Rawene Church 1956
Introduction

This compilation of the Rawene Methodist Church's first eighty years may differ from other such histories.

Believing that history can be a pleasure I have minimised the use of "dates" which often tend to bore the reader. Rather I have stressed the triumphs and setbacks of the people—who after all, are the Church.

It will be seen that the story often concerns the whole circuit. This has been done because while gathering information about Rawene, much concerned the circuit as a whole. Rather than let it pass into oblivion I have included it in this account.


This book has been made possible by the members of the Rawene Methodist Church Trust (Rev. H. D. Besant, B.A., Miss N. E. Bawden, Messrs. D. E. Fletcher, F. 0. J. Langton and Geo. Pearson). I extend my sincere thanks to Miss C. Langton who typed the manuscript, and to Mr. L. Abercrombie and the Secretary of the Wesley Historical Society, the Rev. L. R. M. Gilmore, B.A., and the Rev. E. W. Hames, M.A., of Trinity College, who read the manuscript and offered advice.

K. ABERCROMBIE, WHANGAREI.

1st September, 1956.
In the Beginning

And the earth was without form.

Hokianga Harbour, the scene of this story, is the product of Nature's convulsions, and lies on the West coast of New Zealand, 100 miles south of North Cape, its hundreds of miles of coast-line biting deep into the Northland Peninsula.

Tens of thousands of years before any mortal walked these shores, New Zealand was subjected to violent upheavals that caused faulting in the earth's strata; and into one of these faults rushed the sea to form, the Hokianga Harbour with its many inlets enclosed by fertile valleys and rich mountain-slopes clad with lush indigenous trees to which men centuries later were to look for their livelihood.

It was to this harbour that Kupe the daring ancient sea-farer came about 950 A.D. to give it the name 'Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe'—'great returning place of Kupe.'

Little is known of this harbour till four hundred years later when Maori migrants from the South Pacific in their canoe, Mamari, landed on the West Coast near Maunganui Bluff and journeyed inland to Hokianga to become in later years the powerful Ngapuhi tribe from among whose sons New Zealand Methodism can proudly claim many followers.

For almost five hundred years the Ngapuhi people enjoyed the rich natural resources ignorant of the Giver who had provided innumerable benefits. There were the mountains of dense bush - bush that provided timber for canoes and whares, and in the depths of which were colourful birds providing feathers for cloaks and flesh for hangis. There were the streams which through the ages had formed the fertile plains where kumara and taro grew,—streams of swift current flowed through the valleys to the harbour, from whence came year after year, rich harvests of many kinds of fish— and from the harbour the waters flowed to the bar, thence to be lost in the Tasman Sea.

Truly the harvest was great but the labourers few!

It was over this Sea that the Rev. John Hobbs sailed from Sydney on 20th October, 1827, in the 140-ton brig "Governor Macquarie" arriving at Hokianga on 30th October. Hobbs was returning to New Zealand to recommence the Wesleyan Mission which had formerly been located at Whangaroa where the strength of Maori opposition had forced the missionaries to evacuate in January of that year.

Augustus Earle, author of "A Narrative of Nine Months' Residence in New Zealand” describes the pleasure at sailing up the Hokianga, its bush-clad mountains—the Maori villages—the canoes thronging around the ship during its progress up the Harbour.

They sailed past Herd's Point (Rawene) where earlier that same year the "Rosanna" (Captain Herd) had anchored with a body of New Zealand Company settlers. Most of
these intending settlers decided not to stay after being terrified by the Maori haka. Five Scotsmen remained and the fruits of their labours could be seen further up the river at Horeke where a shipbuilding yard was established.

Hobbs finally chose a mission site at Mangungu and this was the centre of the Hokianga work for many years, where many well-known Wesleyan missionaries laboured.

John Hobbs and later missionaries worked mainly amongst the Maoris but after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi hundreds of Europeans settled in New Zealand annually. This necessitated the extension of the work to include the new settlers. Such was the nature of the work until 1895.

**SETTLERS ARRIVE**

After Captain Herd's first abortive attempt, organised settlement of Rawene alone is not recorded, but in 1835 the brig "Vision" made several trips from Sydney bringing settlers to various parts of the Hokianga. Many of these settled at Rawene.

**LAND RESERVED**

This work which the Rev. John Hobbs had commenced was bearing fruit. In 1856 Arama Karaka Pi had drawn up a Deed of Conveyance, which became a Title Deed in 1879:

"This Deed made the eleventh day of February one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine. ...........

Between Wiremu Arama Karaka Pi of Hokianga in the Provincial district of Auckland in the Colony of New Zealand only son and successor of Arama Karaka Pi grantee of the land described under Crown Grant registered Number 568c of the one part and Richard Hobbs, farmer; Frederick Lambert Prime, estate agent; John Edson chemist; William Griffith, accountant, the Reverend Henry Hassell Lawry, Wesleyan Minister; Thomas Buddle, solicitor; and Joseph Listen Wilson, printer; all of Auckland, Trustees, witnesseth that in consideration of the sum of ten pounds paid by the said Trustees...... the said Arama Karaka Pi doth hereby convey and assure unto the said Trustees their heirs and assigns all that parcel of land. ...... containing one Rood more or less, being Allotment 27 of the Township of Hokianga in the County of Hokianga..............

Enrolled in the Supreme Court Auckland. ...a Deed made for a parcel of land and chapel or place of Religious Worship for the use of the people called Methodists in the Australasian Connexion and to for and upon no other trust intent or purpose whatsoever.”

In the presence of Spencer von Sturmer, Resident Magistrate, Hokianga, and John Charles Quinnell Austin, Clerk New Zealand.

After a translation of the Deed was given by William Webster Licensed Interpreter, the Deed was signed by Wiremu AramaKaraka Pi in the presence of the above gentlemen.
Through Changing Scenes by K. Abercrombie

ARAMA KARAKA PI
Chief of Waima, who sold the land

The previous year the first appointment was made when the Rev. H. H. Lawry was stationed at Hokianga, and it was then that Rawene became a regular preaching place.

Rev. H. H. Lawry – First Minister at Rawene

Mr. Lawry remained in Hokianga until 1861. The Rev. William Rowse arrived the following year. Mr. Rowse who resided at Waima, ministered amongst both races and took all the services himself as there were no local preachers. He shifted to Herd's Point in 1872, because, as he said, it was the tidal centre. His report of 1874 reads:
"At Herd's Point which is the township of Hokianga a piece of land has been secured and subscriptions are being raised towards the erection of a much-needed place of worship, and we hope during the summer to have it erected free of debt."

Dr. Morley in his *Fifty Years of Methodism in New Zealand* wrote: The European townships on the Hokianga and its tributary streams are small, and widely scattered. A small church was erected at Rawene (formerly known as Herd's Point) during the Rev. W. Rowse's residence at Waima in 1876. It cost £160. Eighty pounds of this were raised by the settlers and eventually the balance was voted by the Mission Property Trustees.

Mr. Rowse's 1876 Home Mission report described Hokianga as a Maori-English circuit with 100 Europeans and 650 Maoris Members on trial are common. "There is a prospect of the European population increasing." He then mentions 'the small weatherboard church' and its cost, etc.

Little is to be found about Hokianga until the Home Mission report of 1880 by the Rev. T. G. Hammond:

'Though English settlers are few and widely scattered there are some four congregations comprising 150 hearers, with two Sabbath schools containing 58 scholars.'
Though Mr. Hammond does not mention the four congregations it seems likely that three would be Rawene, Motukaraka and Kohukohu. The difficulties of those early years are stressed in a report two years later.

Mr. Hammond's report goes on:

"There is much travelling by land and water, long absence from home and much anxiety and toil."

By 1887 preaching places worked from Rawene included Motukaraka, Wairere, Hokianga Heads and Okaihau. In the second quarter of that year the total collection was £18 13s. 3d. A feature of the early financial statements was the item on the Income side—"collections unpaid."

The functioning of the Wesleyan mission at Hokianga, was affected, particularly in its early years, by a shortage of money, but the "few" were behind their Church and spared no effort to see it firmly established. Frequent grants were necessary from the Home Mission Fund. It was resolved at an 1887 meeting that a horse and a boat be purchased, and Mr. W^ Webster promised timber, Mr. Riesterer the nails, Mr Herbert •the sculls and rowlocks, Mr. G. G. Menzies the paint Mr Grovel the rope and Mr. Webster, Jnr., the labour. Whether the boat was ever built is not on record but it was quite common for settlers to lend their means of transport—boats and horses—to the Minister.

To leave the Church for a moment. What were the people doing?
The main occupations were those of timber-working, flax-milling, gum-digging and farming. Timber - millions of feet yearly were sent from Hokianga—some south by sea to Onehunga; some across the Tasman to Australia. Mills were located at Waimamaku, Koutu Point, Rawene, Rangiora, Kohu-kohu, Horeke and Wairere—and the population was concentrated mainly on these centres. Rawene, Kohukohu, Horeke, Koutu and Opononi were busy ports on account of the milling. Flax-mills were confined to the lowland areas especially near Horeke and the Waihou Valley areas. The few farmers of those early years widely-scattered around the many inlets of the harbour, spent all their time and money in developing the land. The country had lost its bush umbrella—the heavy rams had washed much of its richness down into the valleys—stock losses were heavy.

Then there were the gumdiggers—perhaps the more nomadic of the early inhabitants—to be found mainly in the area around Taheke with some on the field near Koutu.

Among the settlers in the Hokianga, the prosperous were few the existence of the majority depending almost entirely upon the success of a season, the good fortune of a day's digging—a 'here and now' existence—depending seldom upon scientific outlook or the application of theory.

DEPRESSION

Some idea of the poverty of the people and the serious setbacks suffered in the Hokianga, can be gained from this extract from the Rev. T. A. Joughin's report of 1888.

"The effects of the commercial depression are obvious, only £64 1s 10d. being raised in the year. A mill has been closed; and the gumfield furnishes a mere existence; many families are leaving. There are 1,000 Europeans without a minister of any denomination."

From records available it appears that the European and Maori work became more united and quarterly meetings were often held in association with the Maori brethren. Membership statistics of 1888 were: English 21, one on trial, Maori 105. Sunday schools at Rawene, 4 teachers, average attendance of 20; Motukaraka, 2 teachers with an average of 7; Waimamaku, 2 teachers, average attendance of 20.

A Maori quarterly meeting in 1889 chaired by Mr. Joughin showed that membership was 128, but many Maori members were on trial, the preaching places being Waima, Te Poinga (Waima), Omanaia, Whirinaki, Pakanae, Taheke, Utakura, Horeke, Waihou, Mangamuka, Oria, Te Karae, Mangataipa, Kaeo.

The Home Mission reports of 1889 and 1891 mention the commercial depression. The 1889 reports says:
"Many settlers have been starved out of the district........ Some never attend church. They baffle all efforts to reach them. They have scarcely a remnant of past perception of God, or a vestige of thought about eternity."

Rev. T. A. Joughin

Though the effects of the depression were still being felt in the area 1891 saw an improvement in the timber industry.

As well as the difficulties caused by a depression our missionaries had opposition from other quarters. Mormonism was flourishing in certain Maori communities and the Plymouth Brethren were holding services at Rawene, Motukaraka, Kohu-kohu and Taheke. Roman Catholicism was also well established having begun in 1838.

**OF MANY TALENTS**

The versatility of the ministers of those earlier years always stood them in good stead. Frequently the Rev. T. A. Joughin gave extempore sermons in Maori.

Services in the circuit during 1894 were taken by Mr. T. Weatherall.

Until 1892 the minister had resided at Te Poinga (Waima) but after many years it was deemed unsuitable as this meant an eighteen miles boat journey before reaching river settlements; and crossing the river fourteen times to get to the main road.

The longest ministry at Hokianga was that of the Rev. Geo. Pearson.

Mr. Pearson and his family of six went to Rawene from Kaeo in 1895. The housing situation in Rawene at that time was acute and lodgings were found in the vacated hotel known as the Wharf Hotel (now occupied by T. P. Lane & Co as a furniture showroom) which then became the parsonage for five years. In those days the
Connexion did not provide a house for the minister and Mr. Pearson was also expected to provide a horse and a boat for the work. When he arrived at Rawene Mr. Pearson owned a 12-foot boat he had built himself for the work at Kaeo but after a few years in Hokianga the boat deteriorated and was sold for 5/- Mr. Pearson built a 16-footer in its place.

In April, 1896, an approach was made to the Home Mission Committee for a grant of £100 for the removal of the homestead from the Waima Mission Station at Te Poinga. The following year the Loan Fund Committee replied that the house was regarded by them as unsatisfactory.

However after five years in Rawene Mr. Pearson bought this house and had it dismantled in sections and carried from its former site on rafts towed by rowing-boat. Supervision of the project was entrusted to the Kelsey brothers of Motukaraka the former mission house may be seen at Clendon's Esplanade Rawene, today—still in good condition.

The mission house as it may be seen today.
The rowing-boat built by Mr Pearson, usually carried four persons who took turns at rowing in pairs. Usually his sons manned the oars.

Preaching places included Rawene, Motukaraka, Kohukohu Punakitere Call that region), Omapere, Waimamaku (at the school) and occasionally at Weka Weka and Rangiahua. Mr Pearson was the first Home Missionary to minister particularly to the European settlers.

Services were held fortnightly at Rawene at 11 a.m. Mr Pearson then went by rowing-boat to Motukaraka for a service at 3 p.m., returned to Rawene and then rowed to Kohukohu for a 7.30 p.m. service returning to Rawene by about 10 p.m. Seldom did the elements deter the holding of services. A service at Punakitere meant an 18-mile row to Taheke which usually took 3¼ hours. Often this journey was against a strong current (those who have journeyed by launch up the Waima will appreciate this). The Saturday night was spent with friends (often the Glovers) at Taheke and the following day he undertook the six-mile walk to Punakitere school where the service was held. When a service was held at Waimamaku the night was spent at Omapere where a service was also held.

![Rawene Church in 1900, before the vestry was added many years later.](image)

Mr. Pearson sometimes found time to devote to his very useful hobby; he was an expert photographer and the Church is much indebted to him for many early photographs.

Balance sheets presented at quarterly meetings reveal characteristics of the times. Items in the 'nineties included: Repairing boat 17s. 5d., one pair paddles 10s., horse feed 11s. 6d., candles 2s. 9d., new sail 5s.

Even parochialism can be featured in a balance sheet for one during the 'nineties reads for collections: Waimamaku (Canterbury) 8s. 9d., Waiotemarama (Auckland) 14s. 2d.
(The settlers at Waimamaku were from Canterbury and those at Waiotemarama were from Auckland). Mr. Pearson's stipend in the "best" year was £75.

The lack of funds always impeded the work of the circuit and as early as 1893 Home Mission grants were necessary. From records it appears that for many years all Church funds raised were entirely absorbed within the circuit and applied mainly to stipend—seldom were collection forwarded for "special causes" as they are today.

CONTINUING THROUGH ADVERSITY

Arduous and disheartening though the work may have appeared to some it was nevertheless rewarding and satisfying to those whose humble task it was to carry it out. This is apparent from the Home Mission report of 1906 which read:

"Travelling to and fro averages three hundred miles, twelve services per month, with one hundred at an evening service.

"To hear the 'thank you' and to see tears in the eyes of many after one has read and prayed in a lonely settler's home well repays a tramp of many miles."

Twice during Mr. Pearson's ministry financial aid was sought from the Presbyterian Church and letters sent to the Moderator. One letter read:

". . . . While believing that the Wesleyan Conference has dealt as liberally as it could, we feel that unless some strenuous effort is made the district must inevitably be abandoned, we ask this aid in a Christian spirit and trust that your Synod will consider this matter favourably. We would be grateful for a grant however small."

Mr. Pearson held many meetings in association with the Rev. Piripi Rakena and the Maori brethren. The Maori mission conducted a periodical 'purge' of members and in these 'purges' members were often reproved—in some cases a sub-committee being set-up to investigate. Ministers and kai karakia (local preachers) alike were subjected to censure and criticism. Typical answers were: .... no faults—except having trouble with his wife; .... no faults—except plays cards (reproved); .... no faults—except stole fork from European cask (reproved). Membership returns often included members 'on trial.'

The Rev. R. Gosnell succeeded Mr. Pearson as Home Missionary at Hokianga and remained until 1907 when he was recommended as a candidate for the ministry. During his short ministry plans for the purchase of a launch to aid the work were formulated and it was decided that £150 should be raised for its purchase. To help raise the amount it was proposed that 2,000 shares at a shilling a share should be sold.
LAUNCH PURCHASED

The launch was not actually purchased until some years later during the ministry of the Rev. J. W. Parker. She was an oil-burner named the "John Hobbs" and she soon proved her worth. Formerly Mr. Parker had supplied both horse and boat.

Mr. Parker (now living in Auckland) is able to give accounts of many of his experiences in Hokianga. The circuit in those days was the whole county and he also held at Kaitaia, occasional services which really began the work there.

"LONG TREKS"

Travelling was a real nightmare. One would have to go by boat and then push knee-deep through slushy mud to a service —July and August being the worst months. Roads were often described as "two feet wide and six feet deep." (One authority says it was quite common for a horse to be knee-deep in the "road"). A trip to Waimamaku and Weka Weka every third Sunday meant leaving Rawene by boat (often a Northern Company's) on Thursday or Friday for Pakanae. Then came an overland trip (often by foot) to Weka Weka for a morning service followed by one at Waimamaku in the afternoon. It was more or less accepted that Mr. Parker should assist in the cow-shed when he arrived at any homestead. Usually he had to do this job to secure an organist.

A service at Broadwood meant a trek of seventeen to eighteen miles. When he commenced services at Broadwood Mr. Parker's congregation numbered two (Mr. and Mrs. Harris), but by 1914 the congregation had grown to forty.
When first appointed to Hokianga in 1909 Mr. Parker, his wife, and three sons, found no house available and they were given two rooms at the Kelsey's home at Motukaraka, where they remained for seven months. A small parsonage was built by the church folk in Rawene and the Parkers occupied it. It was on a site sold to the church by Mr. Proctor and may be seen today fronting Parnell Street and immediately behind the old Te Poinga mission house, then occupied by Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Bawden and family.

The amount of stipend in those days could never be guaranteed. The balance sheet was drawn up, presented, and bills having been paid the residue went to the minister and varied from £100 in the first year to £120 in the second and third.

**IN MANY PLACES!**

Services were held not only in churches but in the open, in homes and in barns. On one occasion a Presbyterian Home Missioner, three Maori missionaries and Mr. Parker were going to Auckland Synod, but as the seas were unfavourable the ship remained in the harbour. That Sunday night after having received permission from Mr. Andrewes, the proprietor, a service was held in the Opononi Hotel, the collection going towards hospital funds. The following Wednesday the party proceeded by boat to Onehunga and then to Auckland. On one occasion a boat bound for Hokianga was delayed outside for 48 hours and was able to make the entrance to the Harbour only after oil had been used to calm the sea.

The quarterly meeting in 1912 approved the proposed union of the Primitive and Methodist Churches. Another depression was being experienced that year and six shillings was forwarded to assist the Waihi Methodist Church which was suffering badly from the effects of current labour troubles.

In spite of depression much extension work was commenced in those years. An area of land was purchased at Broadwood; a committee was set-up to enquire into a church site at Kohukohu; Mr. Guthrie's offer of land at Rawene for £50 was accepted; two
horses and saddles were purchased for the church work; the launch "John Hobbs" as mentioned earlier, commenced service, being owned by the church and driven by the minister (then Rev. J. W. Parker). Services began at Mrs Harris' residence at Ivydale.

Up to 1909 regular services were held at Punakitere, Weka Weka, Waimamaku, Waiotemarama, Omapere, Motukaraka Kohukohu and Umawera.

During Mr. Parker's time other preaching places were opened at Ivydale, Broadwood, Oue, Omanaia, with occasional services at Herekino and Whangape.

**CIRCUIT DIVIDED**

To cope with expanding work and to render a more effective ministry in a large circuit a single Home Missionary was appointed to North Hokianga. This man, the Rev. H. S. Kings became a supernumary last year. The Home Mission report of 1911 stated that 70 services were being held each quarter one weekly, others fortnightly and monthly.

Many Hokianga men served in World War I. They included Messrs. H. Lane, W. Lane, C. H. Lane, J. Lane and G. Pearson.

The mission launch "John Hobbs" was sold about 1920— the advent of better roads and the division of the circuit did not warrant the expense of retaining it. Two years previously she won the launch race in the Kohukohu regatta, Mr. T. P. Lane having scraped her hull of marine growth and driven her in the race winning by about a quarter of a mile. The £2 10s. 0d. prize money went into the Circuit accounts.

During the Rev. H. Bateup's ministry which commenced in 1921 the number of preaching places was twelve but the only church was at Rawene. Koutu (at the mill), Paponga and Pakanae were now "regular" appointments. All of the launches were free to the Anglican minister and the Methodist Home Missionary. Overnight stays at various parts of the circuit because of poor travelling faculties were often necessary and an open house for the Home Missionaries was kept at Mr A Fell's (Pakanae) and at Mr. Kelsey's at Motukaraka.

At Herekino there were two halls, one on each side of the valley, and on each monthly visit a service would be held in one on the Friday night and in the other on the Saturday night. Some years previously the Rev. H. S. Kings had taught the people five Sankey hymns so there was never any difficulty in choosing the hymns!

The Rev. H. Ashworth who came two years later was a competent music teacher. A keen tenor singer, he built up the Rawene church choir which greatly assisted the services. A circuit car (Ford) was bought for the work.
BETTER COMMUNICATIONS

During the Rev. D. J. D. Hickman's ministry a motor-cycle was used. The communications system was improving as the county reading schemes were well in hand and travelling became much easier.

Financial depression came again in 1930. Many soldier-settlers were compelled to leave the land and an unemployed men's camp was established near Rawene. Under such conditions the way of the Church was difficult.

In 1930 a girls' Bible Class camp was held in Rawene and the 35 girls who attended stayed in two houses, one of these is today occupied by the Langtons and the other, which was known as the "annexe" on Dr. Smith's property next door, has since been shifted to a place opposite the new nurses' home in Parnell Street.

The Rev. R. Grice, during his ministry, commenced a Young People's Club at Rawene. A new Douglas motor-cycle which was purchased by the circuit was used to convey Mr. Grice to other preaching places at Oue, Pakanae, Opononi, Waiotemarama, Waimamaku, Weka Weka, Waoku, Waima, Taheke, Punakitere, and at a private house on the Waima. A service was held at Omapere to which there was no road access at that time.

A girls' Bible Class camp was held in the present parsonage (then owned by Mr. T. P. Lane) in 1935. Thirty girls attended.

BECOMES A CIRCUIT

Two notable changes took place during the Rev. H. A. Cochrane's ministry. Firstly, the Hokianga Home Mission station as it was then known became the Hokianga Circuit retaining this status ever since. Secondly, the present parsonage was bought from, Mr. T. P. Lane who took the former parsonage (now occupied by Penneys) as part-payment.

The first ordained minister to be appointed to the circuit was the Rev. C. B. Oldfield, who was ordained at the 1943 Conference. Circuit membership was 49 Senior, 33 Junior, and 25 Infant. Preaching places were at Rawene, Pakanae (the school), Waiotemarama (Anglican Church), Waimamaku, Weka Weka (school), Waoku (head of Weka Weka Valley in Mr. Norton's house), Omapere (Hall), Taheke, Moehau (Maori school), Otau (in the school which was then nearer Taheke), Oue (firstly in the school, then in Mr. Geo. Pearson's residence), Whirinaki (every 5th Sunday—service in Maori conducted by Mr. Jim Wynyard—simple sermon in English by Mr. Oldfield). These were the years of World War II.
MORE ADVANCES

Citizen's services were held in the County Hall in association with the Anglican brethren on both VE and VJ Days. Mr. Oldfield conducted the whole service before a large congregation as he was then the only Protestant minister in Rawene. It is interesting to note that a special service was held to mark the introduction of the new hymn book. This was conducted by Mr. T. G. M. Spooner and over eighty per cent of the congregation was in the choir!

Mr. Oldfield was succeeded by a married probationer, the Rev. D. G. Sherson, who remained two years.

Mr. Sherson was succeeded by a married Home Missionary, the Rev. A. W. McKay. During Mr. McKay's ministry the first "Quarterly Message" magazine and preaching plan was published.

For over a year the circuit was without "pastoral charge" until a married Home Missionary, Pastor G. R. Payne, an ex-farmer and builder, was appointed in 1952. During his ministry and under his supervision the Weka Weka Church Hall was built, being opened in 1953. Mr. Payne resigned in 1953. That year a special service was held to mark the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

SECOND ELIZABETHAN ERA

In 1953, services were taken by local preachers. That same year a circuit car (a Ford Prefect) was purchased. The Rev. H. D. Besant, appointed in 1954, is the circuit's second ordained minister. Present preaching places are Rawene, Omapere, Pakanae, Waiotemarama, Weka Weka, Moehau and Rawene Maori.

Labour weekend circuit Youth Rallies in the Omapere Hall have been held the last two years. Last year a Beach Mission was held in the summer holidays at Opononi in association with the Anglican Church.

A new parsonage fund was opened last year and a "shilling-a-week" scheme begun. A section has been purchased for this purpose on the former Rawene school property.

Membership of the Hokianga Circuit in 1955 was 47, and communicants were 60.
The Church Interior.
CHURCH INSTITUTIONS

Sunday School:
Very soon after the church was opened a Sunday School was opened and has continued to the present day. Throughout the years many people have devoted much time to the Sunday School which has had rolls of sixty and over. One year Rawene Sunday School won the banner for best marks in the Auckland Sunday School Union scripture examinations. Many minister's wives have taken an active part in the Sunday School either as superintendents or teachers. Of recent years in particular numbers have not been large. Seldom, if ever, have leaders had the advantage of training for their positions, but the high standard of the anniversary services and the enthusiasm of the children reveal that results are being achieved.

Bible Class:
During many years there has not been a Bible Class. When one has been held usually it was small. Many upon reaching Bible Class age have, especially during recent years, furthered their education in other centres, or because of a limited labour demand in Rawene have sought employment elsewhere. Since the Northland Youth Rallies were commenced in Whangarei, representatives have often attended. Easter camps have also attracted some of the 'few.' This year Easter Camp was held at Rawene District High School. On most occasions the Bible Class leader has been the minister.

Ladies' Guild:
The Church owes a great debt to this group. Over the years on countless occasions they have met for fellowship, discussion, and entertainment. They have attended to and provided the means for Church and parsonage furnishings, advised the Trusts on such matters; held "street stalls" for Church funds; and week-by-week attended to the floral decorations for Sunday worship.
CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Bible-in-Schools:

To many, Bible-in-Schools would seem a recent innovation. In the 'eighties the Hokianga Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting agreed that the work was severely handicapped by there being no religious instruction in the Schools.

At a Quarterly Meeting in 1902, the following resolution was passed:—Moved Mr. G. G. Menzies, seconded Mr. E. McLeod: "That this meeting affirm the principle of selections from the Bible being introduced into Day schools and become part of the syllabus, and no conscience clause to be allowed. Teacher to make no comments."

Over the years the Methodist minister has conducted this service at Rawene District High, Omanaia Maori, Whirinaki Maori, Oue (until it closed) and Moehau Schools. For much of of the time this work has been maintained under the Nelson System. Today the Rawene District High, Moehau and Waimamaku District High Schools are served.

Inter-Church Co-operation:

For many years the Rawene Methodist Church was the only church in the town and people of all Protestant denominations worshipped in it. The opening of the Anglican Church in Rawene little affected the co-operation of the churches and even today it is common for the congregations of each church to attend each other's services. Presbyterians have always formed a considerable portion of the congregations and a Presbyterian service is held once a quarter.

The early minute books also mention this desirable spirit. An ex-Congregational minister (the Rev. Mr. Young) was in residence at Whirinaki in 1888 and took many services as pulpit supply. Until a Methodist Church was built at Kohukohu, services were held in the Anglican Church; the Rev. G. Pearson used the Anglican Prayer Book at alternative services held in that church and conducted the ordinary Methodist services on the other Sundays.

Citizens' services are held each Anzac Day, Protestant ministers working together. Church parades are held in the Anglican and Methodist churches alternately by the Rawene Volunteer Fire Brigade.

Many names appearing under "Gave Time and Talents" further bear witness to the impact of the Church upon the community.
THE CHURCH BUILDING

The money for the building of the church was collected mostly by Mrs. Rowse (wife of the Rev. W. Rowse). Timber from the Wairere mill (first sawmill) was used and Mr. Cook of Waimate North was the builder. The Rev. William Rowse performed the opening service in 1876. It was Land Court day in Rawene and much of the service was in Maori. For many years there was no seating; the congregation took their own seats or cushions. Money for seating was raised by subscription and seats were bought. Mr. G. Clendon raised the subscriptions and Mr. Dixcn, a turner and cabinetmaker of Omanaia, made the seats for 30/- each.

A harmonium was also bought from subscriptions and Mrs. T. L. Millar was organist. A choir was formed; Methodist hymns were sung and on occasions the full Anglican service was followed.

The belfry was added during the Rev. Geo. Pearson's ministry and built by Messrs. Pearson and Millar. A bell was installed but was sent away for repairs. The present bell replaced it but it was too noisy and was removed from the belfry to its present position on the roof at the back of the church.

The church porch was added some years later.

On V-J Day the bell was to have been run for fifteen minutes from 7 a.m. by the Rev. C. B. Oldfield. He rang it for thirteen minutes when the pull-cord broke!

Apparently for many years property matters were handled by the Quarterly Meeting, so that the Rawene Methodist Church Trust was not inaugurated until 5th January, 1920.

The original structure did not include the vestry which was added in 1921. It was at first planned to adjoin the end of the church but Mr. Cook suggested that the 20 feet by 14 feet structure be put on the side. The Trust applied for a £50 grant from the Church Building and Loan Fund. Other money came from the proceeds of a Sale of Work. The following is a copy of a newspaper cutting of 1920:

"SALE OF WORK. in aid of the funds of the ANGLICAN and METHODIST CHURCHES of Rawene, on Thursday, May 27th. 1920. SPECIAL ATTRACTION—Stall under the auspices (sic) of the Waima and Taheke Natives. Promenade Concert in the evening. Pci dances and items by the Waima Natives. Competitions, etc. Doors open 2.30 p.m. Admission 1/-, Children half-price.—N. E. Bawden, Hon. Secretary."

Altogether £200 was raised.

Soon after it was built the vestry was rented to the Education Board for use as a classroom of the Rawene District High School. Rental in 1921 was 5/- per week.
A new pulpit replaced the first one. Built in 1927 it cost £16 and the new Communion rail £5. A newspaper cutting of the time read as follows:—

"Mr. T. P. Lane kindly showed me the improvements and renovations to the Methodist Church, the principal of which is a very fine pulpit made of first-class polished rimu of Gothic design and ten panels by the Messrs. Bawden. ...... .The Church has been repainted throughout (by working bees) and the electric light installed" (This electricity came from Rawene Motors' plant in Rawene).

Most of the repair and maintenance work over the years has been done by working bees.

In 1930 a Town Board offer of a water rate of 5/- per annum was accepted and the water supply connected. The same year unsuccessful negotiations for a parsonage site on section 28 (next to the Church) were carried out. Eight years later the present parsonage was exchanged for the former one with Mr. T. P. Lane, the deal costing the Church £550.

The concrete path to the front door was laid by Messrs. J. F. Crocker and A. E. Winchcombe in 1945. The following year with the completion of the new Rawene District High School the use of the vestry by the school terminated.
GAVE TIME AND TALENTS

The following are a number of laymen and women who served or are serving the Rawene Church:—

**Mr. William Webster:** Was one of the oldest members of the Church, in its early years. He lived at Mangungu.

**Mrs. T. L. Millar:** First organist. Played the old harmonium. Her husband was choirmaster.

**Mr. Ernest McLeod:** Was County Engineer and Clerk; also after retirement was wharfinger at Rawene. Sunday School Superintendent and Society Steward for many years.

**Mr. H. J. Kelsey:** Along with Mr. McLeod was one of the main-stays of the Methodist Church in early years.

**Mr. G. G. Menzies:** Was Government engineer for the district. For some years acted as Steward for the Station. Travelled throughout the district.

**Mr. D. G. Lane:** Businessman. Was Circuit Steward and Treasurer; also organist and Trust Secretary at Rawene. All positions he held for many years. After he retired as organist his daughters Miss L. Lane (now Mrs. H. S. Kings) and Miss T. Lane filled the position.

**Miss M. Pearson** (Mrs. W. Wright: Was organist during her father's ministry.

**Mr. J. O. Bawden:** A builder. A very acceptable local preacher. He was leader of an adult Bible Study group.

**Mr. Geo. Pearson:** Was a farmer. Son of the late Rev. Geo. Pearson, Home Missionary. A local preacher, he was also Circuit Steward and Treasurer.

**Mr. T. P. Lane:** Businessman. He was Sunday School Superintendent, Circuit Steward and Treasurer for many years. Was secretary of Rawene Church Trust. His wife, a former deaconess, was organist for many years and was a local preacher.

**Mr. F. C. Day:** Headmaster of Rawene D.H.S. A very acceptable local preacher.

**Mr. T. G. M. Spooner:** A master at Rawene D.H.S. He was a notable local preacher.

**Miss E. Harwood:** Seamstress at Rawene Hospital. Was organist.

**Mr. W. Donnelly:** Was a local preacher. He was the first secondary assistant at Rawene D.H.S. during Mr. Day's appointment there.
Mr. J. F. Crocker: Was Headmaster of Rawene D.H.S. He served the Church mainly as a local preacher for which he was well-known.

Mr. F. O. J. Langton: Present Chairman of the Rawene Town Council. A businessman, he devotes much time to Church and Trust matters.

Mr. J. Fell: Lived at Kohukohu. As local preacher took many services at Rawene.

Mr. Robert Proctor: Lived in retirement at Rawene and took many services.

Miss N E Bawden: Businesswoman, was Sunday School teacher for many years. Secretary, organiser of many church bazaars; present organist.

Mr. A. Goodall: Carpenter, was trust secretary for many years.

Mr. H. Mcure: Was employed at Kohukohu Post Office. He took many services at Rawene. He is now minister at Waimea circuit, Nelson.

Mr. K. Abercrombie: Was teacher at Rawene D.H.S. He took most services during 1953.
THE PRESENT MINISTER WRITES

Is there a future for Rawene? When (or if) the Motukaraka Dairy Factory closes down will Rawene survive without the traffic and business which the factory brings? Many people say "No! Rawene is doomed!" The Parsonage Trust on the other hand, after due consideration, evidently says "Yes! Rawene will live on!" because we have bought a section, at a fairly stiff price, in Rawene!

Why? Well, with the Hospital, the District High School, the Hokianga County Headquarters, and other facilities, Rawene has enough to keep it going for a year or two yet. Then again the population is increasing throughout New Zealand. As a sign of this, perhaps, there has been a surprising number of new buildings built here in the past few months. We believe then, that the mother church of the Hokianga will still be serving a sizeable community for many years to come. It will be interesting at our 100th Anniversary (atom bombs permitting) to see whether our judgment has been sound.

In the meantime we give thanks for the generations which have pioneered and maintained the work of God in this beautiful place. And we pray that a future rich in godly activities and heart-warming experiences may be in store for the Rawene Methodist Church.—REV. H. D. BESANT

AS THEY KNEW US

"I remember the ceaseless endeavour to build up the circuit .... the wonderful fellowship we enjoyed .... consider it today one of the happiest circuits we have been in. ... "—Rev. H. A. Cochrane, now minister at Mornington Circuit, Dunedin.

"It was with some reluctance that we left the district after only two years. Son of a farmer, I appreciated the difficulties of farming in the far north, and their sacrificial giving that the work of the Church might be maintained." —Rev. D. G. Sherson, B.A., now minister at Henderson circuit, Auckland.

"... these folk loved their Church. I have never known another congregation to sing as the Rawene one. Almost never more than a dozen present—often fewer—but they would tackle any hymn. Always enjoyed the services no matter how 'thin' the numbers."—Mr. T. G. M. Spooner, M.A., now master at Te Awamutu College.

"A glorious privilege to labour in that part of God's vine-yard" and

IN CONCLUSION

"We pray that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the work of the Methodist Church may prosper—that stout hearts there may see the fruits of their labours."— Rev. A. W. McKay, now minister at Picton circuit.
THE LIGHTER SIDE

The foregoing account may present a comparatively dull sort of picture of the life of the ministers. There was, however, a lighter side to their work—perhaps not so pronounced at the time—but which looking back, brings smiles. A few anecdotes are recounted below. Passenger on boat: Seeing you are the only one like Jesus Christ, can you walk on water? Minister: Yes, I can walk on water a great deal better than I can on whisky!

The Rev. T. G. Brooke, who was Home Mission secretary, was travelling on the "John Hobbs." The launch had not been running properly and Mr. Jack Lane took it in tow. Mr. Brooke had fallen asleep. A rifle was near him. Suddenly he was awakened by a loud bang from the launch's clutch. He seized the rifle, pointing it six different ways at once—to defend himself against an imaginary enemy. Realising there was nothing doing, he lay the rifle down, and without even a smile, went to sleep again. The onlookers were highly amused.

There was once a hurried funeral at Pakanae when by accident, the coffin slipped in endways. It was covered over quickly and left that way.

Two ladies were travelling in a small car coming by pontoon from the Narrows to Rawene on a stormy day. The launchman decided that it was too rough for the peace of mind of the ladies to have them facing the "white horses" so he reversed the pontoon. He was startled to see one of the ladies standing on his pontoon half way across the harbour so he opened the cabin window to investigate. She said in a worried voice: "Oh, driver, I don't think I can back off!"

Mr. E. McLeod, while still wharfinger at Rawene, closed his office and went home to bed—retiring early as he almost invariably did. Awakening early he got up and went to the wharf, passing two men talking on the wharf to whom he said a hearty "Good morning." The men looked in surprise at each other but said nothing. Mr. McLeod went into the office and noted the time. He went out and looked at the sun on that fine "morning" and discovered it was just the full moon at ten o'clock the same evening. Rather sheepishly he went home to bed.

A minister stayed overnight at a boardinghouse at Whangape. The proprietor was a Maori. In the morning his wife called "Come and get some breakfast," Hey!" Breakfast was spread on a rather undesirable tea towel and consisted of all manner of foods mixed together—one large flounder, potatoes, onion, tomatoes, bacon, two eggs, etc. He ate the two eggs and made off!
MINISTERS AND HOME MISSIONARIES

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Rawene in 1956 from the Harbour looking south. The two storeyed building on the foreshore is the first parsonage.