

The following is the recorded first origins of the Particular Baptist Church in Melton Mowbray. It is reproduced here from the first official record book of the church and describes the churches' origins and names the individuals responsible in its formation.

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## Particular Baptist Church Melton Mowbray

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### Account of Origins

The church was formed in February 1867. It was first composed of 32 persons who seceded from the Independent Church of this town under the pastoral care of Mr Jos. Twidale. The following is the explanation of their succession:-

- They had long lamented the want of true prosperity. It appeared to them that but little good was being done. They endeavoured to restore spiritual life and vigour by the use of proper means but in this they received neither co-operation or sympathy from a number of the members who acted in conjunction with the Pastor.
- The church organisation was incomplete, its management unbusinesslike, and the Pastor was unwilling that these evils should be remedied.
  1. The Deaconate. The original number of Deacons was four; of these three had been removed by death, yet the Pastor would not allow the election of others to fill their places. The surviving Deacon was Mr T P Adcock, Wine and Spirit merchant in this town.
  2. The Church Books. These were managed in such a way that the members were in ignorance of the state of the church both numerically and financially.
  3. The Church Meetings. In these, the Pastor and his one Deacon were absolute, and the suggestions of members if they did not happen to accord with the ideas of the Pastor and Deacon were slighted or frowned down.
  4. Church Discipline. There was great laxity here, for although it was reported of some of the members that they were guilty of grievous and repeated inconsistency yet these reports were not regarded nor was the conduct of the person investigated.

The disaffection created and fostered by these evils was brought to a crisis at a church meeting December 31<sup>st</sup> 1866. A few days prior to this meeting one of the members – Mr Thompson – had written a private note to Mr Twidale remonstrating with him for what he believed to be a neglect of duty. This letter was introduced at the church meeting and as soon as it was read the Deacon drew from his pocket a resolution (which he had prepared before hand) the object of which was to exclude Mr Thompson from membership. The resolution was at once put to the meeting and carried by a majority. The unfairness of this proceeding will be more apparent when it is recorded.

1<sup>st</sup>. That no previous notice of this step had been given to the church, therefore a great number of the members were absent who would have been present and decidedly opposed it. Church meetings at this time were very uninteresting, and the method in which they were conducted rendered them practically useless hence the absence referred to.

2<sup>nd</sup>. This meeting had been packed (by a private tea and other means) with persons who, it was expected would vote with the Pastor.

This act of injustice and tyranny decided a number to secede and as there were several of Baptist principles amongst them and it was not wished to establish a rival independent church in the town, they agreed to form themselves into a Baptist church. This they did, and the names of persons who united in church fellowship at commencement may be seen on Page 9. The Corn Exchange was taken for one year at a rent of £12.00 and Mr Theodore Hoe of Wymeswold preached the first sermon on Sabbath morning February the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1867. From that time forward to the end of September the pulpit was supplied by very acceptable preachers – chiefly local, and a few students from Chilwell College.

It was decided by the church to apply to Mr C H Spurgeon asking him to send a student for a month on probation. Mr Irving was sent, he preached the first time on Sunday September 29<sup>th</sup> 1867. When the month had expired, he was requested to stay two months more, to this he agreed, and when that term was gone a unanimous invitation from the church and congregation was given to him, asking him to accept the Pastoral Office.

A copy of the invitation together with Mr Irvings reply accepting is given on page 10 to 12. He commenced his stated Ministry at Melton on Sunday January 12<sup>th</sup> 1868, his first text being Proverbs 3 v 5 & 6.

From the time of the formation of the church to date of the settlement of its first Pastor several church meetings were held, and the matter importance decided on at those meetings are the following:-

1<sup>st</sup> – The Name. That the church be called “Particular Baptist Church”, the doctrines held being the same as those maintained by the Particular Baptist Churches.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Officers. That there be two Deacons, one Treasurer, and one Secretary, each elected annually. The Deacons chosen were Messrs Robert Widdowson, and Mr H H Tebbutt. The Treasurer Mr J T Crosher; and the Secretary Mr Thompson.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Fellowship. Although at first the church was formed on Union principles so that unbaptised persons could enter into full membership, it was unanimously decided at a church meeting held in November 1867 that in future none should be omitted who were unwilling to obey the command of their Saviour and be Baptised. This resolution was not to affect the membership of any person already in the church.

4<sup>th</sup> – Communion. Any person in full membership with evangelical dissenting church may sit down as communicants at the table of their Lord.

5<sup>th</sup> – That a set of Plated Communion Service be purchased for the use of the church consisting of Tankard, 2 Cups, and 2 Plates. This was done at the cost of £3/4-0.

6<sup>th</sup> – That a Sabbath school be established. This also was done and Mr Widdowson was chosen as Superintendent.