

FROM MOW COP TO AIREDALE STREET

An Account of the History of Primitive Methodism in Auckland 1849-1913

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THE ENGLISH BACKGROUND

Giving it a Name

In April of 1790, when he was into his 88th year, John Wesley paid his last visit to Chester, and following the preaching service, at a meeting held in the vestry, gave his final blessing to a group of preachers. He closed by saying: "Fellow labourers, wherever there is an open door, enter in and preach the Gospel, if it be to two or three, under a hedge or tree; preach the Gospel - go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed and the halt and the blind; and the servant said. Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Wesley then lifted up his hands, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, repeated: "And yet there is room, and yet there is room." - and then added: "and this is the way the primitive Methodists did."¹

Wesley would not have known that there was present at that meeting a very strange young man, a village rustic named James Crawfoot, who was to exercise a significant ministry within Methodist societies in that part of the country, and whose recollection of the event was to prove decisive in giving a name to one of the main sections of the world-wide Methodist family. Born near Chester in 1758, from about 1793 he lived in the Delamere Forest and gathered round him a group of followers who became known as the "Forest Methodists", or, because of the strange things that apparently happened in their meetings, the "Magic Methodists". His home in the forest became a centre for evangelisation in the district, and in 1807 he was visited by Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, the acknowledged founders of Primitive Methodism. The fact that such a visit necessitated a walk of 60 miles there and back is indicative of the force of Crawfoot's character.

A couple of years later Crawfoot found himself in trouble with the Wesleyan authorities and was expelled for having agreed to preach in a breakaway chapel, and when he was arraigned on this account pleaded guilty but refused to express regret. He referred to the remarks made by Wesley at Chester 19 years before, and said: "Mr Chairman, if you have deviated from the old usages, I have not, I still remain a

¹ *James Crowfoot: The Forest Mystic* Edward Langton - Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society [UK] Vol.30:1 1955 p.12

primitive Methodist." He then joined up with Bourne and Clowes and their followers, who were then known as the "Camp Meeting Methodists", and from 1809 was employed as the first travelling preacher of Primitive Methodism. In February 1812 a meeting was held in Tunstall at which consideration was given to the name by which this new grouping should be known. It was Crawfoot who again recalled his experience at Chester, and it was his story which convinced those at the meeting that they had found the right name.²

The First Beginnings

The place of origin of Primitive Methodism was the borders of Cheshire and Staffordshire, gathered around the rugged eminence of Mow. This hill, about in 1100 feet above sea level, is the southern offset of the Pennines, and the village of Mow Cop consisted then of a score of stone-built cottages nestling among the fantastically shaped rocks left after excavations a century earlier. It was the site of a new expression of revivalism whose beginnings were in the camp-meeting movement. This was a modification of the old field-preaching and had been introduced into England by another strange character, an American named Lorenzo Dow. These camp meetings staked the claim of some evangelicals to an even greater freedom of practice.



Ruined tower, Mow Cop Hill, on the Cheshire-Derbyshire border.

² *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early Years* Julia Stewart Werner - Wisconsin 1984 p.77

The two founders of Primitive Methodism, Hugh Bourne (1772-1852), a moorland carpenter, and William Clowes (1780-1851), a potter, might have remained faithful members of the parent Methodist church had the latter been able to accept their participation in the camp meeting movement. Primitive Methodism was, therefore, the result of an expulsion by rather than a secession from the Wesleyan majority. It was a time when the latter were desperately determined to gain respectability in the eyes of the political establishment. They feared that their hard-won rights to a form of ecclesiastical independence might be taken away. Such an attempt was made in 1811 by the Government, by means of Lord Sidmouth's Bill, based on his concern at the excesses of some lay preachers who were proclaiming, it seemed, a dangerous form of radicalism - a democracy based on the principles of the French Revolution.

The first beginnings were in 1800, when Bourne began "conversation preaching" in his own home in the village of Harriseahead. It spread to Tunstall a few years later, classes having been formed and preaching begun at a chapel erected by Bourne on his own property. For a time such work came under the oversight of the Burslem Circuit. It spread even more rapidly under the influence of Clowes, whose greater fluency and more attractive personality made a wide impact. But it was Lorenzo Dow's visits from 1805 to 1807 which triggered the beginnings of the new movement. The first Camp Meeting in Britain was held at Mow Cop on May 31 1807, and this is regarded by Primitive Methodists as the date of the founding of their denomination.

Bourne's own account of the day is couched in an idiom to be used by the Connexion throughout its history. Thousands of people came from all round the area, from Knutsford, Macclesfield, Wheelock, Congleton and Burslem, the first two about 12 miles away. Preaching stands had been erected, and more were required as the day progressed. Bourne was astonished at the numbers - "thousands hearing with attention as solemn as death, presented a scene of the most sublime and awfully-pleasing grandeur that my eyes ever beheld. The preachers seemed to be fired with uncommon zeal, and an extraordinary unction attended their word, while tears were flowing and sinners trembling on every side. Numbers were convinced, and saints were uncommonly quickened."

The congregation increased so rapidly that a fourth preaching stand was called for. The work now became general, and the scene was most interesting. Thousands were listening with solemn attention; a company near the first stand were wrestling in prayer for mourners, and four preachers were preaching with all their might. This extraordinary scene continued till about four o'clock, when the people began to retire, and before six they were confined to one stand. About seven o'clock a work began among children, six of whom were converted before the meeting broke up. About half-past eight this extraordinary meeting closed; a meeting such as our eyes had never beheld, a meeting for which many will praise God both in time and in eternity. Such a day as this we never before enjoyed. It was a day spent in the active service of God; a

Sabbath in which Jesus Christ made glad the hearts of his saints, and sent his arrows to the hearts of sinners."³

A few months later, the Wesleyan Conference was held in Liverpool. One of the Questions asked was: "What is the judgment of the Conference concerning what are called Camp-Meetings?" The answer given was: "It is our judgment, that even supposing such meetings to be allowable in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief. And we disclaim all connexion with them." The Conference also directed that strangers, from America or elsewhere, should not "be suffered to preach in any of our places."⁴

It was, therefore, to be expected that Bourne and Clowes would themselves suffer the discipline of the church, and within three years the Camp Meeting Methodists had become a distinct community. The general meeting which set up the new Connexion was held at Tunstall in July of 1811 - a circuit was established with a steward; James Crawfoot and William Clowes were made preachers; Hugh Bourne, a little later, was designated as the General Superintendent, and there were some 200 members.⁵

The new denomination did not immediately spread widely or rapidly. For four years it was centred around Tunstall. Then a new work was established in Derbyshire which was linked with Tunstall. A second major circuit was founded in 1818 in Nottingham. From thence it moved into Lincolnshire and Leicestershire, and a third circuit was set up with Loughborough as its centre. Clowes himself established a major new outreach at Hull in Yorkshire in 1819. The plan of 1822 shows 42 places in five counties - this was a time of revival and open-air evangelism, and it coincided with the radical activities of the Luddites and the Levellers.

The Connexional membership had been 7,842 in 1819, but by 1824 it was 33,507. This enormous evangelistic surge was maintained by preachers both itinerant and lay, at great cost. There was, at times, much suffering, for persecution was not unknown from a hostile populace and from hostile magistrates and clergy. Without Bourne's organising ability Primitive Methodism would undoubtedly have collapsed, as much through enthusiasm and indiscipline as anything. By 1828 he had regained control to a large extent, on the one hand by sifting out unsuitable persons, and on the other by a positive programme for the training of ministers through the *Magazine* which he edited.

³ *History of the Origins of the Primitive Methodists, Giving an Account of their Rise and Progress up to the Year 1823* Hugh Bourne - Bemersley 1835

⁴ *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the first, held in London by the Late Rev. John Wesley, AM. in the year 1744* Vol 2 London 1813 p.403

⁵ Werner, op cit pp.75-78

The Contrast between Primitive and Wesleyan Methodism

Recent research is helping towards an understanding of the differing roles of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism at that time. David Hempton describes the predicament of the former in this way: "To the problems of control posed by Sunday schools, revivalism, government pressure and radicalism were added administrative and financial difficulties. General changes in the structure and organisation of the Methodist community, such as the increases in the numbers of preachers (particularly married ones), and of ornate but poorly financed chapels, were cruelly exposed by the post-war economic recession. More collections offered no answer to these deep-seated structural problems. The result was the decline of rural itinerancy, the virtual disappearance of the circuit horse, and financial reliance on big urban chapels with their wealthy clientele. Such chapels were competed for by the available preaching talent so that the younger preachers had different yardsticks of success from Wesley's itinerants. Thus, the growth of big preaching centres staffed by star preachers, that were so admired by nineteenth-century Nonconformists and are looked back on with such nostalgia by many twentieth-century evangelicals, were not so much a symbol of success as a witness to the death of virginal Methodism. The era [to the 1820's] also saw the end of Wesleyan Methodism as a force in working-class culture and politics."⁶

Another contemporary writer, John Vickers, has made a careful study of central-southern English circuit life in 1825. This provides some complementary and more detailed evidence in support of what had just been said. The Salisbury Circuit, in particular, illustrates the failure of Wesleyan Methodism to meet the needs of the rural population. A prominent leader of the principal Wesleyan chapel in Salisbury itself, William Sanger Jnr., was busily registering places of Methodist worship in the villages around Salisbury, and from 1823 onwards did so under the designation of "Tent Methodists". Exactly the same thing happened around Winchester as the result of initiatives taken by Harry Noyes, a local farmer. "There were, in short, Wesleyan laymen and local preachers who were prepared to take the initiative in missioning new villages and who saw the "Tent Methodists" (and perhaps a little later, the Primitive Methodists) as welcome allies, despite any official disapproval." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, by 1825, the "itinerant system" had already been modified throughout the Wesleyan Connexion, though it survived in the non-Wesleyan offshoots, especially the Bible Christians and Primitive Methodists, as one token of their attempted return to their 18th century roots.⁷

Finally, it is important to consider the argument suggested by Bernard Semmel, among others, that the lessening involvement of Wesleyan Methodism in the lives of

⁶ *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* David Hempton - London 1984

⁷ *Circuit Life in 1825* John Vickers, in *Methodism in its Cultural Milieu* ed. Tim Macquiban - Oxford 1994

the poor in rural England was an inevitable outcome of the policy of Jabez Bunting and the Connexional leadership. They, it is suggested, discovered in overseas missions a means of diverting the attention of lower-class Wesleyans from their own wretchedness to the worse plight of the heathen abroad. By redirecting Methodist energies into missions overseas, Wesleyan leaders went a considerable way toward resolving the question of "how to reconcile the Enthusiasm inherent in Methodist evangelism, with its revolutionary, Antinomian tendencies, with an obsession with order in both Church and state."⁸ That such a redirection of energies took place cannot be questioned, but whether they were a deliberate diversion, engineered by such as Bunting, may be doubted. Whatever the case, the increasing retreat of respectable Wesleyan Methodism into urban England provided an opening which Primitive Methodism was eager to fill.

All this helps to explain the opportunity for Primitive Methodism's growth, in the east in East Anglia, Essex and Huntingdonshire, in the south in Wiltshire, Berkshire and Hampshire, and in the south-west in Cornwall and South Wales. Both Bourne and Clowes remained faithful to their evangelical vision, though the former sustained at the same time the tasks of Connexional administration. There was recurring tension between the two men, but the Connexional statistics for 1850, not long before their deaths, show that membership had risen to 104,762, with 519 travelling preachers and 8,254 local preachers, and 1,555 chapels.⁹

A Profile of Primitive Methodism 1850-1870

Another major study of rural England, this time in Lincolnshire, offers a perceptive analysis of Primitive Methodism, making the point that unlike the established Church and even Wesleyan Methodism itself, the "Ranters" as they were often called, were poor and fervent, and homogeneous. They conform to the definition given by sociologists of religion to a conversionist sect - missionary evangelism, membership by conversion experience, strong internal discipline, lay activity in organisation, and spontaneity in worship. James Obelkevich describes the first 20 or so years of Primitive Methodism's existence as its heroic age, the time of its greatest missionary expansion. Then followed, from 1840-1860, two decades of revivalism and consolidation, just at the time when Wesleyanism was most affected by internal dissension. After 1860 there was a period of slackening energies, introversion, and denominationalism.¹⁰

⁸ *The Methodist Revolution* Bernard Semmel - London 1974 p. 169

⁹ *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* John Petty (New Edition Revised and Enlarged by James Macpherson) - London 1880 p.486

¹⁰ *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* James Obelkevich - Oxford 1976 pp.220f

The social composition of Primitive Methodism is undeniably significant. No other religious group, in general, had a higher proportion of farm labourers in its membership. Though it attracted farmers and craftsmen, too, it is from the farm labourers that it derived something of its style and tone - its directness, emotionalism and spontaneity. No other religious group left a deeper imprint on its working-class members. The organisation of the agricultural workers into a united force dedicated to the achievement of better pay and conditions had been heavily defeated in the 1830's, e.g. the Dorset agitation giving rise to the prosecution of a group of men who became known as the "Tolpuddle Martyrs", and who included in their number several Methodists. In order to organise the working class there needed to be intelligent leadership, and a place to gather the forces together. Both these elements were lacking almost by the very nature of things, with agricultural workers being so widely dispersed and much more under the immediate control of their masters. The man for the moment proved to be Joseph Arch, a Primitive Methodist local preacher, who was as responsible as any for the inauguration of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in the early 1870's. Nigel Scotland describes the enormous influence of Primitive Methodism on the leaders of agricultural trade unionism.¹¹ Another study, this time of a Durham mining community by Robert Moore, makes a similar point with respect to their contribution to unionism among the miners, though this became increasingly diverse by the end of the century, with both radical and conservative Primitive Methodists in leadership roles.¹²

Robert Featherstone Weymouth, one of the foremost of an older generation of Methodist historians, was himself a product of Primitive Methodism. Born into a Durham mining family, he left school to become a pit-boy at the age of 12. His extensive research into 19th century Methodism paints a picture of its place within English society. He describes Primitive Methodism as a working-class association, whose polity "which was drawn up in an anti-clerical atmosphere and amid the political agitation of 1819-20, bears the impress of the age to which it belongs."¹³ There was a close association with the working-class Radicals of that time, though it took all of Hugh Bourne's persuasive powers to prevent there being an official alliance. In 1831 and 1832 Primitive Methodist chapels were used for reform meetings, again despite the opposition of the Connexional leadership. At the time of the Chartist agitation in the 1840's the influence of Methodism generally was particularly evident in the organisation of the movement, with its class and camp meetings, hymns, and weekly subscriptions. Again Primitive Methodists are disproportionately represented in its leadership.

¹¹ *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field* Nigel Scotland - Gloucester 1981 chapter 4

¹² *Pit-men, Preachers and Politics* Robert Moore - Cambridge 1974 chapter 6

¹³ *Methodism and the Working-Class Movements of England 1800-1850* Robert Featherstone Weymouth - London 1937 p.208

It is not possible yet to describe in detail from where the Primitive Methodists who came to New Zealand originated. Rollo Arnold's study of Government-sponsored emigration schemes to New Zealand in the 1870's provides evidence of considerable activity within the Connexion in such counties as Oxfordshire and Lincolnshire.¹⁴ At this distance in time it will take some fairly laborious research to reveal whether the majority of New Zealand Primitive Methodists originated in rural England or not. At the time of the centennial of Mow Cop in 1907 it was said the "the villages of England have been the battle-ground for many of our fiercest conflicts. Here many of our great battles have been fought, and many of our finest victories won. No church has done more for the villages than Primitive Methodism, and no Church has received more in return."¹⁵ Nevertheless there was a significant Primitive Methodist presence in the great centres of population. In London itself, for example, from the 1880's wide-ranging, mission-based, social and evangelical work was established at Whitechapel and Clapton. The overwhelming impression, however, is that the Connexion was most effective in the towns and villages of rural England.

So the chances are that the Primitive Methodists who came to New Zealand were not from the growing urban areas. By the 1870's Primitive Methodists were to be found in every part of England, though it is clear that they were, by comparison with their Wesleyan cousins, much more thinly spread and largely lacking the substantial and securely financed chapels which enabled the latter to survive the divisions of the mid-century. So often they came to New Zealand to escape the harsh working conditions of England, and by and large they discovered here the freedom and the independence that they sought.

THE AUCKLAND EXPERIENCE

The Foundation of Primitive Methodism in Auckland

The social conditions in the new land were to have a profound effect on the church involvement and life-style of the Primitive Methodist immigrants. The battles which they had fought in England were, to a large extent, irrelevant in this country. Their commitment to the improvement of the working conditions of the labouring classes was not so needed here. By the end of the century, the *New Zealand Primitive Methodist Magazine* reflects an overriding concern for the spiritual and moral welfare of its readership, and of society as a whole, and there is relatively little reference, say, to the effects of the depression and the plight of the poor. Primitive Methodism in New Zealand concentrated its efforts on the evangelical imperative which had given it

¹⁴ *The Farthest Promised Land - English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870's*
Rollo Arnold - Wellington 1981

¹⁵ *1807-1907 Primitive Methodist Centenary - Souvenir Programme* T.H.Hunt - London 1907
p.20

its *raison d'etre*. It was still a working-class church, but its energies were largely directed inwards, rather than towards active participation in the improvement of the working and social conditions of those outside its membership.

For long enough "missions" in Primitive Methodism had meant outreach within Great Britain. There was a presence in some of the larger centres in the United States and Canada by 1830, but a revival in early 1841 in the latter country led to setting up of a more disciplined organisation for the extension of missionary operations. The General Missionary Committee in England, established in 1843, was given the oversight.¹⁶ About this same time there was a request from South Australian Primitive Methodist, John Wiltshire, for the appointment of a missionary to serve the needs of the first Primitive Methodist society in the Southern hemisphere.¹⁷ With the eyes of the Connexion directed to this part of the world it was almost inevitable that a wish should be expressed to send a missionary to New Zealand as well. The real impetus for such a move came from the North Shields circuit, in the mining area near Newcastle. The money was found by requiring each Sunday School teacher to raise a shilling during the ensuing year.

What are described as "prudent" regulations were drawn up by the Committee, and in the light of the earlier comments made about the decline in social involvement in those who emigrated to New Zealand, Regulation 12 makes interesting reading: "As our missionaries are emphatically teachers of religion, they shall not be members of political associations, nor take any part in public political disputes, but shall enforce, by precept and example, a cheerful obedience to the lawful authorities and institutions recognised in the countries to which their respective stations shall belong. And, in order that they may observe this regulation, they are desired to acquaint themselves with the governors and the laws of those stations, and to demean themselves towards the former, and observe the latter, in such a manner as to secure every possible facility to the spreading of the work of God among the unsaved of mankind, which must be the *alpha* and *omega* of all their conduct."¹⁸

The Conference which met in Lynn Regis in 1844 appointed Robert Ward, the superintendent of the Mattishall circuit, to be the Missionary. To him were delegated "the powers and privileges" necessary for the execution of his task.¹⁹ He sailed with his family for New Plymouth in May 1844, arriving at his destination three months later. It is not clear why New Plymouth was chosen to be the point of entry for Primitive Methodism into New Zealand. From its foundation there had been a small

¹⁶ Petty op cit pp.457ff

¹⁷ Statement by James Guy in article in NZPrimitive Methodist 1.4.1891

¹⁸ Petty op cit p.478

¹⁹ *Primitive Methodist Temporal Affairs Act 1879 Private No. 2* - Laws and Regulations of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Appendix C-1 - Christchurch 1981

but active Bible Christian society, made up of families from Cornwall and Devon, with a church near the Huatoki Bridge on land offered to them by a Mr T.Veale.²⁰ They had themselves unsuccessfully sought a minister from England. On September 1st 1844 after their Sunday worship ended they found a stranger preaching at the bridge, and were pleased to find that he preached "similar doctrines."²¹ Ward had arrived just two days earlier, and it was with the Bible Christians, whose Methodism was not too dissimilar to Primitive Methodism, that Ward began his work. He built a church at Henui, where he also resided, and remained there for five years, the sole Primitive Methodist minister in the country until Henry Green's arrival in Wellington in 1847.

Petty states that the impetus to begin work in Auckland was triggered by the arrival in 1847 of a group of about 800 emigrants, among whom were some who had been members of the Connexion in England.²² It would be interesting to know more about the nature of this particular emigration scheme, if it indeed it was such. At that time, for example, a total of eight ships are recorded as bringing over 700 army men on half pay with their families - these were the "Fencibles", liable only for home service, and provided with land and a house at the outpost settlements, initially at Howick, but a little later at Panmure, Otahuhu and Onehunga. They came from both England and Ireland, where it was by no means an uncommon thing for soldiers to be active Methodists. Initially they were housed in a large building in Epsom where Robert Ward was able to visit them. It may be no coincidence that within five years there was Primitive Methodist worship at all of these places.

The first Primitive Methodist in Auckland, however, was John Harris, a cabinet-maker from London, who had come out in 1838. He it was who wrote to Ward in New Plymouth in 1846 saying "that there were many people in Auckland but very little religion."²³ Ward was favourably disposed to the idea since Auckland was now a particularly significant place as the seat of government at that time. Harris had also pledged financial support for the appointment, which became a fact, temporarily at least, when Ward arrived in late January 1849.

The Growth of Auckland Primitive Methodism 1849-1885

Services were begun in the city immediately in rented accommodation, a class meeting was instituted. Ward visited about 30 families, a Sabbath School was established, and a Society was formed with Messrs Whitmore and Harris as its leaders

²⁰ *New Zealand Primitive Methodist* 1.4.1891

²¹ *NZPM* 1.4.1891 - Article by James Guy on history of Primitive Methodism in New Plymouth

²² Petty op cit p.481

²³ *Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand* James Guy and William S.Potter -

Wellington 1893 p. 129

and five other members. It would seem that the sharpness of the divisions within English Methodism had become somewhat blurred in the young colony, and Ward noted his pleasure at being able to attend such a function as the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting and that "he felt it a treat to mingle with" such as Lawry, Hobbs, Whiteley, Buddle, and Warren and others. Along with Buddle, Reid and Fletcher, all Wesleyans, and with the Presbyterian minister, Inglis, Ward was party to the formation of a branch of the Evangelical Alliance, whose lecture subjects included Intemperance, Poperly, Sabbath breaking, and Sunday School teachers.

Nothing of a more permanent nature could be set in place until Ward's transfer to Auckland became secure with the arrival in New Plymouth of his replacement, Joseph Long, in April 1850. He returned to New Plymouth four weeks later and in the meantime services were conducted by lay preachers, one of whom, Richard Monk, was to achieve prominence in later years as a Member of the House of Representatives. It was, somehow, typical of Primitive Methodism that it was felt appropriate to leave the fledgling mission in the hands of lay people until the return of Robert Ward to take up permanent residence, though Ward paid another visit to Auckland in June for three months until early September.

Grey, by then the new Governor, had come into contact with Primitive Methodists when he was in South Australia, and had formed, as he said, a good opinion of them for "their unobtrusive policy and their good works."²⁴ He offered Ward, soon after his return to Auckland in May, a Crown Grant of half an acre on what was then called Edwardes Street. Apparently Ward's independence inclined him to refuse the offer, but Grey overcame his objections, and the land was gifted to the Mission. The church on the site was opened on March 16th, 1851, and the first to preach a sermon in the new building was Thomas Buddle, who with Walter Lawry was one of the two Wesleyan ministers in the city. There is some significance in this, in that it shows that the degree of separation that existed in England between the Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists was not to be found in the new colony.

Typical of such Methodist enterprise the vision was a costly one for a relatively small number of faithful people. The June Quarterly Meeting of 1851²⁵ reported 20

²⁴ *Primitive Methodism in Auckland 1849-1913* John Olphert - Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (NZ Branch) Vol.7:1 1949 p.3

²⁵ Guy and Potter op cit (p. 143) refers to the first entry in the Quarterly Meeting journal being under the date of June 9, 1851. It is unlikely that Ward would have waited for more than a year to hold his first Quarterly Meeting, and there is evidence that there may have been earlier meetings. There is no indication in the minutes themselves that this was the first meeting of the Quarterly Board, and Ward's Journal a year earlier refers to quarterly fund-raising for the erection of the new church. Ward, it might be noted, acted as the secretary of the Board, rather than as its chairman.

members and 64 Sunday School scholars with 7 teachers. The church, worth £330, carried a debt of £100. It needs to be remembered that until 1870 the various stations in New Zealand were under the supervision of and were subsidised by the General Missionary Committee in London. The same minutes resolved "that an account of the high price of provisions in this colony" be laid before the General Missionary Committee. The December minutes "sanctioned" Ward's journal and extracts from it were sent to the Committee in London.

What happened "at Home" continued to be vitally important in Auckland. Early in 1853 news of Hugh Bourne's death was received. A minute was agreed to expressing "gratitude to Almighty God for raising up our late venerable Father Hugh Bourne, for preserving him to a good old age, and for permitting him together with his noble coadjutor, the sainted William Clowes, to see as the result of their labours the cause of Christ established at the ends of the earth in both hemispheres and in three of the great divisions of the globe."²⁶

Conversely, when news and information from the English Connexion failed to make its appearance this had "an injurious effect on an infant and a district Mission." And a couple of years later: "We have not had a page of printed matter from the Book Room for 1855 and it is now March 1856. Beyond the Sheet stations we literally know nothing about our Connexional movements since Dec 1854 - fifteen months ago. We are to hold our Annual Missn Services within a few weeks. How we are to manage with no intelligence to lay before the public we know not. Were we not well known here we dare not meet the public in such circumstances."²⁷

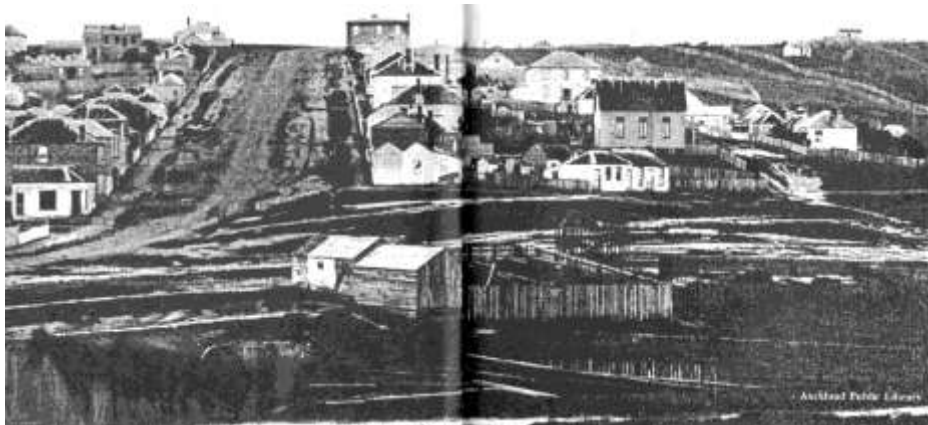
In that same spirit evangelical outreach was the first priority, beginning at that time with weeknight meetings at Freeman's Bay and Mechanics Hill. From the former initiative grew the Auckland Second Circuit, based on the society at Franklin Road. As has already been noted further extensions were made to the work in 1852 through fortnightly Sunday worship at Onehunga, and weeknight services at Otahuhu, Howick, Tamaki East, Epsom and Panmure. There appears to have been the same enthusiasm for missionary work, i.e. with settlers, though it is significantly limited to their spiritual needs. The day school was given up in 1852 because it occupied too much of Ward's time. The population of the colony as a whole fluctuated a good deal during these first years. The discovery of gold in California in 1847, and then in Victoria in 1851 drew away large numbers of younger men. A natural consequence of this situation was a substantial increase in the cost of living, and the work at Edwardes Street suffered from lack of funds. The cost of provisions was such that it was thought necessary to send a list of prices to the Committee in London, and Ward was forced to sell his horse "on account of the pressure of the times."²⁸

²⁶ *Auckland Mission Quarterly Meeting* Minutes March 15 1853

²⁷ *AMQM* Minutes op cit March 3 1856

²⁸ *AMQM* Minutes op cit September 5 1854

In fact, the whole of Ward's time in Auckland must have been, on the basis of the statistical evidence available, anything but encouraging. In the eight years he was in Auckland the roll rose from 20 to 30, and there was never any substantial body of leadership for him to fall back on. At almost his last Quarterly Board Meeting it was reported that the Sunday School roll was 77, with a teaching staff of nine - again not much of an increase on the 1851 figures.²⁹



Auckland about 1857 - the original church of 1851 in Edwardes Street later renamed Alexandra Street and now Airedale Street. Queen Street runs left to right and Wakefield Street vertically to the Symonds Street ridge.

Of Ward's years in Auckland it was said: "He came to Auckland full of hope, and had the satisfaction of seeing many conversions and of founding the Church, beside accomplishing much useful work in town and country. But the lack of local preachers, his inability to get another missionary from England to assist him, and the changes of population, presented difficulties in the way of achieving all the objects upon which he had set his heart."³⁰ One of the results of the unwillingness of the Missionary Committee in England to send out additional staff was that Primitive Methodism was unable to offer its particular form of Methodist spirituality and fellowship in the country areas.

Ward returned to New Plymouth in 1859, his place being taken by Joseph Long. It was a time



Rev. Joseph Long 1818-1892

²⁹ *AMQM* Minutes op cit June 24 1858

³⁰ Guy and Potter op cit p. 147

when the population was growing strongly, and in that particular year three men who were to leave their mark on Auckland Primitive Methodism arrived together with their families - John Manners, Thomas Booth³¹ and George Hayter. The Alexandra Street buildings had to be enlarged to cope, but with the increase in numbers further activities were inaugurated, like the after-church, Sunday evening, open-air services downtown at Mark Somerville's Corner at Shortland Crescent. Sailors and soldiers, bushmen and townspeople gathered in large numbers - frequently 600 people were present. Guy and Potter refer to the fact that at these meetings free religious tracts were distributed.³² Such activities were in the authentic Primitive Methodist tradition, and continued the ethos of the Camp Meeting in which the Connexion had been nurtured.

This sort of evangelism had largely ceased to be an element in Wesleyan Methodism. The early 1850's had been troubled times for the Auckland Wesleyan community based on the High Street Society, under the leadership of Walter Lawry and Thomas Buddle in particular. A booklet of somewhat apocalyptic character had been published in 1854 by "A Lay Member", but alongside its fearsome depiction of the Ottoman Empire as the fulfilment of biblical prophecy are accusations of ministerial oppression and lack of true Methodist spirit in Auckland. The author may well have been C O Davis, associated with the Primitive Methodist cause and clearly no lover of Wesleyan formalism and clerical pretension.³³ It would seem likely that Primitive Methodism's growth and appeal at this time was a reflection of its ability to address the new influx of working-class emigrants who were coming into New Zealand in the early 1860's, particularly as a result of the discovery of gold in Otago.

In the year that Joseph Long's ministry ended and William Colley's began (1864) fortnightly worship was begun at the Whau in west Auckland, and the new Sunday School room was erected at Edwardes Street. Early in the following year a church in Freeman's Bay was built, and again it was a Wesleyan minister, the celebrated "California" Taylor who preached at the foundation-stone laying. Services were begun at Newmarket. This sort of growth was made possible by the emergence of a substantial group of lay leaders who remained loyal to Primitive Methodism in Auckland for many years - such as Messrs Armstrong Mewburn, G. Holdship, John Trenwith, William Jaffrey, James Simpson, Edwin Tremain and Benjamin Felgate, and Mesdames Smith, Dean and Booth.

³¹ Booth's obituary in *The New Zealand Methodist Times* January 23, 1915, Vol.5:20 p.7, provides excellent evidence of the commitment which such leaders as he had to their church.

³² Guy and Potter op cit p. 149

³³ *Dark clouds in the Southern Sky; being a few words by way of remembrance, addressed to the Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, residing in Auckland, New Zealand* A Lay Member - Sydney 1854

In terms of his contribution to Primitive Methodism the foremost among this new generation of leaders was David Goldie, whose name appears as an Exhorter for the first time in 1869. Born of Scottish parents he had come as a boy to Hobart, and had then come across the Tasman to Auckland in 1863. Olphert²⁴ suggests that it was because of his inability to find scope for his "abundant energy" within the Presbyterian Church that he joined the Alexandra Street Primitive Methodists. His later career might suggest that he was a man who needed to exercise leadership, and that, maybe, the smaller Primitive Methodist cause gave him that scope. He became a Sunday School teacher, Superintendent, Trustee and Society Steward, Connexional Secretary, Secretary-Manager of the



Rev. John Olphert 1866-1950

Fire Insurance Fund and President of Conference in 1885, the first layman to be so honoured. In 1874 he was elected a member of the Provincial Council; in 1878 he was sent to Wellington as a member of the House of Representatives for three terms. As a timber merchant and respected businessman he was elected to the Auckland Harbour and Education Boards, and was mayor of the city for two terms from 1889. He was also actively involved in the Prohibition Movement, and used his position on the Licensing Committee to enforce his principles. It is possibly not so well-known that he was the father of the notable New Zealand portraitist, C F Goldie. When he died in 1926 he had been an active member of the Auckland I Circuit for well over 60 years and a local preacher for nearly the same length of time.³⁴

The effects of the Waikato Land Wars, and even more of the transfer of the seat of Government to Wellington in 1865 had meant a period of sharp decline in the city. William Colley's ministry ended early through ill-health and his place was taken by William Dean, sent over from Australia. However, the discovery of gold at the Thames in 1867 began to turn this decline around, and offered, by the way, an opportunity for Auckland Primitive Methodist expansion through the opening up in 1873 of a mission station at Grahamstown,³⁵ near to the first important reef. John Manners went to live there as a paid local preacher, and established the cause, and a minister from Auckland also made a visit to the station on a monthly basis.

³⁴ Obituary in *The New Zealand Methodist Times* 3.7.26 Vol.17:5 pp.5,13

³⁵ Grahamstown was one of two settlements (the other was Shortland, to the south) laid out in 1867, which combined in 1870 to form the present town of Thames. (*Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* Vol.3 p.387)

From Mow Cop to Airedale Street by D. Phillipps - WHS Journal 1996

This was also a time of major reorganisation within the whole region, it being decided by the British Conference that the New Zealand stations should become part of the same District as New South Wales. This proposal did not meet with the approval of the Auckland Quarterly Meeting, at least. All of this had its financial implications, as might be imagined, and it was the expectation of the General Missionary Committee in London in 1871 that the Auckland Station should become self-sufficient as soon as possible. The goal was not objected to, but it was felt that a deputation from England should visit New Zealand to ascertain the position before further steps were taken.

Evidence of the improving state of affairs is found in the decision of the Auckland Quarterly Meeting in June 1874 to request a second appointment, and the proposal to the Missionary Committee was accompanied by a guarantee of both the passage money and the stipend. The new minister resided in the Freeman's Bay side of the Circuit, at Sheridan Street. Within two years sufficient money had been raised for erection of a new building situated at the corner of Franklin Road and Wellington Street, just up the hill a little from the earlier site. The fact that it cost £1,350 points to the increasing affluence of Auckland Primitive Methodism. By then, too, the effects of the Government-sponsored emigration schemes were being felt, and the Auckland Circuit made sure that each emigrant ship was appropriately welcomed, with thanksgiving services at the immigration depot. The significant numbers of Primitive Methodists from rural England were assured of a warm, though not entirely disinterested welcome.

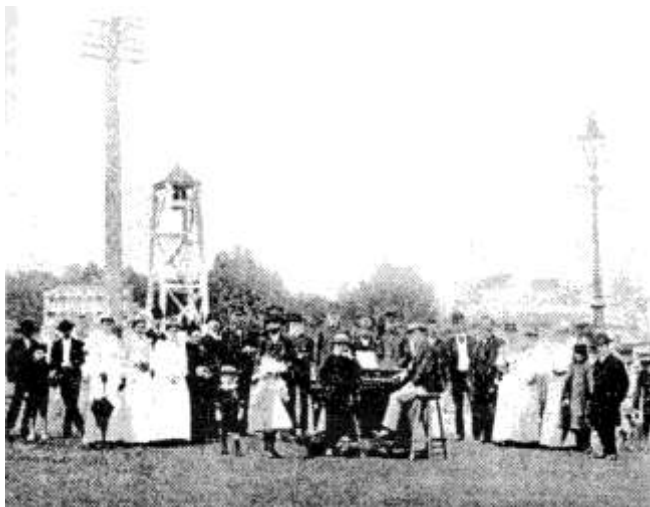


Franklin Road Church Ponsonby, corner of Franklin Road and Wellington Street, opened 1876, now demolished. Note gas lighting and the protected plane tree at front gate. The avenue of planes is one of the features of Auckland. The name was alternatively Franklyn in early Plans.

The first minister of the now named Auckland I Circuit was William Tinsley, and he was followed at the end of 1876 by one of the more remarkable of the Connexion's younger ministers, Daniel Dutton. Dutton was to remain in Auckland for only a year or so, and then after ministries in Wellington and Invercargill, left the Connexion to

become a Presbyterian minister. He had a notable thirty-year ministry at Caversham in Dunedin, being Moderator of the General Assembly in 1921, and serving as a chaplain to the forces in both the Boer and the 1914-18 wars, the latter at the age of 66! He had initially trained as a mining engineer, and during his time in Auckland was made a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and later of the Royal Geological Society. He was, as David Bell records, one who opened the minds of his many congregations to the scientific dimension through his lectures on "scientific subjects, especially astronomy."³⁶

After Dutton's departure Joseph Long returned for a second period of ministry, and in 1882 his place was taken by William Smith Potter. He was among the first local men to become a minister in this country, having himself been a Sunday School scholar at Edwardes Street from 1859. His ministry was coincident with the continuing growth of the Auckland I Circuit, helped by the arrival of leaders like George Turley and Thomas Lyon. Trade was good in the city; young people like John Olphert were joining the church at Alexandra Street. Open-air services were begun on Sunday evenings, before the ordinary evening service, at the junction of Queen, Grey and Wakefield Streets. A year or two later additional services were held on the same site, and the "Saturday Night Firebell Service" became a feature of inner-city evangelism.



Alexandra Street Firebell
open-air mission workers.
- An enhanced illustration
from *NZ Primitive Methodist*
April 1894.

³⁶ *The Impact of Post-Modern Science on Expressions of Faith and Theology, with especial reference to the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand* David Bell unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Otago 1992 p. 147. The quotation is from the *Outlook* November 21 1921 p. 16

Potter was to serve the Circuit as one of its ministers during three separate appointments -1882-1885, 1898-1900, and 1905-1909. His obituary in the 1929 Conference Minutes has this to say of him: "Wherever he laboured properties were improved, debts vanished, congregations increased and conserved, and the spiritual life was intensified. Mr Potter was a diligent pastor, a clear expounder of the Word of God, and in all things a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. Gifted with executive ability, Mr Potter was Book Steward of the Primitive Methodist Church, and President of the Conference on two occasions, as well as Editor of the Connexional paper. Always an ardent advocate of Methodist Union, he rejoiced in its consummation in 1913."³⁷ The Firebell was a landmark at the junction of Queen, Grey and Wakefield Streets, Auckland, at about the south-east edge of the present Aotea Square. Note the portable harmonium at centre.

Consolidation and Union 1886-1913

Within the limitations of this brief survey of the history of just one Circuit within the New Zealand Primitive Methodist Connexion justice cannot be done to the many women and men who occupy the stage for longer or shorter periods. Earlier histories almost inevitably, it seems, were constructed around the ministries of the ordained presbyters. There is a certain inappropriateness in this historiographical method so far as Primitive Methodism is concerned, with its traditional emphasis on democracy and on lay leadership. The published evidence, within the pages of the Connexional magazine, for example, suggests that even Primitive Methodism was moving gradually and almost unavoidably towards a more professional ministry, and a type of activity which was almost wholly centred on the church buildings and the wide range of activities developed there.

Take the Preaching Plan for the Auckland I Station for February-April 1895 as an example. (See next page). There are five preaching places - Alexandra Street, Pitt and Edwin Streets, Eden Terrace, Newmarket and Arch Hill. There were two ordained ministers and ten other preachers, including three on trial. There were, in addition, three exhorters, and five "auxiliaries." On any Sunday there were 12 preaching services, outdoors as well as inside, at these five places, quite apart from the Sunday School work. There were classes every Monday; Young People's work on Tuesday, or a weeknight service at Eden Terrace; two mid-week services on Wednesday at Alexandra Street, and a Mutual Improvement Class (a feature of those times) at Eden Terrace; services on Thursday evening at Newmarket and at Pitt and Edwin Streets; a prayer meeting at Arch Hill on Friday, as well as work with young people at a couple

³⁷ *Methodist Church of New Zealand Minutes of the Annual Conference held at Auckland*
Christchurch 1929 pp.16f

of the other churches; and finally the Firebell Service at Alexandra Street on the Saturday.³⁸

		THE NEW ZEALAND PRIMITIVE METHODIST.													
		AUCKLAND I. STATION													
PLACES.	TIME	FEBRUARY.				MARCH.					APRIL.				
		3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	
<i>— Guarded are they who bear the Word of God and keep it.</i>															
ALEXANDRA STREET—															
Morning Service	11 0	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	
Evening Service	6-45	1s	2	1	1	8	1s	2	2	6	2s	1	2	1	
Open-air Service	10 0	23	15	28	25	23	15	28	25	23	15	28	25	23	
Open-air Service	6 0	28	28	15	23	28	25	15	23	28	25	15	23	28	
Sunday School Address	2.30									1					
Monday, Class	7.30	24	23	1	24	22	23	24	24	23	24	22	24	23	
Monday, Band of Hope	7.30														
Tuesday, Y.P.S.C.F.	7.30														
Wednesday, Open-air Service	7 0	25	28	23	15	25	28	23	15	25	26	23	15	25	
Wednesday Service	7.30	1	2	1	34	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	
Saturday, Fire Bell, Op. air Serv.	7.15	1	2s	23	23	2	23	23	23	1	23	23	23	2	
PITT & EDWIN STREETS—															
Morning Service	1										1	2	1		
Evening Service											2s	1	2		
Sunday School Address											6	5	2		
Monday, Class											2	11	2		
Thursday Service															
Band of Hope															
Friday, Young People's S.C.F.															
EDEN TERRACE—															
Sunday Morning, Prayer Meeting											24	W. Jeffrey, sen.	29	30	25
Afternoon Service											25	C. Langdale	34	2	1s
Evening Service											26	R. Herbert	18	1123	6
Monday, Class											27	W. Moor	6	6	6
Tuesday, Service											28	H. Evans	2	1	2
Wednesday, Mat. Improv. Class											29	W. Butler			
Friday, Y.P.S.C.F.											30	J. Stinton			
NEWMARKET—															
Sunday School	1														
Sunday School															
Sunday Afternoon Service															
Sunday Evening Service															
Monday, Class															
Thursday, Service															
ARCH HILL (Mr Ould's, Oxford-st)															
Sunday Afternoon Service															
Sunday Evening Service															
Friday, Prayer Meeting															
<p>* Station Sub-committee meets at Applications for sittings should be Tickets of Church Membership and Class Moneys and Sent Hearts are Society Stewards—Alexandra Str Herbert and Moor; Newmarket, J. B. The next Quarterly Meeting will Evangelistic Services, Alexandra; Trust Collection, Newton, Terrace. Those who are planned on Sunday help at Newmarket to assist in the sin</p>															

PREACHERS:	
1 C. E. Ward	
2 G. H. Mann	
3 D. Goldie	
4 C. Reid	
5 G. Turley	21 A. Mewburn
6 Mrs. Kerr	22 B. Blakey
7 J. Watkinson	23 P. J. Hawkins
8 H. R. Burton	24 W. Jeffrey, sen.
9 W. Kest	25 C. Langdale
	26 R. Herbert
	27 W. Moor
ON TRIAL:	28 H. Evans
10 R. Wheatley	29 W. Butler
11 Miss F. Frith	30 J. Stinton
12 J. Coal	31 E. Robinson
	32 J. W. Jeffrey
	33 A. Trenwith
EXORDIERS:	34 Miss P. Blakely
13 G. W. Turley	35 Miss Wrigley
14 F. Taylor	36 Miss L. Park-house
15 — Mitchell	
ATTENDANCES:	37 P. Hildreth
16 W. S. Potter	38 H. Moon
17 T. Booth	39 T. Moor
18 T. Snow	40 A. Tarlin
19 T. Thompson	
20 W. H. Bishop	

³⁸ NZPM January 1 1895 p.407

The irresistible conclusion is that Primitive Methodism had become a church, rather than a movement, or a sectarian division within the larger Methodist family. Its principal energies were becoming focused on maintenance rather than on the evangelical imperative that had created it and driven it throughout its formative years in England, and even in Auckland 30 to 40 years earlier. Certainly there were the outdoor services designed to catch the attention of the passer-by and the curious, but clearly with the hope that they would be drawn into the more formal service which was to follow just around the corner in Alexandra Street. Open-air services weren't held in the suburbs, it would seem - they were solely a feature of inner-city witness. There is little doubt, on the other hand, that the style of Primitive Methodist worship was more evangelical and more spontaneous than was the case in the more formal Wesleyan setting.

That they were successful cannot be doubted, if the comparison is made with the Wesleyan Connexion. In the decade leading up to Union in 1913 the proportion of Wesleyan in the total population dropped from 11% to 9.5%. During the same period the numbers of Primitive Methodists doubled, though by the end of that decade they, too, were static. But they continued, as Eric Hames suggests, to make an impact on the unchurched. They still had that popular touch which was their greatest asset, and heeded Wesley's injunction that they had nothing to do but to save souls. Their approach could be described as ardent and aggressive. They were untiring in their pastoral work - they were in the right place at the right time. Like the Salvation Army they were unselfconscious in their evangelism and made an appeal by their obvious sincerity. But "they needed to outgrow a certain sectarian brashness before they would be acceptable members of an ecumenical team."³⁹

With that broad outline as background, a summary of this latter period using the material submitted to the New Zealand Primitive Methodist Magazine is offered. What is found there by way of Station reports can, presumably, be taken to represent the news which they particularly chose to share with their friends. Further, and on the assumption that the editorial team understood the interests of their readership, an attempt is made to describe the issues that were thought to be of significance within the Connexion as a whole. It is from the latter that something of a sociological and theological, as well as political, picture of Primitive Methodism can be drawn.

The Sunday School Anniversary in November 1895 was held in the Choral Hall,⁴⁰ in order to accommodate the 1500 or so people who attended the evening service. A couple of years later it was estimated that 3000 people altogether attended the various

³⁹ *Out of the Common Way* E.W.Hames Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand Vol.27:3-4 - Auckland 1972 p. 105

⁴⁰ The Choral Hall still stands, as part of the Auckland University complex, at the corner of Anzac Ave. and Albert Street.

services. In 1895 there were 380 children on the Sunday School roll.⁴¹ However, by the 60th anniversary of the Sunday School in 1910 it was felt appropriate to report that during the past six years 506 names had been removed from the roll, even though the Anniversary services were on such a scale as to warrant the hiring of the Town Hall.

There is a common emphasis on the importance of Sunday School work. Apart from the obvious pride in the roll numbers, and until the beginning of the period of decline after about 1907, the annual reports speak constantly of growing numbers and the need for more space. It may have been in this way that the Primitive Methodist stress on evangelism found its chief expression. Eric Hames recounts the story of two brothers who, in 1907, had just come out from England, and whose family had rented a house in Franklin Road. On the first Sunday they were attracted by the sound of a brass band, playing hymns. There was an open-air address and an invitation to follow the band to the church, where there was a lively service. Names were taken, the minister, George Clement, called the next week, and the whole family became part of the society.⁴²

Music, generally, appears to have played an important role. The Franklin Road church boasted an orchestra of a dozen or so, in 1907 at least, which included violins, a flute, a cello, a comet and a bass violin. Franklin Road purchased an organ in 1895, and then four years later a piano to "assist with the entertainments"; Alexandra Street purchased a new organ for £250 in 1898; Newmarket in 1907; Franklin Road replaced its organ in 1908; Eden Terrace in 1910. And, of course, there were the choirs.

But the abiding impression from the various reports is of the central place of evangelical mission with the sole objective of preaching conversion. Both at the open-air services and at the regular morning and evening worship there was the call to accept Christ. After the evening service there would always be a prayer meeting where prayers were offered by "sincere and strong-in-faith members which were a source of inspiration and encouragement to the very young."⁴³ Special j services often with visiting ministers were a common part of the annual calendar - a newly arrived minister from England might find himself immediately drawn into this task even before he had taken up his regular appointment. This was so for Richard Hall⁴⁴ conducted an eight-day mission in 1898; it is recorded that the Rev. David O'Donnell conducted a mission at Eden Terrace in 1901, "increasing the fervour of an already

⁴¹ *NZPM* December 2 1895 p.615

⁴² Hames op cit pp.103f

⁴³ Hames op cit pp.104f

⁴⁴ Richard Hall came to New Zealand in 1897 and served for ten years in stations from Auckland to Bluff. His name disappears from the list of Stations after a two-year stint at Ashburton in 1906, as he returned to England on account of his wife's health.

earnest, active church."⁴⁵ Sister Amy led a mission at Franklin Road in 1904, and though the weather was atrocious, "good was done, there being a number of enquirers." Mrs J L Wright conducted special services at Eden Terrace in 1906, when there were 42 converts and 72 "sought the blessings of the higher life." At Franklin Road in 1909 a "very gracious work was done," as the result of an eight-week mission. There had been three weeks of preparatory prayer meetings and there were about 40 professed conversions.

Primitive Methodism also employed travelling evangelists. One such was George Mann,⁴⁶ who had been a Home Missionary and Evangelist in England before coming to New Zealand in 1894. He was appointed Connexional Evangelist in 1902 and travelled up and down the country. But undoubtedly the highlight of the period was the visit in 1908 of the Rev. James Flanagan, a prominent City Missioner from London. An Irishman, a converted pitman "with a passion for souls and social righteousness,"⁴⁷ he founded the St George's Mission in the Old Kent Road, and had a reputation for fearless advocacy on behalf of his poverty-stricken neighbours. He was brought out to New Zealand by the Conference and was sent through the larger Stations. It is said that literally thousands hung on his words, and many cases of conversion were recorded.

Evangelism at a somewhat different level was envisaged in the 1901 Conference resolution which established an order of "female helpers" with a view to "better carrying out aggressive Christian work in the larger centres of population."⁴⁸ The first Station to take advantage of this legislation was Auckland I, and a Miss F. Frith who had for three years been a missionary in India was appointed to work principally in the homes of the people.

For most of this period the reports of the two, then three Auckland Stations are full of confidence, and speak of growth and optimism. New buildings were erected: a new church at Mt Roskill⁴⁹ in 1897, enlarged in 1905; a new church at GreatNorth Road opened in 1898; a parsonage for Pitt and Edwin Streets in 1898; a new church to replace one burnt down at Eden Terrace in 1899 (the opening service conducted seven months after the fire), and renovated and enlarged in 1908; a new infant classroom at Franklin Road in 1899; classrooms and other additions to the Richmond Ave. church

⁴⁵ *NZPM* Vol 11:4,4.1.1901 p.1803

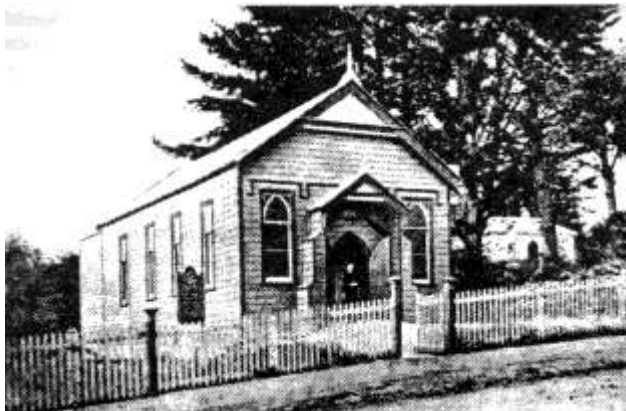
⁴⁶ George Henry Mann (1868-1918). Came to New Zealand in 1894, and after serving in a number of stations he took up the post of Connexional evangelist, based on Wellington. Later he had a long ministry at Geraldine during which time (1911) he was President of the Church. After the 1913 Union he served at Auckland again, and was at Gore at the time of his somewhat early death.

⁴⁷ *Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Class 1850-1900* Robert Featherstone
Wearmouth - Leicester 1954 p. 164

⁴⁸ *Minutes of the Primitive Methodist Conference* Auckland 1901

⁴⁹ Built on the crest of Dominion Rd., and replaced in 1915 by the present brick church.

in 1904; a new parsonage for Eden Terrace in 1907; a hall at Morningside in 1911. And so the list goes on and on. Despite all this capital expenditure there is a repeated refrain in the reports to the effect that the debts have been paid off. The measures taken to reduce such indebtedness were many and varied - bazaars and fairs and anniversary socials and sales of work and much personal pressure in which the ministers themselves were often active. The spirit which gave rise to this period of growth was well expressed in an article written by David Goldie, one of the Assistant Editors of the Connexional magazine, under the heading "Wisely Aggressive."⁵⁰



Mt Roskill Church, opened 1897, in Mt Roskill Road in Mt Eden. Now Dominion Road Church with a different building - the road changed its name. The above building is part of the Waterview building complex, as a hall. Waterview is one of the three remaining former Primitive sites in Auckland.



Morningside Church, Auckland 1912

⁵⁰ *NZPM* August 1, 1898, p. 1214

The saga of the Eden Terrace church in 1899 bears recounting, as an example of the vitality and determination of Auckland Primitive Methodism. On 4 January the church was burned down, with nothing saved. There had been a preaching service in the building on that Wednesday evening, and the fire was noticed shortly afterwards. The congregation decided to build at once a new church to cost about £500. On Saturday April 8, the foundation stones were laid. A fortnight later the young people of the church laid a course of bricks, and for each brick a sum of one shilling had been subscribed to the Building Fund. On Sunday, August 13, the opening services were conducted, followed by a soiree on the Tuesday. The new church cost, in fact, about £900. It seated about 300 persons and underneath the worship area there was a spacious schoolroom, a church parlour and five class rooms. On a property worth £1,350 the debt that remained at that point was about £700.⁵¹

The statistics for 1912 show there were 480 members in the three Auckland Stations, and a total of 2614 attending public worship. Moreover there were 1504 Sunday School scholars.⁵² As has already been noted, by the time of Union in 1913, the Primitive Methodist statistics had started to show a decline from their peak in about 1907. Nevertheless, the numbers just quoted show that there was a real depth of involvement in the life of the ten regular preaching places. It needs, therefore, to be stressed that when the Primitive Methodists, in Auckland as elsewhere, joined with the larger Wesleyan Connexion, they did not do so out of a sense of weakness. Rather there was the feeling that the time was ripe for there to be an authentic New Zealand Methodist Church, untrammelled by Australian Wesleyan predominance.

In the introduction to this brief history considerable reference was made to the disproportionate influence of Primitive Methodist laymen, in particular, at the inception of the Trades Union movement in England and Scotland. The point was made that within such a democratic society as Primitive Methodism it was inevitable that the freedom and the opportunities for self-development that were to be found in its life and organisation should be translated into the secular field. The gains were slow, and while some advances were made, the stifling inertia of a class-ridden society drove thousands of active men and their families to look for opportunities for a fresh start in the colonies. When they came to this country they, of course, found a very different social structure in place, with many of their goals already achieved. It would almost seem that much of their drive to achieve their Utopian dreams was diverted into the creation of an ideal religious, rather than secular, society in New Zealand. The democratic ideal, and the evangelical zeal, were transferred from the political to the ecclesiastical arena.

⁵¹ *Primitive Methodist Church in New Zealand 1893-1912* W.T.Blight - Christchurch 1993
p.26

⁵² *NZPM* Conference Minutes Christchurch 1912

The passing of the Old Age Pensions Act in 1898 may be said to have ushered in the age of social security in New Zealand. It is interesting to read a letter in the Magazine written at the beginning of that year by a member of the Waterview congregation. The legislation was, it has been said, introduced as a response to working-class agitation. Yet the letter to the church paper expresses real doubts about the effectiveness or even the propriety of the initiative on the grounds that the benefit may be abused. "Doubtless there are many deserving people in the country who would feel it a great boon to be provided for in this way, but there would also be a large number of undeserving; and would it not lead to a great deal of deception and trickery?"⁵³ Moreover there was a fear that the influence of the Church would be adversely affected if "the hearts of the people were ossified by a mechanical system of State Aid" If this piece of legislation which, some historians would assert, gave New Zealand a pre-eminence in the field of social responsibility, did arise out of working-class pressure, then one might wonder whether the Primitive Methodist Connexion had lost contact with its radical roots.

Reference has already been made to the fact that David Goldie was closely involved in the Prohibition Movement. Primitive Methodism was, as a Connexion, officially committed to this cause, and provided a number of its leaders, such as John Dawson, Edward Drake and James Cocker. Dawson, in fact, was left without appointment in order to act as Secretary of the New Zealand Alliance. From an early age the principles of total abstinence were inculcated in the Bands of Hope. The 1912 Conference report placed on record its "thanks to Almighty God that the people of the Dominion have been so awakened to the evils of the liquor traffic as to record such an emphatic vote against it." Nevertheless, it was recognised that there was a need for more continuous and effective work until "New Zealand is emancipated." Then followed a summons to battle to all Primitive Methodists and a commitment to "see this thing through."⁵⁴

The secularisation of New Zealand education had been achieved through the passage of the 1877 Education Act. The churches, prominent in the old provincial system, were now excluded. While the Catholic Church responded by setting up its own system, the Protestant churches sought to implant Christian teaching in the state system. This resulted in a long-running battle of words between Catholics and Protestants over the principles involved, and led eventually to the establishment in 1896 of the Bible-in-Schools League, dedicated to the institution of bible reading in schools. Primitive Methodists were committed to this goal and 1897 began with an editorial in the *Magazine* supporting the policy of making school rooms available to

⁵³ *NZPM* February 1 1898 p. 1103

⁵⁴ *NZPM* Vol.22:2, February 1 1912 p.51

suitable teachers for this purpose.⁵⁵ Primitive Methodism seemed to be constantly on guard against what it described as "popery" and supported the secular educational system which was being developed along radically different lines by the newly appointed Director of Education, George Hogben.

In his Presidential address to the 1905 Conference, Edward Drake said "Primitive Methodism has always been closely associated with social reform. The throne of Christ is with the outcast and the weak. In educational matters, in licensing reform, in all that makes for social and temporal welfare of mankind, at Home and in the Colonies, Primitive Methodism had ever been to the fore. It stands for that liberty of conscience which is the glory of Puritanism."

It is difficult to avoid the feeling that these words less and less reflected the direction that Primitive Methodism was taking. Its social action was limited, and the working class from which it sprang had gone its own way, seeking salvation through political representation. The Connexion's most pressing concerns were those that reflected a somewhat negative Puritanism - strict Sabbath observance, temperance, anti-gambling, anti-tobacco, and so on. Not that this was any new thing. As far back as 1858 one of the most senior and responsible leaders of the small Edwardes Street Mission was not "continued as a member of Society on account of his attending crass and worldly amusements such as the Theatre Dancing Etc Etc."⁵⁶ Primitive Methodism had become, by the first decade of the 20th century something akin to a "holiness" movement, with its primary focus on evangelism.

In this it was truer to its own tradition than Wesleyanism was to the example of its founder. Moreover, Primitive Methodism still retained its democratic spirit, never conceding to the professional clergy the same status that its older relative did. Its worship was lively and uninhibited, and it may be regarded as something of a tragedy that the Union of 1913 led to an eventual weakening of this very strength. This happened gradually enough, and there are still Methodist churches in Aotearoa/New Zealand whose Primitive Methodist roots show in a healthy disregard for Connexional or clerical authority. Even at this late stage it is worth being reminded of this part of our tradition, for it has something to say to the Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hahi Weteriana as it enters the new millennium.

⁵⁵ *NZPM* January 1 1897 editorial

⁵⁶ *AMQM* Minutes op cit June 24 1858