

Fact sheet: Researching New Zealand Methodist newspapers

Methodist Newspapers Collection

Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives

Summary of holdings held Methodist Archives, Christchurch February 2022

<i>The Christian Observer</i> (microfilm and digital format)	January 1870-December 1870
<i>The New Zealand Wesleyan</i> (microfilm and digital format)	January 1871-June 1884
<i>The New Zealand Methodist</i> (microfilm and digital format)	July 1884-May 1894
<i>The Advocate</i> (microfilm and digital format)	June 1894-May 1901
<i>The New Zealand Primitive Methodist</i>	April 1889-March 1913
<i>The Outlook</i> (microfilm and digital format)	May 1901-April 1910
<i>The New Zealand Methodist Times</i> (microfilm and digital format to 1948)	May 1910-April 1966
<i>The New Zealand Methodist</i>	1966-1973
<i>New Citizen</i>	January 1974-June 1979
<i>Focus</i>	September 1979-December 1986
<i>Crosslink</i>	March 1987-April 2001
<i>Touchstone</i> (digital on Methodist Church website from 2009)	May 2001-

Note that microfilm option of viewing at the Methodist Archives is no longer available but is available at the National Library.

Digital copies of Methodist newspapers 1870-1948 can be searched on the John Kinder Theological Library website: <https://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/>

Newspapers in paper form are available:

National Library of New Zealand, Wellington (also holds microfilm set)
Hocken Heritage Collections, Dunedin (also holds microfilm set)
John Kinder Theological Library, Auckland
Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury (nearly complete)
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Index to newspapers

A partial index to Methodist newspapers 1948-1986 is available on request to the Archivist or can be viewed in the Research Room at the Methodist Archives in Christchurch.

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May 2022

Methodist Church newspapers in the nineteenth century

Notes by Frank Paine, 2000

The Christian Observer was a religious monthly newspaper started in Christchurch in 1870 by John Armitage, a local preacher from Yorkshire. His printing business, Armitage and Smith, owned the newspaper.

Only a year later, the Canterbury Wesleyan District took over the paper and converted it to a denominational newspaper called *The New Zealand Wesleyan*. The first issue was published on 31 January 1871. It was printed by the Christchurch firm of J T Smith & Co.

The first editor was Rev A R Fitchett. Rev William Morley and Rev J W Wallis took over editorship in 1877; 1879 Rev J Armitage was appointed editor, (the original founder of *The Christian Observer*), by this time an ordained minister. His unexpected death in the sinking of the SS Taranaki in April 1881 meant that for the next three years, several people edited the paper: Revs J H Simmonds, JA Taylor, W Morley, J Crump.

In 1884, it was decided to have a weekly paper, and *The New Zealand Methodist* was published in July 1884. Space was provided for both Primitive Methodists and United Free Methodists to report their activities as well as the Wesleyan (later called Methodist) Church.

It was edited by Rev W J Williams for the next nine years. He was succeeded by Rev P W Fairclough. The name of the newspaper changed in 1894 to *The Advocate*. Rev W C Oliver was appointed editor in 1898.

From the beginning, the national Methodist newspaper was printed in Christchurch by Smith, Anthony, Sellars and Co, then by Russell and Willis. From 1894, it was printed in Dunedin by Wilkie and Company, then around 1899 printed by McKee & Co in Wellington.

Sources:

Morley, William. *The history of Methodism in New Zealand*. McKee & Co, Wellington, 1900.

Hames, EW. *Out of the common way. The European Church in the colonial era 1840-1913*. Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, Vol 27 Nos 3 and 4, 1972.

"The story of Methodist journalism in New Zealand" by WJW [W J Williams] and others. *The New Zealand Methodist Times*, 29 January 1921.

Methodist Church newspapers

By Marcia Baker, 2003

The first denominational newspaper of the Methodist Church was called *Te Haatea* (The Dawn). It was produced for three years 1859-1862 and edited by Rev Thomas Buttle and funded by the Wesleyan Native Trust. The monthly issues were circulated in the Auckland-Waikato area and contained scriptural and religious material, news of meetings, the war in Taranaki and increased tension in Waikato. (Source *Rere atu, taku manu!* ed Jennifer Curnow, 2002).

The Christian Observer

A religious monthly started in Christchurch lasting only a year, from January 1870 edited by John Armitage, a Yorkshire printer by trade and local preacher (later minister). He and James Smith were partners in a printing firm.

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This newspaper was interdenominational and includes articles on religious subjects and reports of activities of Baptist, Congregational, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Primitive Methodist, United Free Methodist and Wesleyan churches. It lasted 1 year and cost 6d.

The New Zealand Wesleyan

14 volumes, published monthly 31 January 1871-2 June 1884.

A denominational journal with contributions from many churches. Editors: Revs A R Fitchett, W Morley, J Armitage, J S Taylor, J Crump, W J Williams. Printed by J T Smith and Co, circulation 1,000 copies, price 6d.

The New Zealand Methodist

11 volumes published monthly, 3 July 1884-26 May 1894, price 3d reduced in 1892 to 1d. Contains circuit reports from Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, United Methodist Free and Bible Christian churches.

Editor Rev W J Williams.

The Advocate

8 volumes published weekly 9 June 1894-11 May 1901. Price 6/6 per annum.

Contains religious, social and political concerns of the time including women's franchise.

Editors: Revs P W Fairclough, W C Oliver.

The New Zealand Primitive Methodist

23 volumes published quarterly and monthly from 1893. 1 April 1889-1 March 1913. Contains reports of stations, preaching plans, district meetings, President's address, obituaries, weddings.

Editors Revs A J Smith, J Guy, C E Ward, W Laycock, H Williams, W S Potter, J Cocker.

Included in Methodist Archives bound volumes are ***Primitive Methodist Advocate*** Nos1-22 (incomplete), ***Liberty*** a paper published by the NZ Temperance Alliance issues 1-9, 1899 and issues 1-7, 1902. ***Christian Endeavour Advocate***, 1 issue 1906.

The Outlook

Presbyterian newspaper with contributions from Congregational and Methodist Churches 18 May 1901-24 April 1910 are held in the Methodist Archives. Published weekly, price 1d.

Methodist editors: Revs T G Brooke, J Ward, P W Fairclough

The New Zealand Methodist Times

56 volumes published fortnightly and monthly from 5 May 1962. 7 May 1910-April 1966.

Contains Māori and Overseas Mission columns, social issues, Church conferences, devotional articles, letters to the editor, Local Preacher news.

Editors: Revs L Hudson, W J Williams, J N Milne, P R Parish, C H Laws, H E Bellhouse, W T Blight, Mr H W Beaumont.

The New Zealand Methodist

8 volumes published fortnightly May 1966-December 1973.

Editors: Revs A M Richards, I W Harris, J W Bluck. Assistant editors: Revs L G Hanna, M A Berry, I W Harris.

New Citizen

5 volumes January 1974-June 1979. Published fortnightly until November 1977 then monthly.

New style of newspaper focusing on issues and news.

Editors: Revs J W Bluck, J B Dawson, Ewing Stevens. Assistant editors: Mary-Jane Richmond, Margaret Lovell-Smith, John Deverell.

Focus

No 1-53 September 1979-December 1986.

Published intermittently, monthly April 1984-December 1986.

Editors Revs Evan Lewis, Derek McNicol.

Crosslink

Methodist, Presbyterian and Union Co-operating churches publication published monthly. 15 volumes March 1987-April 2001.

Editors Hans Kuiper, Brendon Smith, Ravindran Casinder, Ian Harris, Roger Wiig, Dianne Gillian-Weeks, Michael O-Dwyer.

Touchstone

Methodist ecumenical newspaper, published monthly May 2001-present day.

News articles, regular columnists, colour photographs.

Editors: Michael O'Dwyer, Paul Titus, Ady Shannon