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Bound together in the liberty of Christ: Renewing Baptist collaboration in mission.

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Abstract

Bound together in the liberty of Christ: Renewing Baptist collaboration in mission.

By John Richard Claydon

Baptists are a historic mainstream Christian denomination whose origins are found in the Radical Reformation expressed in the English Separatists and the Anabaptists. Having a strong emphasis upon covenanting together as local churches, they have developed a deep sense of liberty for the local church and also theoretically for their translocal relationships, which is ultimately expressed in Associations and the Baptist Union of Great Britain. The contention of this thesis is that the independency of local liberty has seriously disabled the more effective collaboration to which they aspire. The aim of the thesis is to establish the means for renewing Baptist collaboration in mission in ways that are faithful to the nature of Baptist theology and culture. Baptist sociality is explained and explored through the lens of Group-Grid theory in order to provide a framework for understanding the different cultures of the local church, Association and Union. This is then explored by the analysis of the fieldwork interviews which examines the perceptions of 30 Baptists, involved in a variety of spheres of Baptist life, regarding distinctive features of Baptist culture, issues relating to translocal collaboration, collaborative strategy and leadership, with a particular emphasis upon attitudes to translocal finance, known as Home Mission. The tensions of independency vis-à-vis interdependency are then examined through the lenses of Baptist history and theology, Methodism and bureaucracy in order to discover successful precedents from the past and models from other sources, that will enable Baptists to overcome the strong inclination to independency and enter into a more mature interdependency expressed in inter-church relationships as well as those between churches, Associations and the Union, leading to more effective mission.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations will be found throughout the thesis.

B.U.G.B.   Baptist Union of Great Britain

B.U.G.B.I.   Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland

H.M.   Home Mission

N.B.A.   Northern Baptist Association

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without the author's prior written consent and information derived should be

acknowledged.

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- my fellow Baptists in Union and Association for their encouragement and enriching conversations around the subject matter;
- my wife, Janet, and my family for their patience, understanding, advice and encouragement through the years of reading, reflecting and writing.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the Baptist family as it seeks to discover and live out a renewed sense of belonging and engagement in the Mission of God.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1.   Setting the scene

The central contention of this thesis is that the inherent independency of Baptists disables

the more effective collaboration to which they aspire, as witnessed to in the fieldwork.[1]

Contrary to Baptists' official statements about their interdependency, observation of their

attitudes and live experience demonstrates that independency is a defining feature of

Baptist life placing the local church as the prime ecclesial unit consisting of covenanting

individuals.[2] This thesis examines the tensions and constraints within Baptist culture and

ecclesiology on collective Baptist engagement in mission as seen in the Baptist Union of

Great Britain. Independency was repeatedly affirmed in the fieldwork interviews informing

the thesis, with interdependence given much lower priority.[3] Churches are seen as 'very

autonomous' with 'the option to opt out' of collective action.[4] Yet, it was recognised that

the local church functions 'best when it is in fellowship with other churches.'[5] The culture

of independency restricts local churches in their collaboration with other churches and

their engagement in translocal strategic action. That culture also pervades the structural

life of Associations and the Union hindering their effective leadership and operation.

Baptist churches may collaborate for a time-limited project. Occasionally churches

jointly call a minister, but despite positive experiences, the churches generally continue to

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[1] See Chapter 3. Section 3.1.1.3. Eg. Interviewee 133 (Plain numbers are a coded reference to particular interviewees who took part in the fieldwork.)
[2] The London Confession of Faith, 1644. In William Latane Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Chicago: Judson Press, 1959 revised 1969) 165. This Confession also states that the distinct congregations are also committed to 'walk by one and the same rule.' 168-169.
[3] See chapter 3: 2.2.1
[4] 322
[5] 314

retain an independent focus. This thesis is concerned with translocal relationships, collaboration and strategy. Gerry Johnson et al defined the latter as 'the *direction* and scope of an organisation over the *long-term*, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of *resources* and *competences* with the aim of fulfilling *stakeholder* expectations.'[6] Most interviewees indicated that independency restricted the denomination's[7] ability to develop collective strategies; as one said, 'there is a strong independence that each church wants to make its own decisions'.[8] This lack of engagement has a significant restricting effect upon Baptists' ability to act strategically. The major issues of concern focus on the relationship of the local congregation to the wider Baptist family and vice versa, and also that between translocal structures such as Associations and the Union.

1.1.1. Personal anthropology

This study arises out of my experience in translocal Baptist ministry and my perceptions shaped by a life-long involvement with Baptists, and I acknowledge that I bring the biases and assumptions of a 58 year old clergyman shaped by my experience of being immersed in Baptist culture.[9] As a local minister for seventeen years I experienced the predominance of local church liberty vis-à-vis translocal possibilities, but serving for sixteen years in

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[6] Gerry Johnson, Kevan Scholes, and Richard Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Text and Cases* (Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 7th ed. / Gerry Johnson, Kevan Scholes, Richard Whittington. ed. 2005) 34

[7] Whilst Baptists do not fit the typical sociological definition of denomination the Baptist Union of Great Britain's constitution refers to the Baptist Denomination. B.U.G.B., *B.U.G.B. 2010 Directory* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2010) 322. The point is sometimes made that Baptists are a union of churches and not a denomination.

[8] 131

[9] I recognise that each person has a range of perceptions relating to the nature of life, gender, wealth, power and authority which determines their behaviour.

translocal ministries, six of which involved both local and regional roles concurrently, has shown me what I see as the deficiencies in Baptists' translocal co-operation.

I have been a Regional Minister for the N.B.A. since 2002 with the responsibility of providing 'vision and pastoral care', promoting and developing 'agreed vision and strategies,' of being 'a strategic and clear biblical thinker'[10] and of building up 'the common life of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, its fellowship and its mission.'[11] The Induction liturgy welcomes Regional Ministers to work within the 'varied tasks of oversight and leadership in the church of Jesus Christ'[12] which raises the issue of the nature of the leadership and strategy that is appropriate amongst Baptists, recognising the inherent constraints upon the development of translocal strategies and collaboration caused by their ecclesiology, culture and organisation.

I do not offer the 'realist tale'[13] of the professional outsider, but I have made strenuous efforts to maintain some intellectual detachment seeking to narrate and analyse in an objective manner, being reflexive in acknowledging my own values and beliefs, and recognising that such close involvement may be an inhibition. Interviews were conducted with an emic perspective, as a fellow-insider closely engaged in Baptist culture, understanding the common language used, sharing a common ecclesiology, and being a friend and colleague to many participants, yet seeking to be an impartial observer and listener.[14] It became a culturally-specific shared experience.[15] The use of a semi-structured

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[10] Regional Minister: Northern Baptist Association Team Leader Job Description and Person Specification.

[11] Christopher J. Ellis, Myra Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship : Patterns and Prayers for the Community of Disciples* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2005) 157

[12] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 159

[13] John Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field : On Writing Ethnography*, *Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed. 2011) 45

[14] L.K. Pike, 'Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behaviour' in Russell T. McCutcheon, *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion : A Reader*, Controversies in the Study of Religion. (London ; Washington, DC: Cassell, 1998)

[15] L.K. Pike, 'Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behaviour' McCutcheon, *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion : A Reader* 28

interview format helped to give the conversations focus and clarity. There are inherent

restrictions to this manner of working in that it may 'fail to expose the negotiation of

identity and legitimacy' required by anthropologists, it may confuse the relationship

between the researcher and the participants and might raise questions about the language

used in terms of that which is insider-speak and that which conveys more objective

observation. [16] As an insider I had a clear understanding of common language which may

need to be translated for a wider audience.

Whilst the easy rapport of the interviews reflects the egalitarian ethos of the

inherent *enclave* culture of Baptists, some answers from respondents with national

responsibilities reflect a more *positional* approach. There were different levels of

understanding about Baptist ecclesiology and sociality reflecting the interviewees' depth of

engagement with the denomination and its translocal organisation, with those having

national responsibilities reflecting a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Baptist

sociality. Many local participants' perceptions were dominated by their engagement in the

local church as *enclave* communities with a lower need and desire to have significant

knowledge of what happens beyond. However, being a Regional Minister, there was

significant potential for a deference bias towards me with the possibility of interviewees

giving expected answers to a peer or as a perceived authority figure.

1.1.2. The aim of the thesis

This thesis aims: 1) to identify the constraints inhibiting Baptists' collaboration; 2) to

provide a cultural analysis of Baptist sociality; 3) to recommend ways to enhance

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[16] Lanita Jacobs-Huey, 'The Natives Are Gazing and Talking Back: Renewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists,' *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002), 792

interdependency; and 4) to propose the necessary organisational approaches to facilitate effective collective action. Chapter 2 presents a 'thick description'[17] of Baptist sociality and, uniquely, uses Mary Douglas' Cultural Theory[18] to identify the dysfunctions within Baptist translocal relationships and provide the background for the analysis of the fieldwork. Chapter 3 develops the description and qualitative analyses of interviews with Baptists serving in different aspects of their common life, examining their understandings of Baptists' distinctive features, perceptions of mutual collaboration, conceptions of Home Mission and the denomination's finances. Chapters 4 and 5 develop the analysis through the lenses of Baptist history and ecclesiology, and British Methodism respectively. It is to be recognised that these lenses may present distortions and have limitations. The final chapter draws on the analysis of the thesis and proposes potential ways to develop and refresh the translocal covenantal relationships and collaborative action to which Baptists aspire.

This chapter introduces the key areas of study within the thesis, setting out its aims, objectives and methods, and the purpose of the fieldwork. The following sections identify the ethos and culture of Baptists, their missional emphasis and the presenting issues of corporate strategy. Deeper consideration is then given to strategy and a critique of the appropriateness of organisational theory for Baptists. The literature survey identifies the significant writings relating to the different sections of the thesis.

1.1.3. The methodology of the fieldwork

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[17] Cf. Geertz. Clifford, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' *in Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays / Clifford Geertz (London: Fontana, 1993)*

[18] Mary Douglas, *Cultural Bias*, Occasional Paper (Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland) (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1978) 19ff

Home Mission is a major focus of the fieldwork informing this thesis. It is chosen

recognising it is the main way the denomination raises and deploys finance and is therefore

a significant expression of Baptist collaboration and decision-making which demonstrates

the characteristics of Baptist sociality,[19] and its importance to a wide range of stakeholders.

As a clear expression of Baptists' co-operation, collective vision and strategic development

it also reveals the restrictions upon Baptist collaboration. The denomination's ways of

obtaining and using financial resources reflect the values and priorities of donors[20] and

decision-makers.[21] Receipts from the Home Mission Appeal represent the largest portion of

the Union's income.[22] The term 'Appeal' indicates that it is voluntary, and therefore an

expression of living by faith[23]. Church subscriptions are collected based on church size, but

are low and only formed 5.3% of the Union's voluntary income in 2012.[24]

Interviewees have been chosen as 'key informants' with specific experience of

Baptist sociality at national, regional and local level. Patton defines 'key informants' as

those 'who are particularly knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and articulate about

their knowledge.'[25] The choice of interviewees reflects what Michael Quinn describes as a

combination of 'chain', 'criterion', 'stratified', 'political', and 'convenience' criteria.[26] There

was an information-rich connection between several participants. All were chosen

according to certain criteria relating to their service amongst Baptists, and some of them,

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[19] See Chapter 2 Section 2.3.3. for a further explanation of Home Mission.
[20] Primarily local churches and their members.
[21] Ultimately those serving within the denominational structures.
[22] In 2012 it was about 61.99% of the Union's income. Cf. *B.U.G.B., Financial Statement of the B.U.G.B. Incorporating the Baptist Home Mission Fund, Sustentation Fund and Other Funds. (Didcot, B.U.G.B., 2013)*) 1
[23] 314, 320
[24] B.U.G.B., *Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements: Baptist Union of Great Britain for Year Ending 2012* (Didcot, B.U.G.B., 2013) 12 and 17. In 2012 the church subscription required of churches was £2.30 per member p.a. cf. *B.U.G.B Trustee Document TB12/65* (Didcot: 2012) 1. This is set to rise to £3.30 in 2013 See B.U.G.B. letter to Church Treasurers 30th April 2013
[25] Michael Quinn Patton and Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 3rd ed. 2002); Patton and Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*; Patton and Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* 321
[26] Patton and Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* 230ff

such as Trustees, Team Leaders, and local Association personnel, could be stratified as being one or more groups within a wider scenario. The engagement of interviewees in different spheres of Baptist life facilitated the analysis of issues of power, vocabulary, culture and expectations. All could be considered a stakeholder as a donor, recipient or decision-maker in relation to the Union's resources.

Thirty interviewees were selected, comprising three each of local ministers, local church secretaries and local church treasurers; three each of Association team leaders, Association treasurers, and Association volunteers engaged with Home Mission grants processes; seven members of the Union's Senior Management Team plus the Home Mission Grants Manager responsible for overseeing the grants processes[27], three trustees of the Baptist Union and the honorary treasurer on the Union. Other factors employed in the choice of interviewees included the size of their local church, the length of time they had served in the particular post, their age and gender. Although not a typical cross-section of Baptist church-goers they represent a significant range of those involved in different aspects of Baptist church leadership. Consolidated into three categories, 40% were involved in the national life of the Union, 30% in Associations and 30% in local churches. Whilst all were members of local churches, some serving in Association and Union positions had a low level of engagement with their local church giving rise to the possibility of a significant translocal bias vis-à-vis those whose only experience was in the local church. Of the interviewees 20 were male and 10 female, 14 were clergy and 16 lay. The average age in 2010 was 56 with 23% being 65 and above and 17% being between 25 and 50. All were white British, but as the Northern Baptist Association accounted for thirteen interviewees it should be noted that another Association would have provided a more mixed racial profile. Similarly, the gender balance is unrepresentative of Baptist church-goers.

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[27] This post was made redundant during 2013

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way using set questions, but allowing

supplementary questions and further discussion. The questions explored the interviewees'

background, their perceptions of the distinctive aspects of Baptist life and culture, the

potential and possibilities for mutual collaboration, their understanding of Home Mission

and the processes for raising and deploying finance with the Union, what they saw to be

the values and principles determining the processes of Home Mission and finance, their

concepts of leadership and the possibilities for developing strategy within the Associations

and the Union. After 12 interviews the questions were modified to bring a greater

emphasis upon the issue of strategy and collaboration.[28] Basic notes were taken of all

interviews and all have been recorded and transcribed with the exception of two where the

recording equipment failed totally for one and for part of the other interview.

Four further semi-structured interviews were undertaken by telephone which were

also similarly noted and recorded. The interviewees were a District Chair, a Methodist

minister, a Lay Methodist and one Baptist Minister who had transferred from Methodist

ministry, all of whom had intimate knowledge of Methodism.[29]

Qualitative data was gained in order to access and analyse Baptists' self-

perceptions of their culture, opportunities for collaboration and leadership, within which

Home Mission was given a significant focus. The interviews were essentially guided 'data-

gathering conversations … with selected individuals from a particular target population.'[30]

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a means of collecting qualitative data through

direct questioning and the consequent conversation, to reveal the meaning and values that

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[28] See Appendix 3, 4, 5 6 for the interview explanation sheet and the interview questions.
[29] Ref. Chapter 5
[30] Frances Ward in Helen Cameron, *Studying Local Churches : A Handbook* (London: SCM, 2005); Cameron, *Studying Local Churches : A Handbook* 30. Patton suggests that qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. See Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 3rd ed. 2002), 4. Cf. 342 and H. Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology : Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage, 2nd ed. 2005), 209

interviewees attach, and assume others attach, to the language, life and culture of Baptists. The dynamic interaction and fluidity of the interviews meant that some questions were not put, and that others were introduced.

The interviews were analysed and categorised according to the subject matter of each question using NVivo and Excel. Personal data regarding age, gender, clergy or lay, education, occupation and roles in the church were logged in an Excel file. Insights into Baptist life and culture were analysed using both Excel and Word to categorise them as relating to local ecclesiology, the authority of Christ, the Priesthood of all believers and Body Ministry,[31] baptism, scripture, preaching, associating, freedom, mission and other. The rest of the fieldwork was analysed using NVivo allocating the data to 36 nodes[32] to facilitate the description and analysis presented in this chapter under the broad headings of: 1) General observations of the interviews, 2) Baptist Culture, 3) Home Mission, 4) Strategic decisions about finance, 5) Leadership and governance, and 6) Association life. Each category had several sub-categories, some of which have been collated together in the narrative presentation of the material and sometimes shown in the accompanying graphics to help identify insights which vary according to the area of service of the participant. Particular note was taken of the emphasis given by interviewees in order to understand the level of importance individuals gave to each aspect.

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[31] Meaning the role of all disciples in the ministry of the church.
[32] See Appendix 7

1.2.   Baptist Strategy: an organisational matter

1.2.1.   Who is the strategy for?

This thesis is concerned with translocal relationships and collective strategies that facilitate churches working together in mission. Baptist churches may develop strategies for their own life without reference to the wider denomination. The Union and Associations can develop strategies for their own life or for the churches, but churches only engage voluntarily with Association's strategies.

1.2.2.   The Union and leadership

The Union may be a means of developing collective strategy, but its ability to do so is inhibited by its organisational culture and structure which produces an absence of strategic leadership. The Union's Assembly is seen as the governing body, but practically power is delegated to the Union's Council who are served, and led, by the Transitional Steering Group and the Union's Trustees.[33] The Association Team Leaders are responsible to their appointing Associations whose policies and strategies they help to shape, but collectively they speak with considerable local knowledge and understanding and have some leadership to offer the whole Union. Alongside these are the General Secretary and the Transitional Manager.[34] Each of these groups and individuals has the capacity to offer leadership, but are prevented by the structural and cultural constraints and stakeholders interests.

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[33] Due to a period of reform a Transitional Steering Group was established in 2103 which will become permanent as the Baptist Steering Group in 2014. See chapter 2 section 2.3.3

[34] A temporary appointment to oversee changes resulting from reforms in 2012.

Acknowledging local churches' ambivalence towards collaborative action and the tensions between Union and Associations, the nature, parameters and vocabulary of leadership and strategy need to be reconsidered. Terminology and methods need to be appropriate to Baptist culture, but Baptists also must recognise that their inherent independency frustrates effective collective action. In examining their culture and history, and learning from other denominations and other disciplines, insights will be gained to enable Baptists to retain faithfulness to their independency, but develop renewed interdependency. The nature and vocabulary of strategy must be examined to ascertain whether the strategies are of control or release, and to consider their compatibility with Baptist ecclesiology and culture.

1.2.3.   Is organisation theory appropriate for the church?

Organisational theory is used in this thesis as a diagnostic device in contradistinction to a marketing tool. The language of strategy is sometimes seen as particularly inappropriate given its military connections; and the concepts of vision, mission statements, goals and objectives as incompatible with Christian values, reducing the mission of God to the use of management practices. John Drane is critical of the application of rationalistic organisational theory to church life seeing the 'creeping rationalization of modernist culture' as bringing more negatives than positives into the Church[35] and describing the MacDonaldization of society influencing the Church by the application of efficiency, calculability and predictability.[36] Jeremy Carrette and Richard King are critical of churches and para-church organisations, seeing the marketing of projects and initiatives as the

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[35] John William Drane, The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity, and the Future of the Church (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2000) 32
[36] 35

commodification of religion.[37] Courses such as *Alpha* and *The Purpose Driven Life* as well as denominational initiatives are seen by Mara Einstein as expressions of the branding of faith. She critiques the use of commercial techniques seeing religion as a product and religion and marketing' as both being engaged in 'identity creation'.[38] Whilst it would be right to note the dangers identified by Drane and Einstein, the privatisation of religion and the emergence of consumer-orientated and individualised spiritualities that Carrette and King identify,[39] this thesis uses organisational studies as a diagnostic tool in relation to Baptist practice.

If God is to be considered the Lord of all creation it is appropriate to draw upon the insights of those engaged in non-theological study as well as the theological academy. This is not to add to the revealed Word of God, but to recognise the revelation of God in the world as well as in the Scriptures and in the Word made flesh. The principles of love, life, order and growth are found in nature and the working of human society. It is right to receive that which accords with the revelation of God in Christ, for to live under the authority of Christ is a defining aspect of the Baptist Union's *Declaration of Principle*.

1.3.   Literature survey[40]

This section focusses on significant relevant literature related to the subject areas informing the thesis: Baptist culture and theology, Baptist history, anthropology and sociology, Methodism and organisational theory.

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[37] Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Take over of Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) 15

[38] Mara Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) xi

[39] King, *Selling Spirituality* 126 - 128

[40] Some of the books referred to in this section have also been considered in the submission for the A.R.M.P.T module of the Dth Min.

1.3.1. Baptist life, culture and theology

The tension between the independence of the local church and corporate engagement is shown in Baptist publications, minutes, reports and model constitutional documents. They reflect Baptists' understandings of their ecclesiology. The Union documents reflect the views of those already committed to greater translocal co-operation. Church constitutions and the Union's Declaration of Principle affirm the liberty of the local church in its decision-making capacities.[41] The *Nature of Assembly* recognises this liberty, but affirms the 'inter-dependence of congregations.'[42] It presents the concept of 'covenant' as the basis for Baptist local and translocal relationships.[43] Translocal oversight is expressed in the gathering of church representatives and in a personal form through the ministries of 'Association ministers'.[44] *Relating and Resourcing,* which shaped present Baptist structures, also affirms the competency of the local church to 'govern its own affairs',[45] but calls for 'a new quality of relationship between congregations' recognising the 'voluntarist' tradition of Baptists.[46] *Knowing what we believe* also acknowledges the tension of Baptist churches wanting to retain their congregational freedom and yet also wishing to express a collective voice and identity, and it seeks ways of expressing that voice.[47] However,

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[41] B.U.G.B., *B.U.G.B. 2010 Directory* 322, cf. B.U.C. Guidelines: C26 Approved Governing Document (04/2008) 6f, and Durham Baptist Church Constitution and Covenant 3 and 9ff. See http://www.baptist.org.uk/component/docman/doc_details/260-c26-approved-governing-document.html

[42] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of the Assembly and the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain*, 1994) 6 See http://www.baptist.org.uk/search.html?searchword=nature&searchphrase=all&start=20

[43] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 4

[44] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 30

[45] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing: The Report of the Task Group on Associating* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1998) 3 see http://www.baptist.org.uk/search.html?searchword=relating+and&ordering=newest&searchphrase=all&start=20

[46] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 4

[47] Faith and Unity Executive of the B.U.G.B., *Knowing What We Believe: Theological Authority Amongst Baptists* (Didcot, B.U.G.B, 2009) 6

although this tension is given a balanced expression in these documents it is shown by the fieldwork to be heavily weighted towards local church independence.[48]

Paul Fiddes aims to give a 'coherent Baptist vision of the Christian church in its faith and practice.'[49] He demonstrates that covenant has been an important expression of Baptist theology which is lived out in relationship and trust,[50] and provides the foundation for local church life and translocal relationships.[51] Associating is not seen as an option, but assemblies cannot impose their decisions on local churches.[52] *Bound to Love* roots Baptist theology and life in the concept of *covenant* which finds expression within local congregations, but also needs to be expressed in translocal relationships.[53] *On being the Church* expresses the 'urgent need' for Baptists to 're-envision their theology and practice' that will lead to closer ties with Baptists and other Christians. [54] It calls local churches to a greater engagement with Baptist translocal relationships.[55] Steven Harmon sees authority as located in the believing community,[56] but advocates a retrieval of tradition and the embracing of a greater catholicity drawing on a wider Christian tradition.[57]

Theology articulated by Baptists recognises the tension between local and translocal expressions of church and gives clear emphasis to both. This shared emphasis is not seen equally in reality, and examination through the lens of Baptist history provides insights as to why this is may be so, but also reveals precedents for greater mutuality which may need to be reconsidered for the present day.

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[48] Ch. 3 section 3.1.1.
[49] Paul S. Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces : Baptist Identity in Church and Theology*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003) xv.
[50] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 46
[51] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 21 and29
[52] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 200
[53] Paul S. Fiddes, *Bound to Love: The Covenant Basis of Baptist Life and Mission* (London: Baptist Union, 1985) 24f and 28
[54] Haymes Cross and Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church*, vol. 21, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2010) 26f
[55] Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church* 210
[56] Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity : Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006) 11
[57] Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity* 15ff

This thesis analyses Baptist sociality, and the local – translocal tension in particular, through four different lens in order to understand the underlying issues and identify remedial or more effective action. 1) Baptist history explains how Baptist culture has been shaped and provides precedents which could be re-employed. 2) Anthropology and sociology provide a lens to consider levels of meanings and types of culture. 3) Methodist theology and practice, which has a similar covenant theology to Baptist but a much greater sense of translocal mutuality, provides a means of considering how Baptist translocal relationships could be transformed. 4. Organisational studies provide a means for considering the Baptist mode of operation and the insights that may be used to develop a greater translocal understanding and co-operation with the appropriate expression of bureaucracy.

1.3.2. Baptist history

Most detailed engagements with Baptist history are by Baptist authors reflecting their interest in their own tradition. However, other writers have been consulted and are used wherever possible.

As a small part of British Christianity, Baptists often receive little attention in general church histories. J.A. Sharpe[58] and Diamaid MacCulloch[59] provide only brief comments about Baptists, but give the wider ecclesial, social and historical context. *Baptist Confessions of Faith* contains a number of early Baptist Confessions therefore providing primary source material from Anabaptists, early English Separatist-Baptists, English Baptist Associations, English Baptist General Confessions, and confessions from other countries,[60]

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[58] J. A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England : A Social History 1550-1760* (London: Arnold, 2nd ed. 1997) 30 and 257
[59] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant : Edward Vi and the Protestant Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2001) 140 and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2003)
[60] Lumpkin, *Confessions,*

which identify their theological convictions and instructions for congregational practice for both local and translocal engagement. Michael Watts identifies the context of persecution and the influences of English Puritans and Dissenters as well as Anabaptists which would shape the ethos of local church independency.[61]

Barrington White shows that the strong independency of the local church was present in the early days of Baptists accompanied by expressions of interdependency and translocal ministries.[62] Ernest Payne traces the institutional development of the denomination throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and suggests that the influence of the Union has steadily increased beyond the expectations of its founders. [63] This level of influence may not be commensurate with the prevailing culture of independency, so exacerbating the local-translocal tension. Douglas Sparkes recalls how the early attempts at a more organised oversight of ministerial appointment related to the provision of funding from the denomination was seen as an intrusion on the autonomy of the local church. [64]

The historical accounts demonstrate the depth of commitment to local liberty, but reveal continual expressions of translocal collaboration and translocal ministries. The role and authority of Associations and translocal ministries is considered in chapter 4 sections 3 and 4. History provides a context for understanding the development of Baptist culture, but anthropology and sociology provide a contemporary means of analysing this culture and the local – translocal tension in particular.

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[61] Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) 41f and 50
[62] B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, History of the English Baptists (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983) 27, 35
[63] Ernest A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1959) 14
[64] Douglas C. Sparkes, *The Home Mission Story* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1995)

1.3.3. Anthropology and Sociology

Baptists do not naturally fulfil the classic definitions of church or sect. Bryan Wilson defines a sect as distinctive in doctrine and concepts of authority, whose members' 'voluntarily professed beliefs' differ from those of the church, and who are 'associated together in common faith outside the church's control.'[65] He examines different types of sect and their effect on individual identity recognising the differences between them and those in major Christian denominations.[66] In *Patterns of Sectarianism*[67] he sees Baptists' emphasis upon Believer's Baptism as a distinctive feature,[68] and observes that all sects are 'limited in their organisational style by their theological commitment,'[69] which may be partially true for Baptists.

Grace Davie's[70] and Helen Cameron's examination of voluntary association is useful in considering Baptist culture. Cameron asserts that there is no well-accepted definition of 'association'.[71] Douglas'[72] concept of *Grid and Group,* developed in subsequent editions of *Natural Symbols* and then in *Cultural Bias,* provides a useful means of examining this ambiguity and is used to analyse Baptist sociality in chapter two. She presents cosmologies based on *Grid and Group* as a means of explaining how societies function in relation to the individuals within them. The resulting cultural types of *Positional*, *Enclave*, *Individualist* and

[65] Bryan R. Wilson, *Religious Sects : A Sociological Study*, *World University Library* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970) 15-16

[66] Wilson, *Religious Sects : A Sociological Study* 29

[67] Bryan R. Wilson, *Patterns of Sectarianism : Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements / Edited by Bryan R. Wilson* (London: Heinemann, 1967)

[68] Wilson, *Patterns* 257

[69] Wilson, *Patterns* 9

[70] Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007) 94

[71] Mathew Guest, Karin Tusting, and Linda Woodhead, *Congregational Studies in the Uk : Christianity in a Post-Christian Context*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) Cameron, *Are Congregations Associations? The contribution of Organisational Studies to Congregational Studies* 142

[72] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 2003) and Douglas, *Cultural Bias* see also James V Spickhard, 'A Guide to Mary Douglas's Three Versions of Grid/Group Theory,' *Sociological Analysis* 50, no. 2 (1989) Mary Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no., http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/semiotics/cyber/douglas1.pdf.

Isolate provide a framework for exploring the tensions and dysfunctionality of Baptist corporate relationships.[73] The simplicity of Douglas' approach could lead to 'pigeon-holing social processes and cosmological patterns,' and be restrictive of insights into the possibility that individuals inhabit different worlds.[74] However, it is not the model that confines a person to one sphere, but it describes the reality and the complexity of interfacing types.[75]

1.3.4. Methodism

The affinity between Methodists and Baptists regarding covenant theology makes Methodism a useful lens to analyse Baptist practice.

David Carter presents Methodism as inescapably ecclesial at all levels and therefore 'connexional',[76] and concerned with the corporate mutual oversight of the pastorate.[77] Neil Dixon roots Methodist ecclesiology in a Trinitarian theology, with the Church regarded as a covenant people, and connexionalism being 'intrinsic to Methodism since its origins' witnessing to a 'mutuality and interdependence which derive from the participation of all Christians through Christ in the very life of God himself.'[78] Methodist covenantal basis has resonance for Baptists, but their practice of connexionalism is a challenge to local church independency. Chapter 5 will use the different practical expressions of Methodist covenant theology to analyse and challenge Baptist practice.

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[73] See Chapter 2, section 2.3.
[74] T. L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin : Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 36 Ref. J.A.Boon, 'America, Fringe Benefits', *Raritan* 2 (1983) 97-121
[75] Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin : Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'* 37
[76] David Carter, *Love Bade Me Welcome: A British Methodist Perspective on the Church* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2002) 25
[77] Carter, *Love Bade Me Welcome* 50
[78] Neil Dixon, *Called to Love and Praise: A Methodist Conference Statement on the Church* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999) 8, 12, 47f. C.f. 4.7.1 cited in Methodist Church of Great Britain, "The Nature of Oversight: :Leadership, Management and Governance in the Methodist Church in Great Britain," (Methodist Church of Great Britain, 2005) 84

1.3.5. Organisational Studies

Recognising that culture and theology is given tangible institutional expression,

organisational studies are used to explore the nature and dysfunction of Baptist translocal

structures and to consider more appropriate and effective means of co-operation.

The organisational model of Baptist translocal engagement is not mirrored in the

business world. Chris Mallin's description of *agency theory*[79] of delegation from one

organisation to another provides possible comparison, but it does not effectively reflect the

ambiguity of Baptist relationships and the uncertainties as to who might fulfil the role of

agent. The *parent company*[80] model has similar deficiencies, for the translocal organisation

may be seen as the parent body in other national or regional organisations, but this is not

so amongst Baptists.

Malcolm Torry suggests that the basic unit of the church is the local congregation.[81]

Denominations are defined as 'bureaucratized federations of relatively bureaucratic

congregations' and those denominations, whether national or international bodies, are still

voluntary organisations.[82] Margaret Harris recognises that denominational authority is

weakened when local churches, like Baptists, are financially self-supporting.[83] Harris also

recognises the resentment felt by church members when the perceived support for the

central organisation is out of balance with local provision.[84] Failure to recognise the

voluntary nature of Baptist sociality will compound the frustration of Baptist translocal

bodies which may feel the pressure to behave like other denominations.

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[79] Chris A. Mallin, *Corporate Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 10
[80] Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy,* 311
[81] Malcolm Torry, *Managing God's Business : Religious and Faith-Based Organizations and Their Management* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 74ff
[82] Torry, *Managing God's Business* 83
[83] Margaret Harris, *Organizing God's Work : Challenges for Churches and Synagogues* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 14
[84] Harris, *Organizing God's Work* 152

Johnson et al define corporate strategy as being 'concerned with the overall purpose and scope of an organisation and how value will be added to the different parts (business units) of the organisation.'[85] However, Baptist local churches are not business units controlled by a central organisation, but are in a voluntary covenant relationship with Associations and the Union. Lee Parker's study of the Uniting Church of Australia resonates with the Baptist scenario particularly in relation to the issues of multiple stakeholders, unclear leadership structures and confused accountability networks.[86] His analysis of a stragic vacuum that leads to reactive planning by budgetary incrementalism is disappointing in that it does not suggest a model capable of strategic long-term direction.

For Baptists to move beyond reactivity and incrementalism and to define appropriate strategies, they may need to develop an approach which reflects the insights of *Appreciative Inquiry* developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva.[87] Based upon a sociorational view of science, it focusses on the interaction between people's behaviour and the culture of the organisation and it seeks to be collaborative and build on the positive experiences of the organisation in the development of its future.

1.4. Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter the central aim of this thesis is to examine the inherent tensions between Baptists' independence and aspired interdependency. The thesis seeks to find ways to refresh Baptist independency and hold independence and interdependence in a tension that is faithful to the Baptist tradition. The aim is to find, or rediscover, ways of

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[85] Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy,* 11.
[86] Lee D. Parker, 'Reactive Planning in a Christian Bureucracy,' *Management Accounting Research* 12 (2001) 331, 332, 342. And Lee D Parker, 'Budgetary Incrementalism in a Christian Bureaucracy,' *Management Accounting Research* 13 (2002) 79, 83f.
[87] David L. Cooperider and Suresh Srivastva, 'Appreciative Inquiry in Organisational Life,' *Research in Organisational Change and Development* 1 (1987)

expressing Baptist togetherness that is creatively different, which will result in new cultural

norms, effective ways of working, overcoming of suspicion borne of an overly strong sense

of independency and a liberation into new means of collaboration. Although there are

problems with being an insider the interviews will reveal the depth and the tensions and

yet also a willingness to engage together. The fieldwork interviews will enable us to move

beyond official statements about Baptists' mutual engagement to be in touch with the

deeper felt understandings of Baptist sociality. These can then be examined in the light of

Baptist history and theology, Methodism and organisational studies. However, it is first

necessary to engage in a rich description of Baptist sociality.

Chapter 2: Living in Translocal Community

2.1. Introduction

This account of current expressions of Baptist practice employs Douglas' Cultural Theory to demonstrate that Baptists' inherent culture is rooted in *enclave*-type communities, which is reflected in the 'autonomy' / independency of local church life and the emphasis upon personal faith. Baptist rituals such as worship, baptism, Communion and Reception into Church membership, are presented as those which both reflect and reinforce their theology and culture as well as the Church Meeting, as a defining activity, which expresses their congregational ecclesiology: all typify the inherent nature of an *enclave* community. Baptist sociality is explored in the local church and the translocal structures of Associations and the Union, and the nature of authority for translocal bodies and Regional Ministers, providing a context for the analysis of the fieldwork in chapter 3.

2.2. Cultural Theory

2.2.1. Cultural Theory [1]

Using a Durkheimian[2] approach Mary Douglas developed *Group-Grid* theory as an expression of cultural theory [3] arguing for 'causal connection between social life and cosmology.'[4] *Group and grid* moves beyond a 'unidimensional approach to social life'[5] and

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[1] Also known as Theory of Sociocultural Viability. Cf. Virginie D. Mamadouh, 'Political Culture: A Typology Grounded on Cultural Theory,' *GeoJournal* 43 (1997) 19

[2] Spickhard, '*A Guide to Mary Douglas*,' 151

[3] Grid-group cultural theory is also known as *grid-group analysis*, the *theory of socio-cultural viability*, or just *Cultural Theory* (which is often abbreviated to *C.T.*)

[4] Spickhard, '*A Guide to Mary Douglas*,' 153

provides an impressionistic means of expressing the relationship between social

organisation and values, [6] giving two axes for plotting a community's action and values,

thus providing quadrants for locating the place of individuals within the ethos of a

community which also provides a means for them to justify themselves and make

themselves accountable to others.[7] Each section of the quadrant provides a viewpoint to

consider the ideals, virtues and moral principles that explain the motive for that particular

expression of societal life,[8] described by Douglas Davies as the control of ideas.[9] The

categories may be over simple and ambiguous,[10] but this particular framework proves to be

especially useful when applied to Baptist sociality. This is not the only anthropological

model, but whatever is used will bring its own emphases and hindrances when applied to

the data.

Group relates to an individual's social position and incorporation within a bounded

group. *Grid* takes the 'scope and coherent articulation of a system of classification as one

social dimension in which any individual must find himself' including social distinctions and

delegations of authority.[11] The resulting quadrant reveals four incompatible ideal types of

community: Positional, Enclave, Isolate and Individualist[12] as seen in Fig 1 below.

[5] Richard M Coughlin and Charles Lockhart, 'Grid-Group Theory and Political Ideology: A Consideration of Their Relative Strengths and Weaknesses for Explaining the Structure of Mass Belief Systems,' *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 10, no. 1 (1998) 39

[6] Mary Douglas and Aaron B. Wildavsky, *Risk and Culture : An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers* (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 1982) 138

[7] Gunnar Grendstad and Susan Sundback, 'Socio-Demographic Effecs on Cultural Biases: A Nordic Study of Grid-Group Theory,' *Acta Sociologica* 46, no. 4 (2003) 290

[8] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no.5 Cf. Spickhard, '*A Guide to Mary Douglas*,' 154

[9] Douglas James Davies, *Anthropology and Theology* (Oxford: Berg, 2002) 35

[10] Bradd Shaw, 'Cultural Bias by Mary Douglas,' *American Anthropologist, New Series,* 81, no. 2 (1979) 435

[11] Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology* 62 Cf. *Risk and Culture* 138 cf. Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 2-3 cf. Mary Douglas, *In the Active Voice* (London ; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1982) 190

[12]*Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no.* 3f.

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              Isolate                      Positional
              Low group but                High group and
              Increasingly high regulation high internal regulation
                                                              Group

              Individualist               Enclave
              Low group and               High group and
              Low regulation              Increasingly less
                                          regulation
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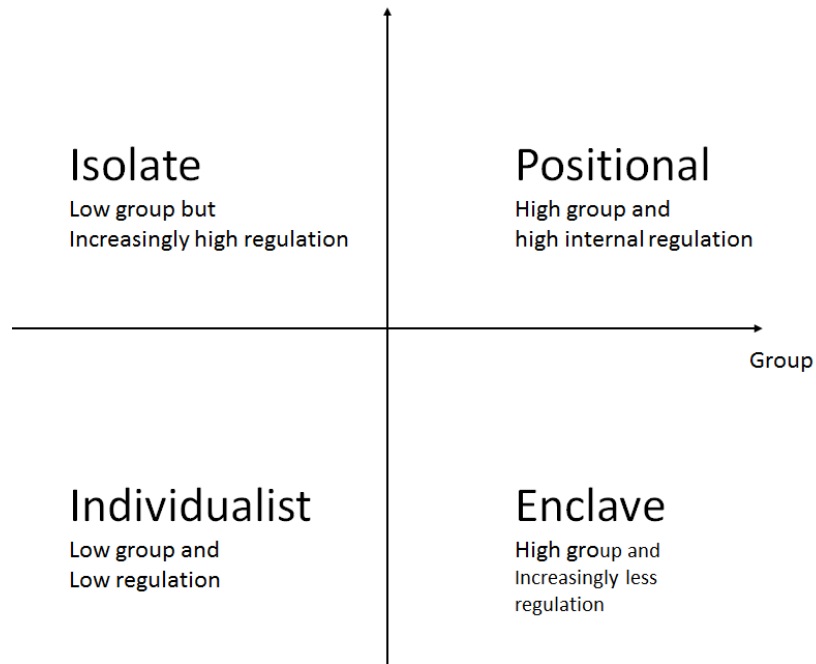
<div align="center">Figure 1: Group and Grid framework</div>

Group loyalty increases from left to right, and societal role structures and differentiation increase from bottom to top, although the distinctions are relative to 'some norm in some particular activity in some particular place.'[13]

The *Positional* quadrant describes a strongly bounded group[14] which 'uses extensive classification and programming for solving problems of co-ordination.'[15] Roles are ascribed according to birth, gender and family, and ranked according to function producing a complex organised society with 'vertically-arrayed collectives.'[16] There are strong boundaries regarding purity, piety, and sacralised institution and a range of possible sanctions for addressing conflict.[17] Roles and loyalty are socially imposed upon individuals.

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[13] Douglas and Wildavsky, *Risk and Culture : An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers* 139
[14] Douglas, *Cultural Bias* 20
[15] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 4
[16] Richard M Coughlin and Charles Lockhart, '*Grid-Group Theory and Political Ideology*,' 39
[17] 70 and 115 Cf. Douglas, *In the Active Voice* 206f

The *Enclave* sector is also a 'strongly bounded group'[18] but without the controlling features of the *positional.* Individuals exercise power by appealing to group values and purposes. Relationships, rights and priorities may be ambiguous, but loyalty is expected:[19] this is a 'community of dissidents,' similarly a sect might be placed in this sector.[20] It reflects a black and white worldview in which outsiders are seen as evil, defection is feared and expulsion is the sanction for internal dissent. However, equality brings 'problems of leadership, authority and decision-making.'**[21]** Covert factions emerge as ill-will and frustrations flourish.

The *Individualist* portion indicates a culture of self-sufficiency lacking group solidarity and the grid controls of regulation where the 'dominant positions are open to merit.'[22] There are no external constraining boundaries and classifications are provisional and negotiable. Relationships between individuals are ambiguous and obligations implicit. There is a tendency towards a pragmatic world view with an emphasis upon honour and shame.[23]Alliances are formed for mutual gain and new partners are screened for their usefulness to one's cause. [24]

The *Isolate* portion describes a situation of 'strong grid controls, without any membership to sustain individuals.'[25] This might include prisoners, slaves, armed forces personnel, the very poor or even the monarch who is hedged around by protocol. The *isolate* tends towards a fatalistic outlook, feeling controlled from without by remote and

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[18] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 5 Cf. Strong Group in Douglas, *Cultural Bias*
[19] Douglas, *In the Active Voice* 205
[20] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 5
[21] Douglas, *Cultural Bias*19f
[22] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 6
[23] Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology*70
[24] Douglas, *In the Active Voice* 205ff
[25] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 6

impersonal powers. [26] There are no rewards beyond that of fulfilling their allotted station. The person reduces his personal risk by minimising engagement in society. Though peripheral to the rest, he may belong to the largest category of the population.

Religious behaviour can be understood by regarding its rituals as 'transmitters of culture'.[27] The different interaction and conflict between individuals from different segments of the *group-grid* axes can be deconstructed 'by identifying the particular type of civilisation which the culture upholds.'[28] Sectarian values are expressed in cultures which score low for grid but high for group. They have global objectives, seek to regenerate moral fervour, counteract a global conspiracy of evil, have low levels of organisation, antipathy to big organisation, a wariness of infiltration and emphasis on the movement's purity. Sectarian movements may originate out of disagreement, moral principles or doctrines. They often foster resentment and feelings of injustice, and tend to make symbolic statements rejecting the larger society.[29] Douglas preferred the term 'egalitarian enclave' acknowledging that 'sect' had acquired negative connotations, but retained 'sectarian and all of its unfavourable associations as a description of a cultural bias which predominates in favourable conditions.'[30]

For the purposes of comparison and analysis of the various local and translocal expressions of Baptist life I have situated the typical Baptist ethos within the *enclave* segment, but recognise that they sometimes move within and beyond that segment.[31] There is a high level of group solidarity, low social organisation, ambiguity about roles, a

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[26]Gerard Fairtlough. 2005. *Cultural Theory and Triarchy Theory*. Triarchy Press, http://www.triarchypress.co.uk/pages/articles/cultural%20theory%20and%20triarchy%20theory.pdf. (accessed 20th January 2011, 2011). Cf. Douglas, *In the Active Voice* 207
[27] Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology* 23
[28] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 9
[29] Mary Douglas, "Seeing Everything in Black and White," no., http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/semiotics/cyber/douglas2.pdf. 1, 7 and Douglas and Wildavsky, *Risk and Culture : An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers* 139
[30] Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology* xx
[31] Cf. Douglas, "Seeing Everything in Black and White," no. 3

favouring of informality, concern for purity, and antipathy to big organisation. Douglas'

Group-Grid theory is used and modified beyond the description and explanation of cultural

types[32] and individuals' self-justification of their behaviour resulting in 'incompatible types

of social control,'[33] to explore a productive tension between the different ethos and

attitudes of local and translocal expressions of Baptist sociality in which mutual recognition

is necessary for the well-being of the whole.[34]

2.2.2. Baptist Sociality

Ecclesiologically and culturally, Baptists focus on the local church with covenant

relationships expressed in Church Membership.[35] Congregationalism is determinative for

their theologies of mission, ministry, and decision-making with their ecclesiology rather

than their missiology giving the local church the prime focus for mission.[36] Baptists affirm

the reality of the universal church, but think and act with a strong emphasis on the

community of believers gathered in the name of Christ to engage in His work.[37] The

inherited culture of Baptist churches is shown in the importance of personal faith with a

deep sense of community. It reflects the *enclave* culture of high group and low grid and as

such, values, relationships and informality are preferred over protocol and regulation. The

practices of Baptism, Communion and Reception into church membership are here

considered as three areas which are practiced elsewhere in the Christian Church yet find a

defining expression amongst Baptists.

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[32] Douglas, *Cultural Bias* 8
[33] Douglas, "A History of Grid and Group Cultural Theory," no. 3
[34] Douglas, "Seeing Everything in Black and White," no. 9f
[35] See *Baptist and Spirituality: a Rule of Life*, Paul Fiddes in Paul S. Fiddes, *Under the Rule of Christ : Dimensions of Baptist Spirituality*, Regent's Study Guides (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008)8f.
[36] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 170
[37] Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church* 22

2.2.2.1.   Defining Rituals in worship

The selective approach to liturgy and the lower level of regulation about worship reflects the culture of the enclave. Baptists are liturgically eclectic not restricted to a given written liturgy, but have the liberty to craft their own, borrow from others or be spontaneous.[38] Baptists are traditionally and inherently Nonconformists, historically rejecting state and episcopal interference, drawing the boundaries of their group so as to exclude or minimise the influence of others and developing a culture of liberty. Consequently liturgies and resources published by the Baptist Union are used at the discretion of the church and minister.[39] Generally services are crafted by the minister or worship leader with spontaneous public prayers and the celebration of the Lord's Supper[40] which could include spontaneous, written or published material. Ordinations and inductions draw heavily on published material, but often with some re-crafting for the local context. This is indicative of an eclectic approach to worship and church life in general, and is symbolic of the localism and independency of Baptist churches.

Baptising believers by immersion is a distinctive feature of Baptists recognised by all the fieldwork interviewees. Culturally this can be seen as a combination of personal profession of faith in a context of worship, perhaps the highest expression of the group's identity, reinforcing the strength of the group and affirming the place of the individual within it. The use of liturgy reflects the selective approach of the *enclave* and so is often primarily extempore. It would be normal for there to be an explanation of the meaning of baptism, a testimony to personal faith by the candidate, questions eliciting a confession of

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[38] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* xiii

[39] B.U.G.B., *Patterns and Prayers for Christian Worship : A Guidebook for Worship Leaders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 67ff and Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 18ff

[40] Perhaps the generally preferred term by Baptists in regard to Communion

faith, and the act of baptism in the name of the Triune God.[41] The laying-on-of-hands may

be part of the event.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper is distinctively different from most historic

denominations and reflects the culture of the *enclave* in two ways: the acceptance of lay

presidency and the widespread practice of deacons saying the prayer of thanksgiving, both

of which are often reserved for the clergy. Normally the presiding minister, who may be

lay, sits behind the communion table flanked by the appropriate number of deacons who

will serve the congregation in their seats. The prayers[42] are customarily offered by a

deacon. Given that all Baptist churches now welcome all Christians to share in Communion,

the group's boundaries are porous, yet the distinctive mode, lay presidency and lay prayers

of thanksgiving maintain both theological convictions and distinctive group practice.

'Reception into membership',[43] a rite separate from Baptism, is not unique to

Baptists, but it does specifically reflect their ecclesiology.[44] Individuals are personally

welcomed into church membership at a Communion service thus theologically reflecting a

covenant theology that underpins membership. The rite includes affirmations of faith,

expressions and commitment to the local church, prayer and a formal expression of

welcome.[45] Traditionally called extending the 'right hand of fellowship'[46] it conveys

welcome, a sign of being joined together in the partnership in the Gospel, and reflects

mutual commitment as a covenant to walk together under the rule of Christ. Such a rite is

in keeping with what might be expected of an *enclave* group. Relationships are affirmed as

is the bounded nature of the group. Some churches will do this fairly informally, but the

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[41] For a formal expression of Baptist liturgy for Baptism see Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 67

[42] Some churches use two prayers of thanksgiving for the bread and wine in turn.

[43] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 77

[44] I.E. Both United Reformed Churches and Methodist Churches have a similar expression of welcome which is a reflection of a covenant theology.

[45] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 74f

[46] B.U.G.B., *Patterns and Prayers* 83 and 106

tradition, reflected in *Gathering for Worship,* is for a formal and personal expression of welcome with the emphasis upon the local church with little reference to a wider sense of Baptist belonging. The enclave group takes on the persona of the isolationist reinforcing its independency.

2.2.2.2.   Defining Relationships

Church Membership is indicative of the strong sense of fellowship within the local church, but with little extension to the wider denomination. Baptist emphasis upon a personal faith relationship with God confessed in Baptism and Church Membership is reflective of the value placed on relationships by *enclave* groups. A church is seen as a group of disciples covenanting to 'watch over each other in love and to walk in ways known and still to be known.'[47] The group's boundaries are protected by the process for approving an individual's entry into church membership with admission being a community responsibility agreed in the Church Meeting.

As Baptists are a minority protestant denomination within the UK., isolationist attitudes may be adopted. Smaller groups often work hard to preserve their identity and define their boundaries with the consequence of strengthening their sense of independency. The emphasis upon the local church has remained strong with the local church being seen as the front line of mission and the task of Associations and the Union as being to 'undergird, encourage and provide resources for the churches.'[48]

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[47] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 108
[48] Ian M. Randall, *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century*, History of the English Baptists (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2005) 461

2.2.2.3. *Defining Community: The Local Church*

Baptists' governance documents reflect their ethos of independence and liberty and deal with the matters of church membership, ministry, and governance. The *Schedule to the Baptist Trusts for Churches 2003* states that 'Church members in Church Meeting shall meet together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit under the Lordship of Christ to discern the mind of God in the affairs of the Church, and as such, shall be the final decision making authority for all matters relating to all affairs of the Church save for those matters reserved for decision approval or action by the Holding Trustees.'[49]

The simplicity and inclusiveness of the local church's structure and its emphasis upon collaborative decision-making reflects an *enclave* culture. Local church structure is similar to other charitable bodies, having a membership and an elected trustee/management body consisting of Elders and/or Deacons to serve alongside the minister[50] providing leadership in collaboration with, and being accountable to, the Church Meeting. As the Church Meeting under the authority of Christ is the place of decision-making, there are more members' meetings than other charities, thus giving the members greater influence and ownership in church life. The level of delegated responsibility given to the leadership group varies according to local customs, size, and constitutional requirement.

Congregations could be placed centrally in the *enclave* quadrant, but the variance of theology and local culture may make some more bounded than others by virtue of having closed membership, whereas others might be more positional by investing further authority in the church leadership. As the leadership remains accountable to the church meeting, the church retains some of the classic characteristics of the *enclave* culture. There

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[49] Baptist Union Corporation Guidelines B.9 Baptist Model Trusts for Churches 2004 p10
[50] Normally called the diaconate, but may be elders and deacons.

are basic internal structure and accountability mechanisms, and fairly loose connections with the wider denomination. Regulatory control by either the state or denomination is usually unwelcome, but accepted as either a legal necessity or for perceived benefits such as grants, resources and help.

2.2.2.4.   Defining Activity: The Church Meeting

Whilst the Church Meeting may find expression in other denominations it is particularly reflective of Baptist theology and culture. Durham City Baptist Church's constitution states that the 'church shall meet for Christian Fellowship and for the transaction of church business bi-monthly.'[51] The Church Meeting reinforces the bounded nature of the group and the egalitarian nature of the event illustrates a low grid. Occurring no less that quarterly, the business of the church is conducted in the context of worship and prayer and is normally chaired by the minister. Baptists have described their own local church governance practices variously as conciliar and collaborative and strongly people-centred[52] with a low sense of hierarchy. Similarly their view of regional governance is described as conciliar, advisory and supportive, resourcing, distant and a 'kind of laissez-faire' with little direct engagement in the management of a particular church.[53] Members of local churches perceive that the sense of purpose of the church depends to a large extent on the leadership team, and particularly the Minister. As with other *enclave* communities this does indicate their vulnerability to the influence of strong characters. One respondent for the Receptive Ecumenism project stated that 'the sense of purpose could change

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[51] Durham City Baptist Church, "Durham City Baptist Church Constitution and Covenant," ed. Durham City Baptist Church (Durham: 2000) 9 cf. Baptist Union of Great Britain, "C26 Approved Governing Document (04/2008)," no. (2008). 7
[52] 12,16,20,26,32 and John Claydon Jacqui Chapman, Paul D Murray, Marcus Pound, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church: Northern Baptist Association* (Durham, Durham University, 2010) 28
[53] Jacqui Chapman, *Receptive Ecumenism N.B.A.* 28

depending on who's on the Deaconate and who the pastor is because they bring their own personal … and the church responds to that.' Another considered that the leadership had a strong sense of purpose but hadn't always communicated this well to the congregation.[54]

Church Meetings vary with both fixed and fluid boundaries. Whilst traditionally the meetings were closed to non-members, a small representative survey of churches in the N.B.A. indicates that as many as 61% of churches may welcome non-members to their meetings usually with an opportunity to speak, but not the right to vote, should one be required.[55] There is fluidity about attendance and influence, but decision-making remains with the members.[56] This is a legal requirement to be in accord with church constitutions, but also maintains the bounded nature of the local church.

2.3.   Translocal Structural Relationships

Local churches, Associations and the Union are all independent and yet interdependent bodies, creating inherent tensions concerning authority, loyalty, strategy and resources. These are integral to the issues of independency and interdependency explored in this thesis. Baptists have developed translocal relationships from an early stage in their history,[57] notably in Associations and later nationally in the Union. Associations are registered charities, limited companies and independent bodies within the Union with the liberty to seek the mind of Christ in a manner similar to the local church. They are an integral part of the Union and reliant upon it for much of their finance.

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[54] Jacqui Chapman, *Receptive Ecumenism N.B.A.* 28
[55] John Claydon, *Rescuing Congregationalism from the Church Meeting* 2007 3
[56] This can be a very sensitive matter if there are controversial matters to be discussed, such as the dismissal of a minister.
[57] White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 64f

2.3.1. Associations

Associations and the Union could be described as collectives of enclave communities while retaining their own independent bounded culture which determines the nature of their interaction. This underlying culture resides in the life of Associations and the Union causing a propensity to become more *positional* in relation to their churches.[58] The structure of each Association is similar, but different terminology is used. They have gatherings of church representatives[59] which older Baptist confessions would have seen as the church meeting writ large. [60] Trustees and directors are appointed,[61] which are served by sub-groups which may have delegated powers from the trustees. As trustees/directors are legally responsible for the life of the Association this may reduce the ownership of the Association by its churches. A description of the Northern Baptist Association can be found at Appendix 2. Following a review during 2012, Association Partnerships are being developed as 'voluntary arrangements' for the 'collaborative' administering of Home Mission monies within and across those Associations, and the nominating of appointees[62] to serve on the B.S.G. which is a new group comprised of Union officers, Specialist Team Leaders, one representative of each of the Association Partnerships[63] plus others for balance and connection with the Trustees.

The present configuration of the Association's structures is influenced by the inherent relational nature of Baptist ecclesiology, the historical precedents of

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[58] Members of Associations are churches. Members of the Union are churches, associations and colleges.

[59] Variously called 'General Meetings' in the Northern Baptist Association and 'Forum' in the North Western Baptist Association

[60] Lumpkin, *Confessions,*327

[61] Variously called 'Council' in the NBA and North Western B.A. but 'Executive Group' in the Yorkshire B. A.

[62] B.U.G.B., *Tb12 – 66 Leadership and Governance Report* (Didcot, B.U.G.B, 2012) 4

[63] The reforms of 2102 agreed that Associations would work in geographically based Association Partnerships for the purposes of overseeing Association Home Mission Grant processes and having a strategic view to the use of Home Mission funds in the support of local churches and the employment of Association staff.

Associations,[64] and the application of the requirements of the Charity Commission and company law. The prevailing *enclave* culture of Baptist churches pervades Association life. There remains a general egalitarian approach valuing informality which is symbolised in the term 'groups' being applied to what might be termed 'committees' in other organisations.

There is little opportunity for Associations to direct the life of the churches except by encouragement, instruction and advice. Authority and leadership is ambiguous and negotiated. Regional Ministers may be accorded authority as their office, experience, gifts and wisdom are recognised, but it is received voluntarily with few opportunities for insistence. Similarly council decisions relating to the churches are advisory. However, when Associations act in collaboration with certain processes of the Union, a move towards a more *positional* culture can be observed such as in the processes related to Home Mission Grants and Ministerial Recognition.

2.3.2.   The Baptist Union of Great Britain

The primary focus of this thesis is the potential for improved interdependence and strategic collaboration of churches and Associations within the Union. The Baptist Union of Great Britain is a union 'of churches, associations and colleges' whose stated object is 'the advancement of the Christian Faith and its practice' in accordance with Baptist principles, and includes aspects such as the cultivating of 'respect and love for one another', the 'spread of the gospel' and 'opportunities for conference'.[65] As of September 2009 there

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[64] See subsequent chapter on history.
[65] Britain Baptist Union of Great and Ireland, *Baptist Union 2010 Directory* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2010) 322 Cf. B.U.G.B. Annual General Meeting 4th May 2013: Changes to our Union's Constitution, 3

were 2,012 churches in membership of the Baptist Union,[66] plus 13 regional Associations

and 7 colleges.

The Union's Assembly[67] is the place of accountability and authority as well as

deliberation.[68] The Union acts 'by the Assembly, through a Council which meets twice a

year and is charged with consulting and developing strategy,[69] and developing general

policy 'subject to any directions of the Assembly.'[70] Assembly and the Council are

'regarded as two expressions of covenant relationship between the churches, two ways of

creating trust and mutual commitment, two valid ways of finding the mind of Christ in his

Body the Church.'[71] Council's deliberations are informed by the Union's Trustees, who are

to 'seek the mind of Christ expressed through Council and Assembly,'[72] and the Baptist

Steering Group (B.S.G.).[73] The Steering Group is to be the 'key location of organisational

leadership and coordination, with a major focus on managing implementation.'[74]

The Trustees were appointed in order to fulfil the requirements of U.K. charity law

which places ultimate authority for the Baptist Union with them rather than the Council or

the Assembly under the headship of Christ. Numbering twelve, they comprise a Moderator

appointed by the Council, the General Secretary of the Union, the Treasurer of the Union

and nine others appointed by the Council.[75] Originally Trustees were charged with shaping

'the vision, mission and long-term strategic direction of the Union,'[76] but recent changes

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[66] Baptist Union of Great and Ireland, *Baptist Union 2010 Directory* 17 There is also 64 churches in membership of Associations but not of the Union.
[67] Chapter 1 Section 1.1.2.
[68] This would be best seen in the debates on public resolutions, constitutional changes and occasionally other specific issues best dealt with by the Assembly.
[69] B.U.G.B., *Leadership and Governance* 4
[70] Baptist Union of Great and Ireland, *Baptist Union 2010 Directory*322-3
[71] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 15
[72] B.U.G.B., *Trustee Board, Memorandum of Understanding* (Didcot, B.U.G.B, Undated)
[73] During 2013 this is called a Transitional Steering Group due to the need to appoint people to serve in a temporary capacity whilst the means of Association Partnership Representatives is clarified.
[74] B.U.G.B., *Leadership and Governance* 4
[75] Baptist Union Council Document Mar05/GPFE/K 2
[76] B.U.G.B., *B.U.G.B. Board of Trustees: Terms of Reference* (Didcot, B.U.G.B., 2005) 1

have stated that they are 'to work closely with Council, listening carefully and allowing Council to shape their thinking, and to concentrate on governance rather than management.[77] Budget and strategy will be set by Council and implanted by the Baptist Steering Group, but the Trustees retain the responsibility for ensuring that the B.S.G fulfils the strategic direction set by the Council, the B.S.G. and Council remain accountable to the churches, the Union is managed well and remains financially sound, and that appointees properly fulfil their specific roles. The *Memorandum* asserts that the Trustees are guardians of 'the integrity of the Union', its financial resources, history, tradition, ethos and future and that while 'having legal authority conferred by the Charities Act, recognise that their responsibility is more appropriately expressed in terms of service than of power, and that they are expected to recognise that Council is the key representative body of the Union.'[78] This is further complicated by the significant influence of the Association Team Leaders' Meeting and the B.S.G. These three teams potentially provide leading influences, but each with different intent and relating to different aspects of Baptist life: the Trustees in relation to the national Union, the B.S.G. seeking to provide cohesion for the Union and Associations, and the Association Team Leaders in relation to the interaction of the Associations with the whole, but not having a constitutionally recognised place within the Union. The Association Team Leaders are appointed by each Association to whom they are accountable and have a significant perspective on the national life and interests of Baptists as it relates to their area. Their meeting has no official remit, terms of reference or lines of accountability, but is a meeting of peers for mutual support and consultation on issues relating to the Union's life.

The Union's direction is to be set by the Council and the B.S.G. whereas the Associations are primarily concerned with a regional agenda. This creates tension between

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[77] B.U.G.B., *Board of Trustees: Terms of Reference* (Didcot, B.U.G.B., 2013) 1
[78] B.U.G.B., *Board of Trustees: Terms of Reference* 1

the Team Leaders and the Specialist Team Leaders exacerbated by the inherent enclave

culture that shapes Baptist character. Their aims and agendas do not coalesce and to do so

regional teams need a greater sense of the national perspective, and those in positions of

national leadership and influence need a greater awareness of regional needs and

priorities. For the Union to impose national agendas on the regional bodies is to fail to take

this reality seriously, but for the regional bodies to fail to work with a national perspective

is to perpetuate the localism endemic in Baptist life which restricts their capacity for

greater strategic co-operation.

This tension is symptomatic of the cultural positioning of the Union in relation to its

member bodies: an *enclave* type culture pervades Baptist life, whereas translocal bodies,

and in particular the Union, adopt a more *positional culture*. As with local church culture,

relationships are valued and there is a strong sense of belonging, but in keeping with the

positionalist culture there are attempts to accord role and status to different individuals

and groups. Given the geographic spread of the Union, the nature of the organisation and

the workplace culture of the National Resource, this may be inevitable. However, there is

an internal conflict of culture as the organisation reflects the positional culture of hierarchy

even though some individuals, reflecting their own *enclave* culture, seek to minimise these

effects. One interviewee commented, 'I still think there is a bit of us and them in what we

try to do but I think some of those barriers have been broken down so I think for me it

certainly, it feels less hierarchical today.'[79] Typical of a *positional* culture is the attempt to

bring order and control in the life of the Union and members. Financially this can be seen in

the way the Home Mission Appeal is presented: the request that churches give at least 5%

of their income to the Appeal begins to move away from a voluntary approach to more

order and regulation. Many do not give at that level and some may donate a much smaller

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[79] 318

amount or even nothing.[80] Churches that apply for a grant to support a minister are encouraged to give at that level, but are unlikely to be penalised in the grant application procedure if their giving is below the requested level. There are rarely repercussions for churches that give very little, or nothing, to Home Mission. In terms of the Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry, there is regulation and control of ministers with minimum academic, experiential and behavioural requirements, and sanctions are applied to ministers whose moral conduct is deemed to be 'unbecoming of a Baptist minister.'[81] The Union regulates aspects of church life, but it is limited in its ability to apply sanctions unless it relates to the provision of resources or status.

2.3.3. Home Mission

The term 'Home Mission' is used ambiguously and is understood in the context of its use, however in common parlance it would be used to refer either to churches' contribution to the Home Mission Appeal or to Home Mission Grants being made available to support various ministries. As seen above,[82] giving to, and the supporting of, Home Mission is a significant expression of Baptist connectedness: it is the 'family pot'[83] and was affirmed by many interviewees and seen as according with Baptist principles and ecclesiology.[84] The main object of the Central Fund, formerly known the Home Mission Scheme[85] is, 'by unity of appeal and action and the encouragement of systematic giving on

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[80] In 2009 5 churches within the N.B.A. did not contribute to Home Mission, in 2010 only on church did not contribute. *N.B.A. Reports and Accounts, 2010* page 19f. Less than half those interviews thought that their church gave 5% of their income to the Appeal.
[81] B.U.G.B., *Ministerial Recognition Rules Relating to the Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2001)
[82] Chapter 1 Section 1.1.3.
[83] Interviewees 313 and 213 respectively described it as the 'family pot' and the 'family fund'.
[84] 317, 111
[85] B.U.G.B., *The Baptist Union Directory 2007* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2007) 13

a denominational basis,' to enable the Union, Associations and churches to foster 'the

evangelical witness and evangelistic enterprise in and through the churches … for the

better support of the ministry of the Gospel.'[86] As the Central Fund significantly resources

all that the Union does, it could be said that ministers, churches and Associations are all

beneficiaries, thus making it a significant arena for exploring Baptist culture and sociality in

relation to the local-translocal tension and to developing greater cohesion and strategy.

This tension is seen in different perceptions of Home Mission. One local church treasurer

believed it was to enable a 'small fellowship to move forward with stronger leadership with

a Minister which … wouldn't be possible without Home Mission.'[87] An Association treasurer

saw it as 'a process whereby family members, church family members can contribute to a

central resource which can then be deployed for the benefit of mission.'[88]

Home Mission appeal income is about 67% of the budget of the Baptist Union

which supports its Specialist Teams and the thirteen Associations. The income for the

budget is comprised of three main sources of income: the Home Mission Appeal, legacies

and investment income. The three main areas of expenditure are the national office

situated in Didcot, grants to churches and other ministries and contributions to

Associations.[89] Failure to meet the budget will result in using reserves or making Union or

Association staff redundant, or reducing grants made to churches.

The Union develops budgets and strategies in the light of expected income

knowing that a sudden fall of income will have a significant impact on its ability to carry out

its own functions as a Union, to fund church grants and to fund Associations. Their strategic

concerns are to maintain and increase income which mainly comes from voluntary sources

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[86] B.U.G.B., *B.U.G.B. 2010 Directory*325. See Appendix 1 *The Central Fund of the Union*
[87] 131
[88] 223
[89] B.U.G.B., *Financial Statement of the B.U.G.B. Incorporating the Baptist Home Mission Fund, Sustentation Fund and Other Funds.* 3. See Fig 1 and 2

as well as to control expenditure which will enable it and the churches as a whole to progress in the work of God's mission. Associations have a vested interest in seeing their churches excel in giving to the Home Mission Appeal as it funds the budget which provides much of their finance. Some Associations have the benefit of very significant reserves that fund extra work.[90]

The main component parts of the income and expenditure of the Baptist Union in 2012 are shown below.[91] There was a deficit of £6,872 which was made up from reserves.

Baptist Union Income: 2012

From Charitable Activities: £151,004 2%
Other: £634,797 11%
Investment Income: £930,985 14%
Home Mission Appeal: £4,089,159 62%
Subs 4%
Legacies: 7%
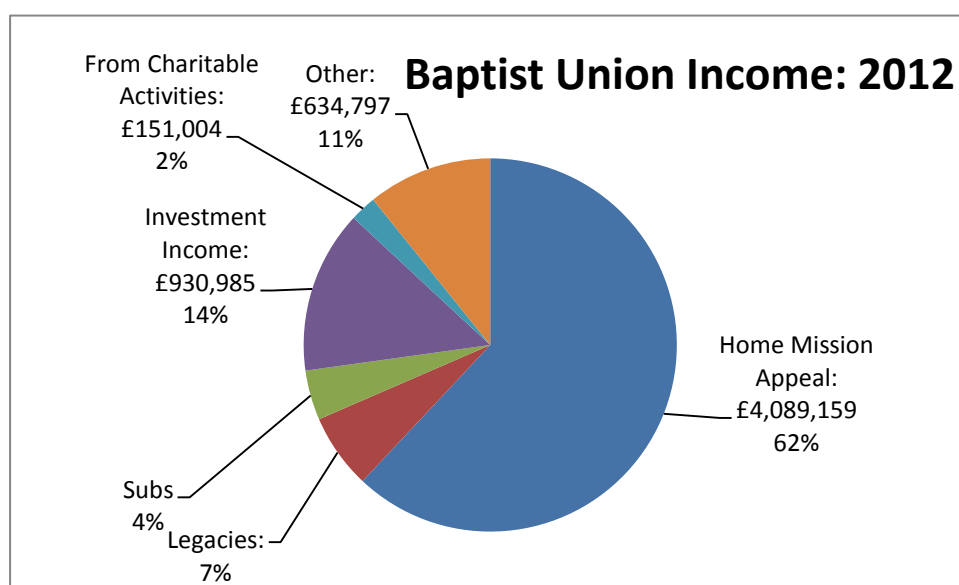
Figure 2: B.U. Income 2012

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[90] This would be so for the Heart of England Association and the East Midland Baptist Association amongst others.
[91] Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the Baptist Union for the year ended 31st December 2012. Presented to the Baptist Union Council March 2013.

Baptist Union Expenditure: 2012

Segment	Value	Percent
Central Resources and other costs	£2,743,132	41%
Grants to Churches	£2,091,035	32%
Associations	£1,801,504	27%
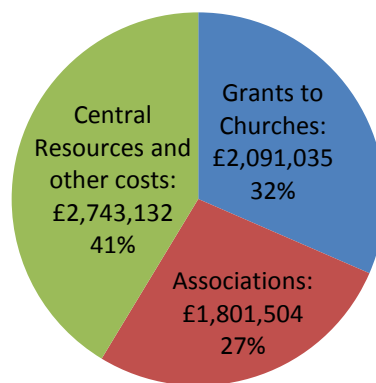
Figure 3: B.U. Expenditure 2012

The requirement of good financial stewardship, appropriate accountancy, effective budgeting and legal obligations imposes a move towards a more *positionalist* culture. These responsibilities rest with the Union's staff, the Transitional Steering Group and the Trustees. In planning expenditure they will operate to agreed criteria, but the churches, from which most income is gained, continue to operate in a voluntarist manner. Those with responsibility for making strategic decisions about the raising and deployment of finance will need to operate between and within these two cultural mind-sets.

The Associations have a significant and complex role acting as agents and recipients in relation to Home Mission income and expenditure. They are involved in receiving and passing on donations and they encourage churches in their giving to the Appeal. Regional Ministers' job descriptions usually require them to promote Home Mission, and some Associations have an identified volunteer to encourage the churches in their giving.[92] The Associations also play an important role in the process of agreeing grant applications.

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[92] The Northern Baptist has the office of Home Mission Co-ordinator. The role is voluntary and the person is ex-officio a member of the Association's Council: that is a trustee and director.

In exploring issues of sociality and strategy in relation to Home Mission it will be instructive to consider the perspectives and experience of those who could be termed 'stakeholders' in relation to its operation.[93] These are ministers, churches, Associations, and the Union itself. All these have responsibilities, roles and benefits that relate to the Central Fund. There are at least three perspectives that may be held by the churches. Firstly, all churches are expected to give towards the Home Mission Appeal, although their response is very varied. Secondly, there are those churches who consider themselves direct beneficiaries because they are in receipt of a grant to support ministry, or have received other one-off grants for particular projects. Thirdly, all churches benefit from the on-going support of the Union and their Associations: the latter also receive significant support from the Home Mission budget to maintain their work. However, not all these churches perceive that the Home Mission appeal is crucial to the provision of these benefits, especially in the third area.

The ministers' perspectives may reflect their church's experience as outlined above. However, they all also benefit from the on-going support provided by the Union and the Associations. Their views will inevitably be very significant in determining the way the churches respond to the Home Mission Appeal, their experience of grants and their engagement in Association or Union life.

In the light of the different perspectives of these various stakeholders the question is how, where and by whom is strategy developed. As well as ministers there are three distinctly different types of organisation engaged in the process: thirteen Associations, the Union and almost 2,000 churches.[94] Each is seeking to reflect Baptist principles, operating

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[93] Cf. Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy,* 179 and David Edwards and Aysen Broadfield Derek Rollinson, *Organisational Behaviour and Analysis: An Integrated Approach* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998) 47f
[94] This involves 136,677 church members and the many adherents who are committed to the life of the Baptist church they attend.

according to its own culture and pursuing its own goals. It is appropriate to consider what

this means for Baptists as they develop connectivity and corporate strategies in this

context. The different stakeholders have varying levels of control, responsibility and

benefit. As independent bodies, Associations are expected to develop strategies, but their

finances are controlled by the Union and sometimes they act as agents of the Union. As will

be seen in the analysis of the interviews in chapter 3, the location of interviewees'

engagement in Baptist sociality, whether in the local church, Association or Union has a

determinative effect on their opinions. The more they are engaged in national life the more

likely they are to speak from a *positional* perspective. The nature of their engagement may

similarly reveal their prime interest as stakeholders.

Strategies that effectively release financial resources for new expressions of

mission will need to work within the constraints of the covenantal voluntarism that

underpins these arrangements and has such appeal as to attract the giving of the churches

and the interests of the denominational decision-makers.

2.3.4.   Translocal Ministries

Regional Ministers play a key role in the sociality of Baptists providing a strategic lead in

Association life, giving pastoral support and oversight to churches, and supporting them in

mission. They enable mutual support through the networking of churches and ministers,

the provision of training and the engagement with specific mission initiatives.

Regional Ministers engage variously with the more *positional* nature of the Union,

the varying nature of *enclave* culture of the local churches and also the *individualist*

approach of some ministers. They operate on a moving trajectory from seeking to oversee

certain regulation and control in co-operation with the Union, to the encouragement,

guidance and exhortation to local churches and advising and challenging those working out of an *individualist* culture. This requires adaptability and a clear commitment to the bounded nature of the *positional* and *enclave* cultures and an ability to relate to those of a different cultural mind-set.

2.3.5. Translocal Authority

The exercise of authority by translocal bodies is constrained by the *enclave* nature of the local church. The decisions of the Union and Associations mostly relate to their own organisation per se and beyond that they are rarely binding, but they do provide the backdrop for Baptists' collective life and influence the culture and expectations of the churches.

The nature of the translocal body's authority can be categorised in three ways: determinative, advisory, and exhortatory. The most determinative decisions of translocal bodies relate to ministerial accreditation, conditions to be met for the provision of grants, and adherence to the responsibilities of trusteeship and legislation. That said, churches may seek waivers, if the trust deeds require it, to appoint an unaccredited minister. Advisory authority is seen in the many areas of guidance provided for church life, such as the provision of model Terms of Appointment for ministers and recommended stipend levels, but churches which are financially self-sufficient are free to vary their practice. Exhortatory guidance is seen in such aspects as encouragement in mission and provision of resources, but there is no authority to enforce any particular mission activity on the churches. The Union finds it difficult to express a 'denominational view' on social issues such as human sexuality, and nuclear arms, etc. as each church retains the liberty to seek

the mind of Christ for itself and may come to a different conclusion. However, a protocol of consultation for responding to such issues has been adopted by the Union's Council.

The determinative decisions are reflective of a move towards a *positional* culture. Churches joining the Union are required to give 'general assent to the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the Baptist Union'[95] which include the objects of the Union and the Declaration of Principle. Churches are required to practice Believers' Baptism and congregational church government although the latter is differently nuanced across the churches. It is rare, but possible, for a church to be asked to leave the Union if it is no longer functioning as a Baptist church, although some churches have left the Union because they have found a greater affinity with other church groups such as New Frontiers or Pioneer. These groups practice Believers' Baptism, but have different governance structures and leadership expectations, and are generally of a more *positional* culture with greater control and influence from those who exercise some form of translocal authority.

The *Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry* and the processes of ministerial accreditation promote a standard of theological education and formation for ministry. Ministers who seek accreditation are required to agree to the Declaration of Principle. Being on the *Register* brings some degree of accountability and discipline for ministers. Ministers can be removed from the register for reasons of conduct 'unbecoming of the Baptist Ministry' with the consequent loss of ministry in the local church.[96] However, there is no insistence upon ministers' continuing ministerial development beyond the initial years of a N*ewly Accredited Minister.*

Home Mission Grants are given to churches unable to finance the total cost of ordained ministry. The normal maximum grant is 50% of the stipend and the church is

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[95] BUGB Church Membership Application Form 2.
[96] B.U.G.B., *Ministerial Recognition Rules* Item 7

expected to reduce its level of grant to the point of self-sufficiency. A church seeks a grant when it has grown to be able to offer the other funding required, or at a time of financial crisis. Control is exercised over the local church in that they may be required to have an accredited minister, a clear mission focus, to pay according to the recommended stipend, to give to Home Mission and BMS World Mission, to exercise good stewardship over its resources, to care for its minister and to be engaged in Baptist translocal life. Not all of these will be given the same weight in the grants assessment process carried out by each Association.

There is an element of covenantal accountability that is exercised by accreditation as it provides status and some degree of quality control for ministers and churches, and the provision of resources which are granted on the basis of expressed criteria.

2.3.6.   Union and Association relationship

The Union and Associations are independent bodies yet they are mutually dependent on and act for each other. Does the Association act as an agent of the Union, or of its churches, or is there some other way to express the relationship? These questions may be similar for colleges as well as Associations. Both are independent entities and yet have an integral relationship with the Union for the performance of the key objects.

Associations fulfil a variety of roles in two basic directions. To the churches they provide pastoral and resource support, fellowship, mutual accountability and regional consciousness. To the Union they provide a conduit for information, facilitation of the ministerial recognition and Home Mission grants processes within the overall budget agreed by the Union's trustees and liaison and support of the Union in its relation to the churches. As many of the Union's initiatives may have been discussed by the Union's

Council, which includes significant Association representation, Associations can be considered stakeholders as decision makers, processors and beneficiaries. Associations operate on a changing continuum between the *positional* and *enclave* cultures which brings a level of tension. The *positional* culture of the Union will find frustration with the separately bounded nature of each Association and their considerably reduced emphasis upon regulation and control. Associations will similarly find the *positional* approach of the Union to be intrusive, but the varied *enclave* culture of each church restrictive in developing collective strategic action within given areas.

2.4. Conclusion

Through a rich description of Baptist sociality and using Douglas' Cultural Theory it can be seen that Baptist culture is nuanced differently between church, Association and the Union. There is tension between the more *positional* cultures of translocal bodies and the *enclave* nature of the churches. This is further compounded by the *individualist* culture of some ministers and other leaders within the denomination. This cultural tension is undergirded by an ecclesiology that is overly balanced towards the local church and disables Baptists in their attempts at strategic collaboration. The fieldwork in the next chapter includes interviews with those who serve in local churches, Associations and the Union, and it explores the differences of culture and understanding and the possibilities for translocal collaboration.

Chapter 3: Purse, Practice and Possibilities

This analysis of the fieldwork interviews explores the perceptions of Baptists engaged in a wide variety of denominational responsibilities in regard to Baptist culture and practice, current and future opportunities for collaboration and their understandings of Home Mission and denominational finance.[1] It will be important to note the degree to which the observations of participants support the contention that the inherent independency of Baptists disables them from effective collaboration, and to observe different cultural types and the resulting different perspectives.

3.1.   Analysis of the fieldwork interviews

3.1.1.   Baptist Culture

Independency was the dominant emphasis and the most mentioned distinctive feature of Baptist life and culture, followed by believers' baptism and the church meeting, the latter itself being an expression of independency. The graph below shows the features most commonly identified by the interviewees.

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[1] Ref. Ch. 1 section 1.1.3. and Ch. 2 Section 2.3.3.

Distinctives of Baptist Culture: % of respondents' answers
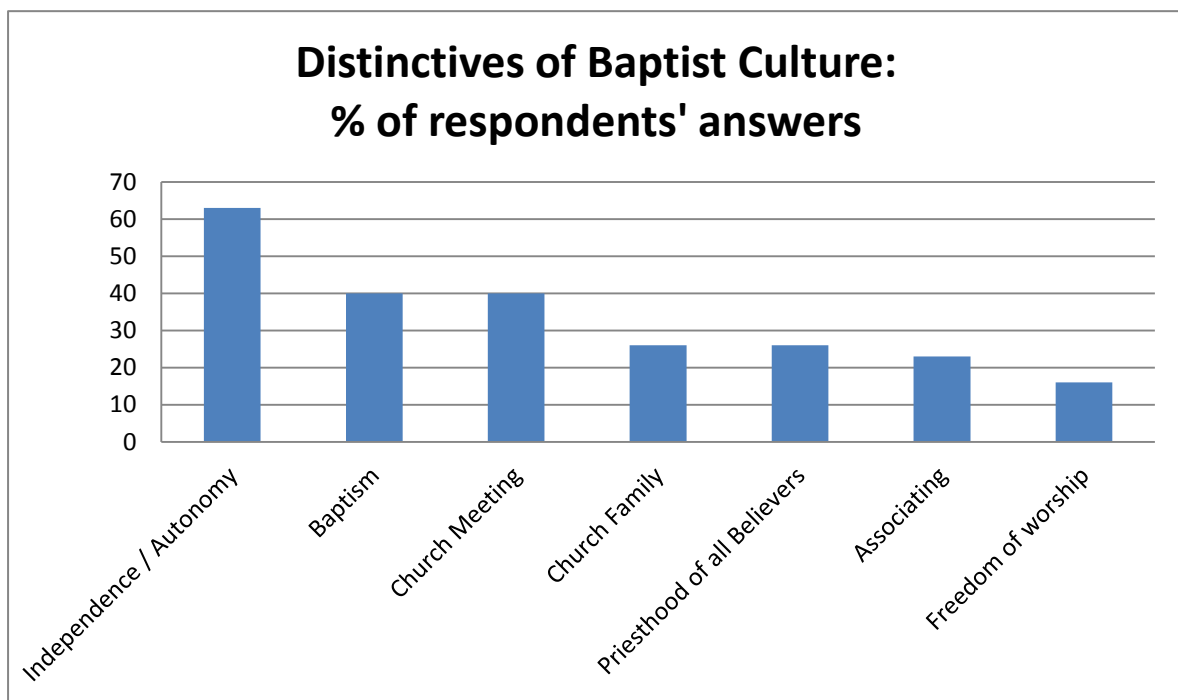
Figure 4: Distinctive feature of Baptist life and culture

Emphasis upon independency by role
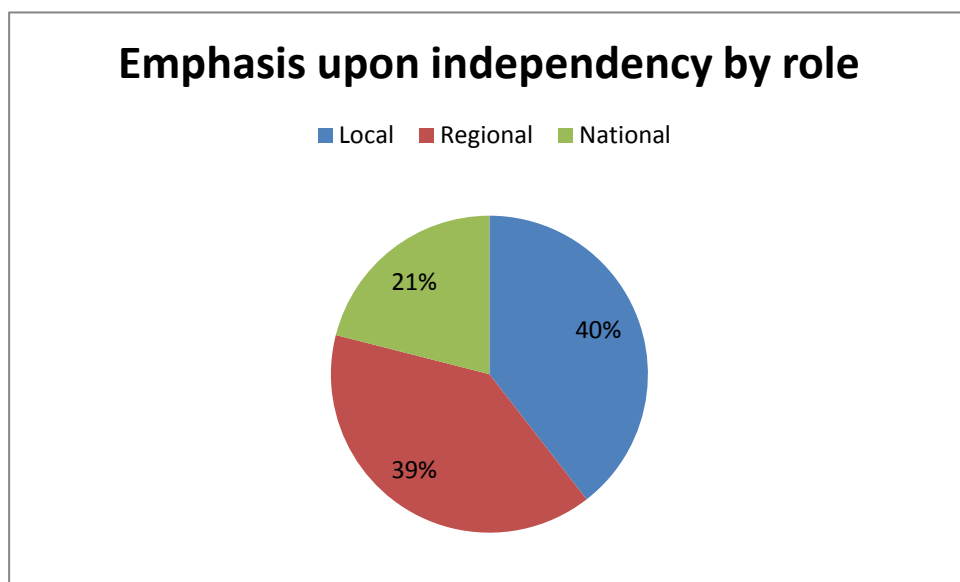
Figure 5: Emphasis upon independency according to interviewees' roles

The emphasis varied according to the interviewees' primary sphere of service, whether local church, Association or Union, indicating that the different constituencies of Baptists have varying understandings about the importance and role of independency. Those from local and regional backgrounds were significantly more likely to identify independency as a key feature, as can be seen from the pie chart above. Those with translocal roles reflected a move away from the typical *enclave* situation to a lower emphasis upon independency.[2] One regional interviewee saw the emphasis upon independence as 'a hindrance' and 'a good excuse for not doing what is sensible.'[3] Only seven participants mentioned interdependence as a distinctive feature, three of whom had Association roles and three who served in senior Union positions. Whilst those in national roles had a lower emphasis upon independency they did not give high priority to interdependency indicating that whilst their ministry was dependent upon interdependency the ethos and values developed in the *enclave* community still exercised significant influence.

The disparity in the views of those who are local vis-à-vis those who serve in national or regional roles has implications for understandings of covenant relationships, the development of common life and corporate strategy, but the crypto-independence of those in translocal roles reflects a duality that is not easily acknowledged: those who are culturally independent are appointed to fulfil roles that are expected to be highly interdependent.

3.1.1.1.   *Expressed sense of belonging*

There seems to be contradiction between the stated desire of most interviewees for collaboration and their strong affirmation of independency which seems to undermine

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[2] See Fig 5
[3] 232

interdependency. Participants may have affirmed collaboration from a sense of deferential bias towards me as a Regional Minister. However, the desire for collaboration was widely expressed, although it is to be acknowledged that 66% of the participants had some form of translocal engagement. The intellectual case for collaboration seems accepted, but the heartfelt commitment towards it appears absent: as one local participant said, 'There is a tremendous sense of ownership to the local congregation but it doesn't overspill beyond.'[4] Some took a minimalist view of interdependency seeing it as a duty to support existing networks with financial contributions like a club subscription.[5] A Team Leader spoke of an absence of 'common bond' amongst Baptists.[6] Association events were thought to be useful, but church clusters had often been unsuccessful. Some inter-church relationships were limited to ministers, with members not knowing of such arrangements, although local lay leaders were more likely to be aware. The willingness of the church's leaders is determinative for a church's engagement in translocal relationships. Churches focus on their own life, and survival overrules the inclination for strategic collaboration.

Although associating through Associations and the Union was seen as a defining feature of Baptist life and culture, Home Mission was not mentioned, but when raised it was seen to be an excellent means of mutual support.[7] That one Team Leader saw Baptists as having to compete with para-church organisations for financial support[8] may be indicative of the frustration arising from the tension between the more *positional* culture of translocal bodies and ministries that wishes to control and command affiliation, and the *enclave* nature of the local church that chooses to voluntarily support denominational or other Christian agencies. Providing denominational infrastructure was seen by church members as less appealing than supporting glossily promoted mission initiatives.

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[4] 123
[5] 111 and 221
[6] 211
[7] 133
[8] 211

Consequently, those responsible for translocal relationships amongst Baptists will need to appeal to the value-based assumptions of the *enclave* culture and develop the common values of belonging and collaboration in a way which has authenticity for the local church and expresses covenantal belonging between churches.

Mutual support was seen as useful and important and while significant examples were identified, they were not widespread. Suggestions ranged from routine meetings and regular communication to church planting as seen at Weir in the Rossendale Valley and in Peterborough, and to the mutually supportive relationships of churches in the Soar Valley, Leicester and North Lincolnshire.[9] One Team Leader suggested that associating 'happens best when between five and eight churches come together with a common identifiable mission purpose.'[10] The examples cited above demonstrate possibilities, but stand out in a denomination where the strong independency of the local church means that this is not a widespread and effective model that is always capable of leading to strategic action. One long-serving local church secretary with experience of translocal organisation acknowledged the Baptists' dilemma resulting from a strong 'sense of ownership to the local congregation' that does not extend beyond the local congregation despite the potential for collaboration.[11] This is confirmed by a Union Trustee, with local church responsibility, who said, 'I think churches are quite insular they don't seem to tend to look to other Baptist churches for … support.'[12]

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[9] 211 and 212
[10] 211
[11] 123
[12] 322

3.1.1.2. Influence of Baptist Distinctive culture

The distinctive features of Baptist culture were seen to produce a range of responses from willing co-operation to neutrality, to excessive independency or even isolationism. Independence was recognised as strength, and a weakness.[13] Interviewees valued the liberty to choose, the opportunity for dissent, and the commitment to serve the immediate locality of a church which, along with the general geographic distribution of churches and the dominance of certain individuals within local churches, strengthen the independent mind-set inherent within the *enclave* community.

The absence of a strong emphasis upon interdependency demonstrates that the interviewees support the main hypothesis of this thesis with the dominant culture being that of the *enclave.* Existing collaboration has often grown out of practical necessity rather than a strategic overview. However, one regional participant affirmed that Baptists 'see themselves generally' as part of 'a larger family' who 'actively support other members' of the family.[14] A local participant said that only 'a few Baptist churches tend to behave in a very individual way.'[15]

In keeping with the approach of enclave communities, relationships and values were seen as important and the precursor to collaborative action, which, given the lack of structural constraint, should be straightforward. Local ministers are seen to have a role in enabling such engagement and consequently churches without ministers may be disempowered and excluded. It was thought that the benefits of collaboration are more easily seen from a translocal perspective which may reflect the basic localist ethos of the local church.

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[13] 321
[14] 231
[15] 133

Whilst it was recognised that Christian Mission and the Kingdom of God should be the prime focus, core Baptist principles, or at least the way they are construed, define the manner of Baptist interaction with the effect of inhibiting collective potential. The lack of geographic proximity of churches in some areas is also seen as a factor, as is the increased level of ad hoc, but not necessarily strategic, collaboration with ecumenical partners.

Enabling Baptists to look beyond their dominant sense of independency requires strategic action to re-emphasise the place and value of interdependency in a way that is understandable and accessible to enclave communities. The inherent values of personal interdependency expressed in local churches need to be extended to translocal relationships, which, together with the intentional application of the understanding of the church as the Body of Christ beyond the confines of the local church to include translocal expressions of Baptist life, this would enable a greater understanding of Baptist catholicity and develop capabilities for regional and national mission and an increased readiness to engage in mutual support and strategic initiatives. Significantly it was a national participant who stated that the failure to stress 'interdependence between churches … … has implications for deciding anything as a Union.' [16] Having a national perspective may have enabled her to realise this lack of emphasis, and to realise that the nature of her role is inhibited by its absence. That said, it is questionable as to whether someone operating from a more *positional* culture would be satisfied by a more informed and willing voluntarism extending from within the *enclaves* of local churches. It seems that as individuals, shaped by the independency of local churches, take up roles within translocal bodies which operate in a more *positional* culture, they themselves express an independency in relation to their own sphere of service within the Union and Associations. They are therefore inclined to pursue independent rather than collaborative agendas. To

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[16] 322

produce effective collaboration will require an ethos of mutuality rather than the coercion of regulation characteristic of the *positional* culture.

3.1.1.3.   Constraints upon developing corporate strategies

Baptist collaboration is perceived to be hindered by independency, practicalities and an innate conservatism in which church members are regarded as being 'too comfortable.'[17] This is typical of an *enclave* community where conversation about community is preferable to considering strategic possibilities. The restrictive effect of their ecclesiology is focussed on their own life in terms of their mission and organisation with 'the survival instinct' being considered by one Team Leader as 'the biggest constraint.''[18] The practice of the Church Meeting delays decision-making between churches, and works against strategic leadership. Churches are hesitant about collaboration, although may consider it for a special purpose.

The perceived constraints upon collaboration were seen as churches being too busy to adopt a wider perspective, the disinclination of leaderships, the lack of financial resources and personnel, geographic distance to other churches and differences of race, culture and class between churches. One church secretary suggested that ecumenical co-operation was more likely to happen 'as opposed to the strictly denominational route'.[19] People expressed a desire to engage together, but generally fail to have the time, energy and inclination required. [20]

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[17] 122
[18] 211
[19] 123
[20] 221

3.1.1.4. *Opportunities for corporate strategies*

Mutual collaboration is simply not a natural inclination for Baptists. Interviewees recognised that good relationships, local ownership and the recognition of common aims were necessary to facilitate successful collaboration, but identified few possible corporate strategies. Suggestions were general in nature, although some mentioned small scale tactical possibilities such as the sharing of services or partnering of churches. Co-operation between church leaderships could be one expression of working together which could give local churches a sense of representation and ownership of agreed strategies and yet allow each church to retain its independence. However, one former local church leader acknowledged that such a possibility had never occurred to him.[21] Some felt that a forum for enabling churches to meet together to share strategic ideas would be useful, believing that the present size of Associations is too large to be helpful.

Those with similar roles could network together to share good practice and provide mutual support. Another interviewee referred to Clusters, but as has been said elsewhere,[22] they are extremely varied in their strategic action with a few exceptions such as in the Soar Valley which is 'a very good example of eleven churches covenanting together … to be strategic in mission.' In this example there are 'big churches connected with little ones and every church is in a relationship with another church to do mission … with a vision to having a cell in every village of the Soar Valley.'[23] Some suggested that churches could share together in mission-orientated projects including campaigning for world debt relief, supporting an evangelistic initiative or organising a youth weekend. Common interests and concerns would need to be identified between the churches with a commitment to work together. One interviewee suggested that social media such as

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[21] 221
[22] See Ch 3 Section 3.11.1. and Ch 5 Section 5.5.
[23] 212

Facebook could be used to develop church relationships and also that cooperation between local churches could be enabled by a 'bishop' overseeing all the churches, but attached to none.[24] However it was also thought that such collaboration need not be limited to Baptist churches, but could be ecumenical. Similar suggestions were made in response to the question about Home Mission and strategy, see section 3.2.3.3.

One interviewee with a national role emphasised that strategy should be 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down', that too much is 'top-driven', and that national and regional bodies should stop pretending that they are doing mission and help churches develop their own strategies and engagement in mission.[25] This seems more in tune with the *enclave* nature of the local church than is often seen from those who might be expected to work from a more positional culture. One local interviewee identified the tensions between task-focussed collaboration and investing time in relationships.[26] The former, reflecting the evangelical activity-focussed culture, is reflective of entrepreneurial leaders, the latter the relationship focus of the *enclave* culture. It also highlights the dynamic between different personality types in that a high proportion of Baptist church leaders are extroverts and activists[27] focussed on achieving the task whereas many church members might be more intuitive and relational. Notably one respondent with national responsibility expressed the view that engaging in wider responsibilities early in her ministry gave her a broader perspective on Baptist sociality.[28]

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[24] 123
[25] 318
[26] 132
[27] Michael Whinney, 'Type in the Churches,' *Typeface* 15, no. 4 (2004) 26
[28] 321

3.1.1.5. Perceived Values underpinning church life

Many respondents saw these values as rooted in their Christian faith, and flowing from being part of 'a God-centred organisation'.[29] Typical of *enclave* communities there was a strongly relational emphasis with words like fellowship, community and grace,[30] accompanied by the personal attributes of love, care and respect expressed in sacrificial service within the church and in society.[31] Others expressed awareness of the denominational and traditional values inherent within the Baptist tradition, but did not express the values in such terms, preferring to use terms that related service, integrity and relationships with a commitment to mission.[32]

One Senior Union employee expressed some of the 'schizophrenic' tensions underlying Baptist values seeing 'deep compassion for some on the margins of society, but an amazing narrowness in regard to issues like sexuality. The church can both seek to make itself vulnerable and yet cling to power'.[33] Similarly another acknowledged the tension between being a community discerning and doing God's will with the reality of the loudest imposing their own will.[34] Yet another expressed a different view suggesting that 'Christian consumerism' was a determinative factor for individual Christians.[35] Perhaps this latter comment is challengingly honest about the effect of western individualism and consumerism upon the church.

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[29] 111
[30] 221, 311 and 213
[31] 113, 314
[32] 111, 113, 333, 314, 316, 320
[33] 317
[34] 321
[35] 312

3.1.2. Home Mission

3.1.2.1. Definitions of Home Mission

'Home Mission' was described as a 'multi-faceted entity' defying description, with people having different definitions.[36] This reflects participants' uncertainty as to whether 'Home Mission' referred to the whole budget of the Baptist Union or to that portion allocated for church grants. Such confusion raises questions about the aims of the Home Mission Appeal promotions publicity. Respondents' emphases in defining Home Mission varied according the role in which they served, but related to the support for four broad categories: 1) local churches, 2) structures to support the Union and Associations, 3) a general sense of togetherness and 4) mission in general. As seen in the pie charts below local respondents were more likely to emphasise supporting churches, regional interviewees gave greater emphasis to mission in general and those with national responsibilities spoke more of togetherness. Local and regional respondents may be seen to focus on what Home Mission does and national respondents upon what it represents as 'an expression of our common life,'[37] and the common fund of the Union, rather than merely a means of supporting financially constrained churches. Another national respondent saw it as an expression of local, regional and national fellowship to which people have a duty to be committed for the sake of mission.[38] However, another admitted that Home Mission can seem to be about 'maintaining a structure'.[39] Such sentiments arise from the more *positional* nature of the Union seeking to nurture the togetherness of local churches as independent *enclave* entities. As a significant amount of the finance raised by the Home Mission Appeal supports the translocal structures of Baptists, it is in their interest to encourage mutuality.

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[36] 211
[37] 322
[38] 313
[39] 312
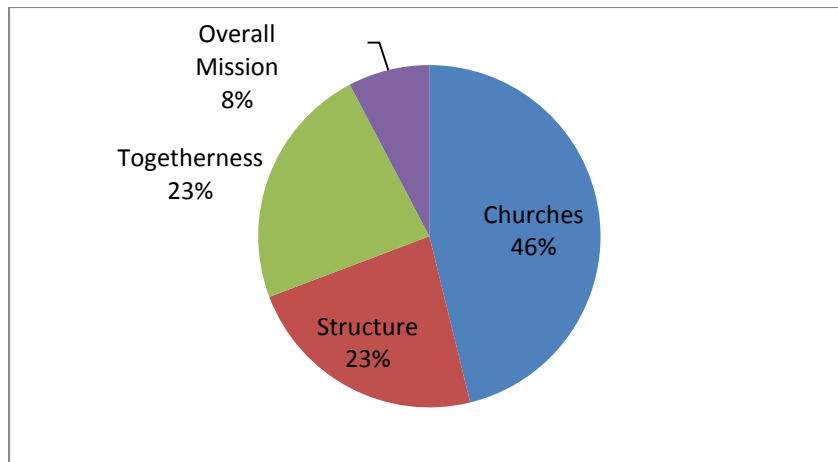
Figure 6: The emphasis of local interviewees' definition of Home Mission
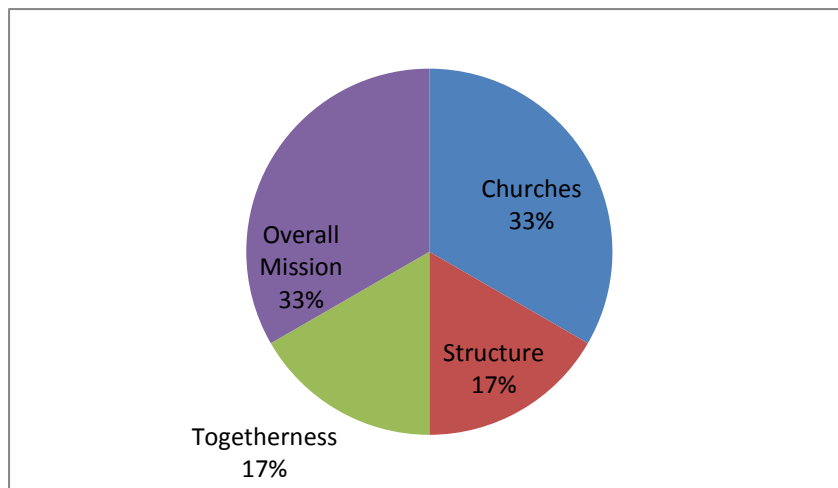
Figure 7: The emphasis of regional interviewees' definition of Home Mission
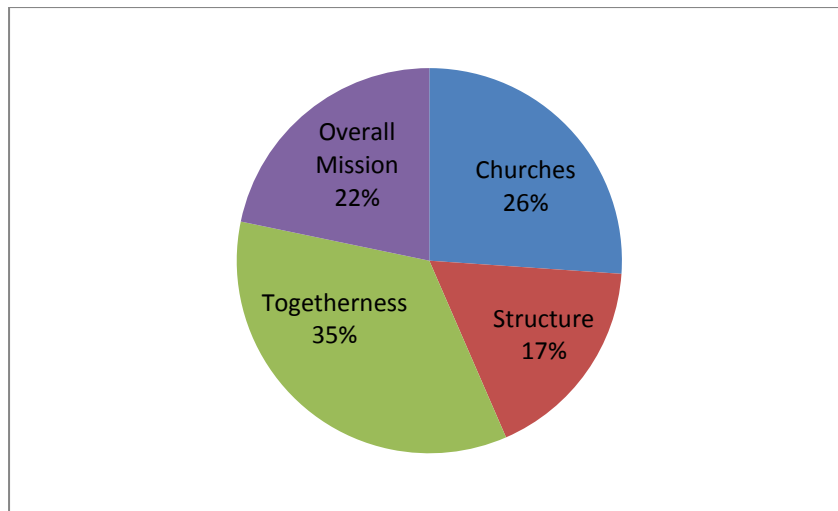
3.1.2.2.   *Church members' perceptions of Home Mission*

Church members' perceptions about Home Mission are highly important given its significance to the denomination's finances and mission, but many participants thought that Church members have little idea as to the meaning of Home Mission and do not 'think about Home Mission,'[40] and may only consider it as a line in the church budget. Church members were seen to identify with the concept, especially in terms of mutual support, but not the title.[41] A participant with both local and regional responsibilities thought that the term 'mission' would lead people to think of work overseas.[42] Older members, those in churches which had received grants, and smaller churches were considered more aware.[43] Local and regional interviewees thought that reducing Home Mission contributions to a budgetary matter contributed to a decline in the awareness of church members.[44] Although there may be little understanding about Home Mission there is thought to be a sense of

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[40] 212
[41] 132
[42] 231
[43] 131, 112
[44] 112, 211

duty to give to it as part of being a Baptist.[45] The name is not seen to be exciting and

people are not thought to have the same emotional commitment that they might have to

other charities.[46] Denominational affiliation, awareness and support are thought to be

weakened by the reduced numbers of cultural Baptists and the increase of those from

other denominations and none.[47]

Ignorance about Home Mission is seen in misunderstandings about whether it is

used predominantly to support the national organisation or local churches. For those who

might have some understanding, it was thought that whilst there would be a range of

opinion about the purpose of Home Mission most church members would see it as

supporting local churches.[48] However, a significant number believed that church members

would see Home Mission as primarily supporting the work of the Baptist Union located in

its national office and that the Appeal is really a levy,[49] and 'just a way of keeping people at

Didcot.'[50]

If this ignorance about Home Mission is true, it should be of great concern to the

Union considering the amount of resources spent on the promotion of Home Mission. The

perceptions held by those in various local, regional or national offices about the view of

church members will have significance for the development of a greater sense of belonging

to a corporate whole and to possibilities for initiating strategies.

Most interviewees were aware of the range of the resources available to promote

Home Mission and appreciative of the work of the now defunct Union's Communications

Department, but even a national participant felt that some publicity had been patronising

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[45] 213
[46] 213, 311
[47] 317
[48] 111, 322, 312, 317, 313
[49] 232, 222,314
[50] 232

and paternalistic telling only part of the story.[51] The stories related by various resources were noted and appreciated with an awareness that all churches benefit in some way and not just those receiving grants,[52] although it was felt that many ministers, as well as church members, do not make the connection between giving to Home Mission and the support they receive.[53] Some expressed the need to expand the repertoire of stories to include a national dimension.[54] Another expressed this much more negatively, suggesting that publicity was slanted disproportionately towards a minority area of spending that is slightly unethically marketed.[55] The interviewees recognised the need for improvement and more effective targeting of promotion.[56]

3.1.2.3.   Home Mission and strategic collaboration

One Association participant saw Home Mission as part of all that Baptists do;[57] it is the one point where churches engage with the Union through donations and sometimes the receipt of grants. However, several interviewees saw little connection between Home Mission and strategic collaboration beyond the provision of personnel and basic support,[58] with monies used according to a 'reactive process' rather than proactively,[59] as a mainly mechanical operation with churches relating it as a concept without any real interest in its practical expression: 'There is a danger that you, you put your money in the pot and forget about

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[51] 312
[52] 317, 323
[53] 321
[54] 317
[55] 111
[56] 311, 315
[57] 223
[58] 122
[59] 318

it.'[60] This may indicate the lack of a strong sense of mutuality that arises from the independency of the local church. With the focus being on the local church the sense of belonging to a denomination and giving to it becomes vague and removed. Strategic change can only come through time, and togetherness is seen as more important than the money.[61] The latter sentiment may be typical of the *enclave* emphasis upon relationships, but may not give sufficient weight to the transfer of monetary resources to facilitate common action.

The contributions of two Team Leaders illustrate the tension that can occur between the two types of translocal body: the Union and the Associations. They identified the disconnection between giving to Home Mission and strategic considerations. Churches were seen to give faithfully, but with significant ignorance about its use. Its distribution is seen to be bureaucratic without the knowledge of the larger vision of Associations or the local awareness of churches and action in their areas.[62] Giving to a broad fund where money is then distributed across several churches reduces the sense of ownership in the process, whereas giving to a direct cause brings greater engagement in the act of collaboration through giving.[63] The nation is seen as too diverse for one single mission strategy; the ideal would be to have smaller Associations with sub-strategies that are contextual to their localities.[64] These contributions are indicative of the Associations' role of relating to local churches and the Union, and seeking to act strategically, but expressing frustration when decisions made elsewhere hamper their efforts. It is to be recognised that these comments were made before significant changes introduced to the Union, which resulted in changes to the distribution of Home Mission monies. The decisions about grants to churches is now made by Associations rather than the Union and so made with clear

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[60] 221
[61] 233
[62] 212
[63] 123
[64] 211

cognisance of the Association's strategy and local needs. Working with an allocated amount

of funding should increase the sense of responsibility within the Associations regarding the

decisions about grants, other forms of support of grant-aided churches and the constraints

of working within finite funding. However, the way funds are allocated to Associations for

this purpose is in the process of development[65] and may follow a bureaucratic process

rather than an examination of the collective vision of Associations. Therefore, although

Associations are enabled to respond more strategically, a sense of disconnectedness

regarding decision-making processes within the Union may follow if a formulaic approach

to distribution rather than a strategic examination of needs and opportunities is adopted.

From the churches' perspective giving to a broad fund with little engagement in the

process remains, although this may be addressed as Associations take on a greater

responsibility for developing awareness of local benefits.[66]

Interviewees identified potential ways to engage in strategic collaboration

including the networking of people engaged in similar forms of service in peer /

counterpart groups such as church officers, general encouragement, the sharing of good

practice and addressing the issues of the day,[67] churches sharing common interests,[68] or

pooling of talents to address the needs of certain communities. Specific projects and

ministries such as industrial chaplains and other ecumenical possibilities may require some

translocal support and organisation.[69] Churches could share personnel and other resources,

or engage in more creative projects, and larger churches could help smaller ones.[70]

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[65] As of December 2013
[66] See Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.2
[67] 221
[68] 323
[69] 123, 232
[70] 132, 221

3.1.2.4.   *Home Mission Prayer*

In order to explore the inclinations and understanding of interviewees regarding Home Mission they were asked what they might say in a dedicatory or intercessory prayer when making a personal donation to Home Mission. The responses of the local, regional and national participants were varied in their emphasis and can be categorised into the following six subject areas: 1) *Broad Mission* as a prayer for mission in general, 2) Prayer for the *decision-makers* allocating Home Mission funds, 3) Local *churches* which receive the support of Home Mission, 4) *Situations* known to the interviewees, 5) *Mission type* as specific expressions of mission and 6. *Association / Union* as support for the translocal structure of Baptist life. Local respondents focussed strongly on expressions of mission and support, with only 25% mentioning decision-makers and translocal structures. Fifty per cent focussed on the specific support given by Home Mission to churches and situations. This may reflect their own practical engagement with mission through local churches. Regional respondents, many of whom will be personally aware of the decision-making processes, made no mention of translocal structures, but gave significant emphasis to decision-makers, then their priority went to Broad Mission, perhaps reflecting the role of many of them in regional decision-making and encouraging mission. National respondents gave priority to mission in broad terms and only 30% mentioned local churches or known situations.

Local interviewees reflected the narrower perspective that might be expected of an *enclave* community, whereas national interviewees shared the broader approach of a more *positional* understanding. Local and national respondents mentioned translocal support equally, but amongst regional and national participants there was less emphasis upon the local church than on the translocal organisation. The emphasis upon decision-makers by

regional respondents may be skewed, in that at least 30% of those interviewed have a

strong engagement in the grant allocation processes at an Association level.
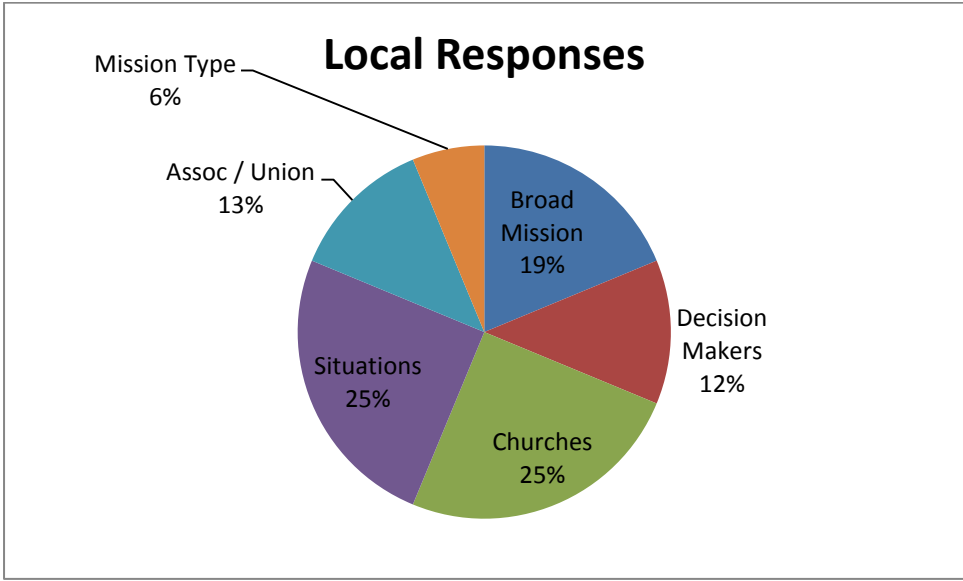
Figure 9: Local interviewees' emphases in a prayer for Home Mission

Regional Responses

Mission Type 6%
Assoc / Union 0%
Situations 12%
Churches 18%
Broad Mission 29%
Decision Makers 35%
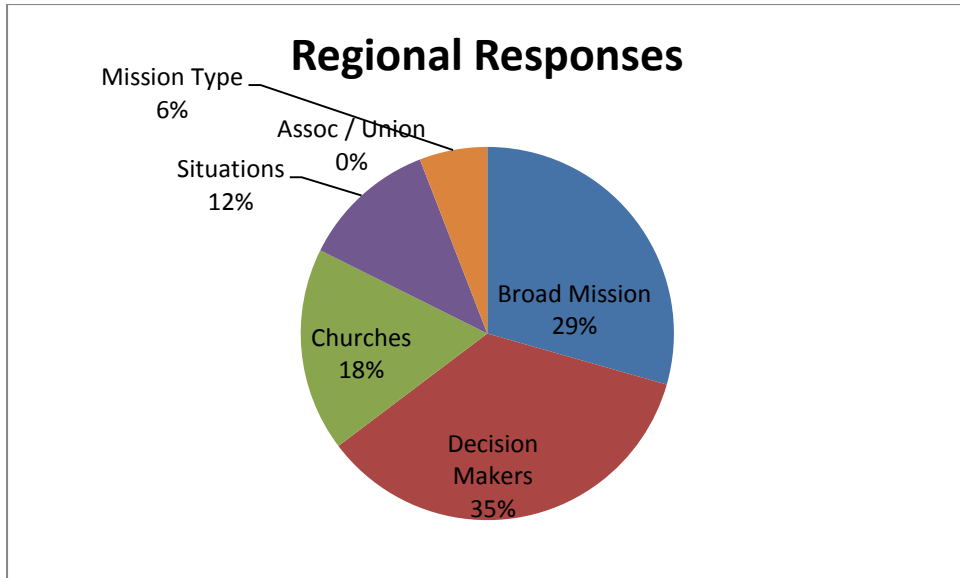
Figure 10: Regional interviewees' emphases in a prayer for Home Mission

National Responses

Mission Type 7%
Assoc / Union 13%
Situations 13%
Churches 17%
Broad Mission 40%
Decision Makers 10%
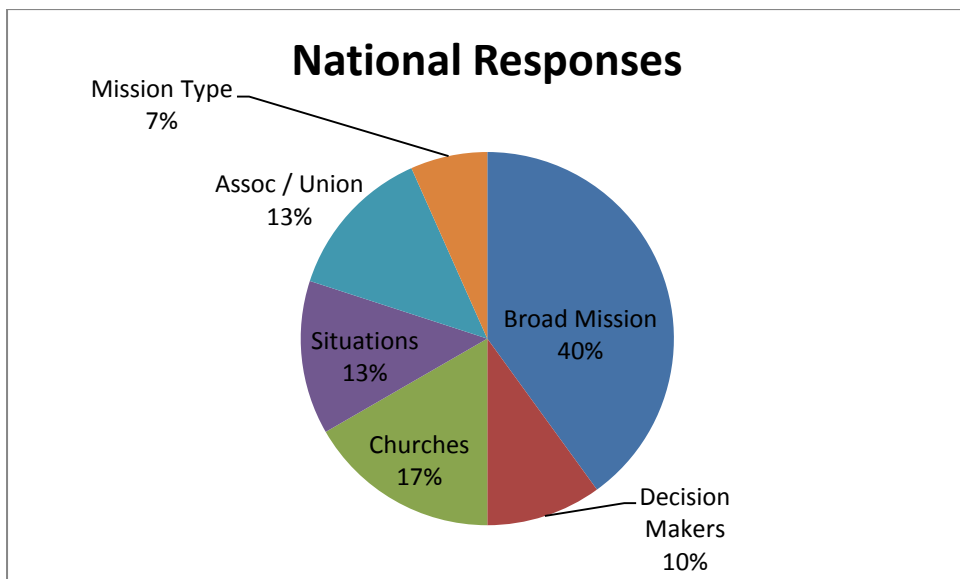
Figure 11: National interviewees' emphases in a prayer for Home Mission

3.1.2.5. Home Mission Beneficiaries

Opinions differed across the categories of participants as to who benefitted from Home

Mission and the responses are collated into eight categories: 1) grant-supported churches,

2) ministers, 3) all churches, 4) Associations, 5) National Resource, 6)ecumenical, 7)society,

and 8) everyone as expressed in pie charts below. The first pie chart shows that 26% of

local respondents perceived grant-supported churches as beneficiaries and 21% and 16%

Associations and Union respectively. Regional responses showed a reduced emphasis upon

grant-aided churches to 9% and Associations and Union 14% and 18% respectively, but a

greater recognition that all benefit in some way. Responses from national respondents are

more evenly balanced amongst most of the categories, seeing the Associations benefitting

more than the Union. Along with regional respondents there is a greater awareness that all

benefit in some way. Their even spread of responses may reflect their inside knowledge.

This variation of understanding of who benefits has implications for Home Mission

Appeal promotion and the explanation of the annual budget. Much promotion is seen to

focus upon positive stories of transformational mission in local churches, leaving many

unaware of the financial support that is needed for translocal structures and the service

they provide. As can be seen from the budget,[71] investment, legacy and other income is

seen to offset the costs of the national resource office, an approach that is not unusual in

the charity world to present the impression that a higher percentage of donated income

goes to frontline activity. However the Union's approach may be seen to dislocate the

service of the national resource office from the support of donor churches with an

increasingly alienating effect. One national respondent commented, 'We have got a

problem because the Home Mission Appeal and everything related to Home Mission goes

to a central fund and that's part of our constitution …. …. The rest of that money is

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[71] Chapter 2 Section 2.3.3

absorbed into the whole of the Union's fund so it's not clear where that money goes other than into the national resource pot in some way.'[72]

This range of different emphases may reflect the nature of Home Mission publicity at any particular time, or more likely the cultural inclination of those in the local, regional or national sphere and what they consider the aim of their ministry. What a local participant might suggest as being beneficial to the Union and Associations could be described by those within those bodies as providing a means to benefit the churches through support and advice, etc. It seems to indicate a fragmented view lacking the sense of giving to a greater whole to which all belong and from which all may benefit. The attitude and ethos of independency seems even to pervade those channels which seek a greater interdependency.
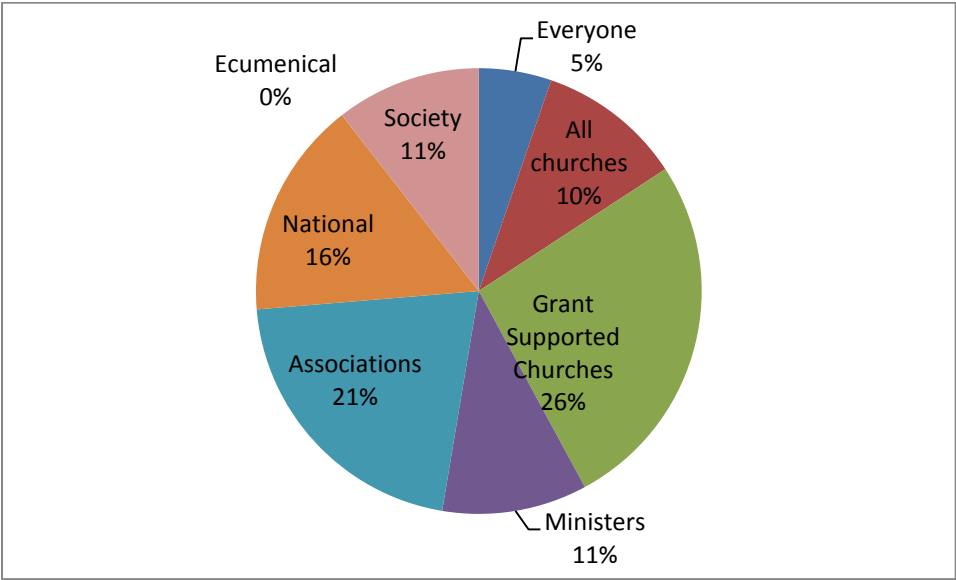
Figure 12: Local interviewees' understandings of who benefits from Home Mission

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[72] 318
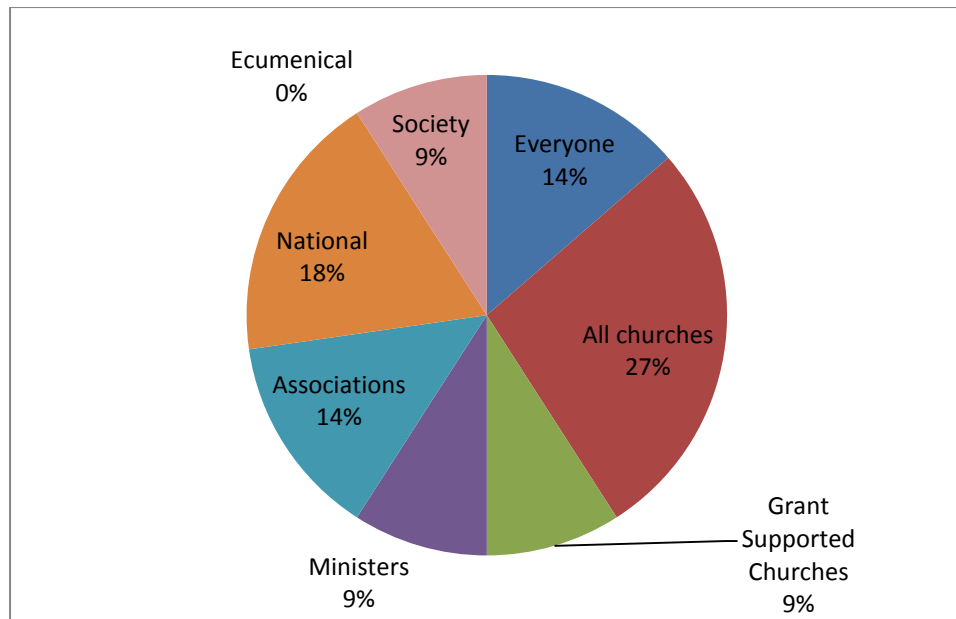
Figure 13: Regional interviewees' understandings of who benefits from Home Mission
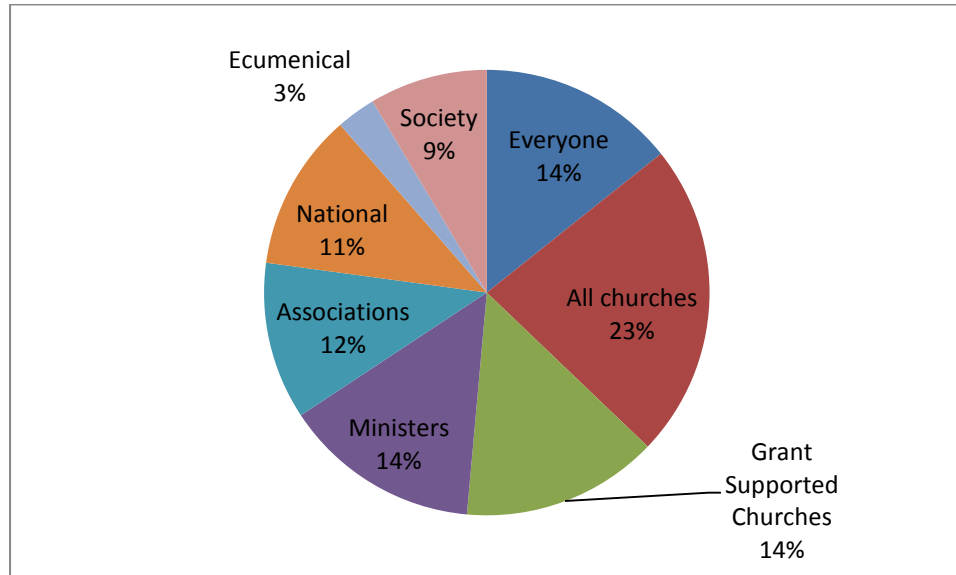
Figure 14: National interviewees' understandings of who benefits from Home Mission

Many interviewees were not clear about the difference between those who do and do not

benefit from Home Mission. Local replies viewed the link between Home Mission and the

notion that all benefit as tenuous with churches not perceiving the benefit.[73] The absence of references to larger churches in Home Mission publicity can undermine the claim that every church is a Home Mission church.[74]

Regional participants thought that the benefits of Home Mission could be extended to include support for unaccredited Ministers, mission initiatives into local communities and practical needs. The difficulty of refusing to continue an existing grant was recognised, but it was thought that some smaller churches might be merged and resources shared recognising the constraints of limited finance:[75] such a view represents a *positional* approach.

A regional and a national respondent recognised that churches' experience of the benefits available is determined by how much they engage in Baptist corporate life.[76] Some wanted to extend the benefit to more frontline mission activity and to those churches which could not meet the 50% stipend plus other ministry costs in order to receive a grant.[77] One called for a more strategic approach that moves beyond just giving grants, to giving more attention to the health of the churches, recognising the unrealistic expectations that are raised when inexperienced ministers find themselves serving some of the hardest communities.[78]

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[73] 113
[74] 112. 'Every church is a Home Mission church' has been a promotion strapline in the past.
[75] 223, 222
[76] 315, 213
[77] 318, 323
[78] 322

3.1.2.6.   Home Mission and priorities

Although all churches benefit in some way, priorities still need to be set for budgeting

expenditure. Few interviewees shared any new ideas and some merely described present

reality. Local respondents wanted to prioritise evangelism and other forms of outreach to

the local community with an awareness of the need for administrative support.[79] They saw

a combination of local knowledge and broader understandings as necessary for setting

priorities along with the need for Associations to be imaginative.[80]

Regional respondents wanted a strong emphasis upon mission, but recognised the

reactive nature of Home Mission which left little room for proactivity. The use of Home

Mission was seen as being reliant upon the initiative of the local church,[81] but priorities

need to be related to mission, continuity and service.[82] Providing all the finance a church

requires may restrict creativity and develop an attitude of reliance.[83] A focus on short term

seed-funding rather than being committed to an on-going level of support over many years

was suggested.[84]

National respondents also kept the focus on mission and one said that practices

should change to allow for more expansive thinking and for different national and strategic

emphases on various ministries at different times.[85] A senior Union officer identified the

problem of having thirteen Associations and one Union, each with different strategies, and

the difficulty of a national strategy with all Associations having collective responsibility

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[79] 131, 122, 121, 132
[80] 123, 111, 133
[81] 233
[82] 231
[83] 212
[84] 221
[85] 323

when independence is highly valued.[86] This is another indication that independency is not confined to local churches but endemic in the structural organisation of the denomination. The issue then focusses on the ability of Associations amongst themselves and in partnership with the Union to develop cohesion, strategy and collective action, when each develops their own strategy sharing the common aim of supporting churches in mission.

3.1.2.7.   Local church support for Home Mission

Recognising the lack of understanding about Home Mission and the fact that about 67% of the Union's income comprises contributions from the churches, it is appropriate to consider the level of support for Home Mission and the motivation to give to it. All participants thought that their churches budgeted their giving to Home Mission, fourteen said that their church gave about 5% of their income as requested by the Union, three did not know how much their church gave. One made the point that as the giving contributes to the 'family purse,' many consider it is akin to a membership fee.[87] Five identified giving raised in a variety of ways that was in addition to the church's budget.

Many identified the range of ways used to promote Home Mission. However, their effectiveness to engender enthusiasm for Home Mission seems questionable. As the vast majority of giving is budgeted, there is a strong possibility that giving to Home Mission is done out of duty rather than any passion to help the denomination and its churches in mission. One participant said that their church

'is one of those typical churches where a significant chunk of the budget goes to Home Mission, the vast majority of people in the church haven't got a clue that

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[86] 318
[87] 112

that happens because the Treasurer presents such a summarised version of the

accounts that you wouldn't even know a Home Mission contribution had gone out

so there is absolutely no loyalty to Home Mission, there is no awareness of Home

Mission.'[88]

The overwhelming reason given for supporting Home Mission was tradition and duty

without enthusiasm for the wider mission amongst Baptists. It happens from dull routine

and the historic precedent of putting it in the budget. For most there is little sense of

passion for mission or enthusiasm for a common enterprise. It was 'part of the ritual'.[89]

Another spoke of a 'dull faithfulness'.[90] For some it is like a subscription.[91]

However, there were those who saw their churches' giving with a sense of

gratitude for the support they had previously received.[92] Others belonged to churches that

gave out of a sense of belonging and commitment to mission through the wider Baptist

family and the biblical principle of mutual support.[93] They recognised the benefits received

by others.[94] One local respondent brought most of these factors together and identified the

mixed motivation of history, tradition, gratitude, awareness of benefits and a sense of

mission to the country.[95]Even recognising this, the general impression was one of mental

assent to give to Home Mission without any emotional commitment, with no one feeling

strong enough against it to remove it from the budget.[96] There does not seem to be a

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[88] 211

[89] 314

[90] 313

[91] 314

[92] 322

[93] 221, 122,212, 213, 132

[94] 231, 318, 112

[95] 113

[96] 316

strong sense of togetherness or overwhelming enthusiasm and vision for a common

mission, reflecting the antipathy of the independent *enclave* church to the wider structure.

Some interviewees employed in regional or national roles were uncertain about

the actual level of financial support for Home Mission by their churches as their ministries

meant that they had little close engagement with their church. This, in itself, highlights the

issue of how engaged they are in the affairs of local church life and whether their translocal

engagement has led them to forget or minimise the strong independency felt in those

churches. Becoming immersed in a more *positional* culture and speaking from that

perspective creates a disconnection with the *enclave* culture of the local church.

It is acknowledged that some churches give very little, or nothing, to Home Mission

and although one regional interviewee expressed irritation,[97] most took a generous view of

those churches recognising the liberty of the local church to make its own decisions on

finance and how it expresses its belonging to the denomination. One participant suggested

that each church had a unique reason, that not seeing any benefit they do not understand

the purpose of Home Mission and want to choose how their money is spent.[98] The

churches were seen to have developed other priorities whether within their own church or

in supporting other causes: they must feel that their money is 'better spent elsewhere,'[99]

they support other church networks, mission organisations or even their own personnel

serving in other locations.[100]Such churches were seen to have a weak sense of belonging to

the denomination, or to be trapped by their own introversion being caught up in their own

mission and lacking a bigger vision.[101] They had ceased to maintain a sense of covenant

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[97] 232
[98] 113
[99] 232
[100] 132, 313,314, 316, 319
[101] 122, 322

belonging and denominational identity[102] and were ignorant of the purpose and benefits of Home Mission[103] feeling a sense of apathy and inertia towards it.[104] Some of the churches were thought to consider that Home Mission primarily supports the Baptist infrastructure and would prefer to give to frontline mission activity.[105] One participant thought that the ignorance was compounded in that Baptist Colleges training ministers do not promote Home Mission.[106] A few interviewees thought it might relate to theology or missional practice in that some churches do not give for fear that their money will be used to support theologically 'liberal' churches, or situations that are not sufficiently mission-focussed.[107] Such an approach sees the donation less as a gift to the Baptist denomination for use in mission as it discerns best, but as an investment in specific mission opportunities. It undermines the sense of covenant and trust.

Generally interviewees were measured and gracious, but it is tempting to wonder whether some degree of deference bias shaped their responses as I expected a much harder attitude to be displayed. Given such understandings of those churches with a poor record of giving to Home Mission, it might be assumed that interviewees think that their own churches do have some sense of belonging and awareness despite the impression of routine loyalty. Conversely it is to be wondered whether some of the supposed reasons for churches not giving reflect some of their own views, given the mixed response of their own churches to Home Mission.

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[102] 317
[103] 131, 223, 232
[104] 123, 312, 233
[105] 318
[106] 318
[107] 212, 133, 111, 112

3.1.2.8.   *Theological Values underpinning Home Mission*

Despite the varied enthusiasm and practice in supporting Home Mission, interviewees believed it to be underpinned by positive theological values. One respondent mentioned most of the key themes, also identified by others, such as mission, the Body of Christ, mutual responsibility and generosity.[108] There was a widespread and strong emphasis upon mutuality, support, mission and giving with many identifying a combination of these values.

Typically, mutuality was seen as expressing being 'one in Christ,'[109] of belonging to the Body of Christ, an expression of the relational theology of the Trinity, the covenant relationship of membership, the biblical description of the partnership in the Gospel, and Christ's injunction to 'love one another'[110] bringing responsibility and accountability in the common engagement in mission with a strong emphasis upon evangelism and discipleship.[111] A sense of independence is combined with a wider vision[112] and Christian community, in which churches support one another, engage in mission with vision and demonstrate fairness.[113] The concept of support is rooted in such concepts as loving our neighbours and caring for the weaker brother.[114] Giving, stewardship and sharing for the greater good were also seen to influence the response of churches,[115] however, one participant did suggest that the support received by churches could feel paternalistic.[116]

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[108] 211
[109] 233
[110] 317, 221, 314, 316, 319. cf. Philippians 1:5 and John 13:34
[111] 221, 222, 318, 323
[112] 316, 112
[113] 315, 123, 221
[114] 122, 223
[115] 231, 311
[116] 312

The local church is seen as the primary agent of mission, carried out in obedience to Christ and supported by the finance of the wider Baptist community.[117] One Team Leader said that as mission is fundamental to Baptist life, sharing together in mission as well as supporting others financially is important.[118]

However, the articulation of such rich underlying values is at variance with the mediocre response evoked from the churches. It raises the question as to whether, in regard to Home Mission, finance should be the prime expression. Collaboration and mutuality in mission could be expressed in other ways. The theology and values articulated indicate the desire to think interdependently beyond the *enclave*, but the reality of practices seems to indicate that the values of independency are deeper and more determinative: the inclination for collaboration is absent. This cultural independency disables Baptists from more fully living out a translocal theology. A renewed spirituality of interdependency is required to counter Baptists' culture of independency.

3.1.2.9.   *Relationship of Home Mission to BUGB Budget*

As varied uses of the term Home Mission[119] can lead to confusion, participants were asked to consider the ways Home Mission relates to the budget of the Baptist Union. Responses fall into four categories. 1) Some saw them as essentially synonymous or 'totally intertwined.'[120] Home Mission is the budget of the Union.[121] 2) Some saw them as two separate, but essentially linked entities with Home Mission being the main source of

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[117] 321, 222, 313
[118] 212
[119] See introduction to Home Mission at Chapter 2 Section 2.3.3.
[120] 312
[121] 316

income.[122] 3) A number saw Home Mission as a percentage of the whole budget with estimates varying between 66% and 80%. 4) A small minority saw Home Mission as only the amount raised by the Appeal.

Almost all interviewees identified the three areas of expenditure of the Union's budget as being 1) The National Resource, 2) Associations and 3) Grants to churches and other ministries. As can be seen from the charts below all think that more is spent locally on grants than actually is, and their perceptions vary according to the role fulfilled by the participant. The expectation of local respondents is that much more would be spent on grants. This may reflect a lack of knowledge about the reality, but may also reflect their understandings gained from promotional material which appeals to the ethos of local churches engaging in mission. Regional interviewees can be seen to have a fairly accurate understanding about regional and national expenditure, but still have an overinflated view of what is actually spent on local churches. National respondents tend to think more is spent on churches and Associations than is actually the case. One complication is that the actual averages for 2010 show 33% being spent nationally and 7% on 'other' which is not referred to in charts indicating participants' response. This 'other' is expenditure by the National Resource on other services or to other causes. Generally, there is a disinclination to own up to how much it actually costs to run translocal organisations like the Union and Associations, and in turn to acknowledge that Baptists are a collective whole and not just a collection of individual churches in a loose alliance. This may also be seen to arise out of the independent enclave nature of Baptist churches and will have restrictive implications for translocal co-operation and the development of strategy.

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[122] 111, 213
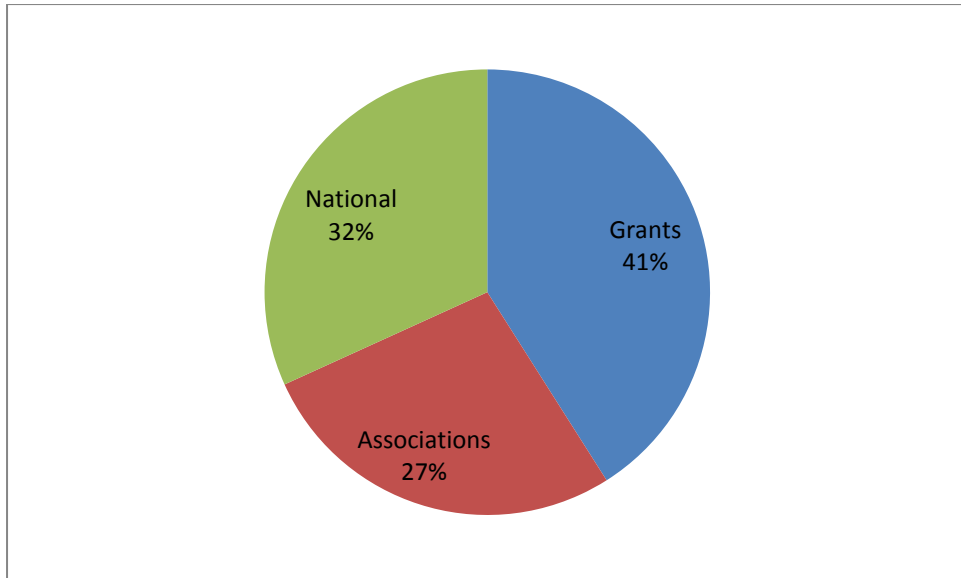
Figure 15: All interviewees' expectations of BUGB expenditure
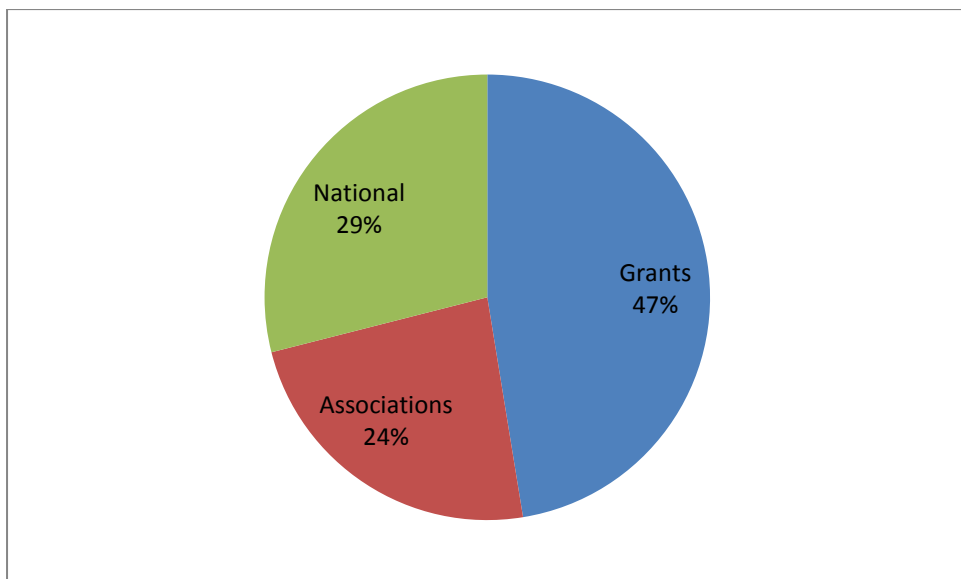
Figure 16: Local interviewees' expectations of BUGB expenditure
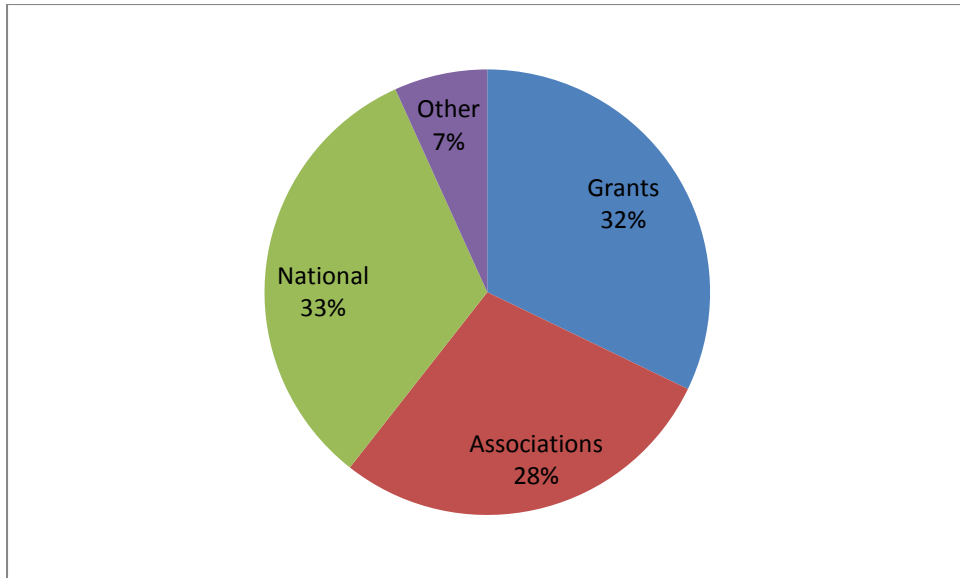
3.1.3.   Strategic decisions about finance

3.1.3.1.   Strategic decisions about the raising of finance

As finance is an indication of Baptist collaboration, interviewees' perceptions were sought about the way strategic decisions are made. They were uncertain as to who makes strategic decisions about the raising of finance which may reflect the complex bureaucratic consultative processes characteristic of the organisational structure of the Union or just a general lack of interest in what happens beyond the local church. One admitted that he had not thought about it deeply which may well be the experience of others.[123]The graphs below illustrate the different understandings of local, regional and national participants. It should be noted the participants may have mentioned more than one person or group. Overall, the position of the Union's Treasurer is seen to be significant as is the role of the Associations working in collaboration with the Union. Local interviewees had no common

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[123] 221

clear inclination as to who makes the decisions, regional participants gave little emphasis to the role of the Associations, but many saw the Treasurer and the Finance Department as making the decisions. National respondents gave little place to the Finance Department, but recognised the place of the Treasurer and the Associations.

There is no strong common awareness about who actually makes the decisions, and the responses indicate that different people are likely to be expecting responsibility to be exercised by different groups and officers. One national respondent thought that there was little strategic thinking taking place.[124] It is worth noting that six interviewees saw strategic decisions about national finance taking place in the local church, in that the local church decides its own level of contribution.

A tension is seen in the response of regional and national participants with the former giving little emphasis to the role of Associations, reflecting their feeling of disempowerment over decisions made in the Union, but the national interviewees recognised the place of Associations, perhaps reflecting the Union's sense of frustration regarding the influence of the Associations or the aspiration to a genuine partnership. Nonetheless the range of options and the lack of clarity reflect an unhealthy ignorance, an overly complicated decision-making process and the lack of permission for appropriate decisions to be taken. These comments relate to the scenario before the Union's reforms of 2013. It may be that some of these feelings of disempowerment amongst the Association are lessened, especially for those directly represented on the B.S.G.

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[124] 322

**Strategic Decisions re. raising finance:
all interviewees**
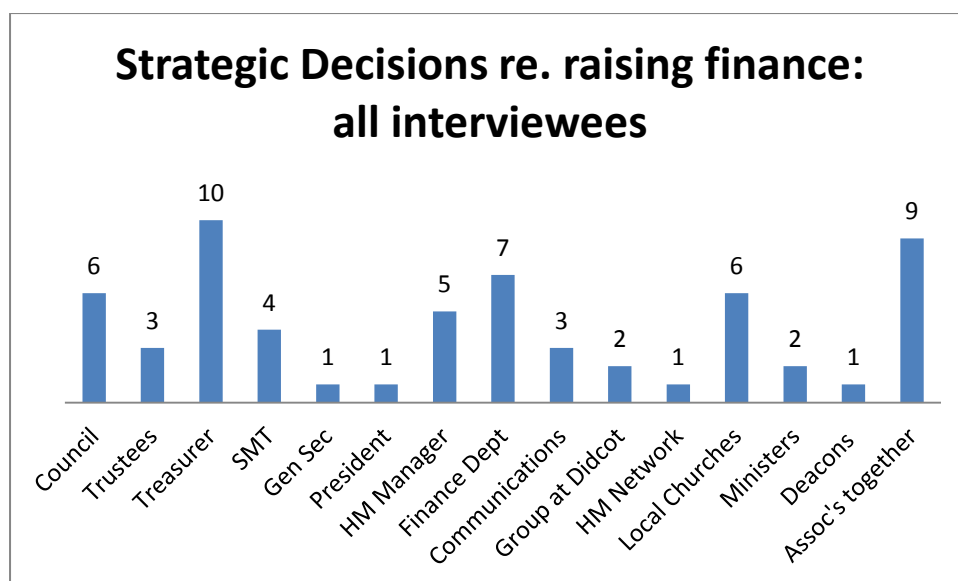
Figure 20: Who makes strategic decisions? Response of all interviewees. [125]

Local Interviewees
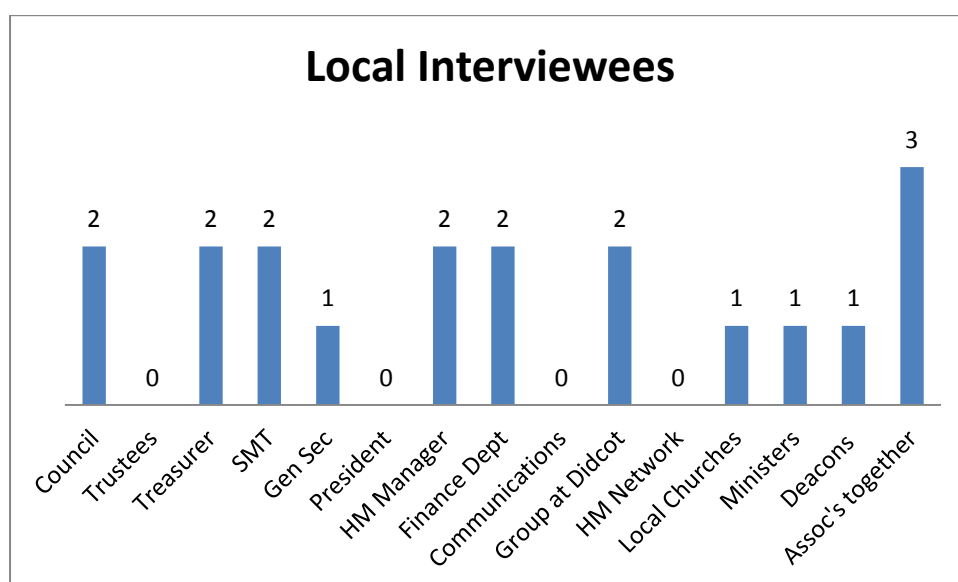
Figure 21: Who makes strategic decisions? Response of local interviewees.

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[125] Assoc's together refers to Associations working together in collaboration with the Union.
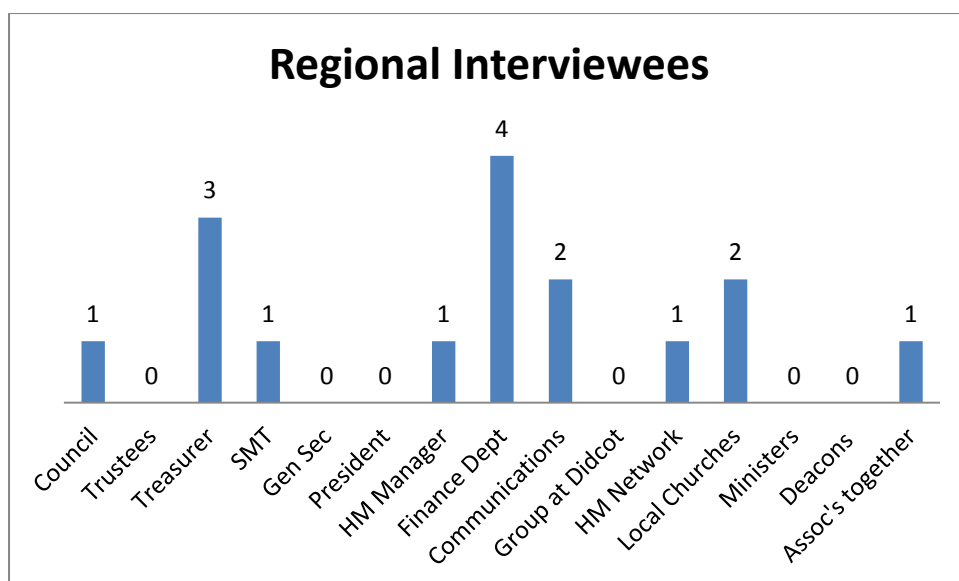
Figure 22: Who makes strategic decisions? Response of regional interviewees.
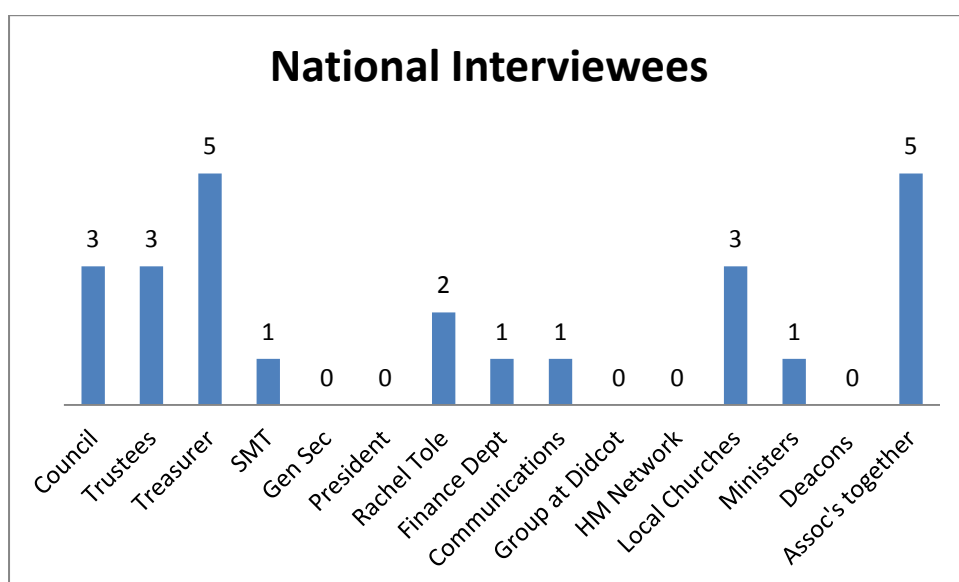
Figure 23: Who makes strategic decisions? Response of national interviewees.

Interviewees had differing views about the principles that guide the decision-making process. Mission, duty to the denomination and pragmatism, as expressed by one national participant, cover most of the principles that others identified.[126] Most thought that pragmatism was the determining feature and that the budget had a momentum of its own,

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[126] 313

increasing incrementally each year. Some thought that decisions were made in response to perceived needs and opportunities and in keeping with the Baptist ethos.[127] A few focussed on the broader purpose of the Union and a sense of belonging.[128] Others saw mission as most important, but recognised budgetary constraints.[129] A significant number placed service as a key principle whether in terms of responding to the needs of churches or the biblical ethic of sharing and helping.[130]

Many interviewees were content with the decision-making process for raising finance and did not want any changes. There was, however, awareness that asking for more from churches can be seen as intrusive.[131] A number expressed the need for greater connectivity between churches and the situations supported by Home Mission,[132] more collective ownership of the process,[133] and a common ownership of the vision.[134] This could be developed through publicity that helps churches see the benefits[135] and church visits offering practical help.[136] Only a few people spoke of the need for strategic planning over a number of years which would hold people accountable, and retain a degree of flexibility.[137]

Other suggestions for change included increased awareness-training for ministers, changing the name of Home Mission, the support of the Union by subscription and diverting all the Appeal income to mission.[138] Another said that the support of the Union

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[127] 233, 315
[128] 323,311, 122
[129] 221, 212, 133, 123
[130] 131, 122, 322, 321, 223, 132, 317, 316, 319,
[131] 122
[132] 122, 322
[133] 318
[134] 313
[135] 113
[136] 131
[137] 211, 321
[138] 311, 213

should be seen as part of Home Mission. A more pietistic approach suggested was to seek what God would want the Union to do and for the necessary resources.[139]

Given that most of the suggestions reflect minor changes to the current processes and that most participants were content, it is to be questioned whether this is because of genuine trust in the organisation of its personnel or a disinclination arising from a localist perspective.

3.1.3.2. Strategic decisions about the deployment of finance

Interviewees identified a range of possible options regarding who makes the decisions for the deployment of finance with some mentioning more than one. That fourteen identified the now defunct Union's Grants Committee demonstrates the close connection in their minds between the Home Mission Appeal and the support for the churches. Such identification does not reflect the full reality of the use of the money with only 32%[140] of the total budget being spent on grants to churches. That a range of fifteen other possibilities were named indicates both the bureaucratic consultative nature of the denomination and uncertainty about where decisions are made. Below is a table indicating the responses from the interviewees, but it is to be recognised that some of these committees and posts no longer exist.

Baptist Union Trustees	7
Baptist Union Council	8
Associations	9
National Grants Committee	14

[139] 312
[140] 2010 figures which are contemporary with the interviews.

Grants Manager	6
Treasurer	4
Regional Ministers	4
B.U. Senior Management Team	2
Finance Committee	6
Finance Department	2
Head of Finance	2
National Office	5
Executive	1
Local churches – applying for a grant	1
Various	1

Figure 24: Table of decision-makers about expenditure

The nature of the organisation and its processes may be the reason one national respondent said, 'I don't think nationally we do make strategic decisions, again, we are reactive:'[141] an opinion shared by a Team Leader.[142] Another national respondent described the budget as 'very set into ruts' with little room for decision-making.[143]

Interviewees recognised that a combination of principles could operate in guiding the decision-makers. The most prominent related to mission and stewardship, with response to needs and support being significant, and recognition of the need to resolve competing claims upon the Union's resources.[144] Mission was expressed in terms of extending God's Kingdom,[145] spreading God's Word,[146] bringing the Gospel to as many

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[141] 312
[142] 213
[143] 316
[144] 221
[145] 319
[146] 231

places as possible,[147] working towards agreed Association and Union strategies and seeing

the 'local church' as 'God's principal chosen vehicle … … for mission,'[148] although it was

expressed that decision-making should be focussed more locally.[149] Some spoke of loyalty

to existing projects and personnel with continuing financial support,[150] and referred to the

need to be forward-looking, innovative and visionary,[151] and enable churches and ministers

to be more effective.[152] One recognised the power of vested interest[153] and others

acknowledged the pragmatic stewardship of resources to maximise funds.[154] Within this

were external considerations such as the effect of market forces on some salaries and

compliance with legislation.[155]

Only four interviewees did not wish to see changes to the way decisions were

made about the deployment of finance with one national respondent describing the

process as 'heavily consultative',[156] but another as an 'effective system' which gives

'stability'.[157] A regional respondent was uncertain about change, but saw the system as

bureaucratic.[158] Others expressed the need for greater connectivity with real places, and

local ownership rather than the presentation of bland figures.[159] Requests for more money

are felt to be demotivating and there is a need for greater clarity as to what is supported.[160]

One regional participant with local church responsibility suggested that Associations could

be allocated an amount of money for them to decide how to use, but he acknowledged

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[147] 112
[148] 132, 315
[149] 233, 312, 213
[150] 323, 123, 311
[151] 322, 122
[152] 314
[153] 321
[154] 223, 212, 133, 222
[155] 113
[156] 313
[157] 314
[158] 212
[159] 122, 222
[160] 133

that would limit the national ability to act strategically.[161] As above[162] these comments were made before significance changes within the Union which devolved the decisions about grant to Associations. However, the level of bureaucracy within Associations in the decision-making process may change over time. Some Associations, such as the Northern Baptist Association and Yorkshire Baptist Association, have initially retained the forms and processes devised by the Union to facilitate the decision-making processes and have not significantly reduced bureaucracy requested from the churches. The North Western Baptist Association has sought to reduce the requirements upon churches asking for stories that can be circulated to promote support for Home Mission rather than reports to help committees in the decision-making process. However, the comment made above about this limiting the national ability to act strategically may yet prove to be true, especially if the Union adopts proposals for a formulaic approach to the distribution of funds to Associations.

Some thought that a more strategic approach should be taken with the allocation of grants to churches. Larger amounts of money could be allocated to fewer situations and grants could be given for five years.[163] There could be more policy debates within the B.U. Council,[164] and a clarification of the role of Associations and the involvement of the B.U.'s Mission Department in strategic thinking.[165] Others felt that more money should be given to support churches,[166] that it is unbaptist to limit grants to only those churches with B.U. accredited ministers,[167] and that the grants application process is too protracted.[168] One national respondent who also served as the minister of a small church wanted a holistic

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[161] 231
[162] Chapter 3 Section 3.1..2.3
[163] 211
[164] 316
[165] 317, 312
[166] 123
[167] 213
[168] 113

view of the denomination's resources to be taken including where the most experienced

ministers might serve.[169] Another national respondent took a contrary view and thought

that more could be given to designated projects although this would be detrimental to

church support.[170] Many wanted a strong mission focus, but one put it particularly clearly, 'I

would love to see the whole strategy and organisation of the Union focus on enabling

people to encounter Jesus Christ.'[171]

Skill and spirituality were also called for with one respondent seeing the need for

people with greater financial wisdom and another calling for more prayer for the income,

expenditure and staff of the Union.[172] Prayer was also seen to increase the sense of

belonging within the denomination as 'family … praying for one another.'[173]

The responses are wide ranging recognising the place of the B.U. Council for policy

debates and for sharper criteria around grants supporting churches and other ministries.

Only one saw Associations as having a more strategic role in decisions about finance. The

absence of further ideas may reflect the complexities of needing to satisfy a wide range of

stakeholders such as churches, Associations and special interest groups within the

denomination.

3.1.4. Leadership and governance

The development of a greater sense of interdependency and corporate strategy requires a

leadership capability that needs to be commensurate with the task and with Baptist

ecclesiology and culture. In order to explore their understanding of leadership,

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[169] 322
[170] 323
[171] 211
[172] 321, 232
[173] 232

interviewees were asked to name a leader, or type of leader, and also whether the characteristics of the leader would be compatible with Baptist practices.[174] Most believed that the leader, or leadership type, they named would be appropriate in a Baptist setting.

3.1.4.1.   Good Leadership

In regard to leadership, participants spoke about charisma, the ability to communicate and share well, to be consultative, upfront but not conceited, a person who could be followed, and who would enable and inspire. Personal charisma was the most commonly identified characteristic which included vision, passion, confidence, energy, courage and the ability to communicate, enthuse and inspire. Of almost equal importance were the personal relational qualities of compassion, care, friendship, dependability, the ability to work collaboratively, understand people and to make them feel special. One even suggested patriarchal or matriarchal approaches to leadership.[175] Closely linked to the relational is the requirement that leaders express humility and self-giving. Mention of other characteristics was considerably lower, but leaders were seen to be people with a clear sense of purpose who can turn words into action and accomplish tasks, but do so with the relational characteristics of listening in the discernment process and delegating roles to others. Leaders are expected to be people of integrity, conviction, self-awareness and spirituality. As enablers they are to be change-agents who help others towards an objective, giving responsibility, allowing personal development and providing accountability. They are required to have a level of intelligence that gives understanding, enables them to act with wisdom and graciousness and bring prophetic insight. Little mention was made of specific gifts except that leaders should have the right skills and ability to lead.

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[174] See Appendix 7
[175] 111

It is clear that leaders are expected to have charisma which relates to the role of the 'big man' in enclave communities,[176] but they seem to expect the typical relational attitudes of those communities. It is noteworthy that the interviewees emphasised character and personality rather than gifting and management skills. Vision and a clear sense of direction are seen to be important, but people wish to be led relationally rather than coerced into programmes. Almost all felt that the leadership style they identified would be appropriate in a Baptist setting. One national respondent and also local minister spoke of a leadership style that 'engages … enables', and 'can add the difference' … … 'I think leadership is about relationship fundamentally.'[177]

The consequence of this is that the Associations and Union can only lead the churches by relationships built on trust with common values and not with approaches that indicate something of a command and control management ethos.[178] The *positional* approaches of a translocal body seeking to express leadership towards a local church runs the risk of using an inappropriate vocabulary of leadership and strategy even as it seeks to help the local church and will therefore be misunderstood and mistrusted.

3.1.4.2.   *Governance*

Reflecting on their various engagements with governance within a Baptist context, whether local church deacons or translocal committees, interviewees estimated the degree to which those groups considered themselves to be exercising spiritual leadership with an overview of the life and direction of the church, or church management which only attends to the

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[176] Douglas, *Cultural Bias* 10ff and 47
[177] 322
[178] Ref Ch. 6

practicalities of church resources and organisation. The responses are plotted below with 1 being almost entirely spiritual leadership and 10 being almost entirely church management.

Figure 25: Spiritual leadership or church management

The perceived understandings of those engaged in Baptist governance groups places the focus more towards church management than spiritual leadership. It was admitted that it was 'easy for people in leadership' to get drawn into 'church management.'[179] Behind this is the issue of how Baptists engage in decision-making and what they think that they are doing in such groups.

Despite the affirmations of the priesthood of all believers and the concept of discerning the mind of Christ, it seems that many do not see themselves as involved in spiritual leadership, but as managing the church's affairs. If leaders are to raise their vision and engagement with the mission of God, a deeper awareness of the spiritual nature of church leadership needs to be achieved. This raises the matter of the training and preparation of lay leaders for the responsibilities and expectations of elders and deacons.

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[179] 132

Whilst some Associations provide training and support for lay leaders many have never accessed such help. It is unknown what level of preparation is offered by local churches, but probably not very much. People are appointed by the Church Meeting without the requirement for any training.

3.1.5. Association Life

3.1.5.1.   Relationship of Home Mission to Translocal decisions

A similar lack of clarity emerges from the interviews on the relationship of Home Mission to translocal decisions as it did on the funding of the Union in section 3.1.3. Section 3.1.2.9. shows that most participants acknowledged that the Union and Associations received funding from the national budget, but conversely not all recognised a relation between the budget <u>and</u> decision-making at Union and Association level. Two regional respondents thought that there was no significant relationship.[180] Two local respondents thought that there were common guiding principles steering both Union and Associations.[181] Two interviewees recognised that Associations have significant influence on the use of money to support churches and one of them said that Associations are entirely funded by monies raised by Home Mission with the consequent restriction on decision-making.[182] A total of 20 respondents (66%) perceived a very clear link, one describing Home Mission and translocal decision-making as 'intimately linked', and another

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[180] 221, 233.
[181] 122, 132.
[182] 322, 113

as a 'completely interdependent relationship' recognising that Associations provide advice

for national budget-setting and are engaged in the delivery of some Union policies.[183]

It was recognised that the Union and Associations are constrained by the amount

of funding raised nationally.[184] Union and Association personnel are seen to be influenced

by the knowledge that they are spending Home Mission money in the decisions they

take.[185] Decisions about strategy are seen to be dependent upon finance,[186] and one

national respondent hoped Associations made decisions in the light of the bigger picture.[187]

Association decision-making was seen to be constrained by the control exercised by central

structures of the denomination as well as questions of affordability.[188] Regional participants

saw Associations as inhibited from taking creative and bold decisions and precluded from

raising funds separately from the churches.[189] There was acknowledgement of potential

dysfunction in decision-making in that the Baptist Union Council could commit the

denomination to new initiatives that are beyond the anticipated expenditure budgeted.[190]

One local interviewee thought that the Union may commit to pieces of work without really

asking whether it is necessary, and without consideration of the broader perspective.[191]

3.1.5.2.   Associations' developing and implanting strategies.

Associations may develop strategies as they seek to fulfil their purpose in serving the

churches which may be for their member churches, their relationship with the Union, and

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[183] 321, 313
[184] 314
[185] 323
[186] 212
[187] 315
[188] 133, 318, 311
[189] 222, 213.
[190] 317
[191] 112

for its own organisational purposes. Interviewees reflected a range of understandings of what this might mean placing importance upon local churches as stakeholders whose views and expectations should shape Association action which should serve the churches, respond to their needs and facilitate their ministries and partnership with them.[192]

Associations should recognise the place of churches as members of their Associations and consult with them in the formulation of policy. It is also recognised that Associations ought to receive insights and advice from civil policy makers and public servants and that they should be developing a strong sense of corporate identity.[193] Associations could use events, church visits, and various media to raise their own profile amongst their member churches and to enable churches to see Associations as part of the link with the Union.[194] It was recognised that many church members do not know what an Association Council is or what it does.[195] However, another identified the need for Associations to work on budgeting and for their Councils[196] to know what they are doing, and to engage with issues such as risk assessments, appropriate terms of employment, and also develop their own structural awareness.[197] Association Councils are not always seen to work in a strategic way,[198] but should seek to be supportive and visionary. However, this is dependent upon the personnel involved.[199]

Whilst it was thought that Councils should be participative and strategic it was recognised that they do not have a daily focus on Association life, and much Association activity is focussed through the work of the Regional Ministers who play a key role in the

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[192] 122, 211, 221, 231, 232
[193] 323
[194] 232
[195] 232
[196] Trustee Boards
[197] 321
[198] 322
[199] 223

relationship with churches.[200] The Regional Minister's role is to challenge the churches without pre-determining what churches need: to listen, raise awareness of opportunities and challenges for mission, and equip in a way appropriate to the church.[201]

Communication[202] and consultation[203] with the churches were both identified as a component part of an Association strategy in regard to local churches. Communication should be personal rather than cold and bureaucratic.[204] This could also be seen as a way of producing and deploying non-financial resources.[205] Relationships with churches should be developed through strategically-planned visits which include personal support to church leaders and public ministry.[206]

The importance of relationships and partnerships with others such as those serving the Union's 'National Resource'[207] or with B.M.S. World Mission was clearly identified.[208] The Association should recognise its place within the bigger picture of the Union from which it receives leads, which in turn inform and flow through the Association's own strategies.[209] A national respondent believed that Associations should be developing strategies in relation to each other and to the Union.[210] It was thought that Associations should develop relationships without barriers and gatekeepers.[211] However, a sense of frustration is created when strategy is developed by an Association if it then discovers that the Union wants to impose its strategy, or focus on something else.[212] Associations are to be full partners with the Union which requires the management structure of the National

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[200] 221 and 233
[201] 211
[202] 131
[203] 323
[204] 131
[205] 223
[206] 321
[207] A term frequently used to describe the Union's Office in Didcot
[208] 212, 318
[209] 231
[210] 318
[211] 322
[212] 212

Office to be 'sufficiently robust, flexible and inclusive.'[213] One female respondent

emphasised the importance of relationship which enables people to 'give and receive' and

to be 'vulnerable,' but felt that 'it's all a bit macho'.[214] Strategies relating to the Union were

needed to reflect the regional differences, or 'flavours' and 'preponderances'[215] of the

various Associations. They are to have a strong emphasis upon relationships and be

focussed though the role of the Team Leaders.

Team Leaders were seen to have a representative and relational role vis-à-vis each

Association and the Union and it was recognised that Associations may only relate to the

Union through Team Leaders, and the Union's Council members, prior to the recent

reforms, may not understand Associations.[216] One regional respondent saw Associations as

agents of the Union delivering Union provision at the local level.[217] However this approach

seems to regard the Associations as sub-units of the Union subservient to Union policy

rather than partners. One interviewee expressed the opinion that the former Senior

Management Team of the Union, now replaced by Specialist Team Leaders, and the

Associations' Team Leaders should meet together[218] and that the Union should not have

disproportionate expectations of what Associations can accomplish.[219]

At least one local interviewee offered no ideas about strategies relating to

Associations and the Union,[220] another felt he lacked the knowledge to be able to comment

on strategies for the Association and Union.[221] It could be that they are not the only ones

who felt that they lacked the necessary insight and awareness of Baptist sociality to be able

to engage more fully. One of these interviewees is a member of a large, fairly self-sufficient

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[213] 233
[214] 321
[215] 132
[216] 322
[217] 223
[218] Something that they now do in a forum called 'Baptist Leaders Team'
[219] 321
[220] 133
[221] 121

church and it may be that church secretaries of smaller churches are more understanding of the workings of Home Mission as they may have local needs that require them to engage with the wider denomination. It is important to consider how large churches gain a greater interest and commitment to the common mission of Baptists as they represent the greater number of Baptist church members.[222]

The independency of the local church constrains Associations and limits the effectiveness of strategic planning:[223] some people are suspicious of Associations.[224] Associations can only invite, encourage or challenge churches to pursue certain actions: the Church Meeting will decide the church's course of action. The Association cannot impose a strategy. [225] One respondent saw the Association as an 'agency' that enables its constituent parts, that is churches, to work well and collectively.[226] However, it is to be questioned as to whether this merely subsumes Association strategy into only serving the churches.

Associations need strategies and infrastructure that supports churches in mission, develops their strategic thinking,[227] enables them to relate together in mission and engages them in decision-making processes and consideration of the wider mission to the area. The way in which they communicate and relate to the churches must reflect the relational ethos of the *enclave* culture in order to be effective. However, it needs to be questioned whether the Association ends up as a resource agency rather than a co-operative missional collective. Associations can tend to be reactive rather than proactive,

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[222] 121
[223] 231
[224] 133
[225] 132
[226] 132
[227] 318

[228] but they can help to develop leadership and provide resourcing in specialist areas such as finance and child protection.[229]

3.1.5.3. *Association constraints*

Independency was seen as a significant constraint upon Associations developing strategies. People's focus is upon their own organisation and the challenge is to enable them to have a 'wider viewpoint'.[230] Associations are reliant upon the churches, but the churches' deep sense of independence and suspicion of translocal bodies are barriers which may be overcome if common aims are adopted.[231] Other constraints relate to resources in terms of people and finance, distance between Associations and the Union's national office in Didcot, the lack of easy continuity between Association Council meetings and the consequent loss of impetus and collective memory,[232] and the varying understandings of strategy: 'everybody has different ideas about strategy' and there is no 'real understanding' of the nature and purpose of strategy.'[233] It was thought that sustaining institutions can inhibit the mission focus of churches.[234] However, Associations were seen to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances and one Team Leader regarded the Association's strategy to be always in draft form so that it could be adapted to the evolving situation.[235]

Given the level of reliance upon the Union for finance it is to be considered whether Associations are systemically weak. One respondent was unsure and wondered

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[228] 322
[229] 212
[230] 132
[231] 231, 133
[232] 223
[233] 322
[234] 322
[235] 212

whether one of their strengths was flexibility.[236] Five said that Associations were not and if

Associations had their own reserves they had a degree of flexibility and opportunity.[237] One

suggested that such weakness encourages trust in God.[238] A Team Leader saw the

Associations as strong and as a threat to the Union, but the control of resources for mission

was seen to reside in the national office of the Baptist Union.[239] National participants

appeared more defensive. One saw Associations as having a strong position with a new

sense of 'identity and strength' resulting from the changes implemented in 2002.[240]

Another believed that it was 'a good strength' that Associations were funded by the Union

and that they are strong and creative.[241] It was recognised that some Associations were in

weaker positions than others. Those that were almost totally financially reliant upon the

Union were viewed as more vulnerable than others, especially as some committee

members who make financial decisions may not be fully conversant with Association life

and needs.[242]

3.2.   Preliminary observations

The inherent tension between independency and interdependency runs through the

interviewee responses. It is shown in the ambiguity towards interdependency which is

affirmed as a concept and not really questioned as a theory, but is weak in practice. Whilst

theologically affirmed, other churches are perceived as not engaging, and participants

often felt that commitment to their own situation, a lack of time and distance between

churches impedes their wider engagement. There is a recognised absence of vision and

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[236] 221
[237] 133, 223, 212, 222
[238] 212
[239] 211
[240] 314
[241] 313
[242] 312

imagination that might encourage effective collaboration. Whilst a clearer articulation of

the theology and value of interdependency would be helpful, especially at a popular level,

it is a clearer vision for the practical reality that is seen to be significant in engendering the

common action. It is not so much that minds have to be won to facilitate greater

interdependency as hearts to be changed. To change such a cultural mind-set will require

long term strategic planning, rather than simply repeating the theology.

The value of Home Mission is widely recognised and appreciated despite the

various understandings of what it actually accomplishes. However, the actual processes of

financial support seem to be more reliant upon duty and tradition than passion and

enthusiasm. It is recognised that changes to the Home Mission scheme and its processes of

allocation need to be mission-based. There is generally a disinclination to recognise how

much it actually costs to run the Union and Associations, and to accept that supporting

Baptists' collective life and mission is part of what it means to be Baptist. Similarly there is

reluctance in the processes of raising Home Mission monies to acknowledge that Baptists

are a collective whole and not just a collection of individual churches in a very loose

alliance. Given the pervasive *enclave* nature and ethos predominant amongst Baptists, it

will be important for them to consider whether they really perceive themselves to be a

Union or a loose federation of churches.

There was confusion about how decision-making processes work and who was

responsible for them before the reforms. There appeared to be no strategic view of finance

and decision-making. The structures existing prior to 2013 created multiple and competing

places of accountability restricting the possibilities for either being strategic for the long

term or flexible enough to respond to quickly changing scenarios. It is recognised that there

is a need for more responsive decision-making processes rather than being restricted by

infrequent Council and committee meetings. Leadership is expected to act relationally and

facilitate strategic action rooted in communal discernment processes. A deeper awareness of the spiritual nature of church leadership needs to be achieved.

Associations are seen to be significantly restricted by local church independency in their ability to develop strategies. Associations should be linked into local churches and express real partnership with them which would help to overcome the constraints created by independency. Associations are expected to provide the strategy and infrastructure that enables the churches in mission and in relating together in that mission. The relational ethos of Baptist culture is shown in that the concept of partnership was considered to be crucial for all levels of co-operation: Baptists need to become 'much more communal.'[243] It was considered important to enable large churches to gain a greater interest in and commitment to the common mission of Baptists. A further tension was identified as being that between the roles and responsibilities of Associations and the Union.[244] Whilst both are translocal bodies, both are infused with a culture of independency with the Union exercising a stronger *positional* culture vis-à-vis the Associations.

I shall now turn to the history of Baptists in England to identify those factors that helped to create their culture of independency but also to identify those precedents that may be drawn upon for establishing appropriate models of translocal co-operation and ministry.

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[243] 322
[244] 213

Chapter 4: Covenanted together under Christ: Baptist history, theology and culture

4.1. Introduction

Firstly, this chapter uses historical material selected in order to explore and analyse the twin tracks of Baptists' commitment to the liberty of the local church, their significant witness to collaborative engagement and the consequent tension between the two. It then examines the selected theological themes of baptism, liberty, covenant and authority as those which particularly shape Baptist ecclesiology.

Cultural Theory[1] is used to analyse historical expressions of the local church and translocal organisation, their consequences for Baptist sociality and the possibilities for future development. This is done recognising the reciprocal relationship of influence between theology and history, when each can be seen to help shape the other, which demonstrates that Baptists' ecclesiology is both seen in and also shaped by, their history.

Independency has characterised Baptists from their beginnings as shown in self-definitions which distinguish them from the Established and Roman Catholic Churches, are forged in the face of State and Ecclesiastical opposition. Baptists emerged from the English Puritans, Separatists and the more radical Anabaptists and were the influence of reform movements such as the Lollards, although White places less emphasis upon a link to Anabaptists.[2] They experienced persecution in the seventeenth century for religious, social and political reasons and some Baptists, such as Richard Overton, were active in reform

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[1] Cf. Douglas, *Cultural Bias*
[2] White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 21and Watts, *The Dissenters* 7

and even joined the Levellers,[3] although Baptist support for Leveller views diminished as they became 'increasingly radical.'[4]

Greater liberty came during the Commonwealth period and Baptists shared in the loose confederation with Presbyterians and Independents comprising the Cromwellian Church:[5] seven Baptists served in the 140 member Barebones Parliament of 1653.[6] However, the Restoration of the Monarchy brought renewed repression which only lifted towards the end of that century.

Both Particular and General Baptists developed Associations as significant expressions of translocal relationships; which was given increased impetus by the liberty gained from the *Act of Toleration* of 1689.[7] The *New Connexion of General Baptists,* which emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a result of the Methodist Revival, brought fresh vitality to church life and to translocal relationships,[8] and ultimately separated from the existing General Baptists who affirmed Unitarianism in 1815.[9] Adult attendance at Baptist churches grew in the nineteenth century to over 500,000 in 1851, although church membership was only about 150,000.[10] Whilst 70% of Baptists and Congregationalists were artisans, labourers or miners,[11] their engagement at the forefront

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[3] Watts, *The Dissenters* 118

[4] Watts, *The Dissenters* 123

[5] Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism, C.1530-1700*, Politics, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001) 69

[6] J. Lilburne, *The Christian Mans Triall* Watts, *The Dissenters* 144

[7] White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 137f

[8] Walsh, 'Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century', 293 in Rubert Davies and Gordon Rupp (eds), *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain,* Vol. 1 , London: Epworth 1965. cited in Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism : The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Nottingham: IVP, 2004) and Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism : The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* 179. Cf Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, History of the English Baptists (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986) 111

[9] Roger Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2nd ed. 2005) 53

[10] A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Baptist Union, 1947)201

[11] Alan D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England : Church, Chapel, and Social Change, 1740-1914*, Themes in British Social History. (London: Longman, 1976) Cited in J. H. Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century*, History of the English Baptists (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1994) 270

of political radicalism seemed more limited than in previous centuries,[12] but they remained

committed to religious and political freedom which came for Baptists with the repeal of the

Test and Corporation Acts in 1828.[13]

The Particular Baptists originally established the national Union in 1813 and

merged with the New Connexion of General Baptists in 1891 to form the Union as it now

exists.[14] Despite the optimism of the late nineteenth century, Baptists were to face major

challenges in the twentieth century with significant church decline in the United Kingdom,

compounded by the devastation of two World Wars, the Great Depression and the

significant social changes of the 1960s.[15] That said, there were some brief periods of

growth as in 1949 with a 10% increase in baptisms, and new churches were built in the

post-war construction and building boom.[16] Whilst the Charismatic Movement of the 1960s

and 1970s revitalised worship in some churches, it also brought division as many people

left Baptist churches in favour of the new free churches and some churches even left the

Union in order to join the new streams of the House Church Movement.[17] In the 1990s the

Baptist Union engaged in a consultation with churches and Associations known as the

Listening Process,[18] which initiated the events that would ultimately result in the current

thirteen Associations. Following a further process of consultation during 2011 and 2012

with churches, colleges, Associations and other committees and groups within the Union,

the Union's Council agreed the Union's vision to grow and nurture 'healthy communities of

missionary disciples in covenant relationship with one another in order to enable them to

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[12] P. d'A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) 392 in Robert Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)57

[13] *Parliamentary History of England*, XXVIII (1789-91) 30 GEORGE III, 1816, 436-7. cited in Brown, *English Baptists Eighteenth Century* 133 -135.

[14] Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 153f

[15] Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 35ff

[16] Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 266& 274

[17] Such as New Frontiers International, Pioneer and the Salt and Light Group.

[18] Cf. B.U.G.B., *The Listening Day Process: A Five Year Plan Towards 2000* (Didcot, B.U.G.B, 1992)

participate in the mission of God.'[19] Recognition was given to the sense of 'us and them'

attitudes felt by many wherever they were located in the Baptist community, yet many

endorsed the 'importance of mutuality' and the 'need for relational independence'

resulting in mutual support and even 'mutual accountability.'[20] The desire for a new sense

of collaboration came to be referred to as the 'new we'[21] with the hope that this would

permeate the new Union governance structures.

4.2. Local Church: The Church as the local covenanted community

4.2.1. The Local church as a strongly bounded group

The local church provides the dominant culture for Baptist sociality. The ethos of a

bounded community became an inherent defining aspect of the culture of Baptist churches

early in their history as typified in the Gainsbrough congregation described by Bradford:

> as the Lord's free people joined themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a
>
> church estate, in the fellowship of the gospel, to walk in all His ways made known,
>
> or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, the Lord
>
> assisting them.[22]

Similarly the church at Bromsgrove assumed their own governance under Christ

and determined that the 'brethren of ye congregation should meet to regulate ye affairs of

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[19] B.U.G.B., *Working Together, Seeking the Future: Our Vision for the Future of the Baptist Union* (Didcot, B.U.G.B., 2012) 6

[20] B.U.G.B., *Working Together* 7

[21] B.U.G.B., *Leadership and Governance* 1. This expresses the desire to seek a fresh sense of collaboration inclusive of all parts of the Union.

[22] John Smyth: W.T. Whitley ed, *The Works of John Smith Ii*, 1 vols., vol. 2 (Cambridge: 1915); ed. W. T. Whitley, *The Works of John Smyth Ii*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Cambridge: 1915); Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006) 332, 493, 548-50. Cited in Wright, *The Early English Baptists* 18f.

ye Church.'[23] The bounded nature of the church as discrete groups is seen in the *London Confession* of 1644, which states that Christ has 'given power to his whole Church to receive in and cast out, by way of Excommunication, any member; and this power is given to every particular Congregation, and not one particular person, either member or Officer, but the whole.'[24]

Theologically such churches were articulating a radical ecclesiology, but anthropologically they exhibited the behaviour typical of an emerging sect demonstrating the outlook of strongly bounded groups emphasising their theology and boundaries, distinguishing themselves from society and the Established Church and managing entrance into local church membership. Typical of 'enclave' communities, they valued equality and liberty[25] to discern God's will for themselves and were also suspicious of the external powers of the state and the Established Church, being convinced that children educated in Anglican schools were 'not only catechised but prejudiced against dissenters'.[26] Brackney's assertion that Baptists were 'poor, persecuted, despised dissenters who were considered outside the mainstream of English church life,'[27] indicates that they would have moved from an *isolate*[28] situation and found identity and support in a strong group society. Baptists' lack of social and political power, persecution,[29] and the scorn of the Anglicans would have strengthened the inclination towards forming strongly bounded groups.[30]

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[23] James M Reniham, *Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists, 1675-1705* (Eugene, OR: Paternoster, 2008) 79
[24] *The London Confession* in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 168
[25] Douglas, *Cultural Bias* 19 and 22
[26] Brown, *English Baptists Eighteenth Century* 52
[27] William Brackney, 'The Dippers Dipt,' *Christian History* Volume IV, no. 2 (1985) 10
[28] Douglas, *Cultural Bias* 20
[29] Underwood, *English Baptists,* 94
[30] Cf. Public debate on 17th October 1642 between the skilled debater and well-educated senior Anglican, Daniel Keatley, and the Baptist artisan, William Kiffin, demonstrated the scorn felt towards Baptists and their principles. Underwood, *English Baptists,* Kiffin lost both parents in the plague and was apprenticed in the brewing trade to the Leveller John Lilbourne.

Fear and suspicion of the outsider is typical of an *enclave* group as described by

Douglas, and both General and Particular Baptists collaborated in defending their cause

and published *The Humble Apology of Some People Commonly Called Anabaptists* which

sought to distance them from the rebels, the violent fanaticism of the Munster Anabaptists

and those in Holland who had influenced early Baptist leaders.[31] Although persecution

eased after the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 allowing Dissenters to worship in public,

its natural effect would be to enhance the Baptists' sense of identity and boundaries which

relates to the sense of injustice felt by those in an *enclave.* Dissenting meeting places and

teachers could be licensed, but those licences could be cancelled and the information used

to imprison ministers.[32] The Act of Toleration of 1689 brought greater freedom, allowing

'Meeting Houses' to be licensed, but oaths of supremacy and allegiance were still made to

the Crown, and tithes and church rates were still paid to the Established Church[33] all of

which deepened the sense of injustice within their 'enclave' culture. The controlled

boundaries and enclave culture articulated in the 1644 London Confession can still be seen

in the *Approved Governing Document*[34] for churches to use when registering with the

Charity Commission, with Church Membership remaining controlled by the Church

Meeting.[35]

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[31] Underwood, *English Baptists,*94
[32] Underwood, *English Baptists,*102
[33] White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,*137
[34] A document negotiated between the Baptist Union and the Charity Commission for use when registering a church as a charity. It is not essential that a church use this document, but expedient in that it saves the legal costs of a church drawing up its own document. It seeks to reflect historic Baptist values within the constraints of the law and gives options for churches to choose from such as with open and closed membership.
[35] B.U.G.B. "C26 Approved Governing Document (04/2008)." (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2008 (accessed 1st February 2011) 4f.

4.2.2.   The Local church and regulation

Baptists have been influenced and shaped by the legislation and regulation of the State and the socio-economic, political and gender rules and norms of British society. Farm labourers of the seventeenth century and factory workers of the nineteenth century fulfilled the expected subservient roles, yet within the church community they enjoyed equality commensurate with an *enclave* society, having a say, even a vote, in the life of the church. New church members found themselves valued in a 'democratic' community. Women, who were accorded more respect than in wider society and were gradually given a vote in church meetings, took on substantial roles in Christian education, hymnody, philanthropy and overseas mission. Many working class men became deacons and lay preachers. The role and profile of women slowly improved and they appeared as platform speakers at the Baptist Assembly in 1889, but it was not until 1922 that the first woman minister was placed on the Baptist Union's accredited list of ministers.

Sometimes Baptists experienced stronger internal regulation as with Particular Baptists who became increasingly restrictive and narrow.[36] Similarly 'Scotch Baptists' brought a greater sense of regulation and their views began to influence English churches as they planted churches as far south as Nottingham and London. Aiming to restore 'all the simplicities of the Church of the apostolic age' they eschewed paid ministry and taught that churches should have at least two elders who would be responsible for the government and teaching of the church whilst deacons were to attend to financial and business matters.[37]

Baptist chapels developed from the seventeenth century rural meeting houses of early dissent, made from converted cottages and barns, to preaching centres capable of

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[36] Underwood, *English Baptists,*138
[37] Underwood, *English Baptists,*189f

seating hundreds in the growing urban centres, as they responded to the population

growth and the influence of American revivalism. The change reflects something of the

tension, which still remains, between the Puritan understanding of the covenanted

gathered church and the church as a mission agency. The latter may require more authority

vested in leaders and more regulation which would be in tension with the ethos of seeking

to be the community of God as Baptists have traditionally understood it. The application of

group-grid theory reveals tensions about the understanding of the nature of the local

church itself, but also in its relationship to the more *positional* translocal organisation.

Baptist Church Meetings are an expression of group, or 'associational authority' as

recognised by Rudge [38] which enables leadership to be 'legitimized by values'.[39] This

associational authority and leadership legitimised by values are inherent to the nature of

Baptists and to the culture of *enclave* communities. Authority is associational whether in

the local church or the Union or Association Assemblies and similarly leadership is

legitimised by values which must reflect that of the *enclave* nature of Baptists. Locally and

translocally, Baptists exercise a form of associational authority in which the ministry is

'firmly subordinated to the immediate authority of the covenanted community'[40]seeking to

live 'under the rule of Christ as covenant-maker.'[41] Leadership and authority that is not

rooted in this cultural understanding is unlikely to be effective amongst Baptists. The

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[38] Torry, *Managing God's Business*87 referring to Rude, Peter F. *Ministry and Management, (*London: Tavistock Publications (1968) and Rudge, Peter F. 'Styles of Administration in Churches and their Theological Presuppositions', in Milton, C.L. (ed), *The Social Sciences and the Churches*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark) p172ff.
[39] Torry, *Managing God's Business* 167 Referencing Bartholomew, John miles (1981) ' A Sociological View of Authority in Religious Organizations', *Review of Religious Research,* **23** (2), 118-32
[40] Ernest A. Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England* (London: S.C.M., 1944) 63 cited in Andrew Rollinson, *The Attentive Community: Recovering God's Gift of Communal Discernment* 2009 5
[41] *Covenant 21: Covenant for a Gospel People* Didcot: BUGB. 2000 6

approach of Appreciative Inquiry[42] may provide a communal framework for enabling Baptists to cast a new future.

Bureaucracy developed in Baptist churches in the nineteenth century as they adopted practices such as formal minutes, democratic procedures, and an increased number of committees and departments in churches.[43] As Payne suggests, the Church Meeting changed from a 'church court' to a 'business meeting' focussing on 'matters of property, equipment and organisation.'[44] According to Wright the church became 'an organisational-institutional syndicate determined by the legal criteria of society.'[45] Even in 1933 H.H. Rowley recognised the need for transformation in the Church Meeting acknowledging its poor attendance, lack of inspiration and 'dead formality'.[46] Bureaucracy is an expression of organisational 'routinization' of practice and authority. An organisation's philosophy and culture are critical in determining best use, extent and style of bureaucracy. A certain level is required to enable a community to engage in mission as Enger makes clear saying that it is 'comparatively simple to be a covenant community,' but 'vision and strategy are required to fulfil the commission to evangelise.'[47] Over-routinization and bureaucracy was seen to have a demotivating result. Denominations experience pressure to develop increasingly bureaucratic structures in order to counter the influence of traditional and charismatic authority.[48] However, the bureaucratic approach is counter to the nature of churches shaped by the relational values of *enclave* communities such as trust and egalitarianism. Bureaucracy reflects a *positional* culture, but can help *enclave*

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[42] Cf. Chapter 1 Section 1.4.5.
[43] Malcolm J. Enger, 'Whatever Happened to the Covenant Community? Baptist Church Meetings in the Nineteenth Century,' *Baptist Quarterly* 42, no. 8 (2008) 522f
[44] Ernest A. Payne, *The Fellowship of Believers* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1954) 105 cited in Enger, '*Whatever Happened to the Covenant Community?*,' 533
[45] Nigel Wright, *Challenge to Change : A Radical Agenda for Baptists* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991) 108
[46] Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 202
[47] Enger, '*Whatever Happened to the Covenant Community?*,' 535
[48] Torry, *Managing God's Business* 102 referencing Benson, J. Kenneth and Dorsett, James H. (1971) 'Towards a Theory of Religious Organizations', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, **10** (2), 139-51

communities restrain traditional and charismatic power, and provide a routinization that increases efficiency.

However, Baptist churchmanship culture is rooted in *enclave* type and whilst embracing routinization for effectiveness in mission, the nature of the bureaucracy must be appropriate to that culture. Bureaucracy in translocal relationships must serve the purpose of mission rather than control and restrict, and be a means of liberating churches into a greater fulfilment of their mission and into a deeper collaboration. The more *positional* translocal bodies need to constantly breathe relationality into translocal bureaucracy exhorting churches to a common ownership of the missional imperative, expressing common values and exercising common responsibility.[49] An appropriate model of bureaucracy must be discovered that effectively enables the aims of association, typically exemplified in the Abingdon Association, as being to exercise mutual care, keep the churches pure, enable love beyond one's own congregation, develop combined strength so as to prosper the work of God, encourage mutual encouragement, prevent misunderstanding and to give advice.[50]

Stephen Ibbotson recognises Congregationalism as the common life[51] of disciples eschewing the 'lording it' of hierarchy.[52] He counters purely formal understandings of '*structural congregationalism*'[53] arguing for a '*habitual congregationalism*' which is related to every dimension of church life and operating at every level 'of leadership and decision

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[49] See Rollinson above
[50] White *Association Records 23* Quoted by Randall *Counsel and Help* 3 cited in Chapter 4
[51] Stephen Ibbotson, *Apostolic Leadership and Congregational Principles - Reflections for Discussion* 2007 7
[52] Ibbotson, *Apostolic Leadership* 7
[53] Ibbotson, *Apostolic Leadership* 7

making.'[54] Andrew Rollinson describes the theological basis for a discerning community as a common ownership of power, enjoyment of liberty and carrying of responsibility.[55]

4.3.   Translocal Organisation: Associations and the Union

4.3.1.   Baptist translocal organisations

Associations and the Union are both bounded communities reflecting a congregational ecclesiology based on covenant relationships in a similar manner to that of local churches. Each translocal body is therefore a bounded community of bounded communities. Associations became the characteristic units of Baptist translocal organisation from the mid seventeenth century and were established for mutual care and accountability, to extend love beyond the local congregation to develop combined strength in order to prosper the work of God, to prevent misunderstandings, give advice and confirm the authenticity of the churches to a wider world[56]. Recognising every church as 'a distinct and compact City in it selfe,' *The 1644 London Confession* states that 'are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsell and help one of another in all needfull affaires of the Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their onely head.'[57]

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[54] Ibbotson, *Apostolic Leadership* 8
[55] Rollinson, *Attentive Community* 8
[56] ed. B.R. White, *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660,Part 3: The Abingdon Association* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1974) *23* cited in Ian M. Randall, "Counsel and Help: European Baptists and Wider Baptist Fellowship," in *Baptist World Alliance Symposium* (Elstal, Berlin: Baptist World Alliance, 2007) 3
[57] Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 168f *The 1644 London Confession* Article XLVII

Randall suggests that the General Baptist references to 'the Church' and not only to 'the churches' indicates a Connexional ecclesiology[58] as seen in their *Orthodox Creed of 1679* which states that assemblies and councils 'make but one church, and have lawful right, and suffrage in this general meeting, or assembly to act in the name of Christ: it being of divine authority, and is the best means under heaven to preserve unity, prevent heresy, and superintendency among, or in any congregation whatsoever within its own limits of jurisdiction.'[59] The *Creed* suggests that although their councils and assemblies had greater authority and regulation over their member churches than Particular Baptists, the local churches still assessed the validity of the translocal body's decisions for its own situation. Being gathered as 'one church' with authority to act 'in the name of Christ' in 'superintendency' over the churches gave the Assemblies a *positional* approach which is countered by an *enclave* ethos articulated by Grantham, the Messenger for Lincolnshire, who stated that Assembly decisions should be received respectfully yet they 'may lawfully doubt what they deliver unless they confirm it by the Word of the Lord.'[60]

A new major stream of Baptists emerged during the eighteenth century resulting from the Methodist Revival which brought together two distinct groups of Arminian Baptists from the Midlands and Yorkshire into The New Connexion of General Baptists founded in 1770.[61]The New Connexion demonstrated two significant Methodist characteristics: evangelical zeal and a strong sense of corporate belonging.[62] Mutual support was demonstrated in the provision of periodical literature, the encouragement of Sunday Schools, the establishing of a fund for aged ministers, and in 1815 The General

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[58] General Association of General Baptists. General Assembly., William Thomas Whitley, and Baptist Historical Society (Great Britain). *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England : With Kindred Records*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for the Society by the Kingsgate Press, 1909) xxx-xxxi cited in Randall, "Counsel and Help: European Baptists and Wider Baptist Fellowship," 4

[59] Lumpkin, *Confessions,*327 Article XXXIX

[60] Underwood, *English Baptists,* citing Taylor Vol 1 pp 461ff

[61] Underwood, *English Baptists,*149f

[62]Underwood, *English Baptists,*153

Baptist Missionary Society, but they saw no biblical warrant for the translocal ministry of Messengers.[63]

Some existing Associations were either re-invented or re-invigorated in the light of the Methodist Revival and several others were founded around this time[64] representing the growth of the Baptist movement and the desire for mutual support, action and accountability. Associations began to take new mission initiatives, including establishing funds to support churches, encouraging preaching in villages, church planting, evangelism and forming separate societies to achieve these ends.[65] New leaders in London included Abraham Booth (1734-1806) who was instrumental in the founding of the Stepney College[66] and the formation of an itinerant society for preaching in the villages which was later renamed the Baptist Home Mission Society and its work later absorbed into the Baptist Union.[67] However, even in 1833, it was claimed that less than half of the churches were in Associations, indicating the depth of the local enclave culture.[68]

Associations took on new functions such as the raising of finance for new buildings as a result of which some became trust bodies for their churches. They sought to offer and facilitate support for poorly paid ministers. There was, however, a tension between the missionary zeal of the new Associations and the concerns of old dissent: between the desire to be the true church and that of being a missionary church. Anthropologically this is

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[63] Underwood, *English Baptists,*154
[64] Norfolk and Suffolk Association in 1769, Kent and Sussex in 1779, Essex in 1796, Oxfordshire and East Gloucestershire in 1802, Shropshire and Cheshire in 1806, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire in 1811 and Cornwall in 1812.
[65] Brown, *English Baptists Eighteenth Century* 123, Association Yorkshire Baptist and Cecil Edgar Shipley, *The Baptists of Yorkshire: Being the Centenary Memorial Volume of the Yorkshire Baptist Association. (C. E. Shipley, General Editor.) [with Illustrations.]* (pp. xiii. 828. William Byles & Sons: Bradford; Kingsgate Press: London, 1912) 827 cited in Brown, *English Baptists Eighteenth Century*128, and Underwood, *English Baptists,* 177
[66] Later to become Regents Park College
[67] Underwood, *English Baptists,*179
[68] *Baptist Magazine* December 1833, 595-6; January 1834, 11-12, March 1834, 103-4. cited Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 206

the tension between the *enclave* of the local church and the more *positional* culture of Associations.

4.3.2. Associations

The distinctive tension for Baptist translocal structures is found between their predisposition towards a stronger regulation and their weaker group identity. Seventeenth century Association gatherings were comprised of messengers, elders and 'judicious' brethren who considered biblical principles for discipleship, church life and pastoral discipline.[69] They represented their churches at Assemblies and brought letters describing the encouragements and challenges they faced. Deliberations included the authority of itinerant evangelists, recruitment of ministers, and even perspectives on international affairs and the moral state of the country. Their meetings demonstrated the tension between the *positional* and *enclave* cultures of translocal and local sociality. Their gatherings reflected the mutuality of the *enclave* ethos, but their decision-making expressed a more *positional* type of authority over their member churches who, in turn, responded from their *enclave* ethos, treating Association decisions as subject to their own discernment.[70]

The voluntarist nature of the relationship between the churches and the translocal body may have produced a weakened group identity which the Association sought to increasingly counter through stronger exhortation, the appeal to common values and even regulation although the latter would be difficult to enforce except for certain financial sanctions and the removal of other support.

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[69] White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 116
[70] See this chapter 4.3.1.

Wright acknowledges that historically Associations accorded significant spiritual authority to assemblies while consistently insisting on the voluntary acceptance of their decisions.[71] However, it seems that sense of associational authority in translocal relationships is greatly diminished, but could be rediscovered and developed if there is a recovering of the common ownership of power, liberty, and responsibility as identified by Rollinson and the habitual congregationalism advocated by Ibbotson. This will require clear and responsible translocal relationships and an emphasis on mutual engagement as churches in a common cause. Associations and Union have a significant role in initiating and nurturing such developments underpinned by the call to forsake isolationism, rediscover translocal covenant relationships, and commit to mutual oversight and collaboration for the mission of God.

4.3.3. Union

The Union shares similar characteristics to an Association, as a bounded group composed of other bounded groups with the complexity deepened in that Associations and colleges also are members of the Union. John Howard Shakespeare (1857-1928), as General Secretary, was committed to bringing about greater organisation and cohesion and considered Baptist independency as unequal to the needs of the time.[72] He led the Union in an increasingly centralised direction reflecting the inclination of the organisation to become more *positional* than its member bodies. Whilst this brought more ordered support of churches with limited resources, and support and development of ministers and various mission initiatives, it also highlighted the tensions of prescription and voluntarism:

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[71] N. G. Wright, ''Koinonia' and Baptist Ecclesiology: Self-Critical Reflections from Historical and Systematic Perspectives,' *Baptist Quarterly* xxxv, no. 8 (1994) 365

[72] Peter Shepherd, *The Making of a Modern Denomination: John Howard Shakespeare and the English Baptists, 1898-1924, Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001) 49

the prescription desired by the Union and the voluntary response of the churches. These tensions between the *positional,* and *enclave* type cultures are at the heart of the dilemmas regarding organised Baptist collaboration.

Amongst the most significant initiatives was the creation of the Twentieth Century Fund to support evangelism, church planting, ministers of poor churches, the purchase of Baptist House which was the Union's first office and council chamber, and the establishment of the Annuity Fund.[73] Another was the establishment of the Sustentation Fund[74] in 1912 and the re-organisation of Baptist Ministry which carried significant implications for the accreditation and training of ministers, and the creation of the ministry of General Superintendents to oversee denominational life in particular geographical areas.[75] The Union continued to express a more *positional* culture, even though the individual churches remained *enclave* in theirs. This conflict was demonstrated between those who wanted central control and those who sought collaboration. Some saw Independency as inadequate for the needs of the time and wanted an organisation comparable to other national churches seeing no connection between 'Baptist principles and the congregational or independent system of church government.'[76] However, Wheeler Robinson comments, 'No one can understand the life of the denomination who does not realise that all larger groupings of Baptist Churches are for common action by representatives, not for the exercise of authoritative control.'[77]

The Union's *positional* culture is seen in an increased denominational influence not previously feasible and the production of schemes for churches and ministers such as the establishment of an accredited ministry, Union reports such as *Affecting the Efficiency of*

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[73] Underwood, *English Baptists,* 248f
[74] The forerunner of the present Home Mission Fund
[75] Underwood, *English Baptists,* 249
[76] Underwood, *English Baptists,* 265
[77] H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Life and Faith of the Baptists* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1946) 91

the Ministry, initiatives to stimulate the life and mission of the churches like the

Discipleship Campaign of the 1930s and also the call for church planting in *Call to Advance*

which became the *Forward Movement.* [78] However, this is within the constraints relating to

churches which behave independently and have their own bounded culture.

Randall saw the changes of the 1990s and 2000s as the dismantling of 'crucial parts

of the Union's structure that had been put in place by Shakespeare early in the twentieth

century.'[79] Following widespread denominational consultation in the 1990s the Union

produced *A Ten Year Plan: Towards 2000* which was designed to enable Baptists to engage

in a common mission strategy.[80] More radical change followed a further Denominational

Consultation in 1996 and the production of two major reports: *Transforming

Superintendency*[81] and *Relating and Resourcing*[82] which led to the major reform of the

Union from 29 Associations to the present 13. Each new, or re-formed, Association would

be an independent entity, appoint all the staff that served that area and be responsible for

establishing their own mission strategies, but would receive a significant proportion of their

finance through the Union's financial strategies and structure.[83] The existence of such

independent regional units with an increased sense of their own identity and purpose

presents the organisation as a whole as a collective of *enclaves*, rather than sub-units in a

positional society. However, it is believed that those who serve the Union per se have failed

to recognise this cultural shift.[84] In that sense it may be seen to be a re-emerging of older,

more inherent, *enclave* type attitudes that not only weaken the ability to regulate, but also

undermine the sense of belonging to a bounded group at a national, or even, regional level.

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[78] Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 164, 206
[79] Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 532
[80] B.U.G.B., *A Ten Year Plan: Towards 2000* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1993)
[81] B.U.G.B., 'Transforming Superintendency',   (Didcot: B.U.G.B, 1996)
[82] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resoucing: The Report of the Task Group on Associating* (Didcot: B.U.G.B., 1998)
[83] The percentage figure of income varies considerably between the associations. In the Northern Baptist Association about 90% of its income is through the Union.
[84] This is a view I have heard articulated by several Association Team Leaders

As a *positional* type of organisation the Baptist Union has sought to substantiate

and legitimise its own raison d'être, express its own authority, the boundaries of the group,

and the appropriate level of regulation. *The Nature of the Assembly and the Council of the*

Baptist Union of Great Britain for example puts the local church in an inter-congregational

context as belonging by covenant to a wider fellowship of churches.[85] Understanding the

nature of the relationship between the churches, Associations, colleges and the Union as a

whole is essential to understanding the limits of regulation and developing appropriate

strategies for mission. At its best the relationship is concerned with a covenanted mutuality

that respects the liberty of each church, but commits all to engage in collaborative action

for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Interdependency is acknowledged in historical

statements and confessions of faith, but it is rarely the starting point or the dominant

aspect. If the relationship between churches was genuinely as a 'like relation betwixt the

particular churches each towards the other, as there is betwixt particular members of one

church' then collective action would be much easier.[86] There would be a greater sense of

group on a translocal level and even of some mutual regulation. It is interesting to note

that those who are most keenly aware of Baptist interdependency are either those who

serve within translocal organisations[87] and thus have a particular interest in the position, or

those who are financial beneficiaries from Home Mission and who could therefore be

construed as grateful clients.[88]

Baptists are not operating with the same cultural understandings in the local

church and translocal structures. The propensity of translocal organisations to adopt a

more *positional* culture controlling boundaries and regulation creates a dissonance with

the culture of the member bodies resulting in mistrust and conflict. The cultures are so

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[85] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 46
[86] B.R. White (ed), *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1600* 1971-77. 126-129. cited in White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 69
[87] 312, 317, 314, 319
[88] 212, 222, 223, 321, 322

dominant that individuals adopt the culture of the location from which they speak,

espousing an *enclave* culture when talking about the local church, but a *positional* culture

when talking about the Union.[89] The recognition of this feature is essential in order to

enable Associations and the Union to discover an appropriate mode of operation and the

philosophy and vocabulary of strategy that will enable relevant, functioning, strategic co-

operation.

4.4.   Translocal Ministries

Recognising the limitations of this thesis, consideration is only given to the ministry of

Messengers, General Superintendents and Regional Ministers as those exercising some

form of oversight amongst Baptists.

4.4.1.   Messengers

Seventeenth century Baptists used the term *Messenger* to refer variously to Evangelists,

church representatives at wider gatherings, those having care and advisory roles over the

churches, and those elected to have some form of authority over the ministry in a group of

churches.[90]

General Baptist, Thomas Grantham, considered Messengers as part of a three-fold

ministry: 'Messengers (or Apostles), Bishops (or Elders) and Deacons.'[91] In *The Successors to*

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[89] 318

[90] Golbourne, Ruth. *Messengers: Do they have a message for us?* B.U.G.B.I., *Translocal Ministry : 'Equipping the Churches for Mission'* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2004) 24 cf. Frederick Maddison William Harrison, *It All Began Here : The Story of the East Midland Baptist Association* (London: The East Midland Baptist Association, 1986) *19*

[91] Grantham, Thomas, *Christianismus Primivitus* Book 2, 119 & 121 quoted by Randall, "Counsel and Help: European Baptists and Wider Baptist Fellowship," 7

the Apostles he said that although they were inferior to the Apostles they shared in an apostolic role which was 'to plant churches and to settle those in order who are as Sheep without a Shepherd.'[92] The General Baptists' *Orthodox Creed* of 1679 applied the congregational principle of ministry accountable to the congregation to the appointment of Messengers who should be elected by the churches they serve and would then have 'the government of those churches which had suffrage in their election.'[93]

At the end of the eighteenth century General Baptists doubted the biblical authority for and the usefulness of the ministry of the Messenger and the role disappeared as the decline in evangelical fervour, and the reluctance of churches to release their ministers, led to a shortage of people to fulfil this ministry. Some in the newly emerging New Connexion of General Baptists saw the ministry as incompatible with local independency[94] which may have represented the culture of a newly bounded group, defining and defending its boundaries.

Particular Baptist Messengers tended to be church representatives at Association meetings, with authority designated to them for particular tasks by their Church Meeting rather than any general inherent authority. The Particular Baptist *Second London Confession* of 1677 determined that difficult issues and differences of 'Doctrine or Administration' are to be referred to a meeting of the Messengers for their considered advice but recognised the limitations of their authority: 'howbeit these messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any Church-power properly so called.' However, examples of Particular Baptist Messengers appointed to specific tasks include Thomas Tillam, who described himself as a 'messenger of one of the seven churches in London,'[95]

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[92] White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,*115 Cf. Barber, E. *A True Discovery of the Ministery of the Gospell* cited in White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,*36
[93] Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 320
[94] Underwood, *English Baptists,*121
[95] Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage,* 76

sent in 1652 and authorised by the Coleman Street Church, as a travelling evangelist in Northumberland, Cheshire and Yorkshire.

4.4.2. General Superintendents

In conjunction with the establishment of the Sustentation Fund and the re-organisation of Baptist Ministry, the Union created the ministry of General Superintendent in 1915 to 'exercise a spiritual ministry in the Churches of the area and promote their closer union and more effective co-operation.'[96] The initial ten were appointed for 'settling disputes', facilitating ministerial settlement, supporting rural churches, 'exercising a sympathetic supervision and linking the whole Denomination'.[97] Commensurate with Baptist ecclesiology their authority was limited and described by Wheeler Robinson as no more 'than moral and persuasive authority' and not 'bishops', but 'more than travelling secretaries.'[98]

However, Roger Hayden saw it as the Union gaining increasing 'control of the national corporate life of the churches' which some thought was tantamount to introducing a 'new order of ministry.'[99] Shakespeare saw the centralised administrative support of ministry, dependent upon the Union, as essential for the direction of ministry.[100] Shepherd critiques Shakespeare as having had a pragmatic commitment to episcopal oversight without having properly considered the

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[96] Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland., *Baptist Handbook* (London: Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1916) 276-277 Cited in Ian Randall, ''A Good Bench of Bishops'? Early Baptist Superintendency', *Translocal Ministry 'Equipping the Churches for Mission'* (Didcot: The Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2004), 11 38
[97] The Baptist Times 3 March 1916 cited in Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 93
[98] Wheeler Robinson, *The Life and Faith of the Baptists* 92
[99] Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage,* 165 cf. Shepherd, *Modern Denomination* 83
[100] Shepherd, *Modern Denomination* 181

theological implications.[101] Their appointment weakened the role of the

Associations who now remitted the work of ministerial settlement and grant-

making to the Union and accepted the Superintendents as leaders amongst them.

Superintendency and associating were very different in their history and ethos

with consequent effect for their approaches to denominational life.[102]

In 1942 *the Report of the Committee on Baptist Polity* called for Superintendents to

increase their exercise of spiritual leadership. However, one Superintendent, Henry Bonser,

said that the Superintendents 'did not wish to be regarded "as a bench of bishops or a

spiritual cabinet", but rather as general practitioners, who have "unique opportunities to

feel the spiritual pulse of the nation, to diagnose its ailments and prescribe remedies".'[103]

Their range of responsibilities came to include the care of ministers and their families,

pastoral oversight and mission encouragement for churches, representing the Union in

ecumenical engagement and generally promoting the objects of the Union.[104]

4.4.3. Regional Ministers

Transforming Superintendency, a major review of the Superintendency in 1996[105] proposed

that the pastoral care of ministers should be the Superintendents' 'primary task' and that

they collaborate with the Associations in developing mission and pastoral policies. Greater

responsibility for the churches was to be placed with the Associations who were to develop

their own strategies in co-operation with the Superintendent who would be regarded as an

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[101] Shepherd, *Modern Denomination*81
[102] Shepherd, *Modern Denomination* 181
[103] H Bonser, 'Recollections of a General Superintendent,' *Baptist Quarterly* XIII (1949-50) Cited in Randall, *English Baptists Twentieth Century* 249
[104] B.U.G.B.I., "The Baptist Union Directory for 2000-2001-2002," (London: Published under the direction of the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2001) 17f
[105] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency: The Report of the General Superintendency Review Group* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1996) 22ff

officer of the Associations in the area. *Transforming Superintendency* was followed by

Relating and Resourcing[106] which recognised the former's importance, but focused on the

need to develop 'a new quality of relationship between congregations.'[107]

Relating and Resourcing's key recommendations[108] included calling churches to

'mutually supportive relationships', and, more radically, for the establishment of new

regional Associations, replacing the existing 29, all of which were of different size and

capability. The primary task of the Associations was to be the 'fulfilling of Christian mission

through its member churches, their members and ministers and the enabling of associating

for this purpose.'[109] General Superintendents were replaced by Regional Ministers

employed by the regional Association with one 'senior' Regional Minister to lead the

Association staff team. [110]

This represented an enormous shift in the corporate life of Baptists, from ministers

and churches being overseen and supported by nationally appointed staff accountable to

the Union, to Association appointed staff accountable to the Association and its churches.

It could be seen as undoing much of what Shakespeare hoped to achieve at the beginning

of the twentieth century. However, it is clear that Regional Ministers continue to fulfil a

role in relation to the Union's oversight and discipline of its accredited ministers, albeit

recognising that this ministry is exercised without much real authority and is therefore

based upon good relationships.[111] It is authority exercised by consent, as would be

consistent with the values of an *enclave* culture and is therefore weak authority.

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[106] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing*
[107] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 4
[108] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 10f
[109] Reference B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 11
[110]Cf. B.U.G.B., *Continuing the Journey: The Reports of the Denominational Consultation Reference Group and the Task Group on Implementation* (Didcot, Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1999) and B.U.G.B., *The Reports of the National Steering Group and the Covenant Task Group* (Didcot, Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1999)
[111] *The Regional Minister and Minister/Church Relationships* undated BUGB document.

4.4.4. Translocal ministries and cultural norms

Questions remain regarding the authority of Regional Ministers and to whom they are accountable. The General Baptist Messengers provide a precedent for translocal ministry with a degree of authority set within a stronger connexionalism, which still respected the liberty of the local congregation. Regional Ministers are accountable to Associations and yet in some matters act as agents of the Union. Their role is clearer with regard to the fulfilment of certain commonly agreed procedures relating to ministerial recognition and in the pastoral care of ministers and churches, but the latter can generally only be delivered by the consent of minister and church. Their role of engineering corporate and collective strategies[112] can only be done by consent and though consensus.

The aims of translocal ministries are clearly articulated, but whether operating within a particular local church or for the translocal organisation as a whole, the cultural paradigms of an enclave type community pervade the whole. Therefore their ministry must be operated in a way that appeals to common values and recognises the importance of the bounded groups. They may challenge the boundaries of the groups by appeal to the common values of the whole, but given the nature of the bounded group, if they are perceived as too threatening, they risk exclusion. Translocal organisations and ministries have clear intent, but undefined authority.

Engagement by the churches in the appointment of the translocal minister, even if only through representatives and the confirmation of an Assembly, may enhance his or her opportunity to encourage, guide and direct a local church. However, given the nature of the independent bounded group such opportunities are by consent and rely heavily on good personal relationships. The predisposition of enclave towards informality presents difficulties for legislating relationships. Local churches may be variously located within the

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[112] Cf. NBA Regional Minister: Team Leader Job Description

enclave culture according to their sense of formality and belonging which, along with the relative tension of the churches' culture and that of the translocal presents complexities for translocal ministers to negotiate. Consequently, those fulfilling such ministries are required to operate variously on a line that may move into the *positional* culture of translocal organisations and down through varying lower grid position of the local church. Local church may be seen to operate variously on a continuum of high group and relatively increased grid to lower group and very low grid as shown figure 25 below.
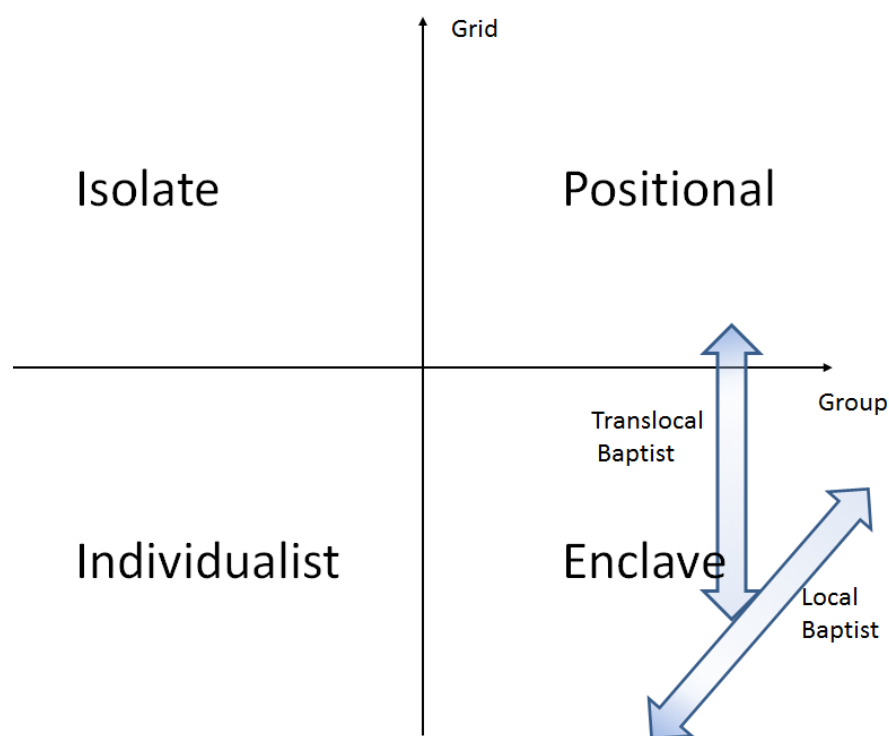
Figure 26: Group-Grid and Baptist churches and translocal ministers

4.5. Baptist theology

This section will focus on those theological themes that specifically relate to Baptist translocal relationships. Paul Fiddes states that 'the gathered church, the priesthood of all believers, the final authority of Christ, believers' baptism, the call to faithful discipleship

and religious freedom' are the convictions which characterise a Baptist community.[113]

There is no one defining document, personality or body of teaching which determines the nature of Baptist ecclesiology, but there are certain significant themes drawn from the influence of Anabaptists and English Separatists which have shaped Baptist life and contribute towards a 'distinctive Baptist identity'.[114] These themes are explored under the headings of 1) Baptism, 2) Authority, 3) Covenant, 4) Liberty and 5) Interdependence as those which most significantly relate to Baptist ecclesiology and sociality. The main sources for Baptist theology include church and Association confessions of faith, the writings of Baptist theologians both past and present, and reports and statements of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

4.5.1. Baptism

The prime defining feature of Baptist theology and practice could naturally be considered to be the 'baptism of believers'. Baptism, however, is situated within a wider theology that includes personal faith and the concept of a believers' Church. The Baptist Union's current Declaration of Principle asserts that 'Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, of those who have professed their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'[115] However, this second clause in the declaration follows one that asserts the authority of Christ, the Scriptures and Baptists' particular ecclesiology. Baptists see their strongest distinctive feature in their ecclesiology which emerges from 'obedience to

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[113] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 12

[114] Identity could be understood, as defined by Douglas Davies, as the 'consequence of self-consciousness within a particular social network embedded within particular language.' See Douglas James Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief : The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2nd ed. 2002) 4

[115] B.U.G.B., *The Baptist Union of Great Britain 2010 Directory* (Didcot: The Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2010) 322

Christ' and their 'listening to Scripture.'[116] John Smyth, an early Baptist leader, defined the church as the 'company of the faithful; baptized after confession of sin and of faith' and asserted that Baptism is an external sign 'of the remission of sins, of dying and of being made alive, and therefore does not belong to infants.'[117] By 1644 English Baptists were defining Baptism as 'an ordinance of the new Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed onely upon persons professing faith' by total immersion signifying cleansing, dying and rising with Christ and a hope of the future resurrection. [118] By 1677 Baptism was seen to be a sign of fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, of unity with Him, the 'remission of sins', and of a commitment to walk in 'newness of life.'[119] *Gathering for Worship*, a current liturgical publication, shows that Baptism is seen to be an act of obedience, identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, cleansing from sin, the promise of the Spirit and a commitment to service.[120] Fiddes et al recognise that Baptists have readily seen Baptism as a 'confessing or declaratory ordinance', but more recent statements have seen it as a symbol which enables a participation in the reality signified, indicating development in Baptists' theology.[121] Whilst Baptism is seen as a personal response of faith and identification with Christ, Christopher Ellis states that it is 'a sacrament which defines the Church as a community, as well as a sacrament of initiation.'[122] Haymes et al reaffirm this link stating that 'baptism is about entering into the possession of the triune God and, therefore, becoming a member of the people of God.'[123] Sacraments can be seen as a 'means of grace',[124] that is 'paradigmatic of the relation of

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[116] Paul S. Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare : A Study of the Declaration of Principle of the Baptist Union of Great Britain* (Oxford: Whitley Publications, 1996) 37
[117] *Short Confession of Faith in XX Articles* John Smyth, 1609 in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 97
[118] *The London Confession* 1644 in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 167
[119] *Second London Confession* 1677 in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 291
[120] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 68. Whilst the use of this resource and its orders of service is not mandatory in Baptist churches it is indicative of what might be regarded as typical.
[121] Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare* 44.
[122] Christopher J. Ellis, *Gathering : A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004) 221
[123] Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church* 57
[124] Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church* 66

God to the material order that is disclosed in the Incarnation.'[125] Baptists' baptismal

theology has underpinned the traditional view that believers' Baptism is a pre-requisite for

church membership in closed membership Baptist churches and a strong preference in

open membership churches.[126]

4.5.2. Authority

The authority of the church is seen to be rooted in Christ and discerned by his gathered

people. Local churches are responsible to appoint those 'fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit'

as officers of the church.[127] Particular Baptist, Andrew Fuller, saw that the early church in

Acts exercised 'government and discipline of each church … within itself.'[128] However,

earlier General Baptists' ecclesiology contained a stronger connexional element viewing

congregational independence as 'very dangerous and detrimental to the Churches.'[129] The

emphasis upon mission in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century provoked a tension

leading to a declining emphasis upon the church as a covenanting community, to the

church as merely a congregation. Some began to express Baptist ecclesiology in more

secular terms. Joseph Angus derived support from John Locke's definition of the church as

'a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to

[sic] the public worshipping of God,' rather than statements of his puritan forebears.[130]

The *Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle* is one of the few authoritative

statements amongst Baptists which churches are asked to affirm when joining the Baptist

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[125] Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity* 13
[126] About **67%** of the churches in the NBA are closed membership churches.
[127] Lumpkin, *Confessions*. 287
[128] Andrew Fuller, 'Constitution of Apostolic Churches', Letter X in 'Strictures on Sandemanianism', 1810 in ed A.G. Fuller, *The Complete Works of the Revd Andrew Fuller, with a memoir of his life,* II, 1831, p429. cited in Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 16
[129] Brown, *English Baptists*. 24 citing W. T. (ed) Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of General Baptists*, 2 vols. (1909-1910) 42
[130] J Angus *The Voluntary System*, 1839, 194 Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 21

Union, and ministerial candidates are asked to sign indicating their acceptance of it. Three distinct authorities are identified to direct the life of the church: Christ, the Scriptures which bear witness to Him and the gathered community led by the Spirit which seeks to discern his mind. *The Declaration's* first clause asserts that 'our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice.'[131] Although the local congregation is the gathering of believers, it is regarded as crucial 'to think first of the Church as a local company of believers under the authority of Christ.'[132] It is this location of authority in Christ, revealed in the common life of his people, which distinguishes Baptists from those Christian traditions that locate authority in personal or conciliar leadership.[133] Amongst Baptists, authority is not an adherence to a list of doctrines or rules that demand obedience, but rather it is about 'discerning the mind of Christ and so discovering what it means to be a Gospel people.'[134]

This leads to an emphasis upon the local church, but leaves the question of how Christ's will is discerned by the Union or an Association, its importance for their member churches and who is able to exercise authority from outside the local church. There remains an ambiguity concerning the level of authority that may be exercised by Association or Union within the life of a particular local church and how that authority is received.

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[131] B.U.G.B., *B.U. Directory 2010* 322
[132] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency*14
[133] Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare*14
[134] REF Faith and Unity Executive of the BUGB, "Knowing What We Believe: Theological Authority Amongst Baptists," in *Baptist Union Council November 2009* (Swanwick: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2009) 4

4.5.3. Covenant

Covenant is a key theme which underpins a theology of union.[135] *Transforming Superintendency* asserted that each 'congregation is truly the Church as it exhibits the features of covenant, fellowship and Body,'[136] thus following a tradition of thought going back to Smyth, who saw the nature of the church as a covenant between believers under God,[137] a visible communion of saints where

> two or three or more saints join together by covenant with God and themselves … for their mutual edification and God's glory …. The true form of the visible church is a vow, promise, oath or covenant betwixt God and the saints.[138]

This emphasis upon voluntary covenant provides the basis for church membership in a Baptist Church and is seen in Baptist confessions of faith such as the Second London Confession of 1677 which says that members 'willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves, to the Lord & to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.[139]

Fiddes suggests that covenanting together gave the early Baptists a sense of identity in place of that provided by the national church and enabled them to respond to the criticism of losing continuity with the universal church by claiming to be a part of the

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[135] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 4
[136] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 11
[137] See this chapter Section 4.2.1.
[138] Quoted in Fiddes, *Bound to Love: The Covenant Basis of Baptist Life and Mission* 24
[139] *Confession of Faith put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many congregations of Christians (Baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country* in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* p286

whole covenant people of God.[140] The concept of covenant continues to be expressed in

local church constitutions which will include the necessary rules for governing church life,

but which also include a statement of faith and a covenant relating to church practice, for

example: 'We covenant together to: walk in God's ways, according to His laws, by the

guidance of the Holy Spirit …'.[141]

Pushing at the Boundaries, a report of Anglican and Baptist conversations, affirms

that for the Church, 'the central idea has always been the presence of Christ in the local

congregation, where believers gather in covenant under his rule to seek to know his

mind.'[142] The gathering is with the intention of expressing covenant commitment and

seeking the will of Christ. Smyth regarded the eternal covenant of grace as being actualised

in the covenant relationship within the local church.[143] Covenant is therefore seen as

having two dimensions: vertically between God and the Christian community and

horizontally in a covenant relationship between members of that community.[144]

Fiddes gives three expressions of the use of covenant. Firstly, the 'covenant of

grace' which God has for salvation through Jesus Christ, secondly the 'Divine Covenant'

between the persons of the Trinity for the redemptive action of the Son of God, and thirdly

the agreement between God and 'his church or particular churches.' Together these inform

the concept of a voluntary covenant of trust and mutual accountability entered into by

Baptist church members. [145]

'Body, fellowship and covenant' are said in *Transforming Superintendency* to be

primary for enabling Baptists to understand the nature and mission of the church. It is God

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[140] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 24
[141] Durham City Baptist Church and Covenant p12. Durham City Baptist Church was formed in 1951.
[142] B.U.G.B. Faith and Unity Executive Committee and Council for Christian Unity., *Pushing at the Boundaries of Unity : Anglicans and Baptists in Conversation* (London: Church House, 2005) 77
[143] B.U.G.B. Faith and Unity Executive Committee and Council for Christian Unity., *Pushing at the Boundaries*81
[144] BUGB, "Knowing What We Believe: Theological Authority Amongst Baptists," 3
[145] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 24ff

who takes the initiative, invites and makes covenant, and the invitation is 'to share the life and mission of God.'[146] That report states that each church 'is truly the Church as it exhibits the features of covenant, fellowship and Body.'[147] However the local church is also seen to be in relationship with all other 'expressions of the Church by reason of its fundamental being in the life and call of God.'[148] This awareness is an important counterpoint to the emphasis upon the local church, and mutuality in Christ is seen as 'an essential mark of the Church.'[149] Baptists place the local church as the incarnational expression of the body of Christ that, in its association with other churches, expresses the mystical unity of the whole. The union is focussed upon Christ whose body is manifested locally, as his Spirit does his work.

It could be suggested that this emphasis upon a covenant between believers gathered and committed to worship and witness in a given locality restricts Baptist Church members in their ability to relate to and collaborate with other Baptist churches. However there is an expression of covenant that is beyond the local church. *The Nature of the Assembly and the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain* clearly sets the church in an inter-congregational context: 'It follows from a biblical understanding of Church as covenant, fellowship and body that there is also no option about local churches being part of a wider fellowship of churches. They *are gathered* together by Christ.'[150] In *Tracks and Traces* Fiddes states that Baptists have always lived in 'spiritual interdependence with each other in associations'[151] and states that a theology of covenant for churches that are interdependent is of strategic importance. It will not only enable Baptists to give financial support to weaker churches, but it is 'to help each other *discover* the shape and form of the

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[146] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 10
[147] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 11
[148] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 11
[149] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 11
[150] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 46
[151] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 55

mission of God in our world today.'[152] However, the lived theology of most Baptists is localist and the concepts of covenant have strengthened this impression. A stronger and clearer articulation of a covenant of mutuality between churches and for the denomination as a whole may enable greater interaction and collaboration.

The issue facing them is whether they are doctrinally covenantal in regard to translocal relationships, but practical isolationists in reality. In their search for harmony in consensus, Baptists may be focussing on unity at the expense of a creative tension that arises from their conflicting independency and interdependency. The desire for unity produces a force for uniformity for the purposes of common identity, efficiency of resourcing and effectiveness in mission, but there is a togetherness that allows for liberty of difference which may drift towards isolationism. If, in their translocal relationships, Baptists are to be a faith community that 'walks together and watches over' one another there needs to be appropriate models that will enable such liberty in unity that properly reflects an interdependency that is commensurate with the theological and cultural understandings of independency.

Early Baptists developed Associations as a way of countering isolationism[153] which Keith Jones sees as an outcome of the worship of the Triune God.[154] Consequently, belonging to a wider fellowship is not seen as an optional extra,[155] but Baptists are 'bound together by a common vision and by mutual commitments of fellowship.'[156] However, this theology contrasts with the strong emphasis upon independency as shown in the fieldwork, indicating a weak sense of translocal covenant and low sense of mutuality.[157] Baptist

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[152] Fiddes, *Track and Traces*55
[153] Wright, ''*Koinonia' and Baptist Ecclesiology: Self-Critical Reflections from Historical and Systematic Perspectives*,' 365
[154] Keith Jones, "Beyond the Local: The Ecclesiological Basis of the European Baptist Federation," in *Baptist World Alliance Symposium* (Elstal, Berlin: Baptist World Alliance, 2007)2
[155] B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly* 8
[156] Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare* 15
[157] Chapter 3: Section 3.1.2.1 and 3.1.2.2

theologians may be echoing the voice of convinced interdependency, and even the frustrations of the translocal insider, but it presents a significant challenge that needs to be heard in every sphere of Baptist life. The Declaration of Principle may imply but does not explicitly articulate translocal relationships and responsibilities. Andy Goodliff recommends revising the Declaration affirming that 'associating is not an optional extra,' but Ted Hale believes that this may undermine the 'essential nature of a Baptist church … whose primary corporate task is to discern and fulfil God's will in their locality' seeing that the 'discharge of this duty ... gives us our common identity and makes sense of any Baptist associating.'[158] Nigel Wright recognises that Baptists' religious individualism, passion for liberty and ideals of independency can lead them to live 'without due reference to other churches' and 'can become a form of selfishness alien to the Spirit of the Body of Christ.'[159]As independency is 'of the essence of Baptist church life,' churches can dissociate themselves from Association and Union decisions.[160]

Translocal covenant relationships have frequently been re-affirmed,[161] but have not become a rooted reality, except for that expressed in finance and pragmatism.[162] Paul Beasley-Murray calls this failure the 'error of isolationism.'[163] Similarly, John Aldis states that 'individualism, independence and liberty are the idols of the day,' questioning whether Baptists, in reacting against perceived 'tyranny' of other ecclesiologies, were falling into 'anarchy'.[164]

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[158] Ted Hale and Any Goodliff, 'Whatever Happened to Associating? Ted Hale Responds,' *The Baptist Ministers' Journal* 317 (2013) 19f

[159] Wright, ''*Koinonia' and Baptist Ecclesiology: Self-Critical Reflections from Historical and Systematic Perspectives*,' 367

[160] Paul Beasley-Murray, *Radical Believers: The Baptist Way of Being the Church* (Didcot: The Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2006) 99

[161] E.g. B.U.G.B., *Covenant 21* (Didcot: B.U.G.B., 2001), B.U.G.B., *The Nature of Assembly*

[162] Chapter 3: Section 3.1.2.7

[163] Beasley-Murray, *Radical Believers: The Baptist Way of Being the Church* 97

[164] Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History* 117.

Methodist ecumenical representative on the B.U. Council, Dudley Coates, expressed surprise at the depth of commitment to Congregationalism and the local church evident in the Council's discussions.[165] Baptists need to develop their covenantal culture becoming inclusive of fellow Baptists, recovering a sense of belonging that means more than being members of a translocal organisation to which they volunteer their time and offer financial support. Baptist organisations and translocal personnel are to enable churches in their collective mission rather than direct them. Conversely, Beasley-Murray and Hale rightly identify the essential nature of Baptist churches, but the balance needs to change to include a responsibility and commitment to the wider denomination.

4.5.4. Liberty

Liberty was a vital concern to early Baptists, not least because of the state and ecclesiastical opposition and persecution that they experienced. The liberty to seek God was also liberty from the ecclesiastical interference of Church and state authorities. Liberty has remained a significant theme for Baptists: the term 'Free Churchmanship', an 'old-fashioned phrase passionately defined and defended by earlier Baptist apologists, serves as an awkward reminder that spiritual liberty is a defining characteristic of Baptist spirituality with a radical edge.'[166] Arising from his experience of persecution Thomas Helwys wrote a plea for freedom of worship entitled *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity* contending that the king 'is a mortal man, and not God, and therefore he hath no power over the mortal souls of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them and to set

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[165] Conversation with Dudley Coates at the end of a 3 day B.U.G.B. Council meeting on 20th March 2013

[166] Jim Gordon, 'Spirituality and Scripture: the Rule of the Word' in Fiddes, *Under the Rule of Christ* 110

spiritual Lords over them.'[167] Such liberty was to be accorded to other faiths including

Muslims and Jews, but was rooted in the concept of the sovereignty of God as Helwys

indicated saying that

> men's religion to God, is betwixt God and themselves; the King shall not answer for
>
> it, neither may the King be judge between God and man. Let them be heretics,
>
> Turks, Jews, or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them
>
> in the least measure.[168]

Similarly, Smyth said that the 'magistrate is not … to meddle with religion or matters of

conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion.'[169] Fiddes strongly

states that this liberty is about obedience to Christ rather than the assertion of

individualism or market place choice.[170] Whilst theologically, the theme of liberty finds its

roots in the concept of *Imago Dei* as people made in the image of a creative and dynamic

God who calls people into relationship with Him, it is also rooted in the personal nature of

justification by faith. Whilst this is a theme shared by paedo-baptists, for believer-baptists it

has led them to see baptism as a sacrament or ordinance for believers who will bear

personal witness to their faith.

The Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle states that 'each church has liberty,

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His [Christ's] Laws.'[171]

Fiddes suggest that this clause refers back to the 'image of a church agreeing to walk

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[167] Thomas Helwys *The Mystery of Iniquity*, quoted in Roger Haydn, 'To Walk in All His Ways,'
Christian History IV, no. 2 (1985) 9
[168] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 231
[169] *Propositions and Conclusions,* article 84, in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 140
[170] Fiddes, *Track and Traces* 261
[171] B.U.G.B., *B.U. Directory 2010* 322

together under the rule of Christ' as articulated by early Baptists.[172] 'The key word in the Declaration about the local church is therefore not "autonomy" or "independence" but "liberty".'[173] However, this concept is directly related to that of authority rather than to the self-determination normally associated with the word 'autonomy'. It is the liberty to respond to the presence and authority of Christ: 'Since Christ makes himself present in his Body, the local congregation has the liberty and responsibility to interpret the mind of Christ.' However a local church should 'seek fellowship, advice and counsel from as much of the whole Body as it can relate to.'[174] Associating with others is not to be merely a matter of practicalities, but of covenanting together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ resulting from a belief in the rightness of doing so.[175] 'To be a Christian congregation is to be in living relationship with other Churches in the fellowship of Christ.'[176] However this latter aspect of relating is often restricted because of the strong emphasis upon the liberty of the local congregation.

Liberty, as a theme, resonates with secular concepts of freedom which have more to do with the Enlightenment ethic of self-realisation than with the liberty to be conformed to the character and will of Christ. Gordon asserts that this is a liberty constrained by loyalty and 'grateful and faithful obedience' which is the glad freedom to love and serve Christ at all costs.[177] Similarly Haymes, Gouldbourne and Cross locate the liberty of the local church to seek the mind of Christ in the scriptures recognising that Christ the Lord is in the midst of those who gather in his name, that Christians belong to and need each other, and that Christ alone is to rule over the body of Christ.[178] They seek to counter the

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[172] Fiddes, *Track and Traces*46
[173] Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare*; Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare* 33
[174] Fiddes et al., *Something to Declare* 34
[175] B.U.G.B. Faith and Unity Executive Committee and Council for Christian Unity., *Pushing at the Boundaries*109
[176] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 14
[177] Gordon, Spirituality and Scripture' 111-112 in Fiddes, *Under the Rule of Christ*
[178] Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church* 41

inclination of the local church's emphasis upon liberty to produce isolationism saying that

such local church liberty does not give the church 'any excuse for isolating itself from other

churches, for the local church is simply a local manifestation of the body of Christ whose

reality is all those in Christ.'[179]

Faith is seen as a free response to God's grace, with commitment to the church as a

natural expression of discipleship. This commitment is expressed with the language of

voluntarism acknowledging 'that the one body is made of several parts.'[180] Briggs suggests

that Baptists' views of churchmanship, ministry and the sacraments were 'largely reactive

and responsive' to external influences and secular pressures 'with voluntarism … construed

as *laissez-faire* political-economics on its knees.'[181] Joseph Angus initially looked to John

Locke's definition of the church as 'a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together

of their own accord,' giving a description of the church that had a distinctly secular

flavour.[182] However, he made the significant distinction between Christian Voluntarism as

the 'willing submission of the heart and of the life to Christ' and that which is an exercise of

'the authority of self-will.' [183] John Fawcett, described the church as 'a voluntary society,

formed by mutual agreement' whose true nature 'consists in all the members standing in

the same relation to the glorious head.'[184] Similarly, Robert Hall rejected the comparison

between voluntarism in society to that in the church seeing the latter as the freedom to

conform to the will of God.[185] Christian voluntarism is set in the context of Christian service

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[179] Gouldbourn, *On Being the Church* 43

[180] *Ways Of Belonging: The Baptist way of being a church in the light of current sociological and cultural trends* Kevin Dare: October 2003 http://www.beestonbaptists.org.uk/docstore/76.pdf accessed 13th March 2013

[181] Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 11.

[182] J Angus *The Voluntary System*, 1839, 194 Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 21

[183] J. Angus, *The Christian Churches*, 1862, 19 cited Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 21 cf. Enger, '*Whatever Happened to the Covenant Community?*,' 531

[184] Fawcett, J. *The Constitution and Order of a Gospel Church Considered*, (Halifax: 1797) 12 cited in Enger, '*Whatever Happened to the Covenant Community?*,' 527

[185] 'Freedom 'is not a freedom for private judgement but a freedom the more devotedly to conform to the mandates of revelation.' Robert Hall, 'A Reply to the Revd Joseph Kinghorn', 1818, in *Works,* III, 1858, 325-6 cited in Briggs, *English Baptists Nineteenth Century* 22

and mutual accountability under the Lordship of Christ indicating a free, willing and yet, expected engagement of Baptists in covenant relationships. It indicates a culture of co-operation rather than of opt out.

Confusion concerning the themes of liberty and rights arising from Enlightenment philosophy and consumerist individualism may well compound the difficulties of churches working together. It becomes a natural position to safeguard the liberty of the local congregation as it discerns the mind of Christ for itself, but in doing so is seemingly oblivious to greater possibilities that could be achieved through engagement with the wider fellowship of Baptists and other Christians. The inherent tension in Baptist life is that members place value and meaning on being Baptist by denomination, yet they continually and strongly affirm the liberty of the local church to seek the mind of Christ with no other authority imposed upon it.[186] The result can be that in the life of Union and Associations it is difficult to know where authority lies, even though councils and assemblies do provide opportunity to gather and seek the mind of Christ.

The emphasis upon liberty remains at the heart of Baptist culture with detrimental effect on their ability to collaborate together for their better engagement in the mission of God. Covenant relationships are not only about support and sharing in discovering the purposes of Christ, they are also about accountability. As well as being expressed within the local church, covenant relationships ought to extend into denominational life and not be exempt from 'the challenge of sustaining and nurturing creative relationships with the Association and wider Union.'[187]

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[186] Cf. B.U.G.B., *Knowing What We Believe* ; BUGB, "Knowing What We Believe: Theological Authority Amongst Baptists,"
[187] B.U.G.B., *Knowing What We Believe*

4.5.5. Interdependence

Transforming Superintendency asserted that Christian community, essential to the believer, will 'show itself in the relationships between one congregation and another. This mutuality in Christ is an essential mark of the Church.'[188] One early Baptist confession affirmed that whilst each church 'be distinct' in respect of their 'particular bodies,' … 'yet are one in Communion, holding Jesus Christ to be our head and Lord; under whose government we desire alone to walke, …'[189]

In the local church oversight (*episcope)* is seen to flow multi-directionally between the personal and the communal. The responsibility to 'watch over' belongs to the whole congregation as well as to the pastor, eldership or diaconate.[190] Such oversight is also expressed communally in the association of churches which meets in assembly to seek 'the mind of Christ for the life and mission of the member churches, while having no power to impose decisions on the local Church Meeting.'[191] Whilst recognising that each church is regarded as competent, under Christ, to rule its own affairs, Baptists have frequently 'sought safeguards against exaggerated individualism.'[192] Early Baptist confessions, however, acknowledged the benefit of free association amongst churches for 'their peace, increase of love and mutual edification.'[193] The relationship between churches was described by R. C. Walton as 'independence in regard to power but not in regard to

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[188] B.U.G.B., *Transforming Superintendency* 11

[189] *The confession of faith of those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists.* Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 155. This is the same London Confession of 1644 cited on page 9

[190] I once heard Fiddes speak of 'a fluidity of oversight'

[191] B.U.G.B. Faith and Unity Executive Committee and Council for Christian Unity., *Pushing at the Boundaries* 82

[192] 'The Doctrine of the Church' Agreed statement by the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, in *B.U.G.B.I., Roger Hayden, and Baptist Historical Society (Great Britain), Baptist Union Documents, 1948-1977 (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1980)*, pp5-11 cited in Jones, "Beyond the Local: The Ecclesiological Basis of the European Baptist Federation," 9

[193] The Second London Confession 1677 in Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 289

communion'.[194] The *True Confession of 1596* recognises the interdependent nature of churches in that

> though Congregations bee thus distinct and severall bodyes, every one as a
> compact Citie in it self, yet are they all to walke by one and the same rule, & by all
> meanes convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all needful
> affayres of the Church, as members of one body in the common Faith under Christ
> their head.[195]

Amongst early Particular Baptists the relationship between the churches was seen as comparable to that between church members, indicating that there should be mutual care amongst the churches.

> For the churches of Christ do all make up but one body of the Church in general
> under Christ their head … And in his body there is to be no schism which is then
> found in the body when all the members have not the same care one over another.
> Wherefore, we conclude that every church ought to manifest its care over other
> churches as fellow members of the same body of Christ in general.[196]

Characteristically of an *enclave* culture, informality is valued and group solidarity is affirmed and is reflected in *Relating and Resourcing* which called for 'the discovery, or rediscovery of a new quality of relationship between congregations.' This recognises that most Baptist reflections on the church begin by stressing the gathering of believers with

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[194] Robert C. Walton, *The Gathered Community* (London: Carey Press, 1946) 89-91 cited in B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 4

[195] Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 94. This statement from the 1596 *Separatist Confession* is repeated verbatim in the *London Confession of 1644.* See Lumpkin, *Confessions,* 168

[196] B.R. White (ed), *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1600* 1971-77. 126-129. cited in White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 69

Christ in the midst, and that having the mind of Christ, each church has power and competency to appoints its leaders and oversee its own affairs. Consequently imposed leadership or government is viewed negatively if not rejected.[197]Baptist ecclesiology not only begins with the local church, but it too easily stays there, especially in its practice.

The theological statements about interdependency are clear, but it is essential to recognise the 'voluntarist' nature of the Baptist tradition which accepts that spiritual life and action are only of value if they are freely entered into.[198] A local church community emerges out of the free association of believers in covenant under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Similarly, out of the free association of churches, an association or union comes into being with the accompanying ministries and organisation. It is out of the local church that translocal structures emerge, and not vice versa.[199]

This reality is central to understanding how the collaborative aspects of Baptist sociality and strategies can be construed and developed. The inherent tendency of organisations to centralise is counter to the deeply embodied culture of independency. However, it is clear that in Baptist confessional statements and amongst Baptist theologians there is a theology of interdependency that can be used for developing good terminology, methodology and practice for collective or corporate action.

4.6.   Concluding considerations

The tensions of independency and interdependency both pervade and are shaped by Baptist history and theology. The theological and cultural norms vary in time and place, but

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[197] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 3,4
[198] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing*5
[199] B.U.G.B. Faith and Unity Executive Committee and Council for Christian Unity., *Pushing at the Boundaries* 107

essentially the local church as an *enclave* culture is clearly evident as is the move to a more *positional* approach in translocal organisation; especially the Union. The culture within which an individual is situated shapes the expectations and language they bring to dialogue and co-operation and also their understanding of others of different cultural types.

Authority is seen to reside in Christ as Lord of the Church, but this does not require a *positional* approach by translocal organisations, but trust in the same Lord to guide his church in all its expressions. Covenant relationships bring responsibilities to walk together in appropriate mutuality, but it is a covenant that listens to God through one another rather than imposing what may be discerned by an ecclesial elite. It is a covenant to liberty as well as one of accountability. Translocal organisations may need to redefine their cultural approach to translocal Baptist life in order to be more faithful to the essential theology and culture of Baptists, but also, pragmatically, to gain more willing co-operation. Local churches may need to redefine the nature of their covenant relationships so as to look beyond the local church, in order to be more ready to receive the revelation of God's will through those beyond their *enclave* community. Those serving translocally will have a significant ministry in enabling the *positional* and *enclave* cultures to relate more effectively to one another and to help each make their own cultural adjustments for the sake of better collaboration in mission.

Historically there are precedents to rediscover and re-craft for the twenty-first century. The stronger connexionalism expressed at various times may need to be revisited to facilitate a greater sense of belonging, accountability and co-operation. The releasing of evangelists and itinerant ministers appointed by groups of churches other than the Union or Association may be a way of addressing some of the mission needs of the time. Translocal co-operation does not need to be limited to the structure of the Associations and Union, but can have a dynamic facilitated and nurtured by those structures.

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The next chapter will consider Baptist life through the lens of Methodism which is a denomination shaped by a strong covenant theology, but with a greater overall mutuality.

Chapter 5: Covenant, mutuality and independence

5.1.   Introduction

Having given an account of Baptist sociality, presented an analysis of the fieldwork

interviews and drawn on Baptist history and theology it is appropriate to consider what

Baptists might receive from another Christian tradition. Using the principles of Receptive

Ecumenism[1] the chapter considers what principles and practices Baptists might

'appropriately learn with integrity' and 'receive' from Methodism and be applied to

improve Baptist sociality, strategic collaboration and translocal ministries. Acknowledging

that disabling effect of independency upon Baptist sociality and collaboration the focus is

upon the specific subject areas of connexionalism, oversight, translocal structure, the local

church, ministry and translocal ministries. There are inherent limitations within this chapter

in that it is primarily drawing from Methodists' self-description by their theologians and

official documents informed by interviews and also constrained by the overall length of the

thesis. Methodism is a particularly apt lens though which to explore the nature of Baptist

covenant relationships given their covenant theology and other elements that are familiar

to the Free Church and Non-Conformist heritage of Old Dissent.

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[1] P. D. Murray, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 6 and 12 cf. Murray Paul and Guest Matthew, 'On Discerning the Living Truth of the Church: Theological and Sociological Reflections on Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church' in Christian B. Scaren, *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: EerdmansPublishing Co., 2012)

5.2. Connexionalism, Association and Independency

Independency is confirmed by the fieldwork[2] as a dominant ethos for Baptists resulting in a greatly diminished interdependence and mutuality beyond the local church. Believers covenanting together to comprise a local church is foundational for Baptist practice and culture.[3] Whilst there is historical precedent for seeing the relationship between churches as akin to that between church members,[4] and there are clear expressions of a broader identity and belonging, the determining factor of local church liberty is expressed in the Baptist Union's 'Declaration of Principle'.[5] However, that liberty tends towards emphasising local congregational life at the expense of the regional and national manifestations of ecclesial and missional practice.

Methodism's view of covenant is distinctively difference to Baptists', but nonetheless may be instructive. There is a strong emphasis upon a personal covenant with God and whilst the term does not feature greatly in their ecclesial documents, a sense of covenanting together is implicit in their history of class meetings and the call to watch over one another. The concept of Connexion is based on a covenant that individuals and societies (churches) entered into with the Methodist movement accepting 'a high level of discipline, mutual responsibility and inter-dependence.'[6] Methodists would then see Church Membership as a further feature of this with a focus on support and discipleship. Methodists' covenant theology and practice is expressed as 'Connexionalism': a mutuality that embraces the whole denomination and even beyond to a covenant relationship with

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[2] See chapter 3: Section 3.1.1.
[3] See chapter 4 Section 4.5.3.
[4] B.R. White (ed), *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1600* 1971-77. 126-129. cited in White, *English Baptists Seventeenth Century,* 69
[5] B.U.G.B., *B.U. Directory 2010* 322 cf. Chapter 4 section 5.4
[6] Methodist Church of Great Britain, *The Nature of Oversight: Leadership, Management and Governance in the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London, Methodist Church of Great Britain, 2005) 74

all Christian believers.[7] The emphasis on 'relatedness' is described by Neil Dixon as

essential to the concept of 'church' and the 'first key distinctive feature of Methodism.'[8]

For Baptists, covenant is nuanced differently as believers covenant together as individuals

in churches, or churches in translocal bodies, to walk together under the Lordship of Jesus

Christ.[9] That Baptist covenant together into specific bodies, such as churches and

Associations, rather than to the whole movement may result in greater tension between

the local church and translocal bodies than is found within Methodism.

Connexionalism and associating respectively describe the translocal relationships of

Methodists and Baptists but in Methodism they are demonstrated in a clearer, cohesive,

unified and more accountable way than amongst Baptists.[10] Connexionalism is seen to

express the mutuality and interdependence which reflects the Christian's participation in

the life of God[11] with the key emphasis being on mutual accountability.[12] Carter sees three

enduring principles undergirding Methodist Ecclesiology: the interdependent nature of the

church as seen in the 'connexional principle', a generous spirit that recognises 'all churches

that clearly carry the marks of the Spirit as true churches whatever their precise ordering',

and the willingness to explore the gifts that others have to offer. [13] The corporate structure

of Methodism[14] is expressed in the Connexion[15] as the joining together of churches,

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[7] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* Section 2.17. p78
[8] Dixon, *Called to Love and Praise* 4.7.1 cited in *Conference Report 2005 The Nature of Oversight* 3.3 p84 In Called to Love and Praise,
[9] See Chapter 4, section 4.5.3
[10] It is as though the Baptist stick of rock has 'independency' written through it and the Methodist one has 'mutuality'.
[11] Dixon, *Called to Love and Praise* cited in Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.1 p 73 It is the fellowship of believers united in God through Christ. …. From this flows the sense of mutual responsibility and accountability characteristic of the Methodist Church.
[12] Carter, *Love Bade Me Welcome* 9
[13] Carter, *Love Bade Me Welcome* 150ff.
[14] Carter, *Love Bade Me Welcome*10
[15] John M. Haley and Leslie J. Francis, *British Methodism: What Circuit Ministers Really Think* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2006) 231 Connexion is expressed in national, regional and local organisation through Conference, Districts, Circuits and the Local Church.

circuits and districts with Conference as 'the primary authority for the exercise of oversight for the whole of the Methodist Church'[16]

The tension of authority and accountability that Drake attributes to Connexionalism[17] is expressed differently for Baptists. Connexionalism has a precedent in Baptist history as seen in The New Connexion of General Baptists,[18] but their structural lines of accountability were restrained by their sense of independency thus highlighting the nature of voluntarism that determines the expression of associating for Baptists. Methodist connexionalism effects significant control of the denomination which places it within the *positional* quadrant of Douglas' *Cultural Theory* grid rather than the *enclave* position of Baptist churches: churches, circuits and ministers are subject to the decisions of Methodist Conference. Whilst the local church may have some involvement in the appointment of a minister, it remains a Conference appointment, whereas Baptist churches call their own minister perhaps with support of the Regional Minister. Methodism tends towards a legislated accountability, whereas Baptists' accountability is more relational. Methodists might consider Baptists' emphasis upon personal responsibility, individual liberty and voluntary association denies them the opportunity for disciplined concerted and strategic action. It may also have left Baptists overly selective in hearing the voice of the Spirit through the wider denomination or ecumenical community. Baptists' structural expressions of associating lack the pervading interconnectedness of Methodism and their strong sense of mutual responsibility and accountability.

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[16] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.3 p73 It also claims that connexionalism finds its precedents in the wider church, specifically the Catholic tradition. See p80

[17] Drake, Philip, *Joining the Dots* in Clive Marsh, *Unmasking Methodist Theology* (New York ; London: Continuum, 2004)135

[18] The every use of the term 'connexion' indicates the influence of the Wesleyan Revival and also that a number of Methodists found their way into Baptist circles and in the creation of The New Connexion of General Baptists of the 18th and 19th centuries. See Ch. 4 Section 4.1.

Both denominations express a theology of the church as the Body of Christ. [19] For Baptists this is primarily related to the local church with a weak practical theology of associating and a vague awareness of catholicity.[20] Methodists' ecclesiology is expressed in their translocal structures within a unified whole. Alongside them, Baptists appear as a loose network of component parts, a bag of marbles knocking together, rather than a bunch of grapes that are interconnected. For Methodists, the 'mutual obligations' of membership 'are expressed in terms of connexion' which is a description 'both of the interrelatedness and the practical organization of the Methodist Community,'[21] but this would only be partially so for Baptists, who affirm the value of interrelatedness, but often fail to give it full expression.

5.3.   Oversight

For Methodists, oversight is focussed on 'ensuring that the church remains true to its calling,'[22] whereas for Baptists, watching over one another is more clearly expressed in the local church, rather than translocal relationships. [23]

The Baptist Assembly is much less authoritative than the Methodist Conference and has become less deliberative and more celebratory and inspirational, although recent discussions have begun to redress this.[24] The sense of denominational oversight exercised

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[19] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=17
[20] My observations in visiting Baptists churches in the N.B.A. is that intercessory prayers vary enormously, but often lack a specific sense of belonging to a Baptist family. Similarly the prayers published in Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 227f give little specific emphasis to the denomination.
[21] Drake, Philip, *Joining the Dots: Methodist Membership and Connectedness* in Marsh, *Unmasking Methodist Theology*131. The whole of the Methodist Church is characterised as a '**Connexion' cf.** Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.6 p75
[22] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* p67
[23] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 108
[24] B.U.G.B., *Working Together* 4

by Methodists is much reduced amongst Baptists and might be regarded as allowing for local church liberty within broad parameters. However, that liberty undermines the ability of Baptists to be committed to concerted strategic action over a long period of time. The authority of Baptist Assemblies and councils is mainly advisory and exhortative. In contrast Methodist policy is more determinative although their churches may be more localist in reality. [25]

Methodist Connexional oversight is expressed through two main strands: the ordained ministry, presbyters and deacons, and those with delegated responsibilities such as particular groups or officers.[26] The ordained ministry carry a responsibility for the general oversight of the connexion, with presbyters playing 'a part in the oversight of the Church and in its deliberations at all levels.'[27] Drake sees connexionalism as holding in tension issues of authority and accountability whose nature is found 'in a pattern of interdependence and mutual obligation' which excludes 'arbitrary authority from above and a self-centred congregationalism from below.'[28]

Methodists see oversight as including 'watching over, discerning, guiding, caring for and disciplining' all of which may be worked out as 'governance, management and leadership'.[29] Although Baptists relate to these categories, they do so in the light of their own ecclesial context. For Baptists to receive such an approach would mean their seeing oversight of churches as more than advisory and supportive, but to some degree determinative, directive and even constraining. Baptists would happily receive the concept of mutuality of oversight, but reflecting their theological tradition and the nature of *enclave* culture it would need to be consensual in nature. The challenge for Baptists is to enter into

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[25] 402, 404
[26] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.25 & 26 p81f
[27] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.24 p81
[28] Drake, Philip, *Joining the Dots* in Marsh, *Unmasking Methodist Theology*135
[29] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 1.8 p68f

that degree of trust in the discernment of Christ's will in the wider Church to be able to allow it to speak persuasively, if not definitively, into the life of the local congregation, college or Association.

5.4.   Translocal Structures

As seen above[30] the primary Baptist means of translocal relationships are found in Associations and the Union which might be seen to relate to Methodist District and Conference. Associations and the Union exist in a united, but not unified whole as they are independent entities joined together in covenant rather than sub-units of an ecclesial whole as Methodist Districts are to the Conference.

Districts, which link the local and national expressions of Methodism and facilitate Connexional priorities, consist of circuits grouped together characteristically 'fulfilling the same purposes as a circuit, but across a wider geographical area.'[31] They are led by a District Chair[32] who also shares in the connexional leadership team of the whole Connexion. Districts support local churches and circuits 'encouraging connexional priorities, offering and subsidizing training, giving pastoral care to ministers, deacons and key lay people, providing people who represent Methodism to the local media, having an overview of legal obligations, and organising large initiatives.'[33] The Districts are guided by Ministerial Synods when clergy reflect and confer together, those groups which act on behalf of and serve the District Synod, and the District Synod itself.[34]

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[30] See Chapter 2: Section 2.3.
[31] *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* 3.13 p88
[32] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=679 Accessed 05/01/2009
[33] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=679 Accessed 05/01/2009
[34] *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* 3.18 to 3.20 p91f

Conference, comprised of lay and ordained circuit representatives and other appointees, is central to the process of 'Christian Conferring' throughout the Connexion and is authoritative for the denomination [35] exercising 'a determinative influence over every part of the life of the Methodist Church.'[36] It embodies the purpose and life of the Connexion and 'gathers, celebrates and cements the connecting of the Connexion, not only internally, between its constituent parts, but also with its past and future and with external bodies.'[37]

The Connexional Leadership Team includes the District Chairs and other officers; the Methodist Council oversees the on-going management of the life of the Connexion.[38] The Secretary of Conference and the General Secretary exercise executive oversight, whilst the President exercises presiding oversight.[39]

Methodist synods give a far higher proportion of time to discernment than Baptists' Assemblies. Although Baptists would want to avoid what they might consider the overly detailed and bureaucratic approach of Methodism it is time to rediscover the place of discernment in Assemblies. It does not need to be limited to the 'business meetings' of Assemblies but could be in seminars, discussion and workshops listening to one another to discern what God might be saying to His Church. However, such an approach would need to find a point of focus and affirmation and then be relayed to the churches for their own deliberation.

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[35] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.7 p75ff
[36] Agenda of the Methodist Conference 1975.5 cited in Marsh, *Unmasking Methodist Theology* 36
[37] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.17 p78
[38] *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* 3.22 and to 25 p93
[39] *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* 3.29 p96

5.5. Local church

There are fundamentally different historical ecclesiologies underpinning both Baptist and Methodist church practice although commitment in membership is a feature Methodists share with congregational denominations. Methodism's origins were in the formation of societies and classes to watch over one another for the good of their spiritual growth, [40] in which, according to Neil Cockling, people were 'united by a common discipline and single authority, and functioning in their respective cities as the local focus of the regular preaching Circuit.'[41] Baptist roots, however, are found in the Radical Reformation in its search to establish separate churches, in their view, true to the Scriptures.

In the past Baptist churches have grouped together in local Districts[42] but many proved unsuccessful[43] and it was recommended that they be replaced by more relational and mission focussed clusters.[44] However, generally, clusters were also recognised by interviewees to have failed to happen,[45] even though their potential was acknowledged.[46] Local Baptist churches may engage with other churches of their own or other traditions but often selectively with a relational or task-based, rather than structural, focus.

Methodists' mutuality is seen in the way societies / churches are responsible for their own programmes and property, and are linked with other churches through the circuit, [47] district and ultimately the Methodist Connexion. Circuits are 'the primary unit in which local churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for

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[40] Members would normally belong to a 'class' with a class leader, but where the class does not meet the leader is called a pastoral visitor.

[41] Neil Cockling, *The Methodist Church: Newcastle and Darlington* 2008 55.

[42] Local Baptist districts must not be confused with Methodists Districts which are larger and a central aspect of Methodist sociality.

[43] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 8

[44] B.U.G.B., *Relating and Resourcing* 10

[45] 318

[46] 312

[47] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 3.2 p84

purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help.'[48] They provide for the effective use

of the resources of ministry, including people, property and finance in relation to their own

denomination, ecumenical partners and the wider society. Local churches are

'interdependent cells of the organism which is the circuit.'[49]

Ordained and lay representatives share in the decision-making of the circuit

through its various committees. Circuit structures have three expressions of oversight: the

Circuit Meeting which is the primary source of oversight and governance under Christ, the

Circuit Leadership Team which is 'subservient to the Circuit Meeting, and a meeting of

presbyters and deacons appointed to the circuit.[50] However, tensions similar to those

experienced by Baptists are recognised in that 'there has been a growing tendency in some

areas towards local autonomy and congregationalism, which has shifted the balance away

from the circuits to the local churches.' Without the close interdependence nurtured by

circuits, many local churches would fail to flourish.[51]

The Circuit presents a model that Baptists may wish to reject because Ministry is

appointed by the circuit rather than the local church and churches are required to share

ministers. However, the collaboration of churches in close proximity is a concept Baptists

could adopt. The model of the Circuit being the unit does not easily fit with Baptist

ecclesiology, but the potential for Baptists to collaborate in a network of similar size is

potentially possible. That said, recent history is not encouraging.[52] Suggested reforms in

2012 have called for the establishing of Networks of similar sized groupings of churches,[53]

but such recommendations are unlikely to find widespread acceptance unless there is

firstly a culture of collaboration. Methodists have such a culture and the challenge for

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[48] *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* Standing Order 500 (1) fn p84
[49] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 84
[50] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 3.7 to 3.9 86f and 3.2 84
[51] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 3.2 84. See also interviewees: 404, 402
[52] See above. Re Baptist districts and clusters.
[53] B.U.G.B., *Networking: An Interim Report for Baptist Union Trustees.* (Didcot, B.U.G.B., 2012) 6

Baptists is to develop a more collaborative culture in keeping with their values arising out of being enclave communities. It is not enough for Baptist translocal bodies to make such decisions: they need to adopt strategies that will change expectations. The fieldwork of this thesis shows that most believe collaboration is good, but indicate a disinclination to engage.

Methodist circuits are an organisational entity and have a greater bureaucracy than Baptists would want, but this expression of interdependence may inform a fresh approach to their engaging together. The nature of 'external control' exercised by the circuit is incompatible with the culture of the enclave and the congregational theology of Baptists. That said, the level of interaction and engagement could be replicated and infused with relational values amongst Baptists if there was a will to engage more effectively together. Even though the external authority of such groups would be seen as advisory and their common action consensual, there is potential for developing relationships that could be expressed in agreed common action. It requires a commitment of the will.

Baptists emphasise a ministry that is almost exclusively to the local congregation which they see as the prime, and sometimes sole, locus for their ministry. The Baptist ordination service recognises that ministers serve the whole Church,[54] but the induction service for a local church minister[55] locates that ministry in a particular situation with no reference to wider responsibilities within the neighbourhood, Association or Union. Consequently churches with their own ministers expect them to lead most of their services and churches without ministers seek to book their own visiting lay preachers, retired ministers or other minsters taking time out from their own church. There are examples in

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[54] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 127
[55] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 134f

the past of preaching societies planning preachers to take services in smaller churches, but with few exceptions these have declined out of existence.[56]

The Circuit Plan is very important in the Methodist Circuit. It has its merits in the deployment of Local Preachers, sharing the presence of ordained ministry amongst the churches and ensures that all who serve the churches are under the discipline of the Methodist Church either as ministers, local preachers or preachers on trial. However, it reduces the opportunity for sustained systematic preaching and teaching and the cohesive development of worship.

Baptists may be able to revisit this concept in relation to the support of a number of smaller churches, with ministers working in collaboration in the provision of teaching and preaching. Such actions may lead to greater trust between congregations and facilitate mutual engagement in mission which would be appealing to Baptists. It would also provide an opportunity for some degree of 'quality control' and accountability of those taking services, provide a way of introducing new preachers, provide opportunities to build relationships between certain churches and preachers, and increase churches' awareness of each other. The latter was seen to be the result of the circuit itinerant ministry amongst Independent Methodists.[57]

5.6. Ministry

The predominant views of the respective denominations about ministry both express and strengthen their different theologies and practices. Both denominations have ordained

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[56] I began my preaching ministry in the now defunct Northampton Village Preachers' Association. The Itinerant Society' serving three churches still exists in the Chew Valley in the West of England Baptist Association.
[57] A comment made to me by, Eric Southgate, the President of the Independent Methodist Connexion on 9th April 2013.

ministry, but a clear distinction between Baptists and most traditional denominations is the permitting of lay presidency at Communion. Baptist Churches have the liberty to call the person they believe to be right as their minister whether that person be lay or ordained[58] which is both a strong symbol of local church independency as it has its own minister for whom and to whom it is responsible, and also strengthens the sense of independency which guards their minister's time and engagement from being drawn away from its local concerns.

For Baptists, the Union constitution gives a place to every minister at its Assembly and many Association bye-laws give ministers a place at their Assemblies presupposing that ministers are to have a wider engagement.[59] The right to attend these assemblies indicates not merely a privilege to attend such meetings, but a responsibility to pray for, speak into, and work for the life of both Association and Union. This possibility for the recognition of wider responsibilities is there, but receives a much lower priority. Baptists need to reconsider the wider responsibilities of their ministers, which will, in turn, change the landscape of Baptist translocal life and lead to renewed Union and Association life.

Traditionally Methodist Ministers have been appointed to a circuit rather than to a local congregation and also engage in the oversight of the Church at all levels.[60] They share with the circuit ministry team of ministers exercising pastoral care across the group, but having designated responsibilities for particular churches.[61] Along with local preachers they lead the services at circuit's churches according to the circuit plan. Such arrangements and expectations are likely to encourage and develop a more open approach to the wider church and a greater readiness to engage together.

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[58] Some church trustees do restrict the ministry to those accredited by the B.U., but wavers to this are regularly obtained as is evident from the minutes of the B.U. National Settlement Team: eg. Minutes of 15th and 16th April 2013 Item 9 in regard to Merstham Baptist Church
[59] Cf. NBA Articles of Association 13 (2)
[60] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 2.24 p81
[61] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=19 and *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* 3.3 p84

It would be practically difficult and counter to Baptist values and culture to impose a circuit-type structure upon groups of Baptist churches, but a greater sense of walking together could be encouraged through the networking concept mentioned above. Similarly ministers could be encouraged to be aware of nearby churches without ministry and to find ways helping personally and through the members of their own congregation and lay preachers from other churches.[62] Such help could go beyond supporting Sunday services to strategic guidance, support in the mission of the other church and the growth and development of its members by giving them experience of occasional services in the said minister's church. Similarly where there are a number of Baptist churches who are able to network together, there will be the potential to collaborate in teaching, preaching and mission to the better effectiveness of each church as well as the whole.

Circuit staff meetings provide an opportunity for supervision and support for each other and a place for superintendents to exercise oversight. Baptists seem open to the concept of peer-support and mentoring, but the question of an organised and formal supervision and support might be regarded as an intrusion into the independence of the local church which is also practically interpreted as the independence of the minister in his or her ministry. However, knowledge of other patterns and the possibility of voluntary supervision are not without merit and possibility.

There is clearly a commitment to lay representation in both denominations. A cursory comparison of a Methodist Synod District Handbook with a Baptist Association Handbook reveals a far greater number of committees for Methodists. Methodists might consider Baptist structures to be light and lacking accountability, but Baptists might regard Methodism as overly bureaucratic. Methodism gives a greater role to the laity through its

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[62] Such a suggestion was made in B.U.G.B., *Half the Denomination* (London, B.U.G.B, 1983) 28

reliance upon local preachers[63] and the sustaining of its committee structure which may be a challenge to Baptists who would want to see themselves as encouraging lay engagement in church life. Methodists may therefore view Baptists, with their desire for a minister for every church, as being clergy-reliant. This would be a challenge to Baptists, given their practice of lay eldership and diaconate and of lay presidency at the Communion Service. The challenge for Baptists is to enhance the role of lay people in leading worship and in the representative decision-making of the wider Baptist community.

In Methodism oversight is a corporate reality expressed in its structures with lines of authority and accountability and is therefore a more *positional* culture. In contrast Baptist oversight remains *enclave* in nature and is expressed in voluntary relationships which respect the liberty of each church or body.

5.7.   Translocal Ministry

As seen above,[64] this thesis has given focus to the role of Regional Ministers as the significant expression of translocal ministry recognising that they are appointed by Associations to serve their churches. This is to distinguish them from others who serve the churches appointed by the Union or Baptist Colleges many of whom exercise a degree of itinerant ministry. Some ministers in local churches will also occasionally take services in other churches, but it is not generally a central part of their ministry. Regional Ministers exercise a ministry of oversight and support to the ministers and churches within their Association and take a lead in the Association's life and mission per se.

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[63] 404
[64] Chapter 2 Section 2.3.4

Methodist ministers, presbyters and deacons, fulfil a role beyond the local congregation as they serve circuits and therefore exercise some expression of translocal ministry which maintains the sense of connexionalism by embodying it in their structures. Superintendent Ministers are charged with ensuring that the ministry needs of the circuits are adequately fulfilled, [65]by exercising leadership, management, governance and oversight responsibilities as the chief officers of the Circuit Leadership Team. They lead and support the ordained and lay team serving the circuit, chair the Circuit Meeting,[66] and ensure that ministry is adequately provided in the churches of the circuit by its ministers and preachers, and the proper functioning of the circuit's organisational life[67] helping to 'create strategy, and policy for their worship and mission, witness and holiness.'[68]

The Methodist model challenges the dangers of isolationism within the Baptist pattern of ministry. This isolationism could be reduced if local Baptist churches were regarded as partners, if not a formal network or cluster. The developing of a broader awareness could be helped if churches were recommended to engage representatives from other local churches in their ministerial appointments processes: the B.U.G.B. recommended terms of appointment includes an expectation that ministers would engage with other Baptist churches and translocal life and that this be reflected in the induction liturgy. Recognising Baptists' concern for continuity of preaching Sunday by Sunday, there could be opportunities for mission and ministry in other churches which is not Sunday based. Where there are good examples of this already happening they should be held up as models to which to aspire. This would not create the structure of circuits, but would begin to change a culture.

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[65] REF Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 86
[66] The Methodist Church of Great Britain, "What Is a Circuit Superindendent," (The Methodist Church of Great Britain, 2005) Item 18
[67] Britain, "What Is a Circuit Superindendent," Item 24
[68] Britain, "What Is a Circuit Superindendent," Item 30

As with Superintendent Ministers, District Chairs are primarily presbyters appointed by Conference to particular translocal ministries.[69] The District Chair works with superintendent ministers and circuit personnel,[70] and has a strategic role in the process of stationing ministers. Chairs offer strategic leadership within their relevant regional and national bodies[71] sharing in the leadership team of the whole Connexion.[72] Districts support local churches and circuits 'encouraging connexional priorities, offering and subsidizing training, giving pastoral care to ministers, deacons and key lay people, providing people who represent Methodism to the local media, having an overview of legal obligations, and organising large initiatives.'[73]

In terms of local churches the engagement of District Chairs has been described by a former Methodist minister, but now a Baptist minister, as not so different to that of Regional Ministers.[74] Even though many Districts are geographically smaller than Associations there may be some equivalence and Chairs share in the oversight of the District and circuits with the Superintendent Ministers. However, in Methodist polity, the role of the District Chair is administrative rather than ecclesial, whereas Regional Ministers are normally ultimately appointed by the Churches in Assembly and so have opportunity to offer oversight as a genuine part of their ministry. However, as with District Chairs, they would still need to negotiate their entrée into the local church given the culture of independency of many churches. The Conference and Superintendents exercise authority over churches and circuits, whilst the Chair can exercise considerable influence in the

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[69] Britain, "What Is a Circuit Superindendent," 5 and 12 p2&6
[70] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=churchlife.content&cmid=1596 Accessed 2009
[71] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=679 Accessed 2009
[72] *Britain, The Nature of Oversight* 3.22 and to 25 p93
[73] http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=679 Accessed 05/01/2009
[74] 403

stationing of ministers[75] and encourages implementation of Conference's strategies[76] and policies. Whilst there is some structural authority in the role, in actuality it may still be a relational authority not overly dissimilar from Baptist Regional Ministers.[77] However, Superintendent Ministers exercise an ecclesial role being directly concerned for the spiritual well-being of the churches of the circuit and their mission. The level of authority of the Superintendent within the circuit is much higher and inevitably closer given the size of circuit. The circuit model with Superintendent Minister does offer a model for Baptists to reflect upon which, with adaption, would be in keeping with their theology of interdependence, but would be a challenge to the culture of independency. Baptist churches would tend to view themselves as distinct congregations rather than seeing a circuit as the prime unit of mission.

As Methodist Chairs share directly in the national Leadership Team of the Connexion, this group has more authority within the denomination and a greater leadership role than that of the Baptist Steering Group.[78] However, each District is represented in the group which establishes a sense of cohesion and continuity thus providing a useful model for Baptists to consider. Including all Regional Minister Team Leaders in the Baptist Steering Group would improve the strategic steering and cohesion of the denomination.

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[75] 401
[76] 404
[77] 404
[78] Britain, *The Nature of Oversight* 93f. Cf. 70

5.8.   What can Baptists receive?

The strong interdependency and centralised positional culture of denominational authority within Methodism is in marked contrast to Baptist practice. Whilst both Methodist Districts and Baptist Associations may act as the link between local and national denominational life, the authority and ability of Districts to encourage denominational priorities is, in theory, much greater, although interviewees indicate that it is less than official policy states.[79] The more positional nature of Methodist oversight with consequent implications for the deployment of resources, exercise of authority and accountability results in a more coherent and effective delivery of strategy than is found amongst Baptists, even though some Methodists bemoan tendencies towards independency within local congregations.[80] For a Baptist the emphasis upon liberty and attitudes of interdependency have significant consequences for the way Baptists can act strategically and cohesively, collaborate ecumenically and speak as a national movement or organisation.

Concepts of covenant in translocal relationships, which are present in Baptist history and theology, could be developed by drawing from the Methodist model, yet still respecting the liberty of the local church. Such an approach would require a cultural change away from the dominant enclave ethos towards acknowledging and accepting the validity of fellow believers to speak into their situation. Baptists would be unlikely to accept the ultimate authority of a body like Conference, but may be able to accept the validity of Union and Association decisions should Assemblies become more deliberative in nature and be seen to be genuinely listening to local churches. Baptists could usefully regain some respect for the deliberative assembly, under Christ, discerning issues and policies to guide

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[79] LO, NC
[80] 402

their life and mission, but there would be little interest in detailed decision-making at that level. The committee structure of Connexionalism would not commend itself to Baptists, who, in order to listen to the Spirit together, would need to find other fora to ensure that collective engagement in strategic thinking takes place. Those fora would need to reflect the value-centred approach of enclave communities rather than the *positional* culture which might seek to impose its will. It would be a call to rally together, rather than a command to act.

Chapter 6: Refreshing Covenant Relationships.

6.1. Introduction

Cultural Theory has been used to examine Baptist sociality observing the prevailing *enclave* nature of local Baptist churches, the consequent undermining of their collaborative efforts and the inclination of Baptist translocal bodies to become more positional. Using this background, the thesis fieldwork was analysed considering the opinions and beliefs of Baptists serving in various roles,[81] regarding their views about Baptist life and culture, translocal relationships and strategic collaboration with a special emphasis upon translocal finance.[82] Baptist history and theology has been explored in order to examine the causes of their dysfunctional interdependence and for potential remedies. Baptist translocal sociality was then considered through the lens of Methodist ecclesiology acknowledging that both denominations hold to a covenant theology expressed in church membership. In this thesis I argue that any effective call to greater interdependency and collaboration must be commensurate with, and draw from, authentic Baptist culture and aim for long-term transformation of their inherent independency.

6.2. Authentic Baptist Collaboration

Baptists see themselves as finding the source of their authenticity in their faith, yet they also recognise that they seek to be faithful to the insights of the Radical Reformation which have shaped them and have become anchor points within their collective culture.[83]

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[81] See Chapter 1 Section 1.1.3.
[82] Home Mission
[83] See Chapter 4

Taylor's consideration of the 'ethic of authenticity'[84] and its sources acknowledge that it is a development from Descartes' rationalism and Locke's individualism as an expression of the moral voice within, be it God or a concept of 'the Good'.[85] It is developed into a view that authenticity is found by connecting with that which is deep within us.[86] In this sense Baptists find their authenticity from that Radical Reformation tradition as the certain way of 'being' and living.[87]

The strength of Baptist cultural independency is illustrated in the diagram below using a development of Weberian terminology relating to church and sect[88] developed by Wilson: the terms of church, denomination and sect are equated to traditional, bureaucratic and charismatic authority as a means to make comparisons between the different types of religious body.[89] Weber's concepts of church and sect were developed by Troeltsch who focussed upon behaviour rather than organisation and stressing the notion of 'accommodation' or 'compromise' as a means of differentiation.[90] He also recognised the category of the 'Free Church' as churches separated from the state with a 'subjective and relative form of religion,' in which membership is a matter of individual choice and church order takes the form of a voluntary organisation, and there is a feeling of obligation to recognise the rights of other forms of church to exist.[91] Niebuhr added the category of 'denomination' demonstrating characteristics drawn from 'church' and 'sect' and seeing

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[84] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1991)25ff

[85] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* 26

[86] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* 26

[87] Cf. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*28f

[88] Max Weber, *Title from Max Weber : Essays in Sociology / Translated, Edited and with an Introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958) 288, 305, 314. See also Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Methuen, 1965) 60ff

[89] Torry, *Managing God's Business* 74ff and 84ff

[90] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches / by Ernst Troeltsch; Translated by Olive Wyon; with an Introductory Note by Charles Gore.* (London and New York: Allen and Unwin and Macmillan, 1931) 494

[91] Troeltsh Social teaching of the Christian Church p 656

religious groups as moving on a continuum with sects taking on the characteristics of a church.[92]

The diagram locates the typical cultural operating locations revealed in the fieldwork for the local church, the Association and the Union illustrating the different structural understandings and operational processes within Baptist sociality. The diagram places the local church firmly in the sect angle having some low local level of authority and being furthest away from the traditional authority as seen in Church. The Association has both a higher degree of bureaucracy and an increased sense of Church, both of which increase for the Union. However, all are placed well to the right of being denomination indicating the predominant sect/charismatic ethos of Baptist churches as *enclave* communities.
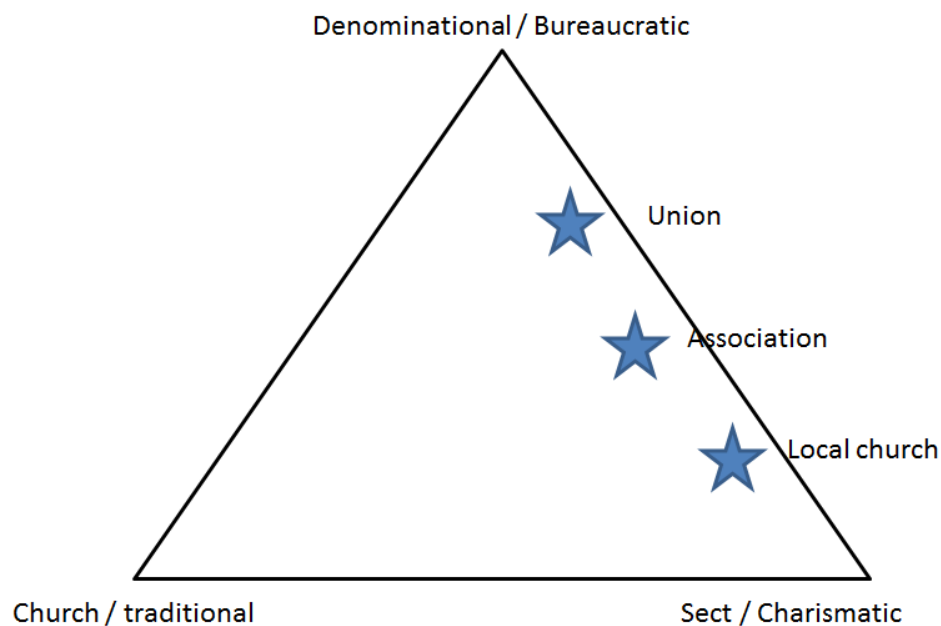

Figure 27 Church, denomination, sect triangle

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[92] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957) 20, 125ff

Interdependency is valued and aspired to, but the predominant ethos is independency.[93]

Attempts to increase interdependency that conflict with independency are likely to be

counter-productive unless it is a prophetic call that is biblically based, theologically rooted

and missionally focussed thus appealing to Baptists' sense of authenticity. Weber's

emphasis upon voluntarism relate well to Baptists' understanding of personal responsibility

and mutual accountability as the established order of the group, gains authority 'only by

virtue of a personal act of adherence.'[94] The difficulty identified of sects forming mass

organisations, identified by Troeltsch, is confirmed by the lived-out culture of

contemporary Baptists.[95] The concept of Free Church allows for free association between

congregations in federations which recognises mutuality and common aims. Torry

concludes that it is not always clear whether the characteristics identified by Troeltsch are

seen to apply to a congregation or a federation of congregations. Torry acknowledges that

within the same denomination some congregations exhibit church-like characteristics and

others sect-like. This difference would also be seen in Baptist churches and so it should be

recognised that the location of churches in the diagram is only a suggested typical position

reflecting the insights from the fieldwork, and that plotting of individual churches, and

Associations, could give a different result.

6.3. Articulating and Developing Covenant Values

Baptists find their authenticity[96] in their inherent covenant attitudes and values which need

to be articulated, developed and nurtured if the theology of covenant is to find clear

practical outworking in translocal relationships. Andy Goodliff recognises this need for

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[93] Chapter 3. Section 3.1.1.
[94] Weber The theory of Social and Economic Organization 151
[95] Troelstch The Social teaching of the Christian churches 337
[96] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* 82

'deep bonds for mutual trust' as people seek the mind of Christ together, which respects

local liberty, but also where the local church allows 'their local liberty to be bounded by the

greater discovery of God's purposes.'[97] The values of trust and belonging need to be both

theologically articulated and developed in church relationships enabling each church to

overcome the inclination to see itself in absolute terms, but rather that it 'embodies

directly the invisible reality of the universal Church of Christ, … but only as part of the

whole.'[98]

This unity must be expressed in the faithfulness of covenant relationships rather

than a hierarchical coercion. Although Swarat argues that the practical implications should

include obligatory financial contribution to the Union and the Union's approval of local

church rules[99] this undermines concepts of mutuality and partnership engaged freely and

willingly without control and coercion. Rather than imposing rules, which may well be

difficult to enforce, there is a need to rediscover and re-emphasise a common ownership of

the values underpinning translocal covenant such as those identified in *Association*

Funding: A Basis for our shared life and offered believing that 'wider covenant

commitments need to be affirmed and lived out' in order to empower local congregations

in their mission:[100] These are the commitments of trust, respect, mutual listening to God,

transparency, sacrifice, wise stewardship, mutual accountability, inclusiveness, and seeking

the prophetic voice alongside the 'voices of institutional leadership and administration.'

Appealing to the authenticity found within will enable Baptists to draw from the

strength of the values that have shaped them.[101] The language of covenant does not figure

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[97] Richard Kidd (ed.) *On the Way of Trust* (Didcot: B.U.G.B. 1997) 26 cited in Andy Goodliff, 'The Language of 'Baptist Family',' *Baptist Quarterly* 44, no. 6 (2012) 351
[98] Uwe Swarat, "Local Churches and Wider Church Structures from the Perspective of Reformatory Ecclesiology," in *Baptist World Alliance Symposium* (Elstal, Berlin: Baptist World Alliance, 2007) 4
[99] Swarat, "Local Churches and Wider Church Structures from the Perspective of Reformatory Ecclesiology," 6f
[100] B.U.G.B., *Association Funding: A Basis for Our Shared Life* (Didcot B.U.G.B, 2010) 2
[101] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*91

strongly in popular thinking amongst local churches.[102] The language of family,[103]

movement, or sharing in a common mission is more accessible for the enclave nature of

Baptist Churches than an institutional vocabulary. Andy Goodliff suggests that covenant

relationships, like those of the family, 'depend on trust and love.'[104] Alan Donaldson, the

General Director of the Baptist Union of Scotland, has confirmed the increasing sense of

commonality within the Scottish Union by their deliberate use of 'our Union' rather than

'the Union'.[105] Given Baptists' inherent independency and the antipathy of *enclave*

cultures to *positional* cultural organisation, the role of translocal organisations in

engendering greater interdependency must always be rooted in the values of trust, service

and covenant relationships.

6.4. Building Baptist Belonging

6.4.1. Catechesis for Baptists

The principles and values that promote interdependency should be promoted, and

taught at academic and popular levels. There is no shortage of scholarly material

articulating interdependency, but resources are needed which clearly enable those

undergoing Baptismal and/or church membership preparation to engage with belonging to

a wider Baptist family. Baptist Church membership is based on the concept of belonging

together in covenant relationships[106] but there is little formal reference to covenant

relationships beyond the local church except for a vague awareness of the universal church.

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[102] The word *covenant* was only used by 5 interviewees all of whom had a translocal role.
[103] The use of the term also allows for the inclusion of all expressions of Baptist sociality whether or not they are part of the formal structure.
[104] Goodliff, '*The Language of 'Baptist Family'*,' 350
[105] Alan Donaldson, General Secretary of Baptist Union of Scotland in a brief address to the B.U.G.B. Council on 20th March 2013
[106] See Chapter 4 Section 4.5.3.

Accompanying the catechetical teaching about Baptist interdependency should be a clear element about Baptists' translocal relationships so that candidates for church membership are clear that belonging to a Baptist Church implies belonging to a wider expression of church. Whilst interdependency is implicit in the current Baptist Basics[107] series which places church membership in the context of the whole people of God, there needs to be a stronger overt engagement with Baptist interdependency to overcome the more isolationist tendencies of Baptist culture. Similarly Bible study material for more mature Christians might be made available to enable them to explore the issues, and the provision of sermon outlines related to interdependency to help preachers engage with the subject.

The correct nuancing of instruction and leadership in encouraging translocal engagement will be essential to developing a deeper translocal sociality. Church members must be enabled to discover covenant relationships as a natural expression of their faith, rather than be told they are in a covenant commitment to a local Baptist church and therefore to the wider Baptist community. To do the latter might challenge the insularity of some Baptist churches, but it might be received negatively as an imposition counter to the norms of an *enclave* community. However, such resources must be seen to reflect the teaching of the Bible and not merely some form of translocal Baptist propaganda if it is to appeal the authenticity of local Baptist church members. There is no guarantee that such material would be used as each church and minister will choose their own material, but it would model an approach that may raise the importance of enabling new Christians and others to think beyond the local church which may gradually change its outlook and culture.

At the point when people seek Church Membership those who interview them should be given guidance to introduce the concept of Baptist interdependence as well as

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[107] B.U.G.B. et al., "Baptist Basics," in *Baptist basics series* (Didcot: Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1994)

congregational polity. This could be further reinforced by an adaption of liturgies for reception into church membership which recognise that membership of a local church implies and includes the wider sociality of Baptists. Guidance and liturgies can only be offered and not imposed and are therefore without a guarantee of being used, but whilst many churches develop their own processes and ministers craft their own liturgies, the models provided would be influential and so raise the importance and expectation of translocal relationships.

6.4.2. Ministry

Covenant theology has shaped the understanding of church membership,[108] Association and Union, and underpins The Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry in which the term 'Covenanted Persons' was chosen to express the mutual responsibilities of ministers and the Union. This implies appropriate involvement in the Union's life and 'acting in ways that guard the reputation of Christ and his Church.'[109] Whilst intending to be more relational it can be seen as merely encouraging loyalty to the denomination's institution and be understood as the Union acting from a *positional* culture. However, to encourage realistic and meaningful engagement with fellow ministers and collaboration between churches, as well as Baptist institutions, would be more commensurate with the concept of covenant and the ethos and values of the *enclave*. A covenant to Union as an institution focussing on institutional loyalty, rather than the Baptist family, is not in keeping with the Baptist ethos and so the language of covenant may come to be resented or emptied of meaning. [110]

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[108] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 74f
[109] *The ministerial recognition rules* (final version November 2009) The Baptist Union of Great Britain Ministerial Recognition committee 9
[110] Some would think that the change from an 'List of Accredited Baptist Ministers' (See previous handbooks) to 'Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry' was little more than a name

The nature of the covenant relationship of ministers and the Baptist family could be usefully emphasised during the ministerial accreditation process recognising that the call to Baptist ministry includes sharing in the ministry of the denomination and not just pastoring a local church. It should be expressed in a question on the Ministry application form and be part of the questioning by Association Ministerial Recognition Committees enabling candidates to locate their ministry within the context of the denomination. This would identify the importance of translocal relationships for potential ministers with the intention that they would be willing to think, relate and serve beyond their local church.

This covenant relationship could be expressed in the liturgies for Ordinations and Inductions. Although the explanation to the Ordination service sets the covenant in a wider context, the liturgy makes no reference to a covenant. Ministers are requested to represent the 'whole Church of Jesus Christ'[111] and there is the opportunity to affirm the Baptist Union's *Declaration of Principle.*[112] Recognition is given to the testing of the person's call to ministry with testimony given by representatives of the sending church, the Association and the college where the candidate trained, but there is no explicit affirmation of a covenant responsibility to serve the *family* that has tested that call and equipped a person for ministry. This could be redressed by including a response from the ordinand affirming the covenant nature of Baptist relationships and their role in collaborating with the Baptist family in the mission of God in the locality and region as well as nationally and internationally.[113]

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change with stronger support being offered by the Union to Newly Accredited Ministers. There was not an invitation to enter a covenant relationship, but rather an assumption that there was some form of covenant relationship.

[111] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship*125

[112] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 126f

[113] Such a question might be: 'Recognising that God has called within the Baptist family and that we are called to walk together in covenant relationships do you accept the call of God to share with fellow Baptists as well as ecumenical colleagues in the mission of God?'

The Induction service is essentially a covenant between the local church and the minister, but lacks a strong covenant commitment to engage locally or regionally with fellow Baptists in the mission of God, although the minister is inducted 'in the name of the Baptist Union of Great Britain' and affirmed by church representatives present.[114] Such expressed commitment would signal the importance of interdependence and could be expressed in a liturgical response.[115] It would be right to acknowledge the reciprocal responsibilities within the covenant relationships of Baptists, but to avoid coercion and the potential for excluding ecumenical collaboration. Without being over-prescriptive in these covenant responses, which would be counter to the informality of the *enclave* culture, they might naturally lead to increased mutual support amongst ministers, support for local churches without ministers, and improved engagement in the local Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, the Association and the Union. A culture of mutuality should be fostered amongst ministers from the point their call is tested by Associations, through college training, and the on-going support of the Associations and Union which would engage them in the wider life of the denomination from early in their ministry.

The above actions would emphasise covenant responsibility to the family of faith that discerns the minister's call, and equips, trains and supports them for ministry, and would give greater encouragement to work out covenant responsibilities in mutual support and collaboration with fellow ministers, neighbouring churches, and support for the Baptist family as whole.

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[114] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship*133f
[115] Such a question might be: 'Recognising the covenant relationships of our Baptist family do you accept the call to share in the building up the common life of the wider Baptist community and to collaborate with fellow Baptists in the mission of God to this region?' This does find expression in the act of induction for Regional Ministers. Cf. Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 157

Each church is responsible for agreeing the term of appointment for their minister, but a model is proposed by the Baptist Union which many use.[116] These Terms of Appointment made should make it clear that the minister will be expected to engage in the translocal life of Baptists expressed in partnership with other churches as well as Association and Union life. This might be contentious given the parochial concerns of the local church, but if agreed at the start of a ministry it would generate understanding within the church of the importance of translocal relationships and give the minister greater liberty to engage in the wider denomination. This would need to be accompanied by Association and Union policies which would enable ministers to engage in some translocal expression of service from an early point in their ministry. However, the involvement with the wider denomination need not be focused on the structure of the denomination, but could be a means of developing some degree of itinerant ministry within the Association and supporting lay preachers in their ministry. This would develop a minister's awareness of the needs and opportunities of nearby churches and provide the foundations for collaborative action based on knowledge and good relationships. It does not guarantee increased involvement, but the implicit message may begin to shape future thinking.

Regional Ministers make Induction promises to build up the common life of the Baptist Union[117] and their job description refers to generally overseeing clusters and networks within the Association. Andy Goodliff sees the ministry as having the potential to be a 'catalyst for catholicity' enabling 'a greater associating between churches'[118] and so focussing on developing relationships and cooperation between churches and not just the wider institution.

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[116] B.U.G.B. 2013. *B.U.G.B. Recommended Terms of Appointment to the Office of Minister of a Baptist Church*. B.U.G.B., http://www.baptist.org.uk/search.html?searchword=appointment&searchphrase=all&start=20 (accessed 2013).
[117] Ellis, Blyth, and B.U.G.B., *Gathering for Worship* 157
[118] Andy Goodliff, 'Whatever Happened to Associating?,' *The Baptist Ministers' Journal* 315 (2012) 17

Regional and national mission needs to be part of a pastoral conversation that Regional Ministers should have with ministers at least annually accompanied by a biennial meeting with the diaconates of each church. Such meetings would build relationships, develop common understandings and provide the opportunity for wider strategic thinking. This would help to overcome the tension in Baptist sociality acknowledged by one interviewee as being between 'institutional organisation' and 'a movement of the Kingdom of God.'[119] It would be in keeping with the five 'articles of action' adopted by early Calvinistic Baptist Associations defining the purpose of the Association[120] facilitated by 'messengers'[121] as including advice in controversial matters, enabling ministry in those churches without it, collaboration in mission, mutual care and discipline.

Regional Ministers need to develop clusters and networks, not just in bureaucratic uniformity to a master plan, but a crafted pragmatic expression of the unity of the Body focused on the Mission of Christ. Soar Valley Gospel Partnership is one such example which was launched after the closure of a number of churches with a view to planting and supporting Christians in every town and village in the Soar Valley.[122] Such an approach requires common ownership of the vision and intentional commitment by the churches themselves, not just by the committees of Association and Union.

6.4.3. Corporate Deliberation

The time and personal contact required for relational qualities to be effective may be counter-intuitive to the mechanical efficiency of business-orientated bureaucratic methods. A deliberate commitment to working collaboratively is required, with each

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[119] 212
[120] Ian Birch, 'The Counsel and Help of One Another: The Origins and Concerns of Early Particular Baptist Churches in Association,' *Baptist Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (2013) 13 and 25
[121] See chapter 4 Section 4.4.1.
[122] *Soar Valley Gospel Partnership Founding Document* 1

feeling part of the common conversation so that they may engage with the outcomes. The isolationism or eclectic relationality of some local churches means that significant encouragement will be required to engage them in the common conversation which engenders ownership and collaboration of common mission. Practically, this may involve using Assemblies as times of collective discernment and listening, as well as worship, teaching and necessary business. Social media could be a means of sharing of concerns and vision and collective listening to the Spirit. Councils and translocal ministers can then listen and become better equipped for their decision-making processes. Many ministers may not attend Assemblies, but if these events are to be meaningful for the collaborative mission of an Association or Union then their engagement, and not mere attendance, is essential. Ways should be found to enable ministers to engage in and take part in Union and Association Assemblies in a way that will increase their sense of ownership of the events. This could include direct participation in the organisation of the Assemblies or in the conduct and leading of the event.

6.4.4. Addressing translocal dysfunction

The cultural dissonance and organisational dysfunction in Baptist life needs to be addressed from both the translocal position and also from the local church perspective. Firstly, through the adoption of recommendations about catechism, liturgy, ministry and networking given above, local Baptist churches need to be enabled to see sister churches as natural partners in mutual support and missional collaboration, sharing a 'partnership in the gospel'[123] to a wider geographic area collaborating in the Mission of God and not merely as fellow members of the bureaucratic denominational structures.

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[123] Philippians 1:5 NIV UK

Secondly, the relationship between the churches, the Associations and the Union needs to be enhanced. Churches have limited interest in the voice of the denomination unless it is advice they perceive they need, therefore the nurturing of relationships with churches and their leaders by the translocal bodies is of strategic importance. As organisations with separate governance structures, Associations and Union develop their own lives serving their own purposes, adopting a *positional* and bureaucratic approach even though aiming to support local churches. Translocal bodies need to intentionally see churches as members and not their bureaucratic sub-divisions. Conversely, churches need to recapture the sense of covenant relationship that includes Associations in regional mission and the Union in national mission. The environment of the Union's office may increase its bureaucratic approach vis-à-vis churches and Associations, creating a dissonance of culture which needs to remedied by the adoption of the appropriate culture within the Union's office operation, and greater understanding of the Union's role by churches and Associations. It is essential that those who serve in translocal bodies recognise and work to the prevailing enclave nature of Baptist culture using the appropriate vocabulary in thinking about strategy. Hierarchical approaches to strategy should be rejected in favour of the lens of strategy as 'experience' deliberately adopted, with accommodation for strategy as 'ideas'.[124] The geographic proximity of Associations to the churches makes them well placed to develop mission strategies, encourage mutual co-operation and provide realistic contact points with the churches to enable the wider Baptist family to speak into the local church.[125] Therefore strategies should be developed regionally, rooted locally and supported and co-ordinated nationally, within the context of the national mission as a denomination. Strategies will need to be collaborative, reflective

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[124] Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy,* 31f Strategy development can be viewed through the lenses of design, experience, and ideas.

[125] E-mail *From: John Claydon: Sent: 29 September 2011 21:44 to: Ernie Whalley (Ernie Whalley); 'Judson Keith and Jill' Subject: Team Leaders Only. My contribution to an Association Team Leaders meeting facilitated by Ernie and Keith.*

of Baptist cultural values, to resource churches and Associations to accomplish their

purposes and provide the backdrop to encourage creative and even risky initiatives in

mission.

Thirdly, the relationship between Associations and the Union needs to be

addressed including the overall relationships between leadership, oversight (episcope),

governance and management of the denomination. The Union and Associations have 14

different governance and leadership structures and mission strategies, leading to a lack of

cohesion and focus, competing agendas, organisational dysfunction, uncertainty of income

and absence of long-term financial planning. The development of coherence between the

Associations and the Union is crucial for Baptists' missional effectiveness. Although there

have been significant attempts to reduce the level of the Union's bureaucracy through

recent reforms it remains more developed than that of the Associations or the churches, as

is seen in its decision-making processes and the organisation of its office and staff. In part

this is due to the extent of the organisation, the size of its budget and the nature of the

office environment. However, significant attempts have been made to recapture some

aspects of the *enclave*-type culture replacing Union Departments and heads of

departments with 'Specialist Teams' with team leaders seeking a more egalitarian and

relational approach. However, the requirements of Ministerial Accreditation, financial

propriety, engagement with ecumenical partners and wider society, and the need for clear

decision-making require a certain level of bureaucracy. The Union operates a consultative

bureaucracy that has significant echoes of Parker's[126] description of the Australian Victorian

Synod. As with that Synod the Union has diffused and dispersed authority, competing

groups who may not be included in the formal decision-making processes and competing

influences from Associations and churches resulting in similar tensions, but lacking the

Synod's level of authority. Authority is legitimised through the bureaucracy of rules,

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[126] Chapter 1 Section 1.2.5.

records and appointment to office by merit, accompanied by a staff hierarchy within the national resource. There is no formal staff hierarchy in relation to the denomination although groups' and individuals' exercise of *resource*, *expert* and *personal* power[127] may affect the nature of the denomination which, typically of *enclave* communities, is consensual. It is essential that those who serve in these roles should be self-reflective about the cultural norms that they bring to their service and consciously adapt their approach to work more effectively within the Baptist context.

The reforms of 2013 have sought to reduce levels of bureaucracy, increase relationality and develop cohesion and strategic thinking within the Union. The translocal life of Baptists should be enhanced as the Union's trustees follow a new memorandum to limit their role to overarching governance issues.[128] However, this would be further enhanced if the Union's Specialist Team Leaders engaged with the Team Leaders from all Associations in the national leadership conversations of the Baptist Steering Group and if one Moderator served the B.S.G. Trustees and Council thus addressing the significant dislocation between the parties and the absence of clear leadership. The repetitive and separate consultation of different groups including the Trustees, the Transitional Steering Group and the Association Team Leaders discussing the same issues diminishes connectivity and coherence, and creates an absence of effective leadership for the denomination as each of these groups is convened by a different chair (Moderator) resulting in a lack of clear management of the discernment process. Similarly it would enhance understanding and cohesion if the Union's Trustees occasionally met those with responsibility for leadership.

In recent reforms there has been the change in the composition, nature and purpose of the Baptist Union Council. It is much reduced in size and seeks to engage those with specific

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[127] Charles B. Handy, *Understanding Organizations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 4th ed. 1999) 127ff
[128] B.U.G.B., *Board of Trustees: Terms of Reference* 1

roles of Moderator and Team Leader within Associations and also to create a greater sense

of diversity in its total composition leading to a significantly refreshed Council with those

who are directly engaged in the pertinent issues. Its nature has changed from forms of

debate shaped by agendas and informed by Committee reports to other forms of reflection

and deliberation seeking to create a greater sense of togetherness. Council's purpose has

been changed and clarified as being to set the strategy and vision for the Union with the

B.S.G. developing its management and implementation and the Trustees' purpose is to

provide the overall governance. As the Council has only met once and the T.S.G. is yet to

change from its transitional role to a more permanent arrangement it is difficult to assess

whether greater relationality, increased cohesion and clearer strategic thinking have been

achieved. The 'new' Council has only met once[129] and the intent to change its culture was

clearly indicated by the deliberate use of first names for the chair rather than the term

'Moderator', and by having a programme rather than an agenda. Similarly the seating of

members around tables so as to be able to discuss issues, engage in plenary discussion and

also engage in more creative discernment processes was indicative of a new approach

which also contained times of prayer and spiritual reflection. However, although the

Council Meeting in November 2013 was a positive experience there was a lack of clarity

about processes and the relationship between the Council and the B.S.G.; a danger that the

fluidity of conversation and creativity of discernment processes may fail to have sufficient

structure and shape to facilitate effective and clear decision-making; and a possibility that

the relational approach, without concretising decision-making processes, may give voice to

people but actually disempower them from the decisions. Such matters will need to be

considered as the changes take effect.

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[129] November 2013

Conclusion

The central contention of this thesis is that the prevailing Baptist culture and ecclesiology of independence severely restrict Baptists' ability to engage cohesively and strategically in collaborative mission. Baptists' hopes for associating, according to Stephen Copson, have often 'been a triumph of hope over experience'[130] with White acknowledging that their history indicates that they have chosen local independence over Association cooperation.[131] To overcome the failures of the past means taking seriously the theological and cultural commitment to the local church and enabling all to see new horizons for translocal collaboration. The theology is broader than the isolationism of the local church, with a strong theme of interdependency which struggles to have equal influence with the force of independency. The concept and theology of Covenant must be properly understood, articulated and accepted as the basis for a partnership in the gospel that permeates Baptist sociality, enabling genuine mutuality, support, accountability and engagement in mission. Addressing these issues requires re-emphasising mutuality, encouraging churches to seek greater interdependency together and to engage more fully and readily with Associations and the Union. Associations also must recognise the different cultural modes in which they operate in relation to each other and the churches and to re-emphasise the values of relationality.

Baptist history confirms the high emphasis upon independency, but there is also a strong sense of interdependency expressed in the desire to 'walk together', the creation of Associations and the Union and a variety of translocal ministries. The authority of these bodies and ministries has varied, but it is clear that they have frequently been given opportunity to speak into the life of the local church. The recovery of a greater sense of

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[130] Stephen Copson, 'Renewing Associations: An Early Eighteenth-Century Example,' *Baptist Quarterly* xxxviii, no. 6 (2000) 264

[131] B.R White in D. Slater (ed.), *A Perspective on Baptist Identity*. 1987 20. Cited in Wright, ''*Koinonia' and Baptist Ecclesiology: Self-Critical Reflections from Historical and Systematic Perspectives*,' 366

interdependency, that is rooted in both formal and informal relationship and is expressed in vertical and horizontal sociality, is essential for Baptists to become more effective in their pursuit of the mission of God.

The recommendations above are not without challenge given the independency and sometimes isolationism of Baptists. Recognising the restricting force of independency amongst Baptists, and that enclave communities respond best to appeals to values rather than hierarchical control, there needs to be a strong appeal to common mission strengthened by an appeal to shared theology and values. Common action can overcome fragmentation and reinforce a sense of empowerment.[132] Consequently Associations and Union must lead churches through relationships built on trust with common values and not with approaches that indicate something of a command and control management ethos.[133]

Although Baptist churches are *enclave* communities with the corporate personality of the *individualist,* their relational values provide an opportunity to encourage informal relationships and collaboration for the sake of common endeavour and mutual support. Appendix 1 contains a list of recommendations including those mentioned in the thesis. Some actions could be relatively straightforward, but their effect will take time to produce results. An understanding of covenant could be nurtured during the Ministerial Accreditation process, and church membership courses could present a deeper and more active connectivity. More challenging is the call to action that brings more immediate changes to Baptists' perceptions and behaviour. This requires the prophetic call to collective mission, calling Baptists to a radical interdependency that regards fellow Baptists as partners, hears the voice of the wider Baptist family and enables cohesive regional and national engagement in mission.

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[132] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*112 and 118
[133] ref Ch. 3 Section 3.1.4.1.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of recommendations

1	Teaching material should be provided that enables those undergoing Baptismal and/or church membership preparation to engage with belonging to a wider Baptist family. Similarly Bible Study material for more mature Christians might be made available to enable them to explore the issues. The provision of sermon outlines related to interdependency might also be useful.
2	Ways should be found to enable ministers to engage in and take part in Union and Association Assemblies in a way that will increase their sense of ownership of the events.
3	Assembly organising committees should include two 'church delegates' who are not ordinarily part of the committee for every Assembly they organise.
4	Interviews for church membership should include conversation about translocal relationships.
5	The liturgy for admission to church membership should make reference to the translocal nature of Baptist life.
6	Policies should be adopted that enable ministers to engage in some translocal expression of service from an early point in their ministry.
7	Some degree of itinerant ministry should be encouraged amongst ministers including the support of itinerant lay preachers.
8	Interdependency should be developed through informal networks and enable churches and ministers to support one another rather than only rely on the formal provision that comes through the structures.
9	Candidates for Baptist ministry should be advised that the call to ministry is a call to serve the wider church as well as a local fellowship.
10	Application forms for Baptist Ministry should give an indication of the covenant relationship of the wider Baptist family and require the candidate to affirm such relationships.
11	Association Ministerial Recognition Committees should explore a candidate's readiness to serve the wider church.
12	Ministers' Terms of Appointment should make it clear that the minister will be expected to engage in the translocal life of Baptists expressed in partnership with other churches as well as Association and Union life.
13	It is essential that those who serve in translocal bodies recognise and work to the prevailing enclave nature of Baptist culture.
14	It is similarly essential that those who serve in these roles should be self-reflective about the cultural norms that they bring to their service and consciously adapt their approach to work more effectively within the Baptist context.
15	All those engaged in translocal leadership, the Baptist Steering Group, the Association and Team Leaders should meet together as one group.
16	Those with responsibility for leadership should meet occasionally with the Union's trustees who will retain the responsibility of governance.
17	Hierarchical approaches to strategy should be rejected and the lens of strategy as experience deliberately adopted with accommodation for strategy as ideas.
18	Strategies will need to be collaborative, reflective of Baptist cultural values, releasing of churches and associations to fulfil their role in the mission of God, resourcing them to accomplish their purposes and providing the backdrop to encourage creative and even risky initiatives in mission.
19	The vocabulary used in thinking about strategy must be appropriate to the *enclave* nature of the culture of Baptists.

Appendix 2: Description of an Association: The Northern Baptist Association
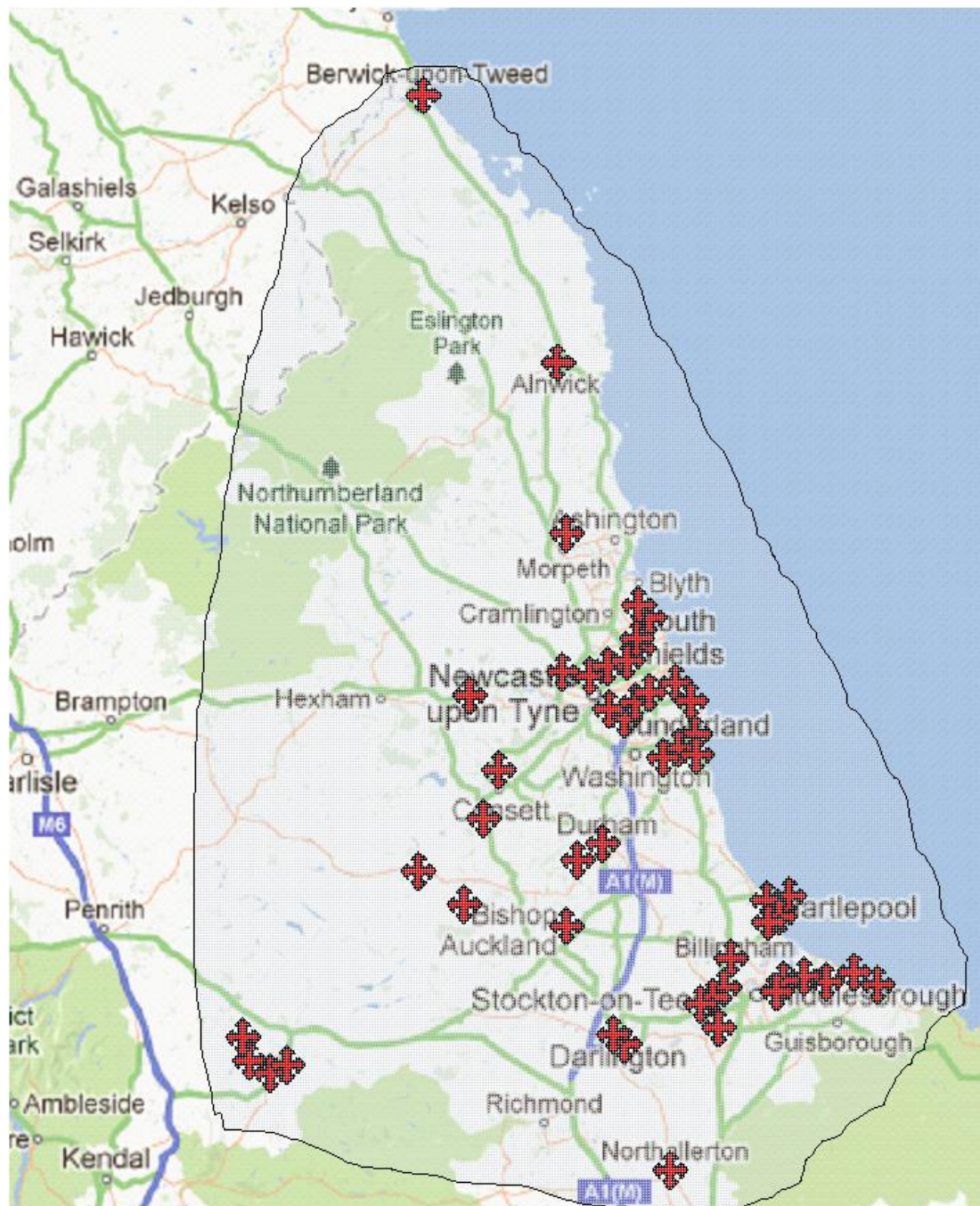

Figure 28: Map giving the location of the 51 churches of the N.B.A. at the end of 2012

The Northern Baptist Association, the location of my own ministry, is described as an example of an Association.[134] Baptists in the north east are a small minority spread over a large geographic area which may add to feelings of isolation and independence. It has 51 churches in an area of over 3,000 square miles ranging in membership from less than 5 and to about 385 with a combined membership of 2885 at the end of 2012,[135] and an estimated adult attendance of about 3,700 and a worshipping community of about 4,500, which is approximately 0.17% of the population of the north east of England. Baptists are disproportionally smaller in the area being about 3% of the church-going population as opposed to 8% nationally.[136] Six churches have a membership of over 100. However, 44% of church members are located in those churches. 66% of churches have less than 50 members with 27% have under 25.[137]

N.B.A. Churches according to size

100+ members 12%

75-100 members 6%

50-74 members 16%

25-49 members 39%

Under 24 members 27%
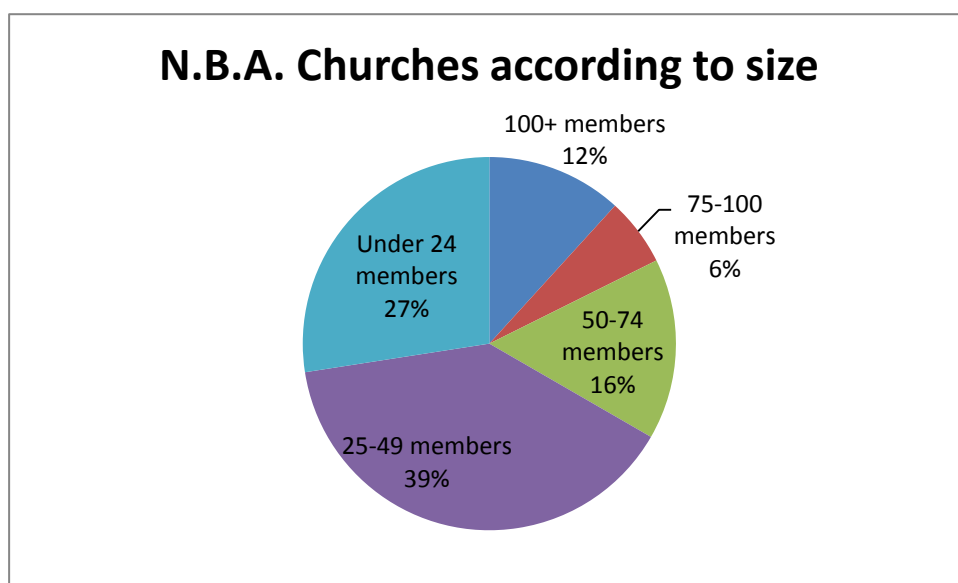
Figure 29: N.B.A. Churches according to size

Of the 41 paid ministers serving local churches, eight are part-time, 10 are supported with by a Home Mission grant and two are Ministers In Training. Seven churches are pastored by

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[134] The NBA is not a Trust Company, nor does it have an office.

[135] Northern Baptist Association, *N.B.A. Directory 2012-13* (Whitley Bay: Northern Baptist Association, 2011) 16

[136] Cf. 2055 English Church Census and 2001 UK Census. See edited by Peter Brierley ; assistant editor: Kim Tainio, *Ukch Religious Trends. No. 7, British Religion in the 21st Century* (Swindon: Christian Research, 2008) 2.1ff

[137] Association, *N.B.A. Directory 2012-13* 15f

unpaid ministers with some sharing a minister. Six churches currently have no pastoral oversight.[138]
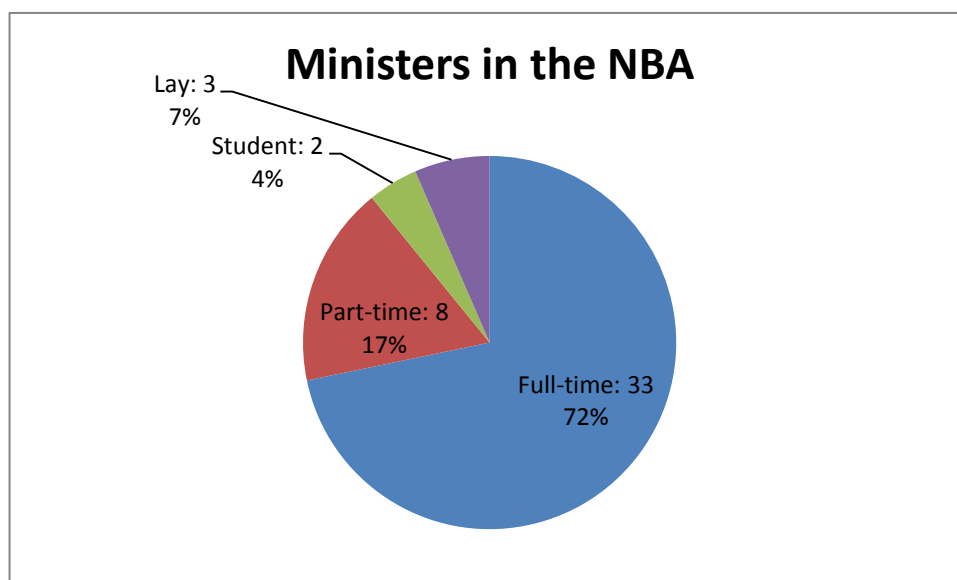
Figure 30: Ministers in the NBA

The Association holds two assemblies per year which are occasions for worship, teaching, fellowship and business and are open meetings, but only church representatives are entitled to vote. It may also be an occasion to share news of the common life of the Association and the churches as a means of encouragement, sharing good practice and praying for one another. All church ministers[139] are members of the Assembly and each church is entitled to appoint a further member for every 50 church members, or part thereof. Association officers do not vote at the Assembly unless they are church representatives. The main decisions relate to the membership of the Association, the

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[138] As of the end of May 2012 these churches are: Upper Eden, Beacon Lough, Durham Road in Gateshead, Rowley, Ushaw Moor and Wolsingham.
[139] Ordained or lay.

appointment of the Association Council, the appointment of certain officers[140] and the

reception of annual reports and accounts.

Association business takes place within the Council and its sub groups. The Council

consists of up to 24 members. Twelve are elected by the Assembly, five are ex-officio,[141]

and up to seven are co-opted.[142] The Council's business normally includes opportunity to

reflect on significant issues facing the common life of the Association, appointments,

staffing matters, finance, consideration of business generated by its sub-groups and staff

reports. The Resources Group oversees finance and administration, and the Ministry Group

oversees ministerial recognition and the support of ministers and churches; both have

authority to act on behalf of Council. The Staffing Group oversees matters relating to the

paid staff, the Assembly Planning Group organises the assemblies, and the Home Mission

Grants Group oversees the application processes for churches applying for a Home Mission

grant to support their minister. All act within a defined remit and are accountable to the

Council.

Demographic composition of NBA Church Attendance

About 59% of Baptist churches'   attendees are female and 41% male. [143] The age and

gender profile for average Sunday attendance is shown in fig. 3 below. There are only 5[144]

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[140] Regional Ministers, the Treasurer, the Home Mission Co-ordinator and the BMS World Mission representative.
[141] Two Regional Ministers, Treasurer, Home Mission Co-ordinator, Baptist Missionary Society Representative.
[142] Up to 4 are co-opted for reasons of balance of gender, ethnicity, etc. within the council and up to three from those who represent the association on Baptist Union Council.
[143] The Baptist Union of Great Britain requested all its member churches to do a congregational count on 2nd December 2007. The actual recorded count for the NBA was 3787. I have added a further 213, based on personal knowledge of those churches which did not reply.
[144] Only two of these are accredited by the Baptist Union and in sole pastoral charge.

women ministering in churches and two others as prison chaplains. 48% of the Church

Secretaries[145] and 44% of the Church Treasurers are female.[146]
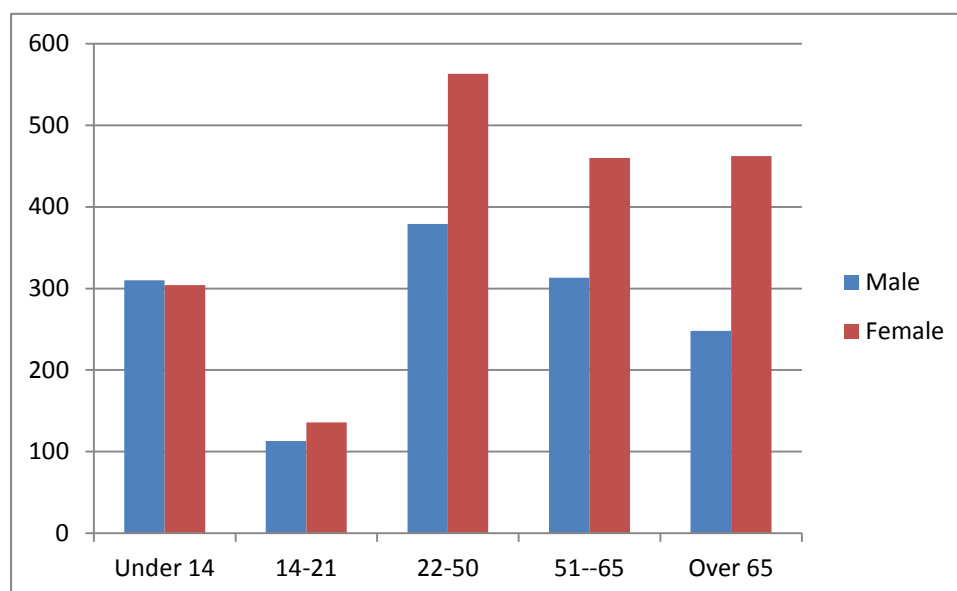
Figure 31: Age and gender profile of N.B.A. churches in 2007

This demographic spread is not equally reflected in Association life. The NBA

Council is composed of 12 male and 6 female members. Of the sub groups (which can

include non NBA Council Members), the Resources Group has 7 members including three

women, the Ministry Group has 10 members including 4 women, the Home Mission Grants

Group has 8 members including 2 women, and the Assembly Planning Group has 9

members including 4 women.[147] Whilst women comprise about 60% of the total attendees,

their proportion in ministry is disproportionally low, although they share almost equally in

the offices of church secretary and treasurer. However, in translocal roles 33% of the N.B.A.

Council are female. All Association committees are White British and only one member is

under the age of 40.

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[145] This is usually a fairly significant leadership role, a kind of quasi elder. However, there are some situations where the role is simply and administrative function.
[146] As of February 2011
[147] As of 2011

The Organisational profile of the NBA
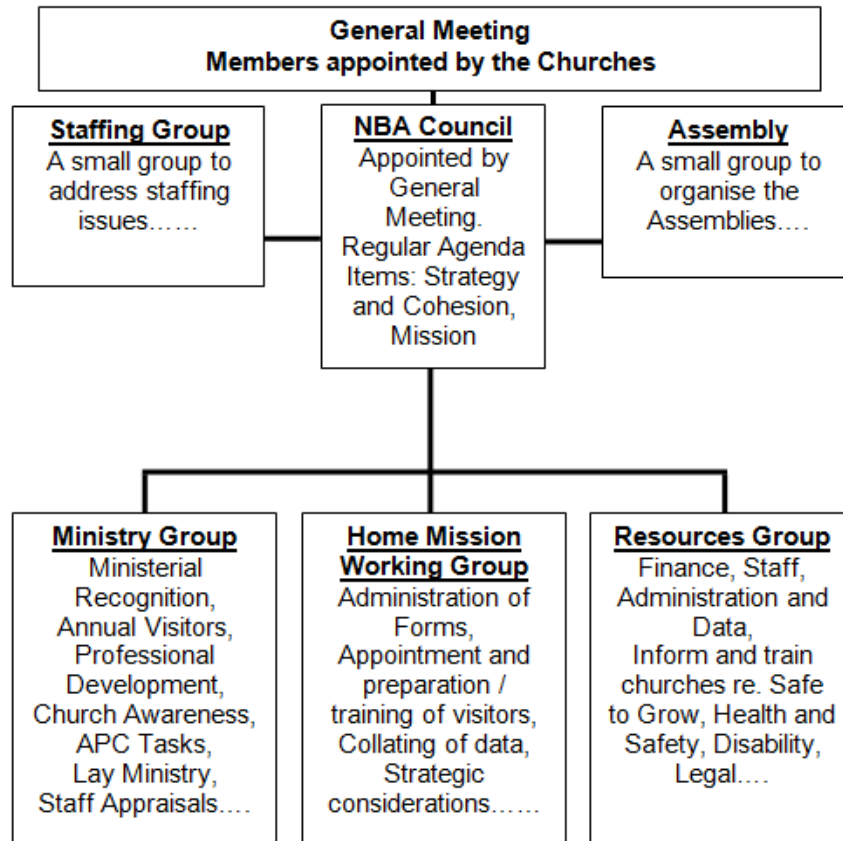
Figure 32: Basic outline of Association structure

The diagram above shows that authority in the N.B.A. rests with the Assembly which gathers under the Lordship of Christ. Church representatives gain their authority to speak from their appointment by the local church. Assembly decisions relate accountability and the overall direction of the Association in accordance with its governing documents. [148] The Council are the trustees/directors of the charity/company and responsible for the affairs of the Association.

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[148] That is the Association's *Memorandum of Articles*, *The Articles of Association,* and the *Bye Laws*.

Association income in 2012 was £116,278.[149] It owns no property and its major costs are the employment of the staff team: two full time Regional Ministers, a part-time Youth Specialist[150] and a part-time administrator. Approximately 90% of the income came from the Baptist Union of Great Britain with no direct contribution from the churches. However the Association, from its churches and special offerings, gave £112,854 in 2012 to the Home Mission appeal which averages over £39 per member. Churches also give voluntarily to the Baptist Missionary Society and in the same year gave almost £95,692[151] which is about £33 per member.

The basic elements of the Association's income in 2012 were a 25% refund of the previous year's contribution to the Home Mission Appeal which is based on the premise that Associations will not independently raise finance from the churches in competition with the Home Mission Appeal,[152] a grant to fund one regional minister which is given to all Associations, a further grant from Home Mission to maintain current staffing, plus donations, bank interest and sundry income. Some Associations have accrued large investments by holding the trust deeds of their churches which have now closed and the interest on the capital is available for that Association's use. In future the income from B.U.G.B. will be allocated from the Central Fund according to the needs of the Association and budgetary constraints of the Union.

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[149] *Northern Baptist Association Reports and Accounts 2010* 12. Discounting income from the sale of a church property so as to reflect normal income.
[150] This post is currently vacant.
[151] *Northern Baptist Association Reports and Accounts 2010* 18.This was a significant reduction from the 2009 figure of £106,961
[152] B.U.G.B., *B.U.G.B. 2010 Directory* 330
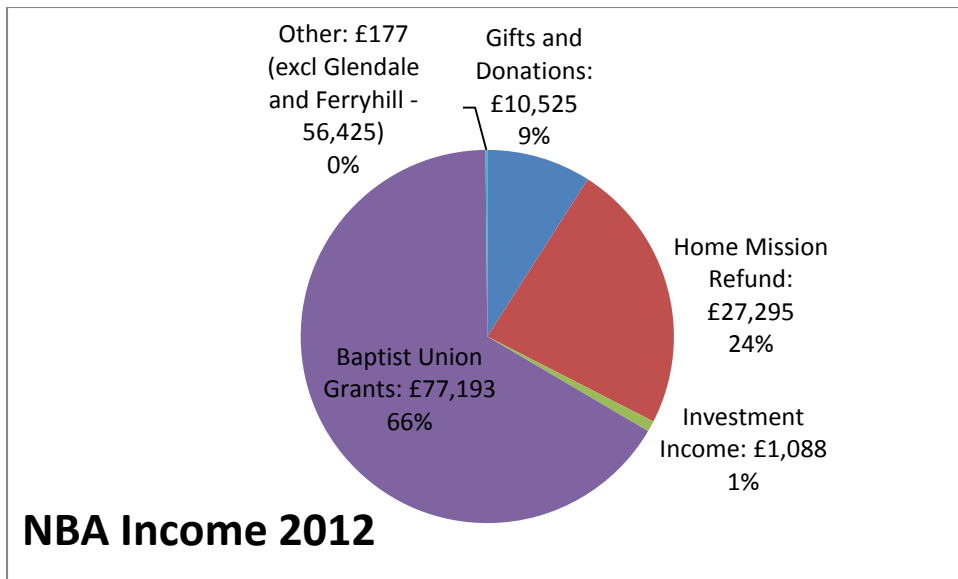
Figure 33: N.B.A. Income 2012
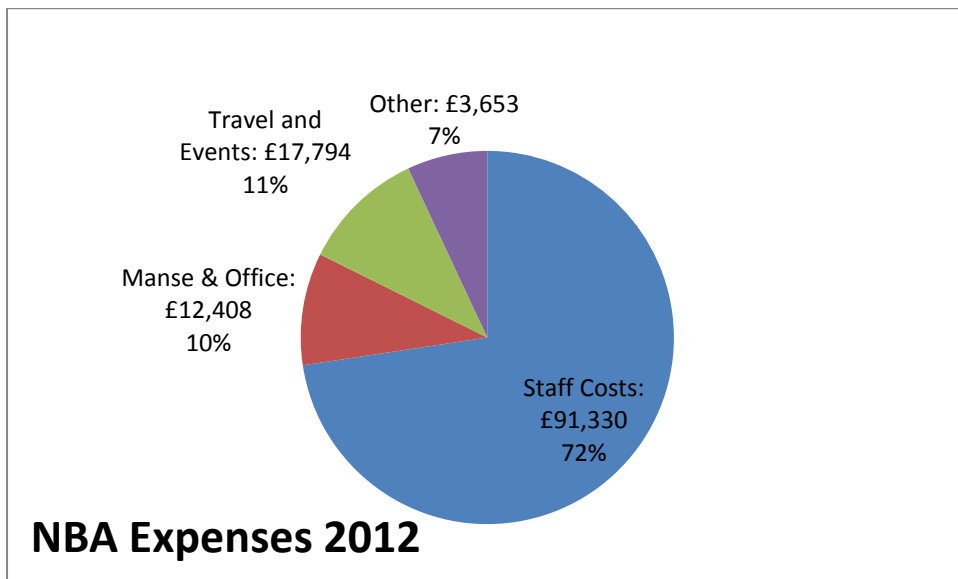
Figure 34: N.B.A. Expenditure 2012

One Regional Minister is designated to give pastoral support to ministers and churches and is also the Team Leader supporting staff and volunteers and providing leadership within the Association. Another has the responsibility to encourage, resource and support churches in mission. The Youth Specialist's role is to encourage and support church youth workers,

providing opportunities for training and networking. The part-time administrator provides support for the paid staff and volunteers.

The major volunteer roles include the Moderator, whose prime responsibility is to chair the business meetings of the Assembly and Council and to act as line manager to the Team Leader. The Treasurer oversees the finance of the Association. The Home Mission Co-ordinator encourages churches in their financial and prayer support of Home Mission. The Ecumenical Officer takes the responsibility for liaising with counterparts in other denominations.

Appendix 3: Participant Explanation Sheet

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW RE. HOME MISSION: EXPLANATION SHEET

Thank you for being willing to take part in this study.

This interview is one of a series which will form an essential research element within a doctoral study on the nature and parameters of corporate strategy in a Baptist Context. Major component parts of the work explore issues of Baptist history and culture, draw on insights from organisational studies, and consider lessons to be learned from anthropological understandings of the meaning of money. The thesis will consider issues of money as a significant expression of approaches to strategy by the denomination.

The aim is to interview 30 people who in some way could be considered to be stakeholders in relation to Home Mission either as donors, beneficiaries or decision-makers. This will include: 3 Ministers of local churches within the Northern Baptist Association, 3 Church Secretaries, 3 Church Treasurers, 3 Regional Minister: Team Leaders, 3 Association Treasurers, 3 volunteers servicing the Home Mission Scheme in the NBA. 3 members of the Union's Trustee Board, 7 members of the Baptist Union's Senior Management Team, the Honorary Treasurer of the Baptist Union, and the Home Mission Grants Manager.

The interview is of a semi-structured nature and whilst it will be based around several questions there will also be scope to explore other issues as well.

The interview begins by noting a number of personal details such as age, gender, occupation, experience of service within a Baptist church, etc.

The main part of the interview will focus on your perceptions and expectations in relation to Home Mission. There are also other questions relating to your own personal background, experience and your values.

With your permission the interview will be recorded, but the recording will be kept secure and reference to your contribution will be anonymous.

Appendix 4: Semi-structured Interview Questions 1

Semi Structure Interview re. Home Mission

Introductory Information

Name: ……………………………   Date of Birth: ………..   Gender: ………

Education: GCSE / O levels,   A levels

                                Diploma   Degree

                                Masters   Doctorate

                                Trade or Professional qualifications

Occupation: …………………………………………………….

Church: …………………………………………………….

1. How many years have you been a member of Baptist churches?

2. What leadership roles have you held within the local church?

3. What roles have you held within the Association and Union?

4. What would you describe as the key distinctive features of Baptist life and culture?

The Main Interview Questions

1. What comes to mind when you hear the words 'Home Mission'?
2. Within the confines of a sentence what would you say that Home Mission is?
3. If you were personally giving some money to Home Mission and offered a dedicatory prayer what would be the essence of that prayer?
   a. If that is a general offertory prayer how would you make it specific to Home Mission?
   b. What would you include if it was to be an intercessory prayer?
4. What do you think the average church member thinks about Home Mission?[153]

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[153] This question is designed to access prejudices.

5. What comes to mind when you think about publicity and information regarding Home Mission?

6. Who do you think benefits from Home Mission and in what way?

    a. Are there any others who benefit?

    b. Is there a difference between those who **do** and those who **should** benefit?

7. What do think are the main components of the Home Mission Budget?

    a. What percentage proportions of the budget do you think go to each of those components?

8. How and in what ways does your church support Home Mission?

    a. How much does your church give to Home Mission?

    b. Is it a budgeted amount or is it ad hoc?

9. What level of importance does your church attach to giving to Home Mission?

10. Why is your church motivated to give to Home Mission?

    a. There are some churches that give very little to Home Mission, why do you think that is so?

11. Who do you think makes strategic decisions about the raising of finance for Home Mission?

    a. Are there any changes that you believe should be made?

12. Who do you think makes strategic decisions about the distribution of Home Mission finance?

    a. What principles guide them in those decisions?

13. In what ways do you think Home Mission relates to the budget of the Baptist Union?

    a. Is there no relationship?

    b. Is it a part of the budget and if so what proportion would you expect it to be?

14. What relationship do you see between Home Mission and decision making in Associations and the Union?

15. Who would you describe as a good leader and why?

16. What values underpin the life of the church?

17. Do people in positions of governance see their role as spiritual leadership or church management?

    a. Why do you think people are private about issues related to money?

18. What do you think are the theological values that underpin Home Mission?

19. Is Home Mission the right way to fund the life of the Union?

20. To which do you think people have a greater sense of ownership, to Home Mission or to the Baptist Union?

21. Are there issues that we have not covered that you think are important when discussing this area?

Appendix 5: Semi-structured Interview Questions 2

Semi structured interview examining perceptions about collective strategy for Baptists and issues concerning finance as seen in Baptist Home Mission

Introductory Personal Information

Name: ……………………………   Date of Birth: ……….. Gender: ……....

Education: GCSE / O levels,   A levels

                 Diploma   Degree

                 Masters   Doctorate

                 Trade or Professional qualifications

Occupation: ………………………………………………………

Church: ………………………………………………………

Introductory Questions

5. How many years have you been a member of Baptist churches?
6. What leadership roles, such as Elder, Deacon, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, and the like, have you held within the local church?
7. What roles have you held within the Association and Union?

Fundamentals of Baptist Sociality

8. What would you describe as the key distinctive features of Baptist life and culture?
9. In what way do those key features shape, positively or negatively, the way Baptist churches interact and collaborate together
10. What are the constraints upon churches developing strategies together?
    a. What are the theological constraints?
    b. What are the constrain arising from the surrounding culture?
    c. What are the constraints arising out of Baptist culture?
11. Whilst local Baptist churches belong to the Union and to Associations how is their belonging together in relationships between churches expressed?
12. How might partnership and common strategy be better expressed by groups of Baptist churches?

Home Mission

One significant expression of common strategy is found in the way finance is raised and deployed in the life of the Union. This is done within the concept of Home Mission.

13. Within the confines of a sentence what would you say that Home Mission is?
14. In what ways might the issues of developing common strategy that we talked about earlier relate to the various aspects of Home Mission?
15. What do you think the average church member thinks about Home Mission?
16. If you were personally giving some money to Home Mission and offered an accompanying intercessory prayer what would be the essence of that prayer?
17. Who do you think benefits from Home Mission and in what way?
    a. Is there a difference between those who **do** and those who **should** benefit?
    b. How should these priorities be set?
18. What do think are the main components of expenditure within the Home Mission Budget?
    a. What percentages of the budget do you think go to each of those components?
19. In what ways does your church support Home Mission?
    a. How much does your church give to Home Mission?
    b. How much of this was budgeted at the beginning of the year?
    c. How is Home Mission promoted within your church?
20. Why is your church motivated to give to Home Mission?
    a. Why do you think that there are some churches that give very little to Home Mission?
21. Who do you think makes strategic decisions about the raising of finance for Home Mission?
    a. What principles guide them in those decisions?
    b. Are there any changes that you believe should be made?
22. Who do you think makes strategic decisions about the distribution of Home Mission finance?
    a. What principles guide them in those decisions?
    b. Are there any changes that you believe should be made?

Leadership and other concerns

23. Who would you describe as a good leader and why? You may find it helpful to name someone in particular or the type of person.
    a. How does that style / person's style relate to leaders in a Baptist context?

24. On a scale of 0-10 indicate whether you believe people in positions of governance see their role as spiritual leadership or church management?

0....1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Spiritual -- don't know - - Church management

25. What do you think are the theological values that underpin Home Mission?
26. What relationship do you see between Home Mission and decision making in Associations and the Union?
27. In what ways can associations develop and implement strategies?
    a. In relation to its own organisation?
    b. In relation to the churches?
    c. In relation to the Union?
28. What are the constraints and weaknesses in regard to such considerations?

29. Are there issues that we have not covered that you think are important when discussing the areas of translocal co-operation and Home Mission?

Appendix 6: Semi structured interview concerning Methodism

Name:

Age:

Church activity:

1. Reflection on Baptist life after attendance at BU Council for three years. (only applicable in one case)

2. How Connexional are Methodists?
    a. What is different from the classic theological descriptions of Connexionalism?
    b. What are the tensions between connexionalism and localism/congregationalism)

3. What can Baptists learn from Methodists?

4. What is the role of the Chair?
    a. What is the level of their authority re Churches?
    b. What is their role in the national leadership team?

5. To what degree do Methodists adhere to published Methodist liturgy?

Node Summary
Interviews
20/07/2013 11:54:54

Source Type	Number of	Number of Coding	Number of Words	Number of Paragraphs	Duration Coded	Proportion

Node

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\01 Baptist distinctives

Document	30	30	8026	455	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\02 Impact of Baptist distinctives

Document	15	16	5876	246	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\02.1 Collaboration opportunities

Document	4	5	3467	156	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\03 Constraints upon strategy

Document	15	16	6774	282	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\04 Sense of belonging together

Document	13	14	6458	273	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\04.01Baptist belonging

Document	4	4	1402	82	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\04.1 Opportunities for strategy

Document	15	17	10228	430	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\05 Home Mission definition

Document	30	34	4995	267	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\05.01 Home Mission impressions

Document	13	15	1980	59	0	0

Source Type	Number of	Number of Coding	Number of Words	Number of Paragraphs	Duration Coded	Proportion

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\05.02 Home Mission publicity

Source Type	Number of	Number of Coding	Number of Words	Number of Paragraphs	Duration Coded	Proportion
Document	12	12	3139	146	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\06 Strategy and Home Mission

Document	16	17	6452	265	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\07 People's view of Home Mission

Document	30	34	8209	397	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\08 Prayer for Home Mission giving

Document	29	33	6784	367	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\09 Who benefits from Home Mission

Document	29	35	8919	281	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\10 Difference of who benefits

Document	16	16	3428	137	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\10.1 Deciding priorities for Home Mission

Document	19	20	5822	238	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\10.2 Components of Home Mission budget

Document	30	34	21322	1669	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\11 Church support of Home Mission

Document	30	40	10158	826	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\12 Motivation to support Home Mission

Document	28	33	4282	217	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\13 Not motivated to support Home Mission

Document	29	30	6370	228	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\14 Strategic decisions for raising finance

Document	30	33	7111	337	0	0

Source Type	Number of	Number of Coding	Number of Words	Number of Paragraphs	Duration Coded	Proportion

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\15 Strategic decisions for raising – principles

Document	27	29	4742	231	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\16 Strategic decisions for raising – change

Document	28	32	7320	356	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\17 Strategic decisions for expenditure

Document	24	27	4486	186	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\18 Strategic decisions for expenditure - principles

Document	26	33	5124	269	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\19 Strategic decisions for expenditure - change

Document	25	26	6417	307	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\2 Good leader

Document	30	36	11316	619	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\21 Governance spiritual leadership or management

Document	30	33	8904	577	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\22 Home Mission theological underpinning

Document	30	30	5092	248	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\23 Relationship of Home Mission to decisions

Document	29	31	5004	267	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\24 Systemically weak

Document	9	9	2000	92	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\25 Association strategies

Document	16	17	8600	402	0	0

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\26 Association constraints

Document	11	11	4287	228	0	0

Source Type	Number of	Number of Coding	Number of Words	Number of Paragraphs	Duration Coded	Proportion

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\27 Catch all question

| Document | 22 | 24 | 10055 | 452 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\28 Funding the Union

| Document | 13 | 13 | 2466 | 112 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\29 Home Mission Promotion - local

| Document | 4 | 4 | 669 | 35 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\30 Importance of giving to Home Mission

| Document | 9 | 10 | 1461 | 59 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\31 Interesting

| Document | 25 | 99 | 49884 | 2507 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\32 Money Attitudes

| Document | 11 | 13 | 1884 | 81 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\33 Money Issues

| Document | 1 | 4 | 892 | 26 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\34 Relationship of Home Mission to Union

| Document | 13 | 13 | 2313 | 130 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\35 Sense of belonging to Home Mission or Union

| Document | 12 | 14 | 2308 | 93 | 0 | 0 |

Nodes\\Free Nodes\\36 Values underpinning church life

| Document | 13 | 16 | 2553 | 107 | 0 | 0 |

Source Type	Number of	Number of Coding	Number of Words	Number of Paragraphs	Duration Coded	Proportion

Appendix 8: Examples of good leadership named by interviewees.

Examples of good leaderships identified were: Jonathan Edwards (General Secretary of the Baptist Union: 2006-2013), Tasker Lewis (former General Secretary of the North East Area of the Baptist Union),[154] Jesus, Archbishop Sentamu (named twice), Nelson Mandela (named twice), Bill Shankly, Bill Jordan (a local Headmaster), Steve Chalke, Edgar Wright (Former Northern Baptist Association Minister) Richard Branson, Dietrich Bonheoffer, Cardinal Hume, David Coffey (former General Secretary of the Baptist Union), Peter Grange (former Regional Minister for the East Midland Baptist Association) and Nehemiah. Most respondents went on to talk about the characteristics of their named example.

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[154] A similar role to that of Regional Minister

Assembly	Meeting of church representatives and ministers in either an Association or Union Assembly.
Association	A voluntary regional organisation of churches.
Association Partnerships	Voluntary Partnerships between neighbouring Associations to create six partnerships to administer Home Mission monies and develop collaboration.
Association Ministerial Recognition Committees	Groups that interview candidates for ministry on behalf of the Association.
Baptist Union	A voluntary national organisation of churches, Associations and colleges.
Closed Membership	Church membership is restricted to those who have been baptised as believers and usually by immersion.
Closed Table / Communion	Where participation in Communion is restricted to those who have been baptised as believers, usually by immersion.
Clusters	Informal groups of churches which network together for the sake of mutual encouragement and mission.
Deacon	A lay leader recognised in and appointed by a local church. They are expected to oversee the business of the church and to share in the spiritual oversight with the minister and others.
Elder	A lay leader recognised in and appointed by a local church. The actual definition varies, with some churches regarding them as sharing in the spiritual oversight with the minister and others as helping with pastoral support of church members.
Enclave	Douglas' designation of a social group in which people have a strong sense of

	belonging, but are not so regulated as positional.
General Baptists	Baptists who hold to an Arminian theology.
Home Mission	The means by which Baptists raise and deploy finance to support local churches and denominational life.
Hyper-Calvinism	Those Calvinists who hold to double-predestination and therefore would not engage in evangelism and may be prone to antinomianism.
Moderator	This term is used in two ways amongst Baptists. One is to describe the role of helping a church during a pastoral vacancy by chairing Elders, Deacons and Church Meetings and providing advice and support. The other is that of chairing Association and Union committees. The NBA appoints a 'Moderator' to chair its Council and Association General Meetings
National Resource	The term that was commonly used by Baptists, especially those involved in translocal work, to refer to the Union's office.
Open Membership	Where church membership is open to those who have not been baptised as believers. A verbal confession of faith would normally be expected.
Particular Baptists	Baptists who hold a Calvinistic theology.
Positional	Douglas' designation of a social group in which people have a strong sense of belonging, and are strongly regulated by the group.
Regional Minister	Minister appointed by an Association to serve its churches and common life in pastoral care or mission.
Senior Management Team / General Secretariat	The five heads of department of the Baptist Union overseeing the Ministry, Mission, Faith and Unity, Finance, and

	Communications departments.
Specialist Teams	The present structure of the Baptist Union's offices comprises the three Specialist Teams of Ministry, Church and Society and Shared Resources, each led by a Specialist Team Leader.
Team Leaders (Association)	The lead Regional Minister in each Association responsible for Association strategy, and line management of other staff members.
Translocal ministry	Those ministers who are appointed either by the Union or an Association to serve nationally or the region relevant to the Association.

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