

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF N.Z.
OTAHUHU CIRCUIT

1854 — CENTENNIAL — 1954

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST
ONE HUNDRED YEARS



THE PAST ---



THE PRESENT ---

*And as the years roll onward
And strong affections twine,
And tender mercies gather
About this sacred shrine.
May this its chiefest honour,
Its glory ever be,
That multitudes within it,
Have found their way to Thee.*

THE TALE OF THE YEARS

TOILS — TRIALS — TRIUMPHS

It is with a profound sense of gratitude to Almighty God that we record this brief survey of the history of the Methodist Church in Otahuhu over the past One Hundred Years.

We would pay tribute to the memory of that faithful company of men and women who laboured and prayed to build the Kingdom here, and whose service throughout this time has left an abiding influence for good.

This is not a story of spectacular events, rather, it is an account of earnest endeavour, faithful following and whole-hearted service.

Otahuhu Circuit has its roots deeply in the past, Christian service began here as part of the activities of the Manukau Circuit. The whole history is closely interwoven with this parent Church. We honour the memory of those leaders from whence we sprang.

Wesleyan Missionaries worked among the Maori people from early days. The first Maori Mission Station situated on the South-western Shores of the Manukau Harbour was founded not later than 1843. A little later the Christian natives founded the settlement of Ihumatao on the north-eastern corner of the Manukau Harbour in the district of Mangere. In 1844 Ihumatao, with other preaching places on the Manukau were connected with the Auckland Circuit and placed under the care of the European Missionary Rev. H. H. Lawry.

The unrest created through the Maori uprising demanded that military precautions be taken, and preparations made to defend the new capital (Auckland) against invasion from the South. Thus military settlements were formed at Onehunga, Otahuhu, Panmure and Howick.

In an Auckland Circuit Report, 1849, there is the following statement: "Attempts have been made at two of the pensioners' settlements (Onehunga and Otahuhu), but hitherto without success, though it is not intended to leave this field in quiet possession of the enemy."

Proof that these were not idle words is furnished by the report a year later: "A new chapel is in course of erection in Onehunga."

The Manukau Circuit was constituted in 1850, with Rev. Henry Hassall Lawry in charge.

By the appointment of the British Conference of 1854 Rev. Thomas Buddle became Superintendent of the Circuit. It was in this year that the first chapel

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was built in Otahuhu on a section of land one acre in extent, a grant made by the Government. It was located in a side street (Church Street). The building was of wood, 20ft by 16ft, and cost £54 to erect.

This first building met the needs for some years. In 1863 Rev. George Buttle went to reside at Spring Farm, Otahuhu. Largely through the efforts of this family a new church was built on the same site and was opened in 1866. The new Church had a neat spire and was quite an ecclesiastical edifice.



The Minute Book of the Trustees' meetings of those days show that tenders were called for the lining of the Church "to be one inch thick," also for Pulpit, reading desk and gates. The minutes also relate the charges for pew rents, which were fixed at the following rates: "Ten shillings per quarter for a whole pew, single sittings Two Shillings and Sixpence, and that there be Six free pews." The payment for lighting and cleaning was fixed at five pounds per year.

Alas, it was soon discovered that the church was badly built and the following minute appears: "That the meeting having heard of the serious deflections of the walls of the new chapel unanimously request that an iron plate shall be placed along the exterior of the building on each side, of sufficient length to carry three rods."

Meanwhile the population had grown to the extent that in the September Quarterly Meeting 1867 this resolution was carried: "That a division of this Circuit is highly desirable.—Recommend that Waiuku be made the head of a separate Circuit."

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In 1868 the name of the Manukau Circuit was changed to Onehunga Circuit. Then Onehunga fell on hard times and was forced to ask the assistance of District Meeting, with the result that for seven years Otahuhu, with its new church and growing population, became the head of the Circuit from 1869. The Circuit, then comprised Onehunga, Otahuhu, Mangere, Tamaki, Woodside, Papakura Valley, Papakura, Waiera, the Bombay Settlement, Drury and Ramarama.

The Waiuku Circuit included Waiuku, Mauku, Linwood, Awiti, Whiriwhiri, Maria. Waipipi, Kohekohe, Kareotahi, Pukekohe and the Waikato Heads.

This division was not successful, and from 1871 to 1876 the Waiuku Circuit merged with the parent Circuit under the name Otahuhu and Waiuku.

A further alteration was made in 1876 when the name of the Circuit reverted to Manukau, and Onehunga resumed its leadership. In the following year Waiuku became established as the Waiuku and Pukekohe Circuit.

Otahuhu continued to thrive and the need of a growing church, plus the condition of the building, hastened the sale of the section and building. A new site, at the corner of Fairburns and the Great South Road was purchased in 1880 at a cost of £60. Here the third church building 45ft by 30ft was erected, with a seating capacity of 200. This (present) building was opened in 1881 at a cost of £625.



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The passing years marked both growth and consolidation in the Circuit, and this year of 1881 saw the appointment of Mr W. S. Bowie as the first Resident Home Missionary in Otahuhu.

In the year 1909 the Manukau Circuit was divided—Onehunga became the head of one of the new Circuits, and Otahuhu, Woodside, Manurewa, Flat Bush and East Tamaki, Papakura and Papakura Valley were constituted another Circuit.

In November, 1908, the Otahuhu Trustees accepted a tender for the building of a new school room at a cost of £459.

1914 saw further development—Papakura became a separate Circuit, Pukekohe followed in 1915, with the Bombay Home Mission Station each increasing in service and influence.

By 1919 the needs of a rapidly growing school necessitated further accommodation. Mr A. Trenwith, the Sunday School Superintendent, undertook to raise £2000 toward the cost of a modern school. The structure cost about £4000 and was opened with much rejoicing on the fourth of December, 1920.



Sunday School and Hall

The march of time had its effect upon the Parsonage property. Reports in the Minute Book, also statements by the older members, show that the old house had outlived its usefulness, and was anything but a credit to the Church. At this time the general financial depression had been keenly felt throughout the

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Circuit; it appeared impossible to raise further funds. The Trustees tackled the seemingly impossible. The sale of a site that had been donated, but was considered unsuitable for a Parsonage, provided a starting point. The generosity of friends and the help of the Church Building and Loan Fund provided the necessary money, and the present Parsonage in Station Road was obtained in 1943, the purchase price being £2000.



The Parsonage

After long years as one Circuit, new housing and rapid development in the Papatoetoe part of the district made it imperative that a new Circuit be formed, and in 1951 Papatoetoe became a separate Circuit with its own minister. Church enterprise and extension have already proved the wisdom of this step, and the future prospects are bright for this new venture.

The Otahuhu Circuit now comprises Otahuhu and Mangere East. At Otahuhu, while making full use of the Church property, an urgent need was felt for additional room. Through the combined efforts of the Ladies' Guild and the men of the Church, a new church parlour was built adjoining the Church. The Ladies' Guild raised the money for the materials, and the work was done by voluntary labour under the direction of Mr W. H. Fothergill. This new room was finished in 1953, and is greatly appreciated.

As a Centennial Thanksgiving, considerable alterations, repairs, renovations and renewals to the Church are now in hand, and we trust will be complete for the reopening services of Sunday, September 19th, 1954.

THE P A S T - - -

It is impossible to mention by name all those who have served through the years; a noble army who kept the flag flying, many of them now passed to higher service. But their memory is cherished and their influence abides. They gave themselves to Christ, and counted it their biggest joy to serve Him.

THE P R E S E N T - - -

We have a Godly heritage, which carries in it a glorious privilege, also a great responsibility. It is committed to us to carry further the work they so ably began.

"We'll Praise Him for all that is past
And Trust Him for all that's to come."

"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these."—Eccles. 7: 10.

THE FUTURE---

With new housing developments all around and increasing population, there is both the Command of Christ, and the needs of the people. As we catch the Master's vision so shall we see the fields white unto harvest.

JESUS CHRIST — THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOR EVER. Heb. 13: 6.

The following are extracts from the Minute Books:

Sunday School record in 1905: *"That the sum of SIX SHILLINGS be paid for waggon hire to Picnic."*

1909 (when Sunday School was held in the Church): *"That the children be reprov'd for writing on seats and in hymn books."*

In preparation for S.S. Picnic: *"That the Sunday School Teachers meet for the cutting-up at 5 a.m."*

June 30th, 1909: *"That we bye a sutabel pony for the Rev. Watkin."*

Re Sale of Work to provide funds to furnish a Parsonage: *"No steps had been taken owing to the general election and Christmas and New Year Holidays."*

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March 11th, 1867: *"A bill having been handed in by Mr ——— (amount £3/3/-) for eighteen months' services lighting and cleaning the lamps, the same having been examined and considered—that the account be passed."*

Also at the meeting of March 11th, 1867, *the sum of £35, proceeds of Soiree, were paid in interest to mortgage.*

December 29th, 1869: *That the Chapel Anniversary and Tea Meeting usually held in February be deferred for a short time, in order that it may be ascertained whether the Rev Mr Taylor, of the Californian Conference, be likely to visit New Zealand, in hope that his services may be secured as preaching the sermons and for the public meeting.*



Grant us, Lord, the grace of Remembrance, and then shall we know but one better thing, the remembrance of Grace.

—Ancient Prayer.

*Our Father, by whose servants, our house was built of old,
Whose hand hath crowned her children w-th blessings manifold,
For thine unfailling mercies far-strewn along our way,
With all who passed before us, we praise Thy name today.
Before us and beside us, still holden in Thine hand,
A cloud unseen of witness, our elder comrades stand;
One family unbroken, we join with one acclaim,
One heart, one voice uplifting, to glorify Thy name.*

LIST OF MINISTERS 1850 — 1954

MANUKAU

- 1850-3 H. H. Lawry.
- 1854-5 T. Buddle.
- 1856 T. Buddle and S. Ngaropi (Native Asst.)
- 1857 T. Buddle & Joseph Orton (Native Asst.)
- 1858 T. Buddle, H. H. Turton and Hohepe Otene (Native Asst).
- 1859-60 T. Buddle, J. Crump and H. Otene.
- 1861 J. Crump and H. Otene.
- 1862 W. Rowse and H. Otene.
- 1863 James Wallis and H. Otene.
- 1864 James Wallis and Wm. Morley.
- 1865 James Wallis and J. S. Rishworth.
- 1866 John Warren and J. S. Rishworth.
- 1867 John Warren and John Whewell.

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ONEHUNGA

1868 John Warren.

OTAHUHU

1869-70 J. Smith.

OTAHUHU and WAIUKU

1871 J. Smith.

1872 R. S. Bunn.

1873- 5 R. S. Bunn.

1876 W. J. Watkin.

MANUKAU

1878-80 J. Law.

1881-3 G. Bond.

1884-6 J. A. Taylor.

1887-8 R. Bavin.

1898-91 J. S. Rishworth.

1892-4 Henry Bull.

1895 W. J. Williams.

1896-9 S. Lawry.

1900-2 C. Griffin.

1903-6 W. Slade.

1907 R. Taylor.

1908 S. J. Gibson.

OTAHUHU

1909-10 E. T. Cox.

1911-12 W. Rowe.

1913 W. Beckett.

1914-5 J. E. Parsons.

1916-7 W. G. Slade.

1918-9 F. Souster (H.M.).

1920-1 H. L. Richards.

1922-4 J. A. Hosking.

1925-30 F. Greenwood.

1932-3 W. Gatman.

1933-6 T. R. B. Woolloxall

1937-46 P. I. Cooke.

1946-7 A. E. Waite.

1948-53 T. Skuse.

1953 H. S. Kings.

The following have served at Otahuhu either as Probationers or as supplies:

S. Bowie, A. H. Scrivin, H. Benny, F. G. Brown, W. Silvester, W. E.
A. Carr, J. A. Daglish, N. W. Olds.

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You are invited to attend the following Centennial Gatherings:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18th, 1954—

Banquet in Hall, 6 p.m. (adults only).

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th, 1954— **GOLDEN OFFERING DAY**

11 a.m., Reopening of Church. Dedication.

4.30 p.m.: Men's Fellowship Tea and Meeting.

7.00 p.m.: CENTENNIAL SERVICE.

These Services will be conducted by the President of Conference,
Rev. H. L. FIEBIG, B.A.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th—

CHILDREN'S TEA, 5.30p.m. Entertainment by Rev.W.E.A.CARR.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st—

OLD FRIENDS' GATHERING, at 2 p.m.

Bring Old Photographs.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd—

MUSICAL FESTIVAL, 7.45 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd—

YOUTH PAGEANT, 7.30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th—

GARDEN FAIR at the Residence of Mr and Mrs J. Nicholls,
109 Mangere Road. Opening 1.30 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th—

11 a.m., CENTENNIAL SERVICE, Rev. H. S. KINGS.

2.30 p.m., Musical Festival.

7 p.m., Service conducted by Rev. E. W. HAMES, M.A., Chairman
of District.

All communications, also if hospitality required, please forward:

Rev. H. S. KINGS,

64 Station Road, Otahuhu, Auckland, S.E.7.

Dr. E. R. LANGE, The Monument, Otahuhu.

We are indebted to

Dr. Morleys "History of Methodism in New Zealand";

Rev. F. E. Leadley's "The Flowing Tide" (Centennial record of Onehunga);

*also to Rev. E. W. Names, M.A., Principal of Trinity College, and many
numerous helpers for assistance with records.*