

“Do the next thing”: Henry Lewis Garrett and the evolution of the Hobart Brethren assembly

The Brethren (sometimes called Plymouth Brethren) movement originated in the late 1820s in the British Isles. It was both an expression of discontent with the established church (some early leaders were ordained Anglican clergymen), with demarcations between non-conformist churches, and also a statement of hope in the unity of all Christians regardless of denomination. The independent churches, or ‘assemblies’, that grew up, spontaneously and as they believed by the agency of the Holy Spirit, developed links quite quickly through such outstanding leaders as John Nelson Darby, George Müller and B. W. Newton.¹ Through Darby’s extensive itineration, churches were also established in Switzerland, and later France and Germany. A vigorous missionary outreach in the century and a half since, out of proportion to the size of the movement, saw the establishment of churches in many overseas countries, particularly those of the British Empire, but also Russia and Eastern Europe.

In the 1840s the movement split into two divergent streams, basically between those who, led by Darby, saw ‘Separation from Evil, as God’s Principle of Unity’ (the title of a tract by him in 1846), and those like Anthony Norris Groves who wrote to Darby in 1836: ‘As any system is in its provision narrower or wider than the truth ... I would INFINITELY RATHER BEAR *with all their evils*, than SEPARATE from THEIR GOOD’.² These two streams became known, broadly speaking, as the ‘Exclusive’ and ‘Open’ Brethren. The ‘Open’ fellowships gained great impetus from the 1859 revival in England. Their relative openness to all who professed the name of Christ, and their emphasis on the use of individual gift, meant that new converts were readily accepted and fostered. This was also the case in rural areas of New Zealand and Australia, where the lack of an ordained minister constrained the growth of other more formal churches.

Brethren churches are orthodox evangelical trinitarians in doctrine, and at least in the past had an emphasis on prophecy and the second coming of Christ. It is their church order and manner of worship that has distinguished them. Open fellowships regard each assembly as autonomous (Exclusives have a central oversight), and there

¹ Entries for all three men may be found in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Darby visited Australia and New Zealand in the 1870s. Müller was famous for establishing and running large orphanages in Bristol, financed entirely through prayer and faith in God. He visited Tasmania in the 1880s.

² see F. R. Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter 1968), Appendix A, pp. 287-291. Groves meant that he would rather unite with other Christians on the basis of their love for Christ, than separate from them on the basis of minor matters of doctrine and practice.

is no ordained ministry. Most churches have elders and (today) usually deacons. Baptism of believers by immersion is practised, although it is not usually a condition of membership. The worship service used to be somewhat similar to a Quaker service, with people waiting on the leading of the Holy Spirit as to when or how they should participate. Some form of open worship is still practised in most assemblies, with contributions taking the form of a suggested hymn, a Bible reading with or without comment, and prayer. As far as reception to communion goes, one author wrote that 'like the Apostolic Church, [they] welcome at the Lord's table all who are sound in the fundamental principles of the faith and godly in life'.³ Given the nature of Brethren fellowships, it is difficult to generalise, but one thing that characterises them all is their constant reference to the Bible for all matters of faith and doctrine, and indeed practice, and to the New Testament for church order.

Brethren meetings were established in Australia by the 1850s.⁴ By the 1860s there were evangelists in Tasmania, and in late 1869 William Douglas, a Scottish evangelist with some connection with the Brethren, held dynamic citywide evangelistic missions in Launceston and Hobart.⁵ As a result, a fellowship of new Christians was formed which met in the People's Hall in Hobart.⁶ With the arrival of another evangelist, Edward Moyse, and retired Indian Army officer Colonel Henry Shelton and his wife, this fellowship evolved into the first Brethren assembly in the south. Henry Lewis Garrett's diaries shed invaluable light on this process, with the added interest of Garrett's passage to the Brethren from his earlier committed Anglicanism.⁷

Henry Lewis (Harry) Garrett was born in 1847, the youngest of ten children of Alfred and Catherine Garrett.⁸ Educated at the Hutchins School, in 1863 he gained an Associate of Arts certificate.⁹ He became an accountant and later (1882) actuary of the Hobart Savings Bank, and in 1871 married Martha Fisher (b. 1843). They had

³ 'A Younger Brother' [A Rendle-Short], *The Principles of Christians called 'Open Brethren'* (Glasgow etc: Pickering & Inglis, 1913), p.77. This does not apply to the Exclusive Brethren, nor to some of the stricter meetings.

⁴ Alan Dyer, 'The movement that shook Tasmania', *Assembly Challenge* Dec. 1987/January 1988, p. 14

⁵ Ken Newton, *A History of the Christian Brethren in Australia*

⁶ The People's Hall was the second building down from the south-eastern corner of Criterion and Bathurst Streets, where the Hobart Midcity Hotel now stands (2005). It was demolished in the 1960s.

⁷ I would like to thank Harry Garrett's descendants, in particular his grand-daughter Mrs Betty Cramp and his great-grand-daughters Mrs Jennifer Atkinson and Mrs Mary Farnell, for their permission to use the diaries, which are in the keeping of the family.

⁸ Arrived Hobart 15 November 1835, on *The Brothers* (Captain Robert Towns). AOT reference MB 2/39/2 p. 396. Alfred was a merchant and importer, later an accountant. Harold Garrett, Notes for the Garrett family centenary, 1935.

⁹ Legislative Council Journals Vol X 1864, Report no. 4 (Council of Education Examiners' Report 1863), p. 8. Harry had been an Exhibitioner in 1860.

five children between 1873 and 1886.¹⁰ The Garretts lived at Cottage Green, Battery Point,¹¹ for the first few years of marriage, then moved to *Casa Nova* on the corner of Grosvenor and Princes Street in Sandy Bay.¹²

The diaries run from 1877 (when Garrett finally made the break with the Church of England) to 1893, and are written in a clear, flowing script, mostly in 'Letts's Australasian Rough Diaries or Scribbling Journals', with a week to a double page. They do not record many personal emotions, apart from some spiritual aspirations, and family doings probably consist of about one-third of the material. Garrett used them as a way to record partly his spiritual journey, but mainly events and people in the group of Christians with whom he associated. There are lists of baptismal candidates, people at picnics, people welcomed into fellowship, and magazine subscribers, and also places of meetings (houses etc), and, always discreetly, controversies. He also noted in the right margin those with whom he had corresponded, and those to whom he had sent money – making it easy for him to glance back and check. On every single day he wrote, there is a left marginal reference to the weather – 'lovely day', 'showery', 'snow on mountain', 'fine' etc. In a society where walking was the chief means of transport, the weather was clearly of paramount importance. Several times meetings were cancelled or given up early because it was so wet. One year (1886) Martha Garrett wrote nearly all the entries, 1887 is blank, and there are no diaries for 1888–90. Also extant is a collection of letters to Garrett about assembly or related matters, or from assembly members, relatives, and a few interstate contacts.

Harry was clearly an energetic, cheerful person. There are numerous references to walks, both for pleasure and necessity. He usually walked into town to the bank, and three or four times a week walked home for tea then back to town or even New Town for a Bible reading or prayer meeting, or to South Hobart. In a couple of his diaries there are lists of names by location – perhaps to plan his pastoral calls more efficiently. He usually finished at the bank at 3 pm so on many days he visited people on his way home. These people are named in the diary. He also refers to walks with friends up Mt Wellington two or three times a year, and later on, with the older children. There are also walks on the mountain, for example from the Waterworks to the Bower (Fern Tree) or from the Bower to the Springs, and to

¹⁰ Mary 1873 (m. Vincent Shoobridge), Harold 1875 (m. Margaret Crosby), Thomas 1879 (the noted artist Tom Garrett), Ruth 1882 (m. Rupert Vaughan), and Frank 1886 (d. World War I). Betty Cramp, *Our Family Homes in Davey Street* (Hobart, n.d.), p. 4

¹¹ Harold Garrett, Notes for the Garrett family centenary, 1935, gives this as on the site of the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Hampden Road. He 'dimly recall[ed] a large garden which ran down to Montpelier Road.' Mrs Jennifer Atkinson notes: 'Appears to have been 'Cottage Green No.2', where Knopwood Street meets James Street - possibly before Montpelier Retreat Hotel was built between the cottage and Montpelier Retreat. See Amy Rowntree, *Battery Point Today and Yesterday*, pp. 90 & 93.'

¹² This house is still standing, on the north-east corner.

Brown's River (Kingston) via Proctor's Road when Martha and the children were staying there. This took him about two and a half hours.¹³

Numerous references attest to Garrett's enthusiasm for gardening. He could sing well, and possibly played an instrument, as on a couple of occasions he was asked to join in practices for evangelistic missions. In March 1878 he 'played all day in the Hutchins cricket match. We had a glorious day'.¹⁴

An affectionate father, Harry twice refers to his children as 'the chicks'. Despite the constant demands of paid work and his commitment to Christian activities, over the years there are mentions of spending an afternoon making a kite for Mary, and another day he 'stayed at home to fly the kite with the children'. As well as taking them for walks (often from their home to Long Beach and back 'through the bush'), he played cricket and rounders with them, painted or did some of the scrapbook with them on a wet day, read to them, took them to the Museum, took them for a 'ramble on the rocks' at Kingston on their holiday, and wrote of one picnic at Mountain Lake: 'happy day with the children all enjoying themselves very much'. A favourite family activity was taking a boat (it is not clear whether they owned one) over to Beauty Bay (opposite New Town) or Smelting Works Bay (probably near Rose Bay) for the day.¹⁵

The Garretts had at least two servants at any time, probably live-in as both Harry and Martha often went together to a meeting at night, presumably leaving the children in their care. There are references to Eliza and Jane and others, and their days off. They seem to have been Christian girls, held in some affection. At least twice Harry mentions the family having dinner with one of them, albeit in the kitchen, as it was her birthday.¹⁶ The walk to Brown's River mentioned above was with Eliza, and she is named on some of the lists of Christians at picnics or outings.

Celebrations in general are interesting. His own birthday, Martha's, and their anniversary (usually 'our wedding day'), are nearly always mentioned, and on his own (7 April) he is usually touched by people's thoughtfulness and affection, and grateful for the mercies of God. A typical entry is 'My birthday 37. "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His mercy endureth forever." Received many tokens of love and kindness from all the dear children of God, from Marth and the children and the girls [=maids]. "Praise the Lord."¹⁷ Christmas Day, in keeping with common early Brethren practice, was not observed with much ceremony. The thinking was

¹³ 22 May 1882

¹⁴ 21 March 1878

¹⁵ AOT Place Names Index (ex-Nomenclature Board): *Beauty Bay*: small inlet on east side of the Derwent (Tasmanian Gazetteer 1877), Clarence Grid E 5204 N 7242 (Nomenclature Board decision 1579, gazetted 4.5.1960). *Smelting Works Bay*: formerly Wade's Bay. Smelting Works Point = Montagu Point: point at western entrance to Montagu Bay. Grid E 5206 N 7226.

¹⁶ e.g. see 7 November 1883

¹⁷ 7 April 1884

that it was an artificial date¹⁸ and that true Christians remembered the Lord every Sunday. There is little evidence from the diary that the Garretts had a special meal; sometimes they visited family, or held a meeting at Cascades. On Boxing Day there was often a picnic or bushwalk, either as a family or with friends from the meeting.

Harry's work at the bank, growing in responsibility when he was promoted ('Praise the Lord') to cashier at £400 per annum,¹⁹ meant he could usually leave at 3 pm, but when the bank staff were balancing this could be much later. The end of financial year, or an occasion when they could not find a balance, would see him working day and night for a week or more. In the earlier years he worked every Saturday night ('bank as usual in evening'), though not generally during that day.

There is no clear indication as to what, precisely, led this well-brought-up young Anglican man to seek Christian fellowship elsewhere. Evidently he had a strong evangelical commitment from at least young adulthood, as a letter to the bishop in 1868 seeks his blessing for an 'Association for Promoting a Mission to the Working Classes of Hobart Town' – Harry writing as the secretary. An affectionate letter in 1874 from his former rector at St John the Baptist in West Hobart (F H Cox, who had returned to England)²⁰ mentions his meetings at the Cascades, and says 'I am sorry you cannot "feel at home" at any church – however it must be better to persevere in an act of duty, even though it seems to bring no reward.' Cox urges him to 'speak to Mr Banks Smith [the evangelical rector of St George's Battery Point]²¹ [and] tell him candidly what you miss & what you want'.²² It is curious that Harry could not settle at St George's, as 'the Canon [Banks Smith] maintained a stolid adherence to pre-Oxford Movement Evangelical principles'.²³ However this may not have met the need Harry felt for an outward expression of the profound religious change he had experienced.

There are also some letters from A. W. Garrett (Harry's older brother Willie), arguing with some sophistication and cogency for a Catholic faith, in the broadest

¹⁸ or even that it was a Catholic custom.

¹⁹ 4 September 1882

²⁰ Frederick Holdship Cox (1821-1906), vicar of St John the Baptist Church, Buckland; Warden of Christ College; rector of St John the Baptist, West Hobart; first Dean of Hobart 1872 and first editor of *Church News*, before his return to England in 1874. G Stephens, *The Anglican Church in Tasmania* (Hobart, 1991), p. 84. His memorial plaque from St John the Baptist (now displayed in the church hall at St Peter's Sandy Bay) attests to his 'energy and influence... signal piety and talent... firmness, justice and purity of life.'

²¹ Rev Canon George Banks Smith (1826/7-1902). *Ibid* p. 257. He was rector from 1859-1902.

²² letter addressed from Tilney Vicarage, Lynn [Norfolk], dated October 28 1874. Cox himself had obviously struggled with his own situation in Tasmania: 'desponding & miserable ... as I was ... at St David's ... a state of things in which I had well-nigh lost hope.' Stephens says he 'strove for peace in the ecclesiastical debates of the 1850s'. *Ibid* p. 84

²³ *St George's Battery Point* (St. George's Church? 1961?), [p. 5]

sense – in particular, suggesting that reliance on the Bible alone, without using the teaching and traditions of the church, was dangerous.²⁴ There is a draft of at least one reply from Harry, writing firmly yet with courtesy that ‘I feel constrained to say that while I have never entertained any strong sentiments on the subject of R.C.s nor ever had sympathy with the party of Protestantism, the result of your letters and handling of Scripture has been to cause a deep sense in my mind of the utter corruption and Godlessness of the whole system which perpetuates such [?doctrines] as the RC church puts forth and holds.’²⁵ This correspondence is interesting, coming as it does the year after controversial ex-Catholic priest Father Charles Chiniquy visited Hobart; his Hobart meetings caused such uproar that the Tasmanian Volunteers were called out to help keep order.²⁶ The tone of these letters is far otherwise: both brothers assure each other of ongoing respect and love, and express some of the pain it gives them to disagree on such fundamental issues, while holding firmly to their respective viewpoints.

St George’s was an evangelical, ‘low church’ outpost (amid much controversy the diocese tended to higher churchmanship), and both Harry and his slightly older close friend Charles Crosby²⁷ experienced an evangelical conversion through revival meetings there led by the Rev Hussey Burgh Macartney, an Anglican clergyman from Caulfield, Melbourne,²⁸ with wide evangelical and inter-denominational contacts. They were thereafter dissatisfied by what they perceived as the deadness of their more conventional churches, and attracted by the warmth of fellowship they experienced with like-minded Christians through these meetings. Macartney apparently told

²⁴ William had a Tasmanian Scholarship to Oxford, where he gained a B.A. degree. While there he joined the Roman Catholic Church, to the grief of his family. He became an Inspector of Schools in India, and later an Inspector in the Education Department in Tasmania, also engaging in scholastic and literary work. Harold Garrett, Notes for the Garrett family centenary, 1935.

²⁵ Letter dated 18 May 1880

²⁶ see Susan Warne, *Sectarianism in Hobart: The Chiniquy Disturbances of 1879* (Honours thesis, University of Tasmania, Department of History, 1977). As far as one can tell from the diary, Harry Garrett was away in Melbourne when Chiniquy came to Tasmania. The relevant dates are completely blank and the next entry tells of his being farewelled from Melbourne by friends.

²⁷ Charles Crosby, a member of a successful merchant company, was an active member of the Davey Street Congregational church and had marriage and family connections to the Walch, Hopkins and Clarke families. Despite their close friendship, Harry Garrett always refers to him as Mr Crosby, Mr C Crosby, or just Crosby.

²⁸ This was H. B. Macartney jnr, whose father was the Dean of Melbourne. Macartney junior was the vicar of St Mary’s Caulfield from 1868-1898, and a leader in inter-denominational evangelical and missionary work. See Darrell Paproth, ‘Hussey Burgh Macartney Jr: Mission Enthusiast’, 1st Biennial TransTasman Conference on Australians and New Zealanders in Christian Missions, at Home and Abroad, ANU, Canberra, 2004. rspas.anu.edu.au/pah/TransTasman/papers/Paproth_Darrell.pdf >

Garrett that he might find happier fellowship with the group of Christians meeting at the People's Hall.²⁹

The move to a new fellowship was by no means sudden and there does not seem to have been a once-for-all severance of connections. Some idea of the transitional stages of Harry's allegiance may be gained from entries in the first week in the diary. On Monday 1 January 1877 he went to an early morning prayer meeting at St George's Battery Point, praying 'that the new year may be attended by even greater spiritual blessings than those of last year which were many'.³⁰ On the Wednesday he paid 10/- pew rent at St George's, on Thursday read a chapter to Martha called 'Do you feel your sins forgiven' and 'had a long talk with her about it'. On the Friday he received a packet of papers from the Rev. Macartney. On Sunday 7th he went to the People's Hall in the morning, and preached at the Cascades in the afternoon.

During 1877 he sometimes went to church (St John's)³¹ with Martha, and she usually went there for the Sunday evening service. In February, he conducted the early morning prayer meeting at St George's, as Mr Smith was away. However, there was a gradual shift in attendance patterns. His sister Kate went to the People's Hall with him for the first time on February 25, and on April 22 he writes 'Marth went with me for the first time to the People's Hall'. Later in the year Martha's sister Grace was converted and went with them. Also during this year, he started going to a Colonel Shelton's place in New Town with a few others for regular Bible study – working their way through various books, and having long conversations on the walk back to town.

That associating with Christians who were often regarded as rather peculiar had its difficulties may be indicated by a comment later in the year: 'In the evening discovered that a great hindrance to my entering on this life of full trust was fear of the opinion of men. Prayed the Lord to enable me to give up this.'³² A milestone was reached in Harry's life on 26 November 1877 when he wrote: 'At St George's

²⁹ family information, also Harold Garrett, Notes for the Garrett family centenary, 1935.

³⁰ 1 January 1877

³¹ St John the Baptist, cnr Goulburn Street and Forest Road, West Hobart.

³² 14 November 1877. There is an interesting cognate comment in his son Harold's reminiscences: 'These defections from the church of their ancestors inevitably made a breach in the unity of the family. There was no ill feeling, I think, & they always stood by one another in any time of trouble, yet during my childhood I recall a sense of our being 'outcastes', tempered perhaps by a slightly smug feeling of being the Chosen People. Whether my feeling was shared by my brothers and sisters I do not know.' Harold Garrett, Notes for the Garrett family centenary, 1935.

prayer meeting at 7.15 had some stirring words from Pitfield on the subject of full trust and reconsecration from Luke 14:33 – forsaking ALL. I was much blessed. In afternoon prayer meeting at our home when the same blessed truth was presented’. In the margin he wrote, ‘A day of much blessing. “Here I give my all to Thee, In Thy promises I trust,”’ and in the corner, diagonally, ‘Gave up Imp[atience?], slothfulness, fear of man.’

A gradual transition between denominations was typical of early Brethren in many places. In the 1820s in Dublin, some early leaders went to Anglican communion in the morning, then met with their friends (later labelled Brethren) in the afternoon or on the following evening.³³ As seen in Hobart, the pattern was often dissatisfaction with one’s spiritual life, a visiting evangelist or Bible teacher bringing teaching of a fuller life or of trusting fully in Jesus for salvation, a new warmth and desire to evangelise, and a wish to meet with others who felt the same yearnings. In Hobart, as in other places, notably Scotland after the Great Revivals of 1859-60,³⁴ these meetings were often non-denominational in character in the beginning, and it is interesting to see how they gradually took the shape of a Brethren assembly – even while still eschewing a ‘denominational’ name tag.

In Harry Garrett’s case, there was a gradual severing of other ties. In July 1877 he wrote to ‘give up his settings in St George’s Church’, and in the same week wrote to another man ‘in reference to evils in Church of England doctrine and practice’. Nevertheless, he still went to the early morning prayer meeting at St George’s until at least the end of the year, once or twice leading the devotion at it. But by August he was writing to local clergyman Canon Davenport, ‘telling him I could not subscribe to the new font for Trinity’.³⁵ Earlier in the year he had written to the secretary of the ‘Light of Queenborough, withdrawing from the lodge³⁶ & from the Order of Good Templars’,³⁷ and in August he had a conversation with a Mr Mather³⁸ ‘as to the inconsistency of Christians remaining amongst the Good

³³ F. R. Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1968), ch. 2

³⁴ F. F. Bruce, *In Retrospect: Remembrance of things past* (London, 1993), pp. 2-7; Neil Dickson, *Brethren in Scotland 1838-2000* (Milton Keynes, 2002), ch. 3

³⁵ 23 August 1877. Davenport (1818-1907) is briefly referred to as ‘a leading churchman of the day’ in G Stephens, *The Anglican Church in Tasmania* (Hobart, 1991), p. 105. “Trinity” would be Holy Trinity church, North Hobart, which dominates the northern skyline of the city.

³⁶ No name is given for this lodge – possibly a Freemason’s lodge. Various lodges are listed for the

³⁷ 20 April 1877

³⁸ A Mr R A Mather is listed in Walch’s Almanac as the manager of the People’s Hall in the 1870s. He was probably Robert Andrew Mather (1815-1884), a Quaker merchant, the honorary secretary of the Benevolent

Templars'.³⁹ He had been active in the Hobart Christian Workers' Association, but in January 1880 he went to this meeting for the last time, 'as I told those present that I felt compelled to withdraw'.⁴⁰

By 1877–78 Harry had a growing interest in believers' baptism by immersion, often seen by mainline church members as quaint. In December 1877 he wrote 'we had some talk on baptism when I saw clearly as I had never seen before that it is truly Christ's ordinance and therefore not to be regarded as unimportant'.⁴¹ Then on 11 April 1878, he 'walked home with Mrs Propsting,⁴² we spoke together of Baptism, both being desirous of being baptized'. The diary has no reference to his own baptism, but it has gaps, and, given his preaching on the topic several times, his rejoicing when others are baptised, and his meticulous recording of their names, it would be very surprising if he were not. Baptisms took place at the Domain Baths, often before the Sunday morning service, and usually in quite large groups – several times ten or so names are mentioned.

One of the great attractions for early Brethren was the simple meeting for worship and communion, with audible contribution by any eligible males.⁴³ This contrasted, for them, with the formality and what some perceived as empty ritual of the Church of England service. Over and over again Harry Garrett refers warmly to Sunday and the meeting for worship in such terms as: 'day of much blessing', 'day of joy and gladness', 'morning meeting with much blessing', 'very blessed meeting for the Lord's supper', 'happy day', 'very blessed ministry in the morning', 'a very happy blessed time', 'a very happy time of worship at the Lord's supper'. There were times when he did not go, when he was overtired, unwell, or (occasionally) was at odds with someone and did not feel it right to participate, but in general it was clearly a happy

Society. See Susan Warne, *Sectarianism in Hobart: The Chiniqy Disturbances of 1879* (Honours thesis, University of Tasmania, Department of History, 1977), Biographical Notes p. 105.

³⁹ 24 August 1877. One of the reasons for an unhappy incident the following year was another person's membership: '...we had a very painful meeting, Mr Lowe behaving in a very violent and insolent manner in reference to Colonel Shelton's action in the matter of Mr Warr's association with Good Templary.' 4 February 1878. The Independent Order of Good Templars were a temperance society similar in organization to freemasonry. It still exists: 'The International Order of Good Templars or IOTG ... operates worldwide in over 40 countries. As in the original organization, the IOTG admits men and women equally and promotes the ideas of temperance, peace and brotherhood. At this time it stands as the largest non-government run organization working in the field of temperance and has expanded its practice of temperance beyond mere alcohol to include narcotics and other drug dependencies.' <<http://www.templarhistory.com/goodtemplars.html>>.

⁴⁰ 6 January 1880. No reason is given.

⁴¹ 12 December 1877

⁴² Working from some of Garrett's lists of names and other associations in the diary, most likely Elizabeth Propsting (née Davidson, 1830-1899), wife of Richard, the Quaker Superintendent of Police.

⁴³ Any male 'in fellowship' was welcome to take part. In some assemblies baptism was a pre-requisite for fellowship, in others not.

priority to attend. Towards the end of his life there were some months when a splinter group met the Garretts' house on Sunday mornings, but they still 'broke bread' together.

Another attraction was the group's friendship and fellowship. While this had aspects of 'us against the world', it also provided a social outlet for people who felt that worldly pursuits were not for them. There are numerous accounts of picnics and outings – to Brown's River, up the mountain, to the Waterworks, to Long Beach – with one list of names numbering 84,⁴⁴ and usually 30–50 people listed. These are usually referred to with some reference to the weather and to a 'blessed time of fellowship' or some such. They include occasions when Christians⁴⁵ from Hobart would travel down to North West Bay to spend the day with the small group there. That Harry saw these events as opportunities for spiritual as well as physical refreshment is borne out by an entry in 1878, after an outing for boys from the Boys' Home to Beauty Bay: 'Found no refreshment for body or spirit from the trip. I feel more convinced than ever that if we go out in this manner we should go as Christians and if we find the day together without any spiritual communion we do ourselves and those with us much harm. May the Lord give us much grace that we may be more faithful in this matter.'⁴⁶ Other times of fellowship were the informal prayer meetings in people's houses, the frequency and regularity of which fluctuated, and meals and informal suppers. The links thus formed were very strong and some of the letters Harry received for his birthdays show the affection, esteem and even love in which he was held. Notes in the diary reveal that he wrote to others on their birthdays also.

One of the testing areas for new fellowships is how they are to be governed. In the first flush of new spiritual life and friendships, it does not appear to be a problem, but soon issues arise which require some sort of judgment. In many cases what later became Brethren assemblies were not established as such in the beginning, and this was the case with those at the People's Hall. At first there was a business meeting to deal with the running of day-to-day affairs. Then, after a serious breach of fellowship in 1878 had been resolved, Harry wrote, 'We decided that Colonel Shelton, Mr Lowe and myself should act together as a committee in all matters

⁴⁴ Regatta Day picnic McRobie's Gully, 23 January 1883. See list in Appendix.

⁴⁵ While they would not have claimed that the only Christians in Hobart were those in the "Brethren" group, Harry and his wife clearly use the word in some special sense to refer to those in their fellowship.

⁴⁶ 9 February 1878

connected with the Assembly'.⁴⁷ Eventually in 1883 he mentions an 'oversight meeting',⁴⁸ (Brethren parlance for an elders' meeting) and later in that year he writes, 'Searching the Scriptures on subject of Eldership'.⁴⁹ It seems that from about that time there was a recognised body of elders, and from the late 1870s there had been contact with other Brethren fellowships and consultation on how matters should be organised. (Harry evidently had access to literature about the Brethren, as early in 1878 he 'wrote to Mr Castray enclosing 'Accusers of Brethren' and 'The Brethren Who are they?',⁵⁰)

The leadership had to cope with various difficulties over the years. Several times there were major upsets in the meeting – either personality clashes or what they believed to be doctrinal differences. At one stage in the 1880s, 30 or 40 people were meeting in the Garretts' home for worship, as the result of some unspecified unhappiness in the wider fellowship. But Harry's bent was for reconciliation. In early problems he talks with the different protagonists and tries to understand each viewpoint. 'Colonel Shelton talks of withdrawing and establishing a new meeting. But I cannot think he is taking a right course.'⁵¹ Some years later he refers to a 'meeting of brethren [that is, males] in the evening with much blessing speaking of unity & division, love & forbearance'.⁵²

There were also sad times when some discipline was called for. In 1884 the Hobart meeting received letters from Christchurch and Dunedin about Edward Moyses, the evangelist who had helped stimulate the fledgling fellowship in the 1870s. Harry refers to it as 'the sad matter',⁵³ and later the meeting wrote to Christians [Brethren] interstate 're Moyses & Dunleavy'.⁵⁴ Dunleavy was an evangelist in New Zealand,⁵⁵ and Moyses had also been working there, and it appears that these two New Zealand Brethren workers had been found to have a scandalous personal relationship. Word went round that they could no longer be received or welcomed to speak in Brethren circles. ⁵⁶

⁴⁷ 30 March 1878

⁴⁸ 22 March 1883

⁴⁹ 16 October 1883

⁵⁰ 22 January 1878

⁵¹ 18 March 1878

⁵² 23 October 1885

⁵³ 20 August 1884

⁵⁴ 6 September 1884

⁵⁵ Peter Lineham, *There we found Brethren:*

⁵⁶ information from Alan Dyer, Sheffield, who interviewed a very old evangelist about the early days of Brethren assemblies in Tasmania.

Every so often a member of the assembly was discussed by the oversight (i.e. the elders' meeting) and told they were to be put out of fellowship. In 1884 a Mr Macrow was told that 'the brethren could not receive him at present into fellowship'.⁵⁷ A clue as to why appears the previous year: 'Called with Mr Reeve⁵⁸ to see McCrow & spoke to him about the business not being conducted in a godly way. He did not seem to submit himself to our judgement in the matter.'⁵⁹ Another situation is indicative of Harry's own approach to delicate situations. In early 1883 a young woman was asked to meet him and three of the women from the meeting. He wrote, 'We had a quiet talk about her sin'.⁶⁰ In February he met her again and 'told her her sin had been brought before the church & asked her to attend a meeting of brethren'.⁶¹ A further clue as to what the sin was might be gleaned from the fact that in April 'Lizzie Bolton & Willie Sly [were] put away' [from the Lord's table].⁶² There is no mention of them being received back into fellowship.

One of the continuing tensions in Brethren and other similar groups has been that between a desire to welcome all true Christians to the Lord's table, and the aim of keeping the fellowship pure from what was seen as wrong doctrine. In Brethren shorthand this became known as the question of reception. It was at least partly the issue that separated Open and Exclusive Brethren. It also involved what they saw as 'separation' – not just from 'the world' but from ecclesiastical systems which they believed were man-made. Over the years written about by Harry Garrett, there are several references to talking with someone about being received into fellowship, and often this happened after baptism.

In 1883 Brethren meetings in the Eastern states divided over the issue of reception. A lady preacher from the United Kingdom, Mrs Margaret Hampson,⁶³ was staying in Melbourne with Mr Theo Kitchen (himself a leader in inter-denominational activity) and asked to come to the breaking of bread. There was concern over how the matter was handled, but the key question was whether this sort of 'occasional fellowship' was part of the Biblical pattern. In the end nearly a quarter of the 200-strong assembly meeting in Protestant Hall in Melbourne seceded, believing that this

⁵⁷ 24 August 1884

⁵⁸ Charles Frederick Reeve was a freelance evangelist at this stage, loosely attached to the Brethren; later Baptist, and the founder of the Poona and Inland Village Mission.

⁵⁹ 26 October 1883. Evidently they were referring to Macrow's commercial undertakings.

⁶⁰ 14 January 1883

⁶¹ 21 February 1883

⁶² 8 April 1883, and see 9 April 1883

⁶³ Mrs Hampson was mainly a temperance speaker.

was not right, and one of the leaders of the secession, Mr Gordon Hopkins, toured neighbouring states explaining their position.

Leaders of the Hobart fellowship met with him on 4 December 1883. Always thoughtful, Harry Garrett concluded his brief note with 'Wait on the Lord'. His more detailed note on the meeting, written at the back of the diary, says 'Talked the matter over. Could see no Scripture to guide us in taking part in the division, decided to wait on the Lord for guidance and light and meet next Sunday'. Sunday's detailed note says, 'Decided that our responsibility was to deal directly with the Protestant Hall meeting, apart from the question of the Division, to ascertain from them the principles they maintain as to reception into fellowship, Clergy and Laity, and fellowship with sects,⁶⁴ in the meantime, any coming from the other assemblies in separation from the Protestant Hall to be asked to sit back [i.e. not take communion]'.⁶⁵ The position of the Hobart assembly eventually crystallised into one of cautious open reception, with letters of commendation from and to other assemblies for people in fellowship. It was well into the twentieth century before these were not required.

Brethren have been characterised by evangelistic outreach throughout their existence, often linked to some form of philanthropy, and those in Hobart were no exception. Harry Garrett was involved in numerous activities to reach out to those they saw in need of salvation. Firstly, though perhaps he would not have seen it as his main work, was his pastoral visiting. As mentioned before, he would regularly visit two or three people on the way home, or after tea. He visited people in hospital or gaol, people who were ill, shut-in, or dying, or just people he wished to follow up. In this pre-telephone decade, he frequently called to find someone out, or too ill to see him, or asleep. At one stage (1877-8) he went most weeks to a Miss Gatehouse, evidently a devout invalid, reading and praying with her and also benefiting from her conversation. On one occasion a few of the believers met for communion at her house. He often mentions taking books or tracts to people, including children; at other times, food or medicine.

⁶⁴ Brethren used the word 'sects' to refer to other denominations, not constituted on what they felt were Biblical principles.

⁶⁵ They met again in January to 'consider the Melbourne matter. We decided upon no course of action but to write again and acknowledge their letter, and let them know we were not at all in accord with them in the matters referred to therein.' 29 January 1884. On 12 February 1884 he wrote 'We came to the conclusion that we could not with confidence receive [believers] on letters of commendation from those in oversight in that meeting [i.e. the meeting in secession].'

Most visits were not long. Some resulted in conversations where, to his great joy, the person told him they were ‘trusting in Jesus for full salvation’ or ‘resting in Jesus’. Some long-term friendships formed from these visits, which at times seem to be more than even a minister working full-time could be expected to make. That he was not unaware of the dangers of ‘busyness’ is borne out by an entry which reads ‘I find I must make some change as I am injuring my own soul for want of spiritual food & time for communion, I must give up going out so much’.⁶⁶ Perhaps the simple phrase he read and noted in 1877 best expresses his approach: ‘Do the next thing’ – which, he writes, would be a very good motto for all Christian workers.⁶⁷

Usually when he mentions a death (distressingly often) he also attends the funeral, or gives the reason why he could not. In February 1883 he went to a baby’s funeral: ‘Had a very blessed time at the grave, but poor Mrs Bennett was very much broken down’.⁶⁸ Once he mentions trying to reconcile a married couple: ‘Called to see Mr & Mrs Knight and tried to make peace between them ... Lord give me more wisdom!’⁶⁹

Other avenues of evangelism were the mission at the Cascades, which occupied so much of Garrett’s time that it needs separate attention, an outreach to cabmen, meetings at the Brickfields for the ‘poor old men’, meetings at New Town for the ‘poor old women’,⁷⁰ and meetings at Peacock’s (the jam factory on the wharf) for workers there. These latter three were more sporadic, but the meetings for cabmen and their associates were quite large (up to 100) at the end of the 1870s, and provided a social service also. On a week night, tea was often provided by ladies in the meeting – a welcome respite in winter, one would think. A service would be held, and tracts given out. Some cabmen were converted and joined the assembly, others were helped financially. Charles Crosby left Hobart for Melbourne in 1879 for business reasons, but he left Harry with £100 ‘to be spent in the Lord’s service during his absence’⁷¹ and later sent more.

A letter in 1891 mentions that it was fourteen years since Garrett had begun work at the Cascades (i.e. from 1877), but the letter from Cox mentioned above shows

⁶⁶ 22 January 1878

⁶⁷ 6 February 1877

⁶⁸ 19 February 1883

⁶⁹ 15 May 1885

⁷⁰ The institution at the Brickfields (just to the north of what is now the North Hobart Oval, where Rydge’s Manor now stands) cared for indigent aged men, mostly at this stage ex-convicts. New Town (part of the complex at St John’s Park) was a similar institution for aged women.

⁷¹ 5 September 1879

that something had been going on earlier than that. Night school and Sunday afternoon or evening meetings were held in the Ragged School,⁷² and in June 1891 the committee in charge of the building queried whether the meetings were truly non-denominational and non-sectarian in nature, which was the agreement. A copy of Harry's answer has not survived, but it seems his was a personal concern, with some help from others associated with the Brethren. Harry preached nearly every Sunday evening unless there was a gifted visitor available, or he was unwell, and he usually took a Bible class on Wednesday evenings.⁷³ Though there were meetings for communion at some stages, in Brethren parlance 'breaking of bread', they seem to have been in a private home, and the actual Ragged School meetings were either educational (night school) or for evangelism or Bible teaching. However, some of the converts were baptised and became members of the Brethren assembly.

There were also general evangelistic missions. In 1879 both Mrs Emilia Baeyertz, a converted Jewess from Melbourne,⁷⁴ and Henry Varley, a well-known English evangelist with links to the Brethren,⁷⁵ came to Hobart. Harry was closely involved with both speakers, meeting them at the train, and helping to arrange their meetings. Mrs Baeyertz spoke at the People's Hall and Varley at the Town Hall. Harry took his wife, children, and servants, distributed notices of his meetings among the cabmen, and posted '123 notices ... to the young men of the town',⁷⁶ though he remarked that the opening meeting was 'very crowded and rather inclined to the disorderly'.⁷⁷

Mrs Baeyertz' visits raised the knotty question of the position of women in a church. Harry Garrett often talked with some of the older women – in the early days

⁷² The Ragged School was held in a chapel in upper Macquarie Street, opposite Denison Street – later the South Hobart Baptist Church, burnt down in the 1967 bush fires. It was operated by the Hobart Town Ragged School Association. Ian Terry, *A Thematic History of South Hobart* (Hobart, 1999), p. 57

⁷³ This must have necessitated consistent preparation and Bible study. Quite often the topics are given, with occasionally short outlines or main headings.

⁷⁴ see Elisabeth Wilson, 'Totally Devoid of Sensationalism: Mrs Emilia Baeyertz, the Jewish Lady Evangelist from Melbourne', *THRA Papers and Proceedings* Vol 49, no 3, September 2002, pp153-166 ; Shurlee Swain, 'In These Days of Female Evangelists and Hallelujah Lasses: Women Preachers and the Redefinition of Gender Roles in the Churches in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia', *The Journal of Religious History* vol 26, no 1, February 2002, pp. 63-77

⁷⁵ see Darrell Paproth, 'Henry Varley and the Melbourne Evangelicals', *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol 25, no 2, June 2001

⁷⁶ 27 March 1878

⁷⁷ 21 March 1878. Varley's style tended to the flamboyant and provocative. Harry had been concerned enough at a 'report of Mr Varley's having denounced Mr Farsons (?) at Launceston' that he talked it over with Charles Crosby and 'decided to send him a telegram at once to ascertain if it is true'. 15 March 1878. There is no record of the answer, if any, but he mentions several social meetings with Varley in Hobart, so presumably he was satisfied with Varley's suitability.

he frequently mentions Mrs Propsting as being at Bible studies and walking home with him, having useful conversations. He visits Miss Gatehouse and also a Miss Sly and her 'girls' – possibly a boarding house. It is evident that he valued their spiritual insights, and many of the active members of the assembly were women. He welcomed Mrs Baeyertz' ministry also. However in common with almost all Christian denominations in the nineteenth century, public participation by women in normal services was seen by Brethren generally as not Scriptural. Mrs Baeyertz was seen by many as an exception because of the blessing that resulted from her meetings, but not everyone approved. In January 1878 Garrett 'called to see Mr Webster when he explained to me his reasons for not supporting Mrs Baeyertz' ministry, not approving of women preaching'.⁷⁸ As Harry took his family to hear her, we may surmise that he did not agree. However, in December 1880 during another visit, he accompanied Edward Moyse 'to speak with Mrs Baeyertz'.⁷⁹ As there is no further mention of involvement with her ministry, and other Brethren fellowships in Tasmania stopped welcoming her to speak,⁸⁰ it is reasonable to assume that they told her that she could no longer speak at the People's Hall.

Another constant activity was letter writing. With no formal denominational structure, Brethren made the most of their informal networks. Harry Garrett corresponded with a wide range of people: close friends such as Charles Crosby, from whom he received regular and presumably encouraging letters, visiting speakers and evangelists, Christian literature agents to organise supplies of books, magazines and tracts, Christians in isolated places, young people to whom he was a mentor and who had moved away for work, men and women asking for help in obtaining work or needing a loan. Many letters are from working class people, written with real affection and with gratitude for his pastoral care.

Doubtless because of his profession, and general efficiency and trustworthiness, Harry was constantly being asked to handle money. The diary records money sent for literature, sent and received for Christian workers, lent to and repaid by people in need. It is not clear whether the loans are personal or from the church – probably a combination. They certainly reveal a world in which there was no state welfare to fall back on, and were not only from or to working class people. Harry

⁷⁸ 28 January 1878

⁷⁹ 27 December 1880

⁸⁰ information from Alan Dyer, Sheffield

was also asked by the wealthy Alfred Kennerley⁸¹ to handle some of his affairs (Kennerley was evidently by this stage an invalid) and there are numerous references to visiting him, getting him to sign cheques, sending a regular remittance to his sister, and so on.

By the 1890s the fellowship at the People's Hall had been recognisably Brethren for at least a decade; it was first listed as such in *Walch's Almanac* in 1880. It had passed from the 'first fine careless rapture' of a group of Christians coming together in new faith and life, to an established and somewhat more circumscribed fellowship within the Brethren aegis. Harry Garrett was clearly a major influence in how it evolved, and on his peers and those younger than he. He and others had ensured that it remained within the broad rather than narrow stream of Brethren meetings. However, he did not live to see the meeting continue into the twentieth century. In 1891 he was found to have cancer of the bone in his leg, and went to Melbourne to have it amputated. He and Martha and their youngest child were there for months, living with Charles Crosby and family while Harry was in hospital. The family still have the letters he wrote home to the older children, letters we are told are 'full of love and courage and faith in God'.⁸² They returned home in 1892 and eventually he resumed work, using crutches and ordering an artificial leg from New York. However, he succumbed to lung cancer in December 1893 at the age of 46.⁸³ The last entry in his diary is a fortnight or so before he died, typically about a visit from a bereaved man: 'The Lord comfort him & sustain him in his sore trial. "If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God."' ⁸⁴

The assembly was bereft, as was his family. In old age his elder son Harold wrote that 'Father's principle of living by Faith forbade his making provision for the future & he left nothing but a few pounds in his current bank account'. Harold had just started work at the Hobart Savings Bank (of which he later became manager) and the family were largely reliant on his income. They had to move house and 'after much dreary house-hunting [they] found a delightful home at 'Remuera', at Lower Sandy Bay.' Another financial consequence of Harry's conscientious application of his Christian commitment was that 'he disapproved of life assurance & had in fact

⁸¹ Alfred Kennerley (1810-1897), businessman, Premier 1873-1876, and philanthropist. See Alison Alexander (ed.), *The Companion to Tasmanian History* (Hobart, 2004)

⁸² Betty Cramp, *Our Family Homes in Davey Street* p. 5

⁸³ His death certificate (AOT reference RGD 35, 1893/810) is dated 6 December 1893, and the cause of death is given as 'pneumonia probably cancerous'.

⁸⁴ 21 November 1893

surrendered a policy he previously held',⁸⁵ which also lessened the possible family income. It is likely that his attitude to money was influenced by such Brethren leaders as George Müller⁸⁶ and Anthony Norris Groves who expounded and lived by the principle of living by faith, and believed insurance showed a lack of trust in God.

The assembly he had helped to guide through its formative years continued steadily, with a membership of between 80 and 100. Harry Garrett would be heartened to know it is still in existence. After using a number of rented buildings, in 1917 it moved to the purpose-built Murray Street Gospel Hall on the edge of the central business district, and then in late 2003 to Hope Christian Centre in North Hobart.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Harold Garrett, Notes for the Garrett family centenary, 1935. It seems that Garrett died intestate, as there is no will listed in the AOT index.

⁸⁶ It is likely that Harry met or heard Müller when he visited Tasmania in the 1880s, but there is no evidence for this – the diaries for the relevant years are missing or blank.

⁸⁷ The buildings used were: People's Hall to 1897, Gospel Hall Harrington Street (the old Baptist chapel near Goulburn Street, now the site of Europcar) 1898-1906, the Mariners' Church on the wharf (now the site of the Marine Board building – the actual building was moved to Sandy Bay and became St Peter's Church) 1907-1917, Murray Street Gospel Hall, later Chapel, 164 Murray Street, 1917-2003, and Hope Christian Centre (formerly the Sunbeam warehouse), 25 Tasma Street, North Hobart, December 2003 – present.

APPENDIX

LIST OF THOSE PRESENT AT REGATTA DAY PICNIC, 23 JANUARY 1883

(for ease of reference the names have been placed in alphabetical order)

Mr Adams

Mr & Mrs Allen & 3 children

Lily Archer

2 Coopers

Mr & Mrs [Charles] Crosby, Maggie, Jack, Nellie and servant

Mr & Mrs Drysdale & 3 children

Mr H[arry] Garrett, Harold & Mary

Miss [probably Kate] Garrett

Mr & Mrs Giblin

Emily Greatbatch

Mr C Green

Mrs Holme & 2 children

Mr & Mrs Hunt & 2 children

Lizzie Inman

Mrs Large, Emma, Martha & baby

Mr & Mrs S Large, Martha & Louisa & Mrs Betty

Martin McGrath

Irene (?) McCracken

Miss Mitchell

Mrs Morgan

Richard Morgan

Eva, Ellen, Rachel, Jane, Mary Mullane

Miss Ord

Miss Propsting

Miss Sarah Rayser

Mr C[harles] Reeve, Mrs Reeve & 4 children

Mr M Richards

2 Miss Shields

Miss Sly

Emily Smith

Mr & Mrs Smith (Cascades)

Mr Stanton & boy

Mrs Tilly

Mr & Mrs Todd

Mr & Mrs Wallis

Mr Warner

Mrs Wheelright

Jno White

Mary Winch

Miss Wilson