the following data is not included: non-Brethren conversions and the year of conversion if the year of joining an assembly is also known. However, in Table 3.1 (average ages of conversion and joining) coincident dates of conversion and joining are admitted to the calculations but to eliminate potential non-Brethren conversions, not adult conversions (i.e. age 21 and above) which differ by more than a year from that of joining, or childhood ones when the year of joining is in adulthood.

was also constructed for emigrants where a year of emigration could be established, using, in addition to *The Witness* obituaries, those of *The Believer's Magazine* and other sources such as the few congregational roll books which were available to the writer.⁸⁸

History has traditionally privileged the written over the spoken, for most often a document or printed matter is what remains. The Brethren, however, had a vibrant unwritten culture, much of their thinking being transmitted in sermons, conversational Bible readings and informal house discussions. Oral history has formed another source. Interviews were undertaken with several individuals, most of them elderly, and valuable information and a sense of the movement's ethos was acquired through these.⁸⁹ In addition many Brethren churches were contacted to establish how much had been preserved of their history.⁹⁰ As a result, a substantial collection of manuscripts was built up.⁹¹ Although gaps remain in knowledge, an eclectic approach to sources allows a reasonably comprehensive picture of Scottish Brethren history to emerge.

PROSPECTIVE

The present writer is a participant observer who through one branch of the family is fifth-generation Brethren. The advantages of this in writing on a movement which has been neglected or often seemed obscure to historians are obvious. The search for sources is made a little easier and a feeling for the subject already exists. The present work is in its own way an

88. See below, pp.378-81.

89. In order to protect confidentiality my interviewees have not been identified below; however, in some cases the provenance of an oral source is indicated. Tapes and notes of interviews will be lodged in the Christian Brethren Archive, John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

90. It was not thought necessary for the purposes of the present work to write to every assembly; those which initially seemed to have the most obscure history were targeted.

91. These are listed below in the Bibliography, pp.499-508; they will be lodged in the Christian Brethren Archive, John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

attempt to rescue the movement from what E P Thompson in a different context famously called 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.⁹² However, it might be felt, both by external and internal readers, that impartiality will be sacrificed. The bane of older denominational histories was their propensity to become polemics which could alienate outsiders. In addition the conflicting currents within Brethrenism mean that increasingly individuals within the movement have *ipso facto* to decide within which stream they are going to move. The present writer grew up within one tendency and has since his undergraduate days belonged to another. Brethren readers might feel one inclination rather than another is favoured. It has been a cliché, persuasively stated by E H Carr's *What is History?* (1961), that historians bring their own values and presuppositions to their writing and historical interpretation is the result of an interaction between author and topic.⁹³ This does not mean, however, that objectivity is a chimera. As Richard Evans has recently stressed, the past is a reality to be encountered and 'the historian has to develop a detached mode of cognition, a faculty of self-criticism and an ability to understand another person's point of view.'⁹⁴ The present work is a necessarily provisional attempt to find, not invent, patterns within history.

The aim is to analyse the development of the movement incorporating its social history. Three polarities of the Brethren in relation to society are of thematic importance to the investigation. These are: integration and withdrawal; continuity and change; and growth and decline. Attention will be paid to how they embedded themselves in concrete features of the movement, such as church-planting, cultural activity, doctrine and

92. E P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1968), p.14.

93. E H Carr, *What is History?* (1961), Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1964).

94. Richard J Evans, *In Defence of History* (London, 1997), p.252.

practice, social class and women's roles. Each of the above three themes relates to significant areas of historiographical interest. The motif of continuity and change, for example, is one of the central concerns of historical (and perhaps any) investigation. In the present work the interest will be in the relationship of the Brethren to their religious and social origins; the innovations of their beginnings when they saw themselves as a renewal movement; what possibilities there were for alteration once the movement reached its mature phase; and the changes of the contemporary movement. The other two themes have over recent years produced a large secondary literature and the interpretation of the Brethren offered will be related to this discourse.

In analysing degrees of integration and withdrawal within the movement the sociological typification of sect and denomination will be drawn upon. The Brethren were a protest movement against sectarianism. One of the objections to independent mission halls was that they associated too readily with the institutional church—theirs was 'a "halfway" theory of separation'.⁹⁵ The Brethren prided themselves on their stand which they felt was common to all Christians. It was for this reason they refused a denominational title and used only such names which were common to all believers.⁹⁶ But it is not the common pejorative usage of 'sect' for ecclesiastical divisions displaying mutual animosity, which the Brethren protested against, that is intended by sociologists.⁹⁷ Troeltsch used the term of small, lower-class perfectionist groups in the Middle Ages which placed

95. [John Ritchie], 'Separation in worship, but not in service', *BM*, 29 (Feb 1919), p.22-3.

96. A[lexander] M[arshall], *Wandering Lights: a stricture on the doctrines and methods of Brethrenism. A review by A.M.*, 3rd edn (Glasgow, n.d.), pp.28-9.

97. This definition is sometimes used by historians, see Paul T Phillips, *The Sectarian Spirit: sectarianism, society and politics in Victorian cotton towns* (Toronto, 1982); Tom Gallagher, *Edinburgh Divided: John Cormack and no popery in the 1930s* (Edinburgh, 1987); *idem Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace: religious tension in modern Scotland* (Manchester, 1987); T M Devine (ed.), *Scotland's Shame: bigotry and sectarianism in modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000).

great stress on the original ideas of Christianity. They were indifferent or hostile to the state and their opposite type was the church.⁹⁸ Attention focused on the ways in which they became a denomination, a category between the restricted membership of the sect and the universal church.⁹⁹ But J Milton Yinger noted how sectarian characteristics might persist over several generations and posited the established sect, a more structured body.¹⁰⁰ The definitions which form the starting-point in the present work are those of Bryan Wilson. According to Wilson, the sect demands total commitment, and is a voluntary society entered by proof of some personal merit such as a conversion experience; it emphasises exclusiveness, being willing to expel those who infringe its rules; it claims the possession of some special enlightenment; there is a high degree of lay participation; and it is hostile or indifferent to the wider society. The denomination, on the other hand, is also a voluntary society but with a more relaxed commitment and more formalised membership procedures; it emphasises tolerance, accepting it is one movement among many and not commonly expelling those who lapse; it has a professional ministry while allowing for lay participation; and it accepts the values of its society with membership tending to be socially compatible.¹⁰¹ The use of church-sect typology has been criticised recently by New Testament scholar David Horrell, who sees it as potentially concealing why, for example, particular sects are hostile to secular society by appeals to it being 'typical' behaviour

98. Ernest Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, 1 (1911), Eng. trans., (New York, 1931), pp.331-43.

99. H Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929) New American Library edn (New York, 1975); Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: a study of Gastonia* (New Haven, CT, 1942), pp.117-24; John H Chamberlayne, 'From sect to church in British Methodism', *BJS*, 15 (1964), pp.139-49.

100. J Milton Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion* (New York, 1970), pp.266-73: this is an adaptation of an earlier work by Yinger, *Religion, Society, and the Individual: an introduction to the sociology of religion* (New York, 1957).

101. B R Wilson, 'An analysis of sect development', in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.23-5.

for this form of community. However, as Horrell recognises, Wilson's work is based on empirical studies and Wilson is alive to the danger of typologies obscuring the variety of phenomena.¹⁰² In addition, Wilson has developed a varied typology of sects which can fit different groups, and these sect sub-types are, he has argued, of greater predictive use than the larger category of sect.¹⁰³ His theory is not a procrustean bed into which disparate groups are made to fit.

In a study of the Quakers, Elizabeth Isichei has pointed out how both sectarian attitudes and denominational attitudes may co-exist in a single group making generalisations about typical sect development difficult.¹⁰⁴ Scottish Brethren of different emphases have accepted that in the sociological sense, the Brethren are a sect.¹⁰⁵ Although the term is not entirely satisfactory because of the derogatory overtones it has in common parlance, in the present work 'sect' will be used in its neutral sociological sense for the movement; 'sectarian tendency' for, among other features, a persistent bias towards increased withdrawal from society and institutional Christianity; and 'denominationalising tendency' for those who permitted a more tolerant attitude to integration with church and society. A useful test of the presence of the last is a pragmatic approach to issues which according to David Martin is an implicit tendency of the denomination.¹⁰⁶ However, it should be noted that none of these terms will be applied with

102. David G Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: interests and ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp.14-16, 287-8.

103. Wilson, 'sect development', in *idem* (ed.) *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.1-2; see also *idem*, *Sects and Society: a sociological study of three religious groups in Britain* (London, 1961); *idem*, *Religious Sects* (London, 1970); *idem*, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford, 1982); *idem*, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism*.

104. Elizabeth A Isichei, 'From sect to denomination among English Quakers', in Wilson (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp. 161-181.

105. Anderson, *Our Heritage*, p.47, quoted below, p.440; John Boyes, cited in Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: the radical Christianity of the House Church Movement* (London, 1985), p.216, n.7.

106. David Martin, 'The denomination', *BJS*, 13 (1962), pp.1-14.

a predetermined meaning as if those who represented one inclination or the other were pressing for all the characteristics present in some ideal type. It is assumed that the Open Brethren are a conversionist sect marked by a literalist orthodox biblicism and a primary concentration on evangelism.¹⁰⁷ But what precisely is meant by 'sect' and 'denomination' in discussing them will emerge from historical analysis.

Growth and decline, another of the central themes of the present work, will engage with the ever increasing literature on patterns of church growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and on religion in industrial society. Until the 1970s historical orthodoxy was that the Church lost membership and influence throughout the nineteenth century and that among the working classes with increasing urbanisation this process was even more marked.¹⁰⁸ Wales, where working-class adherence was high, was seen as being atypical.¹⁰⁹ However, this view has been

107. Wilson, 'Sect Development', in *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p.27; however, Wilson avoids categorising the Open Brethren (he rarely mentions them in his writings on sects) and he placed Peter L Embley, 'The early development of the Plymouth Brethren', in *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.213-43, under introversionist sects in the contents page; this led one Open Brethren reviewer to express the hope that they were conversionist rather than introversionist: T C F Stunt, 'Article review: Patterns of Sectarianism', *JCBRF*, No.19 (March 1969), pp.35-9.

108. E R Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957); K S Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963); Robert Currie, Alan D Gilbert and Lee Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: patterns of religious growth in the British isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977); Alan D Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: church, chapel and social change, 1740-1915* (London, 1976); Geoffrey Robson, 'The failure of success: working class evangelists in early Victorian Birmingham', in Derek Baker (ed.), *SCH*, 15 (Oxford, 1978), pp.381-91; David Englander, 'The Word and the world: Evangelicalism in the Victorian city', in Gerald Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain Volume II: controversies* (Manchester, 1988), pp.15-38; for this view among Scottish historians see, Donald J Withrington, 'Non-church going, c.1750-c.1850': a preliminary study', *RSCHS*, 17 (1970), pp.99-113; A Allan MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974); Olive Checkland, *Industry and Ethos Scotland 1832-1914* (London, 1984), pp. 123-5; T C Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London, 1986), pp.181-208.

109. W R Lambert, 'Some working-class attitudes towards organised religion in nineteenth-century Wales', in Gerald Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain Volume IV: interpretations* (Manchester, 1988), pp.96-114; cf. E T Davies, *Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales* (Cardiff, 1965).

challenged more recently by a number of historians who have seen the churches' influence in the nineteenth century as widely diffused with continuing high levels of working-class adherence.¹¹⁰ Revisionist historians have also examined Scottish churches' and found the same pattern.¹¹¹ Particularly significant is the work of Callum Brown who has argued that urbanisation did not lead inevitably to decline in membership

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110. C D Field, 'The social structure of English Methodism: eighteenth - twentieth centuries', *BJS*, 28 (1977), pp.199-225; Jeff Cox, *English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930* (Oxford, 1982); Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the Working Classes in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1984); *idem*, 'New perspectives on Victorian working-class religion: the oral evidence', *Oral History Journal*, 14 (1986), pp.31-49; Donald M Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness: the evangelical mission to working-class London* (Westport, CT, 1986); Gerald Parsons, 'A question of meaning: religion and working-class life', in *idem* (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain Volume II: controversies* (Manchester, 1988), pp.64-87; Jeremy N Morris, 'Church and people thirty-three years on: a historical critique', *Theology*, 94 (1991), pp.92-101; *idem*, *Religion and Urban Change: Croyden 1840-1914* (Woodbridge, 1992); Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian England: how secular was the working class?* (Bangor, 1993); Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994); Michael R Watts, *The Dissenters. Volume II: the expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford, 1995); Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (Basingstoke, 1996).
111. P L M Hillis, 'Presbyterianism and social class in mid-nineteenth century Glasgow: a study of nine churches', *JEH*, 32 (1981), pp. 47-64; Callum G Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730* (London, 1987); *idem*, 'Religion and social change', in T M Devine and Rosalind Mitchison (eds), *People and Society in Scotland: I 1760-1830* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp.143-62; P L M Hillis, 'Education and evangelisation: Presbyterian missions in mid-nineteenth century Glasgow', *SHR*, 66 (1989), pp.46-62; Callum G Brown, 'Each take off their several way? The Protestant churches and the working classes in Scotland', in Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher (eds), *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant popular culture in modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.69-85; *idem*, 'Religion, class and church growth', in W Hamish Fraser and R J Morris (eds), *People and Society in Scotland: II 1830-1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.310-335; *idem*, *The People in the Pews: religion and society in Scotland since 1780* (Dundee, 1993); P L M Hillis, 'The sociology of the Disruption', in Michael Fry & Stewart J Brown (eds), *Scotland in the Age of the Disruption* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp.44-62; Callum G Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997); positive assessments of religion and the Scottish working classes can also be found in Barbara Thatcher, 'The Episcopal Church in Helensburgh in the mid-nineteenth century', in John Butt and J T Ward (eds), *Scottish Themes* (Edinburgh, 1976), pp.98-123; James Hutchinson, *Weavers, Miners and the Open Book: a history of Kilsyth* (Cumbernauld, 1986); and T M Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (Harmondsworth, 1999).

and that serious reduction did not come until the 1960s.¹¹² The argument looks set to continue for some time especially as it is related to a further contentious issue—the theory of secularisation.¹¹³ The present work will seek to examine the Brethren in relation to this debate by analysing their patterns of growth and their social class. It will attempt to establish how far the movement, the largest sect in Scotland for the first half of the twentieth century, was typical of ecclesiastical bodies. In the contemporary period several studies of Scottish churches, among them the Brethren, will provide invaluable comparisons.¹¹⁴ There is another sense of ‘growth’ which is less accessible to the historian: the self-development of the individual (and here its opposite is constriction). Corporate growth can be measured through statistics but the existential dimension of people achieving their potential has no ready measure. Nevertheless, as a frequent criticism of sects is that they stifle personal fulfilment, some tentative judgements in relation to the Brethren will be attempted. The discussion here will be related to the literature on the social role of

112. Callum G Brown, ‘Did urbanization secularize Britain?’, in R Rodger (ed.), *Urban History Yearbook 1988* (Leicester, 1988), pp.1-14; ‘Faith in the city’, *History Today*, 40 (1990), pp.41-7; *idem*, ‘A revisionist approach to religious change’, in Steve Bruce (ed.), *Religion and Modernization: sociologists and historians debate the secularization thesis* (Oxford, 1992), pp.31-58; *idem*, ‘Religion and secularisation’, in Tony Dickson and James H Treble (eds), *People and Society in Scotland: III 1914-1990* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp.48-79; *idem*, ‘The mechanism of religious growth in urban societies: British cities since the eighteenth century’, in Hugh McLeod (ed.), *European Religion in the Age of the Great Cities 1830-1930* (London, 1995), pp.239-62.

113. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1975); Alan D Gilbert, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain: a history of secularization of modern society* (London, 1980); Bruce (ed.), *Religion and Modernization*; Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (London, 1993); Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: believing without belonging* (Oxford, 1994).

114. D R Robertson, ‘The relationship of Church and class in Scotland’, in D Martin (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, 1 (London, 1968), pp.9-31; Kenneth J Panton, ‘The Church in the community: a study of patterns of religious adherence in a Scottish burgh’, in Michael Hill (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, 6 (1973), pp.183-206; Peter L Sissons, *The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1973).

The main principle of organisation which has been adopted is chronological. A sequence of chapters will trace the expansion and contraction of the movement and its internal development from 1838, when the first known assembly came into existence, until 1999. Chapter 2 will examine the largely Bowesite movement of the 1840s and 1850s and Chapter 3 will analyse the crucial decade which followed the 1859 Revival. In these chapters growth and development will be studied in conjunction with each other. The period of greatest increase for the movement was the late Victorian period and Chapter 4 will analyse contraction and expansion until the outbreak of World War I. The Brethren were in their most developed form in the inter-war period and this phase had an after-life until the mid-1960s. Chapter 6 will examine patterns of growth and decline from 1914 until 1965 with, in addition, an investigation of the ethos of the movement when it was in its mature form. Complementary to Chapters 4 and 6 are Chapters 5 and 7 in which the internal development of the movement will be examined for the respective periods. The classic era of

115. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5), Eng. trans. 1930; rpt (London, 1992); R H Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1922), Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1975); Thompson, *English Working Class*, pp. 385-440; Robert Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics: the effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community* (Cambridge, 1974); T W Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday schools and working-class culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven, CT; 1976); R Q Gray, 'Religion, culture and social class in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Edinburgh', G Crossick (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1977), pp.134-58; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, p.87-93; Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London, 1974); Steve Bruce, 'Social change and collective behaviour: the revival in eighteenth-century Ross-shire', *BJS*, 34 (1983), pp.554-72; J L Duthie, 'Philanthropy and evangelism among Aberdeen seamen, 1814-1924', *SHR*, 63 (1984), pp.155-73; Robert Colls, 'Primitive Methodists in the northern coalfields', in Jim Obelkevich et al. (eds), *Disciplines of faith: studies in religion, politics and patriarchy* (London, 1987), pp.323-34; Wayne J Johnson, 'Piety among 'The Society of People': the witness of Primitive Methodist local preachers in the North Midlands, 1812-1862', in W J Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), *SCH*, 26 (Oxford, 1989), pp.323-34; John Coffey, 'Democracy and popular religion: Moody and Sankey's mission to Britain, 1873-1875', in Eugenio F Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Democracy: Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.93-119.

the Brethren might be said to have ceased in the mid-1960s. Chapter 8 will be devoted to an investigation of the spirituality of the movement from the 1830s until that decade and Chapter 9 to the relationship of the Brethren to culture and society for the same period. Chapter 10 is a coda which will recapitulate the topics of the previous chapters through exploring the contemporary movement from the mid-1960s, examining internal development and changes in membership size, spirituality, and attitudes to culture and society. The conclusion, Chapter 11, will attempt to draw together the central themes—integration and withdrawal, continuity and change, growth and decline—and arrive at some assessment.

CHAPTER 2

THE NAME OF CHRIST ALONE: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT 1838-1858

At Dundee, Liverpool, Arbroath, Aberdeen and many other places in England, Ireland and Scotland, Switzerland, and the East and West Indies, believers may be found who meet, not in the name of man or sect, but in the name of Christ alone.

—John Bowes, *The Christian Magazine and Herald of Union*, 1 (1842), p.11.

In 1828 Benjamin Wills Newton, having graduated earlier in the year with a first in classics from the University of Oxford, toured Scotland, casting a rigorous eye on its churches.¹ He was one of a number of young men who had been influenced at Oxford by Henry Bulteel, an Anglican curate, to adopt Calvinism, and Newton had come to favour a message of individual salvation.² He claimed that after visiting about a hundred Scottish churches he had found only two individuals with 'the sort of Gospel that Bulteel delivered'. This state of affairs he blamed on the absorption of the Church in social and political matters, a fault that he felt had persisted since the Reformation. The prominent Congregationalist Ralph Wardlaw, Newton alleged, 'I found not to have the Gospel', while even Thomas Chalmers was accused of being 'more interested in parish matters and poor law'. Newton felt the Scots 'despised England while', he

1. For Newton see *DEB*, 2, pp.822-3.

2. Cf. CBA 7049, Fry MS, Benjamin Newton to Joseph Treffry, 15 August 1828, pp.148-151: this letter, written to an uncle, shows what Newton considered 'the Gospel' during this period; he gave a 'statement of my religious sentiments—at least those which are considered peculiar and these are the total depravity of mankind and the necessity of regeneration by the sovereign influence of the Holy Spirit.'

asserted, 'there is more Gospel in Oxford and Cambridge'.³ Newton was representative of the new forces, adumbrated in many respects by the Haldanes, which in the 1820s had begun to make themselves felt in Evangelicalism.⁴ Shortly after his Scottish tour Newton was to become a seminal figure in the English Brethren movement, but he had clearly found the Scottish Church out of sympathy with his developing ideas. Another later Brethren leader, Henry Craik, a native of Prestonpans who left Scotland in 1826 upon graduation from St Andrews University, was also to claim that it was not until he went to Exeter and met Anthony Norris Groves, who was then developing ideas which would lead to the forming of the Brethren in Dublin, 'that the Lord taught me those lessons of dependence on Himself and of catholic fellowship, which I have sought to carry out.'⁵

However despite the experience of Newton and Craik, the religious life of Scotland was changing in a manner which would favour the growth of the Brethren. Developments, especially among non-Presbyterian dissenting bodies, were conducive to the formation of assemblies. Presbyterianism itself was also touched by change, as will become apparent through the discussion of James Morison in the present chapter, and many of those

3. *Ibid.*, p.145, 'B.W.N. in Scotland'. The Fry MS is a transcript of Newton's journals and the account of the visit to Scotland was left undated by him. The editor, however, dated it as 1828 because of the existence of a letter from Scotland in that year. Elsewhere in his journal (pp.146-8) Newton states he was in Scotland in 1828. The two individuals who met Newton's approval were 'Hamilton of Strathcarn' (probably William Hamilton of Strathblane was intended) and an anonymous preacher near John o' Groats House.

4. D W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London 1989), pp.75-86.

5. Quoted in G H Lang, *Anthony Norris Groves: saint and pioneer* (London, 1939), p.20; for Craik's Scottish background, see, W Elfe Tayler, *Passages from the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik of Bristol* (London, 1866), pp.6-10; Stuart Piggin and John Roxborough, *The St Andrews Seven* (Edinburgh, 1985); *DSCHT*, p.222; *DEB*, 1, p.266, i.

influenced by the new currents found the older church life wanting.⁶ The discussion below will trace the movements in the Scottish churches and factors within society which were of significance for the emergence of the Brethren. Two are of particular importance. One was what Nathan Hatch has called in an American context the democratisation of Christianity. Hatch saw this process as being marked by the rejection of traditional orthodoxies and of the clergy as a separate caste; the empowering of ordinary people by taking their spiritual experiences seriously without subjecting them to theological scrutiny; and dreams of power to change things for the better.⁷ The second process which is of significance was a new phase of revivalism that was urban, anti-institutional and nondenominational and which mobilised the laity, softening, as it progressed, the scholastic Calvinism of Scotland.⁸ Hatch depicted the conjunction of 'evangelical fervour and popular sovereignty' as having a deep impact on American society.⁹ He saw English Christianity as being handicapped by gentility and compromised by the establishment, but *pace* Hatch, the trends he was examining also had considerable effect on nineteenth-century Britain, one of their consequences being the spread of Brethrenism.¹⁰ After examining the emergence of the Brethren within

6. Among the leaders of new theological thought, John McLeod Campbell and Thomas Erskine of Linlathen were in touch with G V Wigram, one of the leaders among English Brethren (F Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: its origins, its worldwide development and its significance for the present day*, 2nd edn (Exeter, 1976), p.60). Erskine was critical of the Brethren (William Hanna (ed.), *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen* (Edinburgh, 1878), pp.382-6), but more sympathetic for a while was A J Scott, the theologian and educationalist, who edited Groves' journal (A J Scott (ed.), *Journal of a Residence at Bagdad, during the Years 1830 and 1831 by Mr. Anthony N. Groves, Missionary* (London, 1832); Scott may also have edited Groves's earlier journal for 1829-30.

7. Nathan O Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT, 1989), pp.9-11.

8. For this revivalism see: Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CT, 1978); John Kent, *Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian revivalism* (London, 1978); *DSCHT*, p.715, i.

9. Hatch, *Democratization*, p.9.

10. *Ibid.*, pp.5, 8; however, this is to ignore churches such as the Primitive Methodists, the spread across the Atlantic of some of the groups discussed by Hatch, and some of the movements surveyed in the present chapter.

Scotland, the present chapter will trace their growth and the cohesion of the still precarious movement in the decades before the revivals of 1859-60.

EDINBURGH BEGINNINGS

Ten years after Newton, John Nelson Darby had quite a different experience of Scotland. Darby, who had become the Brethren leader with the greatest influence due to his itinerancy in the United Kingdom and in continental Europe,¹¹ reported in 1838 that 'I am invited this week to Edinburgh, where thirty-six are gathered together.'¹² This church, Darby discovered, had been in existence for some years and it had evidently seceded from a larger body for he referred to it in a letter to Swiss correspondents as being '*un petit fragment d'un troupeau*'.¹³ There had been a second, more recent split because the majority of the church had wanted to receive only those baptised as believers and also, according to Darby, they had denied the influence of the Holy Spirit in conversion. The rationalism evident in its pneumatology and the arguments over the relationship of believer's baptism to membership, suggest that the congregation might have originated among the Scotch Baptists. In the 1830s this body was divided over the issue of admission to communion, and certainly their practice of exhortation from among the members would have made absorption into the Brethren easier.¹⁴ However, the

11. On Darby see, W.G Turner, *John Nelson Darby: a biography* (London, 1926); Max S Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby* (1988) Eng. edn (Neptune, NJ, 1992); *DEB*, 1, pp.290-1.

12. J N Darby to Genevan Christians, in [*idem*], *Letters of JND*, 3 (London, n.d.), p.234; the letter is in an appendix to the collected letters with a note at the end: 'Hereford (not before 1837)'. The letter is given in its original French in *MÉ*(1971), pp. 122-9, where it has an introductory note stating: '*adressée de Hereford aux frères de Genève, vraisemblablement en 1838.*' However, a letter dated 1838 is extant which was written from Edinburgh immediately after Darby first made contact with the church (see below n. 13). I am grateful to Mr T C F Stunt for the references to *MÉ*.

13. J N Darby to A M Foluquier, 6 Octobre 1838 (Commencée en septembre), *Lettres de J.N.D.*, *MÉ* (1897), p.294: 'a small fragment of a flock [of God]'; I am indebted to Mr Joe Adrain for the translations from Darby's French.

14. D B Murray, 'The Scotch Baptist tradition in Great Britain', *BQ*, 33 (1989), pp.186-98.

controversy over the Holy Spirit suggests that there may have been an infusion of ideas emanating from Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Disciples of Christ, then new to Britain and which were attracting Scotch Baptists.¹⁵

The small group of seceders which invited Darby to Edinburgh had held the minority view in the recent troubles. He taught them his eschatology, which demanded that true believers should separate from the professing Church to await the imminent return of Christ, and he emphasised the need for an entire dependence on the Holy Spirit which would, he felt, lead to unity among Christians. There was in Scotland, Darby stated:

*un désir ardent de la part de plusieurs de trouver quelque chose de plus spirituel, de plus dévoué, et un renoncement plus complet au monde, <<ce siècle mauvais,>> idée trop peu connue en Écosse, quoi-qu'il ait grande profession de religion.*¹⁶

It is likely, given the enthusiasm with which Darby wrote of the encounter, that he was successful in winning the Edinburgh church to his views. Two women with Scottish aristocratic connections were also attracted to the Brethren in this period. Caroline Margaret Douglas, the Marchioness of Queensberry, wife of the 7th Marquis, became a member of the movement. Like many contemporary women of her class, she engaged in philanthropic work, helping in missions among prostitutes.¹⁷ In addition, Mrs Isabella Hutchinson, the daughter of Lord Cunningham and wife of an army colonel, also joined the movement. Both women were certainly active in Edinburgh,¹⁸ and this may indicate the continued

15. David Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall: a short history of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland* (Birmingham, 1980), pp.13-32.

16. Darby, 'Lettres', p.294: 'an ardent desire on the part of several to find something more spiritual, more devoted and a complete denial of the world, 'this evil generation', an idea of denial too little known in Scotland, despite the great profession of religion.'

17. CBA 7049, Fry MS, pp.152-3; *DEB*, 2, p. 909, i.

18. CBA 7049, Fry MS, p.153; Thomas Croskery, 'The Plymouth Brethren', *The Presbyterian Quarterly and the Princeton Review* (New Series), 1 (1872), p.48; W G Gorman, (ed.), *Converts to Rome*, (London 1910), p.227: I am indebted to Mr T C F Stunt for these references.

existence of an assembly there—the references in Darby's correspondence of 1838 are apparently the only extant references to its existence. But it is unlikely that the majority of the new assembly came from the same social strata as these two women, for part of the attraction of the Brethren for the upper classes was their classless simplicity. Much to the annoyance of the Marquis of Queensberry, his wife withdrew from court where he held an important position, and was known in the Brethren as plain 'sister'. In Edinburgh, in all probability, most of the members were of classes lower than hers.

METHODIST DEVELOPMENTS

Trends in Scottish Methodism had greater significance for Brethren growth. From its inception Methodism had encouraged the use of local lay preachers and appealed to and produced self-directed individuals who desired autonomy. A reaction in the nineteenth century against a more rigid connexionalism and a corresponding move towards independency made several Methodists open to accepting Brethren ecclesiology. The principal individual for Brethren growth in Scotland in this period was John Bowes and as his career typifies the contemporary democratisation of Christianity, it is worth tracing in some detail. Born in 1802, a farmer's son from Coverdale, on the north Yorkshire moors, some of the robust individualism of the area was apparent in him. His father had embraced Wesleyan Methodism, but Bowes, one of whose heroes was the revivalist William Bramwell, was attracted to Primitive Methodism because it was winning larger numbers of converts than the older, parent body.¹⁹ Primitive Methodism was strongly revivalist in character, believing that ecstatic awakenings were the essence of original Methodism and in

19. John Bowes, *The Autobiography: or the history of the life of John Bowes* (Glasgow, 1872), pp.1-12; *DNB*, 2, pp.966-7.

addition it appealed to those looking for greater democracy in church affairs.²⁰ Bowes became a circuit preacher with them and was involved in their revivals and camp meetings in Yorkshire in which there was participation from among those attending.²¹ A Primitive Methodist mission had been established in Edinburgh by the Sunderland circuit in 1826, and it achieved early success.²² It was soon in trouble, however, when Nathaniel West, one of the missionaries, seceded, taking most of the members with him. Bowes was sent north in 1827 in an attempt to reclaim West. But once in Edinburgh, Bowes sided with him, and he also found himself in disagreement with the formally recognised missionary, Thomas Oliver, with the result that Bowes too was taken off his circuit. He quickly decided, however, that West was a tyrant and parted company with him.²³

Scottish Methodism was in disarray. The problems that were troubling the Edinburgh mission were found throughout the denomination during this period. Senior figures in Wesleyan Methodism had doubts about the validity of the Scottish enterprise, believing that it was too costly for the limited success which it had achieved.²⁴ Strong-minded preachers, remote

20. Wayne J Johnson, 'Piety among 'The Society of People': the witness of Primitive Methodist local preachers in the North Midlands, 1812-1862', in W J Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), *SCH*, 26 (Oxford, 1989), p.344; Robert Colls, 'Primitive Methodists in the northern coalfields', in Jim Obelkevich *et al.*, *Disciplines of Faith: studies in religion, politics and paternity* (London, 1987), pp.323-34.

21. J Bowes, 'On the work of God in Keighley Circuit, Yorkshire', *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, July 1826, pp.242-9.

22. H Bickerstaffe Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, 2 (London, 1906), pp.206-8; A Skevington Wood, 'Methodism in Scotland', in Rupert Davies, A Raymond George and Gordon Rupp (eds), *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 3 (London, 1983), pp.272-3.

23. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.55; cf. the account of this incident in George Herod, *Biographical Sketches of some of those Preachers whose Labours Contributed to the Origination and Early Extension of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (London, n.d.), pp.326-8, n., and Bowes' response, 'The attack of Geo. Herod (Primitive Methodist preacher) on J. Bowes, and his reply', *TP*, 6 (1858-9), pp.89-92.

24. Wesley F Swift, *Methodism in Scotland: the First Hundred Years* (London, 1947), p.70.

from central control, were often inclined to adopt the Scottish preference for a settled ministry called by a congregation rather than having preachers imposed and withdrawn at will by their circuits. This was coupled with a move towards a form of Congregationalist independency, an issue that was agitating the whole Methodist body. Jabez Bunting, the most influential figure in Wesleyan Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century, wanted to centralise authority in the London-based Conference. He had a more exalted conception of the role of the pastor, wishing to concentrate the government of the congregation in his hands. Methodism was being institutionalised, and Bunting and his supporters were turning it from being a loose aggregation of societies into a tightly disciplined denomination.²⁵ The price it had to pay was a number of secessions by the supporters of what came to be known as Free Methodism. Its exponents had what has been described as 'an essentially local, lay perspective', wanting a weaker central authority and the government of the church to reside in the entire congregation.²⁶ The collapse of the work, the arguments over Methodist polity and many local disagreements produced a number of dissidents throughout the country. It was a period of contraction for Methodists in Scotland.²⁷

Bowes, as a supporter of a more democratic church order, was among the dissidents. In a letter to the anti-Bunting *Christian Advocate* in 1836 he deplored 'the usurping domination' of the conferences in the three main Methodist bodies—Wesleyan, New Connexion and Primitive Methodism. The decisions of their conferences, he felt, were promulgated as laws

25. John H Chamberlayne, 'From *sect* to *church* in British Methodism', *BJS*, 15 (1964), pp.139-49.

26. A J Hayes and D A Gowland (eds), *Scottish Methodism in the Early Victorian Period: the Scottish Correspondence of the Rev. Jabez Bunting* (Edinburgh, 1981), pp.9-14; W R Ward, 'Scottish Methodism in the age of Jabez Bunting', *RCHS*, 20 (1979) pp.17-63; D A Gowland, *Methodist Secessions* (Manchester, 1979).

27. Oliver A Beckerlegge, 'In search of forgotten Methodism', *PWHS*, 29 (1954), pp.160-1.

which were replacing scripture.²⁸ The schisms in Edinburgh had left Bowes in charge of two congregations in Edinburgh and Leith. He was deeply impressed by his reading of Peter King's *An Enquiry into the Constitution Discipline Unity and Worship of the Primitive Church* (1713). King, an early eighteenth-century Lord Chancellor, had intended it to promote understanding of dissenters.²⁹ He had been accused of supporting Presbyterianism when the work was published, and it is likely that what attracted Bowes was his appeal for the unity of all Christians based on an acceptance of the diversity of rites. Bowes assisted in the formation of a new body entitled the Christian Mission and in 1830 he went to Dundee to be pastor of its congregation there. At his induction there were ministers present from Aberdeen, Perth, Kirkcaldy, and Newburgh, Fife.³⁰ The Christian Mission leaders were independents in ecclesiology, accepted a charismatic rather than a trained ministry, held that congregations should call their own pastor, and professed anti-sectarianism. The Methodist historian Oliver Beckerlegge has linked the rise of Free Methodism to contemporary voluntarism, the movement taking root among several Scottish dissenting bodies, which was opposed to state religion and held that churches should be supported by voluntary contributions only.³¹ Both Congregationalism and voluntarism appealed to individuals with desires for self-determination and those who were economically independent.³² They were part of wider social and political

28. John Bowes to the *Christian Advocate*, 7 November 1836, quoted in *idem*, *Autobiography*, pp.162-3.

29. [Peter King], *An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity and Worship of the Primitive Church, That Flourish'd within the first Three Hundred years after Christ. Faithfully Collected out of the Extant Writings of these Ages. By an Impartial Hand*, 2nd edn (London, 1713); the work was published anonymously in 1691 being subsequently revised by Lord King in 1712 and 1713: *DNB*, 11, pp.144-7.

30. *Ibid.*, p.91.

31. Oliver A Beckerlegge, 'Early Methodism in Paisley', *PWHS*, 29 (1953), pp.76-83.

32. Callum Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland* (London, 1987), pp.41,43.

longings for greater autonomy among the working and middle classes.³³ The emergence of the Christian Mission, largely in weaving and textile communities, was one more group which expressed this spirit.

Hugh Hart, the Aberdeen minister present at Bowes' induction to the Dundee church, typified the advancement of working-class interests in the Christian Mission. Hart shared the anti-sectarian emphasis of Bowes and his writings were undertaken to promote Christian unity.³⁴ He had been a Wesleyan Methodist in Paisley, but had turned to Congregationalism before becoming minister in 1825 of a church in Aberdeen which had seceded from the Relief Church.³⁵ A flamboyant individualist, whose speculations on the Trinity led to accusations of heterodoxy,³⁶ his congregation was composed of sailors, weavers and factory girls. Although he was spurned by most of the city's ministers, he was popular among the working classes,³⁷ and John Bowes claimed that when he preached for Hart it was to 'vast congregations'.³⁸ Part of Hart's attraction was his

33. Cf., Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow, 1960), pp.105-6; Hayes and Gowland (eds.), *Scottish Methodism*, pp.11-13.

34. Hugh Hart, *A Diversity of Theological Subjects scripturally stated, illustrated, and defended; calculated under the benediction of the Great Head of the Church amicably to compose the religious differences existing among biblical Christians, and respectfully designed not only as a Compendium of Faith to assist in repairing the breaches occasioned by schism, in the organic walls of the Militant Jerusalem, but also as an assistant to ministers and students in their theological pursuits* (Aberdeen, 1833); *idem*, *An Outline and a Defence of Consultative Presbyterian Government designed to assist in repairing the disciplinary breaches, and building up the organic walls of the militant Jerusalem to which is subjoined, an epitome of the faith of the members constituting the churches in fellowship with the Original United Relief Association* (Aberdeen, 1833); *idem*, *A Dissertation Theological and Philological in which the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is scripturally stated, illustrated, and defended* (Aberdeen, 1834).

35. 'The Late Rev. Hugh Hart, minister of Zion Chapel, Aberdeen', in John Hunter, *Funeral Sermon for the late Rev. Hugh Hart pastor of Zion Chapel, Aberdeen, preached on Lord's Day May 4, 1862* (Aberdeen, 1862), pp.14-6; Alexander Gammie, *The Churches of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, 1909), gives 1823 as the date of Hart's induction to Aberdeen.

36. Aliquis, *Letters Philological, Theological and Harmonological addressed to Hugh Hart, minister of Shiprow Chapel on his embracing and Preaching the Sabellian Heresy* (Aberdeen, 1838).

37. Gammie, *Churches of Aberdeen*, pp.376-8.

38. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.134 .

enfranchisement of these classes, for he practised what he called 'Consultative Presbyterianism', a mixture of Congregationalist and Presbyterian ecclesiology. He habitually prayed that the labouring classes might have 'adequate remuneration for their labour'.³⁹

Bowes dreamt of a new age in which the world would be transformed. A magazine had been founded in 1831 and shortly after this the title United Christian Churches, suggested by Bowes' reading of the Puritan John Howe, had been adopted.⁴⁰ In 1834 he broke with Hart because Bowes alleged that Hart practised an impure communion by receiving those who were not true believers to the Lord's table.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the problems of Christian unity were uppermost in Bowes' mind. He wrote his first book, *Christian Union* (1835), lamenting the evils of division, and arguing for a unity of Christians based on essential matters of faith and practice and against tests of membership based on non-essentials. Bowes had great expectations of such a union and in its *Epitome of Faith* (1835) the United Christian Churches gave it an eschatological dimension, asserting that the unity of all true Christians in both love and name would lead to the conversion of the world.⁴² They had congregations in Dundee, Edinburgh, Newburgh, Dalbeattie and Castle Douglas.⁴³ Rapprochement was attempted with two Free Methodist bodies, first in 1835 with the Protestant Methodists and then the following year with the United Methodist

39. James Riddell, *Aberdeen and its Folk* (Aberdeen, 1868), p.76; cf., the discussion of Hart in A Allan McLaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974), pp.195-6.

40. John Bowes, *Christian Union: showing the importance of unity among real Christians of all denominations, and the means by which it may be effected* (Edinburgh, 1835), p.171.

41. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.134; Hugh Hart retained the name United Christian Church after the split with Bowes.

42. 'An Epitome of the Faith, and an Outline of the Essential Principles of the United Christian Churches' (1835), in Bowes, *Christian Union*, Appendix C, pp.307-10.

43. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.156-7.

Churches of Scotland.⁴⁴ These overtures came to nothing: in the former case because the English body was unwilling to relinquish the title 'Methodist' and in the latter because Bowes and his churches insisted that Calvinist ministers should be admitted to communion and be allowed to preach.⁴⁵ But the difficulty for Bowes was finding a church which would include true believers only, yet which would not exclude any. He next turned his attention back to England to attempt uniting all Christian churches throughout Britain. Although his congregation in Dundee was growing rapidly and had begun an expensive building project, he moved south to Liverpool in 1837 where he joined Robert Aitken, the former Episcopalian curate of Whitburn, West Lothian, but then a free-lance revivalist who had his own two chapels in the city. The move was a disaster, for Aitken was a domineering individualist, an eccentric who later became an Anglican, combining High Church views with a revivalist Evangelicalism.⁴⁶ The two men became embroiled in a lengthy power struggle and after an unseemly and litigious dispute, Bowes found himself alone, in charge of a chapel in Liverpool with all his schemes for union having failed.

Finally in 1839 Bowes found a church order which gave expression to many of his concerns yet which left him as a free agent. Bowes was also part of the contemporary search for Christian primitivism—a primary

44. For these bodies see: A N Cass, 'Developments in Dundee Methodism, 1830-1870', *Journal of the Scottish Branch of the Wesley Historical Society*, 2 (1973), pp.3-7; A J Hayes, 'A Warrenite Secession in Edinburgh', *ibid.*, 10 (1977), pp.3-18, and, 11 (1978), pp.3-6; Beckerlegge, 'Methodism in Paisley', pp.98-100; *idem*, *The United Methodist Free Churches* (London, 1957), pp.72-3, 77.

45. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.125-7, 157.

46. Charlotte E Woods (ed.), *Memoirs and Letters of Canon Hay Aitken with an introductory memoir of his father by the Rev. Robert Aitken of Pendeen* (London, 1928), pp.15-46; *DEB*, 1, p.6.

concern of the early Brethren—which challenged established structures.⁴⁷ He underwent believer's baptism in 1839 after being challenged to read the Bible on the subject. Although he was invited to join a Baptist church, his unsectarian principles would not allow him to become a member. Bowes heard in 1839 of Henry Craik, by now established as a Brethren leader in Bristol, whose principles seemed to agree with his.⁴⁸ He wrote to Craik, and among the books Craik sent Bowes with his reply was the autobiography of his associate, George Müller. Bowes proceeded to give up his salary and to adopt the 'living by faith' advocated by Müller: that Christian workers should not make their needs known but rely on free-will giving to supply finance.⁴⁹ Bowes journeyed south in September 1839 to investigate the new movement. He was impressed with what he saw, and he found that Craik agreed with him about Christian unity.⁵⁰ On his return to Liverpool Bowes instituted a weekly breaking of bread, and early next year he toured the assemblies in Exeter, Plymouth, Barnstaple, and London, meeting most of the early leaders including Newton and J L Harris in Plymouth and R C Chapman at Barnstaple. Relationships with the exacting Newton were strained. He was unhappy with Bowes' postmillennial eschatology, his Wesleyan Arminianism, and the freedom with which he associated with other churches. Bowes for his part came away with the feeling that 'the brethren in Exeter and Plymouth are Sectarian in withdrawing from all intercourse with the Saints in the

47. James Patrick Callahan, *Primitivist Piety: the ecclesiology of the early Plymouth Brethren* (Lanham, Maryland, 1996).

48. This was possibly through Peter G Anderson, who had pastored the United Christian Church in Newburgh, Fife, and who had moved to Liverpool and then Birmingham where he became the founder of a Brethren assembly: Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.218, 228-9; 'P G Anderson', *W*, 37 (1907), p.123; W A, 'P. G. Anderson', in Hy Pickering (ed.), *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, 2nd edn (London, 1931), pp.35-6; but as Anderson did not commence the Birmingham assembly until 14 December 1839 (*The Witness* obituary mistakenly gives 1838), more probably it was Bowes who influenced Anderson.

49. For this practice, see: Timothy Larsen, 'Living by faith': a short history of Brethren practice', *BAHNR*, 1 (1997-8), pp.67-102.

50. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.211-232.

Sects.⁵¹ Despite the reservations, however, his ecclesiastical pilgrimage was at an end.

Although Bowes enjoyed good relations with Craik and Müller, there had been frictions at Bristol as well as at Exeter and Plymouth. Partly this was due to Bowes' personality. He possessed an unfailing sense of the rightness of his own principles which was at once his greatest strength and his greatest weakness. Lacking a sense of humour, he was frequently obstinate and vain.⁵² He was a tireless and often tactless controversialist. He wrote letters to the youthful C H Spurgeon (suggesting how he could improve his preaching), to the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell (asking for an end to paper tax), Her Majesty's ministers (accusing them of 'murder and treason' in licensing alcohol), and, in 1853, the Czar of Russia ('wishing you a better state of mind and heart, for the sake of suffering humanity').⁵³ He even managed to offend the eirenic George Müller. He had found superior intellects and strong personalities in the Brethren leaders whom he had met, and he subsequently visited Bristol only once. Bowes' strong individualism made it difficult for him to co-exist in any body alongside other leaders. The Brethren, however, gave him the perfect structure. The rock his earlier attempts at unity had foundered on was the need to form a Methodist-style connexion. The complete autonomy of Brethren congregations now meant that he could be an independent force among a loosely connected circle of churches:

51. *Ibid.*, pp.233-6.

52. For critics of Bowes see: Dundee City Library, Lamb Collection, Box 398, 'Newspaper Cuttings, Biographical Notices of Dundee Men', pp.51-8; G Joseph Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in England: its literature and its advocates*, 1, 2nd edn (London, 1875-77), pp.326-7; and [Joseph Barker], 'Note', *The Christian*, 1 (1844), pp.165-6.

53. 'Letter to Mr. Spurgeon', *TP*, 4 (1855-7), pp.257-9; 'To Lord John Russell', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.209; 'The murder and treason of Her Majesty's ministers', *TP*, 5 (1856-8), pp.281-3; John Bowes to the Czar or Emperor of Russia, 6 December 1853, quoted in Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.516-18.

Bowes commenced spreading his new principles. He revisited the Dundee chapel and began a weekly breaking of bread.⁵⁴ Apart from this congregation, it would appear that the United Christian Churches had dissolved after Bowes moved to Liverpool, at the mercy of divisive forces.⁵⁵ He was still in contact with the the United Methodist Churches of Scotland and various individuals in Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere who were discontented with the state of their churches. In Arbroath there were three main causes of discontent: the ministers encouraged the consumption of alcohol, the gifts of the Spirit were 'shut up to the one-man ministry', and the divisions of Christianity were unscriptural. In 1841, at the instigation of Bowes, thirteen individuals began breaking bread independently.⁵⁶ That same year he accepted an invitation to go to Aberdeen where he addressed large crowds. In July Bowes and ten others began breaking bread, although some of those who had initially intended joining wished to retain their church membership. A period of ecstatic revivalism followed with outbursts of weeping and conversions. The new congregation grew rapidly and Bowes settled in the city to teach the young church which met in Loch Street (see Map 5 inset).⁵⁷

He was aware that the movement he was now part of was growing. A passionate believer in the power of print,⁵⁸ in November 1842 he marked the new phase by founding the *Christian Magazine and Herald of Union*, 'to oppose corrupt denominations', to teach his ecclesiology, and to

54. *Ibid.*, p.274.

55. *Ibid.*, Appendix A, p.209 reported a schism in the United Christian Church in Edinburgh in 1838.

56. *Ibid.*, p.274..

57. *Ibid.*, pp.282-300; Bowes used the word 'church' initially, but he later adopted 'assembly', cf. John Bowes, 'Preface', in *The New Testament translated from the purest Greek* (Dundee, 1870), [p.ii]; the vocabulary in the present chapter reflects this more flexible terminology.

58. Cf. Hatch, *Democratization*, p.11.

promote his views on war and temperance.⁵⁹ He also wrote a tract, *A Hired Ministry Unscriptural* (c.1843), holding up as an example to the Christian world those Brethren leaders who were former clergymen, and also the Quakers and the Scotch Baptists who, through having no 'hired ministry', were able to provide for the poor.⁶⁰ Bowes claimed that those ministers he had worked with—Nathaniel West, Hugh Hart, Robert Aitken—had 'caused him intense mental agony',⁶¹ but the strain of anti-clericalism present in his background was probably a more significant factor in the formation of his views. He now argued that not only was a salaried minister a burden to the people, but the minister himself was fettered by the doctrines of his church.⁶² Part of the attraction of the Brethren for Bowes was that, bound only by scripture, he could pursue his own course.

The democratisation of Christianity detected by Hatch was strong in Bowes' thought. He looked for a transfigured social order and adopted several causes which had radical political implications. He became a pacifist, was an opponent of slavery, and took an active part in the movement to shorten factory hours.⁶³ He had a concern for the welfare of the working classes and the poor, among whom he was genuinely popular, maintaining in 1850 that the 'first duty of the church was to provide for the poor and then preach the gospel.'⁶⁴ He proposed redistributing land so that every family had fourteen acres, a response to poverty which had been part of radical politics since the Spencean Thomas

59. [John Bowes], 'Prospectus', *CMHU*, 1 (1842), pp.1-3.

60. John Bowes, *A Hired Ministry Unscriptural* (Manchester [c.1843]), pp.17, 23.

61. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.299.

62. Bowes, *A Hired Ministry*, pp.22-3.

63. 'Dundee Men', p.52.

64. [John Bowes], 'The hired ministry. Public meeting at Preston', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.26.

Evans wrote his *Christian Policy* (1816).⁶⁵ Evans had supported these ideas from the Old Testament laws of jubilee and Bowes appealed to the same source—as did others such as Feargus O'Connor. Restitution for the large landowners scarcely troubled Bowes because he felt they were beneficiaries from centuries of injustice. Instead he saw his scheme as abolishing poverty and its effects, while relieving the unhygienic squalor of the urban poor.⁶⁶ In the manner of Evans, he calculated the huge cost of maintaining an army and clergymen and urged government retrenchment.⁶⁷

Primitive Methodism gave the Chartist movement a number of its leaders, and although Bowes disapproved of the methods of Chartism, he shared a set of social attitudes and assumptions with its adherents.⁶⁸ His location of the production of wealth in the labourer and his demand for a more equitable distribution of the nation's resources owe much to widespread artisan aspirations. His proposals for the redistribution of land were made after O'Connor's landplan had collapsed in 1847,⁶⁹ and they were evidently meant to supplant the latter's scheme. Likewise the establishment of both a day and night school attached to the church in

65. Thomas Evans, *Christian Policy, the Salvation of Empire: being a clear and concise examination into the causes that have produced the impending, unavoidable National Bankruptcy, and the effects that must ensue, unless averted by the Adoption of this only real and Desirable remedy, which would elevate these realms to a pitch of greatness hitherto unattained by any nation that ever existed*, 2nd edn (London, 1816), pp.8-9; on Evans see, Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld; prophets, revolutionaries and pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Cambridge, 1988), pp.7-49.

66. [John Bowes], 'The land: a lecture by J. Bowes, delivered in Bell Street Hall, Dundee, 7 mo. 28th, 1851, showing how every family of five persons may have fourteen acres of land', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.233-6.

67. [John Bowes], 'A lecture on the evils of the nation and their cure: delivered at Preston by J. Bowes 11th mo. 2d., 1849', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.12-15; Evans, *Christian Polity*, pp.26-7.

68. Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: popular politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot, 1984), pp.113-15; Brian Harrison and Patricia Hollis (eds), *Robert Lowery: Radical and Chartist* (London, 1979); for Bowes views on Chartism see his critical comments on the dispute he witnessed in Aberdeen between O'Connor and Patrick Brewster, *Autobiography*, p.297.

69. Thompson, *The Chartists*, pp.299-306.

Aberdeen rivalled Chartist institutions.⁷⁰ Not only did he have his search for primitive Christianity in common with the Scottish Chartist Churches, but his attack on the socially divisive effects of pew rents and his complaint against ministers consuming the wealth of the labouring poor without contributing in return, also had similarities with the critique of the institutional church which they offered.⁷¹ Bowes appealed to the constituency among which these ideas had currency and he attacked those who attracted popular support and whom he perceived as threats to true religion: Thomas Paine and Robert Owen; freethinkers such as Charles Bradlaugh; and Mormons and Swedenborgians.⁷² His tactics were those of early nineteenth-century popular lecturers, and in preaching he proposed abandoning textual exposition. Questions should be asked by the preacher and invited from the audience, he held, for this was the way Christ taught.⁷³ His Christianity empowered the laity.

Bowes also eagerly challenged accepted orthodoxies. He was a man dominated by the demands of his own, often curious, reason. 'The only arms we can use', he wrote in his proposals for land distribution, 'must be reason, truth, prayer, activity, and such constitutional measures as Divine providence has placed within our reach'.⁷⁴ The items in his list are

70. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.297.

71. *The Chartist Circular*, 28 September, 1839, p.1; *ibid.*, 29 August, 1840, p.197, quoted in Donald C Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest: social criticism in the Scottish Church 1830-1945* (New York, 1987), pp.163, 171; cf. [Bowes], 'The hired ministry', pp. 25-7.

72. 'The life and death of Thomas Paine', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.78; 'Public discussion at Northampton between C. Bradlaugh and J. Bowes', *TP*, 6 (1858-9), pp. 192, 205-8, 257-63, 289-293, 297-300; John Bowes, *Mormonism Exposed in its Swindling, Polygamy, & Licentious Abominations, Refuted in its Principles, and in the Claims of its Head, the Modern Mohammed, Joseph Smith, who is proved to have been a Deceiver and no Prophet of God. Addressed to the serious Consideration of the "Latter-Day Saints", and also to the friends of Mankind*, 2nd edn (Cheltenham, 1854); Woodville Woodman and John Bowes, *Report of a Public Discussion between the Rev. Woodville Woodman and Mr John Bowes on the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church concerning Heaven and Hell, the Trinity, Justification, and the Resurrection* (Bolton, 1858).

73. [John Bowes], 'Modern preaching wrong', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.7-8.

74. [Bowes], 'The land', p.236-7.

significant: he saw the need for peaceful politics as well as piety. But the order in which they occur is also important. For Bowes, idiosyncratic though he could be, reason was always the first weapon in his armoury. The emphasis on human liberty found in radical politics, a legacy of the Enlightenment, was one he shared. In 1849 he was to found a second journal entitled *The Truth, the only Way to the Freedom, Elevation and Happiness of Man* (later shortened to *The Truth Promoter*). In the prospectus he declared, 'Our confidence is entirely in *enlightenment*, and therefore our greatest endeavours shall be put forth to make men free, just, honest, pious, and, above all, loving, even to their enemies.'⁷⁵ At times this programme could look eccentric. He renounced the conventional names of days and months because of their pagan origins and adopted the Quaker custom of using numbers instead.⁷⁶ He was attracted to practices which could claim to be health-giving on a rational basis: he advocated vegetarianism, cold-water baths and uncut beards, and, because of their deleterious effects, denounced tea, coffee, alcohol, tobacco, and tight-lacing.⁷⁷ Alternative medicine was one further way of rejecting the professional.⁷⁸ Bowes was to remain in many respects a figure of early nineteenth-century radical Christianity. He was led in part towards his ecclesiology by the upsurge of interest in democracy which came in the wake of the American and French Revolutions. 'All Christians, he proclaimed, 'should be reformers'.⁷⁹

Yet he was a pivotal figure in the transition from the Evangelicalism of

75. [John Bowes], 'Prospectus', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.1.

76. [*idem*], 'Origin of the present names of our months and days' *CMHU*, 1 (September 1843), pp.131-2.

77. [*idem*], 'Bad customs', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.173-4; [*idem*], 'Hydropathy or the cold water cure', *ibid.*, pp.217-9; [*idem*], 'The moustache movement' *TP*, 3 (1854-5), pp.157-8, [*idem*], 'The beard', *ibid.*, pp. 267-8; *TP*, 7 (1860-1), p.64; Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.185.

78. Hatch, *Democratization*, pp.28-9.

79. [Bowes], 'Bad customs', p.174.

the early nineteenth century to that of the Victorian period and he displayed significant discontinuities with the past. He tended to define faith in terms of knowledge, and this meant that he never fully shared the mystical immediacy of popular Victorian piety.⁸⁰ However, the dispute in Edinburgh with Thomas Oliver had been over the place of faith and reason and Bowes gave the former priority, an order which made him open to the heightened supernaturalism of contemporary Evangelicalism.⁸¹ He shared its interest in eschatology and he adopted 'living by faith' for Christian workers. As he was caught up in revivalism in the 1850s he came to emphasise that the church's task was to seek the salvation of sinners, an alteration in his order of priorities.⁸² His challenge to established interests in church and state made him open to innovation and changes of mind. Bowes' eclectic beliefs were a 'blurring of worlds'.⁸³

Bowes was also a lay activist. He was a capable preacher with a powerful voice and he possessed a strong constitution. If he lacked self-doubt, then his self-belief made him indefatigable in spreading his principles. From 1844 until 1859 he was resident in England again, first in Manchester and then in Cheltenham, but as will become apparent, his influence in Scotland remained strong. Eminently suited to the railway age, he spent the rest of his life forming assemblies and itinerating in the North of England and in Scotland, preaching wherever he could gain a hearing.⁸⁴ In his portmanteau, which he carried on a staff across his shoulder, he had a

80. [John Bowes], 'Men are saved by knowledge', *TP*, 2 (1852-3), pp.10-2; cf., [*idem*], 'Supernatural agency', *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.5.

81. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.78-94.

82. *TP*, 6 (1858-9), pp.13-14.

83. Hatch, *Democratization*, p.34.

84. The evidence for this comes from Bowes' reports of his activities in his *Autobiography* and *The Truth Promoter*. The growth of the the Brethren movement in the North of England has been poorly covered in the standard histories and Bowes' writings are an untapped source for the area: one exception is David Brady and Fred J Evans, *Christian Brethren in Manchester and District: a history* (London, 1997).

waterproof baptising suit ready for use in the nearest stream when the occasion demanded.⁸⁵ After one of his annual tours of Britain, he calculated that he had travelled 1 800 miles and preached to 10 000 people in two months.⁸⁶ As well as in Liverpool, he helped to establish assemblies in Manchester, Carlisle and several other places in the North of England.⁸⁷

A number of those who formed the nucleus of these assemblies were, it would appear, like Bowes himself, discontented Methodists. The freedom given by Methodism to lay preachers and the movement to congregationalism in reaction to the centripetal force of the conferences, had led many within it to a position where the Brethren appeared attractive. These factors were prominent, for example, in the secession from the Methodist New Connexion in 1841 of William Trotter, who joined the Brethren movement, and Joseph Barker, who founded the similarly named Unitarian Christian Brethren.⁸⁸ Methodism was one of several streams which fed into the growing Brethren movement throughout the United Kingdom.⁸⁹ In the new movements with which Bowes was in contact, a professional clergy was rejected, conventions were overturned and the laity were empowered. Christianity was being democratised.

85. 'John Bowes', *CW*, 36 (1921), pp.50-1.

86. *TP*, 3 (1854-5), pp.240.

87. Brady and Evans, *Manchester*, pp.20-35; the Carlisle assembly Bowes was in contact with later died out.

88. J Barker and W Trotter, *A Brief report of the Proceedings of the Conference of the Methodist New Connexion in the case of Joseph Barker and Wm. Trotter* (Newcastle [1841]); W Trotter, *The Justice and Forbearance of the Methodist New Connexion Conference, as they were illustrated in the case of W. Trotter* (London, 1841); on Trotter see Harold H Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren 1825-1850* (London, 1967), p.175; Peter L Embley, 'The early development of the Plymouth Brethren', in *Patterns of Sectarianism: organisation and ideology in social and religious movements* (London, 1967), p.241; on Barker's Christian Brethren see MacLachan, *The Story of a Nonconformist Library* (Manchester 1923), pp.152-183.

89. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.241.

EVANGELICAL UNION SECESSIONS

Revivalism as well as a more egalitarian Christianity was present in Bowes' activities, and it was also present in other contemporary movements. During the 1840s the popular Evangelicalism which favoured Brethren growth was further diffused throughout Scotland. The decade commenced with the revivals associated with William Burns and in 1843 the Disruption released Evangelical activity into many parishes throughout Scotland in the newly formed Free Church.⁹⁰ The increased concern for home evangelism, which was accompanied by an interest in foreign missions, indicated that a significant shift in Scottish church life had taken place. Transatlantic revivalist influences led to the formation of a further denomination, the Evangelical Union (EU), and the new body was to have significance for Brethren growth.

James Morison, the eventual founder of the EU, was a zealous young evangelist with the United Secession Church, the denomination formed in 1820 out of the union of the New Light branches of the Burgher and Anti-Burgher Secession bodies. Morison's evangelism was considerably influenced by his reading of Charles Finney's *Revivals in Religion* (1839).⁹¹ In 1840 Morison was called to Clerk's Lane Secession Church, Kilmarnock, and the membership of the church soon swelled as new converts were made and members from the other Kilmarnock churches joined.⁹² Morison had begun to modify his church's Calvinism as part of his evangelistic and pastoral concern. He had departed from the teaching

90. Cf. the account of a Free Church and later Brethren member Donald Ross, quoted in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist of the North of Scotland and United States of America* (Kilmarnock, [1903]), pp.30-2.

91. Garth M Rosell and Richard A G Dupuis (eds), *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney: the complete restored text* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989), pp.590-1, see especially n.6.

92. Congregational Church, Kilmarnock, 'Communicants' Roll Book; or Names, Designations, etc., of Members belonging to Clerk's Lane Congregation, Kilmarnock 1840-1950', shows that 589 new members joined the church in the first two years of Morison's ministry.

of the Westminster Confession, which held that Christ died for the elect only, and he had begun to preach a universal atonement, stressing the love of God.⁹³ Clerk's Lane had the reputation of being a difficult church, and there had been an attempt by some of the membership to stop him accepting the call.⁹⁴ He was not long there before it found itself embroiled in the dispute over his new teaching, and in the spring of 1841, amid scenes of near riot in Kilmarnock, Morison was suspended from the ministry of the Secession Church. Part of the dispute was about Presbyterian subordinate standards, and in their memorial to the Secession Synod Morison's supporters wanted 'a direct appeal to the word of God'.⁹⁵ When Morison was subsequently deposed from the ministry of the denomination, the majority of his congregation seceded with him.

One of Morison's closest friends in Clerk's Lane during the troubles of 1840-1 was John Stewart, a prominent member of the kirk session. It was partly due to a letter which Stewart had written to Morison that the attempt to stop him accepting the call had been frustrated.⁹⁶ Stewart, whose father had also been a leading member of the church, was a wealthy Kilmarnock clothier, highly praised by his contemporaries for his Christian character. A lay activist and a devoted Evangelical, who had reflected deeply on his attitude to wealth, Stewart was an enthusiast for home and foreign missions.⁹⁷ He was closely involved in interdenominational ventures in Kilmarnock and was a director of the

93. Escott, *Scottish Congregationalism*, p.116.

94. Oliphant Smeaton, *Principal James Morison: the man and his work* (Edinburgh, 1902), pp.71-76; Smeaton's book was dedicated to Morison's sister and John Stewart's sister-in-law, Mrs Andrew Stewart: she is also one of his principal sources.

95. William Adamson, *The Life of the Rev. James Morison, D.D., Principal of the Evangelical Union Theological Hall, Glasgow* (London, 1898), pp.118-119.

96. Smeaton, *Principal James Morison*, p.75; probably it is this letter by an anonymous elder 'who espoused the cause of Mr. Morison from the first' which is quoted in Adamson, *James Morison*, p.86.

97. 'Mr John Stewart', in Anon. (ed.), *Jubilee of the Rev. Wm. Orr* (Kilmarnock, 1880), p.80.

Bible Society for twenty years, donating a Bible carriage for the society's work in Spain.⁹⁸ He ran a Sunday school, at one point holding a visitation programme to extend its membership, and for some forty years was secretary of the Kilmarnock Sabbath School Society. He also engaged in philanthropic work. He founded two orphanages for boys in Ayrshire, at Pitcon House, Dalry, and at Shawhill House, Hurlford, where the orphans were taught a trade and given religious instruction.⁹⁹ He built a schoolroom in Kilmarnock where he maintained both an industry school for the daughters of poor families, in which they could have an education and learn Ayrshire needlework, and also an elementary school to give an affordable education to the children of poor people with large families.¹⁰⁰

Stewart's activities were typical of many wealthy Evangelicals of the period, and his evangelistic zeal made him a natural supporter of Morison. It is probable that he was untroubled over the disagreements about the extent of the atonement for there already had been rumours in Kilmarnock that Stewart's theology leaned towards that of the Methodists.¹⁰¹ In addition, he was one of the memorialists to the synod who had wanted appeal made to the word of God only.¹⁰² But while in England, he had made contact with the Brethren movement there¹⁰³ and after being refused the pulpit for a Brethren preacher he resigned his membership claiming, according to an eyewitness, that he 'called no one

98. 'The late Mr J. Stewart and the Bible Society', *KS*, 10 December 1887, p.2.

99. 'The Late Mr J. Stewart of Shawhill', *KS*, 10 December 1887, p.3; 'Reminiscences of the Stewart Brothers', *KS*, 17 December 1887.

100. Archibald McKay, *The History of Kilmarnock* (Kilmarnock, 1864), p.148.

101. However, this may not have been because of Arminianism, but may have been a reference to some other feature of his outlook, such as his style of evangelism.

102. Adamson, *James Morison*, p.119.

103. It is possible that, like Bowes, Stewart's initial contact with the Brethren was through George Müller's growing reputation. Stewart's concerns paralleled Müller's in several respects, and later he was certainly a friend and supporter of Müller, the latter visiting him in Kilmarnock on one occasion, cf. David J Beattie, *Brethren: the story of a great recovery* (Kilmarnock, 1939), pp.223-4; 'Mrs Jas. B. Hunter' *BM*, 46 (1937), p.252.

master' and that he could not remain 'where the one-man system prevailed'.¹⁰⁴ Only six months had passed since Morison's trial. The communicants' roll noted against Stewart's name 'left on account of peculiar views of the Spirit'.¹⁰⁵ He evidently found attraction in the Brethren charismatic concept of the church. Some family members and one of his servants seceded with him to form the nucleus of the new meeting, as did a woman who had recently joined Clerk's Lane from the Scotch Baptist church in Kilmarnock.¹⁰⁶

Morison's breach with the Secession church caused a stir throughout Scotland. He launched on an evangelistic career, preaching in the villages around Kilmarnock and further afield in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. Some of the churches which were founded as a result of these evangelistic campaigns, joined by four Secession and nine Congregational churches, banded together in 1843 to form the EU, initially intended as an unsectarian, nondenominational association to spread revivals, but which soon became a separate body.¹⁰⁷ Among the churches founded by Morison was one in 1844 in Darvel, eleven miles to the east of Kilmarnock (see Map 13). William Landels, one of the first graduates of the theological academy which Morison had founded in Kilmarnock, was appointed as minister. Two years after his induction, however, Landels underwent believer's baptism and left the church in 1846 to become a Baptist minister in Cupar.¹⁰⁸ The now pastorless congregation in Darvel was expelled from the EU because it had continued to accept Landels as a preacher after he

104. Quoted in Adamson, *James Morison*, p.219 (cf. quotation from Bowes below p.55); cf. Smeaton, *Morison*, pp.132-3, 242: neither Adamson nor Smeaton names Stewart, but it is clearly he who is intended.

105. 'Communicants' Roll Book', p.6.

106. Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists in Scotland', *BQ*, 33 (1990), p.372.

107. Escott, *Scottish Congregationalism*, pp.121-6.

108. *Ibid.*, p.329; D W Bebbington (ed.), *A History of the Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1983), pp.39-40.

had been immersed and also because it had intimated its intention of having John Bowes to preach.

Bowes, always eager to influence those who had similarities to himself, had been following Morison's development: the latter's temperance views would be one further attraction for him. He sent Morison an outline of his principles as early as March 1841, and he had probably made contact with several of the other new EU churches. His action, typically, alienated Morison, and when Bowes sent him a letter inquiring about the truth of a report that Morison had travelled first class, Morison's reply was positively frosty.¹⁰⁹ There were, however, others willing to listen. As William Adamson admits in his biography of Morison, the appeal to the Bible alone made by Morison and his supporters predisposed them to giving Bowes a hearing.¹¹⁰ A pamphlet in favour of unsalaried ministers was published in Kilmarnock and Morison responded with *Should There Be a Paid Minister?*¹¹¹ From 1844 until 1847 five members of Morison's Kilmarnock congregation left to join a Bowesite church that had been formed in Kilmarnock which was independent, it would appear, of

109. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.273, 426-7. That Bowes had contacted a number of Evangelical Union congregations might be deduced from his own report that the denomination thought he "was on a mission to Scotland to break up the Union!", a charge which Bowes naturally denied, Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.427-8.

110. Adamson, *James Morison*, p.262.

111. *Ibid.*, pp.262-3; James Morison, *Should There Be a Paid Minister?: an examination of the text Acts xx. 33-35 in three letters* (1846), cited in Adamson, *James Morison*, p.437; I have been unable to trace this work.

Stewart's assembly.¹¹² In addition, about fifty-five members of the expelled Darvel church, Bowes proudly reported, began 'to meet in the Lord's name alone, being under no obligation to have any master but Christ'.¹¹³

The ferment created by Morison's 'New Views' and the revivalism associated with the rise of the EU had begun a process of exploration for those affected by them which brought some to a Brethren ecclesiology. This development can be seen most clearly in Wishaw, the third EU congregation where a secession is known to have produced an assembly. John Kirk, the Congregational minister of Hamilton, was one of the ministers who founded the EU. In 1843, the same year as the new denomination was born, Kirk held a series of evangelistic meetings in Wishaw, and as a result of this effort some sixty converts were made and a church was established.¹¹⁴ A weekly fellowship meeting was held in nearby Newmains (see Map 10) for Bible reading and mutual edification. The group which met there began to be dissatisfied with the government

112. 'Communicants' Roll Book', pp.8, 40, 44. It is possible that these seceders did join Stewart, but the evidence appears to tell against this. Bowes nowhere mentions Stewart (a curious omission if he knew him), and more significantly Adamson discusses both men separately and does not connect them. He refers to Stewart becoming a 'Plymouth Brother' (Adamson, *James Morison*, p.219), but to Bowes as an 'advocate of the non-paid ministry' (*ibid.*, p.262). This last description fits the comment in Clerk's Lane roll book where the seceders have against their names the comment: 'Gone to the non-paid pastor party.' But that they did not join Stewart is almost certainly established by Bowes' report that when he was in Kilmarnock in 1847 he attended the breaking of bread in Clark Street, apparently in the same schoolroom in which he preached in the evening (*Autobiography*, p.440). *The Kilmarnock and Riccarton Post-Office Directory for 1855-56* (Kilmarnock, 1855), p.72, in addition to Stewart's congregation (designated 'Plymouth Brethren'), noted that 'Meetings are also held for Public Worship in Clark's street school.' These were most probably the services of the Bowesite church (it should be noted that Bowes would, of course, have been appalled by the name 'Bowesite', but it is used here as a convenient way of distinguishing churches in which his influence was stronger from those more clearly in the Bristol tradition).

113. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.427-8. Escott is apparently unaware of the expulsion of the Darvel congregation from the Evangelical Union and of its continued existence; in *Scottish Congregationalism*, p.329, he states that the Darvel members travelled to the Evangelical Union church in Galston: it is probable that some continued to meet in Darvel while those who remained loyal to Morison travelled to Galston.

114. Helen Kirk, *Memoirs of Rev. John Kirk D.D.* (Edinburgh, 1888), pp.180-206; Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.201-3.

of the Wishaw church, feeling that a plurality of elders was the scriptural pattern. When the congregation's student preacher, John Hamilton, decided that he should be ordained, one member suggested that he should be sent out to evangelise the surrounding villages one Sunday a month and in his absence they should provide ministry from among themselves. Hamilton began preaching against those who supported this scheme, advising them to leave the church. After a final, difficult meeting with him, a group of sixteen began breaking bread on 11 April 1847 in a workshop in Newmains belonging to one of them, a few weeks later transferring to rented accommodation in Wishaw.¹¹⁵ In their 'Church Record' for that month they determined 'to acknowledge no other name but Christ' and 'to make our only tests of membership, union with Christ'.¹¹⁶ When one member began teaching believer's baptism, one of the leaders withdrew because he felt that the issue was divisive. By August they had made contact with John Bowes who visited them.¹¹⁷ In May, after a subsequent visit from Bowes, four of the members were baptised in the River Calder.¹¹⁸

It would appear that this evolution was initially conducted independently of Brethren influence. There was, perhaps, an infusion of Glasite ideas. The phrase used for ministry from among the members—'the church should edify itself'—was a Glasite one and at the first communion one of the members presided, a Glasite practice. If there were such an influence, then it was possibly indirect, derived from the general familiarity with

115. James Smith, 'The rise of the meeting at Wishaw', 12 October 1848, quoted in Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.455-7.

116. 'Church Record', April 1847, quoted in Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.202-3: this document has apparently been lost since Beattie made use of it in the 1930s.

117. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.441.

118. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.203; Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.448.

such ideas through such bodies as the Scotch Baptists.¹¹⁹ In the account of their development given by James Smith, one of the leaders, there is no mention of contact with any other churches or individuals until Bowes appeared, and David Beattie in his history explicitly states that their development was spontaneous.¹²⁰ However arrived at, the significant features in the new Wishaw assembly were the exploration of Scripture to recover the pattern of the primitive church; the use of lay members; its vision of the unity of all true believers; and the desire to transform its environment through evangelism. These were a nexus of practices and attitudes which connected the Wishaw church with the democratised Christian bodies with which Bowes was in contact and made it part of the Brethren movement. Its EU background had given the new assembly a taste for revival, and this—the first meeting in Lanarkshire—made it an important influence in the development of the Brethren in the county.

FURTHER GROWTH

There were strains at Plymouth between Darby and Newton which became an open breach when Darby accused the latter of heresy in 1845. The split became irremediable when Darby widened it 1848 to include Craik and Müller. Despite their condemnation of Newton's heterodoxy, Darby refused to have any further communion with them because they had received someone at Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, from Newton's assembly in Plymouth. 'The Bethesda Question' became a test for Darby and his followers of the acceptability of an assembly, and those which refused to

119. *Ibid.*, p.456. The Wishaw group was doubtless aware of churches, such as the Scotch Baptists, who had a Glasite ecclesiology. However, the use of the phrase 'edify itself' by Smith does not conclusively point to a Glasite influence, for his document was written after the Wishaw church had made contact with Bowes, and it may have been he who led to its adoption.

120. This evidence needs to be treated with caution given Beattie's tendency to stress the spontaneity of the Brethren movement (see above, pp.12-13).

Table 2.1. Aberdeen Bowesite church: additions and withdrawals 1841-2.

56 from 'the world'.	5 from the Baptists.
16 from the Church of Scotland.	2 from the Episcopalians.
7 from Zion Chapel ¹	1 from a Secession church.
7 from the Methodists.	1 from the Roman Catholic Church.
5 from the Congregationalists.	2 from a 'sister church'.
Total additions = 102	
	3 withdrew
	1 moved
	1 excommunicated
Total left = 5	
Total membership = 97.	

Note:

1. Hugh Hart's congregation.

Source: John Bowes, *The Christian Magazine and Herald of Union*, 1 (1842-3), p.21.

denounce Müller and Craik were cut off by them.¹²¹ Although the then majority of English assemblies went with the Exclusive Brethren, in Scotland, of the meetings that are known to have existed, possibly—if it still survived—only the Edinburgh one followed him, an indication of how little influence he had north of the border.¹²²

The division into Exclusive Brethren associated with Darby and Open Brethren outwith his control was antecedent to any significant Brethren presence in Scotland, and the two sections of the movement grew independently of each other.¹²³ Revivalism ensured that the growth of the independent wing of the movement in this period could, in its initial phase be considerable, as John Bowes' list of additions and withdrawals for

121. Rowdon, *Origins*, pp.236-66.

122. That the Edinburgh assembly would follow Darby is an inference from Fry MS, pp.152-3, which states that the Marchioness of Queensberry followed Darby; however, this assumes that the Marchioness was associated with the 1838 Edinburgh assembly and that it continued to exist—there is evidence for neither point. The Marchioness and Mrs Hutchinson eventually became Roman Catholics: Gorman, (ed.), *Converts to Rome*, p.227.

123. For Exclusive Brethren growth in Scotland, see above, pp.2-4.

1841-2 of the Aberdeen church demonstrates (Table 2.1).¹²⁴ Much of the growth had come from denominations which had similarities with Bowes' congregation, but in the revivalist conditions, which held for the first year of the church's existence, those who had no significant church attachment had comprised more than half of the additions.¹²⁵ Where these conditions were absent, however, it is likely that most of those joining the new assemblies were transferring from dissenting churches. They were small tenant farmers, artisans, or middle-class businessmen. In Aberdeen, a former Chartist preacher joined, while in Kilmarnock the members of Clerk's Lane who became Bowesite Brethren included a blacksmith, a joiner, two miners and a servant girl.¹²⁶ The number of assemblies continued to increase. In 1848 the Wishaw meeting entered into a correspondence (a Scotch Baptist custom) with seven other churches. Not only were the Kilmarnock and Darvel congregations included, but so too were ones in Cumnock, Paisley, Helensburgh, Motherwell and Rutherglen.¹²⁷

Apart from Helensburgh, the precise origins of the congregations in these last mentioned places are not known. It is possible that the Paisley assembly (see Map 12) was a splinter from the Methodists, for after Bowes came back from England in 1841 on more than one occasion he was in contact with John Kennedy, minister of the Paisley congregation of the United Methodist Churches of Scotland. However, Kennedy apparently

124. *CMHU*, 1 (1842-3), p.21.

125. The sixteen from the Church of Scotland possibly obscures this point, it being probable they came from congregations which later helped form the Free Church, and therefore shared Bowes' Evangelicalism. The 'world' probably includes both those who had no church attachment at all and those whom Bowes regarded as having merely a nominal church connection.

126. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.393; 'Communicants' Roll Book', pp.8, 40, 44.

127. Smith, 'the Meeting at Wishaw' , in Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.457.

left Paisley in 1847 (before the correspondence commenced),¹²⁸ and it is more likely that the communication was with another of the town's numerous dissenting bodies. The Cumnock assembly was in existence by 1847 and initially it appears to have consisted of the family of one man, Ivie Campbell of Dalgig, whose farm, where the breaking of bread was held, was about six miles outside the town. Bowes had initially heard that Campbell would receive the baptised only (a rumour which proved false) and it is possible that he had a Scotch Baptist background.¹²⁹ More probably, the black servant whom Campbell had points to a West Indies connection, where Campbell might have come in contact with the Brethren, something which seems plausible given the geographical remoteness of the assembly from other Scottish ones (see Map 13).¹³⁰ What is clear is that the movement was tending to grow in weaving and textile communities, or, in the case of Newmains, places where the new iron and coal industries were appearing.¹³¹

Helensburgh (see Map 12), a residential town from its inception in the late eighteenth century, is again an exception to this pattern. The church there which was corresponding with the others was that of Robert Dickie, the Scotch Baptist pastor. Dickie had lived in Dublin for a while where he attended the church of Thomas Kelly, the proto-Brethren hymn-writer

128. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.274,282. The date of Kennedy (1784-1851) leaving Paisley is given in Robert Brown, *Paisley Poets with brief memoirs of them and selections from their works*, 2 (Paisley, 1890), p.66 n. When Bowes met Kennedy in March 1841 the latter was speaking on unity, and when he met him Glasgow later that year, Bowes was hopeful that an assembly would be established in the city. *The Paisley Directory, 1836-7*, p.108, lists C[itizen] John Kennedy (not John C Kennedy as Bowes refers to him) as minister of the Dissenting Wesleyan Methodists, and the 1841-2 *Directory*, p.118, lists him as minister of the United Methodists, but the 1848-9 *Directory*, p.8, as minister for the Congregationalist Methodists; this last body Beckerlegge, 'Methodism in Paisley', pp.98-101, identifies with the other two.

129. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.437, 494.

130. T C F Stunt, 'Leonard Strong: the motives and experiences of early missionary work in British Guiana', *CBRJ*, 34 (1983), pp.93-105; cf. the epigraph to the present chpt.

131. Cf., below, p.375.

who had gathered a number of independent congregations around him.¹³² Dickie and his wife were both convicted of the worldliness of their enjoyment of singing and dancing and love of good clothing. Back in Glasgow, they underwent an Evangelical conversion through a Baptist minister, and in 1826 Dickie gave up his lucrative clothier's business to become a preacher. He settled in Helensburgh where he founded a Baptist church.¹³³ He was interested in Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church, having heard Mary Campbell using *glossolalia*, and his wife was particularly inclined to join it, but they were dissuaded by criticisms of the phenomenon. Dickie and his wife were open to the new currents in Evangelicalism, and he was evidently in contact with the Brethren by the 1840s. In 1847 Dickie opened the Lord's table to all true believers, and in May of the following year Bowes met him in Wishaw.¹³⁴ Thereafter the latter was a regular visitor to Helensburgh while Dickie's involvement with the Brethren increased.

Dalgig and Helensburgh were not the only exceptions to the appearance of the Brethren in industrialised communities. Aberdeenshire was another one. Bowes, who had itinerated in the county when he stayed in Aberdeen, continued to visit individuals who sympathised with his principles, such as George Smith, the Free Church doctor in New Deer who later joined Bowes' Dundee congregation.¹³⁵ Bowes made contact mainly among dissenters, preaching in their churches or debating with them, and he met Aberdeenshire preachers who were holding revival

132. H H Rowdon, 'Secession from the Established Church in the early Nineteenth Century, *Vox Evangelica*, 3 (1964), pp.76-88; Grayson Carter, 'Evangelical Seceders from the Church of England', c.1800-1850' (University of Oxford PhD thesis, 1990), pp.122-131.

133. John Bowes, 'Memoir of Mrs Jessie Dickie', *TP*, 7 (1860-1), pp. 111-7, 121-5; this memoir was later published separately but the present writer has not been able to locate an extant copy.

134. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.447-8.

135. *Ibid.*, p.363.

services. In 1844 he briefly accompanied Alexander Burnet, the laird of Kemnay who was a local preacher among the Baptists, on a preaching tour. After leaving him, Bowes went to Duncanstone where he stayed with Peter Ferres, a local revivalist, and he talked with the Congregational minister and some members of his church. Everywhere he went Bowes left copies of *The Christian Magazine* and he recorded that it was making a considerable impression in the area.¹³⁶ It was shortly after the visit to Duncanstone that James Shearer reported that ten individuals had begun to break bread at his farm, Croft End of Auchlyne, Clatt parish, to exhort each other and to be free from a hired ministry.¹³⁷ The members of the new meeting evidently lived some distance apart and they met on alternate Sundays in Clatt parish and in New Leslie parish. By 1845 a second assembly had been formed at Inch, the largest town of the area.¹³⁸ A farmer in the Glens of Foudland had fitted up one of his barns as a preaching place for ministers of various denominations, and the Brethren associated with these services, John Bowes preaching there on a number of occasions.¹³⁹ These new meetings were geographically isolated (see Map 5), but favourable conditions for Brethren recruitment had been provided by the few local revivalists and small groups of dissenters which Aberdeenshire contained.

Throughout the 1850s, however, it was mainly in the cities and industrialised towns and villages that the Brethren continued to grow. Since his return to Scotland in 1841, Bowes had tried to establish an assembly in Glasgow, talking mainly with Congregationalists and Scotch Baptists. In 1844 he recorded that there were two groups 'meeting in the

136. *Ibid.*, p.376.

137. *Ibid.*, p.398.

138. *Ibid.*, p.406.

139. *Ibid.*, pp.409; *TP*, 5 (1856-8) 143-4; *TP*, 6 (1858-9), pp.47-8.

Lord's name alone', and that he hoped to unite them.¹⁴⁰ Possibly one of these groups was associated with James Begg with whom Bowes was largely in agreement. Begg, formerly a Reformed Presbyterian, was a Glasgow bookseller who favoured a return to 'primitive Christianity'.¹⁴¹ His congregation designated itself 'a Christian church' only, favoured a Glasite order, practised believer's baptism, and taught universal atonement, premillennialism and that tongues and healing would be restored to the Church.¹⁴² This eclectic mixture shows that Begg had been shaped by the same forces which produced the Brethren. Bowes evidently had support among some of the Glasgow individuals with whom he was in contact, for among those who in 1846 preached in Kilmarnock in support of unsalaried ministers and against Morison were two preachers from the city.¹⁴³ But Bowes' associates seemed to disappear. When he next visited Glasgow, those he met, while meeting weekly, were afraid of founding a church.¹⁴⁴ Eventually, in 1850 he met with a group of individuals to discuss breaking bread regularly, and that afternoon fifty of them commenced to do so.¹⁴⁵ Events in Edinburgh followed much the same pattern, with visits from Bowes to interested individuals and groups. In 1851 he met with a group who, it appears, were already breaking bread

140. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.367

141. William Fulton, 'In Memory of James A. Begg, Bookseller, Argyll Arcade, Glasgow', in James A Begg, *Summary of Doctrines Taught in the Christian Meeting House, 90 Norfolk Street, Laurieston, Glasgow* (Glasgow 1869), pp.iv-xxxvii.

142. James A Begg, *A Connected View of Some Scriptural Evidence of the Redeemer's Speedy Personal Return, and Reign on Earth with His Glorified Saints, during the Millennium; Israel's Restoration to Palestine, and the Destruction of Antichristian Nations with Remarks on Various Authors who oppose these Doctrines* (1829), 3rd edn (Paisley, 1831); *idem*, *The Condition in Which All Men Are Placed: being an examination of the sentiments of Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow and Mr. Russell of Dundee, regarding the atonement, forgiveness, and justification of faith* (Glasgow, 1834); *idem*, *Summary of Doctrines*. Begg also practised a Saturday sabbath: *idem*, *An Examination of the Authority for a Change of the Weekly Sabbath at the Resurrection of Christ: proving that the Practice of the Church in Substituting the First day of the Week, for the Appointed Seventh day is Unsanctioned by the New Testament Scriptures* (Glasgow, 1850).

143. Adamson, *James Morison*, p.262.

144. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.408.

145. *Ibid.*, p.481.

in a hall at 84 High Street and succeeded in uniting them with another body who met separately. This union marked the formation of the assembly which eventually met in Adam's Square (see Map 8, inset).¹⁴⁶ In the weaving village of Neilston, Renfrewshire (see Map 12), by 1854 Bowes was in contact with a group, possibly from the EU church which had been formed there by John Kirk.¹⁴⁷ They were in contact with Robert Dickie and the assemblies in Glasgow and nearby Kilmarnock. Due to the visits of Bowes and Dickie, a number of them were baptised by immersion and a church was formed.¹⁴⁸

It was in Lanarkshire, the county which was becoming the most industrialised in Scotland, where the greatest number of assemblies were established. Apart from the ones in Wishaw, Motherwell and Rutherglen which existed in 1847, several others were formed. A meeting was planted in Douglas towards the end of 1847, and by 1849 one had been formed in Hamilton (see Map 10). Relations between the EU church in Hamilton and the assembly were strained for a long time, and this may have been because the meeting had drawn members—perhaps even the founding ones—from it.¹⁴⁹ Certainly individuals were attracted from other churches and among those baptised was an elder from a United Presbyterian Church.¹⁵⁰ When Bowes toured Lanarkshire in 1850 he reported small groups breaking bread in Carlisle and Airdrie. In Lanark he met some individuals who had a weekly meeting and they agreed to break bread

146. *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.247-8; John Robertson to John Bowes, 5 September 1851, *TP*, p.279.

147. *Ibid.*, 3 (1854), pp.143-4; Kirk, *John Kirk*, p.207. When Bowes first mentions the Neilston group, he states that there is a 'New View Church' (i.e. EU) in the village. It is not entirely clear from Bowes, however, if the group he met in Neilston already constituted a church. It is possible that the group there had no connection with the EU and that it was a congregation belonging to some other dissenting denomination which Bowes and Dickie influenced in a Brethren direction.

148. *TP*, 3 (1854-5), p.159.

149. Bowes, *Autobiography*, pp.457; *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp. 189-91.

150. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.462-3.

also.¹⁵¹ The following year Bowes found twenty-eight individuals in an assembly in Newarthill, and in 1854 after his visit to Strathaven, the breaking of bread was commenced there.¹⁵² The origins of these widely dispersed Lanarkshire assemblies (see Map 10) have not been recorded, but the general pattern of individuals dissatisfied with their churches being attracted to the small fellowship groups of the Brethren and their administration of the Christian ordinances by lay members is clear enough.

THE MAKING OF A MOVEMENT

The new assemblies displayed some diversity and their sense of identity was not entirely clear. Bowes always denied he belonged to the Brethren. When challenged in Old Meldrum, Aberdeenshire, to declare if he were Plymouth Brethren, he tacitly admitted affiliation before proclaiming, "We do not wish any party name. We have no law-book but the Scriptures".¹⁵³ He still wished a wider union, and he proposed a merger of the Open Brethren, the Churches of Christ, the Scotch Baptists and the Exclusive Brethren because of their similar practices.¹⁵⁴ The Dundee church always stood aloof from the Scottish Open Brethren. John Stewart, on the other hand was happy to identify himself in 1855 as 'Plymouth Brethren',¹⁵⁵ and although he used the name which Bowes abhorred, it was Stewart who had the more catholic spirit. Robert Dickie in Helensburgh presented a greater anomaly. Despite his increasingly open identification with the Brethren, he continued to associate with Baptists, and Baptist history was to claim him as one *simpliciter*.¹⁵⁶ The actual

151. *TP*, 1 (1849-50), pp.102, 107.

152. *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.254-6; *ibid.*, 2 (1852-3), pp.141-2; *ibid.*, 3 (1854-5) pp.143-4.

153. Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.361.

154. [John Bowes], 'A step in advance—who will take it?', *TP*, 9 (1863-6), pp.18-19.

155. *Kilmarnock... Directory for 1855-56*, p.72.

156. George Yuille (ed.), *History of the Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1926), p. 192.

situation was more complex. The nondenominationalism of the Brethren and their similarities with the Scotch Baptists enabled Dickie to keep a foot in both worlds.

Among assemblies, practices also varied. It has been already noted above how the first breaking of bread at Newmains tended to follow a Scotch Baptist pattern. The new Edinburgh assembly gave a description of its morning service:

One brother gives out a song of praise; another reads a portion of God's word; another engages in prayer; another gives an exhortation; after which we all join in conversing upon a chapter in Isaiah...¹⁵⁷

This, however, was not entirely to Bowes' satisfaction and he rather condescendingly remarked that 'many have progressed further than this meeting'. However, Bowes own commemoration of the Lord's supper probably followed a Glasite plan, for in one church formed in the following decade his account of the worship was that 'three or four generally speak.'¹⁵⁸ This pattern allowed scope for contributions from the members, but at Neilston the difficulty was in getting the members to adopt unstructured, open participation and to cease relying on one person fulfilling a ministerial office.¹⁵⁹ Across the movement, however, there was a sense of identity being formed. Bowes' visits probably tended to smooth out the differences. Even more influential were his magazines, especially, after its founding in 1849, *The Truth Promoter* (the *Christian Magazine* was merged with it a few months later). The growing movement was linked by its reports and by its articles expounding Brethren ecclesiology.

Mutual consultation among congregations also forged links, and the need

157. John Robertson to John Bowes, 5 September 1851, *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.279.

158. John Bowes, 'The work of God at Dundee and Lochee', *TP*, 7 (1859-61), p.11.

159. *TP*, 3 (1854-5), pp.238-40; *TP*, 6 (1858-9), pp.127-8.

to extend the movement in Scotland was a central preoccupation of the new assemblies. When the eight churches first entered into a correspondence with each other in 1847, it was to consider the best means of obtaining and supporting evangelists. As a result of the contact they met to confer on the subject in Paisley, and a second conference was held by the Lanarkshire churches in 1851.¹⁶⁰ There were others concerned with the problem, and shortly after the 1847 meeting, Frederick Daniel from Carlisle, whom Bowes had first met at Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, and James Wisely from the Clatt assembly embarked on an evangelistic tour during which the meeting in Douglas had been formed.¹⁶¹ Others who had joined the Brethren also undertook evangelistic and pastoral tours, such as Robert Dickie and his wife who in 1850 visited many of the new assemblies in England, and Dickie subsequently itinerated among the Scottish meetings until his health broke down about 1855.¹⁶² But despite this activity the evangelists remained few and the meetings remained small. 'The churches in Scotland', John Bowes lamented in 1854, 'much need an Evangelist at least among them.'¹⁶³ The assembly at Wishaw had grown from its original sixteen to thirty within a matter of months, but twenty years later in 1857 it still had the same number of members.¹⁶⁴ At Hamilton the assembly went from having fifty members in 1850 to twelve six years later, and it was probably discontinued about then.¹⁶⁵ A number of others also ceased: Arbroath, Paisley, Motherwell, Airdrie, Newarthill, Carlisle, Lanark, and Strathaven all apparently ceased soon after their inception, and Aberdeen, the Kilmarnock Bowesite church, Darvel, Glasgow, and Edinburgh died out after an existence of a few years, as

160. *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp. 254-6.

161. Smith, 'the meeting at Wishaw', p.457.

162. 'Mrs Jessie Dickie', p.115.

163. *TP*, 3 (1854-5), p.144.

164. Smith, 'the meeting in Wishaw', p.457; *TP*, 5 (1856-8), pp.143-4.

165. *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.254-6; *TP*, 4 (1855-7), pp.221-2.

probably also did Cumnock. Although Clatt, Inch and Douglas continued into the 1860s, they were not in a healthy condition. By the end of the 1850s (if Bowes' Dundee congregation and Dickie's Helensburgh one are excluded) there were probably only six or seven Open Brethren assemblies in Scotland.¹⁶⁶ The movement was having difficulty in establishing itself.

The lack of evangelists was one reason why assemblies were failing to grow or were declining. Not only did evangelists aid recruitment, they also linked congregations together. Certainly Bowes felt that isolation had been a cause in the collapse of the meeting at Lanark.¹⁶⁷ There were a number of other reasons why so many of the new churches were soon discontinued. James Smith of Wishaw felt that likely candidates for evangelists were reluctant to adopt living by faith and assemblies were slow to support those subsisting in this manner.¹⁶⁸ This resistance to new ideas, such as the use of lay members, was undoubtedly another reason why the Brethren failed to attract people from other churches. The antagonism with which the new meetings were viewed also made the addition of new members difficult. The resultant paucity of numbers created difficulties for many assemblies in having a viable church life. Overseas emigration was high in Scotland around 1850, and it had a decided effect on the decline of the meetings at Darvel, Hamilton, Douglas and Clatt, and probably this was the case elsewhere.¹⁶⁹ It was also the more active members who tended to emigrate. James Wisely, who had promised well as an evangelist, was lost to the Scottish movement in this way,¹⁷⁰

166. These were: Kilmarnock, Neilston, Newmains, Douglas, Inch, Clatt, and possibly Hamilton. Unfortunately the 1851 Religious Census has no data on Brethren numbers as they are not distinguished by name in it; for Exclusive Brethren in this period, see above, p.2.

167. *TP*, 1 (1849-51), p.255.

168. James Smith to John Bowes, *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.144. .

169. See below, Figure 9.1, p.378.

170. *TP*, 1 (1849-51), pp.238-9; Frederick Daniel also emigrated: Bowes, *Autobiography*, p.226.

and losses like this drained the pool of potential leaders. One major cause of decline was the unstable nature of many of the new churches. Aberdeen suffered a schism in 1845 when two individuals (the former Chartist preacher one of them) led a secession to the Disciples of Christ and the meeting never recovered from this division.¹⁷¹ In Edinburgh, shortly after Bowes reported dissension over reception to the breaking of bread, there was a schism, and in Wishaw divisions led to the existence of two or three assemblies in the early 1850s.¹⁷² Sometimes, as at Hamilton, more than one factor was at work.¹⁷³ Lack of vision, declining numbers, and frequent dissensions led to a steady attrition.

By 1855 the divisions of Wishaw had been healed and the assembly had united at Newmains. In the later 1850s the worst of the difficulties were over in a number of congregations. Bowes reported in 1857, 'Upon the whole the churches have rest, and are in several cases adding to their number.'¹⁷⁴ Good leadership was important. Newmains had forward-thinking individuals and John Wardrop, a Wishaw businessman and town bailie, was coming to prominence in the assembly. T J Hitchcock, an English evangelist, had settled at Neilston, and, although he still itinerated, he provided leadership for the meeting there.¹⁷⁵ In Kilmarnock, John Stewart also saw a resident evangelist as a solution. In 1858 he brought to the town John Dickie, a candidate for the ministry who had withdrawn due to ill health, to teach in the assembly and evangelise in the community.¹⁷⁶ Dickie undertook a scheme of regular visitation,

171. *Ibid.*, pp.393-4.

172. *TP*, 4 (1855-6), pp.53-4, 119-20; *TP*, 4 (1855-6), pp.53-4.

173. *TP*, 4 (1855-6), pp.221-2.

174. *TP*, 5 (1856-8), p.144.

175. *TP*, 4 (1855-6), pp.221-4.

176. James Todd, 'Preface; with Sketch of the Life and Work Mr. John Dickie', in John Dickie, *Words of Life Hope and Love* (London, 1900) pp.v-xxvi; J T[odd], 'John Dickie', in Pickering (ed.), *Chief Men*, pp.157-160.

and, although the congregation remained small, his tact and patience were successful in achieving some notable converts.¹⁷⁷ Growth was also experienced at Newmains, Helensburgh and Neilston, and there were reports of revivals in all three places.¹⁷⁸ The settled leadership of these churches had made it possible for them to consolidate. In addition, the increasing permeation of Scotland by the new forces in transatlantic revivalism meant that by 1858 the Brethren movement in Scotland was on the eve of a major period of expansion.

The movements examined in this chapter, a number of which coalesced in the Brethren, had been to a greater or lesser extent been democratised. They challenged established traditions, empowered the laity, and had visions of a transformed society. The upsurge of interest in self-determination among the working classes and its connection with the origins of the lay-directed Brethren movement can be seen most clearly in John Bowes. The religious and social flux of the times provided a favourable climate for the creation of new Christian bodies, and in these conditions, the Brethren grew. The emergence of Victorian revivalism, with its transatlantic influences, had also led to the rise of assemblies and their growth closely mirrored the advance of the piety associated with it. As it appeared in Scotland it eroded the older patterns and formularies of the churches. Yet there were continuities with the past. Bowes was also a link with radical early nineteenth-century Christianity, and figures such as John Stewart, Robert Dickie, and James Smith connected the new movement with older Scottish dissent in both its Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian forms. The concern for a primitivist ecclesiology which the

177. John Dickie, *The Story of Philip Sharkey, the Kilmarnock Blacksmith* (Kilmarnock, n.d.); *idem*, *The Story of William Cochrane: or knowing about it, and yet not saved* (Kilmarnock, n.d.).

178. T J Hitchcock to John Bowes, 4 July 1855, *TP*, 4 (1855-7), pp.94-5; *idem*, to John Bowes, 6 December 1856, *TP*, 5 (1856-8), pp.62-3; *TP*, 6 (1858-9), pp. 13-4, 57-8, 111-12.

Brethren had gave them one further appeal to those within the latter tradition where such thinking had a long influence.¹⁷⁹

These origins blended a variety of traditions. The mixture created difficulties in forging an identity in a body which refused to develop central structures and which did not see itself as establishing a separate denomination but 'gathering to the name of Christ alone'. Although Stewart and Bowes both claimed no master but Christ and criticised the clergy, influences from the English movement and Bowesite ones could not always co-exist, as was almost certainly the case in Kilmarnock. Anti-clericalism showed there was some animus against aspects of other churches, but the first period in the existence of the Scottish Brethren movement was essentially a pre-sectarian phase when the boundaries of identity were still loosely defined.¹⁸⁰ While there had been withdrawal from the insitutional church, isolation from society was not marked, and engagement with its problems was a feature of the activities of individuals such as Bowes, Stewart and Wardrop. But the future of the movement was still precarious, for Bowes was over the period the sole itinerant charismatic leader, and temperamentally he was not given to consolidation. Growth had led quickly to decline. With the expansion of the next decade would come increased problems of definition.

179. Derek B. Murray, 'The influence of John Glas', *RSCHS*, 22 (1984), pp.45-56.

180. Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects* (London, 1970), pp.28-9.

CHAPTER 3

DAYS OF POWER:

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT 1859-1870

Long ago we made no bones about it when I preached in Baptist Churches, and when Hopkins and Boswell went into all the churches in Orkney and Shetland. But these were days of power...

—J R Caldwell to Alex Marshall, 30 August 1909, quoted in John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author and pioneer* (Glasgow [1929]), pp.137-8.

“When we were queans,” one eighty-year old woman in a north-east fishing village wept to a visiting missionary, “there was no word about conversion or revival, and naething said about gueed ava. We gaed to kirk noo’s and than’s and when we cam hame and got our denner we just gaed to the Heughs and played the rest o’ the day.”¹ But by the early 1860s, when this particular woman was speaking, conditions had already altered. J E Orr calculated that some 300 000 individuals, or one tenth of the Scottish population, were converted during the 1859 Revival.² There are difficulties in such estimates as most of those affected by the revivalism in Scotland were already associated with the institutional church and did not show up as new members. However, even if the larger numbers that have been offered for the scale of conversions are treated with some scepticism, it is clear from the ubiquity of revivalism alone that it had a considerable impact on Scottish society in the second half of the nineteenth century. Commentators at the time and later detected various social causes behind

1. *Fourth Annual Report of the North-East Coast Mission 1862-3* (Aberdeen, 1863), p.10: “When we were girls there was no word about conversion or revival, and nothing said about good at all. We went to church now and then and when we came home and got our dinner we just went to the Cliffs/Banks and played the rest of the day.”

2. J Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening* (London, 1949), p.201.

the awakenings: trade depressions;³ the insanitary conditions which were endemic to early Victorian towns and cities;⁴ and more general social change which continued unabated throughout Scotland in rural and urban communities. The flux provided a favourable context for the activities of Evangelicals.⁵ But longer-term trends in contemporary religion also lay behind the revivalist explosion. The building of new churches, the mobilisation of the laity, and the founding of agencies to evangelise hitherto unreached sections of the population extended modern Evangelicalism in Scotland⁶ and were among the causes of the awakenings when they came.

Mid-Victorian revivalism was increasingly urban in character and came through means developed to reach such populations: special mission halls, evangelistic meetings, street preaching and services in buildings hired for the occasion.⁷ It sought to achieve Christian unity on the basis of the minimalist message of individual salvation which it disseminated. It encouraged lay activity and had an impatience with institutions, a pronounced supernaturalism and a strong eschatological emphasis. Within it there was a shift to a more pietistic faith. Peter Drummond, for example, had commenced publishing tracts at Stirling on social issues such as Sabbatarianism and temperance, but as he was caught up in revivalism from 1854 onwards he began disseminating news of the awakenings and

3. Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CT, 1978), pp.159-7; Callum Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730* (London, 1987), p.14; Andrew D Buchanan, 'Brethren Revivals 1859-70' (MA thesis, University of Stirling, 1991), pp.24-5.

4. Geoffrey Robson, 'Between town and countryside: contrasting patterns of churchgoing in the early Victorian Black Country', in Derek Baker (ed.), *SCH*, 16 (Oxford, 1979), pp.401-414; Christopher B Turner, 'Revivalism and Welsh society in the nineteenth century', in Jim Obelkevich *et al.* (eds), *Disciplines of Faith: studies in religion, politics and patriarchy* (London, 1987), pp.311-22.

5. D W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), p.115.

6. Brown, *Social History*, pp.158-9.

7. *DSCHT*, p.715.

issuing tracts pressing salvation on the reader.⁸ However, despite the claims that Orr made for it, the revivals were not a unitary phenomenon,⁹ nor were they necessarily a unifying force within church and society. Just as social change was favourable for its growth, so the religious change that revivalism itself brought aided the growth of new ecclesiastical bodies, the Brethren movement among them.¹⁰ The present chapter will analyse assembly growth during this period, dividing it into two phases of 1859-66, when the initial wave of revivals was having effect, and 1866-70, when more routinised procedures were emerging. The emergence of assemblies will also be related to features of contemporary Evangelicalism.

BRETHREN GROWTH 1859-66

The general pattern in the formation of Brethren assemblies during the 1860s was for some members of churches affected by revivalism to form one with further growth following. It can be seen in the earliest Glasgow meeting of the period. In the wake of the 1859 Revival a group of Scotch Baptists in the city had been feeling their way towards a Brethren form of ecclesiology, a process completed by 1860 (see Map 11 no.17).¹¹ The most significant accession to the new assembly was some members of Ewing Place Congregational Church where the revivalist Gordon Forlong had held a series of meetings earlier that same year. Forlong had encouraged Bible reading and lay-witness among the converts, but the minister had been unhappy with meetings outwith church control. Some had been gathering for discussions in a house, and eventually a group left Ewing

8. Stirling University Library, MS50, Peter Drummond, 'The Stirling Tract Enterprise: its rise and progress, MS, Stirling 1860; cf. Michael J Cormack, *The Stirling Tract Enterprise and the Drummonds* (Stirling, 1984).

9. Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, p.201; cf. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.116-17.

10. Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, pp.201-3; F Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, 2nd edn (Exeter, 1972), p.169; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p.203; Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, pp.201-3; Buchanan, 'Brethren Revivals', pp.47-8.

11. Hy Pickering, 'Home-call of John R. Caldwell', *W*, 47 (1917), p.17.

Place—among them silk manufacturer William Caldwell and his son John—to join the former Scotch Baptists' assembly, in the process undergoing believer's baptism. Later an outreach was begun in Dumbarton Road, and in 1866 twenty individuals, including John R Caldwell, formed a new congregation in the Marble Hall (see Map 11, no.15) as most of their recent converts lived near it.¹² Other assemblies were formed in the working-class areas near Glasgow Cross and in the east of the city. During the summer of 1863 John Bowes, who had moved north to Dundee, attracted by the news of the revivals and resuming the pastorship of the Christian Church there towards the end of 1859, had a mission with a church which met in the City Hall, Candleriggs. This congregation appears to have been in a transitional stage, for James Ritchie, who was described as its pastor, was baptised during the mission.¹³ In October Bowes was again in Glasgow, this time at an assembly in Hutcheson Street, off the Trongate (see Map 11, no.18), which was evidently growing.¹⁴ During the previous month there had been sixty baptisms and when Bowes first visited it, there were fifty-seven in fellowship. By the end of the year its membership had reached about seventy.¹⁵ In 1864, when Bowes held a conference in Glasgow for the assemblies with which he was in contact, both these meetings were represented as well as another small one in Parkhead, where he had occasionally preached, on the east side.¹⁶

The factors which were operative in Glasgow held elsewhere. The frequent visits of Bowes to Helensburgh evidently gave him an interest in other towns in the area, and he visited two other ones to the west of Glasgow

12. J G[ray], 'John R Caldwell, Christian Teacher and Writer', *BP*, 38 (1917), pp.22-4; Pickering, 'Caldwell', p.18.

13. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.55.

14. *Ibid.*, pp.71-2.

15. *Ibid.*, pp.79-80, 88.

16. 'The Glasgow Conference', *Ibid.*, pp.118-20.

immediately before an assembly was formed in them. Greenock, on the south bank of the Clyde (see Map 12), had been among the first places to have a revival in 1859.¹⁷ When Bowes visited the town in July 1864 he met a Helensburgh convert who had moved there, and discovered that there were some in the town wanting 'to meet in the Lord's name alone'.¹⁸ It was probably later that year when the assembly was founded.¹⁹ Greenock was a centre for revivalism and it was visited by several English evangelists associated with the Brethren.²⁰ One effect of their activity was to strengthen the meeting. Late in 1866 John Rae, a former Presbyterian missionary who had joined the Baptists and left them for the assembly,²¹ reported that there were weekly conversions with those from ten to twenty years old particularly affected. Some had been baptised and joined the meeting.²² On the other side of the Clyde Bowes visited Dumbarton. Finding a like-minded group, he encouraged them to begin breaking bread and several individuals did so immediately after his visit.²³ Perhaps this new meeting was short-lived for soon afterwards in Dumbarton another assembly was commenced, which was, it would appear, separate from the Bowesite congregation, when four individuals who had moved to the town for work began to break bread. They met in the home of John Millar,

17. K Moody-Stuart, *Brownlow North*, B.A., Oxon: *Records and Recollections* (London, 1878), pp.219-80.

18. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.144.

19. 'Thomas Black', *BM*, 15 (December 1905), p.i; however, 'David W. Greenlaw', *W*, 48 (1918), p. 62, gives the founding date as 1866.

20. J[ohn] B[rown], 'Some of God's doings in Greenock', *R*, 14 (1866), p.175; *idem* to the editor, *R*, 15 (1866), p.231; if the attribution of these reports to John Brown is correct, then, in view of his later opinions (see below, pp.203-10), there is a nice irony in the approval of the evangelism being conducted in 'a truly catholic spirit'.

21. Wm M Rae, 'John Rae, pioneer evangelist, Western Canada', *BP*, 47 (1920), pp.90-4.

22. J Rae, 'Joy in Greenock', *LR*, 1 (1867), p.61.

23. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.232; Allan Munro to the editor, 13 August 1865, *ibid.*, pp.239-40.

formerly from Randalstown, County Antrim.²⁴

Five assemblies apparently were formed in Ayrshire (see Map 13) during the early 1860s. One town on the Ayrshire coast which had been affected by the 1859 Revival was Irvine, and one of its converts, James Holmes, along with four others founded the meeting which was established in the town, possibly in 1862.²⁵ The county town of Ayr also had a revival in 1859, and William Brown, the leading individual in the Wooden Church, a mission in the crowded working-class area of Wallacetown, was among those influenced by it. One of the first converts of the revival in the town had been the sixteen-year-old John Justice. A precocious individual, Justice began evangelising his friends and became uneasy that his denomination, the Free Church, admitted those he deemed unconverted to communion. He eventually left it in 1862. Justice was among those deeply impressed by Gordon Forlong's emphasis on studying the Bible daily and witnessing to others. He began organising weekend outreaches to the villages around Ayr,²⁶ and in August 1863 Brown, Justice and sixteen others were baptised

24. David J Beattie, *Brethren: the story of a great recovery* (Kilmarnock [1939]), p.257, states 'about seventy years ago' (i.e. c.1866); 'John Millar', *W*, 58 (1928), p.279, states that the assembly began in Millar's house 'over sixty years ago' (i.e. before 1868). However, writer's collection, I.G.2, photocopy of holograph letter, Robert Boyd to Alex McIntosh, 21 April 1987, reports oral traditions that the assembly was founded in 1861, and in the home of Mr Galloway. But it is unlikely it existed before the Bowesite congregation for the members of the latter claimed that no-one in Dumbarton 'attends to the primitive practice'. That the two groups were separate seems certain as none of the individuals credited with founding the assembly in Millar's house were those of Bowes' contacts.

25. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.228; however there is considerable variation in the dating of Irvine assembly's commencement: 'James Holmes', *BM*, (March 1922), p.iii gives the date 1870; D T H, 'James Holmes, of Irvine, Ayrshire', *BP*, 43 (1922), pp.54-5 gives the date 1872; but a date in the early 1860s has been preferred here as 'David Gibson', *BM*, 16 (November 1906), p.i, states that its subject was a member for over forty years (i.e. before 1866); if it is assumed that the obituaries of Holmes are ten years out, then possibly 1862 is the correct date. The former Labour Cabinet minister Tony Benn is a great-grandson of James Holmes (oral information, 22 April 1990).

26. K[err], *Justice*, pp.20-1.

in the sea at Newton beach.²⁷ This was possibly a transitional phase for the group, for later tradition held that the assembly was not formed until the following year.²⁸ The Free Church missionary in Dalry, Samuel Dodds, was another individual troubled by the mixed communion of his denomination.²⁹ While visiting potential communicants, Dodds became alarmed when he discovered that he could not consider them converted. He began a Bible study in his home, and this led to a small group forming an assembly in 1864.³⁰ Also in north Ayrshire, an assembly was formed in Largs towards the end of the following year. A popular Clyde holiday resort, two Brethren from Glasgow had seen conversions during their holiday there in 1864.³¹ When a newly-married Brethren couple moved to the town the following year eight individuals began breaking bread supported by the visit of a Glasgow assembly member.³² In the early 1860s two evangelists, both with later associations with the Brethren, had seen conversions in Dalmellington, in the south of the county, and a group began breaking bread some time later.³³ When the town was visited in 1865 by the evangelist Arthur Massie, a native of the place who had been baptised by Bowes during his mission of 1863 in Glasgow,³⁴ he reported that the 'brethren' held the breaking of bread monthly and apparently none of them had been baptised as believers.³⁵ This uncertain start led to the gathering being discontinued some time later.

27. 'Unseemly conduct', *The Glasgow Daily Herald*, 2 September 1863, p.5, quoted in K[err], *Justice*; p.30-1 (which wrongly gives the date as 3 September 1863); against the quotation of this article in a copy of the latter work which belonged to William Martin, Ayr (in the possession of the Martin family), there is a marginal annotation which identifies Brown and Justice as part of the group which was described.

28. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.233.

29. Anon., 'Samuel Dodds', in J G Hutchinson (ed.), *Sowers, Reapers, Builders: a record of over ninety Irish evangelists* (Glasgow, 1984), p.92.

30. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.218-19.

31. 'Mrs Jessie Flarty', *W*, 57 (1927), p.119.

32. R Patterson [sic] to the editor, 17 January 1866, *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.288.

33. 'Robert Brackenridge', *BM*, 35 (December 1926), p.iii.

34. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.77.

35. Arthur Massie to the editor, 16 January 1866, *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.288.

The county which saw most assemblies planted during this period was Lanarkshire. The Brethren movement in Lanarkshire, aided by the existing assembly at Newmains, emerged out of a group of lay preachers active in the west of the county (see Map 10). The 1859 Revival had made a considerable impact on a number of Lanarkshire towns, and many of the converts continued revivalist activities. Strathaven had been 'one of the most favoured in Scotland' during 1861.³⁶ The following year Bowes baptised seven individuals in the river there, five of them active in lay preaching, and after the baptisms nine local men observed the Lord's supper, including one individual who had been in the discontinued assembly of the 1850s.³⁷ A year later James Stone, a tenant farmer and one of the lay preachers who had been baptised,³⁸ wrote to Bowes reporting that an assembly had been formed in nearby Chapelton with about twenty members.³⁹ Individuals such as Stone had been moving towards Brethren practices when Bowes came in contact with them. This was also the case in Lesmahagow, a town deeply affected by the 1859 Revival, where the assembly apparently evolved independently of the knowledge of Brethren practices elsewhere.⁴⁰ Bible reading had continued among the converts, and late in 1864 four of them commenced breaking bread in the joiner's shop of Charles Miller, one of the group.⁴¹ By October 1865 they had made contact with other Lanarkshire Brethren, and Miller was the first of them to be baptised by John Wardrop, watched by almost half the town.⁴² The movement in the county was growing. In 1863 an assembly had been

36. *R*, 12 (1865), p.268; 'The Revival in Scotland', *R*, 16 (1867), p.81.

37. *TP*, 8 (1861-2), p.176; writer's collection, I.M.26, 'List of the Members of the Strathaven Brethren' (1862-75), inside cover page; Bowes, evidently including visitors such as himself, noted that 14 broke bread.

38. Strathaven Evangelical Church, Strathaven, 'Roll of Members of Strathaven Assembly 1876-1897', p.3.

39. James Stone to the editor, 23 April 1863, *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.24.

40. Hope Hall, Lesmahagow, James Anderson, 'A Brief Record Concerning the Early Days of the Assembly in Lesmahagow', MS, 1960, pp.15-16.

41. *Ibid.*, p.17.

42. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), pp.263-4.

founded in Hamilton, probably with some continuity of membership from the Bowesite congregation of the previous decade.⁴³ At the Hutcheson Street conference of 1864, in addition to representatives from the Lanarkshire meetings in Newmains, Chapelton, and Hamilton, there were ones from an assembly which had been formed at Rutherglen by a Brethren member from Ayr who had moved there.⁴⁴ Chapelton and Hamilton both had memberships of twenty, Rutherglen had one of thirty, and Newmains was the largest with sixty.⁴⁵

Revivalist activities continued as the pattern for the Lanarkshire assemblies. In 1864 the Chapelton assembly transferred to nearby East Kilbride, as most of the recent converts were from neighbouring Maxwelltown, and from there the members continued to evangelise the surrounding villages.⁴⁶ Assisted by the removal of a Glasgow Brethren member to Cambuslang, revivalist services were held by them there, a meeting being formed in 1866.⁴⁷ This last year saw a fresh wave of awakenings throughout Scotland⁴⁸ and impetus was given to them in Lanarkshire by the visit of Thomas Holt and George Geddes, two young English Brethren evangelists.⁴⁹ Their tour of Scotland was largely under the aegis of the Scottish Evangelistic Association (SEA), an interdenominational organisation founded in 1862 to hold informal meetings and obtain suitable evangelists for them.⁵⁰ Holt and Geddes saw

43. Oral information, 29 July 1997, based on a note copied from an early roll book (now lost) which gave the founding date as 1863; it appears from *The Truth Promoter* that Bowes continued to be in touch with individuals in Hamilton after the apparent discontinuation of the meeting c.1856 and with the new one from its formation: this suggests some continuity between the two.

44. 'William Wason', *W*, 59 (1909), p.119.

45. 'The Glasgow Conference', pp.118-20.

46. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.168.

47. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.12-13; 'George MacLachlan', *W*, 37 (1907), p.155.

48. *LR*, 1 (1866-7), p.53; John Macpherson, *Life and Labours of Duncan Matheson* (London, n.d.), p.167.

49. W H Clare, *Pioneer Preaching: or work well done* (Glasgow [c.1925]), pp.25-30.

50. Gordon Forlong, 'Scotland', *R*, 7 (December, 1862), p.178.

their most impressive results in Lanarkshire, claiming, for instance, some 200 converts in Stonehouse.⁵¹ In nearby Larkhall there had been a number of individuals meeting for some time in each others' homes and in the open country for 'Bible searchings'.⁵² Several of them had been converted in 1859 or subsequently, and they held gospel services in the district. Larkhall was a centre for revivalism, and it was against this background that the Bible searchings were being conducted. The first baptism among the Larkhall group had taken place in October 1865 when John Wardrop, witnessed by a crowd of several hundreds, immersed one individual.⁵³ Some time after the visit of Holt and Geddes, and probably later in that same year, nine individuals—all men—commenced breaking bread.⁵⁴ About the same time an assembly was also founded in the neighbouring village of Netherburn.⁵⁵

Newmains assembly had succeeded in forming another meeting in the nearby ironstone mining village of Crofthead, West Lothian (see Map 9), in 1861.⁵⁶ Other assemblies were formed in the east and north. In Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire (see Map 7), Robert Archibald, one of the local mill owners who engaged in Evangelical activities, was won over to Brethren principles it would appear some time about 1859. He founded a

51. Alexander Taylor, 'Showers of blessing in Scotland', *R*, 15 (1866), p.229; 'Times of refreshing in Scotland', *R*, 16 (1867), pp.31-2.

52. Robert Chapman, *The Story of Hebron Hall Assembly, Larkhall, 1866-1928: a short history of the inception, progress and personalities of the assembly* (Kilmarnock, 1929), p.10.

53. Massie to the editor, p.288.

54. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.11.

55. 'Finlay McDonald', *W*, 46 (1916), p.157; writer's collection, I.M.20, James McAulay, 'A Minor Survey of "The Assembly"', n.d., typescript copy, 1964., gives the date of founding as 1862; but as Finlay McDonald, who is named as a founder member, was not converted until 1866, then it must have been on or after this last date.

56. T J Hitchcock to the editor, 27 March 1862, *TP*, 8 (1861-2), p.144.

meeting, building a hall for it in 1864.⁵⁷ Further east, in Grangemouth (see Map 9), an assembly was formed in 1866 by a group of individuals who had been converted in the immediately preceding years.⁵⁸ The earliest evidence of renewed Brethren activity in Edinburgh also comes from this period. It is probable that the member of the 'Plymouth Brethren' from Edinburgh who preached at a chapel in North Yell, Shetland, in 1863 was Open Brethren.⁵⁹ By 1866 a 'brother' was requesting prayer through the pages of *The Revival* for visits to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Tillicoultry and Ayr, an itinerary which suggests visits to assemblies,⁶⁰ and certainly one was in existence in the capital by the following year with forty to fifty members.⁶¹ A few assemblies came into existence further north. Dundee had one formed during this period. The city was deeply affected by revivalism and among those influenced was William Scott, a partner in James Scott & Sons, who in 1861 opened a mission schoolroom in the Mid Wynd for the firm's employees.⁶² Day-school teachers were appointed to teach and in the evenings Scott and his brother James conducted evangelistic services.⁶³ Scott was an elder in the Established Church, but he left when he accepted believer's baptism, apparently in 1866, and he began

57. TP, 9 (1863-6), p.128; *The Alloa Advertiser*, 10 November 1864 quoted in S L Johns, *The Gospel Hall Tillicoultry: A Short History* (n.p., 1990), Appendix 3. Johns places the founding of the assembly some twenty years earlier (p.1): the reason for doing so was the recollection that one deceased member of the meeting had stated she was carried to the services as a baby in the early 1850s. However as the individual in question died in 1950 aged 92 ('Mrs Margaret Snadden', W, 80 (1950), p.187), this would place this event about 1859.

58. Anon, 'How It Began: in Grangemouth', BM, 90 (1980), p.66.

59. W G Sloan's diary, quoted in F Kelling, *Fisherman of Faroe: William Gibson Sloan* (Göta, Faroe Islands, 1993), p.78; this individual was a believer's baptist. The evidence, however, is not conclusive: some Exclusive Brethren were believer's baptists and they were much more likely to call themselves 'Plymouth Brethren'. However, the designation is that of Sloan in his pre-Brethren days (all Brethren tended to be grouped together), and the individual was preaching at a denominational chapel: it seems reasonable, then, to assume he was Open Brethren.

60. R, 15 (1866), p.269; this request was possibly from Shadrach Leadbetter.

61. TP, 10 (1866-9), p.168.

62. R Scott, *History of Mid Wynd International Investment Trust PLC* (Dundee, 1987), p.7; 'Mrs Scott', W, 51 (1921), p.96.

63. TP, 8 (1861-3), pp.60, 280.

breaking bread with a number of others in his Mid Wynd hall (see Map 6, inset).⁶⁴ This was separate from Bowes' congregation, although he occasionally preached for Scott.⁶⁵ At Fettercairn, Kincardineshire (see Map 6), in 1862 Bowes made contact with one meeting which had fourteen members,⁶⁶ and in January 1864 he was present at the second breaking of bread held at Erigmore, Birnam (see Map 3), the home of Mrs Napier Campbell, a lady who preached to her servants and who had come across *The Truth Promoter* in India.⁶⁷ An assembly was also founded during this period in Lerwick, Shetland (see Map 1). There had been a revival in the town during the winter of 1862 which had affected all its denominations.⁶⁸ Among the visiting revivalists drawn to Shetland by the news was J Albert Boswell, a member of the same family which had produced Dr Johnson's biographer.⁶⁹ He made contact with William Sloan, a colporteur with the Edinburgh Tract and Book Society, who had already left the Church of Scotland because he wished to be free of denominational ties.⁷⁰ During the following winter the two men evangelised together and in 1864 they began breaking bread in an attic, joined by three women.⁷¹

Some assemblies whose origins are now lost were possibly formed during this period.⁷² One anonymous individual wrote of the development of a meeting in a town designated only as 'B'—possibly Bellshill, Lanarkshire,

64. Don Palmer's collection, York, interview with Mr Alex Webb, December 1988.

65. *TP*, 8 (1861-3), pp.60, 280.

66. *Ibid.*, p.240.

67. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), pp.95-6.

68. 'Shetland Isles', *R*, 7 (1862-3), pp.248-9; (1862), pp.262-3; *R*, 8 (1863), pp.18-19.

69. For J A Boswell, see J J Park, *The Churches of God: their origin and development in the 20th Century* (Leicester, 1987), pp.86-7.

70. Kelling, *Fisherman of Faroe*, pp.60-79.

71. [George Peterson], *A Century of Witness in Ebenezer Hall, Lerwick 1885-1985* (Lerwick, 1985), p.1.

72. Possible candidates for being founded in the 1860s are those designated as existing by a certain date (i.e. the first known reference to the assembly which may, of course, have been founded earlier) in the lists below, Chpt. 4, ns 134, 143, 155, 157, 163, and 307.

where an assembly was meeting by 1866.⁷³ It had been established by converts of the 1859 Revival in the town who had been disturbed by the mixed communion of their former Free Church congregation and its lack of enthusiasm for awakenings. The formation of the assembly was accomplished independently of direct contact with the Brethren movement.⁷⁴ But once more it was those affected by revivalism who had created it.

BRETHREN AND REVIVALISM

The Brethren movement had had a significant role in the shaping of mid-Victorian revivalism,⁷⁵ and it is hardly surprising that revivalism in turn played an important part in spreading assemblies within Scotland. Itinerant evangelists were prominent in bringing the movement north, but apparently in at least two cases—at Lesmahagow and the town of 'B'—assemblies were formed independently of contact with Brethren elsewhere. There are a number of features within the revivals which help to explain this spontaneous process and also the attraction assemblies held for those influenced by revivalism. One explanation might be the eccentric behaviour manifested during awakenings. James Gilchrist, a master baker and a founder member of Strathaven and Chapelton assemblies, created a considerable stir when, dressed in black and mounted on a black horse, he rode from Chapelton to Larkhall carrying a banner inscribed with 'Prepare to meet thy God'.⁷⁶ It is possible to see the radical step of severing a church connection and commemorating the Lord's supper with a few others in a

73. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.72; if the designation 'B' is accepted as a reliable guide to the identity of the assembly, then Bellshill is apparently the only town from this period with the initial 'B' which had an assembly.

74. Anon., 'Assembly-life experiences. Letters of an octogenarian', *BM*, 29 (1919), pp.8-9, 21, 33, 117; this was later published as a pamphlet of the same title but is no longer extant in this form.

75. John Kent, *Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian revivalism* (London, 1978), p.116; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p.117.

76. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.17.

house as one more unusual occurrence of the revivals.

An important catalyst in the formation of assemblies was dissatisfaction with the impurities which were perceived in the established churches. Revival preaching stressed the necessity of regeneration and gave an impetus towards the concept of the gathered church, one consisting of true believers only. The newly regenerate individual looked with dismay at those who had not been similarly awakened yet who were still partaking of communion alongside him. 'Why should believers', John Justice wrote to one convert who had joined the Free Church in Ayr, 'be connected with those that don't bear testimony to the truth that God's church is composed of believers alone?'⁷⁷ This feeling that the unconverted should be excluded from church fellowship also lay behind the practice of believer's baptism, which stresses that the only fit candidates for the ordinance are those who have made a profession of faith. The only true baptism was that subsequent to conversion, and as with communion, the unconverted could not know its reality. The opposition of many ministers to revivalism was also of significance. At Auchinheath, Lanarkshire, in 1869 one convert was advised by his minister to 'read Burns and Shakespeare, and take care of quacks'.⁷⁸ He later became Brethren. Dissatisfaction with the state of the professing church among the newly awakened made the gathered communities of the movement attractive.

There were, however, several features germane to the Evangelicalism of the period which help explain why revivalist fervour and dissatisfaction with a church should lead to the formation of Brethren assemblies. The message the revival evangelist had to convey was strongly future-directed

⁷⁷. K[err], *Justice*, p.24.

⁷⁸. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.300.

and emphasised the brevity of life and the certainty of death. This emphasis on the end of human life made future judgement a reality of consciousness which impinged on daily life. As Robert Miller trimmed a gooseberry bush at Millheugh near Larkhall in 1866, he weighed 'the momentous matters of eternity'. He was converted, pruning knife in hand.⁷⁹ An emphasis on hell continued in many Victorian churches.⁸⁰ The only solution was redemption through the blood of Jesus and so evangelists laboured tirelessly to save souls.⁸¹ The sense of urgency which the revivals engendered was a powerful influence on those affected by them. When Alexander Taylor, a Free Church elder in Strathaven, was converted, he commenced two weekly evangelistic meetings and wrote and distributed a tract throughout the town.⁸² He later joined the Strathaven assembly, and for individuals such as him the Brethren represented a movement which was continuing the pattern of intense activity that was a marked feature of revivalism. The imperative which the fate of the unconverted created was reinforced by the adventism of contemporary Evangelicalism (to be discussed more fully in Chapter 8).⁸³ Both factors made the business of propagating the faith the main concern of life for those affected by the awakenings. It was also the central purpose in the existence of assemblies during this period which made them attractive to the zealous convert.⁸⁴

The unsophisticated theology which the revivalists shared made it possible for evangelists of different persuasions to work together. One commentator, writing in 1862, felt of the revival that 'Its glory is that it has

79. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.22.

80. Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians* (Oxford, 1974), pp.1-3.

81. Cf. MacPherson, *Matheson*, p.144.

82. Massie to the editor, p.288.

83. See below, pp.322-10.

84. Cf. the opinion of Hay Macdowell Grant cited in M M Gordon, *Hay Macdowall Grant of Arndilly: his life, labours, and teaching* (London, 1876), pp.211-12.

no set system of theology, and no stringent creed, beyond those fundamental elements of the faith without which there is no salvation.'⁸⁵ Union prayer meetings and unsectarian open-air services were, like the simple message of the evangelists, directing those affected away from the traditional concerns of Scottish church life. A new mood of unity was abroad which anticipated that the Evangelical message and the Bible would provide the basis for union, free from the traditional theological formularies that divided churches. In 1866 a number of leading Scottish churchmen issued a pamphlet calling for unity of creed among the churches based on the Bible. They proposed a series of inter-church meetings which would eliminate conflicting biblical interpretations, for only then 'the fellowship of the Christian Church can be expected to reach its proper development, and her evangelistic work to be blessed with full success'.⁸⁶ The project of establishing a universally acceptable interpretation of the Bible was impractical, but it was part of the new spirit of unity for the sake of evangelism and increasing unease with denominational divisions. At a popular level such desires for unity could become frustrated by the continuing divisions.⁸⁷ Part of the appeal of the Brethren lay in their claim that they were, in the words of Arthur Massie, 'meeting in the Lord's name' free from 'the evils of denominationalism'.⁸⁸ Assemblies were perceived as expressions of unity having a simple faith based on the Bible and centred on Jesus.

An impatience with institutionalism was apparent in the desires for unity. It is also evident in the way Evangelicalism was being spread by lay preachers and undenominational agencies—the 1859 Revival was known

85. M, 'Revival Truths', *R*, 7 (1862), p.41.

86. Anon., 'Unity of creed the union of the Christian Church', *R*, 15 (1866), pp.71-3.

87. Cf. K[err], *Justice*, p.24.

88. Massie to the editor, p.288.

as 'the Layman's Revival'.⁸⁹ There had been lay preaching within Scotland, but it had frequently met with disapproval and its most acceptable representatives, such as the Haldanes or Brownlow North, had been from the upper classes.⁹⁰ During the 1859 Revival, however, working-class preachers were widely used in Lowland Scotland. In the north east, for example, the cooper James Turner was joined by others such as Duncan Matheson, a former stone mason. These individuals attained a popularity because of their unclerical nature: one of Matheson's converts commented, 'Never till then had I seen a man in the pulpit—only a minister.'⁹¹ And widespread strains began to emerge between the advocates of lay preaching and ministers.⁹² Many lay preachers became impatient with clerical domination by ministers and the way in which it could render converts inactive. 'The work has for too long a time been thrown over on "ministers",' complained Captain Mackenzie, the secretary of the SEA, 'and their being "specially set apart" has become a shield under which sleepy and self-indulgent Christians have slept on.'⁹³ The perception of some clergy as being unconverted⁹⁴ and the discouragement of converts in witnessing were additional discontents with institutional religion. Much of the work of the revivals was done outside church buildings, in the open air or in halls hired for the occasion, and lay agencies provided independence from unsympathetic ministerial control. The institutional power of the established churches was being

89. Anon. (ed.), *Reminiscences of the Revival of Fifty-Nine and the Sixties* (Aberdeen, 1910), p.xiii.

90. Cf. Arthur Fawcett, 'Scottish lay preachers in the eighteenth century', *RSCHS*, 12 (1955), pp.97-119; D E Meek, 'Evangelical missionaries in the early nineteenth-century Highlands', *Scottish Studies*, 28 (1987), pp.1-34.

91. MacPherson, *Matheson*, p.212.

92. Cf., 'The Coasts of Moray and Banff', *R*, 8 (1862), pp.110-11; J Mackay to the editor, *R*, 7 (1862), pp.79-80; James Stewart, 'The religious quickening in the parish', *R*, 17 (1868), pp.210-12; anon. (ed.), *Reminiscences*, pp.xviii, 46; Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, p.200; MacPherson, *Matheson*, pp.168, 172.

93. Captain Mackenzie, quoted in 'Scottish Evangelistic Association', *R*, 17 (1868), p.168.

94. E McHardie, *James Turner: or how to reach the masses* (London, 1889), p.154.

circumvented. The link between itinerant revivalists and the Brethren was marked, and a number either belonged to the movement or, like Gordon Forlong when he moved to London in 1863/4,⁹⁵ later joined. The unsophisticated, non-institutional nature of assemblies, maintained entirely by lay people for the spread of the Evangelical message, was a congenial environment for them. It was natural this should also be true for some of those influenced by the evangelists.⁹⁶

For those involved in the 1859 Revival its single most important cause was prayer.⁹⁷ It had began in the groups which met for prayer in 1858, and after the first wave of revivals passed one individual believed that 'Scotland would be found covered as with a network of praying people'.⁹⁸ These prayer societies are further evidence of the way contemporary religious life was not contained by institutions. They are also an example of an intensified sense of the supernatural which was due to the influence of Romanticism on Evangelicalism.⁹⁹ Heightened supernaturalism can be detected in a number of other features present in contemporary piety: in the eschatological note present in revivalist preaching; in the popularity of adventism; in the determination by evangelists such as Arthur Massie to live by faith;¹⁰⁰ in the valuing of the spontaneous above the prepared in preaching;¹⁰¹ and in attitudes to the Bible. Gordon Forlong was preeminently the evangelist who encouraged new converts to read the

95. Hy Pickering (ed), *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, 2nd edn (London & Glasgow, 1931), p.68.

96. Cf. anon., 'Assembly-life experiences', p.9.

97. G F Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte* (London, 1923), p.101; anon. (ed.), *Reminiscences*, pp.xii-xv; *BM*, 5 (1895), p.3.

98. G R, 'Scotland', *R*, 7 (1862), p.272.

99. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp.80-1.

100. Massie to the editor, p.288.

101. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, pp.18-19; McHardie, *Turner*, p.165.

Bible,¹⁰² but other evangelists did so too.¹⁰³ Contemporary views of scriptural inspiration contributed a powerful effect to revival meetings.¹⁰⁴ It was with an increased sense of awe at God speaking through the very words of the Bible that people listened to the evangelists' preaching and the new converts read it. In the groups which met for 'Bible searchings' after the revivals, a number of features within contemporary Evangelicalism coalesced: the attempt to recreate the fellowship of the primitive church, the Spirit speaking directly to the individual, a unity based on the Bible, and hearing the voice of God in the scriptures. Robert McKilliam, an Aberdeenshire physician, recalled the homely Bible readings, 'when a Bible hunger was strong within us' which were held in Old Meldrum after revivalist Reginald Radcliffe's visit in 1859. 'We used to meet night after night', he wrote, 'in each other's houses, sit around the table with a Book in our hands, with our eyes up to Jesus, our Lord, and talk out to each other our thoughts as He gave them.'¹⁰⁵ The ethos is that of a Brethren meeting. McKilliam himself later left the Free Church to found an undenominational congregation in Huntly which later united with the town's assembly¹⁰⁶ and when he moved to London in 1880 McKilliam became Brethren.¹⁰⁷ The spontaneity of the awakenings and the impetus they had given to lay activity, coupled with the increased supernaturalism of contemporary Evangelicalism, were all factors in making the unsophisticated, revivalist, gathered churches of the Brethren movement, with their charismatic, lay-led ministry, attractive to those touched by the revivals.

102. Gordon Forlong to the editor, *R*, 7 (1862), p.296; *R*, 5 (1861), p.92; K[err], *Justice*, p.21; 'Thomas Cochrane', *BM*, 21 (May 1911), p.iv.

103. Cf. McHardie, *Turner*, p.150; Moody-Stuart, *North*, pp.240-1.

104. Cf. below, pp.219-20.

105. [Jane Radcliffe], *Recollections of Reginald Radcliffe by his wife* (London [1896]), pp.71-4.

106. 'Dr Robert M'Killiam, London', *BP*, 36 (1915), pp.54-6; *W*, 40 (1910), p.55.

107. Pickering (ed.), *Chief Men*, p.176.

NEW COMMUNITIES

Apparent in McKilliam's description is one additional appeal the Brethren had. They exemplified the contemporary 'ethical, utopian vision'.¹⁰⁸ The attempt to recover the life of the primitive church was one such project. It can also be seen in the way the commonplace was felt to be transformed. The descent of Christ was hourly expected, and for those touched by the revivals, daily life was metamorphosised. A camp meeting was begun at Lesmahagow and fellowship meetings were held, cementing the warm association into which members were introduced.¹⁰⁹ The weekly Lord's supper was often an emotional occasion.¹¹⁰ In Lanarkshire and Glasgow, where Bowes' influence was strongest, individuals such as James Stone, James Ritchie and evangelist Arthur Massie adopted Wesleyan perfectionism.¹¹¹ It was perceived as the issue which led some members of East Kilbride Free Church to leave and found the new meeting in Chapelton.¹¹² At Lesmahagow, too, one minister preached against separatists who were 'ignorantly and unblushingly affirming that they are in a state of absolute perfection'.¹¹³ Evidently the assembly members were his target. The entrance into perfect holiness displayed the zeal for building renewed communities in which the quotidian was transfigured.

The passion for the renovated society can also be seen in the acceptance of female preaching among assemblies and the arguments which were used to justify it. Long disapproved of in Scotland, female preaching was

108. Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920* (Aberdeen, 1984), pp.16-17; cf. *idem*, 'A fertile field: Scotland in the days of the early missions', in R L Jensen and M R Thorp (eds), *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*, (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1989), pp.104-117.

109. *TP*, 10 (1866-9); C J [sic] Miller to the editor, 24 September 1868, *ibid.*, p.240.

110. See below, p.321.

111. Stone to the editor, p.24; *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.88; 'Glasgow Conference', p.120.

112. Moncrieff Parish Church, East Kilbride, 'Minutes of Kirk Session [East Kilbride Free Church]', 2 (1848-83), 25 June 1863.

113. *HA*, 22 June 1867, p.2.

regarded by many as one of the excesses of the 1859 Revival in Ireland, but which during the awakenings had spread to mainland Britain.¹¹⁴ There was a strong antipathy to the practice in Scotland and when women preachers emerged they were regarded unfavourably even by those who were closely involved in the revivals.¹¹⁵ The liberty allowed to lay people and freedom from the controls of institutional religion gave the Brethren a predisposition to accepting the practice. Bowes, as a former Primitive Methodist, had always accepted women preaching,¹¹⁶ and by early in the 1860s assemblies in Lanarkshire accepted female preaching to mixed-sex audiences.¹¹⁷ Four women in particular were prominent. Jessie Macfarlane of Edinburgh came to accept Brethren ecclesiology and adventism, being credited with introducing these ideas into the north-east.¹¹⁸ Isabella Armstrong, an Irish immigrant who had begun preaching during the 1859 Revival in County Tyrone, when she resided in Wishaw spoke at the outreach held in the town by the Newmains assembly (with which she possibly broke bread).¹¹⁹ Both women became famous throughout Britain. Locally renowned in Lanarkshire were two converts of the 1859 Revival, Mary Hamilton and Mary Paterson. They were among the group of lay preachers out of which the Brethren in the county emerged in this period, preaching at the Larkhall gospel meetings held prior to the commencement of the assembly there, and active elsewhere in the revivals of the 1860s. Mary Hamilton associated with the Larkhall

114. Olive Anderson, 'Women preachers in mid-Victorian Britain: some reflexions on feminism, popular religion and social change', *The Historical Journal*, 12 (1969), pp.467-84.

115. James Gall to a 'brother', *R*, 10 (1864), p.412; 'Female preaching and preaching in general', *R*, 13 (1865), pp.129-30, 412; I A Armstrong, *Plea for Modern Prophetesses* (Glasgow, 1866), p.3; H I G., *In Memoriam: Jessie McFarlane a tribute of affection* (London, 1872), p.23.

116. Mrs Stevens to a friend, 27 August, 1828, published as 'Should women preach and teach?' *TP*, 2 (1852-3), pp.225-8.

117. Neil Dickson, 'Modern prophetesses: women preachers in the nineteenth-century Scottish Brethren', *RCHS*, 25 (1993), pp.89-117.

118. H I G., *In Memoriam*, pp.28-9.

119. *HA*, 13 June 1863, p.2; *HA*, 27 June 1863, p.2; *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.46.

meeting and Mary Paterson was a founder member of the one in Chapelton.¹²⁰ They attained prominence when the second wave of revivalism swept much of Scotland and Lanarkshire in particular.¹²¹

The novelty of the women preachers drew large crowds and this was obviously one way of justifying their use.¹²² There were other ways to sanction the practice, and John Wardrop of Wishaw appealed to two of them. One was the pragmatic argument that their evangelism was effective.¹²³ To Wardrop's mind the necessary implication of the women's success was that they had been divinely gifted. Given the Brethren acceptance of a charismatic ministry, proven ability was a persuasive argument. The movement also took the Bible seriously and literally, and arguments drawn from expediency could never be enough for individuals in it. One biblical justification which was offered was the interpretation that was adopted of Joel 2:28-9, 'And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy'. The Apostle Peter assigned the fulfilment of this prediction to 'the last day', and the appearance of women preachers was seen as indication of the end times.¹²⁴ Wardrop also accepted the eschatological significance of female preaching. Quoting the relevant text from Joel, he commented that, 'Truly in these last days he has been making good his word spoken of old'.¹²⁵ The prevailing premillennial expectation found among the Brethren made them almost alone in Scotland in espousing this justification for women preaching.¹²⁶

120. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.13; Moncrieff Parish Church, 'Minutes', 25 June 1863.

121. 'Death of Mrs Fischer', *HA*, 16 May 1925, p.8; 'The Late Miss Mary Hamilton', *HA*, 25 October, 1925, p.9.

122. *HA*, 6 October 1866, p.2; Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.18.

123. John Wardrop, 'Revival work in Wishaw', *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.62.

124. Anderson, 'Women preachers', pp.470, 480.

125. Wardrop, 'Revival work', p.62.

126. Anderson, 'Women preachers', p.479.

The exegetical key to understanding the scriptural teaching on women preachers was perceived as being the existence of Old Testament prophetesses. Isabella Armstrong entitled the lengthy pamphlet she wrote in 1866 on female preaching *Plea for Modern Prophetesses*. It was an attempt to provide a reasoned case from the Bible to support women preaching. She adduced the eschatological argument to support her case, and she also attempted to harmonise scripture claiming that Paul had been mistranslated.¹²⁷ But her central argument was the existence of Old Testament prophetesses and their continuance in the early church. Biblical prophecy, she contended, included teaching as well as foretelling the future, and the prophetess Anna she saw as being a particularly significant example, arguing that Anna was preaching to the crowd when she was presented with the Christ child.¹²⁸ Armstrong was expanding arguments which can be paralleled in contemporary writing. They can be found, for example, in the pamphlet which Jessie Macfarlane had written in 1864, *Scriptural Warrant for Women to Preach the Gospel*. They were also used by James Stone in a lengthy letter he wrote defending the practice of women preaching. Stone was prepared to go further in his case, maintaining that women could teach Christians, for Anna addressed the believing remnant and therefore 'she also taught the saints'.¹²⁹ Stone's letter is evidence that some Brethren individuals had accepted the biblical case for female evangelists and were willing to enlarge the roles available to women. In other assemblies women were encouraged to participate in

127. Armstrong, *Plea*, pp.52, 17-27; that Paul had been misinterpreted was apparently not accepted by Bowes, as can be seen from his translation of the relevant texts in John Bowes, *The New Testament translated from the purest Greek* (Dundee, 1870), pp.277, 327.

128. Armstrong, *Plea*, pp.46-52.

129. James Stone to Br[other Robert]. Martin, 22 December 1874, transcript in Anderson, 'Lesmahagow', pp.94-103.

meetings for prayer or conversational Bible reading.¹³⁰

Stone also used an additional argument for women preaching. In the conclusion to his letter he found support for his case in the nature of the Church as he understood it. The new birth took precedence over earthly and physical states, and in the Church the born-again have already embarked on the life of heaven:

As in heaven there is neither marrying, or giving in marriage so let us, who worship God in the spirit consider that here as well, we are all one having been Baptised into one body by one Spirit and all may prophesy, one by one that all may learn and that all may be comforted.

For there is neither Jew nor Greek there is neither bond nor free there is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.¹³¹

The acceptance of women preachers demonstrated the dissolving of society's mores and the creation of a community of equality. Brethren reasoning was that of a movement which, amid adventist expectations, existed for the conversion of others, and which was non-institutional, provided freedom for lay people, and attempted to achieve a primitive, united Christian community based on the experience of the new birth and the Bible. All of these features assemblies had continued from the Evangelicalism out of which they had emerged,¹³² and they demonstrated the conjunction of revivalism and the democratisation of Christianity examined in the previous chapter.¹³³ The arguments for women preachers also exhibit Brethren zeal, which they shared with others among their contemporaries, for establishing renewed communities.

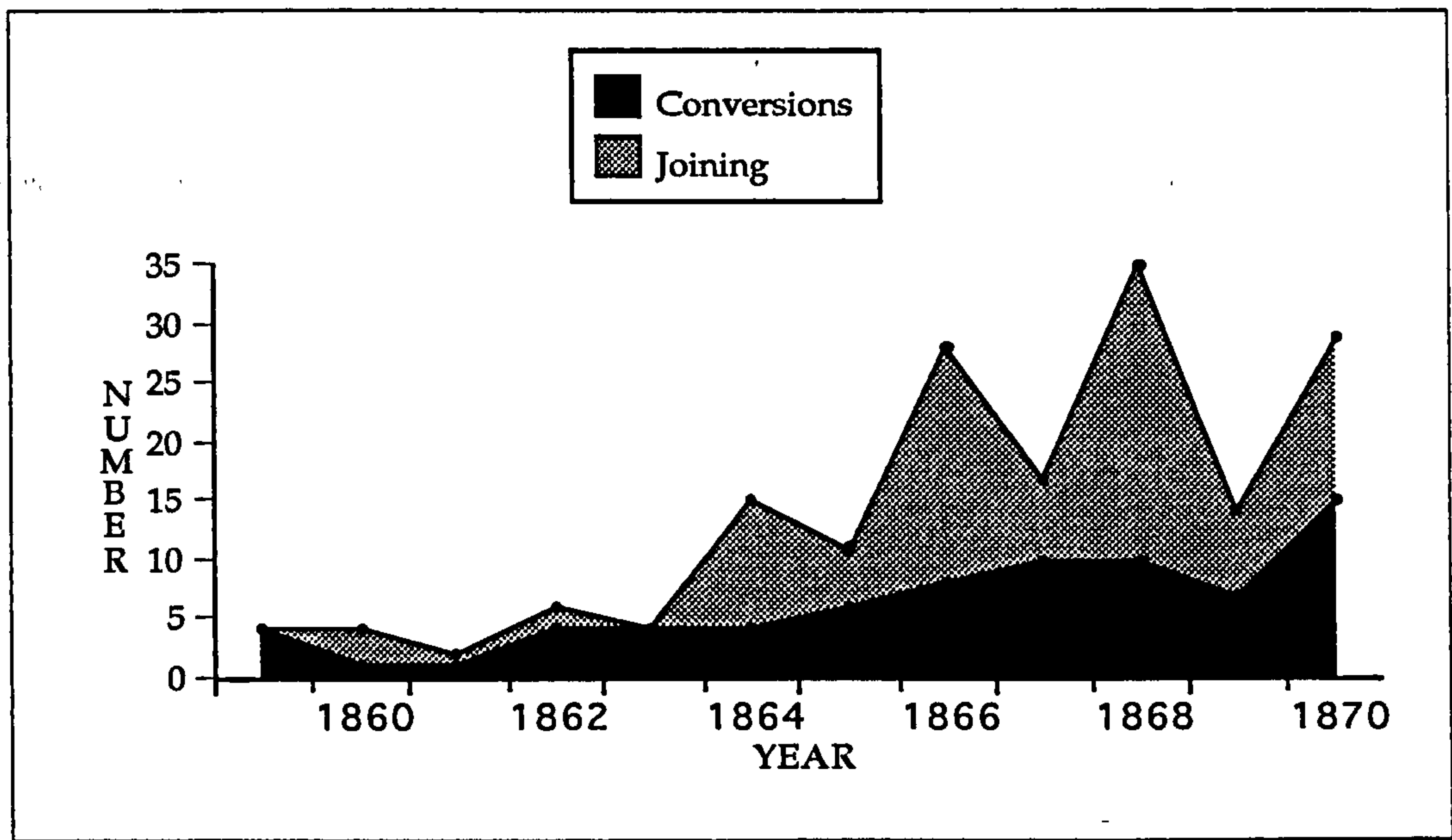
130. [John Ritchie], "A Plea for Sisters": remarks on a recent pamphlet', *BM*, 33 (1923), p.33; Ritchie dated this to 'the early days of assemblies'. However, he did not join the Brethren until 1871 and may be referring to this period.

131. Stone to Br. Martin., p. 103; the second paragraph is a quotation of Gal. 3: 28.

132. Kent, *Holding the Fort*, p.101.

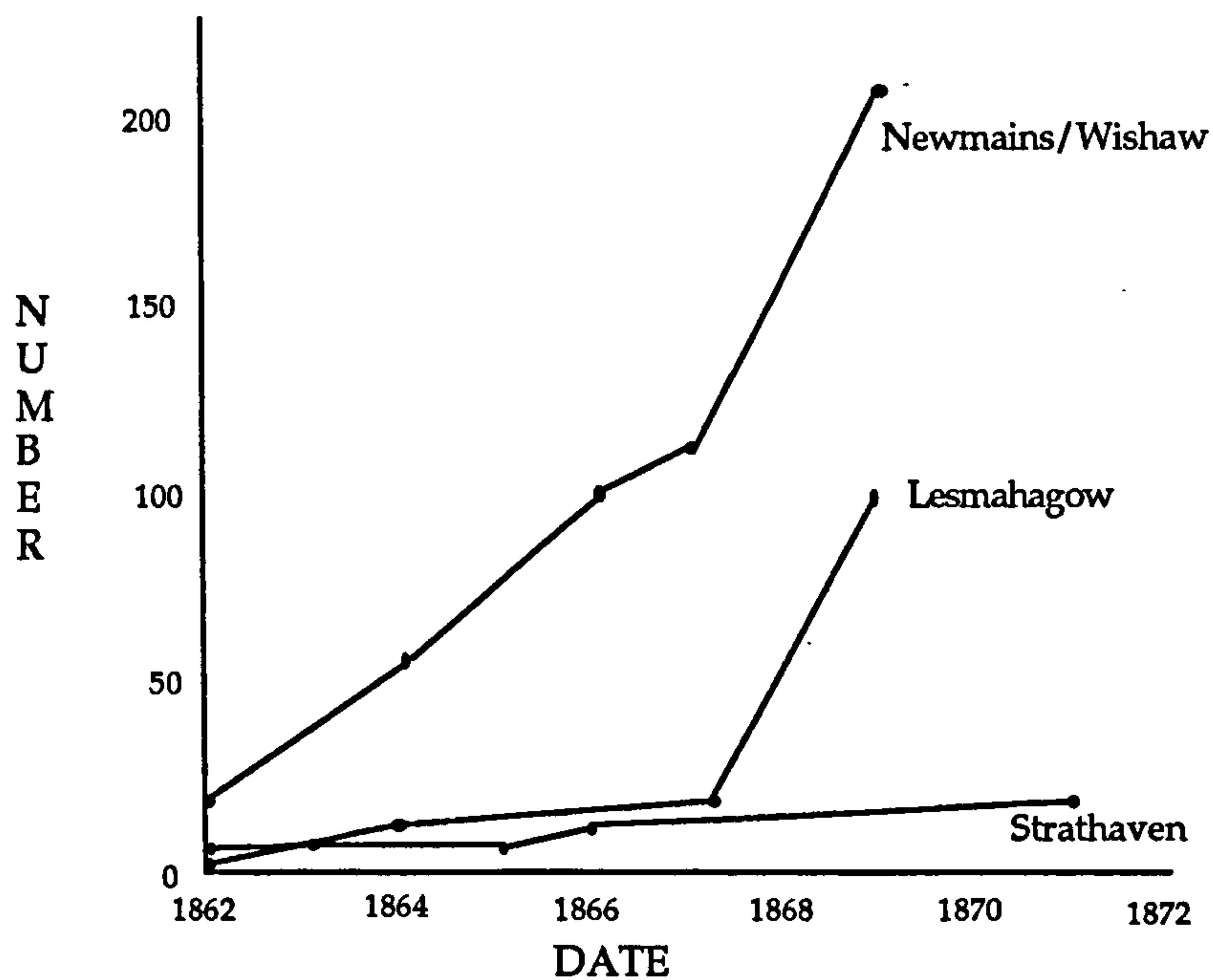
133. See above, p.31, cf. Nathan O Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT, 1989), p.9.

Figure 3.1. Brethren Growth 1859-70.



Source: 'With Christ', *The Witness*, 37-108 (1907-78).

Figure 3.2. The growth of three Lanarkshire assemblies 1862-71.



Sources: *The Truth Promoter*; 'List of the Members of the Strathaven Brethren'; writer's collection, I.M.28., untitled history of Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Wishaw, photocopy of MS, n.d.

Table 3.1. Average ages of converts, 1860-1923, and individuals being received into fellowship, 1860-1928.

	conversion age	reception age
1860-9	19.7	26.8
1870-9	20.9	26.7
1880-9	22.6	26.2
1890-9	21.9	26.7
1900-9	22.3	26.5
1910-9	20.7	29.3
1920-3	24.1	-
1920-8	-	30.8

Source: 'With Christ', *The Witness*, 37-108 (1907-78).

CONTINUED GROWTH 1866-70

During the second half of the 1860s the Brethren enjoyed vigorous growth, seen in Figure 3.1. Particularly striking are the peaks in the additions data created by the formation of new assemblies which attracted revival converts from other churches. The percentage increase suggested by the figure is undoubtedly inaccurate as the data on which it is based is less reliable for this period,¹³⁴ but the general pattern of greater growth in the later part of the decade accords with that of individual congregations (Figure 3.2).¹³⁵ Assemblies appealed mainly to those in early adult life. William Scott at 40 was one of the older individuals involved in the formation of one; more typical were William Sloan, who was 25 in the summer of 1864, and Albert Boswell, who was 24. The average age of sixteen individuals who were founder members of meetings in the early 1860s was 28.5 and all but three of these individuals were born after 1830.¹³⁶ This corresponds closely with the age of 26.8 given for those joining an assembly during the 1860s by *The Witness* obituaries (Table

134. For the use of this evidence see above, p.18, n.87.

135. Cf. below, pp.100-1.

136. The date of birth may be a year out in some instances as in most cases it has been calculated from ages in obituaries and census returns.

3.1).¹³⁷ This last evidence gives the average age of conversion through Brethren evangelism for the decade as 19.7, and if those converted through other evangelistic agencies from 1859 until 1869 are counted, then this rises to 20.5. These age groups were more responsive to new trends and they had come to maturity in a modernising economy. An analysis of the socioeconomic background of the Brethren in Scotland will be undertaken in Chapter 9,¹³⁸ but here it should be noted that those places where assemblies were formed had undergone social change (most usually taking the form of industrialisation) but they retained elements which gave them communal stability, and assembly members tended to belong to the more independent and articulate sections of their society. The energy these middle- and working-class individuals possessed, and the youthfulness of the members, account for much of the vigour of the movement.

The Brethren also continued the theology and practices of contemporary revivalism. Not only the milieu of adventism, but also the revivalist gospel, with its offer of 'instant salvation' and assurance based on scriptural propositions,¹³⁹ were continued. Novel techniques to procure conversions, such as several converts giving their testimony at revival services or holding inquirers' meetings, were adopted. It was after the 1859 Revival that hymns, which until then had hardly been used in Scotland, began to be acceptable in religious services and assemblies continued to sing them.¹⁴⁰ In many areas the Brethren also became the pioneers of

137. For the use of this evidence see above, p.18, n.87.

138. See below, pp.357-67.

139. See below, pp.333-4.

140. For examples, cf., Anderson, 'Lesmahagow', p.7; anon. (ed.), *Reminiscences*, pp.14, 112; Barbour, *Whyte*, p.95; K[err] *Justice*, p.20; McHardie, *Turner*, p.75; James Paterson, *Richard Weaver's Life Story* (London, n.d.), pp.131-2; *R*, 8 (1863), p.51; cf. below, pp.174, 314, 346-9.

street preaching and services in specially erected marquees.¹⁴¹ There were limits, however, to the acceptability of revival phenomena. An individual such as Wardrop had reservations about their more ecstatic manifestations.¹⁴² Novelty *per se* did not meet with approval. It seemed characteristic of the restless *zeitgeist*.¹⁴³ The search for a warm, intensely personal faith and the emotional temper of revivalist practices, nevertheless, signalled a shift in the religious life of Scotland. The continued growth of the Brethren was one further indicator of this change and revivalism continued as the principal factor in their increase.

In Glasgow Gordon Forlong's preaching led to the formation of another meeting. He hired a large circus tent at the foot of the Saltmarket for services. After the mission some of his converts continued to gather, eventually forming an assembly, probably in 1866, which later met in the Tontine Hall in the Trongate (see Map 11, no.21).¹⁴⁴ The Brethren often attracted the converts of missions held by those revivalists who continued to visit Glasgow. Prominent evangelists associated with the movement also preached at campaigns held by assemblies and individual members hired halls in various parts of the city to conduct gospel meetings.¹⁴⁵ This activity maintained the continued expansion of its assemblies. In 1867 Shadrach Leadbetter, an English Brethren evangelist, reported there had been 105 baptisms during a sixteen-week mission he had held in the city and many more conversions,¹⁴⁶ while by that same year the Marble Hall

141. For examples, cf., Carnegie Library, Ayr, ACL 671 BL, H L Allan, 'Ayr Half a Century Ago and Since' (series from *Ayr Advertiser*, 1889), XXIX, 'Ministers, &c.'; Samuel Blow, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Gospel Work* ([c.1890]) rpt Glasgow, 1988), p.89; David Pride, *A History of the Parish of Neilston* (Paisley, 1910), p.150.

142. Wardrop, 'Revival work', p.62.

143. Murray McNeil Caird, 'Communion and apostacy', *LR*, 3 (1870), pp.60-4.

144. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.238-9 (mistakenly referred to as 'Quontine Halls'); 'Mrs Thomas Walker', *W*, 40 (1910), p.151.

145. *LR*, 1 (1867), p.127; 'John P Sinclair', *W*, (1923), p.26.

146. S Leadbetter to the editor, 28 November 1867, *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.180.

had grown from its original twenty members to about seventy members and Tontine Hall, which held 700, was filled on Sundays and had 130 members.¹⁴⁷ At least one additional assembly was also established in the east end in Camlachie, where 1866 a meeting had been formed,¹⁴⁸ possibly the one which was reported the following year in Nelson Street, off the Gallowgate (see Map 11, no.23) which had fifty-five members at the end of 1867.¹⁴⁹ The emergence of new assemblies near Glasgow Cross and in the east end were signs that growth was taking place and that, as before, it was mainly among working-class individuals.¹⁵⁰

But the process of planting new churches was again most marked in Lanarkshire where the existence of a strong group of assemblies helped spread the movement until there were some twenty by the end of the 1860s. The growth that three congregations in the county achieved during the decade is shown in Figure 3.2. Revivalism remained strong in the later 1860s in both Newmains and Lesmahagow, and the effect of this can be seen in numerical growth in those places.¹⁵¹ Brethren evangelistic activities in both communities attracted large crowds. During one period of revivalist fervour in Lesmahagow, the assembly had to abandon its hall and take to preaching in the street to accommodate the hundreds of hearers who had congregated.¹⁵² At the beginning of 1866 the Newmains meeting could attract an audience of 4 or 500 to its services held in a schoolroom in Wishaw,¹⁵³ and in the last four months of the year there were 150 conversions due to the visits of various evangelists to the

147. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp. 87-8; Leadbetter to the editor, p.180; *LR*, 1 (1867), pp.68-9.

148. *Ibid.*, p.68: the assembly had a mission in January 1867, and it must have come into existence during the preceding year at least.

149. Leadbetter to the editor, p.180.

150. In addition, there was possibly an assembly in existence in Norfolk Street, Gorbals, by 1867. 'The Glasgow conference on church government, &c', *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.97-9.

151. Figures for Newmains 1866, and Lesmahagow 1868, are approximate.

152. Miller to the editor, 24 September 1868, p.240.

153. *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.296.

outreach there.¹⁵⁴ An increasing number of the converts were from the latter place. In 1869 Wardrop built a hall in Wishaw with greater accommodation and the congregation was transferred there from Newmains.¹⁵⁵ After it was opened Samuel Blow, a Brethren evangelist from London, held a mission during which 'a marvellous wave of blessing rolled over the town' and as a result a further 150 individuals were converted,¹⁵⁶ bringing the total for the period to some 300.¹⁵⁷ However, the kind of steady growth seen in Strathaven was possibly more typical as most assemblies were still small at the end of the decade.

In 1867 assemblies were formed in Rosebank and Holytown (see Map 10), and in the latter place Jessie Macfarlane taught the new members.¹⁵⁸ The following year ones were formed in Kirkfieldbank and in Lanark.¹⁵⁹ Both of these last two meetings were supported by the Lesmahagow assembly which was engaged in outreach to the surrounding towns and villages. Early in 1867 Charles Miller and Miss McCallum of Glasgow were preaching in Carluke and, a little later, Mary Hamilton.¹⁶⁰ By the end of the year several individuals, assisted by Miller on Sundays, had begun to break bread.¹⁶¹ An outreach in Auchinheath was commenced in 1867 and over the course of a year there were forty conversions.¹⁶² At the instigation of the new converts Mary Hamilton held a further mission in nearby Kirkmuirhill and it was there that the meeting was formed, probably early in 1869.¹⁶³ The previous year Mary Paterson had held a

154. Wardrop, 'Revival work', p.62.

155. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.299.

156. Blow, *Gospel Work*, pp.87-8; *LR*, 3 (1870), p.22.

157. 'G.F. Jackson', *W*, 65 (1935), p.48.

158. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.144, 180.

159. Miller to the editor, 24 September 1868, p.240.

160. *HA*, p.2; *HA*, 2 March 1867, p.2; *HA*, 4 May 1867, p.2; *R*, 16 (1867), p.133.

161. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.180, 184.

162. Miller to the editor, 24 September 1868, p.240.

163. Charles T Miller to the editor, 20 December 1868, *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.264.

thirteen-week mission in Motherwell during which there were a number of conversions. As a result of her preaching it was predicted that a church would soon be formed at Watson's Vale near Motherwell¹⁶⁴—probably a mistake for Watsonsville where Hope Anderson, a former Lesmahagow assembly member, lived and in whose home the meeting began about this time.¹⁶⁵ The advance of the Brethren into those places undergoing the latest phase of industrialisation, such as Wishaw, Carluke and Motherwell, was accomplished by the church-planting activities of assemblies in the older industrial communities. There were visitors among the 200 who broke bread in Hamilton at the opening of Baillies Causeway Gospel Hall in 1871,¹⁶⁶ but the size of the gathering demonstrates the expansion which had taken place in Lanarkshire since 1864 when Hamilton had twenty members and the total membership of assemblies in the county had been some 131.¹⁶⁷

The south and west also had additional assemblies formed. The Helensburgh congregation planted a new assembly at Renton, Dunbartonshire (see Map 12), in 1868.¹⁶⁸ Four new ones were formed in Ayrshire (see Map 13). About 1867 a meeting was founded by a group which had been meeting for Bible study in Stevenston, an industrial community which had been the subject of revivalist activities,¹⁶⁹ and it was certainly in that same year that the removal of a Newmains assembly member to Kilbirnie, a growing steel town, led to the formation of one there.¹⁷⁰ In the coastal resort of Troon the assembly was begun by Glasgow

164. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.232.

165. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.215-6; [John Waddell], *Roman Road Hall Motherwell: Centenary 1875-1975* (Lanark, 1975), p.3.

166. Anderson, 'Lesmahagow', p.59.

167. 'The Glasgow conference', p.118.

168. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.215-16, 279.

169. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.223; 'Mrs Ferguson', *W*, 48 (1914), p.14; 'Rebecca Figgins', *BM*, 32 (1922), p.11; McPherson, *Matheson*, pp.170-1.

170. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.96.

Brethren holidaymakers who commemorated the Lord's supper,¹⁷¹ first meeting in an empty stable in 1868.¹⁷² The visit of Robert Paterson, accompanied by his evangelist sister Mary, to Dalmellington in 1870 saw the re-formation of the assembly there.¹⁷³ After they had left, four individuals began breaking bread in a house.¹⁷⁴ In Wigtownshire Murray McNeil Caird had seen an awakening in Stranraer (see Map 14) in 1866.¹⁷⁵ McNeil Caird, the son of the county procurator fiscal, was a former law student who had become an itinerant evangelist and joined the Brethren in Glasgow.¹⁷⁶ Most likely as a consequence of his mission he helped found the meeting in Stranraer which certainly existed by 1868.¹⁷⁷

The later 1860s also saw the formation of additional assemblies in the east and north. After a mission in 1867 one was formed in Falkirk (see Map 9).¹⁷⁸ By 1868 at Mayfield near Edinburgh (see Map 8) seventeen individuals were in fellowship while in Armadale, West Lothian (see Map 9), there was a small assembly in existence.¹⁷⁹ Boswell and his friends, the English evangelists Rice T Hopkins and Samuel Blow, were involved in the planting of other assemblies in the east.¹⁸⁰ During 1867 Hopkins and Blow met the converts of recent missions in Aberdeen,¹⁸¹ and it was

171. [R Fulton], *Bethany Hall Troon: a Hundred Years of Christian Witness* (n.p. [1970]), pp.1-2.

172. 'C.W. Goodson', *BM*, 29 (July 1919), p.iv.

173. 'Robert Brackenridge', *BM*, 35 (December 1926), p.iii.

174. 'Mrs Geo Wilson', *BM*, 19 (March 1909), p.iv; *BM*, 30 (June 1920), p.i; 'James M'Culloch', *CW*, 42 (1925), pp.82-4; 'James McCulloch', *W*, 55 (1925), p.79; anon., 'The Kindness of God', *Green Pastures* (1908), reprinted as 'How it began: Dalmellington, Ayrshire', *BM*, 97 (1987), pp.232-4.

175. J G[ray], 'Murray M'Neil Caird', *BP*, 39 (October 1918), p.102.

176. J G[ray], 'Alexander Stewart, Christian Solicitor', *BP*, 44 (1923), pp.70-2.

177. 'Mr John Craig', *Wigtown Free Press*, 27 March 1913, p.5; 'James D. Kennedy', *W*, 46 (1916), p.50.

178. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.96; John Sommerville to the editor, 4 December 1867, *ibid.*, p.168; John Robertson to the editor, 22 April 1868, *ibid.*, pp.199-200.

179. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.207-8, 255.

180. For Hopkins see, Ian McDowell, 'Rice Thomas Hopkins 1842-1916: an open brother', *BAHNR*, 1 (1997-8), pp.24-30; and for Blow, his autobiography, *Gospel Work*.

181. *R.*, 16 (1867), pp. 279, 413, 591.

probably during this visit when they encouraged a 'little company' to form an assembly in the city¹⁸² which apparently began breaking bread the following year in the Castlegate (see Map 5, inset).¹⁸³ When Blow went on to visit Peterhead (see Map 5) he met William McLean, a Scotch Baptist who had been an associate of James Turner, and they held evangelistic services together.¹⁸⁴ McLean had already left his church in 1866 when, after a being involved in a fresh awakening, a female visitor had criticized denominational titles. It was against this background of continued evangelisation and a desire for an undenominational unity that McLean put an advert into the local newspaper in 1868 announcing that 'the Church of Christ' would meet above his ironmongery shop. Among those who responded to the advert was an English visitor who was a Mildmay deaconess, an Anglican order of female helpers, and who gave McLean advice which helped him to establish the assembly.¹⁸⁵

Boswell and Hopkins also assisted in the formation in assemblies in Orkney (see Map 2). While he was still a nondenominational evangelist, Hopkins had been involved in a mission in the islands during the winter of 1866-7, being particularly successful on Westray and in the Scotch Baptist-type congregation there.¹⁸⁶ In 1868 he returned to Orkney for a longer visit accompanied by Boswell. During the intervening year Hopkins had become more fully convinced of Brethren practices. The opposition he had encountered earlier was prepared for him, and Hopkins in return was deeply critical of many of the churches.¹⁸⁷ In private

182. Donald Munro, in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist of the North of Scotland and United States of America* (Kilmarnock, [1903]), p.105.

183. 'John Bendelow', *BM*, 18 (February 1908), p.iv; 'Mrs Peter Tait', *W*, 40 (Apr. 1910), p.71.

184. *LR*, 1 (1866-7), p.149.

185. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.274-6.

186. Henry Harcus, *The History of the Orkney Baptist Churches* (Ayr, 1898), p.92.

187. R Hopkins to the editor, *LR*, 1 (1868), p.199; reprinted as 'Shocking account of the religious state of Orkney', *Orkney Herald*, 14 April 1868.

meetings and discussions with converts and supporters the two men taught believer's baptism and Brethren ecclesiology.¹⁸⁸ On Westray Hopkins and Boswell discovered that there was dissatisfaction among the Baptists at the erosion of mutual exhortation from among the members.¹⁸⁹ Hopkins and Boswell visited many of the congregation in their homes, and after the evangelists left the private meetings continued. When a sermon was preached denouncing the new views, some two-thirds of the congregation—about 150 individuals—left to form a Brethren assembly.¹⁹⁰ Meetings also came into existence on the Orcadian Mainland at Stromness and the parishes of Harray and Evie, and on the island of South Ronaldsay.¹⁹¹ Further south Hopkins and Boswell were among the evangelists in 1869 who had a mission in Dunfermline (see Map 7) which led to the formation of an assembly there. When Samuel Blow visited it the following year there were some forty to fifty members,¹⁹² and Fife had a second assembly founded at Buckhaven in 1870.¹⁹³ Increasingly Brethren churches were being formed as a result of Brethren evangelism.

Yet the 1860s were not a period of unalloyed success for the movement. Despite the impressive growth in Wishaw assembly, the membership lagged behind the number of listeners and conversions, and this was true of elsewhere. There were several factors which hindered growth. Assemblies were still a novelty and were not regarded with universal approval. It was often only the strong minded who joined, for within their communities assembly members were frequently subjected to obloquy,

188. [John Ritchie], *Donald Munro*, ([1909]), rpt (Glasgow, 1987), pp.40-1; Donald Munro, in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.117.

189. J A Boswell to the editor, *LR*, 2 (September 1869), p.323.

190. *Ibid.*; Marcus, *Orkney Baptists*, p.94.

191. Alex. Goodfellow, 'Death of the founder of the "Hopkinites" in Orkney', *The Orcadian*, 29 April 1916, p.3; Munro, in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.117.

192. *LR*, 3 (October, 1870), p.231.

193. 'David Cowan', *W*, 63 (1933), p.71.

derision and other forms of persecution.¹⁹⁴ The first baptisms at Ayr were interrupted by a gang of youths who threw wet sand and shouted abuse.¹⁹⁵ Some difficulties were self-inflicted. Soon after the meeting in Ayr was formed it had a division¹⁹⁶ and the Clatt one was discontinued in 1862 due to personal animosities.¹⁹⁷ Revival passed by some existing congregations. The Inch meeting was discontinued some time after 1863¹⁹⁸ while the same appears to have happened to the Douglas one in the later 1860s. Mrs Napier Campbell's assembly and those in Crofthead, East Kilbride, Falkirk, Fettercairn, Kilbirnie, Mayfield and the Glasgow Bowesite ones, all had an ephemeral existence. The connection between revivals and the formation of assemblies was strong but not ineluctable. Broader support for revivalism in the churches of the north east may help explain why the movement was slower in emerging there, and evidence elsewhere suggests that the presence of a congregation which conducted revivals could inhibit Brethren growth. Contentment with the condition of their church made individuals unlikely to seek change.

POSSIBLE FUTURES

Despite these caveats, however, the 1860s firmly established the Brethren within Scotland, and 1870 brought the promise of further growth (Figs 3.1, 3.2). The revivalist piety of the period left an indelible mark on the movement, contributing a salvationist message and a zeal for spreading it

194. For examples, cf., Anderson, 'Lesmahagow', pp.38-9, 59-60; anon., 'Assembly-life experiences', p.55; Beattie, *Brethren*, p.241; Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.13; K[err], *John Justice*, p.22; Blow, *Gospel Work*, p.88; John Graham, to the editor, 22 January 1866, *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.288; Kelling, *Fisherman of Faroe*, pp. 79-80; Miller to the editor, 24 September 1868, p.240.

195. 'Unseemly conduct', *The Glasgow Daily Herald*, p.5.

196. K[err], *John Justice*, p.44.

197. *TP*, 8 (1862-3), p.240.

198. *Ibid*, p.62.

which would be a hallmark of assemblies.¹⁹⁹ John Bowes was no longer the sole Brethren itinerant in Scotland, for in addition to the women evangelists he had been joined by several others. However, the period marked the apogee of his influence. In the heightened enthusiasm of the revivals Bowes' peculiar blend of Methodist and Brethren spirituality found acceptance with many and he still tirelessly itinerated. Yet the future did not belong to him. The meetings in Glasgow with which Bowes had been in contact had their own conferences in 1864. But it was the series of believers' meetings begun the following year by Marble Hall members during the twice-yearly Fast Days which became the sole gatherings for Glasgow Brethren and one of the movement's focal points.²⁰⁰ In Dundee it was William Scott's assembly and not the Bowesite congregations to which subsequent Brethren meetings would trace their lineage. Later one individual was to honour Bowes as a pioneer of antisectarianism but as someone also teaching 'things which I have not yet found in the Word.'²⁰¹ To those in what was becoming the mainstream, Bowesite assemblies were marked with peculiarities.²⁰² Although a number of these churches were absorbed into that mainstream, it would become clear that the 1860s led to the eclipse of Bowes' influence and ensured the triumph of traditions associated with individuals such as Darby and Müller—a process hastened by Bowes' death in 1874.

Contemporary Brethren were probably not entirely aware of the latent tensions within the movement. It is possible that there were Brethren who completely rejected female preaching, as some other supporters of

199. Thomas Stewart Veitch, *The Brethren Movement a simple and straightforward account of the features and failures of a sincere attempt to carry out the principles of Scripture during the last 100 years* (London & Glasgow, [1930]), p.66.

200. C J Pickering *et al.*, *1865-1965: The Half-Yearly Meetings of Christians in Glasgow* (n.p. [1965]).

201. 'John Bowes', *CW*, 28 (1913), pp.162-3.

202. J A Boswell, 'The Open position', *NT*, 12 (1900), p.74.

revivalism did. More probably, given the absence of a record of dissent from this period, any who were uncomfortable with the practice took the same attitude as English Brethren members Samuel Blow or Russell Hurditch who did not openly oppose but admired the women's success.²⁰³ Certainly among those who later criticised female preaching some were happy enough to report their activities in religious journals alongside the female preachers and John R Caldwell, a later critic, preached at the same Wishaw outreach as the women.²⁰⁴ More certain evidence of potential development in different directions can be found in relationships to other churches. Despite the inevitable breach establishing a separate congregation would cause, many Brethren still perceived themselves as being engaged in a wider movement of revival which was finding expression in various denominations. Much evangelism by them in this period was, in the words of Wardrop, 'free from anything that would lead any one to think it was sectarian in its aims'.²⁰⁵ Brethren preachers, such as Holt and Geddes in 1866, attempted to make converts, not to procure Brethren proselytes.²⁰⁶ It was Charles Miller who reported in the nondenominational paper, *The Revival*, a week of special meetings held in 1867 by the Lesmahagow churches, and the assembly joined in by inviting the SEA to its Gospel Hall.²⁰⁷ When William Arnot, the Hamilton agent of SEA, joined the Brethren about 1868 he continued an outreach he held under its auspices assisted by the town's assembly members.²⁰⁸ Glasgow Brethren also engaged in interdenominational cooperation. At a meeting in Hamilton chaired by Arnot, held to report on

203. Blow, *Gospel Work*, pp.86-7; [C R Hurditch], 'Female preaching', *LR*, 1 (1867-8), pp.235-6.

204. *HA*, 16 February 1867, p.2; *HA*, 13 April 1867, p.2; for Caldwell's views see below, p.189-90.

205. Wardrop, 'Revival work', p.62.

206. *HA*, 26 January 1867, p.2.

207. C[hables] T M[iller] to the editor, *R*, 16 (1867), p.204.

208. Ernest Baker, *The Life and Explorations of Frederick Stanley Arnot* (London, 1921), p.18.

the 1866 Lanarkshire revivals, Caldwell preached on the second advent.²⁰⁹ Brethren preachers also helped in the revival services held in the Circus in Ingram Street and assisted in teaching young converts there.²¹⁰ Nor were assemblies consistently baptistic in their practice. The Strathaven membership rolls had a separate column for those in fellowship who were baptised as believers. The issue led the Scotch Baptist element to secede from the Helensburgh congregation in 1869 for a closed communion²¹¹ in contrast to those members who identified with the Brethren and who held that the Lord's table should be open.²¹² For many individuals in this period, the Brethren were an instinctive extension of their piety and they had no wish to establish a rival grouping. For them, assemblies were a natural emanation from contemporary Evangelicalism.

But a negative response to the mixed communion of the existing churches was there from the beginning. Strains between revivalists and the institutional church have already been noticed and these continued to sour relations between assemblies and other Christian bodies. For McNeil Caird all denominations were wrong: 'men are wrong, systems wrong, creeds wrong, principles wrong, the church wrong, everybody and everything wrong'.²¹³ At 'B' the Lord's table was closed to those still in a church.²¹⁴ In addition a number of the visiting English revivalists advocated isolation. 'God seems to be showing his own children separation,' Shadrach Leadbeater noted contentedly during his tour of

209. 'Christian Conference at Hamilton', *R*, 16 (1867), pp.31-2.

210. *LR*, 1 (1866), pp.12, 37, 126.

211. *TP*, 10 (1866-9), p.299.

212. Anderson, 'Lesmahagow', p.41; John Bowes, 'Christian communion and sectism', *TP*, 9 (1863-6), pp. 9-11; J R Caldwell to Alex. Marshall, 30 August 1909, quoted in John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author, pioneer* (London & Glasgow [1929]), p.138; Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, pp.61-2.

213. McNeil Caird, 'Communion and apostasy', p.62.

214. Cf., anon., 'Assembly-life experiences', p.69.

Scotland in 1867.²¹⁵ In the second year of the Glasgow Fast Day meetings one visiting preacher urged his hearers to go *far* outside the camp, an image for joining an assembly.²¹⁶ As the experience of Hopkins and Boswell in Orkney demonstrated, some found cooperation with other Evangelicals increasingly difficult.²¹⁷ They had arrived at the point which those engaged in transdenominational revivals characteristically reach between giving the higher value to evangelistic or ecclesiological factors.²¹⁸ And even the attitude of those who seemed open to cooperation was ambivalent. It was reported that the Lesmahagow Brethren would not enter a church, holding that those who did not agree with them were in 'utter darkness'—a calumny which nevertheless probably had some substance in criticisms of the institutional church by the meeting members.²¹⁹ It was his contacts with individuals such as Caldwell which won William Arnot for the Brethren.²²⁰ As Orkney had shown, cooperation could become a cover for proselytism.²²¹

Mid-Victorian revivalism established the Brethren within Lowland Scotland. The planting of new assemblies was initially dependent on awakenings in established churches, but increasingly meetings became capable of sustaining their own recruitment. The Brethren were themselves an innovative renewal movement, embracing and promoting

215. Leadbetter to the editor, p.180; cf. [John Bowes], 'The Perth Conference', *TP*, 9 (1963-6), p.59.

216. C S Blackwell to — —, 4 November 1866, in *A Living Epistle: or Gathered Fragments from the Correspondence of the Late Caroline S. Blackwell* (1873) John Ritchie edn (Kilmarnock, n.d), p.79.

217. Anon., 'Assembly-life experiences', p.55.

218. Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: from Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford, 1994), pp.169-77; cf. K B E Roxburgh, 'George Whitefield and the Secession Church in Scotland: an unpublished letter from Ralph Erskine', *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 5 (1995), pp.375-382; D E Lovegrove, 'Unity and separation: contrasting elements in the thought and practice of Robert and James Alexander Haldane', *SCH: Subsidia*, 7 (Oxford, 1990), pp.153-77.

219. *HA*, 22 June 1867, p.2.

220. J G[ray], 'Mrs William Arnot', *BP*, 46 (1925), pp.82-4.

221. For this point, see below, pp.217-18.

the new features of contemporary popular Evangelicalism, such as women preachers or its gospel of instant salvation and propositional assurance. They balanced between withdrawal and integration. For some this was a presectarian phase, when interdenominational revivalism was the most salient feature of their religious experience. An individual such as John Wardrop even continued to share the mainstream Evangelical attitude of involvement in the affairs of society. As a baillie he helped in burgeoning Wishaw being founded as a Police Burgh and at the height of the awakenings of the early 1860s he was its provost. He was part of the base on which Gladstonian Liberalism was being built.²²² The intensely personal piety revivalism fostered, however, led most Brethren to withdraw into a private spiritual world.²²³ The pull of separatism could be seen most clearly in relations with other Christian bodies. Brethren itinerant preachers had found undenominational revivalism congenial because of their lack of a developed institutional sense, their concept of an unsophisticated unity based on a minimalist Evangelical message, and the urgent priority which they gave to evangelism. Assemblies formalised these features, along with several other emphases of contemporary popular piety, into an ecclesiology. From the inception of their meetings, there were those who made both its acceptance and the separation from a mixed communion a condition of fellowship. The strains which this engendered became more pronounced towards the end of the 1860s. The obverse of the zeal with which the renewed communities of the Brethren were entered was the horror with which the impure bodies that had been left behind were regarded. Outward expansion and the dynamic impulse of sectarian separation were to be the main concerns of Scottish Brethren for the rest of the century.

222. 'Death of Mr John Wardrop', *HA*, 3 September 1892, p.6.

223. J R Caldwell, 'Earthly things and things above', *LR*, 3 (1870), pp.206-8.

CHAPTER 4

A GRAND MISSIONARY INSTITUTION:

GROWTH 1871-1914

Let each teacher with his assistants have two meetings every week for preaching the Gospel to the ungodly, and all this quite independent of your church meetings. In this manner you become a *grand missionary institution*.

—Donald Ross to 'one who had begun a meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus', 1 September 1871, quoted in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist of the North of Scotland and United States of America* ([1903]), p.97.

When Rice Hopkins and Albert Boswell first came north it was to meet Duncan Matheson at the Perth Religious Conference.¹ This annual conference had been founded in 1860 by John Milne, a Perth Free Church minister, in imitation of the Barnet (later Mildmay) conferences.² It became the centre of the Scottish revivalist network and was important for diffusing nineteenth-century transatlantic revivalism within the country. Matheson was one of the acknowledged leaders among the Scottish lay evangelists. In 1868 in his final address to the Conference before his death he described the new breed of itinerant revivalists: 'I call the majority of them irregulars, free lances, knowing no church, understanding nothing of parochial divisions, subject to no master but Christ...'.³ He was aware of the tensions between them and the clergy: he was critical of the officiousness of some ministers and their lack of sympathy for

1. Ian McDowell's collection, Chadstone, Australia, W H Hopkins, untitled typescript on the early life of R T Hopkins, n.d., Chpt. IV; J A Boswell, 'The Open position', *NT*, 12 (1900), p.74.

2. Horatius Bonar, *Life of the Rev. John Milne of Perth*, 5th edn (London [1868]), pp.337-40.

3. John Macpherson, *Life and Labours of Duncan Matheson: the Scottish evangelist* (London, n.d.), p.234.

revivalism.⁴ His answer to the problem was to concentrate on the task of evangelism and he went on to plead with his audience to avoid controversy and to 'pray, labour and live for the lost'.⁵ "We have nothing to do with the bagging of the game," he reputedly said to Boswell.⁶

But it was to the problem of what to do with the converts that some of his associates began to turn. Matheson's closest friend among the itinerant evangelists was Donald Ross, the superintendent of the undenominational North-East Coast Mission (NECM) which had been spread revivalism to the fishing communities of the north east since its founding in 1858.⁷ It was due to Ross's influence that the Brethren movement was established in the region. The present chapter will examine the process by which Ross came to join the Brethren along with many of his adherents and followers during 1871 until 1873. The discussion will then turn to analysing the growth of the movement in the rest of Scotland before World War I. The period will be divided into two, the secession of the Churches of God during 'the Separation' of 1892-4 forming the dividing line.⁸ The first twenty years will be analysed by regional growth, as this allows separate discussion of growth in rural and industrialised communities which was of significance in these years. However, the industrialised communities themselves will be analysed by causes of formation, the procedure which will also be followed for the second two decades. The former two decades demonstrated more vigorous

4. C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist of the North of Scotland and United States of America* (Kilmarnock, [1903]), p. 41; W H Clare, *Pioneer Preaching: or work well done* (Glasgow [c.1925]), p.64.

5. Macpherson, *Matheson*, p. 236.

6. Duncan Matheson quoted in A M[arshall] *Wandering Lights: a stricture on the doctrines and methods of Brethrenism. A review by A.M.*, 3rd edn (Glasgow, n.d.), p.17; Matheson is quoted as speaking to 'Mr. B.' who later became Brethren, evidently Boswell: for the association between the two men see, Macpherson, *Matheson*, p. 177-9; and Boswell, 'Open position', p.74.

7. *DSCHT*, pp.324, i.

8. For discussion of this schism, see below, pp.196-211.

growth than the latter and some of the underlying causes of this increase and its slackening will be noted throughout the chapter with a final section seeking to isolate them in more detail. There is, however, a difficulty with sources for this period. The final extant volume of *The Truth Promoter* is 1869,⁹ and although the predecessor of *The Witness* magazine, which carried news of assemblies and itinerant evangelists, was founded in 1870,¹⁰ there are large gaps in the preservation of the news sections in extant copies.¹¹ With the founding of *The Believer's Magazine* in 1891 and the conservation of *The Witness* news sections after 1907, contemporary sources improve, but much of the history of the earlier part of this period has been reconstructed from obituaries. Nevertheless, it is clear from the extant evidence that the four decades discussed here saw the greatest increase in both the number of assemblies and Brethren membership in the history of the Scottish movement.

THE NORTHERN EVANGELISTIC SOCIETY

Matheson had acted as a brake on Donald Ross, but after Matheson's death in 1869 Ross's discontent with the institutional church increased.¹² His dissatisfaction had several sources. The acceptance by his denomination, the Free Church, of those whom he felt were unconverted was one cause of his disaffection, a feeling which existed before he had any solution for it. At Aberlour on Speyside he preached on the text 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate'.¹³ After the service an elder in the Established Church put his hand on Ross's shoulder and said, "All true, dear brother Ross; but where are we to go?" Ross answered, "That is what is troubling

9. See above, p.17, n.81.

10. For the history of this magazine, see below, p.182, n.33.

11. See above, p.17, n.81.

12. R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.41.

13. 2 Cor. 6:17.

me."¹⁴ One communion Sunday (probably in 1869) he noticed two sellers of alcoholic spirits present. 'By my very presence with them', he thought 'I am encouraging them to think they are Christians, and thus helping the devil to lead them down to hell. I shall certainly never be found here again.'¹⁵ For the next two years, he took communion only at the Perth Conference with his fellow Evangelicals because it was a '*select company*'.¹⁶ The direction in which his mind was moving was shown by his acceptance in 1870 of believer's baptism. All thirteen of his children had been baptised as infants, but his growing doubts were confirmed by an elderly Baptist lady who explained the bad behaviour of some young people by noting that they were unconcerned because they believed christening made them Christians. Several days later he was baptised in the River Dee by a Baptist friend.¹⁷ Revivalism had directed Ross towards the gathered church.

Another principal source of Ross's dissatisfaction was the faults he saw in the ministers themselves. He blamed them for the lack of conversions and the spoiling of those which were made. The only role churches provided for new converts was a very circumscribed one instead of further involvement in the aggressive evangelism he favoured. Ross complained of the ministers to a friend:

the *real* converts trained under them, instead of being *reproductive* in saving others, are, with few exceptions, withered and wasted... they waste the little fragrance they have on seat-letting, standing by the plate on a Sunday morning, or giving a few coppers to make up the minister's salary.¹⁸

Given to strong utterance, he published a tract suggesting that if the

14. R[oss], (ed.), *Ross*, p.45-6.

15. Donald Munro, in *ibid.*, p.110.

16. *Ibid.*, p.110-11.

17. Munro, in R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, pp.107-8, 112-13.

18. Quoted in R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, pp.45-6

majority of church ministers were removed for ten years or more and nine pairs of evangelists were let loose in Scotland, then greater changes would be effected than were achieved at present through all the clergy.¹⁹ Ministers, he felt, 'in the name of God, were doing the devil's work.'²⁰ The 1859 Revival had made a deep impression on the north east but a decade later not all clergy favoured the lay revivalism fostered by the NECM. A number of individuals in places such as Speyside had joined Baptist churches or, as had happened in the coastal village of Newburgh, had severed all church associations because they felt the ministers were unsympathetic to their piety.²¹ In addition, Ross felt that ministerial control of the NECM was growing excessive. Early in 1870, he resigned from it and established the Northern Evangelistic Society (NES) to evangelise the inland parishes of the north east.²² Ross began living by faith and his new venture was financed by relying on 'God for Supplies' and with 'no committee of directors but the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'.²³

Theological factors were also of significance in creating tension between the NES and Presbyterian churches. The Society maintained in an extreme form that assurance was of the essence of salvation and therefore individuals who, in the older Scottish manner, expressed uncertainty

19. Quoted in Hugh McIntosh, *The New Prophets: being an account of the operations of the Northern Evangelists* (Aberdeen, 1871), p.20.

20. Donald Ross, *Our Record*, quoted in R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.46.

21. Mrs Innes in R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, pp.203-4; Donald Ross to a Newburgh clergyman, 12 April 1867, in *ibid.*, p.88.

22. The NES was possibly founded in May 1870; J A H Dempster calculated that Ross commenced publishing *The Northern Evangelistic Intelligencer* in June 1870 (see below, p.182, n.33), and probably the new publishing venture coincided with the formation of the new institution.

23. R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, pp.46-7.

about their final salvation were deemed not to be regenerate.²⁴ The evangelists assumed that most ministers and church members were not Christians at all and as a result they tended to exaggerate greatly the decline of Evangelicalism in the churches. Ross strongly denied that he was a Morisonian in theology and he remained a life-long Calvinist.²⁵ But undoubtedly a modified version of Finney's ideas concerning revivals was present in the NES. It was accepted that prayer led to revival, it was hindered by Christians not being in a proper condition, and God made promises to his servants concerning specific communities which could be claimed by faith.²⁶ Practices were also used such as praying by name for individuals who were present and bluntly informing people in conversation that they were going to hell.²⁷ Because of the importance assigned to the agents of revival, a heightened state of holiness was eagerly sought. Some evangelists in the NES had adopted the ideas of 'the higher Christian life', a phrase given currency in the title of a book by William Boardman the American holiness teacher.²⁸ The links between the Mildmay and Perth conferences probably were an influence here. Boardman had spoken at Mildmay in 1869 where he expounded his concept, derived from Methodist perfectionism, that the individual could know victory over sin through consecrated faith.²⁹ This teaching was

24. The NES motto was: 'Eternal salvation is a free, present, attainable, inalienable, imperishable gift; i.e., any man or woman in this world, be he or she the blackest sinner in it, may, in one moment, be justified for ever, from every charge of sin; and may beyond all doubt, that he is justified; and may rest as sure of Eternal Glory as he is certain in himself he never has deserved and never will deserve, anything but eternal damnation,' *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.6.

25. Ross to a Newburgh clergyman, in R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.86-9.

26. Donald Ross to a NECM candidate, 16 December 1862 in *ibid.*, pp.78-9; *idem* to a missionary, 11 July 1863, in *ibid.*, p.80; *idem* to anonymous correspondent, 5 February 1867 in *ibid.*, p.83; *idem* to two missionaries, 17 March 1868 in *ibid.*, p.90; *idem* to a missionary, 22 January 1870 in *ibid.*, p.92; McIntosh, *New Prophets*, pp.14-17.

27. G R Masson, *et al.*, 'Footdee Recollections', in Ross (ed.), *Ross.*, p.144; McIntosh, *New Prophets*, pp.26-7.

28. W E Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life* (Edinburgh, 1859).

29. *DEB*, 1, p.113, i.

certainly promulgated by Donald Munro,³⁰ one of the most prominent evangelists in the NES, and by Ross himself, who thought that by walking in the Spirit the believer might 'live in perpetual victory',³¹ and who in his magazine, *The Northern Evangelistic Intelligencer*, published articles expounding the higher life.³² 'Baptism by the Holy Ghost', it was claimed, was the beginning of revival.³³ The mixture of revivalism, absolute assurance, the experience of the higher life, and claims to discern the will of God was a heady one. The NES evangelists were moving towards a less institutional, more charismatic Christianity. It was a further upsurge of a democratised religion, and it drove an additional wedge between them and the churches.³⁴

Matters came to a head early in 1871. The NES came to the Garioch district of Aberdeenshire (see Map 5) in the spring of that year to hold a series of missions. Feelings were running high. When Donald Munro and Alex Carnie began their mission in Inverurie, the second evening meeting was disrupted by about thirty individuals who shouted continuously and at the end of the service attempted to attack the preachers. Converts were made, but because of the prevailing hostile atmosphere they underwent a fair degree of persecution. The Society and the churches were now competing: after Munro and Carnie left Inverurie the ministers held their own special services,³⁵ and the same happened later in Huntly.³⁶ When Munro

30. [John Ritchie], *Donald Munro 1839-1908: a servant of Jesus Christ* (Kilmarnock [1909]), rpt (Glasgow, 1987), p.72.

31. Donald Ross, 'A clear statement', *W*, 69 (1939), p.5; this article was written about 1870.

32. Anon., 'Loose him, and let him go', *NEI*, 2 (1872), pp.13-4; W H W, *NI*, 3 (1873), pp.7-10; W E Boardman, 'Faith and Consecration', *NI*, 3 (1873), pp.44-7; H V[arley], 'Trust in the living Father', *NEI*, 4 (1874), pp.37-41; *NI*, 4 (1874), pp.137-41; Anon., 'Power from above', *NW*, 5 (1875), pp.73-6.

33. *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.59.

34. Nathan O Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT, 1989); cf. above pp.31, 34-9, 96-7.

35. *The North Star*, 11 April 1871.

36. *NA*, no. 2 (February 1873), p.8; *NA*, no. 4 (April 1873), p.16.

moved on to Kemnay the local laird Alexander Burnet, John Bowes' erstwhile companion,³⁷ attempted to stop those in his employment from attending their meetings.³⁸ A Free Church licentiate in Inverurie, Hugh McIntosh, wrote a series of letters to the *Aberdeen Free Press*, criticising the NES, dubbing it 'the New Prophets' because of the similarity he saw between it and movements such as Montanism.³⁹ His sources were a mixture of personal observation, NES publications and hearsay (his least dependable one).⁴⁰ McIntosh was an Evangelical and was not opposed to revivals, but he objected strenuously to some of the more extreme anti-clerical NES statements, and he claimed that various expressions of the evangelists about forgiveness and sanctification, which obviously arose out of their doctrine of assurance and from higher-life teaching, were heretical.⁴¹ The type of revivalism fostered by the NES was too extreme for him, and significantly he quoted extensively from Asahel Nettleton's strictures on Finney's 'new measures'.⁴² McIntosh's letters were soon published in expanded form as a pamphlet which received a considerable circulation.

Ross had reached the point where to follow Matheson's advice of 1868—'pray, labour and live for the lost'—was no longer a solution to disagreement with ministers but had become the cause of the disagreement.⁴³ The churches he regarded as being peopled mainly by the unconverted, and the ministers were either passively acquiescing in something hopelessly corrupt or giving positive encouragement to it. Ross

37. See above, pp.61-2.

38. [Ritchie], *Munro*, p.57-8; Burnet is not mentioned by name but is evidently intended.

39. Hugh McIntosh, 'The New Prophets', *Aberdeen Free Press*, 7, 14, and 21 April, and 12 May 1871.

40. Cf. McIntosh, *The New Prophets*, p. 20, and John Ritchie, 'Revival times and work in Aberdeenshire', in R[oss], (ed.), *Ross*, pp.161-2.

41. McIntosh, *New Prophets*, pp.5-12.

42. *Ibid.*, pp.18, 21, 27, 36.

43. Cf. Ross, *Our Record*, quoted in R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.44-5.

felt that most of his converts must come from among the respectably religious. He left the Free Church determining to have nothing more to do with denominations. He seemed to have few options open to him, and in August 1871 he disbanded the NES so that its members would be alone responsible for their actions. Though not without grave doubts initially, he began breaking bread with the small assembly in Aberdeen, where he lived, eventually merging forces with it in his chapel in the Castlegate (see Map 5, inset).⁴⁴ In a favourite phrase, he had been 'squeezed out' of the existing denominations.⁴⁵

In the Garioch the converts from the society's campaigns also puzzled over their relationship to their churches. They were finding it increasingly difficult to stay within them, as sermons and conversations were against their continued activities in evangelisation. In their zeal, it was later admitted, not all their actions were wise. When the church choir in Inverurie performed at a concert in the town hall, some of the NES converts gave out tracts at the door.⁴⁶ Various groups throughout the north east were gathering for prayer and Bible readings, looking for a way forward. The group at Old Rayne acted first (probably in advance of Ross), meeting to break bread in a joiner's shop in April 1871, and they were apparently followed by the Inverurie one in the autumn.⁴⁷ Others who were searching took similar action, including most of the society's ten evangelists, and during 1871-3 some twenty-eight meetings were formed

44. R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, pp.54-5.

45. *Ibid.*, p.61.

46. Ritchie, 'Revival times', in *ibid.*, p.167.

47. *Ibid.*, p.174.

in the region⁴⁸ and two further south in Perth and Kirriemuir, Angus (see Map 6).⁴⁹ All churches suffered in the secession, but particularly affected were the region's small Baptist churches: Elgin, Grantown, New Deer, Kemnay, Inverurie and Banchory-Ternan, all lost substantially to the new movement.⁵⁰ Alexander Burnet responded in a tract entitled *Plymouth Brethren is Antichrist* (1873).⁵¹

The movement in the north east was produced independently of contact with Brethren elsewhere.⁵² 'We had heard of "Brethren"', wrote Ross himself, 'but only as bad, bad people, and we resolved to have nothing to do with them'.⁵³ Knowledge of the earlier Bowesite movement had been

48. These were in: Moray and Nairn: Aberlour (NA, no. 13 (May 1873), p.14), Boharm (R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.174); Dufftown ('Mrs Farquharson', W, 51 (1921), p.12); Elgin (John Rae to the editor, LR, 5 (1873), p. 83); Findhorn (NA, no. 15 (March 1872); p.12); Keith (R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.115); Forres (R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.115); Nairn (NA, no. 3 (March 1873), p.12); Roths (NA, no. 2 (February 1873, p.8); Aberdeenshire: Auchterless ('William Cowie', BM, 16 (November 1906), endpp); Braco (R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.174); Flinder (*ibid.*, p.197); Fraserburgh (NA, no. 15 (March 1874), p.12); Huntly (NEI, 2 (1872), p.48); Insch (Fordyce Hall, Insch, Minute and account book of Insch assembly, 1873-1891, p.1); Inverurie (R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.174); Kemnay (*ibid.*, p.114); Kennethmount ('Mrs Adam', W, 52 (1922), p.264); Newburgh (Mr Alex. Stewart's collection, Hopeman, F F Bruce to Alex. Stewart, 15 July 1974, in [Alex. Stewart (compiler)], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.); New Deer (R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.186); Old Meldrum (*ibid.*, p.114); Old Rayne (*ibid.*, p.193); Oyne (*ibid.*, p.114); Premnay ('James Thomson', BM, 39 (September 1919, p.v); Rhynie (NA, no. 2 (February 1873), p.8); Tarland ('John Glass', W, 41 (1911), p.87); Turriff (W; 54 (1924), p.247); Kincardineshire: Banchory (NA, no. 2 (February 1873), p.8.

49. NA, no. 10 (October 1873), p.44; [John Ritchie], 'Mrs Jeanie Liveson Ritchie', BM, 34 (1924), pp.53-4.

50. Rae to the editor, p. 83; J S Fisher to the writer, 3 September 1990; Alexander Burnet, *Plymouth Brethren is Antichrist* (Aberdeen, 1873), pp.12-13, quoted in William Reid, *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted* (Edinburgh, 1875), p.31; cf. Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists in Scotland', BQ, 33 (1990), pp.372-87.

51. Special Collections, University of Aberdeen, holds a copy of this pamphlet, but along with another anti-Brethren tract—the anonymous *Prevalent Errors: a reply to a lecture by Mr C.J. Davis regarding the opinions of the party known as "Brethren" by an elder* (Aberdeen, 1871)—it cannot be located despite repeated searches by the librarians.

52. Evidence to the contrary is apparently supplied by the date '1 January 1871' of the title page of *The Northern Intelligencer* that is shown on a facsimile in W, 100 (1970), p.8, and which also has an address by Glasgow Brethren preacher Alexander Stewart. However, the date is evidently a printing error in the original. Stewart's address is dated 1873 on the same page and in 1871 the magazine was still entitled *The Northern Evangelistic Intelligencer*, 'Evangelistic' only being dropped in January 1873. Unfortunately the extant copy of the magazine for January 1873 has had the title page for this last date removed.

53. Ross, *Our Record*, quoted in R[oss] (ed.), Ross, p.48.

lost and the assemblies in Peterhead and Aberdeen apparently had no formative influence on Ross's thinking.⁵⁴ But many Brethren ideas were probably familiar to him. At least one member of Newmains assembly had assisted him during the 1850s when he was an industrial missionary there,⁵⁵ and Hopkins had associated with both Ross and Munro.⁵⁶ The new churches, however, soon made contact with assemblies in Glasgow and identified with them. The accession of the north-east movement greatly strengthened the Brethren in Scotland. As well as the increase in membership, it gave them several more evangelists. Both Ross and Munro were native Gaelic speakers and this gave the Brethren a means of entry to the northern Highlands, where some four assemblies had been formed by the later nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Also of great importance to the future development of the Scottish movement was Ross's interest in publishing. Pickering & Inglis, eventually the major British Brethren publisher, grew out of his work, and John Ritchie, the founder of the other important Scottish Brethren publishing house, had been among the Inverurie converts.⁵⁸ The interest in cheap, special-interest publishing was something which Ross carried over from his revivalist background, it bearing strong resemblances to the programme of Richard Morgan in which Duncan Matheson had been involved.⁵⁹ The formation of the Brethren movement in the north east is a particularly clear example of

54. Munro, R[oss] (ed.), *Ross*, p.116.

55. 'John Smith', *BM*, 21 (March 1911), p.iv; in addition John Wardrop supported the NECM financially.

56. *R*, (1867), p.408; [Ritchie], *Munro*, p.40-1 (Munro's first name is misprinted as 'David').

57. In this period assemblies existed in: Conon: *NA*, no.11 (November 1873), p.47; Helmsdale: 'Donald Sutherland', *W*, 57 (1927), p.218; Thurso: J W Jordan, *List of Some Meetings in the British Isles and Regions Beyond* (London, 1904) p.164; and Wick: *idem*, *List of Some Meetings in the British Isles and Regions Beyond* (Greenwich, 1897), p.136.

The first of these was founded by Ross and the others were all areas in which both he and Donald Munro were active; in addition Ross may have succeeded in forming one briefly in Halkirk, Caithness (*NA*, no. 21 (September 1874), p.34).

58. For a discussion of these publishers, see below, pp.182-4, 341-5.

59. P G Scott, 'Richard Cope Morgan, religious periodicals, and the Pontifex factor', *Victorian Periodicals*, 5, no. 16 (June 1972), pp.1-14.

how assemblies grew out of mid-Victorian revivalism.

RURAL GROWTH 1871-1891

One of Hugh McIntosh's criticisms of the NES was that it tended to 'disturb the peace of society'.⁶⁰ To join the new meetings was make a decisive break with the local community. At Huntly the demonstrations against the evangelists had been so violent that the worst troublemakers were prosecuted.⁶¹ Until 1843 religious dissent had been weak in the north east but the Disruption had coincided with a time of agricultural improvements and the Free Church, though still relatively weak, was supported by many who had suffered under the changes.⁶² In the early 1870s the region was still relatively prosperous, but social change had continued and the successive waves of emigration from the area suggest that people were aware of the new opportunities to improve their economic status.⁶³ The emergence of the Brethren in the region was one indication that the traditional bonds of society were being further loosened.

The Brethren made advances in other rural areas during the 1870s and 1880s. In Shetland (see Map 1), which was in this period experiencing a decline in subsistence agriculture and a corresponding rise in the importance of fishing,⁶⁴ revivalism was strong in the country areas, and two additional assemblies were formed apparently in the 1870s. On the west side of Mainland during 1874-5 William Sloan, assisted by several visiting Brethren evangelists, saw a number of conversions and 'the

60. McIntosh, *New Prophets*, p.21.

61. *NA*, no. 2 (February 1873), p.8; *NA*, no. 4 (April 1873), p.16.

62. Ian Carter, *Farmlife in Northeast Scotland 1840-1914: the poor man's country* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp.163-5.

63. Marjorie Harper, *Emigration from the North East*, 1 (Aberdeen, 1988), pp.167-9.

64. Hance D Smith, *Shetland Life and Trade 1550-1914* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp.155-206.

Lord... reviving some of his people'. In 1875 Sloan's diary first mentioned the breaking of bread at Selivoe, and at Sandwick on south-eastern Mainland, intensive evangelism led to the formation of an assembly in 1878.⁶⁵ In 1879 there were further awakenings near Selivoe and at Sandness, with the converts in the latter place being threatened with eviction.⁶⁶ On at least one island it was found that crowds could be drawn quickly and easily to hear preaching even during the harvest season.⁶⁷ This was possibly Papa Stour which, despite having only two houses, had twelve members in the assembly which existed by 1884.⁶⁸ That same year one Glasgow visitor was reporting that in the Shetland assemblies there were 'several hundreds' with the summer Half-Yearly Conference in Lerwick having two to three hundred people in attendance.⁶⁹ In 1887 the assembly at Selivoe was re-formed when, amid scenes of revivalist fervour, Sloan assisted by fellow-evangelist Colin Campbell saw some forty converts, and an assembly appears to have been formed in Whiteness about the same time.⁷⁰ In Orkney (see Map 2) the removal of some Westray assembly members to Kirkwall accompanied by vigorous evangelism led to an assembly being formed there about 1873.⁷¹ Itinerancy produced additional smaller meetings on the islands of Eday about 1876 and Sanday about 1887.⁷² Within the rural north east and its fishing communities Brethren churches continued to be formed after the initial surge of the early 1870s. Over the succeeding two decades at least a dozen

65. Diary of W G Sloan, quoted in Fred Kelling, *Fisherman of Faroe: William Gibson Sloan* (Göta, Faroe Isles, 1993), p.93; *W*, 67 (1937), p.95; Alex S Rigg to the editor, 11 August 1878, *NW*, 8 (1878), p.127.

66. 'Shetland', *NW*, 9 (1879), p.47.

67. R T Hopkins quoted in 'Glasgow Fast-Day believers' meetings', *NW*, 6 (1876), p.189.

68. Thomas McLaren, 'Visit to the Shetland Isles', *NW*, 14 (1884), p.140.

69. *Ibid.*, p.140.

70. James Moar, 'How it began—Selivoe, Shetland', *BM*, 90 (1980), pp.2-4; Kelling, *Sloan*, p.161.

71. *NA*, no. 9 (September 1873), p.36; 'William Reid', *W*, 58 (1928), p.288.

72. 'William Peace', *W*, 56 (1926), p.279; *W*, 17 (January 1887), endpp.

additional assemblies were established there. 73

The precise origins of all these additional meetings are not known but the migration of Brethren individuals importing new thinking probably had some influence. The meeting in Aboyne was founded by two brothers and their families from Kenmare, County Kerry, who had been assembly members in Ireland. At Montrose the residence after 1875/6 of A O Molesworth, an English lieutenant colonel of aristocratic descent and a Brethren preacher, had an influence, if not in the formation of the assembly, then in its consolidation.⁷⁴ Revivalism continued to be influential. During the 1880s an awakening again swept through the Buchan district,⁷⁵ and revivalist converts were also attracted to the Brethren. The Inverbervie assembly was formed by a group of women who began to break bread without knowledge of the movement elsewhere and who were drawn into it through contact with Donald Ross.⁷⁶ A Christian Union (CU) was one solution to the problem, which had so troubled Ross, of how to keep the revivalist converts contained within the institutional church and active in evangelism. Individuals would band together and hold informal evangelistic services in mission halls procured

73. Assemblies came into existence in Moray at: Buckie (1879): W, 19 (1889), p.vi; and Craigellachie (by 1889): 'James Smith', BM, 22 (September 1912), p.iv; in Banffshire at: Forres (c.1883): 'Alexander Taylor', BM, 23 (July 1913), p.iv; and Auchengoul (c.1890): 'Mrs Duncan', W, 40 (1910), p.103; in the Buchan district, Aberdeenshire, at: Millbrenx, Fyvie (1880); 'William Ingram', W 40 (1910), p.71; and Boddam (by 1881): 'John Bruce', W, 58 (1919), p.148; on Deeside, Aberdeenshire, at: Aboyne (1872): 'Robert Milne', W, 80 (1950), p.168; in Kincardineshire at: Riccarton (c.1884): 'Mrs Rankine', W, 75 (October 1945), p.iv and 'Mrs Allan' W, 81 (1951), p.147; Cove (1888): James Cordiner, *Fragments from the Past: an account of people and events in the assemblies of northern Scotland* (London, 1961), p.19 and Inverbervie (1873): 'Ann Duncan', BM, (July 1917), p.iv, 'Mrs T. Anderson', W, 51 (1921), p.26, 'Mrs Hill', W, 61 (1921), p.192, 'Mrs John Allan, W, 64 (1934), p.120, and 'Mrs H. Clark', W, 71 (1951), p.55; and in Angus at: Brechin (1891): D J Beattie, *Brethren: the story of a great recovery* (Kilmarnock [1939]), p.271; and Montrose (c.1872): 'Jessie Robbie', W, 62 (1932), p.168 (see Maps 4, 5 and 6).

74. 'Colonel A.O. Molesworth', W, 47 (Apr. 1917), p.52; Jessie Robbie (see n.73 above) was a convert of Molesworth in 1872, suggesting he was evangelising in Montrose before removing there.

75. 'James Taylor', W, 79 (1949), p.86.

76. 'Mrs M. Grindlay', W 82 (1952), p.107.

for these purposes. They sprang up in many places during this period, organising themselves into county associations which remained nondenominational.⁷⁷ Their lay ethos was close to that of the Brethren. In Brechin it was some of the town's CU members who were won over to Brethren principles,⁷⁸ and as will become apparent, it was not there only that their members were attracted to assemblies.

In southern Scotland a significant presence was also established in rural areas. The growth of assemblies in the Borders is poorly documented, but by 1891 several towns in the region had one (see Map 14). Beyond their existence, little is known of the origins of the assemblies in Galashiels (founded c.1870),⁷⁹ Moffat (c.1877),⁸⁰ Selkirk (1878),⁸¹ Kelso (c.1881),⁸² and Dalbeattie (by 1887).⁸³ However, it would appear that similar factors were operative in the Borders as were in northern Scotland. In 1887 revivalism affected Walkerburn (a village which had recently undergone rapid expansion) and neighbouring Peebles,⁸⁴ and possibly it had been influential in the formation of the assemblies which existed in both places by 1886 and 1889 respectively.⁸⁵ At Chirnside a group of converts (some recent) were baptised as believers and in 1875 began breaking bread, practices arrived at independently through Bible reading, before Colonel Molesworth drew them into the Brethren movement.⁸⁶ At Hawick, two undenominational evangelists, James Scroggie and W D Dunn, held

77. N W Bryson (compiler), *History of the Lanarkshire Christian Union: instituted 1882* (Strathaven, 1937); Anon., *Ayrshire Christian Union: a century of witness 1878-1978* (Beith [1978]).

78. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.271.

79. 'James Robertson', *W*, 52 (1922), 204.

80. 'W. Stewart Henderson', *W*, 36 (October 1927), p.iv.

81. 'Mrs Smith', *BM*, 21 (March 1911), p.iv.

82. 'Alex. Carson', *BM*, 46 (1936), p.281.

83. *W*, 17 (October 1887), endpp.

84. I R Govan, *Spirit of Revival: the story of J.G. Govan and the Faith Mission*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh, 1960), pp.44-7.

85. *NW*, 16 (August 1886), endpp.; *W*, 19 (September 1889), p.v.

86. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.265.

revival services, the converts forming a CU. Scroggie, a former NECM evangelist, was sympathetic to Brethren concepts and was sponsored by a Carlisle manufacturer and assembly member.⁸⁷ He gave teaching on worship which in 1877 led some of the converts to begin breaking bread in the Brethren manner.⁸⁸ In the Borders, as elsewhere in Scotland, assemblies proved attractive to those influenced by contemporary revivalism.

The later nineteenth century was a time of agricultural depression. Throughout Scotland there was a thirty-three per cent. reduction in farm servants and labourers between 1861 and 1891, and the worst affected regions were the north east and Wigtownshire.⁸⁹ Both were the rural areas in which the Brethren had the greatest effect during this period. Although most of the Border assemblies remained small (possibly one reason for the lack of sources on them), in the south west the movement made greater impact (see Map 14). Migration was one important way in which Brethren thinking found its way into the region. One Brethren individual moved for employment in the granite quarry near Creetown on the Solway Firth. Due to his witnessing, he saw some individuals converted and an assembly established about 1874.⁹⁰ Also on the Solway, a meeting was formed in Glenluce in 1887/8 through the return to his native district of William Henry, a convert of Murray McNeil Caird who had joined the Brethren while learning his trade as a grocer in Kilmarnock.⁹¹ The

87. W Graham Scroggie (ed.), *The Story of a Life in the Love of God: incidents collected from the diaries of Mrs James J. Scroggie* (London [1938]), pp.77, 88.

88. Writer's collection, I.S.1., [autograph page missing] to William Landles, 29 July 1955, photocopy of holograph letter; the date is given in 'Mrs John Elliott', *W*, 39 (1909), 87.

89. T M Devine, 'Scottish farm labourer in the era of agricultural depression, 1875-1900', in *idem*, (ed.), *Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland 1770-1914* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp.243-55.

90. Oral information, 16 May 1988.

91. A M[arshall], 'A Scotsman's conversion', *HS*, no. 579 (March 1927), [pp.12-13]; 'William Henry', *W*, 58 (1927), p.278; writer's collection, I.V.1., William Henry, untitled history of Glenluce assembly, MS [1989].

assembly in Aird, which commenced about 1881, was founded by William Erskine who had been converted in 1866 while a soldier in India.⁹² Similar factors were at work in Leswalt in the Rhinns of Galloway where the meeting was founded in 1888.⁹³ William Clannahan, a joiner and a local farmer's son, had emigrated to Chicago four years earlier where he was converted through a Brethren preacher. He wrote to his family urging the same experience on them, and when they stopped answering his letters he crossed the Atlantic again. He held kitchen meetings in the locality, and eventually succeeded in winning his family to his new views.⁹⁴ It was the converts of Clannahan's evangelism who formed the assembly in Leswalt.⁹⁵

Also of significance for the establishment of the movement in the area was evangelistic itinerancy. It was through this means that members of both the Free Church and Congregational Church in Lowthertown were won over to Brethren ecclesiology in 1873 and an assembly established.⁹⁶ In Newton Stewart four women converts who met in a store for prayer and Bible study were drawn into the movement about 1880,⁹⁷ apparently through contact with evangelist James McAlonan,⁹⁸ a former Presbyterian missionary who, after a spell among the Baptists in Peterhead, had in the later 1870s joined the Brethren.⁹⁹ An assembly was formed in Dumfries due to an evangelistic mission in 1891, although it would appear that the

92. 'William Erskine', *W*, 47 (Apr. 1917), 54.

93. *W*, 18 (February 1888), p.v.

94. A M[arshall], 'The Scotsman's discovery in Chicago', *HS*, no. 339 (March 1907).

95. Oral information, 16 May 1988.

96. *NA*, no. 4 (April 1873), p.15; this assembly later transferred to Annan and then Eastriggs.

97. 'Mrs R.S. McLaren', *W*, 60 (1920), p.216; 'Miss Moorhead', *W*, 62 (1932), p.71.

98. Oral information, 16 May 1988.

99. 'Mr. James McAlonan 1843-1906', in J G Hutchinson (ed.), *Sowers, Reapers, Builders: a record of over ninety Irish evangelists* (Glasgow, 1984), pp. 263-6; W Baird Ferguson to the writer [6 April 1999].

assembly had some initial difficulty in being permanently established,¹⁰⁰ and after a similar effort the following year, one flourished briefly in nearby Thornhill.¹⁰¹ Also in 1891 a meeting was founded in Castle Douglas through the work of evangelist Arthur Hodgkinson.¹⁰² Brethren missions in the coastal communities of the Rhinns of Galloway led to the formation of additional assemblies there. Due to the labours of John Walbran, a former master mariner from Liverpool,¹⁰³ evangelistic campaigns had been conducted on the peninsula since the late 1860s,¹⁰⁴ and among the fishermen of Port Logan, Walbran experienced revival.¹⁰⁵ Meetings were formed at Port Logan (c.1870), Drummore (c.1883),¹⁰⁶ and Sandhead (1887).¹⁰⁷ Factors similar to elsewhere in the south west were probably at work in the assemblies which were also formed in the county town of Wigtown (c.1882)¹⁰⁸ and Gatehouse-of-Fleet (by 1889).¹⁰⁹

The establishment of the movement in the region was not without its opposition. In Creetown youths threw clods of earth at the Brethren founder and at Sandhead one young farm labourer kicked a burning ball of straw into the gospel tent, and only the alertness of evangelist David Robertson averted disaster.¹¹⁰ Intriguingly, the persecutors in both places were among the first converts. Some of the communities surveyed above, such as Walkerburn and Hawick, were industrialised ones. Most of them,

100. *BM*, 1 (1891), p.47; *BM*, 2 (1892), p.11.

101. *BM*, 2 (1892), p.11.

102. *BM*, 1 (1891), p.11.

103. 'John Walbran', *BAHNR*, 1 (1987-8), pp.103-4.

104. 'Mrs Thomas Henry', *W*, 65 (1935), p.264.

105. *W*, 35 (1905), 103.

106. 'Robert McGaw', *W*, 63 (1933), p.215.

107. *W*, 17 (August 1887), endpp.

108. 'Mrs Clachrie', *W*, 52 (1922), p.180.

109. *W*, 19 (December 1889), p.v; however evangelist Robert Kennedy stated in the 1920s that Gatehouse-of-Fleet assembly was one of the oldest in Scotland and was about 100 years old (oral information, 4 March 1990). A date in the 1820s is impossible, but the statement may point to an earlier foundation.

110. Oral information, 16 May 1988.

however, were fishing communities, market towns, and predominantly rural settlements. The advance of the Brethren into these last two types of place, is a mark of the agricultural and economic change which was affecting the Scottish countryside during these decades.

INDUSTRIALISED COMMUNITIES 1871-91

Once more, however, it was mainly industrialised communities in which the Brethren grew during this period. Here, too, the movement gained transfers from other Christian groups. This appears to have been the origins of the parent meeting of Paisley Brethren which had contacts with the movement as early as 1867 when the English evangelist Howard Johnston had held a mission with some members of the future assembly.¹¹¹ After this group came together with some others, they began breaking bread in a house about 1870.¹¹² They probably existed for a while as a nondenominational body, but gradually the company identified with the Brethren, a process which appears to have been completed some time after 1873.¹¹³ Also in Renfrewshire (see Map 12), the assembly in Kilbarchan was formed out of a gospel mission hall begun by a brother and sister in 1884,¹¹⁴ and in Kilmacolm another such mission hall and its converts were drawn into the movement in 1887 through contact with a Brethren family who had moved to the village.¹¹⁵

The same process was at work elsewhere. In Ayrshire (see Map 13) William Lindsay, an itinerant Baptist preacher, made contact in Galston with some individuals who had seceded from the town's Methodists upon

111. LR, 1 (1867), p.69.

112. 'William Scott', CW, 38 (November 1923), pp.162-3; 'William Scott', BM, 33 (1923), p.113.

113. 'William Reid', CW, 37 (October 1922), pp.146-7; [W Geddes], *Link: Jubilee/Centenary Edition* (n.p., 1978), p.1.

114. 'Miss Williamson', W, 71 (1941), p.225.

115. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.258.

their congregation accepting Christadelphianism. Lindsay and the former Methodists formed themselves into an assembly in 1871.¹¹⁶ In the south of the county, 'the Maybole Revival' of the 1870s affected all the town's churches,¹¹⁷ and in 1877 some of its converts formed a meeting.¹¹⁸ Further north in Ayrshire, some members of Kilbirnie CU—formed in 1882 after a mission by the female temperance preachers of the Blue Ribbon Gospel Army—were won for the Brethren in 1889 through contact with Peter Hynd, a Brethren businessman from Troon.¹¹⁹ The following year a meeting was commenced in the mining village of Annbank by a group of Established Church members who were involved in the lay evangelism of their district.¹²⁰ In Glasgow a gospel mission was begun in Duke Street in the early 1870s by John McLachlan. Joined by some co-workers, McLachlan and their converts formed themselves into an independent fellowship. They were drawn into the Brethren movement in 1887 through contact with evangelist William Montgomery, eventually forming Porch Hall in Dennistoun (see Map 11).¹²¹ As had happened in the 1860s, those engaged in revivalism continued to be attracted by the lay ethos of the Brethren and their appeal to Christian primitivism.¹²²

Existing assemblies also planted further ones. Members of the Greenock meeting succeeded in forming one in neighbouring Gourock (see Map 12) in 1887.¹²³ In Lanarkshire (see Map 10), Lesmahagow assisted in the

116. J S Borland, *History of the Brethren Movement in Galston* (Kilmarnock [1948]), pp.2-4.

117. Hugh Douglas, 'Roderick Lawson of Maybole', *Ayrshire Collections*, 12 (1978), p. 80.

118. Alex. Brackenridge' *CW*, 34 (1920), pp.1-2; for further discussion of the founding of the Maybole assembly, see below, p.177.

119. 'John Mackenzie Barclay', *W*, 60 (1930), p.168; 'John Peebles' *W*, 64 (1934), p.216; Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.235-6.

120. Dr M H B Sanderson's collection, Linlithgow, Robert McPike, 'Annbank Assembly 1883-1875 [sic]', MS, 1975; cf. Sam Hay, 'How it began: in Annbank Ayrshire', *BM*, 89 (1979), pp.290-1.

121. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.253-5.

122. See above, pp.96-7.

123. G E Tilsley, *Dan Crawford: Missionary and Pioneer in Central Africa* (London [1929]), pp.8-24

formation of assemblies at Leadhills (1879), Ponfeigh (1883), Kirkmuirhill (1884), and over the Ayrshire border in Glenbuck (1887)¹²⁴; and in Plains a meeting was formed in 1882 as a result of evangelism by Longriggend assembly.¹²⁵ In Ayrshire (see Map 13) the new congregation in Galston helped spread the movement within the Irvine Valley to Hurlford in 1877 and Newmilns in 1878,¹²⁶ and in the centre of the county the removal of a Brethren family from Auchinleck led to the formation of an assembly in nearby Catrine about 1885.¹²⁷ At Busby, Renfrewshire (see Map 12), members of the Newton Mearns assembly formed a meeting in the village in 1891.¹²⁸ The congregation in Cockenzie (see Map 8) was a distant planting: some local fisherman were converted in a revival in Peterhead and baptised in Lerwick Sound; on their return home they formed a meeting in 1882.¹²⁹ The process of church planting by existing assemblies was most marked in the cities. In Aberdeen (see Map 5 inset) in 1879 a second meeting was formed in Footdee, the fishing community at the river mouth where Donald Ross had seen three successive revivals,¹³⁰ and in 1881 one was formed in the developing area of Woodside.¹³¹ In Dundee (see Map 4 inset) a second assembly was founded in 1878 in the Wellgate.¹³² Brethren history in Edinburgh is difficult to trace in this period, but by the early 1890s it would appear there were two meetings in

124. Hope Hall, Lesmahagow, James Anderson, 'A Brief Record Concerning the Early Days of the Assembly in Lesmahagow', MS, 1960, pp.44; 'Hugh Reid', W, 60 (1930), p.96; W, 53 (1933), p.237.

125. Anon., 'How it began—in Plains, Lanarkshire', BM, 90 (1980), p.226; 'James Wardrope', BM, 59 (1929), p.170.

126. Borland, *Galston*, p.13.

127. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.232; W, 66 (1936), p.69

128. Alex. McAllister and Jack Vernal (compilers), *Busby Gospel Hall: a short history of early days 1891-1964* (Glasgow, 1964), pp.2-3.

129. 'William Brown', W, 62 (1932), p.72; 'Robert Hunman', W, 67 (1937), p.48; J S Blackie, 'How it began: Port Seaton [sic]', BM, 97 (1987), pp.342-3: in 1922 Cockenzie assembly transferred to Port Seton.

130. [Matthew S R Brown], *Aberdeen Christian Conference Centenary 1874-1973* (Aberdeen, 1972), p.34.

131. 'Mrs Cooper' W, 71 (1941), p.283; NEI, 10 (1882), p.88.

132. N W, 8 (1878), p.175.

the city centre with a third being formed in Jamaica Street in 1891.¹³³ Among the cities, it was Glasgow assemblies which saw the most vigorous growth (see Map 11) where some seventeen new meetings were formed in this period.¹³⁴ Not all these congregations existed co-extensively, but by 1897 the assembly address listed twenty-five Glasgow congregations.¹³⁵ These meetings were either founded in the older districts, such as Townhead, by evangelism, or in the newer districts which were being developed or incorporated in the city's late nineteenth-century expansion, such as Maryhill and Pollokshaws, by a mixture of recruitment and the immigration of Brethren members.

133. *BM*, 1 (1891), p.95.

134. These were: Hope Hall, Renfrew St (1872) (see Map 11, no.13): J R C[aldwell], 'Glasgow', *LR*, 5 (1872), p.182; Abingdon Hall, Partick (1874) (see Map 11): *NA*, no. 20 (October 1874), p.40; Eglinton Hall, Eglinton Street (1874) (see Map 11, no.40): *NA*, no. 16 (April, 1874), p.16; Beattie, *Brethren*, p.242-3; Greenview Hall, Pollokshaws (1874) (see Map 11; originally Gospel Hall, Green Street): *NA*, no. 18 (May 1874), p.24; and *NW*, (1875), p.111; [Joseph L G Walker], *Centenary of the Pollokshaws Assembly 1873-1973* (n.p. [1973]); anon., 'How it began—in Pollockshaws [sic], Glasgow', *BM*, 90 (1980), pp.98-9; Gospel Hall, Townhead (1875) (see Map 11, no.20): *NW*, 5 (1875), pp.95, 111, 159; Ebenezer Hall, Bridgeton (by 1876) (see Map 11, no.32): the earliest extant reference to this assembly is in Kelling, *Sloan*, p.96; however, it is possible that it was the later meeting place of one of the assemblies founded in the east end in the 1860s; Gospel Hall, Cathcart Road (c.1877) (see Map 11, no.47): the date is an inference from the conversion of William Paterson, a member of Cathcart Road, in a tent mission at Queen's Park Gate in 1877; it seems likely that this was close to the assembly's founding: see, 'William Paterson', *BM*, 15 (January 1905), endpp.; however, the first extant reference to the assembly is in *W*, 18 (May 1888), p.v; Elim Hall, Crosshill (1882) (see Map 11, no.46): *Elim Hall, 5 Prince Edward Street, Crosshill, Glasgow: 60th annual report 1st January to 31st December, 1949* (n.p., [1949]), pp.3-9; there had been an earlier, abortive attempt to plant an assembly in Crosshill in 1876 in the Queen's Park Rooms: *NW*, 6 (1876), p.159 (see Map 11, no.45); Bethesda Hall, Govan (1874) (see Map 11, originally Gospel Hall, Graham Street, Govan): *NA*, no. 20 (October 1874), p.40; Parkholm Hall, Paisley Rd (1876) (see Map 11, no.37): 'Ebenezer Ross', *W*, 51 (1951), p.36; Eastpark Hall, Maryhill (by 1879) (see Map 11): *NW*, 9 (1879), p.47; Gospel Hall, Springburn (1881) (see Map 5): [Sam Thomson], *The Springburn Assembly 1881-1981* (n.p. [1981]), pp.1-2; Wolseley Hall, Oatlands (1882) (see Map 11, no.48): Beattie, *Brethren*, p.245-6; Hebron Hall, Kelvinside North (by 1886) (see Map 11, no.4): *NW*, 16 (October 1886), endpp; Hope Hall, Parkhead (1886) (see Map 11, no.32): *NW*, 16 (October 1886), endpp; Shiloh Hall, Shettleston (1884) (see Map 11): 'Robert Gilmour', *BM*, 36 (September 1920), p.iv; and Round Toll Hall, Possilpark (1889) (see Map 11, no.5): Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.255-256.

All the assemblies in the above list are given the name of the building with which they had the longest association and by which they were generally known in the movement; these often differed from that which they had when they were founded.

135. J W Jordan, *List*, p.124.

One of the lacunae in this period is the history of Brethren itinerancy—undoubtedly a significant cause in the formation new assemblies—and the effects of the migration of Brethren individuals in search of employment. The 1870s and the 1880s were fruitful decades for forming meetings in Ayrshire (see Map 13). When John Ritchie, having become an evangelist, moved from Inverurie to Dalmellington in 1874 he found three itinerants devoting their time to evangelising the county,¹³⁶ and Ritchie himself became an advocate for ‘pioneering the villages’.¹³⁷ It is known that the assembly in Auchinleck was formed about 1874 through Colin Campbell,¹³⁸ as was Skelmorlie through William Hamilton in 1887,¹³⁹ and the removal of a Brethren individual to Girvan meant one being formed there in 1886.¹⁴⁰ The revival which affected the mining village of New Cumnock about 1882 probably was a factor in the formation of the meeting there.¹⁴¹ The assembly in Dailly was formed about 1881 through an estate worker in the area coming in contact with the Brethren in Maybole.¹⁴² It must be supposed that the other sixteen assemblies which were planted in Ayrshire at this time must have been formed due to some combination of the effects of population migration, Brethren evangelism, and attracting members from other churches.¹⁴³

136. *NA*, no. 17 (May 1874), p.20.

137. John Ritchie to the editor, 13 May 1883, *NW*, 13 (1883), pp.93-4.

138. *NA*, no. 24 (December 1874), p.48; writer’s collection, I.C.1., James McCombe, ‘A History of Auchinleck Assembly’, typescript, 1981, p.1.

139. *W*, 17 (March 1887), endpp.; *W*, 19 (August 1889), p.vi.

140. ‘James Barron’, *BM*, 42 (May 1932), p.iv.

141. *W*, 52 (1922), p.146.

142. ‘James Happell’, *CW*, 56 (1939), p.49.

143. By 1891 there were also assemblies in Ayrshire in: Ardrossan (1888): ‘Mrs John Cairns’, *W*, 56 (1926), p.358; Ballochmyle (1891): *BM*, 1 (1891), p.59; Beith (c.1890): ‘Mrs David Bell’, *BM*, 62 (1952), p.80; Burnfoothill (by 1874): ‘John Stewart’, *W*, 54 (1924), p.329; Darvel (1880): Beattie, *Brethren*, p.234; Dreghorn (by 1887): *W*, 17 (January 1887), endpp.; Drongan (by 1885): ‘Mrs William Hamilton’, *W*, 67 (1937), p.191; Kilwinning (1874): anon., ‘How it began: Kilwinning, Ayrshire’ *BM*, 98 (1988), pp.307-8; Lugar (1875): ‘James Welsh’, *W*, 60 (1930), p.240; Mauchline (c.1877): ‘James Vallance’, *W*, 37 (1907), p.155; Muirkirk (c. 1878): ‘Andrew Adams’, *W*, 58 (1928), p.318; Plann (1882): *BM*, 41 (November 1932), p.41; Prestwick (1877): Beattie, *Brethren*, p.234; Rankinston (by 1879): ‘Thomas Menzies’, *W*, 60 (1930), p.24; Saltcoats (by 1888): *W*, 18 (October 1888), p.v; Springside (c. 1886): ‘Mrs Thomas Gaw’, *BM*, 60 (1950), p.71.

The same is true of other areas. In Inverness a group, led by an individual who had previously been in an assembly elsewhere, began breaking bread in 1884 after evangelist Thomas Holt had visited the town.¹⁴⁴ To the west of Glasgow (see Map 12) the growing middle-class dormitory town of Bearsden gained an assembly in 1880 when John R Caldwell's brother-in-law moved there and Caldwell himself held public meetings which attracted the converts of an earlier evangelistic campaign of W D Dunn, by then pastor of Anniesland Hall, an independent Glasgow mission hall.¹⁴⁵ The migration of Brethren members was a factor at Clydebank where Nellie Wood, formerly of Inverbervie assembly, was a founding member during this period,¹⁴⁶ and evangelism was probably a component in the formation about 1876 of Port Glasgow meeting on the other side of the Clyde.¹⁴⁷ But the origins of the other Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire assemblies (see Maps 9 and 12) which were formed at Alexandria

144. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.269-70; Clare, *Pioneer Preaching*, pp.80-2, 89; Frank Edgar *et al.*, to Beloved Brethren in Christ, April 1894, in Arthur Chamings (compiler), 'Some Papers and Letters in Connection with the Separation of the 1880's and 1890's', p.57. Beattie states that the Inverness group were unaware of the Brethren movement, but Clare states that a number of the founder members had previously been members of assemblies elsewhere. In addition Beattie does not mention John Bright who, according to Clare, was a key individual in the formation of the assembly. It is possible that the writers are discussing two separate formations, but it is more likely that Beattie's claim is explained by the facts that Holt did 'not teach separatist doctrine' and the formation of the assembly was due to Bible studies. The same address is given by Beattie and Clare for the meeting (Beattie, *Brethren*, p.269, Clare, *Pioneer Preaching*, p.89). The absence of Bright's name in Beattie might be explained by the subsequent history of Inverness assembly which largely seceded in the Churches of God schism (see below, pp.196-211). If Bright left in this division, then the expunging of his name would be comprehensible. Alternatively the memory of his role may have been lost when Beattie collected his information.

145. 'William McCrone', *W*, 54 (1924), p.349; 'Thomas Daisley', *W*, 81 (1951), p.35; Margaret Sanderson's collection, Linlithgow, 'Milngavie per Mr Daisley, Eastbourne', holograph MS, [1974]; writer's collection, I.G.4., [Clem Round], 'Milngavie Assembly', typescript [1988]. In 1892/3 the Bearsden assembly transferred to more working-class Milngavie.

146. 'Mrs T. Anderson', *BM*, 31 (August 1921), p.iii; 'Mrs William Ingram', *W*, 61 (1931), p.71: the former obituary states the founding date was 'some fifty years ago' (i.e. c. 1871), and the latter 'nearly fifty years ago' (i.e. after 1881).

147. 'James McKechnie', *BM*, 17 (March 1907), p.iv.

(c.1875),¹⁴⁸ Kirkintilloch (by 1876),¹⁴⁹ Renfrew (by 1886),¹⁵⁰ and Newton Mearns (1886)¹⁵¹ are obscure. At Falkirk (see Map 9) the assembly was re-founded after evangelist Alex Livingstone had a mission in 1889.¹⁵² In the Lothians (see Map 8) one was formed at Rosewell in 1875 after a campaign by Donald Ross who had moved to Edinburgh in that same year.¹⁵³ The removal of its members and further evangelism led to meetings being formed in nearby Bonnyrigg and Penicuik in 1875,¹⁵⁴ but how the other three assemblies in Stirlingshire¹⁵⁵ and four in the Lothians were formed during this period is unknown.¹⁵⁶

It is a similar picture in Fife and Lanarkshire. Of the nine assemblies formed in Fife (see Map 7) the precise origin of only three is known: Tayport received an assembly in 1873 when William Arnot of Hamilton and his family moved there;¹⁵⁷ the removal of a Brethren farmer from Leven led to the formation of an assembly in Lochgelly, west Fife, some time in the 1880s;¹⁵⁸ and, after an earlier abortive attempt to begin a meeting, one was founded in Kirkcaldy about 1890 when a Brethren couple moved there from Bo'ness.¹⁵⁹ In Lanarkshire the opening of a new

148. 'Samuel Kennedy', *W*, 46 (1916), p.50.

149. Kelling, *Sloan*, p.106.

150. *NW*, 16 (October 1886), endpp.

151. *NW*, 16 (July 1886), endpp.

152. *W*, 18 (February 1888), p.v; *ibid.*, (August), p.v; *ibid.*, 19 (June 1889), p.i.

153. *NW*, 5 (July 1875), p.iii; *ibid.*, (August) 127; *NA*, no. 20 (September 1874), p.30; Beattie, *Brethren*, p.263: Beattie mistakenly gives the date as 1876.

154. *NW*, 5 (July 1875), p.iii; *ibid.*, (June), p.95; Beattie, *Brethren*, p.264.

155. These were: Limerigg (by 1888): *W*, 18 (May 1888), p.v; Stenhousemuir (1885): 'John Anderson', *W*, 58 (1928), p.279; Stirling (by 1882): Clare, *Pioneer Preaching*, p.71.

156. These were: Bo'ness (c.1883): 'Peter Ritchie', *W*, 63 (1933), p.168; Broxburn (c.1880): *NW*, 10 (1880), p.188; Newhaven (1887): *W*, 17 (March 1887), endpp; West Calder (c.1890): 'Mrs Thomas McQueen', *W*, 70 (1940), p.140.

157. *NA*, no. 4 (April 1873), p.16; Ernest Baker, *The Life and Explorations of Frederick Stanley Arnot* (London, 1921), p.18. The other Fife assemblies were: Burntisland (by 1887): *W*, 17 (May 1887), endpp.; Kelty (c. 1880): writer's collection, I.I.7. (ii), Helen B Gallacher to the writer, 30 June 1987; Leven (c.1881): *NW*, 10 (1880), p.188; Newport (c.1888): *W*, 18 (July 1888), vi, and 'John Mackaskill', *W*, 67 (1937), p.48; Pitlessie (1888): 'David Scott', *W*, 58 (1928), p.478; St Andrews (1888): *W*, 18 (June 1888), p.v.

158. [Kenneth A Munro], 'How it began: Ballingry', *BM*, 98 (1989), pp.300-1.

159. 'Mrs Peter Chalmers', *W*, 68 (1938), p.192; *NW*, 16 (September 1886), endpp.

coal seam at Haywood led to the formation of a meeting there in 1883,¹⁶⁰ and a mission in 1889 by William Blane, a South African emigrant from Galston who had briefly returned to Scotland, saw the replanting of the one in East Kilbride which had been discontinued. Airdrie also had its assembly formed in 1883 through Brethren individuals removing to the town.¹⁶¹ About 1872 a meeting had been formed in Stonehouse, but it remained small and was apparently discontinued. It was re-formed, probably in the later 1880s, by John Curr, a member of Larkhall assembly.¹⁶² There were, however a further ten assemblies formed in the county during the period whose cause of origin has been lost.¹⁶³

UNPARALLELED GROWTH

The twenty years from 1871 until 1891 were ones of unparalleled growth in the Scottish Brethren movement. Some of the seventeen meetings which are known only from their inclusion in the 1897 and 1904 assembly address lists were almost undoubtedly formed during this period.¹⁶⁴ There were most likely others which were formed through schisms, such as was

160. 'Isaiah Stewart', *W*, 64 (1934), p.167; writer's collection, I.M.10.(i) Tom Aitken to the writer, 8 April 1989.

161. Anon., 'How it began: Airdrie, Lanarkshire' *BM*, 98 (198), pp.53-5.

162. Report dated 6 October 1872, *TP*, (1872), quoted in Anderson 'Lesmahagow', p. 64; 'John Curr', *W*, 78 (May 1945), p.iii. An 1873 report in *TP*, quoted in Anderson, *ibid.*, stated that there were only 12 breaking bread in Stonehouse. John Curr (b.1864) was a member of Frame's Hall, Larkhall (occupied c.1872-1891), and was in his twenties after the mid-1880s.

163. These were: Auchentiber (1885): 'Joseph McFarlane', *W*, 50 (1920), p.304; a second assembly in Bellshill (1887): writer's collection, I.M.3., Jim Lewis, 'Some Notes re. History of Bellshill Assembly', MS 1989; Bothwell (1884): 'Joseph McKechnie', *W*, 67 (1937), p.48; Coatbridge (c.1874): 'James Halyburton', *BM*, 30 (January 1920), p.vi; Dykehead, Shotts (by 1889): 'Mrs Logan', *W*, 69 (1939), p.168; Douglas (1883): *W*, 63 (1933), p.237; Longriggend (c.1873): 'John McPherson', *W*, 66 (1936), p.23; Newarthill (by 1878): 'John Thompson', *W*, 53 (1923), p.26; Roughrigg (1873): *NA*, no. 7 (July 1873), p.28; and West Benhar (1888): *W*, 18 (October 1888), p.v.

164. These are: in Jordan, *List* (1897): Gospel Hall, Dundee; Gospel Hall, Dalmarnock, Glasgow; New Lanark, Lanarkshire; Loan, Mid Lothian; Port William, Wigtownshire; and St John's Town of Dalry, Dumfriesshire; in Jordan, *List* (1904): Campbeltown, Argyll; Kirkerton, Aberdeenshire; Garscube Hall, Garscube, Glasgow; Hamnavoe, West Burra, Shetland Isles; Lumphinnans, Fife; Methil, Fife; Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire; Patna, Ayrshire; Saline, Fife; Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire; and Thurso, Caithness; and in both 1897 & 1904: Arbroath, Angus; and Whinnyfold, Aberdeenshire.

probably the case about 1873 in Kilmarnock,¹⁶⁵ and certainly was in 1887 with Bethany Hall, Dundee, which reunited with its parent assembly two years later,¹⁶⁶ That the Brethren founded assemblies wherever they went during these years can be seen from the number of holiday locations which had meetings formed in them. Not only were ones founded in the Ayrshire coastal resorts of Ardrossan and Saltcoats,¹⁶⁷ but assemblies were also founded in Rothesay (by 1879),¹⁶⁸ Dunoon (1882),¹⁶⁹ Millport (1887),¹⁷⁰ Sandbank (by 1887)¹⁷¹ and in the Highlands at Oban (by 1884).¹⁷² Millport was begun after a mission by evangelists Alex Livingstone and Alex Anderson and one of the founder members of Dunoon was a Brethren individual formerly of Kilmarnock. Probably Rothesay was founded by evangelist Colin Campbell when he moved there in 1879 to open his 'House of Rest' and Oban by A M Riddle when he established himself as a photographer in the town—the dates of both men's removals are the earliest references for Brethren in each place. Although these origins are now uncertain, what is incontrovertible is that both itinerants and ordinary members were labouring continually to found further assemblies

165. *LR*, 6 (1873), p.118; this notice evidently refers to an assembly distinct from the one John Stewart founded: it met in the Corn Exchange, Kilmarnock, while the existence of Stewart's assembly in his Nelson Street school continued to be reported in the *Post Office Directory* until 1879. It is probable that the notice was placed close to the Corn Exchange assembly's foundation for it is described as consisting of 'a few believers', and it is probable that it was a schism from Nelson Street as differences existed between Stewart and the later practices of Kilmarnock Brethren (see below, p.199). Beattie, *Brethren*, p.233, dates the founding of Kilmarnock to '1870 or earlier'. His account makes plain that there were tensions among Kilmarnock Brethren during this period but he does not refer to a split. However he treats Kilmarnock Brethren as having a continuous history (evidently reflecting his local correspondent's account) but his characteristic practice throughout his history is to avoid mentioning divisions. If 1873 is indeed the year of the Corn Exchange assembly's commencement, then Beattie's dating may indicate that it was known Nelson Street predated it but that it was not known by how many years.

166. *W*, 17 (November 1887), endpp., *ibid.*, (December 1887), endpp.; *W*, 19 (October 1889), p.v.

167. See above, n.143.

168. 'Colin Campbell', *CW*, 45 (1928), pp.146-7.

169. 'James Petrie', *W*, 42 (1912), p.255.

170. *W*, 17 (October 1887) endpp.; *The Eleventh Hour*, (1887), p.4.

171. *W*, 17 (June 1887), endpp.

172. 'A.M. Riddle', *W*, 46 (1916), p.50.

in conditions which were propitious for their growth.

But the growth was not unalloyed. In 1888, when herring fishing was in a difficult period,¹⁷³ it was reported that one-third of the assembly in Lerwick had emigrated overseas or to the Scottish mainland because of economic conditions. Among those who went were the most gifted members, and the three Shetland country assemblies had no gospel meetings or anyone able to supply Bible teaching to Christians.¹⁷⁴ North-east Scotland was equally affected. Out-migration from the region was high during this period, although its precise effect on individual assemblies is not known. Certainly the pioneer assembly at Old Rayne ceased in 1890, and possibly the removal of members to Aberdeen was a factor in this.¹⁷⁵ Probably the new meeting at Kemnay, where most of the converts had been among the quarrymen, was short-lived because the members were caught up in the emigration of that occupational group there to north America.¹⁷⁶ Amongst those who left the north east were most of the NES evangelists who had seceded to the Brethren, including Donald Ross in 1876.¹⁷⁷ Forty per cent. of all Brethren emigrants from the region whose date of emigration can be established left between 1871 and 1891.¹⁷⁸ However, this is twelve individuals out of only thirty and is too small a sample to be reliable, but it does suggest that this period was the peak one for the emigration of Brethren members from the region.¹⁷⁹ In the process

173. Smith, *Shetland*, p.158, and figs 26 and 40.

174. *NW*, 18 (1888), p.iv.

175. Mrs Gordon's collection, Kennethmount, MS notebook on history of Inch assembly by Mrs Helen Gordon; George Taylor, for example, a founding member of Old Rayne moved to Aberdeen; also short-lived among the north-east assemblies appear to have been Findhorn, Forres, Fraserburgh, Kennethmount, and Nairn.

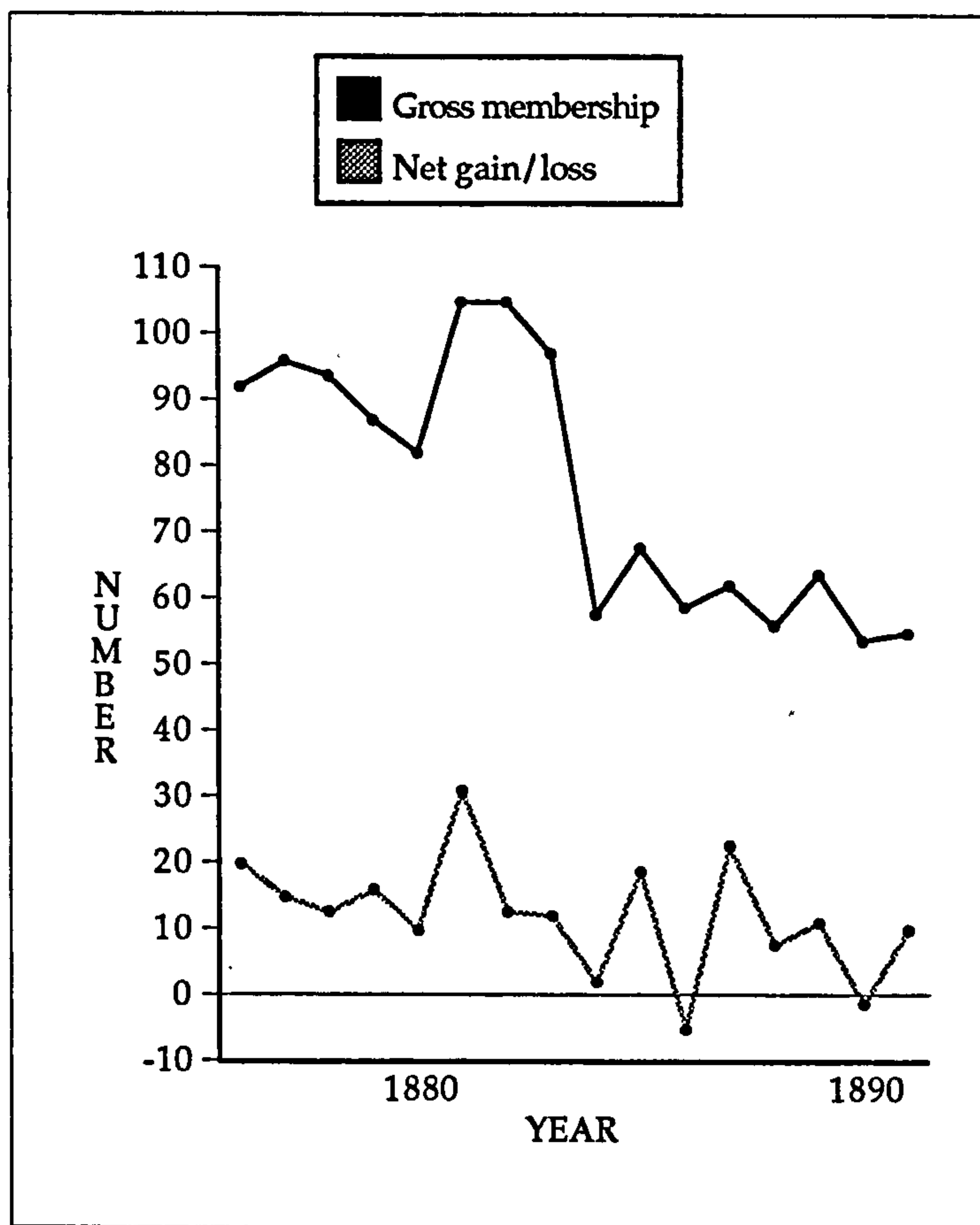
176. Harper, *Emigration*, 1, p.257.

177. Ross, however, had already moved to Edinburgh in 1874.

178. Emigration data base; for the use of this material, see below, p.379, n.79.

179. The same might be argued Orkney, where five out of the seven Brethren individuals from Orkney whose year of emigration is known left in the 1880s, again a decade of high emigration there, cf. William Thomson, *A History of Orkney* (Edinburgh, 1987), p.253.

Figure 4.1. Lesmahagow Gospel Hall, growth 1876-1891: gross membership with net gains and losses through lapse in membership.



Source: Gospel Hall, Lesmahagow, roll book 1876-1907.

north-east emigrants founded the Open Brethren movement in North America.¹⁸⁰ As was maintained above, the Brethren had profited from social and demographic changes in the countryside, and their continuing effects had consequences for the movement. Although rural Scotland was especially affected,¹⁸¹ the period also saw emigration touching industrial areas of the country and Brethren members there also left for a new life overseas.¹⁸² After an initial surge in growth, it would appear that some

180. Ross H McLaren, 'The Triple Tradition: the Origin and Development of the Open Brethren in North America' (M.A. thesis, Vanderbilt University, USA; 1982).

181. Malcolm Gray, *Scots on the Move: Scots migrants 1750-1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.33-7.

182. See below, Figure 9.1.

assemblies experienced decline.

There was, in addition, some loss of membership to the Exclusive Brethren.¹⁸³ At Larkhall a schism in 1874 led to the establishment of an Exclusive assembly¹⁸⁴ and, as certainly happened at Strathaven in 1876 and 1877, small numbers elsewhere probably seceded.¹⁸⁵ One other loss of membership which is difficult to chart is that which inevitably follows a revival as ardour cools. Figure 4.1 shows the membership of the assembly in Lesmahagow from 1876 until 1891.¹⁸⁶ Until 1882 the gross membership increased from ninety-two to 105, having an annual average of 94.4. In 1884 twenty-seven individuals left to establish the meeting in Kirkmuirhill and the membership remained lower until 1891, having an annual average of 59.7 in this period. The figures for net gains and losses through lapses in membership (arrived at by subtracting the figure for the latter from that for the former) show how fruitful 1881 had been when there was a net gain of thirty-one members. However, subsequent years, when the gross membership was lower, also saw marked gains in membership, with 1885 seeing a net increase of nineteen members and 1887 a net increase of twenty-three. There were two years, 1886 and 1890 (both closely following years of large net increases), when there was a net decrease. The data, however, must be treated with caution. While they separate out reasons for leaving the assembly (so that deaths and removals can be excluded), they do not similarly treat reasons for joining. Some of the increases in membership might be due to individuals removing to the area for employment. This possible difficulty, however, should not be

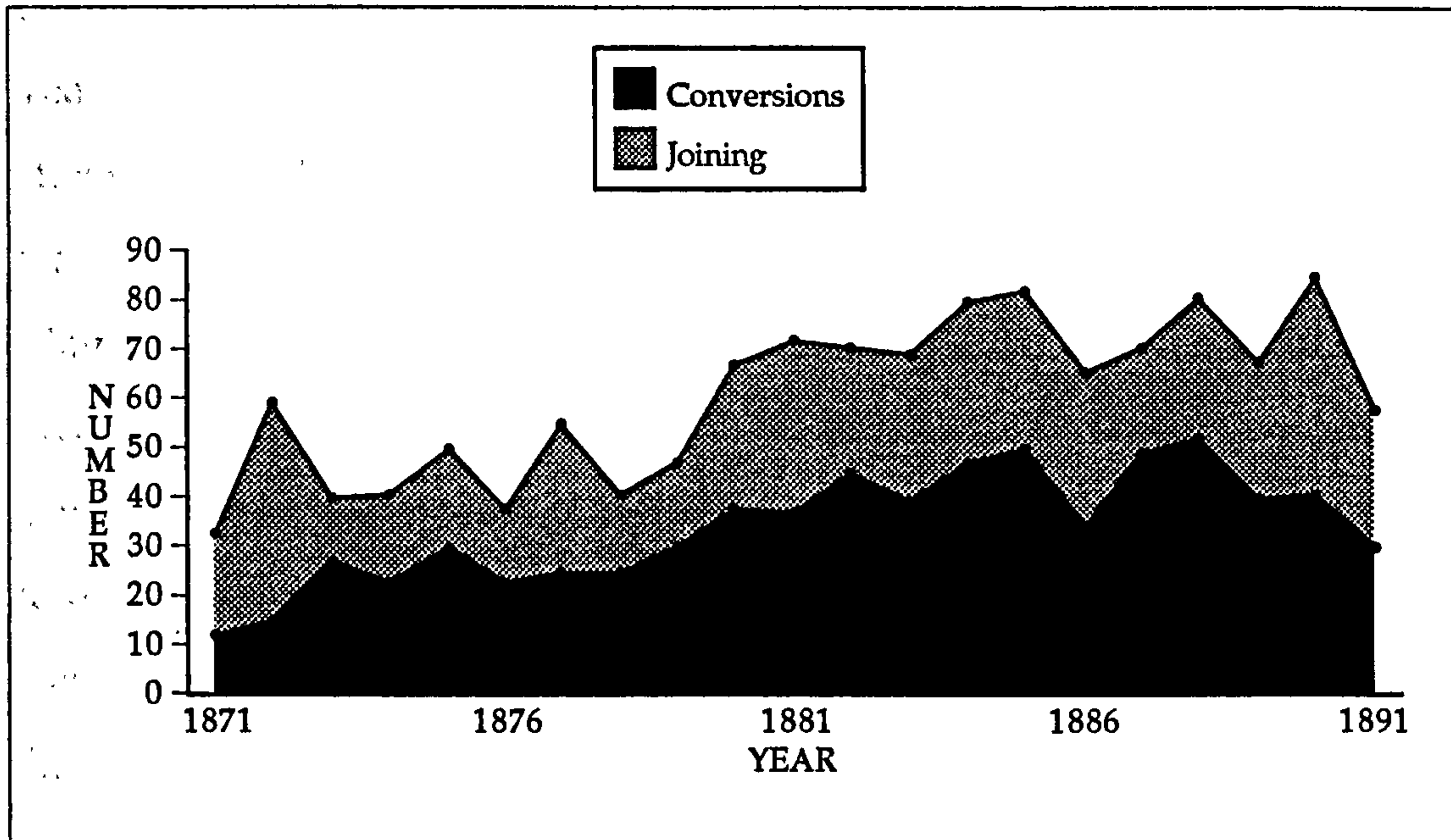
183. For the Exclusives in Scotland, see above, pp.2-4.

184. Robert Chapman, *A Short History of the Inception, Progress and Personalities of Hebron Hall Assembly, Larkhall: 1866-1928* (Kilmarnock, 1929), pp.25-6.

185. Strathaven Evangelical Church, Strathaven, 'Roll of Members of Strathaven Assembly', 1876-1897, [pp. 5, 6]

186. Hope Hall, Lesmahagow, Gospel Hall roll book, 1876-1907.

Figure 4.2. Brethren growth 1871-91.



Source: 'With Christ', *The Witness*, 37-108 (1907-78).

exaggerated. Because national Brethren membership was still small in this period, there were few individuals available to transfer in. It is more likely that most of the increase in membership was due to non-Brethren individuals joining, such as happened in 1881 when there were twenty-eight baptisms.¹⁸⁷ In all but two years there was some growth, and decline in gross membership at Lesmahagow—largely caused by members leaving the district—was gain for the movement elsewhere. This evidence suggests that while some were lost to the movement after a period of greater increase, the growth of the period more than compensated for those who lapsed.

Figure 4.2 also suggests that overall losses were more than offset by gains.¹⁸⁸ According to these data, derived from *The Witness* obituaries, 1890 was the year in which the largest number of individuals joined the

^{187.} *Ibid.*, p.52.

^{188.} For the explanation of *The Witness* obituaries, see above, p.18, n.87.

movement during this period. But it would appear that throughout the 1880s there was a substantial increase. The date of conversion was the most frequent one cited in an obituary of individuals who entered the movement in this period, but it can be seen from the graph that peaks in the number of conversions tended to coincide with high points for those joining an assembly (shown by the thickness of the top band). The exceptions to this correlation are 1871-2 and 1877 where the year of membership of a greater number of individuals can be established. In the case of the former dates this is because of the accession of the north-east movement which comprised 48.8 per cent. of all reported additions in these two years. Brethren numbers were also boosted by gains from the Scottish missions of American evangelist D L Moody in 1873-4 and 1881-2, as many who had been converted in his campaigns found their way into an assembly. One worker in Moody's first mission who, probably in 1874, joined the Marble Hall, Glasgow, was Alexander Marshall, a potential candidate for the EU ministry and a member of the city congregation of which James Morison had become minister. Marshall became the evangelist of the Scottish movement *par excellence*.¹⁸⁹ A number of other individuals who transferred to assemblies in this period also went on to become influential. Two Baptist pastors who joined the movement were John Rae, the Elgin minister, who, with the majority of his flock, founded a meeting in the town in 1872,¹⁹⁰ and William J Grant who, along with a number of others, left his congregation in 1880 to join Kilmarnock Brethren.¹⁹¹ The scale of conversions and additions and the number of

189. John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author, pioneer* (London [1929]), pp.27-31.

190. Rae to the editor, p. 83; H A Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement* (1942), rpt (Grand Rapids, MI, 1985), p.72; F F Bruce, *In Retrospect: remembrance of things past* (London & Glasgow, 1980), p.6.

191. J G[ray], 'William J. Grant, Kilmarnock', *BP*, 51 (1930), pp.98-101; G G[ray], 'W.J. Grant, M.A., Kilmarnock', *CW*, 45, no. 536 (July 1930), [pp.2-3]; *CW*, 45, no. 535, (July 1930), [pp.98-9]; Hy. P[ickering], 'Home-call of W.J. Grant, M.A., Kilmarnock', *W*, 60 (1930), pp.187-8; but cf. below, p.202.

assemblies which were formed in 1871-91, both suggest that during these two decades the Brethren in Scotland enjoyed their most vigorous growth.

Along with this numerical increase, the movement in this period continued to be widely touched with a desire for the transformation of the commonplace.¹⁹² The higher life was not only accepted in the north east but elsewhere too. About the time when Alex Marshall joined the Brethren in Glasgow he was reading *Trust in the Living Father* (1873), a booklet by the undenominational preacher, Henry Varley, who had been influenced by Pearsall Smith.¹⁹³ The Keswick Convention, founded in 1875, had an influence too:¹⁹⁴ W J Grant became an exponent of its spirituality among Scottish Brethren,¹⁹⁵ and, along with a number of others from the Greenock assembly, the newly converted Dan Crawford visited the Convention itself.¹⁹⁶ In 1888 Crawford went on to become a missionary, one of the movement's most famous overseas activists.¹⁹⁷ Grant's brother Alexander, a missionary with the English Presbyterian Church in China, had already been won for the Brethren,¹⁹⁸ but during the wave of enthusiasm for foreign missions which followed the death of David Livingstone in 1874,¹⁹⁹ Scottish assemblies had begun to send out their own foreign missionaries, the first ones being in 1876 the Shetland evangelist William Sloan to the Faroe Isles and Norman Macrae to

192. Cf. above, pp.90-1.

193. D J Findlay quoted in Hawthorn, *Marshall*, p.38; Henry Varley, *Henry Varley: the powerful evangelist of the Victorian era* (London [c.1913]), pp.103-6.

194. For Keswick and the Brethren, see below, pp.330-5.

195. G[ray], 'Grant', pp.98-101; P[ickering], 'Grant', pp.187-8; for further discussion of Grant on this point, see p.335, n.103.

196. Tilsley, *Dan Crawford*, pp.26-9.

197. *DSCHT*, p.574, i; Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, 1964), p.380-2; Robert I Rotberg, 'Plymouth Brethren and the Occupation of Katanga, 1886-1907', *Journal of African History*, 2 (1964), pp.285-97; Paul Hyland, *The Black Heart: a voyage into Central Africa* (London, 1988).

198. J W J, 'Alexander Grant', *BP*, 35 (1914), pp.70-1; 'Alexander Grant, W', 44 (1914), p.12: it would appear that this was before W J Grant joined the Brethren.

199. Andrew C Ross, 'Scottish missionary concern 1874-1914: a golden era?', *SHR*, 51 (1972), pp.52-72.

India.²⁰⁰ Others were to follow quickly, with two of the most noted Scottish Brethren missionaries, John S Anderson and Frederick Stanley Arnot, respectively leaving for Italy in 1880 and Central Africa in 1881.²⁰¹ Before going to Africa, Arnot had evangelised in the south west along with John Ritchie. It was to help teach the converts of a revival in the Dalmellington assembly in 1874 that Ritchie had moved to Ayrshire,²⁰² and he transferred to Kilmarnock in 1879 when there was a large number of conversions there under Rice Hopkins and Alex Marshall.²⁰³ Local awakenings were continuing as a significant factor in Brethren growth. The marked peaks and troughs in the net gains and losses in the membership of Lesmahagow assembly (Figure 4.1) suggest a revivalist pattern there. These several elements—higher life, missionary enthusiasm, and continuing revival—kept the temperature of the movement high.

GROWTH 1892-1914

The first statistics which are available from an address list of Open Brethren assemblies shows that in 1886 there were 184 meetings in Scotland.²⁰⁴ In the address list for 1897 this had risen to 236, and in that of 1904 to 285.²⁰⁵ Assemblies continued being formed into the twentieth century, but the rate of increase slowed and there was, perhaps, a net loss of membership in the years before World War I. The period 1892 until 1914 also began with the Scottish Open Brethren suffering their greatest single loss of members with the secession of the Churches of God in 1892-

200. W T Stunt *et al.*, *Turning the World Upside down: a century of missionary endeavour*, 2nd edn (Bath, 1973), pp.562-7.

201. *Ibid.*, p.562; Baker, *Frederick Stanley Arnot*, pp.20-1.

202. R[itchie], 'John Ritchie', [pp.1-4].

203. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.224.

204. Sprague's *List of Assemblies* quoted in *The Eleventh Hour* (January 1887), p.4; cf. above p.17, n.83.

205. Jordan, *List* (1897), pp.116-44; *List* (1904), pp.128-64.

3. This separation will be discussed more fully in the following chapter,²⁰⁶ but here it should be noted that it had consequences for the continued growth of the movement. There were a few assemblies, it would appear, which seceded in their entirety with the new body, such as in the north east at Macduff and Cumniestone,²⁰⁷ and in Lanarkshire at Dykehead. Other meetings such as Inverness, Buchanan Court Hall, Glasgow, and Wigtown apparently never recovered from the loss of members.²⁰⁸ Those which suffered a schism found it drained the morale of the company,²⁰⁹ and it was evidently due to the secession that Edinburgh Open Brethren were in a state of disarray in the 1890s.²¹⁰ In all some seventy Scottish Churches of God came into existence by secession,²¹¹ and one commentator has speculated that perhaps a tenth of the Scottish Open Brethren membership seceded.²¹² There were, in addition, at least twelve further schisms in assemblies which remained with the Open Brethren, and it is likely that a number of other meetings came into existence in a similar manner during this period. Controversial issues, which shall be more fully dissected in the following chapter, agitated the movement throughout these years and deflected energy and attention away from recruitment.

Yet the 1890s was a decade of growth, and even the Churches of God schism can be seen as an indication of vigour, for ecclesiastical divisions

206. See below pp.196-211.

207. There were Churches of God in both these places, neither of them, it would appear, planted subsequently to the schism.

208. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.243, 270; oral information 16 May 1988.

209. [John Waddell], *Roman Road Hall Motherwell Centenary 1875-1975* (Lanark [1975]), pp.5-6.

210. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.262.

211. Norman Macdonald, 'One Hundred Years of Needed Truth Brethren 1892 to 1992: a historical analysis', typescript [1992], p.23.

212. Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.23.

Table 4.2. Attendance at Brethren morning meetings in Dundee (1881, 1891 & 1901) and Gospel Hall, St Paul St., Aberdeen (1891 & 1901) compared with attendance at morning service in other churches in both cities.

	Dundee				
	1881	1891	% growth	1901	% growth
Brethren					
No. of congregations	2	2	0	2	0
No. in attendance (adults & children)	146	128	-12.3	138	7.8
Other churches					
No. of congregations	83	91	9.6	99	8.8
No. in attendance (adults & children)	30 512	24 227	-20.6	26 000	7.3
Total population	142 000	168 000	18.3	167 000	-0.6
Aberdeen					
		1891		1901	% growth
St Paul St					
No. of congregations		1		2	50
No. in attendance (adults & children)		190		219	15
Other churches					
No. of congregations		87		-	
No. in attendance (adults & children)		26 785		26 144	-2.4
Total population		110 541		153 503	39

Sources: *The Dundee Advertiser*, 1 April 1901, p.5; *The Aberdeen Journal*, 15 April 1901, p.5.

often occur in periods of expansion.²¹³ As Table 4.1 shows, in both St Paul Street, Aberdeen, and the two assemblies in Dundee, attendance at the morning meeting had increased in the decennial survey of attendance carried out by local newspapers, despite there having been a Church of God schism in both cities.²¹⁴ The morning meeting is attended by

213. John Wilson, 'The sociology of schism', in Michael Hill (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, 4 (London, 1971), pp.1-20.

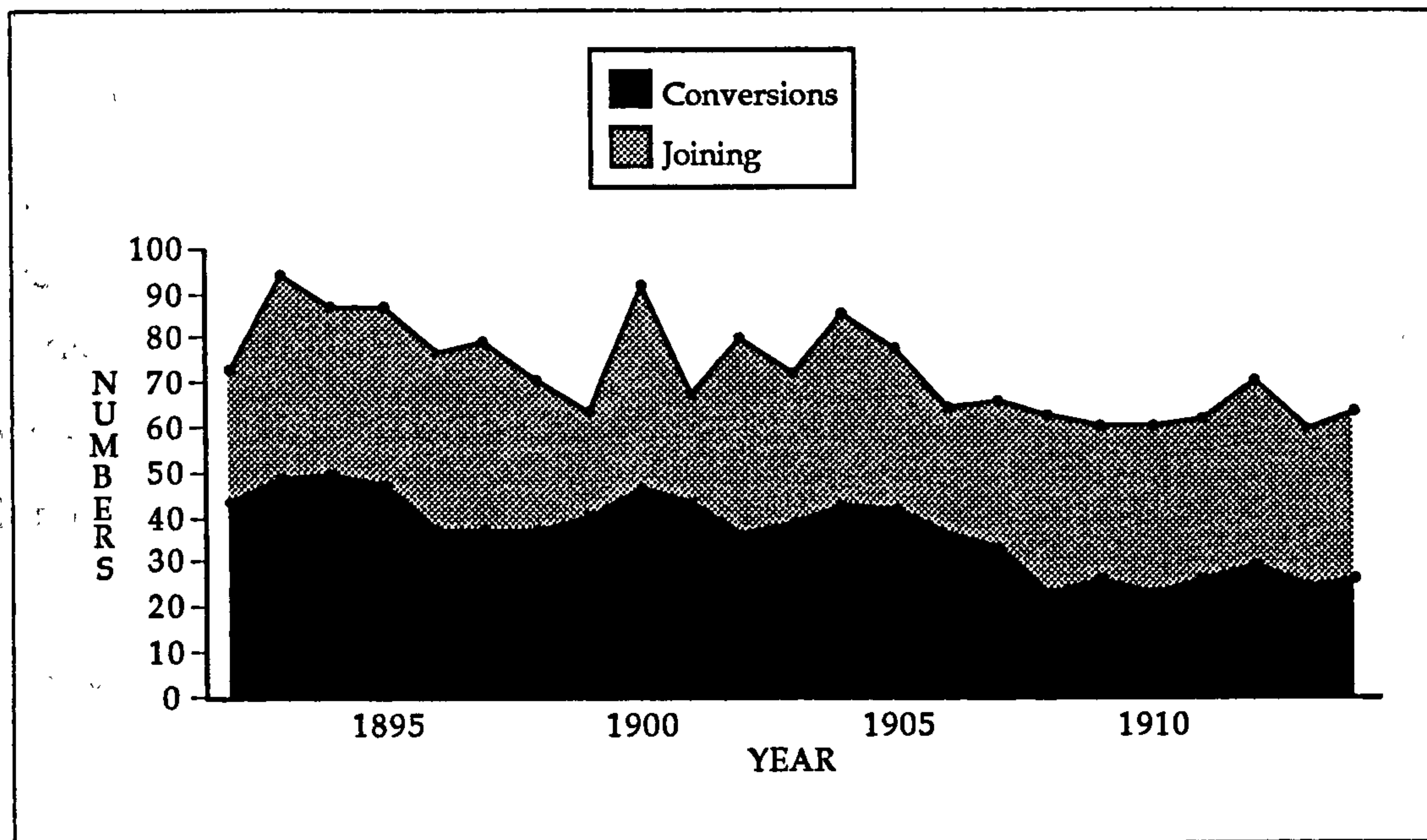
214. *The Dundee Advertiser*, 1 April 1901, p.5; *The Aberdeen Journal*, 15 April 1901, p.5.

members rather than adherents,²¹⁵ and enumeration of those at this service therefore provides a reliable guide to fluctuations in membership. In Dundee attendance at the morning meeting had been lower on the census Sunday in 1891 than it had been in 1881. The poor weather conditions on the later occasion had been blamed for the markedly lower attendance figure in all churches, but it would seem that Dundee had been one of the places in which the Brethren declined during the 1880s. By 1901, however, although attendance had not recovered to its 1881 level, there had been a 7.8 per cent. increase in attendance. But although this rise was a greater percentage increase than that of other churches, it was a lower aggregate increase in attendance from 1881 than theirs. In other congregations it had risen from a 20.6 per cent. decline between 1881 and 1891 to a 7.3 per cent. increase between 1891 and 1901. Probably, however, the more committed Brethren would not have been so adversely affected by the inclement weather of 1891, and the percentage increase in 1901 would more accurately reflect active membership levels. In Aberdeen, Brethren growth in the 1890s is more apparent. In 1900 St Paul Street Gospel Hall had planted an additional assembly in the new suburb of Torry (see Map 5 inset), and the attendance at these two meetings in 1901 has been aggregated in Table 4.1 to provide a comparison with the 1891 figure. Although the percentage increase in attendance on the second census Sunday was not as large as the thirty-nine per cent. growth in the city's population, at fifteen per cent. it was considerably better than that of the other churches whose attendance was lower by 2.4 per cent.²¹⁶ Aberdeen's three other Open Brethren assemblies were not counted in 1891 which does not allow any comparison with the 260 adults and

215. See below, p.320.

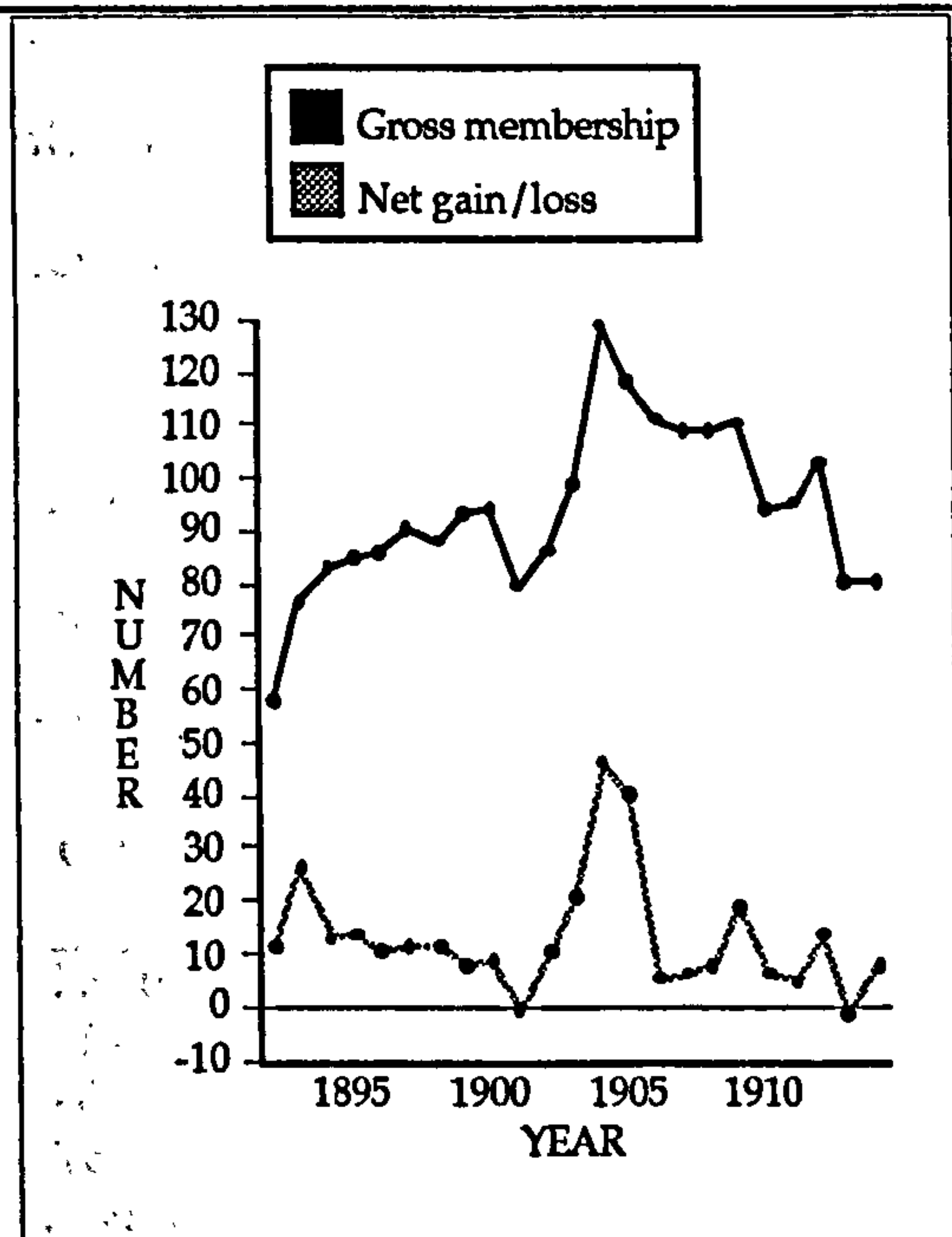
216 One of the United Free churches was omitted on census Sunday and the estimated figure of its attendance has been included in Table 4.2, 'The Aberdeen church census', *The Aberdeen Journal*, 16 April 1901, p.5.

Figure 4.3. Brethren growth 1892-1914.



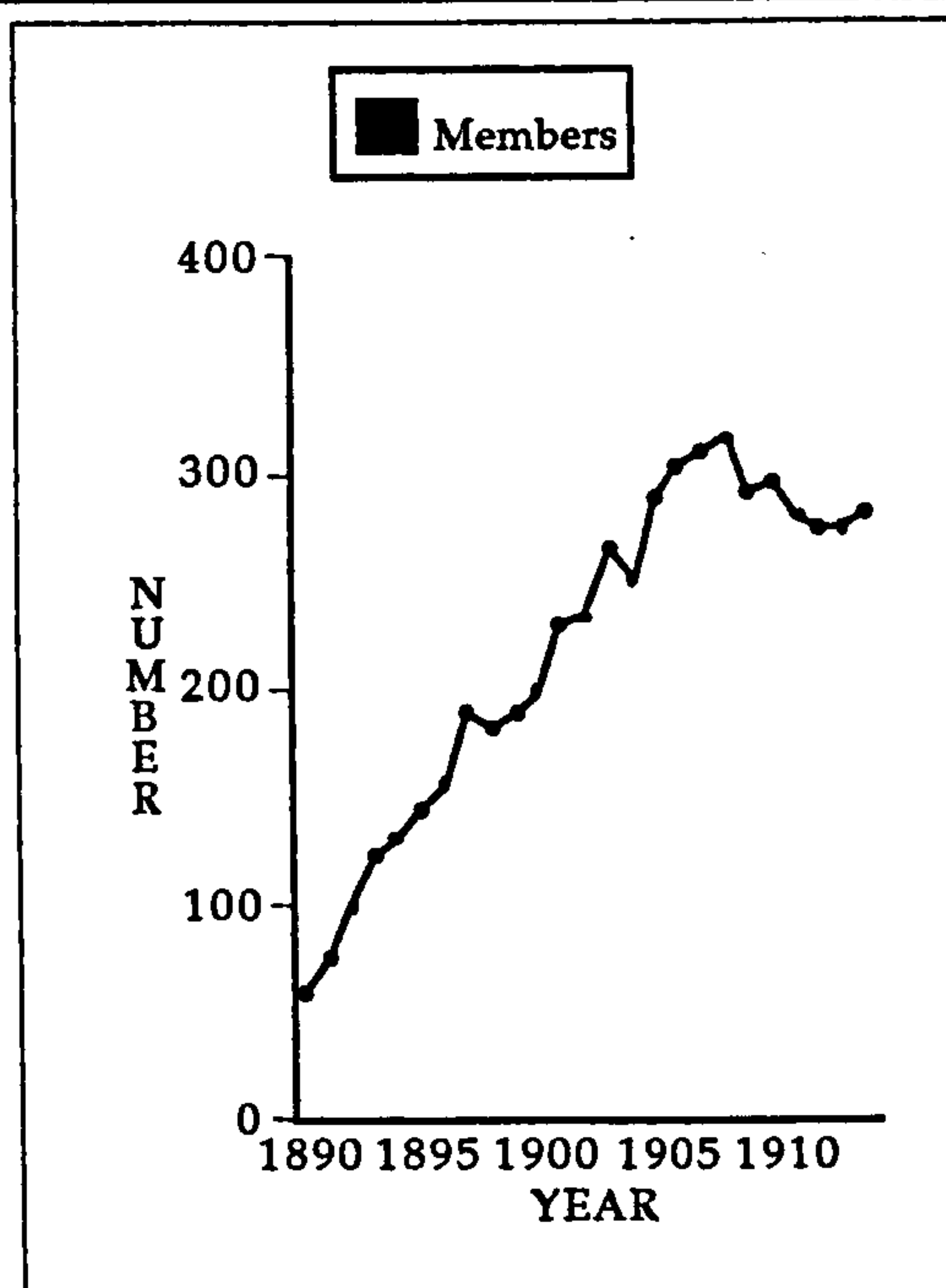
Source: 'With Christ', *The Witness*, 37-108 (1907-1978).

Figure 4.4. Lesmahagow Gospel Hall, growth 1892-1914: gross membership against net gains and losses through lapses in membership.



Source: Hope Hall, Lesmahagow, Gospel Hall roll books, 1876-1907 & 1980-29.

Figure 4.5. Elim Hall, Crosshill, Glasgow, growth 1890-1914: membership.



Source: *Elim Hall, 98th Annual Report, 1st January to 31st December, 1981* (n.p. [1981]).

children in attendance at their morning meetings in 1901. The evidence of these census suggests that, despite the Churches of God separation, assemblies in both cities had enjoyed growth throughout the 1890s.

Figure 4.3, extrapolated from *The Witness* obituaries, also points to the decade as being one of growth.²¹⁷ According to these data, 1893 (when the Churches of God secession was at its height) was the year in which the largest number of individuals joined the movement in any one year. There were also peaks of substantial increase in 1894-5, 1900 and 1904-5. Revivalism continued as a factor in growth. It was in 1895, for example, that evangelist W S King saw a further awakening on Westray,²¹⁸ and that same year James Anderson had a 'remarkable time of revival' in Troon,²¹⁹ while Irish evangelist David Rea accompanied by Alexander Marshall baptised sixty-two individuals after a mission in Glasgow.²²⁰ Revivalism also continued in south Ayrshire in the mining hamlets around New Cumnock where John Harper and J M Hamilton both saw conversions which led to the establishment of meetings in Burnfoot (c.1893)²²¹ and Bank Glen (1897).²²² The activities of the undenominational revivalist James McKendrick in the fishing communities of the north east during this period also increased Brethren numbers.²²³ The most successful of his missions was the one in Findochty, Banffshire, in 1893. During its five weeks the whole community was moved and fishing was abandoned. It was the only occasion McKendrick witnessed the 'the Gospel dance', when the converts, sometimes in groups of several hundred, would join hands

217. For the explanation of *The Witness* obituaries, see above, p.18, n.87.

218. *BM*, 5 (1895), p.24.

219. *W*, 52 (1922), p.216.

220. Tom Rea (compiler), *The Life and Labours of David Rea, Evangelist: largely written from his own MSS.* (Belfast, 1917), pp.138-9.

221. 'Andrew Barbour', *BM*, 53 (1943), p.80.

222. 'James R. Hood', *W*, 62 (1932), p.72; 'Mrs James Stewart' *W*, 67 (1937), p.143; Robert Geddes' *W*, 83 (1953), p.50.

223. Cf. Dickson, 'Sect and region'.

and keep time with their feet to the rhythmical singing of a hymn.²²⁴ He was invited to Sandend (see Map 4) next,²²⁵ and not long after his mission, a group of his converts, after making contact with Aberdeen Brethren, began breaking bread, probably in 1894 after evangelist Duncan McNab had been there.²²⁶ When McKendrick held a mission in Portessie at the end of 1896 he met an air of 'hardness and indifference', but he persevered until he saw revival there too.²²⁷ Methodism was strong in the village due to the earlier work of James Turner,²²⁸ and it was mainly from this denomination, but joined by some others from Findochty, that a group of sixty to seventy individuals, most of them converts of McKendrick's revival, met to break bread in 1901.²²⁹ The formation of an assembly some time after nondenominational revivalism had been a recurring pattern in the nineteenth century.

In the early twentieth century the years around 1905 also saw revivalism widespread when the awakening in Wales of 1904-5 aroused interest among Scottish Brethren.²³⁰ An increased number of conversions is particularly noticeable at Lesmahagow (Figure 4.4) where a sustained period of revivalism in neighbouring Coalburn (see Map 10) led to the addition of fifty-two new members to the meeting in 1904.²³¹ An assembly was formed in Coalburn by forty-seven members of Lesmahagow the

224. James McKendrick, *Seen and Heard During Forty-Six Years' Evangelistic Work* (London [c.1927]), p.88-99.

225. *Ibid.*, pp.100-3.

226. Writer's collection, I.D.2., James Merson to the writer, 28 November 1988; *W*, 4 (1894), p.71. The latter source states that the assembly had commenced in 'Southend', evidently a misprint for Sandend.

227. McKendrick, *Seen and Heard*, pp.139-42.

228. E McHardie, *James Turner: or how to reach the masses* (London, 1889), pp.168-85.

229. D.1., Tom Morrow to the writer, 8 December 1988.

230. *SSW*, 20 (1905), p.34; William Shaw, 'The Revival in Wales: has it a voice for us?', *W*, 35 (1905), pp.27-8; Alex Marshall to the editor [1905], *ibid.*, pp.64-66; cf. *BM*, 15 (May 1905), endpp; on the Welsh Revival see C R Williams, 'The Welsh religious revival, 1904-5', *BJS*, 3 (1962), pp.242-59.

231. Gospel Hall, Lesmahagow, roll books, 1876-1907 and 1980-29, in the possession of Hope Hall, Lesmahagow; Anderson, 'Lesmahagow', pp.44-5.

following year, but the addition of the same number of new members at Lesmahagow in 1905 meant that the gross membership figure of the assembly scarcely dropped (Figure 4.4.). The effects of revivalism in these years can also be seen in Elim Hall in the Crosshill district of Glasgow where only an annual gross membership figure is available (Figure 4.5). In 1905 the membership increased by thirty-nine individuals and continued to increase annually until 1907 when it reached its prewar peak of 317.²³² Other assemblies had substantial increases in these years.²³³ In Tillicoultry the surge came in 1903,²³⁴ and Strathaven assembly, after five weeks of nightly prayer meetings, had an sustained period of conversions in 1904 which, the following year, spilled over into the neighbouring villages of Chapelton and Glassford with sixty conversions in the latter place.²³⁵ Also in Lanarkshire, during a mission in 1905 by evangelist Robert Miller, recently returned from the Churches of God, the assembly in Motherwell was stirred and sixty new members were added.²³⁶ That same year Shetland Brethren also saw some seventy to eighty conversions and a new meeting was formed at Northmavine (see Map 1, Brae) in 1906.²³⁷ Revivalism was a continued factor in Brethren growth.

Yet in the early twentieth century the community-based phenomenon of revivals decreased as a significant component in Brethren growth. It was the more routine operations of the movement and its members which led to greater recruitment. In their activities the spontaneous folk movement had been formalised into techniques for producing conversions, which

232. *Elim Hall, 98th Annual Report, 1st January to 31st December, 1981* (n.p. [1981]).

233. *BM*, 15 (March 1905), endpp.

234. Stephen Lennox Johns, *The Gospel Hall Tillicoultry: a short history* (Tillicoultry 1990), pp.6-7.

235. *BM*, 15 (January 1905), p.i; *W*, 43 (1913), p.139.

236. [Waddell], *Roman Road Hall*, p.7.

237. A M[arshall], 'Shetland', *W*, 37 (1907), p.134; *BM* 16 (October 1906), p.i; the assembly transferred to Brae in 1976.

could at times, as appears to have been the case in some of the examples surveyed in the previous paragraph, touch the wider community. The process had been at work since the 1840s.²³⁸ Revival was replaced by revivalism, and even the latter had less effect. Perhaps the principal means of spreading it was itinerant evangelists, a number of whom dedicated themselves to one district remote from areas of Brethren strength. John Stout, a member of Lerwick assembly, had been working as an evangelist in Shetland since about 1898, and it was he who planted the meeting in Northmavine.²³⁹ In the Hebrides, Lewis (see Map 3) received an assembly at Port of Ness when John M Nicholson, a native of the island who had been converted in America, returned in 1894 to work as an evangelist.²⁴⁰ In the Highlands the assembly in Dingwall was founded in 1907 after a mission by brothers Francis and Matthew Logg,²⁴¹ and Inverness had its meeting re-formed in 1911 after an evangelistic campaign by Gaelic-speaking William Mackenzie.²⁴² In the north-east Lowlands (see Maps 4 and 5) assemblies were formed by Francis Logg, assisted by Peter Bruce, at Lossiemouth;²⁴³ Macduff, where Logg was helped by his brother;²⁴⁴ and at Collieston, probably through Logg's mission of 1892.²⁴⁵ Further south existing congregations could cooperate in the evangelism. Meetings were formed in this way by William Hill in Lochee (see Map 6 inset)—described as 'the dark suburb of Dundee'—in 1907;²⁴⁶ in Stirlingshire (see Map 9) at Airth in 1906, after a two-month

238. John Kent, *Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian revivalism* (London, 1978).

239. 'John Stout', *W*, 82 (1952), p.28.

240. *H*, 4 (1926), pp.90-1; 'John M. Nicholson', *W*, 63 (1937), p.71; apparently the assembly at Port of Ness, where a hall was built in 1907 (*W*, 37 (1907), p.169), preceded the one in Stornoway (see below, p.231).

241. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.273; *BM*, 17 (August 1907), p.i.

242. *BM*, 22 (January 1912), p.i; 'William Mackenzie', *CW*, 42 (1925), pp.129-130; Beattie, *Brethren*, p.270.

243. 'Mrs Edwards', *W*, 77 (August 1947), p.96.

244. *BM*, 14 (December 1904), p.i; *W*, 58 (1928), p.256.

245. J Hay Ritchie, 'Brethren—let us pray', *BM*, 80 (1970), pp.116-7.

246. *W*, 37 (1907), p.152.

mission by an unknown evangelist²⁴⁷ and Laurieston in 1909, through John McDonald;²⁴⁸ and in Cumbernauld, East Dunbartonshire, in 1913 by Arthur Gilmour.²⁴⁹ In Lanarkshire (see Map 10) missions led to the planting of assemblies by Alex Lamb at Low Waters, Hamilton, in 1899;²⁵⁰ W J Meneely, an Irish evangelist, at Overtown in 1905;²⁵¹ John Ferguson at Halfway, Cambuslang, in 1906;²⁵² and John Carrick at Glenboig in 1910.²⁵³ John Ferguson also saw a meeting founded at Thornliebank, Renfrewshire (see Map 12), in 1902 after a mission.²⁵⁴ In Ayrshire (see Map 13) assemblies were formed after evangelistic campaigns by Thomas Sinclair at Crosshill in 1902²⁵⁵ and William Taylor at West Kilbride in 1914.²⁵⁶ In the south west (see Map 14) evangelist Arthur Hodgkinson had a mission in 1891 at Kirkcowan, Wigtonshire, and the following year some of his converts, after a period of Bible study, began to break bread.²⁵⁷ In the same county it was possibly after the mission of July 1895 which saw the assembly formed in Whauphill,²⁵⁸ and in 1909 one was founded in Portpatrick due to the work of the Caledonian Bible Carriage.²⁵⁹ In the Borders Selkirk had its meeting re-formed in 1911 due to evangelist Arthur Gilmour.²⁶⁰ The substantial number of itinerants the Brethren now possessed meant that the movement could recruit both from areas in

247. *BM*, 16 (April 1906), p.i.

248. *W*, 39 (October 1909), endpp.

249. *BM*, 23 (August 1913), p.i; *W*, 43 (1913), p.332.

250. *BM*, 9 (1899), pp.84, 96, 132.

251. *BM*, 15 (September 1905), pi; writer's collection, I.M.23., [James Hislop], "Seventy Years On" or "These Seventy Years": the story of Overtown Assembly of Christian Brethren', photocopy of MS [1971], p.1.

252. *BM*, 16 (September 1906), p.i.

253. *W*, 68 (February 1911), endpp.; 'John Ireland', *W*, 63, 1933), p.96. This assembly was also known as Annathill.

254. 'William Wilson', *W*, 57 (1927), p.138; 'John Cameron', *W* 59 (May 1929), p.122.

255. 'Thomas Steed', *W*, 95 (1965), p.436; Crosshill, Gospel Hall, H Wright, 'Crosshill's Diamond Jubilee', typescript poem dated 21 February 1962.

256. *W*, 44 (1914), p.36 endpp.

257. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.205.

258. *BM*, 5 (1895), p.108: this is the first extant reference to Brethren activity there.

259. *W*, 39 (1909), p.87; *W*, 41 (June 1911), endpp.

260. *BM*, 22 (May 1912), p.i.

which they were already strong and in more remote ones.

Existing assemblies also continued to plant additional ones. The meeting in Windygates, Fife (see Map 7), was founded early in 1914 by members of Innerleven assembly.²⁶¹ In Edinburgh, matters had stabilised with two assemblies on the north and south sides of the city centre (see Map 8, inset) which began to enjoy some growth.²⁶² It was from these centres that the Leith assembly was formed around 1900,²⁶³ as were those at Portobello in 1905,²⁶⁴ and Davidson's Mains in 1911.²⁶⁵ Also in the Lothians the meeting in Newtongrange was formed in 1913 through members of Dalkeith,²⁶⁶ which had itself been formed in 1902 by Brethren members removing there.²⁶⁷ In Lanarkshire (see Map 10) mention has already been made of Coalburn,²⁶⁸ and additional meetings were planted in the county by Blantyre assembly in 1895 at Burnbank,²⁶⁹ and Motherwell in 1908 in the Flemington district of the town.²⁷⁰ Once again, however, this process was marked in Glasgow. On the north of the city Balmore Hall, Possilpark (Map 11, no. 3), was formed in 1910 after a tent mission, and in 1912 on the east side, Baltic Hall, Dalmarnock (Map 11, no. 44), was established after several years of outreach by Rutherglen assembly.²⁷¹ On the south of the city Eglinton Hall (Map 11, no. 40) was founded in 1892 by members of Buchanan Court Hall;²⁷² and Elim Hall, Crosshill, succeeded in forming

261. Alexander Rollo, *The Story of Innerleven Assembly* (n.p., n.d.), p.11.

262. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.262.

263. *Ibid.*; 'James P. Taylor' *W*, 83 (1953), p.129; Mrs Effie McGregor', *BM*, 87 (1977), p.233.

264. *Ibid.*, p.262; *BM*, 15 (July 1905), p.i: this assembly moved to Musselburgh in 1908 (*BM*, 18 (August 1908), p.i), where it was apparently discontinued, and the meeting in Portobello was re-founded in 1911 (*BM* 21 (January 1911), p.i).

265. *W*, 41 (June 1911), endpp.; 'Robert Ainslie', *W*, 81 (1951), p.56.

266. *W*, 43 (1913), p.306; oral information, July 1988.

267. 'John Fraser', *W*, 96 (1966), p.236.

268. See above, p.152.

269. Ransome W. Cooper, *James Lees: shepherd of lonely sheep in Europe* (London, 1959), p.18.

270. *BM*, 18 (May 1908), p.i; *BM*, 19 (April 1909), p.i; [Waddell], *Roman Road Hall*, pp.7-8.

271. *BM*, 22 (August 1912), p.i.

272. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.243.

meetings in Salem Hall, Ibrox (Map 11, no. 26), in 1903; Hermon Hall, Govanhill (Map 11, no. 50), in 1904; Albert Hall, Shawlands, in 1909; and Holmlea Hall, Cathcart Road (Map 11, no. 52), in 1911.²⁷³ In Dunbartonshire an outreach over several years resulted in an assembly being formed in the Radnor Park area of Clydebank in 1913.²⁷⁴ In north Ayrshire (see Map 13), as the majority of the members of Beith assembly lived in or near Barrmill, a meeting was formed in the village in 1902;²⁷⁵ and in 1906 Kilbirnie member Robert White founded one in the hamlet of Barkip where he lived.²⁷⁶ Assemblies were concerned to create new ones around them.

The planting of assemblies by existing ones surveyed in the previous paragraph is hard to disentangle from the migration of Brethren members. New industrialised communities attracted Brethren in search of employment and they would often travel to a nearby meeting, but their ambition would be to establish one in their place of residence. Sometimes this would be achieved through evangelism, and sometimes through a mixture of evangelism and further Brethren members moving to the new area. The effects of the immigration of labour can be seen at its simplest in places such as that of Cowie, Stirlingshire (see Map 9), when the opening of a new coal mine brought Brethren miners to the village where they began an assembly in 1895,²⁷⁷ or in the expansion of the west Fife coalfield (see Map 7) where in the newly founded burgh of Cowdenbeath the

273. Anon., 'Those Sixty Years 1890-1950', in *Elim Hall*, pp.5-6.

274. *BM*, 43 (December 1913), p.ii.

275. Writer's collection, I.C.2., David Bell, 'A Short History of the Christian Brethren Movement with Special Reference to the Origin of the Barrmill Assembly', typescript June 1986, p.4; Beith assembly was discontinued shortly after the Barrmill assembly was formed.

276. 'Robert White', *W*, 68 (1938), p.72.

277. Dr M H B Sanderson's collection, Linlithgow, Joseph Waugh, 'Cowie Assembly', holograph MS, 26 November 1974; writer's collection, I.U.1., Danny Sharp to the writer, 13 August 1988.

meeting went from its original four members in 1898 to forty in two years,²⁷⁸ and additional meetings were formed in Cardenden in 1905,²⁷⁹ and Low Valleyfield in 1910.²⁸⁰ There were at least another twelve places in this period where the migration of Brethren led to assemblies being formed,²⁸¹ but in some cases it seems to be a mixture of causes. Some Brethren members of nearby meetings lived in these places and evangelism gathered more together until it became possible to form a separate congregation, and this was the case especially in the cities and larger conurbations.

The Brethren in this period continued to attract individuals from other churches. The Exclusive Stuart Party meeting in Hamilton, Olive Hall, associated with the Open Brethren about this time, appearing in the 1904 assembly address list.²⁸² Baptist church members were particularly likely to be gained in this way.²⁸³ In Fife (see Map 7) members of the Inverkeithing Christian Endeavour, an activity of the Baptist Church, who met by candlelight to study the Bible in a barber's back shop, formed an

278. *BM*, 10 (February 1900), p.i.

279. *BM*, 15 (September 1905), p.i.

280. *BM*, 20 (December 1910), p.i.

281. These were: Ballater, Aberdeenshire (1906): *BM*, 17 (February 1907), pi; Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire (1910): *w*, 40 (October, 1910), endpp.; Nairn (1894, re-formed 1899): Beattie, *Brethren*, p.272 and William Wright to Alex Stewart, 27 November 1974, in Mr Alex. Stewart's collection, Hopeman, [Alex. Stewart (compiler)], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.; Inchberry, Moray (1909): 'George Mouat Johnson', *BM*, 84 (1974), p.127; Muirhead, Lanarkshire (1892): 'John Pirie', *W*, 74 (March 1944), p.iv and oral information, 27 February 1991; Bathgate, West Lothian (c.1906): 'A. Mabon', *BM*, 27 (March 1917), p.iv; Dunbar, East Lothian (1895): 'Mrs Charles Spence', *W*, 75 (May 1945), p.iv; Philpston, West Lothian (1895): 'Joseph Lindsay', *W*, 61 (1931), p.72; Dalkeith, Mid Lothian (1902): oral information, July 1988; Perth (c.1904): writer's collection, I.Q.2., Wm Walker to the writer, 13 April 1989; Doane, Perthshire (c.1905): 'Willie Rew' in James Anderson (ed.), *They Finished their Course in the Eighties* (Kilmarnock, 1990), p.163; Shieldhill, Stirlingshire (1895): 'Alex. Ferrie', *BM*, 46 (1936), p.56.

282. Jordan, *List* (1904), p.150; for the Stuart Party, see above, p.3.

283. Dickson, 'Brethren and Baptists', pp.372-87.

assembly in 1910.²⁸⁴ At Lochore, one of the new mining communities of west Fife, a Baptist mission had been commenced about 1910.²⁸⁵ It met in premises known locally as 'the Glory Shop' due to its shop-window front and the revivalist activities of the members. The services were conducted by the lay members themselves and only occasionally was a Baptist pastor present to help. Among the immigrant miners who associated with the mission were ones who had previously been in assemblies. They talked of Brethren practices with the result that most of the mission seceded and it erected its own building in 1913.²⁸⁶ The attempt to found a Baptist cause in Plean, Stirlingshire (see Map 9), foundered, it appears, when the group merged about 1910 with a Brethren assembly, probably the one in neighbouring Cowie.²⁸⁷ At Ratho in West Lothian (see Map 9), the Baptist church was so reduced in numbers owing to individuals leaving for the Brethren that in 1912 the pastor had to resign and the church failed to recover from the loss.²⁸⁸ Two secessions in 1907 which are known from single mentions in *The Witness* were the groups which left the Churches of God in Musselburgh and the Baptists in Springburn, but whether they were absorbed into other assemblies or failed to remain with the movement is not known.²⁸⁹

It was in 1910 when the mission hall founded in Huntly by Robert McKilliam united with the town's assembly,²⁹⁰ and at Kilwinning, in central Ayrshire, a group of lay activists who were recent converts and

284. *W*, 40 (March 1910), p.iv; Kilmarnock, writer's collection, I.I.6.(i), Archie Carmichael, MS history of Inverkeithing assembly ([1988]); *ibid.*, I.I.6.(ii), Harry Edwards to the writer, 1 September 1988.

285. Geo. Yuille (ed.), *History of the Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1926), p.286.

286. Oral information, 19 November 1988.

287 D W Bebbington (ed.), *The Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1988), p.206.

288. Yuille (ed.), *History of the Baptists*, pp.127-8; Bebbington (ed.), *Baptists in Scotland*, p.101.

289. *W*, 37 (1907), pp.58, 184.

290. See above, p.90; 'Dr Robert M'Killiam, London', *BP*, 36 (1915), pp.54-6; *W*, 40 (1910), p.55.

who had gradually adopted Brethren practices, had also united with the meeting shortly after they had begun breaking bread in 1892.²⁹¹ Transfers from such bodies provided the greatest number of accessions of Evangelical Christians in this period. The removal of a couple, who were members of the Kilbarchan meeting, to Bridge of Weir led to a mission hall there being formed into an assembly in 1903.²⁹² Also in Renfrewshire (see Map 12) some members of the Linwood Gospel Mission who had been in contact with the Brethren in Paisley turned the Mission into an assembly in 1904.²⁹³ In Glasgow two men, both named James Wilson, had begun evangelistic work in the Garngad district of the city (see Map 11, no.12) in 1888 and through Bible study they and their converts had begun to observe the Lord's supper together. In 1892 James McAlonan drew them into the Brethren movement.²⁹⁴ Elsewhere in Glasgow's east end, the Camlachie Carters' Mission (see Map 11, no.31)—founded in 1873 after Moody's evangelistic campaign—formed itself into an assembly in the early 1890s.²⁹⁵ Bethesda Hall in Govan also became Brethren in 1909.²⁹⁶ In Lanarkshire (see Map 10) members of Wrangham Free Church mission hall, New Stevenston, felt their independent Bible studies were disapproved of by the congregation. They seceded in 1897 to form a meeting in the village.²⁹⁷ In the same county, when the Exclusive assembly in the mining hamlet of Wattstown was discontinued, some members joined the Evangelistic Gospel Band in Greengairs and in 1908 it

291. Anon., 'Kilwinning', pp.307-8.

292. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.259; 'David Wight', *BM*, 64 (1954), p.20.

293. Anon., *These Are My Brethern* [sic]: *Linwood Gospel Hall* 1953 (n.p. [1953]).

294. Beattie, *Brethren*, pp.246-9.

295. 'J.A. Garriock', *W*, 78 (1948), p.iii; 'James Moffat', *W*, 92 (1962), p.236.

296. *W*, 39 (June 1909), endpp.; this mission met in premises formerly occupied by the assembly which by then met in Bethesda Hall, Linthouse.

297. Writer's collection, I.M.21., David Wilson, 'A Brief History of the Assembly of Christian Brethren Meeting in Gospel Hall, Hall St., New Stevenston, Motherwell', MS [1989].

formed itself into a Open Brethren assembly.²⁹⁸ So too in 1913 did the mission hall in Coatdyke, Airdrie.²⁹⁹ At Shotts, however, the mission divided about 1902 when some members wanted to begin breaking bread,³⁰⁰ and in Motherwell, when some individuals from Hallelujah Hall seceded in 1911, they were acknowledged as an assembly.³⁰¹ At Hags in Stirlingshire (see Map 9) a meeting was formed in 1902 out of the Faith Mission in nearby Banknock,³⁰² and the new assembly in turn led the mission in Bonnybridge to become an assembly about 1904 when it continued to meet in the same building.³⁰³ Camelon assembly was formed when a group of twelve individuals, led by Peter Easson who had been a member of the Brethren in his native Cowdenbeath, left the Miller Hall in Falkirk in 1913.³⁰⁴

Most of these transferences were apparently amicable, particularly in places such as Coatdyke where only one member was lost as a result of the mission becoming an assembly. There could be a grey area between Brethren and mission hall identities. On the island of Flotta, Orkney, a meeting was formed in 1910 probably through evangelist James Stephen, but it failed to be included in any assembly address list and it was not entirely clear whether it was a mission hall or an assembly.³⁰⁵ But other transfers were more troubled. In Falkirk, for example, the soured relations between the mission and the assembly lasted for a long time. Here the

298. Writer's collection, I.M.13. (i), 'Assembly of God, Greengairs', anonymous MS [1989]; *ibid.*, I.M.13. (ii). untitled history of Greengairs assembly, anonymous typescript, n.d.

299. James McLachlan, *Ebenezer Hall, Coatdyke* (n.p., [1946]), pp.8-9.

300. Oral information, 18 April 1987; 'John Smith' *W*, 79 (1949), p.151.

301. Oral information 18 November 1986; 'Malcolm Sinclair', *W*, 91 (1961), p.356.

302. Writer's collection, I.U.3., Russell Turnbull to the writer, 30 October 1988.

303. Oral information 24 December 1988.

304. Anon., 'How it began: Camelon', *BM*, 98 (1988), p.261-2.

305. *W*, 40 (August 1910), endpp.; *BM*, 21 (November 1911), p.i; Stephen was active in holding services for Christians on Flotta in November 1910, see writer's collection, II, Charles Smith's papers, James Stephen to Charles Smith, 30 November 1910.

familiar accusation was raised that the Brethren were 'sheep-stealers'.³⁰⁶

There were in addition a further thirty-nine assemblies which probably came into existence between 1892 and 1914 but whose causes of founding have not been recorded.³⁰⁷ Undoubtedly the factors discussed above would be involved in their formation. But despite the increases of the two decades before World War I, it appears that growth was slowing as the

306. Sally Herring, 'Dissent in Scotland', in Peter L Sissons, *The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1973), p.343.

307. These are: Banffshire: Rothiemay (fl.1894): 'Alex Shepherd', *W*, 69 (1939), p.143; Aberdeenshire: Cruden Bay (by 1897): Jordan, *List* (1897), p.120; Fraserburgh (c.1890): James Cordiner, *Fragments from the Past: an account of people and events in the assemblies of northern Scotland* (London, 1961), p.78 ([William Noble], 'How it began: Fraserburgh', *BM*, 99 (1989), p.182, places the founding in the early twentieth century, a dating which is too late as the assembly appears in Jordan, *List* (1897), p.122); Kincardineshire: Auchinblae (c.1911): 'William Douglas', *W*, 61 (1931), p.192; Stonehaven (1914): *W*, 44 (1914), p.29; Perthshire: Abernethy (1901): writer's collection, I.Q.1., [J A Wilkie], 'Abernethy Gospel Hall', typescript, 1990; Crieff (by 1897): Jordan, *List*, p.120; Pitlochry (1907): *W*, 37 (1907), p.71; Angus: Arbroath (1911); [John Beattie], 'How it began: Arbroath', *BM*, 99 (1990), pp.133-4; Forfar (1901): 'Peter Wilkie', *W*, 81 (1951), p.15; Fife: Upper Largo (1909): *BM*, 19 (May 1909), p.i; Lothians: Edgehead (1908): *W*, 38 (1908), p.167; Fauldhouse (1913) *W*, 43 (1913), p.279; North Berwick (1907): *W*, 37 (1907), p.71; Uphall (1905): 'Henry Forsyth', *W* 62 (1932), p.119; Whitburn (c.1901): 'Neil Menzies', *W*, 72 (1942), p.iv; Lanarkshire: Caldercruix (1893): 'Andrew Wilson', *W*, 58 (1928), p.299; Harthill (by 1904): *W*, 35 (1905), p.1; High Blantyre (by 1893): *W*, 65 (1935), p.191; Kirkwood (by 1897): Jordan, *List* (1897), p.128; Morningside (c.1893): 'William Brown', *BM*, 45 (1935), p.307; Tarbrax (1908): *W*, 38 (March 1908), endpp.; Uddingston (c.1895): 'William Stewart', *W*, 60 (1930), p.168, writer's collection I.M.27., Andrew McNeish to the writer May 1988; Glasgow: Cumberland Hall, Eglinton (disc. 1905): *BM*, 15 (March 1905), endpp.; Tylefield Hall, Gallowgate (by 1897): Jordan, *List* (1897), p.124; ; Gospel Hall, Keppochhill (c.1908): *BM*, 18 (May 1908), p.i; Wyndford Hall, Maryhill (by 1897), Jordan, *List* (1897), p.124; Mathieson St. Hall, Oatlands (disc. 1907): *W*, 37 (1907), p.87; Gospel Hall, Parkhead (1896): *BM*, 6 (1896), p.132; Summerfield Hall, Whiteinch (1902): *W*, 62 (1932), p.93; Dunbartonshire: Hope Hall, Clydebank (1900): *BM*, 11 (January 1901), p.i; Renfrewshire: Elderslie (1908): *BM*, 19 (March 1909), p.ii; Johnstone (by 1892): 'Robert Stewart', *W*, 62 (1932), p.216; Bethany Hall, Paisley (by 1897): Jordan, *List*, p.132; Moorpark, Renfrew (by 1914): *BM*, 24 (July 1914), p.i Ayrshire: Ochiltree (by 1904): Jordan, *List* (1904), p.158; Old Cumnock (by 1892): *BM*, 3 (1892), p.11; Stewarton (c.1905): *BM*, 5 (1898), p.84, *BM*, 15 (September 1905), p.i, 'Mrs Margaret Soutter', *BM*, 82 (1922), p.233; Trabboch (1900): *BM*, 10 November 1900), p.i; Waterside (1895): *BM*, 5 (1895), p.24.

There were also apparently abortive attempts to found assemblies in Monifieth, Angus (*W*, 40 (December 1910), endpp.), and Bishopbriggs, Lanarkshire (*W*, 43 (1913), p.139). In addition it is likely that four meetings whose existence was first recorded in the assembly address list published in 1921 were formed before World War I; these were: Portmahomack, Easter Ross (fl. 1921-2); California, Stirlingshire (fl. 1921-2); Tranent, East Lothian (fl. 1921-59); and Mossend, Lanarkshire (fl. 1921-2). Excluding Tranent assembly, the only other reference to them was in the 1922 address list.

movement entered the twentieth century. There were occasional local outbreaks of revivalism after 1905, such as the one W J Gerrie experienced on Westray in 1913 or which Percy Beard witnessed that same year in Galston when about sixty individuals—half of them young female textile workers from the same factory—were converted.³⁰⁸ But awakenings became a decreasing factor in Brethren growth. Although the data extracted from *The Witness* obituaries suggest that the opening years of the twentieth century had been favourable ones for the movement, since about 1895 the underlying trend had been for the growth rate to decrease (Figure 4.3). If the number of additions and conversions in these data are aggregated, then the percentage increase for the decade 1882-91 is 84.4, but the equivalent figure for 1905-14 is 22.4. These data, of course, only register those joining and do not take account of losses which were higher in the later period. But they suggest that net increase had slowed considerably, and probably Brethren growth was behind that of the population in the years before the World War I, something that was certainly the case in other churches.³⁰⁹ It is likely that it slowed sufficiently for the Brethren to suffer some slight overall decline in the pre-World War I period: this is suggested by the membership of both Lesmahagow and Elim Hall, Glasgow (Figures 4.4 and 4.5).

Assemblies in many rural areas were struggling. While conducting services in St Margaret's Hope, South Ronaldsay, James Stephen lamented that 'the situation in the assemblies in Orkney is not too bright as we contemplate the future. Surely there is room for a nightly revival...'³¹⁰ The

308. *W*, 44 (January 1914), p.1.

309. Callum G Brown, 'Religion, class and church growth', in W Hamish Fraser and R J Morris (eds), *People and Society in Scotland: II 1830-1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), Figure 1, p.314; and *idem*, 'Religion and secularisation', in Tony Dickson and James H Treble (eds), *People and Society in Scotland: III 1914-1990* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp.48-55.

310. Writer's collection, II, Charles Smith's papers, James Stephen to Charles Smith, 19 December 1910.

assembly address list which was published in 1921 revealed that the number of assemblies in Aberdeenshire (excluding Aberdeen city) had been virtually halved since the previous list of 1904, dropping from twenty-three to twelve, and most of these were probably discontinued before World War I.³¹¹ But even in Glasgow elders met in 1910 to discuss 'The Decline in the Spiritual Birth Rate: Its Cause and Remedy'.³¹² Competition was growing from new secularised forms of leisure.³¹³ 'Now-a-days some effort has to be made to get people to hear the Gospel,' John Ritchie noted in 1899.³¹⁴ As factors in spiritual decline Henry Pickering, recently appointed as editor of *The Witness*, could point at the war's commencement to 'the enormous increase in football thousands, picture palace queues (even on Lord's days), professional sports, resorts of pleasure and sin, and such-like'.³¹⁵ Recruitment was proving more difficult. But probably the biggest single factor in net decline in this period was overseas emigration which reached its Scottish peak in 1911.³¹⁶ As shall be seen in Chapter 9, Brethren members were more likely to emigrate than the general population,³¹⁷ and it would appear that Brethren emigration had peaked the previous year when 'Large Numbers [sic] of Christians' had left.³¹⁸ Glasgow assemblies were particularly affected during the depression in shipbuilding of 1910:³¹⁹ by the spring of 1913 it was being

311. Jordan, *List* (1904), p.128; *List of Some Assemblies in the British Isles: where believers professedly gather in the name of the Lord Jesus for worship and breaking of bread in remembrance of him upon the first day of the week* (London & Glasgow [1921]), pp.38-49.

312. *BM*, 21 (January 1911), p.i.

313. Brain Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: stability and change in modern Britain* (Oxford, 1982), pp.123-56; Callum G Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730* (London, 1987), pp.182-3.

314. *BM*, 9 (1899), p.94.

315. HyP[ickering], 'The world at war', *W*, 44 (1914), p.166.

316. Michael Flinn (ed.), *Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977), pp.441-55; M Anderson and D J Morse, 'The People', in W Hamish Fraser and R J Morris (eds), *People and Society in Scotland 1813-1914*, 2 (Edinburgh, 1990), p.15.

317. For Brethren emigration, see pp.380-82.

318. *BM*, 20 (October 1910), p.i; cf. below, Fig. 9.1.

319. Writer's collection, II, Malcolm Leslie to George Budge, tape cassette, 1979.

noted that the attendance at the Half-Yearly Conferences was reduced due to emigration.³²⁰ Meetings elsewhere were depleted. When gold mining was being developed in South Africa after the Boer War, many Brethren miners and their families from Auchinleck emigrated to work there, and others in the assembly went to the United States to work in the American coalfield. Altogether some seventy individuals were lost to a meeting of about 100 members,³²¹ and some eighty to ninety people—just under a third of the membership—of Roman Road Hall, Motherwell, also left for America.³²² A number of assemblies never recovered their pre-World War I numbers: emigration probably explains, for example, why those in the ship-building district of Govan were discontinued before the mid-twentieth century.

ELEMENTS IN GROWTH

In the forty years after 1870 the Brethren movement in Scotland enjoyed its greatest single expansion. By the late nineteenth century, reckoned Jamie Clifford, a missionary from Kilbirnie, south-west Scotland had the highest concentration of Brethren assemblies in the world.³²³ The first Ayrshire conference of 1872 had 200 present at it, but by 1903 there were some 1 000 in attendance, an increase of 400 per cent.³²⁴ Throughout the period the data in *The Witness* obituaries show the average age of conversion to be between 20 and 22 and that of reception into fellowship as being 26 until just before World War I when it rose to 30.8 (Table 3.1).³²⁵ The movement continued to appeal to young adults and not merely the

320. *W*, 43 (May 1913), p.139.

321. McCombe, 'Auchinleck Assembly', pp.5-6.

322. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.216.

323. A C T[homson], *Un Hombre Bueno: vida de Jaimie Clifford* (n.p., Argentina, 1957), p.24.

324. John Ritchie Jnr, *"Feed My Sheep": memorials of Peter Hynd of Troon* (Kilmarnock, 1904), p.16.

325. This last figure is for 1910-13, remarkably similar to the 30.8 given in Table 3.1 for 1910-19. However, this figure may reflect the inaccuracy of the data for later periods.

children of members. A causal nexus is impossible to prove, but it seems likely that the constant social and demographic change of the era was a critical element in growth. As was seen above, it not only affected industrialised communities but rural ones also. Change made people open to new influences, and both conversion and the stability assembly membership offered lessened anomie. However, this last point should not be exaggerated,³²⁶ for too much social unrest hindered evangelism, as was found during a miners' strike of 1912.³²⁷ Much of Brethren success rested in their ability, often after a period of persecution, to penetrate communities.

There were other factors. There was a shared ethos among mission halls, certain types of Baptist churches, and the Brethren which allowed individuals to exchange easily from one to the other, such as philosopher John Macmurray's father, a Glasgow mission hall member who joined a Baptist church on moving to Aberdeen, then switched to the Brethren, and on returning to Glasgow went back to a mission.³²⁸ However, most individuals who transferred remained Brethren. Another reason for the growth of the movement was dissatisfaction with existing churches, as was shown by gains from other Christian bodies. The Free Church of Scotland father of Brethren surgeon, William Strain, was influenced by a mid-nineteenth century revival while living in Wales and on returning to Scotland joined an assembly.³²⁹ He was typical of many who found that the Brethren movement was the body which most closely continued

326. Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994), pp.32-3, has found evidence for anomie lacking in his study of religion in Lancashire industrial communities; cf. below, pp.374-83.

327. 'Notes', *BM*, 22 (April 1912), p.i.

328. John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* (London, 1965), p.7-8; I am indebted to Prof. Sam McKinstry for this reference.

329. Anne Arnott, *Wife to the Archbishop* (London & Oxford, 1976), pp.6-7; W L Strain was father of Jean Coggan, wife of Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury.

aspects of the awakenings. Features of the new industrialised hamlets and villages were also significant. The gospel hall provided a religious alternative to the public house which was often their only recreational facility. Behquhat, a mining hamlet in Ayrshire where the Brethren gained converts, was described as being without 'kirk, public house or prison'.³³⁰ Traditional ties had also been loosened in the industrial village. *The Believer's Magazine* noted of Glenbuck that 'the Kirk has little hold on the villagers, which is a mercy, and leaves them free to go and hear the Gospel'.³³¹ The coming of an evangelist—often during a long winter or afterwards in the spring—was a break in an uneventful routine,³³² and crowds gathered at open-air preaching. There was the 'poor mother, with half-a-dozen children around her' whom John Ritchie encountered in an Ayrshire village in the summer of 1880:

... living away near a colliery, far from "church", "chapel" or "meeting house". She has been "thinking of these things for a long while now," and says sometimes she is "like to lose her reason," but she has no one to speak the word that will set her troubled soul at peace. Sitting with her babe on her knee she passes from death to life....³³³

The lack of social and religious competition favoured Brethren evangelism.

But it is also apparent from Ritchie's description that the appeal of his message was grounded on the woman's prior assent to the Christian worldview. The future missionary James Lees was converted in 1895 when someone in Hamilton handed him a tract which merely left the reader to complete the phrase 'If I die to-night, I will be in H—'.³³⁴ Certainly

³³⁰. *BM*, 14 (September 1904), p.i; for the similar example of Drongan, Ayrshire, see below, pp.255-6.

³³¹. *BM*, 5 (1895), p.24.

³³². Cf. the experience of the future Mrs James Scroggie in Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, Scroggie, *Life in the Love of God*, p.11.

³³³. John Ritchie, 'Evangelistic tour among the villages', *NW*, 20 (1880), p.77.

³³⁴. Cooper, *James Lees*, p.17; cf. Hy Pickering, *One Thousand Tales Worth Telling: mostly new/strictly true/suitable for you* (London & Glasgow [c. 1914], p.44.

Victorian religious doubt had penetrated working-class culture: in 1900 evangelist John Ferguson felt it necessary to give one convert in the mining hamlet of Fergushill, Ayrshire, a booklet defending the integrity of the gospels, evidently because the man was troubled by critical theories.³³⁵ Nevertheless the Christian world-picture was still popularly accepted, and possibly this was a decisive factor in explaining the appeal of the evangelist's warnings of future damnation and offer of present salvation. From this perspective it might be argued that all churches profited from religious teaching in elementary schools provided for by the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act and each other's work in disseminating a common Christian message. Religious competition was healthy.

The techniques which were deployed in evangelism were also a powerful factor in Brethren growth. The plentiful use of itinerant evangelists has already been discussed, but there were a number of other methods which the movement took over from popular nineteenth-century Evangelicalism. Sunday schools and children's meetings were almost universally used means in the Brethren. The assembly at Coalburn had grown out of a Sunday school commenced by George and Catherine McGowan, natives of the village, which went from six attenders to 100 in its first year, and by the time of the meeting's founding in 1905 had some 300 children with a further ninety young people attending a Bible class.³³⁶ At Larkhall by the turn of the century five Sunday schools were maintained, and when they were at their peak in 1905 a special train had to be hired to take 1 100 scholars on the annual excursion to Strathaven.³³⁷

335. Mrs Elizabeth Mackinnon's collection, Crosshouse, John Ferguson, holograph flyleaf inscription to Robert Morrison dated July 1900 on copy of Anon., *The Gospels: why are there four, why do they differ and are they fully inspired?* (London, n.d.); cf. BM, 10 (July 1900), endpp.

336. 'George McGowan', BP, 47 (1926), p.24; 'Mrs Catherine McGowan', W, 82 (1953), p.12; the latter source gives four initial attenders.

337. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.49.

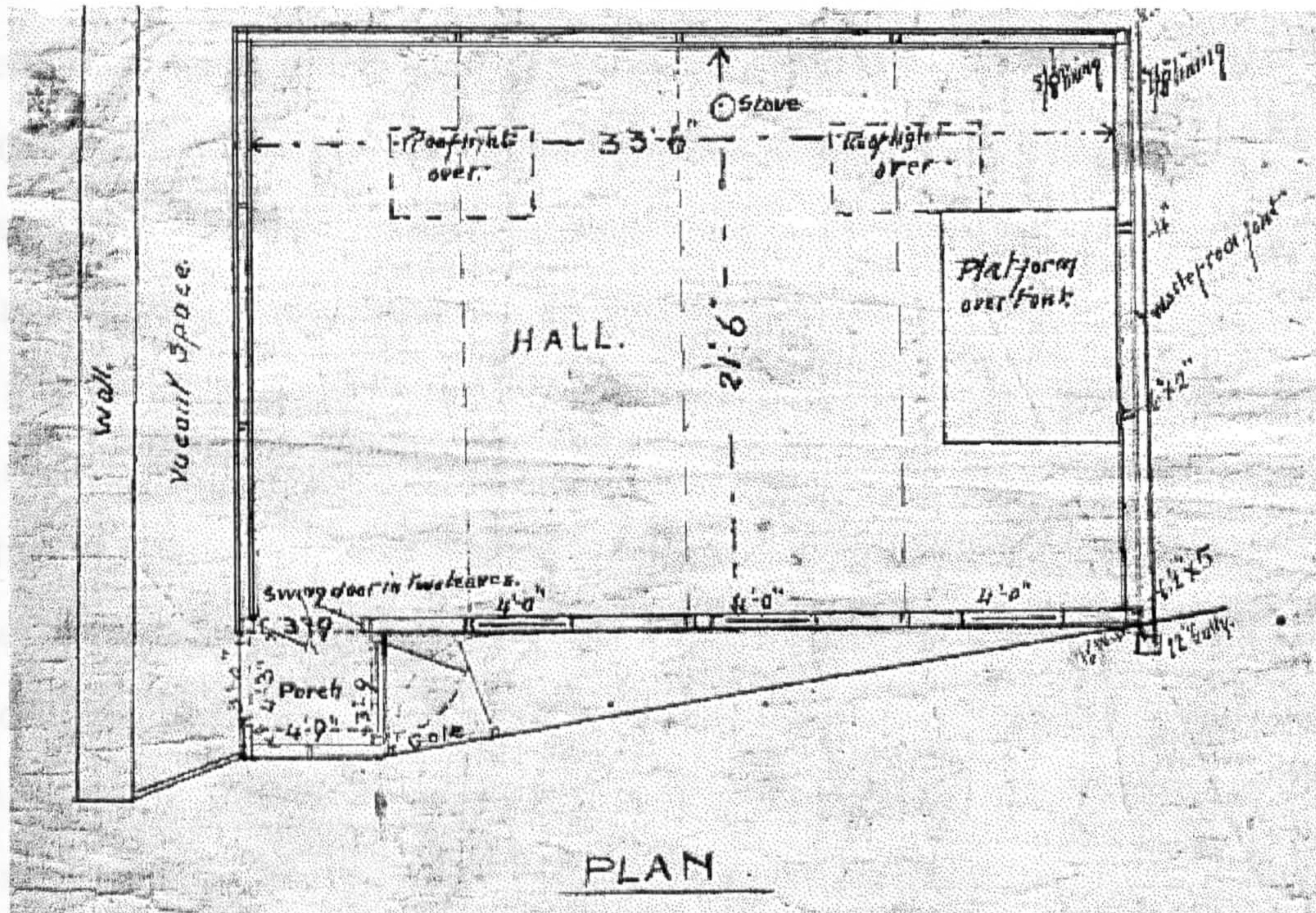
Perhaps the numbers involved at Larkhall, doubtless inflated by irregular attenders attracted by the outing, were exceptional, but it was by no means uncommon for substantial proportions of village children to attend such excursions. Brethren Sunday schools offered Bible lessons and appeals to be saved, but their jaunty choruses and Evangelical enthusiasm could make them lively affairs. *The Witness* editor Henry Pickering was an advocate of 'eyegate lessons', simple object lessons the construction of which usually demanded some ability in handicrafts. In one such lesson, a joiner had to be enlisted to construct a model of an asymmetrical, double gateway, with one door painted black and the other red, respectively symbolising the wide and strait gates of Christ's saying.³³⁸ Pickering wrote a book containing examples of his lessons which had a wide influence, and there were many other Brethren publications available for children and workers among them.³³⁹ One of John Ritchie's first publications was a monthly paper for the former begun in 1883, and there were two other such magazines commenced in the 1880s. Nor were the teachers left out, and in the same decade two monthly magazines were initiated which gave lesson plans and other aids for them.³⁴⁰ Although numbers were to remain high, Brethren Sunday schools appear to have reached their zenith in the Edwardian era, by which period the movement had been accepted as a familiar feature in many communities. Undoubtedly many of the children were multiple attenders of Sunday schools, such as one woman from Stirling who went to those of the Brethren and Church of

338. Hy Pickering, *How to Make and Show 100 Object Lessons: suitable for Sunday schools, annual treats, seaside services, open-air gatherings, happy evenings, at home, Bible classes and all work among young or old* (Glasgow, 1922), p.11; cf. Matt. 7:13.

339. Cf. John Ritchie, *500 Children's Subjects: with outlines of blackboard and emblematic gospel address for workers amongst the young*, 2nd edn (Kilmarnock, 1911); *idem*, *How to Teach and Win the Young: a practical handbook for Sunday school teachers and all evangelistic workers amongst young folks* (Kilmarnock [1924]).

340. See below, p.343; Brethren publications for children and Christian workers are surveyed in J A H Dempster, 'Aspects of Brethren publishing enterprise in late nineteenth century Scotland', *Publishing History*, 20 (1986), pp.61-101.

Figure 4.6. Plan for Gospel Hall, Kirkintilloch, 1897.



Source: Writer's collection, I.G.3.(ii), drawings by John Shanks, 'Proposed meeting house for Christian Brethren at East High Street', November 1897.

Scotland.³⁴¹ The vast majority of scholars would not go on to join an assembly. But the large numbers which often were found at the work among children gave the movement an important role in the diffusion of Evangelical Christianity in late Victorian and early twentieth-century industrial Scotland.³⁴²

The locations in which Brethren evangelism took place were also important. The simplicity of the structures which were used brought recruitment near to the people. Kitchen meetings, held in the larger room of a two-roomed house, were widely used. Through using her home in

341. Callum G Brown and Jane D Stephenson, "'Sprouting Wings?': women and religion in Scotland c.1890-1950', in Esther Breitenbach and Eleanor Gordon (eds), *Out of Bounds: women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.103.

342. For the latent functions of Brethren Sunday schools, see below, pp.371-2.

this way Essy Rabey, a single woman from Glengarnock who was converted in 1892, saw ten of her family saved.³⁴³ In 1904 at least forty-six assemblies were meeting in rented accommodation and the address of a further ten was a private house, together comprising 19.6 per cent. of all assemblies.³⁴⁴ These meeting places were a measure of how small many congregations were. But even the halls which were acquired were simple. A few in this period erected larger buildings, such as the new Hebron Hall, Airdrie, which was acclaimed as being 'one of the finest in the country' when it opened in 1905.³⁴⁵ More typical of Brethren halls, however, was the small, box-like structure of Gospel Hall, Kirkintilloch, with its rooflights over the blind wall and solid-fuel stove standing against it (Figure 4.6). It was squeezed into a site between the River Luggie and a commercial property, and the equally inauspicious location of many others was described in a rhyming couplet:

Through a close and up a stair
You're sure to find the Brethren there.³⁴⁶

It was in such places that the evangelistic Sunday evening gospel meeting was held, and although Alexander Marshall warned that ill-ventilated buildings in similar locations would discourage the respectable,³⁴⁷ the features of even the better halls made them less imposing than a church. The preaching in outlying areas was conducted in large marquees. In Thomas Black of Greenock Scottish Brethren possessed their own tent maker,³⁴⁸ and such marquees were felt to be an advantage because of

343. 'Essy Rabey', *W*, 70 (1940), p.90.

344. Figure abstracted from Jordan, *List* (1904); there undoubtedly were a number of others in rented accommodation, but only those halls with names which clearly show they were rented have been counted.

345. *W*, 35 (1905), p.1.

346. Quoted in Neil Dickson, 'Brethren and their Buildings', *H*, 68, no. 5 (October, 1989), p.13.

347. Alexander Marshall, 'Hindrances to progress in the Gospel: paper III', *W*, 35 (1905), pp.184.

348. *W*, 38 (February 1908), endpp.

'coolness, novelty, and noiselessness... and there are no stairs to ascend'.³⁴⁹ Glasgow Brethren had one since 1864,³⁵⁰ and ten years later it had been joined by another two as well as ones in Greenock, mid-Scotland and the Highlands.³⁵¹ By the early twentieth century many counties possessed one, assemblies in a shire associating for united missions during the summer. The novelty of tents was especially singled out as an attraction,³⁵² but it proved to be a short-lived one for by 1894 it was reported they no longer had the drawing power they once had.³⁵³ Bible carriages were another innovation which the Brethren used. The earliest one, the Caledonian Gospel Carriage, a gift in 1886 of Colonel Molesworth, was horse drawn, heavily decorated with Bible texts and with sleeping quarters for the evangelists who staffed it.³⁵⁴ It was originally manned by John Ritchie, and at the end of its first season of operation 100 000 tracts had been distributed and 10 000 scriptures had been sold.³⁵⁵

This profligacy with which tracts—short leaflets containing a summary of the gospel—had been distributed was typical. The Glasgow Postal Workers' tract band, founded in 1897, specialised in sending them through the mail, and in 1911 alone they distributed 14 664 tracts through this means.³⁵⁶ In the space of thirty minutes 16 000 leaflets were distributed by eighty Brethren members in a Glasgow street in 1913. The publishers supplied a steady flow. In 1878 the Glasgow Publishing Office began publishing a monthly magazine for gratuitous circulation, *The Herald of Salvation*,

349. *NA*, no. 7 (July 1874), p.28.

350. *W*, 57 (1927), p.116.

351. *NA*, no. 18 (May 1874), p.24; *NW*, 5 (1875), p.95.

352. Samuel Blow, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Gospel Work and Revival Times* [c.1890] rpt (Glasgow, 1988), p.89; *NA*, 7 (July 1873), p.28; *NA*, 57 (1875), p.127.

353. *BM*, 4 (1894), p.95.

354. *NW*, 16 (April 1886), endpp.; *NW*, 16 (July 1886), endpp.; T Baird, 'Duncan M'Nab, Caledonian Bible Carriage', *BP*, 48 (1927), p.114-17.

355. *NW*, 16 (November 1886), endpp.

356. *W*, 41 (May 1911), endpp.; *W* 45 (April 1915), p.52, endpp.

imitated by John Ritchie's *The Gospel Messenger*, commenced about 1887. These magazines were little more than a series of tracts, but the rubric enabled them to be given to the same people and households repeatedly.³⁵⁷ Evangelistic tracts were also designed for special interest groups—such as seamen, emigrants or Gaelic speakers—and evangelism was also targeted at these groups, or places where it was felt people might be receptive—such as esplanades, fairs, racecourses, hospitals and prisons.³⁵⁸ J A H Dempster is critical of the indiscriminate nature of tract distribution, but the occasional conversion achieved through its profligacy probably justified it in Brethren eyes.³⁵⁹

One ethnic minority which received some attention from the Brethren was the Jewish community. Dispensationalism, the prophetic scheme espoused by the Brethren, is markedly philo-semitic.³⁶⁰ The postal workers mailed tracts to Jews, and in 1905 Dr J Muir Kelly founded the Glasgow Jewish Medical Mission in Cumberland Hall, Eglinton.³⁶¹ He offered medical treatment and held evangelistic services.³⁶² However, it is doubtful how successful the latter were. Despite the opening in 1910 of another hall in Clyde Terrace for outreach and open-air services among Jews, until the Mission ceased its operation in 1916 due to the war it did not report any converts.³⁶³ The other major immigrant group, the

357. Patrick Scott, 'The business of belief: the emergence of 'Religious' publishing', in Derek Baker (ed.) *SCH*, 10 (Oxford, 1973), p.218, n.23; for a full discussion of the series of tracts offered by these two publishers, see Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', *passim*.

358. For evangelism at fairs see: *NEI*, 2 (1872), pp.11-12; at racecourses: *BM*, 3 (1893), p.120; and in hospitals: *W*, 39 (March 1909), endpp.

359. Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', pp.85-6; for an example of a conversion through a tract, see above, p.167.

360. David S Katz, 'The phenomenon of philo-semitism', in Diana Wood (ed.), *SCH*, 29 (Oxford, 1992), pp.353-9; for dispensationalism, see below, pp.323-6.

361. *BM*, 15 (March 1905), endpp.; it later transferred to Eglinton Hall, Eglinton Street.

362. *BM*, 15 (September 1905), endpp; *BM*, 16 (February 1906), endpp.; *BM*, 16 (January 1906), endpp.

363. *BM*, 25 (August 1910), p.i; *BM*, 26 (August 1916), p.i: the argument from silence is, of course, perilous, but given the strong philo-semitism of the movement it seems likely that if there had been converts then their existence would have been trumpeted.

Catholic Irish, were largely ignored by the movement, and possibly anti-Catholicism was a factor here.³⁶⁴ The four Roman Catholics baptised after David Rea's Glasgow mission of 1895 were rare recruits.³⁶⁵ The lack of success in dealing with ethnic minorities, where Brethren were outsiders, contrasts with the conspicuous achievement of the movement among the population at large. The face-to-face nature of the industrial village or the communities of work and neighbourhood favoured personal testimony to the efficacy of salvation and was a potent cause of evangelistic effectiveness.

It was a commercial age and the Brethren had to persuade. Undoubtedly the means used could be tasteless.³⁶⁶ But readiness to embrace novel means raised the problem for the Brethren themselves of how far an evangelistic method was permissible. Sandwich boards were employed, and in Glasgow a Text-carrier Band was formed.³⁶⁷ To facilitate village visitation Ritchie offered a discount from a Christian bicycle manufacturer, a bicycle combining 'needed exercise with real service in the Gospel',³⁶⁸ and his eldest son, also John Ritchie, sold acetylene lamps for open-air services in ill-lit streets. 'No danger, no dirt, no difficulty, no darkness', he promised.³⁶⁹ The techniques of the Victorian entrepreneur were not very far away here. Other approaches could appear eccentric. Donald Ross forced a fellow evangelist to witness by shouting across a crowded Union Street, Aberdeen, "Well Masson, how's your soul?"³⁷⁰ An additional pressure to use any method which presented itself was the zeal with which Brethren pursued evangelism. Witnessing was the duty of

364. See below, p.395.

365. Rea (complier), *David Rea*, p.139.

366. Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', pp.85-6.

367. 'James Imrie', *W*, 64 (1934), p.264.

368. *BM*, 1 (1891), p.94.

369. Ritchie Jnr, "*Feed my Sheep*", endpp.

370. F F Bruce, 'The origins of 'The Witness'', *W*, 100 (1970), p.7.

every Christian,³⁷¹ and the need to warn individuals of hell was widely used as an incentive.³⁷² It could justify preaching which roused emotion or breaking the rules of etiquette,³⁷³ and the innovation of after meetings was accepted by many.³⁷⁴ But generally methods which were felt to be too much like entertainment or were too emotional were avoided. Bible women who did house-to-house visitation were used in some assemblies, especially in Glasgow, but increasingly, as shall be seen in the next chapter, women preachers were condemned.³⁷⁵ In 1905 John Ritchie felt he had to warn against ephemeral revivals which were 'got up'.³⁷⁶ The evangelistic styles which had gained popularity through Moody and his associate Ira D Sankey were also viewed with suspicion. Excessive use of 'anecdotes, pathetic and sentimental, which work on the natural emotions' and the use of solo singing and 'an American organ' were criticised.³⁷⁷ However, some Brethren adopted solo singing, most notably Robert F Beveridge who was known as 'Scotland's Sankey'. He received the urge to use his singing voice after hearing the American singer in Glasgow, and he also wrote his own evangelistic hymns.³⁷⁸ But most Brethren felt that the unadulterated use of the word of God was the principal, if not the sole, means of evangelism.³⁷⁹

371. Anon., 'What is to be done?', *NW*, (1875), p.100; A M[arshall], 'Full Gospel', *W*, 41 (1911), pp.127-8.

372. A Lover of Souls, 'Letter to a young preacher on closet prayer', *NEI*, 2 (1872), pp.2-3; anon., 'Christian consistency', *NEI*, 3 (1873), p.135-7; Alexander Marshall, 'Hindrances to progress', p.149.

373. Anon., 'Sensational preaching the only effectual sort', *NEI*, (1872), p.18; Ritchie, 'Evangelistic tour', pp.77-8

374. *NA*, no. 21 (September 1874), p.34; A J H[oliday], 'After meetings', *BP*, 7 (1886), pp.102-4.

375. See below, pp.187-9.

376. *BM*, (May 1905), endpp.

377. R H, 'Instrumental Music', *NW*, 6 (1876), p.185.

378. 'Robert F. Beveridge', *W*, 82 (1952), p.91; R F Beveridge (compiler), *Celestial Songs: a collection of 900 choice hymns and choruses* (London [1921]); for discussion of one of Beveridge's hymns, see below, p.346.

379. For views of the Bible, see below, pp.218-23.

By 1914 the Brethren were widely dispersed throughout the Lowlands, especially in industrial central and south-west Scotland. Not all the assemblies formed in this period managed to establish themselves for more than a short time and others remained small, but the demographic and social changes of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras had proved favourable for the new religious movement to grow. Although there were limits to what proved acceptable, innovative evangelistic techniques were embraced. Its lay ethos, furtherance of aggressive evangelism, and appeal to the primitivism of the early Church made it well-placed to attract from existing Christian bodies those who had been influenced by contemporary revivalism. As one critic caustically noted in 1875, 'the Brethren live upon revivals.'³⁸⁰ Not that the movement was dependent on the activities of other denominations, as it had often been in the 1860s. During this period it became self-sufficient in its ability to propagate itself through its capacity to sustain its own revivals, its increasing number of itinerant evangelists, the migration of members, and the outreach of assemblies. The recruitment techniques that were used were populist and suited to an age of mass democracy.³⁸¹ Both external and internal factors were responsible for Brethren growth.³⁸² The advance eventually slowed as the movement found itself in competition with new leisure pursuits and as religious concerns began retreating to the periphery of society. Emigration may have caused a drop in the gross membership, but secularisation slowed Brethren growth. In addition the increase of the movement was self-limiting. To join an assembly was to retreat in some degree from the norms of society. The high level of zeal for evangelism and behaviour expected during

380. Reid, *Plymouth Brethrenism*, p.25; cf. anon., 'The Lord's work', *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.57.

381. Cf. John Coffey, 'Democracy and popular religion: Moody and Sankey's mission to Britain, 1873-1875', in Eugenio F Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Democracy: Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.93-119.

382. Cf. David Luker, 'Revivalism in theory and practice: the case of Cornish Methodism', *JEH*, 37 (1986), pp.603-19.

it—such as standing in open-air services, distributing tracts or witnessing to neighbours and workmates—would frighten off all but the most committed of Evangelicals. The movement was also becoming more institutionalised as awakenings became a less significant element in growth and as the routine work of assemblies and evangelists became more so. Even acquiring its own building tied an assembly more firmly to a structure—John Ritchie advised shutting them up for several months to force the members to go to the people, and Alexander Marshall recommended renting secular buildings for evangelistic purposes.³⁸³ But less formal revivalist procedures were being eclipsed. In the history of the movement during this period there is a parallel process to its growth. It concerns how the Brethren developed into an established sect, and it is the subject of the next chapter.

383. *BM*, 9 (1899), p.94; Marshall 'Hindrances to progress', pp.184-5.

CHAPTER 5

A STEADY TIGHTENING PROCESS:

DEVELOPMENT 1870-1916

While professing to be as "open" as ever, we cannot disguise the fact that in the course of the last twenty years a steady *tightening* process has been at work.

—William Shaw, 'Fellowship among saints', *The Believer's Treasury*, 10 (February 1895), p.19.

William Shaw, a banker and committed church member, was converted through a series of meetings held in Maybole, south Ayrshire, by two itinerant preachers.¹ Shaw became a central figure in the Maybole Revival of the 1870s, founding the *Maybole Evangelist* in 1874, a periodical tract which was issued round the houses of the town,² and three years later, when he was 27 or 28, he and some others formed an assembly.³ Shaw went on to become a prominent Brethren member, founding and editing a further two magazines. In 1895 he described the thinking of many like himself when they had joined an assembly:

We had no call to "found a church". We were in the Church—we realised that we were bound up, with every believer, in the bundle of life with the Lord our God; and we found it blessed to be in the bundle. Neither had we any call to invent a form of Church-government. The Lord Himself, who has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness, has already furnished us with the New Testament pattern. All, therefore, that we had to do was to sit down with the open Bible before us, and seek to carry out, in the fear of God, what we found written there.⁴

But when Shaw was recalling the nondenominational *mentalité* of the mid-Victorian revivals he was writing in the shadow of events which

1. A M[arshall], 'William Shaw's conversion', *HS*, No.599 (January 1928), [pp.9-12].

2. 'William Shaw', *W*, 57 (1927), p.238; cf. Hugh Douglas, 'Roderick Lawson of Maybole', *Ayrshire Collections*, 12 (1978), p. 80..

3. 'Alex. Brackenridge' *CW*, 35 (1920), pp.1-2.

4. William Shaw, 'Fellowship among saints', *The Believer's Treasury*, 10 (1895), pp.17-18; this article was later widely circulated as a tract of the same title.

demonstrated that the presectarian phase of the Brethren in Scotland was irrevocably over.

Shaw dated the period over which this happened from the mid-1870s, almost exactly, at the time of writing in 1895, the years of his association with the Brethren.⁵ As the excitements of the revivals died down, there was a move towards greater uniformity and regulation of church order within Scottish assemblies. It was, Shaw stated in the colloquial jargon of the time, a process of 'tightening'. Those who effected it were concerned with its opposite, 'looseness', a range of practices that they maintained fell short of biblical standards and which they wished to eliminate. In the typology of a church life cycle developed by David Moberg the movement was moving from the phase in the 1860s of incipient organisation, characterised by unrest and dissatisfaction with existing churches, to that of formal organisation when cohesion is achieved and orthodoxy is established.⁶ For Moberg this is a process of institutionalisation in which a social order emerges through a shared history, is transmitted through the construction of roles, and community control is established.⁷ The development of the Brethren movement in the period discussed in the present chapter demonstrates an interesting series of choices about how far standardisation should extend in the definition of the sect. Some of these choices will be examined first before turning to study the Churches of God secession. Those involved in it proposed the establishment of controlling institutions as part of a programme of sectarian intensification. Scottish Brethren were ineradicably altered by the schism, and the chapter will also examine its aftermath and causes.

5. *Ibid.*, p.19.

6. David O Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution: the sociology of American religion* (1962) 2nd edn (Grand Rapids MI, 1984), pp.118-124.

7. Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (1966), Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp.65-109.

THE DUE ORDER

Given the unorchestrated emergence of the movement in the previous decades out of nondenominational revivalism a certain amount of regulation was inevitable, but it was never absolute. At the same time there was a move towards more settled patterns of church life. One sign of this emerging order was the disappearance of the 'open platform', preaching meetings open to any participant. These charismatic occasions, it would appear, had initially been the norm in many places.⁸ At Larkhall the practice was discontinued in the 1870s because of ungifted preachers, some individuals preaching too often, or long pauses. Speakers were thereafter booked, although the opening of a new factory in 1879 which brought Brethren members from Glasgow reopened the debate for a while. But, noted Robert Chapman, the historian of the assembly, the prearrangement of speakers allowed 'all things be done done decently and in order'.⁹ Because of the need for having someone gifted addressing the unconverted, appointed speakers were accepted at gospel meetings even by many supporters of open meetings for Christians.¹⁰ However, the open platform at the former was still being criticised in 1905, evidence of its continued use,¹¹ and it never entirely disappeared at the latter, the system lingering longest at conferences.¹² But although the morning meeting would remain open for participation from among the men in fellowship,¹³ by 1904 it was noted that the booking of preachers at conferences had been 'generally adopted'.¹⁴

8. Robert Kerr in 'Friday's conference', *NEI*, 2 (1872), pp.74-5; [?] A] B[?oswell], undated letter, *NA*, No. 13 (January 1874), pp.2-4; HyP[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 65 (1935), p.66.

9. Robert Chapman, *The Story of Hebron Hall Assembly, Larkhall, 1866-1928: a short history of the inception, progress and personalities of the assembly* (Kilmarnock, 1929), pp.24, 30; this is a quotation of 1 Cor 14:40.

10. [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 10 (1900), pp.59-60; 'Answer to special questions', *BM*, 15 (1905), pp.59-60, 75.

11. Alexander Marshall, 'Hindrances to progress in the Gospel', *W*, 35 (1905), p.183.

12. 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 12 (1902), pp.107-8.

13. For open participation at the morning meeting, see below, p.317.

14. Editor's note [i.e. John Ritchie], 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 14 (1904), p.84.

A number of institutions which evolved at regional and national levels standardised practices and reinforced group identity. When meetings in a county or district procured a tent for evangelistic purposes (discussed in the previous chapter)¹⁵ a committee was formed to discuss its use and assemblies would send delegates to such bodies. They could often establish what was considered acceptable within a region.¹⁶ The one formal national institution which evolved was concerned with missionaries. The Home and Foreign Mission Funds (HFMF) was established soon after the first Scottish missionaries were commissioned in 1876. Based in Glasgow, it was administered by Thomas McLaren, a city assembly member, until his death in 1908.¹⁷ By then the number of Scottish missionaries had increased considerably and in that year a Missionary Council was formed consisting of various leading Brethren individuals.¹⁸ This committee interviewed prospective missionaries, and while it claimed not to be a selection board—the sending bodies remaining individual assemblies—most considered its approval vital. Also in 1908 a meeting of ‘elder brethren’ appointed treasurers to administer the HFMF.¹⁹ The money handled by them rose from £2 106 annually at the death of McLaren to £6 515 in 1917.²⁰

The other institutions which ensured cohesion were informal ones. Large conferences were held in a central location on the Scottish holidays during Fast Days and on New Year’s Day, the pioneer from 1865 having been the Glasgow Half-Yearly Meetings, but joined throughout the 1870s by several

15. See above, pp.170-1.

16. For an example, see below, p.298.

17. M, ‘Thomas McLaren’, Henry Pickering (ed.), *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, 1st edn (London, 1914), pp.156-9.

18. W T Stunt et al., *Turning the World Upside down: a century of missionary endeavour*, 2nd edn (Bath, 1973), pp.562-3; for further discussion of the Council see below, pp.371.

19. ‘John M. Scott’, *W*, 90 (1960), p.157.

20. ‘HyP[ickering]’, ‘Home-call of Mr C.P. Watson’, *W*, 48 (1918), p.46; cf. Stunt et al., *Turning the World*, p.564.

others.²¹ These regional conferences aided the cohesion of the movement: at the first Aberdeen one in 1873 there were people present from Orkney, Nairn, Moray, Banffshire, Kincardineshire, Angus, and Lanarkshire; Dundee, Glasgow, and Dumbarton; Ireland and England; and 'almost all the towns and parishes of Aberdeenshire'.²² Over the first three days of 1910 Brethren conferences drew audiences of 500 in Glasgow, 700 to 1 000 in Ayr, 400 in Dundee, 150 in Bathgate, and 800 in Larkhall, some 2 550 to 2 850 individuals.²³ By the 1890s many smaller local conferences had been commenced, with September particularly favoured.²⁴ 'In districts where the working classes have the half-holiday on Saturday,' it was noted, 'these gatherings afford opportunities for many of the Lord's people coming together.'²⁵ Conferences, it was stated in 1908, 'are becoming quite an institution in Scotch assemblies. As a rule they are homely and helpful, affording meditation to believers who are unable to reach the larger centres.'²⁶ The social function of these occasions was so evident that it was feared that many in the audience were there only 'for a day's outing and pleasure, to meet with friends, &c.'²⁷ But despite these apprehensions, the manifest function of conferences to inculcate doctrine remained prominent and this helped establish sufficient uniformity of teaching which, as well as the social aspects of the gatherings, aided Brethren cohesion.²⁸

21. For Glasgow see above, p.107; other important regional conferences were established in: Ayrshire in 1872 (John Ritchie Jnr, *"Feed My Sheep": memorials of Peter Hynd of Troon* (Kilmarnock, 1904), p.16); Hamilton in c.1875 (transferred to Motherwell in 1901: *BM*, 10 (January 1900) endpp.); Aberdeen in 1873 (see below, n.22); and Shetland in 1878 (Alex S Rigg to the editor, *NW* 8 (1878), p.127).

22. *NEI*, 3 (1873), p.20; cf. [Matthew S R Brown], *Aberdeen Christian Conference Centenary 1874-1973* (Aberdeen, 1972), p.16.

23. *W*, 40 (February 1910), endpp.

24. *BM*, 20 (September 1910), p.i.

25. *BM*, 3 (1893), p.47.

26. *W*, 35 (November 1908), endpp.

27. *BM*, 7 (1897), p.60.

28. For a fuller discussion of the function of conferences see below, pp.261-6.

The two unofficial institutions which probably had most influence were the publishers Pickering & Inglis of Glasgow and John Ritchie of Kilmarnock.²⁹ In 1876 Donald Ross opened the Publishing Office in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow,³⁰ and when Henry Pickering (its manager from 1886) formed a partnership in 1893 with printer William Inglis, it combined both men's names in its title.³¹ The other leading Scottish Brethren publisher John Ritchie began his business in Kilmarnock in 1880, commencing his first magazine, *The Young Watchman*, in 1883.³² Through their bookshops and their printing both these publishers made available the work of Brethren authors and were therefore a principal means of disseminating the teaching of the movement and in ensuring uniform doctrine. Particularly important were two magazines, *The Witness* (founded in 1870 by Donald Ross)³³ and *The Believer's Magazine* (commenced in 1891), issued respectively by Pickering & Inglis and John Ritchie. The former of these journals became the principal Brethren review worldwide, having an initial monthly circulation of 1 500 to 2 000,

29. For a discussion of the output of these publishers see below, pp.342-6; and J A H Dempster, 'Aspects of Brethren publishing enterprise in late nineteenth century Scotland', *Publishing History*, 20 (1986), pp.61-101.

30. *NW*, 6 (1876), p.64; earlier Ross had bookshops in Aberdeen (opened 1872, *NEI*, 6 (1872), p.48) and Edinburgh (opened 1875, *NW*, 5 (1875), p.80), each of which closed on the later shop opening.

31. HyP[ickering], 'William Inglis', *BP*, 29 (1908), pp.22-5; In 1919 Pickering & Inglis absorbed Brethren publishers R L Allan of Glasgow, Alfred Holness of London, and Yapp and Hawkins of London: 'James Hawkins', *W*, 49 (1919), p.35; HyP[ickering], 'Home-call of a colleague', *W*, 56 (1926), p.453. It became a limited company in 1937: 'John Hawthorn', *W*, 67 (1937), p.47.

32. J R[itchie] Jnr, 'The Editor goes "Home"', *BM*, 40 (1930), p.74 ; D R[itchie], 'John Ritchie of Kilmarnock', *CW*, 45, No.532, (April 1930), [pp.50-2] (reprinted in *KS*, 22 March 1930, p.5); *BM*, 90 (1980), p.1.

33. C J Pickering, 'The History of The Witness', *W*, 90 (1960), pp.106-8; and F F Bruce, 'The Origins of 'The Witness'', *W*, 100 (190), pp.7-9, state that the magazine was founded in 1871, and certainly volume numbers were calculated from that year; but a note from the publishers entitled "'These Forty Years'", *W*, 39, (December 1909), endpp., states it was founded in January 1870; The Publishers, 'Concerning "The Witness"', *W*, 34 (1914), p.109, also states that it was founded in that year. However, the former article wrongly gives the year of Caldwell's appointment as editor as 1874 (it was 1876). Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', p.64, basing his claim on the publication of 18 issues before December 1871 (for which he gives no source), states that the magazine was founded in mid-1870. It began as *The Northern Evangelistic Intelligencer*, became the *The Northern Intelligencer* in 1873, *The Northern Witness* in 1875, and *The Witness* in 1887.

rising to 12 000 in 1886 and to 16 000 by 1914.³⁴ Its editor from 1876 until 1914 (appointed by Donald Ross when he left for America) was Glasgow businessman John R Caldwell.³⁵ Caldwell was also responsible for the production by the Publishing Office of *The Believers Hymnbook* in 1885, the collection which came to be most widely used in meetings for Christians among Scottish Brethren.³⁶ He had a strategic role in the formation of the movement. Circulation figures were not released by *The Believer's Magazine* but it too had considerable popularity in Scotland,³⁷ helped by the vigorously dogmatic prose of John Ritchie who edited it until 1930.

In his study of the Scottish publishing enterprises J A H Dempster has argued that both journals aided the cohesion of the Brethren through publishing news of evangelists and assemblies, and that the editors found that their writings allowed them authoritatively to formulate and spread its doctrines.³⁸ This last feature was reinforced by the suppression of debate except within narrowly defined limits by the editors. From the beginning Ritchie did not carry dissenting viewpoints,³⁹ and even before 1876 Ross had begun to move away from a degree of diversity of opinion initially allowed in the magazine to a much more uniform body of teaching, a

34. HyP[ickering], 'About "The Witness"', *W*, 57 (1927), p.213; the figure for 1886 is based on Pickering's statement that the magazine sold 6 000 per week that year.

35. In addition Caldwell may have had a crucial role in the development of Pickering & Inglis for in 1886 The Publishing Office shared premises with Caldwell's firm (Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', p.70) and J B Watson stated that it was Caldwell who invited Pickering to take up the appointment of bookshop manager (Watson, 'Pickering'; however, see below p.203). These evidences of control suggest that Caldwell may have also supported the publishers financially during this period.

36. J R C[caldwell], 'Praise', *NW*, 15 (1885), p.48; the title of the hymnbook had no apostrophe 's'.

37. An partial exception is *BM*, 19 (January 1909), ii, where it was noted that 600 new subscribers were taking the magazine in 1909; however, this exception is understandable in the light of Marshall's attack on Ritchie during the previous year (see below, pp.215-17).

38. Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', pp. 80-1, 83.

39. *BM*, 1 (1891), p.1, cited in Dempster, 'Brethren publishing', p.83.

process furthered by Caldwell.⁴⁰ Both journals also had question-and-answer features which established acceptable beliefs and practices, and in addition the editors were consulted privately by individuals on difficult points.⁴¹ Their pronouncements were widely accepted as authoritative and aided the establishment of normative thinking. As shall emerge, the editors' powers led to accusations that they were abusing their position.⁴²

Other roles were defined more formally. The office of evangelist was one which had been inherited from revivalism. Within a locality the movement possessed influential individuals—such as Peter Hynd in Ayrshire⁴³—who were consulted on troubling issues, and others—such as James Wilson 'the Bishop of Garngad'⁴⁴—were dominant in particular assemblies. Organisational demands made some allocation of roles necessary. At Kilwinning, Ayrshire, soon after the assembly was founded in 1874, for example, a simple division of duties was made.⁴⁵ But more formal recognition of local leadership was established and most assemblies began to adopt elders. As the Scottish movement emerged out of revivalism, Rice Hopkins claimed, 'there seemed little need for rule', and many assemblies had a 'church meeting' at which all the brethren in

40. 'To our contributors', *NW*, 6 (1876), p.191; cf. Caldwell's successors: HyP[ickering], 'Policy of "The Witness"', *W*, 66 (1936), p.206; and J B Watson quoted in F F Bruce, 'His writings', *W*, 85 (1955), p.199.

41. HyP[ickering], 'Brief life of the author', in John R Caldwell, *Epitome of Christian Experience in Psalm XXXII with the development of the Christian life* (Glasgow [1917]), p.xvii. Examples of such correspondence to W H Bennet and W E Vine, editors of journals in England, exist in writer's II, Charles Smith, Kirkwall, papers; and in addition two examples to J R Caldwell are extant: Newmilns, Ayrshire, Gospel Hall: J R Caldwell to a 'Brother', 14 September 1892; and Charles Smith papers: J R Caldwell to Charles Smith, 18 March 1909. It is probably not a coincidence that Caldwell, who was in poor health from 1905, is terse in both and irascible in the former (it was written as the Churches of God division was beginning when according to Pickering, 'Brief life', pp.xx-xxi, he was under 'great stress'); such demands upon his time were considerable.

42. See below, pp.215, 216.

43. Ritchie Jnr., *Peter Hynd*, p.16.

44. Writer's collection, II, Malcolm Leslie to George Budge, tape cassette, 1979; cf. D J Beattie, *Brethren: the story of a great recovery* (Kilmarnock, [1939]), pp.246-7.

45. Anon., 'How it began: Kilwinning, Ayrshire', *BM*, 98 (1988), p.307.

fellowship would discuss matters of consequence.⁴⁶ One potential check on the appointment of elders was Exclusive Brethren writings. J N Darby had rejected the use of elders because their adoption would have been restoring the apostolic church and displacing the rule of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ Alexander Stewart, who had joined the Open Brethren in Glasgow from an Exclusive assembly, appears to have come nearest to this position, although he did not condemn their use.⁴⁸ But increasing size, a growing need for congregational discipline and the unmanageable nature of church meetings meant most assemblies began to appoint them.⁴⁹ In Glasgow there had been some agitation over the use of elders, and in 1867 a conversational conference on the issue had been held at which it would appear widely varying views were expressed.⁵⁰ Larkhall assembly, where elders became more prominent in the 1870s, was probably typical of many existing meetings,⁵¹ but as late as 1882 it was noted that the question was 'exercising many'.⁵²

Initially there were some differences in opinion about how elders might be appointed. At the Glasgow conference of 1867 one individual had suggested a form of Presbyterianism, with someone being elected and

46. R T H[opkins], 'Suggestions as to rule', *N W*, 10 (1880), pp.57-60.

47. J N Darby, 'Scriptural views upon the subject of elders in answer to a tract entitled, "Are Elders to be Established?"', in [*idem*], *Collected Writings of J.N. Darby*, 4, (ed.) William Kelly (Kingston-on-Thames, n.d.), pp.280-348; cf. three Exclusive writers popular among Scottish Open Brethren: C J Davis, 'Christian ministry; its source, object, relationship &c.' in [*idem*] *Aids to Believers: being all the writings for the Lord's people of the late Dr. C.J. Davis* (Glasgow [1912]), pp.120-4; W Kelly, *Lectures on the Church of God* (London, n.d.), pp.190-217; C H Mackintosh, 'The discipline of the assembly; its ground nature and object', in [*idem*], *Miscellaneous Writings of C.H.M.* (London, n.d.), pp.26-33: C J Davis's writings were published by Pickering & Inglis.

48. 'Alexander Stewart', *CW*, 38 (1923), pp.82-3; A S[tewart], [title page missing], *NI*, 3 (1873), p.4 .

49. H[opkins], 'Suggestions as to rule', pp.57-60.

50. 'Alexander Stewart', pp.82-3; 'Glasgow conference on church government', *TP*, 10 (1866-9), pp.97-8; only the views of those who approved of elders is given, but see the comment by James Stone which suggests considerable disunity. The subject of elders had also been debated earlier in 1864, 'The Glasgow conference', *TP*, 9 (1863-6), p.119.

51. Robert Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.25.

52. R S, 'Weakness and encouragement. A letter', *N W*, 12 (1882), pp.93-4.

appointed as a teacher. John Bowes, however, felt that the 'church might be governed too much' and love was more important, but he was not averse to the appointment of a plurality of elders which he felt should be done by evangelists.⁵³ This was also the opinion of at least one other individual (possibly Bowes' friend, William Scott of Dundee) who argued that evangelists were the equivalent of scriptural apostles,⁵⁴ a view which probably indicates the status itinerant revivalists had. At the first conference in the north east, held at Inverurie in 1872, Rice Hopkins, who had possibly been influenced by the Exclusive writers, maintained that the New Testament distinguished between 'elders' and 'them that have the rule over'. In the contemporary Church, he argued, there were 'no officially appointed elders' but there were those to whom the Holy Spirit had given 'the gift of rule'.⁵⁵ This was an attempt to balance his desire for strong congregational government and the need to avoid reconstructing an apostolic succession. But the doctrine which eventually won acceptance was that which had been adopted in 1839 by Henry Craik and George Müller: in post-apostolic times it was the Holy Spirit who appointed elders and it was the place of the assembly to 'receive' them by acknowledging those who clearly had the gift of eldership.⁵⁶ This theory combined a charismatic ministry with church government, and it was championed in Scotland by a number of influential individuals, most notably J R

53. John Bowes quoted in 'Glasgow conference on church government', pp.97-8; this also seemed to be the majority consensus at the earlier conference of 1864, 'The Glasgow conference', p.119.

54. W S[?cott], 'III.—For the consideration of believers', *NI*, 3 (1873), pp.36-9.

55. R T Hopkins, quoted in 'Friday's conference', *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.74.

56. [George Müller], *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller: written by himself*, 1, 9th edn (London, 1895), pp.276-80; the thesis can be found a year earlier in W H Dorman, *Principles of Truth on the Present State of the Church addressed to all Denominations: also reasons for retiring from the Independent or Congregational body, and from Islington Chapel* (London, 1838), pp.65-6.

Caldwell.⁵⁷ By 1880 Hopkins, who had evidently been won over to this last view, was suggesting how elders might act as a corporate oversight.⁵⁸ However, many assemblies, especially smaller ones, did not need such arrangements as formally recognising elders or organising regular oversight meetings, and the important decisions tended to be taken by the older members or jointly by all the brethren in fellowship.⁵⁹ Nevertheless the role of elder had been established and by the later 1880s it would appear that elders from the assemblies in a district were occasionally gathering to discuss matters of mutual interest,⁶⁰ continuing to do so in places such as Glasgow and Ayrshire into the early twentieth century.⁶¹

One other role which received attention was that of women. In the early 1870s preaching by women was being questioned even among those who supported it.⁶² Writing of this process, Robert Chapman gave the impression that the questioning was gradual, accompanied by no great struggle.⁶³ On the other hand, according to John Anderson, a doctor from Rhynie, Strathbogie, who became a missionary in China, the issue 'caused

57. Mr. [J R] Caldwell quoted in 'conference on church government', pp.97-8; J R C[aldwell], 'To the editor of the "Northern Intelligencer"', *NI*, 3 (1873), pp.58-9; *idem*, 'On ordination and acknowledgement of overseers', *W*, 26 (1896), pp.136-8; for similar views cf. John Wardrop of Wishaw (the minority voice at the 1864 Glasgow conference), quoted in 'The Glasgow conference', p.119; and John C Ritchie of Aberdeen and Inverurie in J C R[itchie], 'Gifts, and our recognition of them', *NA*, No.13 (1874), pp.1-2.

58. H[opkins], 'Suggestions as to rule', pp.57-60.

59. C M L[uxmoore], 'The fellowship of assemblies', *NT*, 2 (1889-90), pp.71-2. It is impossible to determine how widespread this practice was. Several assemblies in the north east never formally recognised elders, something which Norman S Macdonald, 'One Hundred Years of Needed Truth Brethren 1892 to 1992: a historical analysis', typescript [1992], p.6, thinks was due to the influence of neighbouring Exclusive assemblies; however, it is more likely to be the lack of necessity for formal arrangements. Albert Hall, Glasgow, was governed by a 'brothers' meeting' until 1991 when elders were appointed (oral information, February 1992).

60. The earliest example of elders from different assemblies consulting is in 1876: editor's note [John Ritchie], 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 16 (1906), p.84; cf. G A [dam], 'Thoughts on church government—IV', *W*, 21 (1891), p.103; Peter Hynd to the editor, 1 September 1891, *ibid.*, p.159.

61. *W*, 35 (1905), p.149; *W*, 42 (1912), pp.279, 331.

62. Neil Dickson, 'Modern prophetesses: women preachers in the nineteenth-century Scottish Brethren', *RSCHS*, 25, pp.110-15.

63. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.24

a great deal of disturbance in Aberdeenshire' where there was some resistance to the practice being abandoned in the 1880s. The Rhynie meeting, despite pressing requests from several prominent individuals in Scotland and England, decided that it would not prohibit the public participation of women in worship and preaching.⁶⁴ As a result, it was ostracised by other assemblies, and, although it was never published, Anderson claimed that Pickering & Inglis held the manuscript of a pamphlet arguing against Rhynie's practice.⁶⁵ It is not only the evidence from the north east which suggests that the suppression of women preachers might have been less free from controversy than Chapman implied. James Stone's letter defending the practice (quoted above in Chapter 3) was written in 1874, evidently to vindicate a custom that was being called into doubt.⁶⁶ In 1882 women were still permitted to take part at conversational Bible readings in Galston, Ayrshire,⁶⁷ and as late as 1889 when *The Witness* invited opinions on whether women might participate publicly, two of the three replies received were in the affirmative. But the practice was eventually eroded, and it would appear that Rhynie, remote even from other north-east assemblies, was left as the sole supporter of female preaching.

Perhaps the acquisition by assemblies of their own halls told against the practice. It disappeared in both Larkhall and Wishaw about the same time as the meetings moved into larger and more permanent accommodation.⁶⁸ Possibly, as the Methodists had already found, the more

64. John A Anderson, *Autobiography of John A. Anderson* (Aberdeen, 1948), pp.21-2; writer's collection, II, F F Bruce to the writer, 26 April 1987.

65. John A Anderson, *The Authority for the Public Ministry of Women* (Braemar, n.d.). p.4.

66. See above, p.96.

67. John S Borland, *History of the Brethren Movement in Galston* (Kilmarnock [1948]), p.14.

68. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, pp.23-4.

formal setting was less favourable to unconventional activities.⁶⁹ But more crucially, the supporters of female preaching lost the biblical argument. By 1882 one writer was using Darbyite dispensationalism to reject the interpretation of Joel which had prevailed among supporters of female preaching.⁷⁰ Dispensationalism located the crucial era, 'the day of the Lord' or 'the last days', in the millennium and after the rapture of the Church. The place of women, this writer concluded, 'in presence [sic] of men in a public assembly is to be "in silence", "in subjection" (1 Tim.ii.11,12).'⁷¹ The role of women was redefined and most accepted the contemporary notion that a woman's sphere was primarily the home. For one individual, a more advanced education for a woman might have its place but it would 'prove little use in household duties'.⁷² Her dress should be inexpensive and unobtrusive, without jewellery, her long hair a sign of subjection.⁷³

But Brethren activism, which was primarily expressed in the urgent imperative to evangelise, meant that many would not totally confine women to their houses. The dual role for women allowed by some was given its fullest expression by J R Caldwell in a series of articles in *The Witness* in 1895, later published as *The Ministry of Women*. The articles were mainly an exegesis of the relevant biblical passages in which Caldwell argued that the texts could not sustain the interpretations of the supporters of female preaching. Yet at the outset he maintained that the question for a woman was 'not as to gift, or ability, or responsibility, but simply and only

69. Dorothy M Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: female preaching and popular religion in industrial England* (New Haven, NJ, 1985), pp.274-5.

70. See above, p.93 ; for dispensationalism, see below, pp.323-31.

71. W F H N, "Forbid him not", *NW*, 12 (1882), pp.116.

72. W, 'Women's rights', *W*, 20 (1890), p.29.

73. 'The dress of Christian women', *NEI*, 3 (1873), p.183; J A B[oswell], 'Department of question and answer', *NT*, 4 (1891-2), pp. 139-40; [John Ritchie], 'Dress at the Lord's Table', *BM*, 12 (1902), p.140.

as to the sphere in which gifts and abilities she undoubtedly possesses are to be exercised'.⁷⁴ And he closed the series with an appeal for women workers in tending the sick, visiting, teaching children and other women, and as missionaries. Caldwell's writings elsewhere allow us to deconstruct these views of a woman's status. Although in principle any individual could dispense the elements at the breaking of bread, Caldwell felt 'it would not be fitting that a woman should do it, or a very young believer'.⁷⁵ She had the same standing as an immature Christian. The status of women could fluctuate between one which accorded them an active role and one which regarded them as being not entirely responsible members of the assembly, certainly ones that lacked authority. But even in the readjustment of their roles there was room for disagreement. In some assemblies the sisters might be solo singers or Bible women,⁷⁶ and Mrs Lundin Brown, an evangelist's widow, continued to pray publicly at prayer meetings until her death in 1924.⁷⁷ But in the stricter meetings even the limited public roles Caldwell had allowed them were not permitted.⁷⁸ Misogyny could take root here. For J Albert Boswell 'much of the evil that arises in assemblies today may be justly described as women's work... [for] her worldliness of heart gradually tells upon her husband'.⁷⁹ Woman's work had been redefined.

74. J R Caldwell, 'The ministry of women', *W*, 25 (1895), p.141.

75. *Idem*, 'The breaking of bread', *W*, 39 (1909), p.77; cf. J A B[oswell], 'Department of question and answer', *NT*, 4 (1891-2), p. 45.

76. For an example of a singer see, 'Miss Annie M'Intyre', *W*, 52 (1927), p.228; for a Bible woman see, 'Mrs John Littlejohn', *W*, 63 (1933), p.168.

77. F F Bruce, 'Women in the Church: a biblical survey', *CBRJ*, 33 (1982), p.14; cf. 'Mrs Lundin Brown', *W*, 54 (1924), p.299; the Lundin Browns lived in Fife in the late nineteenth century, but Mrs Lundin Brown died in Craigellachie, Banffshire.

78. John Brown, "*Spoken Words*" on Profitable Themes (1886), rpt (Dundee & Edinburgh, 1938), pp.19-20; C Morton, 'Christendom brought to the test', *NT*, 1 (1888), pp.142-4; B[oswell], 'question and answer', pp. 139-40.

79. J A Boswell, 'The revelation of the Lord: "whom Jezebel his wife stirred up"', *NT*, 4 (1891-2), p.23.

It was not just in the role of women that some diversity of practice was allowed. Another example can be seen in the morning meeting. In the nascent Inverurie assembly Scotch Baptist ideas had been considered,⁸⁰ and at Inch the order of service from the first breaking of bread in 1873 had also appeared to be close to the Glasite pattern of mutual exhortation. It had consisted of a series of scripture readings with a prayer of thanksgiving at the dispensing of each element and followed by a hymn and an exhortation.⁸¹ But by the following year the service had been assimilated to the pattern of alternating prayers and hymns which J R Caldwell stated was the normal pattern of a morning meeting.⁸² The same process was evidently at work elsewhere in the north east, for John Ritchie confessed of his first morning meeting at Old Rayne that by later standards not everything was done "after the due order".⁸³ Some assemblies in the early 1870s, it would appear, did not have a spontaneous form. One writer claimed he had found some meetings which were 'nothing else than baptist meetings, where a studied address is given, then the bread and wine distributed by the "ministering brother"'.⁸⁴ But such an order of service, with its similarity to the English Baptist practice, was eventually replaced by a charismatic meeting. Some Glasgow assemblies had what Henry Pickering called 'The Twofold Meeting' with the first hour having spontaneous worship and after an interval a further hour at which a prearranged preacher would speak.⁸⁵ However, 'ministry' (the word preferred by the Brethren for addresses to Christians) continued to be

80. John Ritchie, 'Revival times and work in Aberdeenshire', in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross: pioneer evangelist* (Kilmarnock [1904]), p.173.

81. Inch, Fordyce Hall, Minute and account book of Inch assembly, 1873-91, p.1.

82. J R Caldwell, 'Object of the Lord's Supper', *W*, 22 (1892), pp.126-7. The pattern described by Caldwell was probably widely accepted much earlier: this is the first extant reference to it of which the present writer is aware.

83. Ritchie, 'Revival times', in R[oss], *Ross*, p.171: the phrase is from 1 Chron. 15:13. For Ritchie's account of the Old Rayne service, see below, p.316.

84. B[oswell], undated letter, p.3.

85. HyP[ickering], 'The order of the morning meeting', *W*, 54 (1934), p.85.

under pressure at the morning meeting, not because it was Glasite, but because of the definition of worship which was adopted. Ministry was seen as being received passively while worship was thought to be offered actively⁸⁶ and therefore even devotional homilies could be perceived as a distraction at the breaking of bread, the only service acknowledged for worship. Those who wished stricter practices disapproved of even short addresses or Bible reading at the morning meeting and their use was constantly questioned. But the consistent advice from *The Witness* was that ministry should be permitted since the scriptural evidence did not allow one 'to lay down rules'.⁸⁷ Throughout the period under discussion there was a tension between desiring order and eschewing over-regulation.

Music was another area in which there was diversity of practice. All assemblies had accepted the revivalists' new practice of hymn-singing. At Larkhall singing classes were held, and some assemblies went further and had choirs which were used in 'deputation work', singing at Saturday night tea meetings and the like.⁸⁸ Others encouraged solo singing, the proper use of which, J R Caldwell later claimed, was exemplified by Ira Sankey who showed it was not just a 'mere "American innovation" but a divinely appointed means of blessing'.⁸⁹ But typical of many others was John Ritchie's criticism of "'lady soloists" and other such "crutches"' as

86. G.A[dam], 'QA', *W*, 30 (1900), p.132; cf. Caldwell, *Christian Experience*, p.111; Ritchie, 'Revival times', in R[oss], *Ross*, p.171.

87. G A[dam], 'QA', *W*, 29 (1899), p.83; see also 'QA' in: *NW*, 8 (1878), pp.17-18; *W*, 29 (1899), pp.83-4; *W*, 30 (1900), pp.131-2; *W*, 33 (1903), pp.34-6; *W*, 41 (1911), pp.33-4; *W*, 44 (1914), pp.177; cf. 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 14 (1904), pp.143-4. The issue continued to agitate the movement outside the period discussed in the present chapter; see 'QA' in: *W*, 45 (1915), pp.176-7; *W*, 48 (1918), pp.18-19, 26-8, 43-4, 60, 90-1; *W*, 55 (1925), pp.112-13; *W*, 56 (1926), pp.208-9, 384-5; *W*, 57 (1927), pp.153, 159; *W*, 59 (1929), p.280-1; *W*, 60 (1930), p.66; *W*, 74 (1944), pp.95-6; *W*, 75 (1945), pp.15-16, 21-2; *W*, 77 (1947), p.141; 'BQB', *BM*, 31 (1921), pp.55-6; for examples of meditations at the morning meeting see Dan Crawford, *Thirsting After God* (London [1927]), pp.3-69.

88. Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, p.35.

89. Caldwell, *Christian Experience*, p.43.

signs of 'fake revival'.⁹⁰ Similarly, when Sankey's use of a harmonium led some to introduce musical accompaniment at evangelistic meetings, others kept to the older practice of unaccompanied singing.⁹¹ This, however, remained the universal practice at the breaking of bread because praise was spiritual.⁹² The use of fiddles or silver bands, features of working-class culture that had been adapted by some Evangelicals, were stopped in missions which became assemblies.⁹³ In the Baptist mission at Lochore the musically talented Halliday family had a small band which included several fiddles, a mouth organ, a piano harp, a cornet and a trumpet. About 1913 disapproval of this ensemble culminated one Sunday when two women, whom Mr Halliday had invited from Dundee to sing and preach, participated at the morning meeting. One individual in favour of adopting Brethren principles stopped the proceedings and declared that, "Women should keep silence in the church... there should be no singing like this, we'll have none of this music." Some members left for other churches and although the Hallidays made the transition to the assembly, eventually the family moved away.⁹⁴ Other mission halls which became meetings also discontinued their bands. In New Stevenston the proceeds from its sale were given to missionaries and at Greengairs they were used to buy a fence for the building.⁹⁵ Musically, despite some innovation, Brethren worship remained true to its Calvinist inheritance.

90. *BM*, 15 (August 1905), p.i.

91. R H, 'Instrumental Music', *NW*, 6 (1876), pp.185-6; J R[itchie], 'From Egypt to Canaan. Chap. XV.—The song of Redemption', *NW*, 10 (1880), p.105; [*idem*], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 12 (1902), p.59.

92. A A R, 'Worship', *NW*, 10 (1880), p.162; cf. C Morton, 'Christendom brought to the test', *NT*, 1 (1888-9), pp.140-1.

93. See above, pp.130-1, 158-60.

94. Oral information, 19 November 1988.

95. Writer's collection, I.M.22., David Wilson, 'A Brief History of the Assembly of Christian Brethren Meeting in Gospel Hall, Hall St., New Stevenston, Motherwell', MS [1989]; *ibid.*, I.M.13., (ii). untitled history of Greengairs assembly, anonymous typescript, n.d., p.1.

The area in which uniformity was most complete was that of doctrine. It was as advocates of the tenets of Evangelicalism that the Brethren had left their former churches and they were deeply committed to them. Until the mid-1870s there was a period of some theological exploration, but after that date it was suppressed. In the early 1870s conditionalism—the doctrine that the soul is not immortal but eternal existence is granted to the saved alone with the damned ceasing to exist—made some impact in Britain.⁹⁶ In Scotland it found little acceptance,⁹⁷ but within the Brethren it would appear there were those who found it attractive, evidently because they felt the force of the dilemma posed by Alexander Marshall in a tract entitled *Will a God of Love Punish Any of His Creatures for Ever?*⁹⁸ John Ritchie was deeply troubled over the issue, a phase which he dated to 1876.⁹⁹ But it had been three years earlier that the controversy had been at its height. It was claimed then that a number of individuals and some assemblies had come to accept conditionalism, something which Donald Ross blamed on the influence of Dr John Thomas, the founder of Christadelphianism.¹⁰⁰ Ritchie was typical of the majority in eventually rejecting it, and the assembly in Edinburgh divided over the issue, the section accused of holding conditionalism being shunned by other meetings.¹⁰¹ In 1873 a number of 'leading and ministering brethren' were able to sign a statement

96. Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians: a study of the nineteenth-century theological controversies concerning eternal punishment and the future life* (Oxford, 1974), pp.180-207.

97. *Ibid.*, pp.189-90; but cf. *W*, 18 (December 1888), p.vi, which claimed that belief in the non-eternity of hell was 'making rapid headway' in Aberdeenshire.

98. Alexander Marshall, *Will a God of Love Punish Any of His Creatures for Ever?: a plain answer* (Glasgow, n.d.). For the influence of conditionalism on the Brethren, see Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, 2 (Washington DC, 1965), pp.397-9; and of universalism on the English Brethren writer Andrew Jukes, see Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, pp.129-31.

99. John Ritchie, *Man's Future State: an examination of Scripture testimony on this great subject* (Kilmarnock, 1912), [p.3].

100. [Donald Ross], 'A word to assemblies', *NA*, No.4 (April, 1873), p.14; [*idem*], 'The breakers a-head', *NA*, No.9 (September 1873), pp.35-6.

101. *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.88; only the word of their accusers exists that they actually held this doctrine.

denying that any assembly condoned the non-eternity of punishment.¹⁰² Although complaints that it was being tolerated continued until 1900,¹⁰³ it is more likely that those making the claims had a vested interest in proving the existence of heresy.¹⁰⁴ Even the large assembly in Edinburgh which tolerated the doctrine had, it appears, soon dwindled away.¹⁰⁵ Orthodoxy was represented by Marshall who answered his own question in the affirmative,¹⁰⁶ and belief in the non-eternity of punishment was regarded as a doctrine worthy of excommunication.¹⁰⁷ The need to exclude the holders of heresy led Ross to propose a 'note of introduction' for Brethren when visiting another meeting. Later called 'letters of commendation', these were increasingly demanded and, although they never became the universal custom, they became a powerful tool for regulating the inter-communion of assemblies.¹⁰⁸

Theological innovation was also eliminated in other areas. It was probably the death of John Bowes in 1874 which led to the disappearance of Wesleyan perfectionism among its Brethren adherents.¹⁰⁹ An article critical of Wesley's views of sanctification which appeared in 1875 in Ross's

102. E S, 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 16 (1906), p.12.

103. J A Boswell, 'The Open position', *NT*, 12 (1900), p.76; in this article Boswell claimed that an assembly had recently been formed in Aberdeen in which the non-eternity of hell was tolerated.

104. G R Geddes, 'Fellowship or independency?', *NT*, 2 (1889-90), pp.180-6; W Paterson *et al.*, 1 December 1892, in Arthur Chalmers (compiler), 'Some Papers and Letters in Connection with the Separation of the 1880's and 1890's', unpublished typescript, 1987, p.13; cf. 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 16 (1906), pp.11-12.

105. Boswell, 'Open position', p.74.

106. Cf. 'Conference at Sheffield', *NEI*, 3 (1873), pp.189-90; [Donald Ross], 'A word to assemblies', *NA*, No.4 (April, 1873), p.14; [*idem*], 'Charity! Charity!', *NA*, No.5 (May 1873), p.18; 'Sectarian exclusiveness', *NA*, No.7 (July 1873), p.27; 'QA', *NW*, 10 (1880), pp.173-4; [Henry Pickering], 'What are we coming to?', *W*, 18 (February 1888), p.v.

107. [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 15 (1905), p.59.

108. [Ross], 'A word', p.14; cf. T C[ochrane], 'Are assemblies independent?', *NA*, No.18 (June 1874), p.22; [J R Caldwell], *W*, 18 (July 1888), p.vi; John Ritchie, *Assembly Privileges and Responsibilities* (Kilmarnock, n.d.), pp.7-8; cf. complaints about them not being used: C M Luxmoore, 'One', *NT*, 4 (1891-2), p.32; Editor's note [John Ritchie], 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 15 (1905), p.72; also see below, p.295.

109. See above, p.91.

The Northern Witness also signalled the disappearance of higher-life teaching from his journals,¹¹⁰ a move undoubtedly finalised by J R Caldwell who was the leading Scottish exponent of the distinctive Brethren thinking on sanctification. However, although not promoted widely, holiness teaching survived in its more acceptable Keswick form, or as modified by individuals such as John Ritchie.¹¹¹ Even in doctrine, given the nature of the Open Brethren, it was impossible to have absolute uniformity. Although it would appear everyone accepted premillennial dispensationalism, there were differences over whether the ascension of the Church to Heaven ('the rapture') would take place before or after 'the great tribulation' (a period of intense trouble) which the scheme predicted.¹¹² The stricter individuals were certain it was before,¹¹³ but as late as 1904 it was stated that it was difficult to discuss the issue without causing 'hurtful controversy'.¹¹⁴ Perhaps the most noted dissenter from Darby's 'any moment rapture' theory was missionary Dan Crawford who held that there must be worldwide evangelism before the second advent.¹¹⁵ Even in doctrine some diversity on its minutiae was tolerated.

NEEDED TRUTH

The Brethren had kept organisation to the minimum. Possibly this was an adjunct of their adventism and their reaction against the institutionalism of existing denominations.¹¹⁶ But their desire to preserve a quasi-mystical

110. W W, 'A letter concerning Mr. Wesley's views of sanctification', *NW*, 5 (1875), pp.116-121; see above, pp.117-8.

111. For the views of Scottish Brethren on sanctification see below, pp.330-40.

112. For a fuller account of this eschatology, see below, pp.323-31.

113. A J H[oliday] *et al.*, 'The coming of the Lord for His Church—will it be before or after the great tribulation?', *NT*, 2 (1889-90), pp.1-27.

114. Geo. Adam, 'The coming of the Lord', *W*, 34 (1904), pp.10-12.

115. Crawford, *Thirsting After God*, pp.135-43; rejection of the 'any-moment rapture' was usually combined with post-tribulationism, but it is not known if Crawford also held this view.

116. Bryan R Wilson in *idem* (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism: organisation and ideology in social and religious movements* (London, 1967), pp.35, 244.

conception of the Church was probably more significant. Each assembly was individually responsible to the Lord, Glasgow preacher Thomas Cochrane maintained, and thus, while not being independent of the Word of God, they were independent of one another.¹¹⁷ This was his version of Open Brethren independency which allowed for some diversity across the movement. But other strands which had existed within assemblies at least since the 1860s were to pull away from this position towards closer organisation. Donald Ross noted one of these elements in writing to a member of one of the new north-east meetings. The defect of such churches as his correspondent's one, he felt, was 'glorying in their purity'.¹¹⁸ There were in addition those who had been deeply critical of the denominations which they had left.¹¹⁹ At the first Inverurie conference of 1872 these criticisms had been so pronounced that the Glasgow preacher Robert Kerr publicly lamented that he would have liked to have heard 'more constructive along with the destructive truth'.¹²⁰ The drive for purity and negative perceptions of other churches led to demands for greater uniformity and increased separation from denominational Christianity to be achieved through greater organisation.

The central issue became 'the reception question', a debate over receiving non-Brethren Christians to the Lord's supper. Although the assembly was a gathered church it was not seen as being co-extensive with the universal Church in an area. The initial practice of most (though not all) assemblies was to allow fellow-Evangelicals to participate in the breaking of bread.¹²¹

An early and influential statement of this position was given in 1877 by

117. C[ochrane], 'Are assemblies independent?' pp.21-2.

118. Donald Ross to 'one who had begun a meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus', 1 September 1871, quoted in C W R[oss] (ed.), *Donald Ross 1824-1903* (Kilmarnock [1903]), p.97.

119. See above, pp.84-5, 109.

120. Robert Kerr, quoted in 'Friday's Conference', p.74.

121. For an exception, see above, p.109.

Alexander Stewart. Stewart maintained that the essential fellowship was with God and was the basis for communion with other Christians. If it were established that a visitor from a 'religious denomination' was a Christian, then 'the man's title to fellowship is established':

To have the Spirit is the fundamental condition of our communion with God and with each other as born of God and members of the Body of Christ. Fellowship therefore is the birthright privilege of all saints.¹²²

This was Stewart's version of the Open Brethren maxim that 'life, not light'—being born again rather than agreeing to a credal statement—was the basis of intercommunion among Christians.¹²³ In 1872 when Donald Ross's *Northern Evangelistic Intelligencer* listed a series of propositions to govern the morning meeting, number seven stated 'all Christ's members... are as free to come together with us for the breaking of bread, as those already assembled...'.¹²⁴ A limited degree of cooperation with other Evangelicals was also maintained in the early 1870s. During D L Moody's Glasgow mission of 1874 assembly members in the city attended services and assisted at after meetings, and others were willing to accept preaching engagements in nondenominational missions.¹²⁵

But there were those who were unhappy with these open practices. Given the circumstances of their emergence, the north-east meetings were

122. Alexander Stewart to Alexander Marshall, March 1877, quoted in John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author and pioneer* (Glasgow [1929]), pp.127-132; this letter received wide circulation as *The Fellowship of the Saints of God* (Glasgow, n.d.).

123. It was given its classic expression in A N Groves to J N Darby, 10 March 1836, in Mrs Groves (ed.), *Memoir of Anthony Norris Groves: compiled chiefly from his journals and letters*, 3rd edn (London, 1869), pp.538-43; James Patrick Callahan has termed this position 'soteriological unity' in *Primitivist Piety: the ecclesiology of the early Plymouth Brethren* (Lanham, MA, 1996), pp.42-7.

124. Anon., 'Do this in remembrance of me', *NEI*, 2 (1872), p.103; cf. Mrs Code, 'The mystery of Christ', *NI*, 3 (1873), p.89; anon., 'The testimony', *NA*, No.7 (July 1874), p.20; T C[ochrane], 'A few hints to those meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus', *NA*, No.10 (October 1873), p.41; anon., 'The great open meeting of Christianity', *NW*, 5 (1875), p.151; J S, 'William Stephen', *BP*, 54 (1933), pp.146-8.

125. An Old Disciple, 'Thoughts by an old disciple', *NA*, No.17 (1874), pp.17-18; T C[ochrane], 'A word for the times', *NI*, 4 (1874), p.85; Alexander Marshall, *Holding Fast the Faithful Word": or whither are we drifting?* (Glasgow [1908]), pp.24, 25.

particularly isolated from other Christian bodies and Ross criticised those who attended services organised by other churches.¹²⁶ He also directed criticism at Brethren from Edinburgh and England who preached or worshipped in other churches and did not keep to assemblies.¹²⁷ But even in Glasgow some Brethren had felt it was wrong to attend union prayer meetings during Moody's 1874 mission as they would be associated with the 'evils' they had fled.¹²⁸ Cooperation with other Christians was contentious.¹²⁹ In the 1870s there were tensions over the relationship to other Christians in Kilmarnock. The members of the town's second assembly complained that their fellow citizens had 'seldom heard the gospel'¹³⁰ and Kilmarnock Brethren were stopped attending services in other churches. George Müller, on his preaching tour in 1876 of various churches in places associated with Moody, broke bread with the meeting John Stewart had founded.¹³¹ But Stewart's assembly was perceived as not observing 'the true Scriptural principles'¹³² and was discontinued about 1879.¹³³ Stewart left the Brethren for the Free Church.¹³⁴ Ill-feeling between the Brethren and other churches was probably deepened by the works critical of the movement which were published in Scotland during

126. [Donald Ross], 'Unequally yoked', *NA*, No.18 (June 1874), p.24.

127. [*Idem*], 'Religious shams', *NA*, Nos 14, 15 (February & March 1874), pp.7, 11.

128. J S, 'Vessels unto honour', *NA*, No.16 (April 1874), pp.13-15; M, 'To the editor of the "Assemblies"', *NA*, No.17 (May 1874), pp.18-19; A B C, 'To the editor of "The Assemblies"', *NA*, No.19 (July 1874), pp.25-6; anon., "'Vessels unto honour'" *NA*, No.20 (August 1874), pp.29-30.

129. See the call for separation by [?] A] B[?oswell], 'Letter to the editor', *NW*, 6 (1876), pp.43-4, 87-8, and supported by [?R T] H[?opkins], to the editor, *ibid.*, pp.153-5; criticised by A S[tewart], to the editor, *ibid.*, pp.68-9; and T C[ochrane], to the editor, 7 June 1876, *ibid.*, pp.101-2.

130. *LR*, 6 (1873), p.118; in the next issue, this report was contradicted by an itinerant evangelist, *LR*, 6 (1873), p.133.

131. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.223; [Müller], *Narrative*, 4, 1st edn (London, 1886), p.390; for the founding of this assembly, see above, pp.51-3.

132. Beattie, *Brethren*, p.224; cf. the account of Stewart's principles which emphasises his ecumenicity in James Todd (ed.) *Words of Faith, Hope and Love from the Chamber of a Dying Saint: being a series of letters written by the late John Dickie, of Irvine, Scotland, during his last illness to his friend and brother in Christ, James Todd, Dublin*, 1 (London, 1900), p.xiii.

133. For the history of Kilmarnock Brethren in this period, see above, p.138, n.165.

134. 'The late Mr John Stewart of Shawhill', *KS*, 10 December 1887, p.3.

this period, and usually these made no distinction between the Open and Exclusive sections.¹³⁵ The way was led, however, in Shaw's 'tightening process' by Rice Hopkins and Albert Boswell, the critics of other denominations at the 1872 Inverurie conference. The first public indication of the move away from open principles was in 1873 at a conference held for evangelists in Sheffield. It was decided there that 'fellowship' applied not just the breaking of bread but to all the activities of the assembly. This redefinition was a justification of stopping 'occasional fellowship', non-Brethren individuals sometimes participating in the Lord's supper.¹³⁶ The search was on for a more complete theory.

According to Alexander Marshall it was Hopkins who developed the distinction that membership of the universal Church did not automatically qualify one for membership of a local church.¹³⁷ J R Caldwell later dated the open emergence of the new thinking to April 1876 when Boswell anonymously asked some questions in *The Northern*

135. Hugh McIntosh, *The New Prophets: being an account of the operations of the Northern Evangelists* (Aberdeen, 1871); anon., *Prevalent Errors: a reply to a lecture by Mr C.J. Davis regarding the opinions of the party known as "Brethren" by an elder* (Aberdeen, 1871); Alexander Burnet, *Plymouth Brethren is Antichrist* (Aberdeen, 1873); R H Ireland, *Principles and Practices of "Brethren": a word of warning to the churches* (Edinburgh [1873]); Duncan Macintosh, *The Special Teachings, Ecclesiastical and Doctrinal, of the Plymouth Brethren: compiled from their own writings* (Edinburgh, [1873]); Peter Mearns, *Christian Truth Viewed in Relation to Plymouthism*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1875); William Reid, *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted* (Edinburgh, 1875); James Moir Porteous, *Brethren in the Keelhowes*, 6th edn (London, 1876); I have been unable to trace anon., *Prevalent Errors*, and Burnet, *Plymouth Brethren* (see above p.121, n.51). There were in addition a number of such works published elsewhere in the United Kingdom which were widely available.

136. 'Conference at Sheffield', *NI*, 3 (1873), p.190.

137. CBA 2409, Alexander Marshall to P F Bruce, 12 October [1926/7], quoted in Neil Dickson, 'Scottish Brethren: division and wholeness 1838-1916', *CBRFJ*, No.41 (1990), p.28; Marshall dated the emergence of the new views to about 1873 in *Holding Fast*, p.10.

Witness and then answered them himself the following month.¹³⁸ Boswell's questions and answers were based on the distinction between the Church as the body of Christ and a local church and showed that it had important implications for fellowship with Christians from outside the Brethren.¹³⁹ He stated that as 'knowledge of sins forgiven is the ground on which we receive a young convert', it was reasonable that an acknowledgement of Christ as Lord should be 'required from those coming from that which is in rebellion against Him', that is a 'sect' or other Christian body.¹⁴⁰ This redefinition of fellowship subtly shifted the balance away from its earlier definition of shared life in Christ to some degree of knowledge being its basis. The acceptance of Brethren ecclesiology should govern relationships with other Christians. Boswell also argued that there was a responsibility on the assembly to 'receive' individuals, separate from the 'Lord bringing into the Church', and gave a more prominent role to elders in ruling the congregation. He had moved from the earlier, more mystical conception of Christian fellowship to a formally organised one.

In 1884 Hopkins restated these points in his *Fellowship Among Saints: what saith the Scriptures?*¹⁴¹ But a more developed theory had been presented the previous year by the twenty-one-year-old Frederick Banks of Ipswich.¹⁴² In *The Church and the Churches of God* (1883) Banks supplied exegetical support for the distinction between the universal Church and the local church, arguing that the New Testament distinguished two

138. J R Caldwell, *A Revision of Certain Teachings Regarding the Gathering and Receiving of the Children of God* (Glasgow [1906]), p.6; the attribution of the questions to Boswell is made in: T S Veitch, *The Brethren Movement: a simple and straightforward account of the features and failures of a sincere attempt to carry out the principles of Scripture during the last 100 years* (London & Glasgow, [1925]), p.96; and J J Park, *The Churches of God: their origin and development in the 20th Century* (Leicester, 1987), p.16.

139. [J A Boswell], 'Questions connected with fellowship', *N W*, 6 (1876), p.63.

140. [*idem*], 'Answers to questions connected with fellowship', *ibid.*, pp.78-9.

141. R T H[opkins], *Fellowship Among Saints: what saith the Scriptures?* (Glasgow, 1884).

142. Banks had probably been influenced by Hopkins who lived in Ipswich from 1865 until 1875.

circles: 'the Body of Christ' and 'the church of God', the latter only 'used in the Word of God to designate a company of believers acting together in local accountability upon the earth'. There could be no allowing of 'casual communion' because along with the privilege of breaking of bread, the individual had to accept full responsibilities as a member of a church.¹⁴³ This meant in effect a closed communion, for those participating in the Lord's supper would have to leave their church and join an assembly before being received. The pamphlet found wide acceptance. At one conference in the north of Scotland a speaker, 'highly esteemed by many', failed to make the distinction that Banks insisted on. After the tea interval Banks expounded his views and the first speaker 'rose and publicly thanked F.A.B. for the clear and helpful way he had set forth these truths'.¹⁴⁴ There were many others in Scotland ready to listen.

Open dissension began to appear. In 1880 John Ritchie had refused to accept W J Grant and twelve others from Grant's Baptist flock into the assembly in Kilmarnock because they were being received as a group rather than individually. Ritchie forced a division when he proclaimed one Sunday morning, "All those who want to follow the Lord, come with me to the Crown Inn Hall at 2 o'clock."¹⁴⁵ About three years later open views caused a schism in Cathcart Road Gospel Hall, Glasgow, the leading strict assembly in the city, when a widower sought to bring his newly-wed second wife, an active Christian in another denomination, to the morning meeting. She was excluded from participating in the Lord's supper and made to sit in a back seat. A number of younger individuals who had been

143. Frederick Arthur Banks, *"The Church", and the "Churches of God": a suggestive outline of truth* ([1883]), rpt. in *Spiritual Growth: and other writings of the late Frederick Arthur Banks*, 2nd edn (Bradford, 1947), pp.32-43.

144. John Dorricot, 'Foreword', *ibid.*, pp.vii-viii.

145. Oral information, 14 April 1986; my interviewee's account came from a woman who witnessed the event as a teenager.

pressing for an open communion seceded (along with the bride and groom) to the recently formed Elim Hall, Crosshill.¹⁴⁶

It was the restricted views which were winning over significant individuals. Ritchie issued Banks' pamphlet, as did Henry Pickering, then running a small printer's business in Newcastle.¹⁴⁷ Hopkins' pamphlet was issued by the Publishing Office in Glasgow and Banks took over control of this concern in 1886; it was he who appointed Pickering as his manager.¹⁴⁸ J R Caldwell, who was Boswell's brother-in-law, was also won over to these views, and for a while after 1879 a narrowing of viewpoint took place in his editorship of *The Northern Witness*.¹⁴⁹ Particularly prominent in Scotland in the promotion of the new views was John Brown, the owner of a large bakery business in Greenock, who expounded them in his published address *The Church: its constitution and government* (1886).¹⁵⁰ Caldwell, however, had reservations about the novel teaching. In 1882 he claimed that to call an assembly 'the church of God' to the exclusion of other Christians 'is an assumption not warranted by Scripture'.¹⁵¹ Articles by Banks and others in the emerging party were regularly printed in *The Northern Witness* throughout the 1880s. But it was later claimed that ones expounding his ecclesiology were refused by Caldwell.¹⁵² It was possibly because of the lack of complete agreement between the two men that Banks's pamphlet was not issued by the

146. Crosshill Evangelical Church archive, 'Cathcart Road', undated MS; this incident apparently happened shortly after Elim Hall was founded in 1882.

147. A T Doodson, *The Search for the Truth of God* (Bradford, n.d.), p.41; Park, *The Churches of God*, p.19 (a facsimile of the Kilmarnock edition cover is shown on p.18).

148. NW, 16 (March 1886), cover; however see above, n.35 for evidence which suggests Caldwell might also have been involved in this change of ownership.

149. Park, *Churches of God*, p.86; CBA, Marshall to Bruce, quoted in Dickson, 'Scottish Brethren', p.28; [J R Caldwell], 'Forty-one years of witnessing', W, 30 (1910), p.196.

150. John Brown, *The Church: its constitution and government* (1886), rpt in *idem*, "Spoken Words" on Profitable Themes, 2nd edn (Dundee & Edinburgh, 1938).

151. [J R Caldwell], 'QA', NW, 12 (1882), p.188.

152. Park, *Churches of God*, p.19; cf. Doodson, *Truth of God*, p.41.

Publishing Office. Banks died in 1887 and the following year Brown, along with Boswell and three English Brethren, established under their joint editorship a new journal, *Needed Truth*, to promote principles 'relating to the Churches of God'.¹⁵³ It was issued from the Glasgow Publishing Office and in the introduction it was stressed that its appearance was an example of 'specialization'.¹⁵⁴ Care was being taken not to be perceived as a rival to *The Witness* (from 1887 the title of *The Northern Witness*).¹⁵⁵ At first the tone of the new magazine was moderate and probably the proponents of the emerging ecclesiology hoped persuasion would bring everyone round to their thinking, something that they attempted through conference addresses and conversations.¹⁵⁶ Reform, they proclaimed, should be from within.¹⁵⁷

There were other issues apart from those relating to intercommunion which troubled the emerging party. Thomas McLaren (son of the HFMF founder) confessed to the embarrassment he felt when someone would list the diversity of practices in the Open Brethren:

"Oh, the meeting at A— have a harmonium. The meeting at B— receives any Christian to 'the table'. The meeting at C— will admit an unbaptised believer. The meeting at D— are not so strait-laced towards the sects. The meeting at E— allows women to minister. The meeting at F— allows friends from the sects to minister among them." etc., etc.¹⁵⁸

Even if these were not practised in his assembly, McLaren felt guilty of

153. *Circular Message*, quoted in Doodson, *Truth of God*, p.43; the English editors were: A J Holiday of Bradford, W H Hunter of Manchester and C M Luxmoore of Reading.

154. 'Needed Truth', *NT*, 1 (1888-9), pp.2-3.

155. See above n.33.

156. For examples, see the reports on J A Boswell, John Brown, W J Ervine, George Geddes, W H Hunter, and William Laing preaching in: *W*, 17 (September 1887), endpp.; *W*, 19 (September 1889), p.v; *ibid.*, (October), p.v; Henry Pickering, 'What really constitutes a church of God?', *W*, 60 (1930), p.181; for an example of conversations, see Bruce to the writer, 26 April 1987, quoted in Dickson, 'Scottish Brethren', p.31.

157. [A J Holiday], 'Extract from a letter', *BP*, 7 (1886), pp.39-40; [*idem*], "'One accord'" *BP*, 9 (1888), pp.73-5; anon., 'Separation', *NT*, 1 (1888-9), p.154.

158. Thomas McLaren Jr, *Why I Left the Open Brethren* (London, 1893), p.16; however, it was in McLaren's interests to emphasise diversity and some of the practices listed were not necessarily very widespread.

these 'loose' practices by association. Also a source of grievance was that no mechanism existed for judging who was in the right in a schism, both parties in a division being accepted as valid assemblies.¹⁵⁹ The source of the problem was seen to be the independency of the Open Brethren which allowed each meeting to practise according to its own understanding of scripture. Writers in *Needed Truth* began to turn their attention to the way assemblies could arrive at unanimity. Banks had felt that there was no 'definite guidance' in the New Testament about the 'intercommunion' of assemblies.¹⁶⁰ But now it was argued that just as churches in the administrative provinces of the Roman Empire had been grouped, so overseers within a district should come together.¹⁶¹ In this way understanding would be achieved of the commandments of the Lord and there would be mutual submission to one another and to godly leadership.¹⁶² To eliminate 'looseness' some degree of formal organisation was being called for and this new doctrine provided the rationale.¹⁶³ Unity was to be provided by ecclesiology: in one illustration believers were said to be like staves in a barrel and Church truth the hoops which bound them together.¹⁶⁴ In a manner which was foreign to Open Brethren thinking, a representative capacity was also proposed for leaders. For Banks, the brother 'who says in the assembly, "Let us give thanks," ere he breaks the loaf loses his individuality, and is, for the time being, the mouthpiece of the church.' He should then publicly break the bread as a corporate act.¹⁶⁵ Similarly elders were representative of the assembly and could make

159. J A Boswell, 'The kingdom present', *NT*, 4 (1891-2), pp.145-4.

160. Banks, "The Church", in *Spiritual Growth*, pp.41-2.

161. A J H[oliday], *et al.*, 'The fellowship of assemblies', *NT*, 2 (1889-90), pp.49-76.

162. W H H[unter], 'The fellowship of assemblies', *ibid.*, pp.28-40.

163. Gordon Willis and Bryan Wilson, 'The Churches of God: pattern and practice', in Wilson (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.244-86.

164. Quoted in G A[dam], "Thoughts on church government—IV", *W*, 21 (1891), p.103.

165. F A B[anks], 'The feast of remembrance and testimony', *N W*, 16 (1886), p.74-5; cf. *ibid.*, 'Question CCXXV', p.80; *N W*, 12 (1882), p.111; *BM*, 37 (1927), p.90.

decisions on its behalf.¹⁶⁶ There were moves to increase the powers of district oversight meetings.¹⁶⁷ The erosion of independency, increased organisation, and the expansion of elders' roles were shifts towards greater institutionalisation.

The movement became polarised over these issues. Rice Hopkins was seen by many as the leader of the stricter party,¹⁶⁸ but in 1882 he had emigrated. Perhaps a more Scottish perspective on the leadership of the *Needed Truth* group was contained in the sneer that it was 'the house that John Brown built'.¹⁶⁹ From 1890 writers in the magazine became more outspoken. For Boswell, assemblies never had 'power', because they were not 'in the place which God would have His people occupy', instead 'place was given to the Devil'.¹⁷⁰ Articles discussed division.¹⁷¹ Subsequently it became clear that feelings ran even deeper: Thomas McLaren Jnr later claimed that 'Open Brethren meetings have almost become a developed and elaborated system of lawlessness'.¹⁷² Not everyone was persuaded of the *Needed Truth* thinking. Peter Hynd of Troon, a supporter of consultative district oversight meetings, stopped attending one held in an assembly hall because it seemed to be promoting 'exclusivism'.¹⁷³ And others turned back. From 1890 onwards articles began appearing in *The Witness* attacking the confederacy and exclusiveness which were felt to be

166. H[unter], 'fellowship of assemblies', pp.61-6.

167. However, before 1892 writers in *Needed Truth* were careful to avoid granting them legislative powers: see the examples cited in Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.13.

168. Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren* (Denver, CO, 1936), p.273; cf. Ian McDowell, 'Rice Thomas Hopkins 1842-1916': an open brother', *BAHNR*, 1 (1997-8), pp.24-30.

169. Quoted in Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.75; cf. writer's collection, II, F F Bruce to the writer, 8 June 1987.

170. J A B[oswell], 'A transatlantic question', *N*, 2 (1891-2), pp.146-7.

171. W J Ervine, 'Division', *NT*, 2 (1889-90), pp.135-7; *idem*, 'Divisions', *NT*, 3 (1890-1), pp.125-32.

172. McLaren Jnr, *Why I Left*, p.9.

173. Hynd to the editor, p.159.

implicit in *Needed Truth* teaching, most notably a series by George Adam, a Bible teacher who had joined the Brethren in Ross's north-east movement but by then was based in Stranraer.¹⁷⁴ The new prescriptions about representative capacities at the morning meeting also led to controversy in many assemblies.¹⁷⁵

In an attempt to reconcile the differences a conference was held at Windermere in July 1891. It had representatives of the three different sections that were by now felt to exist in the Brethren: the open group, a middle one, and the strict party. However, the differences were too great by this time and the conference only helped to emphasise them.¹⁷⁶ When in September 1891 George Adam published extracts from a letter in *The Witness* recounting how he had come to reject *Needed Truth* teaching,¹⁷⁷ the supporters of the latter felt it was an act of bad faith and that future discussions were impossible.¹⁷⁸ Events in the Greenock assembly forced everyone's hand. After a period of disagreement, principally it would appear between John Brown and Thomas Black, the tent manufacturer and one of the oldest members in the Greenock meeting, the latter was excommunicated in February 1892 for 'the sin of railing and covetousness'. The assembly had been equally divided on the merits of the charge and when Black gained control of the meeting hall, those who agreed with

174. G A[dam], 'Thoughts on church government', *W*, 21 (1891), pp.1-3, 18-20, 54-6, 102-4; *W*, 22 (1892), pp.35-7, 56-58, 70-1.

175. W H Clare, *Pioneer Preaching or Work Well Done* (London & Glasgow [1925]), p.88.

176. Doodson, *Truth of God*, pp.45-7.

177. George Adam, "'The Church of God" and "District Oversight"', *W*, 22 (1892), pp.140-2.

178. W Laing, *The Present Crisis* (1892), cited by Park, *Churches of God*, pp.22-3.

Brown were forced to seek new accommodation.¹⁷⁹ Ironically, for those who made consultation mandatory, the latter group had failed, as Caldwell pointed out, 'before pressing the matter to division to wait upon God for oneness of mind, and seek the help of brethren whose experience and discernment fitted them to give counsel at such a juncture'.¹⁸⁰ In the letters which Brown's assembly subsequently sent out, they justified their actions, claiming—in the words of one—that the point of division was separation from 'Open Brethrenism, known in some parts as "Loose" companies, which deny and oppose the plainest principles of the word of God'.¹⁸¹ Individuals such as Boswell had condemned independency for allowing schisms to multiply¹⁸² and the split in Greenock made others consider their future.¹⁸³ In October 1892 Boswell's own assembly in Edinburgh was the second secession, and he inveighed in the *Needed Truth* against the 'great and increasing evils of Open Brethrenism'.¹⁸⁴ As one justification for their action, the seceders in Glasgow cited the existence of 'non-eternity' meetings.¹⁸⁵ Until 1894, 150 schisms took place throughout Britain, and the 70 divisions in Scotland were proportionally

179. Norman Macdonald's collection, Newton Mearns: Duncan Colquhoun *et al.*, to overseeing brethren gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in Vancouver, 4 September 1893, typescript copy; J R C[aldwell], 'The test question', *W*, 22 (October 1892), pp.164-5; Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.12: neither Caldwell nor Marshall mention Greenock by name, but it is clearly the events there to which reference is being made. In Colquhoun *et al.*, there is an elision in the typescript where the excommunicated individual's name should occur; none of the other sources above mentions the protagonists who are identified in Chapman, *Hebron Hall Assembly*, pp. 37-8.

180. C[aldwell], 'The test', p.164; Caldwell clearly doubted the merits of the charges.

181. Colquhoun *et al.*, to... Vancouver; MS copies of these letters are still preserved in a ledger in the possession of the Church of God, Greenock. I am indebted to Mr Gordon Farquhar for this information.

182. Boswell, 'The kingdom present', pp.145-4.

183. Colquhoun *et al.*, to... Vancouver.

184. J A Boswell to 'my dear Brother in Christ', 14 November, 1892, quoted in *idem*, 'Open position', pp.77-8; *idem*, 'Take heed how ye hear', *NT*, 5 (1892-3), pp.45-9; if the chronology in the typescript of Colquhoun *et al.*, to... Vancouver is accepted (that Black was excommunicated in 'Feb. 1892'), then it is not clear why Boswell waited eight months, nor why Caldwell waited a similar time before publishing a denunciation. It is possible there has been a copyist's error.

185. W Paterson *et al.*, in Chalmers (compiler), 'Papers and Letters', p.23.

higher.¹⁸⁶ The faithful now had to 'outpurge' themselves from evil.¹⁸⁷

The seceders took the formal name Churches of God (although they were popularly called 'the Needed Truth') and claimed to be the House of God in an area where Christ's will could alone be known and recognised. The new body developed into linked groups of churches governed by a hierarchy of oversights. They avoided the independency of the Open Brethren which, along with other churches was seen as 'Babylon', a system of human religion.¹⁸⁸ John Brown later remarked, "We expected to carry all Scotland with us."¹⁸⁹ But even if the estimate that a tenth of the Scottish Open Brethren membership seceded is correct, they failed to draw off anything like the numbers for which they had hoped:¹⁹⁰ only one Scottish evangelist, Frank Vernal of Ayr, defected.¹⁹¹ There were a number of reasons why more did not leave. Henry Elson, an itinerant from Portsmouth who had seceded, was worried because of the stories concerning local incidents and alleged misconduct which were circulating. In his pamphlet *The Cause of the Separation* (1893) he reasserted the primacy of ecclesiology in the division.¹⁹² Perhaps the initial schism at Greenock and other local troubles elsewhere had muddied the waters for some. Other reasons for not seceding were probably those cited by Thomas McLaren when he discussed those wavering: they felt that they still kept to the 'old paths'; their meeting was not an open one; reform should be achieved from within; 'looseness' did not merit secession; and division

186. *Ibid.*, p.23.

187. McLaren Jnr, *Why I Left*, p.18; this expression was based on 2 Tim. 2: 20-1.

188. For the later development of the Churches of God see, Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', pp.25-75; C A Oxley, 'The "Needed Truth" Assemblies', *CBRFJ*, No.4 (April 1964), pp.21-32; Park, *Churches of God*, pp.27-68; and Willis and Wilson, 'Churches of God', pp.250-84.

189. Bruce to the writer, 26 April 1987, quoted in 'Scottish Brethren', p.31.

190. Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.23.

191. The same was true in England: of the five *Needed Truth* founding editors, only two, C M Luxmoore and John Brown, seceded and the latter later returned (see below, pp.211-12).

192. Henry Elson, *The Cause of the Separation* (London [1893]).

was wrong.¹⁹³ Factors such as these probably explain the relative failure of the Churches of God to establish themselves in the north east.¹⁹⁴ According to Boswell, only in Aberdeen were Open tenets accepted but the leading Brethren in the north successfully shut out the Churches of God advocates during the Separation.¹⁹⁵ The assemblies in the region prided themselves in being preserved from the 'extremes of laxity and sectarian narrowness'.¹⁹⁶ They had no 'looser' practices from which to outpurge themselves.¹⁹⁷

Others like Caldwell had the painful task of revising their thinking, something he compared to a schoolboy getting a sum wrong and having to work through the problem to find the point of departure.¹⁹⁸ He returned to his former open views of reception to the Lord's table. But for many others the Rubicon which they would not cross had been the powers granted to district oversights. This had been the case for George Adam, a former member of the Old Scots Independents, who reasserted a mystical conception of Christ's rule.¹⁹⁹ 'A uniformity of action may be brought about by an ecclesiastical combination,' he wrote 'but a oneness of mind and judgment, produced by the Lord Jesus being enthroned in every heart, is fundamentally a different thing.'²⁰⁰ Unanimity was divinely produced whereas organisation was merely a human device. A charismatic

193. McLaren Jnr, *Why I left*, pp.14-25; 'old paths' is a quotation of Jer. 6:16.

194. Churches of God came into existence in: Aberdeen, Boddam, Elgin, Cumniestone, and Macduff: Neil Dickson, 'Open and closed: Brethren and their origins in the North East', in James Porter (ed.), *After Columba—After Calvin: religious community in North-East Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1999), p.168, n.61.

195. Boswell, 'Open position' p.75.

196. *BM*, 3 (1893), p.23.

197. Boswell, 'Open position' p.75; Bruce to the writer, 26 April 1987, quoted in Dickson, 'Scottish Brethren', p.31. Most probably this was also the reason for the lack of success of the Churches of God in Ulster where only two congregations were formed.

198. Caldwell, *Gathering and Receiving*, p.7.

199. For George Adam, see *W*, 18 (May 1888), p.vi; 'George Adam', *BM*, 17 (1907), p.60; 'George Adam', *CW*, 26 (1911), pp.114-5; 'George Adam', *W*, 60 (1930), p.15.

200. A[dam], 'church government', (1891), p.55.

conception of Christian unity had been reasserted against the more institutionalised procedures of the Churches of God.

HOLDING FAST

One frequent complaint about the secessionists concerned the manner in which they had proselytised.²⁰¹ When the Edinburgh solicitor Ludovic W G Alexander, a later editor of *Needed Truth*, returned to the Open Brethren in 1906 he complained that many in the Churches of God were preoccupied with the supposed perfection of their ecclesiology, 'consequently a spirit of self-sufficiency is engendered, allied to a resting and glorying in their system, which is only equalled by the intolerance manifested towards any who dare to question those claims'.²⁰² Admittedly, such criticisms came from their opponents, but perhaps this was a further reason why many who were sympathetic did not join. Certainly the new movement continued to have schisms which suggested that the rebellious personality type was well represented among them. The largest of these secessions was in 1905 when Frank Vernal took most of the Scottish members with him over objections to the powers being granted to higher circles of overseers which enabled them to overrule decisions made at a lower level. The secessionists founded separate Churches of God which were popularly called 'the Vernalites'.²⁰³ In some places quite sizable groups rejoined the Open Brethren.²⁰⁴ John Brown too returned in 1905, apparently over the discipline which was to be imposed upon him after

201. W H S[tancomb], 'Independency', *W*, 21 (1891), p.41; W H B[ennet], 'A warning from history', *ibid.*, p.82; A[dam], "'The Church of God'", p.141; Caldwell, *Gathering and Receiving*, p.29; Bruce to the writer, 8 June 1987.

202. L W G Alexander, *Discerning the Body* (Glasgow, 1907), pp.19-20; cf. Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.38-9.

203. Doodson, *Truth of God*, pp.55-63; Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', pp.44-8; Park, *Churches of God*, pp.27-8.

204. E.g., Edinburgh (Boswell to 'my... Brother', quoted in *idem*, 'Open position', pp.77-8); Govan (*BM*, 17 (May 1907), endpp.); Musselburgh (*W*, 37 (1907), p.184); Ayr (*BM*, 19 (February 1910), p.iv); and examples cited in Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.37-42.

being declared bankrupt.²⁰⁵ He proclaimed the Churches of God 'a fiasco'.²⁰⁶ Most of the leaders who rejoined, such as Alexander, became advocates of more open practices, but Brown was typical of others in that he maintained stricter (and, in his case, idiosyncratic) views.²⁰⁷

In 1901 when W Blair Neatby wrote his *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, he reported that those Open Brethren who 'are to the full as narrow and intolerant as the Exclusives at their worst' were strong in the north of England and Scotland.²⁰⁸ The teaching of those who returned from the Churches of God and retained their narrower views, allied with the many remaining within Open Brethren assemblies who were sympathetic to aspects of *Needed Truth* teaching, meant that a separatist ecclesiology would continue to be promoted. One individual who had been expected to become a leader in the secession was John Ritchie.²⁰⁹ But in 1889 at a conference in Glasgow he had spoken on Ahab, Elijah and Obadiah, examples of the 'broad man', the 'narrow man' and the 'middle man' respectively.²¹⁰ He evidently had begun to see himself as the last. When he founded *The Believer's Magazine* in 1891, he later claimed, it was because other magazines 'had changed their character and line of

205. Park, *Churches of God*, p.85; Macdonald, 'Needed Truth Brethren', p.39, is sceptical that bankruptcy alone was the cause for Brown's return and feels that there must have been doctrinal causes. Brown apparently thought that views which were more extreme than he had intended had pushed his principles too far, something he reputedly blamed on 'some of the brethren from Armagh' (William Gilmore, *These Seventy Years* (Kilmarnock [c.1952]), pp.51-2). However, F F Bruce noted that Brown retained many of the Churches of God principles in later life (Bruce to the writer, 8 June 1987). For Open Brethren attitudes to bankruptcy, see below, p.368.

206. Bruce to the writer, 8 June 1987: Brown also claimed that the Exclusives were 'a fraud' and the Open Brethren 'a failure'.

207. Bruce to the writer, 26 April 1987 and 8 June 1987. For Brown's later disciples within the Open Brethren, see below, pp.290-5.

208. W Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 1st edn (London [1901]), p.327.

209. HyP[ickering], 'Death of a contemporary', *W*, 60 (1930), p.92.

210. *W*, 19 (November 1889), p.v.

testimony'.²¹¹ This was probably an allusion to the teaching on district oversights being adopted by *Needed Truth* writers and the more open communion being promoted in *The Witness* at the time. In 1891 during an address in the Marble Hall, Glasgow, he advocated assemblies supporting each other but not 'ordered and governed by a senate of men... who issue their *judicial* findings to an unwilling people' for this would issue in 'confusion and division'.²¹² On the other hand Ritchie shared the *Needed Truth* concern over the 'looseness' of much Open Brethren practice. He agreed with the teaching of Hopkins on the Church and on the need to dissociate oneself entirely from other denominations either in receiving from them or preaching in them.²¹³ In 1907, after a correspondence on fellowship in *The Believer's Magazine*, he argued that 'a "Church of God" is a distinct and definite local circle' and those who wished to join it must 'share its privileges and responsibilities'. Consequently individuals had to be 'in and of the assembly' and could not be merely received to the Lord's table: to do so would be 'lawlessness'. He clearly intended an attack on the Churches of God when he criticised 'the opposite extreme' in which, 'safeguarding themselves against being "linked" through intermediate channels with "looseness", a sectarian position has been reached, excluding all who do not pledge themselves to separate from all who do not accept it.'²¹⁴ He represented a mediating position which combined the independency of the Open Brethren with the separatism of the Churches of God. It was one which proved attractive to many in the Scottish movement.

211. [John Ritchie], 'The story of 'The Believer's Magazine'—1890-1908', *BM*, 18 (December 1908), endpp; Ritchie dated the founding of the magazine to 1890 with the enlargement of the magazine taking place in 1899: he was a year out in both these dates.

212. John Ritchie, 'The fellowship of assemblies in the work of the Lord', *W*, 21 (1891), p.88.

213. Ian McDowell's collection, Chadstone, Australia: John Ritchie to W H Hopkins, 7 March 1916, quoted in Dickson, 'Scottish Brethren', p.41, n.117.

214. [John Ritchie], 'A brief review of answers on "Church fellowship"', *BM*, 17 (1907), p.96.

Open conflict between the two tendencies left within the movement emerged in the Edwardian period, and separation from other Evangelicals was again the central issue. Preaching in other Christian bodies, Ritchie justly claimed, was becoming more common.²¹⁵ Formerly, he argued, links with the Brethren had not been sought by other churches because of the opprobrium with which they were regarded.²¹⁶ But the numerous independent missions which had arisen towards the end of the nineteenth century regarded assemblies favourably and used their preachers.²¹⁷ Some assemblies welcomed fellow Evangelicals as preachers. The meeting in Pollokshaws, for example, had Peter McRostie and J G Govan as preachers, both prominent mission hall evangelists,²¹⁸ and in their 1895 Glasgow gospel campaign Tom Rea and Alexander Marshall had been assisted by a mission hall pastor and a Baptist minister.²¹⁹

In 1906 J R Caldwell published a retraction of his narrower views entitled *The Gathering and Receiving of the Children of God*.²²⁰ He recalled with nostalgia the presectarian days as assemblies emerged out of Victorian revivalism when 'we boasted that if Dr. Andrew Bonar came into the Marble Hall to break bread we would joyfully welcome him.'²²¹ In the

215. [*idem*], "'Inter-Denominational'", *BM*, 10 (1900), p.12; [*idem*] 'Editor's note', *BM*, 15 (1905), p.12.

216. J R [itche], 'Sectarian evangelists in Assemblies', *BM*, 12 (1902), pp.47-8

217. *Ibid*; John R Caldwell, 'Our "identification" with evangelistic efforts', *W*, 26 (1896), pp.165-6.

218. [Joseph L G Walker], *Centenary of the Pollokshaws Assembly 1873-1973* (n.pl. [1973]), [pp.7,8]; on J G Govan see: I R Govan, *Spirit of Revival: the story of J.G. Govan and the Faith Mission*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh, 1960); and on Peter McRostie see: Ena McRostie, *The Man Who Walked Backwards* (London, 1934).

219. Tom Rea (compiler), *The Life and Labours of David Rea, Evangelist: largely written from his own MSS.* (Belfast, 1917), p.139.

220. Caldwell, *Gathering and Receiving*: a version of the pamphlet also appeared as 'The Receiving of the Children of God', *W*, 41 (1911), pp.109-110, 125-6, 141-2; earlier Caldwell had also published the anti-Churches of God pamphlet: *District Oversight Meetings: their origin and their issues. and On Increase of Knowledge [sic]* (Glasgow n.d.), both of which had also appeared as articles in *The Witness* during 1890.

221. J R Caldwell to Alexander Marshall, 30 August 1909, quoted in Hawthorn, *Marshall*, p.138.

pamphlet he formalised this period into a quasi-mystical doctrine of the Church. In the early Church, Caldwell argued:

At first it was the attraction of a divine instinct, the power of a common object, the love of a new nature begotten of God, that drew together those who were or of one heart and of one soul, and "of the rest durst no man join himself unto them." Daily multitudes were added on the same principle of attraction, and the world was excluded by the same principle of expulsion.

If the Spirit again worked 'in a mighty power', Caldwell argued, then 'the attraction would be same essentially'.²²² In a review pamphlet published by Ritchie this concept was criticised by W H Hunter of Manchester, a non-seceding founding editor of *Needed Truth*, for its 'vague indefiniteness'.²²³ Hunter alleged that Caldwell had a tone of superiority, like someone making 'ex cathedra' statements from the throne of St. Peter, or even from an editorial chair.²²⁴ He asserted that reception into 'the fellowship of the assembly' was a separate act in Christian experience distinct from the new birth, and that those in a denomination were rebelling against the Lordship of Christ.²²⁵ A more concrete conception of the local congregation was being opposed to Caldwell's charismatic concept of unity.

A direct attack on Ritchie's views on separation from fellow Evangelicals was offered in 1908 by Alexander Marshall in *Holding Fast the Faithful Word*.²²⁶ Marshall, after evangelising in North America from 1879, had returned to Scotland in 1904. Initially he had accepted the stricter views

222. Caldwell, *Gathering and Receiving*, pp.15-16.

223. W H Hunter, *The Gathering and Receiving of the Children of God: a review of a recent booklet* (Kilmarnock [c.1906]), p.8.

224. *Ibid.*, p.16.

225. *Ibid.*, pp.5-7, 10-11, 14.

226. The title is taken from Titus 1:9; the pamphlet evidently appeared in 1908 as the response by the Exclusive writer Alfred H Burton, *What is Exclusivism? a review of Mr Alex. Marshall's "Holding Fast the Faithful Word"*, has that year on its title page and internal evidence also places *Holding Fast* in 1908 (see chronology on p.11). The version used above incorporated a page of responses to the first printing.

but, like Caldwell, had come back to a more open position.²²⁷ In his pamphlet he was primarily concerned with defending open communion and speaking in mission halls. The target of his polemic was *The Believer's Magazine* whose editor Marshall felt was abusing his position.²²⁸ Ritchie maintained of individuals who preached in other denominations that if those 'who see the evil effects on young believers of such persons being allowed to appear in assemblies as their instructors *would act firmly and unitedly, they would soon cease to trouble them.*'²²⁹ Marshall felt that this was a call to war. He evidently thought that Ritchie had schismatic tendencies at this time.²³⁰ In 1906 during moves towards unity by an Exclusive party he felt Ritchie would be of little help, noting privately to a friend that Ritchie 'has not broken bread in his own assembly for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years'.²³¹ In the first draft of the pamphlet Marshall had avoided attributing quotations but eventually inserted them in order to show 'when, where and how' open principles were being departed from.²³² Marshall's rhetoric was robust. He teased Ritchie because Ritchie published and sold non-Brethren works and by citing examples of Ritchie's attendance at services conducted by preachers whom Ritchie would not receive to the Lord's table.²³³ Marshall pled for liberty on 'minor matters' which he listed as: 'election, free will, predestination, baptism, church

227. Hawthorn, *Marshall*, p.137. Apparently Marshall revised the section on the Lord's supper in his *Straight Paths for the Children of God* (Glasgow, n.d.); in the edition of this pamphlet reprinted in the 1980s by Gospel Tract Publications, pp.32-3 argue for reception to assembly fellowship, but pp.29-30 of an edition held in the Christian Brethren Archive, Manchester (possibly dating from the early twentieth century), enjoin reception to the Lord's table—the distinction made in arguments for closed and open communion respectively. Presumably the former reprint is an earlier edition of the latter publication.

228. Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.28.

229 [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 28 (1908), p.23, quoted in Marshall *Holding Fast*, p.29 [Marshall's italics].

230. *Ibid.*, p.28.

231. CBA 2356, Alexander Marshall to G F Bergin, 6 November 1906.

232. Note on endpp. insert in Marshall, *Holding Fast*.

233. Marshall, *Holding Fast*, pp. 20, 38; the preachers were evangelists D L Moody and John McNeil and the Exclusive Brethren member W P T Wolston.

government, the Lord's coming, preaching in missions, &c.'²³⁴ Many within Scottish assemblies welcomed the pamphlet but others accused Marshall of being divisive and Ritchie received a large number of expressions of support for *The Believer's Magazine*.²³⁵ He did not reply to Marshall but complained that the truths the journal maintained had been 'traded by others who have departed from them.'²³⁶

J R Caldwell had supplied a preface to Marshall's pamphlet. He rejected a rigid distinction between the universal Church and a local church, the latter being 'part of the whole'.²³⁷ But his attitude to the relationship between the Brethren and denominational churches was an ambivalent one. Although he would not deny communion to someone 'on the sole ground of their church connection', yet, he wrote, 'the one introduced may not see his way to a full identification with the simple mode of assembling in the Name of the Lord'.²³⁸ The Brethren still occupied higher ground to which the person might eventually be won. Marshall listed church government as a 'minor matter', but he gave as one of his reasons for preaching in missions the fact that through such contact many of them had been led to become assemblies.²³⁹ Against one critic he defended his right to teach Brethren ecclesiology to those converted through his evangelism.²⁴⁰ Both Marshall and Caldwell cited as the ideal (doubtless partly because of the participants' subsequent careers) the 1868 mission of Hopkins and Boswell in the Orkney churches, an episode which had left

234. *Ibid.*, p.27.

235. Endpp. insert in *ibid*; [John Ritchie], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 28 (1908), p.142.

236. [Ritchie], "The Believer's Magazine"; cf. [*idem*], 'Holding fast the truth', *BM*, 16 (1906), p.93.

237. 'QA', *W*, 38 (1908), pp.194-5.

238. Caldwell, *Gathering and Receiving*, p.19.

239. Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.30.

240. [Alexander Marshall], *Wandering Lights: a stricture on the doctrines and methods of Brethrenism. A review by A.M.*, 3rd edn (Glasgow, n.d.), pp.17-18.

the congregations they visited depleted and relations embittered.²⁴¹ Those who argued for associating with Christians outside the movement, as well as their critics, argued from the premises that the Brethren possessed truth which it was their duty to teach to others and that denominations were 'sects'. The defence of liberty for preachers was not an expression of a simple pan-Evangelical ecumenism but could become an argument for a means of proselytising.

THE FAITHFUL WORD

The divisions of the period are difficult to explain on socioeconomic grounds. The *Needed Truth* leaders were of the same middle-class stratum as individuals such as J R Caldwell. Ritchie, too, became a successful businessman. Perhaps there were some elements of an urban-rural divide—one circular letter implied that stricter practices were harder to enforce in 'country districts'.²⁴² Certainly it was in areas of Scotland and in the north of England where the industrial working classes were strong that the Churches of God were most readily formed and the Glasgow Church of God was present in Townhead, Govan and Cathcart Street, working-class districts of the city. But what was also significant was the view of the Bible which informed the debate. All sides in the protracted reception question had to argue a difficult case. Writers in the *Needed Truth* and *The Believer's Magazine* maintained that the New Testament distinguished between entering the Church as the Body of Christ and being received into the local church as an institution for which scripture supplied the normative pattern. Caldwell and his allies wanted to retain the charismatic unity of the early Church while agreeing that the New

241. Caldwell to Marshall, 30 August 1909, quoted in Hawthorn, *Marshall*, pp.137-8; Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.23. The former source provides the epigraph to Chpt. 3, p.77, above; for Hopkins and Boswell in Orkney see above, pp.104-5.

242. W Paterson *et al.*, in Chalmers (compiler), 'Papers and Letters', p.13.

Testament gave a clear church order for gathered congregations.²⁴³ Both saw scripture as providing an ecclesiological model which had to be copied.

The Bible was accepted as being fully inspired by God: *Needed Truth* commenced with an article stressing its perfection.²⁴⁴ The mode of inspiration was frequently stated as being that of dictation. For Caldwell the Psalmist wrote at 'the dictation of the Spirit of God', while for Rice Hopkins the writers were 'so many pens in the one hand'.²⁴⁵ A more sophisticated view was offered by physician David Anderson-Berry.²⁴⁶ He rejected mechanical dictation but argued that inspiration was the result of men's selves coming into union with God who communicated his will to them. Though the style might be the writer's 'the matter is God's and the choice of expression is His'. Inspiration was 'plenary' and 'verbal',²⁴⁷ and Anderson-Berry could still use the metaphor of the Holy Spirit using 'anonymous penmen'.²⁴⁸ These views were derived from the high views of scripture propounded by some nineteenth-century Evangelicals.²⁴⁹ Colonel Molesworth cited Robert Haldane as the source of his own views,²⁵⁰ and the work of the Princeton theologians B B Warfield and Charles Hodge evidently lay behind Anderson-Berry's opinions. He

243. J R Caldwell, *The Charter of the Church: revised notes of an exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2 vols (Glasgow [1910]); 'The congregation of true believers in the Lord Jesus', in W Hoste and R M'Elheran (eds), *The True Church: what is it? who compose it?* (Glasgow [c.1915]), pp.32-6.

244. W Laing, 'The Word of God', *NT*, 1 (1888-9), pp.10-18.

245. J R C [aldwell], 'Inspiration of Scripture' *NW*, 10 (1880), p.82; R T H [opkins], 'Thoughts on Deuteronomy', *NW*, 12 (1882), p.33; cf. John R Caldwell, "'The Red Heifer'", *W*, 26 (1896), p.77; A O Molesworth, 'The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures', *W*, 35 (1905), pp.114, 119, 120; John Ritchie, *Lectures on the Book of Daniel with expository notes on "The Times of the Gentiles" and prophetic subjects* (Kilmarnock, 1915), p.6.

246. David Anderson-Berry M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., a son of the manse and a relative of the Duke of Hamilton, was unique among earlier Scottish Brethren for his learning.

247. D Anderson-Berry, 'The Holy Bible the Word of God', *W*, 41 (1911), pp.80, 81.

248. *Ibid.*, p.81; D Anderson Berry, 'The return to Bethlehem', *W*, 44 (1914), p.106.

249. D W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), pp.86-91.

250. Colonel Molesworth, 'The inspiration of the Bible', *W*, 35 (1905), pp.174.

echoed their thinking, rooted in Common Sense philosophy, that Scripture consisted of a 'collection of facts'.²⁵¹ The language of dictation tended to be replaced by the Princeton translation of inspiration as 'God-breathed'.²⁵² The Bible was completely reliable, historically and scientifically.²⁵³

These views of scripture gave rise to a literalist biblicism. There was no place for tradition but the appeal was to scripture alone which was the only confession of faith.²⁵⁴ 'Will brethren at this point', Boswell challenged one waverer in 1892, 'go on with the Word of God, or will they take the traditions of Open Brethren as their guide?'²⁵⁵ John Ritchie commended the man who stamped on the cover of his Bible: 'Enquire Within about Everything'²⁵⁶ Brethren tended to allow only practices expressly commanded in scripture. After the interruption of the morning meeting at Lochore a special discussion was held at which the principal individuals agreed that musical practices not found in scripture should cease.²⁵⁷ Daily, early Bible reading was recommended as the agent of practical sanctification.²⁵⁸ The emphasis on every word of scripture being from God gave rise to the characteristic Brethren sermon which linked different

251. D Anderson-Berry, 'After Death', *W*, 33 (1903), p.26. In this article Anderson-Berry was discussing how doctrines are constructed from the biblical evidence, and he does so by outlining 'the laws of thought', which are clearly the contemporary method for constructing a scientific theory. The Bible is 'the collection of facts' from which doctrines must be deduced. For the Princeton doctrine of scripture, see George M Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: the shaping of twentieth-century evangelicalism 1870-1925* (Oxford, 1980).

252. E.g., J R Caldwell, 'The God-breathed Bible', *W*, 50 (August 1920), pp.305-7.

253. John Ritchie Jnr., *Is the Bible the Word of God?* (Kilmarnock, 1908).

254. T C[ochrane], 'A word for the times', *NI*, 4 (1874), p.85; J R C[aldwell], 'Tradition and the Word of God', *NW*, 10 (1880), pp.65-7; Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.2; [John Ritchie], 'Scripture and tradition', *BM*, 19 (1909), p.102.

255. Boswell to 'my... Brother', quoted in *idem*, 'Open position', p.78; cf. J A B[oswell], 'Willingness to obey', *NW*, 10 (1880), p.168.

256. John Ritchie, 'The Lord's Supper', *BM*, 11 (1901), p.140.

257. Oral information, 19 November 1988.

258. John Ritchie, 'The word of God: its place in the Christian's life', *BM*, 18 (1908), p.89; *idem*, 'The Bible and its daily use', *BM*, 21 (1911), p.37; *idem*, *From Egypt to Canaan*, pp.63-6.

phrases or images throughout the Bible, as in one of John Ritchie's subject outlines:

One thing thou lackest (Mark x. 21)—Salvation

One thing I know (John ix. 25)—Assurance

One thing is needful (Luke x. 42)—Communion

One thing I do (Phil iii. 13)—Devotion.²⁵⁹

New critical approaches to Scripture were rejected and developments in theology, such as R J Campbell's modernist New Theology, were regarded with horror.²⁶⁰ To their dislike of the institutionalism and mixed communions of the churches was added deep antipathy of the religious scepticism which was widely thought to characterise them. Against these trends the Brethren stressed the essentials of conservative Protestant Evangelicalism. By the first decade of the twentieth century the words 'fundamental' or 'foundation' were widely used among them : Caldwell wrote *Foundations of the Faith* (1903) and Ritchie *Foundation Truths* (1907); in 1907 *The Believer's Magazine* carried a series entitled 'Fundamental Truths' and in 1908 *The Witness* had 'Fundamental Facts'.²⁶¹ In advance of the later full-blown phenomenon, the Brethren were profoundamentalists.²⁶²

Practices had to be legitimated from scripture. The typical Sunday pattern in many assemblies was for a morning meeting, followed by in the afternoon a Sunday school, a ministry meeting and an open-air service, and finally in the evening a gospel meeting.²⁶³ The Brethren did not

259. John Ritchie, 'Four "One things"', in *idem*, *500 Gospel Subjects with outlines, divisions, and notes for preachers, teachers and Christian workers* (Kilmarnock, 1904), p.33.

260. J R Caldwell, 'The New Theology', *W*, 37 (1907), pp.57-9; [John Ritchie], "'The New Theology" and the foundations of the faith', *BM*, 17 (1907), p.25.

261. *BM*, 17 (1907), pp.37-40, 54-5, 61-3, 74-6, 85-7, 98-100; *W*, 28 (1908), pp.10, 48-9, 62, 80-1, 98, 111-12, 128-9, 145-6, 155-6, 171-2.

262. On the link between nineteenth-century profoundamentalism and the Brethren, see Ian S Rennie, 'Fundamentalism and the varieties of North Atlantic Evangelicalism', in Mark A Noll *et al.* (eds), *Evangelicalism: comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and beyond 1700-1990* (New York, 1994), pp.333-50.

263. This is the pattern of services before World War I described in Alexander Rollo, *The Story of Innerleven Assembly* (n.pl., n.d.), p.8.

acknowledge this as a pattern inherited from the Victorian Church, but maintained, as Alexander Stewart did, that worship before service was the biblical order.²⁶⁴ One writer eliminated the pragmatic case for female preaching, which maintained it should be permitted because it was successful, by arguing that 'the one safe path is the path of obedience to the Word'.²⁶⁵ The Bible was treated as being canon law. This created difficulty for those who tolerated diversity of practice. At the height of the *Needed Truth* agitation, J R Caldwell argued that there was a difference between a biblical 'precept and a principle'. The former allowed 'little room for diversity of judgment' but the application of the latter, characteristic of the 'present dispensation', might not be apprehended by some 'who far excel their judges in grace and godliness.'²⁶⁶ Marshall argued that:

Scripture does not teach that differences of judgment on minor matters constitute a sufficient ground for the refusal or exclusion of fellow-saints. If God has permitted liberty and forbidden us to judge one another, and we insist on uniformity, thereby causing division, we shall not be blameless.²⁶⁷

These writers were pleading for the acceptance of diversity. But given the premises which the Brethren had concerning the Bible, those who felt that the scriptures legislated for every eventuality perhaps had an easier case to argue. It was natural that those who sat down with an open Bible in the manner described by William Shaw might become critical of those who failed to perceive what was plainly revealed to oneself.²⁶⁸ Hopkins began his pamphlet *Fellowship Among Saints: what saith the Scriptures?* by arguing that 'individuality and independence' were the marks of the sinner, but in the assembly God had made Jesus as Lord 'and as a result

264. Alexander Stewart, untitled sermon in Henry Groves *et al.*, *Addresses Delivered at a Christian Conference Held at Paisley, April, 1877 by Mr Henry Groves, Kendal; Mr Henry Dyer, Bath; Mr Alex. Stewart, Glasgow. Subject: God's Holy Word* (Paisley [1877]), p.22.

265. W F H N, ' "Forbid him not" ', p.115.

266. John R Caldwell, 'On differences of judgment', *W*, 29 (1891), pp.177-9.

267. Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.27.

268. See above, p.176.

expecting oneness of action in the church':

No room then is left to speak of "agreeing to differ" or for the suggestion that some things have been left open on which scripture is silent, as in that case we would have to take a path of our own choosing or follow one chosen by another.²⁶⁹

Scripture was incapable of teaching different things to different individuals about the Church.²⁷⁰ The concept of a faultless, entirely sufficient Bible encouraged the Brethren to seek the perfect ecclesiology in scripture and to see other denominations as sinful for not accepting it.²⁷¹ It also made many feel that the toleration of diversity was implausible.

ASSESSMENTS

The reception question left Scottish Brethren deeply divided. Although Henry Pickering, editor of *The Witness* from 1914, included Exclusive Brethren leaders in his collection of biographical profiles, *Chief Men Among the Brethren* (1918), Churches of God seceders were omitted. Among those who remained Open Brethren, the polemics had soured relations and the two tendencies differed in what constituted a church and which practices were acceptable within it. They also differed in assessing the state of assemblies. In 1916 with modest satisfaction, Ritchie felt that, although the movement was not 'THE Pentecostal or Apostolic Church reconstructed as at the beginning', it constituted a 'remnant' which had achieved 'actual and visible separation from the religious world'. While there never was any 'hope of gaining wide influence or great numbers', God had given power for 'holding fast'.²⁷² Caldwell, on the other hand, felt

269. Hopkins, *Fellowship*, p.4.

270. *NW*, 12 (1882), p.70.

271. Cf. John Ritchie, *The Way, Which They Call Heresy: remarks on Mr. W. Blair Neatby's book, "A History of the Plymouth Brethren"* (Kilmarnock [c.1901]), p.22.

272. John Ritchie, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation: with notes on "Things which must shortly come to pass"* (Kilmarnock, 1916), pp.62-4: this was in the course of commentating on the Church at Philadelphia which he saw as being symbolic of the Brethren movement, cf. Andrew Miller, *Short Papers on Church History*, 1 (London, 1878), pp.632-8; for the theme of restoration in Brethren historiography, see above, pp.10-12.

it was the controversies which had hindered assembly growth. 'In many meetings', he lamented, 'there are two parties carrying on an internal strife, grieving to the Spirit and withering to souls'.²⁷³ He wrote to Marshall:

Had we gone where we were invited, and received all who loved the Lord, the Spirit would not have been grieved as He has, and the meetings would have grown to hundreds instead of tens.²⁷⁴

This assessment was echoed in 1916 by L W G Alexander responding to a correspondence in *The Witness* concerning why many assemblies were being discontinued. The answer, Alexander felt, was the arguments over 'Church Truth'. He maintained that 'a deeply rooted and deadly disease in the history of meetings is openly manifesting itself' and that the next quarter century would determine whether it 'is to be rooted out or whether it will ultimately paralyse and destroy a movement that has been manifestly of God.'²⁷⁵

After the mid-1870s the movement became more conservative. The radical enthusiasms associated with democratised Christian groups in a nascent stage²⁷⁶ had given way to a more settled, structured body. Most obviously the process of consolidation affected the role of women and theological exploration, and in this it reflected the emerging counter-culture of conservative Evangelicalism. But the intensification of sectarianism was also of significance. R S Brown, the last provost of Pollokshaws before it was incorporated into Glasgow, was a rare example of someone who was engaged in society's affairs.²⁷⁷ More characteristic of the period was the withdrawal from association with other Evangelicals

273. J R Caldwell, 'Preface', in Marshall, *Holding Fast*, p.3.

274. Caldwell to Marshall, quoted in *Hawthorn*, Marshall, p.138.

275. L W G Alexander, 'Decadence or revival', *W*, 46 (1916), p.136.

276. Nathan O Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT, 1989).

277. [Walker], *Pollokshaws Assembly*, [p.6].

which took place across the movement. The Brethren were moving into a more settled phase of church life and differing emphases which had been latent within assemblies struggled for dominance.²⁷⁸ There was a strong desire for order and biblical texts which counselled it became familiar parlance.²⁷⁹ Views of scripture were a powerful influence in shaping the eventual outcome. Treating the Bible as revealing the mind of a single speaker without also seeing it as the product of various authors tended to produce uniformity rather than diversity. Although more nuanced readings of scripture surfaced in the arguments of Caldwell and Marshall, probably the majority saw unanimity as mandatory. The strong sense of doctrinal orthodoxy which the movement carried over from its Evangelical background was a powerful factor in ensuring virtually complete agreement. But even here some differences of opinion were permitted and inevitably individuals varied in how rigidly they applied principles and practices. The autonomy of each assembly also made complete conformity difficult to produce and the ecclesiology allowed variety. The *Needed Truth* party wanted tighter organisation. By reconstituting the perfect church pattern, they maintained, Christ's presence would be guaranteed.²⁸⁰ Some institutionalisation had been inevitable in the movement as roles were defined more precisely and as orthodoxy was established. But, as was apparent in the Churches of God, the creation of a formal authority structure produced a more sectarian body.²⁸¹ The only widespread schism to affect Scottish Open Brethren was produced by the rejection of independency.²⁸²

278. See above, pp.106-10.

279. For examples, see above, ns 9 and 83.

280. F Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: its origins, its worldwide development and its significance for the present day*, 2nd edn (Exeter, 1976), p.218, n.

281. cf. B R Wilson, 'An analysis of sect development', in *idem*, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, p.33.

282. Willis and Wilson, 'Churches of God', in Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp.244-50.

A quasi-mystical view of the Church and the appeal of a charismatic order made the majority resistant to institutional regulation. Formal structures and official roles were kept to a minimum and administratively the Open Brethren did not develop much beyond Moberg's stage of incipient organisation.²⁸³ John Ritchie was the most prominent supporter of the open platform because it gave preachers liberty to deliver their message.²⁸⁴ He wanted to preserve the earliest phase of assembly life, something he was probably also attempting to do—given his origins in the north east—in resisting increased contact with fellow Evangelicals. Individuals such as Caldwell and Marshall were also appealing to an earlier, presectarian phase of the movement. The argument was about history.²⁸⁵ Both sides could claim to be 'holding fast'.²⁸⁶ Individuals such as Ritchie always wanted mechanisms to approve and uphold the judgment of individual assemblies:²⁸⁷ Marshall could taunt him with what he felt was the latter's desire to excommunicate those who preached in mission halls, but he knew that congregational autonomy made this impossible for Ritchie.²⁸⁸ Independency gave the movement considerable capacity to absorb such tensions without them leading to general schism.²⁸⁹

That the Brethren movement was privileged in being the custodian of a special truth was accepted by all. However a denominationalising tendency was present in those such as Marshall. He considered church government a minor matter, maintained interdenominational contacts, and opposed

283. Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution*, p.119.

284. [John Ritchie], 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 10 (1900), pp.107-8; [*idem*], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 38 (1918), p.23.

285. See above, pp.12-14.

286. See above, pp.215, 223.

287. Editor [i.e. John Ritchie], 'Answers to special questions', *BM*, 16 (1906), p.96; [*idem*], 'Answers to correspondents', *BM*, 18 (1908), p.47.

288. Marshall, *Holding Fast*, pp.28, 29, 38.

289. W B Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 1st edn (London [1901]), p.325, cited in Willis and Wilson, 'Churches of God', p.246.

the open platform because it led to less orderly services. His attitude was a more pragmatic one. Diversity continued to exist, but increased conservatism, doctrinal orthodoxy, and the location of an ideal state in history—the emergence of a reified social order—made it more difficult for all assemblies to change and innovate. Probably, as Caldwell maintained, separatism did hinder Brethren growth to some degree. It made the movement less attractive to many potential recruits who wanted to retain links with interdenominational Evangelicalism. But Alexander had been unduly pessimistic in his assessment that conflict might paralyse the movement. The Brethren were about to find that they could grow in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 6

A HEARTY, HAPPY BAND: GROWTH AND ETHOS 1914-1965

But show me a company of "feeble folk", with little gift, less gold, yet with hearts aglow concerning the One whose "visage was so marred more than any man" (Isa. 52. 14), and the love of Christ constraining them as ambassadors for Christ to beseech men "in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5. 20), and you will behold a hearty, happy band bringing glory to God and goodwill to men. And, thank, God, many such there are.
—Henry Pickering, "'The Lord Himself'", *The Witness*, 46 (1916), p.6.

In 1943 the future missionary George Patterson was sent to work at a mechanical engineering plant which constructed military vehicles in Portobello, East Lothian.¹ The assembly in the town was composed of about eighty individuals, the men mainly fishermen and miners, and they met in a small room above a billiard hall in the Working Men's Institute. Serious and cerebral, belonging to the "Tight' school of thought', they regularly met for animated discussions of the Bible. Once a week a conversational Bible reading was held when, after an introductory address, the passage in question was discussed through a 'verse-by-verse debate'. During the frequent visits to assembly members' homes, 'the talk would most of the time centre in the Word... Bibles would be brought out and an impromptu 'Bible-reading' would continue for hours'.² Absorbed in the Brethren world and self-sufficient in its provision for the lives of the members, many assemblies in the period discussed in the present chapter were similar to the Portobello one. Bible study and evangelism were the principal leisure pursuits and even industrial problems could be a means

1. George N Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet: death throes of a nation* (San Diego, CA, 1998), p.57.

2. *Idem*, *God's Fool* (London, 1956), pp. 38-40.

of pursuing them. In 1921 the 'Unemployed Preachers' appeared briefly in north Ayrshire,³ and during the General Strike of 1926 miners engaged in Bible study and evangelistic missions.⁴ During the second quarter of the twentieth century the internal life of the Brethren reached its high-water mark.

Two estimates of the size of the movement were produced in the period under consideration, one in 1933 and the other in 1960. In 1924 Henry Pickering in an article for *The Witness* had thought that Brethren numbers were increasing on a rising tide of enthusiasm,⁵ and at the time of the 1960 estimate, the individuals who produced it also felt that assembly membership was larger than ever.⁶ The movement, it was felt at these two different points in the twentieth century, was increasing in size. In an attempt to establish the reality which lay behind these impressions, the present chapter will examine these estimates and perceptions through the growth of assemblies and such statistics as are available. The period will be divided into two, using the two world wars as dividing lines. This is not merely a device. Both events had major consequences for society, and, as shall become apparent, this in turn meant they would also have important results for Scottish assemblies. An additional section will analyse several significant aspects of Brethren life to examine the ethos of the movement at a time when, as we have seen, contemporaries felt meetings were at their strongest. In an era when mainline churches were beginning to decline numerically, it will become clear that Scottish Brethren demonstrated several differences and similarities.

3. W, 51 (1921), p.74; W, 52 (1922), p.206.

4. Oral information, 10 August 1997; writer's collection, I.L.2, W Dunning, 'Assemblies in the South of Scotland. 1908-1947. Gatehouse of Fleet', typescript [1988].

5. Hy P[ickering], 'WW', W, 54 (1924), p.384.

6. See below, pp.248-9.

GROWTH 1914-39

Knowing that the Great War was sending millions of young men to hell apparently undermined the health of the Churches of God evangelist Frank Vernal and contributed to his early death.⁷ The conflict gave the Brethren fresh incentive to evangelise.⁸ Special tracts were issued and evangelists and assemblies attempted to take advantage of the large number of men brought together in the army.⁹ Alexander Marshall spent the war using the opportunities it provided for evangelism, visiting the German internment camps in Holland where he addressed the British prisoners of war and in 1918 spending several months at the front in France under the auspices of the Soldiers' Christian Association.¹⁰ It was for his work with this last organisation during the war that James Anderson, a former missionary, was awarded an MBE.¹¹ Assemblies were formed at Nigg, Easter Ross (see Map 3),¹² Gretna, Dumfriesshire (see Map 14),¹³ and, during the war probably, at Rosyth, Fife (see Map 7),¹⁴ where naval bases with large concentrations of men—Brethren individuals among them—had come into existence. Nor was the home front neglected. In 1916 there was a brief outburst of revivalism among some northern fisher girls who were staying at Lochee, Dundee, when some sixty to eighty of them were converted, and the following month it spilled over into the city's Hermon Hall where there were a further forty

7. J J Park, *The Churches of God: their origin and development in the 20th Century* (Leicester, 1987), p.28; Vernal had been an Open Brethren evangelist from 1888 until 1892.

8. For other Brethren attitudes to the war, see below, pp.274-81, 389-1.

9. *BM*, 24 (1914), p.120; *BM*, 24 (September 1914), pp.i, iv; 'Sergeant McAllister's Story', *HS*, 39 (January 1917); *BM*, 25 (January 1915), p.i; Alexander Rollo, *The Story of Innerleven Assembly* (n.p, n.d), pp.11-12.

10. John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: evangelist, author and pioneer* (Glasgow [1929]), pp.142-6.

11. J G[ray], 'James A. Anderson, London', *BP*, 50 (1929), pp.34-6.

12. *BM*, 26 (May 1916), p.i; *BM* 38 (May 1918), p.i.

13. *BM*, 27 (May, 1917), p.i.

14. *BM*, 32 (June 1922), p.i, is the only reference to the Rosyth assembly and it was made close to its discontinuation when many were leaving the town because of reductions in the dockyards; cf. *BM*, 34 (July 1925), p.ii.

professions.¹⁵ New assemblies were formed: after a mission in 1915 by Arthur Gilmour one was formed at Livingstone Station, West Lothian (see Map 9);¹⁶ in Monifieth, Angus (see Map 6), where there had been an abortive attempt to found a meeting before the war, an assembly was established in 1916;¹⁷ J M Nicholson succeeded in planting a second meeting on Lewis in Stornoway (see Map 3), probably during the war years;¹⁸ the assemblies in Plantation Street, Glasgow (see Map 11),¹⁹ and Chapelhall, Lanarkshire (see Map 10),²⁰ were founded by Brethren individuals in 1915 and 1918 respectively. Also probably during the war a small meeting was formed in Dunlop, Ayrshire (see Map 13), when Frederick Stanley Arnot's brother William began a breaking of bread service in his house;²¹ and Kilbirnie assembly members appear to have founded one in Glengarnock about 1918.²² Further south in the county assemblies were re-formed in Ochiltree, mainly by members of Auchinleck meeting, in 1915²³ and Patna in 1918.²⁴ The internal conflict of the movement which had marked the early years of the century did not cease for the duration of hostilities,²⁵ and an additional five assemblies were formed through schism. Three of these were short-lived, which suggests

15. *W*, 46 (November 1916), p.143 endpp., *ibid.*, (December), p.143, endpp.

16. *BM*, 25 (May 1915), p.i.

17. 'Mrs Wilson', *W*, 69 (1939), p.48; *W*, 40 (December 1910), endpp; *BM*, 26 (August 1916), p.i.

18. *W*, 78 (1948), p.144, notes that the assembly was formed 'over 30 years ago' i.e. before 1918; cf. *W*, 49 (1919), p.145.

19. 'How it began: Harley Street, Glasgow', *BM*, 98 (1988), pp.104-5

20. *W*, 48 (1918), p.27; however a note in *W*, 49 (1919), p.193, stated that 'Brethren of the district' had met on 25 October 1919 in Lauchope Hall, Chapelhall, to 'commend them as a company': either the founding noted in January 1918 had failed or the surrounding assemblies were giving their blessing to it some two years later. On the principle of not multiplying assemblies unnecessarily (see above p.17, n.84), the latter is the preferred solution.

21. 'William Arnot', *BM*, 34 (July 1925), p.v.

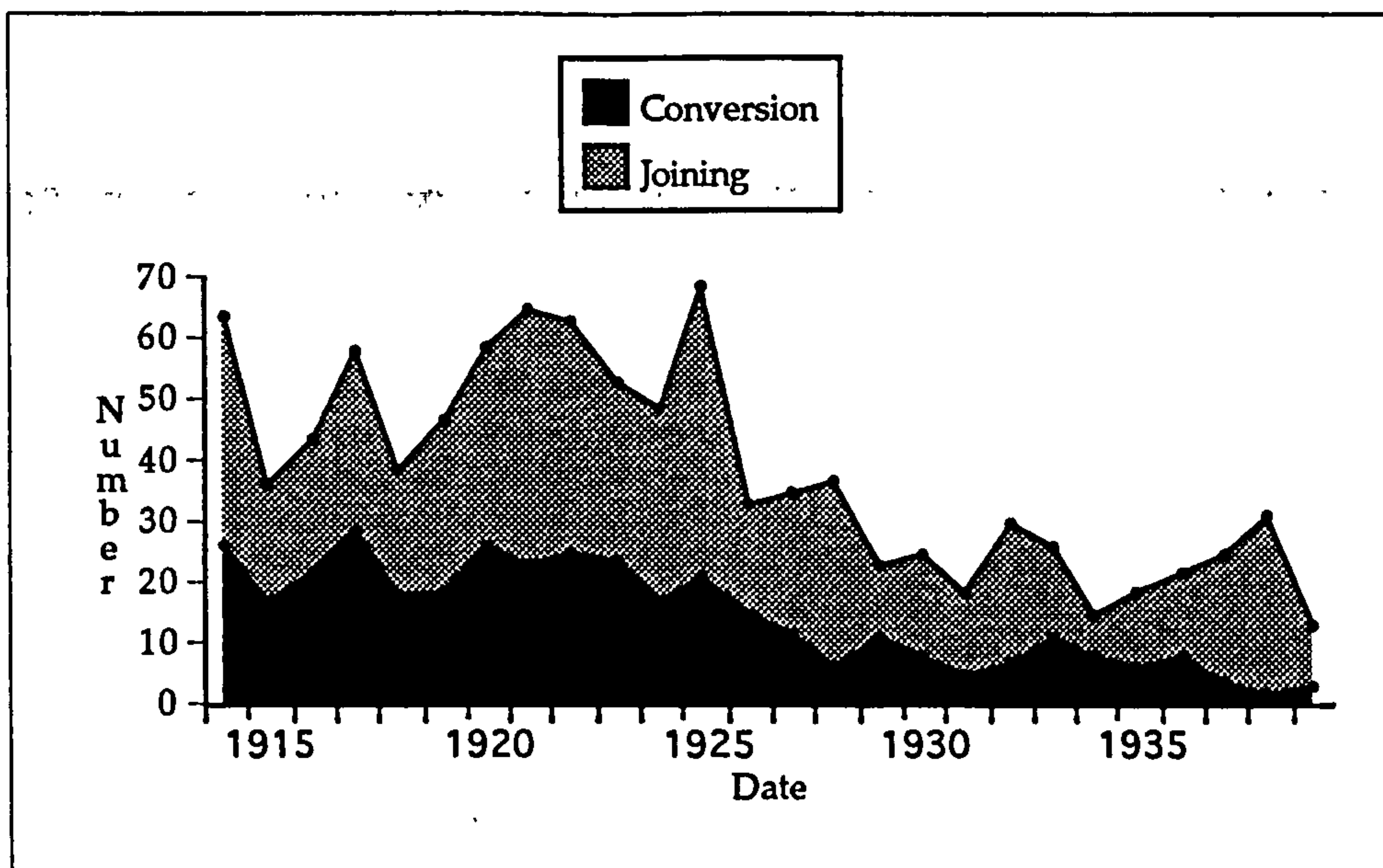
22. *W*, 47 (1919), p.33.

23. Writer's collection, I.C.6., John Hannah, interview with William Hannah, 18 April 1993, MS notes.

24. *BM*, 28 (1918), p.i; the earlier attempt to commence one in Patna had been in 1910, *BM*, 28 (May 1910), p.i.

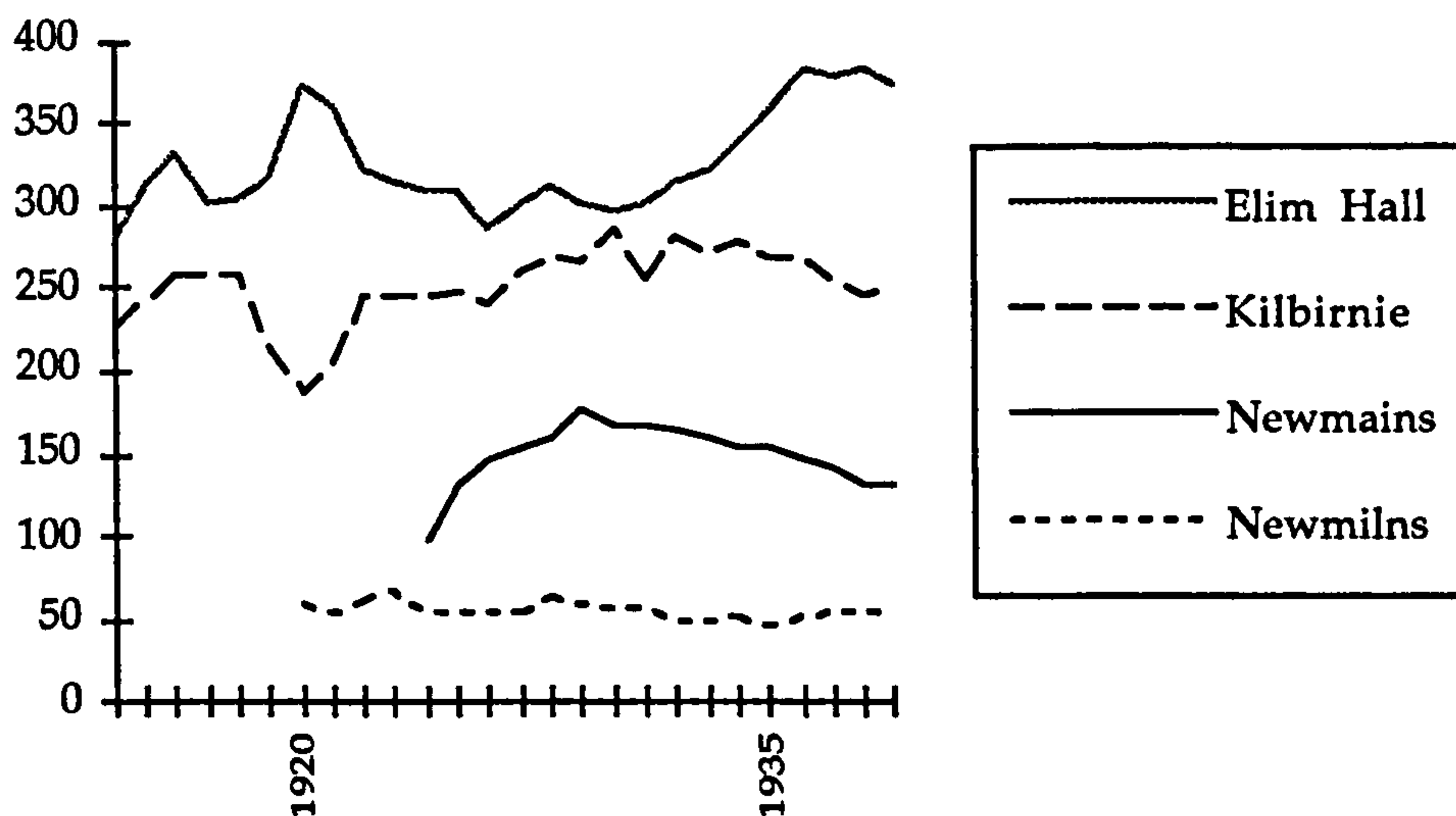
25. See above, pp.211-18.

Figure 6.1. Brethren growth 1914-39.



Source: "With Christ", *The Witness*, 37-108 (1907-78).

Figure 6.2. The growth of four assemblies: Elim Hall, Glasgow, 1914-39; Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire 1914-39; Gospel Hall, Newmains, Lanarkshire, 1923-39; Gospel Hall, Newmilns, Ayrshire, 1919-39.



Sources: *Elim Hall 5 Prince Edward Street Crosshill Glasgow 60th Annual Report 1st January to 31st December., 1949* [Glasgow [1949)], [p.12]; Kilbirnie roll books, 1913-15, 1916, 1919-21, 1925-6, 1928-30, 1931-3, 1934-6, 1937-40; 'Minutes of Half-Yearly and Annual Meetings of Gospel Hall Newmains', 1923-51; 'Assembly Register of Believers Meeting in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in Drygate Street Gospel Hall Newmilns', 1907-1933; Sam Hill, untitled summary of membership of Gospel Hall, Newmilns, 1929-51, MS notes.

that it was personalities rather than any fundamental principles which were involved. Rather different was the secession that took place in Hermon Hall, Govanhill, where it would appear there was dissatisfaction over the role of the leading elder, Fred A Leith.²⁶ A dissenting group separated in 1917 to form a meeting in Dixon Halls, Govanhill,²⁷ and in 1920 Hermon affiliated to the Baptist Union.²⁸ One transfer of membership which favoured the Brethren movement was the merger of 1916 in Cowdenbeath of the town's gospel mission and its assembly.²⁹ Brethren continued their evangelism and concern for ecclesiological rectitude.³⁰

Despite the effort, however, the war created difficulties for the movement. The conflict did not incline individuals to listen to the message the Brethren preached,³¹ and in the absence of men, *The Believer's Magazine* advised, assemblies should use the sisters in inviting people to gospel meetings.³² However, as Figures 6.1 and 6.2 suggest, membership remained fairly constant. The data in *The Witness* obituaries show fluctuations in recruitment with a growth peak in 1917 (Figure 6.1). The memberships of both Elim Hall, Glasgow, and Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie, increased slightly from 1914 until 1916 and dipped towards the end of the decade (Figure 6.2). But Figure 6.1 shows that in the early 1920s there was a marked increase in growth and further peaks on a lesser scale in the 1930s; however, it should be remembered that these data are less accurate after

26. For the founding of this assembly, see above, p.156.

27. 'A. J. Fraser', *W*, 87 (1957), p.17; 'R. Hill', *W*, 96 (1966), p.116: this assembly eventually met in Victoria Hall, Govanhill.

28. Geo Yuille (ed.), *History of the Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1926), p.176: Leith had the unique position of being acclaimed in both Brethren and Baptist history as founding the same congregation.

29. Writer's collection, I.I.4., Robert Muir 'Union Hall, Broad Street, Cowdenbeath' typescript 1988; *BM*, 28 (April 1918), p.i; *W*, 48 (1918), p.27.

30. There was in addition an assembly at Stonefield, Lanarkshire, during these years (*fl.* 1916), but its cause of formation and precise date of origin are not known.

31. *BM*, 24 (October 1914), p.i; *BM*, 25 (August 1915), p.i; *W*, 45 (July 1916), p.84; *BM*, 26 (September 1916), p.i.

32. [John Ritchie], 'Gospellers', *BM* 27 (1917), p.47.

1923.³³ Although during the 1930s the membership trend of three of the assemblies in Figure 6.2 was gently downwards, the inter-war years were at times favourable for Brethren growth. The membership of Kilbirnie assembly dipped in the early 1920s, probably due to out-migration—overseas emigration alone accounted for the loss of twenty-three members between 1919 and 1922; but on the other hand there was a steady number of additions, most notably in 1930 when there were on average 3.25 conversions per month (Figure 6.2).³⁴ The exception to much of this was Elim Hall, Crosshill, which finished the inter-war period with its highest levels of membership. Probably it had benefited in part from migration from the city centre. Three of the assemblies represented in Figure 6.2 ended the period with higher membership levels than those with which they began, and the exception, Gospel Hall, Newmilns, was reduced by only two individuals. Certainly by the end of the inter-war period growth was slowing considerably and complaints were being made that recruitment had ceased in many places.³⁵ But the evidence of the statistics in both figures suggests that although some assemblies suffered slight numerical decline on the eve of World War II, this was offset by gains elsewhere and that in the inter-war era there was a net increase.

Other evidence also suggests overall growth. The increase around 1920 in the membership of Elim Hall was largely due to the effects of revivalism. In 1920 some 2 000 conversions were claimed for a tent mission held by Fred Elliott in the Crosshill district of Glasgow and 120 were baptised in a specially dug baptistery with many of those immersed joining Elim Hall.³⁶ This scale of recruitment was approaching that of the nineteenth century

33. For the explanation of *The Witness* obituaries, see above, p.18, n.87.

34. Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie, roll book, 1928-30.

35. Montague Goodman, 'Why are there so few conversions to-day?', *W*, 57 (1937), pp.29-30; W A Beggs to the editor, *W*, 70 (1940), p.54; cf. Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet*, p.47.

36. *W*, 50 (1920), p.328.

and *The Witness* declared that: 'Never since the days of Moody in '74, Richard Weaver, or David Rea in his best days have we seen the same interest and power'.³⁷ In the early 1920s the last spontaneous community-based revival of the British mainland³⁸ affected Scottish Brethren assemblies. In 1921 Jock Troup, a cooper turned evangelist, was involved in a revival in Yarmouth among the fishing people.³⁹ After an unusually depressed fishing season,⁴⁰ Troup moved north to Fraserburgh in November 1921 in response to what he believed had been a heavenly vision. Vast crowds attended his meetings and the town was stirred by his preaching.⁴¹ The revival spread to other coastal fishing communities where it tended to be guided more by ministers.⁴² In Fraserburgh the awakening took place mainly in non-Presbyterian dissenting churches, and the assembly there and in other places along the coast gained substantially from increased attendance at their services and in attracting the revival converts as members.⁴³ Brethren evangelists were drawn by the news of events: Alexander Marshall held evangelistic services and provided teaching for the new converts in the assembly at Peterhead where the revival had been less ecstatic.⁴⁴ By early 1922 *The Believer's Magazine* was able to report (probably referring to Brethren activity in each place) a 'general awakening' in Portessie, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, and Wick which was affecting many meetings elsewhere.⁴⁵

37. *W* 50 (August, 1930), p.315.

38. Donald E Meek, 'Fishers of men': the 1921 religious revival, its cause, context and transmission', in James Porter (ed.), *After Columba—After Calvin: religious community in North-East Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1999), pp.135-42.

39. J A Stewart, *Our Beloved Jock* (Asheville, N.C., 1964), p.8; Stanley C Griffin, *A Forgotten Revival: East Anglia and NE Scotland—1921* (Bromley [1992]).

40. J L Duthie, 'The fisherman's religious revival', *History Today* (December, 1983), pp.23-4.

41. Griffin, *Forgotten Revival*, pp.67-8.

42. Duthie, 'Fisherman's Revival', p.25.

43. [William Noble], 'How it began: Fraserburgh', *BM*, 99 (1989), p.182.

44. Hawthorn, *Marshall*, p.151; Alex. Marshall to the editor, 14 January 1922, *W*, 52 (1922), pp.166-7.

45. *BM*, 32 (January 1922), p.ii.

The fishermen's revival led to the formation of new assemblies. Evangelist David Walker saw a large number of converts among the fishingfolk of Whinneyfold, Aberdeenshire (see Map 5), in the winter of 1921-2 and a meeting was formed there in 1923.⁴⁶ An evangelistic mission in 1925 by Murdo McKenzie also led to the planting of one at Hopeman, Moray (see Map 4),⁴⁷ and possibly the revivalist atmosphere in the fishing villages was a factor in the formation of the small assembly which existed at Cairnbulg near Fraserburgh (see Map 5) in 1927.⁴⁸ In Caithness Angus Swanson, a Church of Scotland lay reader in Wick (see Map 3), who had been converted in 1919 through the Pilgrim Preachers—an organisation of revivalist itinerants founded in England by two Brethren individuals⁴⁹—resigned his church membership after evangelising alongside Troup. When the two men were about to enrol as students at the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Swanson returned to Wick where he met two Brethren evangelists. In 1923 he and nine teenagers, who had also been influenced by the revival, began breaking bread.⁵⁰ Further south in St Monans, Fife (see Map 7), the same pattern of revival producing dissatisfaction with the institutional church was repeated. In the winter of 1921 some fishermen from the village had been trapped in the harbour at Yarmouth due to heavy gales, and a number of them were converted in the revival. Back in St Monans many of them went to the Congregational Church which had as its minister James Thomson, a former Brethren missionary.⁵¹ In

46. W, 52 (1922), pp.166-7; W, 76 (1946), pp.24-50; photograph of converts in Alex Stewart's collection, Hopeman, [Alex. Stewart (compiler)], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.; BM, 33 (August 1923), p.i.

47. BM, 34 (February 1925) p.ii.

48. W, 57 (1927), p.76.

49. John W Newton, *The Story of the Pilgrim Preachers: and their 24 tours throughout Britain with many stirring scenes, genuine conversions, peculiar positions, and soul-stirring experiences* (London [1938]).

50. Angus Swanson, 'Our heritage', BM 82 (1972), pp.91-2; cf. W, 53 (1923), p.86; H, 1 (1923-4), p.82; 'Angus Swanson', BM, 100 (1990), p.121.

51. Oral information, 9 May 1987; cf. W T Stunt *et al.*, *Turning the World Upside down: a century of missionary endeavour*, 2nd edn (Bath, 1973), p.618.

addition some of the fishermen had forged links with the movement when in various herring-fishing ports and three of them had joined the St Andrews assembly.⁵² In 1923 when evangelist Jack Roberts held a mission in St Monans, he taught Brethren ecclesiology, and the following year a meeting was established.⁵³

The industrial troubles of 1921, it was lamented, 'do not induce large audiences... especially in mining districts'.⁵⁴ But many assemblies—particularly those with a mining constituency—found the early 1920s a fruitful time for recruitment. The membership of the one in Coatdyke, Lanarkshire, was doubled after a six-week mission by John McAlpine, commenced in November 1920, during which there were seventy conversions and twenty-eight baptisms,⁵⁵ while after a seven-week mission by Henry Steedman begun in the same month, the meeting in Shotts had twenty added to it.⁵⁶ In 1921 the Brethren in Aberdeen witnessed emotional scenes in advance of the Moray coast revival when audiences of 2 000 on Sunday evenings and 6-700 at weeknight meetings attended an evangelistic campaign by two English evangelists.⁵⁷ Irish missionary Tom Rea prolonged his stay in the city due to "Christians singing, weeping, praying",⁵⁸ and during Fred Elliott's tent mission in the spring there were a number of conversions, especially of men, with an estimated 2 500 present when he preached at its conclusion.⁵⁹ In 1924 Edinburgh Brethren saw their largest audiences since the 1890s when Rea had a mission at Bellevue Chapel and some thirty converts were made.⁶⁰

52. 'How it began: St Monans', *BM*, 99 (1989), p.36; cf. *W*, 52 (July 1922), p.218.

53. *H*, 1 (1923-4), p.34; *W*, 54 (1924), p.407.

54. *BM*, 31 (June 1921), p.i.

55. *W*, 51 (1921), p.1; James McLachlan, *Ebenezer Hall Coatdyke* (n.p. [1946]), pp.11-12.

56. *W*, 51 (1921), p.14.

57. *W*, 51 (1921), pp.37-8.

58. *Ibid.*, p.50.

59. *Ibid.*, p.74.

60. *H*, 2 (1923-4), p.136.

According to *The Witness* data, the peak years for Brethren growth in the immediate post-war period were 1921 and 1925 (Figure 6.1).⁶¹ It was in this last year, for example, that forty individuals joined the meeting in Glengarnock, Ayrshire, after a mission by James Barrie,⁶² while Cowdenbeath assembly had fifty new members added.⁶³

The inter-war period remained relatively favourable for the formation of assemblies through evangelism. They had institutionalised awakenings in their evangelistic methods and were able to take advantage of factors, such as the troubled social and economic conditions of the period, conducive to advancing revivalism.⁶⁴ There was increased concern to establish the movement in virgin territory. In 1923 a new magazine, *The Harvester*, was founded as part of a move to publicise information about evangelism in districts with few assemblies,⁶⁵ and the following year an association entitled the Unreached Parts of Scotland was formed which organised support for evangelists, initially for those working in the northern Highlands and Argyll but later including the south west and Borders.⁶⁶ These events followed some success which had been achieved in the north-eastern Highlands when assemblies had been formed amongst scenes of revivalist fervour and some opposition in 1923 at

61. On 1925 cf. J H, 'Half-Yearly Meetings of Christians', *W*, 55 (1925), p.215.

62. *W*, 55 (1925), p.76.

63. *H*, 2, (1925), p.79.

64. Cf. above, p.152-3.

65. J A [Judson], 'Editorial', *H*, 1 (1923-4), p.26; 'Gordon Norie Davidson', *W*, 80 (1950), p.168. There had been, in addition, a short-lived newsletter, *Report of Pioneer Gospel Work in Scotland*, which was probably absorbed by the the new magazine; however, the publication in England of *The Harvester* told against it being used by Scottish Brethren to publicise their activities and by 1930 such news had virtually disappeared from it.

66 *H*, 1 (1923-4), pp.132-3, 157, 182-3; *W*, 56 (1926), p.260.

Embo, Brora, Golspie and Helmsdale (see Map 3).⁶⁷ In Argyll the assembly had been re-formed in Campbeltown in 1919 when John Craig, a member of the Girvan meeting who had done his war service in the RFC at Campbeltown, moved there to establish a business.⁶⁸ Evangelism along the coast produced additional assemblies among the fishermen of Carradale in 1925⁶⁹ and Ardrishaig in 1929 where the removal of a Brethren individual to establish a business in the village assisted the process.⁷⁰ Two coastal communities in the south-west (see Map 14) also had assemblies formed in them: Port William meeting was re-formed in 1922 after a mission,⁷¹ and the Kirkcudbright one was founded in 1933 after evangelism.⁷² The Borders also received some attention and a meeting was planted in Biggar, Lanarkshire (see Map 10), after a series of missions,⁷³ and one was re-formed at Moffat, Dumfriesshire (see Map 14), during a visit in 1931 of several evangelists with a gospel car.⁷⁴ There were, in addition, as a result of evangelism assemblies founded on the islands of Trondra, Shetland (see Map 1), in 1924,⁷⁵ and re-formed on Papa Westray, Orkney (see Map 2), in 1933.⁷⁶ However, despite the energy expended on 'Unreached Parts', it was the industrial Lowlands in which

67. W, 52 (1922), p.254; H, 1 (1923-4), pp.34-5, 61; Mr A Stewart's collection, Hopeman, Moray: Mrs Murdo McKenzie to Alex Stewart, 14 February 1975, in [Alex Stewart (compiler)], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.; W, 53 (1923), p.53.

68. BM, 29 (June 1919), p.i; H, 1 (1923-4), p.155; 'John Craig J.P.', W 97 (1961), p.315; writer's collection, I.K.1., R H Craig to the writer, 4 July 1988; and 27 January 1989.

69. H, 2 (1924), pp.44-5, 107; W, 55 (1925), p.136.

70. W, 58 (1928), p.337; W, 59 (1929), p.120; 'William Holden', BM, 90 (1980), p.384.

71. *Report of Pioneer Gospel Work in Scotland*, No. 2 (November 1922), p. 4; W, 52 (1922), p.242.

72. W, 63 (1933), p.192; it is possible that an assembly existed briefly in Whithorn, Wigtonshire, about 1924: W, 54 (1924), p.247, noted a conference being held there, but perhaps it was for recent converts in the surrounding area; cf. *Report of Pioneer Gospel Work in Scotland*, No. 2 (November 1922), p. 4.

73. BM, 34 (September 1925), p.i; W, 56 (1926), p.396; W, 58 (1928), p.456.

74. W, 61 (1931), p.264.

75. BM, 34 (November 1924), pp.i-ii; BM, 34 (April 1924), p.i; H, 1 (1923-4), p.225.

76. W, 63 (1933), p.117; writer's collection, I.P.3., [Michael Browne], 'How It All Began—Papa Westray, Orkney', typescript [1977/8/9].

Brethren missions created new assemblies most easily and some fourteen were formed in the region in this way.⁷⁷ Here, too, existing congregations were most readily able to plant further ones in neighbouring communities and at least thirteen additional meetings were created by this means.⁷⁸

The Brethren also continued to attract members of other churches. The conversionism of the movement remained potent at a time when the mainline churches were competing in the provision of secular leisure.⁷⁹ One Brethren convert from a mining village with the nearest church five miles distant complained that his erstwhile minister was 'a man of the world, played golf most week days, had whist drives in his Kirk, and was

77. These were: Fife: Culross (1921): *BM*, 31 (June 1921), p.i; Kincardine (1922): *W*, 52 (1922), p.206; Methilhill (1933): *Rollo, Innerleven Assembly*, p.11; Stirlingshire: Denny (1935): *W*, 65 (1935), pp.261-2, 264; writer's collection, I.U.2., A Comrie to the writer, March 1989; Kilsyth (1920): *W*, 50 (1920), p.242; Maddiston (1922): *W*, 52 (1922), p.254, writer's collection, I.U.4. Alexander Smith to the writer, 10 July 1989; Lothians: Blackburn (1920); *W*, 50 (1920), p.336, writer's collection, I.N.2., Sam Thomson to the writer, 19 June 1988; Bonnyrigg (1928): *W*, 58 (1928), p.297; Gorebridge (c. 1928): *BM*, 38 (1928), p.i; Lanarkshire: Tannochside (1934): *W*, 64 (1934), p.237; Quarter (1921): *W*, 51 (1921), p.85; Glasgow: New Central Tabernacle, George St (1923): *W*, 53 (1923), pp.226-7; 'William Tytler', *W*, 60 (1930), p.168 (however, this congregation apparently developed into an independent mission); Ayrshire: Cumnock (1920): *BM*, 30 (October 1920), p.i; Hurlford (1933): *W*, 63 (1933), pp.213, 237.

Brethren individuals probably already lived in several of the above places: e.g. Denny (see next paragraph below). Kilsyth, Cumnock and Hurlford assemblies were reformations.

78 These were: Fife: Glencraig (1931): *W*, 61 (1931), p.236; Stirlingshire: Falkirk (1937): *W*, 67 (1937), p.264. Edinburgh: Granton (1920s): 'George Wilson', *W*, 85 (1955), p.54; Lanarkshire: Bishopbriggs (1939): *W*, 69 (1939), p.260; Gavin McGregor, *The Bishopbriggs Assembly 1939-1989: the first fifty years* (n.p. [1989]); Bothwellhaugh (1921): *W*, 51 (1921), p.134; writer's collection, I.M.4. (i), David L. Cook to the writer 21 September, Ayrshire: 1992, *ibid.*, L.4. (ii), M A Crooks, 'Relating the Commencement of the Gospel Effort in Bothwellhaugh', photocopy of holograph transcript, n.d.; Calderbank (1923): *W*, 53 (1923), p.4; Glassford (1922): oral information, 3 May 1987; Glenboig (1938): *W*, 68 (1938), p.117; Holytown (1927): *W*, 27 (1927), p.56; writer's collection, I.M.15., Brian Young, untitled history of Holytown assembly, MS, 1988; Dunbartonshire: Hermon Hall, Clydebank (1931): *W*, 61 (1931), p.92; Renfrewshire: Newton Mearns (1930): *W*, 60 (1930), p.192; writer's collection, I.J.4., S Bolton, 'A Short History of Newton Mearns Assembly', photocopy of MS, 1978; Ayrshire: Glenburn, Prestwick (1929): *W*, 59 (1929), p.238; writer's collection, I.C.4., John McCloy, "'O Glenburn Greatly Favoured", 1929-1959', typescript [1996]; Tarbolton (1922): 'James Frew', *W*, 46 (1937), p.140; oral information, 30 April, 1986.

Of the above, Falkirk, Bishopbriggs, Holytown, Newton Mearns and Tarbolton were reformations.

79. Callum G Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730* (London, 1987), pp.182-4.

as dark on eternal things as we were ourselves.’⁸⁰ A former pastor of Gourock Baptist church, Michael Grant, who had demitted his charge in 1915 after becoming dissatisfied with his ministerial role, joined the movement in 1921 and became an evangelist,⁸¹ and his brother Edward, also a Baptist pastor, acted similarly about 1930.⁸² Once more, it was from those churches which had most in common with the Brethren that large-scale transfers of membership came. The Ratho Baptist church had held an outreach about 1920 in the nearby village of Kirknewton and it had led to a regular gospel meeting there. The preaching supply at Kirknewton (see Map 8) was drawn from nearby Brethren meetings and in 1924 an assembly was formed out of the converts.⁸³ The meeting which was formed in Denny (see Map 9) after a mission in 1935 had as its nucleus a group who had left the Baptist church for Camelon assembly.⁸⁴ Several Exclusive Brethren congregations also transferred to the Open Brethren in the inter-war period. In Pitlochry the Glanton Party meeting associated with the Open movement in the 1930s,⁸⁵ and three Stuart Party assemblies transferred to the Open Brethren: the one in Fort William evolved into an Open meeting over the period 1919-22;⁸⁶ and Gospel Hall, Carluke, and Albion Hall, Larkhall, were accepted as Open Brethren in the 1930s.⁸⁷ It was, however, principally members of gospel missions who were attracted

80. *BM*, 34 (June 1924), p.v.

81. M H Grant, *Twice Delivered* ([1935]) rpt (Glasgow, n.d.); ‘Michael H. Grant’, *BM*, 68 (1958), p.264; Geo. Yuille (ed.), *History of the Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1926), p.283.

82. ‘Edward Hotchiss Grant (1894-1979)’, in James Anderson (ed.), *They Finished Their Course* (Kilmarnock, 1980), pp.77-9; E H Grant had been pastor for a time at Hermon Baptist Church, Govanhill, the former assembly: Yuille (ed.), *Baptists in Scotland*, p.282.

83. Writer’s collection, I.N.4., David Taylor to the writer, 13 April 1989; *BM*, 34 (May 1934), p.i.

84. Writer’s collection, I.U.2., A Comrie to the writer, March 1989; *W*, 65 (1935), pp.261-2, 264.

85. Oral information, 6 October 1994.

86. The process was evidently complete by 1922 when Fort William assembly was included in *List of Some Assemblies in the British Isles...* (London, 1922).

87. Oral information, 22 November 1988; for Exclusive parties, see above, pp.2-4.

to the movement. In Fife (see Map 7) some members of the Railway Mission in Kettlebridge and of Pitlessie assembly used the former Railway Mission hall in Ladybank to form an assembly there in 1920.⁸⁸ The Miller Hall, Falkirk, lost about one third of its members when in 1937 an assembly was re-formed in the town.⁸⁹ In Lanarkshire gospel missions in 1927 in Baillieston,⁹⁰ in 1935 in Salsburgh,⁹¹ and in 1938 in Coatbridge⁹² formed meetings. In Glasgow and Renfrewshire the process was well established, and the City Temple, Bedford Street, in 1923,⁹³ Johnstone Evangelistic Association, in 1925,⁹⁴ Sharon Hall, Ibrox, in 1937,⁹⁵ and Tabernacle Gospel Hall, Shettleston, in 1938⁹⁶ were accepted into the movement.⁹⁷

This continued formation of assemblies suggests that membership remained high during the inter-war period. There were probably at least a further nine meetings formed during this period whose causes of origin

88. Writer's collection, I.I.8. (i). Catherine C Bell to the writer, 1 April 1988; 8. (ii)., [Mr R Mackay], untitled MS, n.d.; *ibid.*, I.I.8.(iii). Mr R Mackay to the writer, 3 March 1988; and 9 April 1988; *BM*, 30 (July 1920), p.i.

89. Sally Herring, 'Dissent in Scotland', in Peter L. Sissons, *The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1973), pp.343-4.

90. Writer's collection, I.M.2., William S Hutchinson, 'Baillieston Gospel Hall Assembly', typescript, 1988; *H*, 4 (1927), p.72.

91. Writer's collection, I.M.25., E Long to the writer 28 August 1988; *W*, 65 (1935), p.264.

92. Writer's Collection, I.M.9., Andrew Leggat, 'Hebron Hall, 20/22 Church St., Coatbridge', MS 1989.

93. *W*, 53 (1923), pp.226-7; 'Joseph A. Mitchell', *W*, 83 (1953), p.13; upon joining the Brethren this congregation changed its name to Bedford Hall (see Map 11, no.39).

94. *W*, 55 (1925), p.77.

95. *W*, 67 (1937), p.216, (see Map 11, no.36).

96. *W*, 68 (1938), p.288.

97. For attitudes to transfers from other Christian bodies in this period, see below, pp.288-9.

are not known.⁹⁸ Out-migration of assembly members also led to new assemblies. Some twelve congregations, a few in northern Scotland but mainly in the industrial Lowlands, were created in this manner.⁹⁹ The mobility of fishermen had been an additional factor in the spread of the movement among their communities, and the migration of people in search of employment had a similar effect in diffusing the Brethren geographically. This cause in the planting of further assemblies makes explicit the social change which created favourable conditions for Brethren growth. The post-war mood was conducive to the advancement of a conversionist sect. By the years around 1930 the Brethren in Scotland were at their strongest numerically. The growth of the previous eighty years had increased the size of the membership and autogenous growth from among the relatively large families which were still the social norm had a similar

98. These were:

Perthshire: Pitlochry (1933): W, 63 (1933), p.144; Angus: Broughty Ferry (by 1940): W, 70 (1940), p.44; Fife: Crossgates (by 1929): W, 59 (1929), p.47; Stirlingshire: Plean (1923): W, 53 (1923), p.28; Lothians: Dunbar (1933): W, 63 (1933), p.117; Musselburgh (1923): W, 53 (1923), p.106; Ormiston (1924): W, 55 (1925), p.19; Westfield (1935): W, 65 (1935), p.264; Glasgow: Claremont Hall, Argyle St. (1930): *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1930-1931* (Glasgow, 1930), p.178.

Of the above, Musselburgh and Pitlochry were re-formations; the latter assembly was a different one from that discussed above, p.241; for the ones in Portmahomack, Tranent, California and Mossend, to which the first reference was the 1921 address list, see above p.161, n.307.

99. These were:

Highlands: Mallaig (c.1937): W, 67 (1937), p.213; 'Mrs William Simpson', W, 92 (1962), p.196; 'William Simpson', W, 93 (1963), p.76; Munlochy (1924): 'David Millar', W, 97 (1967), p.35; oral information, 2 April 1989; Aberdeenshire: Tarland (1936): oral information, 13 July 1988; Fife: Blairhall: W, 67 (1937), p.192; writer's collection, I.I. 2., Thomas Rowan to the writer 10 June 1987; and 26 January 1988; Kinross-shire: Kinross (1925): W, 55 (May 1925), p.97; 'John Martin', W, 91 (1961), p.156; Lanarkshire: Carfin (1928): *BM*, 37 (February 1928), p.i; writer's collection, I.M.7., James H Capie, 'Carfin Assembly—1988', typescript, 1988; Arunah Hall, Cambuslang (1925): W, 55 (1925), p.16; writer's collection, I.M.6. (i). David Wightman to the writer 18 September 1988; Glasgow: King's Park (1932): W, 62 (1932), p.240; anon., 'Those Sixty Years 1890-1950', in *Elim Hall, 5 Prince Edward Street, Crosshill, Glasgow: 60th Annual Report 1st January to 31st December, 1949* (n.p. [1949]), p.6; Knightswood (1929): W, 59 (1929), p.288; Renfrewshire: Elderslie (c. 1922): oral information, 13 October 1994; Ayrshire & Bute: Kilmaurs (1920): W, 50 (1920), p.292; Millport (1934): W, 64 (1934), p.192.

Of the above, Tarland, Elderslie and Millport were re-foundations. In addition, during 1927-38 there was a breaking of bread service during the summer in Oban (W, 57 (1927), p.136; oral information, 8 May 1990).

effect. Geographically meetings were dispersed throughout Scotland and there was scarcely a community of substantial population in the Lowlands which did not have one. Shetland Brethren had revived from their pre-war decline and in 1937 their five assemblies contained 190 members.¹⁰⁰ In 1933 the assembly address list contained 373 Scottish meetings, the largest reported number, and that same year it was calculated that there were 'considerably upwards' of 30 000 members—an average of some seventy-five per assembly, the highest estimated membership.¹⁰¹

Yet it would be erroneous to see the inter-war period as being entirely one of expansion. While numerical growth had continued, it was levelling off. Despite Brethren hopes, the Moray coast revival did not translate into a general awakening.¹⁰² Fred Elliott's Glasgow mission of 1920 was the closest the city came to one, and even Jock Troup failed to ignite a movement of large-scale conversions when he moved there.¹⁰³ There was declining interest in the message the Brethren had to offer. A future missionary, Alex McGregor, who was active in evangelism in Renfrew after World War I noticed a hardening setting in during this period when, he felt, the preaching seemed too simple to the returning soldiers.¹⁰⁴ Several of the new assemblies planted in the inter-war period were short-lived. This brief lifespan was especially true of those created through the Unreached Parts of Scotland movement. Apart from Wick, the new meetings of the northern Highlands had probably all been discontinued by

100. James Moar, 'Surveys of service. The Shetland Isles', *BM*, 47 (1937), pp.322-3, 326.

101. David P Thomson (ed.), *The Scottish Churches' Handbook* (Dunfermline, 1933), pp.44-5; the anonymous estimate (probably by a Brethren member) was on the basis of about 400 assemblies; however, this calculation assumes that some 27 meetings were not included in the address list of the same year, probably too generous an estimate, and, in addition, those assemblies which did not enter their addresses tended to be very small. More serious for the estimate is the assumption of average size. If an average of size of 50 is assumed for 373 assemblies, then the membership would have been 18 650.

102. Marshall to the editor, 14 January 1922, p.167.

103. Stewart, *Beloved Jock*, pp.15-17; cf. Duthie, 'Fisherman's Revival', p.27.

104. Oral information, May 1986.

1939, as had the one at Carradale.¹⁰⁵ But declining numbers characterised other rural areas. In the 1920s John Ritchie felt that the movement in the landward parishes of Aberdeenshire had stagnated. Since its inception there in the 1870s, he lamented, 'Gospel work has been sluggish'.¹⁰⁶ In southern Scotland the new assemblies at Port William and Moffat were discontinued.¹⁰⁷ One writer noted of Wigtownshire assemblies in 1929 that they had suffered from emigration and 'the altered conditions of rural life during the past twenty years',¹⁰⁸ probably an allusion to the need for fewer farm workers and out-migration. More serious for the future of Brethren evangelism were the alterations noted in a perceptive comment in *The Believer's Magazine* in 1934. Cottage rows were being destroyed and populations were increasingly concentrated in housing schemes; improved bus services meant that on weekend evenings villages were emptied as people went to the towns.¹⁰⁹ The loss of community would have important implications for the ability of assemblies to recruit.

But despite these caveats, active decline for the movement as a whole was still some way off on the eve of World War II. Revivalism might have declined as a significant factor in Brethren growth, but the routine evangelistic operations of the movement could still prove effective, and it was through these means that most of the enlargement had taken place. In addition, the increase of the early 1920s had been achieved against another period of high emigration in society which substantially affected Scottish Brethren.¹¹⁰ But contemporary observers had felt that there were many

105. They were perhaps discontinued even earlier: none of them was listed in the 1933 address list.

106. *BM*, 34 (September 1925), p.i.

107. Moffat was discontinued in 1932 the year after its founding (*W*, 64 (1932), p.64) and Port William did not appear in the 1933 address list.

108. Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall*: p.152.

109. *BM*, 44 (1934), p.80.

110. See below, Fig. 9.1.

more young people in assemblies.¹¹¹ The average age of conversion, extracted from *The Witness* obituaries, show that it was between 20 and 24 for the post-war period, while the average age of joining an assembly increased to 30.8 (Table 3.1). However, these data are at the limit of their accuracy in this period and both figures almost certainly should be lower because of childhood conversions and reception into fellowship not being recorded adequately.¹¹² Nevertheless, the high average age of reception into fellowship given in the data shows that adults were still being recruited into the 1930s. Attracting youth had had its disadvantages in Easter Ross where the young converts migrated to the cities.¹¹³ But in the industrial areas of Scotland, the heartland of Brethren strength, the movement remained healthy. The influx of fresh, young blood in the early 1920s had promised vitality for a further number of years, and in the late 1930s Brethren were again commenting on the presence of many young people in assemblies.¹¹⁴ Figure 6.1 also suggests some growth in this period, culminating in a peak in 1936-8.¹¹⁵ One additional sign of the vigour of the movement was the formation in the inter-war years of at least twenty-three assemblies through schisms, many caused by the issues, which will be analysed in the next chapter, that were agitating the movement in this period.¹¹⁶ The number of secessions is a further indicator that it was a buoyant time for Scottish Brethren.¹¹⁷

111. J B Watson, 'Dr. James Black on the "Plymouth Brethren"', *W*, 55 (1925), p.191; P[ickering], 'WW', *W*, 54 (1924), p.384;

112. For the explanation of *The Witness* obituaries, see above, p.18, n.87.

113. Mrs Murdo McKenzie to Alex Stewart in [Stewart (compiler)], 'Moray and Nairn'.

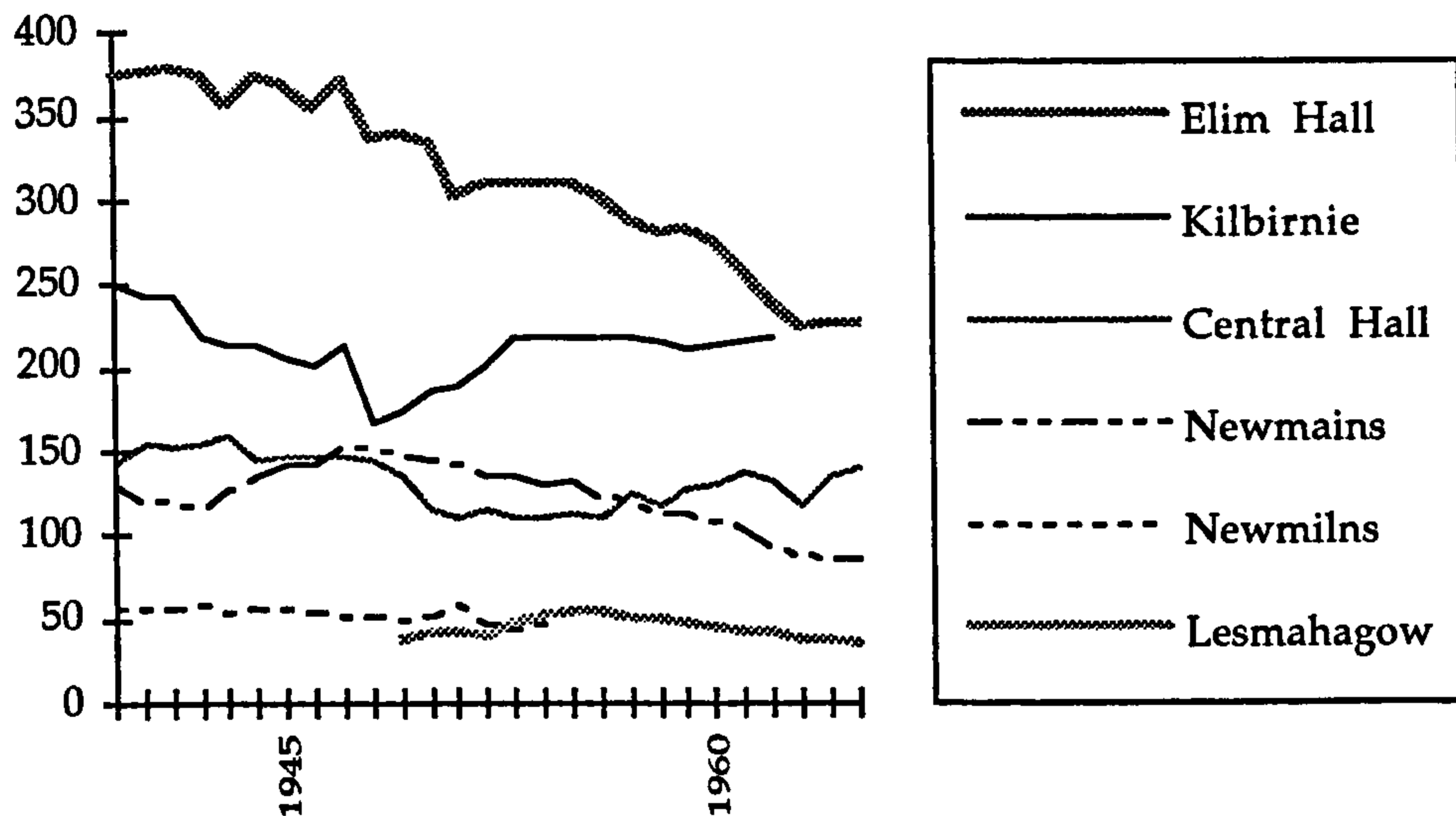
114. D J Beattie, 'Let no man despise thy youth', *W* 68 (1938), pp.247-8; Andrew Borland, *Old Paths & Good ways in Personal, Family, and Church Life* (Kilmarnock, 1938), pp.7-8; F A Tatford, 'How can we keep our young people?', *W*, 68 (1938), p.29.

115. However, it should be remembered that the data on which it is based are at their most unreliable.

116. See below, pp.287-95.

117. For this view of schism, see above p.146-7.

Figure 6.3. Membership of six assemblies: Elim Hall, Glasgow, 1939-65; Central Hall, Kilmarnock, 1939-65; Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie, 1939-62; Gospel Hall, Newmains, 1939-65; Gospel Hall, Newmilns, 1939-55; Hope Hall, Lesmahagow, 1950-65.



Sources: *Elim Hall 5 Prince Edward Street Crosshill Glasgow 108th Annual Report 1st January to 31st December., 1949* [Glasgow [1991]], [p.12]; Central Hall, Kilmarnock, 'Minutes of Annual Business Meeting' 1932-1989; Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie, roll books, 1937-40, 1941-44, 1945-6, 1947-8, 1949-52, 1957-60, 1961-2; 'Minutes of Half-Yearly and Annual Meetings of Gospel Hall Newmains', 1923-51; 'Assembly Register of Believers Meeting in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in Drygate Street Gospel Hall Newmilns', 1951-1955; Sam Hill, untitled summary of membership of Gospel Hall, Newmilns, 1929-51, MS notes; Hope Hall Lesmahagow, roll books, 1950-60, 1961-71.

GROWTH 1939-65

In 1960 two Glasgow Brethren, T J Smith and John Boyes, estimated for sociologist John Highet that there were 25 000 Brethren members throughout Scotland, an average of 71.4 per assembly.¹¹⁸ This seems to indicate a decline since the calculation of 1933 had been made.¹¹⁹ However, Smith

118. John Highet, *The Scottish Churches: a review of their state 400 years after the Reformation* (London, 1960), pp.36-8; the calculation was made on the basis of there being about 350 assemblies: this assumes that 26 assemblies did not report their existence in the 1959 address list, a figure which is probably too high (see above, n.101). The average size of assembly is perhaps over generous, and if one of 50 is assumed for 324 assemblies, then the membership would be 16 200.

119. See above p.244.

and Boyes felt that there had not necessarily been a loss, but had the impression that Brethren membership was then at its peak.¹²⁰ The authors of *The Third Statistical Account* for Ayrshire reported that in 1951 there were in the county at a 'rough estimate' 2 000 Brethren members in thirty-nine assemblies (an average size of around fifty per congregation).¹²¹ In Glasgow the *Account* had more accurate figures which also showed continuing Brethren strength. In 1955 the city's thirty-one assemblies contained 3 318 members, giving an average size of 107.¹²² The traces for five of the assemblies of differing sizes in Figure 6.3 show their membership to have been fairly stable. Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie, after some fluctuations in the 1940s, grew in the 1950s, and Central Hall, Kilmarnock, after some decline in the post-war period saw a slight swelling in its membership in the early 1960s. There was a gradual contraction in the size of Lesmahagow and Newmains meetings (although the latter enjoyed some periods of growth), and the same was probably true of that of Newmilns in the decade before 1965.¹²³ Elim Hall, Glasgow, markedly declined, and probably this largely middle-class congregation was being eroded due to the suburbanisation of the city. In the suburbs, however, most Brethren would seek out another meeting thereby aiding growth there. But each of the assemblies represented in Figure 6.1 had years in the inter-war period when it had been larger. The decline in the number of congregations in the address lists, from 373 in 1933, to 339 in 1951, and 324

120. Dr John Boyes to the writer, 26 October 1988.

121. William Boyd and John Strawhorn, *TSA: County of Ayr* (Edinburgh & London, 1951), p.256; the information was supplied by an anonymous Brethren member. When the estimated 1 000 members of the other divisions of Brethren are added, then the Brethren were the fourth largest Christian body in the county.

122. John Hight, 'The Churches', in J Cunnison and J B S Gilfillan (eds), *TSA Glasgow* (Edinburgh, 1958), p.719; this represented 0.78% of the church-going population of Glasgow and 0.43% of the adult population, *ibid.*, 726.

123. Unfortunately the roll books for Gospel Hall, Newmilns, for 1956-67 have not been preserved; but there were 47 members in 1955 and 34 in 1968, suggesting that it decreased over the decade 1955-65.

in 1959, also suggests some contraction. Any overall diminution in the movement was evidently slight enough not to trouble contemporary observers such as Smith and Boyes—some assemblies clearly could maintain numbers, even growing after depressed periods, and in the early 1960s post-war ‘baby boom’ offspring of Brethren parents helped swell membership. But by 1965 the movement had, to some degree it would appear, reduced in size.

World War II offered the same opportunities in evangelism as the First¹²⁴ and equally it presented assemblies with difficulties.¹²⁵ After the war there were expectations of revival among them.¹²⁶ The immediate post-war period was a favourable one for Evangelicals, and they were resurgent in the mainline Scottish churches.¹²⁷ It was the period of the interdenominational ‘Tell Scotland’ campaign, and as part of it the American evangelist Billy Graham was brought to Glasgow in 1955 for the ‘All-Scotland Crusade’.¹²⁸ A leading figure in the initiative to bring Graham to Scotland was a Glasgow businessman John Henderson, the MP for Cathcart division and a member of Elim Hall, who had been on the Executive Committee of the evangelist’s London mission.¹²⁹ Many other Brethren took an active role in the crusade and enthusiasm was particularly high among assemblies in Glasgow where during the year

124. James Anderson (compiler), *Willie Scott: 55+ years of service* (Glasgow, 1986), pp.15-34; ‘Mrs Isabella Hopkins’, *W*, 88 (1958), p.86; oral information, 18 April 1989; oral information, 8 January 1991.

125. *W*, 74 (1944), p.64; *W*, 78 (April 1948), p.iii; *W*, 88 (1958), p.214; letters to the editor, *BM*, 54 (1944), pp.94, 122-3, 151-2, 152, 186.

126. J R Rollo, ‘In the beginning of the year’, *W*, 76 (9146), pp.1-2; A Borland, ‘“Revive They work”’, *BM*, 57 (October 1947), p.iii; H P Barker *et al.*, ‘Can Revival Come?’, *ibid.*, pp.291-2.

127. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p.254.

128. Hight, *Scottish Churches*, pp.86-8.

129. William Fitch, ‘The story of beginnings and preparation’ in Tom Allan (ed.), *Crusade in Scotland ...Billy Graham* (London, 1955), pp. 30, 31; David Jeremy, *Capitalists and Christians: business leaders and the churches in Britain, 1900-1960* (Oxford, 1990), pp.398, 407; for Henderson, see below, pp.311, 397-8.

twenty-six city assemblies administered 196 baptisms.¹³⁰ To establish the new converts the Glasgow Summer Bible School was founded in 1955, an annual diet of services offering detailed biblical study,¹³¹ and a similar aim lay behind the establishment in Motherwell of the Maranatha Centre that same year: it provided a games room, a library and a prayer room and was open every evening.¹³² Evangelist Peter Brandon witnessed emotional scenes in Maddiston, Stirlingshire (including a 'clockless prayer meeting' held on Friday nights), beginning in the month after the All-Scotland Crusade finished, and his mission produced a substantial number of converts.¹³³ The results claimed for Graham's style of crusade evangelism gave rise to imitation among the Brethren.¹³⁴ In Ayr during October 1956 over forty individuals, mainly brought in from surrounding districts by hired buses, were converted in a campaign entitled 'Faith is the Victory' which was held in a cinema by evangelist Fred Whitmore.¹³⁵

New assemblies were also formed in the post-war period. In 1945 two returning servicemen who had made contact with the Brethren formed an assembly in Gardenstown, Banffshire, joined by a former member of the Fraserburgh meeting who lived in a nearby village.¹³⁶ Through the outreach of existing congregations, further ones were formed in East Yell, Shetland (see Map 1), in 1946,¹³⁷ Oxfgangs, Edinburgh (see Map 8, inset), in

130. Hight, 'Churches', p.719; this was the same number of baptisms *per capita* as the city's Baptist churches had.

131. Ian Ford, 'Glasgow Summer Bible School', *H*, 65 (July, 1986), p.11.

132. Oral information, 25 November 1990.

133. *W*, 85 (1955), pp.125, 166: the number of converts was not given, possibly due to a disapproval many Brethren had against numbering them.

134. For the Crusade results see: Tom Allan 'The road ahead: results and lessons of the crusade', in *idem* (ed.), *Crusade in Scotland*, pp.106-128; Hight, *Scottish Churches*, pp.89-123.

135. *W*, 86 (1956), p.247.

136. 'How it Began: Gardenstown, Banffshire', *BM*, 99(1989), pp.2-5.

137. Writer's collection, I.T.1., [James Moar], 'A Continued Survey of Service in the Shetland Isles from 1914 to 1976', photocopy of typescript, 1976.

1964,¹³⁸ Forgewood, Motherwell, in 1960,¹³⁹ Viewpark, Uddingston (see Map 10) in 1961,¹⁴⁰ and in Glasgow in the new housing schemes at Drumchapel in 1959¹⁴¹ and Nitshill in 1962 (see Map 11 nos 1 & 51).¹⁴² The migration of Brethren members led to the formation of an additional six assemblies, among them ones in the new towns at East Kilbride, Lanarkshire, in 1951 and Glenrothes, Fife, in 1956.¹⁴³ There were also several Christian bodies which transferred to the movement. The Motherwell independent mission, Hallelujah Hall, was recognised as an assembly in 1953,¹⁴⁴ as earlier in Glasgow had been London Road Gospel Hall in 1943¹⁴⁵ and Thornwood Hall in 1948 (see Map 11 nos 30 & 9).¹⁴⁶ Also in Glasgow Anniesland Hall decided to join the movement in 1942, and this last accession was a significant one because of the size and resources of the congregation.¹⁴⁷ In addition, a further two meetings were formed at Melrose in 1945 and Hopeman in 1951 whose origins are not known;¹⁴⁸ assemblies also existed at Beaully and Prestonpans in this last year;¹⁴⁹ and eight schisms, all but two of them permanent, took place

138. W, 94 (1964), p.116.

139. W, 90 (1960), p.157; the outreach here was commenced in 1936: W, 66 (1936), p.213.

140. W, 91 (1961), p.436.

141. W, 89 (1959), p.170.

142. Oral information, February 1992.

143. W, 81 (1951), p.131; W, 86 (1956), p.126. The others were:

Orkney: Shapinsay (1940): W, 70 (1940), p.115; Highlands: Oban 1 (1941): W, (July 1941), p.iii; Oban 2 (1948): W, 71 (1948), p.iii; oral information 8 May 1990; Tain (by 1951): *Assemblies in Britain...* (London, 1951), p.109; Thurso (1961): W, 71 (1961), p.476; Glasgow: Craigton (1943): *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1943-1944* (Glasgow, 1943), p.2083; Dumfries-shire: Sanquhar (f. 1952): writer's collection, I.F.1., Robert Lind to the writer, 3 May 1989.

Of the above, Oban, Thurso, and North Berwick were re-formations; the assembly founded in Oban in 1941 was discontinued in 1945 and during 1945-7 there was a breaking of bread during the Glasgow Fair holidays only: W, 75 (May 1945), p.iv; in addition, for several years after 1957 there was a breaking of bread at North Berwick, East Lothian, during the summer: W, 87 (1957), p.132.

144. BM, 63 (1953), p.104; oral information, 15 November 1986.

145. *Glasgow Directory for 1943-1944*, p.2083.

146. *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1948-1949* (Glasgow, 1948), p.2196.

147. Writer's collection, I.J.2., '19th September 1958', photocopy of anonymous MS.

148. W, 75 (December 1945), p.v; BM, 61 (1951), p.220.

149. These assemblies are known only from their inclusion in the 1951 assembly address list; they may, of course have been founded before the war.

during the period. The new assemblies were signs of continuing vitality.

Children's services continued their traditional appeal. *The Third Statistical Account* reported that the Brethren Sunday schools in Glengarnock and Kilbirnie had 426 members between them, almost as many pupils as the 445 members the four Church of Scotland congregations had among them.¹⁵⁰ A later report of the churches in Falkirk in 1969 found that people with little or no connection to a church would send their children to a Brethren Sunday school, 'because they are respected as good people'. Although the parents regarded this as a preparation for joining a mainline church, it was noted, many of the pupils went on to enter the Brethren.¹⁵¹ It was out of a Sunday school and a handicraft evening for young folk commenced in 1950 that the new post-war Edinburgh assembly had developed,¹⁵² and the Uddingston one had grown from Bible teaching done in local schools since 1953.¹⁵³ Success in religious activities among the young provided new members. The children's evangelist Dan Cameron claimed that 1958 in particular had been a 'year of blessing among children' and that many 'teenagers had been won for Christ'.¹⁵⁴

The word 'teenager' had been coined during the war. The growth of the inter-war era had largely been achieved by methods inherited from nineteenth-century revivalism,¹⁵⁵ but from the 1940s onwards new techniques increasingly began to be used. It was due to the rising awareness of the group which the new word represented that several of the innovations were adopted, not least because the offspring of assembly

150. Boyd and Strawhorn, *TSA: County of Ayr*, p.397.

151. Sissons, *Burgh of Falkirk*, p.345.

152. Don Palmer, York: notes on interview with Mr Ron McColl and Mr and Mrs Bob McDonald, 13 May 1988.

153. *W*, 91 (1961), p.436.

154. *W*, 88 (1959), p.35.

155. For a survey of these, see above, pp.167-74.

members were in it. During World War II the government encouraged young people to join a youth organisation. Many Brethren were suspicious. Young people had usually been discouraged from joining such groups, and an attempt at militarisation was suspected, but some were sufficiently pragmatic to take advantage of the situation.¹⁵⁶ A number of assemblies formed Christian Youth Centres (CYC) which attempted to provide physical, moral and spiritual training for the young.¹⁵⁷ A principal activity was an evening for teaching crafts, and during the summer a holiday camp was held which was mainly recreational. Such events were new for assemblies, but if the Brethren now had leisure activities they had an evangelistic purpose: both craft evenings and camps had a religious component.¹⁵⁸ Most of the CYC were discontinued after the war but holiday camps were continued. In north Ayrshire, for example, a camp was started by returning serviceman whose wartime experience of such life had made them realise its advantages.¹⁵⁹ Youth rallies, a type of event which originated in America and that had been introduced before the war, were also held at weekends for young people.¹⁶⁰ While these were often for those already Christian, one group of assemblies reported that thirty-four converts had been made in 1956 through such meetings held in a burgh town.¹⁶¹ It is likely that much of this activity recruited the children of Brethren parents, but undoubtedly it also captured some young people from the wider community.

New methods of evangelism for adults were also considered. In 1955 a North American visitor at the Conference of Brethren at High Leigh,

156. G N Davidson to the editor, *W*, 72 (1942), p.51; J B W[atson], 'WW', *ibid.*, p.52.

157. 'Registration for youth', *BM*, 51 (1942), p.80.

158. Oral information, 26 November 1990.

159. Oral information, 2 December 1990.

160. *W*, 37 (1937), p. 36 is the first extant reference to them when a series of rallies was held in Greenock, Elim Hall, Glasgow, and Dundee; cf. Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet*, p.45.

161. *W*, 86 (1956), p.146: the town in question was not identified.

Hertfordshire, spoke of the transformation the morning family Bible hour had made in Vancouver,¹⁶² and the following year Cecil Howley, the recently appointed editor of *The Witness*, was enthusing about them in a letter to a Scottish friend.¹⁶³ This advocacy of Sunday morning evangelistic services had some effect. There were, perhaps, a couple of assemblies who experimented with the new time from the 1950s onwards.¹⁶⁴ But it was Glenview Evangelical Church, Gartness, Lanarkshire, which probably was the first to adopt a morning family service permanently in 1964 because it was felt that non-churchgoers were more likely to attend a service on a Sunday morning.¹⁶⁵ In 1950 T J Smith became the first Brethren individual to preach on the radio when a service was broadcast from Ebenezer Hall, Coatdyke. This, it was felt, gave the 'unsaved' the opportunity of 'hearing the Gospel',¹⁶⁶ but the significance of the occasion probably lay more in its indication that new opportunities for evangelism were being considered.

Despite the effort and some attempt at innovation, assemblies saw fewer converts in the post-war period. Impressive as the All-Scotland Crusade had been, no awakening took place in the post-war mainland and revival on Lewis failed to spread.¹⁶⁷ The only meeting established through an evangelistic mission was one founded in 1942 at Eastfield, Lanarkshire.¹⁶⁸ The number of assemblies being founded was falling while those being

162. Anon. (ed.), *A New Testament Church in 1955* (Rushden, 1956), pp.83-4; for Scottish reactions to this conference, see below, pp.399-302.

163. OA, D27/6/4, G C D Howley to Robert Rendall, 20 September 1956; cf. Touchstone [i.e. G C D Howley], 'The Family Service', *W*, 93 (1963), pp.146-7.

164. Oral information, 17 May 1988.

165. Harry Morris to the editor, *A*, 69 (January 1991), p.23; this had been the argument used in their favour by H L Ellison, a Bible College lecturer in England, in his influential book, *The Household Church* (1963), 2nd edn (Exeter, 1979), pp.41-7; cf. below, p.416.

166. *W*, 80 (1950), p.164.

167. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p.254.

168. *BM*, 52 (1942), p.159; however this does not include the six assemblies discussed above, pp.249-50, which were founded through the outreach of existing ones.

discontinued was perceptibly rising. Rural areas were the worst affected.¹⁶⁹ The Highlands had fewer evangelists.¹⁷⁰ By 1959 inland Aberdeenshire had only eight assemblies and in the Borders, an area where the Brethren had always been weak, the movement had almost disappeared: meetings only remained in Hawick, Chirnside and Galashiels, and the last was discontinued soon after 1964.¹⁷¹ In addition by the 1960s, although evidence is difficult to find, it would appear that there were few converts from outside Brethren families. Slightly later in 1970, of the twenty-four members of the Gospel Hall Bible class, Kirkintilloch, only three were from non-Brethren families and none of them remained with the assembly.¹⁷² There were undoubtedly reasons in the wider society for this. Television was added to the earlier culprits for distracting people.¹⁷³ An additional reason for targeting young people in evangelism had been the growing indifference among adults. The large post-war housing schemes and the new suburbs, lacking the face-to-face nature of the communities which they replaced, were a less favourable context for Brethren recruitment. The new assemblies at Viewpark, and Drumchapel were soon discontinued, the latter after its hall was the subject of arson.¹⁷⁴ In the early twentieth century the only public amenities with which the gospel hall had to compete in the mining village of Drongan, Ayrshire, were four shops, a school and an iron-clad public hall, but in the expanded post-war community, whose inhabitants came from several mining hamlets which had been demolished, there were, among other things, a community centre, a library, two churches (one Roman Catholic), two working-men's

169. W McInroy to the editor, *W*, 88 (1958), p.211.

170. W McInroy to the editor, *W*, 91 (1961), p.112.

171. *Assemblies in Britain ...* (London, 1959), pp.93-6; cf. W Landles to the editor, *W*, 88 (1958), p.55.

172. Writer's collection, II, 'A sketch of the class', 'Enterprise' [magazine of Gospel Hall Bible class, Kirkintilloch] (May 1970), p.2.

173. W K Morrison, 'Christian of the sixties', *BM*, 74 (1964), pp.118, 121.

174. Oral information, 4 July 1999; for the new Nitshill assembly's later history, see below, p.449.

clubs, a bowling club, and an inn. The villagers were settled in housing schemes in which, in it was complained, there had been a loss of cohesion.¹⁷⁵ This was an environment in which secularisation increased.¹⁷⁶

But there were also internal causes for lack of additions. Families had been smaller from the later 1930s onwards. Although contraception was a taboo subject among Brethren and it would not be until the later 1960s that artificial methods were used, it would seem that a variety of natural means were used to reduce family sizes.¹⁷⁷ In addition to autogenous growth declining, so too was allogenuous. Some evangelistic methods were proving ineffectual: in 1956 one individual pointed out that marquees were by then virtually useless in attracting people.¹⁷⁸ It was possibly difficult for individuals socialised into the Brethren world to imagine how more effective communication with the wider one might be achieved. But considerable suspicion existed of such changes as were suggested, undoubtedly the reason behind the reluctance to accept morning evangelistic services. One individual, in denouncing innovation, called for renewed emphasis in preaching on sin and hell.¹⁷⁹ Henry Pickering had criticised mass evangelism in the inter-war period as a possible form of mesmerism,¹⁸⁰ and after the war many Brethren continued his disapproval. CYC were regarded with suspicion for it was felt that they were too like other church youth organisations¹⁸¹ and the Maranatha

175. Gavin Wark, *The Rise and Fall of Mining Communities in Central Ayrshire in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Ayrshire Monographs No.22* (Darvel, 1999), pp. 35-9, Figures 2 and 3, pp.19, 38.

176. Callum G Brown, 'The mechanism of religious growth in urban societies: British cities since the eighteenth century', in Hugh McLeod (ed.), *European Religion in the Age of the Great Cities 1830-1930* (London, 1995), pp.239-62.

177. Oral information, 28 March 1999 and 10 April 1999.

178. John S Borland, 'How to speed the message, *BM*, 66 (1956), pp.101-2.

179. Hugh Borland to the editor, *BM*, 56 (1946), p.120.

180. *W*, 53 (1923), p.50; cf. the letters in support of him, *ibid.*, pp.81-2.

181. Oral information, 26 November 1990.

centre was shunned by the majority of Lanarkshire assemblies.¹⁸² The introduction of techniques imported from America and the use of singing to attract young people were criticised because to the Brethren they seemed too much like entertainment.¹⁸³ Evangelist Isaac Ewan objected to the idea that teenagers might need their own forms of meeting and a lighter approach. 'The young', he declared, 'full of youthful exuberance in the things of everyday life, are generally very sober and serious in the things of God—if their elders will allow them.'¹⁸⁴ And perhaps most Brethren had lost contact with the wider society. 'Some members would of course require training in treating courteously an unfamiliar lady visitor who wore make-up or came without a hat', noted schoolteacher W K Morrison in an article on how gospel meetings might be made less alien to visitors.¹⁸⁵ The deep-seated conservatism of the movement in this period (to be discussed more fully in the following chapter) and its lack of sympathy with contemporary mores stifled adaptation.

ASSEMBLY ETHOS

Yet the post-Second World War period was not as yet—it was argued above—given over to serious decline. There was much vitality, young people were added and membership levels remained high. A warm after-glow continued from the inter-war years when the movement had probably reached its maximum strength. One sign of the continuing vigour was most assemblies acquiring their own halls. In 1922 some fifty-seven assemblies obviously met in rented accommodation and a further sixteen had a private house listed as an address, but by 1959 only eighteen

182. Oral information, 25 November 1990.

183. *BM*, 33 (1933), pp.42-3; [A Borland], 'Latitudinarianism', *BM*, 51 (1941), p.19; [*idem*], 'Editor's comment', *BM*, 56 (1946), pp.57-8; W Rodgers, 'Making a noise', *ibid.*, pp.57-8.

184. I Y E[wan], 'Ashael, or the youth movement', *PT*, 9 ([194]), p.121-3.

185. Morrison, 'Christian of the sixties', p.117.

Figure 6.4. Central Hall, Kilmarnock, 1933.



Source: drawing by Gordon Weir, c.1985, Central Evangelical Church, Kilmarnock.

were in the former position and none in the latter.¹⁸⁶ The upgrading of accommodation and the acquisition of new buildings was particularly marked after World War II—in 1955 the assembly which George Patterson had discovered in Portobello exchanged its rented room for Southfield Gospel Hall.¹⁸⁷ Most halls remained simple. The assembly in Bellevue Chapel, Edinburgh, was unique among Scottish Brethren in its choice of name and its acquisition in 1919 of a former Lutheran church resplendent with spire.¹⁸⁸ It was probably seen as one more indicator of Edinburgh Brethren being different. But the larger and more prosperous assemblies built bigger and grander halls than had been used formerly. One of the most impressive of these was the one which was opened in Kilmarnock in 1933 (Figure 6.4).¹⁸⁹ W F Valentine, a prominent local architect, designed

186. *List of Some Assemblies* (1922), pp.38-49; *Assemblies in Britain* (1959), pp.97-113. The figure for 1922 should probably be higher as only those places where rented accommodation is definitely indicated (e.g. Co-operative Hall, Masonic Hall etc.) have been counted; there were many assemblies which had buildings with names such as Wilson Hall or Eastburn Hall which may or may not have been rented; but in 1959 there were only two or three with such names.

187. W, 84 (1955), p.34.

188. Writer's collection, I.H.1., W W Campbell, 'Bellevue Chapel', photocopy of typescript, n.d.; however the assembly in Linlithgow called its building St John's Chapel for a while in the 1950s, *Assemblies in Britain* (1959), p.18.

189. W, 64 (1934), p.21.

the façade in the Italian Renaissance style, its arched frontage based on the triumphal arch—a clearly non-Gothic manner popular in English Nonconformity.¹⁹⁰ The interior was spacious. It was designed to seat 450 with a balcony able to take a further 100. The lectern and baptistery were in an elliptical apse which was surmounted by an arch that echoed the shape of the ceiling.¹⁹¹ Erected on one of the principal streets in the town, its name, Central Hall, indicated a greater confidence in the place the assembly had in the community.

The movement continued the pattern of intense activity which it had inherited from the nineteenth century. In addition to the usual three Sunday services (morning, afternoon and gospel meetings), assemblies also had Bible classes, Sunday schools, tract bands, and open-air meetings. Mid-week there were Bible readings, prayer meetings and children's meetings.¹⁹² The sisters too were active in running women's gospel meetings, solo singing, and Dorcas work (hospital visitation).¹⁹³ Independent initiatives, such as that of Jimmy Black who ran religious services for the boys of Polmont Borstal, Stirlingshire, from 1935, were also undertaken by some Brethren.¹⁹⁴ Assemblies provided ample uses for the leisure time which its members increasingly enjoyed. An annual holiday had become a possibility for many, and Brethren piety occupied this fresh area. *The Witness* first carried notices of holiday accommodation in May

190. I am grateful to Prof. Sam McKinstry for this comment on the architecture.

191. 'The Central Hall', *KS*, 2 December 1933, p.5; in this article the feature which is described above as an 'apse' was described as a 'chancel': it clearly did not fulfil that function, but the use of the ecclesiastical term is significant.

192. Cf. the meetings listed for Bethany Hall, Camelon, in Patterson, *Patterson of Tibet*, p.19—there were five on a Sunday.

193. 'Mrs John Dalton', *W*, 94 (1964), p.36; Jane Helen Fraser, *W*, 106 (1976), p.115; Miss Sophia Hynd', *W*, 89 (1957), p.233; 'Mrs Agnes King', *W*, 88 (1959), p.59; Mrs Wallace Lee' *W*, 102 (1972), p.312; 'Mrs Euphemia McIntyre', *W*, 103 (1972), p.75; 'Cecilia H. Taylor', *W*, 108 (1978), p.125; 'Miss Helen Wright', *W*, 94 (1964), p.36.

194. James Anderson (ed.), 'Jimmy Black (1895-1975)', in *They Finished*, pp.25-8.

1926,¹⁹⁵ and by 1955 it listed 144 places, twenty-five of them in Scotland.¹⁹⁶ The establishments which were advertised (usually a 'Christian guest house') were maintained by fellow-Evangelicals, principally Brethren individuals. They allowed members of the movement to have their holidays in an environment insulated from worldliness and in the company of fellow Christians with an assembly to hand. The largest establishment of this type was Netherhall Christian Holiday and Conference Centre, the former mansion of physicist Lord Kelvin, in the Clyde coastal resort of Largs which was opened in 1927.¹⁹⁷ The initiative to acquire it was that of W E Taylor, a former household steward to aristocratic and wealthy families, who had helped in running a summer convention for young people at St Andrews.¹⁹⁸ This convention, commenced in 1919 and probably drawing upon the model of Keswick, was acclaimed as 'a solution to the problem of giving young men and women a holiday and a help Heavenward'.¹⁹⁹ Netherhall was purchased when university student accommodation was no longer available in St Andrews.²⁰⁰ The new location continued the spirit of the earlier convention, extending it to adults and allowing for the use of invited resident preachers to provide devotional meetings for holidaymakers. Brethren also were counselled to use vacations for witnessing and a more directly religious holiday included evangelism.²⁰¹ The Green Tent Gospel Campers had been founded by two future missionaries in the Edwardian era and in the early inter-war period it continued to offer young men 'a

195. W, 56 (1926), p.340.

196. W, 85 (1955), pp.82-8.

197. W, 57 (1927), pp.16, 38.

198. 'W E Taylor', W, 70 (September 1940), p.iii.

199. W, 49 (1919), p.49; W, 50 (1920), p.316.

200. The St Andrews Convention was briefly revived during 1945-7: W, 75 (March 1945), p.iv; 'Mrs W E Taylor', W, 77 (1947), p.60.

201. William Balfour, 'Golden opportunities', W, 52 (1922), p.225; Leslie Randall, *Knowing the Scriptures*, No. 9 (March-April 1950), p.18.

profitable holiday, with opportunity for Gospel work',²⁰² mainly, it would appear, in the Ayrshire coastal resorts.²⁰³ From 1947 evangelist Willie Scott attracted many young men to Galloway for his 'Preaching Holiday Campaigns', based after 1953 at Machermore, the eventide home for assembly members which he had established in Wigtownshire. They provided practice for developing preachers and were fruitful in producing full-time Christian workers.²⁰⁴ The activism of the Brethren and concern for the improvement in piety carried over into new opportunities for leisure.

Shorter working hours and increasing ease of travel allowed conferences to flourish after World War I. These were not for the faint-hearted—four to five preachers would give lengthy addresses (forty-five minutes being the usual time),²⁰⁵ generally of an intellectually challenging nature²⁰⁶—but among the Brethren they were exceptionally popular. The Glasgow Half-Yearly Conferences had grown so large by their jubilee year of 1914 that the second largest venue in Glasgow, the City Halls, had to be used to accommodate the numbers attending—possibly about 2 000 individuals.²⁰⁷ By 1950 it was reported that the Half-Yearly weeknight missionary rally, by

202. *W*, 50 (1920), p.293; 'Peter Cochrane', *W*, 101 (1971), p.196, states the organisation was founded by 'former missionaries in Venezuela', naming them as S B Adams and J N Struthers; the former served in Venezuela 1910-40 and J H Struthers in 1915-26 (Stunt *et al.*, *Turning the World Upside Down*, pp.637, 8). The first extant reference to its existence is in *W*, 45 (1915), p.72, when it was in Largs, and given this date and the common Brethren pattern of independent initiatives in evangelism leading to missionary service, it seems likely that the organisation was founded in the Edwardian era before both men went to Venezuela.

203. *W*, 49 (1919), p.81; 'John Frame', *W*, 88 (1958), p.130.

204. Anderson (compiler), *Willie Scott*, pp.35-47; *W*, 85 (1955), p.125.

205. J S Borland to editor, *BM*, 59 (1949), pp.185-6.

206. Cf. F F Bruce, *In Retrospect: remembrance of things past* (London & Glasgow, 1980), p.25.

207 J G[ray], 'The Fundamentals', *W*, 44 (1914), p.89. According to Joe Fisher, *The Glasgow Encyclopaedia* (Edinburgh, 1994), p.169, the City Halls held 3 500 at this period; it is unlikely, however, that this number was present. In 1921, when attendance was at its highest since the war, there were 2 000 attenders (*W*, 51 (1921), p.122), and it is probable that this figure held for the earlier occasion.

then held in Glasgow's largest venue, St Andrews Halls, could draw about 2 700 attenders.²⁰⁸ This gathering continued to fill the Halls until they were destroyed by fire in 1962. It had reached its apex two years earlier when, after the Missionary Exhibition held at Bellahouston Park Palace of Art which attracted 15 000 visitors, the final rally at the St Andrews Halls had to use the side halls for the audience of 3 000 and a further 1 500 were turned away.²⁰⁹ The Glasgow Half-Yearly was the leviathan of the conferences, but others could achieve substantial numbers. The first day of 1925 saw a storm of exceptional violence, but it did not prevent there being New Year's Day conference audiences of 600 in Ayr, 900 in Kilmarnock, 500 in Glasgow, 700 in Hamilton, 1 000 in Motherwell, 750 in Edinburgh and 1 000 in Aberdeen—some 5 450 individuals in total.²¹⁰ Many Brethren Saturdays were spent in attending conferences.²¹¹ The pattern established in the late nineteenth century for these gatherings was continued.²¹² Public holidays, especially New Year's Day, were the favoured times for the larger ones held in the towns and cities.²¹³ The Saturday half-holiday was used for the smaller local ones with the months of April and September particularly popular. But they could be held at any time, as long as they did not conflict with another one in the district. In the typical year of 1934 some 182 conferences were held throughout Scotland.²¹⁴

208. OA/D27/6/1, J B Watson to Robert Rendall, 4 October 1950; the capacity of St Andrews Halls was 2 500 at this time, both it and the City Halls having being reduced in seating capacity since 1914 for safety reasons, Fisher, *Glasgow Encyclopaedia*, pp.169, 170.

209. T J Smith, "Operation Overseas", *BM*, 71 (1961), pp.324-6; missionary James Caldwell's interview on television as a result of the exhibition was probably the first appearance by a Scottish Brethren individual on assembly affairs on the medium.

210. *W*, 55 (1925), pp.36-7.

211. Patterson, *God's Fool*, pp.18-19.

212. See above, pp.181.

213. *BM*, 44 (1934), p.52; *BM*, 46 (1936), p.53.

214. *W*, 45(1935), *passim*; the number of conferences held per month were: January: 35; February: 17; March: 13; April: 23; May: 15; June: 1; July: 3; August: 9; September: 23; October: 17; November: 15; December: 11.

So popular was the institution that the Brethren developed variations on the theme. The traditional Bible class conferences, which probably included a fairly large number of older people, were replaced with ones billed as 'Youth Conferences' and by 1945 they were widespread.²¹⁵ They were one more inter-assembly event through which young people might find a suitable partner.²¹⁶ Missionary conferences became popular in the 1920s: an annual one was established in Ayrshire in 1920,²¹⁷ and five years later an annual open-air missionary conference was founded in the same county at Newmilns.²¹⁸ By 1938 a missionary conference for young people which was held in the grounds of the Livingstone Memorial, Blantyre, was attracting an audience of 400.²¹⁹ Doubtless this venue was chosen because it was felt that Scottish reverence for David Livingstone would intensify any challenge presented to the young, and the gathering was held annually from its initiation in July 1931 until 1952.²²⁰ Residential conversational Bible readings spread over several days in May for men only were begun at Netherhall in 1935 and they continued, with a seven-year interruption caused by the war, until 1955.²²¹ Another series of Bible readings at Netherhall, which apparently grew out of the earlier one, was for a mixed-sex audience and in 1945 they transferred to Ayr.²²² These 'May Readings' became immensely popular, drawing visitors from throughout the country who would stay for their duration: in 1960,

215. They were held in Troon, Ayrshire (from 1937, *W*, 70 (1940), p.56); Elim Hall, Glasgow (*BM*, 47 (1938), p.81); Innerleven, Fife (*W*, 69 (1939), p.69); Larkhall, Lanarkshire (*W*, 71 (1941), p.186; Assembly Hall, Aberdeen (*W*, 75 (February 1945), p.i), Paisley, Renfrewshire (*W*, 75 (March 1945), p.i); Hermon Hall, Dundee (*W*, 75 (April 1945), p.i); Cowdenbeath, Fife (*W*, 75 (August 1945), p.i).

216. For attitudes to courtship and marriage, see below, p.384.

217. *W*, 50 (1920), p.260.

218. *BM*, 42 (1932), p.i; cf. *W*, 56 (1926), p.396.

219. *BM*, 47 (1937), p.220.

220. *BM*, 41 (1931), p.ii; *W*, 83 (1953), p.108; on Livingstone's reputation in Scotland, see John M Mackenzie, 'David Livingstone: the construction of a myth' in Graham Walker and Tom Gallagher (eds), *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant popular culture in modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.24-42.

221. *W*, 65 (1935), p.116; *W*, 78 (1978), p.72; *W*, 85 (1955), p.102.

222. *W*, 75 (1945), p.i.

although attendance had fallen, there were still some 100 attending the morning sessions and 300 the evening ones.²²³ From 1945 the pattern had been successfully copied by September Bible readings in Aberdeen.²²⁴ The period was one of conference-going for the Brethren.

The explicit aim of these gatherings was the inculcation of right doctrine and practice,²²⁵ features which were eagerly embraced by those attending. In 1947 J B Watson, editor of *The Witness* (1941-55), enthused over the Ayr Bible Readings: 'Where else but in Scotland will one find three or four hundred men eager to gather for five successive weekday mornings with nothing to attract and hold them, but the desire to get to know the scriptures better?'²²⁶ Other purposes can also be discerned in the conferences. The large gatherings provided support for those who were in small or isolated assemblies,²²⁷ the community of believers helping to confirm the reality of the Brethren mental world. Also, like the magazines, in the absence of a formal organisation they were important for the cohesion of the movement.²²⁸ One individual in the 1920s described conferences as providing 'an opportunity for happy reunion, social intercourse, mutual inquiries, as well as bringing together brethren from the homeland and far-away parts of the world'.²²⁹

Protestant Evangelical sects are sometimes perceived as being dull and lacking in festivals. However, assemblies had an annual cycle composed of the assembly social, the Sunday school trip, the Bible class trip, the annual conference and the Sunday school soirée [*sic*] which marked out the

223. *W*, 90 (1960), p.275.

224. *Ibid.*, p.476.

225. J McDonald, 'Do conferences justify their existence?', *W*, 58 (1928), p.451.

226. J B Watson, 'WW', *W*, 77 (1947), p.70.

227. J G[ray] to the editor, 'Glasgow Half-Yearly Conferences', *W*, 52 (1922), p.274.

228. See above, pp.182-4.

229. McDonald, 'Do conferences justify their existence?', p.451.

year.²³⁰ Although Christmas was not celebrated, the soirée was often near to it and served as a substitute, and socials might be held close to the commencement of the new year.²³¹ Conferences were certainly sober and solemn gatherings, but they too had a festal component. Audience expectation of the event, the anticipation of meeting others, the symbolic function of the singing (usually *a capella*),²³² and the satisfaction of having the Brethren world-view legitimated gave them a sense of occasion. They were festive events which punctuated the Brethren year. This was explicit in the north east where the conference circuit followed the rhythms of the farming year with (*inter alia*) Aberdeen Conference on New Year's Day, conferences in Dufftown and Buckie at Easter, a two-day one at Craigellachie in mid-July, and Harvest Thanksgiving ones in New Deer and Mosscorral in the autumn.²³³ During the conference interval the speakers and audience shared a meal—usually a meat pie and a bag containing a roll and confectionery—and at the several-day ones the significance of this was most evident. At Craigellachie, in a scenic part of Speyside, the mid-day meal 'in Scotch-like fashion' of broth, pudding and tea was prepared and served by the local sisters, and visitors (some 600 by 1949, double the number of twenty years before)²³⁴ were lodged with local Christians for the night.²³⁵ One preacher at the conference, J R Rollo, a Fife headteacher, recalled the hospitality which was offered: 'the sense of unity was a throbbing reality... There and then we learned the meaning of the

230. Cf. S J D Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: organisation and experience in industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.331-4.

231. *H*, 2 (1925), p.32; however, the stricter assemblies did not hold a social.

232. Cf. below, pp.314-15.

233. Bruce, *In Retrospect*, pp.20-2; Craigellachie conference was founded in 1889, J B Watson, 'WW', *W*, 79 (1949), p.100; and New Deer about 1878, *W*, 38 (December, 1908), endpp.

234. OA/D27/6/1, J B Watson to Robert Rendall, 27 July 1949; *W*, 59 (1929), p.213; cf. *W*, 79 (1949), p.100, which also states that the conference was commenced in 1889.

235. J G[ray], *W*, 53 (1923), p.149; *W*, 54 (1924), p.213.

local term "couthie".²³⁶ For people used to arduous work, conferences, with their established rituals, were the festal holy days of the movement.

The Brethren in this period supported a number of full-time Christian workers. In 1920 there were thirty-six such individuals in Scotland,²³⁷ and probably the number increased over the inter-war era. The evangelists were in the tradition of the working-class revivalist. Former miner Fred Elliott was described by one of his converts as having 'twinkling eyes, curly black hair and a broken nose. He was the sort of man a boy could trust...'.²³⁸ Lengthy, sober sermons were expected of the gospel preacher.²³⁹ Evangelist John McAlpine was praised for his methods which contained 'nothing flamboyant or sensational'.²⁴⁰ The system of conferences was supported by some full-time Bible teachers. Two of the most prominent had seceded from moderate Exclusive parties: W W Fereday (1866-1959), an English preacher formerly with the Kelly Party, was resident in Scotland from 1936,²⁴¹ and W F Naismith (1896-1981), who had acceded with the Stuart Party assembly at Carluke, was in popular demand as a preacher on eschatological and devotional subjects.²⁴² For more mundane speakers Brethren publishers supplied an array of preaching aids. Henry Pickering

236. Collection of Alex Stewart, Hopeman: J R Rollo to Alex Stewart, 6 November 1975, MS letter in [Alex Stewart, compiler], 'A Record of Gospel Work. Christian Brethren. Moray & Nairn', MS, n.d.

237. HyP[ickering], W, 50 (1920), p.288.

238. Frederick Catherwood, *At the Edge* (London, 1995), p.13; cf. [Fred Elliott], *The Conversion and Call of Fred Elliott* (London & Glasgow, 1917).

239. J G[ray], 'United Tent Mission in Glasgow', W, 53 (1923), p.168; J Ritchie, "'Ask for the old paths'", W, 57 (1927), p.210-1; *idem*, 'Plain advice for young preachers', W, 64 (1934), p.178.

240. A B[orland], 'Books to read', BM, 57 (1947), p.314.

241. 'W W Fereday' W, 89 (1959), pp.182-3; W, 66 (1936), p.216.

242. James Anderson (ed.), 'A. Naismith W.F. Naismith', in *They Finished their Course in the Eighties* (Kilmarnock, 1990), pp.125-132.

and John Ritchie both produced several,²⁴³ but also popular was *1200 Notes, Quotes and Anecdotes* (1963) by Archie Naismith, missionary brother of the conference speaker. Unfortunately, few examples of Brethren preaching as it developed from the second quarter of the century are extant.²⁴⁴ The allegorical, aphoristic, densely biblically-allusive style cultivated is quintessentially present in the transcript of a sermon by John Douglas, a Lanarkshire preacher, on the life of David in 1 Samuel:

In Proverbs we read: "A soft answer turneth away wrath." David was innocent of this charge, the charge of Eliab and the question of his inability by Saul, brought out David's experiences with God. Public contest because of private communion. David knew his God in private. The defeat of the nation was the triumph of the individual who was in communion with his God. Pauline strength—Paul is the Caleb of the New Testament,—"I can do all things through the power of Christ which strengtheneth me."²⁴⁵

The idiom is perhaps that of Douglas, but the tone and hermeneutic is representative of many Scottish Brethren preachers of the period.²⁴⁶ The audiences were capable of following the multiple references: frequent exposure to the Bible made assembly members intimately acquainted with its content. In this respect, as in much else, assemblies in this era dominated the lives of their members.

THE TURNING TIDE

The period discussed in this chapter was a pivotal one for Scottish

243. Henry Pickering, *One Thousand Tales Worth Telling: mostly new/strictly true/suitable for you* (London & Glasgow [c. 1915]); *idem*, *1000 Subjects for Speakers and Students* (Glasgow [1925]); *idem* (compiler) *Twelve Baskets Full of Original Outlines and Scripture Studies* (London & Glasgow, n.d.); John Ritchie, *500 Gospel Subjects with outlines, divisions, and notes for preachers, teachers and Christian workers* (Kilmarnock, 1904); *idem*, *500 Gospel Illustrations: incidents, anecdotes, and testimonies for the use of evangelists, preachers and teachers* (Kilmarnock 1912); *idem*, *500 Evangelistic Subjects: with suggestive notes, outlines, and heads for evangelists, preachers, and teachers* (Kilmarnock, 1915); *idem*, *500 Bible Subjects: with suggestive outlines and notes for Bible Students, preachers and teachers*, 2nd edn (Kilmarnock, 1926); see also below, p.344.

244. Some of the articles in *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine* began life as addresses.

245. John Douglas, *Lessons from the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Ashgill, 1997), p.13; cf. *idem*, 'Suffering', *BM*, 39 (1929), p.13.

246. For Douglas, see below, pp.290-5.

Brethren. In the judgment of James Hislop, a school headteacher who lived through the period, the years from the Miners' Strike of 1921 until the commencement of World War II were "'the great days" in the lives of Scottish assemblies'.²⁴⁷ The epithet applied to the organisation of evangelism, but it could be usefully extended to the movement as a whole which achieved its most developed form during this period. It was the period to which the histories of Veitch and Beattie belong, evidence that the movement had reached an established phase.²⁴⁸ The influences of the magazines, *The Witness* and *The Believer's Magazine*, were at their greatest and their circulation continued to rise—in the case of the former going from almost 20 000 per month worldwide about 1918 to some 30 000 in 1941.²⁴⁹ But on the eve of World War II Andrew Borland, the newly appointed editor of *The Believer's Magazine*, detecting changes in the ethos of assemblies, had warned that they were entering the third phase of any movement—the long period of decline which followed inception and growth. They were now less vigorous, recruiting from families of believers who gave nominal assent to truths hard-won by previous generations.²⁵⁰ After the war, the movement displayed signs of numerical contraction.

Until the inter-war period listening to open-air services had been a communal activity and crowds would gather, but in the post-war world new entertainments were more readily available. The writer Liz Lochhead (b.1947), a native of Lanarkshire, has described a Brethren open-air service of her childhood:

Sunday, maybe later in the evening
there'd be a Brethren Meeting.

²⁴⁷. James Hislop to the writer, 19 January 1990.

²⁴⁸. For these histories, see above, pp.10-14.

²⁴⁹. Endpp advert in Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of the Jesus Christ*, 5th edn (London [c.1918]); supplement to *W*, 71 (March 1941); *BM*, 37 (1927), p.iv; *BM*, 41 (1931), p.iv.

²⁵⁰. Andrew Borland, *Old Paths & Good Ways in Personal, Family and Church Life* (Kilmarnock [1938]), pp.8-12.

Plain women wearing hats to cover
uncut hair. And
singing, under lamp-posts, out in our street.
And the leader shouted the odds on Armageddon, he
tried to sell Salvation.
Everybody turned their televisions up...²⁵¹

Brethren life-style in the post-war era looked old-fashioned. In 1956 Andrew Campbell, a Bible teacher from Leven, Fife, attempted to establish why Brethren gospel meetings were by then largely ineffective. The preacher, he felt, 'too often appears out of touch with modern life... Constant reference is made to Old Testament types, which anyone in touch with reality ought to know have no meaning for men and women of the world today'.²⁵² The assembly at Kelty in west Fife had shared in the post-war religious resurgence, rising from fourteen members in 1946 to forty in 1954.²⁵³ It was probably the meeting described as being in a mining village which Campbell reported had doubled its membership in the previous five years through active evangelism. Such assemblies, he felt, were the exception, and he offered two reasons for the loss of evangelistic zeal. The first reason, repeating an old complaint, was that disputes over church order had preoccupied minds unduly, and his second reason was the materialism of Brethren members.²⁵⁴ James Hislop concurred with this last cause of contraction in size: 'The spiritual and numerical declines came', he felt, 'with the Macmillan "you've never had it so good" years'.²⁵⁵ The factors which led to ineffectiveness identified by these individuals may or may not be correct. But by the 1950s both the manner in which the movement appeared archaic and its increasing prosperity pointed to basic

251. Liz Lochhead, 'The Offering', in *Dreaming Frankenstein and Collected Poems* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp.60-1.

252. A P Campbell, 'Simplicity of testimony' in Anon., *A Return to Simplicity: conference of Brethren at High Leigh, September 1956* (Rushden [1959]), pp.68-9.

253. Writer's collection, I.I.7., Helen B Gallacher, 'The Story of Ebenezer Hall', typescript [1987].

254. Campbell, 'Simplicity of testimony', p.69.

255. Hislop to the writer, 19 January 1990.

social changes which were affecting Brethren life and the ability to recruit new members.

The wave of the Brethren advance in Scotland probably reached its peak in the mid-1930s.²⁵⁶ The sound of its long, withdrawing roar became more audible after World War II, but was perhaps hushed for contemporaries because the high-tide marks of Brethren life were so conspicuous and separate surges could still be detected. Membership probably reached its absolute peak around the same time as the Scottish Congregational and Baptist churches did in 1934 and 1935 respectively and before the Church of Scotland did in 1956.²⁵⁷ Growth, however, had slowed considerably and, as was argued in Chapter 4 above, like other denominations the Brethren had a membership *per capita* that had probably been falling since the turn of the century. On the other hand unlike the Church of Scotland, attendance kept pace with the membership longer.²⁵⁸ In 1955 on average 31 per cent. of the Church of Scotland's membership in Glasgow attended morning service on three census Sundays compared to 64 per cent. of Brethren members, a figure which only the Baptists and the Free Church of Scotland (both at 62.9 per cent.) could approach.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the movement reached the same turning point in this period as the other churches did and about much the same time. This is evident in the contrast between the two post-war periods. Both were times which

256. Cf. J Anderson, 'Editorial searchlight', *BM*, 90 (1980), p.65, which makes the same point.

257. Robert Currie, Alan D Gilbert and Lee Horsely, *Churches and Churchgoers: patterns of religious growth in the British isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), pp.134-5, 150-1.

258. See above, p.162; and Callum G Brown, 'Religion and secularisation', in Tony Dickson and James H Treble (eds), *People and Society in Scotland*, 3 (Edinburgh, 1992), pp.48-54.

259. Hight, 'Churches', pp.p.719, 731; however, the Brethren were not included in the census and it is not clear how the figure for them was arrived at; if it were supplied by a Brethren member then it is likely to accurate since most Brethren would regard this as an under-estimate. In addition 1955 was possibly a better than average year for Church of Scotland attendance in Glasgow: as a percentage of membership it was 26.2% in 1954 and 28.4% in 1956; it is highly unlikely that Brethren attendance, being more closely related to membership levels, would fluctuate as much.

favoured assembly growth, but on the second occasion the expansion was on a noticeably lesser scale. Decline was most fully felt by Scottish churches in the early 1960s when the Brethren too were on the brink of substantial contraction.²⁶⁰

During the period from 1914 until 1965 the Brethren movement was in its most fully-developed form. Assemblies had grown initially and then retained their numerical strength and inner confidence. Although they had difficulties maintaining themselves in rural Scotland, they were by the mid-1960s thickly spread throughout the industrial Lowlands (see Maps 7-13). The movement had a rigid control over the lives of the members which can be seen in the way it completely provided for their leisure time. Brethren wanted to remain in this habitual world using the evangelistic strategies which had served them so well, and this did not make them responsive to change. The distaste for innovation could be clearly seen in their reaction to the transatlantic influences which were influencing Protestant Evangelicalism and to a significant subtext of the present chapter, the rising importance of youth. Those of a denominationalising tendency had always pointed out that undue withdrawal from society meant loss of contact with potential converts. But now the rate of change meant that society was leaving the Brethren behind as they remained devoted to the styles of a previous era. This had profound implications for a conversionist sect. The innovators were pragmatic enough to keep pace with the wider world, but the more sectarian wing of the movement resisted this process and by so doing became more introversionist. It was an era of increasing institutionalisation for the Brethren which hindered the ability to adapt to a changing world. This theme features prominently in the next chapter.

²⁶⁰. Brown, 'Religion and secularisation', p.54.