

WILLIAM MORLEY



A man for his time

Wm Morley

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William Morley – A man for his time

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William Morley – A man for his time

WILLIAM MORLEY



Rev. William Morley DD c 1916 *Gadd*

Foreword

It was said, with more than a hint of animosity, of Jabez Bunting, the powerbroker of Wesleyan Methodism for most of the first half of the 19th century, that the 'whole of Conference was buttoned up in one pair of breeches.' The lives of both Bunting and of William Morley are clear evidence of the timelessness of Francis Bacon's dictum: 'Knowledge itself is power.'

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Mr Thomas's two biographical studies, elaborating on the life of William Morley, are a more than welcome addition to our understanding of this key figure in the history of New Zealand Methodism. Maybe it could be said the key figure. Bernard Gadd's brief life was published over 40 years ago and he did not have access to some of the material Mr Thomas has used. The fact the Morley was considered worthy of an entry in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography makes it all the more important that a major study should be made available.

Mr Thomas's research into the details of his great-grandfather's life has been exemplary in its thoroughness, and he has brought out the extraordinary breadth of Morley's life and work. In fact it would not be inappropriate to use the term 'polymath' of Morley. His formal schooling may have been confined to his years in a Wesleyan day-school in his home village, where he stayed on as a pupil-teacher, but his education, in another sense, continued throughout his life. On the evidence of his relatively few published works he must have been a remarkably widely-read man. From what can be gleaned from his History of Methodism in New Zealand he shows acquaintance with a dozen, or even a score, of New Zealand authors, in addition to his obvious familiarity with a host of early and contemporary writers on general Methodist history and doctrine.

In a Church which, at that time, laid relatively little stress on academic training, Morley was an acknowledged intellectual leader. Some of his younger colleagues had had the advantage of formal theological training at institutions such as Richmond and Didsbury Colleges in England. Morley held his own with these bright young men who became leaders of the Church in their own time.

The purpose of the knowledge he acquired was two-fold. He surely would have agreed that its primary purpose was to inform and illustrate his preaching of the Gospel. But its secondary purpose was to 'know' his Church, and to 'know' the society in which it was set. Morley was better placed than anyone else in the Connexion in respect to the latter.

Mr Thomas quotes Morley's use of the word 'culture', and suggests it had a different meaning to that in common use today. I am not entirely convinced that this is so. He used the phrase 'modern culture' and I have the strong feeling that Morley saw the place of the Church, and of Methodism in particular, as being within society, not standing at a distance from it. This was not the usual stance of the Connexion which, with its English background in mind and its long struggle with the 'Established Church' had an excessive fear, it might be said, of what we would call social involvement. Morley was ahead of his time in seeing that New Zealand Methodism was a part of contemporary culture, as it were.

This did not make him a worldly man, but it did make him a 'man of the world', and it was this characteristic that doubtless enabled him to establish sound relationships with the rising generation of successful Methodist businessmen in Auckland and Christchurch in particular. He admired many of them for what he termed their 'broad

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sympathies', a term which might now be paralleled by that of 'liberalism'. His drive and vision, and their acumen and resources, turned the Church around during Morley's time as Secretary of the Church Building and Loan Fund and then as Connexional Secretary.

If I have one small reservation it is that Mr Thomas did not attempt a larger appraisal of Morley as an administrator. One of Morley's successors spoke of administration being 'sacramental'. I think Morley would have agreed warmly with this. It was Morley the administrator who brought together all these other aspects of his ministry - theologian, educationist, historian, writer, preacher, and statesman. Without his administrative skills, his organisation of his time, his ability to carry an enormous work-load, and his obvious grasp of financial management, he would never have been able to carry out all these other roles.

Morley's record as a Church leader has never been equalled in the Methodist Church of New Zealand. Mr Thomas has given us all we need to know why this is so. What he has shared with us is eminently readable, and he deserves both our commendation for what he has written and our time in reading it.

- Donald Phillipps



WILLIAM MORLEY

Lecture for the Annual Meeting of the Wesley Historical Society

Friday 7 November 2003 at the Uniting Church, Johnsonville,
Wellington, New Zealand

by *William F F Thomas*

Introduction

Good evening and kia ora.

If tonight was a hundred years ago, my grandfather and great-grandfather, both Wesleyan ministers and conference representatives, would probably have been in the audience. Another great grand-father a great-great-grand-father, both lay representatives to Conference at one time or another might also have been here, and maybe even my redoubtable great-grandmother Henrietta Thomas, the very epitome of a Victorian minister's wife. I am pleased to have occasion to acknowledge their contribution to New Zealand Methodism.

The tradition of conference lectures began when the 1881 Conference resolved that:
... a sermon or lecture be delivered during the sittings of Conference on some theological question of current interest.¹

The Rev. J H Simmonds, no doubt chosen for his knowledge of the subject as well as his speaking ability, delivered the first lecture entitled "The Immortality of the Soul". One of his audience, the Rev. J N Buttle, noted:

The Conference sermon by the Rev. J H Simmonds was a scholarly masterly treatment of a deeply interesting subject, viz: The Immortality of the Soul; is it natural or conditional? The lecturer leaned to the latter view, which of course is not orthodox according to Wesley. I should not wonder if a charge of heresy be laid.²

They were not, but another doctrinal controversy erupted in 1893 over the Rev. C H Garland's lecture on higher criticism of the Bible, taking a very liberal theological position which accommodated Darwinian evolutionary theory, and which did lead to heresy charges. Despite controversy the conference lectures did foster discussion on subjects often of intense interest and relevance. A good example was William Morley's *Doctrinal and Ecclesiastical Position of the Methodist Church*, a scholarly

¹ *New Zealand Conference Minutes, 1881, p.52.*

² *William Newman papers, (Hereafter WNP), folder 13, letter from J N Buttle to William Newman, 21 February 1882.*

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commentary of some 25,000 words, delivered in compressed form as the lecture. Perhaps Victorian Methodists enjoyed controversy and debate - they certainly did like to talk and to listen.

While the conference lecture is not an unbroken tradition over 121 years, it is now, under the aegis of the Wesley Historical Society, an important focus of historical research and scholarship. I am honoured to be invited. Thank you. In doing so I would like to thank and acknowledge contributions and help from Marcia and Fred Baker of the Connexional Archives Christchurch, Colyn Storer, genealogist of Sydney and Louise Elliot, Chief Librarian of Queen's College, Melbourne University. Dr Peter Lineham of Massey University kindly read a lengthy draft and made helpful comments and suggestions.

Something of the record of William Morley as an outstanding leader of Australasian Methodism will be reasonably well-known to many of you and you will not thank me I think for going over ground already well-beaten by previous writers. While recapitulation is unavoidable, I am able to share with you the results of my research which has uncovered a great deal of previously unpublished primary source material in the form of letters, sermons, addresses and commentary. My purpose tonight is to use this to illuminate areas in which Morley shone as a churchman and at the same time to reveal something of his personal character and qualities. Following an outline of Morley's family life and church career, I will comment on his five major areas of achievement.

There is authenticity and a special immediacy to be found in original material. Victorian Methodism has its own special flavour and I think you will find something of its essence in the extracts I have chosen to include. For clarity of presentation I have transcribed third-person quotes into the first person.

In later life William Morley recounted his origins:

I was born in the little village of Orston, Nottinghamshire, on 14 August 1842, where I spent the first six years of my life and where my parents were members of the Methodist Society. The next two years were spent near Southwell in the same County where I first attended a Sunday School.

During the next five years we lived in a hamlet known as Norwell Woodhouse, where I attended a Sunday school and memorized the whole of the New Testament, also attending a day school in the vicinity. At the end of 1856 I became a Pupil Teacher at the Wesleyan day school in Newark-on-Trent, serving the usual period of five years.

Local preachers were needed, and just before my eighteenth birthday, I made my first attempt to preach. In due course I was examined and my name appeared on the plan as 'No. 49.' Two years later I was recommended for the ministry, and from the first Cranbourne Conference received the intimation from the Rev. W Morley Punshon that my offer had been accepted, and that I

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was designated for Foreign Mission work. I expected to go to college, but - both the colleges being full - I went to London, with other Missionary candidates where for six months I was tutored by Dr Kessen, an ex-Ceylon Missionary and a scholar.

The British Conference of 1863 appointed me to the charge of a training school at King's Point, Sierra Leone. But as my parents and the other family members were emigrating to New Zealand, and a Methodist ship-owner at Bristol had offered free passage for a Methodist minister to New Zealand, the Mission Home authorities sent me there. After a long and weary voyage of five months in the Royal Stuart, we reached Auckland in February, 1864.³

William had expected to join the Rev. Cort Schnackenberg at Raglan, but was prevented from doing so by the precarious state of Maori-European relations in the area and went instead to the Manukau circuit, south of Auckland, with responsibility for the Waiuku area. This was the northern frontier of the King Country where the Imperial Government was confiscating Maori land and handing it over to military settlers and thus Waiuku was being resettled by Pakeha farmers.⁴ As hostilities moved south the area began to stabilize and it became safer for a lone clergyman to move around. William travelled on horseback round the rough bush tracks of the circuit to the farms and small settlements, receiving a warm welcome in very basic conditions. He recalled:

A vivid recollection of my visit is cherished, when, on a moonlight night the few settlers had been gathered - had united in praise and prayer - a sermon had been delivered, and I, the young preacher spent the night in Mr Hawke's whare, with the springing fem as a mattress, and could study astronomy through the well-ventilated nikau covered roof after retiring. But we were young then, and the very novelty of the surroundings gave additional zest to the undertaking, while the hearty welcome given by the Hawkes, Roosees, Robinsons and others more than compensated [for] the difficulties of travelling.⁵

He also remembered:

The crossing of the Waikato River, often in a broken canoe, which had to be baled out constantly, with a strong current running, and the horse swimming behind, at first caused me some perturbation.⁶

³ *The Spectator*, 20 September 1922. p.754.

⁴ F G Glen, 'Methodism in Auckland During the Wars 1860-64', WHS, Vol. 16, 1 & 2, 1958, p.28.

⁵ William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1900, (Hereafter HMNZ), p.238.

⁶ HMNZ, p.238.

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His chosen field was that of missionary, not a country pastor to new settlers and it would have been a matter of regret to him that he could not evangelize among the Maori tribes around the old west coast mission stations. Nevertheless, from the first he threw himself into his work with an energy and thoroughness that was a lifelong trademark. However, less than six months after his arrival he suffered a serious illness. A parishioner, Mehetabel Newman wrote in a letter that:

...in our own circuit we are feeling very much the loss of Mr Morley's services dysentery has been followed by fever and it is thought now that consumption will follow.. .he was such a plain practical good preacher I never before sat under a ministry with so much pleasure and profit.⁷

He returned to his parents' home in Parnell to recuperate and despite predictions of consumption recovered full health. In 1865 he was stationed at the Parnell church and from 1866 travelled throughout the circuit from Auckland north to Whangarei and the northern Wairoa River, doing much evangelical ground-breaking work among the new settlers. The adventurous days of a young single minister-on-probation were coming to an end for, in 1867, he was received into full connexion by the Australasian Conference and assigned to the Hutt in Wellington.

In April, 1867, before leaving for Wellington William Morley and his fiancée Hannah Buttle were married.



Hannah Buttle 1866 - Gadd

⁷ WNP, folder 30, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 29 July 1864.

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Hannah was the eldest child and only daughter of Rev. George and Jane Buttle, who in 1844 went to the Te Kopua Mission Station on the Waipa river in the Waikato, two days walk from Kawhia, and about a ten day overland journey from Auckland. Hannah was born on the Station in January 1845. From about the age of seven she went to Auckland for her education, firstly at the home of Rev. Thomas Buddle and subsequently at Wesley College, staying with her Newman cousins in the term holidays. Jane Buttle, her mother, was in the heroic mould of missionary wives characterized by endurance and deep commitment. Her sister Mehetabel Newman, also a strong and determined woman, lived on the station with the Butties for long periods as an invaluable helper to Jane and George. Mehetabel was a prolific letter-writer and many other letters are preserved in the Turnbull Library, Wellington. They present a unique and fascinating view of life on the Te Kopua Station.

When Jane died in 1857 George returned to England with his eight children, where he itinerated as a circuit minister for five years. Because the climate of New Zealand was more beneficial to his health he returned, with his children and his sister-in-law Mehetabel and bought Spring Farm at Otahuhu, also preaching in the district as a supernumerary minister.⁸ Hannah involved herself in the church, playing the harmonium, conducting Sunday school classes and participating in all activities. She became friends with William Morley and Mehetabel reported:

Hannah is engaged to one of our young Ministers a Mr Morley. He is at present travelling in Auckland, he is a young man of promise and ability and we hope it will prove a desirable connection. His probation terminates at the end of the present connexional year when they will most probably be married.⁹

When they did marry Mehetabel wrote a long letter to her English relatives describing in great and interesting detail the events leading up to and following the ceremony, the clothes, the presents, the food and the departure of the couple by steamer to Wellington.¹⁰ One of Hannah's bridesmaids, her cousin Mary Atkin wrote:

The day was very fine, there were a great number of guests, the bride of course looked lovely, we the bridesmaids looked very well. The bridegroom was the happiest man... I had not seen Mr Morley before the morning of the wedding day - his personal appearance is not in his favour, but all who know him speak highly of him. I have seen Aunt Mehetabel once since the wedding... [she] had been very unwell, but was better again, the house did not look home-like without Hannah. I think Aunt will miss her very much she was such a lively companion for her and they have not many neighbours.¹¹

⁸ WNP, folder 30, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 29 July 1864.

⁹ WNP, folder 30, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 29 November 1866.

¹⁰ WNP, folder 31, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 1 May 1867.

¹¹ WNP, folder 2, letter from Mary Atkin to Sarah Newman, 29 May 1867.

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And Mary was right because soon afterwards Mehetabel wrote:

I cannot tell you how sad and sorrowful I feel at losing Hannah. She has been such a comfort in every respect, but I know it is all right. I have perfect confidence in Mr Morley, I feel satisfied he is the kind of man her mother would have approved. He is so worthy and besides a most excellent preacher. There was great anxiety to get him at several places.¹²



William Morley 1866 - Gadd

The Morleys were one year in Wellington and William recounted his introduction to the congregation, many of whom had been in the colony since 1840 and were in advanced years:

It was quite an ordeal for a young pastor to advise these Fathers of the Church in meetings for religious fellowship and to hear them relate the story of early days was very animating.¹³

¹² WNP, folder 35, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, undated, but shortly after the wedding.

¹³ HMNZ,p341.

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Then in 1868 they moved to Wanganui, where the circuit was in a bad state of disunity, and William had been sent up to make what he could of the situation. Hannah became pregnant in September 1868 and journeyed north to stay with her father and aunt at Spring Farm for a time.



Ridgway Street Church, Wanganui - Morley

In December Mehetabel lamented:

Our dear Hannah left us today. She has been with us eight weeks and I think I feel her leaving more than when she first went and what makes the parting more painful their district is so disturbed.¹⁴

By taking a moderate and constructive approach William re-vitalised the congregation and set about reviving the circuit property and finances. In just a year the circuit debt was extinguished and church property brought up to standard.¹⁵ Mehetabel wrote:

I went last week to see a lady from Wanganui, an intimate of Hannah's and Mr Morley's, she speaks so highly of William, says he has worked so hard and got their circuit into such different circumstances they have built him a new house and raised his salary to £225 and ultimately it is to be £250, he is not only a good Preacher but has such good administrative ability.¹⁶

I have heard such a good account of Hannah. A neighbour of ours has been south and spent four or five days with her, she says she looks so well and happy. I believe she has sent you a photograph of herself and William taken in Wellington. We like it so much, it is such an excellent one.¹⁷

¹⁴ WNP, folder 35, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 22 December [1868].

¹⁵ HMNZ, pp. 292-3.

¹⁶ WNP, folder 31, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 24 November 1869.

¹⁷ WNP, folder 31, letter from Mehetabel Newman to Sarah Newman, 29 November 1869.

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By the end of 1871, when William was relocated to Lyttelton, thanks to his patient and painstaking efforts the painstaking efforts the Wanganui circuit was in good heart.¹⁸



Lyttelton Church 1870 - Morley

Apparently this took its toll for, in June 1871 Mehetabel sounded a worried note:

According to the system Hannah and William have been removed this year, they are now appointed to Lyttelton and like the place and people very much, they have been received with so much kindness. William is proving himself a very valuable and efficient man. When he was sent to Wanganui the cause there was so low and everything trammelled with debt, he has left everything so prosperous and free of debt. He is an excellent preacher and so diligent and energetic. The worst is he is not very strong, the serious illness he had at our house undermined his constitution.¹⁹

Lyttelton had a debt of almost £250 remaining on the church, but true to form William soon had this eliminated and in 1873 was relocated to Wellington as Superintendent of the circuit. The debt here was £3,460, but, again, with typical efficiency William had this cleared by the end of 1874.²⁰

In 1875 Mehetabel proudly wrote:

Their society sold the house we saw them in and bought them a beautiful house on the Terrace, giving £1300 for it. It is the best preacher's house in New Zealand.²¹

¹⁸ **Bernard Gadd, 'William Morley 1842-1926: A Statesman of God Amongst Australasian Methodists: His Work in New Zealand', WHS, Vol.20, 1 & 2, 1964, pp.8-9**

¹⁹ **WNP, folder 32, letter from Mehetabel Newman to William Newman, 12 June 1871.**

²⁰ **Gadd, p. 10.**

²¹ **WNP, folder 33, letter from Mehetabel Newman to William Newman, 2 September, 1875.**

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By 1875 the Morleys had established a pattern of family and church life, moving from circuit to circuit as the church determined. William carried a full load of circuit duties and was a respected preacher with a growing reputation for building up church membership and putting finances on a sound footing. Hannah played her part:

Before marriage, and more conspicuously after it, she threw herself into the activities of church life with all the ardour and energy of her nature.

Discharging her home duties with scrupulous care, she found time to act as class leader in several circuits, to work with the ladies of the congregations for financial objects, and above all, to visit the poor and aged.²²

In 1876 the Morleys moved to Christchurch where William had been appointed Superintendent of the important Durham Street circuit. Of this move Hannah wrote to her uncle William:

We left Wellington three weeks after you were with us and although we are getting more accustomed to the place yet we do not like it as a place of residence nearly so well as Wellington. We do miss the scenery here there is nothing to be seen scarcely from any part of our house and it is so monotonous to have nothing but the opposite of the street to look at. You will be sorry to hear Mr Berry is on the sick list and has been for some time.... Mr Berry's absence throws a great deal more work upon my husband it seems to be his fate to have colleagues who break down.... The winter has been very fine but so very cold. I never remember such sharp frosts and so much of it. I enjoyed it very much. It was rather cold for my husband.²³



Durham Street Church - Morley

²² *The Advocate*, 25 June 1898, p.32.

²³ WNP, letter from Hannah Morley to William Newman, 19 October 1876.

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Morley's appointment to the Durham Street circuit gave him a heavy load of pastoral work and financial management, opening new churches or enlarging existing ones as well as some new connexional duties. From afar aunt Mehetabel worried:

I am sorry to tell you William Morley is far from well. He has worked much too hard the last year when he was made secretary of the Conference and Conference has now appointed him editor of *The Wesleyan*. He is completely prostrated. Mr Lewis says unless he has entire rest for a month or two he will have to sit down for a year or two.²⁴

While at Christchurch Morley was elected President of the 1879 New Zealand Conference. He was thirty-six years old, had been in the colony for fifteen years and an ordained minister for twelve.

In 1879 the Morleys moved to Auckland where William was superintendent of the Pitt Street circuit and chairman of the Auckland District.



Pitt Street Church - Morley

²⁴ WNP, folder 34, letter from Mehetabel Buttle to William Newman, 8 March 1877.

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He encountered his greatest challenge yet, in the form of a very burdensome debt of £4,000 on Pitt Street church, but within his three years he saw this cleared as well as a substantial church extension programme implemented. His achievement, together with her usual gloomy prognostication about his health was reported by aunt Mehetabel:

Mr Morley gets on well at Auckland, he draws large congregations and the finances are flourishing. £1,500 of church debt has been paid off during the past year. He works very hard, too hard I fear to hold on very long.²⁵

Hannah was not so happy with the move north. Shifting from one end of the country to the other was the lot of an itinerant minister's wife and children and invariably caused disruption. Hannah's Auckland cousins wrote:

Hannah has been out twice to see us, and all her children but we have not seen her husband yet. She has grown very stout and murmurs at our Auckland sun, so much that I begin to doubt whether it shines in the south at all. Pitt Street does not agree with the children, for they are constantly having the doctor for the croup or something.²⁶

Mr Morley and Hannah are living in Auckland now and Hannah hates it, the heat does not agree with her children, they have suffered from sore throats nearly ever since they have been there.²⁷

In 1881 Morley was part of the New Zealand delegation to the General Australasian Conference. Aunt Mehetabel found reason to be pleased:

One of their objects in going is to try and get a separate Conference for New Zealand. Mr Morley will be eight weeks from his circuit. In one respect we are glad, he was becoming so worn and prostrated with hard work that a rest had become necessity.²⁸

Whether he needed rest or not William led a determined battle for independence at the General Conference, but without success.²⁹ Defeat did no harm to his reputation, as his brother-in-law, Rev. J N Buttle reported:

I am hoping that brother Morley may come to Dunedin next April.... My own opinion is that Dunedin would be an infinite gainer by the change. Dunedin is deficient now in preaching power, and William's vigorous manly way of putting the claims of the Gospel is just what is I wanted. His ability as an

²⁵ WNP, folder 34, letter from Mehetabel Warren to William Newman, 11 October, 1880. Aunt Mehetabel had married the Rev. John Warren, a former Wesleyan missionary in 1878.

²⁶ WNP, folder 3, letter from Mary Atkin to William Newman, 1 March 1880.

²⁷ WNP, folder 5, letter from Carrie Buckland to William Newman, 3 July 1880.

²⁸ WNP, folder 35, letter from Mehetabel Newman to William Newman, 23 May 1881.

²⁹ Australasian Conference Minutes, 1881, p.28.

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administrator, and his enterprise in church extension, would also find a large sphere in this provincial district, where there is plenty of room for such work. Every year seems to add to his popularity and influence, and during the recent General Conference at Adelaide, he seems to have been accorded a front rank position. All the papers speak in highly eulogistic terms of his speech in support of an independent Conference for New Zealand.³⁰

In 1882 they were back in Christchurch, on which occasion, aunt Mehetabel, ever-mindful of William's physical condition had this to say:

The Morleys have gone which I deeply regret. At the farewell service the night before he left they presented him with a purse of £81. If life is spared I think it will be many years before they come north again, they prefer the south so much. He will have more leisure at St Albans and he greatly needs it. I think he would succumb to have the strain he has had in Auckland, but he is a hard and constant worker and so methodical and so systematic that he accomplishes a great deal.³¹

The move back to Christchurch in 1882 was the start of Morley's transition from Circuit minister to full-time national official, taking on more responsibilities each year. In 1883 he was appointed General Secretary of the Church Building and Loan Fund, effectively the fund-raiser and financier for church expansion. He was required to manage the Fund as well as raise its capital and this entailed considerable travel and he visited every circuit and almost every preaching station from the Bay of Islands to Riverton.

In 1884 Morley was again elected President of the New Zealand Conference and in 1885 relocated to Dunedin, retaining his responsibilities as Secretary of the Building and Loan Fund. By 1887 it was clear to his colleagues that Morley was in great need of a rest and the Conference of that year arranged a trip to England. It seems that he may have been near to a serious breakdown. William and Hannah sailed from Wellington on the steamship *Ionic* in March 1888, for a six-week voyage via Cape Horn. This was probably the most restful period for them of their ten months holiday, for on arrival he wrote:

I think I am decidedly better. Though not yet strong, have lost that feeling of weariness which I had for some months before leaving, and trust soon to quite recover tone.³²

By July he was writing that he had greatly benefited by the change and was enjoying himself beyond all that he had ever imagined possible.³³ This did not mean that he was

³⁰ WNP, folder 13, letter from Rev. Joseph Newman Buttle to William Newman, 6 October, 1881.

³¹ WNP, folder 35, letter from Mehetabel Warren to William Newman, 22 April 1882.

³² *N Z Methodist*. (Hereafter NZM), 2 June, 1888, p.6.

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quietly resting in the countryside, but rather that he was buzzing with excitement at seeing British life at Methodism at first hand.

They went first to aunt Mehetabel at Louth in Lincolnshire. Mehetabel had returned to Louth after the death of her second husband, Rev. John Warren. She would not have been surprised to find William needing a rest, but was no doubt pleased to see him having one. Morley went down to London to attend a full series of public meetings on religious and related topics. He wrote regular letters to the *New Zealand Methodist* - eighteen over the next nine months, full of information on British Methodism and showing William and Hannah to be constantly on the move. He addressed the English Wesleyan Conference at Cambourne,³⁴ and also the Irish Methodist Conference along the same lines.³⁵



Mrs Warren (Mehetabel?) - Morley

Although they travelled extensively in Britain it appeared that William was learning from experience, as he advised his readers:

³³ NZM, 18 August, 1888, p.6.

³⁴ NZM, 15 September 1888, p.4.

³⁵ NZM, 1 September 1888, p.4.

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After considerable hesitation I have determined to forego my projected trip to America. For many years I have felt a great interest in the United States and Canada, and should have greatly enjoyed the opportunity of observing the working of their civil and ecclesiastical institutions on the spot. But my visit must necessarily have been hurried, and would have involved rapid and extensive travelling. It seemed therefore to be my duty by taking things more quietly to more fully recruit strength for future service....³⁶

In November they returned home, arriving just in time for William to attend the 1889 New Zealand Conference and to be appointed Secretary of the Jubilee Fund - another major exercise to raise funds for church extension. He described the difficulties of constant travel:

Journeyings often are a necessary part of the experience of the Jubilee secretary. During my work in the Nelson district, in addition to the journeys by steamer and rail, I had at least five hundred miles of coaching. Coach travelling in fine sunny weather is very enjoyable. To sit behind four spanking nags, well handled by a competent whip, and travel over a well-kept road at the rate of often miles an hour, few things arc more exhilarating. But with driving storms of rain, and bitterly cold gales, to sit for several hours a day (in two or three cases twelve hours), and the only view you get of scenery from one side of the coach curtains is a joy which can only be known by experience. You cannot read: if you attempt to sleep, contact of the cranium with the top of the coach induces you to think better of it, while every now and then a jolt, threatening to send you out head foremost, reminds you that the roads have not all the smoothness of an asphalt pavement. Such was my experience for twelve days, a spell of exceptionally bad weather continuing from the time of leaving Nelson till arrival in Christchurch. I mention the fact to show that the ideas of those who think the Jubilee Secretary's appointment means a very enjoyable year's holiday, are not quite in accordance with facts. The compensation was in the earnest warmth and piety of the friends who gathered at our meetings....³⁷

The results of this year of effort were firstly, a total sum from contributions of £9,138 to add to the capital base of the Church, secondly a resurgence of religious conviction among the membership and thirdly a strengthening of the view that the central connexional direction could produce results that could not be otherwise matched. And of course it also confirmed Morley as the leading Methodist of his day.

In 1891 he went overseas again, this time to the Second Methodist Ecumenical Conference in Washington, USA. Again he sent back detailed accounts of the conference, his oilier experiences in the United States and Canada and his observations on Methodism in America. On returning to New Zealand, it was only a

³⁶ NZM, 27 October, 1888, p.4.

³⁷ NZM, 22 November 1890, p.6.

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matter of months before he took up his new positions as principal of Three Kings theological institution and chairman of the Auckland District. Among his papers there is a note written at 11pm on his fiftieth birthday in 1892:

I am this day 50 years of age. My devout thanks are due to the God of Providence and the God of grace for all his Mercy and Love. The language of Ps 23. v.6 is mine. Renewed consecration is required.

The greater part of my life is gone. Oh that the remaining days or months may be spent to purpose.

I purpose for my children to record in writing some events of my early days. And the last 20 years especially have been heavy ones and no lengthened diary has been kept I purpose also giving some brief a/c of my work during those years. Feel how little has been done. God strengthen me for future.³⁸

This restless spirit was not to be satisfied by less than maximum effort, and maybe not even then.

The church was then at a stage when continuing oversight and direction of the connexional funds had become highly desirable and so after three years of debate and argument the position of Connexional Secretary was established and Morley appointed to it in 1893. Then followed perhaps the most challenging and difficult period of his life. The position was extremely onerous, requiring much travel and public-speaking, and in 1895 wrote to the Connexional Committee resigning the position. He said, in part:

My reasons for so doing are that I do not feel longer equal to the heavy labour involved in long journeymings and incessant speaking which the appointment of Organising Secretary of the Home Missions requires, in addition to the other duties of the office. Nor do I think I am justified in subjecting myself and family to the strain which such long and frequent absences from home involves. It appears also that my work in this department fails to give satisfaction to a majority of the Home Mission Executive Committee. Further, judging from the past, it seems unlikely that the amount required from the Church Building and Loan Fund towards the annual working expenses will be raised by the churches benefited, so that to meet the outlay, it would be necessary to entrench upon the Capital, a course to which I could not possibly consent.

... I relinquish the office [in] the hope and strong wish that it should be not only maintained but strengthened. A younger man than myself and one with fewer family claims would not feel the strain so much, and a brother going fresh into

³⁸ **Held in the Morley Collection in the Archives of the Uniting Church, Melbourne. Verse 6 of Psalm 23: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."**

William Morley – A man for his time

the work might see what I have overlooked, and evoke an amount of sympathy and enthusiasm for the consolidation and extension of our Church work which I have been unable to do.³⁹

A most distressing matter, not mentioned in the letter, was that Hannah had been diagnosed with a critical heart condition that could at any time be fatal. The strain this imposed on the family can only be imagined, especially on those children still living at home, (daughters Mabel, Ethel and Lilian aged 24, 22 and 20 respectively and Arthur, aged 17 and Frank, 11). Nevertheless, the 1896 New Zealand Conference reappointed William Connexional Secretary with modified duties, curtailing some of his travelling.⁴⁰

From 1894 to 1897 Morley was the President of the General Conference of the Australasian Church, a position of influence, but little power, and which did not add substantially to his duties. In 1898 he was conferred Doctor of Divinity by the prestigious Emory and Henry College in the United States, confirming his reputation in international Methodism.

But in 1898 Hannah succumbed to her illness. She died in June, much mourned by her family. Tributes were paid in the church papers and condolences were sent by congregations from all parts of the colony. Further reductions in William's traveling duties were made, but this did not mean rest from work as he was given the added responsibility of Secretary of the Connexional Fire Insurance Fund. And several years later saw the completion and publication of *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*.

In his address to the 1897 General Conference he pointed to the need for the Supernumerary Fund, which was financially unsound, to be fully examined. The Conference took this up, the end result of which was that Morley was transferred to Melbourne to reform and revive the Fund. Despite loud and continuing protests from the New Zealand brethren, and over the reluctance of William to leave his adopted country he was removed to Melbourne in 1902, immediately following the New Zealand Conference of that year. The Conference, meeting in Dunedin, gave him a stirring farewell and many heartfelt and long speeches were made, paying him tribute. To these William replied:

If I have been pertinacious, and brethren have sometimes thought me unduly persistent in urging the claims of this loan fund and the necessity of keeping the rules strictly, the fact that I have put my shoulder to the wheel of that burden I might plead in extenuation of that fault. I do not claim not to have made mistakes, but I do claim that I have never sought any personal end and had never tried to accomplish any scheme that was not in my judgment for the extension and building up of our Church in New Zealand.

³⁹ **Minute Book of the Connexional Secretaryship Committee, July, 1895.**

⁴⁰ **Conference Minutes, 1896, p.97.**

William Morley – A man for his time

If asked why I am going, my answer is that the power to which I have given my life - my Church - calls me to it, and it seems to be my duty to go.. I would prefer to stay in New Zealand - for I am bound to it by the living and the dead. There are ties of friendship that constrain me to do my very utmost to remain in this colony. I am not tired of New Zealand, and do not feel I could not do any more work here; but I am going without any feeling of elation.⁴¹

At a public meeting in Dunedin that same evening public farewells were made. This was attended by the Premier of New Zealand R J Seddon, who referred to William as:

Energetic, whole-souled, broad-minded, liberal - any country that lost a man of that stamp must feel it...

[responding Morley said that he] ...had been brought into personal contact as Connexional Secretary with three Premiers of the colony

- Sir Harry Atkinson, the Hon. John Balance and the present occupant of the office - and he desired to bear testimony to the unvarying readiness to respond and promptness to answer communications sent in connection with legislative matters affecting the Church.⁴²

In March 1903 he married Grace Henderson Webster in Melbourne.



Grace Henderson Morley - Gadd

⁴¹ *The Outlook*, 15 March, 1902, pp.30-1.

⁴² *The Outlook*, 22 March 1902, pp.27-8.

William Morley – A man for his time

Grace was aged forty-two and had been a nurse and Staff Sister at Christchurch Hospital in the 1890s before serving as a nurse in the Boer War from 1900 to 1902. (Rev. Quick officiated at the second marriage William Morley to Grace Webster in 1903.)

Their son Ian was born a year later. In his years at Melbourne William took on a full load of pastoral and other duties, preaching, serving on many committees and maintaining a continuing interest in New Zealand. William Morley retired in 1922, aged eighty, and died four years later.

Now to some of his exceptional achievements - firstly as:

Journalist & Historian

In 1877, he was appointed editor of *The New Zealand Wesleyan*, the monthly journal of the church of some 24 pages of local, national and international church news, comment, worthy tales and advertisements. He was editor for four years in 1877-8 and 1882. His editorials were always to the point, reflecting the views of the Church and stimulating discussion on a variety of topics, usually taking a liberal and progressive standpoint.

Morley's editorship of the *The New Zealand Wesleyan* was part of a remarkable literary output. He was a prodigious letter-writer and contributor to the Methodist papers in New Zealand and Melbourne. He was a correspondent of the *Christian Advocate* of Nashville, Tennessee for over twenty years.⁴³ Morley's contribution to *The New Zealand Wesleyan* was not limited to editorial duties. From his first year as editor he began pressing for the journal to be published weekly rather than monthly, quoting examples from the other conferences of the Australasian connexion and making various funding proposals. He put a resolution to the 1879 Conference, but the financial obstacles were not easily overcome and it was not until 1884 that the new weekly, *The New Zealand Methodist* appeared under the editorship of Rev. W J Williams.

In addition to his journalistic output, which was primarily about the policies and development of the church his other publications are more historical. His first major work was *The Doctrinal and Ecclesiastical Position of the Methodist Church*, a lecture delivered to the 1887 Conference. This is a masterly coverage of the theological foundations of Methodism and its relation to other creeds, the fundamental position of human sin and personal salvation, Christian perfection and the other doctrinal features. The ecclesiastical review covered various orders of the Christian churches, touching on the controversy of apostolic succession, Methodist polity and government, the itineracy and evangelism and some possible reforms. Anyone believing Morley to be simply a strong-minded administrator will find upon reading this a basis of scholarship and intellectual capacity out of the ordinary.

⁴³ *The Spectator*. 20 September 1922, p.754.

William Morley – A man for his time

His second published work, *Australasian Methodism its Position, Needs, and Outlook* was his address as retiring President of the Australasian General Conference in 1897. A work of some 7,000 words it reviewed the past three years of his presidency, touching on his particular interest in mission work and the desperate need for the Supernumerary Fund to be fully examined. Again, the scope of his review and the analytical power brought to bear on the theme is exceptional.

There is *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, of 1900, of over 500 pages, hundreds of photographs and perhaps close to half a million words. This is an incomparable work for its time, certainly unmatched in Australasian Methodism and probably unequalled in any Australasian church. Assuredly much of the information was provided by contributions from ministers and office-bearers, but there was also a solid basis of research, particularly in 'The Maori Mission' and the clear and consistent prose show the hand of Morley the author. By the time he produced it Morley had visited all the circuits and mission stations in the Colony at least twice and had worked in all major centres over thirty-six years. Apart from a few minor errors its accuracy and authenticity reflect this experience. It is still a valuable primary resource for the historian as well as a great gift to the Church.

In 1904 he wrote *Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund*, a report to the General Conference of 1904 and to Methodist Church members generally. This was a comprehensive review, of over 10,000 words, of what was then perhaps the most controversial issue of all within the Church, of which more will be said later in this lecture.

Also in 1904 he contributed a section on New Zealand to *A Colony in the Pacific*, published by Rev. James Colwell, a work of thirty pages, about 15,000 words. Another accomplishment was as:

Preacher Morley

It is important to say something about him as a preacher for two reasons: firstly because, to him, it characterized him as an evangelist before everything else; and secondly because it was the power and quality of his preaching that drew congregations to attend his services, to take pleasure in his sermons and to give financial support to his church. He thought of himself as an evangelical preacher all his life from his first attempt as a seventeen year old in a Lincolnshire village to a congregation composed of farm labourers, artisans and shopkeepers.⁴⁴

He preferred to persuade by logic rather than coerce by fear and there is a fine example of his mature preaching in a report of a sermon he gave as President of the Conference in 1884 on the subject of 'The Kingship of Christ'. After an introduction of the text (Philippians ii, 9,11) and an explanation of the universality of Christ's Kingdom in scriptural terms he went on to say:

⁴⁴ *The Advocate*, 18 August 1894, p. 1.

William Morley – A man for his time

...the natural treasures of the earth are to be consecrated to the spread and extension of this Kingdom. This shall take place though we do not now see it. Instead of immense sums spent in keeping up standing armies, and in naval defence, they shall be poured into the churches' treasury, and used in the spread of the Gospel.

[On the question of when this might happen he thought that]... The signs of the times are encouraging. The Kingdom is progressing.

Science and literature today are doing homage to the Cross of Christ. Protestant nations are in the very van of the world's progress. The principle of arbitration is growing. Heathen lands are being flooded with the light of the Gospel.⁴⁵

Morley was clearly in the very van of Victorian positivism and Imperial Christianity. We should not allow our twenty-first century perspectives to reject the perceived validity of what was a powerful and compelling message to his hearers and no doubt delivered with utter conviction. Our Victorian forefathers are often an easy target of abuse or derision when they should be they should be viewed in a more authentic mirror of their own times.⁴⁶

In a sermon preached in Durham Street Church on the Third Jubilee of Methodism in 1889 he presented a comprehensive review of the history of the Church interwoven with theological insights and evangelical exhortations that must have been both instructive and inspirational to its audience.⁴⁷

He preached continuously from 1859 until his retirement in 1922 aged eighty. He remained on the Melbourne preaching plan until he was seventy-five and continued to take Sunday services long after he had given up most other church work. On his retirement it was said:

He has put most of the Circuits in the two Melbourne districts under obligation by the service which he has so freely rendered in their pulpits, in which he has shown himself an able expositor, and has never lost his evangelistic zeal. His gift of public prayer is remarkable.⁴⁸

Another important area of endeavour was as:

The Educationalist

William Morley had a life-long active interest in education, from Sunday school to tertiary, both within the Church and in a broader social context. In this he was putting into his work the value of self-betterment that was so deep a part of Methodism. He

⁴⁵ *NZ Wesleyan*, 1 March 1884, p.53.

⁴⁶ For reports of other sermons see Gadd, pp.20-23.

⁴⁷ *NZ Wesleyan*. 11 January 1890, pp.2-3.

⁴⁸ *Victoria and Tasmania Conference Minutes, 1922*, p. 10.

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believed it to be the responsibility of a Methodist minister to foster education shown in a statement in his presidential address to the 1879 New Zealand Conference in which he:

...urged the importance of culture for the work of the ministry, never, however, overlooking the fact that modern culture should be blended with ancient devotion.⁴⁹

One hundred and twenty years ago the word culture meant well-educated or refined. Morley could not call himself cultured in the sense of having received a higher education, but he had made it his business to be familiar with modern theological studies and to keep abreast of social and political developments and international politics. He was not a simplistic thinker and was careful in his choice of words, often blending different, even contrasting, ideas into a consistent and refined view of the world. This complexity was exemplified in his viewpoint on educational matters which was a balance between secular education and biblical knowledge, or as he put it the blending of modern culture with ancient devotion.

He wrote many letters and contributed articles to the Church papers on the subject. He initiated the formation of the Sunday School Union of which he was the first chairman. In 1878 he published a substantial and well-researched article of some 3,000 words in *The New Zealand Wesleyan* - effectively a blueprint for the future teaching and administration of the schools, including the qualification of the teachers.⁵⁰ This was the time of the new Education Act, which provided for free, compulsory and secular education for primary school children - an act which effectively destroyed the Wesleyan day schools, but gave added impetus to the Sunday schools as places of religious teaching. Morley had himself attended Methodist Sunday and day schools and his claim to have memorized the New Testament is that of an exceptional pupil.

As well as theoretical and administrative service contributions, in 1892 he was appointed Principal and Theological Tutor of Three Kings College (also sometimes called Wesley College) with the task, as Chairman of the Higher Education Trust, of establishing the new school, called confusingly, both Prince Albert College and Wesley College. He was also elected Chairman of the Auckland District, with preaching duties.

In 1892 the Three Kings College had a roll of fourteen boarders. There were also two students for the European ministry and one for the Maori ministry. The boarders were given elementary education in return for which the boys helped on the farm attached

⁴⁹ *NZ Wesleyan*, 1 February 1879, p.26.

⁵⁰ *NZ Wesleyan*, 1 October 1878.

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to the school. The theological students received training and were expected to assist with the tuition of the boarders in English.⁵¹

Hannah who had, it will be remembered, spent the first eleven years of her life at Te Kopua mission station, and was familiar with Maori language and culture was evidently pleased to be at the College and lavished her maternal love on the boys, while William gave them a basic education.⁵² In the meantime plans went ahead for the new Prince Albert College, aiming to provide a school that would give an education up to matriculation, with provision for boarding students who attended the university and combining this with a theological wing.⁵³



Hannah Morley - Gadd

When he became Connexional Secretary in 1893 he retained his chairmanship of the Higher Education Trust and his interest in education. His next foray was to be elected on to the Board of Governors of Canterbury College (later Canterbury University) in 1897. The Board was then responsible for the College, the Agricultural College at Lincoln, Christchurch Boy's High School, Christchurch Girl's High School, the Canterbury School of Art, Canterbury Museum and the Canterbury Public Library. He remained on the Board until his removal to Melbourne, taking the Chair from time to

⁵¹ Gadd, p.36.

⁵² Gadd, p.36.

⁵³ NZM, 15 October 1892, pp.6-7.

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time and serving on a special committee set up in 1898 to consider problems raised by declining student numbers at the College.⁵⁴

During his term he proposed what seems in retrospect a remarkable innovation. In June 1900 he moved a resolution to enable the College to provide University Extension lectures in various centres in Canterbury. The proposal was referred to a sub-committee of which he was convenor. In November the sub-committee presented a report containing overseas experience and expert opinion, views of New Zealand educationalists, examining local conditions and supporting the proposal. The Board approved the report and established the Special Council with Morley as secretary, which then drew up a constitution and commenced its business.⁵⁵

Several points may be made: As a churchman Morley might have been expected to be suspicious of the secular content of university courses - there had been editorial complaints in *The New Zealand Wesleyan* about the salacious nature of some Greek literature used in courses - but he was wholehearted in his support in principle of the dispersal of knowledge. His own travels and lectures around the circuits must have convinced him that extension lectures would have been welcome, at least among those to whom he lectured, who were in the main Methodists. From the titles of his lectures, it may reasonably be supposed that they were well-salted with facts and information and more 'educational' than a Sunday sermon. Whatever the case, his contribution to the Canterbury College Board is a solid tribute to his breadth of vision and commitment to education.

Queen's College

It appears that Morley might have made a condition of his acceptance of removal to Melbourne a seat on the Council of Queen's College, because even before he arrived he was elected to the Council by the Victoria and Tasmania Methodist Conference. He remained on the Council for twenty-two years, even after his retirement from all other Church duties. Queen's College, an affiliate of Melbourne University, was founded in 1887, erected on a piece of land adjacent to the University, granted by the Victorian Government to the Methodist Church. The first President was the Rev. William Quick one of the prime founders of the College. He remained President until 1909 when declining health forced him to retire. He was succeeded by Morley who held the position until 1925.

In 1903 Morley was appointed to the Finance Committee and in 1904, and with F J Cato a Treasurer of the special building fund committee. The procedure was that the Council met quarterly and the Finance Committee met monthly - in effect as the executive committee of the College together with the Master. The Building Fund

⁵⁴ **Canterbury College Board of Governors minutes of meetings, 1897-1902, held at MacMillan Brown Library, Canterbury University.**

⁵⁵ **ibid.**

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Committee met as required and was engaged in continuous fund-raising for building extension and debt liquidation. Thus Morley was involved early on with the general oversight of the College, with its monthly operations through the Finance Committee and its future enlargement through the building committee.⁵⁶ C living Benson recorded:

Dr Morley became President of the Queen's College Council when its finances were a burden. The courageous scheme to liquidate the debt and extend the buildings was initiated by him.⁵⁷

His fund-raising experience was brought to bear in two major projects - one prior to the First World War and one after. The first of these was the completion of the eastern facade of the main building in 1910. The second was a much more ambitious project. The Council decided to build a central main tower (the Sugden Tower) and complete a new front wing (the Tweddle Wing) and to finance it mainly from contributions from members of the Church, from various funds from well-wishers. The projected cost was in the vicinity of £40,000 which must have seemed daunting, but Morley's sense of vision, his experience of fund-raising and pragmatic commitment to the task surely gave it every chance of success. Techniques utilized in New Zealand were repeated - obtaining substantial contributions from affluent members, acknowledging these publicly, following up with requests to the ordinary membership and publication in *The Spectator* of all contributions, no matter how large or small. In addition W T Hattam was appointed as the agent of the Council to carry out fund-raising work in the manner that Morley had perfected in his campaign for the Jubilee Fund. Hattam travelled to all the circuits in Victoria and Tasmania and spoke at many meetings throughout the states. Morley himself undertook some of this work. The result was a resounding success, the new wing being opened in 1924. Morley, although a supernumerary, was President when this mammoth task was completed and able to preside at the celebrations that accompanied it. In the following year however declining health finally caught up with him and he was unable to continue. The Council, recognizing his great contribution over twenty-two years, designated him President Emeritus, which title he retained to the end of his life.

His reputation as an administrator is well known, but a few brief points can be made:

Administrator

The ordinary contributions of church members and adherents was sufficient only for the operating expenses. Recognising the need for capital investment to finance church expansion Morley incorporated the role of fund-raiser into his repertoire, first at the district level and then nationally. In addition he was a highly competent fund-manager

⁵⁶ **Minutes of the Queen's College Council, held in the Archives of the Queen's College Library.**

⁵⁷ **Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, Melbourne, 1935, p.335.**

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and under his care every precious pound was to be properly husbanded and wisely spent. In his motivation he was expansionist - in his method prudent - a successful formula at a time when church membership was growing rapidly and the demand for churches, parsonages, halls and ministers was surging. His work as Secretary of the Supernumerary Fund exemplifies his outstanding administrative capacity. The huge debate that took place in the Australasian conferences about the Supernumerary Fund, also known as the Worn Out Preachers' Fund, is too complex to be dealt with here, but it was the pinnacle of his success as first class church manager.

Finally –

The Statesman

That he had a national and international reputation as an outstanding church leader has been well-proven, but what of the term Statesman of God often applied to him? It is essentially an assessment of his contemporaries and I believe reflects his broad range of interests and his progressive attitude. There is evidence of this in the areas of achievement referred to above. An instance may be seen in the 1906 Victoria and Tasmania Conference minutes where his name appears on no less than ten committees, as well as the Queen's College Council, the Wesley College Council and the Board of the Theological Institution.

The use of the term 'liberal' by Seddon is intriguing. Morley was certainly a liberal in ecclesiastical matters and it would not be surprising if he had a similar political affiliation. Photographs of his daughters show them in the company of liberal Members of the House of Representatives, G J Smith and Tommy Taylor, among others. Taylor was a fierce temperance reformer, an independent liberal and a political foe of Seddon. Morley favoured the church taking an interest in social issues. The pastoral address of the 1879 Conference, of which he was president, urged members of the Church to stand for local and national political office to bring their influence for good into community life "...not from motives of ambition, but from earnest loyalty to Christ and love to the common weal."⁵⁸ It is not too much to suggest then that Morley was a middle of the road liberal party supporter, as many of his brethren would also have been.

He was not one to hide his views and did not have a retiring nature. He was a driving force of those projects to which he gave himself wholeheartedly and a formidable opponent of those he believed wrong or fruitless. At his death in 1926 many tributes were paid to his memory, acknowledging the fine contribution he made to his faith and church.

His life and work record speaks for itself, but what of the person? Australian commentators who were his contemporaries have tended to portray him as a conservative. His adversary in the Supernumerary Fund battle, Rev. J E Carruthers:

⁵⁸ NZ Conference Minutes, 1879, p. 50.

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He did not lay claim to any special gifts or attainments in scholarship or oratory. But he was what Methodists delight to describe as a good all-round man. Good as a preacher, good as a man of affairs, good as a committeeman and debater, there was no department in which Dr. Morley was not able to give a good account of himself and render service of value... Naturally disposed to be conservative, Dr Morley has moved with the times in many directions. An early tendency to be somewhat autocratic has yielded to the mellowing influences of age and deepening piety.⁵⁹

C Irving Benson, author of the definitive history of Victorian Methodism, followed Carruther's view:

Naturally conservative, he was always adding to his capacity for service. An early tendency to autocracy mellowed as he grew in age and grace.⁶⁰

Dr Sugden, Master of Queen's College and a very influential Methodist of his day, remarked after working with Morley for sixteen years:

I suppose I am a little impulsive and optimistic and Dr Morley's wise and prudent counsel saved me many times.⁶¹

I do not find the Australian assessments very persuasive. Morley went to Australia at the age of sixty, his determined and driven nature tempered by experience. But there is no evidence that he was a conservative, either in theological or ecclesiastical matters, and not even in the broader political sense. While in New Zealand he fought and lost some major battles at Australasian Conferences which were usually seen as too progressive, but some of which, it may be added, were eventually introduced.

The assessment of his New Zealand contemporaries is more to the point. President Rev. J J Lewis at 1902 annual New Zealand Conference referred to Morley as a liberal and progressive ecclesiastical statesman, a view he did not dispute in his response.⁶² Pertinacious he himself admitted to and this record bears out. Rev. W J Williams, himself of liberal views, was almost invariably a supporter of Morley in his time as editor of *The New Zealand Methodist*, and treats him very fairly in *Centenary Sketches of New Zealand Methodism*.⁶³ When Morley was appointed Connexional Secretary Williams commented that it was one of the wisest things the New Zealand Conference had ever done adding:

⁵⁹ J.E., Carruthers, *Lights in the Southern Sky: Pen Portraits of Early Preachers and Worthies of Australian Methodism*, Sydney, 1924, pp.81-2.

⁶⁰ Benson, p.334.

⁶¹ Owen Pamaby, *Queen s College University of Melbourne: A Centenary History*, Melbourne, 1990, p. 114.

⁶² *The Outlook*, 15 March 1902, pp.30-1.

⁶³ W.J.Williams, *Centenary Sketches of N.Z. Methodism*, Christchurch, 1922, pp.210-5.

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In our American Episcopal Church he would have been laid hold of, and consecrated a bishop years ago... at last [the Conference] has recognized that the claims of the Connexion, as a whole, are paramount in importance, and the appointment was made by a practically unanimous vote.⁶⁴

Although not a contemporary, Hames observes that he was dominating and not always popular, surely an opinion based on contemporary views.⁶⁵ It should be noted however that Morley was only one among a number of strong, sometimes dominating personalities.

The comments of a lay official of a circuit visited by Morley during the Jubilee Fund campaign appeal to this biographer:

As night after night he discoursed as a man only can whose heart is all aglow with his theme, on such subjects as 'Fifty Years of Colonial Methodism,' 'The Life and Times of Wesley,' 'The Early Methodist Preachers,' 'The Church's Obligations, and the World's Indebtedness to Methodism,' 'The Need of a Forward Movement in New Zealand.' I was deeply impressed with the fact, that as a Church, we owe a great debt of gratitude to God for such a man as Mr Morley who appears to combine in himself the sagacity of a statesman, the ability of a financier, and the fervour of an evangelist. Truth to tell, as he mustered and marshalled his facts and figures, I put him down as a living Encyclopedia of Methodism.⁶⁶

Perhaps the last word may be left to Rev. Rugby Pratt, a younger contemporary of Morley's, an incumbent of the position of Connexional Secretary and a church historian of note, writing in 1930:

There was no office in the church that he did not fill and fill worthily. He was a statesman in the kingdom of God, an outstanding man of affairs, a capable editor and historian, a gifted preacher, and a great spiritual force in all the work of the church.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *NZ Methodist*, 22 April 1893.

⁶⁵ E.W. Hames, *Out of the Common Way: The European Church in the Colonial Era 1840-1913*, WHS, Vol 27, 3&4, 1972, pp.63, 110

⁶⁶ *NZM*, 23 August, 1890, p.6.

⁶⁷ *The NZ Methodist Times*, July 26, 1930, p.30.



“The History of Methodism in New Zealand”, detail of front cover - *Morley*

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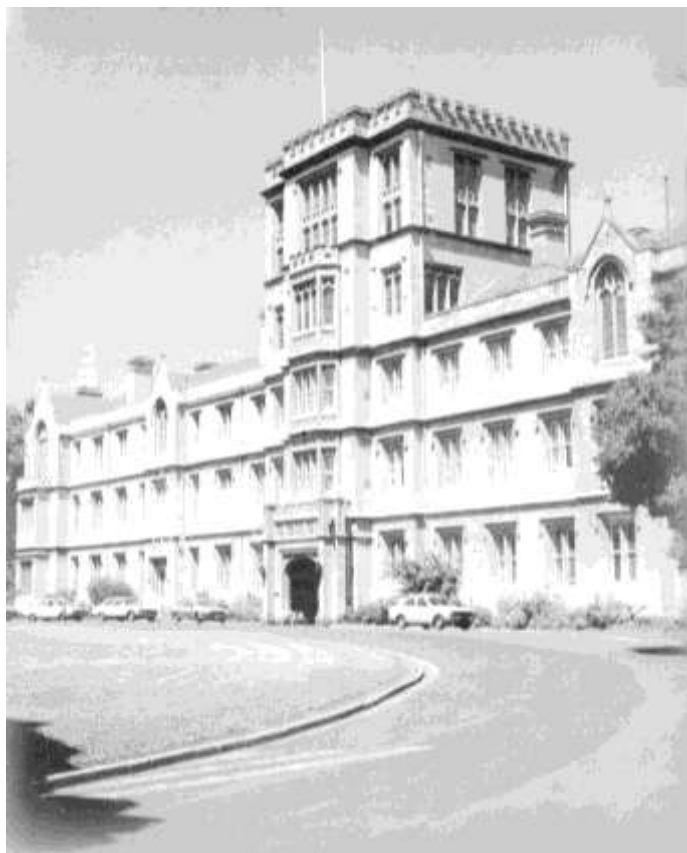
WILLIAM MORLEY

President of Queen's College 1909-25

**Address to
The Friends of Queen's College Library,
Melbourne University**

**given by
William F F Thomas MA
31 October 2004**

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Melbourne University



**Queen's College, the Sugden Tower and North Wing, opened 1923 - Parnahy
Wesley Historical Society (NZ) 2005**

Preface

I am honoured to be invited to give this talk on William Morley and I would like to think that the man himself would be pleased that an occasion had been found to remember his work for the College. I would like to thank Louise Elliot, the College Librarian, for her help over several weeks as I researched this topic in the Library. I must also thank Colyn Storer, Morley's grand-daughter and genealogist of Sydney for her help and for doing me the honour of being here today. Ian Breward, eminent church historian of the United church and expatriate New Zealander, like Morley, was also helpful to me during several days research. Finally I must thank Dr Peter Lineham of Massey University, on whom I rely for his wonderful enthusiasm for this branch of historical study as well as his searching and penetrating comments on my work.

Introduction

The Rev. Dr William Morley was a member of Queens College Council from 1902 until 1925 and President from 1909. In this talk I shall deal firstly with the background to his appointment to Council, then with the educational and other skills and experience he brought to the position and end with his contribution to the College as both Council member and President.

My purpose is to present a picture of Morley which is relevant to his work at Queen's, namely his strengths as a financial administrator and as an educationalist. Although I have spent quite a number of days researching this topic, I have to admit there are large gaps in the story. Materials, such as private notes and letters are few and far between. In contrast to many ministers with missionary training Morley did not keep a diary. I have therefore relied heavily on his extensive published writings, and the formal records of the Church as well as reports in various Methodist publications. As to his time on the College Council, I had relied on the written records held in the Library, reports in *The Spectator* and on Dr Owen Parnaby's fine centenary history of the College.

Background

The background to Morley's arrival in Melbourne and appointment to the Council is as follows, in 1902 he was transferred by the Australasian Conference of the Methodist Church from Christchurch in New Zealand to Melbourne to take up the position of secretary treasurer of the Ministers' Supernumerary Fund. It is worth spending a moment or two explaining this fairly unusual event. Ministerial itineracy within connexions requiring a change of location every three years was still strictly enforced at the time. It seldom applied from one Australian state to another or across the Tasman, and when it did it was usually as an exchange of ministers, or for special reasons and with the consent of the ministers concerned. Nevertheless the New Zealand and Australian Connexions were both parts of a united Australasian Church

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so there were no 'technical problems' - and it was also quite common among Congregationalists and Baptists.

Morley was sixty years of age in 1902, very well established in Christchurch as virtually the permanent Secretary of the New Zealand Connexion and settled with a family, and therefore the move to Melbourne was no small matter for him. Nor was it a small matter for the church, as in 1902 ministerial superannuation for all the New Zealand and Australian Conferences was managed by the Australasian Conference in Melbourne and this superannuation was in very serious trouble.

A form of superannuation for ministers had been in place since the earliest days of Methodism. In 1749 Wesley himself created a fund for what he termed old and sickly preachers that was later variously called the Aged Ministers' Fund and the Worn Out Ministers' Fund. The Fund was regularized in 1765 when regulations were adopted to standardize the circuit contributions and payments to recipients. It was transplanted to the Australasian colonies, where, by 1900 it had become the Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund. The rigid enforcement of the Itineracy and the prohibition on ministers undertaking business for profit made some form of pension a crucial condition of service in colonial Australasian Methodism. A pamphlet produced for the New Zealand Conference of 1883 noted:

On condition of you giving yourself wholly to the work of the Ministry we undertake to supply all your reasonable wants - first as single men; then as married; next as fathers according to the number of your children; and lastly as through age and infirmities, no longer capable of full Ministerial duty... The principle on which our Ministers are paid, is that of maintenance, not remuneration.⁶⁸

The basis of the Fund was summarized by Morley as:

The needs of ministers in their old age and their widows are provided for by a Fund which is the property of the whole of the Australasian

Methodist Connexion. Certain annual payments are required to be made by each minister during his term of service. The circuits also contribute a fixed sum yearly on account of each minister employed.

The payments of the Fund are on a scale determined from time to time by the General Conference.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ From *The Reasonableness of the Connexional Funds of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, New Zealand*, a pamphlet produced by order of the New Zealand Conference of 1883, signed by A.R. and T.B., (probably Revs. Alexander Reid and Thomas Buddle.)

⁶⁹ William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1900, (Hereafter HMNZ), p.283.

William Morley – A man for his time

At this time both ministers and circuits contributed to the Fund and the undistributed cash reserves were invested at commercial rates of interest. However, the depressed economic conditions of the eighteen-eighties and nineties reduced the capacity of the Fund to meet the financial demands upon it, despite increasing church membership. In addition the number of supernumeraries was increasing, placing even more pressure on the Fund. This was following the trend in which the whole Australasian population had moved into having generated its own aged by the eighteen-eighties leading to pressures on the state to provide for a pension. In addition, there were often problems for the church to do with the collection of contributions. In his address as retiring President of the Australasian Conference in 1897 Morley noted the serious menace to the stability of the Fund and called for a thorough examination to determine what needed to be done.⁷⁰ A committee confirmed the seriousness of the situation and Morley was transferred to Melbourne to lead the recovery of the Fund. From the outset it was a contentious issue, involving endless discussion, bitter divisiveness and heated debate, lasting over ten years. There was no argument that superannuation was a necessary condition of ministerial work; the problem was with the form it should take. The Church divided into two camps - one promoting an actuarial fund in which payments were related to contributions, the other wanting contributions and payments to be set annually by Conference on a pay as you go system. The debate was given added virulence by a proposal to substantially reduce grants to enable the Fund to regain stability.

Morley, whose proven administrative and financial experience made him well-suited for managing the Fund, gained a deep understanding of the issue. He researched the subject in other Methodist jurisdictions and prepared and distributed to the circuits a number of comprehensive papers. He supported the actuarial concept and was at the centre of the combat, against such opponents as Dr Fitchett and Dr Carruthers. At the 1904 General Conference the matter was debated for fully four days and they still failed to settle it. The controversy raged on for the next three years. The story of the eventual rescue and reconstitution of the Fund in 1907 is a drama all its own and called for much of Morley's considerable political and administrative skills and a great deal of pertinacity.

It seems the case then that Morley was given this role because he was one of the few people in the whole Connexion seen as capable of getting the Fund out of trouble. As might be expected then much of his reputation in Australian Methodism rests on his recovery and subsequent stewardship of the Fund, leading to an emphasis on his managerial talents and a rather narrow view of his other activities. I think he deserves a more rounded representation, which the following outline will, I hope, provide.

⁷⁰ **William Morley, *Australasian Methodism: Its Position, Needs and Outlook*. Retiring President's Address to the General Conference of the Australasian Methodist Church, 1887, Auckland, 1897, p. 12.**

William Morley – A man for his time

In 1902 Morley was sixty years of age, with thirty-eight years of active ministry in New Zealand behind him.

He was very equivocal about leaving New Zealand and although the New Zealand Conference opposed the move he acknowledged the need and believed it was his duty to answer the call. He was a widower with a family and many close ties of friendship and collegiality in New Zealand.

Educationalist

As well as his devotion to his church and faith he had two great loves - education and the foreign missions, and it is to the former that I shall now refer. Indicative of his active interest in education was the fact that several weeks before he actually arrived in Melbourne he was appointed to the Council of Queen's College, Melbourne University by the Victorian and Tasmanian Methodist Conference.

From his own experience it might be thought that he would have held the view that on-site training was the appropriate of education for the ministry, but not so. It is more likely that he felt his own lack of academic learning. If so he more than made up for it in his studies and writings and in the contribution he made to formal education, both religious and secular. From 1872 he began writing on church education and was on virtually every Conference committee on the matter. He was the driving force behind the re-opening of Wesley College in Auckland in 1892 and was its first Principal, as well as Theological Tutor of Three Kings College for aspiring ministers. He was chairman of the Methodist Higher Education Trust, a position he retained when appointed Connexional Secretary.

In 1897 he was elected to the Board of Governors of Canterbury College (later Canterbury University), a body responsible for the College, Lincoln Agricultural College, Christchurch Boys' High School, Christchurch Girls' High School, the Canterbury School of Art, the Canterbury Museum and the Canterbury Public Library, remaining on the Board until 1902. Whilst on the Board he initiated moves to establish University Extension lectures in the towns of the province of Canterbury. He chaired the sub-committee that examined the proposal and was secretary to the special council set up to implement the scheme.

So by the time Morley arrived in Melbourne he had a proven record in both religious and secular education. This was supported by a comprehensive philosophy of education with a strong theological underpinning.

In her paper to the Friends of the Library, entitled "Knowledge and Vital Piety" Dr Karen Tucker probed the educational philosophy of John Wesley, demonstrating the close linkage between scholarly knowledge and evangelism in his life and pointing to the lasting influence this had on his followers through his collection and promotion of the Christian Library, his expectations of the study his preachers should follow and the hymns of himself and his brother. Dr Tucker summarised Wesley's approach:

William Morley – A man for his time

All knowledge served the understanding of Scripture, and Scripture served the purposes of God. For this reason, learning and holiness were not antithetical, but instead a vital and essential combination.⁷¹

Morley's view of knowledge came from the same source. In an 'Important Statement on Higher Education' he observed:

...that the Methodist Church from the beginning had been conspicuous for its zeal and energy in the advancement of education. Its founders were University men and ripe scholars and from the beginning strove to promote sound learning. That policy had been continued, and the highest culture had been systematically sought.⁷²

He also acknowledged the extent to which the theology of the church was embodied in the hymns of the brothers Wesley:

Possibly by that, more than any other means, has its purity been preserved and the continuity maintained. All those truths which we deem most vital are as distinctly defined, and sometimes more so, in these poetic writings than in the prose writings of [the Wesleys] themselves...

The Hymnbook is the liturgy of our Church, and should be held fast by us all.⁷³

In relation to the education of ministers, his philosophy can be paraphrased in the following injunction from his presidential address to the 1879 New Zealand Conference, in which he:

...urged the importance of culture for the work of the ministry, never, however, overlooking the fact that modern culture should be blended with ancient devotion.⁷⁴

To the Victorians the word culture meant highly or well-educated and his use of the phrase "modern culture should be blended with ancient devotion" is therefore somewhat akin to Wesley's concept of "knowledge and vital piety" as outlined by Dr Tucker, bearing in mind that Wesley's view of knowledge was quite traditional even for his time; whereas Morley was definitely in the vanguard.

In 1898 Morley was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Emory and Henry College of Virginia. It was noted in *The Advocate* (the New Zealand Methodist paper) that:

⁷¹ Karen Westerfield Tucker, 'Knowledge and Vital Piety', *Occasional Paper presented to the Friends of the Library, Queen's College, University of Melbourne, No. 14, September 2003*.

⁷² *New Zealand Methodist*, 15 October 1892, p.6.

⁷³ W. Morley, *The Doctrinal and Ecclesiastical Position of the Methodist Church*, Christchurch, 1887, pp. 18-20

⁷⁴ *New Zealand Wesleyan*, 1 February 1879, p.26.

William Morley – A man for his time

The College is one of the most reputable of the Methodist Colleges in the Southern States. It has been most conservative in relation to honorary degrees. Dr Morley is one of a small and select band, of not more than half-a-dozen, who have been similarly honoured.⁷⁵

How did this come about? Thanks to Wesley's emphasis on the literacy and learning of Methodist preachers theology was, from the first, intertwined with their evangelical and pastoral work, in theory at any rate. During the nineteenth century the Protestant churches in Britain and America generally followed the philosophy that a Christian society rested on the notion that if people were educated to perceive reality accurately, then, with the guidance of the scriptures they would make good moral judgments. This would in turn lead to a higher level of behaviour in society as a whole. A sound theological training of the ministry was therefore essential to the progress of civilized countries to a more Christian state. Throughout the century networks of Sunday schools, day schools, secondary schools and higher education institutions were developed by all the large denominations not only in Britain and America, but also in the Australasian colonies. Queen's College is of course one such of these. Thus, on-site training of ministers was replaced by seminaries or divinity schools providing post-graduate education - a development to which Morley had made a significant contribution in New Zealand, as he was to continue to do in Australia.

In the context in which theology was such an inherent part of the work of the ministry it is not so surprising that those who had not received divinity school education, but who had advanced their own scholarship to a high level received academic recognition from the new institutions. Morley's main theological publication was *The Doctrinal and Ecclesiastical Position of the Methodist Church*, of 1887, a modest but masterly work of some 25,000 words covering all the important elements of Methodism, including its foundation and relation to other creeds. Morley's reputation as a Methodist educationalist and scholar rested on his published work, his commitment to higher education and the impact he made on American Methodism at the Ecumenical Methodist Conference of 1891 and after. He was the Australasian correspondent of the *Christian Advocate* of Nashville for over twenty years.

By far the most challenging theological debate of the later nineteenth century was on the authority of the Bible as an authentic historical document. The evolutionary theories of Darwin and other scientists led to criticism of the Pentateuch in particular, but rational enquiry also cast doubt on the historical reliability of many parts of both the Old and New Testaments. Morley was on the side of those who sought consistency rather than conflict between unfolding scientific knowledge and faith, by which I mean that he believed it was possible to reconcile Darwin's ideas with those of the Bible.

⁷⁵ *The Advocate*, December 1898/January 1899.

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In summary, the new member of the Council brought strong educational credentials and a deep and active interest in Methodist education and training to Queen's College.

Queen's College

In 1902 the College had been in existence for fifteen years under the guidance of its founding President Rev. William Quick and first Master Rev. E H Sugden. However, the depression of the eighties and nineties which had nearly sunk the Supernumerary Fund also had a detrimental effect on the University and on Queen's College.

Academic and sporting achievements of Queen's students were at an increasingly high level, but the financial situation was serious. Student numbers, were about 19 in the nineties, well below the fifty-two room capacity of the College. From 1898 numbers steadily increased and were to virtually treble in the following ten years, but this growth was taxing the ancillary facilities.⁷⁶ So, while the Council took pride in student achievement it had its own major financial problems. The traditional fund-raising activities so dear to the hearts of our forefathers and (perhaps even more so to our foremothers) were of course fully utilized. But as prosperity returned to Victoria and as the College had expansionist objectives, more ambitious money-raising schemes needed to be considered.

In those days the Council met quarterly and the Finance Committee, which was a form of executive committee, met monthly. In 1903 Morley was appointed to the Finance Committee and in 1904 appointed joint Treasurer of the Special Building Fund with Fred J Cato.⁷⁷ The establishment of a Special Building Fund, to be followed by the Building Committee became the vehicle for raising the capital needed to fund the expansion of the College. In the following two decades it was the driving force of a series of major successful extension projects. These lifted the College to the level of a soundly established educational institution within the University, the State of Victoria and Australian Methodism. Committee and Council minutes chart a succession of almost continuous fund-raising activities under the leadership and direction of Morley, Fred Cato and the Master.

Australian Methodism a hundred years ago differed in many ways from the church of today and some aspects of this difference cast an interesting light on the aspirations and activities of the Council in the early nineteen hundreds. And because the Council was so concerned with maintaining and expanding its operations it is now time to look at how the church funded its operations and growth.

⁷⁶ Owen Parnaby, *Queen's College University of Melbourne: A Centenary History*, Melbourne, 1990, pp.84, 101.

⁷⁷ This and subsequent references to committee activities are, unless otherwise specified, taken from the original Council and Committee minutes, held in Queen's College Archives.

Methodist finances

From its early beginnings Methodist finances were based on Circuit Funds to which members contributed a penny a week and a shilling a quarter. The funds were independently managed by the minister and officials of each circuit, according to guidelines set down by Wesley and subject to the overall direction of the whole connexion. It became customary for weekly collections to be made and for marriage fees and the like to be added to standing funds set up for charitable work, foreign missions and the like. These covered the ordinary operating expenses of the circuit but went nowhere near creating sufficient capital to acquire land, build new chapels or extend existing property and premises. Therefore capital acquisitions were made either through specific donations, special fund-raising activities or loans against future income.

From 1855, when the Australasian Connexion was established as separate and independent of the British Connexion, growth was financed out of the Home Mission and Church Extension Funds. Some land was given by the state, mainly for educational purposes but by and large members of the church had to carry the burden of financing its growth and extension, through the acquisition of capital either through contributions or loans against future income. While this provided some finance, many circuits struggled with large interest payments and loans quite beyond their capacity to easily extinguish. Furthermore, ownership of church property could be entangled in a web of disputes and litigation, affecting borrowing potential. Morley was instrumental in drawing up a Model Deed based on the British model, but relevant to New Zealand, and from 1886 as Registrar of Church Properties was well aware of the problems and pitfalls associated with it.

Although the eighties and nineties were depression decades, Wesleyan membership grew as much as the other major Christian denominations and in New Zealand more significantly so. Continuing growth of the church inspired its leaders with optimism and a positive attitude towards the future. Between 1893 and 1913 the minor Methodist denominations in both countries, including the Primitive Methodists, the Bible Christians and the United Methodist Free Churches merged with the Wesleys. This removed uneconomic 'competition' especially in rural areas and eased the demand for church property, buildings and ministers which always ran ahead of the capacity to provide them. The leaders of the church, lay and ministerial, were driven by aspirations for self-betterment within a thriving Wesleyan faith in the new and prosperous dominion of Australia would not easily be deterred from their duty. Nothing could be achieved without effort, and whatever else we might think about our Victorian forebears and their values and beliefs, they were hard-working, committed to the job at hand and rose eagerly to the challenges before them.

William Morley – A man for his time

Morley the fund raiser

It is a simplification to call Morley as a fund-raiser without peer. Some explanation of his methods and relevant experience in New Zealand will show the expertise he brought to the task at Queen's.

From 1868, the time of his first appointment as a circuit minister Morley developed an unmatched reputation for either greatly reducing or eliminating church debt in every circuit he worked in up to his appointment as Connexional Secretary in 1893. He was hugely in demand as a minister throughout the colony and after 1879 was the chairman of the four major New Zealand Districts and twice President of the New Zealand Conference. Wherever he was stationed he brought to bear financial management expertise which earned him praise from all within his charge. The following extract from *The History of Methodism in New Zealand* describes how a debt of some £4,000 on the Pitt Street Church in Auckland was largely extinguished in three years.

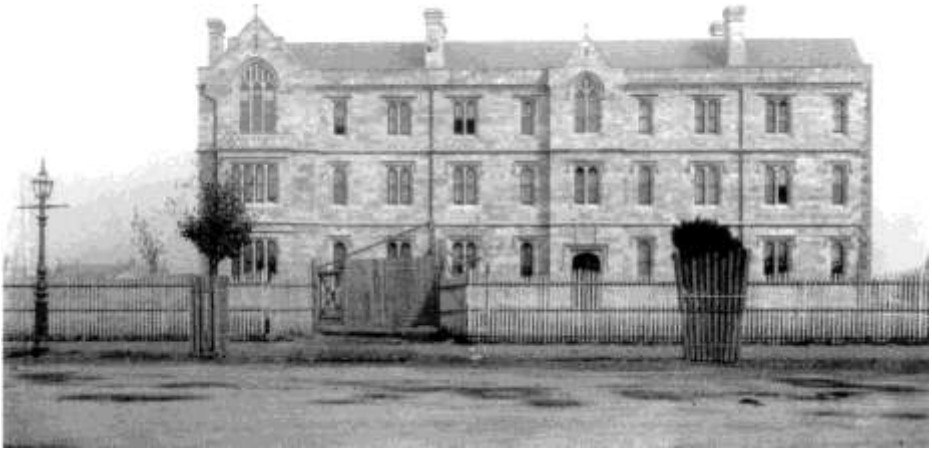
The Trustees were called together, the facts placed before them, and a scheme outlined by which the whole amount could be paid off by systematic contributions extending over two or three years. Time was taken to consider... then they met again... prepared for action. Their own gifts and those of one or two friends, then announced, totalled £900. A vigorous canvass of the congregation secured £1,400 more, and the back of the debt was broken. Then the question was. What was to be done further? The only answer was. Repeat the effort. A member of the congregation promised £500 if the balance were raised. The challenge was at once taken up and before the Chairman [Morley] left at the end of his three years' term he had the satisfaction of knowing all was promised. Within a few months the subscriptions were paid in, and the Church freed.... It was a splendid effort, marked by three chief features. No appeal was made outside the Wesleyan congregations, no bazaar or sale of work was resorted to, and ordinary contributions were not only kept up, but even increased.⁷⁸

He was the prime mover in the formation in 1882 of the Church Building and Loan Fund and in the following year travelled to every Wesleyan circuit and almost every preaching station in New Zealand, lecturing on various topics and seeking contributions or promises to the Fund. After three years, and they were depression years remember, £6,000 had been raised and many advances made to circuits. As money was repaid to the Fund it was re-loaned and by 1900 Morley reported that the total amount of advances made was £28,923, of which £21,680 had been repaid. Working capital had increased to £8,571 and the debt burden on all Wesleyan Methodist property reduced from 26.5 of total cost to 11.3. Again in 1890 the Conference established the Jubilee Fund, to raise capital for further extension and

⁷⁸ HMNZ, p.207.

William Morley – A man for his time

expansion with Morley as Secretary travelling the country for contributions, this time realizing over £9,000. As Secretary of the Building Fund Morley was able to and did ensure that policies and procedures for expenditure protect the stability of the Fund.



Queen's College 1888 - Parnaby

Queen's College expansion

I would like to now discuss the expansionist vision of the Council in the early nineteen hundreds and how this was played out in the years up to 1925 by which time the College changed from a small residential entity to an established and respected institution within the University, and reached what Doctor Parnaby has called 'a healthy maturity'.⁷⁹

Following the College debt problems of the nineties, 'which had all but closed Queen's down'⁸⁰ the Council formed a policy that extensions were not to be financed from loans and were not to be commenced until it was clear that sufficient funds would be available to meet costs. So when the Special Building Fund was set up in 1904 its objectives were clear - raise capital to expand the College. Its first efforts were small, but not insignificant. The Council minutes of 19 June 1906 record the thanks of Council to Morley and Cato in raising £1,500 for the Fund and the passing of a resolution directing the Finance Committee to report on the exact debt of the College, the annual interest repayments and ways and means of dealing with the debt. From this time the Finance Committee took firmer control of college expenditure, seeking to avoid annual operating deficits and eliminating debt, while the Building Committee set out in earnest to find the funds necessary for further extension. To the students the Council might have been a rather remote body of elderly respectable Methodist

⁷⁹ Parnaby, p.1 16.

⁸⁰ Parnaby, p. 100.

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gentlemen, but the Council well understood its role as a driving force in the present and future well-being of the College, namely, ensuring it was operating within budgets while finding money for ambitious extension plans. Dr Morley, Fred Cato and Master Sugden and their Council colleagues made this their vision and their aim for the College.

At the Council meeting of April 1909 Morley was elected President of the College. It is entirely coincidental that the same meeting approved the first major extension of the College, namely the completion of the East Wing for a cost of £4,500. It was completed and opened by the Governor at the end of 1910, for a final cost of £5,386. It comprised staff and student residences and increased the number of student rooms to eighty.⁸¹ The report to the Victorian Methodist Conference of 1913 noted that the College now had 85 students, of whom 67 were residential, which demonstrates the success of the expansionist vision.

Morley and Sugden

Financial problems evidently remained. As Chairman of the Finance Committee Morley kept a close eye on the accounts of the College as the following unusually long item in the Council minutes of August 1913 indicates:

The President called attention to the deficit of last year. He submitted figures giving comparisons of expenditure for several years, showing a considerable increase for last year. He also pointed out the large increase in the Bank overdraft and further stated that over £400 had been wiped off as bad debts. The latter in his judgment ought not to have been allowed. A lengthy discussion followed in which the Master, the Secretary, Rev. Knight and Messrs. Adamson and McCutcheon took part. Finally the Master moved that to meet the increased cost 'resident students be charged an addition of one guinea each per term'.

Mr McCutcheon moved an amendment 'that the additional increase be two guineas per term'. The Master's motion was adopted by a large majority.

Whether this not quite public caning of the College administration altered the situation is a mystery, but his concern for such matters was shown again in the minutes August of the following year:

Dr Morley called attention to the expense incurred re. Foundation Day and suggested that in the future it might be made not a charge on the funds of the College but a means of adding to the finances ...a committee was formed to consider it.

Morley's concern for expenditure enhanced his reputation as a prudent and vigorous financial manager. Reading between the lines of these minutes, one suspects they

⁸¹ Parnaby, p. 102.

William Morley – A man for his time

indicate a divergence between Morley and Sugden. Morley's rectitude may have seen Sugden's enthusiasm as imprudent, while Sugden perhaps thought Morley over-cautious. Something of this is contained in Sugden's remark:

I suppose I am a little impulsive and optimistic and Dr Morley's wise and prudent counsel saved me many times.⁸²

There is an echo of this from Morley himself in a slightly different context. Once, on the topic of the New Zealand Loan and Building Fund he adverted to his careful financial guardianship:

If he had been pertinacious, and brethren had sometimes thought he was unduly persistent in urging the claims of this loan fund and the necessity of keeping the rules strictly, the fact that he had put his shoulder to the wheel of that burden might be pleaded in extenuation of that fault.⁸³

Sugden may have chafed a bit, but there is no hint of undue strain in the long relationship between the two in the research material available to me. While such strong characters would have occasionally clashed they appear to have had mutual respect for each other and a harmonious working relationship.

Further Expansion

The First World War was a challenging time for the College. Student numbers fell while the operating deficits rose. However, it did not halt the expansionist phase, but rather slowed it. During the war years fund-raising continued and there was regular discussion of various proposals. At the Council meeting in October 1917 a memorial chapel for those College men who had fallen during war was mooted at a cost of between five and six thousand pounds. Morley and Cato were not in favour, but the plan went ahead anyway. After the war the memorial chapel was included in ambitious extension plans at an estimated cost of £38,400, to be raised without adding to the College debt burden. In 1920 a fund-raiser, W T Hattam was engaged and by May 1922, a special section of *The Spectator* reported that £31,511 had been raised and seeking the last few thousand. The result was the construction of the Tweddle Wing and the Sugden Tower, which were opened in 1923 at a total cost of £53,000, with £11,000 still owing. Pamaby tells of the rapturous moment when WT Hattam told the Council at their meeting in May 1924 that this debt had been extinguished.⁸⁴ Coincidentally, this was the meeting at which Morley was elected President for his last term. The following May he finally retired aged 81, and given the title President

⁸² Parnaby, p. 114.

⁸³ *The Outlook*, 15 March, 1902, pp.30-31.

⁸⁴ Parnaby, p. 121.

William Morley – A man for his time

Emeritus. He died a year later, at the time of the General Conference and was accorded many tributes.



*Yours faithfully
Wm. Morley*

Conclusion

This brief account has focused on Morley's presidency of the Council during a period of expansion of the College. As well as his position with the Supernumerary Fund he also participated fairly fully in Victorian Methodism. For example in 1906 he was on 13 Conference Committees including the Foreign Missions Executive, the Home Missions Executive, the Union of the Churches Committee, Wesley College Council and various committees related to the Supernumerary Fund. As Managing Treasurer of the Fund he was an ex officio delegate to the triennial General Conferences, which

William Morley – A man for his time

he attended assiduously until his retirement. He was nominated for President of the Victoria and Tasmania Annual Conference in 1914, but not elected. He remained on the preaching plan till he himself became a supernumerary in 1922 having given 60 active years to his faith.

In 1904 he contributed a chapter on New Zealand Methodist history to a volume on Australasian Methodism, edited by Colwell. He continued to write letters and articles for *The Spectator* on a variety of matters, in particular on the Foreign Missions. He left Queen's College Library a collection of over a hundred theological and Methodist works, including a thirty-volume set of Wesley's Christian Library, reflecting his broad intellectual and religious interests. He did not remain a widower long in Melbourne and in 1903 married Grace Webster. The Rev. William Quick, the founder President of the College, officiated at the wedding.

There is much more to be said of William Morley, but I hope this talk has shown you the mould and essence of the man, the good servant of his faith and church, an educationalist and administrator who made Queen's College a central focus of his considerable talents for over twenty years.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION - BILL THOMAS

Bill Thomas graduated MA in history from Massey University in 2001, his area of research being nineteenth century Methodism in New Zealand, with special reference to the Free Methodists in Christchurch. His current interest is in nineteenth century Australasian Methodism including the transformation of the Wesleyan Maori Mission to the Methodist Church of New Zealand between 1822 and 1913. He has done considerable research into the life and work of Rev. Dr William Morley, the pre-eminent Methodist minister of the later 19th and early 20th centuries.



Wesley Historical Society (NZ) 2005

Methodist Church of Australasia

Resolution of the General Conference
held in Adelaide, May 1922

The Conference places on record its deep sense of
the fidelity, ability and untiring zeal with which
the Rev Dr. Morley has discharged the high and
responsible duties of the office of Managing Treasurer
of the Supernumerary Fund.

For twenty years he has been the administrative head
of this beneficent Fund, and has at all times brought
to the service of our Church in this, as in every other
department of our work, unstinted and unwearied
devotion to the interests committed to his care.

Owing to impaired health he felt compelled to retire
from his post in April, 1922. In his retirement he
carries with him the admiration, the goodwill, and the
heartly thanks of this Conference, of which he is so
distinguished a member.

Edward H. Super

President.

Illuminated address presented to William Morley (reduced facsimile) - Gadd

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The Writings of William Morley

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A COMPANION TO MORLEY'S HISTORY

Probably the most frustrating thing about Morley's *History of Methodism in New Zealand* is that it lacks thorough indexing. By my reckoning he mentioned just under 2500 individuals by name - maybe the size of the roll-call had something to do with the fact that the book was sold in parts by subscription.

Whatever the case, while the book is set out in an orderly fashion with adequate and helpful sub-headings, it is difficult to find the people Morley names, except for the ministers, almost all of whom are noted. It was to remedy this lack that I began the task of recording every name and incident in connection with the ministers, laymen, and Circuits, as well as the host of information on other matters.

This led to a decision to complete the list of appointments, since Morley does not mention all the stations of all the ministers, especially those of the Home Missionaries. JT Pinfold's *Centenary Index* is equally limited in that it is confined only to ordained ministers who remained in Full Connexion. So every endeavour has been made to ensure that every appointment, whether of minister or Home Missionary is noted, and that all the Circuits have a full list of all the ministers appointed to them. This has meant the addition of many names whom Morley omitted altogether, and the rediscovery of individuals who served the Church in their time and now have been largely forgotten.

Finally, and in hindsight, somewhat ambitiously, I decided I would enter the dates of birth and death of every person named, and not just of the ministers, who make up a relatively small proportion - probably 10 - of the total. This has proved to be a daunting, though stimulating, task. At the moment about 2000 names have been found, but the point is unlikely to be reached when all those named have been located, since Morley's references are often tantalisingly sketchy.

It is hoped that the project will be completed in the second half of this year, and will be available to those engaged in both historical and genealogical research. It will be distributed through the Wesley Historical Society, and it would be good to think that libraries who have copies of Morley's *History* will want to keep a copy of the *Companion* at its side.

- Donald Phillipps

[*Companion to William Morley's History of Methodism in New Zealand* was published by the WHS in 2006. See the frontpiece on the next page.]

COMPANION

TO WILLIAM
MORLEY'S

HISTORY OF
METHODISM IN NEW ZEALAND



A GUIDE TO
NINETEENTH CENTURY
NEW ZEALAND METHODISM

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