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All communications to:
The Secretary:
Rev. Barry Neal
2 Upland Road
Huia
West Auckland 1250
from whom copies are
available.

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Editor
Bernie Le Heron

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Derek Olphert
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FOREWORD

Seldom has a particular theme been so exhaustively examined in our pages as The Growth of Methodism traced in this issue of our Journal.

An important aspect running throughout is that the continuation of Methodism depends chiefly on its people rather than its buildings, and on enthusiasm and dedication rather than strict adherence to forms of worship and ecclesiastical dogma.

What could best be described as anarchy may conceivably result from recognition of the equal status of all believers in the eyes of God, thus there must be a framework of authority to ensure that order is maintained.

Breakaway movements depend heavily on the charisma of their leadership.

All of the above considerations apply in some degree to the formation and subsequent re-absorption of the several streams of Methodism traced in the articles we here publish.

The Wesley Historical Society is ever conscious of the necessity to assemble historical information before the people who are conversant with it pass on from this present stage. To this end *Journal 77* concentrates on the breakaway streams of Methodism that made such a positive contribution to the promotion of Christianity in New Zealand that it demands to be recorded in readily accessible form.

To my colleagues in this undertaking whose energy, enthusiasm and dedicated application have brought about what we trust will be used in time to come as an authoritative reference text, I tender grateful thanks.

Bernie Le Heron

APPRECIATING METHODISMS

Terry Wall

We have been accustomed to speak of Methodism and the "people called Methodist" as John Wesley did. The implication has been that there is one Methodism to which we all belong. This has given a distorted view and confined the smaller bodies to neglect and oblivion.

Should we not be talking about Methodisms, for though the Wesleyans were dominant, other Methodist bodies were significant. The life and witness of other Methodisms are represented in this edition of the Wesley Historical Society Journal.

The smaller Methodist bodies constituted a critique of the hegemony of the Wesleyan Connexion. They claimed to be the true inheritors of the evangelical awakening. The Primitive Methodists appeared to have been influenced by American camp meetings. Their message was a simple gospel for simple people.

There were wider sociological factors that impinged upon the emergence of the smaller Methodist bodies. Democratic impulses were blowing through Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Wesleyan Connexion, appalled like so many by the chaos and terror of the French Revolution, resisted the philosophy of democracy. The long and sometimes bitter controversy in the Wesleyan Connexion over the nature of the Pastoral Office led eventually to schism. What appeared to be the autocratic control of Jabez Bunting of the Wesleyan Connexion stifled the development of leadership and the sharing of responsibility among younger men.

The smaller Methodist communities had a different culture to that which prevailed in the Wesleyan Connexion. As the Wesleyans became conventional the smaller bodies turned their backs on respectability. Where the Wesleyans withdrew the permission for women to preach, the smaller communities employed their gifts in the pulpit. When the Wesleyans supported the political status quo, the smaller connexions endorsed trade unions and provided leadership for radical causes. Where the Wesleyans were reluctant to include lay people in their decision making courts, the smaller bodies welcomed them.

The spirituality of the Primitive Methodists, the United Free Methodists and the Bible Christians might embarrass progressive Methodists today. It approximated to charismatic revivalism. Extempore prayer was central matched by fervent singing of gospel hymns. Their preachers were often described as 'ranters' because of their unpolished style, imploring people to accept the offer of salvation. Vital testimony to the grace of God in conversion and growth in holiness was regarded as a normal part of the Christian life.

In effect the smaller Methodisms were engaged in an ongoing debate with the Wesleyan Connexion over the interpretation of the memory of John Wesley. How close or distant was Wesley in relation to the Established Church? How free was

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Wesley from the tradition of the Church? To what extent was Methodism a movement of the working classes? The Wesleyan Connexion appeared to give one answer, the smaller Methodisms another.

It is true that the witness of Wesley can be read in a number of ways. American Methodist theologian John Cobb has demonstrated the ways an appeal is made to Wesley in our own day: "Conservative evangelicals want the church to return to the Wesley of one book who preached powerful revivals and taught strict personal morality. High church Methodists want to return to the faithful priest of the Church of England who went daily to communion and retained a high ecclesiology to his death. Liberationist Methodists want to return to the Wesley who devoted his life to the poor and denounced the rich. Liberal Methodists want to return to the Wesley who polemicized against predestination and qualified natural depravity in order to affirm individual freedom and responsibility. Psychologistic Methodists want to return to the Wesley who emphasized actual religious experience and the importance of openness in small groups." (John Cobb, *Grace and Responsibility* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995 p. 125)

Of course, as Cobb writes, "All those Wesleys exist." But each is taking a part for the whole and not seeing the complexity of the man in his context.

The debate goes on within our church as to whether one Methodism will determine theology and spirituality. Can there be space for a number of streams or is there an inclination to define one acceptable version and exclude others? We still search for ways to live together in which each inheritance is honoured and valued. This is the *koinonia* in Christ that we long for yet which appears to be out of reach. In his *The Character of a Methodist* John Wesley wrote in 1742, "And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God." (ed Thomas Jackson, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. Vol. VIII*, London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872 p.347)

FREE METHODISM IN NINETEENTH CENTURY NEW ZEALAND

William FF (Bill) Thomas

Few New Zealand Methodists will be familiar with, or perhaps even aware of, the part played by Free Methodism in the history of the church in the nineteenth century. Free Methodism was embodied in the United Free Methodist Church (UMFC) formed in 1857 in England out of three groups that broke away from the main Methodist body in the eighteen-twenties, thirties and forties. This commentary tells the basis of difference between the UMFC and the Wesleyan church, the emigration of Free Methodists to New Zealand over the settler period and of the establishment and growth of the denomination in the colony, predominantly Christchurch. New Zealand became a UMFC District in its own right in 1875, retaining links with the parent body in England, but taking responsibility for local business. The District went out of existence when it merged with the Wesleyans and Bible Christians in 1896 and apart from a minor hitch became fully integrated into the new church body. This commentary briefly examines its role as a member of the Protestant family of churches in colonial New Zealand and, in particular, looks at its relationship with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Some brief observations about social issues are made.

The material derives from research undertaken for my MA thesis *Free Methodists in Colonial Christchurch*¹ The Methodist Archives in Christchurch holds a good collection of primary source material, made available to me by courtesy of the Archivist and staff, for which I am indebted. *Free Methodism in New Zealand, An Outline of History* by S. G. Macfarlane provides a useful base for research into the denomination. Morley's celebrated *The History of Methodism in New Zealand* contains many useful references. Other sources and references are acknowledged in the bibliography.

History is littered with the bones of institutions, important in their time and place, but no longer significant or relevant. Nevertheless an understanding of their influence broadens historical perspectives and may explain some of the changes that brought us to our own condition. The aim of this commentary is to discuss an entity with a limited influence and lifespan in the colony of New Zealand in a way that may cast some light on more general events in the history of Methodism.

Introduction

Between 1738 and 1791 John Wesley created and directed the organizational structure of the "people called Methodists". During the rapid growth of the Methodist movement after its foundation in 1738 he formed structures that stayed in place for

¹ Thomas, William F.F., *Free Methodists in Colonial Christchurch. The Church, Community, and Commercial Lives of Some Immigrants from Sunderland*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Massey University, 2001.

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many generations. Certain as he was of the rightness of his faith, so also was he keenly aware of the need for the rapidly-growing movement to be properly organized and managed and he controlled it with something of an iron hand. In conceding this he said: "If by arbitrary power you mean a power which I exercise simply without any colleagues therein, this is certainly true, but I see no hurt in it."² Such was the depth and scope of Wesley's evangelism, personal example and commitment that the benign autocracy of his leadership was largely accepted by his followers. But it could not continue past his death in 1791 and in the following sixty-five years there occurred a number of sharp internal disputes and breakaways, culminating in 'the great disruption' of the eighteen-forties. This resulted, over a period of five years, in one third, or about 100,000 members being expelled or departing to form other Methodist denominations, or being lost to the Christian church altogether.³ It left the Wesleyan Methodists as the predominant group, but the UMFC represented well over 40,000 members.

By 1857 there were five main divisions of Methodism, including the Wesleysans:

Methodist New Connexion - formed in 1797

Primitive Methodists - formed in 1811

Bible Christian - formed in 1815

United Methodist Free Churches (Free Methodists) - formed in 1857

The Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians were not born out of internal disputes, but grew out of the independent development of separate groups around strong, charismatic leaders. Some small local self-governing groups, known as Independent Methodists, with little or no central control, flourished in a few communities. (The diagram outlines the growth and development of the Methodist denominations.)

There was nothing doctrinal about the disputes that led to the formation of the UMFC. The issue was the division of power between the ministers and the lay members - the Polity. The Wesleyans stuck to the strict rule that the annual conference of ministers was the over-riding authority of the movement and that between conferences the ministers in charge of districts and circuits exercised the delegated authority of the conference. The other denominations, including the UMFC, brought lay members into the decision-making process to one extent or another

Far from destroying Methodism or creating unbridgeable doctrinal schisms, the five denominations believed that re-union was desirable, even though its terms might be difficult to agree on. Although the 'disruptions' had caused deep personal animosities, the hope for eventual re-unification was durable and the bitter recriminations diminished as the leading protagonists moved from positions of influence.

² Green, John Richard, *A Short History of the English People*, Edited by Roger Hudson, London: The Folio Society, 1992.

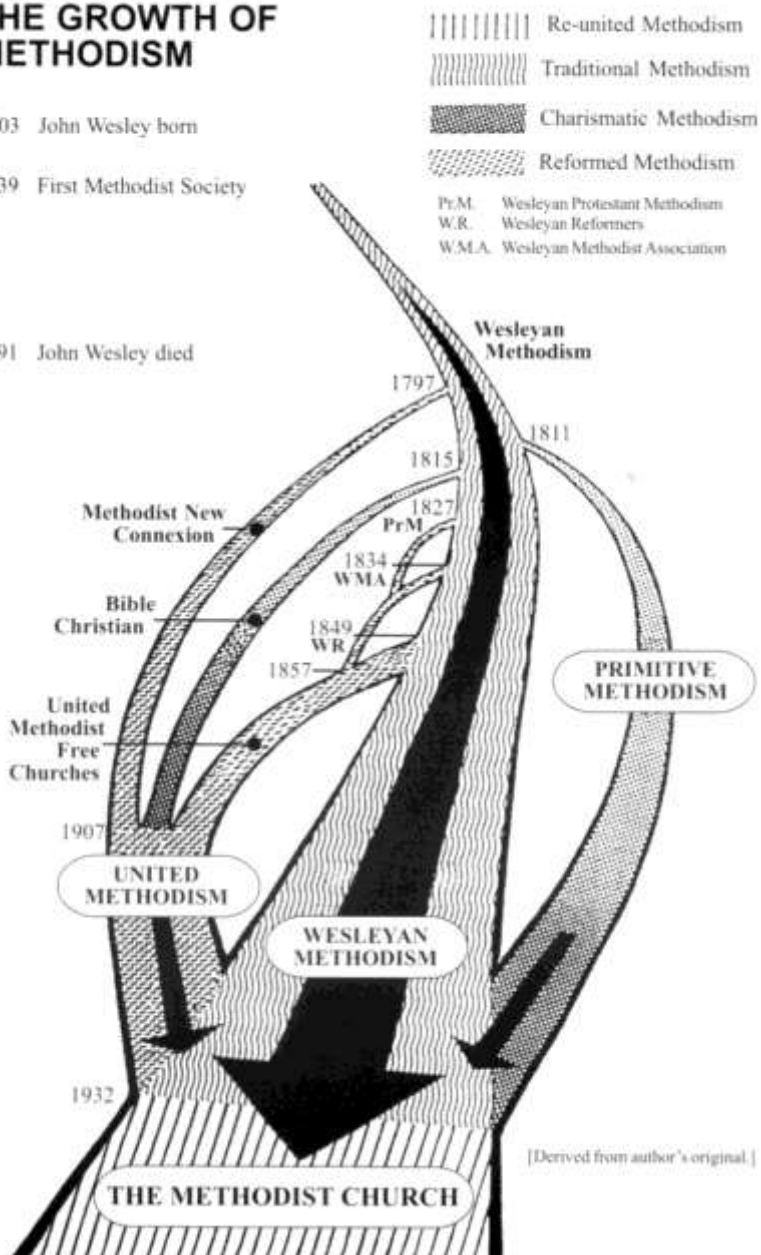
³ Beckerlegge, Oliver A., *The United Methodist Free Churches A Study in Freedom*, London: Epworth Press, 1957.
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THE GROWTH OF METHODISM

1703 John Wesley born

1739 First Methodist Society

1791 John Wesley died



The Polity

The Polity centred on the structural question of who in the organisation was eligible to participate in its governance. In the political ferment of early nineteenth century England the impulse for democratic reform ranged against the resistance of conservative tradition. Few social institutions were impervious to such deep-seated socio-political change and the conflicts that accompanied it, and Methodism was no exception. Lacking the cohesive influence of John Wesley after 1791, Methodism began to develop rifts between those who sought change and those who resisted it. Under the Wesleyan constitution lay officers were excluded both from the Annual Conferences, which sat behind closed doors, and from eligibility for important connexional positions. The stationing of ministers in circuits, under the general principles of the Itineracy, was determined by the Conference and overrode members' wishes.

Added to that, inherently serious problems that emerged at the local or regional levels tended, because of the itineracy, to be escalated to the national level. The regular relocation of ministers may have kept their evangelical fire alive, but it also inhibited the development of the kind of relationships that could have resolved divisive issues at circuit or district level. Another factor was that lay circuit officers - the preachers, class leaders and stewards - were given important operational positions in circuit and district structures to do with church property, revenues and spiritual welfare. Many had also become successful in their worldly life, partly because of training in church work and would not accept a back seat in general church management. They were willing to accept the minister as a spiritual leader but not as a temporal master.

Conservative ministers opposed the extension of lay members into church government on the basis that John Wesley had not admitted it. Reform-minded ministers, backed by a significant body among the membership, fought for it. From time to time the conflict erupted into hostilities at the Annual Conference where powerful conservative personalities were very capable of controlling Conference agendas and decisions and expelling or bringing heavy pressure to bear on dissidents. Three reform groups were ousted from or left the main Wesleyan Church between 1827 and 1849.

The UMFC was formed in 1857 out of these three breakaway groups.⁴ Its Constitution stipulated that the governing body would be an Annual Assembly comprising a President, Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Connexional Treasurer "...together with such Itinerant and Local Preachers, and other officers or private members, as the respective Circuits or Churches shall elect to represent them." A circuit could send up to three representatives to the Assembly, depending on the number of members, and had the right to govern itself in its local courts, where decisions were to be made by a majority of votes. A three-yearly interchange of ministers under the Itineracy was

⁴ **They were the Wesleyan Protestant Methodists of 1827, the Wesleyan Methodist Association of 1834 and the Wesleyan Reformers of 1849.**
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generally observed. However, the Constitution provided that the Circuit Quarterly Meeting would "... determine, in conjunction with the District Meeting (or Annual Assembly), upon all changes in regard to the Itinerant Preachers [the Circuit Ministers]..." and furthermore gave the Quarterly Meeting the right to "... enquire into any charge brought against any Itinerant Preacher [Circuit Minister] in regard to his Character, Doctrine, or Ministerial Abilities." [Rule 3]⁵ These rules bound the Free Methodist ministers in a way that would never have been allowed by the Wesleyans and therefore their constitutions held the denominations apart until such time as a compromise could be found.

Getting Established

From the eighteen-fifties. Free Methodists emigrated to New Zealand in small numbers and often in groups.⁶ At first they tended to worship with either the Wesleyans or one of the other Methodist denominations. Whilst the UMFC and Wesleyan traditions and constitutions were brought to New Zealand, co-operation prevailed between them rather than division. In fact co-operation between most Protestant denominations was an important feature of New Zealand church history from the earliest missionary days. Denominational animosities transplanted from the home country wilted in an environment where the religious needs of fellow-Christians in isolated communities had to be met. Important church ordinances, such as marriage and baptism could be performed by ministers of other Protestant churches, usually Anglicans, Presbyterians or Congregationalists, all of which were becoming established in the settler communities. Interdenominational committees of clergy ran smoothly and pulpits were often shared on important occasions, such as the opening of new churches.

The fluidity of the boundaries between the Protestant denominations contributed to amicable relations in both the ministry and the laity and it was commonplace for churches and halls to be shared for religious purposes and for meetings on such public issues as temperance and Sunday observance.⁷ The pragmatic responses of the New Zealand branches of home churches to meet local needs worked reasonably well, though they might have raised a few eyebrows in the home country.

Another colonial phenomenon shared by the Wesleyans and the UMFC was the establishment of Methodist societies and the erection and opening of chapels by members sometimes years in advance of a minister arriving to establish and take charge of a circuit. The roles of local preacher, class leader and steward, learned

⁵ *The Constitution of the United Methodist Free Churches with the Rules and Regulations (Rule 3), adopted by the Addington Circuit, Printed at the Union Office, Christchurch, 1888.*

⁶ Morley, William, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, pp.321-324, Wellington: McKee & Co., 1900, pp.321-4.

⁷ Methodists, however, were very unwilling for their halls to be used for dancing or fund-raising functions where games of chance were played.

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in the Methodist church from its earliest days and inherent in Methodism above other denominations fitted lay members well for colonial life including the acquisition of property and the building of a chapel without a minister in residence. Gillian Watkin comments:

The willingness of lay people to participate, in fact to see this as part of their Christian responsibility, meant that the churches and preaching places were established. There came to be a strong Connexional feeling and spirit of unity in a country where there were strong parochial feelings. Some class meetings were established and local preachers at hand long before a minister appeared. The power of the laity was zealously guarded.⁸

The Wesleyan missionary experience of breaking in new ground gave rise to an ethos of self-reliance that continued through the settler period. Furthermore the connexional structure, arising from the historical growth of Methodism in England, was conducive to the emergence of new circuits at the initiative of local members. The rugged independence of the UMFC, together with these Methodist traditions kept the momentum going and optimism high about the future of church in the early years.

In the eighteen-sixties the UMFC made considerable gains in Christchurch. George Booth and John Thompson Brown, both Sunderlanders from one of the cradles of Free Methodism, took up positions of leadership in the church. Brown, his brother Matthew and their wives arrived at Lyttelton in 1858 on the *Indiana* with a shipload of 315 assisted immigrants, 93 from Sunderland. The Brown brothers who had worked in the Sunderland boat-building industry set up a boat-building business at Port Levy on Banks Peninsula. The following year Booth who had been a prominent UMFC leader in Sunderland as well as proprietor of a boat-building business arrived on the *Zealandia* with his wife and seven children as paying passengers.

In 1860 George Booth, who was farming at Rangiora, began a class and commenced public services in a lean-to cottage in that settlement - the first organized Free Methodist worship in New Zealand. In May 1864 he moved to Sydenham, a growing industrial centre on the southern boundary of Christchurch where he set up as an importer of farm machinery and immediately set about organising the growing number of Free Methodists:

Without delay, he took steps to establish a Free Methodist Church, the result being that the following November a neat little church, seating about a hundred, had been erected in Selwyn Street... This church (or chapel as it was then called) was opened on Sunday November 13, 1864, the preachers being, in the morning, the

⁸ Watkin, Gillian M., 'Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodism in New Zealand to 1913' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (New Zealand)*, No. 49, 1986, p.49. While this statement was made in regard to Methodism generally, it applies equally well to the UMFC, particularly the final sentence.
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*Rev. W.J. Habens, B.A., a Congregational minister, ... and in the evening, Mr. John Jebson, a much respected local preacher from Sheffield, Canterbury.*⁹



Mr. J. T. Brown Photo: Morley



Mr. G. Booth Photo: Morley

⁹ *Souvenir of the Jubilee, 1864-1914 of the Addington Methodist Church and Sunday School, Christchurch: Addington Church Committee, 1914.*
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The Addington chapel was the first Free Methodist church in New Zealand. The Wesleyans felt the impact of its opening, acknowledging in the Minute Book of the Quarterly Meeting that the decrease of members by twenty-seven could be partly put down to "...the fact that several members meeting with the Wesleyan Methodist Church had preferred joining the 'Methodist Free Church', which had been organized in Christchurch during the Quarter ...".¹⁰

A Colonial Church

In the Methodist tradition, a society had been started and a chapel built without the presence of a minister in the circuit, or indeed the entire colony. With a place of worship the number of members grew and shortly after it opened an appeal was made to the mother church in England for a minister. The first to be sent was Rev. John Tyerman, (the possessor of a name well-known in English Methodism) of whom Morley, rather mysteriously said (p.323), "Unfortunately his character did not bear the strain of popularity, and after a few months he was called upon to retire, which was a great blow to the members."¹¹

The next to arrive, in 1868, was the formidable Rev. Matthew Baxter, a preacher of a very different character. As the New Zealand representative to the English Connexion he was a powerful advocate to the home church for the allocation of money and ministers to New Zealand. He threw himself into extending the small denomination. The Christchurch circuit flourished and new circuits were established in the Hawkes Bay and Westland. After five years he was forced by ill-health to retire to a supernumerary position and, in 1873, was succeeded by Rev. Samuel Macfarlane who also came as Connexional representative, a position he held for the next twenty-five years. When New Zealand was constituted a separate District in 1875, Macfarlane was elected chairman.¹²

In 1874, the New Zealand Census showed that there were 674 Free Methodists in New Zealand, of whom 328 were in Canterbury and 209 in Christchurch. This compares with 22,728 Wesleyans in New Zealand, 6,514 in Canterbury and 2,107 in Christchurch. In 1881, at the end of a decade of expansion and immigration the Free Methodists had increased to 2,009 in New Zealand, 998 in Canterbury and 460 in

¹⁰ Chambers, Wesley, *Our Yesteryears 1840-1950 Being a Short History of Methodism in Canterbury New Zealand*, p. 15, Christchurch: Willis & Aitken, [1950]

¹¹ Morley, p.323. Edith Jarman in *The New Church in New Zealand*, pp.6-9, says: "Rev. Tyerman, although a good preacher, had none of the moral character expected of a minister and had, in effect been discarded by his own church ... for immorality." He went to the Independent Methodists, then, after another quarrel, to the New Church (Swedenborgian) and then to Melbourne, unsuccessfully offering for the Anglican Church, and finally, apparently, became a Freethinker. Victorian Christianity, particularly the evangelical denominations, was not without colourful personalities, not a few of whom strove to make a name for themselves in the colonies.

¹² Morley, p.324.

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Christchurch. (Of the 460 in Christchurch, 322 were concentrated in the borough of Sydenham.) Comparable figures for the Wesleyans were 39,544 in New Zealand, 11,712 in Canterbury and 2,739 in Christchurch.



Rev. M. Baxter *Photo Beckerlegge*

In the decade up to 1881 all Methodist denominations combined increased not only in absolute numbers of followers, but also as a proportion of the population.

Although the increase of Free Methodists was proportionally greater than the Wesleyan Methodists (which at the same time was the fastest growing major denomination in New Zealand) its backing was tiny at about 0.3% of the total population. According to the 1881 Census the combined total of all Methodist denominations was still only 9.5% of the total population, the fourth largest denomination in New Zealand, after Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic.

However, the significance of a group is not to be measured by numbers alone. The quality and personal commitment of the members and leaders also count. The UMFC may have been small, even numerically insignificant, but it was neither exclusive nor sectarian - rather a vigorous member of the Methodist family of denominations, outward-looking and committed to creating a good and godly society in the colony. Its contribution to the Methodism and also within the broader Protestant family was very largely determined by the achievements of its leaders both as members of the New Zealand District Committee and as individuals.

The New Zealand District Committee

The centre of gravity of the UMFC in New Zealand was Christchurch. Notwithstanding that Canterbury was founded as an Anglican settlement, Methodists

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were among the first settlers.¹³ Anglicans were by far the most populous group in Canterbury throughout the nineteenth century, in the 45-50% range, while Methodists were in the 10-15% range, several percent higher than the national proportion. From 1850 Christchurch grew rapidly culminating in the immigration influx of the eighteenth-seventies when many settlers arrived from the severely depressed towns and villages of England. Assisted immigrants were generally required to be of good Christian character and the colonial immigration agents often worked with church organisations to reach the right kind of potential migrants. The Methodist churches had a strong following in the depressed areas and actively encouraged members to emigrate to alleviate unemployment.¹⁴

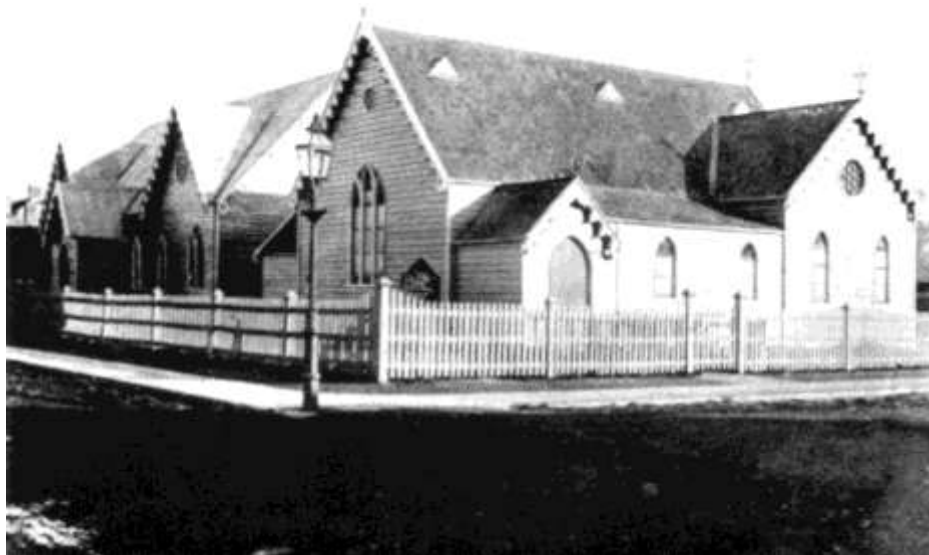
The suburbs on the outskirts of Christchurch were attractive to those seeking cheap housing and a job or a place to start a small business. The railway yards at Addington became the centre of an industrial area, giving Sydenham something of a working-class flavour and creating a ripening commercial environment for Methodist immigrants imbued with the ethos of self-betterment. Many Free Methodists settled there.

In 1875 the UMFC District Committee was based in Christchurch with its headquarters at the Addington Church, Selwyn Street, Sydenham, and took up the task of organising the colonial church on a connexional basis. It sought help from the mother church in England requesting ministers and financial assistance and its requests were not ignored. One benefactor, a Mr Hicks of Cornwall, was particularly generous, supporting the sending of two ministers a year as well as giving considerable sums towards the building of new churches in Christchurch, Wellington and Napier. Free Methodists were distributed unevenly throughout the colony, predominantly in pockets in urban areas at Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland, the West Coast, Hawkes Bay and Manawatu.

The Committee could only make small provision, within its limited means, to assist those struggling to establish their own circuits. Because need far outweighed capacity it was always an uphill struggle and without strong and determined leadership the denomination would have found it nigh impossible to operate as a viable district. Overall, though small in numbers and scattered in location. Free Methodism was enthusiastic, cohesive and well-directed, more than pulling its weight in the task of bringing unbelievers to salvation and making New Zealand a good Christian colony.

¹³ Morley, p.408. It was claimed that a Methodist layman, Isaac Philpot who arrived on the *Cressy* in 1850, conducted the first Christian service in the new settlement.

¹⁴ Arnold, Rollo, *The Farthest Promised Land*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1981. WHS Publication #77, 2003



Addington Church and School. Photo: Morley

UMFC Leaders

The Rev. Matthew Baxter, Rev. Samuel Macfarlane, George Booth and John T Brown were the pre-eminent leaders of the UMFC.¹⁵ Baxter had been a missionary in the West Indies from 1841 -51, was a president of one of the breakaway groups (the Wesleyan Methodist Association) at the time of the formation of the UMFC • and a founding secretary of the UMFC. He was a long-standing reformer of high reputation and author of several religious books and brought prestige to the New Zealand denomination. Morley comments that his willingness "...to go to New Zealand occasioned some surprise to his friends.. ." but whatever his reason for offering to relocate to the colony he threw himself into the task of extending the small church with great drive and enthusiasm and must be given credit for making a good start in its early years.

Samuel Macfarlane was an able minister of twenty-one years of service in England, to which he added a further twenty-one as the senior New Zealand UMFC minister. He edited the Free Methodist magazines, travelled the colony visiting circuits and addressing public meetings, was the Chairman of the District Committee as well as carrying the ordinary responsibilities of a circuit minister.¹⁶

¹⁵ **Booth and Brown were outstanding in the time and effort given at both local and national levels over a long period of time.**

¹⁶ *The New Zealand Free Methodist Quarterly Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 3 of 1877 (an A4 size booklet of 32 pages) describes a month-long journey in April and May from Christchurch to Wellington, the Manawatu and Hawkes Bay on the transport of the day, rising



Rev. S. Macfarlane *Photo: Morley*

Well-respected throughout the Protestant churches he was, in the 1880s, elected chairman of a large interchurch temperance revival committee in Auckland "... consisting of all the ministers in practical sympathy with the movement and fifteen lay gentlemen..."¹⁷

George Booth was recognized as the father of Free Methodism in the colony. A respected member of the District Committee, he was also Class Leader for many years and a Local Preacher as circumstances required. He was a strong supporter of the Temperance movement, a life-long member of the Total Abstinence Society and member of the Sunday Observance Committee. Imbued with the Methodist ethos of self-betterment he was successful in business, turning his agricultural importing business into a large machinery manufacturing company. This was carried on by his son G T Booth as Booth Macdonald & Company, one of the largest manufacturers of farm implements in the colony and which had also found a market for its products in Australia. George entered local politics, becoming the first Mayor of the borough of Sydenham from 1877 to 1879 and taking up positions on the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards and the North Canterbury Education Board, which he chaired for a time.

John Thompson Brown shifted to Sydenham in 1868, becoming a member of the Addington church. Also a long-serving member of the District Committee he was at one time or another Class Leader, Steward, Trustee and Sunday School

sometimes at 5am and addressing evening meetings on the same day. Not an easy life!
Methodist Archives, Christchurch.

¹⁷ *The New Zealand Wesleyan*, held in the Methodist Archives, Christchurch.

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Superintendent, the latter position for nearly forty years. He was a Trustee of the Selwyn Street Church of the Bible Christian denomination at the time of its building.¹⁸ After ten years boat-building at Port Levy and operating a coastal trading business John Brown shifted his operations to Christchurch and established J T Brown (later J T Brown & Son) as timber and coal merchants, a company that lasted well into the twentieth century. He was elected a Sydenham borough councillor in 1877 and followed George Booth into the mayoralty in 1879 and was also a member of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards, a Justice of the Peace, and held numerous other local body positions. He reckoned himself worth 20,000 pounds in 1879. He invested in land and suffered losses in the economic downturn of the eighties, going bankrupt in 1884 but being discharged three years later. This set-back caused barely a pause in his church and community activities.

The UMFC in the Eighties

Nineteenth century Methodism was strongly evangelistic. The fire in Wesley's gospel message was fanned into new strength by the second great awakening in the mid-century. This internationalist revival movement grew out of North America, spread to England and sent missions from America and Europe to Asia, Africa and the Pacific in conjunction with the political and economic colonization taking place across the world. Japan and China were opened to trade and the benefits of western civilization and Christianity were to be spread among the millions who had hitherto been denied the gospel. Even the UMFC in England sent missionaries to China.

New Zealand Free Methodism had a clear sense of its evangelistic mission to bring sinners to salvation, to claim souls for God and to spread the gospels. Without the resources to send missionaries its field was among the settlers in those towns and villages that had a core of Free Methodist residents. This was fertile ground in the eighteen-sixties and seventies when men outnumbered women by far and drunkenness and other forms of anti-social behaviour were rife in the colony.

The colonial economy was hard hit by the depression of the eighteen-eighties. Economic growth slowed dramatically and the impact was felt through the entire country. Investors lost property and businesses went broke. Bankruptcies were so common that the law was changed to ameliorate their worst effects. Religious loyalties remained strong and although financial resources were stretched local congregations kept up or increased their church support work.

By the eighteen-eighties secularism was starting to make inroads into biblical doctrine and was seen by the churches as an attack on the values of Christian society. Darwinian theory, scientific discoveries and compulsory secular education caused questions to be raised about such fundamental doctrines as the Creation, the existence of God and the relevance of the church and gospel teachings to everyday life.

¹⁸ **This is an example of the close working relationships within the Methodist family.**
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Alongside these developments, or perhaps in response to them, the mainstream churches underwent some very important changes. Doctrines such as the Creation were re-interpreted and the Scriptures given a broader construct allowing absorption of scientific theories. During the eighteen-eighties the emphasis of interest changed from saving souls for God to creating a better world for humanity. Ever adaptive to new conditions Methodism began a fundamental shift from an emphasis on personal salvation to the objective of social improvement. In *Out of the Common Way* Hames traces the move from individual conversion and evangelistic zeal to the 'emerging social concern' of the church.¹⁹ Peter Lineham has identified the emergence of the Temperance Movement as the starting point of this development:

Gospel Temperance Missions must have been the most characteristic evangelism of the period, and Methodism had many preachers among the temperance campaigners... The moral campaigns called for a commitment to a model of society, and to a form of social control and moral rectification by individual self-improvement...a deliberate redeployment of traditional evangelistic methods...campaign(ing) for positive community values...²⁰

Participation in the Temperance Movement drew the UMFC further into co-operative relationships with other denominations. Free Methodist leaders joined interchurch committees and participated in large public meetings. In a week-long temperance revival by American evangelist Richard Booth in 1883, which attracted thousands of Christchurch citizens, John Brown chaired one of the meetings and a Free Methodist representative spoke from the platform at most of the meetings.

Sunday Observance is another example of a social issue being promoted by the church. To the pious Methodist Sabbath desecration was an indicator of a high level of godlessness in society. It belied both belief in God and the practice of Christianity laid down in the Bible and was the next worst thing to breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Large interchurch committees were set up to lobby against the growth of Sunday entertainment and protect the sanctity of the day. It came into contention with the Freethought Movement that made an appearance in England in 1880 and spread rapidly to America, Australia and New Zealand. It was an organized intellectual resistance movement opposed to religious dogma and any extension of Church influence in society. In the freer intellectual climate of the times its support grew rapidly, reaching a peak in the eighteen-nineties and declining just as rapidly until by the time of the First World War it had little significant influence. *The Freethought Review*, produced in the eighteen-eighties by John Balance, poured scorn

¹⁹ Hames, E.W., 'Out of the Common Way', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (New Zealand)*, Vol. 27, Nos. 3 & 4, 1972.

²⁰ Lineham, Peter, 'New Zealanders and the Methodist Evahgel: An Interpretation of the Policies and Performance of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (New Zealand)*, No. 42, September 1983.
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on the Sunday Observance campaign and promoted the norm that eventually prevailed.

Towards Re-union

In 1876 the UMFC District Meeting passed a resolution that set the scene in formal relations with the Wesleyan Methodist Church for the next twenty years:

That this meeting rejoices to know that in the Wesleyan Church of this Colony there are amongst its ministers and laymen, those who desire a union of the different branches of the Methodist family in the Colony: furthermore this meeting would heartily reciprocate such desire, and would gladly assist in maturing any scheme which would place all the Methodist Churches on a foundation which would effectively secure the rights of both Ministers and Laymen, and so advance the Kingdom of our common Lord and Master, and that the District Committee be empowered to confer with any authorized deputation on the Subject, and report to the next District Meeting.²¹

The "rights of both Ministers and Laymen" gave an edge to this beautifully-worded piece of diplomacy. Nevertheless the Wesleyans appreciated the point and in 1876 Rev. William Morley, a strong advocate of re-union, summed up the main differences as:

...the greater power of the U.M.F congregational meetings, the wider representation of U.M.F. Quarterly meetings, the ability of U.M.F. laymen to chair church meetings, the Wesleyan insistence on parity between lay and clerical representation at Conference, and the Wesleyan reluctance to permit longer ministerial appointments than three years.²²

Although friendly and supportive relations between the leaders kept the prospect of re-union alive it can also be argued that without the accommodating links between all the Methodist denominations the UMFC would have struggled to be a viable New Zealand connexion. However, independence and polity differences were over-riding deterrents and no progress was made for nearly twenty years after the formation of the New Zealand District. In 1894 the all-powerful Australasian Wesleyan Conference approved a plan to change the polity of that church to encourage and enable re-union. The economic depression placed continuing pressure on all the Methodist groups in Australasia to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Church leaders believed that competition between denominations for members in large and small communities caused unnecessary duplication of effort and led to the wasteful use of resources.

²¹ *Minutes of the New Zealand District Meeting of the United Methodist Free Churches, held in the Methodist Archives, Christchurch.*

²² Gadd, Bernard, 'William Morley 1842-1926. A Statesman of God Among Australasian Methodists. His Work in New Zealand,' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (New Zealand)*, Vol 20, Nos. 1 & 2, March 1964, p. 16.

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For the UMFC the problem was most acute when it came to finding and keeping suitable ministers. The District Committee could not supply all the circuits with a minister and one year the Auckland circuit even offered to do without a minister for a year. Small congregations struggled to pay stipends and at the end of a minister's term it was common for him to waive part of his stipend so that his successor could come to the circuit debt-free. Recruits came primarily from England, but about half became discontented and left or could not survive on an uncertain or depleted income. At least one suffered a lapse of morality. Some did not respond well to the guidance offered by strong-minded lay officers.

A matter of great concern to the UMFC is revealed in the 1891 Census figures which show a decrease in those professing allegiance to Free Methodism from 2,193 in 1886 to 1,923 in 1891. Statistics for the same period in the District Meeting minutes show that actual membership numbers decreased from 940 to 848.²³ These realities could not be ignored and the developments to the Wesleyan constitution provided a good opportunity for fresh approaches to be made. The District Committee obtained approval from the home church to enter discussions and seek a suitable agreement.

William Morley, who in 1894 was Connexional Secretary of the Wesleyan Church, chaired a Federal Council comprising the leaders of the Wesleyan, Free Methodist and Bible Christian churches charged with framing conditions acceptable to all parties. Discussions culminated in an agreement for full amalgamation, including a plan for the structure and organization of the united body. It was then referred to constituent groups. The proposal received overwhelming approval from the UMFC membership and the union of the three churches was consummated with effect from 13 April 1896.²⁴

Conclusion

UMFC Ministers and members were integrated into the united organization with little fuss. There is however an intriguing footnote to this re-unification. The Mount Eden Free Methodist church appears to have either rejected it or later broken away from the united body. A four page booklet entitled *The Advocate, the Voice of Mount Eden*, makes some acid comments about the united organization, claiming that "...after all the properties of the Free Methodists were seized by the Wesleyans, the Ministers of the Churches were treated shamefully and practically driven out one after the other,

²³ In the same period Wesleyan numbers increased, but this only heightened the demand for new churches and parsonages and made the prospect of re-union more attractive to that denomination.

²⁴ The Primitive Methodist Church had been invited to participate, but declined.

However, that church did eventually amalgamate with the united body in 1913, creating the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

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and sent about their business."²⁵ There appears to be little truth in this comment and it must be concluded that, apart perhaps from Rev. John Hosking (one of the more colourful characters of Free Methodism), the re-union in 1896 of the three members of the Methodist family was a success.

Also refer:

Jarmin, Edith, *A History of the New Church 1842-1983*, Auckland: New Church, 1983.

Wright, Ernest E., *Sydenham, Past and Present: A History of the Borough of Sydenham from its foundation in 1877 up to the time of its amalgamation with the City of Christchurch*, Sydenham: Ernest E. Wright, 1904.

²⁵ *The Advocate*, ed. Rev. Dr John Hosking, Mount Eden Free Methodist Church, Auckland: Vol. 1, No. 1, August 1900, p.1.
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THE BIBLE CHRISTIANS IN NEW ZEALAND

Fred Baker

Of the four branches of Methodism first established in New Zealand perhaps the least known is the Bible Christian Church. Besides being the smallest group at the time of union in 1896, six of their ten stations were in Canterbury. Three of the others were in Otago and only one in the North Island, in Palmerston North.

The first congregation in New Zealand was established in 1841 at New Plymouth. Many of those settlers had come from Devonshire, the home of the Bible Christian Connexion, so it was not surprising that there were several Bible Christians among them. One of their number was Henry Gilbert, a local preacher. He arrived 31 March 1841 and on his first Sunday in New Plymouth he conducted a service. Soon a Bible Christian cause was established. The 1843 Conference in England received a letter from Mr R Rundle, on behalf of the New Plymouth congregation, saying they had 15 members and had opened a Chapel on Whitsunday 1843 and requesting the appointment of a travelling preacher. The Missionary Committee discussed the request and Robert Kent was set aside to fill the position. However, the slow communications of those days meant the news did not reach New Plymouth before events took another turn.

On Sunday, 1 September 1844, as members were returning home after the service, they came upon a man preaching at Huatoki Bridge. This was the pioneer Primitive Methodist minister, Robert Ward. They at once realised what the preacher was saying was in line with their own beliefs and they soon decided to throw in their lot with him. In his diary for 7 November 1844 Robert Ward writes: *Today the quarterly accounts of the Bible Christians were settled. They have resolved, as a body, to come over to the Primitive Methodist Connexion, and they offer me full use of their chapel, so long as evangelical doctrines are preached and wholesome discipline is maintained. I have accepted them. There are five local preachers and eight members.* The events in New Plymouth were probably looked on as failure by the English authorities but a readymade congregation gave Robert Ward a good base for his task of establishing the Primitive Methodist work in New Zealand. It was more than 30 years before another attempt would be made to establish Bible Christian work in New Zealand.

Over the intervening years many Bible Christians came to New Zealand and most became loyal members of other Churches, the English conference eventually appointed Mr Edward Reed, a local preacher of considerable gifts to commence a mission in New Zealand. Arriving in Christchurch in 1877, he made contact with several Bible Christian folk and commenced holding services in the home of Mr Tregeagle in what was then Aldred Street, now Conference Street. Numbers attending grew and it was soon necessary to hire a hall in Worcester Street. Services were also commenced at Addington and Templeton. News of his success soon reached England

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and the conference of 1877 appointed the Rev. William Keast to New Zealand. He left England on 27 September 1877, arriving in Christchurch early 1878.

With his arrival new impetus was given to the work and soon the group meeting at Addington set about building their own Church. Mr Daniel Manhire gave a site on Brights Road, now Jerrold Street, and his son Mr B.P. Manhire offered a donation of £20. These were accepted and a small Church was opened on Sunday 8 September 1878. The total cost of the building was £220. One of the preachers on the opening day was Rev. Joseph White, the minister of the Addington United Methodist Free Church. At the tea meeting the following Tuesday evening, William Keast in his report said, *I have pleasure tonight of submitting the first report of the Bible Christian Church in the colony of New Zealand. Our present statistics are: Ministers 1, Local Preachers 5, members about 60.*

Continued progress led to a further appointment and the Rev. John Crewes arrived in Christchurch in 1879. He shared the work with William Keast and was responsible for the purchase of the site on High Street where a small Church was built. New preaching places were established at Prembbleton and Kaiapoī and the work progressed well. However, William Keast was not in the best of health and he died on 18 October 1880. He had been well received and respected by the whole community and the *Lyttelton Times* wrote, *As a temperance advocate, a tender-hearted and very sympathetic friend and a Catholic-spirited Christian minister, he endeared himself to many.* A man of many gifts he was sorely missed. This left John Crewes to carry on alone.



Rev. W. H. Keast Photo: Morley

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By 1882 the Addington congregation realised their Church was too small. The first entry in the Trust Minute Book reads, *A meeting was held in Addington Church on Monday December 4th 1882 for the purpose of forming a Trust for the taking up of a section of land in order that we might have room to enlarge our Church or build a new one when necessary to do so.* The section of land they purchased was on the corner of Selwyn Street and South Crescent Road, now Somerset Crescent and the Church building was shifted from Jerrold Street and enlarged. The Jerrold Street property was returned to its original owner Mr Daniel Manhire.

In 1883 Rev. Jeremiah Wilson arrived from Australia and went to Dunedin to start a mission there. However, after a few months John Crewes had a breakdown in health and was forced to retire so Jeremiah Wilson had to leave Dunedin and move to Christchurch to continue the work. He faced difficulties over the debt on the High Street Church and there was an air of despondency. Early in 1886 he returned to Australia and in April 1886 the Rev. John Orchard came from Victoria to be superintendent of the mission. John Orchard was an acceptable preacher and an energetic organiser. Almost immediately there was an expansion of influence and activity. In June he announced that plans had been prepared for the building of a parsonage. It was opened in 17 October 1886. In August a quarterly magazine was commenced and the first article was entitled "Aggression". *We must have aggressive work, we cannot exist without it.*



Rev. J. Orchard Photo: Morley

The arrival of John Orchard also sparked other building activity. At its meeting on 25th April 1887, the Addington Trust resolved: *That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that we build a New Church and the cost to be about 400£ [sic]. That 100£*

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be raised before a start be made in erection of the Church. That a conversazione be held on Tuesday May 10th 1887 and the matter be laid before the congregation. At the next meeting on June 16th Mr Orchard reported that in spite of bad weather a good number were present at the conversazione and the matter was taken up heartily, £102 being promised. A loan of £400 was promised by the "Home Conference" to be repaid in instalments of £40 a year. Plans were prepared and accepted and tenders were called. Those tendering were asked to give separate quotes for church alone, vestry, seats and rostrum, and fence. The quotes of Messrs. Glass and Down for the church and porches, £568-19-11, and of Messrs. Brown and Dymond for the seats and rostrum, £76-2-0, were accepted. No tenders were let for the vestry and the fence.



Lower High Street Church and Parsonage, Christchurch. Photo: Morley

On 21 February 1888 a foundation stone laying ceremony was held when 15 stones were laid. Donations of £178-11-7 were received, about a third of-the cost of the new building. The Trust meeting on 27th April decided: *That the new Church be opened on Queen's Birthday 24th May.* They obviously did not think it was worth mentioning that it was also the 150th anniversary of the conversion of John Wesley. At the meeting on 9th June the only reference to the opening was the decision to pass for payment the accounts in connection with the opening. Later, to help cover the cost of maintenance, pew rents were instituted, being as follows:

Side Seats- single - 1/-

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Side seats - whole - 4/-
Centre seats - single - 1/3
Centre seats - up to 5 5/-
Centre seats - whole - 8/- per quarter

The officials at High Street were also in the position of having to provide more room for the congregation. Plans were prepared for a new Church to seat all those now attending services. The ceremony of laying four corner stones took place on 12th December 1888. John Orchard declared he would not preach in the Church until it was free of debt. The "Home Conference" made a grant of £200 and the remaining £500 was raised locally before the new Church was opened on 13th May 1889. Unfortunately no Trust minutes survive to give fuller details. Also the account book in the archives gives no indication that any money was either collected or paid out for a new Church. It does show us however that like the Addington Church pew rents were instituted. When John Orchard attended the Conference in England later in the year, he was able to say that during his 26 years in Victoria and New Zealand he had superintended on an average the erection of one chapel, schoolroom or other building every six months.

In 1886 John Orchard had only John Crewes, who was recognised as a supernumerary, to assist him. This was soon to change. In 1886 John Ellis was appointed and William Ready arrived in 1887 and William Grigg and Frederick Quintrell followed in 1888. Up to 1887 there was only one station, Christchurch, but now it was possible to move further afield. First, John Ellis went to Cromwell to open a mission there. In 1888 two more stations were opened with William Ready going to Banks Peninsula (Little River), where eight preaching places were established, and John Ellis to Courtenay in the Selwyn district. Waikari opened in 1889 with the arrival of William Grigg. When John Orchard attended the 1889 British conference Barton Ginger was set aside for work in New Zealand and he arrived in New Zealand in November. He became the second minister in Christchurch for two years.

With these new appointments and the new opportunities they presented, it was now time for the Bible Christian Church to take what would prove to be its greatest step forward. In 1890 William Ready was invited by Mr Richard Vanstone to go to Dunedin to make another attempt to establish work there. One Saturday evening he conducted an open-air meeting in the Octagon and invited those present to attend a meeting in Maclaggan Street. This hall soon proved too small and a move was made to a larger hall in Rattray Street. He also visited the homes of families who had had some former connection with the Bible Christian Church in England or New Zealand. Numbers grew rapidly. Two more moves were made and eventually the Garrison Hall, the largest in the city, became the meeting place. The Mission soon had the largest Protestant congregation in New Zealand. One of its activities was work among the Chinese who had moved from the gold fields into Dunedin. A result of this was the

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sending of Miss Maude Cannon to the mission work in China. Later history shows that the Dunedin Mission was perhaps the greatest contribution the Bible Christians made to the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

1890 also saw John Crewes arrive in Wellington on 11 July. The first services were held on 20 July in the Foresters' Hall in Tory Street with 20 attending in the morning and about 30 in the evening. John Crewes reported in the Bible Christian magazine of December 1890, *The first church of our denomination in the North Island was formed at a meeting in the Rechabite Hall, Manners Street, on 5 October*. Mr J.J.K. Powell was elected class leader, it was agreed to purchase a harmonium and Miss I Jones was appointed organist. In 1891 services were started in the Mungaroa School but already difficulties were being experienced. It was reported that the Wellington congregation was being greatly weakened *by the migration of friends to other districts, the power of influenza etc*. The retirement of John Crewes in 1892 saw the work come to an end.

The next move forward was in Palmerston North. At the Wesleyan Lay Preachers' Meeting in June 1891, it was decided to suggest to the Quarterly Meeting that a Mission be started on the south side of the town. In February 1892 the Quarterly Meeting at Broad Street set up a committee to examine and report on the matter. Just how it came to be the Bible Christians who opened the mission is not clear but several Wesleyans transferred their allegiance, among them were Mr and Mrs J. Kibblewhite who had given the Broad Street site. John Ellis arrived from Waikari to be the first minister of the new Church and in June purchased the section on the corner of Cuba and Domain Streets. The first church was built by voluntary labour in 1893 and enlarged in 1895 at a cost of £58. One of the preachers at the opening of the enlarged Church was Rev. James Wrigley, of the United Methodist Free Church in Woodville who in 1897 became minister at Cuba Street. In 1894 John Ellis transferred to Templeton and Frederick Quintrell took his place. There was trouble over the property because it was in John Ellis's name. Probably there was no Trust in existence to take responsibility. It appears that John Ellis used some of his own money in the purchase. Eventually the matter was solved and the land transferred to the Church.

The question of Methodist Union had been discussed for several years, in Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In New Zealand the 1877 Wesleyan Conference set up a committee to meet representatives of the United Methodist Free Churches and the Primitive Methodist Church to discuss the matter. This was just before Edward Reed arrived in Christchurch. After several different proposals, the Wesleyan, United Methodist Free and Bible Christian Churches in New Zealand agreed to a Basis for Union. This was signed on 31 December 1895, John Orchard and Barton Ginger being the Bible Christian signatories. The agreement named the second Monday in April 1896 as the effective date of union, with the Bible Christian and United Methodist Free Churches able to send representatives to the 1896 Wesleyan Conference in Auckland in March. The Bible Christian Church contributed 38 churches and preaching places, 609 members, 4,853 attendees and 10 ministers to the United Church.

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So the nineteen years of separate Bible Christian activity came to an end. The Church in Great Britain felt the loss of the New Zealand Mission greatly but of the New Zealand Mission greatly but in New Zealand, Methodism as a whole gained some very influential leaders who gave faithful service to the United Church over many years. John Orchard, William Ready and William Grigg served as Presidents of Conference. The "aggressive evangelism" of which John Orchard had spoken meant that sometimes the Bible Christians tackled areas other Churches neglected. For example the new Circuits of Cromwell, Hawea and Banks Peninsula which appeared on the Wesleyan Station Sheet after union were made up entirely of Bible Christian churches, with a total of seventeen preaching places. We give thanks for the example and heritage they left us.



Mr. E. Reed Photo: Morley

SOURCES:

Leslie R.M. Gilmour. *The Bible Christians in New Zealand*. Wesley Historical Society. Vol 5. No.3 1947.

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W.T. Blight. *The Story of the Dunedin Central Mission Church*. Unpublished. Connexional Newspapers, *Advocate*, *N.Z. Methodist*, *Methodist Times*: Circuit reports and articles.

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THE FORGOTTEN PRIMS

Ivan Whyte

John Wesley is revered still as preacher, evangelist, organiser, the Anglican priest who changed the world of his day. His day was a long one and many changes in his movement were already apparent in his old age.

The field preaching had given way to buildings to preach and meet in. And there were similar changes in style. He himself harked back to the 'primitive' life Methodists and their fire.

A new movement sprang up in the Midlands of England in 1807. The Wesleyans did not like it and were deeply suspicious of it. It began in a camp meeting at Mow Cop, a rural area beyond Wesleyan influence. The two leaders of the new movement, Hugh Bourne, a Wesleyan class leader, and William Clowes, a Wesleyan local preacher, were expelled for not desisting, along with Wesleyans who would not be warned off.



W. Clowes. From front cover of 'Minutes', *PrimitiveMethodist Magazine* 1897

The new movement was based on the early Wesley style and quoted him in the name they gave themselves, 'Primitive Methodists'.

Thirty-seven years later from a greatly enlarged denomination, a young missionary, Robert Ward, landed in New Plymouth, put a chair on a small stone bridge in the small settler town and did the open-air, or field preaching in the Wesley style. After

New Plymouth came Wellington and later, Auckland. As more missionaries came more churches followed, and local preachers multiplied.



H. Bourne. Silhouette from *PM Magazine* 1897

Manchester April 20. 1831

Dear Brother/

If you will bring Brother
Garner's document relative to the conclusion
of his probation to the yearly meeting
when you come to Leicester or if you
can send it I will try to get it accepted
but he must take care that it is filled
up according to rule and as it is for
his interest I hope he will not
refuse to pay you for this letter
Yours in the Lord W^m. Clowes

Letter from Clowes 1831. *PM Magazine* 1897

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In time Auckland tried a small church paper, which developed into a national one with a breezy style commended by the editor of the Wesleyan paper.

It had missions in the cities, copying the missions among the poor in English cities. Its Sunday schools, Christian Endeavours,²⁶ and Bands of Hope flourished in parallel with the Wesleyans and other denominations.

In 1897 the two smallest Methodist denominations - Bible Christians and United Methodist Free - united with the Wesleyans, the largest group. The new name was simply Methodist. The Primitive Methodists declined to join, and held out until 1913²⁷. In between those two stages of union came the centenary of Primitive Methodism, in 1907.

The celebrations in New Zealand included a visit by a notable evangelist. Rev. Flanagan. That visit of a church celebrity warranted, in those times, a call on the New Zealand Parliament. Though the visit is forgotten now, it was a significant event then.²⁸ The excellent reporting of the 1907 conference enables us to see what the Primitive Methodists thought of themselves and how they differed from the Methodists.

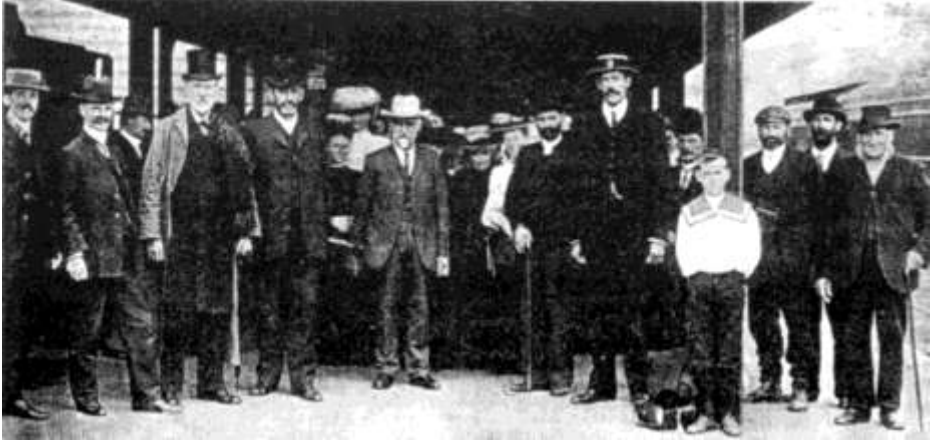


Rev. J. Flanagan

²⁶ **The Christian Endeavour movement was international and huge but apparently has not had a history written.**

²⁷ **Goldie records that the Primitives had invited the two smaller groups to unite with them but they chose the Wesleyans.**

²⁸ **The NZ Primitive Methodist many articles 1907 - Feb, March, April, Nov, Dec.**



Mayoral reception for Rev. J. Flanagan (third from left) at Wanganui railway station
Photo: Primitive Methodist Magazine, June 1908.

Both the Wesleyans (from 1822) and the Primitive Methodists (from 1844) were missionary ventures, the former to the Maoris and then the settlers, and the latter to a settler town in a Maori environment. Ward attempted a mission among the nearby Maoris, from pa to pa, but was soon overwhelmed by the many tasks he faced and had to restrict himself to a settler church. He had tried. One man can do only so much.

Both denominations continued to draw missionaries (and ministers) from England. For the Wesleyans the control was Australasian followed later by a New Zealand conference. The Primitives were directed first from England direct, and later had their own conference. The Primitives were stronger on lay representation and when union did come that had to be incorporated in the union.

David Goldie was one of the lay leaders in New Zealand Primitive Methodism. Of forty-one presidents of their conference between 1873 and 1913 there were six laymen - Goldie 1885, Frogatt 1888, Luke 1890, Bellringer 1892 and 1906, and Luke again as Hon. C M Luke in 1902 and 1913. The denomination attracted some prominent, wealthy and influential men.²⁹ The same happened in England -Hartley, a wealthy jam manufacturer was a benefactor of Hartley College, a theological college of the denomination. He developed a model factory and village to house his workers.³⁰

At a public meeting, 15 January 1907, Goldie "gave a stirring address on the progress of the church" and drew on census figures. Primitive Methodist growth in the ten years before the first Methodist union had been three times faster than in the larger denominations. He had wondered whether it could last. But between 1901 and 1906

²⁹ Goldie was a mayor of Auckland and Bellringer of New Plymouth. Luke became Hon. CM Luke, member of the Legislative Council. Fox, a premier, was a member.

³⁰ *NZ Primitive Methodist Magazine* Nov. 1908 pp. 280 - 281.

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the number professing Primitive Methodism had increased from over 10,000 to near 22000, a 114 percent increase. At the same time the Methodists declined from approximately 71,000 to 64,000.³¹



Hon. C. M. Luke MLC



Mr. J. Bellringer

³¹ The interpretation of the census was open to dispute. The change of title from Wesleyan to Methodist could have been confusing. NZPM Feb. 1907 p46 (a); March 1907 p60; Nov. 1908 p.240 (c).

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The church knew its attendance figures were far below the census figures and was constantly working at methods to reach the people and or retain the young after they had completed Sunday School. There were plenty of Primitive Methodists living their Gospel in country areas where there was no Primitive church to attend.

Goldie went on to stress that the church must always be open to the poor. He was critical of the great missions overseas that he heard of, fearing that their establishment "was because it was felt by those whom God or the devil had blest with a little more wealth than their fellows that there must be no mixture of rich and poor on earth, whatever there might be in Heaven. So those occupying the parlours were willing to build kitchens for the poor and call them missions".³² A Wesleyan minister writing on our debt to Primitive Methodists emphasised their belief in the equality of the people before God. " 'We are all one in Christ Jesus' is a text that is perpetually expounded and exemplified in every Primitive Methodist Church and Sunday School and class meeting in England".³³

The Primitives' style was for the open air, testimonies, 'exhorting', challenge, conversion, prayer from the heart, and preaching from the heart. They were trying to find ways to present their message, and knew from their denomination's history what did not work, as well as what did. They were not given to formality.

Singing was even more important to them than it was to the Wesleyans. In many ways they remind of the impact of the earlier Salvation Army style³⁴ and while organ music was their staple they encouraged whatever instruments were available, including brass. One of the methods recorded in England was for the preacher to sing along the street to draw a crowd. Bourne recorded a sermon delivered on the go with a militia march - a sermon "a mile and a half long".³⁵

They were impassioned initially: they prayed for results, believing, and aimed at changing people's lives. They set out to convert people but they did not stop there. They were also social activists. The Primitives believed a person could start with no education, learn to read the Bible, study, learn to witness or exhort or preach. This links closely with a sturdy egalitarian view based on that of the early Christians of the book of Acts.

³² NZPM Feb 1907 p.46 (b).

³³ NZPM June 1907 p. 180.

³⁴ NZPM July 1906. In an obituary for Richard Seddon, the Prime Minister, Rev. Cocker quoted conversations with Seddon who had been brought up in Primitive Methodist Sunday School and services. "Why, I am not half as good a speaker as my mother was" and he made the comparison too with the Salvation Army, adding, "The Primitives... seem to have got very respectable nowadays".

³⁵ NZPM July 1907 p.1 57 c.

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They saw themselves as far more democratic than the Wesleyans, and as working for a better deal for the working man. They were against sweat shops, for Unions, against alcohol, and for women's franchise.

Just as the Wesleyans had grown more formal over the years so too did the Primitives experience changes that reduced open air preaching and focused more on meetings in their church buildings. They had however a strong storyline from their history as guide and inspiration.

They did not reach every area in New Zealand but they did go far and wide. In early Auckland the cause was fragile because members moved out to farms in distant places. That was the common pattern for settlers. Howick was an early preaching place, though rural.³⁶ Kuaotunu, near Whitianga, was on the preaching plan along with Waterview, Auckland. That's how the gospel spreads.

The church paper published the preaching plans submitted by their local correspondents. Any reader got a sense of the denomination throughout the country.

From the conference of 1912, the last year before union, the following shows the geographical spread.

Taranaki District

New Plymouth, Inglewood, Stratford, Eltham, Wanganui East, Egmont

Wellington District

Wellington - 3 Stations or circuits, Foxton, Feilding, Halcombe, West Coast

Auckland District

Auckland - 3 Stations, Thames, Waihi, Hamilton, Cambridge

Canterbury District

Christchurch - 2 Stations, Greendale, Timaru, Waimate and Oamaru, Temuka

Otago and Southland District

Dunedin - 2 Stations, Invercargill - 2 Stations, Bluff, Waikouaiti, Edendale

Increasingly it is all long ago and far away. What remains as a legacy? The buildings have mainly gone, but there were some good examples in their time. In Auckland there are three remaining sites or causes: Methodist Mission Northern (Airedale Street), Waterview, and Dominion Rd (Mt Eden), now a Tongan congregation. The original Dominion Road building and the Waterview church are combined on the Waterview church site. The Airedale Street buildings were replaced by more modern ones. The Dominion Road church was replaced by a Gothic brick building in 1915 as part of the union's strategy for Mt Eden, and has a Heritage B Classification.³⁷ The

³⁶ K. Rowe, *Beyond the Tamaki*, Barry Crichton 2002, p.7.

³⁷ Planning for a larger building began years before the union.

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English language congregation is no longer based there. The Ward Memorial church at Northland, Wellington has closed recently within a 'Cooperative Venture'.

How strong is the Primitive Methodist memory in New Plymouth? When the main Primitive Methodist church was vacated it became an important community facility, but is no longer standing.



First New Zealand Primitive Methodist Church, New Plymouth. Photo: Morley

When the sesquicentenary came up in 1994 Auckland was slow to plan a local commemoration even though it has the original and very valuable site opposite the Town Hall. It put a commemoration of the New Plymouth beginnings together a couple of months late. New Plymouth held a commemoration, attended by a contingent from Auckland.

The president of Conference admitted that he had had a "steep learning curve". The story became much more accessible after the Wesley Historical Society published it.

The Auckland sesquicentennial was 16 March, 2001. The Mission commissioned a history.³⁸ It records the growth of the Primitive Methodist church in Auckland, including the Primitive and the Wesleyan missions. Thereafter the emphasis was on the development of the present Methodist mission. At the celebrations there was a rather obvious neglect of the church that preceded and that provided the advantageous inner-city site.

The opening service of the celebration, attended by the Maori Queen, and led by a Maori presbyter, omitted to mention Ward's worthy attempt to establish a Maori

³⁸ **D. Phillipps, *Mission in a Secular City*, Methodist Mission Northern, 2001. WHS Publication #77, 2003**

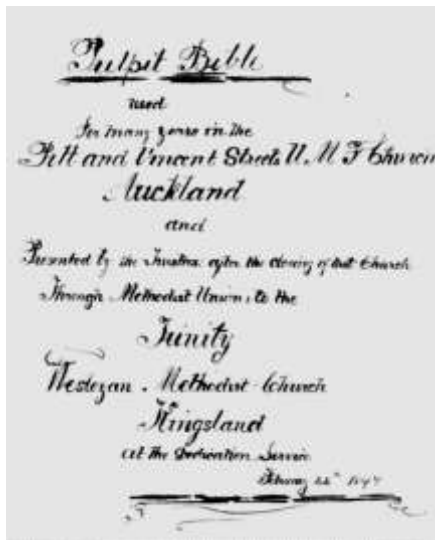
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mission. At a later service the president of Conference included one sentence to acknowledge the earlier Primitive Methodist church.

There are different meanings of the word 'mission'. The Primitives aimed to change the person but, like the Salvation Army, were known for their good works and for the welfare side. The other view of mission emphasises changing social and welfare conditions and social justice.

Goldie had strong views on missions that were set up away from their parent church, and away from the primary mission of the church. *God help Primitive Methodism if ever a time should come when the poor, to whom and for whom the Master toiled and suffered, shall find no rest for either body or soul in the churches created by us. If that day should ever come, then your days of increase will cease, and you will go down to the grave as a church and people without a tear being shed for your demise.*³⁹

The evangelical belief and style was always part of Methodism, recognised officially in the Aldersgate Fellowship which became Methodist AFFIRM. When the evangelicals were mainly leaving the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa, Conference recorded that it valued the evangelical tradition and valued its place still. The events that led to division and now a small Evangelical Network are another story.



³⁹ NZPM Feb. 1907 p.46 (b).
WHS Publication #77, 2003

Two typical Images of the period.



“The Home Service”

THE LAST PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONFERENCE.



Banner heading of the PM publication.



Rev. J. Olphert



Primitive Methodist Church, New Plymouth



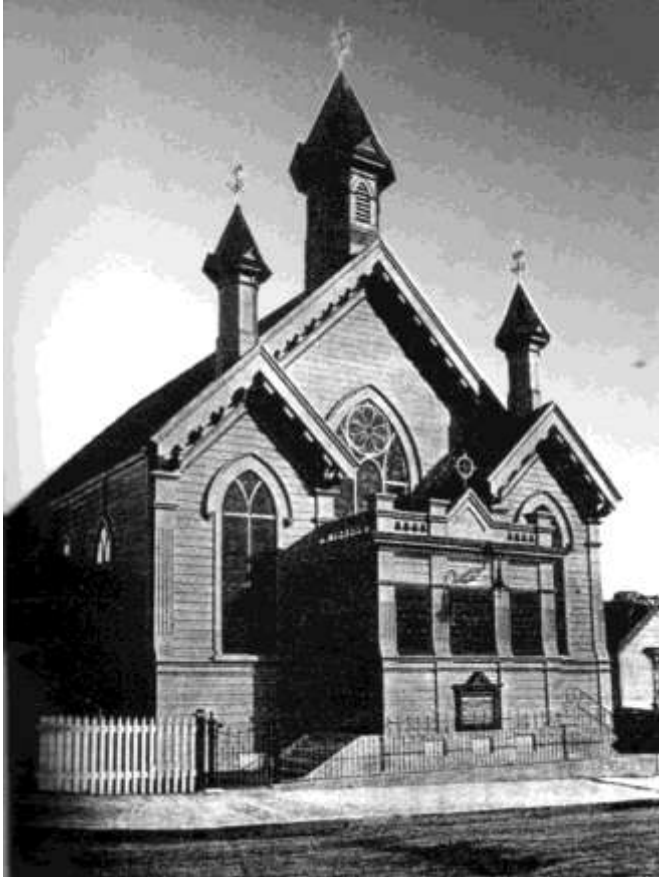
Delegates at 1909 Conference, Eden Terrace Church



Pitt and Edwin Street Church (centre) around 1890. *Photo: Auckland Public Library*



Rev. Robert Ward Memorial 1994, New Plymouth.
Jack Penman (left) and Ivan Ward.



Don McLean Street Church, Christchurch



Jesus Christ looks down on the manger scene at Christmas in the Chapel.

PRIMITIVE METHODIST ARTIFACTS

Display at Methodist Mission Northern, 370 Queen Street, Auckland

An exhibition of New Zealand Primitive Methodist memorabilia in the foyer of the Aotea Chapel ran from November 2001 into February 2002. Staged as part of the Primitive Methodist sesqui-centennial celebration it attracted much interest from visitors to the Chapel. Some of the items came from the Waterview Church and others were selected from the archives of the Mission.

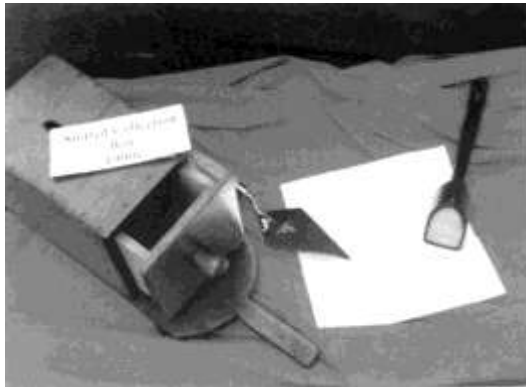
Fiona Maunsell and Rob Wallace prepared and mounted the exhibition on a tiered circular structure in the glassed-in 'fish bowl' enclosure. Rob took many photographs, some of which we have used in the preparation of this article. The archives room in the office area houses among other items, equipment used to produce a weekly half-hour TV programme, since discontinued. Items are lent out as required for suitable projects. The archives in the basement are a heterogenous collection of artifacts tightly stowed in the limited space available.



General view of the display. The painting depicts Natai, a member of the war party that met the French explorer D'Urville in 1827. Although not directly relevant to the Primitives, it was included as background.



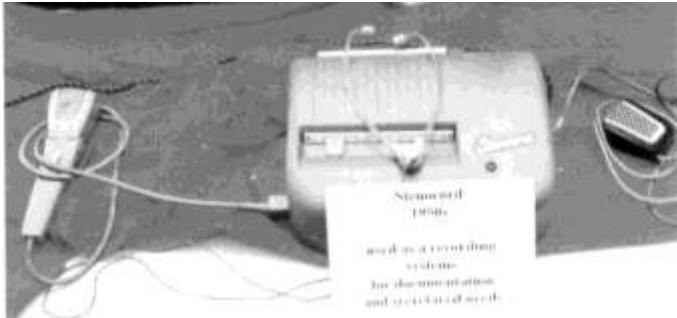
Rob Wallace and Fiona Maunsell who arranged the Artifact Display.



Slotted collection box, also the trowel and spatula presented to Rev. Everil Orr MBE by Fletcher Construction Co. when he laid the foundation stone of the Methodist Central New Church Hall and Mission on 8 June 1963.



Kaleidoscope glass slide projector (magic lantern) used in the Methodist Mission as early as 1880.



1950s Stenocord used as a recording system for documentation and secretarial purposes.



Printers blocks. The Methodist Mission was pro-efficient with the use of printing equipment.



The Primitives' newspaper, *Joyful News*, 1904



The Felgate organ.

The caption reads: "This portable organ, on loan from the Waterview Church, is believed to have belonged to Mr Felgate, who was one of the pioneers of the Primitive Methodist congregation in Freemans Bay. After he moved to Waterview the congregation commenced services in his home and that of the Sanson family before acquiring their church building on land adjacent to his home. It is believed that this portable organ was carried by preachers to services in the West Auckland area."



1950 Film Projector. Footage is in the Mission archives.

DAVID ROBERTS FAREWELLED

David Roberts was farewelled at the Wesley Historical Society Executive meeting on 5 September 2002 in anticipation of his departure to a new home in Paraparaumu.

Past President Vema Mossong and President Helen Laurenson spoke of Dave's valuable work at the Auckland Archives.



David Roberts Photo: B. Le Heron

In reply, Dave recalled his arrival in Papatōetoe 21 years ago, in time to see the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana on TV. Initially he did not know a soul but quickly made friends in the Papatōetoe Methodist Church.

When Les Gilmour died in 1982 Dave was asked if he would like to act as secretary of the Wesley Historical Society. This was a challenge because up to that moment he had been unaware of its existence. He sought information and advice from a member, Stan Andrews, and was told that the job "would be no sinecure". Ten years later he handed over to Graham Brazendale.

David Roberts BA authored *The First Sixty Years*, already regarded as an authoritative account of the Society's activities from its inception.

He distinguished himself in 1999 when he and Douglas Burt made a comprehensive tour of the South Island photographing pre-1900 churches mentioned in *Morley's History of Methodism* in New Zealand. The resulting album containing 126 pictures has since proved to be a valuable source of information for several articles in our Journals.

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At the function Dave presented the album to the Wesley Historical Society, saying that it had been his intention from the outset to hand it over so that it could be consulted by researchers.

An aspect of Dave's activities, known to few apart from his colleagues at the Auckland Archives, was his custom of visiting WHS members when he happened to be in their district, thus promoting awareness of the ongoing functioning of the WHS.

His present address is: 3D Malvern Way, Paraparaumu. He would welcome a phone call at 04-2989193.

OBITUARY

Rev. Graham Brazendale MA Wesley Historical Society Secretary 1993-1999

Graham grew up in the farming community of Carterton in a staunch Labour-leaning family. Alan Newman, their minister for some years, was an important influence in directing him towards his lifelong vocation.



Graham Brazendale

In 1957 he came straight from the family farm to Trinity College. After his first term exam results Principal Hames took him aside and said, "I'd like you to enrol at

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university, as we need a few ministers with degrees to match the Presbyterians." Graham realised that his natural inclination was towards history.

Through several parish ministries he continued to study and while he was at Te Atatu he completed his thesis for his MA degree. He chose the life and ministry of the Taranaki missionary, John Whiteley, and later used it as the basis for his lecture, *John Whiteley and the Land Question*, delivered to the annual General Meeting of the WHS at the 1991 Church Conference (*Journal No. 58*, 1992).

Graham further drew on his thesis to write a stand-alone book, *John Whiteley: Land Sovereignty and the Land Wars of the 19th Century*, published by WHS as *Proceeding No.64*.

Also he was invited by the committee preparing the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* series to write the article on Whiteley. His findings were to reverse the romantic understanding Methodists had until this time held of their New Zealand missionary martyr. Brave though John Whiteley was as a missionary he finally stood for the settlers. He was a fluent speaker of Taha Maori and understood many of their customs. He was a dedicated preacher of the Gospel to Maori yet he at the same time encouraged the new settlers in acquiring Maori land.

With his deep interest in history, Graham was well suited to take a leadership role in the WHS. Ill health was to cause his early retirement from full ministry even before he accepted his position with the Society. Finally he resigned when Barbara and he decided to move to Te Puke where the less humid climate gave him greater comfort. He died 15 July 2002.

Throughout Graham's tenure innovative means were sought to publicise the work of the WHS and encourage new membership. Methodist theological students were visited at College and presented with the latest publications.

Phil Taylor

OBITUARY

Alan Charlesworth Armitage

The historical roots of the Armitage family are most interesting to follow, as members moved from Calvinism to Arminianism, to Primitive and then Wesleyan Methodism. Two of Alan's forebears entered the Primitive Methodist Ministry. His grandfather, John Armitage, a Yorkshire printer by trade and a local preacher, on emigrating to New Zealand became a partner in a printing firm and was responsible for the publication of a religious monthly *The Christian Observer*. This survived only one year. By 1879 he had become a Wesleyan Minister and was editor of *The NZ Wesleyan*. Unfortunately he was drowned in 1881 in the wreck of the *Tararua* when en route to the Australasian Methodist Conference in Adelaide, and so Alan did not ever know him personally.

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Alan was never able to visit England and the places well known to his family. The nearest approach was during the Second World War when he served in North Africa and the Middle East.

Alan had a wide knowledge and delighted in sharing his many stories and humorous anecdotes about early days in New Zealand and, in particular, Canterbury Methodism. When working on his family tree he had become very interested in the history of Primitive Methodism. He joined the Yorkshire Wesley Historical Society and was regularly in touch with several people in the United Kingdom. He contributed a series of articles to the Yorkshire Branch Bulletin on his family's Methodist roots in both countries. Gradually he built up a library of books on Primitive Methodism, and when it was nearing time for him and his wife Joyce to move into care Alan presented this library to the Methodist Church Archive at the Connexional Office. This gesture was greatly appreciated.

We enjoyed his visits to the Archives. He was always wanting to research for more information, and to share the stories he had discovered. His friendship was valued.

Alan Charlesworth Armitage died in Christchurch 3 August 2002, at the age of 87 years, his wife Joyce having predeceased him some months before.

Marcia Baker

OBITUARY

Rev. Robert Thornley and History

Robert Thornley was one of the most gracious ministers New Zealand Methodism has known. He was greatly loved and never ceased to amaze by the way he remembered people and events. His memory represented a genuine interest in people and their connections and in events that helped mould them. In this way, he was expressing a belief that memory and history are inextricably interwoven.

Two quotes are relevant, "In our families, common memory is perhaps the principal cohesive, integrative principle." and, "A nation is united, and moreover is characteristically itself, largely in virtue of the shared memory of past events.".

(Quoted from *Whole People of God* in a letter from Laurie Michie)

Apply that to the life of the church and you have a reason for Robert Thornley's strong support of the Wesley Historical Society. He knew how essential it was to remember the past in order that the present may be fulfilled and the future be enriched. Writing in the anniversary production of the WHS, "I am writing as one who has received much from the Society and believes that it is essential that the Society continues in being for the years to come".

(*The First Sixty Years*, p.5)

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Brueggemann once wrote of "insiders to the faith who have become careless, weary, jaded and cynical about the faith". He drew on First Testament texts to illustrate that such in Israel's history were "those who have lost the core memory of who they are as God's people, and the formative stories and experiences that have shaped them as a people". Robert wrote, "The WHS underlines that history exercises a discipline of research and criticism, and contributes to knowledge, understanding and wisdom.". In claiming that "history is a living and creative area of human study" he further stated that "WHS informs us of our story, both our continuity with the past and our response to the reality of change."

(The First Sixty Years, p.6)

Robert Thomley's leadership of worship knew the value of the church as a community of memory - "doing this" to remember and move on. He knew the people and he knew their ancestors. He knew the land, its significance to the Tangata Whenua and became one with it, enriched by Dorothy and her history, the roots in Totara North and the pioneers. He went back to the United Kingdom, rekindled memory and made connections enabling him to return to Aotearoa and enrich life.

He was a true churchman, constantly stirring memories, and in remembering relived the essence of faith and inspired others to walk the way. Wesley Historical Society pays tribute and acknowledges the unpayable debt.

Jack Penman

23 May 2003

OBITUARY

SERVING THE CHURCH IN WAR AND PEACE

**Reprinted with permission from The New Zealand Herald,
7 February 2003**

Rev. James Wesley Parker MA, BD Methodist minister. Died aged 95

James Wesley Parker was a long-serving Methodist minister who saw action as a padre for the 36th Battalion in World War II.

He was also an author, columnist for the *Herald*, frequent broadcaster on Radio New Zealand religious programmes and, in his 30s, a rower of national standard in coxless pairs and a rugby player.

At the time of his death, Wes Parker, as he was universally known, was the oldest surviving New Zealand Methodist minister.

One of nine children, Wes was born in Waiuku with his identical twin, Gordon. They grew up the hard way, their Methodist minister father a tough taskmaster with Victorian notions of child-rearing.



Wesley Parker. *Photo: Family*

They were expected to dig potatoes and make hay to help the family finances, at the cost of frequent disruption to schooling.

Despite these difficulties, both graduated from Dunhoime Theological College in 1929. Studying part-time, Wes Parker subsequently gained an MA in philosophy and Bachelor of Divinity.

His circuits were wide-ranging: Richmond road in Auckland, then Huntly, followed by Sydenham and Riverton in the South Island, before heading back north to Hawera and finally to the Auckland parishes of Remuera, Kingsland, and Henderson.

During 1946-9 he served on the Committee of the Wesley Historical Society.

He found time to write four books: a biography of revered Methodist minister Dr C.H. Laws, a history of the Auckland Methodist Central Mission, a reminiscence about his tough childhood entitled *Eketahuna, Four Years in the Life of a Boy*, and a collection of wartime anecdotes, *Over to You, Padre*.

The latter describes his experiences in the Pacific campaign of 1942-44, including his role in the August 1943 assault against entrenched Japanese forces on Mono Island in the Solomons.

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Padre Parker brought physical as well as spiritual sustenance to his men in the field. His ever-full tea urn became legendary as a morale-booster.

Parker preached an old-fashioned, muscular Christianity that focused on self-reliance as well as redemption, but he had infinite goodwill. If his parish could not afford a car, he would cycle miles to visit needy, housebound parishioners.

His wife, Essie, died in 2000, and his twin brother Gordon early last year. He is survived by three sons.

Selwyn Parker

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members since Annual General Meeting 2002:

Ailsa Campbell - Te Awamutu
Cathrine and Ron Gibson - Otaki
Kay and Ron Malpass - Upper Hutt
Bill Thomas - Brooklyn
Jeff Sounders - Waiwhetu
Rev. Lorraine Reid - Lincoln
Heather Walls - Christchurch
Rev. Trevor Hoggard - Pakuranga
Rev. Stephen Temar - Wesley College
Edith Gorringe - Epsom

Those who have died during the year:

Jim Steel - Tauranga, formerly Henderson
Rev. Robert Thornley - Everil Orr Village, Mt Albert
Rev. Wesley Parker - Everil Orr Village, Mt Albert

NOTE: Despite our best efforts, this information may be incomplete.

Present Membership:

228 - in New Zealand; 17 - overseas; 12 - libraries etc.

CONTRIBUTIONS SOUGHT We welcome information that is connected in any way with the history of Methodism in New Zealand. This may be:

An article based on a thesis produced for a university degree.

Family history.
Disposal or subsequent use of church buildings.
Information gleaned from inscriptions on gravestones.
Eulogies delivered at funerals.
Handbooks or commemorative publications.
Items in local newspapers.
Follow-up on articles in our *Journal*.

Please submit direct to the editor or any member of the Publications Committee (see the next page.)

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY- DIRECTORY 2003

Executive Members

President

Mrs Helen Laurenson
14 Corbett Scott Ave
Epsom
Auckland 3
09 630 3850
laurensonarch@xtra.co.nz

Secretary

Rev. Barry Neal
2 Upland Road
Huia
West Auckland 1250
09811 8054
thehuianeals@clear.net.nz

Treasurer

Rev. Philip Taylor
12 Melandra Road
Whangaparaoa
09 424 3059
phildavinia@paradise.net.nz

Editor

Mr Bernie Le Heron
1/136 Calliope Road
Devonport
North Shore City
094450381

Executive Members

Rev. Norman Brookes
12 Halberg Street
Papakura
(0) 09 298 4695
(H) 09 299 5556
BrookesNE.M@xtra.co.nz

Rev. Doug Burt
9/34 Esplanade Road
Mt Eden
Auckland 3
09 630 9503

Rev. Dr Allan Davidson
Private Bag 28-907
Remuera
Auckland 1136
(0) 09 521 2725
ak.davidson@auckland.ac.nz

Mrs Margaret Gordon
32a Haverstock Road
Sandringham
Auckland 3
09 620 6026

Mr Eric Laurenson
14 Corbett Scott Ave
Epsom
Auckland 3
(O)09 630 4741
(H) 09 630 3850
laurensonarch@xtra.co.nz

Rev. Dr Susan Thompson
104 Beerescourt Road
Hamilton
07 849 7630
susan@hamiltonmethparish.org.nz

Rev. Terry Wall
2 Takutai Street
Pamell
Auckland 1001
(O) 09 373 7599 ext 87732
(H) 09 377 0996
lynne.terry@clear.net.nz

Mrs Jill Weeks
112 Bayswater Avenue
Bayswater
North Shore
09 445 8669
devonportmeth@ihug.co.nz

Mr Ivan Whyte
36 Prospect Terrace
Mt Eden
Auckland 3
096302164

Corresponding Members

Rev. Donald Phillipps
165 Carroll Street
Dunedin
03 477 8929
Phillipps@clear.net.nz

Rev. Marcia Baker
11 Merton Place
Christchurch 5
03 352 2671
ymbaker@ihug.co.nz

Mr Frank Paine
22/40 Bristol Street
St Albans
Christchurch
Email courtesy Marcia

Honoured Members

Dr Elaine Bolitho
33 Kandy Crescent
Ngaio
Wellington
bolitho@xtra.co.nz

Mrs Vema Mossong
1 Bmue Road
09 444 7584
mossong@clear.net.nz

Rev. Rua Rakena
PO Box 62554
Central Park
Penrose
09 570 5234

Mr Dave Roberts

Journal 2003

3d Malvern Way
Paraparaumu
042798152

Mr Bruce Verry
2/22 Mission View Drive
Howick 1705
09 535 7453

Publications Committee

Rev. Dr Susan Thompson (Convener)
Mrs Helen Laurenson
Mrs Jill Weeks
Rev. Terry Wall
Rev. Barry Neal
Mr Bemie Le Heron

ANNIVERSARIES FOR 2004

1854 150th ANNIVERSARIES

- 16 April High St., Christchurch – First Church Opened.
14 Dec. Maori Chapel, Wellington – Second Chapel opened.

1904 100th ANNIVERSARIES (Centenaries)

- 11 Feb. Waitara Church opened. [Erroneously listed. *Journal 2002*, as 10 Feb.]
4 April Buckland Church (Manukau) stonelaymg
7 April Avondale Church (Auckland) stonelaymg
23 April Mornington New Church (Dunedin) stonelaying. [Erroneously listed
Journal 2002, as opened on 30 April.]
30 June Eltham Church stonelaying
17 Sept. Crofton (Ngaio) Church (Wgton) stonelaying
2 Oct. Brightwater (Nelson) Church opened
19 Nov. Johnsonville Church (Wgton) stonelaying
11 Dec. Crofton (Ngaio) Church (Wgton) opened.

ANNIVERSARIES FOR 2005

1855 150th ANNIVERSARIES

- 18 Jan. First Australasian Methodist Conference - Sydney
4 March Lyttelton Church opened

1905 100th ANNIVERSARIES (Centenaries)

- 5 Feb. Mornington Church (Dunedin) opened
1 March Johnsonville Church (Wgton) opened.
27 Sept. North-East Valley Church (Dunedin) stonelaying
9 Nov. Hawera Church stonelaying.