

**The Convergence of
British and American Methodism
in the South Pacific**

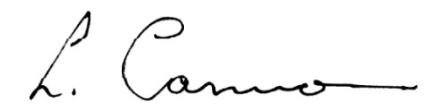
Lindsay Logan Cameron, May 22, 2017.

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Unless otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents the original research of the author.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "L. Cameron", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lindsay L. Cameron

99,339 words

plus notes and appendices

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I did not know that research could be so enjoyable! From the first day that I arrived at The Australian National University I have been embraced by the faculty and I have found that nothing is too much trouble for the staff (especially Jo Bushby). I owe a special debt of gratitude to my supervisory panel. Dr Vicki Luker has served as the chair of the panel and has been both a friend and a task-master. I am so grateful for the times that Vicki challenged my thinking and forced me to search behind new doors. It was a bonus to secure a further two such accomplished academics on my panel as Professor Brij Lal and Professor Bronwen Douglas. Both have been an encouragement and a source of guidance. I know that I am privileged to have worked under their care. The fourth member of my panel has been Dr Michael Gladwin, from a different institution and a special gift to my study. It turned out that Michael's family was part of the history that I have been exploring in this research and he is well known to my wife's family. Michael is a thorough academic who knows enough of the world that I have been researching that his insights have been invaluable.

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ABSTRACT

There have been several Methodist denominations in the South Pacific, two of which operated under the name "Wesleyan Methodist Church". The first was from Britain in the nineteenth century and the second from America in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The latter and numerically smaller of the two, the American Wesleyan Methodist Church, is ultimately the focus of this thesis, but an overview of British Methodism is necessary to provide a context for the emergence of the latter group.

This thesis outlines the historic development of the American Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia from the appointment of its founder, Rev. Dr Kingsley Ridgway, in November 1945 until its most recent National Conference, in September 2015. In addition to the domestic history of the denomination, the development of missions in Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and New Zealand resulted in the formation of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 2012. A summary of the regional expansion and the structure of the Regional Conference is included.

The motivation for the formation of a second Methodist Church in 1946 was a conviction by some evangelicals that Australian Methodism had ceased to genuinely reflect John Wesley's original priorities. This claim is evaluated by comparing South Pacific Methodism of the twentieth century against John Wesley's statements that Methodism must hold true to his original "doctrine, spirit and discipline" or become merely a "dead sect".¹ The conclusion of this research is that British Methodism, as practised in Australia and New Zealand in the twentieth century, had largely ceased to be recognisable as Wesley's Methodism and that American Methodism, as practised by the Wesleyan Methodists in Australia in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, also fails to reproduce much of Wesley's spirit and discipline.

¹ John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 13: 258.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
TABLE OF FIGURES	viii
GLOSSARY OF THEOLOGICAL TERMS	xv
COMMON ABBREVIATIONS	xvii

1: INTRODUCTION	1
British Methodism, 1	
American Methodism, 4	
Arriving at a Thesis Topic, 6	
Methodology, 9	
Literature Review, 16	
Positioning the Thesis, 25	
Constraints, 30	

THE EXPANSION OF BRITISH & AMERICAN METHODISM

2: BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA	37
Calvinist and Arminian Methodists, 40	
The Growth of Methodism, 42	
Wesley's Organisation, 44	
Conversion Manifestations, 48	
British Schisms, 50	
American Methodism, 53	
Slavery and Schisms, 59	
The Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, 59	
3: AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND	67
Australian Methodism, 67	
The Smaller Methodist Groups, 74	
New Zealand Methodism, 78	
Factors in Methodism's Decline, 83	
4: TONGA, SAMOA AND FIJI	105
Tonga, 105	
Samoa, 113	
Fiji, 117	
Transitions, 122	
5: THE MISSION TO MELANESIA	127
The New Guinea Islands, 127	
The Papuan Islands, 132	
The Solomon Islands, 136	
Bougainville, 143	
The Southern Highlands of PNG, 145	
Trends in the Mission to Melanesia, 147	

WMC - 1ST CONVERGENT EVENT:
OUT OF METHODISM

6: ANOTHER METHODISM IN AUSTRALIA	155
<p>Kingsley Ridgway's Preparations, 155 New Guinea, Canada and Egypt, 160 The War Years, 164 The Strategy, 174</p>	
7: FOUNDATIONS 1945-1947	181
<p>Launching the Denomination 1945-1946, 181 Effective Organisation 1947, 189 Huntingtower, 193 Accusations by Charles Lee, 197 Gilbert McLaren's Resignation, 201 The Culture of the Wesleyan Methodists, 203 Wesley's Priorities During This Period, 206</p>	
8: REGROUP AND REBUILD 1948-1961	211
<p>The End of a Dream, 211 New Strategies, 214 Missionary Leadership 1949-1959, 220 Local Churches at a Glance, 232 The State of the Work, 236 Wesley's Priorities During This Period, 237</p>	
9: SLOW DECLINE 1961-1974	241
<p>Local Churches at a Glance, 243 Leadership Issues, 249 Other Influences in the 1960s, 262 Wesley's Priorities During This Period, 265</p>	

WMC - 2ND CONVERGENT EVENT:
OUT OF UNION

10: A RUSH OF NEW GROWTH 1974-1983	273
<p>Formation of the Uniting Church, 273 QLD, VIC & NSW in the Late 1970s, 280 Ordination of Women, 289 QLD, VIC & NSW in the Early 1980s, 292 The Losses of 1982, 294 Wesley's Priorities During This Period, 300</p>	
11: CHURCH LEADERSHIP 1983-2012	303
<p>Metro-Move 1983, 304 James Ridgway as National Superintendent, 305 Don Hardgrave as National Superintendent, 307 Tom Blythe as National Superintendent, 310 Stan Baker as National Superintendent, 314 Lindsay Cameron as National Superintendent, 328 Rex Rigby as National Superintendent, 332 Conversion Statistics, 333 Wesley's Priorities During This Period 335</p>	

WMC - 3RD CONVERGENT EVENT:
OUT OF OCEANIA

12: PACIFIC INFLUENCE 1979-2015	343
Islander Congregations, 343 Area Directors, 350 Observations from Regional Growth, 352	
13: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1995-2015	357
The Solomon Islands, 357 Bougainville & Buka, 363 New Zealand, 371 Convergence Matters, 380 The Regional Conference, 383	
14: FUTURE POSSIBILITIES	385
Positioning this Study, 385 Conclusions from this Study, 392 Wesley's Priorities in South Pacific Methodism, 394 Further Research Required, 399	

APPENDICES

A. Meth. Pres. & Cong. with pre-Uniting as %	403
B. The First Churches 1946-1947	405
C. Local Churches 1948-1961	415
D. Papua New Guinea Mission 1961-1976	445
Ridgway Promotes his Vision 1959-1960, 447 PNG Mission Commences 1961, 454 PNG Mission Expands 1962-1965, 460 PNG Mission Transitions 1966-1975, 465	
E. Local churches 1961-1974	469
F. Victoria/Southern District 1983-2015	489
The Victorian Church, 489 South Australian Outreach, 495 Tasmanian Outreach (Devonport), 501 Western Australian Outreach, 502	
G. South QLD District 1983-2015	509
The Don Hardgrave Era, 509 Everton Hills/Hills, 514 Growth Trends, 516 Mount Gravatt/South Gate/Threesixteen, 520 Riverside/Axis, 527 Maryborough/Lifchurch, 532	
H. NSW & Nth QLD Districts 1986-2015	535
New South Wales District, 535 Giralang, Canberra, 537 Crossroads, 540 Campbelltown, 543 North Queensland District, 546 Middlemount and Lifegate, 555	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Materials, 561	559
Record of Interviews, 563	
List of Newspapers referenced, 564	
Published Sources, 565	
Theses and other Unpublished Materials, 580	
Websites, 582	

TABLE OF FIGURES

1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Pacific focus of British and American Methodism of 19 th century	2
1.2 British Wesleyan Methodist network in the South Pacific	4
1.3 British and American Methodism's convergence in the South Pacific	5
1.4 Three convergent events of the Wesleyan Methodist Church	8
1.4 Topics covered in John Wesley's 44 Standard Sermons	10
1.5 Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia historical publications	24
1.6 Wesleyan Methodist Church average Sunday attendances 1946-2015	29
2: BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA	37
2.1 The evangelical network of the eighteenth century	40
2.2 Quarterly Class Tickets from Australian Methodists	47
2.3 British Methodist schisms and reunions	53
2.4 American colonies of the 1770s	54
2.5 The Wesleyan Church of America	64
2.6 American Methodist schisms and reunions	65
3: AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND	67
3.1 Four largest Australian denominations as a % from 1836-2011	74
3.2 Four branches of British Methodism merged in Australia & New Zealand	77
3.3 The scale of Methodism's merger in Australia 1902	77
3.4 Methodist Church as a % of Australian population 1860-1976	78
3.5 New Zealand map with historic Methodist sites	80
3.6 New Zealand & Australian Methodism as a % of population 1860-2011	84
3.7 Major Australian denominations as % of population 1900- 2011	96
3.8 Australian Methodism, numerical and % increase 1901-1970	100
4: TONGA, SAMOA AND FIJI	105
4.1 The three main groups of the Tongan islands	106
4.2 Map of Tongatapu with historic Methodist sites	108
4.3 Map of Samoa with historic Methodist sites	114
4.4 Map of Fiji with historic Methodist sites	119
5: THE MISSION TO MELANESIA	127
5.1 Bismarck Archipelago (New Guinea Islands) prior to 1949 PNG union	130
5.2 Map of Papuan (Milne Bay) District with historic Methodist sites	133
5.3 Map of the Western Solomon Islands with historic Methodist sites	138
5.4 Map of Bougainville and Buka with historic Methodist sites	144
5.5 Map of PNG Highlands with historic Methodist sites	146
6: ANOTHER METHODISM IN AUSTRALIA	155
6.1 Map of Melbourne with Ridgway/Carson sites marked 1930s	158
6.2 Dorcas and Kingsley Ridgway's wedding day, February 25, 1929	161
6.3 Holiness Movement Church, Standard Church & Wesleyan Church	163
6.4 The Zam Zam on which the Ridgways were evacuated from Egypt	164
6.5 Ridgway revisits Lang Lang in July 1942	165
6.6 Advertising for Ascot Vale Congregational Church 1941-1942	166
6.7 Telegram advising Kingsley Ridgway of R.A.A.F. appointment	167
6.8 R.A.A.F. Flight Lieutenant (Padre) Kingsley Ridgway 1942	169
6.9 Kingsley Ridgway at the Fitzroy Mission on August 13, 1944	170
6.10 U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Theron Colegrove 1945	172

7: FOUNDATIONS 1945-1947	181
7.1 Advertising flyer for Essendon tent meetings 1945	182
7.2 Church Notice showing Ridgway & Carnell together 1946	182
7.3 Map of Melbourne with significant places 1940s	185
7.4 Church Notice showing J.T. Carnell & Gilbert McLaren together 1945	186
7.5 Gerald Bustin, William Bromley and Gilbert McLaren 1947	187
7.6 The Carlton church and congregation c. 1947	188
7.7 Miss Grace Wood and Miss Ella Bienvenu c. 1948	188
7.8 Significant Wesleyan Methodist Church locations in Victoria 1940s	189
7.9 Terms used by the Wesleyan Methodist Church	191
7.10 Huntingtower in 1947	193
7.11 The Wesleyans with Mr Bishop for inspection of Huntingtower 1947	195
7.12 First Wesleyan Methodist convention at Huntingtower 1947	196
7.13 Churches at a glance 1945 to 1948	203
8: REGROUP AND REBUILD 1948-1961	211
8.1 The years of big Sunday Schools 1948-1965	215
8.2 The Annual Camp at the Healesville campground c.1959	218
8.3 The Cox family: Esther, Rachel, Mary Ruth, Martha and Leo c. 1949	221
8.4 Members of the class of 1949	222
8.5 The class of 1953	223
8.6 The Mattke family: Robert, Sharon, Beth and Jeanette c. 1954	229
8.7 Australian ministerial team 1947-1964	231
8.8 Churches at a glance 1948-1961	232
8.9 Caricature of the Carnells by Favaloro boys (Phil & Peter)	233
9: SLOW DECLINE 1961-1974	241
9.1 Bryce Hartin and Aubrey Carnell c. 1969	243
9.2 Churches at a glance 1961 to 1974	244
9.3 Glenroy church brochure from the 1960s	245
9.4 Green Valley/Busby church brochure from 1967	247
9.5 Australian ministerial team 1960-1974	248
9.6 The Carnells: Hazel, Dennis, Graeme and Aubrey c. 1948	250
9.7 Aubrey Carnell in 1990s	254
9.8 Arthur Calhoun and Aubrey Carnell c.1968	255
9.9 Extended absences of Kingsley and James Ridgway, 1946-1974	257
9.10 Ridgway family passage to America together 1966	258
9.11 Wesleyan Messenger, editor K.M. Ridgway, 1969	260
9.12 The American Wesleyan Advocate issue celebrating merger	263
9.13 Denominational brochure c.1969	265
10: A RUSH OF NEW GROWTH 1974-1983	273
10.1 Australian states and selected cities in the Sth Pacific neighbourhood	281
10.2 Churches started and closed 1974-1983	284
10.3 Long-term college staff	286
10.4 Rev. Lyn Holland (née Burch) c. 1989	290
10.5 Kingsley College faculty 1984	294
10.6 Sydney Continuing-Methodist advertisement 1977	296
10.7 Mel and Donna Lockard, Melva and James Ridgway 1980s	300

11: CHURCH LEADERSHIP 1983-2012	303
11.1 James Ridgway 2009	305
11.2 David Wilson 1996	307
11.3 Don Hardgrave 2009	308
11.4 Dr Lee Haines installs the National Board 1986	309
11.5 Tom Blythe 2011	310
11.6 Stanley Baker c. 2000	314
11.7 Church attendances peaking in 1999	329
11.8 Overlap between national boards and committees 2004 elections	332
11.9 Kingsley College in Glenroy 2011	333
11.10 Lindsay Cameron 2006	335
11.11 Kingsley College's new location in Broadmeadows 2013	331
11.12 The National Priorities of 2009-2011	
11.13 Rex Rigby 2015	
11.14 "Persons saved" 1983 to 2015	
11.15 Number of WMC churches and national leaders 1946-2015	
12: PACIFIC INFLUENCE 1979-2015	343
12.1 Revs. Ana and Heamoni Iongi 1996	346
12.2 Islander congregations in the WMC of Australia 1983-2015	350
12.3 Caricature of Barry Ross as sketched by one of his Korean students	351
13: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1995-2015	357
13.1 Map of Western Solomon Islands with Wesleyan Methodist sites	360
13.2 Hall Malasa 2010	361
13.3 George Velopide 2015	362
13.4 Kay Fulcher taking discipleship booklets to the Solomon Islands 2009	363
13.5 Map of Bougainville and Buka Islands with Wesleyan Methodist sites	365
13.6 PNG Movement Order issued to Wesleyan Methodist team 1997	368
13.7 Nashon Nosuri 2011	370
13.8 Edgar Hornblow 2011	374
13.9 Richard Waugh 2008	379
13.10 New Zealand leadership installed by Dr Jerry Pence 2010	380
13.11 Wesleyan leaders at the World Methodist Council in Durban 2011	381
13.12 Lindsay Cameron, Jeff Fussner, Richard Waugh, Anzac Day 2009	382
13.13 Structure of International Conference of The Wesleyan Church 2015	384
14: FUTURE POSSIBILITIES	385
14.1 Kelley's (L) and Cameron's (R) charts, both showing decline in 1960s	389
14.2 Methodism in Australia with % decline preceding numerical decline	390
14.3 The first 70 years of the British and American Methodists in Australia	396

APPENDIX A: Meth, Pres, Cong as % of the population	403
A.1 Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational & Uniting as % of population	403
APPENDIX B: The First Churches 1946-1947	405
B.1 Churches at a glance 1945 to 1948	405
B.2 An advertising flyer for the Moonee Ponds Church 1946	406
B.3 An advertising flyer for the Carlton Church 1946	407
B.4 An advertising flyer for the Bendigo Church opening 1946	409
Error! Not a valid result for table.: The Churches 1948-1961	415
C.1 Church Notice, dedication of Sunshine chapel 1953	420
C.2 Church Notice advertising J.T. Carnell's new meetings 1953	421
C.3 Dalton's Bridge chapel with congregation c. 1949	425
C.4 Dedication of the Balwyn chapel 1955	432
C.5 Walter Betts, Gilbert McLaren & Roy Fletcher together 1945	437
Error! Not a valid result for table.: Papua New Guinea Mission 1961-1976	445
D.1 Leadership changes 1958-1960	446
D.2 Ridgway and Hotchkin's exploratory visit to Koroba, PNG May 1961	456
D.3 Walter Hotchkin and Kingsley Ridgway with two Huli men	458
D.4 Kingsley Ridgway baptising converts at Tagaru 1965	464
D.5 Walter Hotchkin and Yawijah Tuguyah at 30 th anniversary 1991	467
APPENDIX E: Local Churches 1961-1974	469
APPENDIX F: Victorian/Southern District 1983-2015	489
F.1 Number of congregations in Southern District with District leadership	491
F.2 Churches started and closed in Southern District 1984-2015	492
F.3 Southern attendance milestones for four leading churches	495
F.4 Adelaide churches	498
APPENDIX G: South QLD District 1983-2015	509
G.1 Newspaper clipping from 1983	509
G.2 Number of congregations in Sth QLD District with district leadership	510
G.3 Churches started and closed in Sth QLD District 1993-2015	513
G.4 South Queensland attendance milestones for four leading churches	519
APPENDIX H: NSW & Nth QLD Districts 1986-2015	535
H.1 Number of congregations in NSW District with District leadership	536
H.2 Churches started and closed in New South Wales District 2001-2015	539
H.3 Crossroads & Campbelltown beside the stable Coffs Harbour Church	543
H.4 Number of congregations in Nth QLD District with district leadership	547
H.5 Churches started and closed in Nth Queensland District 1984-2015	549
H.6 Life Supply and Ambassadors tour of North QLD 1989	550

GLOSSARY OF THEOLOGICAL TERMS

Arminianism: The teaching that God calls all people to salvation but only those who respond are saved, which fundamentally contradicts the Calvinistic teaching that unilaterally chooses those who will be saved.

Calvinism: (see also Reformed): The teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), and in particular the doctrine of "predestination". Calvin's teachings were adopted by the Puritan sect in Anglicanism. In Methodist history there was conflict between Calvinist and Arminian understandings of free will in relation to salvation.

Christian perfection or holiness: John Wesley's signature doctrine that Christians can and must have their hearts purified from deliberate sin. Christian perfection was also called holiness or perfect love. This teaching has often been confused with sinless perfection, which claims that Christians can live without any failings.

Conversion: The supernatural spiritual process by which evangelicals understand a person to be restored to right relationship with God. It involves individual faith and repentance and a supernatural act in which the Spirit of God enters into new believers, changing their motivations and moral capacity and it usually results in a sense of assurance of salvation.

Evangelical: The school of theology identified by a commitment to a supernatural spiritual conversion (including salvation by faith, rebirth and assurance of salvation), the centrality of Christ's death on the cross, the inspiration of the Bible and activism (that is, social action as well as evangelism and mission).²

Higher Criticism: A sceptical approach to Biblical Criticism, first prominent in German universities in the 1800s and reflecting Enlightenment thought. It has maintained that scientific and literary methods can be used to distinguish between those elements within the Bible thought to contain truth and those thought to be historically untenable.

Holiness: see Christian perfection

Industrial missions: A mission strategy that placed an emphasis on large industrial projects (usually plantations) to teach indigenous men and women skills and western work ethic with the purpose of creating a self-supporting indigenous church. When "industrial missions" was meshed with social gospel, it tended to replace the goal of evangelisation with the goal of civilisation.

Liberal theology: A theology that seeks to accommodate Christian faith to modern culture and the latest scientific knowledge,³ thus implicitly contradicting the traditional evangelical teaching that the Bible is miraculously inspired and infallible.

² See 11, 33.

³ Donald E. Miller, *Case for Liberal Christianity* (Norwich: SCM-Canterbury Press, 1981), 33.

Modernism: This term was popular in the first half of the twentieth century. It represented the concept of modernising the Church through new worship styles, multi-function buildings, Higher Criticism and liberal theology.

Pentecostal: The Pentecostal denominations were birthed primarily out of the Methodist holiness movement,⁴ but with, "only the gift of tongues that set [Pentecostalism] apart from [holiness] teachings."⁵

Pietist: Pietism was a revival movement within the Lutheran Church, inspired by the writings of Johan Arndt in a call to return to heart-religion. The Moravians, with roots dating back to pre-Reformation leaders, merged with Pietism and added the controversial teaching of instantaneous conversion.

Predestination: A doctrine derived from the Bible and developed by Augustine and the Reformers that God has predetermined who will be saved. John Wesley reacted against an extreme predestinarian teaching that no person can resist God's appointment to either heaven or hell.

Premillennial: The teaching that Christ will physically return to the earth to reign for 1,000 years. This teaching is based on the expectation that the world (and the Church) will become progressively more corrupt so that Christ's intervention becomes the only hope for humanity.

Postmillennial: The teaching that the Church will progressively defeat evil and introduce righteousness into the world, resulting in 1,000 years of peace and prosperity, after which Jesus Christ will return.

Puritan: Reformers within the Anglican Church who were influenced by Calvinistic theology and came to prominence in the Church of England during the reign of Elizabeth I. Puritans established a colony near Boston in America and were expelled from the Anglican Church in 1662.

Reformed theology: The Reformed tradition or theology includes a number of traditions, including the teachings of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. Moravian teaching was Reformed via the Lutheran stream. All Reformed theologians hold to some form of the doctrine of predestination. There are, however, differences between various Reformed branches, most notably over the sacraments.

Social gospel: The promotion of community engagement without promoting a supernatural conversion. Evangelicals rejected this new social gospel as a false gospel that denied (or neglected) the miraculous spiritual conversion of individuals.⁶

⁴ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, Kindle edition, 1997), preface, loc 37 also chapt. 1, loc. 50.

⁵ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), 175.

⁶ Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn, Kindle edition, 2012), chapt. 4, loc 1996.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

ADC: Area Directors' Consultation with Global Partners.

APS: A Pleasant Surprise bookshop, a company limited by guarantee, gifted to Don Hardgrave and his mother (Nan) and operated in Brisbane.

BCV: Bible College of Victoria, see MBI

CMML: Christian Missions in Many Lands, connected to Brethren Assemblies.

CMS: Church Missionary Society - the mission agency of the Anglican Church.

DBMD: District Board of Ministerial Development.

ENC: Established National Church, a semi-autonomous body in the global church.

ERC: Established Regional Church, a semi-autonomous body in the global church.

EU: Evangelical Union.

IVF: Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

LBA: Local Board of Administration.

LMS: London Missionary Society, formed late in 1794 out of the British Evangelical Revival. Its members were predominantly non-Anglican (so not interested in the CMS) and Calvinistic (so not interested in the Wesleyan Methodists).⁷

MAF: Missionary Aviation Fellowship

MBI: Melbourne Bible Institute 1920-1978, later BCV (Bible College of Victoria, 1978-2011) and MST (Melbourne School of Theology, from 2012).

MEC: Methodist Episcopal Church in North America from 1784-1939, including a period of separation into North and South denominations.

DBA: District Board of Administration.

NBA: National Board of Administration.

OMS: Originally the Oriental Missionary Society, today the One Mission Society.

NSW: New South Wales, state of Australia.

PFA: Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia.

PNG: Papua New Guinea, including the period from 1949-1972 when it was officially the "Territories of Papua and New Guinea".⁸

QLD: Queensland, state of Australia.

⁷ Tom Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail* (United Kingdom: Vintage Press, Kindle, 2000), chapt. 1.

⁸ The separate regions of New Guinea (at one time German New Guinea) and Papua (at one time British New Guinea and later as Papua under Australian management) were governed separately until 1949, after which they became jointly managed by Australia as the Territories of Papua and New Guinea. In 1972 the name was altered to the modern Papua New Guinea as the 1972-1975 transition to self-governance was implemented. In this thesis PNG or Papua New Guinea have been used for the period after 1949, while acknowledging that it was formally Papua *and* New Guinea until 1972.

SA: South Australia, state of Australia.

TEE: Theological Education by Extension, a distance education program run out of the Queensland district office in the 1980s and South Gate Church in the 1990s.

VIC: Victoria, state of Australia.

WA: Western Australia, state of Australia.

WMC: Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There have been several Methodist denominations in the South Pacific, two of which operated as the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The first was from Britain in the nineteenth century and the second from America in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The later and numerically smaller of the two, the American Wesleyan Methodist Church,¹ is ultimately the focus of this thesis but an overview of British Methodism is necessary to provide a context for the presence of the later group. This thesis seeks to contribute to current literature in two substantive ways: by providing an updated and more complete history of the American Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia and by addressing an incomplete history of why British Methodism declined in the twentieth century.

BRITISH METHODISM

British Wesleyan Methodism was first recorded in Australia when British migrants began to meet in Methodist class meetings in Sydney in 1811,² leading to the arrival of missionary Rev. Samuel Leigh in 1815. From Australia Methodism spread successively to New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Bougainville to become one of the dominant Christian denominations of the South Pacific. Other strands of Methodism that had separated from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in England arrived in Australia and New Zealand in later decades

¹ Some extent of the difference in size of the two branches of Methodism is detailed in chapter 14: 458.

² Glen O'Brien, "Methodism in the Australian Colonies, 1811-1855," in *Methodism in Australia*, eds. Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 15. O'Brien ascribes a date to Edward Eager's class meeting, placing it earlier than the often referenced class meeting started by Thomas Bowden in 1812 at The Rocks in Sydney.

of the nineteenth century, as identified in chapter 3: page 74. However, these smaller Methodist groups did not have the resources to engage in missionary work across the South Pacific in the way that the Wesleyan Methodists had. No American Methodist work was launched in the South Pacific in the nineteenth century.³ The American Methodists were occupied with other mission priorities relating to American political developments in Asia, South America, Africa and the North Pacific as well as the desire to evangelise the Native American Indians. Figure 1.1 illustrates the expansion of British and American Methodism as they relate to the South Pacific.

Figure 1.1 *Pacific focus of British and American Methodism of 19th century*

BRITISH METHODISM		AMERICAN METHODISM	
North America	1760		
West Indies	1786		
Sierra Leone	1811		
Ceylon	1814		

* Pacific		Pacific	Elsewhere
Australia	1815		
New Zealand	1822		
Tonga	1826		
	1833		Liberia
Samoa	1835		
Fiji	1835		
	1848	China	
	1850		Germany
	1855		Sierra Leone
	1856		India
	1865		Switzerland
	1867		Brazil
	1872		Mexico
Papua New Guinea	1875	Japan	
	1899	Philippines	Puerto Rico
Solomon Islands	1902		
	1905	Hawaii	
	1909		Italy
Bougainville	1922		

** Chart does not include all British or American Methodist missions. It illustrates the areas where American Methodism engaged during the expansion of British Methodism in the South Pacific.*

NB. The dates of entry into new fields are general. Entry often involves multiple events over time. These dates simply provide a sense of timing.

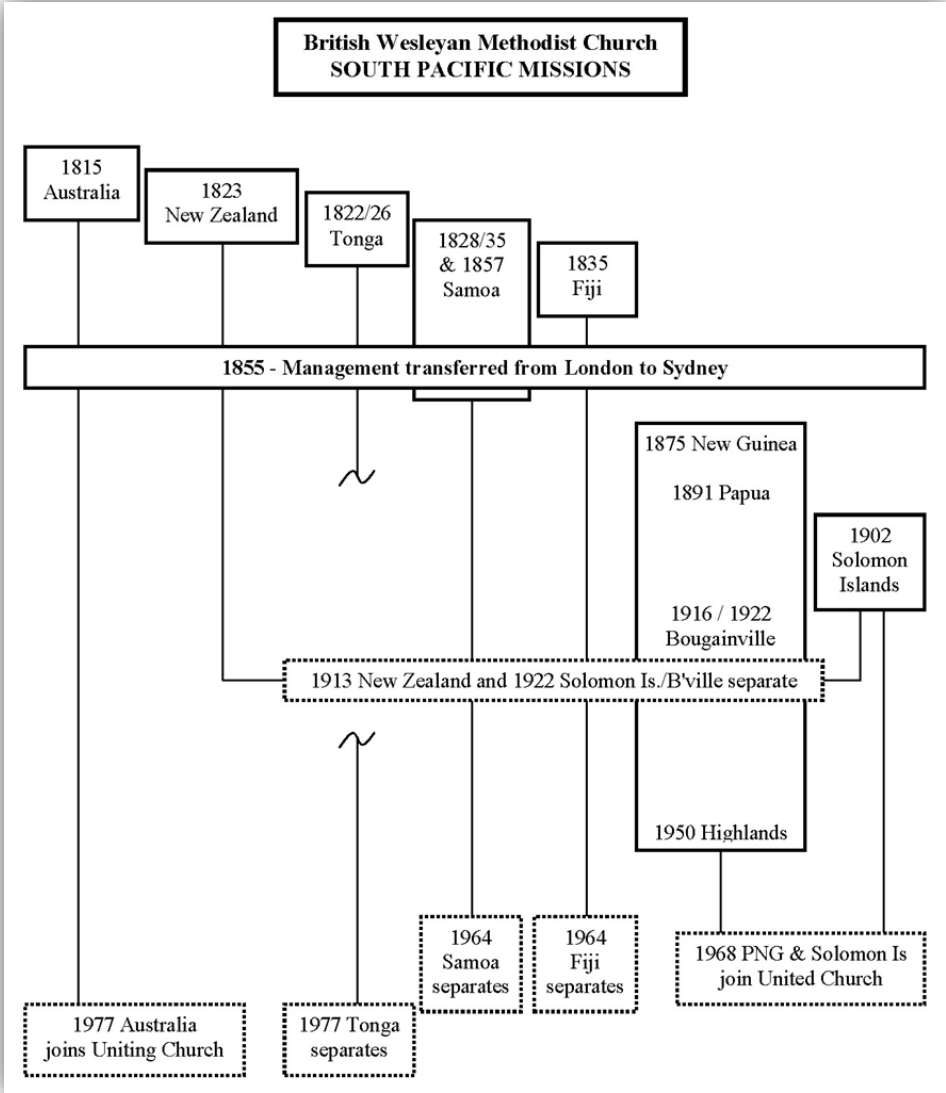
³ Prior to World War II only American Methodist individuals had conducted ministries in Australia, such as Rev. William (California) Taylor, three visits from 1863-1870 (Australian Dictionary of Biography, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/taylor-william-4695>); Rev. Wertheim, the MEC evangelist whose preaching in 1907 inspired the establishment of Bethshan Mission at Wye (Glen O'Brien, "North American Wesleyan-Holiness Church in Australia" (Melbourne: Ph.D. thesis, La Trobe University, 2005), 25; and Rev A.B. Carson who was in Australia from 1919-1929, as described in chapter 6: 192).

In 1855 leadership of the British Wesleyan Methodist ministry in the South Pacific was transferred from London to Sydney. In 1902 these Wesleyans completed a merger with the other smaller British Methodist denominations to form the Methodist Church of Australasia. Until 1902 the Wesleyan Methodists were commonly known as Wesleyans but after merger with the Primitive Methodist Church, the United Methodist Free Church and the Bible Christian Church they jointly used the term Methodists.

In 1913 the New Zealand Methodist Church separated from the Australian Methodist Church, resulting in the assignment of the Solomon Islands and Bougainville/Buka missions to the New Zealand church. The Samoan Methodist Church was granted autonomy from Australia in 1964, as was the Fijian and Rotuman Methodist Church. In 1968 the Methodist Churches of Papua New Guinea (including Bougainville) and the Solomon Islands were merged with the Papua Ekalesia (former London Missionary Society) and other smaller works to form The United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The Tongan Methodists established independence from the Australian church in 1977 after a complex history of autonomous action.

In 1977 the only remaining member of the Methodist Church of Australasia was the Australian Conference, now separated from its Pacific network. In that year it merged with much of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations to form the Uniting Church in Australia, with the result that the Methodist denomination in Australia was entirely absorbed and ceased to exist as Methodist (see figure 1.2). This marked the end of the British stream of Methodism in Australia, although British Wesleyanism/Methodism continues in most of the island nations.

Figure 1.2 *British Wesleyan Methodist network in the South Pacific*

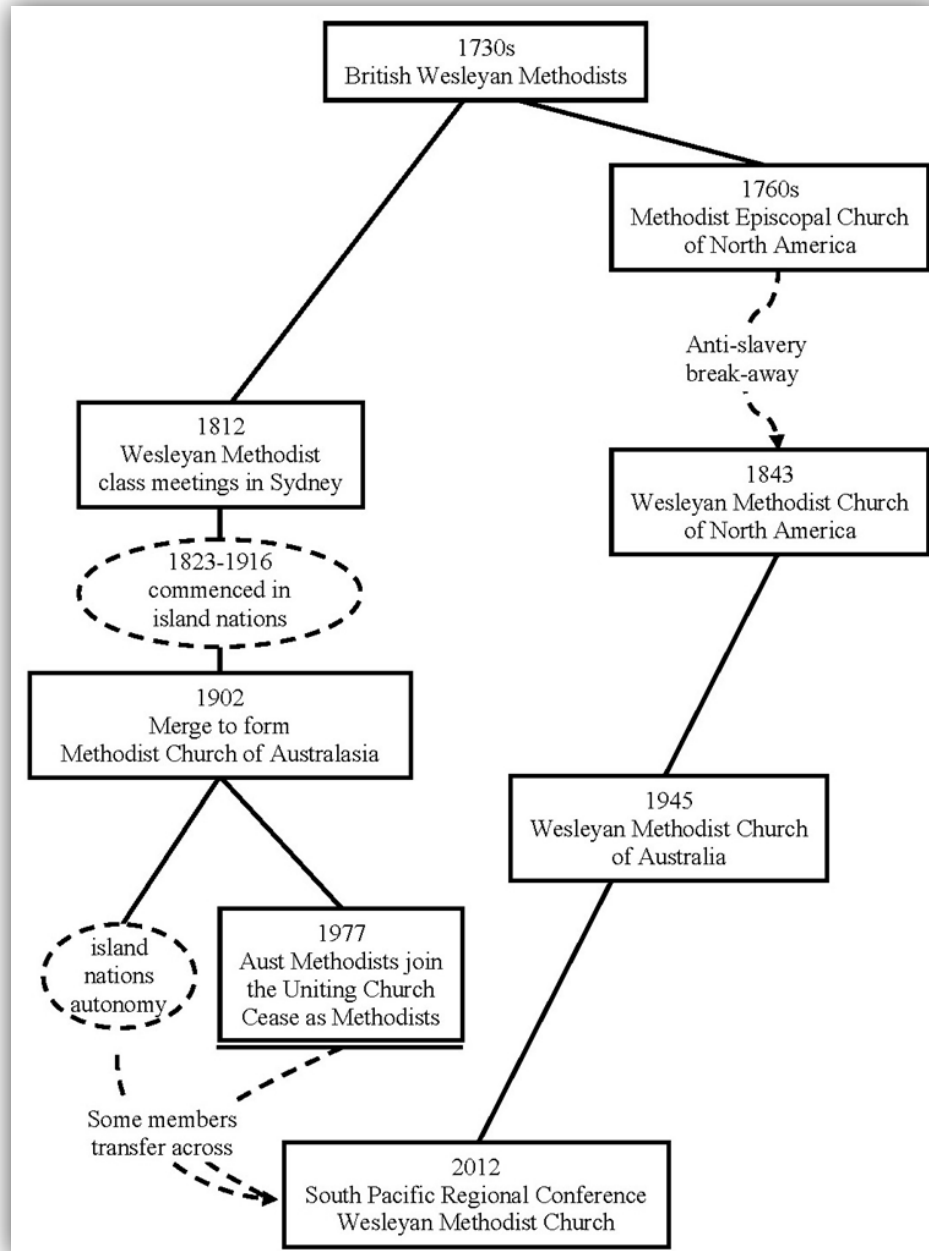


AMERICAN METHODISM

The second Methodist denomination that carried (and still carries) the name Wesleyan Methodist in Australia was a minor strand of American Methodism that arrived in Australia in the twentieth century. It too spread into the island nations of the South Pacific. While it is correct that American Methodism also had its roots in Britain, two centuries of development in North America resulted in some variations in the American stream by the time of arrival in Australia. This second body of Wesleyan Methodists was founded by an Australian who began the denomination in Melbourne in 1946 as World War II was concluding. As American Wesleyan Methodism has increased in Australia and reached into other South Pacific nations, a

majority of its growth has come from Methodists who were formerly part of British Methodism, resulting in minor events of convergence of British and American Methodism during the past seventy years (see figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 *British and American Methodism's convergence in the South Pacific*



Since 1946 the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia has established ministries in Papua New Guinea (1961), Bougainville (1996), the Solomon Islands (1997) and New Zealand (2000). In 2012 these national churches, with the exception of Papua New Guinea, formed the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, thereby severing the former mission relationship with

North America. The South Pacific Conference now relates directly to the International Conference of The Wesleyan Church.⁴

In this thesis, unless otherwise obvious, when the terms Wesleyan Methodist, Wesleyan Methodism or Wesleyan Methodist Church are used, they shall be taken to refer to the denomination that exists in Australia today and traces its origins through the Wesleyan Methodist Church of North America. The earlier Wesleyan Methodist Church, which was founded as a British mission, shall be called the British Wesleyan Methodist Church prior to the 1902 merger or the Methodist Church from 1902 until the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977.

ARRIVING AT A THESIS TOPIC

Recently two of the earliest Australian Wesleyan Methodist ministers passed away: Rev. Dr Aubrey Carnell in 2010 at the age of ninety-six and Rev. Dr James Ridgway in 2012 at the age of eighty-two. These two men were the first two ministers to be ordained in the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church (1952) and had each served as the denomination's Australian leader and as college principal. When they died their families brought a substantial body of archival material to the denominational headquarters in Melbourne. Furthermore, James Ridgway's files contained archival materials from as early as the 1920s from the files of his father, the denominational founder, Rev. Dr Kingsley Ridgway. This new archival material presents a rich opportunity for research and has exposed some misconceptions, both within and without the denomination, about its early history in Australia.

In 2012 the Wesleyan Methodist Churches of Australia, New Zealand, the Solomon Islands and Bougainville became founding members of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, providing a venue for regional cooperation and celebration. These two historical factors, the inclusion of a body of new material in the denominational archives and the establishment of the new Regional Conference, have motivated this thesis. Furthermore, as 2015 marked the bicentenary of British Methodism's official arrival in Australia, this study

⁴ See the chart of the International Conference in chapter 14: 454.

provides a useful review of Methodism's internal dynamics and its impact upon the religious history of the region over two centuries.

Kingsley Ridgway's Wesleyan Methodist Church began in Australia in direct response to a perceived drift of mainline Methodism away from earlier Methodist teachings. Ridgway therefore began the new stream of Methodism with the purpose of re-establishing original Methodism in the South Pacific. This thesis will argue that the Methodist Church of Australasia had indeed, largely surrendered much of John Wesley's original emphases by the twentieth century. However, it will also argue that the later Wesleyan Methodist Church led by Kingsley Ridgway likewise failed to establish some elements of original Methodism, so that by 2015, it was only partially identifiable as Wesley's Methodism. The trend to abandon John Wesley's original methods and teachings gradually changed the identity of both British Methodism and Ridgway's Wesleyan Methodism. With the benefit of previous literature on Methodism and the new Wesleyan Methodist archival materials, this thesis will detail the development of Methodism in Australia and the South Pacific for the purpose of assessing its adherence to John Wesley's original priorities for Methodism.

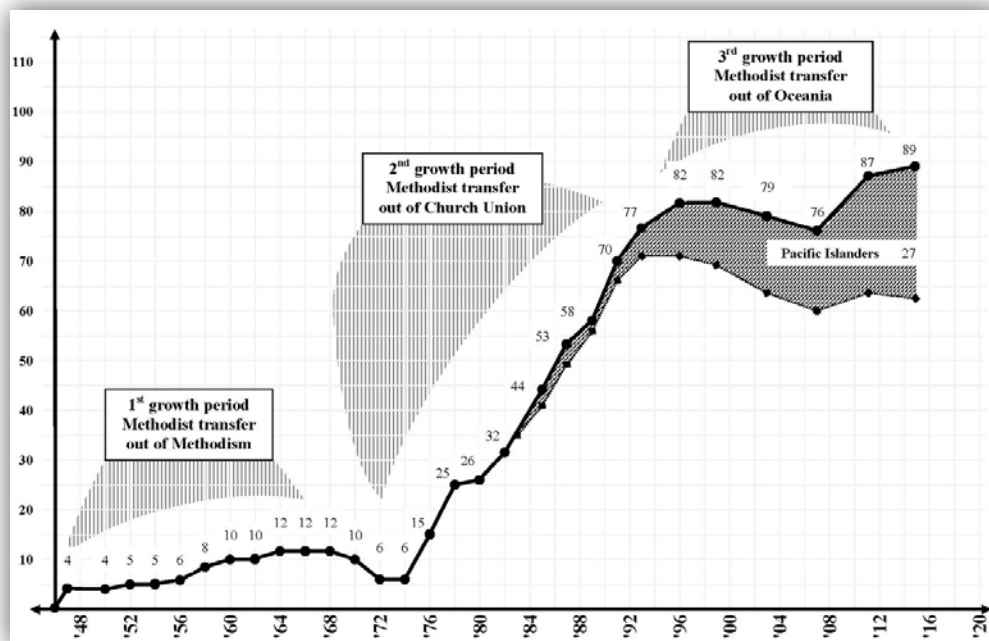
In 2015 the Wesleyan Methodist Church listed eighty-seven congregations in Australia with an average Sunday attendance of 4,330 persons.⁵ Since its commencement in 1946 it had experienced three distinct growth periods as former British Methodists transferred into the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia.

The three of these convergent events, as pictured in figure 1.4, were:

- 1) From 1946 to 1964, during the founding years, when the Wesleyan Methodists struggled to gain a viable presence in Australia
- 2) In the 1970s and 1980s as former Methodists departed Methodism because of the formation of the Uniting Church
- 3) Since the 1980s as islander immigrants sought out the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, resulting in twenty-seven islander congregations by 2015 and notwithstanding the declining number of former congregations.

⁵ "Statistician's Report," 48th National Conference, September 2015 (Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, Melbourne).

Figure 1.4 *Three convergent events of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*



During those seventy years the Wesleyan Methodist Church was able to hold its American-ness because the structures and polity retained their American forms and the ministerial training college continued to provide strong American influences through staffing and curriculum. Consequently, individual members often came from a British Methodist heritage but the institutions shaped them according to American Methodism. However, toward the end of the twentieth century the convergence of islander Methodists took a different form when Islanders and New Zealanders of European descent began to seek out the Wesleyan Methodist Church to have the denomination established in their own countries. The common reason was that they were seeking the evangelical form of Methodism that they had known in past decades. This pursuit of "original Methodism" resulted in the formation of the South Pacific Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In this expanded convergent event into the South Pacific nations the American-ness of the Australian church's structures was not easily imposed upon other member conferences. The Bougainville, Solomon Islands and New Zealand churches identify with a rich heritage of British Methodism while the Australian stream still identifies predominantly with its American history. The initial spread of British Methodism and the convergent events named above constitute the overall outline of this thesis:

Section 1 - The expansion of British and American Methodism

Section 2 - 1st convergent event: out of Methodism

Section 3 - 2nd convergent event: out of Union

Section 4 - 3rd convergent event: out of Oceania.

In response to the recurring ideal of "original Methodism" this thesis addresses the question: **To what extent has Methodism in the South Pacific remained true to John Wesley's priorities for original Methodism?**

METHODOLOGY

Just five years before his death, John Wesley wrote:

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit and discipline with which they first set out.⁶

In this statement, Wesley names those priorities that *he* considered of most importance to the future effectiveness of Methodism: its doctrine, spirit and discipline. These three elements provide a measure of original Methodism according to John Wesley's intentions for the organisation that he established.

Wesley's Doctrine. John Wesley was one of several leaders in the evangelical movement that spread through Britain, North America and other nations from the 1730s. Much of Wesley's doctrines are therefore shared with other evangelicals. Evangelicalism in general is identified by its commitment to a supernatural spiritual conversion (including salvation by faith, rebirth and assurance of salvation), the centrality of Christ's death on the cross, the complete inspiration of the Bible and a priority upon activism.⁷ Wesley upheld these shared defining elements of Evangelicalism and he promoted his own emphases on Arminianism and Christian perfection.

⁶ John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 13: 258.

⁷ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 5-17.

In Wesley's own words, the essential elements of his doctrine are found in his forty-four *Standard Sermons* and in his *Notes on the New Testament*.⁸ An outline of the forty-four Standard Sermons is provided as figure 1.5. There is a sense of "highest priority" in his earliest sermons as Wesley preached on salvation by faith, evangelical conversion, assurance of salvation and holiness before moving on to more pastoral topics as his congregations were established. Pastoral topics, including the role of the Bible, the sacraments and Christian living were introduced in sermon twelve, but became more dominant from sermon twenty-one.

Figure 1.5a *Topics covered in John Wesley's 44 Standard Sermons*

TITLE - text	TOPIC
1. Salvation By Faith - Ephesians 2:8	CONVERSION
2. The Almost Christian - Acts 26:28	CONVERSION & ASSURANCE
3. Awake, Thou That Sleepest - Ephesians 5:14	CONVERSION
4. Scriptural Christianity - Acts 4:31	CONVERSION
5. Justification By Faith - Romans 4:5	CONVERSION
6. The Righteousness Of Faith - Romans 10:5-8	CONVERSION
7. The Way To The Kingdom - Mark 1:15	CONVERSION
8. The First Fruits Of The Spirit - Romans 8:1	CONVERSION & HOLINESS
9. The Spirit Of Bondage And Of Adoption - Romans 8:15	CONVERSION & HOLINESS
10. The Witness Of The Spirit - Romans 8:16	ASSURANCE & HOLINESS
11. The Witness Of Our Own Spirit - 2 Corinthians 1:12	HOLINESS & THE BIBLE
12. The Means Of Grace - Malachi 3:7	PRAYER, BIBLE & LORD'S SUPPER
13. The Circumcision Of The Heart - Romans 2:29	HOLINESS
14. The Marks Of The New Birth - John 3:8	CONVERSION, ASSURANCE & HOLINESS
15. The Great Privilege Of Those That Are Born Of God - 1 John 3:9	HOLINESS
16. Sermon On The Mount: <i>His disciples came to him</i> - Matthew 5:1-4	BIBLE & CONVERSION
17. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Blessed are the meek</i> - Matthew 5:5-7	HOLINESS
18. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Blessed are the pure in heart</i> - Matthew 5:8-12	HOLINESS

⁸ Wesley, "Minutes of Several Conversations: Trust Deeds for Methodist Chapels," in *Works*, vol. 8: 331.

Figure 1.5b *Topics covered in John Wesley's 44 Standard Sermons cont.*

19. Sermon On The Mount: <i>You are the salt of the earth</i> - Matthew 5:13-16	WITNESSING
20. Sermon On The Mount: <i>I did not come to destroy the Law</i> - Matthew 5:17-20	BIBLE & HOLINESS
21. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Do not do your alms before men</i> - Matthew 6:1-15	DEEDS & PRAYER
22. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Do not fast as the hypocrites</i> - Matt. 6:16-18	PURITY OF INTENTION
23. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Treasures in heaven</i> - Matt. 6:19-23	WEALTH & GOOD DEEDS
24. Sermon On The Mount: <i>You cannot serve two masters</i> - Matthew 6:24-34	WEALTH
25. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Judge not</i> - Matthew 7:1-12	JUSTICE, MERCY & TRUTH
26. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Enter by the narrow gate</i> - Matthew 7:13-14	HOLINESS
27. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Beware of false prophets</i> - Matthew 7:15-20	FALSE GOSPEL
28. Sermon On The Mount: <i>Not all who say "Lord, Lord"</i> - Matthew 7:21-27	CONVERSION
29. The Original, Nature, Property, And Use Of The Law - Romans 7:12	THE LAW
30. The Law Established Through Faith: - Romans 3:31	THE LAW
31. The Law Established Through Faith: - Romans 3:31	THE LAW
32. The Nature Of Enthusiasm - Acts 26:24	UNFOUNDED EXPECTATIONS
33. A Caution Against Bigotry - Mark 9:38-39	ECUMENISM & DEMONOLOGY
34. Catholic Spirit - 2 Kings 10:15	ECUMENISM
35. Christian Perfection - Philippians 3:12	HOLINESS
36. Wandering Thoughts - 2 Corinthians 10:5	HOLINESS
37. Satan's Devices - 2 Corinthians 2:11	SATAN OPPOSES HOLINESS
38. Original Sin - Genesis 6:5	ALL-PERVADING SIN
39. The New Birth - John 3:7	CONVERSION
40. The Wilderness State - John 16:22	CONVERSION & HOLINESS
41. Heaviness Through Manifold Temptations - 1 Peter 1:6	TRIALS
42. Self-denial - Luke 9:23	SUBMISSION TO GOD
43. The Cure Of Evil-speaking - Matthew 18:15-17	BACK-BITING
44. The Use Of Money - Luke 16:9	MONEY

Wesley reinforced his understanding of the doctrinal fundamentals explicitly in his thirty-ninth sermon, saying:

If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed fundamental, they are doubtless these two, - the doctrine of justification, and that of new birth: The former relating to that great work which God does **for us**, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does **in us**, in renewing our fallen nature. [emphasis his]⁹

In another of Wesley's more famous statements, he explained how central the doctrine of Christian perfection is to the Methodists, "This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly he appeared to have raised us up."¹⁰ From this statement it is seen that John Wesley's teaching of Christian perfection is the doctrine that he believed distinguished his Methodism from other evangelical denominations.¹¹

In the "Preface" to his *Notes on the New Testament*, Wesley expressed his confidence in the integrity of the Bible, a teaching that some Methodists abandoned in the nineteenth century: "The Scripture, therefore, of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess."¹²

From these records and the history of Wesley's own Christian experience, it can be shown that his doctrinal priorities were:

1. A **supernatural conversion**,¹³ including the substitutionary death of Christ, an act of saving faith by the believer and an instantaneous born-again experience through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, resulting in **assurance of salvation**;
2. **Christian perfection** (often known as **holiness** in subsequent generations), which is enabled by a purifying act of the Holy Spirit and maintained by grace and self-discipline;
3. The use of all **Means of Grace**, especially baptism and the Lord's Supper, Bible-reading, prayer and fasting to maintain Christian vitality and fidelity. Wesley's confidence in the integrity of the Bible can also be noted as a means grace, through which God's wisdom can be consistently accessed.

⁹ Wesley, "Sermons," in *Works*, vol. 6: 65.

¹⁰ Wesley, "Letters to Various Persons," in *Works*, vol. 13: 9.

¹¹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, Kindle edition, 1997), chapt. 1, loc. 114.

¹² Wesley, "Various Works XLVII: Preface to Explanatory Notes on the New Testament," in *Works*, vol. 14: 238. This topic is addressed further in chapter 3: 106.

¹³ See Glossary, xv.

Wesley's Spirit. In his "Thoughts Upon Methodism" in which Wesley named his priorities of doctrine, spirit and discipline, he went on to define what he meant by the spirit of Methodism. He stated, "I fear, wherever riches have increased, (exceeding few are the exceptions,) the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion."¹⁴ Material wealth, according to Wesley, is one of the greatest hindrances to the spirit of Methodism.¹⁵ With remarkable insight, Wesley acknowledged that revival produces the seeds of its own downfall through the economic and social advancement of converts. As riches produce pride, anger and love of the world, so the Methodist spirit is defined in the opposite extreme through humility, long-suffering, and self-denial. Increased wealth could be expected to undermine personal motivation and Methodist spirit. This trend was noted in the second generation of Methodists in America. Francis Asbury, the most prominent of all early Methodist leaders in America bewailed the decline of Methodist spirit, "We are losing the spirit of missionaries and martyrs, we are slothful... Our *ease in Zion* makes me feel awful... Ah, poor dead Methodists!... How shall preachers who are well provided for maintain the spirit of religion!" [italics his]¹⁶ Methodism began amongst the poorer sectors of society in both England and America, but as religion produced upward social mobility and wealth, it also brought comfort, complacency and declining zeal.¹⁷

Wesley's Discipline. John Wesley's personal experience of Christianity was initially a strict regimen of devotional exercises, good works, the use of the sacraments and daily accountability to a like-minded group.¹⁸ When he was almost thirty-two years old he finally experienced his spiritual "conversion". His understanding of conversion was of a supernatural gift from God, effected through the presence of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ However, once converted Wesley never surrendered his personal disciplines. His Arminian theology affirmed that salvation

¹⁴ Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *Works*, vol. 13: 260.

¹⁵ This principle is widely acknowledged, having been named "redemption and lift" by Donald McGavran in *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd edition, ed. C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Kindle, 1980), chapt. 16, locs. 2598, 2652, 2679.

¹⁶ Asbury as quoted in John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford: University, 2012), 367.

¹⁷ This topic is revisited in chapter 2: 76 and chapter 3: 104.

¹⁸ Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley M.A.: Founder of the Methodists*, 1870 (Revival Library Series, Kindle edition, 2013), vol. 1, chapt. 3, loc. 960.

¹⁹ Wesley, "Sermon 18: The Marks of the New Birth," in *Works*, vol. 5: 212-223. See Glossary, xv.

was always synergistic: it involved both God's gift and human effort. God's gift did not negate a personal need for discipline and focus. Holiness, for Wesley, was achievable in this life, but must be sought diligently. In later centuries, and especially in the American holiness movements and the rising Pentecostal movements, spiritual power came to have a much greater dependence upon the visitation and anointing of the Spirit with less emphasis on rigorous personal discipline. To understand Wesley's concept of discipline, one must set aside modern understandings of spiritual gifts and graces. Wesley constructed a movement in which people were brought to life through an instantaneous supernatural experience that was then fostered and retained through perseverance and personal discipline, as noted by David Hempton:

The whole ecclesiastical superstructure of Methodism, its itinerant and local preachers, its bands and classes, its love feasts and camp meetings, and its hymns and publications were all designed to promote scriptural holiness and guard against laxity or levity.²⁰

Wesley's statement on doctrine, spirit and discipline included an unusual turn of phrase: he stated that Methodism would lose its edge unless Methodists clung to, "both" the doctrine, spirit and discipline. This use of the word "both" may have been a grammatical form of the times or it may point to Wesley's understanding that spirit and discipline are vitally connected as one unit. Certainly, when Wesley spoke this way he was not using the word "spirit" in a doctrinal sense, such as clinging to the Holy Spirit. He was saying that the doctrine (and the conversion experience) motivated a spirit of intense desire for further and deeper experience that required personal and corporate discipline. This thesis will continue to describe Wesley's priorities as a trichotomy of "doctrine, spirit and discipline", but acknowledges that there is a dichotomist logic when "spirit and discipline" are grouped as one concept.

John Wesley held his group together by, "the sheer force of his personality and convictions".²¹ While he was still alive, his doctrine, spirit and discipline were evident in Methodism in Britain, North America, West Africa and the Caribbean. However, once Wesley and his generation died, Methodism began to lose its clear

²⁰ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (London: Yale: University, Kindle edition, 2005), chapt. 3. loc. 789.

²¹ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), 39.

focus. Methodism, "splintered into fragments, each preserving only certain parts and themes of the original Wesleyan vision."²² It should be no surprise then if it is found that British and American Methodism had variously lost and clung to different aspects of original Methodism by the twentieth century in the South Pacific.

To properly respond to the thesis question: "To what extent has Methodism in the South Pacific remained true to John Wesley's priorities for original Methodism?" it has been necessary to devote chapters 2-5 to an overview of the work of British Methodism, which provides the context for the commencement of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. Most of this initial overview has been achieved by reviewing published literature, some of which is primary source material and some of which is more recent, secondary source material. The focus in these initial chapters has not been a comprehensive summary of Methodism's expansion, but rather a sensitivity to those practices that relate to John Wesley's three priorities, such as the doctrines taught, the urgency (spirit) of the Methodist generations, the use of class meetings, love feasts, circuits and itinerancy and the roles of lay members and clergy.

Some focus has been placed upon the islander missions of the early Methodists in the South Pacific (chapters 4-5). This is especially useful to the study for two reasons:

1. The missions established in the islands have remained as a type of time-capsule, a window into the past practices of Methodism. In some cases the island churches retained the early priorities of Methodism long after the European churches in Australia and New Zealand changed.

2. The conclusion of this thesis will consider some of the potential obstacles to harmonious participation in the new Regional Conference. An understanding of the different histories and expectations of Methodists from the nations of the South Pacific will inform that discussion.

²² Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 39.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The most significant source for this thesis has been the archival materials in the Melbourne offices of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. These are the foundations of chapters 6 to 14. In providing the context for the emergence of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, literature reviews were undertaken to provide the early history of British, American and South Pacific Methodism.

The story of early Methodism. The research done by several prominent authors into the origins of Evangelicalism greatly assisted in understanding Methodism's roots. William Ward's *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*²³ is a seminal work that traces the development of Pietist and Moravian expansion across Europe, Russia and North America before contributing to the evangelical revival in Britain. David Bebbington's *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*²⁴ and Mark Noll's *The Rise of Evangelicalism*²⁵ build upon Ward's work to describe the evangelical awakening when European revival movements combine with Puritan and Anglican influences in the relative freedom of British and American societies. David Hempton's *Empire of the Spirit*²⁶ adds to the history by tracing Methodism's rapid international expansion in conjunction with the Anglican Church and the British Empire. John Wigger's *American Saint*²⁷ describes the life and ministry of Francis Asbury, the "Wesley of America": his restoration of class meeting discipline in Philadelphia in 1772, his relentless itinerant ministry spanning a quarter of a million miles over forty-four years, his autocratic style, his commitment to Christian perfection and his death in Virginia in 1816. Asbury's implementation of Wesley's doctrine, spirit and discipline, resulted in explosive growth and provides confirmation of Wesley's model and teachings.

Other aspects of the global evolution of Methodism are highlighted in George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture*,²⁸ which deals with the shift from

²³ W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992).

²⁴ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2002).

²⁵ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*.

²⁶ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*.

²⁷ Wigger, *American Saint*.

²⁸ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd edition (Oxford: University, Kindle edition, 2006).

Evangelicalism to Liberalism²⁹ and Vinson Synan's *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*,³⁰ which provides a thorough overview of the development of the holiness denominations in America and their connection to the Pentecostal movement in the twentieth century. Both of these issues, Liberal theology and Pentecostalism, are significant in the twentieth century demise of the Methodist Church in the South Pacific and the origins of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. Liberal theology seeks to accommodate modern culture and the latest scientific knowledge,³¹ thus contradicting the traditional evangelical teaching that the Bible is fully inspired and infallible and more reliable than scientific theory. Early Pentecostal teaching was very similar to traditional Methodist teaching except the additional Pentecostalism teaching on glossolalia (that is, speaking in tongues).³²

In addition to these more-recent publications a vast amount of historic documentation is available electronically. Many of the digital publications are primary sources written by key figures in evangelical history, including (with some of the sources footnoted) John Wesley,³³ George Whitefield, James Hutton,³⁴ Adam Clarke, Jonathan Edwards,³⁵ John Fletcher,³⁶ Richard Watson, Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, Nathan Bangs, Orange Scott,³⁷ Luther Lee,³⁸ Phoebe Palmer,³⁹ Seth Rees and Martin Wells Knapp.⁴⁰ These publications add great depth and insight into the issues and the tone of the debate at crucial times in evangelical history.

British Methodism in the South Pacific. The expansion of British Methodism across the South Pacific is similarly represented in modern research and in early

²⁹ See Glossary, xii. These topics and terms will be further examined in later chapter.

³⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*.

³¹ Donald E. Miller, *Case for Liberal Christianity* (Norwich: SCM-Canterbury Press, 1981), 33.

³² This topic is revisited in chapter 8: 258.

³³ Wesley, *Works*.

³⁴ James Hutton was an early associate of Wesley's in the Fetter Lane Society who later became the leader of the Moravian cause in London and a harsh critic of Methodism. A large amount of his correspondence is reproduced in his memoirs. See Daniel Benham, *Memoirs of James Hutton; Comprising the Annals of His Life and Connection with The United Brethren* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1856).

³⁵ Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God, 1737* (Kindle edition, 2012).

³⁶ John Fletcher, *Fletcher on Christian Perfection*, n.d. (Kindle edition, 2011).

³⁷ Orange Scott, *The Grounds for Secession from the M. E. Church*, 1849 (Internet Archive).

³⁸ Luther Lee, *Slavery: A Sin Against God*, 1853 (Internet Archive).

³⁹ Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness*, 1849 (Kindle edition, 2011).

⁴⁰ Martin Wells Knapp, *Lightning Bolts from Pentecostal Skies*, 1898 (Kindle edition, 2013).

publications. Alexander Strachan's *The Life of the Rev. Samuel Leigh*,⁴¹ which was informed by personal conversations between Strachan and Leigh, proved especially useful in identifying the first Methodist missionary's rigorous application of Wesley's system. A. Harold Wood's *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, vol. 1: *Tonga and Samoa*⁴² and vol. 2: *Fiji*⁴³ likewise illustrate the class meetings, holiness teaching and sacrificial service in the island nations of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. Noel Rutherford's *Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga*⁴⁴ and Sione Lātūkefu's *Church and State in Tonga*⁴⁵ were particularly helpful in explaining the work in Tonga, from where the missions to Samoa and Fiji flowed. These more recent histories were greatly enhanced by numerous primary writings, such as Walter Lawry's *Friendly and Feejee Islands*,⁴⁶ Martin Dyson's *My Story of Samoan Methodism*,⁴⁷ Joseph Waterhouse's *The King and People of Fiji*,⁴⁸ George Brown's *Autobiography*⁴⁹ and Ruth Bradbury's condensation of the diary of William Wilson (1828-1896) in *Fiji Wilson*.⁵⁰

After a forty year period of consolidation in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, the Wesleyan Mission was extended across to New Guinea, Papua, the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Wesley's priorities appear to have been inconsistently applied in these missions, as illustrated in Alan Tippett's *Solomon Islands Christianity*.⁵¹ George Carter's *A Family Affair*⁵² confirms Tippett's observations and supplements Tippett's work with details of the final

⁴¹ Alexander Strachan, *The Life of the Rev. Samuel Leigh, Missionary to the Settlers and Savages of Australia and New Zealand*, 1870 (Forgotten Books, 2012).

⁴² A. Harold Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, vol. 1: *Tonga and Samoa*, (Hawthorn East, VIC: Aldersgate, c. 1975).

⁴³ A. Harold Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, vol. 2: *Fiji* (Melbourne: Aldersgate, 1978).

⁴⁴ Noel Rutherford, *Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga* (Melbourne: Oxford, 1971),

⁴⁵ Sione Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga: The Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries and Political Development, 1822-1875* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1974).

⁴⁶ Walter Lawry, *Friendly and Feejee Islands: A Missionary Visit to Various Stations in the South Seas, in the Year 1847*, ed. Elijah Hoole (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850).

⁴⁷ Martin Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism* (Melbourne: Fergusson and Moore, 1875).

⁴⁸ Joseph Waterhouse, *The King and People of Fiji*, 1866 (Google Books).

⁴⁹ George Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer, an Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908).

⁵⁰ Ruth M. Bradbury, *Fiji Wilson: Wesleyan Missionary and Minister, Fiji and Britain* (Canberra: Self-published, 2010).

⁵¹ Alan R. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction* (South Pasadena: William Carey, 1967).

⁵² George G. Carter, *A Family Affair: A Brief Survey of New Zealand Methodism's Involvement in Missions Overseas 1822-1972* (Auckland: Wesley Historical Society, 1973).

decades of the mission to the Solomon Islands and Bougainville before the formation of the United Church. The biographies of George Brown's life and ministry by Helen Gardner *Gathering for God*⁵³ and Margaret Reeson *Pacific Missionary George Brown*⁵⁴ were rich sources of information and interpretation of the strategies in the mission to Melanesia and of the developments within the Methodist Church in Australia. Margaret Reeson was a further valuable primary source of information for the Methodist work in the Highlands of PNG, both through published sources⁵⁵ and personal correspondence with the author. The most difficult part of the Papua New Guinean work to trace was the Milne Bay District. No complete history of this mission appears to have been published. However, a picture of the early vigorous development and later failures of this mission were sourced from Ronald Williams' *The United Church in Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands*⁵⁶ and John Burton's *Papua for Christ*.⁵⁷

The island missions, spread as they were across 130 years from 1822 to the 1950s, provides a frame-by-frame picture of the changes taking place gradually amongst the European Methodists. The Tongan, Samoan and Fijian Island Ministers had known a traditional evangelical-holiness teaching, but under the increasingly modernist leadership of George Brown, William Bromilow and John Francis Goldie in the Melanesian mission, they were challenged by the new social gospel of the European Methodists. In the late nineteenth century the Methodist Church in Australia and New Zealand was surging forward into different doctrines, loss of spirit and abandonment of discipline. George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture*⁵⁸ provides a useful overview of the doctrinal shift in a global context, while Stuart Piggin's *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia*⁵⁹ illustrates the Australian context. The 2015 edited work, edited by Glen

⁵³ Helen Bethea Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania* (Dunedin, NZ: Otago, 2006).

⁵⁴ Margaret Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown 1835-1917* (Canberra: ANU EPress, 2013).

⁵⁵ Margaret Reeson, *Torn Between Two Worlds* (Madang: Kristen, 1972) and "What I Saw of the Revival in the P.N.G. Highlands," in Margaret Reeson, Joan Rule and Keith Everingham, *An Outline History of Evangelical Revivals in the Pacific Islands and in Papua-New Guinea*, ed. Robert Evans. <http://revivals.arkangles.com/docs/EvangelicalRevivalsInThePacific>.

⁵⁶ Ronald G. Williams, *The United Church in Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands* (Rabaul, PNG: Trinity, 1972).

⁵⁷ John Burton, *Papua for Christ* (London: Epworth, 1926).

⁵⁸ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*.

⁵⁹ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*.

O'Brien and Hilary Carey, *Methodism in Australia: A History*⁶⁰ filled in much of the story of Methodism in Australia, especially those chapters that describe the progress until the 1902 merger. The subsequent chapters that deal with twentieth century Methodism were similarly revealing but gave little attention to the internal division within Methodism over evangelical/liberal theology. Fortunately, this silence was filled by another 2015 work, *Out of the Ordinary*, edited by Patricia Curthoys and William Emilsen, in which the theological perspectives of several lesser-known educational and pastoral leaders along the evangelical/liberal spectrum are described biographically.⁶¹

Arnold Hunt makes some reference to this theological division in *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia*⁶² and Kenneth Dempsey's *Conflict and Decline: Ministers and Laymen in an Australian Country Town*⁶³ provides a graphic illustration of the gradual introduction of liberal theology. However, the most telling records are found in obscure booklets by disappointed evangelicals, including, William Fitchett's *A Tattered Bible and a Mutilated Christ*,⁶⁴ Walter Betts' *The Drift*⁶⁵ and Donald Hardgrave's *Church Union: The Other Side of the Coin*.⁶⁶ The end result in Methodism's shift in priorities is illustrated in the writings of D'Arcy Wood's *Building of a Solid Basis*⁶⁷ and William and Susan Emilsen's *The Uniting Church in Australia*⁶⁸ and William Emilsen's *An Informed Faith*.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey, eds. *Methodism in Australia: A History* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015).

⁶¹ Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen, eds., *Out of the Ordinary: Twelve Australian Methodist Biographies* (Unley, South Australia: MediaCom, 2015).

⁶² Arnold D. Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1985).

⁶³ Kenneth Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline: Ministers and Laymen in an Australian Country Town* (North Ryde, NSW: Methuen, 1983).

⁶⁴ W.H. Fitchett, *A Tattered Bible and a Mutilated Christ: Ought a Christian Church to Accept This?* (Melbourne: Fitchett Brothers, 1922).

⁶⁵ W.F. Betts, *"The Drift": Tracing the Drift in Modern Methodism, leading up to my Resignation in 1954* (Melbourne: Self-published, c. 1955).

⁶⁶ Donald Hardgrave, *Church Union: The Other Side of the Coin* (Camberwell, VIC: Essential Christian Books, 1977).

⁶⁷ D'Arcy Wood, *Building of a Solid Basis: A Guide to the Basis of Union of The Uniting Church in Australia* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1986).

⁶⁸ William and Susan Emilsen, eds., *The Uniting Church in Australia: The First 25 Years* (Armadale, Victoria: 2003).

⁶⁹ William W. Emilson, ed., *An Informed Faith: The Uniting Church at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015).

The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. The primary focus of this thesis is the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia - an important piece of Australian church history that has been unduly neglected until now. This thesis will provide the first comprehensive account of the origins and development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church by reviewing an extensive volume of archival materials, undertaking interviews and referencing the small number of histories that have been published on specific elements of the Wesley Methodist Church's progress.

The archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church date from the 1920s, with many boxes apparently unexplored for decades. The current holdings of almost four hundred archive boxes includes a full set of district and national board minutes, extensive correspondence files from most of the past Australian leaders and missionaries, a full set of conference journals, college records, local church records and various brochures, flyers, agendas and programs. The work of reconstructing the seventy-year history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was undertaken by reviewing more than forty boxes of files, page by page, and confirming historical details through interviews with thirty-nine surviving church members. The resulting history quickly exceeded the word count permissible for the thesis. Therefore a concise overview is included in the thesis body with attention given to events that specifically highlight the continuation or neglect of Wesley's stated priorities for Methodism. Some of the additional results of the archival search are included as appendices for those who want the minutiae of year by year, congregation by congregation, pastor by pastor, district by district history.

The death of the early Australian ministers has created some urgency in the task of collecting data for the historical record. In many cases, those who knew the story behind the board minutes are no longer available. Consequently, the archival records have been supplemented through interviews with subsequent church leaders and personalities and a small number of interviews conducted with persons who have been aware of the Wesleyan Methodist Church but not part of the denomination themselves. The interviews were undertaken in accordance with the Australian National University's Human Research Ethics protocols. All interviewees agree to respond to two streams of questions: first questions relating to their involvement in the church, and then more general questions about their perceptions of the events and the organisation. Some interviewees came prepared with several pages of notes,

which were then filed with their consent form. Others simply responded to questions. All spoke freely, and most showed a tendency to dwell upon the good memories rather than the difficult times. In most interviews there were moments of uncertainty or confusion around dates and events, which became apparent when the dates were checked against the written records. Nonetheless, the interviews added a great deal of clarity to the record by identifying unknown persons, providing background for people and decisions, explaining the motivation behind various conflicts and offering insightful perspectives.

Several partial histories of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia are available. The two most commonly referenced today are Donald Hardgrave's *For Such a Time*⁷⁰ and Glen O'Brien's *Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan Holiness Pioneer*.⁷¹ Hardgrave's work was published with a focus on church-planting and provides unique material on the rapid growth experienced in the 1970s and 1980s while O'Brien's work is a biography of Kingsley Ridgway's life that incidentally provides important material on the Wesleyan Methodist Church through its focus upon that era in Ridgway's ministry. Both of these books draw early information from two small booklets published by James Ridgway in the 1960s, *The Beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in Australia*⁷² and *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia: Interesting Facts... for Interested Friends*.⁷³ However, by James Ridgway's own admission, these booklets were constructed from memory⁷⁴ and contain some misinformation. Where necessary this thesis corrects these errors. Another source of the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia has been the *Discipline*⁷⁵ (now called the *Handbook*) but again, some historical inaccuracies were included in the 1994 and 2008 editions.

⁷⁰ Donald Hardgrave, *For Such a Time* (Brisbane: Pleasant Surprise, 1988).

⁷¹ Glen O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan-Holiness Pioneer," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011).

⁷² James Ridgway, *The Beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in Australia* (Marion, Indiana: Wesleyan Methodist Church, c. 1960),

⁷³ James Ridgway, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia: Interesting Facts for Interested Friends* (Melbourne: Wesley, 1965).

⁷⁴ Ridgway notes the limitations of his paper in its introduction, written as it was from memory. It is also noted that those who might have provided additional information to him were no longer available.

⁷⁵ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia 1994* (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1994).

There have been a number of autobiographies, published and unpublished, from ministers of the church over the past eighty years that contribute to the fuller story of the denomination. Kingsley Ridgway published two books, one from his years before ministerial training in Canada, *In Search of God* (first published 1937)⁷⁶ and one from his missionary experiences in New Guinea, *Feet Upon the Mountains* (first published in 1976).⁷⁷ Aubrey Carnell left an unpublished manuscript, "The Life Story of Rev. Dr Aubrey Carnell"⁷⁸ from his half-century of ministry in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Other biographies that have served this research are from the lives of Max Richardson,⁷⁹ William Bromley⁸⁰ and Walter Betts.⁸¹ These provide additional detail and a source of personal observations and pertinent evaluations. For example, Max Richardson recorded:

I experienced many different emotions about the Church of which I had come to be a part. I hated it and I loved it; I despised it and I respected it, I wanted to kick it, and I wanted to nurture it. Many times I would have left it but something would not let me go. I saw it as a hide bound animal; famished by a host of do's [sic] and don'ts; administered by a legislative system that squashed the life out of its infant body.⁸²

The seven main biographical and historical works are identified as figure 1.6. These works relate to the life and ministry of individuals in the first five decades but only mention the wider denominational history incidentally, which has left many significant historical events undocumented. No new histories have been written since the mid-1980s, which is significant because this later period covers the time when islander congregations have multiplied in the Australian work and when missionary work has commenced in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and New Zealand. This

⁷⁶ Kingsley M. Ridgway, "In Search of God: An Account of Ministerial Labours in Australia and the Islands of the Sea, (1937)" republished in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011).

⁷⁷ Kingsley M. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains: A History of the First Five Years of the Wesleyan Missionary Work in Papua New Guinea, (1976)" republished in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Melbourne: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011).

⁷⁸ Aubrey Carnell, "The Life Story of Rev. Dr. Aubrey Carnell" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, 2000), held in Archives of Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia.

⁷⁹ Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough - Pioneer Church Work in Australia: 1955 to 1995* (Lilydale VIC: Self published, 1995).

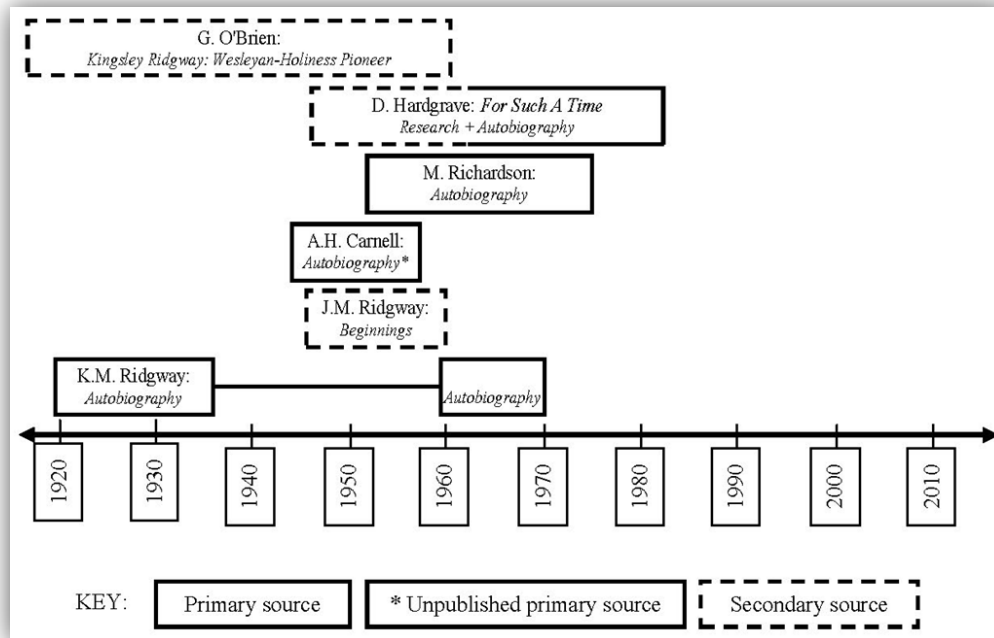
⁸⁰ Agnes E. van den Berg, *Arrows of the Almighty: The Story of William Bromley, Pioneer Missionary to Papua New Guinea* (Kansas City: Nazarene, 1972).

⁸¹ Dallas Clarnette, *50 Years on Fire for God: The Story of Walter Betts* (Benalla, VIC: Fletcher and Fitchett, 2001).

⁸² Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 57.

is also a period when the growth of the 1970s and 1980s slowed and went into decline.

Figure 1.6 Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia historical publications



Several non-Wesleyan sources have provided the broader context in the Australian church and society. Barry Chant's *The Spirit of Pentecost*⁸³ describes the rise of the Pentecostal Church in Australia and David Millikan's *Imperfect Company: Power and Control in an Australian Cult*⁸⁴ described the Tinker Tailor cult in Sydney and Melbourne that coexisted with the Wesleyan Methodists and impacted their reception in the wider church scene. Ian Breward's *A History of the Churches in Australasia*⁸⁵ and James Jupp's *Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*⁸⁶ were useful general sources.

⁸³ Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* (USA: Emeth Press, 2011).

⁸⁴ David Millikan, *Imperfect Company: Power and Control in an Australian Cult* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia and the Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1991).

⁸⁵ Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: University Press, 2008).

⁸⁶ James Jupp, "Wesleyan Methodists," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, James Jupp, ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge, 2009), 592.

POSITIONING THE THESIS

In the early decades of the twentieth century in Australia Methodism was fractured by conflict between the traditional and the newer ideas of church life and teachings. The new ideas were generally included under the label of "modernism".⁸⁷ Modernism encompassed the various efforts to modernise the church through new worship styles, multi-function buildings, Higher Criticism and liberal theology.⁸⁸ As the decades passed congregations became accustomed to the new worship styles, new musicology and modern buildings, but the conflict of theology remained. With a narrower focus upon theology, the terminology also narrowed from opposition to modernism to the battle between evangelical and liberal theology.

Evangelicalism has been identified earlier in this chapter by its commitment to a supernatural spiritual conversion, the centrality of Christ's death on the cross, the inspiration of the Bible and a priority upon activism. Liberal theology, however, is based in the teaching of Higher Criticism, which accepts that the Bible contains errors and that scientific methods can be used to separate those passage which are thought to be inspired truth from those thought to include human introduce error. Liberal theology leans upon Higher Criticism to reject the traditional evangelical confidence that the Bible is without error and to deny supernatural Christian tenets such as the Virgin-Birth, the resurrection of Christ, biblical authorship and various miraculous events.⁸⁹ In the early twentieth century this new teaching quickly led to denial of the evangelical doctrine of a supernatural conversion and Wesley's teaching of holiness.

From the late 1800s liberal theology dominated the ministerial training institutions and dictated the published narrative so that denominational decline was regularly attributed to external social factors rather than a shift in core beliefs and internal conflict. Arnold Hunt, who published a 429 page history of South Australian

⁸⁷ In America these changes had become dominant fifty years earlier. It was sometimes labelled "progressive" but was essentially the same as modernism in that it presented the new use of organs and robed choirs in worship, the loss of class meetings and altar services, and the German teaching of Higher Criticism of the Bible. See Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 1997, chapt. 2, loc. 342.

⁸⁸ See Glossary xi.

⁸⁹ See for example, the controversial textbook, Arthur S. Peake, *A Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1919), 5.

Methodism, demonstrated this reluctance to criticise the impact of liberalism: "Secular theology seemed to undermine the very basis of religion, belief in God. Much more influential than this issue, was a widespread questioning of the worthiness of much of the activity associated with the church...."⁹⁰

Here Hunt proposes that disillusionment with church programs was "much more influential" than the denial of a supernatural God and the undermining of belief in God. It seems more credible to argue that denial of God was the very reason church activities were rendered irrelevant. John Wesley, on the other hand, designed his church programs and congregational discipline to support his doctrine of the miracle-working God. Wesley's entire organisation was relevant because of his doctrine.

More recently general church historians (but not so many Methodist historians) have begun to grapple with how much responsibility liberal theology bears for the decline of mainline Christian denominations. David Hempton names liberal theology as one of several events that led to Methodism's decline when "theological education introduced liberal ghosts into the machine."⁹¹ Stuart Piggin likewise affirms that modernism, "inflicted major casualties on the evangelical armada... The Presbyterian and Methodist ships were severely damaged and fell behind. The Congregational ship was scuttled: 'unable to regroup in the post-liberal age'."⁹²

In the 2015 publication, *Methodism in Australia*, Glen O'Brien describes the theological rift as a matter of "religious experience" and in the conclusion claims that, "such disputes were never played out as a 'culture war' as was the case in America."⁹³ This thesis, however, will argue that the evangelical/liberal dispute was equally as destructive to Methodism in Australia and New Zealand as in America, even if the "war" was not as public. The internal theological conflict of the twentieth century was not only a substantial historic event, but was arguably an underlying cause for the decline and disappearance of the Methodist Church in Australia.

⁹⁰ Hunt, *This Side of Heaven*, 392.

⁹¹ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, chapt. 8, loc. 2418.

⁹² Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 4, loc. 2320. Modernism included more than just new theological propositions - it included worship styles, dress codes and multi-functional buildings. However, in the second half of the twentieth century liberal theology has come to be understood as the lasting legacy of Modernism, and in this context Piggin's reference is understood.

⁹³ Glen O'Brien, "Australian Methodism Religious Experience," 167-179, and "Conclusion," 276, in O'Brien and Carey, *Methodism in Australia*.

Since the 1960s sociologists have joined the discussion, exploring the connection between liberal theology and decline. Two seminal works of the 1960s and 1970s illustrate competing thoughts on this matter. Peter Berger's *The Sacred Canopy* argued that religion was created by humans to provide meaning for social order, but science and secularisation have now displaced religion's capacity to provide rational explanations. Consequently religion adopted the scientifically-grounded liberal theology with its denial of the supernatural, but this undermined "the very existence of the religious institutions" and the Church declined.⁹⁴ Berger's thesis was focused upon the Church's inability to withstand the external forces of secularisation, but by 2008 Berger had recanted his ideas. Instead he found that secularisation was under threat from religion and his theory of secularisation was "empirically untenable".⁹⁵

Berger's early secularisation prediction was followed in 1972 by Dean Kelley's *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* which proposed that the growth or decline in denominations is a result primarily of internal factors rather than external forces. He maintained that religions that make "demands" upon their members and maintain "strictness" are more likely to grow.⁹⁶ Drawing upon an abundance of denominational examples ranging from Catholic to Protestant to Mormon, Kelley linked liberal theology and ecumenism with decline, while conservative strictness correlated with growth.

Numerous authors have responded to Kelley's thesis since 1972, either challenging him or expanding upon his conclusions. Laurence Iannaccone developed Kelley's thoughts in a journal article, *Why Strict Churches are Strong* (1994),⁹⁷ which was followed by several books by Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, culminating

⁹⁴ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Open Road, Kindle edition, 1966), chaps. 6 and 7.

⁹⁵ Peter L. Berger, "Secularization Falsified" in *First Things* online journal, 2008, accessed August 26, 2014, <http://www.firstthings.com/> and "Further Thoughts on Religion and Modernity" in Springer Science+Business Media online, 2012, accessed August 26, 2014, <http://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors>.

⁹⁶ Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion*, Rose edition (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University and Rose, 1995), 86.

⁹⁷ Laurence Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches are Strong," in *American Journal of Sociology*, 1180-1211 (Chicago: University of Chicago, March 1994).

in their joint work, *Acts of Faith: Exploring the Human Side of Religion* (2000).⁹⁸ In 2005 Kelley's theory was redirected by Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, who argued that Kelley's "strictness" was less important than the subjective spiritual experience found in growing churches. However, Heelas and Woodhead go on to concede that, "the contradiction may not be as great as it seems," but rather, strictness and subjective experience are likely to co-exist and complement each other.⁹⁹ This theory provides further support for the general principle that the mainline liberal denominations are in decline while many evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic churches are growing.¹⁰⁰ Kelley's book continues to be referenced and debated today,¹⁰¹ and his charts of growth and decline in North American denominations bear a striking similarity to the results of this thesis for denominations in Australia.

Kelley names four markers that are indicative of growth and decline. "Distinctive life-style and morality" and "community evangelism" are growth predictors, while "theological liberalism" and "individualism and pluralism" are predictors of decline.¹⁰² These observations prove especially useful to this thesis, because they not only provide a rationale for the decline of liberal denominations but they also speak to the periods of growth and stagnancy in the non-liberal denominations. Kelley's model predicts that where there is no distinctive teaching and no evangelism, denominations will likely stagnate and decline. This observation is relevant to the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. One of the Queensland members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, who joined the Wesleyans in 1978, made the observation about the loss of focus in the denomination:

I think after a while we got self-satisfied. We sort of sat back on our knees and a number of things happened... About ten years after we started... the emphasis

⁹⁸ Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Exploring the Human Side of Religion* (Los Angeles: University of California, Kindle edition, 2000).

⁹⁹ Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, et al., *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Carlton, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, Kindle edition, 2005), chapt. 4, loc 1768.

¹⁰⁰ Philip Hughes, "Why Some Churches Decline While Others Grow," in *CRA (Christian Research Association) Pointers*, vol. 21, No. 4 (Nunawading, Victoria: CRA, December 2011), 2.

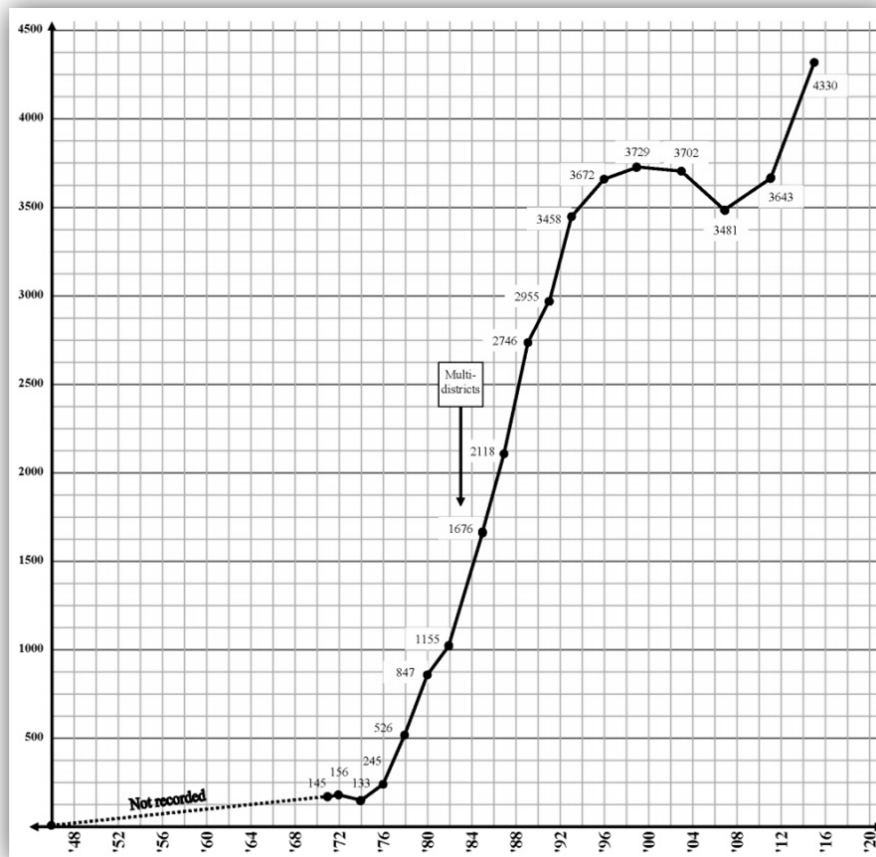
¹⁰¹ Christopher Brittain, "Plague on Both Their Houses: The Real Story of Growth and Decline in Liberal and Conservative Churches" (ABC online May 8, 2013), accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2013/05/08/3754700.htm>.

¹⁰² Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*, ix.

had changed from starting churches to establishing churches. In that *establishment* we took our eyes off the goal."¹⁰³

"Taking our eyes off the goal" coincided with the loss of growth in the denomination in the 1990s, as seen in figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7 Wesleyan Methodist Church average Sunday attendances 1946-2015



There are two proposals included in the paragraphs above. One is that liberal theology, by its very nature, leads to decline because it undermines organisational discipline, focus and purpose. The other is that abiding internal conflict produces decline because it drives one faction or the other out of the organisation. The two proposals do not prove each other - either or neither may be correct - but an understanding of the introduction of liberal theology is essential to understanding the internal conflict within Methodism in the twentieth century. Ultimately the purpose of this thesis is not to argue either proposal; rather, the *perception* of theological error is most important to this thesis. The introduction of American Methodism came

¹⁰³ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:39:40.

about in a region where British Methodism traditionally held a monopoly amongst Methodists. This introduction of American Methodism was possible because some Methodists felt that British Methodism had lost its way. The perception repeated throughout the correspondence and interviews in the following chapters indicates how fundamentally the evangelicals opposed the introduction of liberal theology, some even naming it "apostasy".¹⁰⁴ This understanding undergirds the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and it ties into the question whether one or both of the Methodist organisations surrendered Wesley's priorities.

CONSTRAINTS

This thesis is primarily a "top-down" institutional history that focuses on leadership and leaders, rather than on the events and concerns of local church personalities. This approach is driven by the thesis question that seeks to examine the overall priorities of the organisation. Denominational structures, strategies, theological emphases and statistics are explored. More research could be undertaken through the archives of the college or the local congregations, but space has been a constraint for this thesis.

Some reflection upon the decline of Methodism is helpful in understanding the origins of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the South Pacific. Similarly, the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977 greatly impacted the growth and policies of the Wesleyan Methodists. There are many and varied viewpoints relating to these major historic developments. To reflect upon these events is essential, but to touch only briefly upon them will be unsatisfying to those readers who feel misrepresented. Further investigation might be desirable but cannot be accommodated within the word limit of this research project. The need to stay focused on John Wesley's priorities and the origins of the Wesleyan Methodist Church are constraints. More so, the archival research and the interviews included in this project have an inherent bias. The Wesleyan Methodist Church archives contain a convincing volume of letters and articles from people who were apprehensive about the direction of Methodism in the 1950s and the interviewees in this research

¹⁰⁴ See pages 79, 120.

project represent many who objected to church union in the 1970s. Publishing this research gives voice to a disgruntled minority. Speaking on behalf of those who have felt marginalised is both a privilege and a burden. Space does not permit fuller exploration of every point of contention, either within the Wesleyan Methodist Church, in the former Methodist Church or in the many debates surrounding the formation of the Uniting Church. In the readings it has been clear that men and women of good conscience were active on every side of contentious decisions.

The focus of the thesis question is upon the presence or absence of original Methodism's priorities in the earlier Methodist Church and the later Wesleyan Methodist Church. While the broader history of Methodism and the context of Australian culture are important, they cannot be explored in depth in this brief work. Furthermore, many of the discussions that arise in the decline of Methodism include advanced theological concepts, but the focus in this thesis must remain on history rather than theology. Some generalised description of theological concepts will be provided to explain the historic discussion, but it is acknowledged that most of the theological topics are more complex than this thesis can pursue.

The story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia includes periods of excitement and growth and other periods of loss and decline. It is easier to tell the story of a denomination when it is growing. Those inside the denomination and those watching from outside enjoy the excitement and the sense of progression. It is much more difficult to tell the story of a denomination when it is in decline. The centre of attention falls upon the arguments between the leading characters, the incomprehensible decisions that are made by church boards, and the tragic, irreversible losses. It can be depressing. The insiders do not like this story because it usually includes criticisms and they do not want outsiders knowing all of their failings. During periods of decline the successes are often slow while the losses are explosive. It is easier to write about explosive success. The flood of Methodist histories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the noticeable lack of Methodist histories of the twentieth century support this observation. The publications from the Wesleyan Methodist Church follow a similar pattern by neglecting periods of decline. This thesis attempts to tell of the decline as well as the growth. One method used is to focus upon the individual stories of extraordinary people who laboured faithfully during times of negative growth. Another is to note

the accumulated effect of seemingly small successes. However, the glaring failures are included as well.

Parts of the Wesleyan Methodist Church story are my own story. I am an ordained minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and I have served at all levels of the Australian church, including as a layperson, a pastor, a missionary, a district leader and as the National Superintendent. In this project I manage my personal involvement by video recording my own responses to questions similar to those asked of other interviewees and reserving my interview along with others for deposit in the church archives. When referencing my own involvement I speak of myself in the third person. Since the 1980s my own story is intertwined in the history of the denomination and therefore I have minimised any recent history that might present a conflict of interest.

Section 1

**THE EXPANSION OF
BRITISH & AMERICAN METHODISM**

1728-1977

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 1

The primary purpose of chapters 2-5 is to provide a context for the subsequent formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the South Pacific. The Wesleyan Methodist Church that commenced in Melbourne, Australia in 1946 started on the premise that mainline Methodism in Australia had ceased to function according to John Wesley's priorities and the American holiness stream of Methodism was required to revive Australian Methodism:

After much prayer we became convinced that God called for the rebirth of holiness teaching as enunciated by John Wesley. Having looked at the possibility of such a witness within the existing churches in Australia, we came to the conclusion that revival of the teaching of holiness could best be brought about by a link with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America.¹

The brief overview of chapters 2-5 will result in several useful outcomes despite extending across three continents and 250 years from 1728 to 1977:

1. An overview of Methodism in Great Britain from the formation of the Holy Club in 1728 until the schisms of the early 1800s, provides concrete examples of Wesley's practices and theology.
2. An overview of Methodism in North America from the first class meetings in 1760 until the rise of Pentecostalism in the first decade of the twentieth century illustrates the strict implementation of Wesley's priorities under Francis Asbury, the decline of Methodism's vitality in the mid 1800s, and the rise of the Holiness Movement as a correcting influence after the American Civil War.
3. An overview of Methodism in the European colonies in Australia and New Zealand from the first class meeting in 1811 to the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977 highlights the loss of Wesley's spirit of radical consecration, the abandonment of his class meeting discipline and the

¹ District Board Minutes, April 29, 1946 (Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, Melbourne).

redirection of his doctrine from a conservative evangelicalism to a modernist liberal theology.

4. An overview of Methodism in the islands of the South Pacific from the first missions to Tonga in 1822 until the final mission to the Highlands of Papua New Guinea in 1950 and the formation of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands in 1968 draws out the changes of mission strategy that are connected with the loss of Wesley's priorities in European Methodism. This section is particularly useful because it provides a window into the past, a time-capsule, which contrasts the strongly Wesleyan practices in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji against the oftentimes less-than-Wesleyan practices in the missions to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Chapter 2

BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA

The Methodist movement of the eighteenth century emerged out of a private study group of radically devout students at Oxford University, England from 1728 until 1738. This group was famously dubbed the "Holy Club", the "Bible Moths" and the "Methodists".² John and Charles Wesley were founders of the Holy Club but not its earliest celebrity. George Whitefield was the early star of these young Anglican clergymen, the first of the group to experience an evangelical conversion and arguably the greatest of all of the Methodist preachers.³ He was a powerful speaker, theatrical and direct. Whitefield preached the new birth, "urgently, immediately and as the great question for every hearer *right now*." [italics Tyerman's]⁴ He is credited with preaching eighteen thousand sermons in his lifetime⁵ and was styled the "Apostle of the British empire, and the prince of preachers" by Augustus Toplady, the Anglican priest and author of the hymn *Rock of Ages*.⁶

John and Charles Wesley experienced a slower, almost tormented pathway to conversion. Their own deep religious commitment and personal discipline made it difficult for them to accept the simple evangelical tenet that salvation is gained by faith. In October 1735, while Whitefield was beginning to preach in England, the Wesleys sailed for missionary service in the North American colony of Georgia in

² Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley M.A.: Founder of the Methodists*, 1870 (Revival Library Series, Kindle edition, 2013), chapt. 3, loc. 972.

³ George Whitefield is styled "the prince of preachers". Tyerman, *The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley*, chapt. 3, loc. 934.

⁴ Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 88-89.

⁵ "George Whitefield: Modern Evangelist," Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed October 30, 2014, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/whitefield>.

⁶ John Charles Ryle, *A Sketch of the Life and Labors of George Whitfield*, 1854 (New York: Anson and Randolph, Google digital books, 2010), 37.

the company of fellow Holy Club member, Benjamin Ingham, and a group of Moravian missionaries. Through the Moravians the young Methodists were further pressed to accept the peace and assurance of salvation as an immediate reality. Benjamin Ingham found assurance under the ministry of the Moravians while still in Georgia and returned to preach in Yorkshire in partnership with the Moravians and under Whitefield's encouragement early in 1737.⁷ Ingham is most famous for influencing Lady Margaret Hasting to saving faith, who in turn, shared the gospel with her sister-in-law Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon. When the Countess was converted she immediately connected with Whitefield and the Wesleys and began attending the earliest of the Methodist societies. She used her aristocratic influence and wealth to establish a network of evangelical chapels and was consequently ejected from the Church of England. Theological differences eventually led to a bitter rift between her and John Wesley, but she remained a life-long sponsor of George Whitefield. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion continues today.

Charles Wesley returned from Georgia in 1736 after one year in the colony and John returned in February 1738. Both John and Charles had been humbled by the ineffectiveness of their American service and both continued to have further encounters and deep discussions with the Moravians in London. On May 21, 1738 Charles Wesley experienced his evangelical conversion and on May 24 John similarly found peace with God. John wrote in his journal:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death. [Italics Wesley's]⁸

John Wesley, together with Benjamin Ingham and other members of the Fetter Lane Society,⁹ travelled to Germany in June and July 1738 to meet the European

⁷ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 88.

⁸ John Wesley, "Journal, May 14, 1738," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 1: 103.

⁹ The Fetter Lane society was an Anglican society into which the Moravian and Methodist teachers were first introduced. It was never technically a Methodist society, even though John and Charles were leading for some time. The Wesleys were finally ejected because of their Arminian theology and the society continued under Moravian leadership.

sponsors of this new teaching that they had now embraced. They visited the Moravian headquarters of Herrnhut and the Pietist headquarters at Halle, but despite being encouraged in their new evangelical faith they were also made acutely aware of the theological differences that would soon divide the British evangelicals. At Herrnhut Wesley was shocked to find himself refused the Lord's Supper while Benjamin Ingham was welcomed to participate.¹⁰ This was because of Wesley's convictions on Christian perfection, which were understood by the Moravians to be a denial of salvation by faith.

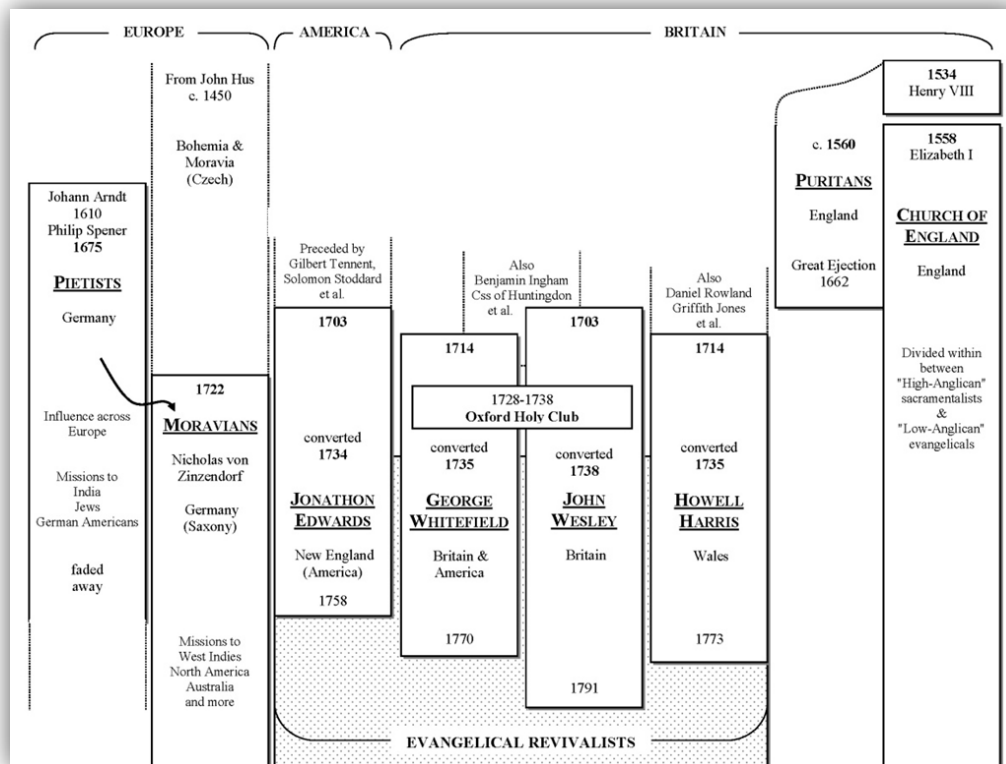
Meanwhile, George Whitefield had been lured to the colonies by John Wesley for the first of his successful preaching tours. He returned to London in December 1738 where he gathered with around sixty of the Fetter Lane fellowship on Sunday evening, December 31, 1738 for a love feast (a simple meal and prayer with fellow believers).¹¹ Their number included John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Benjamin Ingham and other Moravian and Anglican members of the society. John Wesley records that around three o'clock on Monday morning, as they prayed, "the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground."¹² No one could have known that this time of reunion and spiritual visitation marked the end of an era of youthfulness and unity, and the beginning of powerful ministry in which deep divisions would separate them. Figure 2.1 illustrates the evangelical context out of which Methodism emerged. Evangelical teaching had roots in continental Europe, but it was in Britain's religious tolerance and America's multiculturalism that it achieved its culture-changing potential.

¹⁰ Daniel Benham, *Memoirs of James Hutton; Comprising the Annals of His Life and Connection with The United Brethren* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1856), 40.

¹¹ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (Yale: University Press, Kindle edition, 2005), chapt. 3, loc. 1068.

¹² Wesley, "Journal, January 1, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 170.

Figure 2.1 *The evangelical network of the eighteenth century*



CALVINIST AND ARMINIAN METHODISTS¹³

By 1739 the former Holy Club leaders were starting to experience widespread Anglican opposition to their new evangelical teaching. The Wesleys and Whitefield were systematically excluded from preaching in Anglican churches,¹⁴ so on February 17, 1739 Whitefield made the bold transition to preaching in the open fields at Bristol, 200 kilometres west of London. In a matter of weeks the crowds grew from a few hundred coalminers to as many as twenty thousand.¹⁵ However, Whitefield had already committed to a second trip to the American colonies, and so in March he pressed John Wesley to replace him in the Bristol ministry.¹⁶ Wesley reluctantly agreed, arriving in Bristol on March 31, 1739. The following day Whitefield departed Bristol to prepare for his voyage while Wesley began to preach in the open air on April 2, 1739 with misgivings, "At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile,

¹³ See Glossary, xi.

¹⁴ Wesley, "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," in *Works*, vol. 7: 49-75.

¹⁵ A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1978), 91.

¹⁶ Wesley, "Journal, March 15, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 176.

and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people."¹⁷

Whitefield finally sailed for America in August 1739 for what would become known as the First Great Awakening, but division between him and the Wesleys over the theological teaching of predestination was already developing. Whitefield was a Calvinist. Calvinism (today often included under the general descriptor "Reformed") follows the teaching of French Reformer, John Calvin (1509-1564). Calvinism maintained that God predetermined who would go to heaven and who would go to hell (predestination). The Wesley brothers followed a rival Protestant teaching attributed to Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), a Dutch Reformer. Arminian teaching is that God calls all people to salvation and all people can respond, but only those who respond in repentance and faith will be saved. Arminianism contradicts the Calvinistic teaching that people have no choice. The teaching of free choice led to Wesley's teaching of holiness, in which believers are able to achieve a higher level of purity through God's cleansing and self-discipline. There are numerous variations on Reformed and Arminian teachings, including the Moravians who are connected to the Lutheran-Pietist branch of the Reformed tradition.

The Wesley brothers removed themselves from the Fetter Lane Society in July 1740 because of theological conflict with the Moravians. They relocated two kilometres away to the Foundry at Moorfields.¹⁸ The Foundry had been purchased by Wesley as a preaching point in 1739, a "vast, uncouth heap of ruins,"¹⁹ which now provided a suitable alternative for the non-Moravian members of the Fetter Lane society and for the vast number of people drawn to Wesley's field preaching. It was at the Foundry that the first Methodist "United Society" was established.²⁰

Meanwhile John Wesley continued to preach against the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and his sermon on *Free Grace* was made widely available in printed form in June 1740.²¹ This news reached Whitefield while engaged in ministry in the

¹⁷ Wesley, "Journal, April 2, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 185.

¹⁸ It was spelled "Foundery" at the time.

¹⁹ Wesley, "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," in *Works*, vol. 8: 37, 38. The Foundry had been used for casting cannons until seriously damaged by an explosion.

²⁰ Wesley, "United Societies," in *Works*, vol. 8: 269.

²¹ Wesley, "Sermon CXXVIII: Free Grace," in *Works*, vol. 7: 373-386.

American colonies. The colonies had strong a Calvinistic heritage, so this news was damaging to Whitefield who was still known to be one of the Methodists. Whitefield then placed his own Calvinistic views on record by publishing a rebuttal against Wesley.

This Calvinist/Arminian divide separated John and Charles Wesley from George Whitefield, Benjamin Ingham, the Countess of Huntingdon and the Welsh Methodists led by Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland. Over time the relationship was restored between these former friends, to the extent that at Whitefield's request, John Wesley conducted George Whitefield's memorial service in London in 1770. The Calvinistic Methodists in Wales ultimately became the Presbyterian Church of Wales in 1823.²² The name "Methodist" came to speak of the spiritual descendants of John Wesley, but the name Wesleyan Methodist continued to hint at a time when John Wesley's Methodists were not the only Methodists in Britain.

THE GROWTH OF METHODISM

Wesleyan Methodism grew dramatically during John Wesley's lifetime, impacting England, Ireland, Wales, the West Indies and America, and its growth accelerated into the century after Wesley's death. Wesleyan Methodism grew from a small sect, despised by the Anglicans and Calvinists alike, into a powerful global denomination. Wesley died on March 2, 1791, by which time Methodism reported 72,476 members in the United Kingdom, 57,621 members in America, and twenty-one missionaries serving 6,525 members in the West Indies and Canada; a total of 136,622 members worldwide.²³ A century later, in 1891, self-governing Methodist denominations had been established in Britain, the United States of America, Canada, Australasia, the West Indies, South Africa, India and Ceylon, with a

²² Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn, Kindle edition, 2012), chapt. 1, loc. 452.

²³ "Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, 1744-1877, Manchester 1791," British Online Archives, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://goo.gl/CR6mmO>. Note that American statistics are said to be notoriously outdated by the time they appear in the British Methodist Conference Minutes, Abel Stevens, *The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1861), vol. 3: 43 footnote.

reported total global membership of 6,508,950 class members in 77,196 churches and 6,939 preaching places.²⁴

Meanwhile, George Whitefield preached to huge crowds in the American colonies decades before Wesley's Methodists arrived on that continent. Whitefield was a masterful preacher while John Wesley, though less theatrical in his preaching, brought two important strengths to the ministry that ensured the success of his ministry: his organisational ability and his longevity. Toward the end of his life, George Whitefield concluded, "My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in societies, and thus preserved the fruit of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand."²⁵ Wesley was a disciplined organiser who multiplied his own preaching ministry through others to establish a denomination. At age eighty-two, with astonishing energy, John Wesley was still travelling throughout Britain, "with the spirit of a hardy young soldier."²⁶ Wesley survived Whitefield by twenty years and in those years he became an esteemed figure in British society,²⁷ Methodist numbers doubled,²⁸ future leaders were ordained, legal arrangements were undertaken for the consolidation of Methodism in Britain, and American Methodism separated from British control. It has been said, "Had Wesley died in 1753 when he was seriously ill and wrote his own epitaph, most of the evangelical legends about the revival would never have been written."²⁹

²⁴ William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand* (Wellington: McKee & Co., 1900), 15.

²⁵ This comes from the recollections of Dr. Adam Clarke as published in 1859 by J.W. Etheridge, *The Life of the Rev. Adam Clarke*, 1859 (London: Forgotten Books, 2013), 189. This can be easily confused with Whitefield's statement during his last sermon in 1770 when denouncing salvation by works, saying, "I would as soon think of climbing to the moon on a rope of sand." See "The Last Sermon of Reverend George Whitefield," The Exeter Historical Society, accessed March 30, 2015, <http://goo.gl/sk2JMp>.

²⁶ W.H. Daniels, *The Illustrated History of Methodism in Britain, America, and Australia, from the Days of the Wesleys to the Present Time* (Sydney: George Coffee, 1879), 324-325.

²⁷ Daniels, *Illustrated History of Methodism*, 324.

²⁸ In 1770 Methodism reported 29,406 members. This number increased to 71,568 in 1790. Daniels, *Illustrated History of Methodism*, 311, 339.

²⁹ W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 348.

WESLEY'S ORGANISATION

In a sermon on conversion, Wesley described his belief in a supernatural experience, brought about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the believer and resulting in an abiding assurance that the believer now belonged to God:

The true, living, Christian faith, which whosoever hath, is born of God, is not only assent, an act of the understanding; but a disposition, which God hath wrought in his heart; "a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God."³⁰

In another sermon Wesley described conversion as being born of God:

...a vast inward change, a change wrought in the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; a change in the whole manner of our existence; for, from the moment we are born of God, we live in quite another manner than we did before; we are, as it were, in another world.³¹

These teachings were common to all of the evangelical leaders, notwithstanding the fact that the Calvinist/Arminian debate separated them in the matter of predestination. However, John Wesley's teaching of Christian perfection and his rigorous disciplines set him apart from other evangelicals. In the eighteenth century Methodism was still part of the Anglican Church it was the practice for members to attend the Anglican Church for the sacraments and the less formal societies for deeper discipleship. The early group at Fetter Lane was initially one such Anglican society. When Wesley began preaching in Bristol in 1739 he immediately directed his field-preaching converts into societies.³² This use of larger societies by the Anglicans³³ and smaller bands by the Moravians³⁴ pre-existed Wesley's ministry,³⁵ but those informal arrangements for bands and societies that Wesley inherited were increasingly inadequate for the large numbers from his open-air campaigns. Until

³⁰ Wesley, "Sermon XVIII: The Marks of the New Birth," in *Works*, vol. 5: 213.

³¹ Wesley, "Sermon XIX: The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God," in *Works*, vol. 5: 224.

³² Wesley first used existing Anglican societies, until a transition is evident, first when he accepted members into a society and later when he identified a society as belonging to his ministry: Wesley, "Journal, April 1 to May 1, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 185-191 and Wesley, "Journal, April 4, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 185

³³ Geordan Hammond, "Reviving 'the Primitive Standard': The Religious Society Rules of Anthony Horneck, Josiah Woodward and Samuel Wesley, 2006," Manchester Wesley Research Centre, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.mwrc.ac.uk/scholarly-papers/>.

³⁴ Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 69.

³⁵ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, chapt. 1, loc. 218.

1742 the leaders still had no effective method of drawing the tens of thousands from the field ministry into a Methodist society. Furthermore, where people did attend a society, the Methodists still lacked an adequate system to fund the building needs of the growing societies.

The breakthrough for Methodist organisation came in Bristol in 1742 when the band structure was merged with a system of weekly offerings for church buildings.³⁶ It was agreed to divide the societies into small classes of about twelve persons with a designated layperson to visit each member weekly to receive a contribution of one penny. This structure was then modified to address the other great concern: the majority of new people not being incorporated into the Methodist fold. Wesley wrote, "but when a large number of people was joined, the great difficulty was, to keep them together. For they were continually scattering hither and thither, and we knew no way to help it."³⁷ As the class structures were implemented it became apparent that the leader was becoming a pastoral worker in his weekly visitation. The concept of fund-raising classes under lay leaders was then merged into the former tradition of bands, with personal accountability introduced and weekly contributions given at a class meeting rather than through home visitation. In May 1743 the new structures were published³⁸ and classes were named as the primary unit of a Methodist "United Society". After twenty years using the class-meeting system, Wesley, "was more convinced than ever, that preaching like an Apostle, without joining together those that are awakened, and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the murderer [the devil]."³⁹

From the beginning the class meetings included a good proportion of people who were not yet converted but who were seeking assurance of salvation. Therefore, provision was made for classes to be divided into "bands" for smaller, same-sex meetings of those who were converted and deeply searching for the holiness experience, and even further into "select bands" for those who testified to having found holiness.

³⁶ Wesley, "Journal, February 15, 1742," in *Works*, vol. 1: 357.

³⁷ Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *Works*, vol. 13: 259.

³⁸ Wesley, "The Nature Design, and General Rules of the United Societies, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, &c," in *Works*, vol. 8: 269-271.

³⁹ Wesley, "Journal, August 25, 1763," in *Works*, vol. 3, 144.

The class meeting structure was of central importance to Methodism, shaping every part of the ministry. The classes were generally under the leadership and pastoral care of a lay person, which immediately elevated the role of laity in the Methodist organisation. Class meetings in private homes were usually the first evidence of a Methodist presence in a new community, often occurring months or years before a minister visited. Class leaders undertook the pastoral duties in the small scattered congregations (societies) and the best of the lay leaders were elevated to serve as itinerant preachers, assigned to supervision of multiple societies. This impacted the responsibilities of the few Methodist clergy, freeing them up for itinerant ministry across a number of societies, often a dozen or more. The discipline of the congregational members was epitomised in the class meeting structure, where members were required to weekly testify to the struggles and victories of their growing faith. The discipline of the clergy was seen in their willingness to maintain unrelenting travel and deprivation as they rode their preaching circuits.

In 1741 and 1742 Wesley began to issue printed tickets to those who had proven themselves to be faithful Methodists. Wesley's first recorded issuing of these tickets was in Bristol on February 24, 1741, in response to an internal schism.⁴⁰ Tickets provided a way to formally disavow divisive behaviour. A similar process was introduced in London in April 1742,⁴¹ and as the societies increased Wesley added the practice of quarterly interviews with all class members where he personally signed the tickets to signify, "I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness."⁴² A current Quarterly Ticket was evidence of church membership and was required for attendance at Methodist love feasts.⁴³

The use of class meetings became the norm for Methodism around the globe for the next two centuries, and in most of those places the issuing of quarterly tickets was practised. The Australian Methodist Quarterly Tickets in figure 2.2 have been provided courtesy of Rev. Dennis Hartin, Queensland.

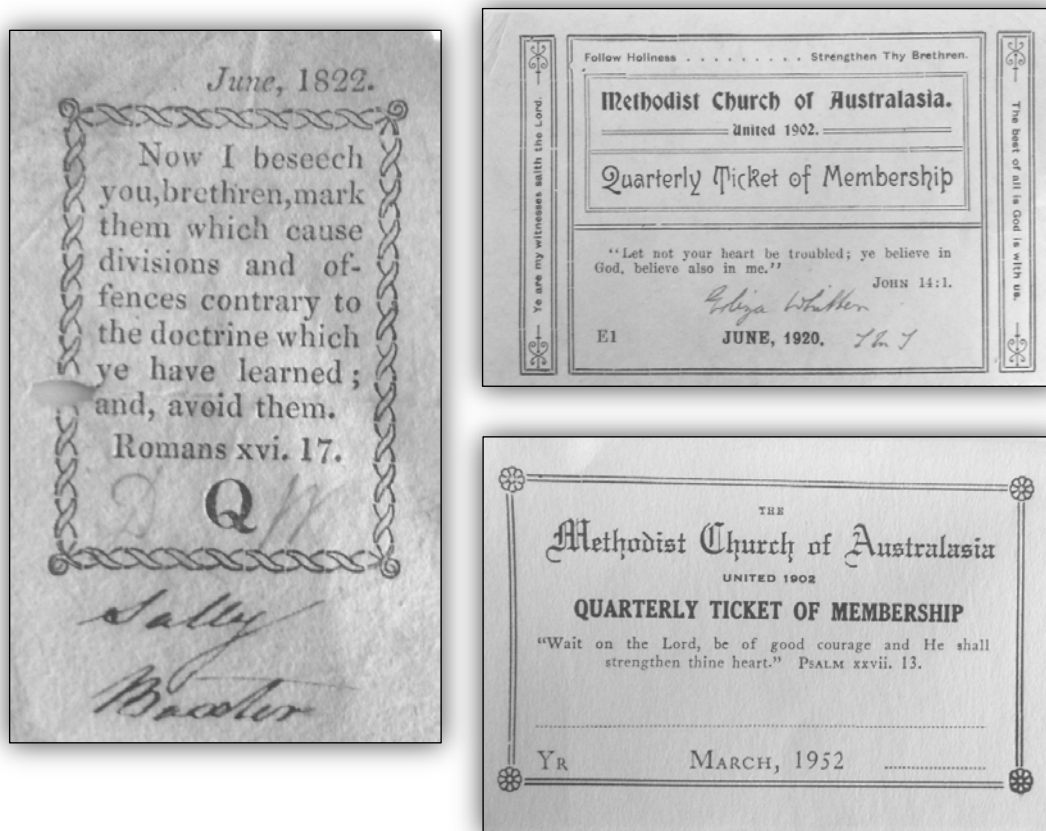
⁴⁰ The schism was led by John Cennick: Wesley, "Journal, February 18-24, 1741," in *Works*, vol. 1: 299-301.

⁴¹ James E. Kirby, Russell E. Richey and Kenneth E. Rowe, *The Methodists* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1996), 166.

⁴² Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," in *Works*, vol. 8: 256-257.

⁴³ Wesley, "A People Called Methodists," in *Works*, vol. 8: 259.

Figure 2.2 Quarterly Class Tickets from Australian Methodists⁴⁴



John Wesley's structures tied his doctrine to his discipline. A Methodist could, and did, go to other churches for Sunday worship, but Sunday worship was not at the heart of Methodism. Attendance at an Anglican church for the Lord's Supper was expected of early Methodists and only gradually replaced by alternative options as Methodism expanded and ordained their own clergy. The heart of Methodism was the desire for salvation and for holiness.⁴⁵ These were normally two separate experiences, with the discipline of the weekly class meeting proving especially helpful for the second experience. At the weekly meeting members made confession of their faults and struggles to one another, prayed together and encouraged each other. The class meeting was what made one a Methodist. Sunday worship was important because the sacraments were important, but Sunday worship was not what made one a Methodist. The life of Methodism centred on the mid-week class

⁴⁴ Courtesy of Dennis Hartin, used by permission.

⁴⁵ "Christian perfection" was John Wesley's preferred terminology, though it was a phrase that raised more questions than it answered. It is essentially the experience of holiness.

meeting. The class meeting structure reduced the dependency on clergy and it brought discipline to those who had been touched through public preaching.

CONVERSION MANIFESTATIONS

Early Methodists were known for bizarre manifestations and unruly behaviour, especially during preaching rallies. These responses to the preaching included losing consciousness, laughing, shaking and crying out for relief, followed by a sense of awe and peace.⁴⁶ The outbursts were often disturbing, even to the preachers, and they were generally socially unacceptable. Consequently opponents of Methodism were prone to ridicule the evangelical teaching as a form of emotional manipulation.

The manifestations came to the attention of the public once John Wesley began his field preaching, but they were present from much earlier in the formation of the Fetter Lane society. A Moravian missionary, Philip Molther, wrote of his first experience in a Fetter Lane meeting in October 1739:

The very first time I entered their meeting, I was alarmed and almost terror-stricken at hearing their sighing and groaning, their whining and howling, which strange proceeding they called the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. In the midst of it all, it was quite apparent, from conversation with individuals, that most of them, from the very depth of their hearts, were yearning for the salvation of their souls.⁴⁷

In fact, even the Fetter Lane manifestations were not entirely new to the Wesley brothers. John described a time around 1729 when he and Charles were overwhelmed by uncontrollable laughter during a time of worship. Wesley did not consider this manifestation to be helpful, however. In Bristol he described some who were similarly, "buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter as they could in no wise resist, though it was pain and grief unto them."⁴⁸ Even so, as the ministry in Bristol developed, Wesley neither encouraged nor discouraged the manifestations.

⁴⁶ Much of the same early Evangelical emotionalism was reproduced at the turn of the twentieth century in Pentecostalism, except that the Pentecostal use of tongues does not appear in this earlier period.

⁴⁷ Benham, *Memoirs of James Hutton*, 53.

⁴⁸ Wesley, "Journal, May 9, 1740," in *Works*, vol. 1: 271.

The power of these manifestations and the scepticism that they generated in the community is illustrated in Wesley's Journal on many occasions. In 1739 Wesley wrote, "Many were offended again, and, indeed, much more than before. For at Baldwin-Street my voice could scarce be heard amidst the groaning of some..."⁴⁹ The day after this a faithful member of the Anglican Church came to the meeting to prove the behaviour was contrived, but soon Wesley was called to help because that man had himself, "fallen raving mad.... He changed colour, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground.... We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty."⁵⁰ The Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson (1669-1748), published his grave concerns about the practices of Whitefield's and Wesley's crowds, leaving a valuable insight into the Anglican response to the revival phenomenon. Gibson questioned whether orderly worship would not be a "better evidence of the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, than those sudden agonies, roarings and screamings, tremblings, droppings-down, ravings and madneses, into which their hearers have been cast. [spelling modernised]"⁵¹

John Wesley's response to excessive emotional behaviour, even falling down or roaring aloud, was not to reject such behaviour outright.⁵² Wesley's doctrine of spiritual conversion was so urgent and powerful, that he fully expected visible signs of immediate change. When these symptoms appeared as physical manifestations, he neither condoned nor condemned the manifestations. He was only concerned to see a change of heart and attitude. Two passages illustrate his views on this topic, although he speaks far more on the matter in his Journals and Sermons. In his early ministry at Bristol he was challenged not to accept physical manifestations as proof of conversion. He wrote in response:

You deny that God does now work these effects: At least, that he works them in this manner. I affirm both; because I have heard these things with my own ears, and have seen them with my eyes. I have seen (as far as a thing of this kind can be seen) very many persons changed in a moment from the spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, joy, and peace; and from sinful desire, till then reigning over them, to a pure desire of doing the will of God. These are matters

⁴⁹ Wesley, "Journal, May 1, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 189.

⁵⁰ Wesley, "Journal, May 2, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 190-191.

⁵¹ Edmund Gibson, *Observations Upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect, Usually Distinguished by the Name of Methodists*, c. 1740 (Reprinted in USA by ECCO Print Editions, 2010), 10.

⁵² Speaking in tongues is not intended in this argument. Speaking in tongues was not a phenomenon that was common during John Wesley's lifetime, and so belongs to a different discussion.

of fact, whereof I have been, and almost daily am, an eye or ear witness.... I know of several persons in whom this great change was wrought in a dream.... And that such a change was then wrought, appears (not from their shedding tears only, or falling into fits, or crying out: These are not the fruits, as you seem to suppose, whereby I judge, but) from the whole tenor of their life, till then, many ways wicked; from that time, holy, just, and good.⁵³

Even George Whitefield initially expressed scepticism about the manifestations that followed Wesley's preaching. However, the following day Whitefield also saw startling manifestations as people responded. Wesley concluded, "From this time, I trust, we shall suffer God to carry on his work in the way that pleaseth Him."⁵⁴

By September crowds of ten or twenty thousand were regularly gathered in the open-air to hear Wesley preach.⁵⁵ Occasions when hearers were overcome continued throughout the years, but with less regularity than in the early months at Bristol. This pattern of extreme displays was gradually replaced by more moderate behaviour as converts were channelled into the discipline of the class meetings.

BRITISH SCHISMS

By 1791, when John Wesley's died, division was increasingly evident within his Methodist organisation. Methodism had begun as a revival ministry within the Anglican Church but as it expanded it drew in many who did not have Anglican loyalties. Remaining an Anglican society provided legitimacy in Britain and government recognition abroad, but it also restricted the Methodists from ordaining their own clergy or offering the sacraments. These disadvantages increased as isolated Methodist chapels multiplied and Methodism gained its own public profile.

In 1784 Wesley took "a decisive step" when he made legal arrangements for the identity and autonomy of Methodism and he began ordaining clergy, first for ministry in America and then in Scotland - but not in England.⁵⁶ Wesley viewed America and Scotland as having unusual circumstances which justified ordaining Methodist clergy. America was no longer under British authority, and therefore the

⁵³ Wesley, "Journal, May 20, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 195.

⁵⁴ Wesley, "Journal, July 7, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 210.

⁵⁵ Wesley, "Journal, September 9, 16, 23, 1739," in *Works*, vol. 1: 223, 225, 226.

⁵⁶ John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford: University, 2012), 140.

Anglican Church could not claim authority there. Likewise, in Scotland where the Church of Scotland was the Established Church, Wesley believed the Methodists were not under obligation to the Church of England. However, Wesley objected to ordaining Methodist clergy in England.⁵⁷ The provision for the serving of the sacraments in England was therefore never addressed satisfactorily during Wesley's lifetime, since only ordained clergy could officiate in the Lord's Supper or baptism. For some historians this neglect was "the greatest defect of Wesley's administration."⁵⁸

Within two months of Wesley's death in 1791 the sacramental issue had become a volatile public dispute. After four divisive years of debate the issue was settled in 1795 through the unanimous adoption of a "Plan of Pacification".⁵⁹ This Plan made provision for the sacraments to be delivered, circuit by circuit, upon the majority approval of the trustees and stewards of each chapel or society, and with conference ratification. It also provided for baptisms, burials and services concurrent to Anglican Church hours. This was an enormous break with previous regulations and took decades to be fully implemented.⁶⁰ Consequently, 1795 is recognised as the year in which the Methodist Church broke from the Anglican Church⁶¹ although there was no formal separation but rather an inevitable parting as a consequence of the Conference decisions. Increasingly administration of the sacraments became general practice in the societies⁶² and the chapels had freedom to compete with the Anglican services. In this transition the first schisms occurred within Methodism. Administration of the sacraments, the role of laity in the conferences and autocratic leadership resulted in a number of breakaway groups. An example of the autocratic model employed by the early Methodists is seen in the fact that lay members were only admitted to the General Conference from 1878.⁶³

⁵⁷ Stevens, *The History of Methodism*, vol. 3: 27.

⁵⁸ Richard Watson, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 1831 (Digitised by Google Books, <https://goo.gl/i1qZNX>), 290.

⁵⁹ "Minutes Methodist Conferences, Manchester 1795," British Online Archives.

⁶⁰ For example, this issue was at the heart of Samuel Leigh's and Walter Lawry's rift in the 1820s in Sydney.

⁶¹ "Separation from the Church of England," Methodist Church in Britain, accessed April 29, 2015, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/who-we-are/history/separation-from-the-church-of-england>.

⁶² Stevens, *The History of Methodism*, vol. 3: 67.

⁶³ "The President and Vice-President," *The Methodist Church in Britain* website, accessed November 8, 2016, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/who-we-are/structure/the-president-and-vice-president>

The Methodist New Connexion was formed in 1797 by Alexander Kilham as he agitated for a break with the Church of England.⁶⁴ The Primitive Methodist Church broke away in 1811 when Hugh Bourne and William Clowes were expelled for conducting camp meetings.⁶⁵ In 1815 the Bible Christian Church broke from Methodism when William O'Bryan (also Bryant) was rejected as a preacher in the Methodist Church.⁶⁶ The Protestant Methodist and the Arminian Methodist Churches separated from Methodism in 1827 over issues with autocratic leadership. Dr. Samuel Warren was a leader in the schism of 1836 when the Wesleyan Association was formed by Methodists who opposed the establishment of a ministerial training college⁶⁷ and the Wesleyan Reformers left in 1849 in criticism of Conference President, Jabez Bunting and other leaders.⁶⁸

In 1857 the Wesleyan Association and the Wesleyan Reformers joined to form the United Methodist Free Church. This marked a turning point in British Methodism as mergers began to replace schisms, with reunion facilitated by the 1878 decision of to include lay members in the Wesleyan Methodist General Conferences. British schisms and reunions are illustrated in figure 2.3.

⁶⁴ Alexander Kilham as quoted in Watson, *Life of John Wesley*, 31.

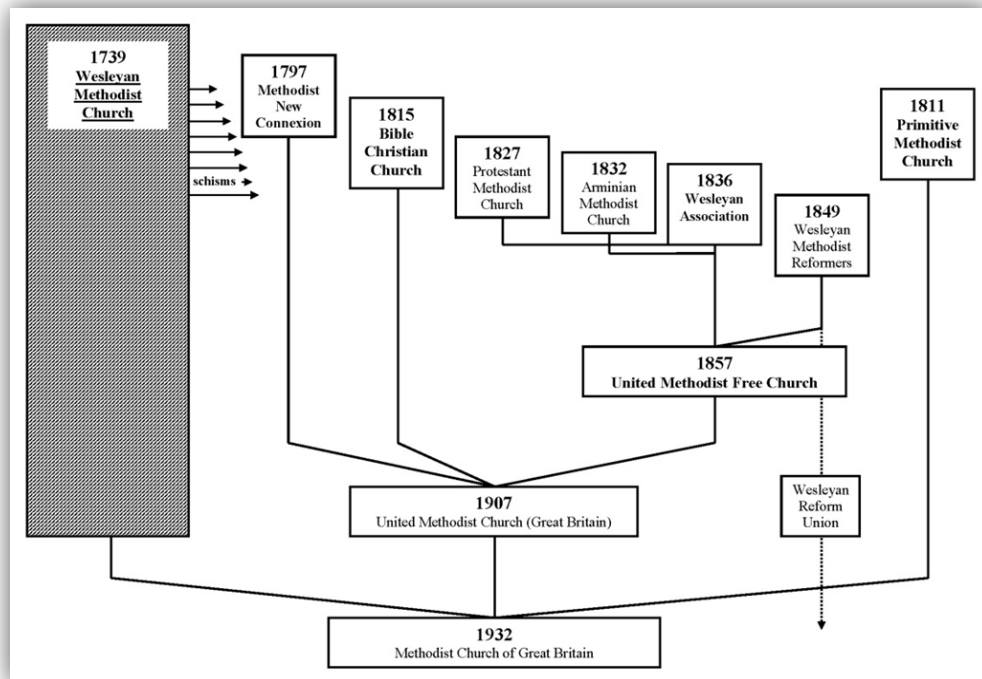
⁶⁵ John Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its Origin to the Conference of 1860* (London: Primitive Methodist Conference, 1864), 25.

⁶⁶ Charles Yrigoyen Jr., ed., *T&T Clark Companion to Methodism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 404.

⁶⁷ D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The Origins of Free Methodism in Three Lancashire Towns* (Manchester: University Press, 1979), 36-37.

⁶⁸ David Barton, "The Wesleyan Reform Movements in Derbyshire," 25-33 in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, ed. E. Alan Rose, vol. 52, May 1999, accessed April 30, 2015, <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/whs/52-2.pdf>.

Figure 2.3 *British Methodist schisms and reunions*



AMERICAN METHODISM

The formation of an autonomous Methodist Church in North America in John Wesley's lifetime was unexpected because Wesley normally maintained close control over the growing Methodist network. However the American War of Independence forced the separation, resulting in some lasting variations between British and American Methodism.

With a steady flow of immigration from Great Britain to North America in the eighteenth century, Methodist class meetings were soon started in the New World. The first two class meetings were launched by Methodists from Ireland around 1760 when Robert Strawbridge migrated to Maryland and Philip Embury to New York.⁶⁹ The New York congregation wrote to the home church in England to seek preachers to support the work, so in 1769 Wesley commissioned Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor to serve in America. Boardman settled in New York and Pilmoor in Philadelphia - an unfortunate decision since it meant that these preachers remained in

⁶⁹ Daniels, *Illustrated History of Methodism*, 376-377. This quote is taken from the monument to Strawbridge which is erected at Mount Olivet Cemetery, Baltimore.

the growing cities, isolated from the largely rural communities and especially from Methodists groups growing vigorously in the southern states.⁷⁰

In 1771, Wesley sent two more preachers to America, Richard Wright and Francis Asbury. Francis Asbury (1745-1816) was twenty-six years old at the time and was to serve in America for the next forty-five years until his death in 1816. The two preachers arrived in Philadelphia on October 27, 1771 to serve under Pilmoor's lead. However, Wright did not stay long before returning to England and Asbury quickly found the urban ministry established by Pilmoor and Boardman too restrictive. Asbury began riding a rural circuit out from New York City and later into the southern states to connect with Strawbridge.

Figure 2.4 American colonies of the 1770s⁷¹



⁷⁰ Wigger, *American Saint*, 49.

⁷¹ Chart produced by Australian National University CartoGIS CAP, used by permission.

In 1773 two more British missionaries arrived – George Shadford and Thomas Rankin. George Shadford was described as “the most compelling preacher of Wesley’s missionaries”⁷² and his stationing in the South was timely. Revivals broke out in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and North Carolina from 1773 to 1775, with large numbers converting. As the southern congregations’ sense of isolation from the northern cities increased, Asbury spent much time riding in the South to hold the southern Methodists together. During this time Asbury came to experience and accept the unruly emotionalism of the revival⁷³ which was to be a mark of the American ministry for many years. This first revival in the South occurred even as the prospect of war with Britain was brewing.

The Revolutionary War was fought from 1775 to 1783. In 1775 the American colonies, were New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, as charted as figure 2.4. Asbury chose to take no sides in the politics of the day, but was treated with suspicion nonetheless because he was an English missionary and a representative of John Wesley. During this time any form of British loyalty was a source of real danger, but a connection to John Wesley especially so. In 1775 John Wesley had published an address in which he made it known that he opposed the liberation of the American colonies and supported ongoing taxation.⁷⁴ Unfortunately this address hindered the Methodist cause in the colonies. Most of the British missionaries left America, including Episcopalians⁷⁵ and Methodists, with Asbury remaining as the only Methodist missionary.

During the war the independent outlook of the colonial Methodists became more entrenched and Asbury’s role as the American leader was established. With the departure of most clergy during the War, the need for Methodists to access the sacraments became more pressing. From 1778 to 1780 the Methodists in the northern and southern states almost separated entirely over the southern decision to ordain their own ministers. Only Asbury’s personal presence and his history with the southern Methodists was able to secure a compromise. The southern delegates voted

⁷² Wigger, *American Saint*, 62.

⁷³ Wigger, *American Saint*, 78.

⁷⁴ Wesley, "A Calm Address to our American Colonies," published in 1775, in *Works*, vol. 11: 82.

⁷⁵ The Church of England was, and still is, known as the Episcopalian Church in America.

to accept a twelve-month moratorium on ordinations and Asbury spent the following six months riding and preaching ceaselessly in Virginia and North Carolina, cementing his own popularity and renewed denominational unity. Asbury was thereafter accepted as the Superintendent in the North and the South.⁷⁶

The sacramental issue was not properly resolved until 1784 when John Wesley finally provided for the ordination of Methodist ministers in the American Church. With the end of the war and with continuing tension over ordination, American Methodists were eager to take control of their own governmental processes. In 1784, in a radical break with Church of England polity,⁷⁷ Wesley ordained Thomas Coke⁷⁸ and Richard Whatcoat with instructions to go to America and ordain Asbury.⁷⁹

Coke and Whatcoat arrived in America late in 1784 and called a conference to commence on December 25 – thereafter called the "Christmas Conference". Coke ordained Asbury as an "elder"⁸⁰ and the conference elected both Asbury and Coke as joint superintendents of the American work. American Methodism adopted the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) at the Christmas Conference, severing any remaining links to the Anglican Church.⁸¹ Coke departed in 1785 to continue his role as the international missionary leader while Asbury remained to lead the work in America, travelling enormous distances to build the new work and earning the descriptor of "the Wesley of the New World."⁸²

In 1786 Wesley sent Coke back to America with directions to appoint Whatcoat as a superintendent alongside Asbury, but the Americans refused Whatcoat's elevation, feeling that since the Christmas Conference the American Church was no longer under Wesley's direction. They removed Wesley's name from their *Discipline*

⁷⁶ Wigger, *American Saint*, 119.

⁷⁷ Wesley had arrived at the conclusion that he could ordain as freely as an Anglican Bishop could ordain. From this date he ordained ministers for America, Scotland, Antigua, Newfoundland and England. He also legally incorporated the Methodist Church in Great Britain in 1784. These actions secured his Methodist legacy; a need which Wesley was very aware of since he turned 81 in 1784.

⁷⁸ Coke was already ordained as an Anglican priest, since 1772, which made this an easier transition. However, Wesley "ordained" him as a superintendent for the colonial work.

⁷⁹ It is noted that Charles Wesley strongly opposed this new policy of ordination. Wigger, *American Saint*, 146.

⁸⁰ That is a priest or an ordained minister.

⁸¹ Abel Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (New York: Eaton & Mains, c. 1900, vol. 2, book 3, chapt. 3, Holiness Data Ministry, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyctr/books/0201-0300/stevens/>).

⁸² John Telford, *The Popular History of Methodism* (London: Charles Kelly, 1900), 32.

as a Superintendent of the American work and they substituted the title "Bishop" in place of "Superintendent" for Asbury. This was a provocative statement of independence since the use of the title "Bishop" was particularly offensive to Wesley, who had his own history of conflict with bishops in England! Wesley wrote to Asbury, "How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called Bishop?"⁸³

Methodism grew rapidly in the American colonies, especially in the South. In 1787 widespread revivals broke out with emotional scenes, including fainting, shaking, loud noises and crying out for God's mercy. This included blacks and whites in the same congregations. Membership of the American Methodists in 1780 was 8,500, but by 1790 it had reached 57,600. In the 1790s growth continued amongst blacks in the South but fell away amongst whites. In that decade the work began to expand westward across the Appalachian Mountains and north into New York and New England.

Extensive revivals broke out again from 1800-1803. They were centred in the Cumberland region of Tennessee and Kentucky and in the Delmarva Peninsula.⁸⁴ People fell to the ground, barked aloud, cried out for mercy, quaked and jerked in the meetings. Often the preacher could not hear himself speak in the heat of the meeting. Thousands were converted. Meetings went on for days. One meeting in Virginia went thirteen days and nights without interruption. Revival spread to the newer western states, but very little reached the Carolinas where the slavery issue was dividing the church⁸⁵ or to the northern states where Puritan-Calvinism dominated.

Intense camp meetings, which featured prayer and preaching for conversions and holiness, became a powerful tool for revival. Camp meetings were relatively new in 1802, but by 1803 they were increasing as a logical extension to the traditional quarterly meetings. In 1802 church membership increased by 13,860 and in 1803 it increased by 17,336. By 1810 Methodist membership in America was 163,033 with six hundred camp meetings scheduled for that year alone.⁸⁶

⁸³ Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3rd edition (New York: The Methodist Episcopal Church, 1839), vol 1: 175.

⁸⁴ The Delmarva Peninsula connects the states of DELaware, MARYland and VirginA.

⁸⁵ Wigger, *American Saint*, 310.

⁸⁶ Wigger, *American Saint*, 365.

Francis Asbury died in Virginia on March 31, 1816, aged 71. During his lifetime Methodism increased from 600 to 214,000 members in America.⁸⁷ By 1813 American Methodists were divided into nine regional conferences and Asbury still attended all of the annual conferences. At age 68 he was still riding 4,000 to 6,000 miles each year. Methodism continued to grow after Asbury's lifetime and "by 1860 every third church member in America was a Methodist."⁸⁸

The westward expansion carried Methodism across the plains to the west coast in subsequent decades in four great waves of colonial migration beyond the Appalachian Mountains.⁸⁹ During these mass migrations the Methodist system was at its most effective. Circuit-riding preachers arrived with the first settlers, and sometimes before them. Richmond Nolley illustrated the urgency of the circuit-riders. Nolley followed a set of wagon tracks into Alabama around 1813, catching up with the settler at Choctaw Corner while he was still unpacking his wagon. The settler was exasperated, having already fled Virginia and Georgia to escape the pestering of the Methodists. He exclaimed, "What, have you found me already? Another Methodist preacher!"⁹⁰

By 1800 there were fourteen Methodist circuits west of the Appalachians, spread across Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and the western parts of Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina.⁹¹ The "genius of the Methodist system" and "the intrepid spirit of the itinerant" saw Methodism commenced in Indiana in 1800, Louisiana in 1805, Michigan in 1808, Kansas in 1830, Colorado in 1859 and Dakota in 1860.⁹² Meanwhile, however, Methodism was losing its "genius" in the eastern states. The issue of slavery was reigniting the division between the northern and southern

⁸⁷ Robert Black and Keith Drury, *The Story of the Wesleyan Church* (Indianapolis: Wesley Publishing, 2012), 20.

⁸⁸ Black and Drury, *The Story of the Wesleyan Church*, 22.

⁸⁹ These four migrations were 1. To the Mississippi River from 1790 and peaking around 1800; 2. To the northern territories and into Canada immediately following the 1812 War with the British; 3. The "Jacksonian migration" across the Mississippi River to Oregon and New Mexico along the Oregon and Sante Fe trails following the panic of the financial markets in 1837; and 4. The gold rush to California from 1848, which was the largest of the waves of migration Halford E. Luccock, Paul Hutchinson and Robert W. Goodloe, *The Story of Methodism*, enlarged edition (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 288.

⁹⁰ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2nd edition (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 81.

⁹¹ John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (Grand Rapids: Frances Asbury Press, 1985), 91.

⁹² Luccock, Hutchinson and Goodloe, *The Story of Methodism*, 291-293.

Methodists and affluence was beginning to drain the urgency out of the Methodist cause, just as Wesley had predicted.

SLAVERY AND SCHISMS

The sacramental controversy, the Revolutionary War, calls for autonomy, and extensive revivals all shaped the growth and character of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, but abiding division over the practice of slavery overshadowed almost every general conference. The importation of African slaves into the British colonies in North America began in 1619 in Virginia and the trade began in earnest when an American slave ship was built and launched in Massachusetts in 1636. By the time the Methodists arrived in the 1760s, slavery was widespread in the southern states as an economic necessity to sustain agriculture. By the Revolutionary War there were approximately 500,000 slaves in America.

John Wesley was outspokenly opposed to "the execrable trade" of human slavery,⁹³ publishing and distributing his abolitionist opinions across England⁹⁴ but the American Methodists were divided on the matter. From 1804 two versions of the MEC *Discipline* were produced, one with "antislavery sentiments deleted for the states south of Virginia."⁹⁵ As the debate intensified in the 1830s the Bishops sought to quash the abolition debate at the annual conferences, resulting in preachers and lay leaders being disciplined and removed from their positions for continuing agitation for abolition. By the time the first abolitionist groups began to leave Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1840s, one outspoken abolitionist concluded that, "I am morally certain that the M. E. Church is at this time one of the 'great props' of slavery. A slaveholding ministry! A slaveholding church!"⁹⁶

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CONNEXION

⁹³ Wesley, "Letter to Mr. Thomas Funnell," in *Works*, vol. 12: 507.

⁹⁴ Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Slavery," in *Works*, vol. 11: 59-79.

⁹⁵ Black and Drury, *The Story of the Wesleyan Church*, 26.

⁹⁶ Orange Scott, *The Methodist E. Church and Slavery*, 1844. (Charleston SC: Nabu Public Reprints, 2011), 51.

Rev. Orange Scott (1800-1847) attempted to have a policy of abolition endorsed at the 1836 General Conference but failed. Consequently, from 1839 a small number of congregations in Ohio, New York, and Michigan withdrew from the MEC and on November 8, 1842 Revs. Orange Scott, Jotham Horton and La Roy Sunderland seceded. Scott wrote that the MEC, “has reached the point of corruption, at which God’s people must leave it.”⁹⁷

Organising meetings for the new Wesleyan Methodist Connexion were held in Utica, New York in 1843 and the first General Conference was held in Cleveland, Ohio for ten days from October 2, 1844. Luther Lee, a strong proponent of the connectional model,⁹⁸ was elected as President. Membership was already recorded as 14,600 by that year, leading to the formation of multiple districts. The successful launch of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion prompted Methodist Episcopalians in the North to adopt a stronger anti-slavery position at their general conference in 1844, resulting in fracturing the MEC into northern and southern denominations,⁹⁹ a division that lasted for ninety-five years. The delegates to the 1844 Wesleyan Methodist conference adopted a republican form of government, with elected leaders, no bishops and equal representation of clergy and laity in their conferences.¹⁰⁰ By 1847 the first Wesleyan Methodist congregation was started in the pro-slavery South.

The campaign for women's political and denominational rights was a dominant theme in the Connexion. In 1848 the first Women's Rights Convention was held at the Seneca Falls Wesleyan Methodist Church in NewYork¹⁰¹ and in that same decade Laura Smith Haviland was given a conference appointment to continue her work in helping slaves escape from the Southern States to Canada; a ministry that earned Laura a three thousand dollar bounty, dead or alive, from the Southern slave holders.¹⁰² In 1861 Mary A. Wills became the first woman to be ordained in the

⁹⁷ Scott, *The Methodist E. Church*, 97.

⁹⁸ The early use of the name "Connexion" indicates that the intention was to form a connection of independent congregations rather than a denomination, but this was revisited after the Civil War.

⁹⁹ Black and Drury, *The Story of the Wesleyan Church*, 42.

¹⁰⁰ McLeister and Nicholson, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 34-38.

¹⁰¹ "Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention of 1848," Oxford Reference website, accessed November 27, 2016, <https://goo.gl/atFmGd>.

¹⁰² Maxine L. Haines and Lee M. Haines, "Laura Smith Haviland," in *Celebrate Our Daughters: 150 Years of Women in Wesleyan Ministry* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing, 2004), 15-16.

Illinois Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and is believed to be only the second woman ordained in American church history.¹⁰³ The ordination of Mary Wills was not without debate though, and her ordination was later rescinded by action of the Wesleyan Methodist General Conference.¹⁰⁴ It was the 1880s before the General Conference acceded to the ordination of women.¹⁰⁵ In 2001, to acknowledge Mary Will's ordination, Maxine and Lee Haines documented the ministries of 1,169 women who have served in the Wesleyan Methodist Church as evangelists, pastors and superintendents between 1841 and 1968.¹⁰⁶

Vinson Synan proposes that the abolitionist cause and the holiness message were tightly interwoven¹⁰⁷ in the origins of the Wesleyan Methodists. The same concept is reflected by George Marsden who argues that “social consecration in nineteenth century America have most often [been found] to be related to the holiness tradition.”¹⁰⁸ Holiness and social activism were both seen as expressions of separation from worldly abuses and perfected love for God and man.

Another group that left the MEC over similar concerns before the Civil War was the Free Methodist Church, also holding its first conference in New York state. Under the leadership of B.T. Roberts the Free Methodists declared three priorities:

1. Doctrines and usages of primitive Methodism, such as the witness of the Spirit, entire sanctification as a state of grace distinct from justification, attainable instantly by faith; free seats, congregational singing, without instrumental music in all cases; plainness of dress.
2. Equal representation of ministers and laymen in all the councils of the Church.
3. No slaveholding and no connection with secret, oath-bound societies.¹⁰⁹

Of importance to this thesis is that Roberts criticised trends within Methodism in the 1850s that would be reflected in Australian Methodism at the turn of the next century. A "modernized type of Methodism" had emerged led by some of the

¹⁰³ Black and Drury, *The Story of the Wesleyan Church*, 65.

¹⁰⁴ Haines, "Mrs. Mary A. Wills," in *Celebrate Our Daughters*, 18.

¹⁰⁵ Haines, "Mary E. Kinney Depew," in *Celebrate Our Daughters*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Haines, *Celebrate Our Daughters*.

¹⁰⁷ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, Kindle edition, 1997), chapt. 1, loc. 230.

¹⁰⁸ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd edition (Oxford: University, Kindle edition, 2006), chapt. 9, loc. 1713.

¹⁰⁹ Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1915), 319-320.

clergy,¹¹⁰ which Roberts labelled "New School Methodism".¹¹¹ The dominant group of the modern clergy, the "Regency", claimed that "Christianity is not, characteristically, a system of devotion... The characteristic idea of this system is benevolence [that] consecrates the principle of charity."¹¹² Those who were teaching holiness and assisting escaped slaves were troubled by this new emphasis that emphasised charity at the expense of personal devotion, a teaching that would be named "social gospel" before the end of the century.

While this new theology was gaining support amongst the American Methodist clergy, holiness teaching was becoming a vigorous alternative movement. One of those who led the emphasis on holiness was Mrs Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), a Methodist and the wife of Dr. Walter Palmer. She experienced holiness at age thirty and broke through social boundaries to become a renowned camp meeting preacher. She promoted the "shorter way" to holiness through faith and altar-calls.¹¹³ Palmer is known as the "Mother of the Holiness Movement" and for some, "the link between Wesleyan revivalism and modern Pentecostalism".¹¹⁴ Other holiness preachers followed and camp meetings flourished. Camp meetings attracted people from a wide range of denominations so that from 1880 non-denominational associations and independent holiness churches multiplied.

The American Civil War was fought from 1861-1865 and saw the Wesleyan ideal of emancipation triumph, with the result that after the war the Wesleyan Methodists faced an identity crisis. The connexion had emerged during the struggle for emancipation and now their reason for continuing came under review. Some left the connexion, returning to the Methodist Episcopal Church, while the remainder refocused on other long-standing social issues, including women's suffrage, abstinence from alcohol and opposition to secret societies.¹¹⁵ Mainstream Methodism became increasingly polarised between traditional conservative teaching and the new

¹¹⁰ Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, 94.

¹¹¹ Benjamin T. Roberts, "New School Methodism," in *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing, 1915), 96-102.

¹¹² Roberts, "New School Methodism," in *History of the Free Methodist Church*, 98.

¹¹³ Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness*, 2nd edition, 1845 (Kindle edition, 2011), sect. 6, loc.432.

¹¹⁴ "Phoebe Palmer: Mother of the Holiness Movement," Christianity Today, accessed May 27, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/131christians/moversandshakers/palmer.html?start=2>.

¹¹⁵ McLeister and Nicholson, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 80-89.

liberal theology¹¹⁶ with its teaching of social gospel. Twentieth century Wesleyans reflected upon this period as, "the inroads of apostasy by the embracing of evolutionary theories and liberal theology."¹¹⁷

In 1867 the "National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness" was formed in Georgia, marking a turning point in the modern holiness movement.¹¹⁸ As a direct result of this camp meeting movement, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South sought to quash the holiness movement in 1894, leading to the "coming out" of dozens of new holiness groups and denominations from 1895.¹¹⁹

One such non-denominational association was the International Holiness Union and Prayer League, inaugurated in September 1897. It was founded by two holiness preachers based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Martin Wells Knapp (1853-1901) was a former Methodist pastor from Michigan and Seth Cook Rees (1854-1933) was a former Quaker minister from Rhode Island. Together they published and conducted inter-denominational camp meetings where their work flourished, attracting people from many different denominations - including the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Independent faith-missionaries¹²⁰ from the Holiness Union carried the message of holiness to the West Indies, China, India, Africa and Peru. The Holiness Union's emphasis upon missions greatly impacted the Wesleyan Methodist Church, drawing them out of their focus upon American social issues to the global need for holiness. As a result, the first Wesleyan Methodist overseas missionaries were sent to Sierra Leone in 1889.¹²¹

Knapp died of typhoid in 1901, Rees resigned in 1905 and the Holiness Union was incorporated as the International Apostolic Holiness Union in 1902. Missionary

¹¹⁶ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, chapt. 2, loc. 346.

¹¹⁶ Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, 319-320.

¹¹⁷ Paul Westphal Thomas and Paul William Thomas, *The Days of Our Pilgrimage: History of the Pilgrim Holiness Church*, eds. Melvin E. Dieter and Lee M. Haines (Marion IN: Wesley Press, 1976), 3.

¹¹⁸ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, chapt. 2, loc. 294.

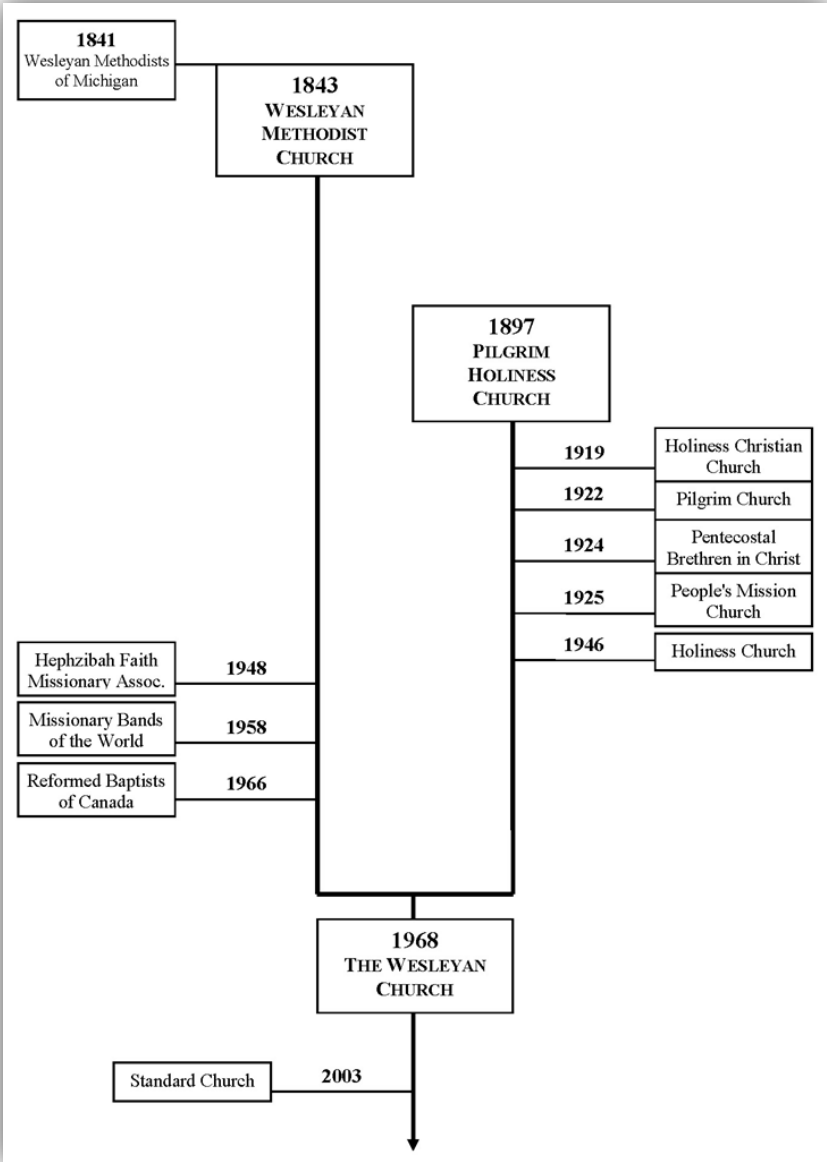
¹¹⁹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, chapt. 2, loc. 448.

¹²⁰ That is, individuals from holiness class meetings who went to foreign countries without denominational structure or organised financial support.

¹²¹ The notable difference between Wesleyan missionaries and Holiness Union missionaries was that Wesleyan missionaries were managed and supported by the home denomination. Nonetheless, in the first decade in Sierra Leone six Wesleyan Methodist missionaries died and a further five died shortly after their return to America.

activities were brought under central administration, membership regulations were implemented, colleges were built, and the Union became a denomination. In 1922 it merged with the Pilgrim Church of California, founded by Seth Rees since his resignation from the Union in 1905. Upon merger the two groups formed the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Numerous other mergers accompanied the parallel development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Pilgrim Holiness Church until June 1968 when the two denominations finally merged to form The Wesleyan Church. See figure 2.5. In the midst of this process, the Wesleyan Methodist Church appointed Kingsley Ridgway to commence a new mission in Australia, late in 1945.

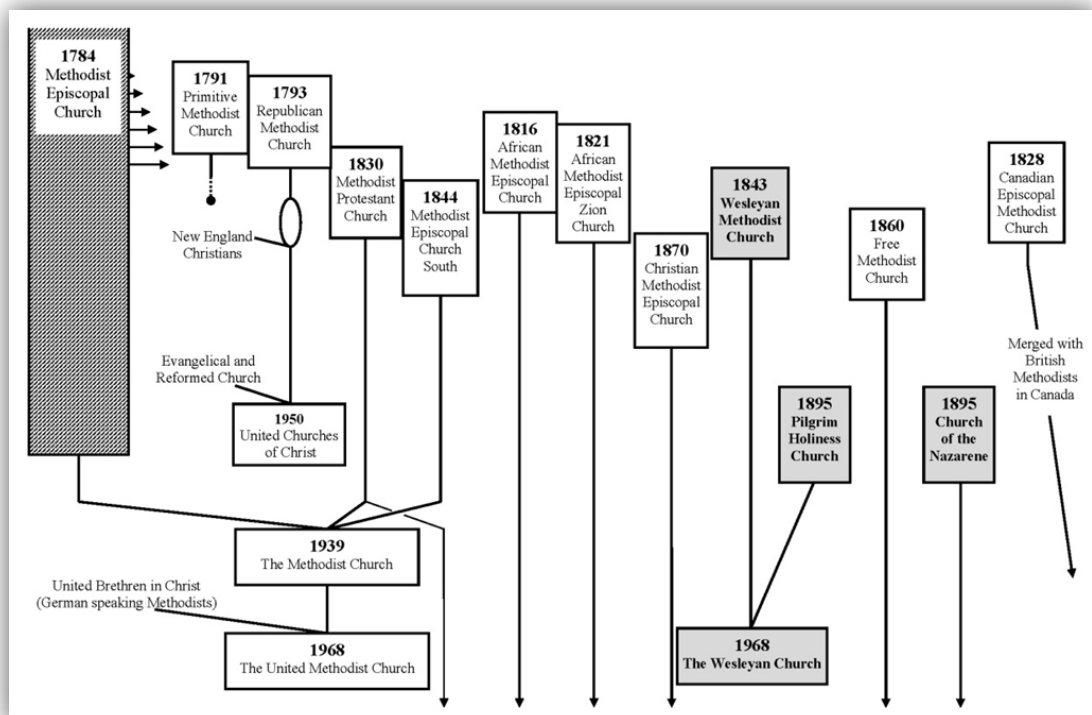
Figure 2.5 *The Wesleyan Church of America*¹²²



¹²² Details drawn from Haines and Haines, *Celebrate Our Daughters*, contents page.

As in Britain, Methodism experienced numerous schisms in North America from the time of John Wesley's death, but unlike Britain, the movement to reunion was considerably delayed in America because of the civil war and the holiness/liberal divide. In the mid-1900s some reunions were achieved, though not with the African-American or the holiness denominations. Figure 2.6 illustrates the several schisms in American Methodism from the War of Independence (1775-1783) to the American Civil War (1861-1865), with only selected later schisms from the holiness movement included. The Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Pilgrim Holiness Church and the Church of the Nazarene are highlighted. The Church of the Nazarene, born out of the holiness movement also approved the start of ministry in Australia in 1945. The presence of the Nazarenes in Queensland, Australia was one of the reasons why the early Wesleyan work was confined to the southern states of Australia.¹²³ A third American Wesleyan-holiness denomination to come to Australia was the Church of God, Anderson, in 1960.¹²⁴ The Wesleyan Methodist Church is the largest of these three at this time.

Figure 2.6 *American Methodist schisms and reunions*



¹²³ See chapter 6: 207-210.

¹²⁴ Glen O'Brien, "North American Wesleyan-Holiness Churches in Australia," (Bundoora, Victoria: La Trobe University Ph.D. thesis, 2005), 27.

Chapter 3

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Early Methodism was not dependent upon clergy; its structure of lay leadership and class meetings enabled the denomination to spread as individual members entered new locations. This resulted in an organisation ideally suited to the people-movements of immigration, pioneering and gold rushes that were typical of the colonial centuries of the British Empire.¹ Ironically, British Methodism was therefore relatively slow in organising a missionary department; because its international growth was not generated through specialist missionaries but by unplanned diaspora of class members across the British Empire.² In contrast to the Baptist Missionary Society (1792), the London Missionary Society (1795) and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (1799), the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was only organised in 1818.³ Prior to this time the international work was managed by the British Methodist Conference that placed almost one hundred Methodist "missionaries" before a mission agency was deemed necessary.⁴

AUSTRALIAN METHODISM

The first Methodist class meetings in Australia were held two decades after the British convict colony was first established in 1788. Edward Eager is credited with commencing a class meeting in Windsor in 1811⁵ and the following year, Thomas

¹ David Hempton illustrates the extensive connections between the British Empire, the Anglican Church and Methodism in David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (London: Yale: University, Kindle edition, 2005).

² Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, chapt. 1, loc. 290.

³ This followed a process of establishing local groups in congregations from 1813, a draft Constitution in 1817 and a final Constitution in 1818.

⁴ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, chapt. 1.

⁵ Glen O'Brien, "Methodism in the Australian Colonies, 1811-1855," in *Methodism in Australia*, eds. Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 15. O'Brien ascribes this

Bowden and John Hoskins drew together twelve persons for a class meeting at Bowden's home in Princess Street, Sydney (The Rocks) on March 6, 1812. Soon after, Hoskins formed a third class meeting in Sydney. After a combined meeting of the three classes a letter was sent to London requesting a minister for the New South Wales colony, which numbered around 20,000 British subjects at the time.⁶ When the request arrived in London, Dr Thomas Coke, the "father of Methodist missions",⁷ was preparing to sail on his ill-fated voyage to Ceylon.⁸ The Methodist Conference had already ordained and commissioned a single missionary, Rev. Samuel Leigh (1785-1852), to service in Montreal and Quebec, but when that Canadian invitation was rescinded Leigh was reassigned to the Australian colony. Dr Adam Clarke, the Methodist leader at that time, personally undertook to secure government sanction for this appointment⁹ and Leigh sailed from Portsmouth onboard the *Hebe* on February 28, 1815. After a treacherous voyage he arrived in Port Jackson (Sydney) on August 10, 1815.

In Sydney Leigh enjoyed the support of the Anglican priest, Rev. Samuel Marsden, and he gradually gained the favour of Governor Lachlan Macquarie.¹⁰ Leigh began by visiting every home in Sydney, organising class meetings and preaching where possible, including in private homes and in a small Presbyterian chapel. Only a remnant of the 1812 class meetings was left by then and from these few Leigh organised a single class of six persons. Nonetheless, by March 1816 the small group had increased to six class meetings with a total of forty-four members and Leigh was holding services in fifteen different locations.¹¹ In his arduous schedule, Leigh rode a monthly circuit from Sydney-town to Parramatta, Windsor,

year to Edward Eager's class meeting, placing it earlier than the oft referenced class meeting started by Thomas Bowden in 1812.

⁶ Alexander Strachan, *The Life of the Rev. Samuel Leigh, Missionary to the Settlers and Savages of Australia and New Zealand*, 1870 (Forgotten Books, 2012), 21-34.

⁷ Norman E. Thomas, "Coke, Thomas," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 143.

⁸ Thomas Coke had been the driving force of Methodist international expansion for years. His service was ended when he joined a missionary party to Ceylon, died on board and was buried at sea.

⁹ This illustrates the favoured position that Methodism enjoyed through its relationship to the Anglican Church.

¹⁰ Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn, Kindle edition, 2012), chapt. 1.

¹¹ David Blair, *The History of Australasia*, 1878 (Forgotten Books, 2013), 692-693.

Castlereagh and Liverpool. He slept in the bush, rode through flooding rivers and ate at the tables of hospitable strangers.¹²

By 1818 Leigh's health was in serious decline. He was offered recuperation on a voyage to New Zealand on the Anglican mission boat on condition that he would visit and encourage the community of lay workers established by Samuel Marsden in the Bay of Islands. This offer coincided with the arrival of the second Methodist missionary, Rev. Walter Lawry (1793-1859) on May 2, 1818.¹³ The following year, after a surge of building projects in the Sydney circuit,¹⁴ Leigh sailed for New Zealand, arriving in the Bay of Islands in May 1819.¹⁵

Leigh stayed in New Zealand for three months,¹⁶ but despite the stated purpose of recuperation, he quickly busied himself in ministry with the lay workers at the Anglican station. Consequently, this visit did little to refresh his failing health but it was the turning point for Leigh's future ministry: from this time Leigh's vision was expanded to ministry in New Zealand. He returned to New South Wales and was soon diagnosed as physically unfit for continued ministry in the harsh Australian setting. His health was so poor in fact, that, "He was now incapacitated for all public duty; and, for some time, his friends despaired of his life." The doctors advised that he must sail to England to recover, "and only wonder that he sustained [such

¹² Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 60-61.

¹³ There is some confusion about this date. The confusion was created by Alexander Strachan's ambiguous statement, "On the day after Mr. Lawry's arrival, May 2nd, 1818, Mr. Leigh returned from the country." (*The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 82.) Early Methodist histories drew extensively from Strachan and generally adopted the interpretation that Lawry arrived on the 2nd. However, the alternative interpretation, that he arrived on the 1st May, is adopted by S.G. Cloughton, "Walter Lawry (1793-1859)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed March 6, 2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lawry-walter-2337>.

¹⁴ The Castlereagh chapel had already been built and opened in October 1817; in September 1818 Leigh laid the foundation stone for the Windsor chapel; in January 1819 he opened the Windsor chapel and laid the foundation stone for the Macquarie Street chapel (Sydney); and in March 1819 he opened the Princess Street chapel (Sydney). See "Leigh, Samuel," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed May 6, 2014, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/leigh-samuel-2348> and Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 89-90.

¹⁵ Early authors suggested that Leigh sailed soon after Lawry's arrival but the records show that he worked with Lawry for almost a full year before sailing to New Zealand. William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, (Wellington: McKee & Co., 1900), 27. See also W.J. Williams, *Centenary Sketches of New Zealand Methodism* (Christchurch: Lyttelton Times, ca. 1922), 6-7. This seems largely due, again, to Strachan's writings in which he places the New Zealand trip out of order, detailing it before the NSW ministries of 1818 and 1819 (*The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 83-91.)

¹⁶ *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand* records that he was there for May and June: "Samuel Leigh," accessed March 6, 2015, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/116/leigh-samuel>.

incessant labour] so long."¹⁷ Leigh sailed for England in 1820, and there reported that the work now consisted of eighty-three members and an average attendance of 230-350 persons on Sundays.¹⁸

Two significant developments involving Leigh and Lawry during this time help explain later actions. During Leigh's ministry around Sydney he had grown very fond of a young lady, Mary Hassall. Mary was the teenage daughter of former London Missionary Society missionary to Tahiti, Rowland Hassall, who had settled in Parramatta.¹⁹ Leigh proposed to Mary, but was declined. She did, however, accept Walter Lawry's marriage proposal and served with him in the Tongan venture of 1822. Leigh and Lawry became increasingly critical of each other's ministry from this time²⁰ which expedited the scattering of the missionary team to the new fields of New Zealand and Tonga.

The second noteworthy event related to Lawry's ministry in Parramatta. Leigh was of the early Methodist view that the Wesleyan mission was an extension of the Church of England and, consequently, he worked well under Samuel Marsden's fatherly interest. However, Lawry and subsequent missionaries, Benjamin Carvosso and Ralph Mansfield, were of a more independent mind. In Leigh's absence, Lawry built a chapel in Parramatta and celebrated its opening in June 1821. There he began a Sunday School in competition with the Anglican Church, which was a clear break with established protocol.²¹ Leigh arrived back in Sydney on September 16, 1821 en route to his new assignment in New Zealand but appears to have been unaware that Lawry, Carvosso and Mansfield had begun to compete with the Anglicans and had even celebrated the Lord's Supper at Parramatta - the first time in a Methodist Church in Australia. This break with the established relationship offended Samuel Marsden and caused Samuel Leigh to lodge a complaint against Lawry and the new missionaries with the British Missionary Committee. The Committee first censured Lawry, Carvosso and Mansfield for having "deviated from their instructions", but

¹⁷ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 91, 92.

¹⁸ Don Wright and Eric G. Clancy, *The Methodists: A History of Methodism in New South Wales* (St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, Kindle edition, 1993), chapt. 1.

¹⁹ It is recorded that Leigh, "kept losing his concentration if Mary Hassall were in the congregation." See Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 1.

²⁰ It was reported that Leigh, "found it galling to see his younger colleague succeed". Wright and Clancy, *The Methodists*, chapt. 1.

²¹ Wright and Clancy, *The Methodists*, chapt. 1.

when the missionary team challenged the charges, the Committee reversed its conclusion and admonished Leigh for his "prejudices against his Brethren."²² This tension highlights the differences between the missionaries and also illustrates the frustration the missionaries experienced when so isolated from their governing board.

Samuel Leigh's "convalescence" in England in 1820-1821 was a brief few months and full of activity - a pattern that was typical of his life. He sought approval for three new mission endeavours to the Australian Aboriginals, to New Zealand and to Tonga, then raised the financial support for the new ventures. The funding of additional mission fields was initially denied outright because the British mission agency was already in debt to the sum of £10,000.²³ Leigh's novel solution was not to ask for money from donors but to appeal for goods from various interested manufacturers; goods that would then be shipped to Sydney and sold in the colony to finance the new mission. This strategy was agreed to by the Mission Committee and enthusiastically supported by donors. The mass of goods were then shipped to Sydney and reshipped to the islands as required.²⁴

Leigh's proposal was that he and Lawry would begin missions in New Zealand and Tonga respectively. The Conference President, Jabez Bunting, wrote to the English Methodist circuits with conference authority confirming this expanded vision.²⁵ On December 14, 1820 Leigh married Catherine Clewes, a friend from his youth in Staffordshire. This marriage is reported as a rather pragmatic arrangement: "In the hope of promoting his own comfort, and extending his usefulness among the natives of New Zealand, he went down into Staffordshire, and married a lady of the name of Clewes." However, Samuel and Catherine's years together give evidence of their deep and abiding relationship.²⁶

The Leighs sailed from England on April 28, 1821 in the company of additional missionary staff, Rev. and Mrs William Horton and Rev. William Walker. They arrived in Sydney in September, having visited Tasmania en route. With the new

²² James Colwell, *The Illustrated History of Methodism, Australia: 1812 to 1855, New South Wales and Polynesia: 1856 to 1902* (Sydney: William Brooks and Co., 1904), 133-135.

²³ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 97.

²⁴ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 100-101.

²⁵ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 99.

²⁶ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 106.

missionary staff and with Samuel Leigh returned from successful advocacy in London, the missionaries held the first meeting of the (Australasian) Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society on October 1, 1821 at the Macquarie Street chapel.²⁷

From this meeting the expanded team of missionaries moved out to their new posts:

- Samuel Leigh to New Zealand 1822-1823 and Sydney 1824-1831
- Walter Lawry to Tonga 1822-1823 and then England via Sydney
- William Walker to Aborigines 1821-1825 and then an orphanage until 1826
- William Horton to Tasmania 1822 and Sydney 1823-1826
- Benjamin Carvosso to Sydney 1822-1825 and Tasmania 1825-1830
- Ralph Mansfield to Sydney 1822, Tasmania 1823-1825, Sydney 1825-1828.

In 1822 Rev. George Erskine arrived in Sydney, and when Samuel Leigh was unable to continue as chairman of the Annual Conference, Erskine succeeded him. It is clear from the list above that the first missionaries did not enjoy long tenure on the mission field. One of the factors in the loss of missionary staff appears to have been the London Committee's proclivity for making unilateral decisions, often over-ruling decisions made by the on-field missionary team. Ralph Mansfield resigned in 1828 because of one such ruling²⁸ and William Walker resigned in 1826 after a number of disagreements with the Committee.²⁹

After a slow start, Methodism entered into an extended period of growth from 1840, outnumbering the Presbyterians for the first time in 1881 to become the third largest denomination in Australia after the Anglicans and Catholics.³⁰ Three events help explain Methodism's rapid growth in the nineteenth century: the Church Act of 1836,³¹ Methodism's capacity to move quickly into gold mining communities³² and the arrival of other smaller Methodist denominations from England. The Church Act of 1836 removed the Anglican Church's privileged position as the sole denomination to receive state aid for church buildings, schools, parsonages and ministers' salaries.

²⁷ Colwell, *The Illustrated History of Methodism*, 114.

²⁸ Vivienne Parsons, "Mansfield, Ralph (1799-1880)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mansfield-ralph-2429>.

²⁹ Cloughton, "Walker, William," Australian Dictionary of Biography, accessed March 10, 2015.

³⁰ 1828-1891 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics microfiche, "La Trobe Australiana Collections," State Library of Victoria.

³¹ Malcolm Prentis, "Methodism in New South Wales, 1855-1902," in *Methodism in Australia*, eds. Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 37.

³² Renate Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," in *Methodism in Australia*, eds. Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 46-50.

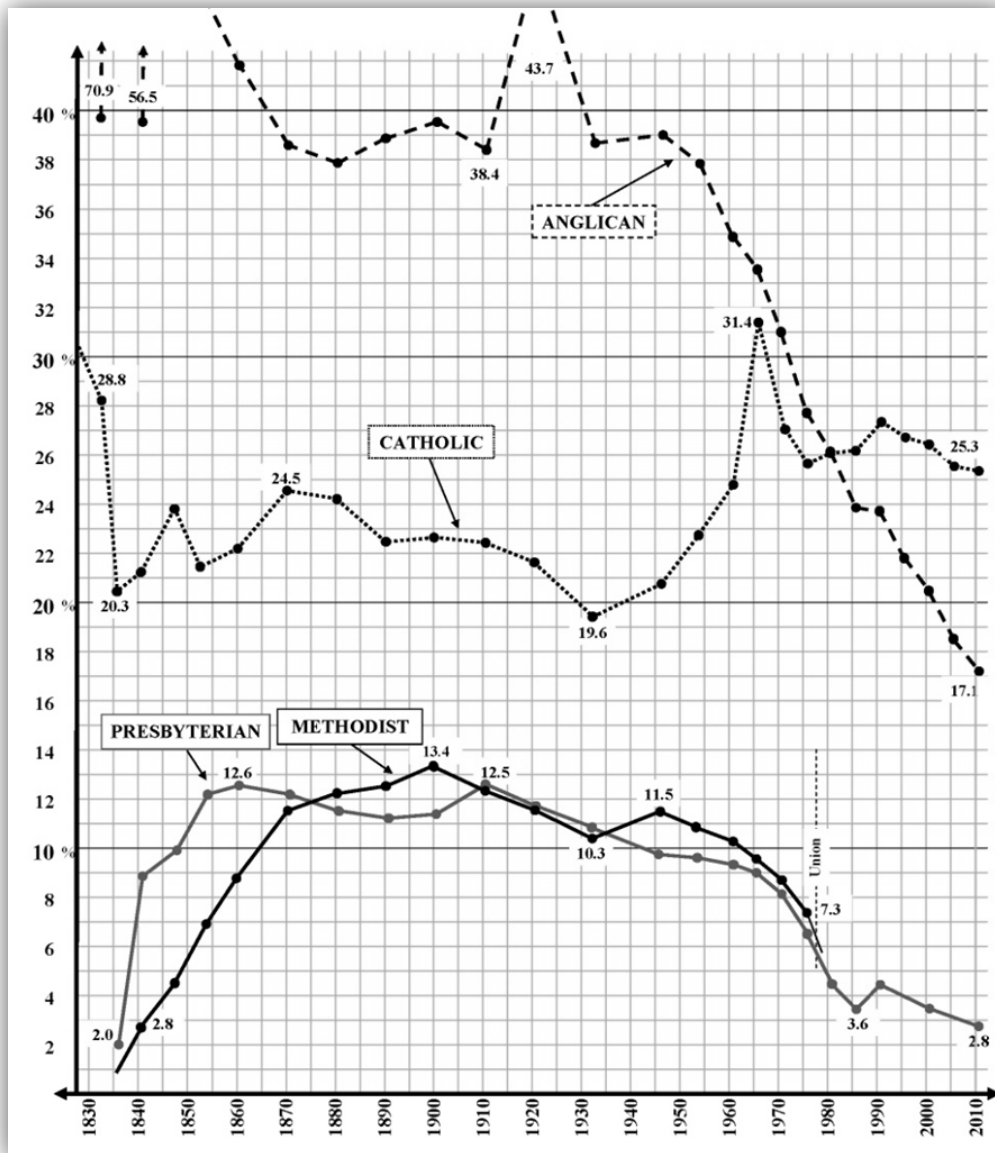
The Act made provision for grants of up to £1,000 for buildings and £300 per annum for a minister's salary.³³ The discoveries of gold in Victoria in the 1850s, Queensland in the 1860s and Western Australia in the 1890s provided Methodists with the ideal social conditions for their model of lay leadership and class meetings. In the Victorian gold fields Methodists are reported to have often held more services than all other denominations combined.³⁴ The arrival of smaller Methodist denominations from England between 1840 and 1862 added to the vitality of Australian Methodism.³⁵ The growth of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches resulted in a decline in the Anglican Church, as shown as figure 3.1. The Anglican Church had held 70.9% of the population at the 1828 census, but began to lose its overwhelming dominance from 1840.

³³ From 1836 these provisions were extended to the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Jewish and Baptist denominations. "The Church Act 1836," State Library New South Wales website, accessed November 17, 2016, http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/discover_collections/history_nation/religion/places/act.html.

³⁴ Geoffrey Searle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861* (Parkville, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 342-343.

³⁵ The Bible Christians grew out of Methodism in the mining communities of Cornwall, England and their expansion to Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia can be seen to mirror the discoveries of gold where their mining expertise was valuable.

Figure 3.1 Four largest Australian denominations as a % from 1836-2011³⁶



The first Primitive Methodist ministry in the Southern Hemisphere was commenced in Adelaide on July 26, 1840 under the lay leadership of John Wiltshire and John Rowlands. In October 1844 missionaries Joseph Long and John Wilson arrived from England to provide leadership to the South Australian work, and in 1845 John Wilson was reassigned to Sydney at the request of a small number of Primitive Methodists in New South Wales. In 1849 an experienced missionary, John

³⁶ 1828-1891 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics microfiche, *La Trobe Australiana Collections*, State Library of Victoria; 1901-2011 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>.

Ride was sent to Melbourne³⁷ following the establishment of the first class meetings in that city with the first Primitive Methodist chapel in Victoria erected on La Trobe Street in 1850.³⁸

The Bible Christians likewise began their Australian ministry in South Australia. Cornish Bible Christians joined for their first public worship service in the town of Burra in 1849.³⁹ They began holding class meetings and built the first Bible Christian chapel in Australia with the opening service held on August 25, 1850. Missionaries, James Way and James Rowe arrived in November 1850 to find a chapel and congregation already established.⁴⁰ From South Australia the Bible Christians reached into Victoria in the 1850s, Queensland in the 1860s and Western Australia in the 1890s.⁴¹

The Wesleyan Association commenced in Australia in October 1951 through the ministry of Rev. Joseph Townend. Townend had been commissioned by the 1850 Connexional Committee at Bury, England and sailed with his wife to begin a preaching point at Collingwood, Melbourne.⁴² The mission grew well, reaching from Victoria into the other states. In 1857 the mission became part of the newly formed United Methodist Free Church and the name of the Wesleyan Association ceased to be used.

Another of the Methodist groups from Britain that was present in Australia briefly was the Methodist New Connection. James Maughan commenced a congregation in Adelaide in 1862 and Clement Linley commenced in Melbourne in 1865, but the group never really became established. Instead they merged with the

³⁷ John Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its Origin to the Conference of 1860* (London: Primitive Methodist Conference, 1864), 474, 482-485.

³⁸ Ian Breward, "Methodist Reunion in Australasia," 120.

³⁹ James Laurence Moss, *Sound of Trumpets: History of the Labour Movement in South Australia* (Netley, South Australia: Wakefield, 1985), 57.

⁴⁰ F.W. Bourne, *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History (1815-1900)* (London: Bible Christian Book Room, 1905), 307-310.

⁴¹ Bourne, *The Bible Christians*, 352, 385, 543.

⁴² Joseph Townend, *Autobiography of the Rev. Joseph Townend: with Reminiscences of his Missionary Labours in Australia*, 2nd edition (London: United Methodist Free Churches' Book Room, 1869), 84, 117.

Bible Christians and the Wesleyan Methodists respectively in 1888 and were part of the subsequent union through those bodies.⁴³

Merger of the four branches of Methodism in Australia became a recurring topic of discussion in the later parts of the nineteenth century. Methodism had already undergone national reunification in Ireland in 1878 and in Canada in 1884 and since Australian society at large was in discussions to form the Commonwealth of Australia it was not surprising that unification of Methodism would also be on the agenda. Eventually merger was achieved state by state in Australia, rather than as one national bloc, and the New Zealand Methodists had to accept a partial solution for a time. South Australia was the first to achieve full unification, on August 14, 1899, celebrating their first united conference in February 1900. This progress in South Australia spurred the other states forward, with Australia-wide merger of the four Methodist streams declared in the formation of the Methodist Church of Australasia on January 1, 1902. A fifth group that opted not to participate in the merger was an indigenous congregation in Newcastle, New South Wales, called the Lay Methodist Church. The Lay Methodists survived until 1951.⁴⁴ Figure 3.2 illustrates the mergers of British Methodism in Australia and New Zealand early in the twentieth century.

Australian union brought together 78,715 Wesleyan Methodist members (+ 433,070 adherents) and 20,586 members from the three smaller Methodist groups (+ 94,486 adherents), making totals of 99,301 members and 527,556 adherents.⁴⁵ Figure 3.3 graphically illustrates the numerical dominance of the British Wesleyan Methodist Church in nineteenth century Australian Methodism.

⁴³ Breward, "Methodist Reunion in Australasia," 121.

⁴⁴ Prentis, "Methodism in New South Wales, 1855-1902," 29.

⁴⁵ W.J. Townsend, *The Story of Methodist Union* (London: Milner and Co., c. 1905), 188.

Figure 3.2 *Four branches of British Methodism merged in Australia & New Zealand*

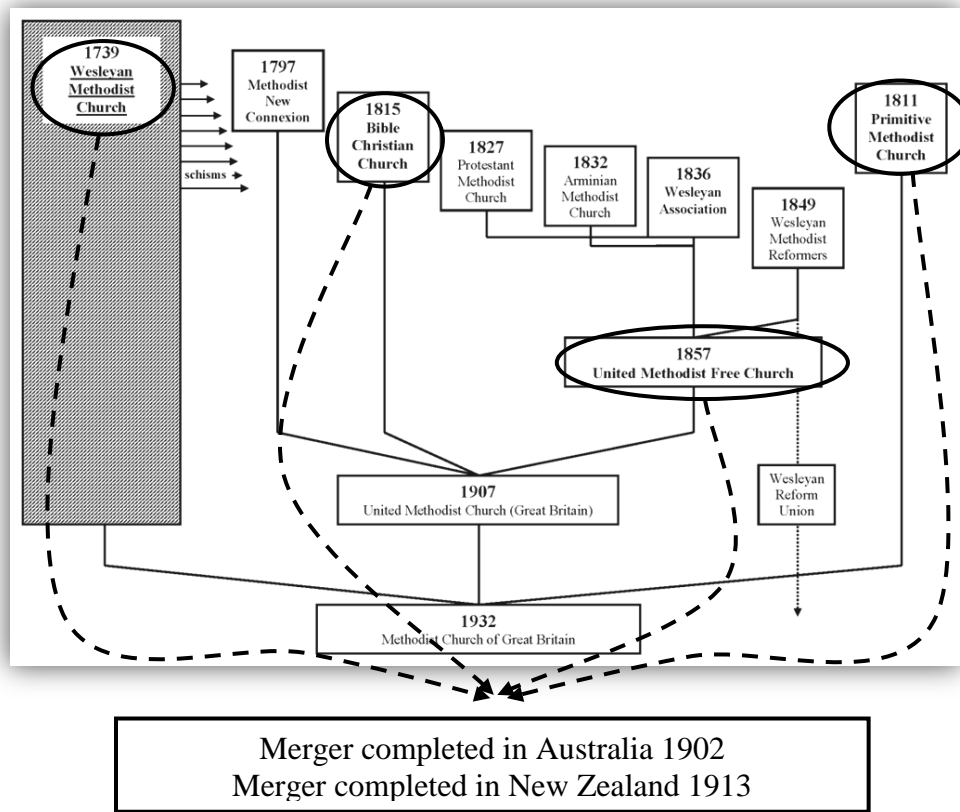
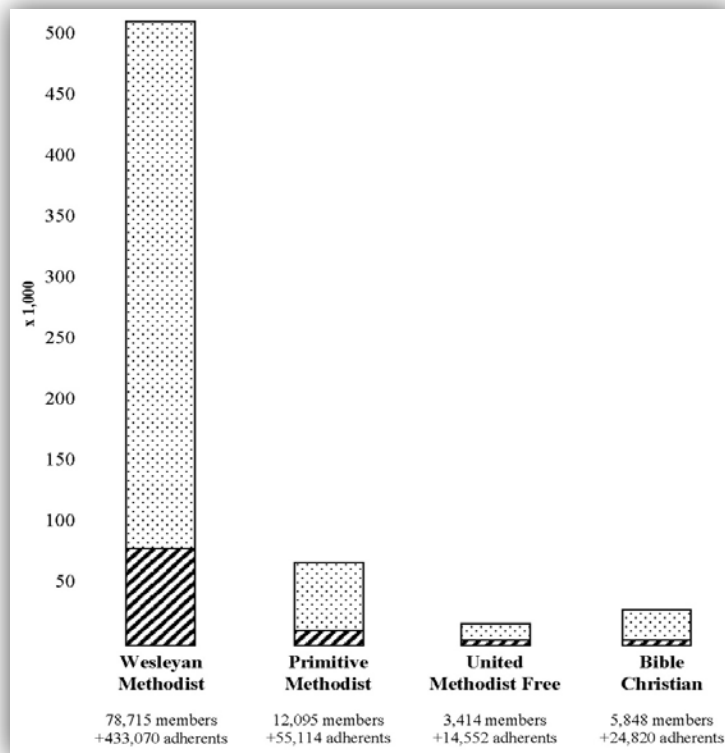
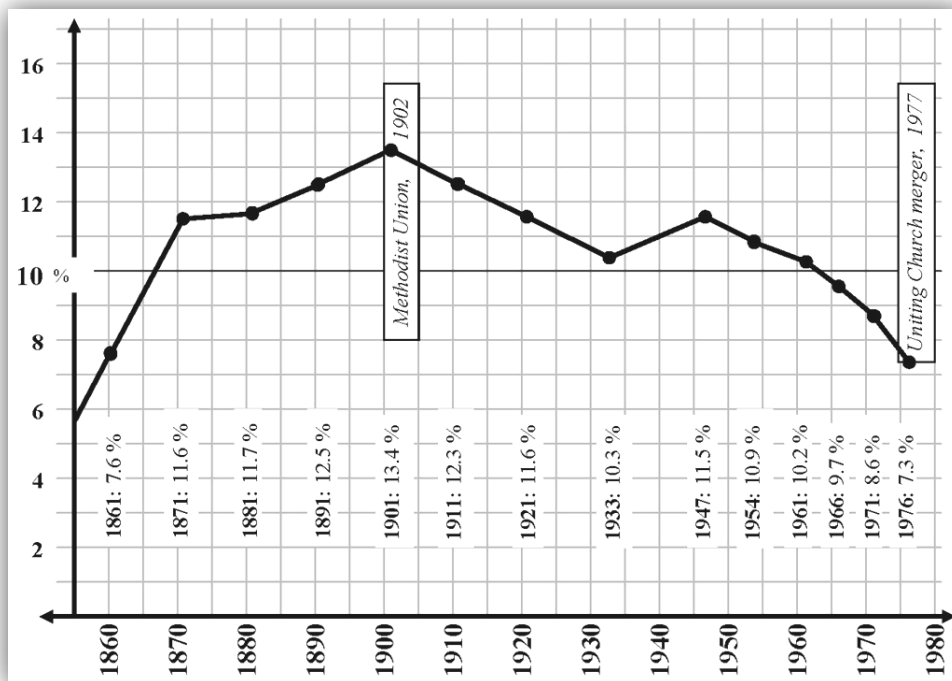


Figure 3.3 *The scale of Methodism's merger in Australia 1902*



Methodist union was celebrated as a wonderful victory and a necessary step toward greater effectiveness. Rev. J. Berry preached at the South Australian celebration in 1900, "I am only a witness, and not a prophet, but I think that every member of this Conference will agree with me that in a new country like ours, united Methodism will be more effective than disunited Methodism."⁴⁶ Berry may have been overly optimistic however - from the turn of the twentieth century Methodist growth in Australia slowed and began to decline until it disappeared altogether in 1977. The rise and decline of Methodism in Australia as a percentage of the Australian population is illustrated as figure 3.4. Factors that impacted these trends are discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 3.4 *Methodist Church as a % of Australian population 1860-1976*⁴⁷



NEW ZEALAND METHODISM

Samuel and Catherine Leigh departed Sydney on December 31, 1821, arriving in Paihia in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand on January 22, 1822. They initially stayed

⁴⁶ Berry as quoted in Townsend, *The Story of Methodist Union*, 208.

⁴⁷ 1861-1891 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics microfiche, *La Trobe Australiana Collections*, State Library of Victoria; 1901-2011 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>.

with the missionaries of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) for language studies while Samuel sought an appropriate site for a Wesleyan mission. On July 13, Walter and Mary Lawry visited the Leighs in Paihia on their way to Tonga. They returned on May 26, 1823 en route to Sydney after abandoning the Tongan venture.⁴⁸ Leigh preached his first sermon in the Māori language on August 25, 1822.⁴⁹

Rev. William White arrived in the Bay of Islands in May 1823 and, together with the Leighs, they sailed to the preferred location of the Wesleyan mission at Whangaroa Harbour on June 6, 1823. Land was purchased from the local tribes for a mission station at Kaeo, seven miles up-river from the harbour and Wesleydale Mission was established. In August Rev. Nathaniel Turner and Mr John Hobbs joined the team of missionaries. On August 15 Samuel Marsden sailed into Whangaroa harbour bringing Nathaniel Turner's wife and children. By this time Samuel Leigh's health had again declined and Marsden prevailed upon him to return to Sydney for medical treatment. The Leighs departed Whangaroa on August 19, 1823,⁵⁰ concluding a brief but historic time in New Zealand. The mission at Wesleydale was left in the hands of three new missionaries, none of whom could yet speak Māori. Leigh returned to Australia and served the Wesleyan mission until 1831. Catherine Leigh died on May 15, 1831 and was buried at Parramatta. Leigh then returned to England, remarried in 1842 and died on May 2, 1852.

In 1826 William White took leave from Wesleydale to travel to England to be married. By the time he returned to Sydney in 1827, Wesleydale had been raided and destroyed. Early in 1827 tribal warfare had overtaken the Wesleydale mission. The chief who had been a mainstay of protection for the Wesleyan mission died and the mission station was defenceless. On January 10, as warriors broke down the back fence at the mission station, the missionaries left via the front gate. The Turners with three children, John Hobbs and nine others walked twenty-five miles along narrow tracks through rain and in fear of their lives to the CMS station. Wesleydale was

⁴⁸ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 126.

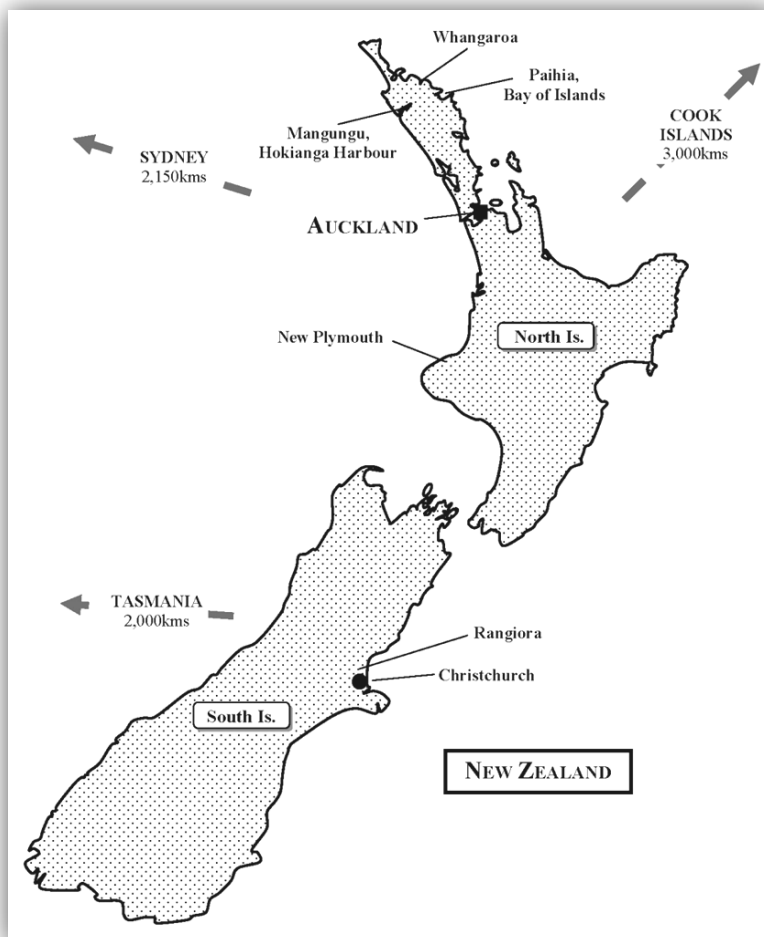
⁴⁹ Williams, *Centenary Sketches*, 9.

⁵⁰ Strachan, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Leigh*, 161.

looted and burned to the ground.⁵¹ The fugitives sailed from the Bay of Islands on January 28, 1827, returning to Sydney.

In consultation with Samuel Leigh and the other missionaries in Sydney, the newly ordained and married Rev. John Hobbs and his bride, Jane, returned to relaunch the Wesleyan mission in New Zealand in November 1827.⁵² A Māori chief, Patuone, who had given passage to the fugitives from Wesleydale during the January escape, now invited the mission to start again in his territory at Hokianga Harbour on the western side of the North Island. With Mr James Stack, another who had worked at Wesleydale, they established the new mission station on 344 hectares (850 acres) at Mangungu,⁵³ almost directly across the North Island from where Wesleydale had been located, as illustrated as figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 *New Zealand map with historic Methodist sites*



⁵¹ Williams, *Centenary Sketches*, 26.

⁵² Hobbs was intended to come back with Nathaniel Turner and William Cross, but they were reassigned to Tonga at the last minute.

⁵³ Williams, *Centenary Sketches*, 29.

In the following decades Methodism was greatly impacted by British migration to New Zealand. Unlike Australian Methodism, the first work in New Zealand was directed toward the indigenous inhabitants but as British settlement increased exponentially the focus of the mission shifted. Between 1839 and 1852 the number of immigrants living in New Zealand increased from 2,000 to 28,000.⁵⁴ Immigration of British citizens to New Zealand was facilitated by the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, which, ironically, was promoted by the missionaries to protect Māori land-ownership but which also provided increased safety for British settlers. From 1855 to 1874 the European population in New Zealand rose from 37,000 to 256,000.⁵⁵

The majority British influx in New Zealand refocused the missionary work for the Methodists, Anglicans and Presbyterians, while ongoing wars between the European settlers and the Māori population during the same period⁵⁶ further alienated Māori believers who felt betrayed by the missionaries and lost confidence in European Christianity.⁵⁷ The training of Māori Methodist pastors, which had been suspended during the New Zealand Wars, was resumed in 1877 to provide a majority of Māori ministers to the indigenous work.⁵⁸ A century later, in 1973, the Methodist Mission established a separate Māori division for work in New Zealand.

During the period of explosive immigration the three smaller Methodist denominations that had established in Australia also began their ministries in New Zealand. Rev. Robert Ward of the Primitive Methodist Church began work in New Plymouth in 1844 amongst English settlers. In 1860 Mr George Booth initiated meetings for the United Methodist Free Church at Rangiora and in 1868 Rev. Matthew Baxter was sent from England to serve the Christchurch circuit that had grown out of Booth's work. Meanwhile, members of the Bible Christian Church had arrived in New Plymouth, but with no ministerial supply they accepted the ministry

⁵⁴ "Story: History of Immigration," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/history-of-immigration/page-3>.

⁵⁵ Eric W. Hames, *Out of the Common Way: The European Church in the Colonial Era 1840-1913* (Auckland: Wesley Historical Society, 1972), 52.

⁵⁶ The "New Zealand Wars," which included several campaigns across the North Island, lasted from 1845 to 1872. See "New Zealand Wars," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed October 26, 2016, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-wars>.

⁵⁷ Charles Jr. Yrigoyen, and Susan E. Warrick, "New Zealand," in *Historical Dictionary of Methodism*, 2nd edition (Oxford, Scarecrow, 2005), 223.

⁵⁸ Tim Shoebridge, "Methodist Church - The Methodist Mission," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated July 13, 2012, accessed October 22, 2015, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/methodist-church/page-1>.

of the Primitive minister from 1844. Bible Christian minister, Rev. W.H. Keast served in the Christchurch area briefly from 1878 to 1879 followed by several years without ministerial support until Rev. John Orchard arrived in 1886.⁵⁹ The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australasia continued to substantially outnumber the smaller Methodist groups throughout this time and until the eventual consolidation of the Methodist interests.

From 1855, once management of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society had been transferred from London to Sydney, the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australasia functioned as multiple districts. In 1874 the whole region was restructured to function as one general conference meeting triennially and multiple District Conferences meeting annually. This commencement of District Conferences gave the New Zealand work some autonomy from Sydney, but larger decisions were still subject to the Australian-dominated General Conference. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, with mergers and unions underway, the four branches of Methodism began to explore union in New Zealand and in Australia. In 1894 the several Wesleyan Methodist District Conferences were given permission to work out mergers as long as they conformed to a *Basis of Union* policy that the Victorian District had drafted, although this was of mixed blessing to the independently-minded New Zealanders. The two smallest Methodist denominations, the Bible Christians and the United Methodist Free Church agreed to merger, but the Primitive Methodists were not willing to merge with the New Zealand Wesleyan Methodists as long as it entailed coming under Australian domination. The Wesleyan Methodists, Bible Christians and United Methodist Free Churches were merged in New Zealand on April 13, 1896, bringing together 63,280 Wesleyan Methodists and 8,611 Free Methodists and Bible Christians.⁶⁰

The desired merger with the New Zealand Primitive Methodists, however, had become synonymous with the New Zealand Wesleyan Methodist campaign to be separate from the Sydney structure. This campaign was given a patriotic flavour when the New Zealand colony was granted political autonomy from Britain in

⁵⁹ Gary Allan Malcolm Clover, *The Road to Methodist Union in 1913* (Christchurch: Methodist Publishing House, 2012), 2-3.

⁶⁰ Clover, *The Road to Methodist Union in 1913*, 11.

1907.⁶¹ Meanwhile, merger was achieved amongst Australian Methodists in 1902, because, naturally, the Australian Primitive Methodists did not have the same objection to Australian control as the New Zealanders did.

By 1913 the Methodist Conference and the Primitive Methodist Conference had approved the separation from Australia and the merger of the final two New Zealand Methodist bodies. Establishment of the Methodist Church of New Zealand was formalised in Wellington on February 6, 1913. The new Methodist Church included 1,138 congregations in New Zealand, with 23,044 members and 92,636 adherents.⁶²

With independence came the expectation that the New Zealand Methodists would support their own mission field. In 1912 the New Zealand leadership proposed that Tonga, Samoa and Fiji might be the proper fields of New Zealand missionary interest but this proposal was never fully explored, partially because those fields were not willing to be separated from the Australian church⁶³ and because World War I was about to intervene. In 1917, during the war, sentiment in New Zealand shifted toward the Solomon Islands when Daniel Bula from Vella Lavella, accompanied by missionary Reginald Nicholson, undertook an extensive speaking campaign in New Zealand. During that time missionary giving in New Zealand Methodist Churches doubled to more than £10,000; an extraordinary feat at any time, but quite incredible given that this was midway through the Great War! On April 1, 1922, during the centenary celebration of Samuel Leigh's arrival in New Zealand, the Solomon Islands transfer was officially conferred.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, mergers and mission fields notwithstanding, New Zealand Methodism began to experience decline similar to Australian Methodism.

FACTORS IN METHODISM'S DECLINE

In both Australia and New Zealand, Methodism achieved its highest percentage of population in the census count of 1901, followed by a loss of community share. Figure 3.6 illustrates this parallel trajectory of declining influence. There were

⁶¹ Clover, *The Road to Methodist Union in 1913*, 14.

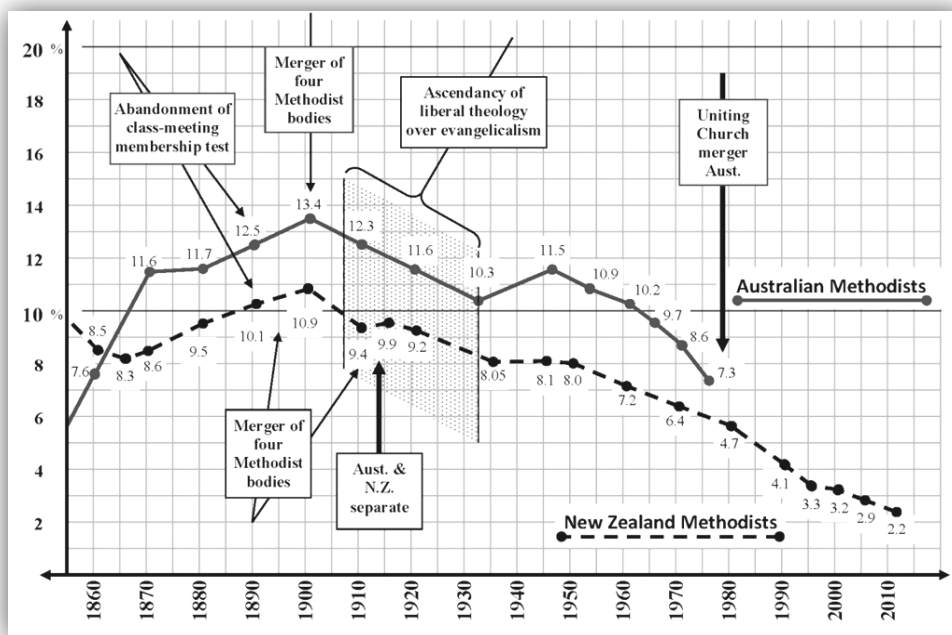
⁶² Hames, *Out of the Common Way*, 147.

⁶³ George G. Carter, *A Family Affair: A Brief Survey of New Zealand Methodism's Involvement in Missions Overseas 1822-1972* (Auckland: Wesley Historical Society, 1973), 98-103.

⁶⁴ Williams, *Centenary Sketches*, 310.

several prominent internal events which accompanied Methodism's reversal at the turn of the twentieth century, including the rising status of Methodism and the Methodist mergers, but most significant were the shift away from class meetings, the adoption of liberal theology and social gospel, and the establishment of universities for ministerial training. Rising prosperity and social respectability preceded these trends and set the stage for much that was to come.

Figure 3.6 *New Zealand & Australian Methodism as a % of population 1860-2011*⁶⁵



Methodism in the British settler colonies of the South Pacific followed the patterns of Methodism in North America and in Britain as early revival enthusiasm was replaced by increased affluence and social respectability - as John Wesley had predicted.⁶⁶ David Hilliard has dated the loss of early Methodist spirit in Australia from the 1850s, when "as Methodists became more prosperous and comfortable it became harder to maintain the discipline of earlier years."⁶⁷ The increase of affluence and social respectability preceded dramatic changes within Methodism later in the century.

⁶⁵ New Zealand data from Peter J. Lineham, *New Zealanders and the Methodist Evangel* (Auckland: Wesleyan Historical Society, 1983), and from NZ Census, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census.aspx>.

⁶⁶ John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 13: 260.

⁶⁷ David Hilliard, "Methodism in South Australia, 1855-1902," in *Methodism in Australia*, eds. Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 69.

Loss of class meetings. The loss of John Wesley's discipline of class meetings has been widely acknowledged as one of the first signs that Methodism was changing.⁶⁸ With affluence, status and respectability, Methodists became increasingly uncomfortable with excessive displays of emotion⁶⁹ and the accountability of class meetings.⁷⁰ Malcolm Prentis has noted that from 1870, "staleness was beginning to afflict prayer meetings, love feasts and class meetings."⁷¹ Kenneth Dempsey has described the shift more specifically in central New South Wales when, "prosperous businessmen and farmers were not prepared to accept the spiritual leadership of, say, a farm labourer or a shop assistant."⁷²

Official relaxation of the requirement for class meeting attendance can be dated in Australia and New Zealand to the 1890 General Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, meeting in Sydney. At that conference the class meeting test for membership was narrowly upheld by a vote of fifty-seven to fifty, but then in a late compromise, the definition of class meeting attendance was broadened to include attendance, "in a meeting for testimony or fellowship to be held at least once a month."⁷³ This reduced the test from weekly accountability to a non-specific monthly church attendance, which effectively spelled the end of the class-meeting test and over the following decades, "attendance at worship became the only major criterion" of church membership.⁷⁴ In 1898 Rev. Joseph Berry (1846-1907), who had served the pastorate in New Zealand and South Australia and had served as South Australian Conference President,⁷⁵ bewailed the loss of class meetings:

Our classes are languishing to the verge of extinction. In many Circuits there is hardly any serious attempt to meet them. In many a congregation I could name, if an awakened sinner sought to join the Church, he would discover that there was no living Church to join, nothing but a list of names of persons to whom membership implies no sense of privilege, or duty, or responsibility. Nothing

⁶⁸ Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," 54.

⁶⁹ Renate Howe, "Social Composition of the Wesleyan Church in Victoria during the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2007): 213, accessed March 13, 2016, doi/10.1111/j.1467-9809.1967.tb00289.x/pdf.213.

⁷⁰ Gloster S. Udy, *Key to Change* (Sydney: Surrey Beatty, 1985), 113.

⁷¹ Prentis, "Methodism in New South Wales, 1855-1902," 34, 38.

⁷² Kenneth Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline: Ministers and Laymen in an Australian Country Town* (North Ryde, NSW: Methuen, 1983), 75.

⁷³ "The Wesleyan Conference at Sydney," in *The Age* newspaper, May 20, 1890, 6. Rev. James Haslam initiated the motion to confirm that class membership would remain the primary test of church membership. "Australasian Wesleyan General Conference," in *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, May 19, 1890, 7.

⁷⁴ Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline*, 75-76.

⁷⁵ "Death of Rev. Joseph Berry," in *Advertiser* (Adelaide) newspaper, July 10, 1907, 6.

that has been discovered yet has superseded—nothing, I believe, will ever supersede—the old Methodist class meeting.⁷⁶

Social gospel, Higher Criticism and liberal theology. The connection between the rising prosperity of Methodist members and the advent of liberal theology and the social gospel is illustrated in the ministry of Rev. Hugh Price Hughes (1847-1902). Hughes was a Welsh Methodist who served as the Superintendent of the West London Methodist Mission from 1887 and later as Conference President for the British Wesleyan Methodist Church. As prosperity increased in the British Church, many became concerned that they had lost touch with the poorest sections of society. Through his work in the London Mission, Hughes became a prominent figurehead for re-engagement in community development in Methodism.⁷⁷ Edward H. Sugden (1854-1935), who served as the first Master of the new Queen's College in Melbourne, sought to promote Hughes' emphases in Australia during his forty years of college leadership.

This focus upon community engagement was consistent with John Wesley's priorities, but Sugden and Hughes both also promoted liberal theology,⁷⁸ which was not consistent with Wesley's theology. When liberal theology was connected to community engagement, it resulted in a new theology of activism called "social gospel" that undermined Wesley's teaching of miraculous conversion. Liberal theology tended to deny supernatural causation, and so it influenced the formation of the new theology that likewise tended to deny the miraculous individual conversion,⁷⁹ so fundamental to traditional evangelicalism.

Two phenomena propelled liberal theology onto the world stage at the end of the nineteenth century: the teachings of Higher Criticism and of evolution. The arrival of these new teachings explains why so much of Methodist teaching was shifting by the 1920s. A method of Bible study, dubbed Higher Criticism, had arisen in Germany

⁷⁶ "The Wesleyan Conference," in *Adelaide Observer* newspaper, March 5, 1898, 13.

⁷⁷ Hughes' work was part of an interdenominational emphasis called the "Forward Movement". Arthur Walters, *Hugh Price Hughes: Pioneer and Reformer* (London: Robert Culley, 1907), 64-65.

⁷⁸ Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," 57.

⁷⁹ That is, conversion involves more than individual assent and repentance. It includes a supernatural act in which the Spirit of God enters into new believers, changing their motivations and moral capacity. This has various names, such as "born again", "new creation", "regeneration", etc.

early in the nineteenth century through the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Schleiermacher, who is often regarded as the father of modern hermeneutics, sought to bring Enlightenment thought and scientific knowledge to bear on the biblical text.⁸⁰ Higher Criticism assumed that the Bible can be studied as any other piece of literature using literary methods and drawing upon the latest scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge cannot consider supernatural causation, so the result was that parts of Bible were found to be highly improbable. However, John Wesley, like the other early evangelicals, articulated his confidence in the complete inspiration of the Bible and its inerrancy. An example of Wesley's confidence in the Bible is seen in his written response to a Criticism-like statement by a Mr Jenyns:

If he is a Christian, he betrays his own cause by averring, that "all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God; but the writers of it were sometimes left to themselves, and consequently made some mistakes." Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth.⁸¹

Higher Criticism has been shown to be of concern to Methodist evangelicals in North America in the first half of the nineteenth century,⁸² but it was not until the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution that the study gained wider acceptance. In 1859 Charles Darwin published his *Genesis of Species* and the theory of evolution was rapidly adopted.⁸³ The theory of evolution sought to the origins of life through natural, scientifically-explainable causation. Darwin's theory provided an intellectual alternative to the knowledge of God and supernatural causation. As one atheist, Richard Bozarth, has noted:

Christianity has fought, still fights, and will continue to fight science to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of

⁸⁰ Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), vol. 1:135-36.

⁸¹ Wesley, "Journal, July 24, 1776," in *Works*, vol. 4: 82. See other similarly emphatic statements by Wesley: God has written the Bible - Wesley, "Preface to Standard Sermons," in *Works*, vol. 5: 3; and: Faith in the inerrancy of the Bible is a standard Protestant doctrine, "Sermon 106 On Faith," in *Works*, vol. 7: 198; and no defect in the Bible whatsoever, Wesley, "Preface to Notes on the New Testament," in *Works*, vol. 14: 238.

⁸² See chapter 2: 76 in connection with the origins of the Free Methodist Church.

⁸³ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859).

the Son of God. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing.⁸⁴

The factors that led to social gospel were then in place: Advocates of Higher Criticism, with the support of Darwin's theory, were prone to conclude that many of the supernatural or miraculous explanations of the Bible were similarly untrue. As liberal theology took shape in the late 1800s it distanced itself from supernatural explanations and sought natural solutions to ministry and humanity's frailties. Social gospel became a matter of social advancement and "moral progress" rather than a result of a supernatural conversion of individuals who then addressed social needs.⁸⁵

In 1917 an American Baptist, Walter Rauschenbusch, published *A Theology for the Social Gospel*,⁸⁶ a text which serves to illustrate the theological changes which undergirded liberal theology and the social gospel. Rauschenbusch claimed that traditional theological teachings were failing the modern world and therefore, the social gospel was needed to "renovate" the work of the Church.⁸⁷ He argued that sin was simply social selfishness; "not a private transaction between the sinner and God."⁸⁸ He downplayed traditional doctrines of inbred sin, by developing a theology in which "Sin is transmitted along the lines of social tradition... The permanent vices and crimes of adults are not transmitted by heredity, but by being socialized."⁸⁹ He revised the doctrines of salvation, biblical inspiration and the atonement, concluding that "the death of Jesus influences human thought and feeling in many ways," but his cannot be a substitutionary death because, "guilt and merit are personal. They can not be transferred from one person to another."⁹⁰ Rauschenbusch's conclusion was that the Church must work to "bring social forces to bear on evil," resulting in, "repentance and conversion for professions and organizations."⁹¹ Traditional evangelical teaching maintained that regenerated individuals brought social change,

⁸⁴ G. Richard Bozarth, "The Meaning of Evolution," in *American Atheist*, ed. Frank R. Zindler (Cranford New Jersey: www.atheists.org, February 1978), 30.

⁸⁵ A.M. Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, "The Authority of the Bible," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, revised edition, Gen. ed. Matthew Black (London: Nelson, 1962), 5.

⁸⁶ Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: MacMillan, 1917), 196.

⁸⁷ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 17.

⁸⁸ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 48.

⁸⁹ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 60.

⁹⁰ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 267, 245.

⁹¹ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 117-199.

while the social gospel held that social improvement led to regenerated individuals who live in the consciousness of God.⁹²

Rauschenbusch does not specifically deny the miraculous work of God but his theological conclusions and his solutions to the work of the Church are not centred on the supernatural activity of God in the way that evangelical teaching was. In this Rauschenbusch is typical of following generations of liberal scholars who often retained a theoretical commitment to God's supernatural work but practiced a theology that denied the supernatural. The foundations of scientific research and of evolutionary theory do not have a place for the supernatural and neither does Higher Criticism. After all, if God's supernatural intervention were an acceptable possibility then a six-day creation is possible, a world-wide flood is possible, a virgin birth is possible, an inerrant Bible is possible and Daniel's prophecies about the Greek and Roman empires several centuries before those empires emerged is possible. Sceptical biblical criticism would then be reduced to just another option alongside a miraculous explanation.

Denial of supernatural, for some theologians, actually did lead to denying the existence of God. In South Australia from 1969 Methodist ministers were provided with seminars titled "Religious Studies No. 1" to promote the social gospel. One of the studies concluded with the statement, "I BELIEVE IN GOD, AND EVEN THIS ONE DOES NOT EXIST." [emphasis Drayton's]⁹³

Denial of the supernatural was clearly a denial of John Wesley's doctrines. Wesley taught:

Is there any conversion that is not miraculous? Is conversion a natural or supernatural work? I suppose all who allow there is any such thing [as conversion] believe it to be supernatural. And what is the difference between a supernatural and a miraculous work, I am yet to learn.⁹⁴

For those who promoted community engagement without a supernatural conversion, redeeming society through *human* intervention became the alternative to

⁹² Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 125.

⁹³ Dean Drayton, "Arthur Jackson: Preacher, Theologian, Charismatic (1918-2006)," in *Out of the Ordinary: Twelve Australian Methodist Biographies*, eds. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Unley, South Australia: MediaCom, 2015), 345.

⁹⁴ Wesley, "Letter to The Reverend Mr. Potter," in *Works*, vol. 9: 92.

redeeming individuals through *supernatural* conversion. Conservative evangelicals rejected this new social gospel as a false gospel that denied (or neglected) the spiritual conversion of individuals.⁹⁵ For John Wesley, community action was an essential expression of holiness and "purity of intention"⁹⁶ but for evangelicals of the twentieth century, community action was tainted by association with liberal theology and many withdrew their previous commitment to community engagement.⁹⁷

George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture*⁹⁸ provides insights into the changes that led to this "Great Reversal" in evangelical ministry; that is, the evangelical church's abandonment of social activism. Marsden describes the disillusionment of the American evangelicals after the Civil War as Darwinianism, atheistic secularism, apostasy in the Church and other causes turned the tide of American evangelicalism from a Postmillennial to a Premillennial expectation. In effect, those who had thought that the American experience was proof that the world would become increasingly righteous until the Kingdom of God was established on earth shifted to the expectation that the world would become increasingly evil until the Church is crushed and Christ returns to intervene.⁹⁹ The fundamentally pessimistic outlook of Premillennialism (from a worldly perspective) served to neutralised the previous evangelical priority for social action because the world was already "wrecked".¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, Marsden notes that the holiness movement of the same era provided some balance through its emphasis upon selfless service, as seen in the abolition and inner-city movements. Dramatic change in evangelical practice came to a head around 1920 as liberal theologians adopted an aggressive social gospel in which the exclusivity of social concern disregarded the message of eternal salvation. For evangelicals, "traditional Christian belief seemed to be at stake."¹⁰¹ As the fundamentalist arm of evangelicalism began to challenge the social gospel doctrine, "anything that even looked like the Social Gospel" was rejected.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 4, loc 1996.

⁹⁶ John Wesley, "Sermon XXVIII," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 5: 377.

⁹⁷ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 4, loc. 1984.

⁹⁸ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd edition (Oxford: University, Kindle edition, 2006).

⁹⁹ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, chapt. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, chapt. 9, loc. 1787.

¹⁰¹ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, chapt. 10, loc. 1957.

¹⁰² Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, chapt. 10, loc. 1932.

Methodist training in Australian universities in this same period moved increasingly toward liberal theology and social gospel while an abiding evangelical pillar of Methodism was maintained in its inner-city missions. Two such Methodist Missions that were mentioned in the commencement of the Wesleyan Methodist Church from 1946 were the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney (founded in 1885, and now Wesley Mission) and the Fitzroy Mission in Melbourne (founded c. 1906). By 1930, with the Fitzroy Mission on the brink of closure,¹⁰³ a country minister, Rev. Walter Betts, was appointed to lead the mission. He did so with such success that Fitzroy Mission became a leading evangelical influence in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.¹⁰⁴ Betts was a friend to Kingsley Ridgway and the new Wesleyan Methodists from the late 1940s. In the 1950s Betts became increasingly critical of Methodism's liberal drift and he resigned to start an independent congregation, the Kew People's Church. Rev. Alan Walker, leader of the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney and of the Methodist "Mission to the Nation" in 1953 was another dominant figure. Conflict between Walker and Betts illustrates the confusion that social gospel caused for evangelicals. Betts criticised Walker's Mission to the Nation, claiming that, "There appears little evidence of Australia finding God' through the agency of this 'social' type of evangelism."¹⁰⁵ However, a later author asserts that "there is little doubt that Alan Walker was a dedicated evangelical who believed that his primary call was to evangelism."¹⁰⁶ Walker illustrates a generation who had partially adopted the new teachings and partially retained earlier convictions.

University training. The third change within Methodism is closely linked to the advent of social gospel and is similarly connected to rising affluence. Ministers were increasingly expected to achieve a higher level of training to fulfil their ministry to wealthier and better educated congregations.¹⁰⁷ From the late nineteenth century university education began to replace the former reading-list and in-service training

¹⁰³ A.C. Bowman, *The Story of a Wonderful Revival* (Fitzroy, Melbourne: Fitzroy Methodist Mission, 1932), 4.

¹⁰⁴ Dallas Clarnette, *50 Years on Fire for God: The Story of Walter Betts* (Benalla, Victoria: Fletcher and Fitchett, 2001), 28-43.

¹⁰⁵ W.F. Betts, *"The Drift": Tracing the Drift in Modern Methodism, leading up to my Resignation in 1954* (Melbourne: Self-published, c. 1955), 10.

¹⁰⁶ Robert D. Linder, "Alan Walker Among the Sharks: Why the Most Important Christian in Australia in the Latter Half of the Twentieth Century Was Not Also a Beloved National Figure," in *Church Heritage: Historical Journal of the Uniting Church in Australia*, vol. 17:1, March 2011, 5, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://search.informit.com.au/>.

¹⁰⁷ Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," 55.

of Methodist clergy.¹⁰⁸ From 1888, when Queen's College received its first students in Melbourne, the Methodist Church began to establish ministerial training colleges in capital cities.¹⁰⁹ The establishment of theological colleges accelerated the introduction of modernist ideas and liberal theology through the placement of European and American trained professors.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, the popularisation of liberal theology was supported through the establishment of the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) in 1896. The ASCM promoted ecumenical cooperation, political engagement and the use of Higher Criticism in its studies. Consequently, bible study at the universities in the early twentieth century was characterised as "increasingly contentious", with the Bible "the storm-centre of this time" while "controversy raged over the interpretation of the scripture."¹¹¹ By the turn of the twentieth century preachers committed to Higher Criticism, liberal theology and social gospel were beginning to trouble the more traditional Methodist leaders.¹¹²

The arrival of the radically liberal, Dr Samuel Angus (1881-1943) in 1914 provided reinforcement to the liberal theologians in Sydney. The Irish-born and American-trained Angus was brought to Australia by the Presbyterian Church to serve as chair of New Testament exegesis and theology at St Andrew's College at the University of Sydney, where his duties included teaching Methodist students at the United Faculty.¹¹³ Another critical point in the struggle between the liberal and evangelical camps was the failed attempt by William Fitchett (1841-1928) in 1922 to have Peake's radically-liberal text book, *A Commentary on the Bible*,¹¹⁴ removed from Methodist training in Victoria.¹¹⁵ This battle on the floor of the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference saw the conservative Fitchett, who had been the first

¹⁰⁸ Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline*, 127. See also Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," 55.

¹⁰⁹ Samantha Frappell, "Methodism and the Crisis of Nationhood," in *Methodism in Australia: A History*, eds. O'Brien and Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 142.

¹¹⁰ For example, Ivan Stebbins credited sending seven Congregational students to study in Germany with the death of the Congregational Church in Australia. See Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 4, loc. 2257.

¹¹¹ Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence: The Australian Student Christian Movement 1896-1996* (Sydney: UNSW, 2009), 177.

¹¹² Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," 72.

¹¹³ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 4, loc. 2249

¹¹⁴ Arthur S. Peake, *A Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1919).

¹¹⁵ W.H. Fitchett, *A Tattered Bible and a Mutilated Christ: Ought a Christian Church to Accept This?* (Melbourne: Fitchett Brothers, 1922).

President of the Methodist Church of Australasia, pitched against the liberal Sugden, the first Master of Queen's College.¹¹⁶ This contest epitomised the internal struggle brought about by the Methodist Church's move away from John Wesley's doctrines. With liberal theology dominating the universities, the struggle was effectively won by the liberals from 1922, resulting in the denigration of the teaching of miraculous conversions in many Methodist training institutions.¹¹⁷

For decades thereafter key Methodist leaders were neither fully liberal nor fully committed to biblical inspiration. Rev. Dr George Calvert Barber (1893-1967) is an example of one such twentieth century leader who was accused of liberal heresy by the conservatives and of being overly conservative by the modernists.¹¹⁸ Barber served as Professor of Theology at Queen's College from 1937-1959 and held diverse, perhaps even contradictory, doctrinal views including placing a high value on the authority of the Bible, holding a deep commitment to the sinfulness of all humanity and proclaiming Christ as the only Saviour of the world, all the while embracing Higher Criticism.¹¹⁹ He was described as "by no means" liberal and a "guardian of orthodoxy" but he was desperately committed to ecumenism, which for some was only achievable by relinquishing traditional views.¹²⁰ Theological convictions within Methodism in the twentieth century ranged back and forth along a spectrum from conservative-evangelical to radical-liberal, resulting in conflict between individuals and even within individuals. An example of this fluctuation and resulting confusion can be seen in Barber's successor at Queen's College. While Barber consistently directed his students to traditional English theologians,¹²¹ Colin Williams (Professor of Theology, 1959-1962) purposefully introduced students to "the European philosophical and theological roots of modern theology and especially... German theology."¹²²

¹¹⁶ Howe, "Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902," 57.

¹¹⁷ For examples of the derision experienced by evangelicals from the 1920s see pages 119, 205ff.

¹¹⁸ Norman Young, "Calvert Barber: Theologian, Educator, Ecumenist (1893-1967)," in *Out of the Ordinary: Twelve Australian Methodist Biographies*, eds. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Unley, South Australia: MediaCom, 2015), 192-193.

¹¹⁹ Young, "Calvert Barber: Theologian, Educator, Ecumenist," 190, 181, 193.

¹²⁰ Young, "Calvert Barber: Theologian, Educator, Ecumenist," 193, 194, 202-209.

¹²¹ Young, "Calvert Barber: Theologian, Educator, Ecumenist," 192.

¹²² Brian Howe, "'Colin Williams' A Modern Evangelist (1921-1999)," in *Out of the Ordinary: Twelve Australian Methodist Biographies*, eds. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Unley, South Australia: MediaCom, 2015), 374.

A few outstanding Methodists who wrestled for the evangelical faith in twentieth century Australia are named by William Emilson, including Cyril and Ivan Alcorn in Queensland, John Renshaw and Robert Weatherlake in Victoria, and Arthur Erwin Vogt and Deane Meatheringham in South Australia.¹²³ Others named in Emilson or elsewhere in this thesis include Alan Walker in New South Wales, Alfred Harold Wood and Walter Betts in Victoria, Victor Goldney in South Australia, Robert Missenden in Queensland and Gilbert McLaren in Western Australia. The Methodist Church sought to hold the evangelicals and the liberals together through most of the twentieth century, resulting in perpetual conflict and decline. Eventually, in 1977, Higher Criticism's definition of the Bible was formally adopted as policy when the Methodists joined in the formation of the Uniting Church.¹²⁴

All four of the denominations that embraced liberal theology in Australia (Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Anglicans) declined dramatically in the twentieth century. By contrast, those denominations which did not embrace liberal theology showed more stability. To illustrate this point the Catholic, Baptist and Pentecostal Churches are included in the combined chart as figure 3.6. This chart reinforces the proposal that the abandonment of class meetings was unlikely to be the primary factor in Methodism's decline, because a parallel decline is also evident in the Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in which class meetings were not practised.¹²⁵ Methodism's loss of class meetings appears to have been a symptom of declining commitment or passion¹²⁶ which contributed to Methodism's receptivity to liberal theology, but the abandonment of class meetings was not the primary cause of the decline. An example of one who recognised the danger of surrendering class meetings was John Watsford (1820-1907). Watsford had served as a missionary to Fiji and as a church leader in several states of Australia. He was elected as president of the General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1878 and was well respected as a conservative evangelical.¹²⁷ Watsford wrote that surrendering the discipline of class meetings "would indicate to

¹²³ William W. Emilson, ed., *An Informed Faith: The Uniting Church at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Eugene, Origen: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 298.

¹²⁴ See later in this chapter and in chapter 10.

¹²⁵ See appendix A: 477 for more detail of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational progress.

¹²⁶ As suggested by Glen O'Brien, "Australian Methodist Religious Experience," in *Methodism in Australia: A History*, eds. O'Brien and Carey (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015), 176.

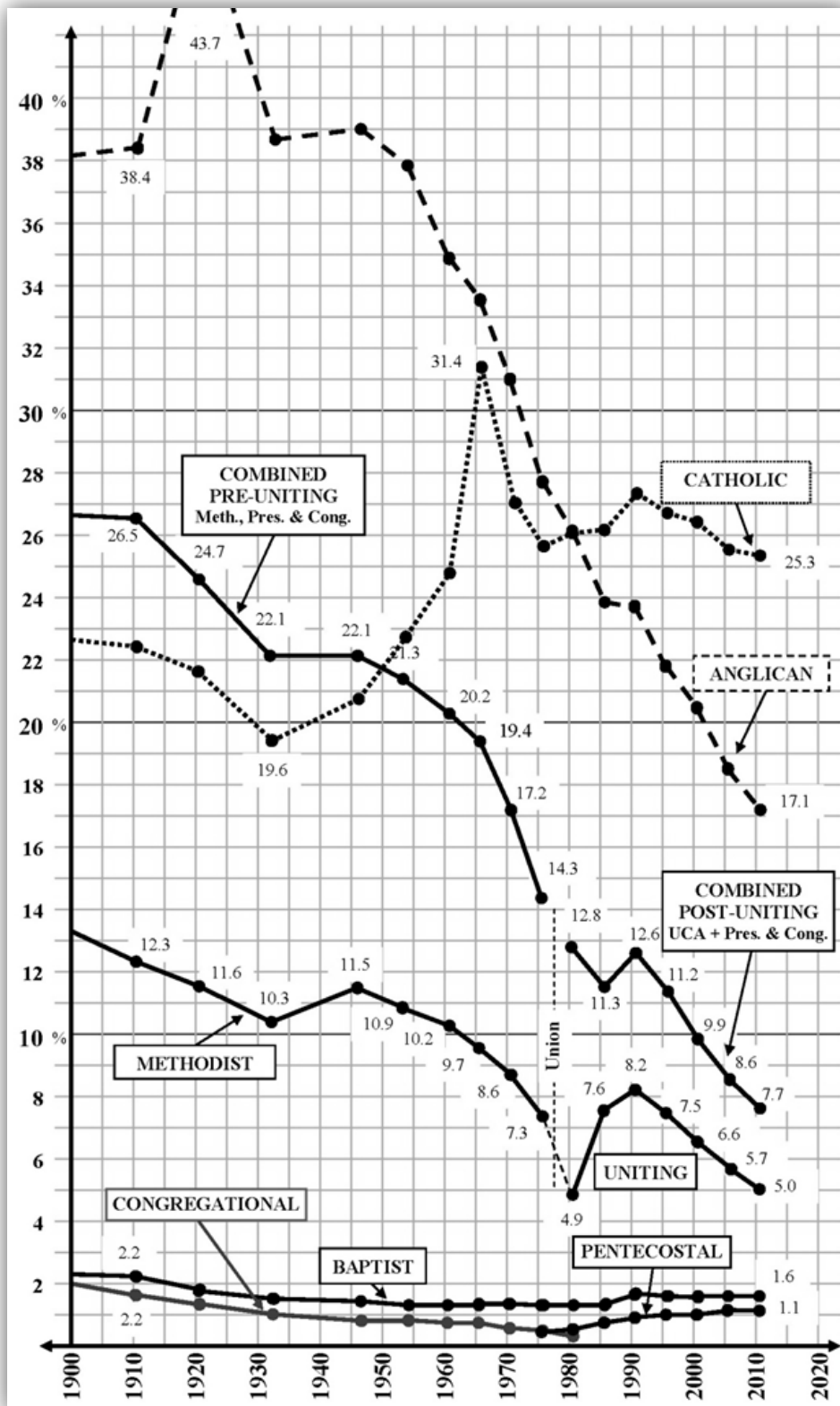
¹²⁷ Renate Howe, "Watsford, John 1820-1907," in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* online, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/watsford-john-4809>.

future historians the chronological point when the great tidal flow of revival began to recede."¹²⁸ Yet, a few sentences previously Watson acknowledged that if there was a "revival of religion" there would not be any need to "press people to go to Class" because they would be driven to class by the passion of their own hearts. Watson's argument - that the loss of passion leads to the loss of class meetings - meshes easily with John Wesley's terminology: the loss of spirit leads to the loss of discipline.

Similarly, the 1902 church merger (1913 in New Zealand) was unlikely to have been a primary cause of decline because other denominations had merged decades earlier without noticeable decline: the Presbyterian Churches in Australia merged in 1865, the Congregational Union was formed in 1866 and the Baptists Union was formed in 1870. The adoption of liberal theology was, however, a common factor for the Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist Churches and, as shown in figure 3.7, corresponded closely to decline in all four denominations.

¹²⁸ John Watsford, *Glorious Gospel Triumphs: As Seen in My Life and Work in Fiji and Australasia* (London: Charles Kelly, 1900), 327.

Figure 3.7 Major Australian denominations as % of population 1900- 2011¹²⁹



¹²⁹ The 1901 census records 504,155 Methodists, 426,322 Presbyterians and 75,025 Congregationalists. The 1976 census records 983,239 Methodists, 899,950 Presbyterians and 53,444 Congregationalists. The 2011 census records 1,065,794 Uniting and 599,520 continuing Presbyterians and Reformed. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>.

Dean Kelley's thesis in *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* proposes that it would be misleading to identify the introduction of liberal theology as the starting point of decline any more than decline originated with the loss of class meetings, the move to merger or the rise of social gospel and ecumenism. Kelley takes denominational decline back to a more primary cause:

Others may have leaped to the wishful or fearful conclusion that churches decline because they are ecumenical. This is no more true than that they became ecumenical because they were declining... Neither is the cause of the other, but both are symptoms of an underlying process or condition which makes for diminishing effectiveness in gaining and retaining members, while it also, more or less independently, creates a receptiveness to possibilities of cooperation with other groups of similar kind and common objectives.¹³⁰

Kelley pointed to John Wesley's warning that the loss of Methodism's early doctrine, spirit and discipline resulted in "a dead sect".¹³¹ Therefore, the cause was the cooling of initial enthusiastic faith, which led to the loss of class meetings, the merger with other Methodist groups and the adoption of liberal theology. Furthermore, from that time the discussion turned to merger with the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Anglicans, who appear to have likewise forgotten their early distinctive teachings and fervour.

Kelley explains that the loss of distinctive teachings and values results in "lukewarmness", which is a natural by-product of tolerance: "If you have some truth and I have some truth, why should either of us die for [our] portion?"¹³² Stuart Piggin appears to support Kelley's thesis, concluding that, "Evangelical churches, the world over, are far more effective in holding their membership than mainline Protestant churches of a liberal persuasion."¹³³ As a case in point, in Piggin's study of Australian Anglicanism, he notes that the Sydney diocese, the only evangelical Anglican diocese in Australia, grew steadily in the 1990s while every other Anglican diocese in Australia was declining.¹³⁴ It might be assumed that Wesley's *doctrine* was his most effective tool of church growth, but Kelley's thesis points to Wesley's *spirit and discipline* as driving forces. The loss of Methodism's spirit preceded the

¹³⁰ Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion*, Rose edition (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University and Rose, 1995), 97.

¹³¹ Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *Works*, vol. 13: 258.

¹³² Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*, 83.

¹³³ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, preface, loc. 329.

¹³⁴ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, chapt. 10, loc. 4781.

loss of discipline and was accompanied by decades of sustained conflict within Methodism over matters of doctrine. This conflict contributed to denominational decline throughout the twentieth century.

In the twentieth century, in the aftermath of World War I, external factors increasingly drove society's values toward secularism and away from traditional religion. These external factors included immigration, war, the sexual revolution, television, the introduction of the theory of evolution into school curricula, industrialisation, urbanisation, modernisation, reduced censorship, and more.¹³⁵ Most of these social changes of the twentieth century influenced Australia and New Zealand alike, except where the two nations purposefully pursued different ideals in immigration and indigenous relations.

With federation in 1901, Australia pursued the White Australia Policy, which was accelerated from 1945 by the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme through which British adults could migrate to Australia for a subsidised passage of £10. The Assisted Passage influx peaked at 80,000 immigrants in 1969 and declined dramatically after that until the end of the policy in 1982.¹³⁶ It was from this policy that the colloquial term "Ten Pound Pom" originated. Donald Denoon argues that New Zealand pursued a substantially different policy, seeking to become "the growth pole for Polynesia south of the equator, as well as that region's leading centre for technical and higher education."¹³⁷ New Zealand welcomed Pacific islander immigration while Australia put up barriers, even restricting its traditional connections with Fiji, Papua and the Solomon Islands. Despite the difference in Australia and New Zealand's immigration policies, and despite the argument that immigration is a major external influence upon denominational growth,¹³⁸ the pattern of decline in Australia and New Zealand Methodism is remarkably parallel

¹³⁵ See Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, chapt. 8 and David Hilliard, "Australia: Toward Secularisation and One Step Back," in *Secularisation in the Christian World*, Callum Brown and Michael Snape, eds. (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 82.

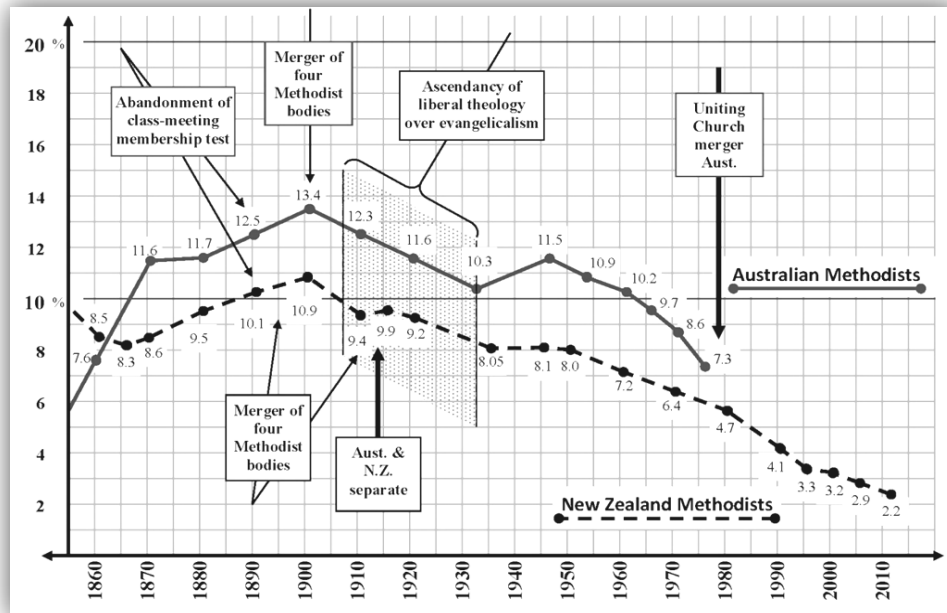
¹³⁶ "Ten Pound Poms," Victorian Immigration Museum, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/discoverycentre/your-questions/ten-pound-poms/>.

¹³⁷ Donald Denoon, "Re-Membering Australasia: A Repressed Memory," 2003 in *Australian Historical Studies*, 34:122, 290-304 (Canberra: Australian National University: Published online: September 29, 2008), 301.

¹³⁸ James Jupp, "Time, Place and Social Status," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge, 2009), 42.

throughout the twentieth century. This suggests that immigration was not the primary influence in Methodism's growth pattern. See figure 3.6 repeated below.

Figure 3.6 repeated *New Zealand & Australian Methodism as a % of population*

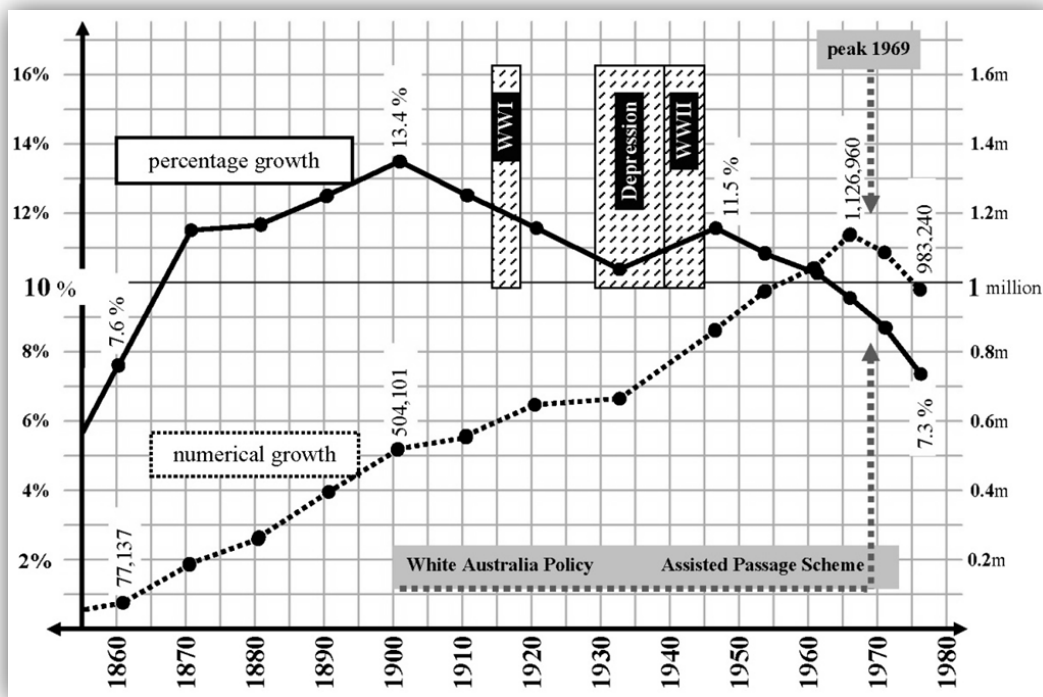


Both the numerical increase of membership for Methodism in Australia and its percentage of population decrease can be charted together for a fuller appreciation of the trends over the century. These two trends plotted together reveal that until 1901 Methodism in Australia was growing consistently in both numerical and percentage statistics, but after 1901, while still gaining membership, it was for the first time, falling behind the population increase. In figure 3.8 the suggestion that immigration was a substantial factor in the real increase until 1969 is supported by the first numerical decrease at the 1971 census. Taking these two trends together then, that Methodism was falling behind from 1901 and declining in real numbers only after 1966, it can be concluded that immigration was serving to mask the truth that Methodism had lost much of its capacity to draw Australians into church from 1901. Effectively, Methodism was relapsing for decades but the sponsorship of British immigration rendered decline less obvious. With the decline of the Assisted Passage Scheme, the true extent of Methodism's decline became apparent.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ There are many other factors that should be considered in denominational decline from the 1960s. This is the decade when American churches began to decline, it was the time of the "sexual

Space could be given to each of the social changes of the twentieth century which encouraged widespread secularisation in the community and contributed to the decline of mainline churches. The role of the two World Wars, from 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, with the Great Depression (1929-1939) between them, belongs on the figure 3.8 chart as clearly as immigration belongs, falling between the percentage decline (1901) and the numerical decline (1966) of Methodism. David Hilliard has described the factors that resulted in increased nominalism after World War I and yet a slight upturn in church attendance after World War II.¹⁴⁰ Mark Hutchinson confirms that, "Modernity's crises - the hardship of economic depression and the trauma of war - caused some to reject traditional faith, but also gave rise to renewed evangelical social engagement and revivalistic energy."¹⁴¹

Figure 3.8 *Australian Methodism, numerical and % increase 1901-1970*¹⁴²



revolution", it was immediately after the Billy Graham Crusade, and it was when the theory of evolution was introduced into Australian schools. Nonetheless, at most it can be shown that pre-existing denominational decline was accelerated from this decade.

¹⁴⁰ David Hilliard, "Australia: Toward Secularisation and One Step Back," in *Secularisation in the Christian World*, Callum Brown and Michael Snape, eds. (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 80-81.

¹⁴¹ Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: University Press, 2012), 177.

¹⁴² 1861-1891 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics microfiche, *La Trobe Australiana Collections*, State Library of Victoria; 1901-2011 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>.

The proposal being pressed in this thesis is not that secularisation and its numerous causes did not impact the life and decline of the church in Australia, but that the internal loss of spirit, discipline and doctrine (in that order) rendered Methodism internally weakened and unable to withstand the secularisation of the twentieth century. The cause of the 1901 loss of vigour in Methodism was not the loss of class meetings, but rather the loss of spirit, which resulted in the loss of class meetings, loss of doctrine, and loss of internal unity. Subsequently secularisation most severely impacted those denominations that were already weakened within by pre-World-War-I developments. It is clear in figure 3.8 that Methodism was already faltering from 1901, before secularisation began to impact Australian society in the middle of the century. Therefore, the primary condition that enable decline in Methodism was internal. The parallel trajectory of Australia and New Zealand for the subsequent seven decades suggests that Methodism in both countries was unable to recover its former vigour.

In this brief summary of the tumultuous years from 1870 to 1930 and the results throughout the twentieth century, it can be seen that Methodism in Australia and New Zealand breached all three of John Wesley's priorities - his doctrine, spirit and discipline. However, this transition was protracted and there were some abiding exceptions. Strong pockets of evangelical teaching and conservative ministers remained scattered across the local churches¹⁴³ until the 1977 church union.

Evangelicalism within the Australian Methodist Church was dealt a critical blow when the *Basis for Union*¹⁴⁴ for the Uniting Church formally adopted the formula that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, which liberals had come to understand as implying that not all parts of the Bible *are* the Word of God – and that some parts may therefore be disregarded as untrue.¹⁴⁵ A group of evangelicals has continued in the Uniting Church, drawing together the evangelical remnant from the Methodist,

¹⁴³ Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline*, 128.

¹⁴⁴ Uniting Church in Australia, "Basis for Union 1971," 7-17, in *Constitution and Regulations*, 2012 edition (Sydney: Uniting Church Assembly, 2012), accessed August 13, 2015, <https://goo.gl/91tMJS>.

¹⁴⁵ D'Arcy Wood, *Building of a Solid Basis: A Guide to the Basis of Union of The Uniting Church in Australia* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1986), 17.

Presbyterian and Congregational Churches,¹⁴⁶ but as an historic entity, the merger of 1977 spelled the end of the British stream of Methodism in Australia.

The divisions and dissensions that Methodists (as well as Presbyterians and Congregationals) lived through prior to the 1977 union have an ongoing place in the Uniting Church, resulting in a structurally unified but theologically divided Uniting Church in the twenty-first century. As Geraldine Dougue of the ABC's Compass Program asked in 2007, "Many different expressions of faith are today lived under one church banner. How can it survive?"¹⁴⁷ This internal disunity is illustrated by the Assembly of Confessing Congregations (ACC), a continuing evangelical conference within the Uniting Church. In 2014 it was estimated that of approximately 90,000 attendees in the Uniting Church, 9,000 of them were attending an ACC congregation.¹⁴⁸ They published the statement, "The response of these [ACC] congregations is to declare, among other things, that they believe that the National Assembly's decisions on same gender sexual relationships are apostate, and are the result of departure from substantial elements of the faith."¹⁴⁹ The fact that this charge of apostasy arises from within the Uniting Church's own ranks illustrates the intensity of the struggle that continues over evangelical/liberal convictions.

The introduction of American-holiness Methodism into Australia was linked to the bitter internal struggle within mainline Methodism. Kingsley Ridgway (who later founded the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia) was preparing to enter Queen's College in Melbourne as a Methodist ministerial candidate in the 1920s at the height of the modernist controversy¹⁵⁰ but withdrew from candidature because of the liberal teachings. By the 1930s the Methodist Church was openly renouncing the concept of spiritual conversion in favour of social conversion:

[The] President of the NSW Conference in 1933 said, "A revised Methodism is what this twentieth century needs... [The] word evangelism has had an inadequate connotation being often interpreted as conversion, but we should advance beyond conversion to the spreading of the Christian ideal of life and the

¹⁴⁶ The Assembly of Confessing Congregations, <http://www.confessingcongregations.com/>.

¹⁴⁷ Geraldine Dougue, Australian Broadcasting Commission, *Compass*, November 11, 2007, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s2088713.htm>.

¹⁴⁸ Interview, Peter Bentley, September 12, 2014, 0:09:50. Bentley has published statistical reporting for the Uniting Church and served as National Secretary for the ACC.

¹⁴⁹ "About the Assembly," The Assembly of Confessing Congregations, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://www.confessingcongregations.com/assembly/about-the-assembly/>.

¹⁵⁰ See Glossary, page xiv.

Christian ideal of society, the baptism into the spirit of Christ of every sphere and relationship of life."¹⁵¹

By the 1950s, modernist teaching was being felt in local congregations, where "liberal theological views" were interpreted to be "undermining the authority of the Bible."¹⁵² Members of many local congregations were also aware that the source of the new theology was the universities and colleges. One critic exclaimed,

It is often said that the church is going to the pack by degrees. It is – by university degrees! Alan [Cox] was well-versed in theology but I don't know if he knew how to bring a person to the point of conversion.... He had a lot of friends, but he did not stir things up spiritually here.¹⁵³

One former Wesleyan Methodist minister, the son of a well-known Methodist minister in Adelaide, has described the derision experienced by evangelicals in the South Australian colleges where liberal theology prevailed:

The Methodist Theological College became extremely liberal and many ministerial candidates who were not liberal had difficulty in passing the exams when they gave their personal views. Many of these students came to my father [Rev. Victor Goldney] for tuition on how to combat this problem and a number have indicated to me over the years how helpful and what a difference it made. Some students went to the Adelaide Bible Institute (now Bible College of SA), to receive a sound Biblical grounding before going to Wesley College. For years evangelicals were treated as non thinkers, simpletons and imbeciles who while being Biblical were almost devoid of theological knowledge and practical thinking.¹⁵⁴

Liberal theology was changing the face of Methodism in Australia and New Zealand in the twentieth century but was slower to impact the Methodism of the Pacific Islanders.

¹⁵¹ Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline*, 85-86.

¹⁵² Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline*, 29.

¹⁵³ Dempsey, *Conflict and Decline*, 50.

¹⁵⁴ Interview, Don Goldney, February 27, 2016, notes 2. Rev. Victor Goldney was chairman of the Adelaide Bible Institute from 1951 to 1961, a circuit preacher and a lecturer. See Donald C. Goldney, David V. Goldney and Margaret A. Mann, "Goldney, Victor Henry 1891-1972," Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, accessed February 29, 2016, <http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ADEB/article/view/1177/1174>.

Chapter 4

TONGA, SAMOA AND FIJI

The Methodists undertook simultaneous missions to Tonga and New Zealand in 1822. Both attempts met with failure but produced lasting relationships that would facilitate later success. Of the two locations, New Zealand became the focus of British migration and the mission adjusted to that circumstance. British migration to Tonga was not to be a factor, but the neighbourhood of the three nations of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji was to be decisive. A later phase of Methodist missions to the Melanesian nations further west was undertaken by a subsequent generation, but the development of the missions in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji have to be considered together to grasp the effectiveness of Methodism in the Pacific.

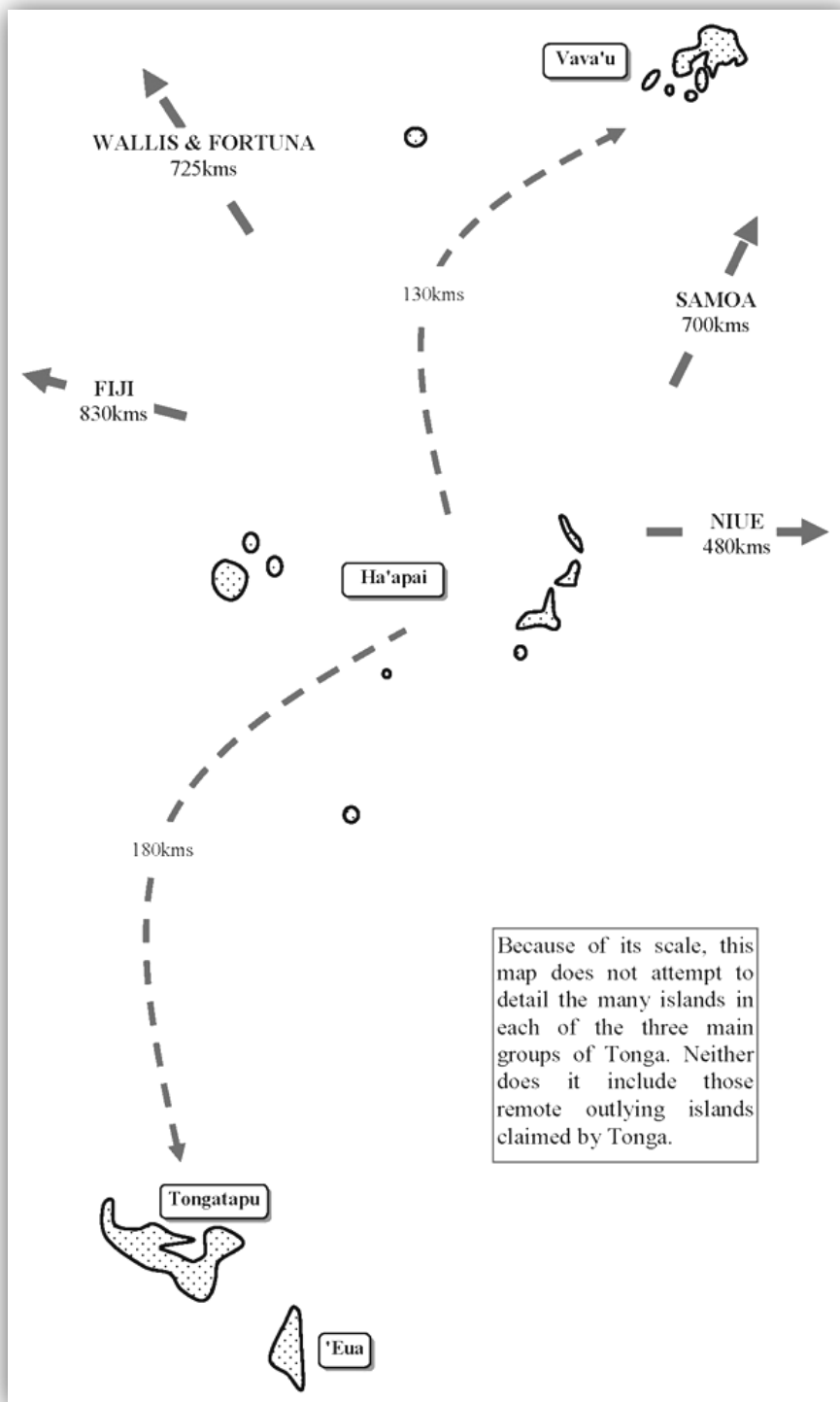
TONGA

The Tongan islands include three main groups of islands, Tongatapu in the south, the Ha'apai group 180 kilometres to the north, and the Vava'u group a further 130 kilometres to the north (see figure 4.1). The London Missionary Society (LMS) had attempted to place European missionaries at Hihifo on Tongatapu in 1797 and Tahitian missionaries at Vava'u in 1822, but was unable to establish a lasting presence in Tonga in either effort. These were times of civil war due to the decline of the unifying role of the Tu'i Tonga¹ and a power struggle between the Tu'i Kanokupolu of Tongatapu and Finau 'Ulukalala II of Vava'u.²

¹ Traditionally the Tu'i Tonga was the almost god-like king. His power waned during the time of European contact while his warrior-protector, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, increased in power and eventually supplanted the Tu'i Tonga.

² A. Harold Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, vol. 1: *Tonga and Samoa*, (Hawthorn East, VIC: Aldersgate, c. 1975), 11-12.

Figure 4.1 *The three main groups of the Tongan islands*



Walter Lawry led the first Wesleyan missionary venture to Mu'a, the ancient capital of Tongatapu, landing on August 16, 1822 while Samuel Leigh was establishing the mission in New Zealand. Lawry had been inspired by stories of Tonga from Elizabeth (Bean) Shelley, the widow of one of the former LMS missionaries, William Shelley. Unfortunately, Lawry's venture lasted only one year,

being abandoned on October 3, 1823. The reasons for Lawry's short stay in Tonga were several. The work was greatly hindered by opposition from the chiefs, the priests and the "beachcombers" (that is, earlier cast-away traders, whalers and convicts living amongst the Tongans).³ However, the final decision to leave seems to have resulted from medical concerns for his wife who was due to give birth to their second child and from a show of authority by the British mission leaders who reassigned Lawry to Tasmania because they felt he had defied their authority when going to Tonga.⁴

Lawry's efforts were not wasted though. His legacy on Tongatapu would be seen in 1826 when three historical events converged to produce the birth of Tongan Methodism. Lawry left behind a number of Islanders interested in the work of the mission, including the Tu'i Kanokupolu and two entrepreneurial individuals, Tākai (a Fijian) and Langi (a Tongan).⁵ In a roundabout journey that took them to Fiji, then to Sydney and finally to Tahiti, these two individuals returned to Tonga in 1826 with two LMS preachers from Tahiti. The two Tahitians, Hape and Tafeta, were sent to start a mission in Fiji but paused in Tonga to pay their respects to the Tu'i Kanokupolu. Their boat began to leak and they were forced to stay over in Tonga.⁶ Together with Tākai and Langi, they soon established an unplanned congregation exceeding three hundred persons at Nuku'alofa.⁷ Figure 4.2 illustrates the locations of the early Methodist and LMS works on Tongatapu.

³ Sione Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga: The Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries and Political Development, 1822-1875* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1974), 27-28.

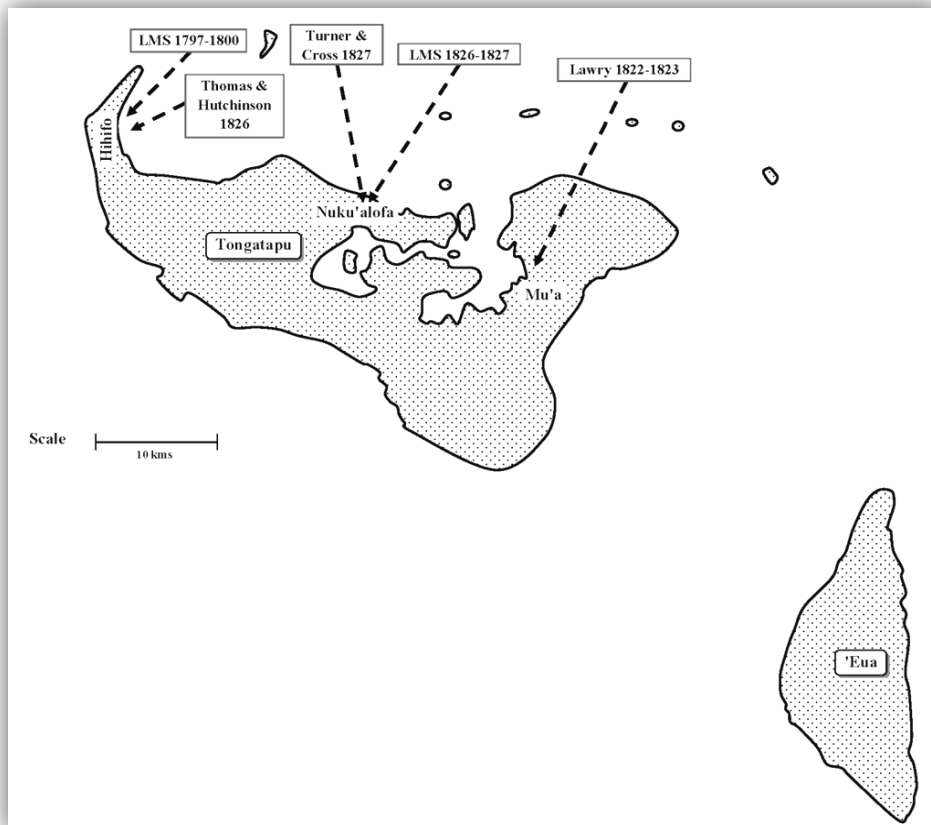
⁴ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 24.

⁵ Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 50.

⁶ J.G. Turner, *The Pioneer Missionary: Life of the Rev. Nathaniel Turner, Missionary in New Zealand, Tonga, and Australia*, 1872 (Forgotten Books, 2013), 90.

⁷ Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 50.

Figure 4.2 *Map of Tongatapu with historic Methodist sites*



The LMS Tahitians arrived at Nuku'alofa at a time when the Tu'i Kanokupolu was struggling for political survival against opponents who sought to control him by use of the old traditions. Aleamotu'a, the Tu'i Kanokupolu at the time, lived at Nuku'alofa and he was open to a new source of spiritual power in his struggle against the traditional gods. He had seen that the Europeans had many things that the Tongan gods had not been able to deliver, so he attended the new worship. He quietly adopted Christianity and sent word to the leaders of Ha'apai and Vava'u to come and learn about the new faith. The chief of Ha'apai was Tāufa'āhau, the grand-nephew of Aleamotu'a and destined to be the first modern-day king of Tonga.

In that same year the Wesleyans launched their second mission to Tonga, arriving on June 28, 1826. One of Lawry's fellow missionaries, Charles Tindall, was still living at Hihifo in 1826 awaiting the next Wesleyan attempt. Consequently, John Thomas and John Hutchinson began the Wesleyan mission at Hihifo and in doing so, they almost missed the opportunity that was developing at Nuku'alofa. They met with considerable resistance at Hihifo, although it is largely acknowledged that their

own lack of respect for the local chief and for the culture were factors in this failure.⁸ While the mission work at Hihifo was failing Aleamotu'a came to them seeking a European missionary for Nuku'alofa, but he was declined.⁹ The Wesleyan mission to Tonga was almost abandoned for a second time when Thomas and Hutchinson requested extraction back to Sydney, but instead the mission was saved by the arrival of additional missionaries in 1827 and the commencement of a new station at Nuku'alofa. Two of the new missionaries, Nathaniel Turner from the failed Whangaroa mission in New Zealand and William Cross recently from England, had been ready to sail to New Zealand for the relaunched mission at Hokianga Harbour but were redirected to Tonga because of the fear of losing the Tongan work altogether.¹⁰ They were accompanied by a local preacher from Sydney, Mr I. Weiss. These three men, with their wives and children, joined the work at Nuku'alofa that the LMS Tahitians had started. The Tahitians gladly handed this work over to the Wesleyans, because, as LMS missionary John Williams discovered three years later, the native teachers were not aware of a difference between LMS and Wesleyan missionaries.¹¹

Following the hand-over to Turner and Cross the LMS teachers returned to Tahiti rather than press on to Fiji - Aleamotu'a had warned them of war in Fiji and advised that going there would be unwise at the time. The last to leave, Hape, departed for Tahiti in August 1828. It was 1830 before another three LMS teachers were again sent to Fiji to launch a new work.¹²

The healthy congregation in Nuku'alofa made good progress under the patronage of the Tu'i Kanokupolu and the mature leadership of Turner and Cross. Methodist historian, A. Harold Wood, gave tribute to Turner's ministry at Nuku'alofa:

Strictly speaking, it is Nathaniel Turner who should be honoured as the true founder of the Wesleyan Mission [in Tonga], even though Lawry was the

⁸ Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 47.

⁹ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 37.

¹⁰ Turner, *The Pioneer Missionary*, 81.

¹¹ John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London: J. Snow, 1837), 303-304.

¹² A. Harold Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, vol. 2: *Fiji* (Melbourne: Aldersgate, 1978), 21-22.

pioneer and Thomas began long and continued service. Undoubtedly, it was Turner who saved the future of the Tongan Church.¹³

As numbers began to increase rapidly in Nuku'alofa, Turner and Cross organised the converts into traditional Wesleyan class meetings and in 1929 introduced members to "love feasts", where each was encouraged to share their testimony of God's goodness.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Tāufa'āhau visited Nuku'alofa to learn from the missionaries and to seek a missionary for Ha'apai. In 1829 the Tongan convert, Pita Vī, was sent to teach in Ha'apai and in 1830 John Thomas was reassigned from Hihifo to Ha'apai. (Hutchinson had left the mission in 1828.) Tāufa'āhau converted after proving the impotence of the old gods for himself.¹⁵ It is recorded that Tāufa'āhau tested the Christian God during this time as well, by throwing Pita Vī into shark infested waters and making him swim ashore.¹⁶

Tāufa'āhau was baptised on August 7, 1831, adopting the name *George* after the English king. By this time he had also convinced the ruler of Vava'u, Finau 'Ulukalala III, to abandon the old gods for Christianity. Under the encouragement of these two powerful rulers most of the population of Vava'u and Ha'apai converted to Christianity. On August 12, 1832 the first love feast for class members was held at Vava'u with 2,000 present.¹⁷ When 'Ulukalala died in 1833, Tāufa'āhau became ruler of Vava'u as well as Ha'apai, further consolidating his own authority and the central role of Christianity in the renewed Tongan society. Class meetings were used extensively in Ha'apai and Vava'u and the role of lay preachers was well established, However, the powerful emotional manifestations of John Wesley's evangelistic meetings were still absent. Until 1834 the Christian commitment of many was a mixture of loyalty to Tāufa'āhau and readiness to switch from the old gods, but few had the evangelical personal spiritual experience.

New missionaries, Peter Turner and David Cargill, were stationed at Vava'u in 1834 and seeing the need, began preaching on spiritual revival and holiness. On July 23, 1834 in the village of 'Utui under the preaching of a Tongan local preacher,

¹³ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 39.

¹⁴ Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 52-54.

¹⁵ Pita Vī, "Peter Vi's Narrative," in Thomas West, *Ten Years in South-Central Polynesia* (London: Nisbet, 1865), 363.

¹⁶ Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 64-65.

¹⁷ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 54.

Isaiah Vovole, a revival broke out with a striking resemblance to the early British Methodist experience. At the 'Utui meeting, "The people were so moved that they began to cry aloud for forgiveness, drowning out the voice of the preacher.... In some villages, six prayer meetings a day were held, homes as well as churches being thus used, while schools were suspended."¹⁸

The revival quickly spread and continued to be accompanied by a deep conviction of sin, crying out in agony, weeping and praying, followed by shouts of joy when release came. It was not uncommon for two hundred people to lie unconscious on the floor after church services. The revival spread from village to village and reached Ha'apai on August 30 with the scenes of confession, weeping and joy repeated.¹⁹ Tāufa'āhau was deeply impacted by the revival, humbling himself before the preaching and bringing his marriage into accord with Christian values. However, when the revival reached Tongatapu on October 6 there was only a limited response, since much of that island had not yet received Christianity. With the exception of these in Tongatapu, "the Tongan nation had been swept into Christianity in little more than five years."²⁰

Inspired by the powerful revivals, the Tongan missionaries²¹ meeting on January 2, 1835 decided to send William Cross and David Cargill to Fiji and Peter Turner to Samoa, and with them a wave of Tongan teachers. The Tongan church was still to face some significant challenges over the next decades but already the front line of the missionary work was moving on to new nations.

In 1835 Tāufa'āhau was the ruler of Vava'u and Ha'apai, but chiefs on Tongatapu were becoming increasingly antagonistic to Tāufa'āhau's uncle, the Tu'i Kanokupolu. In 1837 and 1840 Tāufa'āhau took his armies to assist his uncle, and in 1845 when his uncle died, Tāufa'āhau became the next Tu'i Kanokupolu, adopting the name

¹⁸ Margaret Reeson, Joan Rule and Keith Everingham, *An Outline History of Evangelical Revivals in the Pacific Islands and in Papua-New Guinea*, ed. Robert Evans (Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2007), 8, accessed September 4, 2015, <http://revivals.arkangles.com/docs/EvangelicalRevivalsInThePacific.pdf>

¹⁹ George G. Finlay, and William W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, vol. 3 (London: Epworth, 1921), 305-307.

²⁰ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 59.

²¹ At the time they were called the "Friendly Islands District".

King George Tupou.²² During this period, as Tonga's national identity solidified under King George, the relationship between the Tongans and the missionaries was deteriorating, especially after 1855 when management of the Methodist Church shifted from London to Sydney.²³

Into this growing rift another Wesleyan missionary arrived in Tonga, Rev. Shirley Baker (1836-1903). Baker would play a significant role in leading the Tongan church to separate from the British/Australian Wesleyan Mission. Baker had migrated from England to the Australian colonies in 1852, been ordained on July 13, 1860 in Sydney and landed at Nuku'alofa just weeks later on August 14. His wife, Elizabeth, gave birth to their first child soon after arriving in Tonga. In some ways Baker's missiology was ahead of his time, in that he was ready to work under the leadership of the Tongan King George, rather than attempt to manage the king. In Shirley Baker, King George found a loyal advisor at a time when he was finding the political influence of many of the other missionaries disturbing and their loyalty to the future of Tonga confused by their loyalty to British ambitions in the Pacific.²⁴ This resulted in considerable conflict between Baker and the other missionaries, notwithstanding the fact that Baker served as mission leader for a period of time. The closer Baker aligned himself with King George, the more he was resented by his fellow British missionaries.²⁵

By 1872 increased tension between King George and the Australian Mission Board led Baker to side with King George in pursuing independence for the Tongans. He was a central figure in drafting the Tongan Constitution in 1875, and in January 1885, after numerous paternalistic decisions from the Wesleyan leaders in Sydney, Baker assisted in the formation of the Free Church of Tonga. In establishing the Free Church, King George led the vast majority of Tongan Methodists to independence from Sydney. The small number of continuing Wesleyans were brutally oppressed and a remnant exiled to Fiji until the British High Commissioner intervened and, threatening to deport Baker, gained an amnesty and religious

²² Noel Rutherford, *Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga* (Melbourne: Oxford, 1971), 9-10.

²³ Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 157-159.

²⁴ Rutherford, *Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga*, 15-18.

²⁵ See Baker's long struggle with James Moulton, the college principal: J. Egan Moulton, *Moulton of Tonga*, 1921 (Reprinted Queanbeyan: Buoyant, 2002).

freedom for continuing Wesleyans in Tonga.²⁶ Blame for this dark chapter in Tongan suffering is often attributed to King George or to Shirley Baker's push for autonomy, but it is equally probable that this division would never had occurred if the Sydney Wesleyan leadership had given their blessing to the autonomy of Tongan Methodism and facilitated an orderly transition to indigenous leadership.

The separation of the Free Church continued until 1924 when the young Queen Salote Tupou, who had married a continuing Wesleyan Tongan, acted to reunite the Free Church and the Wesleyan Mission. This met with legal challenges and objections from numerous factions. After the legal appeal was settled in favour of the union in 1925, Tonga's two churches had become three: the newly-formed Salote-sponsored Free Wesleyan Church, a small number of continuing Free Churches and a new denomination, the Free Tongan Church, formed by that generation's high chief of Vava'u, Finau 'Ulukalala.²⁷

SAMOA

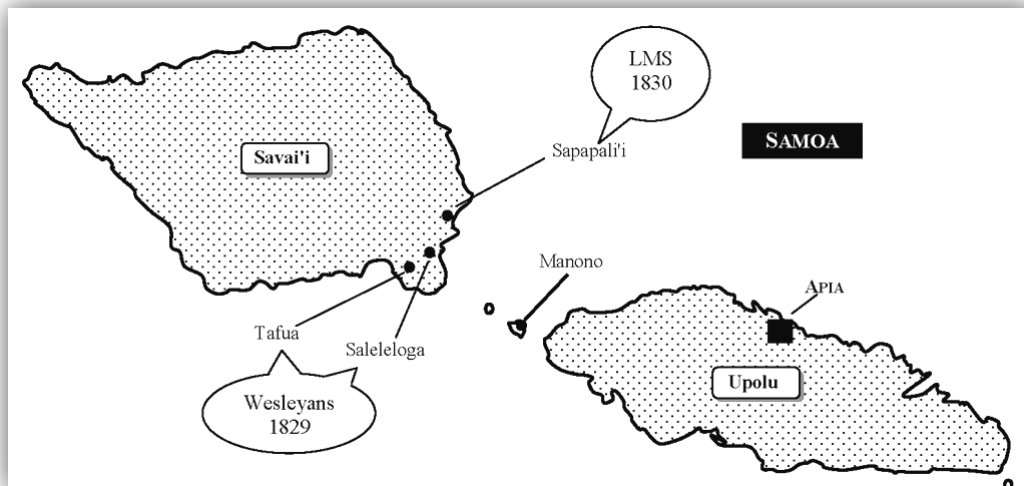
Although separate nations, Tonga and Samoa have close historical links. Their languages are related and Tongans and Samoans have intermarried, traded and warred with each other for more than a thousand years. Consequently, outreach to Samoa was initiated by Islanders very quickly - before the arrival of any LMS or Wesleyan missionaries in Samoa. A young Samoan chief, Saiva'aia, was converted in Tonga and returned to Samoa late in 1828 or early 1829 to start two Methodist congregations at the villages of Tafua and Saleleloga, on the eastern side of the main island of Savai'i.²⁸ Some Tongan Wesleyans accompanied Saiva'aia, assisting him to establish the first Christian churches in Samoa.

²⁶ Rutherford, *Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga*, 150-154.

²⁷ John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1992), 387.

²⁸ Martin Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism* (Melbourne: Fergusson and Moore, 1875), 12.

Figure 4.3 Map of Samoa with historic Methodist sites



In July 1830, LMS missionary John Williams arrived in Samoa, landing at Sapapali'i, only eight kilometres from where the Wesleyan work had started two years earlier. Figure 4.3 shows the proximity of the earliest Methodist and LMS work. When Williams departed one week later he left eight Tahitian missionaries to work amongst the Samoans under the patronage of Paramount Chief Malietoa.²⁹ These were followed by European LMS missionaries in 1835, the same year that the Wesleyan Mission sent Peter Turner to Samoa.

The two groups might have blended together except for the strong rivalry between Samoan chiefs. In 1830 the Samoan Wesleyans were functioning without a trained pastor so they asked the chief of Sapapali'i to send one of the LMS Tahitians to them, but he refused. Therefore, in 1831 one of the chiefs from the Wesleyan villages, Tuinaula, came to Nuku'alofa in Tonga to ask for a Wesleyan missionary. He was given assurance that one would come, although it was 1835 before this commitment was fulfilled.

On June 18, 1835 Peter Turner and his wife with several Tongan teachers arrived in Samoa to find at least two thousand professing Wesleyans meeting in sixty-eight villages worshipping according to the Lotu Tonga, that is the (Wesleyan)

²⁹ Ruta Sinclair, "Preparation for Mission," in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: From Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia*, eds. Ron and Marjorie Crocombe (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1982), 7.

Church of Tonga.³⁰ By 1837 there were reported 13,000 Wesleyans meeting in eighty congregations, with some 300 class meetings in operation.³¹ Turner continued in Samoa until 1839, joined by a second Englishman, Matthew Wilson in 1836. The church was growing rapidly, but so were the LMS congregations, and conflict between the two groups was brought to the attention of the London leadership by the LMS missionary leader, John Williams. Williams insisted that he and Nathaniel Turner had mutually agreed to leave Samoa for the LMS and Fiji for the Wesleyans at a meeting in Nuku'alofa in 1830. When consulted about this Nathaniel Turner denied that any such agreement was made, but in the meantime the British leadership of the Wesleyan Mission and the LMS had already agreed to honour the questionable comity agreement. In fact, the Wesleyan leaders in London did not consult with any of the Tongan or Samoan missionaries or native believers in making this extraordinary decision and this remained an offence that no doubt contributed to the later reversal of the London decision.³² Nonetheless, firm instruction was given by the Wesleyan leadership that the mission to Samoa must be abandoned and on May 23, 1839 the Wesleyan missionaries took a heart-rending departure from Samoa. The Turners and the Wilsons, as well as the Samoan Wesleyans, were deeply affected by the abandonment of such an effective work. The Samoan Wesleyans refused to have the LMS missionaries speak in the Wesleyan Churches and some of the recent converts reverted to their earlier pre-Christian lifestyles in the conflict.³³

With the European missionaries gone, King George Tupou received requests directly from Samoa for Tongan teachers.³⁴ Therefore, in 1841 King George sent sixteen Tongan teachers and he visited the Samoan work personally. In 1842 he sent ten more teachers and in 1847 he again visited the work in Samoa. However, civil wars continued to rage in Samoa, and in this context, the conflict between the Wesleyans and LMS grew increasingly bitter. The Tongan teachers became involved in the politics of Samoa and the Wesleyan Church declined rapidly until "Methodist places of worship on Upolu became empty, and finally, either fell into the hands of

³⁰ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 14.

³¹ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 19.

³² Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 275-282.

³³ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 28.

³⁴ Sarah S. Farmer, *Tonga and the Friendly Islands: with a Sketch of their Mission History* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1855), 282-283.

the London Society's missionaries, or perished with only few exceptions."³⁵ In 1851 King George finally withdrew his Tongan teachers, placing the Methodist existence in Samoa at risk again. However, in 1855 governance of the Wesleyan Mission in the South Pacific was passed from London to Sydney and, through an impassioned appeal to the Australasian Conference by the retired Peter Turner, the Conference decided to re-engage in the Samoan mission.³⁶ With this decision the Wesleyan work in Samoa was reignited, but so was the bitter feud between the LMS and the Wesleyans. The first of the missionaries responsible to revive the Samoan Mission, including Martin Dyson, George Brown and James Wallis, agreed that returning was a mistake after so much hurt and loss.³⁷

In 1857 Martin and Sarah Dyson were sent to Samoa, accompanied by Tongan teachers to re-establish the work.³⁸ The work was shockingly run down and Dyson wrote, "The brilliant reports of the Methodism of Samoa might fit the year 1839, but they certainly were untrue of 1857."³⁹ Dyson set about reviving the failing work, drawing upon traditional Wesleyan practices and Wesleyan spiritual anointing. He reported:

We met seventy Samoan preachers, who until now had had no status among us.... On the 8th of October we held a special service, and administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to our newly-appointed officers, and sought for the divine seal on our work, and obtained it. An overwhelming influence from God came down upon us, which made us weep and shout aloud for joy.⁴⁰

In 1860, on October 30, George and Lydia Brown arrived on the island of Manono to assist Dyson. In Dyson's own words, the arrival of George Brown was "the most important event of the year, not only for Satupaitea [village], but also for the Methodist mission in the [Samoan] group."⁴¹ After just five years Brown was sending trained Samoan teachers to support the expansion of the Samoan mission.

³⁵ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 36-37.

³⁶ Helen Bethea Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania* (Dunedin, NZ: Otago, 2006), 34.

³⁷ Margaret Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown 1835-1917* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), 31, 55.

³⁸ Dyson does not name the Tongan teachers, but records that seven were sent ahead of his arrival and four with him.

³⁹ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 54.

⁴⁰ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 65-67.

⁴¹ Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 61.

The Samoan Wesleyan Church began to rival the LMS ministry again. LMS missionaries published their claims in London that Wesleyans were employing "a system of proselytising aggression on the stations in charge of our missionaries." These claims were met by counter-claims from the Wesleyans, centred upon the right of religious freedom for all Samoans.⁴² One of the factors in the revival of the Methodist Church was that the LMS adopted a policy of rescinding the membership of any Samoan who took part in warfare but the Methodists did not follow that policy. Therefore many Samoans moved from LMS affiliation to Wesleyan,⁴³ which fuelled the sense of moral indignation among the LMS missionaries who felt that the Wesleyans failed to take a proper stand against warfare.

Despite the conflict of warfare and denominational disputes, or perhaps because of it, lay ministry was strongly established in Samoa.⁴⁴ Samoan congregations continued to provide teachers for expansion in Samoa as well as large numbers of missionary teachers for LMS and Wesleyan missionary outreach to New Guinea, Papua, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue, Tokelau, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Fortuna.⁴⁵ Today the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (formerly LMS) claims a membership of 70,000 and the Methodist Church of Samoa (formerly Wesleyan) claims a membership of 36,000.⁴⁶

FIJI

The Lau group of islands in the Eastern Division of Fiji stretches almost half way toward Tonga from the main Fijian island of Viti Levu. These Fijian islands have long been home to a sizable Tongan population. As the Christian faith spread in Tonga the new faith was carried to the Lau Islands⁴⁷ and missionaries soon followed.

⁴² Dyson, *My Story of Samoan Methodism*, 74-77.

⁴³ Gardner, *Gathering for God*, 33.

⁴⁴ Raeburn Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity* (Canberra: Pandanus, 2005), 100.

⁴⁵ Lange, *Island Ministers*, 83.

⁴⁶ "Pacific," *World Council of Churches*, accessed August 24, 2015, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/pacific>.

⁴⁷ William Gill, *Gems from the Coral Islands*, vol. 2: *Eastern Polynesia* (London: Ward and Co., 1856), 305.

After the failed attempt by the LMS to send Tahitian missionaries to Fiji in 1826, they sent three more teachers, Taharaa, Faaruea and Hatai to accompany Tākai to his village at Lakeba Island in 1830. The four arrived on July 9, 1830 but experienced significant resistance there. In 1832 they relocated their efforts to Oneata where the work was more fruitful,⁴⁸ although Tippett argues that the new work was always held back because the Tahitians chose not to use the Fijian language in their sermons or prayers.⁴⁹ These LMS teachers are recognised as the first missionaries to Fiji.

In 1835, after widespread revival in Tonga, missionaries William Cross and David Cargill were sent to Fiji accompanied by several Tongan teachers and one Fijian convert, Joshua Mateinaniu. They initially came to Lakeba, arriving on October 12. Cross and Cargill had both served in Tonga and spoke fluent Tongan. The Lau group was therefore a natural point of entry for them into Fiji because of the number of Tongans with whom they could immediately converse. In their first year they were able to establish worship services, baptismal classes and a school using the Tongan language while they learned to speak Fijian.⁵⁰ In 1836 Cross visited the LMS teachers in Oneata and assigned the Fijian teacher, Mateinaniu, to manage that work with the LMS teachers continuing under the Wesleyans for another two decades at Oneata.⁵¹ Mateinaniu, however, did not stay more than a few months at Oneata. In 1836 he moved on to Rewa on the southern side of Viti Levu. Within a year he was able to report fifty people in class meetings.⁵² Rewa was the most populous region of Fiji but the nearby island of Bau was the seat of one of the most important chiefs. Therefore, in December 1837, Cross made his first visit to Bau on the south-east corner of Viti Levu. Figure 4.4 illustrates the significant early Methodist sites in Fiji.

⁴⁸ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 22.

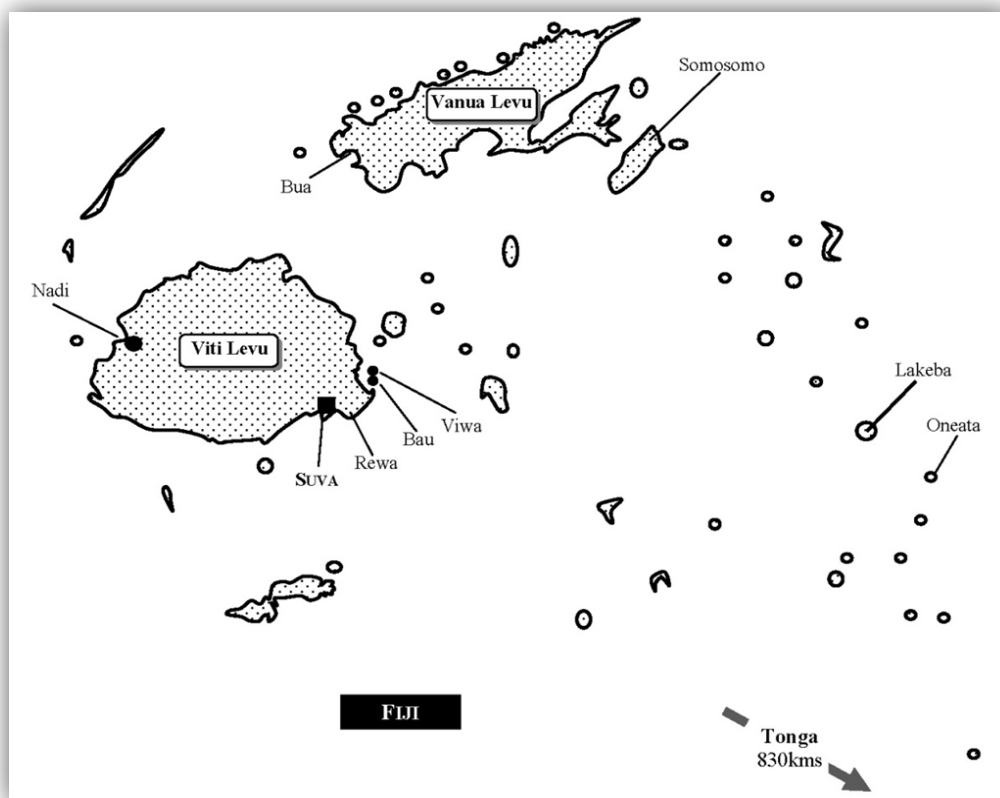
⁴⁹ Alan R Tippett, *The Christian (Fiji 1835-67)* (Auckland: Institute Printing & Publishing, 1954), 1.

⁵⁰ Andrew Thornley, *A Shaking of the Land: William Cross and the Origins of Christianity in Fiji*, trans. Tauga Vulaono (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 2005), 155.

⁵¹ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 23.

⁵² Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 38.

Figure 4.4 Map of Fiji with historic Methodist sites



The chief of Bau bore the title of "Vunivalu" (root of war). At this time Tanoa was Vunivalu, but his son Seru served effectively as prince regent for several years. Seru would become Vunivalu in 1852 and be famously known as Cakobau (evil to Bau).⁵³ In 1853 the U.S. Consul to New Zealand, John B. Williams, described Bau:

The very atmosphere we breath is filled with the fumes of roasted human flesh: it is quite enough to fill one with disgust. The pirates that infested the Isle of Pines, in the West Indies, in its worst days, were nothing compared to this Bau: the most vivid imagination cannot describe this hell upon earth.⁵⁴

Furthermore, in this letter Williams made an impassioned plea for warships to destroy Bau, stating that they could "knock down and destroy that town, while one is smoking a cigar."⁵⁵ Cakobau converted to Christianity less than one year later, after King George of Tonga wrote a letter to Cakobau to alert him to this threat and to urge him to become a Christian.⁵⁶ Cakobau (the Evil of Bau) turned to Christianity

⁵³ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 17.

⁵⁴ John B. Williams, "Feejee Islands," in *The Empire* newspaper, Sydney, December 30, 1853, 3.

⁵⁵ Williams, "Feejee Islands," in *The Empire*, 3.

⁵⁶ Joseph Waterhouse, *The King and People of Fiji*, 1866 (Google Books), 243-244.

on April 30, 1854 and began to promote the Christian cause. This was to be a major milestone in the work of the Fijian Mission, but that was still far into the future when Cross visited Bau in 1837. At that time Cakobau refused him permission to establish a preaching place on the island and so, in January 1838, Cross established the mission headquarters at Rewa. In 1839 the Tongan missionaries sent still another of their own team across to Fiji: Richard Lyth. With the extra personnel Cross and Cargill divided their energies, Cross taking Hunt and Lyth to Rewa and Cargill continuing at Lakeba with Calvert and Jagger. Within months Cargill and Jagger moved to Rewa while Hunt and Lyth moved to a third region of Somosomo and Cross relocated to the new station at the island of Viwa, just two miles from Bau. Viwa soon became the mission headquarters and underwent intense revivals.⁵⁷

In June 1838 King George of Tonga sent six teachers to assist in the Fijian work, including Joel Bulu (Joeli Mbulu)⁵⁸ who served in Fiji for almost four decades.⁵⁹ In December that same year three missionaries from London arrived: John Hunt, James Calvert and Thomas Jagger. John Hunt served in Fiji for a brief ten years, dying in 1848 while serving at Viwa, but for his enormous contribution to translation and pioneering he is remembered as *The Apostle to Fiji*.⁶⁰ From 1845 revival broke out at Viwa, similar to the experiences of the Tongan revivals. John Hunt recorded the details in his journal on October 19, 1845:

On some occasions the glory of the Lord was wonderfully revealed. Some of the instances of conversion were very remarkable. A person would be seized all at once and thrown into the most extraordinary distress. Most of the women fainted two or three times before they found peace. On some occasions the men were so violent, both in their sorrow and joy, that it was almost dangerous to be near them. There was no way of managing them but by throwing them on the ground, and holding them there, which sometimes had to be done for hours together, and in some cases the strength of four or five men was required to manage them. Yet there was nothing wild or silly in what they said; indeed, in general we were astonished at the manner in which they expressed themselves, both in prayer and praise, and in their exhortations to others after they found peace.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 49-53.

⁵⁸ That is his English orthography and (Fijian orthography)

⁵⁹ Joel Bulu, *The Autobiography of a Native Minister in the South Seas*, trans. by a missionary (London: Wesleyan Mission House, 1871).

⁶⁰ Andrew Thornley, *The Inheritance of Hope, John Hunt: Apostle of Fiji* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 2000).

⁶¹ John Hunt, "Journal entry October 19, 1845," as quoted in Joseph Nettleton, *John Hunt: Pioneer Missionary and Saint*, ed. John Telford (London: Charles Kelley, 1902), 77.

The conditions under which the early missionaries served in Fiji were difficult. Isolation, disease, opposition, war and cannibalism are described by missionaries and visitors.⁶² However, amid such extreme opposition and hardship the church grew rapidly. By 1848 there were thirty-seven churches and another twenty-three preaching places; an average attendance of 4,000, of whom 1,700 were members; and there were fifty schools.⁶³ The conversions of the chiefs was always a high priority of the missionaries, but even before the chiefs converted there were thousands following the new Christian faith at great risk to their own safety. Alan Tippett asserts that before the high chief Cakobau converted there were 6,000 Christian worshippers in Fiji.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the conversion of the chiefs invariably opened the way for a great increase in numbers.

In 1857, missionary William Wilson, reported 1,167 conversions in his circuit alone (the Bua circuit).⁶⁵ That year the Wesleyan Church reported 54,281 members.⁶⁶ In the late 1860s the mission moved into a new phase as it sought to reach into the interior of Fiji, with different languages and new dangers. From the 1870s greater numbers of European traders and planters began to flow into Fiji, and when some were killed by inland tribes, increased security became a priority for the British. Although they had previously resisted the suggestion, the British finally agreed to receive Fiji under British rule in October 1874. From 1879 the first of the Indian indentured labourers were brought in to work the cotton and sugarcane fields leading to a substantial Indian-Fijian population. In 1885, the jubilee year for the mission, "there was hardly one [indigenous] Fijian, who had not, at least nominally embraced the Christian faith."⁶⁷

⁶² From William Wilson's diary, missionary to Fiji 1854-1859. Ruth M. Bradbury, *Fiji Wilson: Wesleyan Missionary and Minister, Fiji and Britain* (Canberra: Self-published, 2010), 30-43.

⁶³ Tippett, *The Christian*, 3.

⁶⁴ Tippett, *The Christian*, 4.

⁶⁵ Not to be confused with Bau. Bau was an island off Viti Levu and Bua was a circuit on the island of Vanua Levu.

⁶⁶ Bradbury, *Fiji Wilson*, 63.

⁶⁷ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 1.

TRANSITIONS

The missionary outreach of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society continued westward to New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Bougainville. However, some significant transitions were taking place within the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society in London and Sydney that contributed to a different strategy of missions in much of Melanesia, which became especially significant in the Solomon Islands. It is helpful to name these transitions at this time so that changes can be recognised as they appear.

The transitions to be aware of are:

1) Geographically and administratively, supervision of the Mission was reassigned from London to Sydney in 1855, and the Mission moved from the Tonga/Samoa/Fiji zone of interaction of the central Pacific to the cultures of the island groups further west, to the north of Australia. The New Zealand Methodists then separated themselves from Australian management in 1913.

2) Philosophically, the Australian and New Zealand Methodists were gradually abandoning Wesley's priorities of spiritual conversion and class meetings and these modern trends filtered through in the mission policy of the European missionaries. The new policies were often at odds with the more traditional practices of the Polynesian islander missionaries.

The reassignment of the mission from London to Sydney has already been shown to have coincided with crisis points in Tongan and Samoan Methodism. Denial of autonomy to the Tongan Methodists and re-opening the Samoan Mission were both questionable decisions that resulted in lasting tensions, and both came under the new leadership in Sydney. A positive outcome from the shift of governance was that the mission to New Britain could be advocated directly and with more effect upon the Sydney leadership by the missionary, George Brown.

The transition of the mission from the Polynesian connections of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji to the Melanesian missions to New Guinea, Papua and the Solomon Islands is a clear landmark in the progress of the Wesleyan Mission, although that is not to say that the different cultures impacted the outcome of the mission. There were indeed different outcomes, but it is the contention in this thesis that the different

results were influenced by different missionary methods as much as by different island cultures.

The ethnicity of the original inhabitants of the Fijian islands is debated. Fiji is on the geographic boundary between the so-called Polynesian and Melanesian peoples. However, whether Fijians were originally uniquely Melanesian, Polynesian or a polygenesis through engagement and immigration is still debated.⁶⁸ That discussion is not intended here when linking Tonga, Samoa and Fiji as a "connection". Regardless of how the oceanic peoples originated and spread, it is true that Tonga has a long established presence in the eastern Lau Islands of Fiji,⁶⁹ and that trade, marriage and warfare were common between the three nations. Tonga, Samoa and Fiji were a neighbourhood that knew each other well. Once the Methodist Mission was established in Tonga in 1827, there was an immediate urgency to share the new faith with the two neighbouring groups. The Islanders naturally preceded European missionaries to both Samoa and Fiji because there was widespread, regular interaction.

The urgency of the missionary work largely dissipated once the three island groups were reached. It took just nine years for European missionaries to be assigned from Tonga to Samoa and Fiji, from 1826 to 1835, but it was to be a further forty years before George Brown successfully lobbied for a mission to New Britain in 1875.⁷⁰ Many factors influenced this forty-year hiatus including the need for consolidation of the existing missions, budgetary constraints, the transition of mission leadership from London to Sydney and the political realities of British, Dutch, German and American presence in the region. Once the mission to New Britain was finally ready, it would be initiated by European missionaries. This next stage of the mission reached beyond the natural bridge of relationships that existed between Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. Beginning ministry in New Guinea was intentional

⁶⁸ David V. Burley, "Fijian Polygenesis and the Melanesian/Polynesian Divide," 436-462 in *Current Anthropology*, vol. 54, no. 4 (University of Chicago, August 2013), 442, accessed August 6, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/671195>.

⁶⁹ Ronald A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji* (Suva: Government Press, 1950), vol. 1: 121.

⁷⁰ Perspective on this time lapse can be gained by recognising that George Brown was born in 1835, the year that the previous missionary expansion had been initiated by the Methodists in the South Pacific.

and strategic missions rather than relational (i.e. unbridged missions rather than bridged missions).⁷¹

The philosophical transitions in Methodist missions from Fiji to New Guinea, Papua and the Solomon Islands reflect changes in the British, Australian and New Zealand churches, so that the missiology evidenced in the Melanesian fields provides a window into what was happening in the home-church of Australia and New Zealand. Methodist drift away from class meetings and away from the teachings of supernatural conversion and holiness to the social gospel had implications for missionaries. Missions to New Guinea, Papua and the Solomon Islands, which are grouped together in the next chapter, span the years from 1875 (entering New Britain) to 1968 (formation of the United Church). Changes in strategy can be detected in the relatively tradition missionary work of George Brown, to the modernist policies of John Goldie in the Solomon Islands and finally to the strategies in Bougainville and the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

The missionary work of the Methodists in the nineteenth century in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji exemplifies John Wesley's three priorities of doctrine, spirit and discipline. The repeated references to the use of class meetings and love feasts and the preaching of the holiness message demonstrate the careful application of Wesley's doctrine and discipline in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. From the first signs of progress in Nuku'alofa in 1827, people were organised into classes.⁷² In the aftermath of revivals on Vava'u, Harold Wood confirms that, "Before the end of the year 1832, 660 people on Vava'u were meeting 'in class'."⁷³ In Samoa there were 300 classes functioning by 1837, and in 1840 after the missionaries had been withdrawn against their wills, the Samoans wrote to the Tongan missionaries and to Tāufa'āhau with an assurance that classes were still being used. In Fiji the same pattern continued, not surprisingly since many Tongan teachers and some of the same European missionaries led the church in Fiji. From the diary of missionary William Wilson in the 1850s it is shown that the Fijian church was being taught to follow Wesley's original disciplines, including the issuing of paper class tickets, "William

⁷¹ Lindsay Cameron, *The 5 Stages of Missions: Building Genuine International Partnerships* (Longwood, FL: Advantage Books, 2012), 81.

⁷² Lātūkefu, *Church and State in Tonga*, 52.

⁷³ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Tonga and Samoa*, 54.

sailed to Dama on the 29th March [1857], where he preached twice to large congregations, he distributed membership tickets to fifty-seven people and baptised eight."⁷⁴

When Peter Turner and David Cargill were stationed at Vava'u, they immediately began to preach the holiness message, which resulted in widespread revival and manifestations reminiscent of Wesley's early experiences in Britain and the American frontiers. From there Turner was reassigned to Samoa and Cargill to Fiji, so it is no surprise that the same manifestations followed in those nations. Furthermore, missionary John Hunt's writings on holiness were considered so profound that his *Letters on Entire Sanctification* was used as a textbook for ministerial training in England for some years.⁷⁵ Again, William Wilson recorded that "Many people were filled with the power of the spirit that day, some were shaking and fell down and needed to be carried away."⁷⁶

Alan Tippett analysed the Methodist results in Fiji, "to establish whether or not there is a connection between the Wesleyan Revival at home [Britain] and those of Viwa and other places."⁷⁷ He concluded, "We have seen that the leaders of the Church awaited a second conversion, a spiritual experience before admitting a person into the real Flock." Therefore, in answering his own question, Tippett states:

Indeed, the more one penetrates into the old records the more he realises that the religious experiences themselves, which the Tongan and Fijian Christians enjoyed, were remarkably similar to those of the Evangelicals of Britain and America; or to use their own terminology, the manifestations of the Holy Ghost in Viwa or Ono or Kandavu, might well have been accounts from Cornwall or New England. By merely changing the names of the places and people, the love feast testimonies from one place might well be taken as from the other. There are pages and pages from the missionary journals telling of these, which might well have come from Wesley himself, or Robe or Kilsyth or Edwards of New England.⁷⁸

Tippett's words support a conclusion that John Wesley's doctrine, discipline and spirit can produce similar results and the same effective church growth, whether practised in Britain, America, Australia, Tonga, Samoa or Fiji. However, by the

⁷⁴ Bradbury, *Fiji Wilson*, 62.

⁷⁵ Wood, *Overseas Missions, Fiji*, 43.

⁷⁶ Bradbury, *Fiji Wilson*, 69.

⁷⁷ Tippett, *The Christian*, 2.

⁷⁸ Tippett, *The Christian*, 19-20.

twentieth century a change of doctrine and discipline had filtered through from Europe to Australia and was beginning to be seen on the mission stations in the South Pacific. The results are not seen in one instant but in a gradual change of strategy. One important consequence of the forty-year lag between Fiji and New Britain is that the New Guinea work was almost entirely undertaken by a new generation of missionaries, a generation that had not been coached in the disciplines of John Wesley in Britain. This was a generation for whom Wesley's doctrines, spirit and disciplines were not as carefully identified and followed.

Chapter 5

THE MISSION TO MELANESIA

The London Missionary Society began missionary work into the Melanesian Islands shortly before the Wesleyans, which served as an incentive to the Wesleyans to do likewise.¹ In 1871 the LMS began in the islands of the Torres Strait and in 1874 along the south-eastern coast of British New Guinea (Papua). They drew upon island ministers from the Loyalty Islands, Cook Islands, Niue, Tahiti and Samoa. The death rate of these early missionaries, mostly through malaria, was high. Raeburn Lange reports that "by 1899, at least 130 members of the Pacific islands' missionary families had died while serving in Papua."²

THE NEW GUINEA ISLANDS

To avoid duplication with the LMS, the Wesleyan Methodist Mission went to the heavily populated north-eastern, German New Guinea islands of New Britain and New Ireland in 1875, led by veteran missionary George Brown. George Brown (1835-1917) served as a missionary to Samoa from 1860 until 1875. During his time in Samoa, Brown developed two interests that would guide his future ministry: he became an avid collector and photographer of anthropological and botanical materials and he began to take an interest in missionary work to New Guinea. The interest in New Guinea has been traced to as early as 1862³ and by 1871 he was appealing to the Wesleyan Mission to launch a new venture to the Bismarck

¹ Margaret Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown 1835-1917* (Canberra: ANU EPress, 2013), 61.

² Raeburn Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity* (Canberra: Pandanus, 2005), 293.

³ Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown*, 61.

Archipelago. Brown settled on the site for the new mission on the Duke of York Islands, a small group between the large islands of New Britain and New Ireland.⁴

After concluding his service in Samoa in July 1874, Brown met with the Mission Board in Sydney in August to seek final approval for the new mission. Approval to gather a team of Tongan, Samoan and Fijian teachers and to start the new work in 1875 was granted. After an intense five months of fund-raising in Australia and New Zealand, Brown sailed for Fiji on January 27, 1875. A measles epidemic in the islands had caused many deaths in the intervening months and almost derailed the whole strategy of taking island ministers.⁵ 40,000 people were reported to have died in Fiji alone.⁶ Tonga was in quarantine and some in Fiji who were to join him had died. In a compromise, rather than taking away any of the remaining Fijian ministers, Brown was given permission to appeal to the Bible College students at Navuloa College. After describing the enormous risk of missionary service in New Britain, all eighty-three of the students stepped forward to volunteer. From the students Brown selected nine men (six of whom had wives and children) to accompany him. The newly appointed British administrator over Fiji met with the candidates to dissuade them, but one of their leaders, Aminio Baledrokadroka replied, "We have fully considered this matter in our hearts; no one has pressed us in any way; we have given ourselves up to do God's work, and our mind to-day, sir, is to go with Mr. Brown. If we die, we die; if we live, we live."⁷ Two more students with their wives were recruited from the Piula College in Samoa, and together the eleven Fijian and Samoan men are named by George Brown as: Aminio Baledrokadroka, Misieli Loli, Setaleti Logova, Livai Volavola, Elimotama Ravono, Peni Caumia, Peni Luvu, Mijieli Vakaloloma, Pauliasi Bunoa, a youth named Timoci, and another who had died.⁸

⁴ Helen Bethea Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania* (Dunedin, NZ: Otago, 2006), 53.

⁵ Gardner, *Gathering for God*, 54.

⁶ George Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer, an Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 71.

⁷ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 80.

⁸ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 176. There is some confusion in Brown's description whether it was Timoci or another who had died, but if it was Timoci, (Timothy) then the name of one of the teachers is missing.

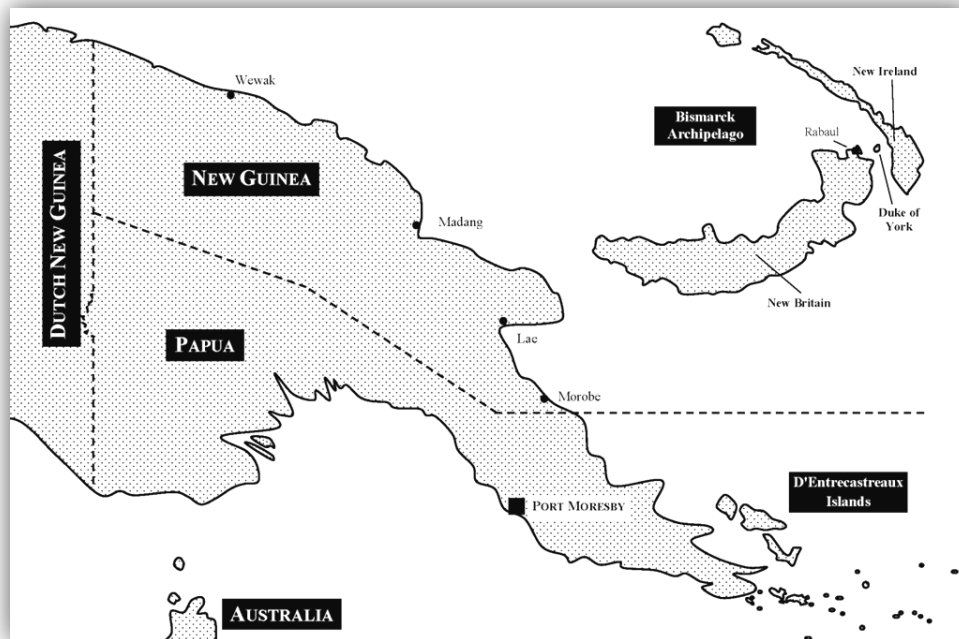
George Brown with fellow missionaries William and Lizzie Fletcher and the Fijian and Samoan teachers and their families arrived at the Duke of York Islands on August 15, 1875 to commence the new mission. The island ministers moved away from the main mission station to commence ministries in villages on the surrounding islands. One of the island ministers died in November 1875 and in 1876 more island ministers arrived. By 1877 there were thirty-four preaching places reported. Figure 5.1 illustrates the strategic location of the Duke of York Islands.

On April 6, 1878 four of the native ministers were murdered, dismembered and eaten on the northern peninsula of New Britain. They were Fijians, Rev. Sailasa Naucukidi, Peni Luvu, Livai Naboro and the youth Timoci. George Brown consulted with local leaders and the European traders in the vicinity before making the controversial decision to lead a reprisal raid. The consensus was that failure to respond would render the continued presence of the mission and other whites untenable. In the reprisal attack somewhere between ten and one hundred of the villagers who had participated in the cannibalism were killed.⁹ After some years of investigation and debate Brown was cleared of any wrong-doing, though with some abiding concerns in the Australian church. Ronald Williams, of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands has noted that, "The least worried were the [native] people, who accepted the missionary action as in accord with their own law and custom."¹⁰

⁹ Gardner, *Gathering for God*, 65.

¹⁰ Ronald G. Williams, *The United Church in Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands* (Rabaul, PNG: Trinity, 1972), 110.

Figure 5.1 *Bismarck Archipelago (New Guinea Islands) prior to PNG union 1949*¹¹



In 1881 George and Lydia Brown departed the mission in the Bismarck Archipelago, leaving two children buried at Port Hunter. They gathered their remaining children from where they had been billeted in New Zealand and settled in Sydney. At that time the work in the Archipelago numbered forty congregations with 2,390 attending worship.¹² Isaac Rooney, a veteran missionary of fourteen years in Fiji, replaced Brown as Chairman of the mission and Benjamin Danks continued Brown's translation initiatives, while many more island teachers from Tonga, Samoa and Fiji carried the work forward.

Around this time the capture of indentured labourers for the Australian and Fijian sugarcane fields began to increase but this was curtailed in the archipelago by German annexation of the region in 1884-1885. German rule brought a greater degree of law and order, which was a welcome development for the missionaries.¹³

¹¹ The separate regions of New Guinea (at one time German New Guinea) and Papua (at one time British New Guinea and later as Papua under Australian management) were governed separately until 1949, after which they became jointly managed by Australia as the Territories of Papua and New Guinea. In 1972 the name was altered to the modern Papua New Guinea as the 1972-1975 transition to self-governance was implemented. In this thesis PNG or Papua New Guinea have been used for the period after 1949, while acknowledging that it was formally Papua *and* New Guinea until 1972.

¹² Neville Threlfall, *One Hundred Years in the Islands: The Methodist/United Church in the New Guinea Islands Region, 1875-1975* (Rabaul: United Church, 1975), 51.

¹³ Threlfall, *One Hundred Years in the Islands*, 61.

From 1897 German Methodist missionaries joined the mission, led by Rev. Heinrich Fellmann. By 1900 there were 132 congregations with 12,737 attending worship services.

In 1914, with the opening of World War I, the German administration was removed from the New Guinea islands by Australian military force and the mission, which had been managed by the German Methodists, reverted to the supervision of the Australian Methodists. The reconnection to Australia brought the introduction of the latest Australian ideas of industrial missions,¹⁴ which were soon implemented in New Britain and New Ireland and began to compete with evangelism for budget funds. By 1929, in the Great Depression, "Methodist plantations were extensive; budgeting for the mission had become tight."¹⁵ That year they reported seven districts, with two hundred and forty-three congregations and 30,083 attending worship services.

World War II had an even more direct impact upon the Archipelago than World War I had done. Japanese forces occupied the islands from January 1942, and when their push forward was halted on the Kokoda Trail and in the Coral Sea, they fortified their presence in Rabaul where they remained until August 1945. During this time of suffering and religious persecution the face of Methodism changed in New Guinea. When the expatriate missionaries were withdrawn, the Islanders took more leadership, but at a high price. Ninety-three local church workers and ministerial students died during the war, with many others left sick and broken.¹⁶ Recovery after the war was slow. By 1950 there were 398 congregations in the New Britain / New Ireland mission with 41,438 in attendance at worship services. In the last Methodist Synod prior to merger into the United Church in 1968 there were 62,643 people reported attending worship services in these New Guinea islands.¹⁷

¹⁴ See more on this topic later in this chapter in the Solomon Islands mission.

¹⁵ John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1992), 342.

¹⁶ Threlfall, *One Hundred Years in the Islands*, 156.

¹⁷ Threlfall, *One Hundred Years in the Islands*, 215-216.

THE PAPUAN ISLANDS

When relocated to Sydney, George Brown undertook translation work, deputation, a pastoral assignment and travel to England. In 1887 he was elected as the General Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Church's Mission department, which led him to the next phase of the mission to Papua and New Guinea. Brown's election coincided with changes in the management of Papua. On November 6, 1884 the southern half of New Guinea had been declared the British protectorate of British New Guinea, which was changed again in 1906 when it became the territory of Papua under Australian authority.¹⁸ In 1889 however, in fulfilment of Britain's obligations, the new Governor of British New Guinea invited the LMS, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church to simultaneously commence missions along the one thousand mile coastline of south-east New Guinea.

The plan was agreed to by the Methodist Conference in 1890, and on tour to the designated Methodist territory in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, Brown selected the island of Dobu to commence the new mission because it was, "very populous and in the centre of a very dense population on Normanby and Ferguson Islands."¹⁹ In doing so, whether by design or by chance, Brown again took advantage of "the power that the inhabitants of small islands sometimes possessed in Melanesia, for each of these islands in pre-Christian times had been a source of fear to its larger neighbours."²⁰

A large team of fifteen men and six women from Fiji, ten men and ten women from Samoa, four men and four women from Tonga, and six European missionaries was recruited, with Rev. William Bromilow appointed as team leader.²¹ Perhaps because of the size of this party, the names of the island ministers are difficult to find. The missionaries from Australia were Rev. and Mrs W.E. Bromilow and their

¹⁸ Jonathan T. Dixon, *Papuan Islands Pilgrimage* (Granville, NSW: self published, 1988), 1.

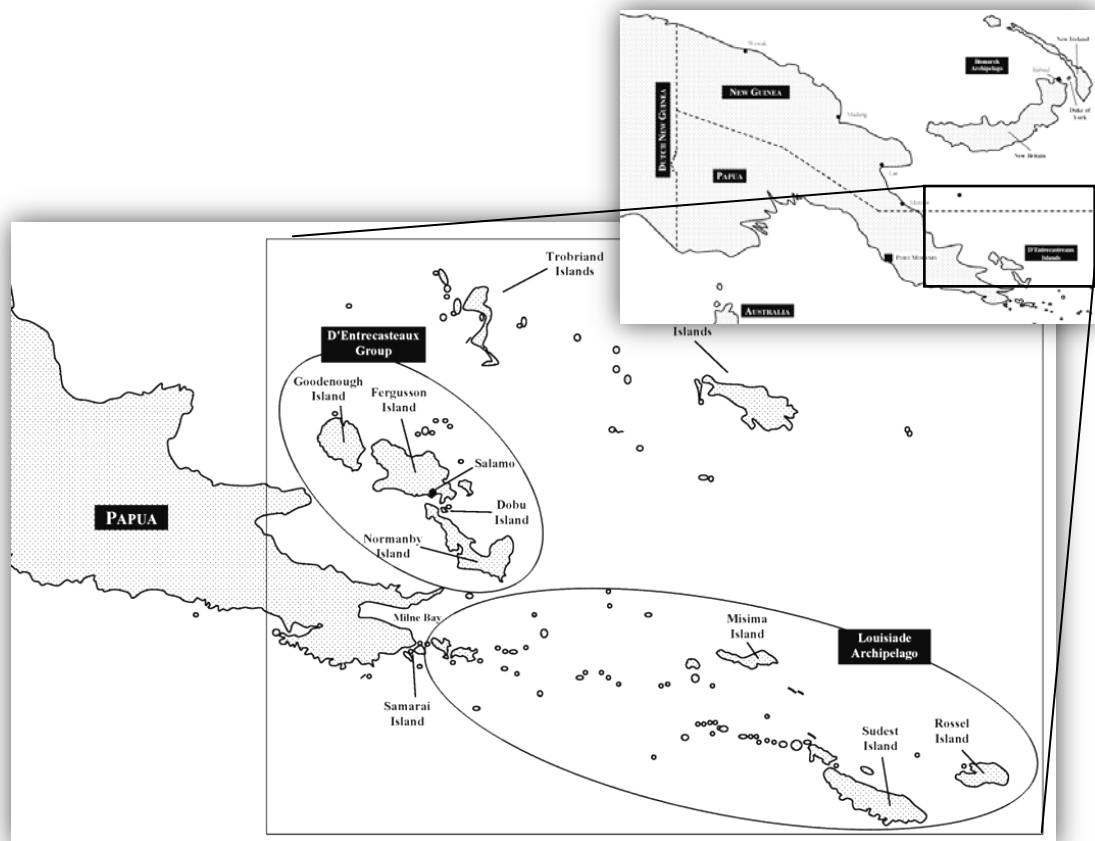
¹⁹ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 486.

²⁰ David Wetherell, "Christian missions in Eastern New Guinea: a study of European, South Sea Island and Papuan influences, 1877-1942" (Canberra: Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1974), 44.

²¹ John W. Burton, *Papua for Christ* (London: Epworth, 1926), 64. Perhaps because of the size of this party, the names of the island ministers are difficult to find. The missionaries from Australia were Rev. and Mrs Bromilow and their daughter,

daughter, Rev. R.H. Rickard, Rev. and Mrs W. Brown and George Brown.²² In the midst of these arrangements, in March 1891, Brown was elected Conference President for a one-year term. Nonetheless, Brown accompanied the team of missionaries to Dobu Island, arriving on June 19, 1891. In July Brown sailed on to New Britain to deliver three more missionaries and then sailed back to Sydney. Figure 5.2 illustrates the early sites of the Methodist mission to the Papuan Islands.

Figure 5.2 Map of Papuan (Milne Bay) District with historic Methodist sites



The region assigned to the Methodists included the islands on the south-east tip of Papua, from Rogeia and Samarai Islands, east to the Deboyne Islands and the Louisiade Archipelago, north to Woodlark, back west to the Trobriand Islands and south to the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, with a small stretch of the mainland.²³ Soon after the arrival of the team, the area of Milne Bay was added to the Methodist

²² Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 489.

²³ Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown*, 201.

mission.²⁴ Thereafter the Papuan Islands mission became more commonly known as the Milne Bay district. Initially the mission headquarters was on Dobu Island, but in 1906 it was moved to Ubuia Island off Normanby Island, and again in 1922 it was relocated to 600 acres at Salamo on Fergusson Island.²⁵

The Papuan mission was the first of the Australian Methodist mission fields to be supplied by single female missionaries, which serves as a signal to the changing culture of the Australian church. In 1902 Eleanor Walker and Jeannie Tinney arrived on the mission field and the Ladies Auxiliary to Foreign Missions was inaugurated in Sydney. A total of twenty-two women would be sent to the Papuan Islands through the support of the Auxiliary.²⁶

John Burton, who served as General Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society from 1925 to 1945, described the inhabitants of this coastal region of Papua as cannibals noted for the practice of roasting their victims alive²⁷ and yet they quickly responded to the missionary message. Converts were placed in class meetings, with gifted ones given responsibilities for preaching and class-leading. Burton reported that this was part of the "genius of Methodism", that the people were not left to "think that it is a missionary's Church, and that the winning of others is primarily his task instead of theirs."²⁸ After a decade on these islands it was reported that the Mission had thirty-two churches and 16,376 worshippers.²⁹

Wesley's class meetings were very obvious in the Papuan work. It is reported that the first class meeting took place on April 30, 1893, and "Class meetings were thus established right from the very beginning as in early Methodism."³⁰ Burton supported this assessment of the Papuan Mission by his own observations:

The class-meeting is found to be a most valuable method in Papua of correcting and developing the moral and spiritual life of the converts.... The 'marks of Methodism' were really present in that little company; and the Holy Club of

²⁴ Williams, *The United Church*, 183.

²⁵ Dixon, *Papuan Islands Pilgrimage*, 5.

²⁶ Margaret Reeson, "A Mother in Methodism," in *Out of the Ordinary: Twelve Australian Methodist Biographies*, eds. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Unley, South Australia: MediaCom, 2015), 41-48.

²⁷ Burton, *Papua for Christ*, 68.

²⁸ Burton, *Papua for Christ*, 75-76.

²⁹ James Colwell, *The Illustrated History of Methodism, Australia: 1812 to 1855, New South Wales and Polynesia: 1856 to 1902* (Sydney: William Brooks and Co., 1904), 466.

³⁰ Williams, *The United Church*, 188.

Oxford had its lineal descendent in that humble gathering in far-off New Guinea.³¹

By 1924 there were reported to be 296 congregations and 31,238 attending worship services. However, history has not treated the mission to the Milne Bay District favourably. The late introduction of industrial missions has been blamed for sidelining the evangelistic work of the mission and any attempt to indigenise the ministry. "In the Methodist Mission in Milne Bay and along the chain of eastern Papuan islands, early fervour, as experienced under such earlier pioneers as William Bromilow and J.T. Field, gave place to industrial mission and education," where General Secretary John Burton's, "centralized approach and concentration on practical training stood in the way of progress toward a self-governing church led by educated men."³²

While the missionaries showed an unwillingness to elevate Papuans to roles of leadership because of perceived incapacity, the missionaries themselves were slammed by accusations of incompetence. The first two Papuan candidates for ministry did not rise up until 1936, forty-five years after the work commenced.³³ The departure of almost all of the missionaries during World War II, and their return to reclaim leadership afterward did not help to change the situation. Between the War and 1953 only two more Papuans became candidates for ministry, with a gradual increase from that time. "The shortage of people offering for church work has been a characteristic weakness of the church from the beginning."³⁴

Eventually the lack of replacement missionaries and government policy forced indigenisation, which was then rushed through in just seven years. During that time the Papuan church was granted independence from Australia and membership in the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In 1987 it was reported that the Papuan mission included 90,331 members in twenty-nine circuits with thirty-six ordained ministers and seventy pastors.³⁵

³¹ Burton, *Papua for Christ*, 86.

³² Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea*, 341.

³³ Ross Mackay, "A Church in Papua or a Papuan Church?" in *Vision and Reality in Pacific Religion*, eds. Phyllis Herda, Michael Reilly and David Hilliard (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005), 156-157.

³⁴ Williams, *The United Church*, 220.

³⁵ Dixon, *Papuan Islands Pilgrimage*, 76.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

George Brown had long held an interest in commencing a mission in the Solomon Islands, even visiting the Roviana Lagoon in 1879 and finding that "both the chiefs and people were very much opposed to any mission work being carried on."³⁶ This interest was sidelined as the New Guinean Islands and the Papuan Islands claimed the energies of the Methodist Mission for almost three decades. However other factors were at work during this period. Solomon Islanders were converted through the Methodist Mission in Fiji where they had been taken to work on sugarcane plantations. From Fiji they repeatedly requested the Methodists to come to the Solomon Islands, but this was considered inappropriate by the Methodist leadership since the Melanesian Mission of the Anglican Church had been working in the Solomon Islands for fifty years.³⁷

On returning from New Guinea in 1899, Brown again stopped over in the Roviana Lagoon in the Western Solomon Islands, as he had done in 1880. Here he met with his "old friend Mr Frank [Francis] Wickham", whom he had met in 1879, and "received a hearty welcome."³⁸ Wickham encouraged Brown to begin a mission in that location. Thereafter, in 1901, Brown brought the proposal to the Mission Board in Sydney to commence in the New Georgia region of the Solomon Islands and was given approval. Brown sailed to the Solomon Islands, stopping over at Norfolk Island to secure grudging agreement from the Anglican Bishop to the Methodists entering where the Anglicans had laid claim but not begun any real ministry.³⁹ In the Solomon Islands Brown visited numerous islands, including a visit to Simbo Island in the company of the British Commissioner of the Solomon Islands, and made arrangements for the future mission.⁴⁰

As in previous missions, a large missionary team was assembled included Revs. John Francis Goldie, Stephen Rabone Rooney, J.R. Martin (a carpenter), four Fijians, two Samoans, as well as one from New Hebrides and one from the Solomon

³⁶ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 515.

³⁷ Lange, *Island Ministers*, 283.

³⁸ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 516.

³⁹ Bishop Wilson visited Sydney to continue the discussion, stipulating that the Methodists must not go to Guadalcanal or Malaita, but could go to New Georgia. See Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown*, 263-264.

⁴⁰ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 521.

Islands.⁴¹ Again in Fiji too many volunteered, so a select few were taken, and when reminded of the head-hunters of the Solomon Islands one of the Fijians responded, "This body of mine I cheerfully give to the man-eaters of New Georgia, if thereby the cause of Christ can be advanced."⁴² George Brown left a record of the names of the island ministers:

From Fiji: Joni Laqere and Miriami his wife, Aparosa Rakuita and Keleraani his wife, Wiliami Gavidu, Rusiate Sawatabu, and Samu, a native of the Solomon Islands who had been converted in Fiji. From Samoa: Muna and his wife Tupuaga, Saiasi and his wife Tupuai, Seru and his wife Avane, and Ulu, a New Hebrides islander who had lived a long time in Samoa.⁴³

Brown led the team to introduce them and to help them get established. They arrived at the Roviana Lagoon on May 23, 1902 and were met by Frank Wickham and fellow trader, Norman Wheatley. Camp was established on the small island of Nusa Zonga off Munda Point that Brown had purchased from a former trader in 1901.⁴⁴ Once Brown had departed John Goldie secured land on the main island on a hilltop of Kokenggolo beside what would become Munda township. Figure 5.3 illustrates the early sites of the Methodist mission in the Western Solomon Islands.

From the beginning the Roviana Mission was different to previous Methodist missions in the South Pacific. Goldie established a mission compound at Munda and held all of the missionaries back from entering other villages for more than a year. This caused great concern for the missionaries and it showed the character that Goldie would exercise in the Solomon Islands for the next fifty years; "his egocentric desire to run everything and keep everything under his personal control, and his tendency to procrastination and delay."⁴⁵ Eventually the teachers from Fiji, Tonga and Samoa were dispersed to other islands and villages while Rooney established a new station at Choiseul in 1905 and new missionary, Nicholson, established a station at Vella Lavella in 1907.

⁴¹ Alan R. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction* (South Pasadena: William Carey, 1967), 55.

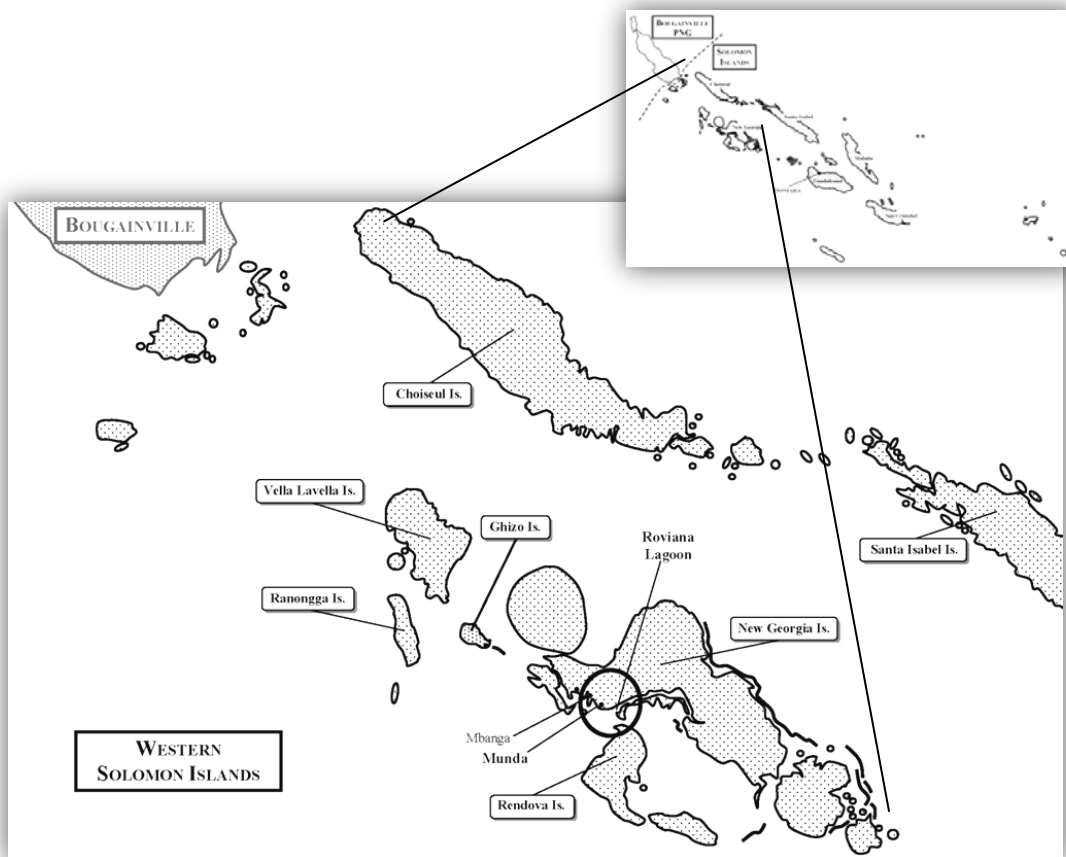
⁴² C.T.J. Luxton, *Isles of Solomon: A Tale of Missionary Adventure* (Auckland: Methodist Foreign Missionary Society, 1955), 23.

⁴³ Brown, *George Brown, D.D.: Pioneer Missionary and Explorer*, 523.

⁴⁴ Reeson, *Pacific Missionary George Brown*, 263.

⁴⁵ George G. Carter, *A Family Affair: A Brief Survey of New Zealand Methodism's Involvement in Missions Overseas 1822-1972* (Auckland: Wesley Historical Society, 1973), 90.

Figure 5.3 Map of the Western Solomon Islands with historic Methodist sites



Even more distinctive was Goldie's implementation of a recent mission emphasis of industrial missions. This emphasis sheds light on Goldie's priority in establishing the Munda station rather than the typical scattered village churches and schools. The priority of industrial missions was to establish a commercial centre where the uneducated could be civilised, economic independence fostered, and industrial skills taught. Goldie purchased land for plantations at Banga near Munda, at Bilua on Vella Lavella Island and on Choiseul Island.⁴⁶ As a result, the mission reports from the Solomon Islands were very focused on the mission station achievements (or lack of achievement), while the more traditional Wesleyan ministry of the island ministers was largely unreported.⁴⁷ After two years Goldie had reported no converts, and after five years, with 5,000 Islanders attending church services there will still very few

⁴⁶ Williams, *The United Church*, 250.

⁴⁷ Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 56-57.

conversions. Goldie was seeking a different result than previous generations of Wesleyan missionaries.

The term "Industrial Missions", as used by Goldie, can create confusion for the modern reader. Today Industrial Missions is used to describe chaplaincy in the workforce, but at the turn of the twentieth century it was used to describe the missionary strategy that sought to establish plantations and industries to teach labour skills as a way of civilising tribal peoples and building a self-sufficient national church. In many cases though, in keeping with the growing European and American theological trends, it put more emphasis on community development than on making individual spiritual converts. Industrial missions was the social gospel implemented on the mission field, and it was greatly vaunted in missionary strategies at the time. While Goldie was introducing industrial missions into the Solomon Islands from 1902, Charles Abel was introducing it to the LMS work in the Milne Bay (Kwato) region of Papua from 1903, having been influenced by American Booker T. Washington.⁴⁸

The concept of industrial missions was not new, although the terminology was. Samuel Marsden modelled his early community of lay workers in New Zealand on this concept in the 1820s.⁴⁹ Influential mission leaders, William Carey, Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson and John Nevius promoted the concept of self-supporting missions throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ The terminology of "industrial missions" was popularised in the 1890s however, and with it came a new blending of self-supporting missions with a theology of social improvement to the exclusion of spiritual conversion. The rise of the term "industrial missions" has been credited to the work of Joseph Booth, a Baptist missionary who founded the Zambesi (or Nyasa) Industrial Mission in Malawi in 1891. Booth argued that it was possible to "spread the gospel and conduct self-supporting operations, and yet be successful in both

⁴⁸ David Wetherell, *Charles Abel: And the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891-1975* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 95-96.

⁴⁹ The effort was strongly criticised by Samuel Leigh. Alexander Strachan, *The Life of the Rev. Samuel Leigh, Missionary to the Settlers and Savages of Australia and New Zealand*, 1870 (Forgotten Books, 2012), 84.

⁵⁰ Lindsay Cameron, *The 5 Stages of Missions: Building Genuine International Partnerships* (Longwood, FL: Advantage Books, 2012), 20-24.

departments."⁵¹ Prior to his work in Malawi, Booth had served in Melbourne, Australia and so it is not surprising that five years after Booth's book *Africa for the Africans* (1897) appeared, Australian missionaries were attempting to reshape strategy in the Pacific along the lines of Booths' model. By this time it was already unpopular amongst "modernists" to speak of spiritual conversions, so in the work of Goldie (and Abel) it can be seen that the rising emphasis on industrial missions was not meshed with traditional Wesleyan conversion growth in the way that Booth projected in Malawi.

In the early twentieth century Methodist missionaries increasingly refocused upon industrial skills and a concept of Christianity-through-civilisation came to be normative. Rev. Dr John Burton (1875-1970), who served as the Australian General Secretary of Methodist Missions from 1925 to 1945, illustrated this shift. In the Laymen's Missionary Lecture to the General Conference on May 22, 1917, Burton dismissed the traditional teaching of the unconverted suffering in the fires of hell, saying, "One wonders how such a Gospel could be really 'good news' to the heathen world." He argued that the loss of that that old teaching, "that belief, in its old and crude form at any rate, has utterly gone, and the nerve of Mission is not cut.... We have turned from the grim negative to the warm positive, from the post-mortem fortunes to the immediate needs of the human race."⁵²

Burton gave much of his life to the service of missions in the South Pacific, including service in Fiji where his work is credited with turning public opinion against the abusive practice of indentured labour. However, during that same time in Fiji, "Burton's own experience of converting others was not encouraging and few Fiji Indians became Christians from his preaching."⁵³ The spirit of Methodism continued through the missionary endeavours of twentieth century Methodists, but the message had shifted away from John Wesley's doctrine. In contrast to Burton's assurances, Wesley described his own teaching on the reality of eternal suffering in his sermon *Of Hell*:

⁵¹ Joseph Booth, *Africa for the African, 1897* (Reprinted in Malawi: Kachere, 2007, ed. Laura Perry), 28-29.

⁵² John W. Burton, *Some Modern Problems of the Missionary Enterprise* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing, 2017), 11.

⁵³ Christine Weir, "John Burton: Missionary, Administrator, Mission Theorist (1875-1970)," in *Out of the Ordinary: Twelve Australian Methodist Biographies*, eds. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Unley, South Australia: MediaCom, 2015), 62, 64.

Does not our Lord speak as if it were real fire? No one can deny or doubt this. Is it possible then to suppose that the God of truth would speak in this manner, if it were not so? Does he design to fright his poor creatures? What, with scarecrows? with vain shadows of things that have no being? O let not anyone think so! Impute not such folly to the Most High!⁵⁴

Nonetheless, through the mixture of Islanders in village ministry and missionaries leading the stations and the mixed messages of traditional and modern Methodism, the mission began to grow. In 1914 the Solomon Islands reported fifty-nine congregations, 1,035 members and an average attendance of 6,625. At that time they still had fourteen island ministers from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga.

Despite the controversy around the use of industrial missions, however, it is noted that the mission remained close to some aspects of Wesley's doctrine, spirit and discipline. Luxton explains:

Very early in the activities of the mission the Methodist class-meeting was introduced and became a very much appreciated and valued part of life of the young Christians. This meeting was for baptised members and members "on trial". It was a regular feature of mission life and was held on Thursday afternoons. So prominent a part did it play in the people's lives that Thursday became known as "class-meeting day" and was seldom referred to by any other name.⁵⁵

Just as the earlier Polynesian missions had been impacted by the reassignment of responsibility for the mission from London to Sydney, so too the Solomon Islands was impacted by events in the following century. In 1913 the New Zealand Methodists became an autonomous Methodist entity and after World War I discussions were underway for New Zealand to take responsibility for the Solomon Islands mission. In 1919 the arrangement was finalised and a ceremony of transfer was enacted at the 1922 New Zealand Conference. One of the first actions of the New Zealand Methodists, at Goldie's urging, was to recruit an additional twenty-two island ministers from Fiji and Tonga. Missiologist and anthropologist, Alan Tippett is scathing of this decision, arguing that the opportunity to advance local Solomon Islander leadership was thereby lost.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ John Wesley, "Sermon LXXIII: Of Hell," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 6: 386.

⁵⁵ Luxton, *Isles of Solomon*, 50.

⁵⁶ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 63.

Meanwhile debate surrounding the strategy of industrial missions was increasing. The missionaries reported that opportunities for new churches were consistently being lost because all of the manpower was invested in running the plantations. The complaints reached the New Zealand Methodist Church and in 1929 the Synod resolved to completely review the mission strategy and to divest some of the plantations and commercial interests. However, when this was presented on the mission field, the same missionaries who had complained about lack of spiritual ministry chose to disregard the Auckland directive and to retain the industrial strategy. The New Zealand Conference had discovered that it did not have the power to change the entrenched mission strategy of the Solomon Islands, which was still under John Goldie's leadership.

After the devastation of World War II a new era opened up before the Methodist Church of the Solomon Islands, but it was delayed in coming. The New Zealand church and the Solomon Islands church "could only see the need for restoration."⁵⁷ Rather than lead the church into a new day of indigenous leadership, John Goldie was sent back to rebuild his former empire. Goldie finally retired in 1951, being succeeded by J.R. Metcalfe in 1952 and then George G. Carter in 1959. When Carter took up his role he found that he had only one indigenous ordained minister still serving and three probationers. The frustration of some of the young indigenous leaders contributed to the Silas Eto faction, which led a substantial number of congregations out of Methodism in the Roviana Region.⁵⁸

The New Zealand Conference elected a new General Secretary of Overseas Missions in 1952, Rev. S.G. Andrews. Andrews adopted an unspoken policy of radical indigenisation. He gave the Solomon Islands leadership the "fullest freedom within the limits of finance and staff that were available" in an attempt to generate some indigenous ownership of the church before the planned United Church union of 1968.⁵⁹ In 1968 the Methodists Churches of the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and

⁵⁷ Carter, *A Family Affair*, 137.

⁵⁸ Williams, *The United Church*, 270-271.

⁵⁹ Carter, *A Family Affair*, 140.

Papua New Guinea were merged with the Papua Ekalesia⁶⁰ to form the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

BOUGAINVILLE

The connections between the Solomon Islands and Bougainville are longstanding and it is no surprise that the arrival of Methodism in the Solomon Islands quickly led to interest in the southern parts of Bougainville. John Goldie visited Mono Island in 1905, with the result that a Methodist Church was started under the care of an island teacher. Mono Island is just south of the border between the Solomon Islands and Bougainville. Relatives of the Mono people who lived in the Siwai region of Bougainville soon sought a teacher for their region as well. Two young Solomon Islanders who were training at Munda, David Pausu and Chilian Kiau, were sent to Siwai in 1916, and they remained working in Siwai to welcome the missionaries when they finally arrived after World War I.

In 1922 Rev. Allan Cropp arrived at Siwai with three Fijian teachers, Usaia Sotutu, Malolile, and Eroni Kotosoma.⁶¹ Cropp settled the Fijians at Siwai and then explored further north along the coast of Bougainville and Buka Islands. He selected Petats Island, on the western side of Buka for the second mission site. Petats was to become the headquarters for Methodism in the Bougainville region.

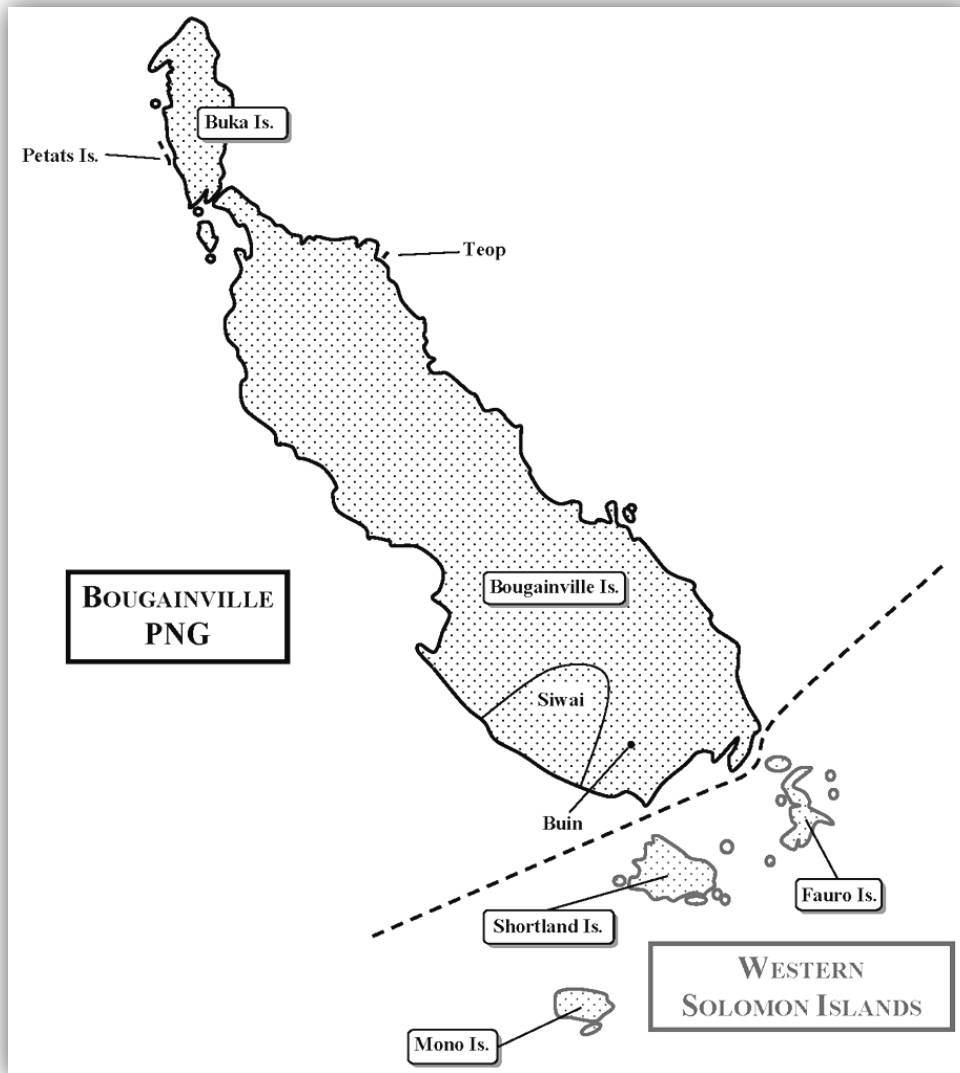
The third station established by the Methodists was at Teop, on the eastern coast of Bougainville Island. Teop was an influential centre, with the Methodist work commenced by the Fijian couple, Eroni and Loata Kotosoma. In 1924 support arrived with the assignment of Rev. Herbert Brown. When Brown retired for ill-health, he was replaced by another Fijian, John Mark Uliambau, and later joined by Rev. John Metcalfe from the Choiseul Mission. Metcalfe recruited six graduates from Munda and the mission moved inland and around the coastline. Figure 5.4 illustrates the early Methodist sites in Bougainville and Buka Islands.

⁶⁰ The Papua Ekalesia was itself formed in 1962 through the merger of the Congregational/LMS churches, a New Zealand Presbyterian mission and some other small groups.

⁶¹ Williams, *The United Church*, 253.

Rev. Harry and Beryl Voyce arrived in Bougainville in 1926. They were initially stationed at Siwai and then at Buin. During Voyce's time as Mission Chairman "he pushed back the frontiers and managed to occupy an amazing number of places, and when reinforcements were recruited from the British Solomons in 1929,⁶² there were plenty of openings for them."⁶³

Figure 5.4 Map of Bougainville and Buka with historic Methodist sites



With the Japanese invasion in World War II, the home that the Voyces had built at Buin became a Japanese airbase. Most of the missionaries were evacuated while

⁶² Use of the term "British Solomons" was descriptive but outdated by the time of the Methodist work. Britain had declared a protectorate over the southern Solomon Islands in 1893 to resist German claims to the northern islands. In 1900 Germany ceded their claim in the Solomon Islands to Britain in exchange for recognition of Germany's claim over Western Samoa.

⁶³ Carter, *A Family Affair*, 181.

the Islanders led the church at great cost. Mission stations were bombed and many Bougainvilleans died during the occupation. In some places fifty percent of the population was reported to have died.⁶⁴ In 1947 post-War reconstruction began. Rev. George Carter, who later served as Mission Chairman in the Solomon Islands, served at Buin from 1949.

The criticism of the Methodist Church in Bougainville was similar to other criticisms of the mission under Goldie's leadership:

... the failure to give positions of real responsibility to local leaders. The Pre-War Church was an organisation with a chiefly structure. Goldie was the general in charge, and under him as his chief aides and officers were the European missionaries. The next ranks below were filled by Samoan, Tongan, and Fijian teachers and ministers; and only then do we find local people beginning to take their place in the leadership structure....⁶⁵

Rev. Francis Bongbong was appointed as the first local superintendent in 1965, three years before union moved the church out of Methodism and into the United Church.

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS OF PNG

In 1950 Rev. Gordon Young and two catechists from New Ireland, Tomas Tomar and Kaminiel Ladi arrived in Mendi to start the Methodist mission in the New Guinea Highlands.⁶⁶ In 1951 they were joined by Rev. Roland Barnes with his wife and son, nurse Joyce Walker and teacher Elsie Wilson. As staff numbers increased and as the government allowed the missionaries to move beyond the initial site, four preaching points were established along the Mendi Valley. Papua New Guinean teachers were drawn from the New Guinea and Papuan Districts, with Rev. David Mone joining the team from Tonga. By 1959 the team also included at least one Solomon Islander, Burley Mesipitu.⁶⁷ However, they made very little progress with

⁶⁴ Williams, *The United Church*, 264.

⁶⁵ Williams, *The United Church*, 258-259.

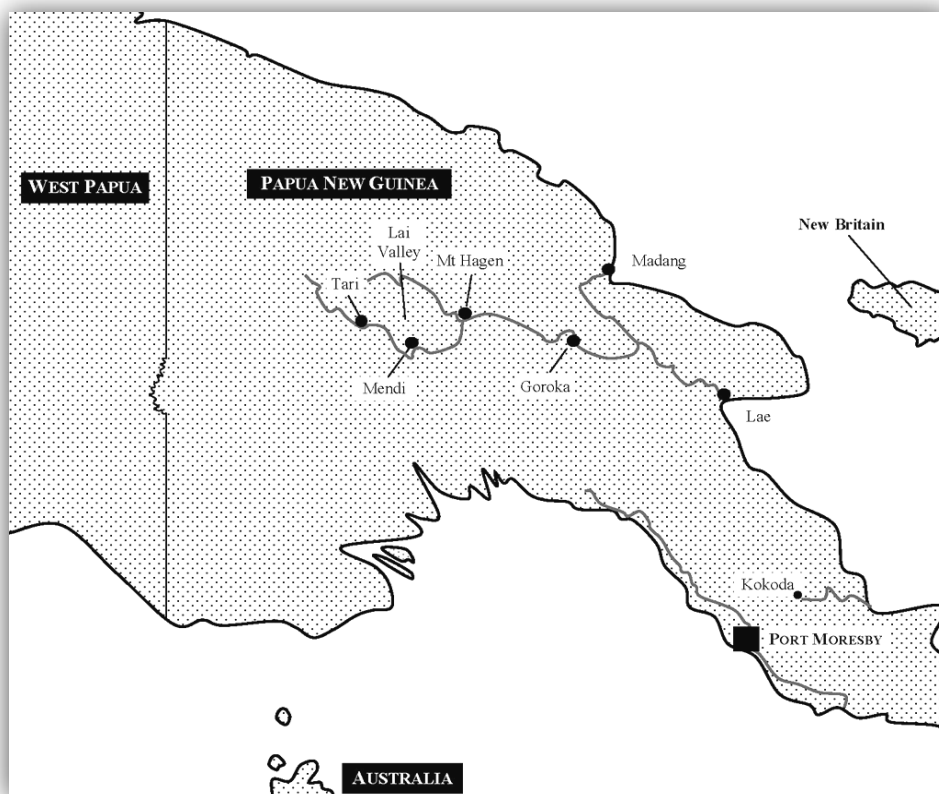
⁶⁶ Margaret Reeson, *Torn Between Two Worlds* (Madang: Kristen, 1972), 7-17.

⁶⁷ Williams, *The United Church*, 290.

the Mendi people, who "saw no need to fit in with the white man's ways." By 1957 they still recorded no Mendi Christians.⁶⁸

Meanwhile the Methodists had begun work in Tari in 1953 and in the Lai Valley in 1956, with a view to reach the tribes between these areas as the government opened up new valleys. In 1960 the first Highland converts responded in Tari, and soon after the first Mendi convert followed.⁶⁹ Figure 5.5 illustrates the early Methodist sites to the west of Mt Hagen.

Figure 5.5 Map of PNG Highlands with historic Methodist sites



Throughout the 1960s the Methodist Church in the Highlands continued to grow rapidly,⁷⁰ recording 185 preaching points and 7,221 full members in 1966. Revival broke out in the Highlands, sweeping across many denominations and firing new intensity amongst the Mendi believers. Congregations sat for hours listening to

⁶⁸ Reeson, *Torn Between Two Worlds*, 37, 44.

⁶⁹ Reeson, *Torn Between Two Worlds*, 56-57.

⁷⁰ Margaret Reeson, "What I Saw of the Revival in the P.N.G. Highlands," in Reeson, Rule and Everingham, *An Outline History of Evangelical Revivals in the Pacific Islands and in Papua-New Guinea*, ed. Robert Evans. <http://revivals.arkangles.com/docs/EvangelicalRevivalsInThePacific.pdf>, 32.

preachers and some fell unconscious on the floor.⁷¹ The same revival reached the Methodist Church in Tari, as Keith Everingham has described, "The Word was preached, and the response was just dramatic. It terrified me, because people fell down, and cried, and laughed, and shook. All kinds of things happened that I'd never seen the like of before."⁷² Significantly, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan has noted that the revival amongst the Huli tribe was most effective where the missionaries were not in leadership.⁷³ By 1968 when the United Church formed the widespread revival was starting to slow.

TRENDS IN THE MISSION TO MELANESIA

Holiness teaching was a clear priority of the earlier Methodist missionaries to the Tonga-Samoa-Fiji connection but reference to holiness teaching is largely absent from the Melanesian missionary record. Furthermore, little mention is made of revivals in the Melanesian mission except when it is introduced from a non-missionary source. The emotional revivals of the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea appear to have swept into the Methodist work from outside and it is noted by Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan that revival often flourished where missionary control was not present. Again, in the Solomon Islands, the emotional extravagance of old-time Methodist revivals broke out amongst the South Sea Evangelical Mission⁷⁴ and indeed, amongst Silas Eto's schism, but it did not appear in the Methodist Church record in any substantial way. The island ministers may have been teaching holiness, but inasmuch as the record generally follows the European missionaries, the absence of holiness revivals suggests that the holiness message was not brought to the islands from Australia and New Zealand.

The gospel of a personal spiritual conversion is present throughout the Methodist Melanesian record, although sometimes overwhelmed by the effort invested into industrial missions. This suggests that Wesley's doctrines of personal conversion and assurance were still taught in the homeland of the island ministers (Tonga, Samoa

⁷¹ Margaret Reeson, "What I Saw of the Revival in the P.N.G. Highlands," 34.

⁷² Keith Everingham, "What I Saw of the Revival in the P.N.G. Highlands," 35.

⁷³ Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, "An Ethnomusicological Study of The Huli Of The Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea" (Brisbane: Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 1981), vol. 1: 69.

⁷⁴ Alison Griffiths, *Fire in the Islands* (Wheaton IL: Harold Shaw, 1977).

and Fiji) and in the homeland of the European missionaries. However, it was a time of doctrinal transition for Methodism in Australia and New Zealand. This doctrinal change is highlighted by the introduction of industrial missions in the Solomon Islands from 1902 and, after World War I, into the New Guinea and Papuan Islands. In discussing industrial missions, Alan Tippet noted, "For the Methodists this was a significant shift from their earlier policy in Oceania, as for instance in Tonga and Fiji."⁷⁵ The difference was that Wesley believed social regeneration would follow *after* individual conversions, not *before* them.⁷⁶

In contrast to these criticisms, John Wesley's Methodist spirit was quite evident in the Melanesian work. Island teachers announced their willingness to die for the purpose of reaching head-hunters in New Britain and the Solomon Islands, and indeed hundreds of Islanders did just that through cannibalism, malaria and deprivation. Many of the European missionaries demonstrated a similar spirit. When missionaries themselves survived, they often left children buried on mission stations.

The implementation of class meetings, which was essential to the spirit and discipline of Methodism, is perhaps the most recognisable sign that Wesley's doctrine, spirit and discipline were present. Throughout the Melanesian work we hear of class meetings, except in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. In the Solomon Islands the practice of Thursday afternoon class meeting was widely known and practised. Interviews with Solomon Islands Methodists in 2015, those who were Methodist children and United Church members before forming the renewed Wesleyan Methodist Church, describe the continuing practice of Thursday afternoon class meetings for "personal testimony" and "sharing our confessions too."⁷⁷

However, Margaret Reeson, a former missionary to the Highlands agreed that "the original class meeting format of small groups who met regularly for mutual spiritual support and accountability" was not used in the Methodist mission in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.⁷⁸ This absence of Wesley-style class meetings in the Highlands from 1951-1970 is consistent with the development of Australian

⁷⁵ Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 66.

⁷⁶ As noted by Gardner, *Gathering for God*, 26.

⁷⁷ Interview Hall Malasa, Solomon Soto and Moses Kororo, October 2, 2015, 0:17:50.

⁷⁸ Correspondence with Margaret Reeson, September 10, 2015, L. Cameron records (Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, Melbourne).

Methodism. The Australian and New Zealand Methodists abandoned the requirement of the class meetings for church membership in the 1890s and over the following decades they were gradually replaced by Bible studies and prayer meetings. Rather than the Highlands' experience being unusual, what is noteworthy is how strongly class meetings were still implemented in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville some decades after their decline in Australia. This might be because of the influence of the more traditional island teachers or it might simply be that the missionaries could still see the value of regular accountability and instruction for new believers coming out of an alternative worldview.

Finally, it is revealing to note where the modern teaching of Higher Criticism did, or did not, impact the work of the Polynesian and Melanesian missions. The real impact of Higher Criticism began to be felt in Australia in the early twentieth century but did not penetrate into island Methodism in any significant way, except in the philosophy behind industrial missions. The teaching of Higher Criticism has only become a feature of island Methodism as Islanders have more recently been sent for training in England, America, Australia and New Zealand, and to some extent it is still only discreetly present. Rev. Dr Sifa Lokotui described this in Tonga:

[teaching] is a bit different these days because people went overseas to study the Bible in different seminaries and cultures and when they went back to Tonga they came with the funny doctrine.... Some students came from overseas questioning some area of the Bible. Yes, and I can say, it sounds like a liberal theology.⁷⁹

The irony is that those mission fields where indigenisation was not done well have remained more isolated from the liberal theology of the West, while those nations where national leadership was well developed were also the nations from which students were taken overseas for their post-graduate studies. Alan Tippett addressed this evangelical/liberal issue in his observation on the Solomon Islands, noting that, "In no part of the Solomons do I think that the authority of the Bible as the word of God would be questioned among Christian people."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, June 6, 2015, 0:02:55.

⁸⁰ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 299.

Section 2

WMC - 1ST CONVERGENT EVENT:

OUT OF METHODISM

1920-1974

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 2

Chapters 6 to 9 relate the early development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia, beginning with Kingsley Ridgway's first encounter with Methodism and extending through until his retirement. During this section some convergence occurred between Ridgway's American-holiness Methodism and disgruntled former Australian Methodists, but with disappointing results. In this section the thesis question will be applied to the Wesleyan Methodist Church with these conclusions:

1. Kingsley Ridgway and his team of Australian ministers only partially understood John Wesley's doctrine, spirit and discipline themselves. The resulting organisation failed to implement Wesley's system of class meetings and was branded as a sect by some: "there are quite enough sects in this country without introducing another one regardless of its merits."¹
2. After the failed attempt to implement class meetings, the Wesleyan Methodists, under American missionary leadership from 1948 to 1960, moved further away from Wesley's discipline but continued to pursue his doctrines and spirit.
3. From 1961 the Australian leadership became involved in missionary work in Papua New Guinea while the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia declined until it was made up of five congregations with a total membership of one hundred and two adults in 1974.

¹ Correspondence from Bruce Hooke, c. May 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Chapter 6

ANOTHER METHODISM IN AUSTRALIA

In the midst of the theological turmoil of 1921, a young man, Kingsley Ridgway, sought entry into Methodist ministerial studies in Melbourne. This marks the beginning of a dream that would lead to the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia in 1946 and ultimately to the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 2012.

KINGSLEY RIDGWAY'S PREPARATIONS

Kingsley Ridgway (1902-1979) was born at Lang Lang, in the Gippsland of Victoria on May 8, 1902. He was raised in a God-fearing family but with little understanding of personal faith. In May 1916 Ridgway moved to Melbourne for work with a building contractor, J.D. Frogley² and he began to attend the Spring Road Methodist Church in Malvern. He later took work in the accounting department of Davies, Doery Pty. Ltd.³ while attending night school for accounting and military training.⁴ Meanwhile he progressed through the youth discipleship program of Christian Endeavour at his local church and began to teach in Sunday School. During this time Ridgway became increasingly aware that he lacked any real assurance in his own Christian faith. These spiritual struggles were heightened by a near death experience. On his way to work one morning, Ridgway ran to catch a moving train, slipped, and almost fell under the wheels. The guard saw his peril as he was dragged along holding the handrail and stopped the train. Ridgway recognised "the direct intervention of God's providence." In desperation, as he hung from the side of the

² Reference from J.D. Frogley, November 29, 1919, K. Ridgway records (Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, Melbourne).

³ Reference from H. Carnell, May 7, 1926, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁴ Mary Ridgway, "Kingsley Ridgway's Life" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, 2015), 1.

train, he had prayed to God that "if He would spare me I would live for Him."⁵ This perilous experience was not reassuring for Ridgway though; to the contrary it added to his sense of unworthiness.

An account of this pre-ministry period of Ridgway's life is provided in a small 1937 publication *In Search of God*, written by Ridgway. His early exposure to the vibrant church-scene of Melbourne shaped Ridgway's whole life and it was extraordinarily influential in the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia two decades later. Two crucial shifts in Ridgway's loyalties are highlighted to explain future chapters of the historical account: it was at this time that Ridgway lost confidence in the Methodist Church of Australasia and it was here that he formed a lifetime bond with the North American holiness tradition.

Ridgway began to lead worship services and preach in the local Methodist circuit as part of the Young Men's Band⁶ and he commenced studies in the Methodist local preacher's course. He was mystified though by occasional exposure to those preachers who demonstrated an emotional connection in their faith. He heard the early Pentecostal preacher, Smith Wigglesworth speak of the Christian experience and he listened to a Salvation Army preacher from India testifying to the experience of holiness,⁷ but these testimonies did not match his own shallow experience. He finally explained his feelings of "desperate unworthiness" to his Methodist mentor, Rev. Alfred Judkins, but Judkins could only assure him that his feelings were quite common and that he should allow the church to determine whether he had gifts for ministry rather than depend upon such feelings. On Christmas Eve of 1920,⁸ at eighteen years of age, Ridgway knelt beside his bed in prayer and felt the call of God to a "life's work" as a missionary. Upon his mentor's

⁵ Kingsley M. Ridgway, "In Search of God: An Account of Ministerial Labours in Australia and the Islands of the Sea, (1937)" republished in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 170.

⁶ Following the merger of 1902, the Methodist Church organised their young adults into Young Men's and Young Women's Leagues (also Societies, Guilds, Bands, Help Leagues and Mutual Improvement Societies) for spiritual encouragement, community service and social development: see "A Young Men's League," in the *Kadina and Wallaroo Times* newspaper SA, August 4, 1906, 2. Similar terminology was used in the Anglican Church at the time; see "Cricket," in *The Sunday Sun* newspaper NSW, October 22, 1905, 7.

⁷ K. Ridgway, "In Search of God," 172-173.

⁸ K. Ridgway, "In Search of God," 175.

advice he began the process of applying for ministerial training with the Methodist Church at Queen's College in the University of Melbourne.

In his preparatory studies, before being formally accepted as a candidate, Ridgway recognised that John Wesley's key doctrines of assurance of salvation and holiness were not taught in the Methodist Church of Australia. His confusion continued until September 1922 when the American Pentecostal Aimee Semple McPherson conducted meetings in Melbourne. Ridgway attended one of her meetings on Monday evening and responded at the altar, but was disappointed by the lack of inner peace that resulted. He went again on Tuesday evening, September 19, and in the audience met an independent Canadian preacher, A.B. Carson. Carson was attending to hear the female evangelist when, mistaking Ridgway for someone else, he called Ridgway over to sit with him. Carson was himself an evangelist from the Standard Church of America and in him Ridgway discovered someone who preached old-time Methodist doctrines. The McPherson meetings were never to be a cause of Ridgway's conversion but Ridgway claimed that this accidental meeting with Carson "was destined to change the whole current of my life."⁹ Over the next fifty-eight years he would be devoted to serve as a preacher in the holiness tradition of Methodism, serving as a pastor in Canada, a missionary in Egypt, a chaplain in World War II, and subsequently founding the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Rev. Carson ran weekly services at the Temperance Hall at 172 Flinders Street, Melbourne (see figure 6.1), which Ridgway began to attend. The Temperance Hall was a small building, very modestly presented. It served as a community hall from 1850 to 1933, after which it served as a movie theatre until it was demolished in 1963.¹⁰ Ridgway attended some services, and although he was unimpressed by the simplicity of the venue, he was impressed by Carson's forthright preaching of Wesley's doctrines. In one of Carson's meetings he was confronted directly with his own unconverted state. He attended a prayer meeting at Carson's home the following Saturday, and there he found peace with God. He described his experience in picturesque language:

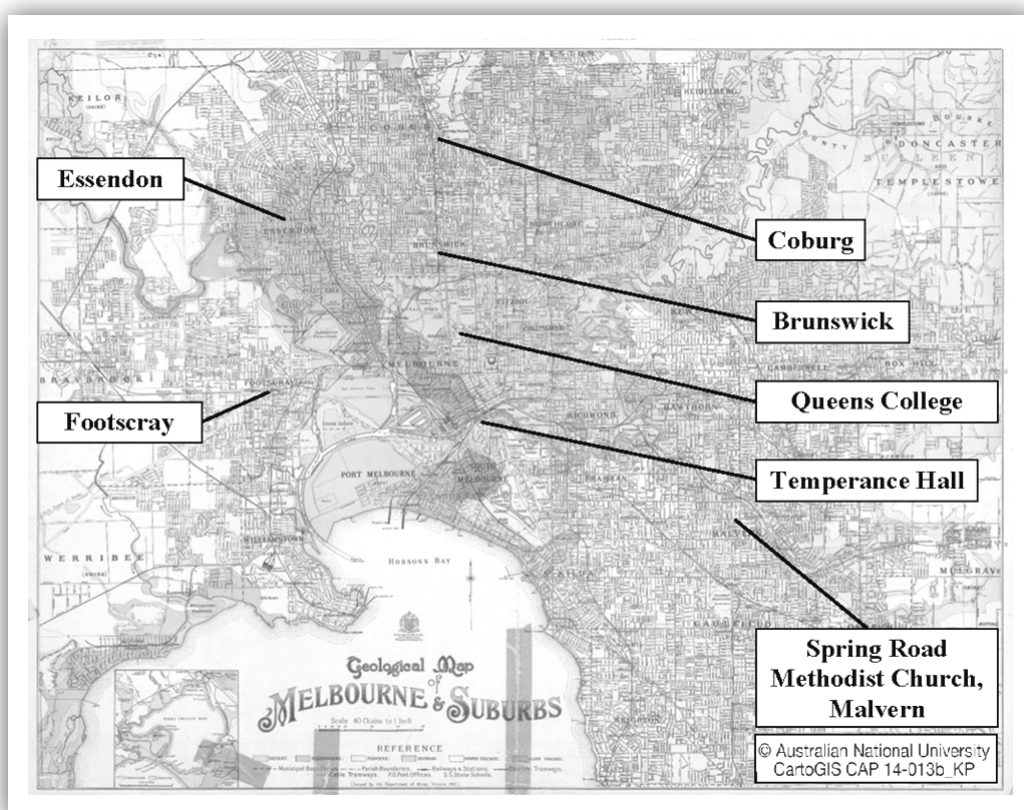
⁹ K. Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 179.

¹⁰ The hall served as the Imperial Theatre from 1934, and then as the Savoy Theatre from 1939.

The next moment, conscious of a warm glow within and the shining of a great light into the darkness of my heart's deep night – the lead was gone, I was borne away on the vast sea of God's eternal love, where there was no ripple, no bottom, no shore; and such a sense of calm, sweet, uncaring peace throbbed in my soul.... My burden had gone. I had the victory. My search was ended. I had found God!¹¹

Ridgway began to attend Carson's services regularly after this time and built an abiding relationship with the Carson family.

Figure 6.1 Map of Melbourne with Ridgway/Carson sites marked 1930s¹²



Rev. Alfred Benson Carson (1877-1933) was born in Ontario, Canada. He was converted in the Melfort revival, 1905, as holiness evangelism extended westward into Saskatchewan.¹³ Carson and his wife, Ida, trained for ministry at Annesley College in Ottawa operated by the Holiness Movement Church. The Carsons pastored in Canada until the end of World War I, after which, they relocated as self-

¹¹ K. Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 182.

¹² Map provided by Australian National University CartoGIS CAP used by permission.

¹³ Glen O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan-Holiness Pioneer," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 18 and K. Ridgway, "In Search of God," 183-189.

supporting missionaries with six children to Sydney, Australia. A.B. Carson got what little employment he could, which was difficult when competing with returned soldiers for the few available jobs. The Carsons' seventh child was soon born and the growing family moved to Melbourne where they established a faith mission¹⁴ from their home in Brunswick. Later they relocated to the neighbouring suburb of Coburg and it was there that Kingsley Ridgway met the Carsons and joined their campaign.

Ridgway's personal spiritual experience under the ministry of Carson brought the conflict with Methodist teaching to a head. There were obvious differences between the Methodist Church, in which he was applying for ministry, and the teachings of Wesley and Carson, through which he had now found the peace he had sought. He wrote:

Many of the younger men, however, were greatly influenced by what is loosely spoken of as the "Higher Criticism", a legitimate method of biblical criticism when rightly viewed, but provocative to unsettlement of belief. Theirs was the "Modernist" position, which in its extreme view denies the fall of man, impugns the virgin birth, and regards much of the Old Testament as of no historical value, being merely a collection of myths and legends.¹⁵

At the time of his conversion, Ridgway records that whereas his faith had previously been shaken to the point where he wondered "if there were anything at all in the Christian message – whether I could accept any of the Bible, since such learned men had rejected much of it." Once converted however, Ridgway had a new perspective. "If before my conversion I had found it difficult to believe in God, it would have been correspondingly difficult after my conversion to disbelieve in Him."¹⁶ As Ridgway spoke of his experience he bore the brunt of mockery from his classmates and even from his Methodist mentor. At this time Rev. Judkins went so far as to refuse permission for Ridgway to marry his daughter, Elvie, because of Ridgway's new "Pentecostal revival" faith.¹⁷ With Carson's urging, Ridgway resigned from his studies and from the Methodist Church.

¹⁴ That is, a mission without any denomination or other established means of support. The mission functioned in faith that God would provide for their needs.

¹⁵ K. Ridgway, "In Search of God," 190.

¹⁶ K. Ridgway, "In Search of God," 190.

¹⁷ Mary Ridgway, "Kingsley Ridgway's Life," 2.

Ministering under Carson provided a training that Ridgway would never have found at Queen's College. The growing congregation engaged in tent-meetings, all-night prayer services and spirited altar-calls that resulted in powerful conversions. In one meeting Ridgway was himself powerfully moved:

The first time the power fell on me was at the first of these all-night meetings. We were standing up singing, "There is power, power, wonder-working power, in the precious blood of the Lamb", when the heavens seemed to open, and a stream of glory poured upon my soul from the upper sanctuary. When I came to myself I was lying under the table, and the service was proceeding quite nicely without me.¹⁸

In recording this testimony more than a decade later (c. 1937), Ridgway added, "Many times since then those shocks of power have fallen on me, and I am free to confess they never come too often to be badly needed."¹⁹

NEW GUINEA, CANADA AND EGYPT

The end of Carson's ministry in Melbourne came suddenly through an attack against his mission by one of the newspapers. The result was the loss of many of the congregation despite a subsequent apology from the newspaper journalist.²⁰ Kingsley Ridgway accepted this as God's leading that he should embark upon his missionary career to the Pacific. In May 1926, Ridgway took employment as an accountant in Rabaul, New Britain with Burns Philp and Co., who were shipping contractors for the Australian administration.²¹ In the evenings and weekends in Rabaul he practised his missionary ministry, meeting with and discipling New Guinea workers.²² In the meantime Carson moved back to Sydney and accepted appointment with the Methodist Church at Lakemba and later in the Gosford circuit.²³

¹⁸ K. Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 195.

¹⁹ K. Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 195.

²⁰ K. Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 196.

²¹ Correspondence from Burns Philp, Rabaul, February 10, 1927, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

²² Kingsley M. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains: A History of the First Five Years of the Wesleyan Missionary Work in Papua New Guinea," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 247.

²³ Carson's willingness to accept ministry in the Methodist Church suggests that he was opposed to Ridgway being trained in the liberal school of theology but not opposed to service in the Methodist Church, and the Methodist Church in the 1930s still had a base of evangelical local churches where a Canadian holiness preacher could be welcomed. From Ridgway's account, however, it is clear that Carson soon divided his congregation with his open preaching on spiritual conversion.

Ridgway returned to Melbourne from his twelve month contract in Rabaul in 1927, expecting to travel to Canada with the Carson family. This was delayed however, so Ridgway took employment with E.F. Watt in Melbourne as an accountant.²⁴ After twelve months in that work he joined Carson in Gosford where the ministry was experiencing both success and opposition. By this time Ridgway's relationship with the oldest Carson daughter, Dorcas, had matured and they were married on February 25, 1929 in the Methodist Church of Gosford.²⁵ See figure 6.2. Ridgway then sailed to Canada with Dorcas, her mother and siblings while Carson stayed some months longer in the Wyong circuit, before he too joined the family in Canada.

Figure 6.2 *Dorcas and Kingsley Ridgway's wedding day, February 25, 1929*²⁶



In the Province of Ontario, Kingsley and Dorcas enrolled for theological studies at the campus of the Standard Church in Brockville. This church has a long history in the holiness tradition, and it symbolises a remarkable network of events that came together over the next century. A former Methodist evangelist, Ralph C. Horner (1853-1921) had been removed from the Methodist Church because of his theology of three blessings; that is, an experience of salvation, a second experience of holiness cleansing (entire sanctification) and a third experience of power in witnessing

²⁴ Personal reference from J.C. Rosevea, June 12, 1928, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

²⁵ Wedding certificate, February 25, 1929, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

²⁶ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

(fire).²⁷ His followers were known as "Hornerites" and it was these who had reached A.B. Carson in Saskatchewan in 1905. Horner initially tried to join another holiness organisation, the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America in 1894,²⁸ but was soon expelled from that denomination as well because of his theology of three blessings. (This is the same Connection that Kingsley Ridgway ultimately established in Australia fifty years later.) Subsequently, Horner commenced the Holiness Movement Church, with himself as Bishop. A.B. and Ida Carson trained at the Holiness Movement College in Ottawa before their mission to Australia. However, in 1916, while the Carsons were in Western Canada and before their arrival in Australia, Ralph Horner and a group of his followers left the Holiness Movement Church and commenced the Standard Church of America with headquarters in Brockville, Ontario. Therefore it was to Ontario that the Carson family returned in 1929 with Ridgway. Ridgway completed his pastoral training at Brockville and pastored several congregations of the Standard Church in Canada. He was ordained on October 9, 1932 in Brockville²⁹ under the authority of the Kingston Conference of the Standard Church of America and was appointed to missionary service in Egypt.

Several chapters in their lives later, in the mid-1940s Ridgway chose not to continue with the Standard Church, but instead transferred his ordination credentials to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America and commenced the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. Fifty-eight years later, in 2003, the Standard Church officially merged into the Wesleyan Church of North America and the network was reunited. Figure 6.3 illustrates the founding of the Holiness Movement Church and the Standard Church with the merger into the Wesleyan Church in 2003. It also illustrates ministries of Ralph Horner, A.B. Carson and Kingsley Ridgway.

Kingsley and Dorcas's first four children were born in Canada: James, Dorothy (Izzy), Marjorie and Walter. Meanwhile, Ridgway had not forgotten his calling to the Pacific. He continued to vigorously promote a mission work to the islands and he

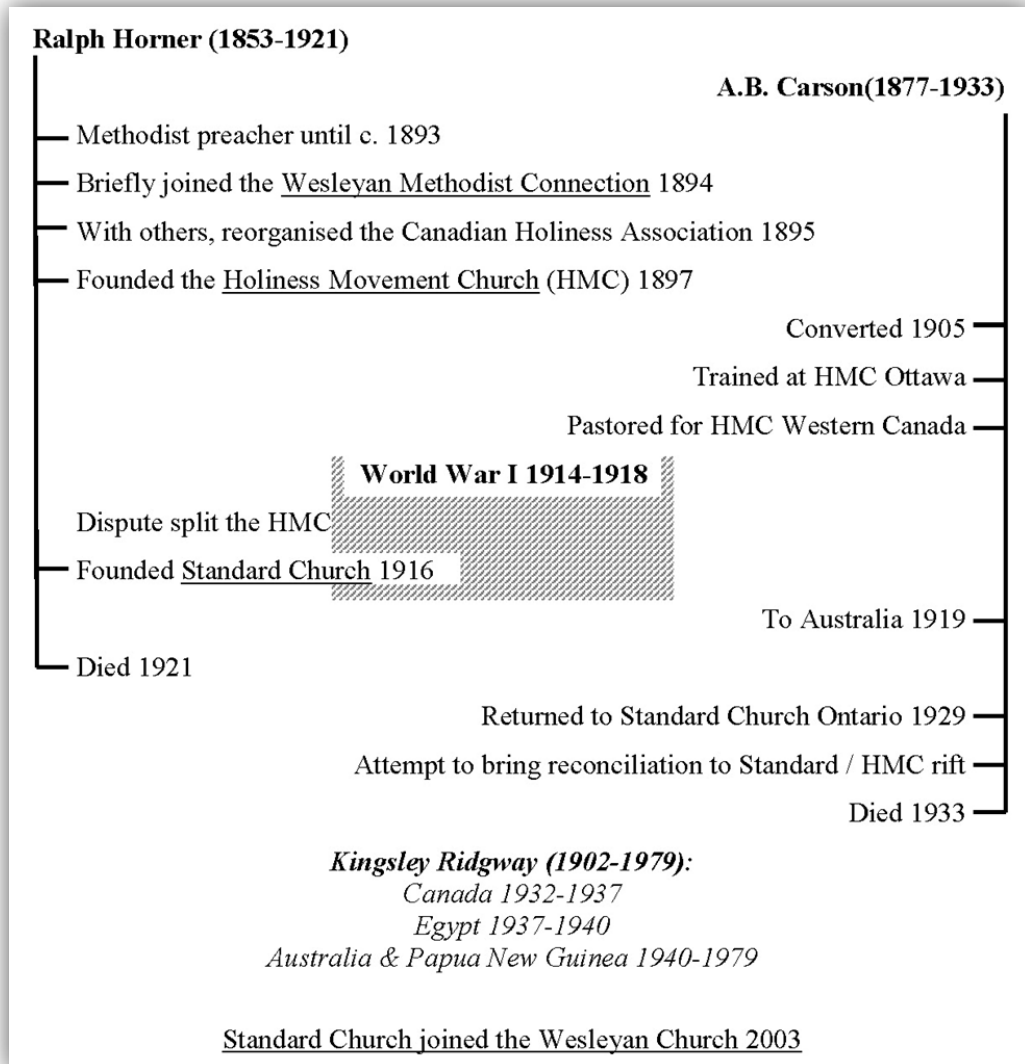
²⁷ This third experience of power would place Horner closer to Pentecostalism than to John Wesley's traditional focus upon purity of life and intention.

²⁸ "Horner, Ralph Cecil," *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed February 12, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/horner_ralph_cecil_15E.html.

²⁹ Ordination certificate, October 9, 1932, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

published *In Search of God* as an appeal to the North American church for support of a South Pacific ministry.

Figure 6.3 *Holiness Movement Church, Standard Church & Wesleyan Church*



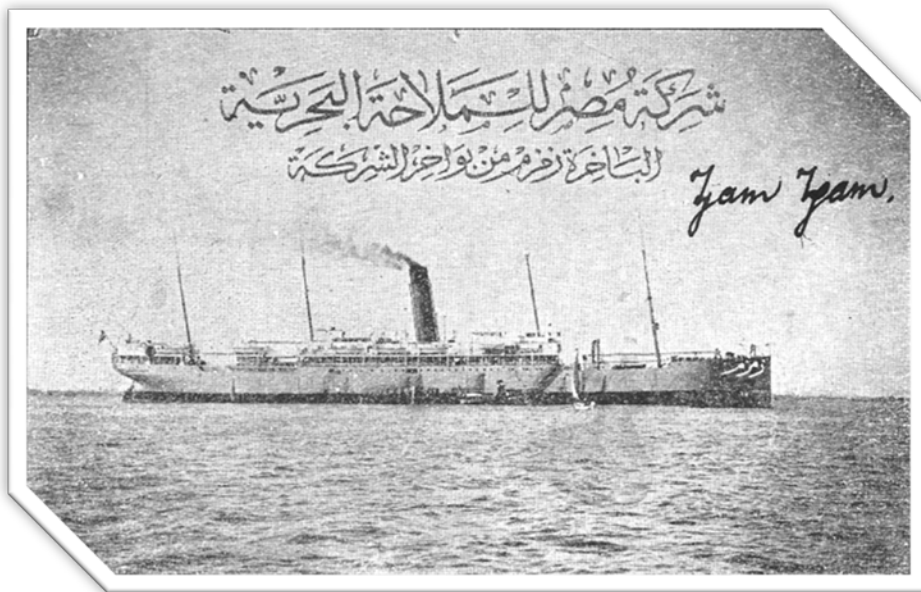
In August 1937, as the first step toward a mission work in the Pacific,³⁰ Ridgway was sent to superintend the Standard Church mission field in Egypt, arriving at Port Said on September 28, 1937.³¹ During his brief but intense three years in Egypt, Ridgway wrote a thesis titled "A History of the Religions of Egypt from the Earliest Times to the Present," for which he was awarded a Doctorate of

³⁰ Lindsay Cameron, "Editor's Note," in Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 147.

³¹ Notes for 1937-1940, undated, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Divinity from Webster University in Missouri, U.S.A.³² In May 1940, with World War II troops amassing in Egypt, Ridgway took on additional chaplaincy ministry to the troops in the Western desert through the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.).³³ This ministry was short-lived. As war intensified the Ridgways were evacuated to Australia. They departed Port Said on June 23, 1940 for a perilous sea voyage to Australia as one of a twenty-three ship convoy escorted by the British Navy. During this two and a half month voyage they experienced the threat of German torpedos, cramped conditions and oppressive heat in the steel-hulled Zam Zam as they sailed via the Suez Canal to Colombo (Ceylon). From there, on another vessel they sailed via Fremantle (Western Australia) to arrive in Melbourne on September 7, 1940.

Figure 6.4 *The Zam Zam on which the Ridgways were evacuated from Egypt*³⁴



After a brief visit with family in Gippsland, Ridgway reconnected with the Y.M.C.A. and accepted an appointment with their Military Service Department.³⁵ He was initially placed at the Broadmeadows Army Camp and then at the Ballarat Army Base. The family relocated to Ballarat on October 2, 1940. Throughout the

³² Kingsley Ridgway, "A History of The Religions of Egypt from the Earliest Times to the Present" (Heliopolis, Egypt: Doctorate of Divinity thesis, Webster University, Missouri), 1938.

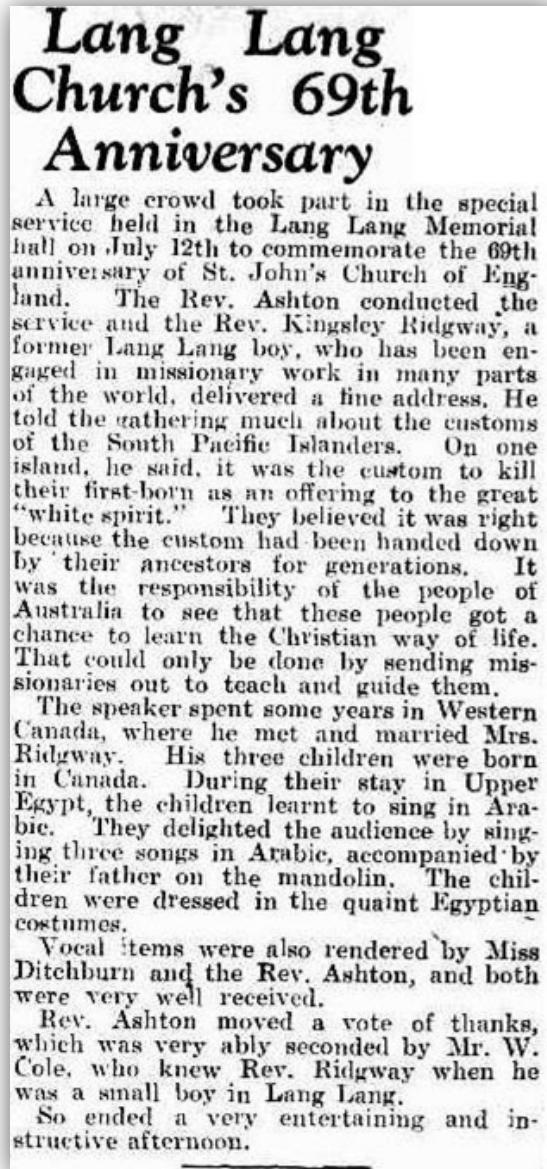
³³ Correspondence from J.T. Massey, Secretary to the War Work Committee of the Y.M.C.A. of Egypt, May 6, 1940, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³⁴ K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³⁵ Correspondence from A. Moodie, Victorian Y.M.C.A. Military Secretary, September 12, 1940, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

subsequent years Ridgway maintained his connection with his Gippsland heritage, returning in 1942 for a church anniversary.

Figure 6.5 *Ridgway revisits Lang Lang in July 1942*³⁶



On February 17, 1941 he transferred with the Y.M.C.A. for ministry to the Royal Australian Air Force (R.A.A.F.) at the Ascot Vale showgrounds and relocated the family to Ascot Vale West.³⁷ Three months later Ridgway was asked to accept

³⁶ "Church Notices," in *The Dandenong Journal* newspaper, July 22, 1942, 3.

³⁷ Notes for 1937-1940, undated, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

appointment to pastor the Congregational Church at Ascot Vale, concurrent with his Y.M.C.A. ministry, and on Sunday July 13 he was installed into the pastorate.

Ridgway's ministry in the Ascot Vale Congregational Church was quite successful, with large crowds coming to hear his evangelical preaching.³⁸ Figure 6.6 illustrates the active outreach of the local church and Ridgway's connection with the Y.M.C.A. It was here, in the Ascot Vale pastorate, that Ridgway began to build relationships that would shape the development of the future Wesleyan Methodist Church. After the war Ridgway would steadfastly focus upon the north-western suburbs of Melbourne, despite several important early relationships in the eastern suburbs. A lasting result is that the Wesleyan Methodist Bible College was ultimately established in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, which today has a substantial Muslim population. Meanwhile the wealthier suburbs and the larger theological colleges are either in Melbourne's inner city or eastern suburbs. The choice to locate away from the eastern suburbs, despite connections in Clifton Hill from 1946, can be traced to Ridgway's Ascot Vale connections during the war.

Figure 6.6 Advertising for Ascot Vale Congregational Church 1941-1942³⁹



Meanwhile his ministry to R.A.A.F. personnel was proving very effective, with Bible studies, local church and a total of eight services each week.⁴⁰ In September Ridgway gained approval to take military personnel to a Sunday afternoon outreach in the new unchurched suburb of Maribyrnong (see map, chapter 7: 185). At the first

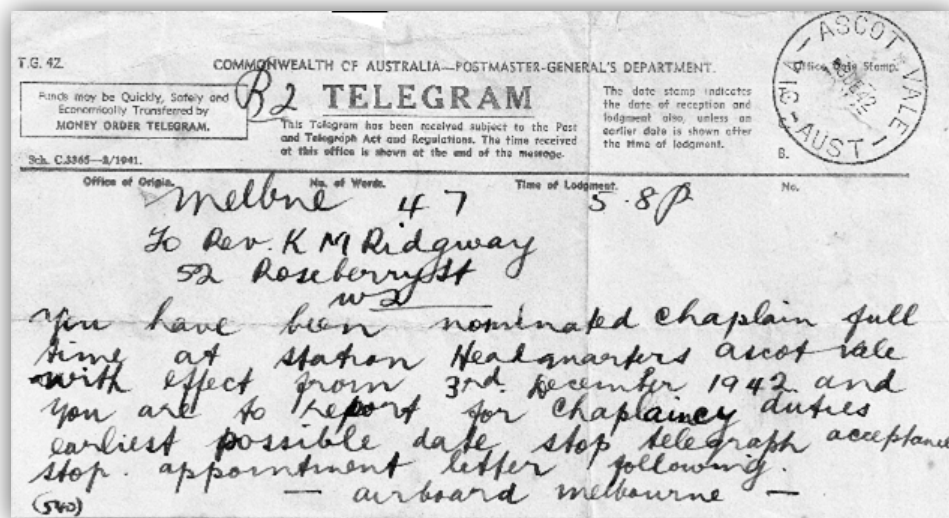
³⁸ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 48.

³⁹ K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁴⁰ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 50.

meeting Ridgway recorded seventy-five in attendance with Brethren, Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist and Church of Christ Air Force personnel participating in worship leading.⁴¹ In December 1942 Ridgway resigned from the Y.M.C.A.⁴² to transfer to the Royal Australian Air Force as a Chaplain to the Other Protestant Denominations (OPD)⁴³ based at Ascot Vale.⁴⁴ The commencement of chaplaincy duties on December 3 required the conclusion of Ridgway's church ministry since the R.A.A.F. imposed the condition that, "you will be occupied only in the work of ministering to R.A.A.F. personnel, and in no other clerical duties."⁴⁵ See figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7 Telegram advising Kingsley Ridgway of R.A.A.F. appointment⁴⁶



Ridgway was commissioned as a Flight Lieutenant in the R.A.A.F. and from Ascot Vale he was stationed for periods in Darwin and south-east Asia.⁴⁷ These assignments however, did not prevent him from maintaining a presence in Melbourne. Newspaper clippings from 1943-1945 illustrate Ridgway's continued ministry in and around Melbourne:

⁴¹ "Report on Initial Services in Maribyrnong Hall," c. September 1943, K. Ridgway records (Archives).
⁴² Correspondence from A. Moodie, Victorian Y.M.C.A. Defence Forces Committee General Secretary, December 18, 1942, K. Ridgway records (Archives).
⁴³ The Roman Catholic and Church of England denominations had their own chaplains.
⁴⁴ Correspondence from R.A.A.F., December 8, 1942, K. Ridgway records (Archives).
⁴⁵ Correspondence from R.A.A.F., December 9, 1942, K. Ridgway records (Archives).
⁴⁶ K. Ridgway records (Archives).
⁴⁷ "Brother Ridgway Writes," draft article for the Christian Standard, May 17, 1943, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Howe Cres. Congregational Church, Sunday March 14, 1943⁴⁸
 Augustine Congregational Church, Auburn, Sunday April 11, 1943⁴⁹
 Everyman's Campaign, Collins St., Saturday April 22, 1944⁵⁰
 Everyman's Campaign, Collins St., Saturday June 10, 1944⁵¹
 Fitzroy Methodist Mission, Sunday August 13, 1944⁵²
 Burke Rd. Methodist Church, Balwyn, Sunday August 27, 1944⁵³
 People's United Service, Little Collins St., Sunday September 10, 1944⁵⁴
 Lygon St. Methodist Church, Sunday October 15, 1944⁵⁵
 People's Service, Little Collins St., Sunday October 29, 1944⁵⁶
 Fitzroy Methodist Mission, Sunday December 3, 1944⁵⁷
 East St. Kilda Congregational Church, Sunday January 21, 1945.⁵⁸

In May 1945 Ridgway wrote to a friend that he was now stationed on the island of Moratai in the Dutch East Indies; that is at the northern part of modern-day Indonesia.⁵⁹ In Moratai he served as Command Chaplain, supervising the work of the OPD chaplains. The duties of Command Chaplain were demanding, including extensive travel, exposure to disease and constant ministry.⁶⁰ However, it came with certain privileges so that, as hostilities concluded after Germany's surrender in May 1945 and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, Ridgway was among the first to be returned to Ascot Vale to administer his chaplaincy work. From there he was in a better position to negotiate the timing of his discharge than other military personnel still stationed in the Pacific. The chaplains were informed in September 1945, "The Command Chaplain, the Reverend K.M. Ridgway, will return to No.1 Personnel Depot for discharge."⁶¹

⁴⁸ "Congregational Church Rally," in *The Record* newspaper Port and South Melbourne, March 13, 1943, 1.

⁴⁹ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, April 10, 1943, 9.

⁵⁰ "Church Notices," in *The Age* newspaper, April 22, 1944, 8.

⁵¹ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, June 10, 1944, 17.

⁵² "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, August 12, 1944, 8.

⁵³ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, August 26, 1944, 20.

⁵⁴ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, September 9, 1944, 14.

⁵⁵ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, October 14, 1944, 20.

⁵⁶ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, October 28, 1944, 14.

⁵⁷ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, December 2, 1944, 15.

⁵⁸ "Church Notices," in *The Argus* newspaper, January 20, 1945, 15.

⁵⁹ Correspondence to Roy S. Nicholson, May 17, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶⁰ Correspondence to Wesley Nussey, May 17, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶¹ Correspondence from R.A.A.F., September 8, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Figure 6.8 R.A.A.F. Flight Lieutenant (Padre) Kingsley Ridgway 1942⁶²



Throughout the war Ridgway stayed in regular contact with leaders and prayer partners in the Standard Church of Canada. However, he had misgivings about the Standard Church and how it might be received in the Australian culture. In a letter to a long-time friend, Wesley Nussey, a Wesleyan Methodist who had been raised in the Standard Church, Ridgway exposed his deep reservations about the legalistic dress codes of the Standard Church:

I do believe that the Standard people are the finest I know; but I believe too that people can be Christians without conforming to Standard practices. To be plain, I believe that where in Australia we could organise perhaps one or two self-supporting Standard churches after years of labour, we could be used of God to establish several conferences of preachers able to lead people into holiness, but making dress a matter of conscience.⁶³

It was while wrestling with these misgivings that Ridgway encountered an American serviceman, Theron Horace Colegrove (1913 – 1992). Colegrove was a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania who served as an American Army Staff Sergeant in the Pacific during World War II,

⁶² K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶³ Correspondence to Wesley Nussey, May 17, 1945 K. Ridgway records (Archives).

based out of Brisbane, Australia. While stationed in Brisbane he met and married an Australian woman, Dorothy Butter Hancox. They were married in her family home at Red Hill, Queensland on October 27, 1944 by her Baptist pastor, Rev. Albert Butler.⁶⁴ The ceremony was in the family home because, as a Wesleyan Methodist, Colegrove felt that his family in America would object to his being wed in a Baptist Church. Colegrove almost missed his own wedding, being in transit back to Melbourne from the Philippines. His ship was not due to dock in Brisbane, but because salt water had seeped into the fresh water tank, they docked briefly in Brisbane on October 26 to refill with water. Colegrove disembarked and was married on schedule the following day. Together Theron and Dorothy raised four children in that same house. Colegrove never returned to the U.S.A. and in later years had his name changed to Abraham Loeffler Kol to identify with the Jewish nation.⁶⁵ Dorothy died in 1988 and Theron in 1992. Both are buried at the Albany Creek cemetery.

Colegrove had a clear testimony of sanctification in the American Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1944, two months before his wedding, Colegrove was in Melbourne for military purposes⁶⁶ and was asked by Rev. Walter Betts to share a testimony at the Fitzroy Mission on August 13.⁶⁷ Kingsley Ridgway was the guest speaker that evening, and was greatly impressed by Colegrove's testimony. A newspaper clipping for that date is included as figure 6.9. Ridgway had been aware of the Wesleyan Methodist Church prior to this time, but the vitality of Colegrove's testimony captured Ridgway's attention and inspired him to approach Colegrove and then the Wesleyan Methodist Church in America.

Figure 6.9 *Kingsley Ridgway at the Fitzroy Mission on August 13, 1944*⁶⁸



⁶⁴ Hope Colegrove, "The Story Behind the Photo," *The QB: The Voice of Queensland Baptists*, April 2015, 31, accessed June 23, 2015, http://issuu.com/qbmagazine/docs/qb_apr-2015.

⁶⁵ Correspondence with Hope Colegrove, February 13, 2014, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁶⁶ Correspondence Theron Colegrove to Roy S. Nicholson, September 18, 1944, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶⁷ Interview, Donald Hardgrave, May 7, 2014, 0:33:00.

⁶⁸ *The Argus* newspaper, August 12, 1944, 8.

Over the years Theron and Dorothy attended Baptist and Salvation Army Churches in Brisbane and later the Salvation Army in Caboolture. He facilitated Ridgway's introduction to the North American leadership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and stayed keenly interested in Ridgway's work in Melbourne, always hoping to start a Wesleyan Methodist Church in Brisbane. In 1947, when interviewing W.E. Bromley for the Bendigo Church, Colegrove wrote to Ridgway to request permission to start a Wesleyan Methodist Church in Brisbane,⁶⁹ but for an unknown reason Ridgway did not embrace Colegrove's request. Ridgway clearly had a lot of confidence in Colegrove and Bromley's preference was also a ministry in Queensland. It may have been because of the commencement of the Church of the Nazarene in Brisbane that Ridgway was unwilling to proceed. The Church of the Nazarene was a second American holiness church that had started in Australia in the last years of World War II, and in 1946 Ridgway had agreed with the American leadership that competition with the Nazarenes should be avoided. Colegrove wrote to the denominational leadership again in 1967, offering to commence work in Brisbane, but was again declined.⁷⁰ When the Wesleyan Methodists reached Brisbane in 1974, Colegrove attended the Joyful News Church and introduced himself to Don Hardgrave and other Brisbane workers, but was past retirement age by then. Colegrove's funeral was conducted by Rev. Lionel Rose at the Joyful News Wesleyan Methodist Church in Fortitude Valley in April 1992.

On September 18, 1944 Colegrove wrote to Roy S. Nicholson at the Wesleyan Methodist headquarters to introduce Kingsley Ridgway.⁷¹ Dr Nicholson was at that time the editor of *The Wesleyan Methodist* magazine and subsequently would serve as Conference President. Dr Nicholson replied to Colegrove and to Ridgway on October 9, 1944 to express interest in an Australian mission work and to pass the discussion over to Dr F.R. Eddy, the Conference President of that time.⁷² He followed up by sending Ridgway a copy of the latest *Discipline* of the Wesleyan

⁶⁹ Correspondence from Theron Colegrove, March 12, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷⁰ District Board Minutes, May 4, 1967 (Archives).

⁷¹ Correspondence Roy S. Nicholson to Theron Colegrove, October 9, 1944, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷² Correspondence from Roy S. Nicholson, October 9, 1944, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Methodist Church.⁷³ When Ridgway read the *Discipline* he declared to his wife, "This is exactly what we believe. I like this church."⁷⁴

Figure 6.10 U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Theron Colegrove 1945⁷⁵



After some months of thought and prayer, Ridgway wrote to Dr Eddy on March 15, 1945 to formally request approval to commence a Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. It can be understood that this was a difficult decision for Ridgway, since his Standard Church friends had been praying with him for many years now. He wrote to Wesley Nussey:

I will be considered disloyal by the people I love the best on earth; but when the Standard people rejected by an overwhelming vote the proposal for reunion with the Holiness Movement, something died in me. This is not a good spirit to manifest, and I see little prospect for a church which harbours such an unforgiving spirit.⁷⁶

⁷³ The *Discipline* is the book of regulations under which the denomination functions, including history, articles of faith, constitution and structures.

⁷⁴ James M. Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia 1946-1956" (Wilmore, Kentucky: Term Paper for Asbury Theological Seminary, 1957), 1.

⁷⁵ Photo courtesy of Hope Colegrove, used by permission.

⁷⁶ Correspondence to Wesley Nussey, May 17, 1945. K. Ridgway records (Archives).

The final comment in this quote is in reference to an unsuccessful attempt by A.B. Carson to reconcile the Holiness Movement Church and the Standard Church members when returning to Canada in 1929.

In June Dr Eddy advised Ridgway that the Board had instructed them to proceed.⁷⁷ Ridgway responded with a proposal to commence the work in Melbourne on November 1, 1945 and Dr Eddie approved this arrangement in his letter of July 19, 1945.⁷⁸ Around this time Ridgway became aware that the Nazarene Church would also be commencing in Brisbane⁷⁹ and in this letter in July from Dr Eddy it was agreed that Ridgway's initial focus in Melbourne would reduce the chance of competition between the two holiness denominations.

It was agreed that the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church would come under the American Department of Home Missions, rather than the Department of Overseas Missions. This had previously been discussed in several letters, with the conclusion that Australia would relate to the United States church as a district, like Canada because of its English language, rather than as a "foreign" field. For this reason Ridgway was now directed to Rev. J.R. Swauger, the Home Missions Secretary.⁸⁰

There was a lot of interest in America at the possibility of a new work in Australia. J.R. Swauger explained the new venture to the American membership in some depth, stirring the American support for the new mission.⁸¹ In Swauger, Ridgway found a real friend and a champion for the Australian cause. A large file of correspondence to and from Swauger is held in the archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. As part of his facilitation of the new work, Swauger came to Australia in 1947 to chair the first conference and he personally raised the funds for the purchase of the new college property.

⁷⁷ Correspondence from F.R. Eddy, June 18, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷⁸ Correspondence from F.R. Eddy, July 19, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷⁹ Correspondence to F.R. Eddy, July 2, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁰ Correspondence from Roy S. Nicholson, June 8, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸¹ Draft article for *The Wesleyan Missionary* 1946, 29, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

THE STRATEGY

The stage was set for the new work to start. Ridgway had every expectation that the new church would grow quickly, building upon his ministry of the previous years and upon those dissatisfied with the modernistic teachings in the Methodist Church. He wrote to Dr Eddy:

My difficulty is that there are few spiritual homes to offer to my converts. Some hundreds have professed conversion under my preaching during these past three years in the chaplaincy work: but I readily confess that the standard of conversion is low.⁸²

In a letter two months later Ridgway explained that he would rent a hall and advertise widely to alert his contacts to the new work. Furthermore, he surmised, that should bring him into contact with those in the Methodist Church who are patently dissatisfied with the modernism of Australian Methodism.⁸³

It is clear that Ridgway's personal experiences as a ministerial student in the Methodist Church left him without hope for the future of mainline Methodism. Five years of ministry in Melbourne and as an R.A.A.F. chaplain confirmed his own worst experiences and left him certain that many Methodists were ready to break free from modernist theology. Over the next two years Ridgway received confirmation of this assessment from a range of Australian Methodists, although this commonly did not translate to a willingness to separate from the Methodist Church. The following are some samples of the correspondence that came to Ridgway in 1946 and 1947 in support of the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

From East Gippsland, Victoria, October 12, 1946, Mr J.D.,⁸⁴ a local preacher of fifty years in the Methodist Church, wrote:

There is no doubt in my mind that that [sic] our church, generally speaking, has departed from the teaching & church polity observed 50 years ago, with the resultant ineffectiveness as God's witness in the world. Seldom do we hear the word conversion mentioned by preachers & it seems in many cases they have

⁸² Correspondence to F.R. Eddy, March 15, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸³ Correspondence to F.R. Eddy, July 2, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁴ For anonymity the full names of the following eight correspondents is left unstated.

ceased to preach or expect conversions. I am very interested in your church & rejoice to hear news of its success.⁸⁵

From Taree, New South Wales, c. 1946, Miss J.D., a deaconess of the Methodist Church, wrote to enquire "about this more 'Methodist' branch of our church than the modernistic organisation which now exists."⁸⁶ She further requested pamphlets for distribution to others who were interested. From Ravensthorpe, Western Australia, in September 1946, Mr L.R. wrote to Kingsley Ridgway urging him to start a Wesleyan Methodist Church in Perth to help follow up on the converts from a recent Walter Betts crusade in that city.⁸⁷ From Ouyen, Victoria, in July 1946, Mr W.L. wrote to Ridgway, referencing John Wesley's prophecy "of what would destroy Methodism", now fulfilled through the rejection of Wesley's teaching. He concluded, "I pray for your success in the Work you are at, as I believe it is a calling out of God's people from a Worldly Church."⁸⁸ From Pakenham, Victoria, in March 1947, Mr F.C. wrote to Ridgway to seek a pastoral appointment. He recorded his own experience with the modernist trend, "I was for three years a Home Missionary in the Methodist Church: but was more than discontented with its ways and teachings."⁸⁹

From Hay, New South Wales, in August 1946, Mr L.W. wrote to describe his experiences in the Methodist Church. His story deserves fuller attention:

I am the son of a Methodist minister who stood for all that Wesley and ourselves preach. He died in 1940, in the same year as I ... entered the ministry.

When I entered college I knew I was out of tune with the Methodist Theological students because I was evangelical and believed in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. I attended the Modernistic lectures in the United Theological Faculty.... By the Grace of God, I came out of College an even more convinced Fundamentalist than ever; but with the rosy idea that the greater part of present day Methodism and the older ministers were behind me.

In 1943 I was appointed to the Bonalbo circuit. God's Spirit was moving through His Word; and I was able to establish a monthly Squash Meeting⁹⁰ in

⁸⁵ Correspondence from Mr JD, Swifts Creek, Gippsland, Victoria, October 12, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁶ Correspondence from Miss JD, Taree, NSW, c. 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁷ Correspondence from Mr LT, Ravensthorpe WA, September 15, 1946. K. Ridgway records (Archives). Walter Betts was the pastor of the Fitzroy Methodist Mission.

⁸⁸ Correspondence from Mr WL, Galah, Ouyen, Victoria, July 18, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁹ Correspondence from Mr FC, Pakenham East, Victoria, March 11, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹⁰ A Squash Meeting was a young adults gathering, for 13-18 year olds.

three centres. But the work was cut short when I was moved to Port Kembla in 1944. Here I spent a very happy year despite the Superintendent who showed his antagonism to my open air preaching and to making appeals in the churches. Decision [sic] were made for Christ and souls were being saved. I should have been able to consolidate there too; but I was moved and a rank Modernist came and deliberately set out to undermine my work by open infidelity and ridicule. Consequently I do not know how much work I was able to accomplish there.

April 1945 saw me at Hay; a circuit which has always been worked (except once) by a minister of only a few years status. It is white anted with Modernism and worldliness.... I am fully aware of the fact that if I stay in this Church I will have to spend my whole life trying to preach to indifferent Modernistic Congregations like Hay; where Modernism has been preached for twenty years. I would not mind being in the vanguard of an evangelical movement if I knew that the succeeding ministers would be evangelical. In fact I would rejoice in it. But it does appear that the false shepherd has every chance to replace me always.⁹¹

From Leederville, Western Australia, in August 1946, Mr R.M. wrote to a Mr Renshaw to express appreciation for his newspaper article, and the letter was passed along to Kingsley Ridgway. This ministerial student described his experience at ministerial college in Perth:

When I came in I firmly believed that in the Bible I had the Word of God. Undeniably and unquestionably written by the Holy Spirit. Now, through the offices of our Peakes Commentary and our other text books, I know that the Bible contains the word of God, but also it has quite a lot of interpolations and error. I have reached the stage of thought where I must believe that if we accept the Bible as the Word of God we are old fashioned fools. If we cannot believe portions of it, why believe any?. Although I am the product of "emotional Evangelism" I have been assured that such conversion as mine isn't real and does not last. Why then am I here at all? Don't preach Salvation or sin, that's the "Gospel of good advice" and must be avoided!

Looking into my own heart I realise that my experience NOW is not that which I knew 12 months ago. Mr Renshaw, there are several young men here whom I know are contemplating entering into the ministry, and they have asked my opinion on the matter. How can I let them deliberately destroy themselves, for that is what this step will mean. I intend to withdraw from my training now, and enter a Bible Institute, where I know I will be taught the Gospel according to Our Lord and not according to Professor Peake or anyone else. I know that this step will bring me much unfavourable comment, but I feel I must either do that, or lose what little faith I have left...

⁹¹ Correspondence from Mr LW, Hay, NSW, August 20, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives). More study could be done on the contrast between modernist Methodism in Hay and the conservative Uralla ministry of the same era described by Kenneth Dempsey in *Conflict and Decline*.

Methodism here is not dying, it's dead!... W.A. needs your prayer support Mr Renshaw, just as Methodism everywhere needs the prayers of God's people. If we do not get back to God, we must perish! I thought that the Roman Church was the biggest menace to Protestantism in Australia... now I know that it is not. Modernism, with its soul destroying doctrine is the greatest menace we have to face today.⁹²

From Launceston, Tasmania, in July 1946, Mr M.K. wrote to encourage Ridgway to open in Launceston, even though it would mean some of his own congregation might leave to join the Wesleyan Methodists.⁹³

These handwritten letters are in addition to the personal approaches made by prominent Methodists detailed in the next chapter, such as Gilbert McLaren, Charles Lee and William Bromley. It is clear that there was widespread concern within Methodism about its drift away from Wesley's doctrines of salvation by faith, assurance of salvation and holiness.⁹⁴ Ridgway's assumption was that those who were concerned would act upon that concern and join the new denomination.

During the war years Ridgway was back in Melbourne for at least one half of 1944, and in these times he developed many friendships. In 1945 Ridgway wrote to Dr Eddy to explain:

Two Methodist ministers in Melbourne have seceded from the church on account of prevalent worldliness there, and have established independent missions. These may shortly be incorporated in our work. I have preached at both missions, and find them spiritual men.⁹⁵

Ridgway does not name the men, but almost certainly Gilbert McLaren was one and Walter Betts the other, given that Ridgway was preaching at Betts's church the previous year when he met Theron Colegrove. However, technically Betts was still with the Methodist Church at the Fitzroy Mission at this time, which makes his inclusion less certain. A "Mission" in the Methodist Church had more autonomy than other Methodist churches, so it is possible that Ridgway referred to Betts, but simply did not go into the detail of Walter Betts' peculiar situation. Although both Walter

⁹² Correspondence from Mr RM, W. Leederville, W.A., August 3, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹³ Correspondence from Mr MK, Launceston, Tasmania, July 6, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹⁴ See chapter 1: 11.

⁹⁵ Correspondence to Dr F.R. Eddy, July 2, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Betts and Gilbert McLaren were very supportive of the new denomination, ultimately neither joined. McLaren's attempt to bring his congregation into the Wesleyan Methodist Church is included in the next chapter. Walter Betts mixed with the Wesleyan Methodists regularly for more than a decade, but in March 1954 he resigned from the Methodist Church⁹⁶ and founded the People's Church at Kew rather than join the Wesleyans. Even so, he maintained a close connection with the Wesleyans.⁹⁷

The strategy that Kingsley Ridgway presented to the Wesleyan Methodist leadership showed every chance of success. Methodism was torn by inner division, Ridgway had a track record of successful ministry, the American church was ready to support the new work, and there appeared to be a good number ready to join. Ridgway's strategy was not just to draw Methodists away from their own church but to reach non-churchgoers as he had been doing for several years.

In addition to Ridgway's Australian connections and his American Wesleyan Methodist supporters, two other men were interested in joining the new work. In May 1945 from the island of Moratai, Ridgway's wrote of his hope that these two workers would join the Australian mission. An African-American chaplain named McWilliams had expressed real interest in joining Ridgway. McWilliams had trained at Yale Divinity School and Ridgway wrote confidently to Roy S. Nicholson that McWilliams "speaks our [holiness] language".⁹⁸ However, although McWilliams had expressed enthusiasm for the idea of ministry in Australia, he and Ridgway were separated by military reassignment and no further progress was made. The other potential recruit was Ridgway's friend, Wesley Nussey. Nussey had expressed some "leading" to Australia, and Ridgway warmly responded that "it would certainly be a great delight to have you as a co-worker."⁹⁹ As it eventuated, nothing came of either possibility.

⁹⁶ Betts, W.F., *"The Drift": Tracing the Drift in Modern Methodism, leading up to my Resignation in 1954* (Melbourne: Self-published, c. 1955), 16.

⁹⁷ Melbourne had a history of sponsoring "nonconformity and disestablishment" and this sentiment appears to have been a feature in the struggle to start a second Methodist denomination. See Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn, Kindle edition, 2012), chapt. 2, loc 977.

⁹⁸ Correspondence to Roy S. Nicholson, May 17, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹⁹ Correspondence to Wesley Nussey, May 17, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

By September 1945 Ridgway was back at Ascot Vale, and on November 1, with his R.A.A.F discharge approved, Kingsley Ridgway took on the new role of Field Representative of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia.

Chapter 7

FOUNDATIONS 1945-1947

The period from Ridgway's appointment in November 1945 until the first official Conference in November 1947 was foundational as a team was gathered and policies were established.

LAUNCHING THE DENOMINATION 1945-1946

The first meeting held on behalf of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was on Sunday, November 11, 1945 at rented facilities at 262 Flinders Lane in inner-city Melbourne. In 1946 the work expanded to the suburbs and to rural centres in the state. Tent meetings were initially used for outreach into the northern and western suburbs, with churches established in the suburbs of Moonee Ponds and Yarraville and the rural centres of Bendigo and Cohuna. This was in keeping with the strategy that Ridgway had outlined to Dr Eddy, the North American Conference President, in March 1945, "I visualize a campaign of tent meetings of sufficient duration in each place to gather a permanent congregation: thence a rented hall and a resident pastor until ultimately the members can themselves finance the building of a church."¹

Evangelistic tent meetings were commenced in those outer northern suburbs where Ridgway had many connections. Initially the meetings were conducted four evenings each week at the corner of Buckley and Fawkner/Cooper Streets in Essendon. (See figure 7.1.) In February 1946 the tent was relocated to Ascot Vale from which the Moonee Ponds congregation began in May. The tent was used again in January 1947 to launch the Yarraville ministry and in March to launch the Cohuna

¹ Correspondence from Eddy, March 15, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives of Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, Melbourne).

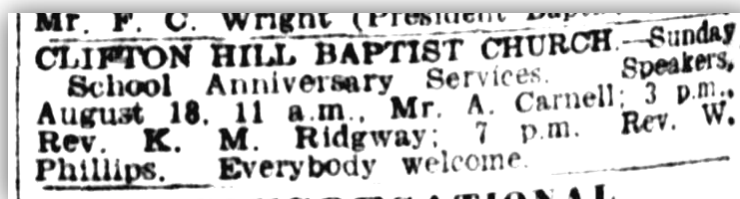
ministry. After that time the tent was redirected to children's ministry and annual camp meetings.

Figure 7.1 Advertising flyer for Essendon tent meetings 1945²



Meanwhile Ridgway continued preaching in various churches as part of his interdenominational practice and to build his network in the church community. In April 1946 Ridgway spoke at Ivanhoe Baptist Church, at the City Mission, and at an Ambassadors for Christ rally in Lilydale, Tasmania. On August 18, he spoke at the Clifton Hill Baptist Church, sharing the preaching engagement with Aubrey Carnell, who he had previously met in 1945.³ (See figure 7.2.) In December Ridgway spoke at the United Gospel Mission, to which he returned again in March 1947.

Figure 7.2 Church Notice showing Ridgway & Carnell together 1946⁴



One who assisted Ridgway to connect with a wider network of church-goers in Melbourne was Rev. Gilbert McLaren. McLaren had known of Ridgway's ministry

² K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³ Aubrey Carnell, "The Life Story of Rev. Dr. Aubrey Carnell" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, 2000), 22.

⁴ *The Argus* newspaper, August 17, 1946, 32.

as a padre in the R.A.A.F. and a speaker at the Everyman's Rallies during the war. He began to meet regularly with Ridgway for prayer early in 1946. The two men found a strong connection through the holiness message and became "more and more firmly convinced that what is needed is a holiness church."⁵ McLaren had previously served as an ordained minister in the Methodist Church of Australasia and as President of the Western Australia Conference but in 1932 he resigned from the Methodist Church, stating that "the burden of labouring amid so much compromise [was] becoming intolerable."⁶ He then established a non-denominational ministry at a rented hall on Noone Street, Clifton Hill. Land was purchased and a new building was constructed through 1940-1942. The new brick hall served the Noone Street Mission for twenty years, after which it was purchased by the Open Air Campaigners,⁷ and later converted to a private residence. The newly formed Wesleyan Methodist Church met in the Noone Street Mission many times in 1946-1947.

In April 1946 McLaren took Ridgway to meet Mr Charles Lee, a former Methodist lay worker. Lee had served as the President of the Local Preachers' Association in Victoria and later as the Treasurer of the Melbourne branch during a period when Gilbert McLaren also attended the Melbourne branch. In his earlier years Lee had sought out the Methodist Church because he wanted to "join the church with the most fire" but instead found that the "fire had gone out!" When Lee read the Wesleyan Methodist Church's *Discipline* "and saw its clear holiness teaching, and its prohibition of such things as tobacco, secret societies, fairs and worldliness, he said 'That's my church!'"⁸

The three men met together on Monday April 29, 1946 at Lee's home in Monbulk to discuss the new denomination. They met for prayer and discussion and by the end of the day they agreed to take membership in the new church and began to prepare for a larger Organising Meeting. The minutes of the initial Monbulk meeting record the overwhelming sentiment:

⁵ District Board Minutes, June 8, 1946 (Archives).

⁶ District Board Minutes, June 8, 1946 (Archives).

⁷ The Open Air Campaigners (OAC) began in Australia in 1892 with the purpose of presenting evangelistic services in public spaces. OAC has expanded its operations to twelve countries in 2016. OAC website, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.oacom.org/index.asp>.

⁸ District Board Minutes, June 8, 1946 (Archives).

After much prayer we became convinced that God called for the rebirth of holiness teaching as enunciated by John Wesley. Having looked at the possibility of such a witness within the existing churches in Australia, we came to the conclusion that revival of the teaching of holiness could best be brought about by a link with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America.⁹

The public Organising Session was held on June 8, 1946 at the Clifton Hill Church, at which time five additional members were received: Mrs Elizabeth Ebbels, Miss Hilda Exell, Mr L. Bruce Hooke and Mr Douglas Bushby, with Ridgway's wife, Dorcas, transferring her membership from Syracuse, New York.¹⁰ These founding meetings were held in the eastern suburbs because of Gilbert McLaren's participation, despite the fact that the evangelistic ministry was entirely focused in the northern and western suburbs.

During 1946 the new church grew consistently through mid-week meetings. The small meetings were characterised by fervent prayer, holiness preaching and appeals to all to receive the fullness of the Spirit. It was not unusual for meetings to continue "till a late hour in prayer and praise, testimony and exhortation."¹¹ The group was intentional and expectant in their purpose of bringing the holiness message to the Australian population.

The first two worship centres were established in the Melbourne suburb of Moonee Ponds and the city of Bendigo, with the Moonee Ponds congregation relocating six kilometres to North Carlton later in 1946. (See figure 7.3.) Options were explored for work in Newcastle, New South Wales and invitations to commence in Western Australia and Tasmania were deferred.¹² A possible union with the Bethesda Aboriginal Mission in Fitzroy was also discussed with its founder, Maude Ellis, but to no avail.¹³ Despite Charles Lee and J.T. Carnell serving on the Bethesda Mission Board into 1947 with Ridgway as Board Chairman, two of the trustees were steadfastly opposed to surrendering the property to the Wesleyans and

⁹ District Board Minutes, April, 29, 1946 (Archives).

¹⁰ The Ridgways had been received as members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Syracuse when they decided to move away from the Standard Church. Ridgway's ordination credentials had also been recognised at that same time, making it easy for them both to transfer into the Australian church as a membership roll was established.

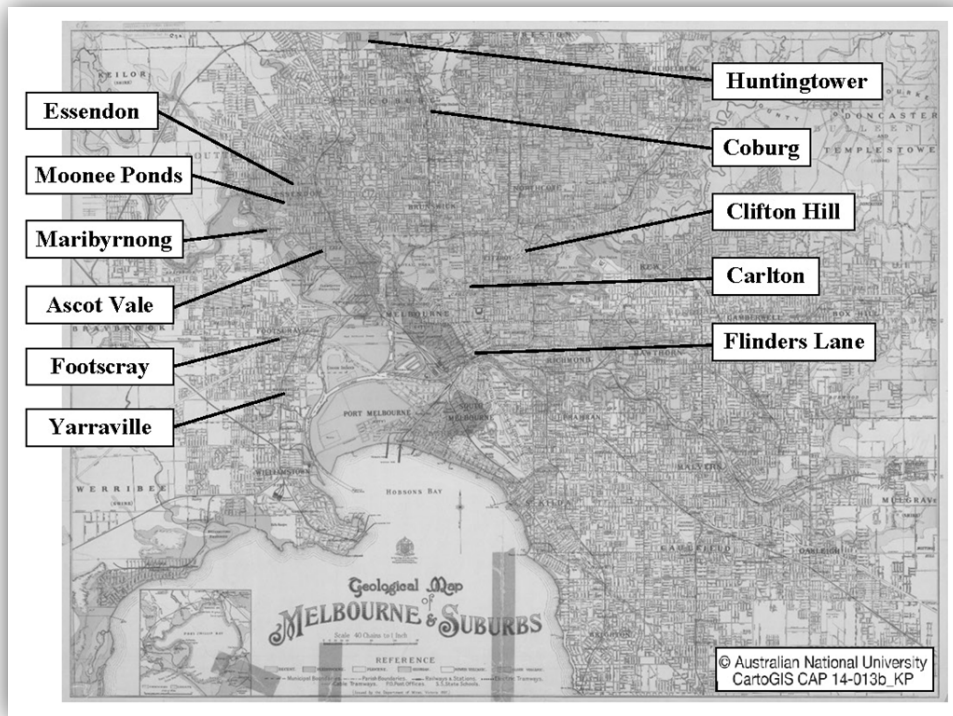
¹¹ District Board Minutes, August 13, 1946 (Archives).

¹² Correspondence to Swauger, September 15, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹³ Correspondence to Swauger, December 6, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

the arrangement lapsed.¹⁴ Maude Ellis, who took membership on January 22, 1947, submitted her letter of resignation on April 4 the same year, stating that she felt she should remain non-denominational because of the work she was leading.¹⁵

Figure 7.3 *Map of Melbourne with significant places 1940s*¹⁶



Another of the very early leaders was John Thomas (J.T.) Carnell, who joined after many years of ministry as an officer of the Salvation Army. He and his wife, Elsie, had served in an extensive number of corps following the Army's practice of regular reassignment. Twenty of these pastoral assignments between the years of 1908 and 1931 in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia are named in Aubrey Carnell's "Life Story".¹⁷ J.T. and Elsie Carnell bore two children, Aubrey and Gwen, and all four were to become vitally engaged in the newly established Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1935, Carnell and his family relocated to Footscray and it was while serving there that Carnell left the Salvation Army and took up interdenominational ministry. In December 1945 Aubrey Carnell, who was now

¹⁴ Correspondence to Swauger, February 8, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives). Which Carnell (J.T. or Aubrey) is not stated.

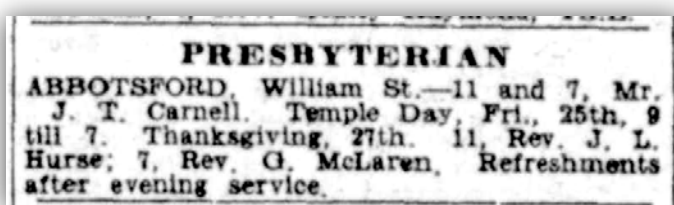
¹⁵ Correspondence from Ellis, April 4, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹⁶ Map provided by Australian National University CartoGIS CAP, used by permission.

¹⁷ Carnell, "Life Story," 1-8.

twenty-one years old, was asked to visit the tent meetings in Essendon to evaluate Kingsley Ridgway's ministry. Carnell does not name the person who asked him to visit the Essendon tent meetings but he does mention an existing relationship with the Noone Street Mission,¹⁸ so it is possible that Carnell's commission to visit Ridgway's new work came via J.T. Carnell or directly from Gilbert McLaren himself. An advertisement in the "Churches" section of *The Argus* newspaper in May 1945 shows J.T. Carnell and Gilbert McLaren sharing a preaching engagement at the Abbotsford Presbyterian Church, illustrating a prior relationship between McLaren and the Carnells.

Figure 7.4 Church Notice showing J.T. Carnell & Gilbert McLaren together 1945¹⁹



Carnell apparently met Ridgway for the first time at the Essendon tent meetings and was sufficiently impressed that he continued to communicate with him. By early 1946 Carnell was a regular participant in the Wesleyan Methodist ministry.²⁰ In this way the foundation was laid for the Monbulk meeting, still three months into the future. Carnell's mother, Elsie, and sister, Gwen, took formal membership on July 30, 1946 and his father (J.T. Carnell) joined on August 13. J.T. Carnell was serving as a minister in the Presbyterian Church at that time and concluded that appointment at the end of 1946 to join the Wesleyans. He served initially as a layman and then as a local preacher before his ordination was recognised by the Wesleyan Methodist Church on December 31, 1947.²¹ (See figure 7.5.) The denomination's first full year (1946) concluded with three significant events. In October the first service in

¹⁸ Carnell, "Life Story," 17.

¹⁹ *The Argus* newspaper, May 19, 1945, 14.

²⁰ Carnell, "Life Story," 22. No record of this is found in the minutes. The minutes show Aubrey Carnell becoming a Full Member on the April 2, 1947.

²¹ Most denominations allow some time for the transfer of ministerial credentials from a previous denomination. Often it requires additional studies. During this time ministers may be given special permission to minister under some restrictions. The additional complication for J.T. Carnell is that the Salvation Army does not use ordain in the same sense that other Protestant denominations do. Therefore it is not unusual that J.T. might move between denominations and finally settle. In fact, toward the end of his career, J.T. returned to serve in the Salvation Army.

Bendigo in the new church was held, in November the former Moonee Ponds congregation held their first service in Carlton and in December a district camp meeting was held at Barwon Heads.

Figure 7.5 *Gerald Bustin, William Bromley and Gilbert McLaren 1947*²²



The first regular Sunday services for the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia were conducted at Moonee Ponds from May and Bendigo from October 1946. The Moonee Ponds congregation relocated from their rented room to a rented church in Carlton in November the same year, which was cause for great celebration amongst the new Wesleyan Methodists. In the denominational records the Carlton dedication has somewhat overshadowed the dedication of the Bendigo Church that preceded it by one month. The Bendigo dedication was in fact, a more auspicious event since it involved the purchase of the denomination's first church building in Australia.²³ However, Carlton was central to the work, being located in Melbourne and the church which Kingsley Ridgway pastored. The Carlton Church was considered the home church and the early minutes of the Carlton Church flow into the later district minutes, so the record from Carlton is better preserved. The congregation at Carlton is pictured as figure 7.6.

²² Photo courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used by permission.

²³ Aubrey Carnell makes the claim that the Dalton's Bridge chapel built in 1948 was the denomination's first building, but this is inaccurate though understandable given the short history of the Bendigo church. See Carnell, "Life Story," 23.

Figure 7.6 *The Carlton church and congregation c. 1947*²⁴



The Barwon Heads camp meeting spanned Christmas Day and New Year's Day, extending from December 23, 1946 to January 1, 1947. A notable arrival at this camp was Miss Grace Wood, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary who had served in India for thirty years and was returning to the United States. Miss Wood and Miss Bienvenu staffed the new headquarters from December 1947. (See figure 7.7.)

Figure 7.7 *Miss Grace Wood (front) and Miss Ella Bievenu c. 1948*²⁵



²⁴ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

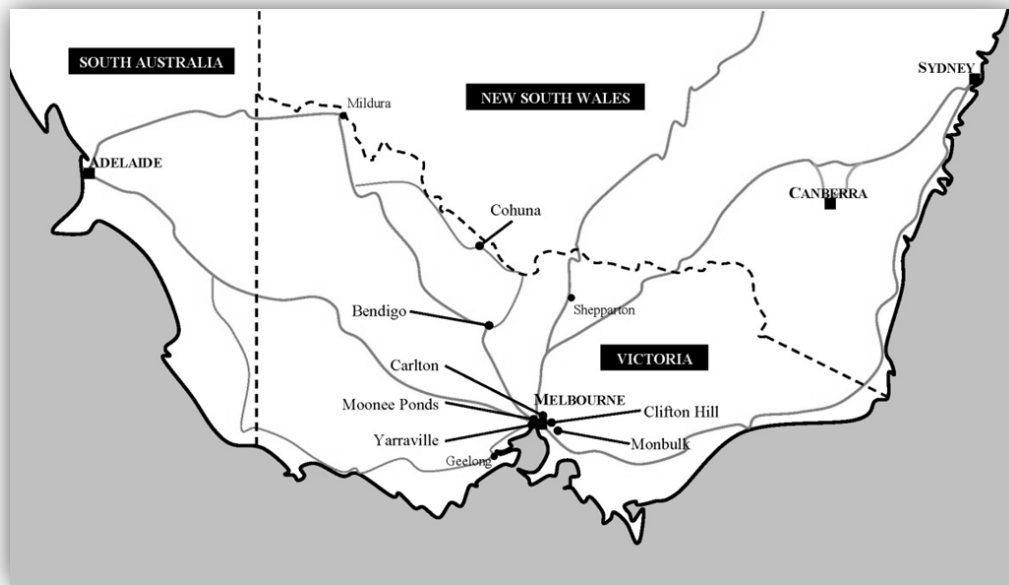
²⁵ K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Miss Wood's imminent arrival had been advised at the Monbulk meeting in April 1946,²⁶ but through miscommunication and changing circumstances, she only arrived in December for the commencement of the camp.²⁷ Miss Wood stayed in Australia from December 1946 until August 1949.²⁸ As shall be seen, she was a close confidante to Ridgway and was largely responsible for holding the fledgling group together during the middle months of 1947. At the first Annual Conference, in the Conference President's report, Ridgway spoke for the Australian church when he wrote, "[Miss Wood's] utter devotion to God, her blameless life and holy conversation, and especially her power in prayer, have been of inestimable value to this holiness cause in Australia."²⁹ Her contribution to the new mission remains one of the most celebrated gifts of the foundation years.

EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION 1947

Early in 1947 congregations were established in the suburb of Yarraville, to the west of Melbourne city and in the small rural community of Cohuna, 280 kilometres north of Melbourne on the Murray River (see figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8 Significant Wesleyan Methodist Church locations in Victoria 1940s



²⁶ District Board Minutes, April 29, 1946 (Archives).

²⁷ "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives). See also, James Ridgway, *The Beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in Australia* (Marion, Indiana: Wesleyan Methodist Church, c. 1960), 2.

²⁸ "Conference President's Report: Official Acts," 3rd District Conference, March 1950 (Archives).

²⁹ "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

With the impending General Conference in North America, formalisation of the Australian work became a priority in 1947. In February permission was received from America to hold a "Token" Conference³⁰ for the purposes of organising the work.³¹

The Token Organisation was held on Easter Monday, April 7, 1947.³² At that meeting Kingsley Ridgway was elected President and Bruce Hooke was elected Secretary. Ridgway was further elected to represent the Australian work at the 1947 North American General Conference, which was a mere formality since preparations had been underway for Ridgway's passage to General Conference since December 1946. An Australian Advisory Board was elected consisting of Kingsley Ridgway, Gilbert McLaren and Grace Wood.³³ Ridgway sailed for California on April 14, 1947.³⁴ During his absence Grace Wood led the Australian church and the young Aubrey Carnell, now a local preacher in the new Wesleyan Methodist Church in Yarraville, filled the pulpit at Carlton. Ridgway returned from America in July.

The role of the layman Bruce Hooke was significant in the early years. In June 1946 he took membership in the denomination and in 1947 he was elected Secretary. He was granted an exhorter's licence on January 22, 1947 (see figure 7.9.) and was an elected delegate to the Token Organization meeting in April 1947. Therefore, it came as a surprise for Grace Wood when she received Hooke's resignation during Ridgway's absence in North America. Hooke wrote:

Herewith I enclose my resignation as Clerk, S.S. Superintendent, Y.M.W.B. Treasurer and Token Conference Secretary. Also I enclose my resignation as a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Doubtless this will cause regret and I do thank you for all the help and inspiration you have been. Unfortunately my present experience changes my attitude – it is my humble yet considered opinion that there are quite enough sects in this country without introducing another one regardless of its merits.³⁵

³⁰ "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

³¹ Correspondence from Swauger, February 25, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³² The minutes of this meeting do not list the names of those who were present, but based on the small membership at the time, it is unlikely to have been more than twenty persons in total.

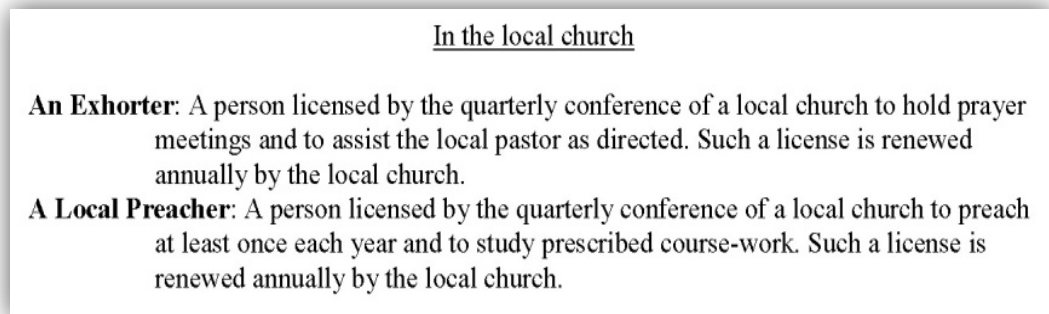
³³ District Board Minutes, April 7, 1947 (Archives).

³⁴ Correspondence to Swauger, February 8, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives). The *Marine Phoenix* departed Sydney on April 14, with anticipated arrival in San Francisco on May 2-3.

³⁵ Correspondence from Hooke, c. May 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

The departure of Hooke marked the beginning of an early reversal in the work. In 1957 James Ridgway, Kingsley Ridgway's oldest son and a future denominational leader, wrote of Hooke's departure stating that, "This began a period of real sifting and withdrawal of numbers."³⁶

Figure 7.9 *Terms used by the Wesleyan Methodist Church*³⁷



On October 9, 1947 Rev. J. Robert Swauger arrived in Melbourne to conduct the first District Conference. (See figure 7.11.) Ridgway and Swauger had been in constant communication since 1945 and had met together during Ridgway's travel to North America for General Conference. Swauger had been generous and unwavering in his support for the Australian work and held Ridgway in high regard. In December 1946 Swauger wrote:

It seems to me that every one of your letters gets to be more and more encouraging. I feel as though the work that you are doing there in Australia will go down in history for its achievement and its good management. May the Lord's blessing continue to be upon you.³⁸

Swauger's arrival in Australia was used as a major advertising opportunity for the Australian church. He was promoted as a visiting "American evangelist"³⁹ in Melbourne for the "Australian Revival Campaign",⁴⁰ with meetings scheduled every night from October 11 to 20. Three newspapers interviewed Swauger on the day of

³⁶ James Ridgway, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia: Interesting Facts for Interested Friends* (Melbourne: Wesley, 1965), 7.

³⁷ Wesleyan Methodist Church, *Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection (or Church) of America 1943* (Syracuse, NY: Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1943), para. 90, 91, 94, 164, 166, 171.

³⁸ Correspondence from Swauger, December 18, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³⁹ *The Argus* newspaper, October 4, 1947, 38.

⁴⁰ *The Argus* newspaper, October 11, 1947, 38.

his arrival, adding to the publicity for the campaign.⁴¹ In the daytime Swauger and Ridgway searched for a suitable property for the future headquarters, sometimes accompanied by Miss Wood, Aubrey Carnell, Gilbert McLaren or Charles Lee.

On October 17, Swauger, Ridgway and Aubrey Carnell inspected "an old brick mansion, with two large garage buildings and three hen-houses; there were about 3 acres of land."⁴² This old mansion in the northern suburb of Glenroy was called Huntingtower, as shown as figure 7.10. All were quickly convinced that this was the property that they wanted. The following Monday, October 20, Swauger wrote to the American leadership requesting urgent approval to purchase Huntingtower. Their option to purchase Huntingtower was due to expire on Friday, so after prayer and before American approval had been returned, Swauger and Ridgway went ahead and agreed to the purchase with final payment due by January 25, 1948. Fortunately the cable arrived from America on Tuesday October 28, "as follows: '**Good.**' **Nicholson**".⁴³ "Good" had been the prearranged code word for "Board approves but can find no one to lend money". During this time Swauger and Ridgway also had discussions with McLaren to encourage him to accept the role of Conference President, and they met with Lee to resolve growing tension between him and Ridgway.⁴⁴

The denomination's first District Conference⁴⁵ was scheduled to commence on November 14, 1947, so for three weeks between the Melbourne campaign and the Conference Swauger participated in meetings in Bendigo⁴⁶ followed by a tour in Tasmania. The visits to Launceston and Hobart included meeting with an ex-Methodist minister in Launceston and with Ambassadors for Christ.⁴⁷

⁴¹ J. Robert Swauger, "Diary: Australian Trip Begun at Apollo, Pennsylvania" (Wesleyan Church headquarters, USA: unpublished diary, 1947), 6.

⁴² Swauger, "Diary: Australian Trip," 9.

⁴³ Swauger, "Diary: Australian Trip," 15.

⁴⁴ Swauger, "Diary: Australian Trip," 10 and 13.

⁴⁵ In the Minutes the early conferences are titled "Annual Conferences" although they were later called a "District Conference" of the North American Church. The Australian Church became a "National Conference" in 1983 when they adopted a multi-district structure in Australia to cope with rapid expansion. For the sake of continuity and to separate these conferences from other local conferences, I have adopted the use of "District Conference" from 1947 to 1982.

⁴⁶ District Board Minutes, December 18, 1947 (Archives).

⁴⁷ Swauger, "Diary: Australian Trip," 19.

Figure 7.10 *Huntingtower in 1947*⁴⁸



The inaugural District Conference went two days, Friday to Saturday, November 14-15, 1947, with Swauger was invited to chair the Conference. The Conference consisted of the Chairman, ten voting delegates and other visitors. The ministerial delegates were not listed, but they would have included Kingsley Ridgway, Gilbert McLaren and J.T. Carnell, with missionary Grace Wood and local preacher William Bromley. Lay delegates were Mr Charles Lee, Mr L.R. Lanston, Mr Edgar Randall, Mr Aubrey Carnell and Miss Gwen Carnell. Mr Earle Spratt was present to bring greetings from the Nazarene Church. Three important events at this Conference permanently reshaped the infant church: approval to purchase Huntingtower, an accusation brought by Charles Lee, and the election of Gilbert McLaren to the position of Conference President.

HUNTINGTOWER

Following the Denominational Address by J.R. Swauger, a brief minute is recorded approving the purchase of a property that would serve as the hub for the church for the next sixty years: "It was voted that the Conference board trustees be authorized to sign the contract, and necessary papers for the purchase of 'Hunting

⁴⁸ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

Tower' [sic] as a Bible School."⁴⁹ The urgency to establish a Bible College might seem unusual given that, at the time, the denomination had only four small congregations with less than forty members in total and too few workers to fill a college. However, this action illustrates how clearly Kingsley Ridgway and his team saw themselves introducing a theological emphasis that was lacking in the Australian church scene at the time. In 1945 Ridgway stated his vision, "Our own theological training school will be needed: for those existing are either modernistic or else rabidly Calvinistic: with the single exception of the Salvation Army training colleges, which of course are restricted."⁵⁰

Huntingtower was one of the largest double-storey mansions built north of Coburg in the nineteenth century, with ten rooms and situated on a large estate. It is thought to have been built in 1875 and was originally known as Orient House.⁵¹ After World War I it was renamed Huntingtower, and in 1933 it was purchased by Edward J. Bishop. During World War II Bishop made the property available as a Servicemen's Recreation Centre. In 1945 Mrs Bishop died in Huntingtower, and subsequently it was rumoured to be haunted.⁵² The house sat empty for some time, until it was taken to auction in September 1947 but failed to reach the reserve price.⁵³ The house on three acres of land was then offered to the Wesleyan Methodist Church by private negotiation at a greatly reduced price of £3,000. Following approval from the North American headquarters and the vote of the Australian Conference, the purchase proceeded quickly. Mr Bishop, the vendor, permitted the Wesleyans to take possession of Huntingtower in December 1947 even though government approvals had not yet been processed and final payment had not been completed. With furniture added and some renovations undertaken, including a shower and a septic toilet, Grace Wood and local single woman, Ella Bienvenu, moved into the premises

⁴⁹ "Minutes," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

⁵⁰ Correspondence to Eddy, March 15, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁵¹ "Huntingtower," Victorian Heritage Database, accessed January 21, 2014, http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic/?timeout=yes#detail_places;59086.

⁵² Carlotta Kellaway, Research notes on Kingsley College (Archives: unpublished, 2011).

⁵³ *The Argus* newspaper, September 18, 1947, 16.

on December 10, 1947,⁵⁴ Grace Wood as "House Mother" and Ella Bienvenu as cook.⁵⁵

Figure 7.11 *The Wesleyans with Mr Bishop for inspection of Huntingtower 1947*⁵⁶



J.R. Swauger returned to the United States late in November 1947 and began an intense schedule of travel and promotion on behalf of the Australian work. Before Christmas he posted a check for US\$7,604.77 to Australia to pay the bulk of the purchase price of Huntingtower and to demonstrate his earnestness to Mr Bishop. These funds came from local church gifts, a gift of \$3,000 from the Ladies' Missionary Society and an interest-free loan of \$3,000 from another individual (to be repaid as funds were raised). Swauger wrote, "I shall not be surprised if we have the school paid for in full before many weeks. The interest has been splendid."⁵⁷ By March 1948 the American church had sent more than US\$10,000 for the purchase and fit-out of the new Australian headquarters.

⁵⁴ Correspondence to Swauger, December 1, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

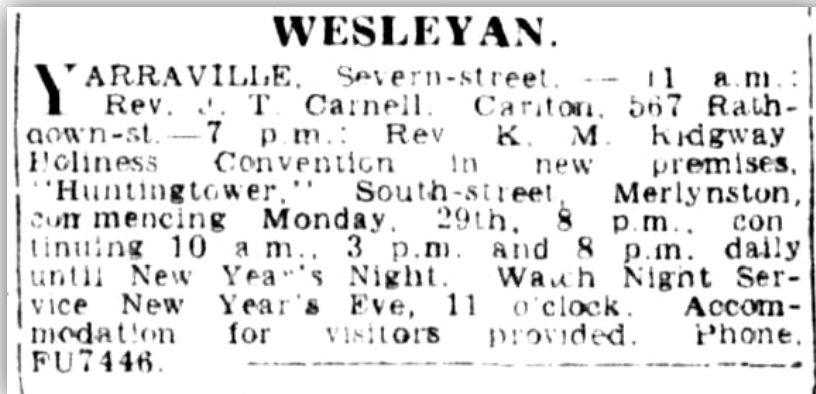
⁵⁵ James M. Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia 1946 – 1956" (Wilmore, Kentucky: Term Paper for Asbury Theological Seminary, 1957), 12.

⁵⁶ Photo courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used by permission. L-R: J.T. Carnell, JR Swauger, Grace Wood, William Bromley, Hazel Carnell holding Dennis Carnell, Elsie Carnell, Mr Bishop, Aubrey Carnell holding shoulders of Graeme Carnell, James Ridgway.

⁵⁷ Correspondence from Swauger, December 19 and 23, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Following the November Conference, a holiness rally was held in Huntingtower from December 19-31, 1947. (See figure 7.12.) During that rally an emergency session of the Conference was convened on December 31 to approve the ordination of J.T. Carnell.⁵⁸ Carnell's ordination ceremony was conducted at Huntingtower that same evening.

Figure 7.12 *First Wesleyan Methodist convention at Huntingtower 1947*⁵⁹



It is interesting that the property was already called the "Bible School" in 1947, even though the school would not become a reality until 1949. The Conference Trustees met again at Huntingtower in January and March, 1948 and at the March meeting they reaffirmed the decision to purchase the property with a more detailed motion:

It was resolved that the Board of Trustees purchase and acquire the property known as "Huntingtower" in South Street, Glenroy, for use as a Bible School, Hostel, Campground, Headquarters, Residence, and for any other purpose authorized by the annual [i.e. District] Conference; the full purchase price of the property being three thousand pounds.⁶⁰

The reason for revisiting this motion was not to re-make a decision to purchase, since the Conference had made that decision and the sale had already been accomplished. This additional minute was to outline the *purposes* of the new property. The first minute gave the impression that the property was purchased solely as a Bible College, but the later motion details multiple purposes for the property and in fact, it would be used for whatever the Australian church should deem necessary

⁵⁸ "Minutes," Special Session of the District Conference, December 1947 (Archives).

⁵⁹ *The Age* newspaper, December 24, 1947, 11.

⁶⁰ District Board Minutes, March 5, 1948 (Archives).

in future generations. This action by the Board of Trustees was echoed in 1994 when an Australian version of *The Discipline* was finally approved with the statement, "Title to the property of Kingsley College shall be held by the Wesleyan Methodist Church Property Trust Ltd. for the use and benefit of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia."⁶¹

ACCUSATIONS BY CHARLES LEE

The other two major events of the first Conference in November 1947 were the resignations of Charles Lee and Gilbert McLaren. Charles Lee had been working vigorously for the new church. He was one of the founding members, he had been instrumental in starting the two early churches at Bendigo and Cohuna, and he had served as conference preacher in both Carlton and Bendigo Churches. However, by May 1947 Charles Lee was losing passion for the Wesleyan cause. He wrote to Kingsley Ridgway, "I herewith tender my Resignation as Pastor of the Bendigo Church & as a Conference Preacher as from May 5th 1947."⁶² Two events seem to have precipitated this resignation. In April, Lee was hospitalised for three weeks in Bendigo and was absent during the Token Organisation meeting on April 7, 1947. In his absence he was not elected to the Advisory Board. Later in April, Lee wrote to Grace Wood to arrange for the work at Bendigo to be handed over since he could not care for it properly due to a period of hospitalisation.⁶³ (Ridgway had departed for the North American General Conference on April 14 and consequently pastoral arrangements for Bendigo were addressed to Grace Wood.) Upon Ridgway's return it seems that Lee wanted to convey his more permanent decision, hence the second letter. It is also clear that the debt on the Bendigo property was beginning to overwhelm the new church and a sense of resentment and suspicion was aroused in Lee's mind. As the financial strain mounted, Lee began to question Ridgway's distribution of North American funds, claiming that funding from America

⁶¹ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia 1994* (Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1994), para. 936.

⁶² Correspondence from Lee, c. May 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶³ Correspondence from Lee, c. April 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

designated for the Bendigo property had not been fully acquitted. Ridgway was at that time the treasurer.⁶⁴

Several comments in correspondence between J.R. Swauger and Kingsley Ridgway around this time suggest that there was mounting tension between one key leader and Ridgway, and Charles Lee was most likely that key leader. Swauger wanted both Kingsley Ridgway and Grace Wood to attend the General Conference, but Ridgway insisted that one of them must remain in Australia. In March 1947, as the tension was brewing, Ridgway wrote to Swauger:

The condition of the work here is such that both Sister Wood and I feel that one of us should remain here while the other is away at General Conference. I can see my way clear for the work if she remains while I am away, but I think we would be taking a big risk if both of us leave at this juncture.... One of our workers is rather a dominant type, but not the type to leave in charge: yet in our absence he would virtually take charge. I speak thus plainly so that you may sense our difficulty.⁶⁵

From April 1947 Charles Lee withdrew from ministry, but did not yet withdraw his membership. He remained involved and attended the District Conference in November as a voting delegate. In August, two months prior to the Conference, Swauger wrote to Ridgway:

Please do not allow the fact that one of the leaders has taken a chance to differ with you, to discourage you. I believe that there is no better way, under such circumstances, than to separate and keep sweet. I am sure that God will overrule all of this for His glory.⁶⁶

It cannot be a coincidence that in the first session of the Conference, Charles Lee was appointed together with H.W. Smith to audit the financial records. They reported to the Conference that the records were "in order and correct",⁶⁷ which may have settled that part of the dispute. Immediately after Ridgway's Treasurer's Report, a vote of thanks was extended to Charles Lee for his services to the denomination, which is incongruous unless it was in connection with the Treasurer's Report that Lee

⁶⁴ Personal communication between James Ridgway and the author established the content of the accusation. The details are confirmed by Glen O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan-Holiness Pioneer," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 67-68.

⁶⁵ Correspondence to Swauger, March 1, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶⁶ Correspondence from Swauger, August 23, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶⁷ "Minutes and Auditing Committee's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

announced his resignation. The accusations against Ridgway were unsubstantiated and the Conference accepted Lee's decision to depart. It is notable that immediately following this report Ridgway excused himself from service as treasurer.⁶⁸

Popular history has it that Charles Lee actually stood and brought accusations against Ridgway on the floor of the Conference,⁶⁹ but the minutes are silent on that. What is recorded in the minutes is that Charles Lee brought a letter to the Pastoral Relations Committee, seemingly in an attempt to be reinstated as a conference preacher, and J.R. Swauger ruled that letter out-of-order. The letter has not survived, but the minute of the Executive in December 1947 reads, "The action of the Home Missionary Secretary in ruling 'out-of-order' the application of Mr. C. J. Lee for reinstatement as a Conference Preacher was approved."⁷⁰ It is possible that Lee's statements on the floor of Conference may have been made at the time of the reading of the Pastoral Relations Committee's report or the Treasurer's report.

One day after the Conference, Charles Lee wrote to Gilbert McLaren, the newly elected Conference President, presenting his written resignation. The main accusation in that letter is against the American chairman. He wrote:

Now Sir these are some of the things that led me to take this step this Sabbath morning at the close of the 1st Conference at which a representative of the American body presided & who made it perfectly clear that no final decisions could be reached both in regard to conduct of Church matters & progress & in regard to the safeguarding of ones [sic] good name unless first submitted to the American Head Quarters of the Church.⁷¹

A formal letter from J.R. Swauger, posted to Australia from the North American Headquarters upon Swauger's return in 1948 makes it clear that Swauger believed misuse of funds was central to the accusation, even if resentment against the American intervention was named in Lee's letter of resignation. On denominational letterhead and embossed with the corporate seal, Swauger wrote:

To Whom It May Concern,... The Rev. Mr. Ridgway has always given a prompt, accurate and satisfactory accounting for all monies sent to him, and there has never been any question whatsoever as to his honesty or accuracy in accounting

⁶⁸ "Minutes," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

⁶⁹ Alberta Metz, *God Found Kingsley Ridgway* (Marion, Indiana: Wesley Press 1985), 47. See also O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 67.

⁷⁰ District Board Minutes, December 4, 1947 (Archives).

⁷¹ Correspondence Lee to McLaren, November 16, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

for all funds entrusted to him, nor has there been any question in his carrying out the wishes of the Executive Board in America in his use of such funds.⁷²

Gilbert McLaren subsequently audited the cash book kept by Ridgway while treasurer, comparing it to the Swauger's records, and confirmed that all had been correctly entered.⁷³

All of the details of this saga are difficult to ascertain. It seems that the purchase of the Bendigo property was hasty and ill-considered and the subsequent loss of Bendigo was a harsh consequence that impacted the whole church. Furthermore, Charles Lee, Kingsley Ridgway, Gilbert McLaren and all involved were exhausting themselves to get the new church established, and this may have contributed to Lee's illness in 1947 and to the rising tension. Furthermore, it is possible that J.R. Swauger's close friendship with Kingsley Ridgway, or his lack of understanding of the Australian culture, led him to overreact to Lee at the Conference, although the evidence suggests that Charles Lee and Kingsley Ridgway had already reached an impasse. In 1974 the National Secretary, Rev. James Midgley, wrote to Charles Lee to seek clarification. Charles Lee replied in a very welcoming tone, but rejected the suggestion that his accusation had centred upon Kingsley Ridgway's use of church funds,⁷⁴ but rather was a question of Ridgway's integrity.

Two things are clear: there was no evidence to support a claim of financial mismanagement against Kingsley Ridgway and the church lost one of its most vigorous workers when it lost Charles Lee. In an undated letter from Lee, but clearly in 1947, he speaks of the "push into" and the "great hopes for" Echuca.⁷⁵ The Wesleyan Methodist Church would certainly have developed differently if Lee had not resigned. Instead, the rural work in Victoria lost ground after 1947 and it was decades before it was re-established.

Charles Lee's relationship with the Wesleyan Methodists continued to decline after the first Conference when some defamatory correspondence from Lee's wife to

⁷² Correspondence from Swauger, May 22, 1948, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷³ Notation signed by McLaren, dated June 14, 1946, and added to the bottom of the above letter from Swauger.

⁷⁴ Correspondence from Lee, March 11, 1974, J. Midgley records (Archives).

⁷⁵ Correspondence from Lee, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

another church contact was reported back to the church. Ridgway wrote to Swauger, to inform him that they would be taking no further action.⁷⁶

GILBERT McLAREN'S RESIGNATION

McLaren also withdrew from the denomination after this first Conference in November 1947, but without the acrimony. At the Conference McLaren was elected President with Ridgway as Vice-President, but this action brought to a head the conflict between McLaren's personal desire to join the Wesleyan Methodist Church and his local church's steadfast intention to remain independent.⁷⁷ McLaren had recorded his commitment to bring the Noone Street Mission into the new denomination at the very first meeting in April 1946⁷⁸ and he quickly initiated the transfer of his own ministerial credentials to the North American Wesleyan Methodist Church.⁷⁹ In June 1946 it was anticipated that the Noone Street Mission was ready to join the Wesleyan Methodists and that the transfer of ownership of their property was imminent⁸⁰ but as the months went by it became clear that Calvinistic theology⁸¹ and a desire for independence were obstacles.⁸² In September 1946 McLaren received a letter of good standing from the American church⁸³ allowing him to join the first District Conference as a ministerial delegate and to be eligible for election to leadership. He was duly elected Conference President and gave his acceptance speech. Subsequently however, he was urged by his wife to decline because of the conflict this created with his role in the Noone Street Mission.⁸⁴ The obstacle of Calvinistic theology must be viewed with some scepticism however, since the Noone Street congregation welcomed McLaren's teaching despite him being trained as a Methodist in Arminian theology. It is likely that the desire to remain independent was a stronger motivation for members of the congregation.

⁷⁶ Correspondence to Swauger, c. December 30, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷⁷ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 67.

⁷⁸ District Board Minutes, April 29, 1946 (Archives).

⁷⁹ Correspondence from Eddy, President of the North American WMC, June 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁰ Correspondence to Swauger, June 1, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸¹ Correspondence to Swauger, September 15, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸² O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 67.

⁸³ Correspondence to Swauger, September 15, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁴ Personal communication with James Ridgway.

McLaren resigned on Sunday, one day after the Conference concluded, presumably once he had spoken to his congregation.⁸⁵ Two days after the Conference he wrote to Ridgway to offer his apology, "I am sorry for what has happened but I could do no other."⁸⁶ J.R. Swauger replied to McLaren, echoing the sentiments of the other church leaders, "Your decision was naturally a severe shock to all of us, but it did not strain our love for you, nor our faith in you. We trust that God's guidance shall be your continued portion, and that He shall constantly use you for His glory."⁸⁷

As Vice-President, Kingsley Ridgway was then asked to serve the year as Conference President and he subsequently reported as such to the following District Conference. Gilbert McLaren maintained a friendship and interest in the Wesleyan Methodist cause for many years, attending occasional conferences for the next decade. The loss of McLaren's mature influence was a discouragement to the Wesleyans, and both the Noone Street Mission and the Wesleyan cause suffered as a result of this loss of partnership. The Wesleyan Methodist Church slowly regrouped in the coming years while the Noone Street Mission declined until closed a decade later.

With the rise of the first District Conference, J.R. Swauger undertook meetings at Cohuna then hurried back to Essendon to catch a flight to America to begin raising funds for the payment on Huntingtower.⁸⁸ The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia, now without several early leaders but in possession of a permanent base for a headquarters and a Bible College entered into a new era of modest growth. The losses of 1947 were reported to the American leadership and Roy S. Nicholson, now President of the General Conference, wrote a very encouraging and comforting letter to Ridgway that noted Nicholson's own experience that, "very often those who at first seem most interested in the work and most promising in its promotion usually were among the first to disappoint one."⁸⁹ In response, Ridgway wrote, "Amidst stiffening opposition this thing is crystal clear to me; God wants a Wesleyan work in Australia.

⁸⁵ Personal communication with James Ridgway, supported by O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 66-67.

⁸⁶ Correspondence from McLaren, November 17, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁷ Correspondence Swauger to McLaren, November 22, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸⁸ Initially he was scheduled to depart on December 10, but this was moved forward to November 26 to meet the need for fund-raising. See Swauger, *Diary: Australian Trip*, 18.

⁸⁹ Correspondence from Nicholson, December 16, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

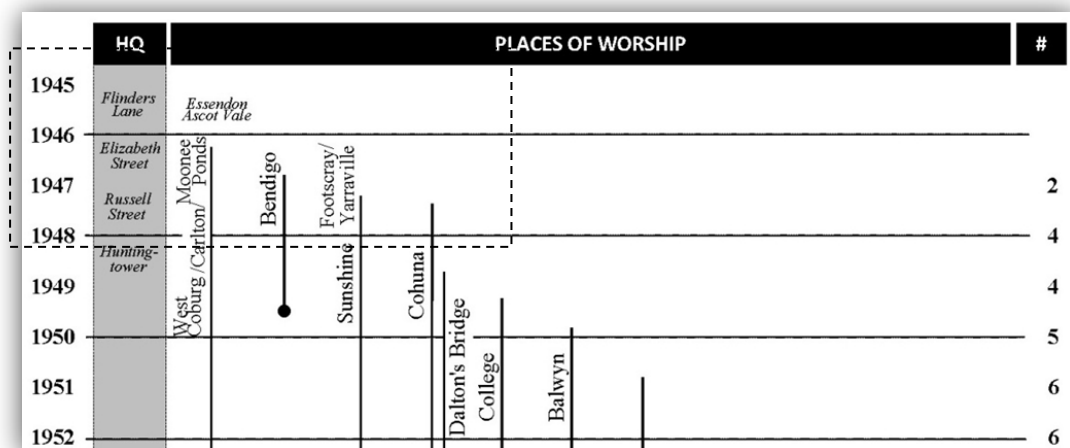
Whom He uses in that work is immaterial. The work is bigger than any man or men."⁹⁰

This overview of the foundational years provides the context for a deeper inspection of some specific events.

THE CULTURE OF THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS

The first four churches were Moonee Ponds (May 1946), Bendigo (October 1946), Yarraville (January 1947) and Cohuna (March 1947). Figure 7.13 shows the name changes and duration of these early congregations and the headquarters movements.⁹¹

Figure 7.13 Churches at a glance 1945 to 1948



There was a sense of optimism in the newly founded church in 1946. This grew out of the conviction that Australia was lacking a holiness church and the expectation that the new work would be warmly welcomed. In 1945, while still in the Air Force, Ridgway wrote to Dr Nicholson in the North American church describing the liberal theology of Methodism and the urgency to commence a more traditional form of Methodism.⁹² If this vision failed to eventuate it was not because of lack of effort on behalf of the pioneers of the new church. Rather, it was their over-estimation of

⁹⁰ Correspondence to Nicholson, December 27, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹¹ For more detail on the local churches and the characters of the time, or for greater listings of source materials, go to APPENDIX B.

⁹² Correspondence to Nicholson, May 17, 1945, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Methodist church-goers' willingness to move to the new cause. Ridgway received an impressive number of enquiries from disillusioned Methodists between 1945 and 1947,⁹³ but few of these resulted in membership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. People were not so quick to leave their former church and its buildings. Furthermore, the activity within the Wesleyan Methodist Church may have been somewhat disturbing to those who considered joining them. Some saw them as sectarian⁹⁴ and controlled by Americans,⁹⁵ and even more disturbing, their emphasis on the holiness doctrine was easily confused with other cultish events in recent Australian church history.⁹⁶ From the correspondence it is clear that a good number of Australian Methodists were familiar with bible-preaching and were pining for this lost emphasis, but they were cautious of the demands of holiness as taught by the Wesleyan Methodists.

Adoption of the Australian work by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of North America was of great significance to the founders. For Ridgway, recognition from America provided authentication, resources and structure. These benefits were realised as the new church carried the name of the North American church, received several important visitors and adopted the Wesleyan Methodist *Discipline*. Ridgway was not overstating the sentiments of the Australian church when he reported:

We are especially grateful to have in our midst as connectional representative The Rev. J.R. Swauger, the Secretary for Home Missions. As will be found when the Treasurer's report is submitted, his department has nobly assisted our work in Australia. His coming has been a great blessing to the Wesleyan cause in Australia, and we are assured the interests of Australia will be well represented by him in the councils of the home church.⁹⁷

However, it seems that some were expecting more financial assistance, especially in securing properties. This is seen in the willingness to take on indebtedness and particularly in the disappointment surrounding the loss of the Bendigo building. The impressive support from North America in the purchase of Huntingtower was not replicated in other properties. This was partially due to a strategic difference between Huntingtower and any local church; Huntingtower was

⁹³ See chapter 6 correspondence samples, page 205ff.

⁹⁴ As illustrated in Bruce Hooke's letter of resignation, page 223.

⁹⁵ As illustrated by Charles Lee's letter of resignation, page 234.

⁹⁶ See Tinker Tailor cult in chapter 8: 265.

⁹⁷ "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

to be a denominational asset rather than a local church asset. Ridgway's vision and the North American expectation was always that the Australian church would finance its own local buildings as they grew, but the Americans saw the establishment of a Bible College as a different cause and one that the small Australian work could not be expected to finance alone.

The apparent partnership of the Noone Street Mission was another source of strength to the early work. At the initial meeting in April 1946 it was recorded that "we rejoice in the statement of Bro. McLaren that the Noone Street Mission, which has been established for the past twelve years, will become part of the new church."⁹⁸ It was not until the rise of the 1947 Conference that it became clear that this would not happen and in the misunderstandings, a close working relationship was fostered and then abruptly severed.

In his biographical study of Kingsley Ridgway's ministry, Glen O'Brien highlighted a loss of momentum and direction while Ridgway was in North America: "Upon his return to Australia, Kingsley found the young church in distress. The people had missed his strong, inspiring leadership. Much difference of opinion began to arise concerning Wesleyan doctrine and practice."⁹⁹ Don Hardgrave, in his 1988 history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia, offered his commentary on this period: "It was apparent that the greatest point of vulnerability was in the area of leadership, for during his absence significant numbers withdrew."¹⁰⁰ It may be that Ridgway's absence was only one factor in the losses leading up to the first District Conference, but the matter of absentee leadership would be revisited many times in the years to come. Ridgway's absences from the Australian leadership consume almost one half of his remaining years of active ministry. Ridgway is portrayed as a humble man, always ready to defer to other leaders, with an "unwillingness to thrust himself forward."¹⁰¹ However, as the founder and the visionary who attracted so many other leaders, Ridgway's unwillingness to accept the mantle of leadership became one of the vulnerabilities of the young church.

⁹⁸ District Board Minutes, April 29, 1946 (Archives).

⁹⁹ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 65.

¹⁰⁰ Donald Hardgrave, *For Such a Time* (Brisbane: Pleasant Surprise, 1988), 65.

¹⁰¹ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 66.

The honeymoon of 1946 gave way to testing times and losses in 1947, but there were greater trials to come. American missionary, Leo Cox arrived late in 1947 and by 1952 wrote:

No one could anticipate the heartaches, setbacks and disappointments that these dear ones were facing in 1946. At times the cause seemed so promising, and then there would come severe onslaughts of Satan. Through the years while others came and went, the Ridgways [were] faithful standbys.¹⁰²

Statistical reports for the year of 1947 record four churches (Carlton, Bendigo, Cohuna and Yarraville) with a total of thirty church members and 105 in the Sunday Schools. At the end of 1948 the membership was stable at thirty-three, as the denomination adjusted to its leadership changes. Despite the challenges, the establishment of a Wesleyan Bible College and the vision of reforming the Australian religious culture spurred the group forward.

WESLEY'S PRIORITIES DURING THIS PERIOD

In these foundational years there is an appearance of every effort being made to re-establish a truly authentic Methodist ministry that reflected John Wesley's own priorities of doctrine, spirit and discipline. However, none of the leaders of the fledgling group had experienced Wesley's early Methodism; they had each been raised in a form of Methodism already adrift from Wesley's priorities. Ridgway's training and experience had been in the Standard Church with a variation of doctrine that, by Ridgway's own admission, had become legalistic and unattractive. McLaren, Lee and others from the Australian Church had served in the Methodist Church during a time of modernism, conflict and rapid change. McLaren had resigned from leadership of the Methodist Church in Western Australia because of compromise and Lee believed that the "fire had gone out" in Australian Methodism. It is not surprising then to find that the Wesleyan Methodists missed some important elements of Wesley's model.

Ridgway and his group vigorously promoted Wesley's doctrines of salvation by faith and assurance of salvation and they demonstrated an extraordinary spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice. However their understanding of John Wesley's holiness

¹⁰² Cox draft article submitted to the *Missionary* magazine, c. 1952, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

doctrine and its working through the class meeting structure was lacking. In retrospect, concern should have been noted at the first meeting in April 1946, when Charles Lee made the connection between holiness teaching and the Wesleyan Methodist *Discipline's* "prohibition of such things as tobacco, secret societies, fairs and worldliness." He said "That's my church!"¹⁰³ This statement may have pointed to a confusion between the holiness teaching of purity of intention and the legalism that holiness churches so easily adopt. Ridgway's concerns about the Standard Church of North America¹⁰⁴ were exactly this issue; the Standard Church had rules that members should not wear jewellery (including wedding rings), not wear any colour other than brown, grey and black (including no neck-ties), as well as the other regulations that were noted by Lee.

Furthermore, Ridgway's "class meetings" are disturbingly un-Wesleyan and require illustration. The first two meetings, in April 1946 at Monbulk and in June 1946 at Clifton Hill were clearly organisational meetings with more business than would otherwise be expected. From July, however, the meetings were relocated to the newly secured offices in Elizabeth Street in the city of Melbourne and designated as class meetings in the minutes. At the first of these meetings, Kingsley Ridgway chaired as members were received, announcements were made and the group then "continued in praise, testimony, prayer and exhortation."¹⁰⁵ At the next meeting, Ridgway chaired as members were received, elections were held for church officers and "the meeting continued till a late hour in prayer and praise, testimony and exhortation."¹⁰⁶ At the third class meeting the election process was continued, members were received and a Sunday School was discussed, after which "Bro. Ridgway read the Epistle of Jude and expounded therefrom."¹⁰⁷ These meetings were uplifting, but they were not class meetings such as Wesley had implemented. John Wesley's class meetings involved lay members leading groups in which each member took turns describing their spiritual victories and failures, followed by prayer for each other's needs. Other activities at the class meetings initially included collection of one penny from each member for a church offering and in later decades

¹⁰³ District Board Minutes, June 8, 1946 (Archives).

¹⁰⁴ See chapter 6: 189.

¹⁰⁵ Class Meeting records July 30, 1946 (Archives).

¹⁰⁶ Class Meeting records August 13, 1946 (Archives).

¹⁰⁷ Class Meeting records August 20, 1946 (Archives).

often served some educational purpose. However, the dynamic of class meetings was lay leadership facilitating each member in sharing their own spiritual experience (or giving their confession, as the Solomon Islanders described it),¹⁰⁸ with prayer for one another. In contrast, the Elizabeth Street meetings were business meetings, chaired by clergy, with a devotional time at the conclusion.

The format of these meetings resulted in increased intensity, and there are signs that the intensity began to wear on the members of the small group:

[August 27, 1946] A time of singing, prayer and testimony followed, after which Bro. Ridgway read from Genesis 21:6-12 and exhorted therefrom on inbred sin and the power of God to destroy it. A number of young believers thereupon knelt and sought this cleansing, whilst all were earnestly praying. Following a definite visitation from the Lord, they testified to an experience of Entire Sanctification.¹⁰⁹

[September 3, 1946] A time of prayer followed, after which numbers of those present gave testimonies of praise and thanksgiving. Bro. Ridgway read from Hebrews 5:5-14 and 6:1-3, exhorting therefrom on standing the fires of worldliness and particularly of going on to perfection, getting absolutely where God wants us. Following an earnest appeal by Bro. Ridgway to those present to press for the blessing of Entire Sanctification a number prayed.¹¹⁰

[September 3, 1946] A time of earnest and importunate prayer followed, intermingled with singing and testimonies. Bro. Lee read from John's Gospel 21:15-17, and John's 1st Epistle 4:7-21 and exhorted therefrom.

[October 1, 1946] Bro. Ridgway read from 1 Thessalonians 5:9-23 and exhorted therefrom, urging those present who had not experienced the grace of Entire Sanctification to press in. He exhorted that those present who had not experienced the saving grace of God to seek God without delay. Following this Spirit filled message, a number came to the penitent form seeking Christ as their Saviour, one sister came seeking to be entirely sanctified, whilst another sister sought the Lord for bodily healing. Then followed a time of earnest and importunate prayer, after which testimonies to God's saving and sanctifying power were given.¹¹¹

By mid October a shift of tone is evidenced in the "class meetings". Ridgway gave an exhortation on October 8, but that was the last time that he is recorded to have taken part in leading a class meeting. On October 15 a gentler style is noted:

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Moses Kororo, October 2, 2015, 0:17:50.

¹⁰⁹ Class Meeting records August 27, 1946 (Archives).

¹¹⁰ Class Meeting records September 3, 1946 (Archives).

¹¹¹ Class Meeting records October 1, 1946 (Archives).

Mr. Everly and Mr. Mitchell were invited to give a word of exhortation and testimony. Much blessing was felt as they told of their early Wesleyan experiences. A time of prayer followed and this portion of the meeting was dismissed with singing.¹¹²

Class meetings were then replaced by other meetings until January 1947. At the first meeting that year the record simply states that, "The meeting opened with singing, after which a time of prayer was engaged in. Following on, a time of praise, testimony and thanksgiving was experienced."¹¹³ The meeting then continued with business matters. In March, after much business, the meeting simply closed with prayer.¹¹⁴ The "class meetings" had shown a pattern of clergy domination throughout 1946, with diminishing effect, until changing completely in 1947.

The shift in the pattern of the mid-week meetings was accompanied by resignations of several founding members. At the meeting immediately subsequent to the March meeting, held on April 2, Mrs Ebbels resigned as secretary and treasurer.¹¹⁵ Mrs Ebbels was a founding member of the denomination and one who had volunteered to run a Sunday School program the previous year. Maude Ellis, who ran the Bethesda Mission, resigned her membership two days later on April 4. Mrs Ebbels was replaced as secretary by Bruce Hooke on April 9, but in May he also resigned from the denomination with the haunting suggestion that the Wesleyan Methodists were just another sect.¹¹⁶ Bruce Hooke was also a founding member. On May 5, Charles Lee resigned from his pastoral role in Bendigo but remained a member of the conference until he had the opportunity to present his concerns to the annual conference in November. Charles Lee and Mrs Ebbels were married in June.¹¹⁷ It would be easy to suggest that there was some collusion between the members who resigned in this brief period from April to May, 1947, but the record is silent on that.

What is clear is that the early attempts to build a denomination on Wesley's central strategy of class meetings did not survive twelve months. By June 1947 the

¹¹² Class Meeting records October 15, 1946 (Archives).

¹¹³ Class Meeting records January 22, 1947 (Archives).

¹¹⁴ Class Meeting records March 26, 1947 (Archives).

¹¹⁵ Class Meeting records April 2, 1947 (Archives).

¹¹⁶ Correspondence from Hooke, c. May 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹¹⁷ Class Meeting records June 12, 1947 (Archives).

midweek class meetings were formal business meetings with financial reports and strategic planning.¹¹⁸ The next era of the new denomination would see a change of leadership and of strategy, and Wesley's priorities would be tested again.

¹¹⁸ Class Meeting records June 12, 1947 (Archives).

Chapter 8

REGROUP AND REBUILD 1948-1961

1948-1961 was a time of renewed focus for the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. In December 1948 Rev. Leo Cox, an American Wesleyan Methodist missionary and former educator, arrived to assume leadership of the Australian church. His arrival marked a permanent end to Kingsley Ridgway's leadership except for temporary periods when the elected leader was not in-country. This transition introduced a substantial change of church-planting strategy and the commencement of team rebuilding after the losses of 1947. 1961 is an appropriate year to conclude this chapter because it marks the end of the fruitful 1950s, a transition back to Australian leadership and the commencement of missionary work in Papua New Guinea. The mission to Papua New Guinea created a major new dynamic in the life of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia.

THE END OF A DREAM

The transition of 1948 was quite dramatic.¹ By 1949 the last of the original leadership had abandoned Ridgway. McLaren, Lee and Hooke all resigned by the end of 1947. Walter Betts never threw his lot in with the Wesleyan Methodists, although he remained friendly for many years. Grace Wood and William Bromley departed in 1949. J.T. Carnell remained in the denomination but Carnell was a local church leader and never truly a denominational leader. Disenchanted Methodists simply did not turn to the Wesleyan Methodists in the numbers that Ridgway had predicted and from 1948 it was already obvious that the Bendigo building could not

¹ There has been a consensus that the group was smaller but stronger after 1947 - e.g. Donald Hardgrave, *For Such a Time* (Brisbane: A Pleasant Surprise, 1988), 66. However, I am proposing rather, that Ridgway quietly withdrew from Australian leadership after 1947, disillusioned if not defeated.

be retained. The personal accusations at the 1947 Conference robbed the joy of labouring together as a team. In 1948 and 1949 Ridgway stepped back from leadership as quickly as circumstances would allow and the change of leadership corresponded to a major shift in ministry practice.

Ridgway served as Conference President throughout 1948 by default because of the resignation of Gilbert McLaren, but he never again accepted election to the role of leader. Ridgway's gradual withdrawal is obscured by the fact that, as Vice President, he provided temporary supply for Leo Cox for four months in 1951² and for Robert Mattke for ten months in 1958-1959,³ but there are other indicators that he was isolating himself from the leadership role and from the Australian project. There is no more record of the intense mid-week class meetings driven by Ridgway with altar calls for salvation and holiness. The inner-city presence at Elizabeth Street was relinquished in the following years. Even Ridgway's ministry in non-Wesleyan churches is greatly reduced from this time. The tents came to be used for children's ministry from this point on, rather than for church-planting. Midway through the 1950s Ridgway was further demoralised by the unexpected death of his beloved wife, Dorcas, on Christmas Day in 1955. In the aftermath of that loss Ridgway rebuilt his life and his ministry. His capacity to carry out his earlier vision of a holiness denomination in Australia was never restored after the 1947 losses and his partner in ministry was gone by 1956. He remarried and, with his new wife and small children, he rediscovered his passion for ministry in New Guinea.

Jean Ridgway, Ridgway's second wife, described him as a man with a healthy self-esteem, seeing himself as "one of the best of all the preachers around."⁴ He felt he was called of God to lead Evangelicalism in Australia into "great revival."⁵ However, because of Ridgway's holiness emphasis, the preaching invitations gradually diminished and denominational barriers went up. "People didn't like what

² "Conference President's Report," 5th District Conference, December 1951 (Archives of Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, Melbourne).

³ "Conference President's Report," 12th District Conference, March 1959 (Archives). Glen O'Brien states that Ridgway was elected as President in 1957, but this is likely a mistaken reference to Ridgway's 1958 temporary assignment on behalf of Robert Mattke. Glen O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan-Holiness Pioneer," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 84

⁴ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 0:28:00.

⁵ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 1:11:20.

he was preaching."⁶ This is an interesting shift for a preacher who appeared to be welcomed into a diverse range of churches in the mid-1940s. It might be that Ridgway's Methodism had become more overt, or it might simply be that his denominational commitment now made him less interdenominationally appealing.⁷

By the late 1950s Ridgway had lost confidence in "the whole politics of born-again Christians" in the Australian church scene⁸ and concluded that the Australian church was simply not ready for revival. Consequently, his vision shifted. The Australian church wanted him to take on the role of College Principal from 1959, but in defiance of the Australian leaders Ridgway wrote to his son, James Ridgway, suggesting that the college could be closed for a time⁹ - something that would have been unthinkable for Kingsley Ridgway in the late 1940s. By the early 1970s Melva Ridgway, wife of James Ridgway, remembers Kingsley writing to James in the U.S.A. advising the family that they might do better to stay in North America rather than return to the Australian church.¹⁰ These glimpses of Ridgway's loss of hope for the Australian project are revealing but they are only one part of the man's sense of calling and purpose. Ridgway remained in the Wesleyan Methodist Church for the remainder of his life and he served in many meaningful roles, although he was selective.

Two weeks after the 1947 Conference, on December 31, J.T. Carnell was granted ordination in recognition of his studies and ministry with the Salvation Army. The special Conference and ordination ceremony were held at the new Bible College, formerly Huntingtower, which the Wesleyans were now permitted to occupy before settlement was completed. Revs. Kingsley Ridgway and J.T. Carnell, together with Miss Grace Wood and Mr William Bromley led the four-church denomination throughout 1948.

In December 1948 the newly arrived American missionary, Rev. Leo Cox, was elected as Conference President and after five years he was succeeded by a second

⁶ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 0:27:30.

⁷ Another factor might have been that in the early 1940s Ridgway was pastoring a Congregational Church in Ascott Vale, which was of Calvinistic heritage. It may have been that Ridgway's move into Methodist ministry rendered him less desirable to Calvinistic congregations.

⁸ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 0:26:40.

⁹ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, June 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁰ Interview, Melva Ridgway, July 1, 2015, notes.

American missionary, Rev. Robert Mattke. By the end of Mattke's missionary term the young men, James Ridgway and Aubrey Carnell, had risen to prominence and become the next in line to leadership. The 13th Conference, in January 1960, presented a poignant moment as Kingsley Ridgway and J.T. Carnell were supplanted by their own oldest sons as the leaders of the denomination.¹¹

NEW STRATEGIES

With the transition to the leadership of Leo Cox late in 1948 there came a noticeable shift in ministry strategy. The early ministry had been conducted with the expectation that former Methodists would be attracted to the renewed emphasis on traditional Methodism. However, perhaps because of Ridgway's Canadian training, his understanding of traditional Methodism was not the same as that of most Australian Methodists and the flow of ex-Methodists did not materialise. From 1948 the strategy shifted away from ex-Methodists and toward the unchurched, with large Sunday Schools as the preferred method of reaching into new communities. In 1948 and 1949 church membership grew by a mere five adults, but the Sunday School numbers increased four-fold. Sunday School attendances vastly outnumbered adult attendances throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with an average of eleven children for every adult in the denomination across the 1950s. In 1959 the ratio peaked at fifteen children to every adult member. See figure 8.1. Most adult members were engaged in teaching children, either through Sunday School or youth ministries. No mention of class meetings appears again in the District/National Board Minutes after 1947.

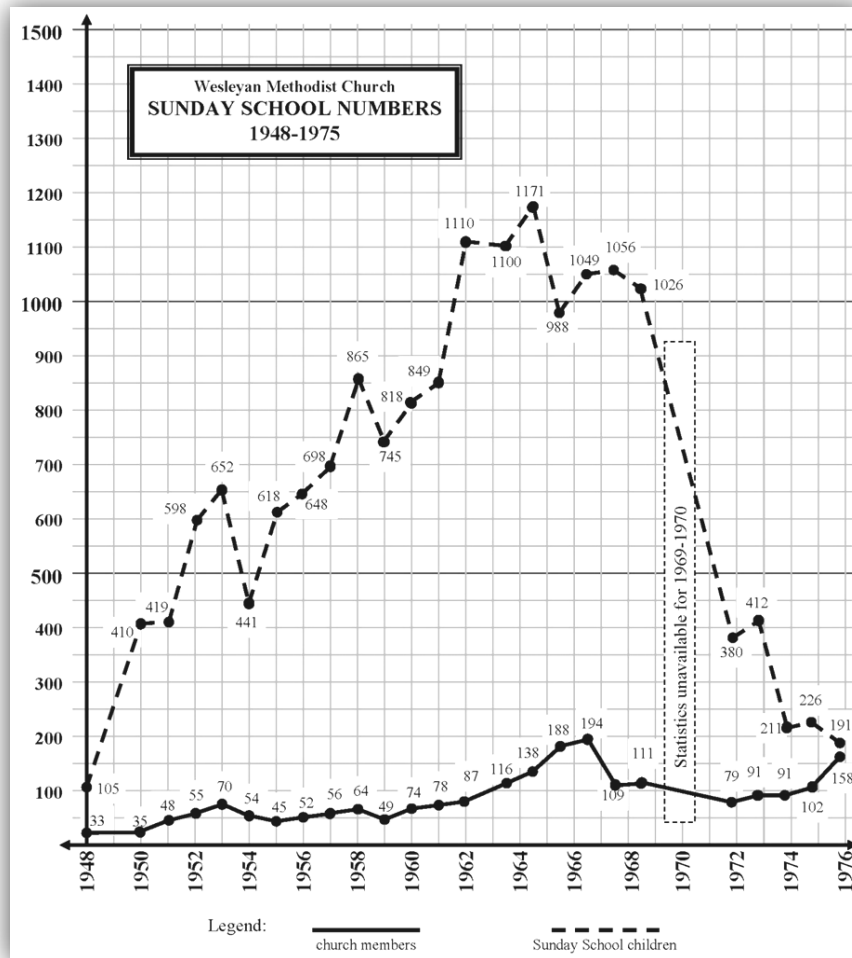
Small Wesleyan Methodist congregations were consistently running Sunday Schools of 200 children or more. Max Richardson wrote:

The clear motive was to gain opportunity to reach parents with the Gospel through the children. The Wesleyans became very competent with their children's work, but in some cases the Sunday School grew to such enormous proportions that the few teachers did not always know what to do with so many children.¹²

¹¹ James was Kingsley Ridgway's oldest son and Aubrey was J.T. Carnell's only son. The two young men took denominational leadership after 1959 when Robert Mattke strategically stepped back from the roles of Conference President and College Principal.

¹² Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough, Pioneer Church Work in Australia: 1955 to 1995* (Lilydale, Victoria: Self published, 1995), 54.

Figure 8.1 *The years of big Sunday Schools 1948-1965*¹³



Graeme Carnell, the oldest son of Aubrey and Hazel Carnell, noted that the problems with the enormous Sunday Schools were that they did not necessarily bring the parents into the church and in the meantime the pastor was self-supporting because there was no financial base in the church.¹⁴

Another strategy that became more pronounced through the decade was the district's commitment to purchase land and build church halls as a first priority in church-planting. This priority of property ownership was not a shift from the earlier period, but it was pursued with greater purpose as the denomination's assets allowed. Property investment was made possible by the outright ownership of the college property, thanks to American sponsorship. After settlement on Huntingtower in 1948

¹³ Data from "Statistical Reports," National Conference Journals, 1947-1976 (Archives)

¹⁴ Interview, Graeme Carnell, May 5, 2014, 0:42:40.

the property was immediately mortgaged to underwrite further expansion.¹⁵ Subdivision, construction and the gradual sale of small portions of land in East Street and South Street, Merlynston¹⁶ were used to fund local church buildings, while continued American support¹⁷ and small profits from property resale beyond Merlynston also assisted the denomination. Resale of the Bendigo property¹⁸ and the purchase and resale of two blocks in West Coburg (Coonans Hill) were examples of this entrepreneurial spirit.¹⁹

Camping became a dominant feature of the annual district calendar in the 1950s and 1960s. The district-wide annual camp was relocated several times during these decades, and eventually the Conference bought its own camp-ground at Healesville. The annual camps continued to be week-long events²⁰ that provided a powerful venue for developing team spirit and for enforcing the holiness priority. Attendance was expected of the pastoral team, which in most cases was accepted as a privilege. Some pastoral families, however, found the financial cost and the sacrifice of their annual holidays too high. John and Marion Buckley in South Australia were an example of one such couple. John wrote to James Ridgway in 1961 to excuse himself from the annual camp:

I am working fulltime – plus, and my annual holidays are at Christmas time you will realise that they are annulled by church activities. So we may this year have a much needed holiday in S.A. I realise we have standing rules etc. but I'm hardly a pastor in the true sense since having to work interferes with the Vocation.²¹

In 1950 a property was offered to the church as a camp ground at Diamond Creek²² and again in 1952 a site was offered at Heathcote Junction,²³ but the Conference Board did not choose to pursue these options. Instead campsites were rented south of Geelong and later around Healesville, with occasional camps held on

¹⁵ "Minutes," Special Session of District Conference, January 1948, also District Board Minutes, April 15, 1952 (Archives).

¹⁶ "Trustees," District Board Minutes, March 5, 1948 and January 5, 1949 (Archives).

¹⁷ District Board Minutes, September 20, 1951 (Archives).

¹⁸ "Trustees," District Board Minutes, January 5, 1949 (Archives).

¹⁹ District Board Minutes, July 16, 1956 (Archives).

²⁰ For example, the 1951 camp was held from the evening of Christmas Day until the evening of New Year's Day, 1952.

²¹ Correspondence from Buckley, October 2, 1961 J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²² District Board Minutes, March 14, 1950 (Archives).

²³ District Board Minutes, March 7 and April 15, 1952 (Archives).

the college grounds. In 1955 the "Annual Convention" was relocated to the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia (PFA) grounds at Anglesea, and continued there until early 1959, when a double booking made it necessary to look elsewhere.²⁴ The church then relocated their "Christmas Camp" to Healesville at various rented sites while they found and developed their own site. In 1960 a site was located at Badger Creek, Healesville²⁵ near the corner of Pine Avenue and Toolebewong Road, off the old Deering Avenue.²⁶ In 1961 the price of £389.5.0 was paid for the six and a half acre property.²⁷

Meanwhile, in 1957 the Department of Crown Land surveyed off four acres of land for the Wesleyans at Anglesea²⁸ for an annual lease of £5. However, this property required a lot of development, including supply of electricity and water. In 1962 the district youth requested permission to develop the Anglesea site for their own uses, but by then the Healesville property was ready for use. The youth were denied and the Anglesea lease was discontinued.²⁹

The 1959 annual camp was held at the Essendon Fellowship Campsite in Healesville with a record attendance of eighty-eight campers. A photograph of the accommodation at the Healesville camp is included as figure 8.2. With day-visitors the camp reached 110 on some days.³⁰ The camp ran from December 26, 1959 to January 1, 1960, and it was immediately followed by the Annual Conference at the Bible College.

²⁴ District Board Minutes, May 22, 1958 (Archives). The abbreviation "PFA" is commonly used in District Board Minutes.

²⁵ District Board Minutes, August 18, 1960 (Archives).

²⁶ Development map for the proposed campsite, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

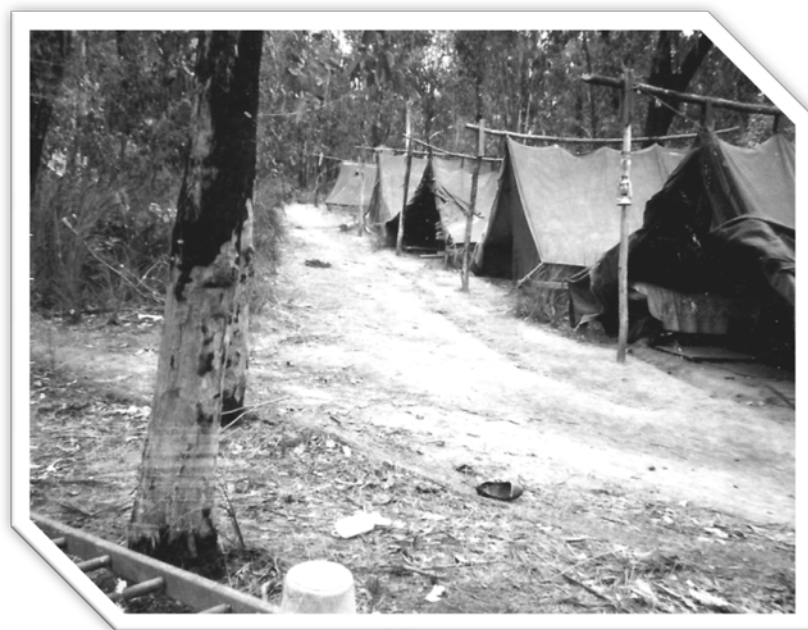
²⁷ "Conference Board's Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

²⁸ District Board Minutes, March 27, 1958 (Archives).

²⁹ District Board Minutes, December 6, 1962 (Archives).

³⁰ Draft article by Mattke, 1960 K. Ridgway records 3 (Archives).

Figure 8.2 *The Annual Camp at the Healesville campground c. 1959*³¹



Plans for development of the Healesville site were quite elaborate, including subdividing plots of land to church members and adherents on fifteen-year leases for £30 each.³² The intention was to hold the first camp on their own campgrounds in 1961, but this was delayed until 1962. The result was that the 1961 camp was held at the Belgrave Heights campground.

The annual camp concept was copied by the youth and the children's workers as the denomination grew. The range of camps in 1953 illustrates how purposefully the camping model was pursued. In that year a youth camp was held at Bellbrae in January, and in September a "Boys' Camp" was held at Maroondah while the "Girls' Camp" was at Ellesmere campsite, Upwey. These camps were in addition to the annual family camp over Christmas.

The week-long camp was an important annual feature of church life for the Wesleyans. Robert Mattke wrote in 1957, "I am of the conviction that our Annual Camp can be a mighty spiritual force in the programme of our church and that it is necessary for our people to support it in every possible way."³³ This is a revealing statement by the American missionary, in what Mattke does not say as much as what

³¹ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

³² District Board Minutes, February 16, 1961 (Archives).

³³ "Conference President's Report," 11th District Conference, December 1957 (Archives).

he does say. The American Methodist Church had been greatly impacted by the camp meeting movement, especially in the nineteenth century holiness movement. Intermittent camp meetings combined with weekly class meetings were at the very centre of reviving the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the birth of the Pilgrim Holiness Church.³⁴ However, Mattke seems to have not recognised the vital link between camp meetings and class meetings. Wesleyan historian, Melvin Dieter has noted that the new holiness groups used Wesley's class meetings and band meetings as the model for their congregations.³⁵ Furthermore, he notes:

It is not without coincidence that the main thrust of the holiness revival appeared at the same time that the Methodist Episcopal Church South was doing away with class meetings after the Civil War, and the disciplinary requirements for class participation and enforcement of the general rules in the northern Church were beginning to falter as well.³⁶

However, there is no reference in Mattke's or in Leo Cox's writings to the need to establish class meetings to support the dynamic annual camps. The absence of attention to class meetings appears to be part of a broader changes brought about by the rise of the Pentecostal Church at the turn of the twentieth century. A growing expectancy of "signs and wonders of new supernatural power" and a "Spirit-baptized church was evident in American Methodism in the late 1800s,"³⁷ concurrent to the holiness revivals. Pentecostal expectations of power and spiritual gifts moved some in the church from the traditional Methodist priority of ethical victory over sin to the Pentecostal priorities of gifts and power for witnessing.³⁸ Ralph Horner's theology of three blessings, referenced earlier in the formation of the Standard Church (chapter 6: 161), typifies this growing expectation of spiritual power (with prophecy and physical healings). The new emphasis was realised in the appearance of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) and the formation of the first Pentecostal denominations. Although preceded by John Dowie's healing ministry in Illinois,³⁹ Agnes Ozman's

³⁴ The origins of the Pilgrim Holiness Church and its eventual merger with the Wesleyan Methodist Church is described in chapter 2: 77.

³⁵ Melvin E. Dieter, "The Post-Civil War Holiness Revival: The Rise of the Camp Meeting Churches," in *Reformers and Revivalists: The History of the Wesleyan Church*, ed. Wayne E. Caldwell (Indianapolis: Wesley Press, 1992), 158.

³⁶ Dieter, "The Post-Civil War Holiness Revival," in *Reformers and Revivalists*, 159.

³⁷ Dieter, "The Post-Civil War Holiness Revival," 155.

³⁸ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), 93.

³⁹ Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* (USA: Emeth Press, 2011), 59.

experience of tongues in Kansas⁴⁰ and the subsequent ministry of Charles Parnham in Missouri and then in Texas in 1905,⁴¹ the commencement of the Azusa Mission in Los Angeles in April 1906 is credited as the founding of the Pentecostal Church.⁴²

Birthered primarily out of the Methodist holiness movement,⁴³ with "only the gift of tongues that set [Pentecostalism] apart from [holiness] teachings,"⁴⁴ the advent of Pentecostalism appears to have coincided with the decline of interest in class meetings in the American holiness movement. The power of spiritual growth in early Methodism was in the accountability and support of the class meeting; the power of the Pentecostal movement became the individualistic baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ The Wesleyan Methodist Church, like much of the holiness stream, rejected speaking in tongues as a genuine spiritual gift,⁴⁶ but appears to have failed to retain the class meetings either. Methodism's power withered as a result.

MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP 1949-1959

In the last days of December 1947 an American couple, "Brother and Sister Moore", arrived in Melbourne from the American church, having made a unilateral decision to come to Australia to serve the new work. They spent two weeks helping clean Huntingtower and were then to go to Cohuna.⁴⁷ However they quickly found that the Australian working conditions were too primitive and they abruptly returned to the United States.⁴⁸

Leo G. Cox (1912-2001). In December 1948 reinforcements arrived from America in the persons of Rev. Leo G. and Mrs Esther Cox, with their children

⁴⁰ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 178-179.

⁴¹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, Kindle edition, 1997), chapt. 5, loc, 981. Parnham provides the link between Dowie's ministry to the north of Chicago, the Kansas, Missouri and Texas, and the beginning of the Azusa Street Mission under William Seymour in California.

⁴² Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, 2014), xxiv.

⁴³ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Church*, preface, loc 37 also chapt. 1, loc. 50.

⁴⁴ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 175.

⁴⁵ This is a proposal that would support a thesis in its own right. Here it is simply presented as a possible reason for the decline of class meetings in the holiness tradition.

⁴⁶ The General Superintendents of the Wesleyan Church. *No Uncertain Sound: An Exegetical Study of I Corinthians 12, 13, 14*. Marion, Indiana: Wesley Press, 1975.

⁴⁷ Correspondence to Moores, December 27, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁴⁸ Correspondence from Swauger, February 10, 1948 K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Rachel, Mary Ruth and Martha. Since 1947 J.R. Swauger had been working to send missionary support for the Australian mission and in August 1947 he reported discussions with Rev. Arthur Bray⁴⁹ of the Iowa Conference and Dr Wilbur Dayton of Marion College.⁵⁰ Both were considering coming to Australia to help establish the new college and in February 1948 Dayton was given official approval to serve in Australia.⁵¹ However, in April Dr Dayton advised that he would not be coming due to his wife's ill health. Roy Nicholson recommended Leo Cox of the Miltonvale College, Kansas and arrangements were quickly made for the Coxes be sent.⁵²

Figure 8.3 *The Cox family: Esther, Rachel, Mary Ruth, Martha and Leo c. 1949*⁵³



Leo Cox was sent primarily to staff the new Bible College although his additional role of Conference President was soon added to his duties. It may be that some classes were offered by Kingsley Ridgway during 1948,⁵⁴ but the college is recorded as officially opening in 1949 once Cox was there to give it full attention. The first cohort of students commenced in 1949 with eleven students⁵⁵ and increased

⁴⁹ Arthur Bray was the father of Rev. Dr Donald Bray who served as a Wesleyan Missionary in Papua New Guinea and as General Director of Wesleyan World Missions (North America).

⁵⁰ Correspondence from Swauger, August 23, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁵¹ Correspondence from Swauger, February 21, 1948, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁵² Correspondence from Swauger, April 23 and 28, 1948, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁵³ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁵⁴ It is suggested that Kingsley Ridgway ran courses during 1948. See, Memorial Service bulletin, June 27, 1979, J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁵⁵ "Achievements and Goals," draft article by Cox, c. January 1950, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

to fifteen students by the following year.⁵⁶ Some of the first students are pictured as figure 8.4.

Figure 8.4 *Members of the class of 1949*⁵⁷



In December 1951 the first three men graduated from the college program: James Ridgway, Charles Wilson and William (Bill) Morris.⁵⁸ All three would eventually be ordained as Wesleyan Methodist ministers. In 1952 a new cohort of eight students commenced the college year:⁵⁹ Joy Baragwanath, Gwen Pratt, Marcia Gibbs, John Tipping, John Buckley, Val Baragwanath, Bill Morris and Max Richardson.⁶⁰ In the next couple of years Jim Thorpe, Bill Thorpe and Margaret Raymond joined them at the college.⁶¹

⁵⁶ James Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia 1946 - 1956" (Wilmore Kentucky: Term Paper for Asbury Theological Seminary, 1957), 13.

⁵⁷ J. Ridgway records (Archives). L-R: George Randall, Charles Wilson, Hilda Randall, Lloyd (?), Marjorie Ridgway, Bert Williams, James Ridgway.

⁵⁸ J. Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 18.

⁵⁹ Richardson writes that one of the eight was continuing from the previous year.

⁶⁰ Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 30

⁶¹ Joy Baragwanath married Walt Ridgway, Gwen Pratt married Val Baragwanath and Marcia Gibbs married Bill Henderson.

Figure 8.5 *The class of 1953*⁶²



Leo Cox's expertise was theology and education but he did an admirable job of leading the denomination as well. In his second report as Conference President, he remarked on the heavy load, "When one is Conference President, College President, Schoolteacher, Church Pastor and a general Church representative all at the same time, little time is found to carry out any one task efficiently."⁶³

Notwithstanding the heavy load, in March 1950 Cox reported the commencement of new work in Balwyn, another at Ormond, and a third in the city. By December 1950 churches had been commenced at the college and at Highett, and both were clearly through Cox's initiative and the utilisation of his students in the new works. The Ormond meetings that started in the home of Mrs Joyce Osborn were closed after a short time but were replaced in 1950 by the work at Highett. Mrs Osborn married Charles Wilson and served the church for many years.⁶⁴ This increased church-planting focus drove the life of the Wesleyan work throughout the 1960s.

⁶² J. Ridgway records (Archives). Men L-R, staff underlined: John Buckley, Bill Thorpe, Max Richardson, Aubrey Carnell, Val Baragwanath, Kingsley Ridgway, John Tipping. Women L-R, staff underlined: Joy Baragwanath, Margaret Raymond, Hazel Carnell, Gwen Pratt, Marcia Gibbs, Esther Cox. Absent from this photo: Leo Cox, Bill Morris, Jim Thorpe, Mrs Stirling.

⁶³ "Conference President's Report," 4th District Conference, December 1950 (Archives).

⁶⁴ J. Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 14.

Cox's vigorous endorsement of the holiness message meshed well with the previous emphasis of Kingsley Ridgway, Gilbert McLaren and Charles Lee. In December 1952 he recorded the district goal to make, "Efforts to extend the message of Holiness in Melbourne and country areas by printing, evangelistic teams, and if possible the radio."⁶⁵ The following year, in his final report to the Australian church, he called for "Continued emphasis on the college as a training school and as a centre for holiness and youth."⁶⁶

During Leo Cox's five-year term however, his American presence and his bold proclamation of the holiness message was met with considerable resistance from other church organisations. Wesleyan Methodists since that time have speculated on the lack of charity from other evangelical agencies, and in particular the Melbourne Bible Institute⁶⁷ and the Keswick Convention.⁶⁸

Max Richardson wrote:

The Wesleyans did not have many friends in Australia. A huge public relations exercise was needed to be mounted in order to correct certain, common misconceptions that existed about the Church. I came to understand that the influential Keswick Convention had warned against it.... Some very misleading impressions must have been given out by the Wesleyan Methodists in those early days, about their favourite doctrine, entire sanctification. Many Christians were led to believe "Sinless Perfection" was being taught.⁶⁹

Equally confronting was the initial refusal of the *New Life* newspaper⁷⁰ to provide advertising space to the Wesleyan Methodists and the legal action of the Methodist Church in an attempt to stop the Wesleyans using the name Methodist.⁷¹ James Ridgway wrote of the opposition to the Wesleyan work shown by the

⁶⁵ "Conference President's Report," 6th District Conference, December 1952 (Archives).

⁶⁶ "Conference President's Report," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁶⁷ Later known as the Bible College of Victoria (BCV) and then as the Melbourne School of Theology (MST).

⁶⁸ The Keswick Convention is an annual holiness convention that has its origins in Calvinism theology in Britain. Keswick, therefore, has some natural resistance to the Methodist understanding of holiness although there is sufficient common purpose between the two that some cooperation is possible.

⁶⁹ Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 44.

⁷⁰ *New Life* was a newspaper that served the evangelical community across Australia with its weekly edition generated from its Melbourne base from 1938. In 2006 it transitioned to fortnightly editions, and in 2010 it closed its hard-copy editions altogether, being replaced by an email and web-edition from March 2011. *New Life* website, http://www.nlife.com.au/index.php/content/about_new_life, accessed July 15, 2016.

⁷¹ "Our Relationship with Other Evangelicals," draft article by Robert Mattke, 1957, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

Melbourne Bible Institute, to the extent that they expelled one student for attending Wesleyan services.⁷² Ridgway credited this to the strong Calvinistic influence at the Melbourne Bible Institute and at the Keswick Conventions, and this explanation was largely adopted for the remainder of the century. Indeed, by the 1950s the traditional Methodist Church was in serious decline and most of the remaining Protestant denominations were Calvinistic, so the Calvinist/Arminian division explains a substantial amount of the resistance that the Wesleyans experienced.⁷³ The Salvation Army and the Pentecostal Churches were the other Arminian groups, but the Salvation Army was itself going through a difficult time and the Pentecostals were, in reality, the main competition to the Wesleyans in attracting ex-Methodists. The Calvinistic denominations, especially the Anglican Church with a strong Calvinist-evangelical centre at Moore College, had claimed an important role in leading Australia's evangelical community. Since the time of Wesley and Whitefield, the differences between Calvinists and Arminians was always heightened when the Wesleyan doctrine of holiness was emphasised.⁷⁴ The new Wesleyan Methodists promoted the holiness doctrine to provide contrast between themselves and the traditional Methodist Church, but that strategy seems to have been more effective in stirring the Calvinists than the other Methodists.

However, there is another explanation for the resistance experienced by the Wesleyans, a crisis of which the Wesleyan leaders seemed unaware. A breakaway group had been developing in the Sydney and Melbourne evangelical communities prior to World War II and the Wesleyans appear to have inadvertently been associated with that group. In the 1990s the Australian Broadcasting Commission and Rev. Dr David Millikan did an exposé on a cultish group known as "Tinker Tailor" which had existed in Sydney and Melbourne evangelical circles since the 1930s and was teaching sinless perfection. Millikan traced the group's origins to the

⁷² James Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 12.

⁷³ Calvinistic teaching (more often included in a more general term "Reformed" today) is that God predetermined who would go to heaven and who would go to hell - no one can go to heaven unless so-predestined and no one can resist God's appointment to either heaven or hell. Arminian teaching is that God calls all people to salvation, but only those who respond can be saved. This fundamentally contradicts the Calvinistic teaching that people have no choice. Free choice then feeds into Wesley's teaching of holiness, in which believers are able to achieve a higher level of purity through self-discipline and God's anointing. There are numerous intermediate positions between Reformed and Arminian teachings.

⁷⁴ See Glossary, page xii, also chapter 2: 50.

visit of Howard Guinness in 1930.⁷⁵ Howard Guinness had originally come to Australia to represent the British Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) in 1930 to combat the liberal teaching of the Australian Student Christian Movement in the universities. He commenced the Evangelical Union (EU) on university campuses on his first visit and returned again to Australia in 1933 to continue the work, establishing branches of IVF on every Australian university campus.⁷⁶ One of Guinness's young followers, Lindsay Grant, came from a strong Anglican family. He and Del Agnew, from a prominent Tasmanian family, are reported to have joined forces to lead a group of young evangelicals into increasingly unorthodox teachings with secretive and isolationist behaviour. As their influence spread and their teachings of perfection and demonology became more pronounced, they were removed from leadership of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship and from their influence in the South Seas Evangelical Mission, the Evangelical Union, Keswick and the Melbourne Bible Institute. After World War II the group continued to function in secrecy into the twenty-first century. "Outsiders saw few signs of its existence. There was only a mass exit from members in Presbyterian and Anglican Churches on some weekends."⁷⁷ Children from founding families of the Belgrave Heights Convention (Keswick)⁷⁸ and the Melbourne Bible Institute became active in the Tinker Tailor group, leaving a lasting concern in Melbourne evangelical circles.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church began in Melbourne in the last days of World War II and the Church of the Nazarene commenced in Sydney at the same time. Both the Wesleyans and the Nazarenes have a strong heritage in the holiness revivals of North America, identifying them with the primary traits of the Tinker Tailor group: foreign influence and Christian perfectionist teaching. It was unfortunate, but understandable, that the leading evangelical bodies reacted to teaching that appeared to be similar to that of the Tinker Tailor group.

An event that seems to have precipitated the worst of the rejection by the Belgrave Heights organisers was the invitation to one of the Wesleyan leaders to

⁷⁵ David Millikan, *Imperfect Company: Power and Control in an Australian Cult* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia and the Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1991), 47.

⁷⁶ Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn, Kindle edition, 2012), chapt. 4, loc. 2315.

⁷⁷ Jeremy Halcrow, "The Devil Inside...", Sydney Anglicans, July 5, 2005, accessed June 23, 2015, http://sydneyanglicans.net/blogs/indepth/the_devil_inside.

⁷⁸ Initially at Upwey in Victoria from 1918 and then moved to Belgrave Heights in 1950.

speak at the Convention late in the 1940s. In speaking the leader pressed the holiness message so strongly that it "caused quite a stir".⁷⁹ It is unclear whether the Wesleyan leader was an American or an Australian, but given the timing of the rejection by Melbourne evangelicals, it seems likely that it was either Kingsley Ridgway or Leo Cox. The organisers of the Keswick Convention at Belgrave Heights were understandably sensitive to aggressive holiness teaching because of their experience with the Tinker Tailor group.

The worst of the opposition from the evangelical institutions faded quickly once they became acquainted with the Wesleyan Methodists and by the end of the 1950s students from Melbourne Bible Institute were being openly recruited by the Wesleyan Methodist Church.⁸⁰ The *New Life* newspaper developed a close and lasting friendship with the Wesleyans and was quite influential in their spread into Queensland in the 1970s. A major turning point for the Wesleyans was when they were invited to participate on the Executive Committee for the Billy Graham Crusade in 1959; an invitation that was only possible because the Wesleyans had broken ranks with the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches who boycotted the crusade.⁸¹ George Beverly Shea's ministry beside Billy Graham also helped, since Shea was an American Wesleyan Methodist.⁸² Kingsley Ridgway initially filled the role on the Billy Graham Crusade Executive Committee, and when he went to America, James Ridgway filled his place.

The Tinker Tailor cult seems to have had very little impact within traditional Australian Methodism during this time. However, for other obvious reasons, the Methodists were likewise unsupportive of the Wesleyan Methodist presence in Victoria. Kingsley Ridgway and his team had been quite clear that their existence in Australia was a consequence of the failing Methodist Church of Australasia. During Leo Cox's five years in Australia some good progress was made in church extension, but at the same time the early confidence of 1946 was replaced by a new timidity. Max Richardson described the early Wesleyan Methodists, "For a long time the

⁷⁹ Interview, Graeme Carnell, May 5, 2014, 0:44:55.

⁸⁰ The Glenroy Church agreed to ask if any Melbourne Bible Institute students could help with their children's program. Glenroy Mission Church Minutes, December 2, 1958 (Archives).

⁸¹ Glen O'Brien, "North American Wesleyan-Holiness Church in Australia" (Melbourne: Ph.D. thesis, La Trobe University, 2005), 27.

⁸² Interview, Graeme Carnell, May 5, 2014, 1:19:45.

Church lay dormant and did not grow. It looked like a tortoise that had been hit over the head so often that it was afraid to poke it out of its shell anymore, lest it get bashed again."⁸³ Leo Cox went back to America at the end of 1953 to undertake further studies. He earned his M.A. in 1957 and his Ph.D. in 1959 from the University of Iowa, publishing his Ph.D. thesis on the doctrine of holiness in 1964.⁸⁴ Robert Mattke was sent from America to fill the gap left by Cox's departure.

Robert Mattke (1921-2007). Robert and Jeanette Mattke with their daughters, Sharon and Beth, arrived in Melbourne in time for the December 1953 Conference. Robert Mattke had completed ministerial studies at Marion College, Indiana and Asbury Seminary, Kentucky. He was subsequently pastoring his first Wesleyan Church at Hayward, Wisconsin when he received a phone call from Wesleyan headquarters to ask if he would go to Australia as a missionary. The story is told that he was given twenty-four hours to decide.⁸⁵

Upon arrival Mattke was assigned the roles of College Principal and Conference President vacated by Leo Cox. Unlike Cox, Mattke's experience was in local church ministry rather than in education. Mattke brought new energy and new focus to the work, maintaining a blistering work schedule. In his first Conference President's Report, in December 1954, he noted that in the previous twelve months he had spoken at seventy-four church services and thirty-five chapel services, assisted at a youth camp, travelled ten thousand miles and written three hundred and fifty letters.⁸⁶ In 1955 he made two trips to Sydney and one to Brisbane to seek out new possibilities, conducted the usual cycle of board meetings and quarterly meetings and wrote four hundred letters. In 1956 his travel, chairing and correspondence continued apace. In 1957, he visited Launceston three times, Adelaide once and Sydney and Brisbane twice each. He also conducted business meetings, preached sixty-two times and wrote five hundred letters.⁸⁷ His energy and commitment was a great

⁸³ Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 46.

⁸⁴ Leo G. Cox, *John Wesley's Concept of Perfection* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1964).

⁸⁵ Correspondence from Sharon Butterworth via Dennis Carnell, July 1, 2015, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁸⁶ Interview, Sharon (Mattke) Buttermore, February 25, 2014, 0:01:40. See also "Conference President's Report," 8th District Conference, December 1954 (Archives).

⁸⁷ "Conference President's Report," 10th District Conference, December 1956 (Archives).

encouragement to the Australian team. Sixty years later Melva Ridgway remembered him as a man with a servant heart and a deep interest in the welfare of others.⁸⁸

Figure 8.6 *The Mattke family: Robert, Sharon, Beth and Jeanette c.1954*⁸⁹



Robert Mattke's capacity for strategic planning quickly became apparent. In his third Conference Report, in December 1956, he urged "the Conference to pray and to look to the following areas for the development of new works: Glenroy, Geelong, Elizabeth Town, S.A. and Dandenong."⁹⁰ The following year he visited Launceston, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane. By December 1957 congregations had been established in Glenroy and Launceston with chapels either built or purchased. Plans were well underway for a new work in Elizabeth, South Australia, with the first service held in August 1959. Even so, a work in Sydney was still several years away, and a congregation has never yet been established in Geelong. In setting Conference goals, Mattke was often as not advising the Conference of the new possibilities that were already opening. For example, the December 1956 goal to commence in Elizabeth was preceded by Mattke's application for government housing in Elizabeth in June 1956, and the goal for Glenroy was preceded by an expression of interest from a young man from the Fitzroy mission, Roy Fletcher, who wanted to serve with the Wesleyans. However, it is equally clear that his goal-setting was accompanied by aggressive action and the serendipitous appearance of new recruits.

⁸⁸ Interview, Melva Ridgway, July 1, 2015.

⁸⁹ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹⁰ "Conference President's Report, Goal 7," 11th District Conference, December 1957 (Archives).

Mattke's second demonstration of strategic leadership was in his 1959 admonition, "It is my counsel that the Australian Conference continue to anticipate and plan for your own leadership as soon as practical."⁹¹ In 1960 Mattke brought this goal to fulfilment, stating, "For some years now the Conference has been encouraged to anticipate the time when you could provide your own leadership.... [I]t is my conviction that this should be my last year as President of the Conference."⁹² James Ridgway was Mattke's preferred future leader and was duly elected as Conference President, while Mattke remained another year as Pastor of the West Coburg Church.

During Robert Mattke's leadership substantial improvements were made to the college buildings. In 1955 new bathrooms were added, the laundry was upgraded and the chapel was remodelled. John Buckley, who would later start the church in Elizabeth, appears in the minutes as the builder on the college in 1955 and is remembered as an accomplished pianist and singer.⁹³ In 1958 a block of four new housing units was constructed at the back of the college, making it possible for the college program to expand its appeal to residential students. Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin occupied the first unit in 1958 and newly-weds Kingsley and Jean Ridgway, the second unit.⁹⁴ During these years the Bible College continued to produce pastors, although enrolments fluctuated year-to-year. In 1956 Mattke recorded that there were only five students that year, with an average attendance of three.⁹⁵ A summary of the ministers from 1946-1964 is included as figure 8.7.

⁹¹ "Conference President's Report, Goal 6," 12th District Conference, March 1959 (Archives).

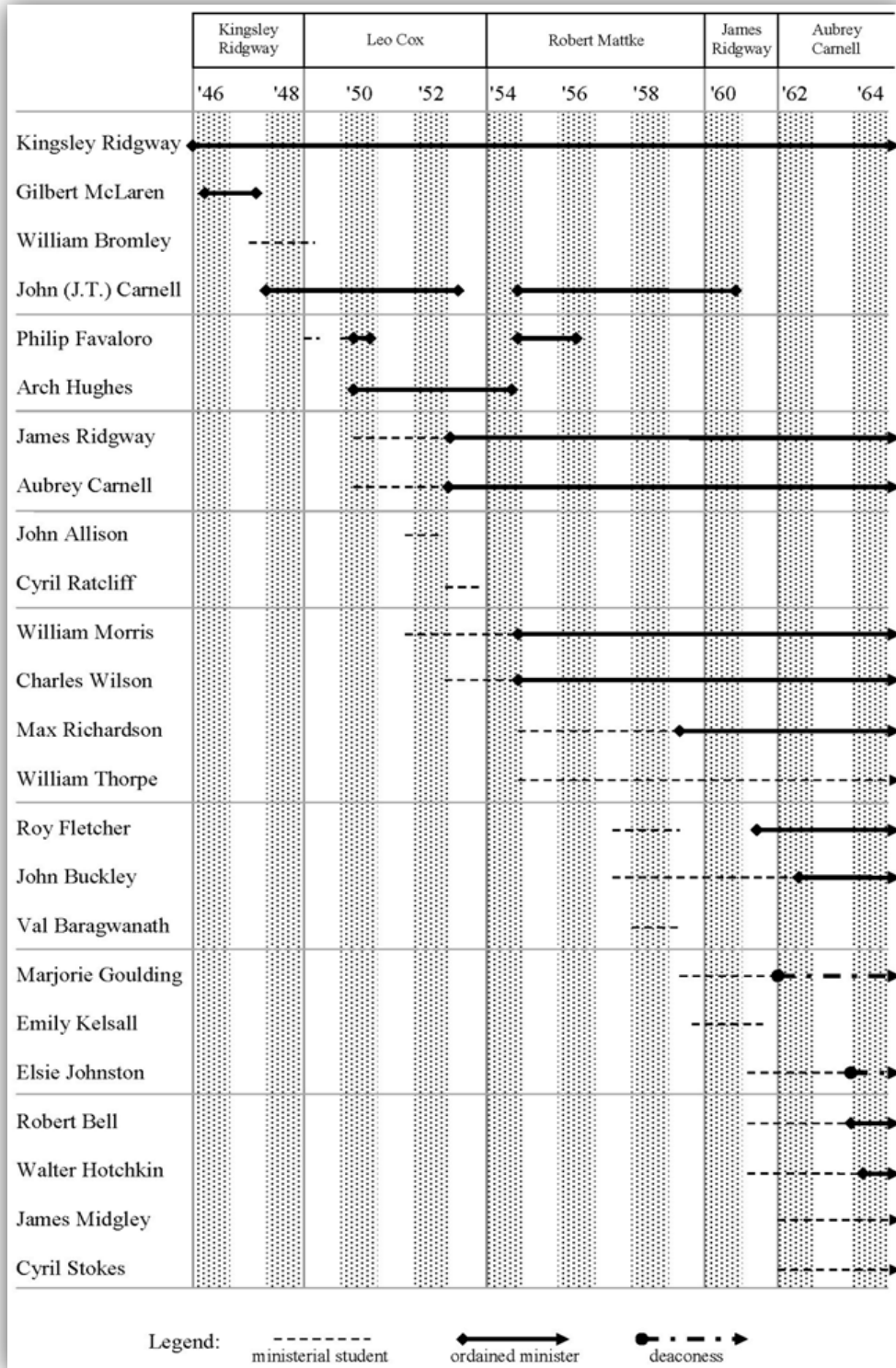
⁹² "Conference President's Report, Goal 8," 13th District Conference, January 1960 (Archives).

⁹³ Interview, Sharon (Mattke) Buttermore, February 25, 2014, 0:26:50.

⁹⁴ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, July 7, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

⁹⁵ "Conference President's Report," 10th District Conference, December 1956 (Archives).

Figure 8.7 Australian ministerial team 1947-1964



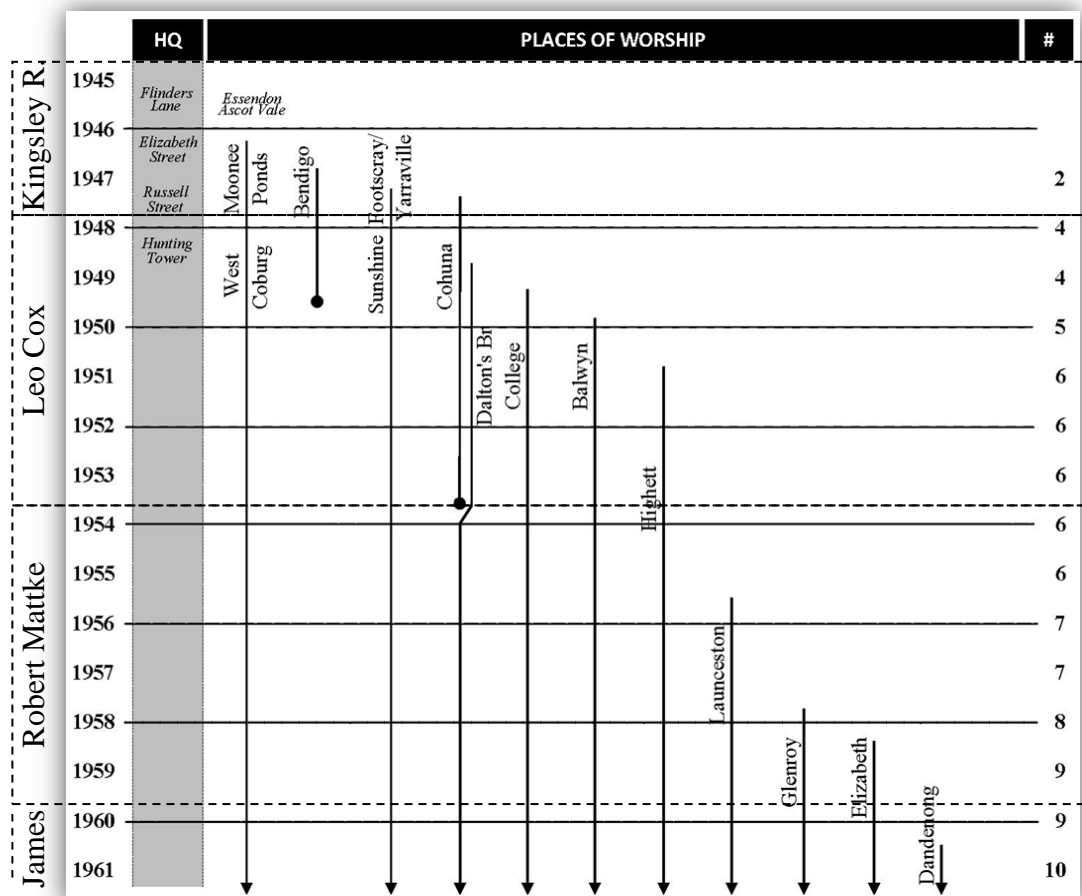
Leo Cox, Robert Mattke, their wives and daughters were an integral part of the early Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church. They were highly regarded and are fondly remembered in numerous conference reports. They helped cement the Bible College as the hub of the life of the denomination for sixty years and they reinforced

the link between the college and the very purpose for the existence of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. Leo Cox wrote: "We cannot train good Wesleyans in non-Wesleyan schools; nor can we train good holiness preachers in non-holiness colleges.... The real reason for this Bible College in Australia is not that there are many who at present want it, but that there are many who **need** it." [emphasis his]⁹⁶

LOCAL CHURCHES AT A GLANCE

From 1948 to 1961 seven new congregations were commenced in the district, including one in South Australia and one in Tasmania. At the same time two were closed: the Bendigo and the Cohuna congregations. An overview of the churches 1948-1961 is included as figure 8.8.⁹⁷

Figure 8.8 Churches at a glance 1948-1961



⁹⁶ Draft article by Cox, 1951, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁹⁷ For more detail on the local churches and the characters of the time, or for greater listings of source materials, go to APPENDIX C.

West Coburg. In June 1948 the Carlton congregation relocated to Peace Hall at 42 Walhalla Street, West Coburg and Philip Favaloro was appointed as the pastor. The church grew well in West Coburg, quickly surpassing the work that had been in Carlton⁹⁸ and continued its heritage as the home church for the denomination until the college property in South Street Glenroy became the hub of the growing work.⁹⁹

Cohuna. In 1949 the Cohuna congregation purchased land and built a parsonage, resulting in the arrival of their first residential pastor, Aubrey Carnell, in February 1950. The Carnells stayed three years. A preaching place was commenced in 1948 at nearby Dalton's Bridge and both congregations grew under Carnell's ministry. In January 1953 Carnell was relocated to the college in Melbourne and by June the Cohuna congregation closed altogether. Dalton's Bridge continued for many years under the leadership of Keith and Marj Goulding. A caricature of the Carnells is included as figure 8.9.

Figure 8.9 Caricature of the Carnells by Favaloro boys (Phil and Peter)¹⁰⁰



Sunshine. In July 1948 the Yarraville congregation began an outreach into the developing suburb of Sunshine, and soon after closed the Yarraville work and

⁹⁸ "Conference President's Report," 2nd District Conference, December 1948 (Archives).

⁹⁹ James Ridgway, *The Beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in Australia* (Marion, Indiana: Wesleyan Methodist Church, c. 1960), 4.

¹⁰⁰ Courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used by permission.

combined with the Sunshine ministry. They rented the Progress Association hall in Dobson Crescent,¹⁰¹ East Sunshine. While in this hall, from 1948 to 1953, the Sunday School regularly ministered to one hundred and forty-five children.¹⁰² In 1951 construction of a worship centre was commenced at 139 Devonshire Road, Sunshine, with the opening held in December 1952.

College Church. The congregation at Huntingtower was commenced in 1949 once the Cox family were living on campus. Leo and Esther Cox, together with Grace Wood and George and Hilda Randall,¹⁰³ began holding regular services in the college chapel for the community.¹⁰⁴ As was the strategy across the district, the College Church reported eighty-five children on the Sunday School roll for 1949, before they took in any adult members.

Balwyn. The church in the suburb of Balwyn commenced through a friendship between Leo Cox and Mr Archibald Hughes. Cox introduced Hughes as a lecturer at the Bible College in 1949 and consulted with Hughes on the Australian culture as he led the denomination.¹⁰⁵ Hughes began drawing a group together in Balwyn late in 1949 and in February 1950 the new church was officially organised with nine members and with Arch Hughes as their pastor.¹⁰⁶ In 1955 a chapel was built and dedicated for the Balwyn congregation.

Highett. The Highett Church began in the partially constructed home of John Allison, the Australian General Secretary of the Oriental Missionary Society (OMS). The church commenced with a large Sunday School and evening worship services in 1950. In 1953 land was purchased at the corner of Spring Road and Hazel Avenue and through funding from the American Women's Missionary Society (WMS), the church was built and dedicated in April 1955.

¹⁰¹ The Progress Association Hall was alternatively listed as Ravenhall Street or Dobson Crescent, the two streets being connected.

¹⁰² *Sunshine Advocate* newspaper, June 20, 1952, 1.

¹⁰³ Hilda Randall was Hilda Exell in the 1946 membership roll as entry number 6.

¹⁰⁴ James Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 12.

¹⁰⁵ J. Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 13.

¹⁰⁶ "Conference President's Report," 3rd District Conference, March 1950 (Archives).

Glenroy. The Glenroy Church (or Hilton Street) was commenced by Roy Fletcher. Fletcher had studied at Melbourne Bible Institute from 1941¹⁰⁷ and served at the Fitzroy Methodist Mission from January 1945.¹⁰⁸ In 1956 Fletcher approached the Wesleyan Methodists about starting a church for them. Fletcher was appointed to the suburb of Glenroy and a building was erected at Hilton Street.¹⁰⁹ By the time Fletcher started in July 1957 the small chapel was completed and ready for use. After a year Fletcher took leave of absence from the Glenroy Church. The congregation was cared for by Kingsley Ridgway and J.T. Carnell until March 1959 when James Ridgway, recently returned from America, was appointed as the pastor.

Launceston. In February 1955 the District Board decided to send Kingsley Ridgway to Launceston to explore the possibilities of starting a work in that city.¹¹⁰ Seven days later, with a positive report from Ridgway, the Board decided to appoint Ridgway to start the work in Tasmania in a rented hall.¹¹¹ Kingsley and Dorcas, with their youngest son, Robert, moved to Launceston where they held weekly services in the centre of the city and established three Sunday Schools in outer suburbs.¹¹² On Christmas Day 1955, Dorcas Ridgway died suddenly. Ridgway continued in Launceston until June 1957, when he returned to Melbourne, was remarried and began to plan his Papua New Guinea mission.

Dandenong. In February 1960 Roy Fletcher was ready to commence another church and with Board approval, he had a group meeting in Dandenong by August 1960. The growth and implosion of the Dandenong/Noble Park church is included in chapter 9: 246.¹¹³

Elizabeth. In March 1958 John and Marion Buckley were appointed to commence the Wesleyans' first church in South Australia, in a new housing development north of Adelaide called Elizabeth.¹¹⁴ A house was rented for the family and land was purchased for a chapel in 1959. Church services were started on

¹⁰⁷ *The Argus* newspaper, December 13, 1941, 11.

¹⁰⁸ *The Argus* newspaper, January 6, 1945, 21.

¹⁰⁹ District Board Minutes, March 24, 1957 (Archives).

¹¹⁰ District Board Minutes, February 1, 1955 (Archives).

¹¹¹ District Board Minutes, February 8, 1955 (Archives).

¹¹² K. Ridgway records, draft article by Mattke, 1956 (Archives).

¹¹³ Also appendix E: 609.

¹¹⁴ District Board Minutes, March 27, 1958 (Archives).

August 16, 1959 at the Broadmeadows State Primary School,¹¹⁵ while Robert Mattke gained approval to commence building a church hall in November 1959.¹¹⁶ John Buckley served as the pastor and the builder while supporting himself in secular employment. The hall was built in stages, with the first stage completed and the first service held on December 25, 1960.

An important highlight of the time was the 1959 evangelistic crusade of Billy Graham. James Ridgway served on the Executive Committee for the crusade in Melbourne and a modest influx of converts was reported by Wesleyan Methodist Churches in the wake of Graham's ministry.¹¹⁷ On the evening of February 24, James Ridgway was privileged to lead the crowd of twenty-five thousand in prayer at the evening rally and he reported "thirteen hundred seekers" that evening.¹¹⁸ At that time, with crowds too large for current venues, the Executive Committee began to consider the use of the Sydney Myer Music Bowl or the Melbourne Cricket Ground for future rallies. At the final night of Graham's four-week campaign in Melbourne, on March 15, 1959, 143,000 people packed into the Melbourne Cricket Ground, with another 4,000 listening on speakers outside the stadium.¹¹⁹ Robert Mattke began his next Conference report with the statement, "This year began in a spiritual atmosphere which was probably unique in the history of Australia. The Billy Graham Crusade brought to the masses a certain awareness of God."¹²⁰ Even so, the impact upon the local churches was negligible, with membership increasing by only twenty-five adults from 1959 to 1960.

THE STATE OF THE WORK

The extraordinary leadership of Leo Cox and Robert Mattke restored growth and hope the Wesleyan Methodist Church by the end of the 1950s. By December 1961 the work was under home-grown leadership, there were nine churches served by six

¹¹⁵ District Board Minutes, September 24, 1959 (Archives).

¹¹⁶ District Board Minutes, November 11, 1959 (Archives).

¹¹⁷ James Ridgway reports that fifteen contacts referred to the Glenroy Church from the crusade. "Jottings From Down-Under," April, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹¹⁸ Correspondence to Mattke, February 25, 1959, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹¹⁹ "Billy Graham Downunder," *Compass with Geraldine Doogue*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s2484481.htm>.

¹²⁰ "Conference President's Report," 13th District Conference, January 1960 (Archives).

ordained ministers and six licensed ministers, and the small denomination held substantial property investments with a modest 23% indebtedness.¹²¹ The early opposition of the wider evangelical community had largely been replaced by recognition and respect in Victoria. Work had begun in Tasmania and South Australia, and now mission outreach was started into Papua New Guinea. The future looked bright.

In November 1947 the denomination reported thirty adult church members and eighty-nine children on the Sunday School roll. Fourteen years later, at the conclusion of 1961 the conference reported ninety-seven adult members and one thousand and thirty-three children on the Sunday School roll.¹²² These are very modest numbers, but even so they equate to a 9% p.a. increase in adult membership and 19% p.a. increase in Sunday School over a fourteen year period.

WESLEY'S PRIORITIES DURING THIS PERIOD

The adoption of the large-Sunday-School model of church growth highlights the difference between the Wesleyan Methodist strategy and John Wesley's discipline of class meetings. Large Sunday Schools became the outreach strategy into new suburbs, with no apparent attempt at rural church-planting. One immediate consequence was that, whereas John Wesley had primarily sought to reach unchurched adults, the Wesleyan Methodists were primarily trying to reach unchurched children with the hope that they would gain access to the parents through the children. They were quite successful in reaching the children, but the small increase in adult members confirms that this strategy was not effective in reaching adults.

The less obvious result of the large-Sunday-School model was the exhaustion of the pastoral team. As the Wesleyan Methodists moved further away from John Wesley's class meeting structure they also lost the opportunity to implement Wesley's circuit model that would have allowed one minister to serve multiple congregations. Class meetings were where Wesley developed and tested lay

¹²¹ In 1961 (Jan 1962) the conference reported a total of £33,768 value of chapels and parsonages with £7,790 total indebtedness.

¹²² "Statistical Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

leadership, but in the large-Sunday-School model a pastor was required for every congregation because lay members were fully involved in children's ministry. With the failure to reach adults came financial difficulty since the support-base of the congregation was not improving. Pastors had to take on secular employment as a source of income and this resulted in a high level of exhaustion amongst the pastoral team. The full extent of the attrition was not seen until the early 1970s, by which time the large Sunday Schools were being abandoned and only a remnant of pastors remained. The congregation at Dalton's Bridge was the exception. It was the only rural congregation, and because of its isolation it functioned on lay leadership with rostered visits by Melbourne-based clergy. This approached the circuit ministry, except that it too failed to reach the adults in the community in any appreciable number. When Marj and Keith Goulding left Dalton's Bridge in 1967 the congregation dwindled and disappeared.

Meanwhile, as in the 1940s, Wesley's spirit and doctrine were clearly present. Pastors and laity were dedicated to the tasks of church-planting and ministry to children, with impressive numbers enrolled in the Sunday Schools. While this emphasis on large Sunday Schools worked against Wesley's disciplines of class meetings and itinerant preachers, it can be said that this was the closest that the Wesleyan Methodist Church went to reproducing Wesley's discipline of community service. As has been experienced in the early life of the Moonee Ponds church,¹²³ the social disruption caused by the absence (and loss) of fathers in the two world wars resulted in juvenile confusion. The work of the church amongst the children and youth was needed during this time, as can be seen by the large numbers they were able to attract. In fact, the phenomenon of children's work was typical of Australia's post-war attempt to deal with juvenile delinquency across denominations: "In the ever-spreading new suburbs that ringed every capital city Sunday school enrolments swelled."¹²⁴

Both American leaders, Leo Cox and Robert Mattke, promoted Wesley's doctrines, with a strong emphasis on holiness teaching. While the doctrine and the motivation of the Wesleyan Methodists was focused on John Wesley's priorities, the

¹²³ See appendix B: 513.

¹²⁴ David Hilliard, "Australia: Toward Secularisation and One Step Back," in *Secularisation in the Christian World*, Callum Brown and Michael Snape, eds. (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 81.

methodology was not. From 1961 to 1974, in the next chapter, the Australian Wesleyans lost most of their team, sold their campground, and at one stage the Bible College was closed and encircled by a barbed wire fence.

Chapter 9

SLOW DECLINE 1961-1974

From 1961 until 1974 the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia turned toward slow decline. The mission to Papua New Guinea had its origins as early as 1958 when Kingsley Ridgway was invited to begin a mission in Papua New Guinea and submitted a proposal to the American leadership for that purpose.¹ As that mission began to be realised, it also began to drain energy from the Australian work. The change from American to Australian leadership in the Australian Church (Mattke to James Ridgway) occurred in 1960, which briefly resulted in increased vitality in the Australian work, but then James Ridgway went to America to study and growth turned to decline.²

During the 1960s the number of adult members increased slowly while the large number of children in Sunday School plummeted after 1968. In January 1962 a five-year goal was recorded to start churches in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia³ and by 1964 it appeared that this might be achieved. In 1965 the Conference adopted a six-page *Australian Constitution* to serve as a supplement to the American *Discipline*,⁴ and early in 1966 efforts were made to begin new work in Western Australia. From January 5-22 James Ridgway, Ron Smith and Walt Ridgway drove from Melbourne to Perth to seek those who would be ready to commence a Wesleyan Methodist Church in the west.⁵ Some good contacts were made but it was to be almost two decades before a church was started in Perth.

¹ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Birch, November 14, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

² For more detail on the mission to Papua New Guinea, go to APPENDIX D.

³ "Conference President's Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Melbourne: Archives of Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia).

⁴ "Proposed Statutory Rules, 1965," Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin records (Archives).

⁵ Conference President's update, February 9, 1966, Hotchkin records (Archives).

Later in 1966 James Ridgway went to America for further studies, leaving a leadership vacuum in the Australian work. The strategy of the denomination became one of survival. In 1969 the new Conference President, Bryce Hartin, made the telling comment, "We have managed to keep the ship afloat, but the ship hasn't been going anywhere. We have lacked direction."⁶ Bryce Hartin had been an Australian evangelist with Campaigners for Christ from Sydney. He first appeared in the denominational records while speaking at a crusade for the Wesleyans in Launceston in March 1964.⁷ In April 1966 Hartin conducted crusades at the Highett and Sunshine Churches, and in June he was received by transfer as an ordained minister into the Wesleyan Methodist Church. When invited to pastor the College Church from 1967, Bryce and Ruth Hartin with their family moved from Sydney to Melbourne. Hartin pastored the College Church for four years from 1967 to 1970. He was well received in the district so that in 1969 he was elected Conference President in addition to local church pastor. Bryce and Ruth's son, Dennis Hartin, has served as a Wesleyan Methodist minister for decades since then and one of their daughters, Joy, has similarly served alongside her husband, David Powell. Bryce Hartin and Aubrey Carnell are pictured together as figure 9.1.

As the Sunday School strategy was abandoned in the late 1960s an alternative strategy of aggressive evangelism in the local churches was briefly promoted by Bryce Hartin, but this was subsequently abandoned as well. The number of Wesleyan Methodist congregations in Australia dropped from twelve to five by early 1974. Leadership had transitioned to Australian personnel in 1960, but this transition was disrupted by the absences of both James and Kingsley Ridgway at different times. This was a dark era for the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia, as much as a time of growth in Papua New Guinea; while the Wesleyan Church in Papua New Guinea was growing rapidly, the Australian Church was in decline.

⁶ "District Superintendent's Report," 22nd District Conference, December 1969 (Archives).

⁷ District Board Minutes, December 5, 1963 (Archives).

Figure 9.1 *Bryce Hartin and Aubrey Carnell c. 1969*⁸



LOCAL CHURCHES AT A GLANCE

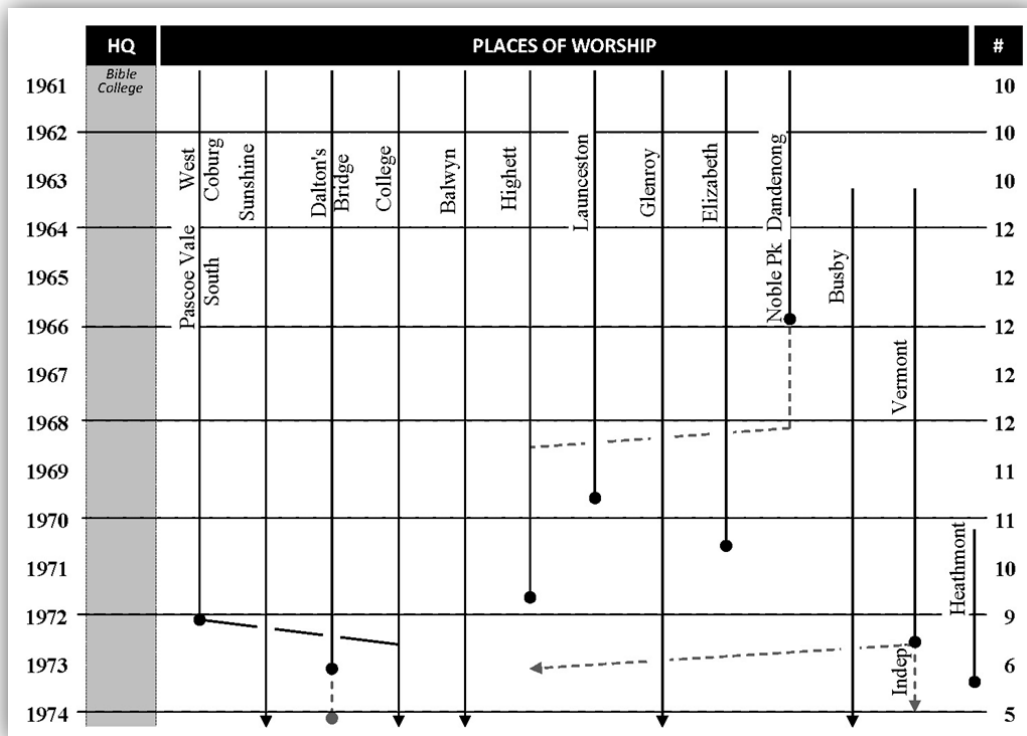
From 1962 to 1974 three new churches were started, including the first Wesleyan Methodist Church in New South Wales. During the same period eight churches were closed, including the churches in Tasmania and South Australia. Figure 9.2 illustrates the churches of 1961-1974.⁹

West Coburg / Pascoe Vale South. In 1964 the West Coburg Church changed to the Pascoe Vale South Church in keeping with community realignments. A good relationship was enjoyed with the owner of Peace Hall, who even granted ownership of the hall to the church in his will. Unfortunately his will was not properly signed and upon his death the hall was sold by his family. With the loss of Peace Hall the Pascoe Vale South congregation was merged into the College Church. This was the end of the denomination's first congregation, that which had once been the Moonee Ponds Church.

⁸ Photo courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used by permission.

⁹ For more detail on the local churches and the characters of the time, or for greater listings of source materials, go to APPENDIX E.

Figure 9.2 Churches at a glance 1961 to 1974



Sunshine. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the Sunshine Church slowly increased its attendance, achieving an average of twenty-four in 1972. A parsonage was completed beside the chapel in 1968 and in 1974 an American pastor William (Bill) Foster was assigned to the Sunshine Church. Bill brought new energy to Sunshine Church and it reached its highest attendances in the 1980s under his care.

Dalton's Bridge (Cohuna). Dalton's Bridge continued twenty-two years after the closure of the Cohuna Church with a small, vibrant ministry focused toward children and youth. A number of options for pastoral supply were attempted but the bulk of the ministry fell to Marj Goulding. When the Gouldings went to Papua New Guinea the church declined to become a Sunday School only and was eventually closed.

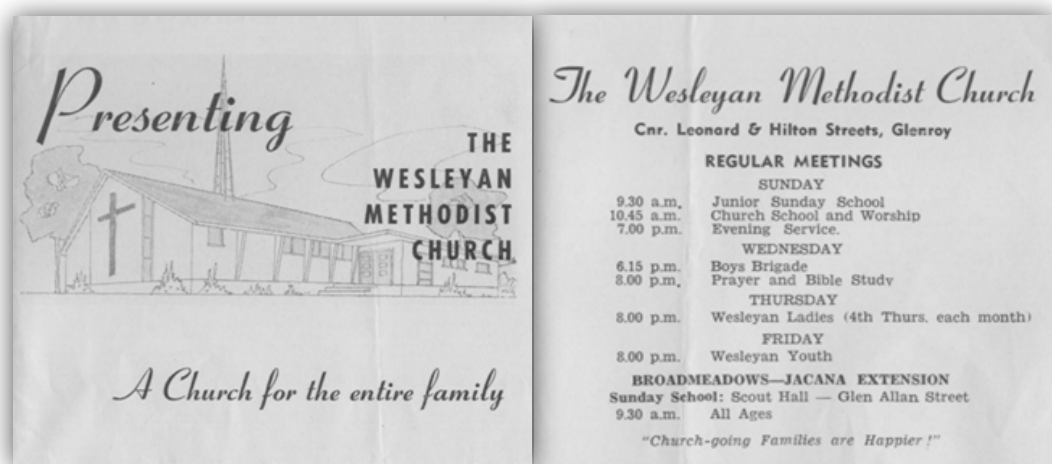
College Church. During the 1960s and 1970s College Church was consistently the largest of the Wesleyan Methodist Churches. This was aided by stationing some of the most experienced ministers at this prominent location. Aubrey Carnell, Bryce Hartin, Kingsley Ridgway and Charles Wilson led the College Church at different times. In 1963 the congregation built their chapel at 23 South Street, Glenroy.

Balwyn. Charles Wilson served as pastor of the Balwyn Church for much of the time covered in this chapter. During those years the adult membership showed a slight increase, from seven in 1962 to ten in 1968. In 1965 and 1966 the Vermont Church was placed in circuit with the Balwyn Church with Wilson as pastor. During those two years the Balwyn membership peaked at twelve. James Midgley succeeded Wilson from 1969 with membership reaching nineteen in 1974.

Hihgett. The Hihgett Church limped along until a slow increase in attendance resulted in the construction of a parsonage beside their chapel in 1968. Repayments on the parsonage were more than the congregation could sustain though and after two pastoral changes, the church was closed on the last day of November 1971.¹⁰

Glenroy. During James Ridgway's appointment the Glenroy Church the congregation peaked at twenty-five adult members and around three hundred children from 1959 to 1966. However, when Ridgway left to pursue further studies in America the congregation suffered inconsistent pastoral supply and attendance plummeted. In July 1971 the Glenroy Church was placed in circuit with College Church and began to grow again, achieving an attendance of twenty-five and membership of twenty-two in 1974. A brochure from the Hilton St, Glenroy congregation is included as figure 9.3.

Figure 9.3 *Glenroy church brochure from the 1960s*¹¹



¹⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 26th District Conference, September 1972 (Archives).

¹¹ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

Launceston. Max Richardson was assigned to the Launceston congregation in 1958 after Kingsley Ridgway's departure. The Launceston Church grew well under Richardson's ministry until he was relocated in 1964. Under subsequent pastors and a spirit of disunity in the congregation the attendances declined until the church was discontinued in 1969.

Dandenong. The Dandenong Church started well in 1960 under Roy Fletcher's aggressive evangelistic leadership. Fletcher had, "a heart for growth and for evangelism, which really wasn't a strong focus of the church... We didn't have any evangelist-type people."¹² In 1963 a hall was purchased in the neighbouring suburb of Noble Park, resulting in a name change for the church. Adult membership reached twenty-one in 1965, making it the fourth largest church in the denomination. However in 1965 Roy Fletcher attempted to improperly discipline some members who opposed his autocratic style and he was subsequently removed himself.¹³ The congregation divided and was finally disbanded on February 29, 1968, with a remnant moving across to the Hihett Church.

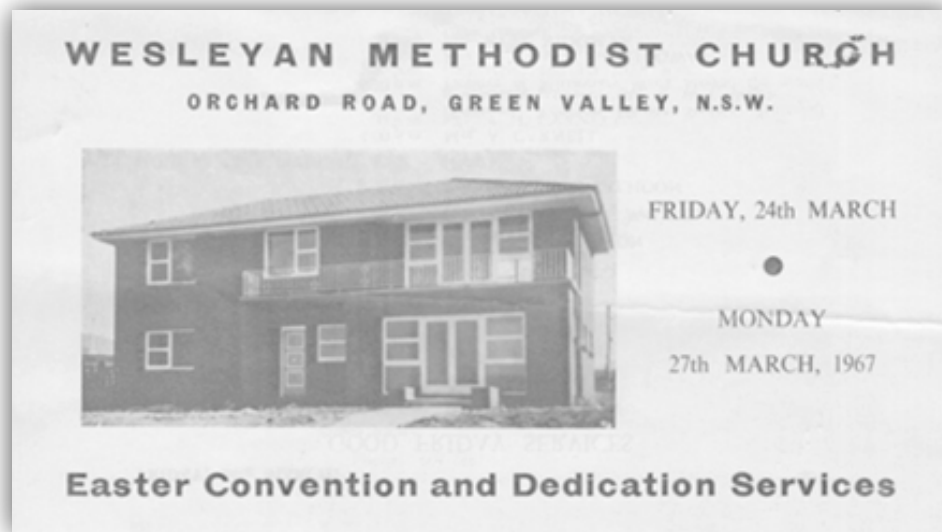
Elizabeth. Stage one of the chapel had been completed in January 1961 and stage two continued slowly. Plans for the parsonage were approved in August 1962 and membership peaked at ten adults in 1964, with one hundred and sixteen on the Sunday School roll. John and Marion Buckley had exhausted themselves and resigned in 1964. Under the subsequent two pastors the congregation fractured and declined. By 1971 no program was running at Elizabeth and the property was sold.

Green Valley / Busby. In February 1964, a former Nazarene pastor, Rev. W.D. (Doug) Pinch, commenced services in the name of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Cabramatta, New South Wales. It was then relocated to Green Valley where land was purchased and a two-storey house constructed. The suburb was later rezoned as Busby, resulting in a name change for the church. The property debt was crippling and attendance did not increase significantly until the 1980s. A brochure from the Busby church is included as figure 9.4.

¹² Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:50:40.

¹³ The details of this dispute are outlined later in this chapter in connection with a related dispute between James Ridgway and Aubrey Carnell.

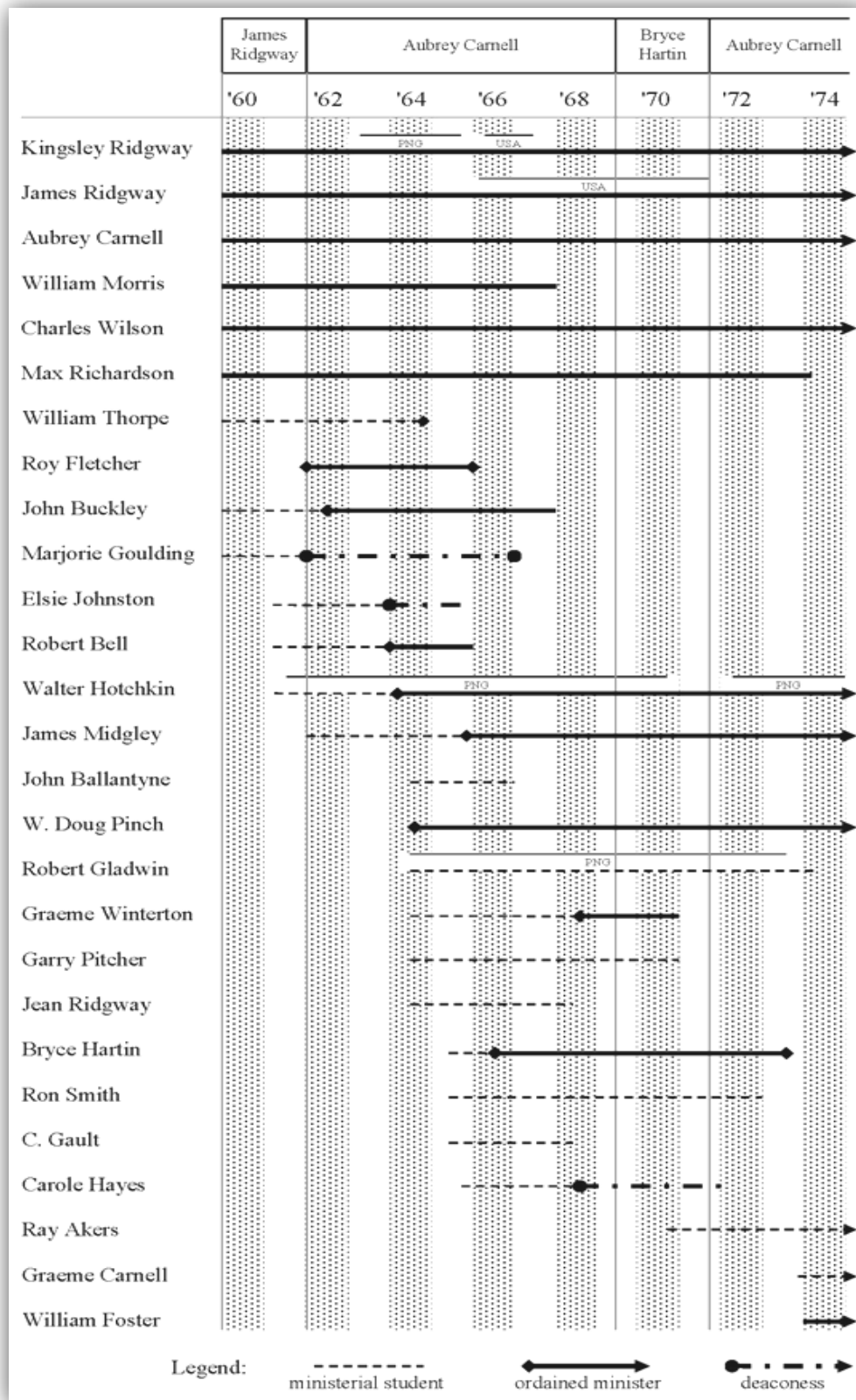
Figure 9.4 *Green Valley/Busby Church brochure from 1967*¹⁴



Vermont and Heathmont. In July 1963 an independent congregation in Vermont joined the denomination with Jim Henderson as lay leader. Students from Kingsley College helped supply the pastoral needs until Vermont was brought into circuit with Balwyn in 1964. Max Richardson was assigned as their pastor in February 1968, ending the circuit arrangement. By 1971 the church reported twenty-six in morning worship but internal divisions were growing within the congregation. After Richardson completed his service the congregation became so divided that some went to other Wesleyan Methodist Churches and the remaining Vermont congregation became independent in 1973. A small congregation at Heathmont was started from Vermont in 1969, but this group was discontinued in 1973. In 1977 the Vermont congregation rejoined the Wesleyan Methodist Church, but in 1982 they fractured again. The ministry was closed and some members transferred to the Boronia congregation. The chart of ministry personnel to 1974 as figure 9.5.

¹⁴ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

Figure 9.5 Australian ministerial team 1960-1974



LEADERSHIP ISSUES

Evidence that it was lack of senior leadership that impacted the Wesleyans rather than lack of pastoral supply can be seen in the number of ministerial personnel joining the church throughout the 1960s. In fact, by the 1970s some of the most gifted pastors were forced to seek employment in other denominations because there were insufficient pastorates to which they could be assigned.¹⁵

With the impending departure of Robert Mattke the church elected its leadership from within its own ranks. Mattke made it clear that the American leadership believed that James Ridgway was the person to lead the Australian church into a truly healthy, national work. Mattke orchestrated Ridgway's election at the 1960 Conference and subsequently the American church appointed Ridgway as their Field Representative.¹⁶ Field Representative was the same appointment that Kingsley Ridgway had been given in November 1945, and today might be viewed as the Mission Director. The Australian Church then elected its own President (Superintendent), but for many years the American church retained a Field Representative to manage designated American funding and to have some veto if it was felt necessary. Kingsley Ridgway briefly raised objection to the continuation of the position of Field Representative in 1960, arguing that continuation of the position would be "a retrograde step... otherwise frictions may develop."¹⁷ Nonetheless, he conceded that it should be workable if James Ridgway were both President and Representative. The discussion ceased abruptly when Mattke cautioned Kingsley Ridgway that the report from America was that he had expected that position for himself.¹⁸

Unfortunately, James Ridgway did not hold both positions for very long and the concerns were proven valid. Kingsley Ridgway served as College Principal for the first parts of 1961 and 1962. In January 1963 the Australian Conference granted him

¹⁵ Max Richardson, for example, accepted appointment with the Baptist Church. Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough - Pioneer Church Work in Australia: 1955 to 1995* (Lilydale VIC: Self published, 1995), 103.

¹⁶ This was the same appointment that Kingsley Ridgway was given from November 1945. It might be viewed as the Mission Director. The Australian Church then elected its own President (Superintendent), but for many years the two role were held by the same person.

¹⁷ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, June 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁸ Correspondence Mattke to K. Ridgway, July 7, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

two years leave of absence from the college to concentrate on the work in Papua New Guinea¹⁹ in recognition that their desire that he lead the college was impractical. Therefore, James Ridgway was reassigned from Conference President to the role of Acting Principal and Aubrey Carnell was elected as the new Conference President. The Carnell family are pictured as figure 9.6.

Figure 9.6 *The Carnells: Hazel, Dennis, Graeme and Aubrey c. 1948*²⁰



James Ridgway, however, retained the role of Field Representative. This reassignment, a knock-on effect of the Papua New Guinea priority, resulted in two events of lasting significance: as leader of the college Ridgway came to recognise his own need for further education; and the separation of the roles of President and Representative predictably brought Carnell and Ridgway into conflict. Both events contributed to the decline of the next decade.

At thirty-three years of age, Ridgway became increasingly aware of his own lack of qualifications to provide leadership and counsel to the team of pastors and students under his influence.²¹ In 1965 he concluded that they needed to return to America so that he could undertake doctoral studies. They booked their passage and Ridgway took the early months of 1966 away from ministry to earn the money for

¹⁹ "College President's Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

²⁰ Photo courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used by permission.

²¹ Interview, Melva Ridgway, July 1, 2015, notes.

the final payment on their passage. Ridgway's Ph.D. studies in psychology and his pastoral service at Jersey City Wesleyan Church in New York City totalled almost six years absence from Australia, covering the time of greatest decline.

Before the Ridgways departed an incident occurred at the Noble Park Church in which James Ridgway became embroiled as Field Representative. Roy Fletcher was the founding pastor of the Noble Park congregation, previously the Dandenong Church. Fletcher came from a different denominational background, most recently from Walter Betts' Fitzroy Mission, and he completed his training at the Melbourne Bible Institute. Consequently he had some different practices to the Wesleyan Methodists. Kingsley Ridgway mentioned this matter to Mattke as early as 1958, when Fletcher had commenced the Glenroy Church:

Roy is wanting some assurance that he can be in the running for the Highett pastorate, but I have given him none. He will have to learn to take counsel if he is to fit into our team. He is a little too autocratic as a pastor; which goes in the Methodist Church; perhaps even in the Nazarenes; but does not suit so well in our Church.²²

Seven years after this correspondence, while pastoring the Noble Park Church in 1965, Fletcher was encountering opposition from within his congregation. Tom Blythe was one of those members and he has provided details of this story.²³ The pastoral vote was due, so Fletcher found an ingenious way to avoid a negative vote. At a Sunday evening youth service, when the hall was full of members and visitors, Fletcher announced that he was due for a vote and asked those in favour of himself as pastor to raise their hands. A good number raised their hands, including many visitors, and Fletcher accepted the vote. At this point approximately ten of his members stood and walked out. This voting procedure was a major departure from Wesleyan Methodist protocol, but even so, it may have gone unnoticed except that Fletcher took further action against those who walked out. He wrote them each a letter summarily dismissing them from membership.²⁴ Church membership is carefully guarded in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and cannot be removed by unilateral action of the pastor. Therefore, the disenfranchised members appealed to the Conference President, Aubrey Carnell.

²² Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, October 2, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²³ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:11:59 ff.

²⁴ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:44:28.

When Aubrey Carnell did not take decisive action and it appeared that the members would be lost, James Ridgway became involved. This was the first time that the Field Representative acted to contradict the Conference President. Ridgway brought a formal accusation against Fletcher himself. The accusation included "Flagrant disobedience to the order and discipline of the church" and "Unministerial conduct."²⁵ These accusations were referred to a Judiciary Committee by the 1965 Annual Conference. The Committee met on August 5, 1965 and found Fletcher guilty of all charges. Roy Fletcher then resigned.

Fletcher continued to have irregular contact with the Wesleyan Methodist leaders. In 1966 he was associated with Charles Lee, the early Wesleyan worker, in running an independent camp at Heathmont at which Arthur Calhoun was the guest speaker.²⁶ In October 1980 Fletcher applied to the National Superintendent for reinstatement as a minister with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, but after several months of interviews and correspondence, his application was denied because of continuing "impediments".²⁷

Joyce Wilson was a close friend and fierce defender of the Fletchers and after the 1965 Conference she wrote to the pastors to defend Fletcher and to criticise the Conference and James Ridgway for prosecuting Fletcher. In response Ridgway wrote to the pastors, providing the details of the process and offering some stern criticism of "Sister Wilson".²⁸ Wilson felt defamed by James Ridgway's letter, so her husband Charles brought a formal accusation against Ridgway. The same committee that had examined Fletcher met again on March 8, 1966 to consider the accusation against Ridgway. Charles Wilson was the chair of that Judiciary Committee that met to consider Charles' own accusation against Ridgway. The committee found that Ridgway had already apologised to Wilson and the matter seemed easily settled. They directed Ridgway to send a copy of his apology to the pastors, which he did immediately after the meeting. Soon after this James and Melva Ridgway departed for America thinking everything was settled. Months after the 1966 Conference, while in America, Ridgway received a copy of the Conference Journal to find that

²⁵ "Report of the Committee on Ministerial Character," 18th District Conference, June 1965 (Archives).

²⁶ Correspondence K. Ridgway to J. Ridgway, December 19, 1966, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²⁷ National Board Minutes, March 27-28, 1981 (Archives).

²⁸ Correspondence to the pastors, June 21, 1965, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

the meeting with him was reported as a *trial* instead of an informal meeting and that the results of the meeting were badly misrepresented.²⁹ Indeed, the publishing of the details of this meeting highlights a serious conflict of interest, since the offence was against Joyce Wilson, the formal accuser was her husband Charles and the Chair of the Committee was also Charles. In 1967 Kingsley Ridgway noted that Charles was "the plaintiff and the judge."³⁰

Ridgway wrote to the Conference President, Aubrey Carnell, to have the record corrected but it took the remainder of the year for Carnell to address the matter. The following year (1967) a Correction was published in the Journal, accurately stating the full minute of the Committee, noting that the matter was dealt with and that forgiveness had been extended.³¹ However, in correspondence between Ridgway and Carnell, Ridgway expressed his feelings of being unfairly treated:

Thanks for the report on the Judiciary committee action. I must confess that I feel some sense of disappointment that you have done so little to correct this matter, and have some misgivings concerning the procedure used in getting this correction into the MINUTES. However, the correction as you stated it in your letter is what I understood to be the resolution and I shall be happy to have it stated in the Minutes. I would have pressed for a clear statement of "Not Guilty" had these matters been expedited in a proper manner, to offset the possibility of Wilsons inferring my guilt in the future.³²

At the 1966 Conference the President, Aubrey Carnell, had reported that, "For the next three years, Reverend James Ridgway will be studying at Drew University, and pastoring a church in M.A.S. Conference."³³ Ridgway's three year stay was extended to six, raising the question whether the unpleasantness with the Judiciary Committee was a factor in James and Melva Ridgway's failure to hurry back to Australia.

Time spent in America by Kingsley and James Ridgway must be factored into the decline of the Australian church during the 1960s and 1970s. The loss of Ridgway leadership in the Australian church is compounded by the departure of

²⁹ "Report of the Judiciary Committee," 19th District Conference, June 1966 (Archives).

³⁰ K. Ridgway to J. Ridgway, June 1, 1967, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

³¹ "Correction to Last Year's Judiciary Committee's Report," 20th District Conference, June 1967 (Archives).

³² J. Ridgway to A. Carnell, August 29, 1967, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

³³ "Conference President's Report," 19th District Conference, June 1966 (Archives).

other potential leaders, including Robert Mattke in January 1961 and Charles Wilson's time in America from 1969 and 1971.

Throughout this post-Mattke period, from 1961 to the new growth period of 1975, the sole constant leadership presence was that of Aubrey Carnell, pictured as figure 9.7. Despite his gifts lying more in administration than leadership, Carnell accepted whatever promotions and demotions the Conference gave him. An example of Carnell's commitment to duty can be seen in the 1969 Conference Journal, when Carnell is listed as Assistant District Superintendent, District Administrator, District Treasurer, Chairman of the New Guinea Commission, Camp Director, College Principal (Acting), Chairman of the Ministerial Standing Committee, a member of all District Boards and Committees, and Pastor of Pascoe Vale South Church. Carnell humbly concluded his 1969 report with the words:

I appreciate the privilege and opportunity of serving the District, I have worked for the promotion and the extension of the Wesleyan Church in Australia, and my prayer is that we shall see a real work of the Holy Spirit in each of our churches during the year 1970.³⁴

Figure 9.7 *Aubrey Carnell in 1990s*³⁵



Two of those who briefly stood with Carnell in carrying some of the district leadership were Rev. Arthur Calhoun and Rev. Bryce Hartin. Arthur Calhoun was an American missionary who took leadership of the Bible College from July 1966 until July 1969. See figure 9.8. Sadly however, during Calhoun's time in Australia the

³⁴ "Assistant District Superintendent's Report," 22nd District Conference, June 1969 (Archives).

³⁵ Photo courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used by permission.

college declined until it was reduced to just evening classes in the city. Nonetheless, Calhoun's students remember him warmly. James Midgley describes Calhoun as "a pastor and a theologian, strong in holiness teaching, one who made holiness living exciting and possible."³⁶ Similarly, Dennis Hartin remembers Calhoun as "a Godly man; a real man of prayer." In 1967 Calhoun reported a good year with an average of twenty-one students and eight part-time lecturers,³⁷ but by the end of his second year Calhoun reported such a drastic decrease in the number of student enrolments that the college was subsequently closed to daytime classes.³⁸

Figure 9.8 *Arthur Calhoun and Aubrey Carnell c.1968*³⁹



Calhoun attributes this decline in numbers to the lack of advertising and recruiting, but an additional factor is alluded to in Dennis Hartin's recollection that students came to his father, Bryce Hartin, to complain about the heavy academic demands that Calhoun was placing on them,⁴⁰ raising the possibility that he had not made sufficient adjustment for the diploma-level studies at the college. Soon not even night classes were offered at the college campus. The property was fenced with barbed wire by the time James Ridgway returned in 1972.

³⁶ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:31:55.

³⁷ "College Report," 20th District Conference, December 1967 (Archives).

³⁸ "College Report," 21st District Conference, December 1968 (Archives).

³⁹ Photo courtesy of Dennis Carnell, used with permission.

⁴⁰ Interview, Dennis Hartin, May 6, 2014, 0:56:50.

Bryce Hartin election as Conference President in 1969 relieved Aubrey Carnell of some of the leadership load that he had been managing almost single-handedly. When accepting this additional responsibility, Hartin advised that his gifts were not in administration so he requested the creation of a new position, that of Conference Administrator. This was approved and Aubrey Carnell was elected to that position. As a result Carnell's administrative load continued as listed above in his 1969 responsibilities. Consistent with this arrangement, Hartin's Conference Reports were future-focused on District strategies and goals and quite devoid of the typical conference reporting on statistics and significant events from the past year. Carnell did not assume this responsibility in his reporting either, resulting in a regrettable gap in the records for 1969 and 1970.

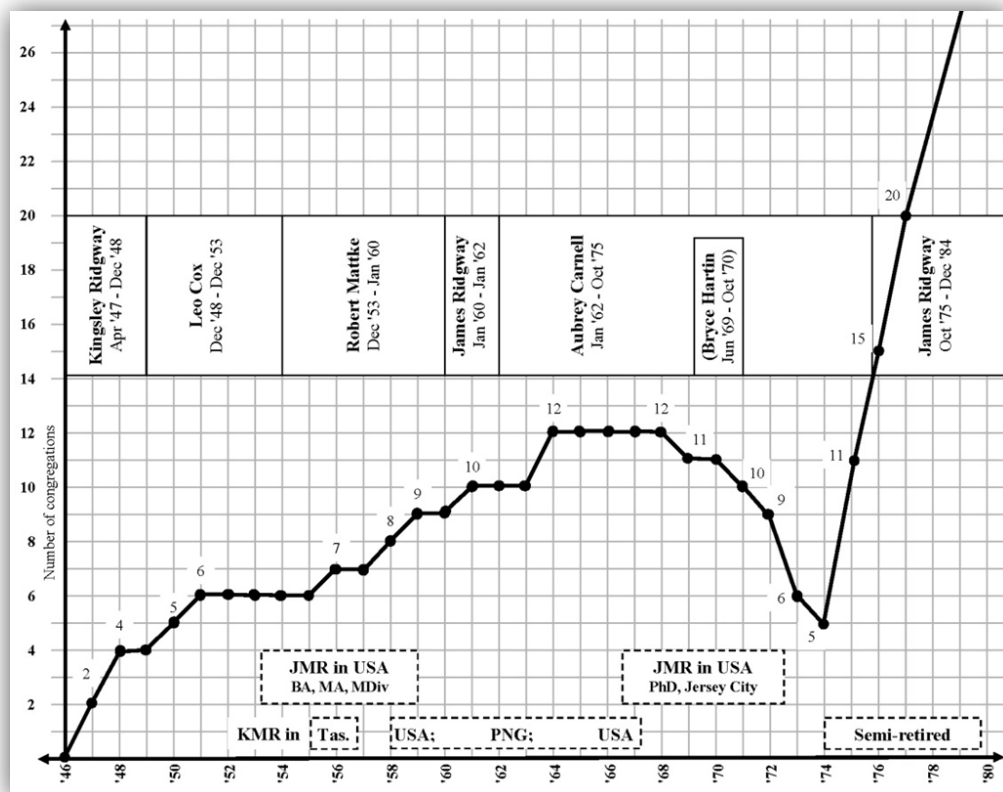
The lack of reporting notwithstanding, it is clear that Hartin was correct in identifying the need for a new vision and for urgent action. In his Conference Report at the end of his first year as President, Hartin set large goals for evangelistic outreach through the local churches. These goals included training people for visitation and personal evangelism, with a projected budget of \$17,600.⁴¹ One of the sources that Hartin proposed would supply the budget was from the sale of the Healesville campsite. The Healesville campsite had been James Ridgway's project, but he was not there to argue against its sale. By 1970 it became clear that the strategy of community evangelism was not progressing well, but nonetheless, the sale of the Healesville campsite had by then been initiated. Hartin identified one of the major hindrances to his strategy was his own overload as Pastor of College Church, Conference President and Director of Evangelism and Church Growth. Therefore, to free himself up for evangelism, he resigned from the College Church pastorate. He advised the 1970 Conference, "I propose to give my time and energy to those things which I feel must receive top priority if our work in Australia is to survive."⁴² Unfortunately, the Conference delegates did not share Hartin's enthusiasm. Instead they narrowly returned Aubrey Carnell to the role of District Superintendent, with nine out of seventeen votes in the second ballot. Hartin left the Conference without either role of pastor or superintendent and his vision for the church was never pursued. Bryce and Ruth returned to Sydney soon after.

⁴¹ "District Superintendent's Report," 22nd District Conference, December 1969 (Archives).

⁴² "Assistant District Superintendent's Report," 24th District Conference, June 1970 (Archives).

The sale of the Healesville campsite was finalised by the District Board in July 1970.⁴³ James Ridgway returned from America in March 1972 to find the Bible College closed and fenced off, the Healesville campsite sold and the number of local churches halved. The Australian church would benefit greatly from Ridgway's maturity and academic achievements in future years, but in 1972 it was obvious that his absence had been a factor in the decline of the Australian church. A chart of James and Kingsley Ridgway's times of absence is shown as figure 9.9.

Figure 9.9 *Extended absences of Kingsley and James Ridgway, 1946-1974*



Kingsley and Jean Ridgway, John and Lael, returned from Papua New Guinea in December 1965 due to Ridgway's health. After six months of recuperation they sailed to America to promote the work of the Pacific. They chose their departure date to accompany James Ridgway and family on the ocean voyage to America. See figure 9.10. Kingsley Ridgway was accompanied by Keith Goulding, who offered to serve as his driver in America.⁴⁴ Kingsley Ridgway and his family, together with

⁴³ District Board Minutes, July 23, 1970 (Archives).

⁴⁴ Interview, Melva Ridgway, July 1, 2015, notes.

Keith, returned to Australia late that same year, after an intense program of conference and church speaking.

Figure 9.10 *Ridgway family passage to America together 1966*⁴⁵



By this time Jean Ridgway was an accomplished speaker. She represented the work of Papua New Guinea at conferences in Canada, North Michigan, Indiana, Allegheny, Ohio, Michigan, Kansas, Oregon, California and Australia. She spoke 78 times during the months of July, August and September.⁴⁶

Kingsley Ridgway was assigned to stabilise the Noble Park work in 1967 after Roy Fletcher's departure and Jean Ridgway served as briefly as College Matron, before ill health forced her to surrender the task to Mrs Calhoun.⁴⁷ Ridgway pastored the College and Glenroy churches in the early 1970s with great success but he was not brought back into district leadership, perhaps out of consideration for his health.

Kingsley Ridgway also served as editor of the *Wesleyan Messenger* magazine, as pictured as figure 9.11, after his repatriation to Australia. The Wesleyans had a history of producing their own magazines. In 1950 they first began to produce *The Wesleyan Witness*, which was quite a financial success for several years because of

⁴⁵ J. Ridgway's records (Archives). Adults L-R: Kingsley and Jean Ridgway, Keith Goulding, Melva Ridgway (J. Ridgway behind the camera). Children L-R: Lael, Karen, Beth, John, Kent and Dale Ridgway.

⁴⁶ "New Guinea Missions Secretary's Report," 20nd District Conference, December 1967 (Archives).

⁴⁷ "College Report," 20nd District Conference, December 1967 (Archives).

American interest in the Australian ministry. At its peak in 1951 there was US\$1,100 in subscriptions in America.⁴⁸ Arch Hughes served as magazine editor until resigning in 1953, after which the magazine declined. In 1962 a new magazine was produced called the *Wesleyan Messenger*, which was specifically for publishing articles by church leaders.⁴⁹ This is the magazine that Kingsley Ridgway produced. However, by 1968 the high costs of producing the magazine brought production to a halt. In the 1970s the Balwyn Church began publishing its own church magazine called *Horizon*, and from the end of 1974 the district took over that publication. In April 1975 the name was changed to *The Australian Wesleyan*.⁵⁰ This magazine continued to be published quarterly until 2012 when production of hard copies was discontinued and an electronic copy was trialled and then replaced by an emailed newsletter from the national office called *Weswords*.⁵¹

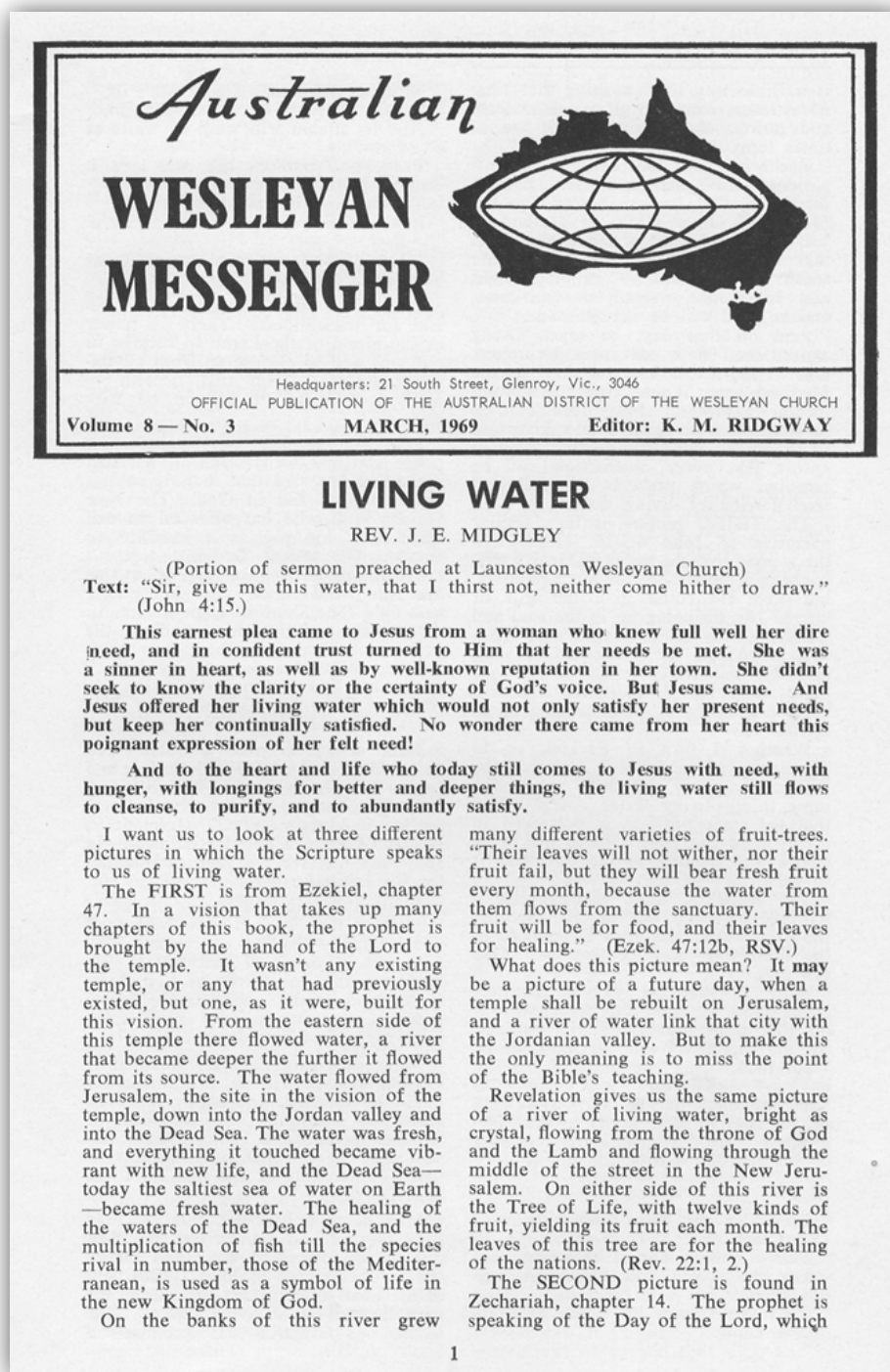
⁴⁸ District Board Minutes, September 20, 1951 (Archives). \$575 in subscription + \$525 in gift subscriptions.

⁴⁹ District Board Minutes, February 2, 1962 (Archives).

⁵⁰ "Publications Editor's Report," 29th District Conference, October 1975, 25 (Archives).

⁵¹ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *Weswords* (<http://weswords.com/>, issued periodically 2012-).

Figure 9.11 *Wesleyan Messenger*, editor K.M. Ridgway, 1969⁵²



It was a shock to the district leaders when Kingsley and Jean's marriage broke down in 1973, resulting in separation. Two years later, in December 1975, they were divorced. The reasons for their separation were kept very private, with some of the details only confided to James Ridgway thirty-five years later. There were numerous

⁵² Kingsley M. Ridgway, ed., *Australian Wesleyan Messenger* (Glenroy, Victoria, Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1969), 1.

factors in this parting. Kingsley and Jean were of different generations and radically different worldviews. The twenty-seven year age difference was only one factor in Kingsley's and Jean's disharmony. Jean Ridgway had been raised as a feminist by a feminist mother and a suffragette grandmother in the suburbs of Melbourne;⁵³ Kingsley Ridgway had been raised in conservative rural Victoria. She was raised amidst severe beatings and physical abuse; he was raised to believe in redemptive value of firm discipline and corporal punishment. She was an independent-minded, self-supporting career woman; he understood that a wife's role was to support her husband in his career. They might never have been married except that they shared one overwhelming passion: they both wanted to go to the mission field. Their love for each other and their adventures in America and the Highlands of Papua New Guinea carried them through their differences, but as Jean Ridgway explained, there were always tensions in the marriage. The tensions became real points of conflict when the children were born. Forty-two years after their separation Jean Ridgway reflected on her duties as a wife and a mother; "Kingsley told me often that I was to obey him, [pause] and I tried,"⁵⁴ but as the babies became small children Kingsley's and Jean's views on discipline became a serious matter of contention.

After the sudden termination of their mission work new stresses were introduced as their roles changed and they grieved for the loss of ministry and purpose that they had enjoyed in Papua New Guinea. Kingsley Ridgway struggled with ongoing medical issues, interrupted ministry assignments and a brief return to secular work. Jean Ridgway suffered an emotional breakdown, and in her recovery she returned to nursing at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. By 1970 both Kingsley and Jean were leaving the home before the children went to school and arriving home after the children.⁵⁵ He was offered the College Church pastorate and accepted so that it would bring some routine back into the home. However, in this the reversal of Jean and Kingsley's roles was complete - she earned the main income and he cared for the children - which suited Jean's values but not Kingsley's. One evening the issue of

⁵³ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 0:30:15.

⁵⁴ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 0:58:50.

⁵⁵ Correspondence K. Ridgway to J. Ridgway, October 13, 1970, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

discipline of the children resulted in a final confrontation between Kingsley and Jean. She took the children and walked out of the marriage and away from her faith.⁵⁶

After two years' of separation Jean Ridgway agreed to a divorce and to accept full responsibility for the separation. Kingsley and Jean met privately with James Ridgway to present the same sanitised explanation. Kingsley Ridgway offered to resign from the ministry but the church leadership approved his continued ministry with the assurance that he was the innocent party in the divorce.⁵⁷ Little more information was made public except Kingsley Ridgway's reference to Jean's declining mental health.⁵⁸ This was not without basis since she was indeed seeking professional help, but there were other factors in the divorce. Throughout the subsequent decades the church members accepted with sadness that one of the prominent figures of the early denomination had walked away,⁵⁹ while at the same time, Jean Ridgway was hurt that so many severed contact with her entirely.⁶⁰ Kingsley Ridgway was remarried on March 28, 1977 to a long-time friend and widow, Elvie (Judkins) Armstrong. He had sought Elvie's hand in marriage in 1920 but been declined by her father.

OTHER INFLUENCES IN THE 1960s

In the 1960s the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America was in negotiations with the Pilgrim Holiness Church toward merger. Merger was achieved in 1968 with the formation of The Wesleyan Church.⁶¹ Changes flowed on to the Australian church. A commemorative edition of *The Wesleyan Advocate* illustrated the merger of the Wesleyan Methodist and Pilgrim Holiness Churches, as pictured as figure 9.12.

⁵⁶ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 1:11:50.

⁵⁷ Interview, Melva Ridgway, July 1, 2015, notes.

⁵⁸ Kingsley M. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains: A History of the First Five Years of the Wesleyan Missionary Work in Papua New Guinea," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 329.

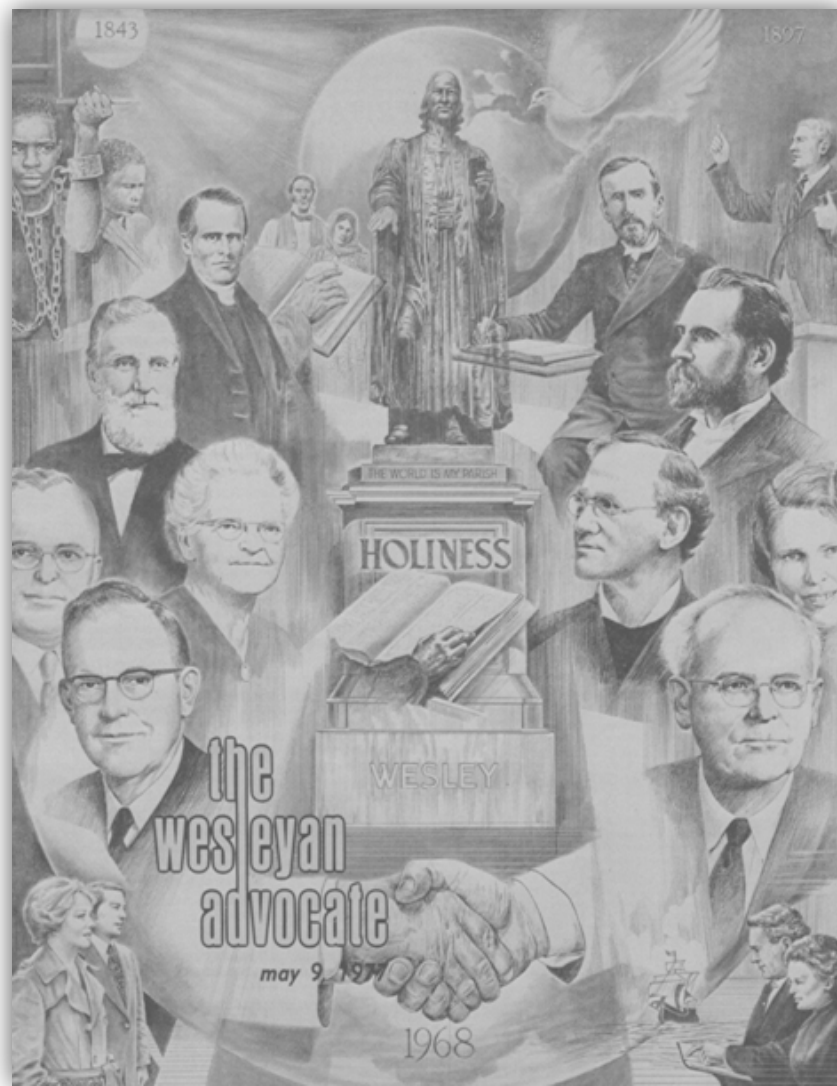
⁵⁹ The lack of information and the regret is obvious in the interviews. See Interview, Dennis Hartin, May 6, 2014, 0:10:15. Also, Glen O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan-Holiness Pioneer," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 92.

⁶⁰ Interview, Jean Ridgway, July 15, 2015, 1:17:40. Some of those who did stay close friends were Mick and Emily Kelsall, Hazel Carnell, Frances Leak and James Ridgway. Jean retained use of the surname "Ridgway".

⁶¹ This merger is described in chapter 2: 77.

The Australian church was granted special permission to retain the name Wesleyan Methodist even though the parent body dropped the name Methodist. Many of the structural terms changed: Conference President became District Superintendent; the Committee of Itineracy and Orders became the District Board of Ministerial Standing; the College President became the College Principal; and the Action Committee appeared as the body that processed resolutions to Conference.

Figure 9.12 *The American Wesleyan Advocate* issue celebrating merger⁶²



At that time, the District and College Boards formed a joint committee to investigate the possibility of selling the college property and relocating to another site. The committee reported back:

⁶² Wesleyan Church of America, *The Wesleyan Advocate* (Marion, Indiana: Wesley Church, May 1977), cover. See chapt. 2, 80.

In consideration of:

- (1) The nature of the college as a general Bible College
- (2) Its central location
- (3) The prohibitive cost of re-locating
- (4) Difficulties involved for staff and students in a rural location,

We recommend that the College and headquarters building remain on the present location.⁶³

The result was to take no action, but the exercise and the wording are significant for later generations. It is obvious that the unsuitability of the Glenroy facility was under consideration relatively early in the denomination's history - long before the work had expanded into Queensland.⁶⁴ It is also clear that the building was considered to be a shared resource for college and headquarters - it was not the sole property of the Bible College.⁶⁵ In 1973, once James Ridgway had returned from America, the name of the college was changed from the Wesleyan Methodist Bible College to Kingsley College in recognition of Kingsley Ridgway's primary role in the Australian work.⁶⁶

The losses covered in this chapter are in contrast with the reports of consistent growth in the new mission to Papua New Guinea.⁶⁷ In Papua New Guinea a vibrant mission work was established and indigenised at a rapid pace with a vigorous strategy of expansion, training and empowerment. In Australia leadership was also passed on from missionaries to Australian personnel, but it barely survived through times of isolation, lack of resources, loss of morale, internal conflict, incongruous decisions and absentee leadership. Too many men and women were used up and left behind.

⁶³ District Board Minutes, October 2, 1967 and May 2, 1968 (Archives).

⁶⁴ In later generations, as the denomination flourished in Queensland the discussion would include relocation to that state. It is significant that the discussion of relocation was under consideration before that parochial factor was introduced.

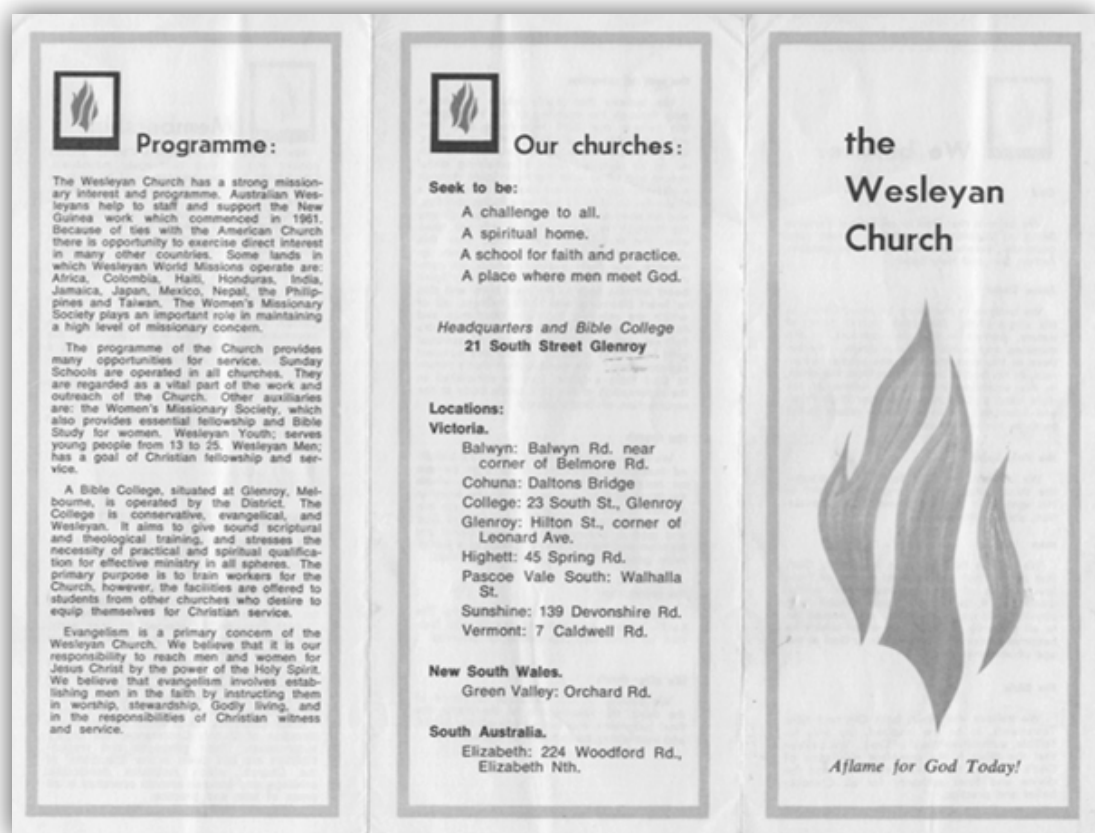
⁶⁵ By 2008 the College Board had begun to list the property as an asset of the College, which could therefore be reinvested by the College, but this record confirms that the purpose of this property was historically more complex.

⁶⁶ District Board Minutes, February 8 and July 26, 1973 (Archives).

⁶⁷ See appendix D: 586.

In January 1961, membership had been eighty-seven persons in ten congregations. In 1974 there were one hundred and two members in five churches. The district had peaked at one hundred and ninety-four members in twelve churches in 1966. Australian Wesleyans made a strong contribution to the pioneering of the New Guinea work in both personnel and funds, but at a price. One report reflected hopefully that perhaps it was now the Australian church's time for growth.⁶⁸ A denominational brochure from this period is pictured as figure 9.13.

Figure 9.13 *Denominational brochure c.1969*⁶⁹



WESLEY'S PRIORITIES DURING THIS PERIOD

Wesley's priorities of doctrine and spirit continue to be very apparent in the Wesleyan Methodist Church during the 1960s and 1970s but with no attempt to institute Wesley's disciplines. Once again, the role of an American missionary, in this

⁶⁸ "Wesleyan World Fellowship Report," 30th District Conference, October 1976 (Archives).

⁶⁹ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

case Arthur Calhoun, is named as one of the strongest forces in promoting the ongoing commitment to the holiness doctrine.

The loss of the large Sunday schools (from 1,171 children in 1964 to 211 children in 1973) was a shift of strategy that was only temporarily replaced by a focus on adult evangelism during Bryce Hartin's term of leadership. In contrast, and to illustrate that it was possible, Roy Fletcher built his congregation in Dandenong/Noble Park on effective evangelism, generating one of the fastest growing congregations in the denomination.

The changes in leadership resulted in an absence of any consistent strategy during this time, least of all, Wesley's disciplines. As has been noted in an earlier chapter, John Wesley held his group together by "the sheer force of his personality"⁷⁰ and while he was still alive, his doctrine, spirit and discipline were evident in Methodism in Britain, North America, West Africa and the Caribbean. Strong focused leadership had been a necessary factor in enforcing Methodist priorities in John Wesley's lifetime,⁷¹ but the opposite is evident in the decade from 1965-1974 in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. Leadership shifted from James Ridgway to Aubrey Carnell to Bryce Hartin and back to Carnell. As a result, strategy was fluid and the internal discipline of any motivating goal was lacking.

Despite Kingsley Ridgway's time in Papua New Guinea (1961-1965), he was back in Melbourne for most of the time while James Ridgway was in America for doctoral studies. The fact that Kingsley Ridgway was not called upon to serve in leadership at all during James Ridgway's absence appears unusual. Kingsley Ridgway had just suffered heart difficulties, but he was well enough to work in pastoral positions and to take on secular employment. He was in his mid to late 60s during James Ridgway's absence, so he was not too old to lead. From 1970 Kingsley and Jean separated and divorced, which could certainly have been an obstacle to church leadership, but that happened some years after their return from Papua New Guinea. Carnell's need for assistance was clearly noted when Bryce Hartin was elected as Conference President in 1969, but from 1966 through until James

⁷⁰ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), 39.

⁷¹ Chapter 1: 17.

Ridgway's return in 1973 Kingsley Ridgway is not nominated for the roles of President or Vice President at any time. Furthermore, Kingsley Ridgway did not serve on the eight-person Conference Board in 1966, and in 1967 when Kingsley Ridgway and Tom Blythe were nominated to serve on the Conference Board, the Board was reduced in size to six persons, resulting in Blythe's election but not Kingsley Ridgway's.⁷² In 1968 the Board was expanded again to nine persons but again he was not elected. In 1969 he was finally elected as the eighth person of an eight-person Conference Board.

This absence of Kingsley Ridgway from leadership during a critical time arouses questions. Was the conference simply protecting him from a stressful role? Had he offended the Australian team by his insistence in going to Papua New Guinea in the 1960s? Or, was it Ridgway himself who refused any leadership role because his passion for the Australian work had waned too far? Whatever the reason, lack of consistent visionary leadership was a dominating factor in a period of denominational decline and a drift further away from Wesley's disciplines.

⁷² "Minutes," 20th District Conference, June 1967 (Archives).

Section 3

WMC - 2ND CONVERGENT EVENT:

OUT OF UNION

1974-2015

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 3

Chapters 10 to 11 cover an initial period of rapid growth for the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia followed by some loss of focus. Convergence of British and American Methodism in this section centres on the influx of former Australian Methodists into the American-styled Wesleyan Methodist Church. The former Methodists were driven to join the Wesleyan Methodist Church by the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia and the extinction of the former Methodist Church. In this section John Wesley's priorities of doctrine, spirit and discipline are applied to both the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Methodist Church with the conclusions:

1. The Methodist Church of Australasia had been in critical decline for seventy-six years by the time of union, having arguably lost Wesley's spirit and largely abandoned his disciplines at the turn of the twentieth century. With church union they cemented the rejection of Wesley's doctrinal basis of the fully inspired Bible through the *Basis of Union*¹ and ceased to function as Methodist.
2. From 1974 until the 1990s the Wesleyan Methodist Church is in a period of rapid growth and some disappointing losses. New churches, new leadership, and new structures are introduced into the denomination. The first woman is ordained to ministry in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. John Wesley's spirit and doctrines remain evident in the growing church, but the method of church growth is not consistent with Wesley's disciplines.
3. From the 1990s until 2015 the Wesleyan Methodist Church showed signs of drifting further from John Wesley's priorities and growth slowed until decline was evident. The early sacrificial spirit was seen to dissipate through the loss of church-planting, the discipline of church membership was softened without any real attempt to establish an alternative process of discipleship and

¹ The Joint Commission on Church Union, *The Basis of Union as Revised 1971* (Melbourne: Aldersgate Press, 1972).

the loss of the emphasis on the holiness doctrine is seen through the sale of their college and adjustments to reporting standards. A number of disappointing congregational losses occur during these years, as detailed in the appendices F-H.

Chapter 10

A RUSH OF NEW GROWTH 1974-1983

In his Superintendent's Report to the 1975 Conference, Aubrey Carnell wrote:

A new era in the history of the church has emerged, many who feel that they are unable to join the Uniting Church, are directing their attention toward the Wesleyan Church, this action is largely responsible for the beginning of Wesleyanism in the State of Queensland, and will be an avenue of growth in each State in the near future.²

Carnell correctly identified a new tide of interest, generated primarily by those who disagreed with the merger of the Methodist Church with most of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches into the Uniting Church in Australia. The expansion of Wesleyan Methodist Church continued from 1974 to 1996, during which time the number of congregations increased from five to eighty-two. The increase of congregations resulted in new church members and new leadership.

FORMATION OF THE UNITING CHURCH

Those ex-Methodists who joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church came from a broad range of experiences, and yet voiced similar issues of discontent with the Methodist Church and with the 1977 church union.

Neil and Merlene Stocks were part of the Methodist Church in Childers, Queensland. Neil had been raised in the Methodist Church, eventually serving as Sunday School Superintendent and a Local Preacher in the Childers Church and its six preaching points. When arrangements for church union were announced Neil states that they were not pleased:

² "District Superintendent's Report," 29th District Conference, October 1975 (Melbourne: Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia).

One of the key factors was the fact that the Word of God was *contained* in the Bible, [instead of the Bible being] actually taken as the Word of God, full stop... Another was that they were involved with the World Council of Churches.³

We said we'd give it twelve months trial to see how it went, and we weren't happy. The further we got into it, the further we were disgruntled with it.... One of the things that disgruntled us greatly was we came into a cooperative parish situation, and we had a Presbyterian pastor who was a mason lodge bloke. That didn't sit well. And also he was starting to explain away the miracles, by saying, you know, there could have been a sand bar under there [Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea]. We had young children at the time and they were starting to think about Christian things and we didn't like the influence that overflowed...⁴

My wife and I had many discussions and arguments over what we should do... We didn't know just what to do.⁵

The Stocks joined with six other families from the church to start their own bible study, and one weekend they went to Gayndah for the Keswick Convention. There they met Graeme Carnell and Don Hardgrave from the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Hardgrave visited the study group in Childers, and "having been suitably impressed by their standard on the Word of God and the Holy Spirit"⁶ most of the Childers groups joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Once they started attending they were greatly impressed to hear people sharing stories of God's work in the meetings. Neil said, "This is what we've missed! We haven't seen this happening in our church for years. We felt that we were where God wanted us to be."⁷

Brian and Una Gesling had been teacher-missionaries with the Methodist Church and then with the government in Papua New Guinea from 1952-1964, serving in Rabaul and the Sepik District. However, even in the remoteness of PNG they heard stories of the decline of Methodism. "The trends in the Methodist Church of Australia were becoming liberal. Standards and goals, the truths of Scripture, were being compromised."⁸ They returned to Australia in 1964 and were pleased to be located in successive Methodist congregations, at Annandale and in Pennant Hills Sydney, both of which were evangelical. However, when the proposal for church

³ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:03:05.

⁴ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:04:20.

⁵ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:06:30.

⁶ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:08:50.

⁷ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:12:45.

⁸ Interview, Una Gesling, May 7, 2013, 0:04:50.

union was announced in 1977 their concerns resurfaced. Una's bible study group studied the *Basis of Union* together and were greatly concerned:

The things that really were crucial were the statement on the Word of God - "The Bible *contains* the Word of God" is how it was worded - we didn't believe that to be adequate, and then the very fact of allowing for [further] unions all the way down the line as far as Rome... the name was deliberately chosen "Uniting..."⁹

The group felt that the Methodist Church "had sold out completely"¹⁰ so they left Methodism and formed an independent congregation, which then joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church. More of the Geslings' experiences and the formation of Hills District Church are found in chapter 10: 295.

Rev. Sione Faletau was a Tongan minister with the Methodist Church in Australia at the time of union. He has described the difficult situation that he perceived the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga to be placed in during the formation of the Uniting Church and the decisions that were forced upon him personally. Faletau explained that when the Free Wesleyan Church separated from Australian Methodism [in 1977] they had no choice but to stay connected with the Uniting Church because of the financial aid they received from Australia. The Methodists had built colleges and schools and other infrastructure, to the extent that the Tongan Church, "had no option but to hang on to the Uniting Church when it was formed, even though they did not agree with its theology. But they had no other option... There was no way that the Tongans would be able to keep that structure going."¹¹ Despite having been ordained in the former Methodist Church in Australia, Faletau made the choice to withdraw soon after union to "find an evangelical church rather than joining the Uniting Church."¹² He commenced five congregations in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and until his death spoke often and passionately about John Wesley's teachings, "I'm crazy about the holiness doctrine... about [the message of] love"¹³

⁹ Interview, Una Gesling, May 7, 2013, 0:08:55.

¹⁰ Interview, Una Gesling, May 7, 2013, 0:10:05.

¹¹ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:41:20.

¹² Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:04:10.

¹³ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 1:00:35.

James Midgley had been raised in the Methodist Church in New South Wales and was licensed as a Local Preacher in the Wyong Circuit. By 1961 Midgley found that he could no longer tolerate the liberal teachings of the Methodist Church. In 1961 Midgley published a booklet to promote his concerns¹⁴ and was subsequently called to explain himself before the President of the Conference.¹⁵ When that achieved nothing, James and Miriam resigned from the Methodist Church and, after some searching, joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria.

At the time of church union, Don and Claire Martin were involved in the Boondall Methodist Church in the five-church Sandgate circuit, in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. As union approached the Martins became increasingly concerned about the introduction of liberal theology into the training of the small children. "The first five books of the Bible - they were questioned and virtually thrown out, if you like, in the Sunday school material."¹⁶ The Martins joined the Joyful News Wesleyan Methodist Church rather than participate in union and both went on to serve the denomination for decades at the Melbourne headquarters.

Tom (and Eleanor) Blythe, who had been involved in an evangelical Methodist Church in Northern Ireland before migrating to Australia in 1961 at age twenty-three, was shocked by Australian Methodism: "It was a shock, so cold, so formal and so liberal in its teaching and preaching. I knew then I was in a different Methodism."¹⁷ Within months the Blythes left the Methodist Church and joined up with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Noble Park, "which was much closer in our hearts to the Methodism we knew."¹⁸

David and Sue Brownless migrated to Australia from England and in 1974 David was appointed a Methodist Home Missioner in Western Australia. Brownless followed the Methodist Church into union in 1977, but found the theological shift made ministry "increasingly difficult".¹⁹ The Brownlesses resigned from the Uniting Church in April 1978 and David took employment selling life insurance around

¹⁴ James E. Midgley, *My Answer* (Wyong, NSW: Self published, 1961), 1.

¹⁵ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:02:40.

¹⁶ Interview, Don Martin. February 15, 2015, 0:05:25.

¹⁷ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:38:10.

¹⁸ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:02:20.

¹⁹ Interview, David Brownless, February 14, 2015, 0:07:20.

Perth. Brownless had met James Ridgway in 1976, and in 1979 he was invited to accept the pastoral duties at Yeppoon in Queensland. David, Sue and their children moved to Central Queensland to commence ministry in August 1979.²⁰

Similar concerns to these from the 1970s can be seen in the letters addressed to Kingsley Ridgway in 1946-1947, but in those early years no significant transfer into the Wesleyan Methodist Church was seen. However, in the 1970s the pressure upon former Methodists was considerably increased. The *1971 Basis of Union* for the Uniting Church now formalised a lesser view of the Bible, which until then had been an option in Methodism but not the official doctrine. Another reason for the exodus of some ex-Methodists during merger was the spectre of cherished buildings becoming obsolete as congregations were amalgamated. Dissatisfaction caused some Methodists to seek an alternative:

There were a lot of dissatisfied people!, but most of them did not make a stand and sort of step out and go somewhere else. Those that did, some went to the Pentecostals, some went to the Baptists, and some looked around for an alternate Methodist Church. Don Hardgrave came on the scene about that time and he had the ability to be able to draw together people that were interested in staying Methodist and assembling together and making a little congregation of their own. Coffs Harbour started that way. Sydney started that way...²¹

In 1977 Don Hardgrave also published a small booklet challenging the platform upon which church union was proposed. He criticised the *Basis of Union* on several fronts: the lack of reference to the final Judgment, the endorsement of the World Council of Churches, the promotion of baptismal regeneration and the absence of authority ascribed to the Bible.²² Hardgrave (1946-) trained for Methodist ministry, but opted to join the Wesleyan Methodist Church instead, serving as a dynamic district and national leader from 1974-2000. He was converted while eleven years old in a Methodist mission in Brisbane and experienced "a deeper work" at a high school camp when seventeen. He trained and served as a school teacher from 1964-1969, during which time he witnessed more than twenty ministerial candidates leave the Methodist Theological College in Brisbane in protest over liberal theology. From 1970 Hardgrave undertook ministerial training at Melbourne College of Divinity and

²⁰ More of Brownless's ministry is described in appendix F: 580.

²¹ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:43:30.

²² Donald Hardgrave, *Church Union: The Other Side of the Coin* (Camberwell, VIC: Essential Christian Books, 1977), 6-11.

then at the Methodist Theological College in Brisbane. In 1974 he joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church and was ordained in 1975. Don Hardgrave's ministry is described more fully throughout chapters 10-12 and appendix G.

The teaching of baptismal regeneration is that a person is received into the Church through water baptism or that a person is born again when baptised with water. This teaching gained prominence in the Catholic Church and is echoed in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*.²³ The Uniting Church *Basis of Union* had now affirmed the same teaching,²⁴ possibly to facilitate future mergers with the Anglican and Catholic Churches. However, the evangelical movement was founded upon the rediscovery of spiritual conversion as the entry point into a life with Christ. For evangelicals it was at conversion that a person received the Holy Spirit and assurance of salvation. John Wesley emphatically proclaimed that water baptism was not conversion, "They are not one and the same thing." Water baptism was simply intended as a symbol of what had already occurred within the new believer when they were born again; water baptism is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."²⁵ The significance of this change in the formation of the Uniting Church was that salvation through the sacraments provided an acceptable concept to a liberal worldview that sought to deny an outright supernatural event of spiritual renewal.

This fundamental departure from orthodox Christian teaching was facilitated through a revised interpretation of the concept that the Bible *contains* the Word of God rather than the Bible *is* the Word of God. This phrase, "contains the Word of God", can be traced back some centuries, having been included in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession in 1647, in which Q.2 notes that "The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him."²⁶ However, this turn

²³ "The (Online) Book of Common Prayer: Holy Baptism," The Church Hymnal Corporation, New York, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.bcponline.org/>.

²⁴ "Basis of Union: 7. Baptism," Uniting Church in Australia, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://uca.org.au/basis-of-union/>.

²⁵ John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 6: 73.

²⁶ "Westminster Shorter Confession, Q.2," Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, accessed May 21, 2017, http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html?_top=http://www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.html.

of phrase did not indicate any limited inspiration of the Bible, as made clear in the Larger Catechism in item Q.3, “The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.”²⁷ The same can be illustrated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council of 1965: “For the Sacred Scriptures contain the word of God and since they are inspired, really are the word of God.”²⁸

The liberal theologians however, adopted a nuanced interpretation of the historic Christian doctrine that the Word (or communication) of God existed in three forms: the spoken Word of God, the written Word of God and the living Word of God. Martin Luther illustrated the traditional view when he declared the Bible to be the Word of God at the Diet of Worms:

Unless I am convicted by scripture and plain reason - I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other - my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.²⁹

Uniting Church scholars agreed that traditionally the Bible had been taught to be the Word of God, but modified this teaching by affirming that Jesus Christ is actually the true Word of God and the Bible only *contains* his teachings. In his guide to the *Basis of Union*, D'Arcy Wood explained:

Paragraph Four [in the *Basis of Union*] refers to Christ himself as 'the Word of God' (cf. John, chapter 1). Reformed thinking has seen that the Word is indeed in three forms: Christ himself is the Word, first and foremost; the preached message, which is the burden of Paragraph Four, is the second; and the Scriptures are the third (Paragraph Five).³⁰

Paragraph Four tells us Christ is truly present in his Word. It is he who constitutes, rules and renews the church. The Word is in scripture, in the proclamation of the church and in the powerful witness of the obedient life.³¹

²⁷ “Westminster Larger Confession, Q.3,” Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, accessed May 21, 2017, http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html?_top=http://www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.html.

²⁸ “Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum,” Vatican Council II, promulgated on November 18, 1965, chapt. 6, item 24, accessed May 21, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

²⁹ "Luther at the Imperial Diet of Worms (1521)," Luther de, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.luther.de/en/worms.html>.

³⁰ D'Arcy Wood, *Building of a Solid Basis: A Guide to the Basis of Union of The Uniting Church in Australia* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1986), 19.

³¹ Wood, *Building of a Solid Basis*, 17.

This was an essential doctrinal adjustment for Higher Criticism to do its work of examining the Bible for error. It was the formalisation of this teaching in the *Basis of Union* for the Uniting Church that alerted evangelicals to the new status of liberal theology as no longer merely tolerated but now the official, authorised teaching of the Uniting Church. The September 1971 *Evangelical Journal* stated, "We may conclude that the Basis is no statement of Evangelical Theology."³² Some Methodists saw the only option was to refuse to enter into Union and some of those joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

QLD, VIC & NSW IN THE LATE 1970s

The Uniting Church merger was accomplished on June 22, 1977. From 1974 to 1983 the Wesleyan Methodist Church still functioned as one district, although from 1978 office bearers who had formally been designated as District officers were redesignated as National officers. During this ten-year period the number of congregations increased 840% from five to forty.³³ In the same period Sunday morning average attendance increased 1,085% from 116 to 1,258.³⁴ In a similar way the number of church workers increased exponentially, with many of these new local church workers becoming denominational leaders in a short space of time.

In achieving this increase forty new congregations were commenced, with five of them closed again during that time. During this period Don Hardgrave was instrumental in the commencement of twenty of the new congregations, James Ridgway in five of these, and Sione Faletau in four of these. Other ministers who supported the church-planting work included Stan Baker, David Brownless, Fred Maddison, Keith and Marj Goulding, Stuart Somerville, Dallas Clarnette, Ray Akers,

³² R.J. Hillman, "The Theology of the Basis of Union," in *The Aldersgate Journal: Special Church Union Issue*, editor A.E. Wood (Roseville, NSW: Aldersgate Fellowship and Fellowship for Revival, September 1971), 7.

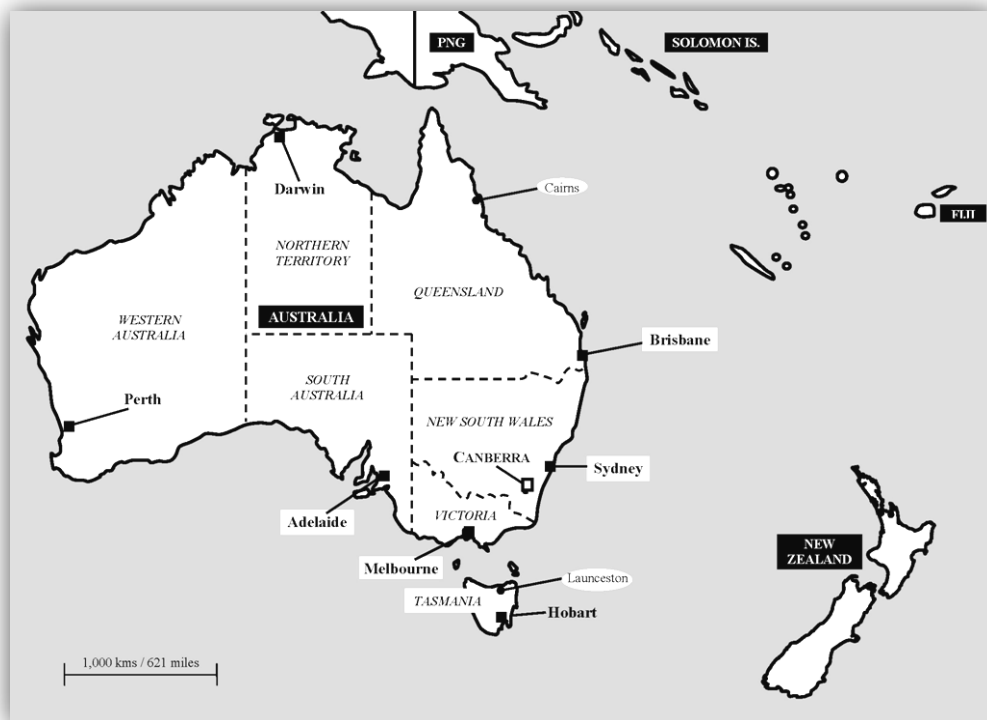
³³ This total is calculated to the end of 1983, thus exceeding the 1983 Journal which concluded in June. Broadmeadows has not been included in this total of worshipping congregations since it was not more than a Sunday School. Central Coast has been included, although not listed in the Journal Statistical Report. Mackay and Indooroopilly were both started twice, and therefore counted twice. Balwyn was temporarily suspended between 1982 and 1983 but a statistical report continued, so it not counted as a re-plant.

³⁴ "Statistical Report," 37th National Conference, June 1983 (Archives).

Bill Foster, Peter Wilson, Robert Fairman, Bryan King and a joint effort between Graham Mitchell and Roger Rounds.³⁵

In June 1974 the District Superintendent, Aubrey Carnell, visited a small group in Brisbane that was seeking an alternative to the Uniting Church merger. (See figure 10.1.) The two men who initiated this connection in Brisbane were retired Methodist minister, Rev. Dr Allen Hall and a ministerial candidate, Mr Donald Hardgrave. Following a productive meeting with Hall and Hardgrave, Carnell returned again for another meeting on September 13. At that meeting five Methodist ministers³⁶ and Marjorie Goulding were present.³⁷ The visiting delegation included Aubrey Carnell, James Ridgway and Wayne Wright from Wesleyan World Missions in America.³⁸

Figure 10.1 Australian states and selected cities in the Sth Pacific neighbourhood



Kingsley Ridgway was not at the September meeting although he was in Brisbane with the delegation. He stayed on in Brisbane to officiate at several subsequent events. On Thursday evening October 3, 1974 Kingsley Ridgway chaired

³⁵ Donald Hardgrave, *For Such a Time* (Brisbane: Pleasant Surprise, 1988), 209-214.

³⁶ Allen Hall, Don Hardgrave, Peter Howe, Bob Missenden and Bruce Gulley.

³⁷ Marj was James Ridgway's sister, long-time lay leader at Dalton's Bridge, then missionary in PNG and now living in the northern suburbs of Brisbane with her husband Keith.

³⁸ Hardgrave, *For Such a Time*, 102.

the inaugural business meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Queensland at the home of Charles and Shirley Garrow at Scarborough.³⁹ On Sunday October 6, the inaugural worship service was held at 3:00pm at the home of Allen and Jo Hall at 16 Sir Fred Schonell Drive, St Lucia and in the service Allen Hall was commissioned to his work amongst the Thaayorre aboriginal community (Edward River) by Kingsley Ridgway.⁴⁰

The following week, on Saturday October 12, the group met in committee again, at which time Kingsley Ridgway advised that the Constitution of the Queensland branch had been approved and that Don Hardgrave was appointed as pastor of the first congregation.⁴¹ On the following day, Sunday October 13, worship was relocated to the Hardgraves' home in Annerley, where meetings continued until March 1977 when the church relocated to a public hall at Mount Gravatt.

In 1975, with the Annerley church functioning strongly, new congregations were added at Clontarf to the north of Brisbane in March and at Fortitude Valley in inner-Brisbane in August.⁴² Rev. Mervyn Stace was appointed as the pastor of the Clontarf congregation and Don Hardgrave was assigned to pastor the Joyful News church in the city. The Clontarf congregation was started by Keith and Marj Goulding and soon renamed Redcliffe Peninsula. After a messy division and ultimate relocation, it became Deception Bay church. The Joyful News congregation, an independent holiness mission with a long history in Brisbane's inner city, brought with them their own building at 136 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley. The migration from the Methodist Church to the Wesleyans was starting to be felt in Victoria as well at this time. From late 1974 a fellowship began to meet in the home of Mr and Mrs Norm deVaus at Silvan, in the hills to the east of Melbourne. An annual summary of the congregations is included as figure 10.2.

Delegates to the 1975 Conference enjoyed a sense of new hope. Bill Foster, now established at Sunshine Church and assisting as a college lecturer, was bringing new energy to the Victorian work. James Ridgway reported the construction of six new units on the college campus and an increased student enrolment, from twenty

³⁹ Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Queensland, October 3, 1974 (Archives).

⁴⁰ "Diary snippets by Dr. Allen Hall," for the 20th anniversary, 1994 (Archives).

⁴¹ Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Queensland, October 12, 1974 (Archives).

⁴² Minutes of the SQ councils, SACs and RACs, J. Ridgway records 7 (Archives).

students in 1973 to thirty-four in 1974 to fifty-one in 1975. A growing "liaison" with the mission agency, OMS International, would result in another sixteen students by 1976. Don Hardgrave initiated the production of a new hymnal for the Wesleyan Methodist Church that year, which would facilitate the convergence of British and American Methodism in Australia by combining the best-loved hymnody of each stream in modernised English. James Ridgway reported that he would be providing pulpit supply on a monthly basis to the Kew People's Church throughout 1975, thereby maintaining the long-standing relationship with Walter Betts' independent congregation and freeing Rev. Dallas Clarnette to join the Wesleyans.⁴³ As a consequence, Aubrey Carnell reported that Clarnette would be transferring to the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Clarnette was a well known church personality in Melbourne, having trained at Queen's College and served with the Methodist Church. After several years of Methodist circuit ministry and evangelistic work, he succeeded Walter Betts as pastor of the Kew People's Church from June 1967 until December 1974. In 1975 Clarnette approached the Wesleyan Methodists and the Conference assigned him to pastor the new congregation at Silvan.

At the 1975 Conference James Ridgway was elected as District Superintendent, replacing Aubrey Carnell after fourteen years of district leadership and/or Administrator. Ray Akers, Graeme Carnell, Tom Blythe and Dallas Clarnette were now studying under the District Board of Ministerial Standing and destined to be significant leaders in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in coming years.⁴⁴ At the same Conference it was proposed by the Brisbane delegation (at their first Conference!) that Kingsley College be relocated to a rural setting because of the limited space, poor environment and increasing land values.⁴⁵ This resolution was not carried.

⁴³ Interview, Dallas Clarnette, March 10, 2013, 0:44:30.

⁴⁴ "Ministerial Standing Committee's Report," 29th District Conference, October 1975 (Archives).

⁴⁵ "Action Committee's Report," 29th District Conference, October 1975 (Archives).

Figure 10.2 Churches started and closed 1974-1983

	VICTORIA + West Australia	NEW SOUTH WALES	QUEENSLAND
Brought forward (5)	College ^a Sunshine Balwyn Glenroy (Hilton St)	Busby ^b	
1974 (6)			Annerley ^c
1975 (11)	Silvan		Deception Bay ^d Joyful News ^e Gayndah Mackay
1976 (12)		Coffs Harbour	
1977 (16)	Belgrave Yarram	Hills District ^f	Indooroopilly Wynnum Mackay
1978 (20)	Wangaratta		Childers Maryborough Nanango
1979 (26)	Prahran ^g Thorpdale Beechboro WA	Maitland	Yeppoon Coochie Mudlo Island
1980 (29)	Werribee ^h Perth ⁱ WA	Central Coast ^j	Rockhampton Indooroopilly
1981 (32)	Beechboro WA	Taree	Bundaberg Everton Hills Goombungee
1982 (34)	Boronia Perth WA	Central Coast	Bracken Ridge ^k Toowoomba West Moreton ^l
1983 (40)	Ballarat	Dee Why Tongan Griffith Tongan Liverpool Tongan ^m	Mackay (2 nd) Indooroopilly (2 nd)
(40)	(13)	(8)	(19)

^a Aka Box Forest

^b Aka Cabramatta or Green Valley - merged with Liverpool/Fairfield Tongan in 1989

^c Aka Mt Gravatt, Southgate, Threesixteen

^d Aka Clontarf, Redcliffe Peninsula, Kippa Ring

^e Aka Fortitude Valley or "The Valley"

^f Aka Pennant Hills, Baulkham Hills

^g Aka Spring Street

^h Aka Melton

ⁱ Aka Karrinyup

^j Aka Wyong, Narara, Gosford

^k Aka Northpoint, Pine Rivers

^l Aka Tallegalla

^m Aka Fairfield

The 1976 Conference welcomed a further three congregations at Gayndah and Mackay in Queensland and at Coffs Harbour in New South Wales. In that year Keith McLauchlan joined the Brisbane team and was available to assist Hardgrave in visiting Gayndah and Coffs Harbour. The Mackay Church would close in 1977 and be replanted in 1983.⁴⁶ Peter Howe was assigned to Mackay while Victorian recruits, Graeme Carnell and Tom Blythe, were sent to Gayndah and Coffs Harbour respectively. Dennis Hartin was sent from Victoria to assist in the Mount Gravatt/Joyful News circuit while college student, Harry Herlaar, made his appearance as pastor at Glenroy assisting Graeme Carnell, and Ray Akers was appointed assistant pastor at College Church.

During 1976 Kingsley College had added a fourth-year Bachelor of Theology, with nine students already enrolled in that stream. Overall the college reported an enrolment of seventy-four full and part-time students.⁴⁷ The college was growing through James Ridgway's profile as a church leader in Melbourne and as the recruitment of new ministers in other states fed into the denominational training system.

The 1977 Conference was held in Brisbane at the Joyful News Church. At this conference six additional churches were added; Pennant Hills in New South Wales, Wynnum and Indooroopilly in Queensland, and Yarram and Belgrave in Victoria, with the former Vermont congregation rejoining the denomination.⁴⁸ The Belgrave Church was formerly the Belgrave Evangelical Church, which brought with it a chapel on Bayview Rd. In this year the Redcliffe Peninsula (Clontarf) Church was divided into potentially two churches, Clontarf and Deception Bay despite the congregation opposing this action as premature. The Conference voted to proceed with the division⁴⁹ but in 1979 the Clontarf Church was closed and some of the members transferred to the Deception Bay congregation. During 1977 Dennis Hartin, Keith McLauchlan and Peter Howe (now returned from Mackay) were stationed in Brisbane, freeing Don Hardgrave to relocate to the new Maryborough Church and to

⁴⁶ Hardgrave, *For Such a Time*, 108.

⁴⁷ "College Report," 30th District Conference, October 1976 (Archives).

⁴⁸ Variations in church names and years occur between various publications because churches gradually develop from a house group to a worship service to membership. Further clarification to the listings here can be found in Hardgrave's *For Such a Time*, 209-214.

⁴⁹ "District Superintendent and District Board's Reports," 31st District Conference, August 1977 (Archives).

continue travelling extensively throughout Queensland and New South Wales stirring up new groups while James Ridgway led the outreach in Victoria.

Noel and Merran Whincop, who had been introduced to the 1976 Conference as members of the Joyful News Church in Brisbane, relocated to Melbourne where Noel was commissioned as the college builder. Don Martin, also from Brisbane, began to serve as an administrator and book-keeper in Queensland. In future years Don Martin and Merran Whincop would become long-term staff to the national church and Kingsley College. Shirley Fox, from Gayndah in Queensland, joined the college staff in 1984. Figure 10.3 pictures these long-term staff member.

Figure 10.3 *Long-term college staff*⁵⁰



⁵⁰ Kingsley College records (Archives). Clockwise: Merran and Noel Whincop (1980s), Shirley Fox (1990s), Don and Claire Martin (1990s).

Under the guidance of the visiting General Superintendent, Dr Virgil Mitchell, the Conference requested that the Australian church be granted approval to continue to use the name Wesleyan Methodist Church, rather than the name of the Wesleyan Church as adopted globally since the 1968 merger of the Wesleyan Methodist and Pilgrim Holiness Churches.⁵¹ The need to retain the name Methodist was felt strongly at this time because of the impending loss of any continuing Methodist Church in Australia through the formation of the Uniting Church. In the 1978 Conference this request was re-submitted to the American leadership,⁵² while at the same time it was agreed to seek registration in Australia for both names, Wesleyan and Wesleyan Methodist.⁵³

At the 1977 Conference it was agreed once again to form a sub-committee "to examine the feasibility of re-locating Kingsley College."⁵⁴ The sub-committee secured an evaluation of the Glenroy property at \$700,000 and the cost of a likely alternative site at \$1,000,000. When presented with these figures in 1979 the Conference adopted the sub-committee's recommendation that relocation not be pursued.⁵⁵

In 1978 four new churches were reported in Queensland and Victoria, at Maryborough, Nanango and Childers in Queensland and at Wangaratta in Victoria, while assignments were given to Graeme Wright at the Childers Church, Stan Baker at the Nanango Church and Ivan Nalder at the Glenroy Church.

In the late 1970s the structure of the denomination was being stretched and modified because of the increase of congregations, the geographical expansion, and the increased leadership now available within the ministerial team. Until 1978 Don Hardgrave had been serving as Secretary for Extension and Evangelism under James Ridgway as Superintendent. In 1977 the concept of a Northern Region (Queensland and New South Wales) and a Southern Region (Victoria) had been formalised, but the election of Dallas Clarnette as Assistant Superintendent placed both the Superintendent and the Assistant within the Southern Region, which was an

⁵¹ "Minutes, August 30," 31st District Conference, August 1977 (Archives). See 81.

⁵² "Minutes, August 19," 32nd District Conference, August 1978 (Archives).

⁵³ "District Board's Report, October 1977," 32nd District Conference, August 1978 (Archives).

⁵⁴ "Action Committee's Report," 31st District Conference, August 1977 (Archives).

⁵⁵ "Feasibility Study Committee Report," 33rd National Conference, August 1979 (Archives).

inadequate arrangement for the new growth in New South Wales and Queensland. In 1978, with Clarnette on study-leave, the District Board appointed Don Hardgrave as the Acting Assistant Superintendent, thus spreading the leadership between north and south. At the 1978 Conference this temporary solution was continued by provision for two Assistant Superintendents, one in each region.⁵⁶

A highlight of the 1978 National Conference was the election of Kingsley Ridgway to National Superintendent Emeritus. Ridgway survived less than twelve months after this conference, dying of a heart attack in Melbourne on June 23, 1979. He had been suffering from chest pain for a week and was in hospital at the time. The denomination mourned its founder and letters of condolence flowed from around the globe.

Meanwhile, Doug Pinch retired from ministry at Busby in 1978, transferred his credentials back to the Nazarene Church. He subsequently served at the Church of God Holiness at Canley Vale before Doug and his wife retired to Coffs Harbour.⁵⁷ Doug was replaced at Busby by supply pastor, Rob Trainor and Keith McLauchlan was relocated from Brisbane to pastor the Silvan Church in Victoria. During the same period Graeme Carnell, Tom Blythe and Dennis Hartin were ordained and Ron Glenister was received by transfer. In addition to the growing number of Australian personnel, in April 1978 Wesleyan missionaries, George and Linda Eberly, were welcomed to Australia.⁵⁸ An extraordinary number of high-profile American leaders were received by the Australian church in 1977 and 1978, including Peter Wiwcharuck, Jimmie Johnson, Laurel Buckingham, Bob Girard, Charles Carter and Virgil Mitchell. The support of the American church was further evident in 1979 with the arrival of several American missionaries who came to assist in local churches and at the college: Roger Rounds, Don and Elinor Barber and Dennis and Mary Ann Barnett.

At the National Conference in 1979 reports were received of new churches started at Yeppoon and Coochie Mudlo Island in Queensland, Maitland in New South Wales, Prahran and Thorpdale in Victoria and Beechboro in Western

⁵⁶ "Action Committee Report - item 11," 32nd District Conference, August 1978 (Archives).

⁵⁷ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:53:00.

⁵⁸ "National Superintendent's Report," 32nd National Conference, August 1978 (Archives).

Australia. The church at Prahran was previously the Spring Street Mission and, through the ministry of James Ridgway, transferred to the Wesleyan Methodist Church with its own building. The ministry at Coochie Mudlo Island was a small ministry run by the Pine Ridge Christian Centre and included the gift of a chapel and a parsonage on the island. David Brownless was given his first assignment at the Yeppoon Church; Ray Akers started the church at Thorpdale; and Max Richardson returned to the Wesleyan Methodists as the Thorpdale pastor. Rev. Graeme Mitchell of the Bethshan Mission transferred to the Wesleyans and assisted in the starting of the new church at Maitland. Another ordained minister joined the Wesleyans, Rev. Robert Fairman, who had begun a new group at Beechboro near his home at Bassendean, Perth. Reg Childs was transferred into the denomination from the Nazarene Church as a Licensed Minister and took on the duties of pastoring the Deception Bay congregation, while Ken Chalmers was assigned to Busby, Harry Herlaar to Wangaratta and Ray Akers to Silvan and Belgrave. Rod Enderby, Adrian Morley, Ray Gilmour and Ralph Ashley were engaged in studies and/or ministry. Robin Clarke served as Supply Pastor at Sunshine in 1979 during Bill Foster's absence. Ray Akers was ordained on May 12, 1979 and Lyn Burch was commissioned as a Deaconess at the Sunshine Church on June 24.⁵⁹ Lyn's appointment was increased to that of Assistant Pastor from 1981 and she was ordained in 1984, becoming the first female ordained minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. This was not without some controversy.

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Lyn Burch, pictured as figure 10.4, later to marry Owen Holland, had been a new convert and youthful school teacher when the Annerley Church began in Brisbane. She was stationed to teach at Mt. Isa in 1975 and 1976, but after experiencing a sense of call to Bible College, went to Melbourne for four years' study from January 1977.⁶⁰ Lyn had no expectation of becoming a minister but she was gradually drawn into teaching roles, first to youth and then to adults. To her

⁵⁹ "National Superintendent's Report," 33rd National Conference, August 1979 (Archives).

⁶⁰ Interview, Lyn Holland, June 5, 2015, 0:06:30.

surprise in 1981 Lyn "began to dream sermons,"⁶¹ and was subsequently brought before the Board of Ministerial Standing and accepted as a Licensed Minister. In this stage in the process Lyn was in agreement with the Board that she was not expecting ordination. This was an extraordinary concession, or oversight, by the Board of Ministerial Standing since there is no provision in the system for a person to remain a Licensed Minister without proceeding toward ordination. In the early stages Lyn encountered objections to female ordination from Dallas Clarnette, Keith McLauchlan and Ray Akers, but in time they came to affirm Lyn's ministry.⁶² In 1982 the full intent of the Board of Ministerial Standing was endorsed when Lyn was "advanced one year toward ordination"⁶³ and the Conference approved this without debate.⁶⁴ Lyn remembers only one person who spoke to her about the conference motion, Miriam Midgley. Miriam asked Lyn at dinner time in a quiet voice, "Lyn did I hear what I think I heard? Does that mean that you're going toward ordination?" Lyn understood this to be Miriam's way of saying, "You go girl!"

Figure 10.4 *Rev. Lyn Holland (née Burch) c. 1989*⁶⁵



Unfortunately, a small section of the Board's report was omitted from the 1982 Journal, including the reference to Lyn's standing. This omission was corrected in the 1983 Journal,⁶⁶ but because of this it was mid-1983 before those who had concerns about female ordination were made aware of the intention. Stan Baker wrote from

⁶¹ Interview, Lyn Holland, June 5, 2015, 0:14:10.

⁶² Interview, Lyn Holland, June 5, 2015, 0:18:30 - 0:19:50.

⁶³ Correspondence Ridgway to all pastors, August 30, 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁶⁴ Interview, Lyn Holland, June 5, 2015, 0:18:30 - 0:20:55.

⁶⁵ Kingsley College records (Archives).

⁶⁶ "Board of Ministerial Standing's Report," 37th National Conference, September 1983, 98 (Archives).

Nanango to express his view that "it would seem to me to be inappropriate to ordain women to Elder's Orders [ordination]."⁶⁷ Peter Keilor wrote from Rockhampton and rallied his local congregation to express the concern that women should not be ordained and it would be a mistake to debate this at the 1983 Conference.⁶⁸ Clive Howe wrote from the Busby Church to state his convictions that women should not be ordained.⁶⁹ A number of letters came from Victoria expressing concern at the divisive nature and inappropriate haste in this matter and to ask for more time for discussion. These included one letter jointly signed by Phil Case, Chris Whitting, Greg Hansen and Peter Breen that was copied to all of the districts.⁷⁰

James Ridgway wrote some strong rebuttals to these letters, notably one to Peter Keilar with eleven points of correction and a reminder that Keilar's own ordination still had to be confirmed.⁷¹ Ridgway sought guidance from Dr John Abbott, the American General Superintendent, and with his support wrote a lengthy open-letter to all the Australian workers explaining that there is a long history of ordination of women in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and that the topic was really not open to debate.⁷² Ridgway included a copy of a research paper by George Eberly, "Women - Their Place in Ministry: A Scriptural Exploration"⁷³ with the open letter.

Lyn's ordination was scheduled for the 1983 Conference in Sydney, but amid vigorous debate on the floor of Conference it was discovered that she had not completed some of her course-work. Her ordination was therefore rescheduled for 1984, by which time the debate had subsided and the ceremony proceeded without incident. Lyn was ordained at the Sunshine Wesleyan Methodist Church on Sunday April 29, 1984. Incredibly, Lyn remembers that in the midst of heated debate on the principle of female ordination, she felt "not one word of personal attack." She remembers strong support from James Ridgway, David Wilson, George Eberly, Bill Foster, Don Hardgrave and Don Bray (who was visiting in 1983), and she noted that

⁶⁷ Correspondence Baker to Ridgway, no date, c. 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁶⁸ Correspondence Keilar to Ridgway, September, 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁶⁹ Correspondence Howe to Ridgway, September 20, 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁷⁰ Correspondence from Case, Whitting, Hansen and Breen, August 4, 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁷¹ Correspondence Ridgway to Keilar, September 21, 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁷² Correspondence Ridgway to all pastors, August 30, 1983, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁷³ Eberly, George D., "Women - Their Place in Ministry: A Scriptural Exploration" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, c. 1983).

most of the objections she experienced came from the young men in the congregation and very little at all from the women.⁷⁴ Since that time numerous women have been ordained in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia without controversy.

QLD, VIC & NSW IN THE EARLY 1980s

In 1980 churches were added at Werribee in Victoria as an outreach of the Sunshine Church, at Wyong in New South Wales, at Rockhampton in Queensland and at Karrinyup in the northern suburbs of Perth. Rev. Robert and Jeanette Mattke returned to serve the Australian church in 1980, teaching at the college and undertaking local church visitation. Another significant visit was that of Mel and Donna Lockard from America. Mel was the District Superintendent of the Arizona-New Mexico District, but on this trip he applied his brick-laying skills at the college. Mel and Donna would return again in 1982 to serve in local churches in southeast Queensland before Mel was elected as the Victorian State Superintendent in 1983. Meanwhile, Merran Whincop was entrenched as Office Secretary to the National Superintendent / College Principal, Keith and Heather McLauchlan were serving the college in student ministries, while Gwen Connors and Helen McInnes served in the college library⁷⁵ and Rose Clayton as college cook.

In 1980 Charles Wilson resigned from the College Church pastorate due to persistent illness, returning as supply pastor at Balwyn in 1981. Charles withdrew from ministry in October 1982.⁷⁶ The 1980 Conference welcomed ex-Methodist minister, Rev. Bryan King from Perth, former Canadian Free Methodist, Rev. Dr Alan Harley to serve in Sydney and Mr Clive Howe from the Congregational Church now assigned to Maitland, NSW. Roger Rounds filled an important role supplying the pastorate at Busby with the assistance of Maurie Walsh, while Rounds also undertook a brief ministry at Maitland and served in short campaigns across the country as National Evangelist.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Interview, Lyn Holland, June 5, 2015, 0:19:00 - 0:24:45.

⁷⁵ "College Principal's Report," 34th National Conference, August 1980, 45-46 (Archives).

⁷⁶ "National Superintendent's Report," 37th National Conference, September 1982, 29 (Archives).

⁷⁷ "National Evangelist's Report," 34th National Conference, August 1980, 50 (Archives).

In 1981 churches were added at Taree in New South Wales and at Bundaberg, Everton Hills and Goombungee in Queensland. Don and Delcie Hardgrave relocated from Maryborough to Bundaberg for six months to facilitate the Bundaberg opening.⁷⁸ On presenting his report as Secretary for Church Extension and Evangelism to the Conference, Don Hardgrave was acknowledged by a standing ovation. Meanwhile, following difficulties in Beechboro in Western Australia, that work was discontinued. At the Conference Paul Attwood, David Brownless, Keith McLauchlan and Ivan Nalder were granted ordination and the ordinations of Alan Harley, Graham Mitchell and Bryan King were accepted by transfer.⁷⁹ Alan Harley, now an ordained minister, was elected as the New South Wales State Superintendent in place of Tom Blythe. Don Hardgrave and Dallas Clarnette were elected as State Superintendents in their own regions.

Don and Claire Martin moved to Melbourne where Don took up the roles of National and College Treasurer and Claire worked alongside Merran Whincop in managing the administrative duties that accompanied James Ridgway's duties.⁸⁰ Reg Childs submitted his resignation from the Deception Bay Church and from the denomination in June 1981. Important new arrivals in 1981 included Rev. David Wilson who was returning to Australia from ministry in Pasadena, California. Wilson's transfer of ordination credentials to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia was completed in 1982. Also in 1981, Nigel Lau was listed as a ministerial student. Nigel was to be instrumental in reviving the Balwyn Church and developing the Chinese congregation from 1984. The 1984 faculty of the college, including Roger Rounds and George Eberly, are pictured as figure 10.5.

⁷⁸ "Queensland State Superintendent's Report," 34th National Conference, August 1980, 28 (Archives).

⁷⁹ "Minutes," 35th National Conference, August 1981, 18 (Archives).

⁸⁰ "National Superintendent's Report," 35th National Conference, August 1981, 24 (Archives).

Figure 10.5 *Kingsley College faculty 1984*⁸¹



THE LOSSES OF 1982

Concern was raised via the Action Committee in 1978 regarding James Ridgway carrying the roles of District Superintendent and College Principal concurrently. The only action taken at that time was the appointment of additional secretarial assistance, although the concern continued to surface for several years. In 1980 Ridgway made his own preferences known to the Conference when he reported, "Earlier in the year I expressed to my colleagues the priority of my call to serve in the College and that I viewed my service to the District as but an interim ministry while the Lord raises up another leader."⁸²

By 1980 the adjustment from being a single district to multi-districts was well underway, although the first State Conferences were not held until 1983. The boundary between the Northern and Southern Regions had been set as the Murray River in 1978,⁸³ but by 1980 the decision was made to transition to three districts; those of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. This change was made with

⁸¹ Kingsley College records (Archives). L-R: David Wilson, Roger Rounds, Debbie Wilson, Melva Ridgway, George Eberly, James Ridgway.

⁸² "National Superintendent's Report," 34th National Conference, August 1980 (Archives).

⁸³ "Minutes," 32nd District Conference, August 1978, 15 (Archives).

Dallas Clarnette, Tom Blythe (Alan Harley in 1981) and Don Hardgrave elected as the State Superintendents respectively.⁸⁴ Earlier in 1980 a survey of the churches had shown that 72% did not want to move away from an annual National Conference to State Conferences, so the election of the State Superintendents was softened by naming them as assistants to the National Superintendent. Nonetheless, the reality of enormous distances could not be resisted for long. Two years later, in 1982, the last annual National Conference was replaced by biennial National Conferences (ultimately moving to quadrennial conferences) with annual conferences held in the districts.

In his National Superintendent's Report to the 1982 Conference, James Ridgway began with a rather cryptic statement:

The Conference year began with the indications that a good working formula had been found for the best deployment of available workers and leaders, and a structure permitting greater efficiency in the co-ordination of local churches under State Superintendents having expanded powers.

Subsequent developments suggest either that the system was unworkable, or that the real difficulties have been more personal than structural.⁸⁵

Ridgway became less cryptic as the report continued. Those delegates who were not already aware of the year's struggles were soon to learn that four key ministers had departed the denomination - from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Toward the end of his report, Ridgway stated his own opinion more transparently:

I call upon each minister of the church to make a fresh commitment to the Wesleyan Methodist Church at this Conference. Let malcontents, if there are any, work for change within our generously democratic system, or find some other place of service.

The losses in 1982 impacted the denomination for some years. A summary of the losses is included below.

Hills District, NSW. The Hills District Church in Sydney started from a Methodist Bible study in which Mrs Una Gesling⁸⁶ was involved. The group could not accept the *Basis of Union* for the Uniting Church, so they began holding

⁸⁴ "Minutes," 34th National Conference, August 1980, 34 (Archives).

⁸⁵ "National Superintendent's Report," 36th National Conference, August 1982, 26 (Archives).

⁸⁶ Interview, Una Gesling, May 7, 2013.

independent meetings. The newspaper clipping advertising the first meeting in 1977 is included as figure 10.6.

Figure 10.6 Sydney Continuing-Methodist advertisement 1977⁸⁷



Initially the independent group was pastored by Rev. Bruce Smyth, but when the group heard of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and decided to join, Smyth opted not to join. Paul Attwood, a Methodist from Dubbo in New South Wales who in 1976 had requested a Wesleyan Methodist Church for his city,⁸⁸ was invited to relocate to

⁸⁷ Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, June 25, 1977, 35.

⁸⁸ National Board Minutes, August 20, 1976 (Archives).

Sydney to provide oversight of the new group.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, with Attwood's guidance, the congregation invited a Canadian Free Methodist minister to come as their permanent pastor. Rev. Dr Alan Harley came with an impressive résumé, including an earned doctorate and an honorary doctorate, as well as a preaching career that had touched on four continents.⁹⁰

At the 1980 Conference Alan and Rosamund Harley were introduced to the Australian delegates, and on August 31 he was installed as pastor of Hills District Church. Alan Harley and Paul Attwood worked very well together, to the extent that when Doug Pinch retired from the Busby work that church was soon brought into a circuit under the Hills ministry team. At the 1981 Conference Paul Attwood was ordained and Alan Harley was received as an ordained minister by transfer. At the same Conference, Alan Harley was elected New South Wales State Superintendent, replacing Tom Blythe.

However both Harley and Attwood "came into a charismatic experience"⁹¹ that became more central to their ministry and drew them away from the Wesleyan Methodists. James Ridgway met with Harley and Attwood in March 1982 to discuss their convictions, but with no resolution. On March 20, Ridgway received the formal resignations of both ministers. The Hills congregation did not know about these developments until the announcement was made in Sunday worship that the following week⁹² the pastors would be beginning a new fellowship, Bethany Ministries, in a new location.⁹³ The result was that everyone but four people departed with Harley and Attwood. Those who continued to meet as Wesleyan Methodist congregation were Brian and Una Gesling, Marj Wood and Melalia Floyd. Roger Rounds was reassigned to pastor the Hills District fellowship and Clive Howe to Busby.

Beechboro and Karrinyup, WA. In July 1982, the even more precarious work in Western Australia was discontinued completely. Rev. Robert (Bob) Fairman had

⁸⁹ National Board Minutes, January 2, 1978 (Archives).

⁹⁰ That is, Canada, the United States of America, Great Britain, the Middle East, Hong Kong and Australia. News release, August 11, 1980, J. Ridgway records 8 (Archives).

⁹¹ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 1:00:10.

⁹² Interview, Una Gesling, May 7, 2013, 0:21:50.

⁹³ National Board Minutes, March 26, 1982 (Archives).

been recruited to commence a congregation in the western Perth suburb of Beechboro in 1978. Fairman made an encouraging start but it quickly became apparent that he was overcommitted. Despite visits by Don Hardgrave and Roger Rounds the ministry floundered and was discontinued in 1981.

In 1980 a second congregation was started in Perth at Karrinyup by ex-Methodist Rev. Bryan King. King's ministry briefly overlapped with that of Bob Fairman and for a while it seemed that the church in Western Australia was on a firm footing. However, King then became quite sick and disillusioned with the leadership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. His concerns resulted in his resignation when the National Board appointed Dallas Clarnette to lead the Western Australian work without consulting King. On July 28, King tendered his resignation and on September 7 he submitted his grievance about the Australian leadership to Dr Abbott, the American General Superintendent with responsibility for the Australian work. In that letter he made the claim that James Ridgway had lied and covered up facts.⁹⁴ This was a sad end for such a promising beginning in Perth. Karrinyup Church was closed and the work in Western Australia was set back for years.

Dallas Clarnette, VIC. The third loss to the denomination in 1982 came when Dallas Clarnette resigned on July 28, the same day that Bryan King was writing his letter of resignation in Perth. Clarnette had been feeling increasingly stifled in his role in Victoria as assistant to James Ridgway. He was serving as District Superintendent and Assistant National Superintendent under Ridgway's leadership and as Vice Principal of the college under Ridgway as Principal.⁹⁵ Meanwhile there were indications that similar sentiments were surfacing in other parts of the Victorian District. The 1978 Action Committee request for a division of the offices of Superintendent and Principal had originated in the Victorian church.⁹⁶ In 1980 the Action Committee again received two items from Silvan Church and from the Victorian Regional Advisory Council seeking "immediate separation of the offices of National Superintendent and College Principal." These resolutions were countered by a motion from Queensland members stating, "We believe it is important for Dr Ridgway to continue to hold these positions and encourage him to do so as long as he

⁹⁴ Correspondence King to Abbott, September 7, 1982, J. Ridgway records 4 (Archives).

⁹⁵ Interview, Dallas Clarnette, March 10, 2014, 0:47:40.

⁹⁶ "Action Committee's Report," 32nd District Conference, August 1978, 29 (Archives).

does not feel the burden is excessive."⁹⁷ No changes resulted from the resolutions, but the resolutions illustrate how strongly the sentiment had formed along Victoria / Queensland lines at a time when the Victorian Superintendent was feeling undermined and the Queensland Superintendent was feeling empowered by James Ridgway.

In March 1982 the National Board, being aware of Dallas Clarnette's growing discontent, proposed relocating Clarnette to Western Australia as State Superintendent. Clarnette appears to have initially been in agreement with this proposal and travelled to Perth soon after to make arrangements. While in Perth, Clarnette and Bryan King shared their discontent with each other.⁹⁸ Clarnette withdrew from the Wesleyan Methodists to commence an independent ministry soon after this trip to Perth, as did King.

Alan Harley resigned in March and Dallas Clarnette resigned in July 1982. Both had been serving as State Superintendents. Tom Blythe was immediately reappointed as Acting New South Wales Superintendent and Ray Akers was recruited to assist James Ridgway with superintendence of Victoria. In November 1982 Mel Lockard transferred to Melbourne and took on the role of Victorian State Superintendent. (Mel and Donna Lockard are pictured as figure 10.7.) Unfortunately Bryan King's departure in July could not be so quickly covered and the work in Western Australia closed.

The motions asking for Ridgway to be restricted from holding both offices of National Superintendent and College Principal are noticeably absent from the 1983 Conference. By that time some of the leadership struggles had been settled and the decisions to move to a multi-district structure had been finalised. However, the stress of these few years took a toll on him. In 1984 he resigned from both roles of Superintendent and Principal. It was thirteen years before he would be briefly drawn back into any form of denominational leadership.

⁹⁷ "Action Committee's Report," 34th District Conference, August, 1980, 70 (Archives).

⁹⁸ Correspondence King to Abbott, September 7, 1982, J. Ridgway records 4 (Archives).

Figure 10.7 L to R: Mel and Donna Lockard, Melva and James Ridgway 1980s⁹⁹



WESLEY'S PRIORITIES DURING THIS PERIOD

The growth from 1974 generated a renewed optimism amongst the Wesleyan Methodists. There was a sense that they had a purpose. The title of Don Hardgrave's book, *For Such a Time* (1988) captured the sense that the denomination was in the right place at the right time for those who would leave church union.¹⁰⁰ However, despite the growth (or rather because of the growth), the denomination was moving further away from Wesley's priorities. That outcome was not immediate but would be seen in coming decades. The growth slowly resulted in better church buildings, better financial provisions for pastors and a growing sense of respectability in the community. Once the church-planting rush had ended in the late 1990s, this relative comfort began to erode the sacrificial spirit of the early Wesleyan Methodists and of Wesley's priorities.

Not all of the growth was from ex-Methodist transfers. This is seen in the number of independent churches that simultaneously opted to bring their congregations and property over to the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Examples included Joyful News and Coochie Mudlo in Queensland and Spring Street and

⁹⁹ Kingsley College records (Archives).

¹⁰⁰ This title was a reference to the biblical story of Queen Esther, who was asked if she had not been prepared by God "for just such a time as this". Esther 4:14 (Bible).

Balwyn in Victoria. Furthermore, the denomination maintained a steady focus on conversion growth throughout the decades from 1980s, as highlighted in chapter 11: 333, where it is seen that the Wesleyan Methodists consistently exceeded recognised Australian denomination averages. However, the impetus for the new growth was the Uniting Church merger and the majority of new congregations were ex-Methodist. The influx of ex-Methodists was a boon to the denomination, but it also introduced a challenge. These ex-Methodists were now several generations removed from the vigorous growth of Methodism in Australia in the 1800s, when Wesley's priorities were still being implemented. The peculiar difficulty was in the fact that these new members were unlikely to understand how far they were removed from original Methodism; they were more likely to see themselves as the defenders of true Methodism because they were those who left the Uniting Church to uphold Wesley's doctrine. In future decades the centrality of the doctrine of holiness in the Wesleyan Methodists became less clear.

Chapter 11

CHURCH LEADERSHIP 1983-2012

1983 was the year of transition in the Wesleyan Methodist Church from a single national structure to a multi-district structure. Provisional Districts were established in Victoria and Queensland and a Pioneer District in New South Wales. The result was that Queensland held their inaugural State Conference on June 10-13, 1983 and Victoria held their inaugural State Conference on August 19-20. As a Pioneer District, New South Wales held an Advisory Council on April 22-25. In October, after each of the states had met, the National Conference convened at Thornleigh in the north-western suburbs of Sydney. Don Hardgrave, Mel Lockard and Tom Blythe were returned as State Superintendents in their respective districts and James Ridgway was returned as National Superintendent.

Debate about the ordination of women brought vigorous debate to the floor of Conference through the application of Lyn Burch.¹ Some delegates had been asking for more time to talk through the issues and as it eventuated, the discussion was postponed because some gaps were discovered in her studies. When Burch was ordained in Victoria in 1984 the heat of the discussion had passed and she went on to serve as a highly respected member of the local, district and national church.

At the same Conference a revised edition of the Australian Wesleyan hymnal, *A New Song*,² was released. This hymnal, which adapted favourite hymns to contemporary language, was a strong influence in church-planting and in the youth movement for more than a decade until it was largely replaced by modern choruses and data projection.

¹ See Chapter 10: 359.

² Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *A New Song* (Brisbane: A Pleasant Surprise, 1984).

METRO-MOVE 1983

Connected to the 1983 Conference was a major outreach called Metro-Move, focusing on the area around Baulkham Hills, Sydney. The Metro-Move program was a global initiative from the American headquarters to boost evangelism into major urban locations. Prior to Sydney, Metro-Move had already been used in African cities of Freetown, Johannesburg and Mbabane, in Asian cities of Manila and Magelang, and in the South American city of Bogota, with a further five cities scheduled after the Sydney event. Metro-Move was managed from America by Paul L. Swauger, son of J.R. Swauger, with assistance from another long-time friend of the Australian church, Don Bray.

The National Conference ran from September 28 to October 2, 1983, with Metro-Move continuing from October 3 to 11. It was anticipated that 200 Australians would join the outreach in Sydney but this number proved overly ambitious. A total of 103 people participated in the seminars and outreach, including fifty delegates from Victoria, twenty-two from New South Wales and thirty-one from Queensland.³ Training was provided before participants were sent into the community to offer a community survey. If interest was shown by the home owners, further visits and One-Family-Evangelistic-Bible-Studies (OFEBS) were offered. By the end of the week 2,066 homes had been surveyed with 372 contacts expressing a desire for a deeper faith and thirteen people making a decision to follow Christ.⁴ Organisers reported that the Sydney Metro-Move attracted the largest number of participants, yielded the largest number of surveys and the highest percentage of respondents of any of the Metro-Move programs conducted in various countries.⁵

Nonetheless, the interest expressed in the home visitation did not result in substantial numbers in Hills District Church, leaving a sense in the Australian church that Metro-Move did not achieve lasting results.⁶ Perhaps it contributed to the outward focus in the overall denomination though, for from 1983 until 1996 the

³ Metro-Move correspondence and reports, J. Ridgway records box 7 (Melbourne: Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia).

⁴ Metro-Move correspondence and reports, J. Ridgway records 7 (Archives).

⁵ News release, October 17, 1983, J. Ridgway records 7 (Archives).

⁶ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:45:15.

number of congregations increased a further 95% from forty-two to eighty-two and Sunday morning average attendances increased 191% from 1,258 to 3,672.

JAMES RIDGWAY AS NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

Initiating new churches and maintaining growth was the outstanding achievement of the period from 1974 to 1996. After that time the number of churches slowed dramatically, partially because growth had been fuelled by decisions made in the former Methodist Church in the 1970s⁷ and partially because of the loss of some of the key drivers of church-planting in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Two types of church-planters were evident during this period; the long-term resident church-planter who stayed through brutal hardship to slowly build a congregation, and the circuit-building church-planter who started multiple churches and placed new recruits into the pastorate to grow the new congregations. The circuit-building church-planters stand out in this part of the denomination's history. These high-energy, enthusiastic, multiple-planters made the rapid expansion possible.

Figure 11.1 *James Ridgway 2009*⁸



The partnership of James Ridgway as national leader, pictured as figure 11.1, and Don Hardgrave as a church-planter and leader of the Queensland work must be acknowledged as the dominant force in the growth from 1974 until 1987, with

⁷ Those who decided to stay in the Uniting Church were getting older by this time. Many who joined the Wesleyans between 1974-1983 had young families and this was a key concern for them.

⁸ Photo courtesy of Ridgway family, used by permission.

Hardgrave's church planting continuing into the 1990s. The roles of Tom Blythe as national leader and David Brownless as Southern District leader from 1987 to the 1990s exemplify the second wave of church-planting commitment. From 1984 until the present the emerging Tongan church was led initially by Sione Faletau and subsequently by Sifa Lokotui, while many others could be named during a period when starting new congregations was the priority.

James Ridgway submitted his resignation from his roles of National Superintendent and College Principal at the April 1984 National Board. Ridgway had been under considerable stress and the brunt of much criticism for several years. Victorian delegates objected to Ridgway leading both the college and the national church and some accused him of autocratic leadership. Early in 1983 the struggles of leadership were taking a toll on Ridgway⁹ and at Metro-Move 1983 he recognised how dangerously close he was to burn-out.¹⁰ His resignation to the National Board in May 1984 was greeted with "great dismay" by some of the National Board members because his ministry had been "of indispensable significance."¹¹ However, it seems that not all were distressed by this news. When Ridgway stepped out of the room to allow a free discussion, other Board members openly expressed their criticisms of his leadership.¹² Divisions within the National Board would continue into the terms of later leaders.

Ridgway's resignation was to be effective from the end of 1984 although he was granted four months leave during that year. Don Hardgrave was elected Interim National Superintendent from January 1, 1985, but was also required to "progressively assume" Ridgway's duties during Ridgway's overseas' travel from May to August 1984.¹³ At the next National Board meeting, in October 1984, the Board also adopted the College Board recommendation that David Wilson be appointed Interim Principal of Kingsley College until the National Conference.

⁹ As noted by returned missionary, Fran Leak: interview Frances (Leak) Taylor, August 03, 2015, tape B 0:06:30.

¹⁰ Interview, Phil Hotchkin, September 15, 2015, 1:12:00.

¹¹ National Board Minutes, April 26-28, 1984 (Archives).

¹² Interview, Donald Hardgrave, May 7, 2014, 0:40:45.

¹³ "National Board Actions," 38th District Conference, January 1986, 103 (Archives).

Rev. David Wilson, later to earn his doctorate in psychology, was from the Melbourne region but not of Wesleyan heritage. As a young man he was pastoring a "Jesus Movement sort of church in St Kilda" when he met James Ridgway in the mid 1970s and learned of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.¹⁴ Wilson, pictured as figure 11.2, transferred to Kingsley College and completed the Bachelor of Theology in 1978, building upon a Licentiate of Theology from the Australian College of Divinity.

Figure 11.2 *David Wilson 1996*¹⁵



From Melbourne Wilson went to California to study psychology at a Masters level at Azusa Pacific College and while in California he served as an Assistant Pastor at the Pasadena Wesleyan Church. When Wilson returned to Australia in 1981 he transferred his credentials to the Wesleyan Methodist Church and was employed as Dean of Students at Kingsley College. He was elevated to the role of Acting Principal from January 1985.¹⁶

DON HARDGRAVE AS NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

Don Hardgrave served as Interim National Superintendent from 1984 until January 1986, at which time he was elected for a further biennium by the Conference while serving concurrently as Queensland State Superintendent. Apart from the

¹⁴ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 0:01:25.

¹⁵ K. College records (Archives).

¹⁶ National Board Minutes, October 4-6, 1984 (Archives).

difficulties of the extra workload, the interstate rivalry between Victorian and Queensland members worked against Hardgrave's acceptance in the south. Don Goldney, who was visiting the Southern District Conference in 1986, was "amazed at the disrespect shown to the National Superintendent."¹⁷ Leading the National Board was even more difficult than the conferences. Hardgrave's difficulties with the National Board came to a head in 1986 over the election of a youth leader.

Figure 11.3 *Don Hardgrave 2009*¹⁸



The Nominating Committee to the January 1986 National Conference proposed that missionary Rev. Stuart Holsing be elected to the position of National Secretary of Wesleyan Youth.¹⁹ Stuart and Janet Holsing had come to Australia as missionaries from Kansas in 1983. Stuart played a prominent role in New South Wales, serving as pastor at Coffs Harbour Church and as District Superintendent. However, at the 1986 National Conference Stuart's nomination as Youth Secretary met with resistance from the delegates who wanted to elect Stuart Hall, a prominent Australian young adult, to that position. The national leaders attempted to influence the vote toward Stuart Holsing but the delegates elected Stuart Hall nevertheless.²⁰

At the National Board meeting three months later the Board changed the structure of Wesleyan Youth, introducing a new position of National Youth Director

¹⁷ Strathalbyn WMC records, Goldney Family History, December 2015, 5 (Archives).

¹⁸ Photo courtesy of Don Hardgrave, used by permission.

¹⁹ "National Board Actions," 38th District Conference, January 1986, 134 (Archives).

²⁰ "Minutes," 38th District Conference, January 1986, 24 (Archives).

and appointing Stuart Holsing to that position,²¹ circumventing the Conference action. After the Board meeting one of the college students complained to Don Hardgrave that the Board was defying the will of the National Conference by this action.²² On reflection, Hardgrave agreed that the Board had indeed acted improperly and he rescinded the Board's action a week later, notifying the Board members that discussion would be included at the next meeting. Assistant National Superintendent Tom Blythe was offended that Hardgrave would overrule the National Board so he phoned and wrote to Hardgrave to chastise him and he lodged his concerns with American leadership.²³ Hardgrave was seriously drained by this conflict and his role in stabilising the Townsville Church during the same period so he chose not to attend the National Board meetings in December. In Hardgrave's absence the National Board re-enacted their previous decision and Stuart Holsing was again promoted over the Conference-elected Stuart Hall.²⁴

Six months later, in May 1987 Hardgrave resigned as National Superintendent and Tom Blythe was appointed in his place.²⁵ In retrospect Tom Blythe has expressed regret for his aggressive pursuit of this issue with Hardgrave and the two remain good friends.²⁶ Hardgrave continued as District Superintendent in Queensland until September 1990, after which he pastored the South Gate church.

Figure 11.4 *Dr Lee Haines installs the National Board 1986*²⁷



²¹ National Board Minutes, April 16-18, 1986 (Archives).

²² Interview, Lindsay Cameron, February 8, 2016, 0:15:40.

²³ Interview, Donald Hardgrave, May 7, 2014, 0:54:00 - 0:58:45.

²⁴ National Board Minutes, December 9-10, 1986 (Archives).

²⁵ National Board Minutes, May 13-14, 1987 (Archives).

²⁶ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 1:18:00.

²⁷ Kingsley College records (Archives). L-R: Lee Haines, Tom Blythe, Max Richardson, David Brownless, Don Hardgrave, Stuart Holsing, James Midgley, Bev Hanbury, Ralph Lewis.

TOM BLYTHE AS NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

Subsequent to the events surrounding the resignation of Don Hardgrave from national leadership, Tom Blythe was elected and served in that role for almost ten years from May 1987 until January 1997. In 1987 Blythe was already the District Superintendent of the New South Wales District and the pastor of Bankstown Church. When elected as National Superintendent, he resigned the district leadership but continued to pastor the Bankstown congregation until 1992 when he became full-time as national leader.

Figure 11.5 *Tom Blythe 2011*²⁸



During Blythe's term of office the Australian version of the *Discipline* was published,²⁹ the work across Australia was consolidated and the number of churches increased thirty percent, peaking at the time of Blythe retirement from leadership. Tom Blythe's term of office concluded at the fiftieth anniversary of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, celebrated in January 1997 in Melbourne on the grounds of Ridley College. The National Conference delegates in January 1997 were divided over who should succeed Blythe as National Superintendent. Almost one half of the delegates wanted to return Don Hardgrave to leadership and Hardgrave was ready to serve. Stan Baker was also a popular candidate, but he declined nomination. An unusual contender for the role was Rev. Dennis Jackson, an

²⁸ Photo courtesy of Tom Blythe, used by permission.

²⁹ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia 1994*. Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1994.

American pastor who had been travelling around the local churches in Australia for several months caring for the pastoral team. The outcome of the vote was that, from the seventy-five votes cast, Don Hardgrave received thirty-one votes and Dennis Jackson received thirty-eight. Dennis was elected, but after consideration he declined for family reasons.³⁰ The process was started again from the beginning and this time Stan Baker did not decline. The outcome of the second vote was that Don Hardgrave received thirty-seven votes and Stan Baker received thirty-eight votes. Baker was elected with a majority of one and he graciously accepted the role of National Superintendent.

Leadership Challenges. The transition to multi-districts from 1983 introduced new dynamics on the National Board. Repeated power struggles and unresolved hurt resulted in a long list of former leaders and sacrificial workers who left the denomination. This topic is broached often in the National Board minutes but has not been resolved. With the introduction of multi-districts the role of the National Board ceased to be that of managing church growth, pastoral supply and auxiliary ministries; instead becoming the policy-making body that was intended to supervise district leaders in their ministries of church expansion. This role of the National Board, and especially the National Superintendent, has remained unclear however. The Handbook of the Wesleyan Methodist Church states that the National Superintendent is "the general spiritual and administrative leader of the church"³¹ but struggles between the National and District Superintendents has been a symptom of unclear boundaries in the denomination since 1982, resulting in the loss of too many former leaders.

District Superintendents are influential leaders within their own district voting bloc and they are ex-officio members of the National Board. The *Handbook* requires that the National Superintendent has a supervisory capacity over the districts but the District Superintendents compose a substantial part of the National Board that supervises the National Superintendent. This circular structure leads to conflict when the National Superintendent seeks to correct a district or when the District

³⁰ In the Wesleyan Methodist Church at that time any minister of the world-wide Wesleyan Church was eligible. This has since been changed.

³¹ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *The Handbook of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia 2012* (Melbourne: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2012), para 726.

Superintendents become too personally invested in matters of national leadership. From 1995 until 2012 this tension was greatly compounded by the placement of district leaders on most of the national boards and committees, thus ensuring that District Superintendents were consistently engaged in matters of national leadership. In 1984 some awareness of this potential was seen in a resolution to the National Conference, "Moved and approved that the College Board be enlarged to 15 members, to include additional laymen not members of the NBA." [emphasis mine]³²

Early symptoms of leadership dysfunction have already been alluded to during James Ridgway's leadership. Subsequent leaders consistently grappled with high levels of conflict on the National Board. Both Don Hardgrave and Tom Blythe were powerful leaders of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and deeply committed to the task. They both led their districts during periods of expansion and vitality. However, they had different understandings of the role of National Superintendent. Hardgrave believed that he had a mandate from God to spread spiritual awakening in Australia. He believed his role was to lead and the Board's role to advise and support him. Blythe, however, did not expect to be providing vision and growth stimulus from the national level. When one of the district leaders sought a vision statement from Blythe, he replied, "The N.B.A. cannot, even if it wanted to, be an effective agent for growth. I am convinced that the District Superintendents comprise the best forum for vision and growth."³³ Both Hardgrave and Blythe believe that they were correct in their actions and yet the result of conflict between them was a tragedy of lasting import to the denomination. Hardgrave has spoken of his brief term in national leadership, saying, "It damaged me. Very definitely."³⁴ Don Hardgrave's and Tom Blythe's terms of leadership illustrate a difference of ministry philosophy, especially as it relates to the vision and authority. In effect, Hardgrave understood his authority to be derived from the Conference, whereas Blythe expected ongoing direction by the National Board of Administration.

Blythe led during the waning years of growth in the Australian church while generating a confusing array of messages about who provides leadership and vision. In May 1987 the National Board recorded a "silent minute" that a study of the role of

³² National Board Minutes, April 26-28, 1984 (Archives).

³³ Correspondence Blythe to Lindsay Cameron, December 1994, 2, T. Blythe records (Archives).

³⁴ Interview, Donald Hardgrave, May 7, 2014, 0:53:00.

the NBA and the DBAs be undertaken.³⁵ Blythe was concerned that some of the members of the National Board were seeking to undermine the "role and efficiency" of the National Board.³⁶ In May 1989 Blythe reaffirmed that, "There is no doubt in my mind that the initiatives and motivation for church growth belong to the District Superintendents and the best I can do is to encourage and give advise [sic] when requested."³⁷ However, the following December he stated, "I believe as never before that this board must not content itself with matters of administration, but should be, must be a group of leaders who give direction."³⁸ In 1991 the review of the national structure returned a number of conclusions, summed up by the statement, "We see a visionary/spiritual input to the National Church as the most vital aspect of the role of the National Supt."³⁹

In 1993, amid slowing denominational growth,⁴⁰ Blythe reported, "I believe with all of my heart that our church is facing our greatest challenge for many years, and this will require us to restructure for new convert growth or begin to decline. The question is who is going to make it happen?"⁴¹ The outcome of that discussion was that the National Superintendent should coach the several District Superintendents so that a unified vision could be promoted at the district level. Blythe accepted this behind-the-scenes role and reduced his national leadership to a part-time role.⁴² From May 1995 Blythe began scheduling regular meetings with the District Superintendents prior to the National Board meetings for the purpose of coaching them.⁴³

By May 1996 Tom Blythe was offered the role of Executive Director at the Bethshan Convention Centre and Retirement Village⁴⁴ and was considering his future.⁴⁵ In November, when submitting his resignation, Blythe reported it was a "critical moment" in the life of the church when growth was being replaced by a

³⁵ The "silent minute" is attached to the end of National Board Minutes, May 13-14, 1987 (Archives).

³⁶ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, December 9-10, 1987 (Archives).

³⁷ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 17-18, 1989 (Archives).

³⁸ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 15-17, 1989 (Archives).

³⁹ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 12-13, 1993 (Archives).

⁴⁰ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 15-16, 1993 (Archives).

⁴¹ "National Superintendent's Report," National Executive Minutes, August 12, 1993 (Archives).

⁴² "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 7, 1994 (Archives).

⁴³ National Board Minutes, May 9-10, 1995 (Archives).

⁴⁴ Bethshan Mission was a holiness mission and aged care facility at Wyee, NSW. It had close links to the Wesleyans and conferences were regularly held at the Bethshan facilities.

⁴⁵ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 7-8, 1996 (Archives).

"plateau".⁴⁶ In an echo of Don Hardgrave's demise as National Superintendent, Tom Blythe sent apologies for not attending the last meeting of the National Board during his term, which met in November 1996.

STAN BAKER AS NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

One of the immediate differences under Stan Baker's leadership was that the North Queensland District Superintendent was included in all National Board meetings, first by invitation and later as an ex-officio member.⁴⁷ Another change was that the National Board assumed a more conciliatory attitude towards Don Hardgrave and the ministry of TEE (see below). This new attitude was probably influenced by the election of James Ridgway as the Assistant National Superintendent. Ridgway had long since established a respectful relationship with Hardgrave and the Board's dealing with Hardgrave continued to be almost amicable as long as Ridgway remained in the national leadership team.

Figure 11.6 *Stanley Baker c.2000*⁴⁸



Theological Education by Extension (TEE) was a ministry training program introduced to the Wesleyans by Don Hardgrave in Brisbane in 1988 as a successor to Kingsley College Summer Intensives that had been offered since 1978. TEE was designed to provide distance education so that ministerial students and lay people

⁴⁶ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 5-7, 1996 (Archives).

⁴⁷ See APPENDIX H: 701.

⁴⁸ L. Cameron records (Archives).

could undertake training while remaining in their local churches. As a general rule TEE operated on set semester timetables so that there was some chance of the students having a cohort and a trainer in their region and so that the lecturer could hold regional group sessions once or twice for each subject. It was also different because it offered studies at a basic level as well as an advanced level. The basic level was primarily for lay people who expected to be useful in their local congregation while the advanced level was to provide an avenue toward ministerial credentials. With the help of Peter Howe, Bev Hanbury, Robyn Watson and a team of workers at the district office, TEE quickly became well entrenched in the Queensland and New South Wales work. However, the relationship between TEE and Kingsley College was problematic. Kingsley College had held the monopoly of authorised ministerial education for the Wesleyans for decades, and the ministry of TEE introduced a level of competition. In truth TEE provided an effective recruitment tool for college students, but the "B Level" basic studies created a source of tension since Kingsley College sought to maintain a high educational standard.

In 1976 the ministry in Brisbane had been gifted stock for a bookshop by Mrs Belle Crow,⁴⁹ which was managed and renamed A Pleasant Surprise by the Hardgraves.⁵⁰ Since both TEE and A Pleasant Surprise (APS) were connected to the personal ministry of Don Hardgrave,⁵¹ the management and finances of both became intertwined while he was at South Gate church. In 1994 the National Board had directed that TEE come under the National Board of Ministerial Standing,⁵² but in 1996 another motion was presented by Don Hardgrave and Peter Howe that TEE and APS be managed by a board appointed by the Director of TEE (Hardgrave). The National Board denied this request, instead appointing its own board of management.⁵³ From 1997, under new national leadership, the National Board loosened its grip on TEE, dissolving the board appointed in 1996 and placing TEE under the management of APS.⁵⁴ Furthermore, at a subsequent meeting the National Board directed that, "the A.P.S. Board has authority to direct the use of any funds

⁴⁹ "A Pleasant Surprise Report," 31st District Conference, September 1977, 41 (Archives).

⁵⁰ "Secretary for Extension and Evangelism's Report," 30th District Conference, September 1976, 22 (Archives).

⁵¹ The origins of APS go back to a book ministry that Don's mother, Nan Hardgrave had run from their family home.

⁵² National Board Minutes, May 10-11, 1994 (Archives).

⁵³ National Board Minutes, May 7-8, 1996 (Archives).

⁵⁴ National Board Minutes, November 11-12, 1997 (Archives).

given to TEE as part of the special promotions and offering appeal and all items purchased using such funds will be the property of A.P.S."⁵⁵

However, in June 2000 Don Hardgrave and Peter Howe withdrew from the Wesleyan Methodist Church⁵⁶ and the link between APS and the Wesleyan Methodist Church was concluded. James Ridgway resigned from the National Board at that time and at the next meeting of the National Board accreditation of TEE was withdrawn by the remaining Board members.⁵⁷

Health issues. Stan Baker had not been seeking the role of National Superintendent in January 1997. He had been serving Wesleyan congregations since 1978 and as the South Queensland District Superintendent since October 1990. In 1997 Baker initially declined nomination to National Superintendent but when pressed, he allowed his name to go forward. When elected he continued as South Queensland Superintendent for three years, maintaining both district and national roles concurrently. In September 1999 he resigned from the district role, but immediately accepted the role of pastor to the Caboolture congregation. Baker began his service as National Superintendent reluctantly and to balance the stress at the national level he sought relief through a local church ministry.⁵⁸ Unfortunately he was not able to give the local church the time that it deserved, which added to his sense of guilt and stress. In several reports to the National Board from 2000 Baker records his misgivings about his failure to adequately minister to his local congregation.⁵⁹ By 2003 his reports included a worrying tone, "Recently my feelings seemed to echo those expressed by the psalmist in Psalm 77:1-9.⁶⁰ Psalm 86:1 reads

⁵⁵ National Board Minutes, May 4-5, 1998 (Archives).

⁵⁶ See APPENDIX G: 662.

⁵⁷ National Board Minutes, November 14-15, 2000 (Archives).

⁵⁸ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2000 (Archives).

⁵⁹ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 14-15, 2000 (Archives).

⁶⁰ Psalm 77:1-9 (Bible):

I cry out to God; yes, I shout. Oh, that God would listen to me!

When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord.

All night long I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven, but my soul was not comforted.

I think of God, and I moan, overwhelmed with longing for his help.

You don't let me sleep. I am too distressed even to pray!

I think of the good old days, long since ended, when my nights were filled with joyful songs.

I search my soul and ponder the difference now.

Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again be kind to me?

Is his unfailing love gone forever? Have his promises permanently failed?

Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he slammed the door on his compassion?

(NLT) BEND DOWN, O LORD, AND HEAR MY PRAYER; ANSWER ME, FOR I NEED YOUR HELP." [emphasis his]⁶¹

In 2005, "Considerable discussion took place on the issue of Stan's stress levels," and Baker's report was received with, "concern expressed for the emotional well being of Stan."⁶² In 2006 Baker again reported on his internal stress⁶³ and his intention to resign at the January 2008 National Conference.⁶⁴ He concluded his term of office at that conference and died of cancer in August 2010.

Membership changes. During Stan Baker's leadership from 1997 to 2008 major changes were made to the membership requirements in the Australian church; changes that ultimately broke with traditional American Wesleyan standards. Concerns had been expressed by individuals for many years about the seeming elitism in the structures of Full Membership, Associate Membership, Provisional Membership and Junior Membership.⁶⁵ At the 2000 Conference delegates voted to follow the American simplified categories of Covenant Membership and Community Membership, which effectively separated those who were able to participate in district and national ministry from those who were engaged in the local church.⁶⁶ This was the first step toward revising membership structures, and was relatively straightforward because it followed the direction previously set by the American church.

The second step was much more difficult because in this the Australian church sought to pre-empt American church discussions. The 2000 Conference directed the National Board to review the Membership Commitments and Special Directions,⁶⁷ which included the long-held standards of total abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and gambling and the warnings against attending the cinema, dancing and other social activities. The National Board subsequently appointed a committee of four to initiate an extensive review,⁶⁸ which would then report to the 2004 National Conference.

⁶¹ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2003 (Archives).

⁶² National Board Minutes, November 7-8, 2005 (Archives).

⁶³ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 7-8, 2005 (Archives).

⁶⁴ National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2006 (Archives).

⁶⁵ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 8-9, 1999 (Archives).

⁶⁶ "Minutes," 44th National Conference, January 12-14, 2000, 15-16 (Archives).

⁶⁷ "Minutes," 44th National Conference, January 12-14, 2000, 19 (Archives).

⁶⁸ National Board Minutes, January 15, 2000 (Archives).

Once submissions began to come from the districts, the committee was reformatted around members from the South Queensland District, with Lex Akers as chair.⁶⁹ Extensive consultation followed, so that by the time of the 2004 National Conference a good discussion and general acceptance was achieved. The proposed changes would relocate much of the former membership *requirements* to the section containing traditional *advice*, and the requirements for membership would focus more on spiritual growth and discipleship. There were many delegates who did not agree with these changes, but because of the widespread consultation, there was general willingness to accept the majority decision. The result was that the Australian Conference adopted these changes and forwarded their conclusions to the American church for approval. Good reports were received from international observers:

Dennis Wright, who attended the district conferences and Earle Wilson, who was present for the National Conference remarked on the nature and quality of the debate on this issue. Both of them felt it reflected wonderfully on the Lord Jesus Christ and the Australian people.⁷⁰

At this time the American church was also considering some membership changes and the General Board did not want to be seen to be endorsing the radical changes from Australia and thereby pre-empting the American discussions. However, there was some sympathy for the Australian initiative on the General Board, so some members did not want to disapprove the Australian changes either. Therefore the General Board tabled the Australian application for two years, while they pressed the Australian church to modify their proposal.⁷¹ The Americans wanted the “Leadership Covenant” included which required a commitment by anyone in denominational leadership to abide by the former requirements of abstinence. The Australians resisted because they felt this effectively reversed the changes that the Australian church had made. This resulted in a protracted stalemate.

Meanwhile new international structures had been introduced⁷² and the Australian Conference was applying for promotion to be an Established National Church (ENC). However, the ENC application could not be considered until the

⁶⁹ National Board Minutes, November 13, 2002 (Archives).

⁷⁰ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 3-4, 2004 (Archives).

⁷¹ National Board Minutes, November 7-8, 2005, including the "National Superintendent's Report"(Archives).

⁷² See chapter 13: 472.

membership changes were finalised,⁷³ so the National Board members were caught between the two objectives; adopting a discipleship-based membership structure in place of a rules-based structure, or achieving semi-autonomy from the foreign body that was holding them to the older structure. The Australian National Board considered several options, including seceding from the international organisation,⁷⁴ but agreed that such action would divide the Australian church. In May 2006 they agreed to recommend the Leadership Covenant to the 2008 Australian Conference and, therefore, in 2007 they were advised that they could proceed with the ENC application.⁷⁵ The 2008 National Conference adopted the Leadership Covenant with a minor change in the wording that leaders should live "in the spirit of" the requirements instead of "live by" the requirements.⁷⁶

Refocusing the district superintendents. From 1995, as the former National Superintendent, Tom Blythe, had distanced himself from projecting national vision, growth slowed to a trickle in all of the districts and the denomination as a whole began to decline. The chart of growth is included as figure 11.7. The most effective church-planters of the 1980s and 1990s, Don Hardgrave, James Ridgway, Tom Blythe, David Brownless and Sione Faletau were not only finished but almost without exception felt unwelcome in the movement. The denomination systematically rejected and exiled many of its former leaders, at least partially because of the structure that consistently raised district leaders to a position of rivalry with the national leader.

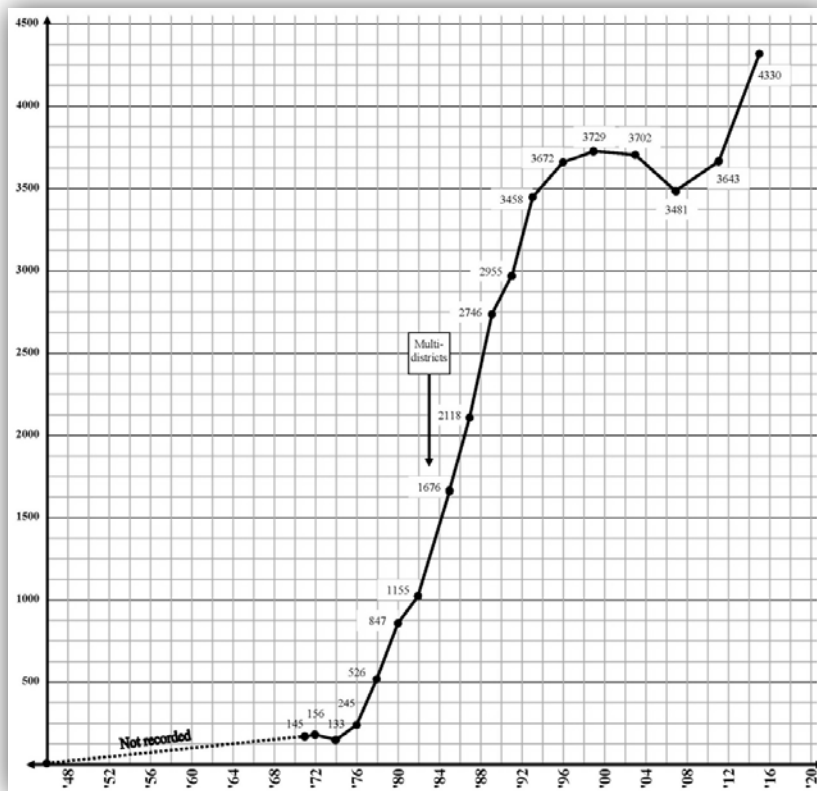
⁷³ National Board Minutes, May 9, 2006 (Archives).

⁷⁴ National Board Minutes, Special Meeting on February 13, 2007, called "following the further deferment of our Membership Document by the General Board." (Archives).

⁷⁵ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 7-8, 2007 (Archives).

⁷⁶ "Minutes," 46th National Conference, January 13-17, 2008, 26 (Archives).

Figure 11.7 Church attendances peaking in 1999



Stan Baker had succeeded Tom Blythe as National Superintendent in January 1997. By the early 2000s declining health was impacting Baker, resulting in fundamental leadership changes. While Blythe had begun holding biannual meetings with the District Superintendents to coach them in district leadership, Baker met with the District Superintendent's as an advisory committee prior to the National Board. The result was that from 1997 this pseudo national board was reviewing key matters and bringing recommendations to the National Board. Apart from the obvious weight that any recommendation from the five Superintendents would have on a ten-person National Board, this informal board also violated a deeply held Wesleyan priority of lay representation on all boards. Occasionally the Assistant National Superintendent and the College Principal would join with the Superintendents, both of whom are also required to be ordained.

The national role of the District Superintendents was systematically increased over the next decade. In 1997 the National Board formally invited all four District

Superintendents to sit on the College Board,⁷⁷ in 2000 the Superintendents' Committee was given responsibility to serve as the National Board of Evangelism and Church Growth⁷⁸ and in 2001 the District Superintendents were included as ex-officio members of the National Board of Ministerial Development.⁷⁹ This removed any real checks and balances between those boards that directed ministerial training. From 2007, as Baker's health became a serious concern, the District Superintendents began to chair each other's district conferences.⁸⁰ As was stated on the 2008 floor of Conference, it seemed like the denomination was being managed by a council of bishops.⁸¹

What had started as an attempt at distributed leadership under Tom Blythe had become a matter of serious structural weakness under Stan Baker's failing health. Clearly there was an element of necessity in these emergency measures, but where Tom Blythe had set about empowering the District Superintendents to take the lead in church-planting at the district level, the District Superintendents were now consistently engaged in national church governance and the district work of church-planting was neglected.

Church-planting continued to be a stated priority in the districts but the District Superintendents ceased to be personally engaged in starting new congregations. Until 1993 church-planting had been undertaken by drawing together a small group into a local congregation and gradually building upon that base until a sustainable congregation was established. The District Superintendents were often the leaders of this work. However, in the mid-1990s a new strategy emerged in which fewer, larger church-plants would be attempted using overseas funding. This was achieved by raising money in America and drawing a team of lay and ministerial workers together in Australia before the first worship service commenced. The Cairns church-plant in North Queensland was at the forefront of the transition to this new strategy. In Cairns a small traditional church-plant had been started by the District Superintendent, but was then accelerated with American funding.⁸² The list of

⁷⁷ National Board Minutes, November 11-12, 1997 (Archives).

⁷⁸ National Board Minutes, November, 14-15, 2000 (Archives).

⁷⁹ National Board Minutes, November 13-14, 2001 (Archives).

⁸⁰ National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2006 (Archives).

⁸¹ Interview, Lindsay Cameron, February 8, 2016, 1:00:10.

⁸² "Statistician's Report," 4th NQ District Conference, October 1996, 37 (Archives).

American-funded church-plants from 1994 to 2008 included Cairns (North QLD), Riverside (Brisbane), Crossroads (Sydney), Village (Adelaide) and Lifegate (south of Cairns).

The many factors described above converged to result in denominational decline. The District Superintendents were no longer the drivers of church-planting and the traditional priority of each local church pastor starting a small group in a neighbouring community was no longer encouraged. A few small churches were commenced over the next decade but not enough to replace the normal process of attrition. Two seemingly good changes eroded the traditional model of denominational growth: the elevation of District Superintendents to de-facto national leadership and the introduction of American funding into church-planting.

Kingsley College. The loss of sustainability and vitality of Kingsley College was a real threat to the Australian denomination. The college was at the heart of the Wesleyan strategy of proclaiming the holiness message and the college had been the physical hub of the denomination through living memory. The realisation that Kingsley College was in crisis came unexpectedly. In the late 1990s Kingsley College seemed to be making good progress, now offering government-accredited bachelor's and master's degrees.⁸³ The college was well recognised in the Melbourne scene as an influential evangelical training centre and as a centre of excellence for counsellor training.⁸⁴ American missionaries, Rev. Dr Phil and Rev. Kathy Bence brought depth to the educational credibility of the college, serving from 1990 to 1997. They were succeeded by missionaries, Rev. Dr Jonathon and Miriam Case. On May 19, 1999 the second floor of the library building was dedicated, fulfilling a decade long goal, and Dr David Wilson was praised for his role in leading the college.⁸⁵

However, the ethos of the college was changing. David Wilson claims that it was the availability of Austudy to students that was the largest factor in the change of culture on the campus.⁸⁶ Austudy was government financial aid to fulltime students at accredited educational institutions, and Kingsley College had finally gained the

⁸³ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 0:49:20.

⁸⁴ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 0:39:50.

⁸⁵ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 8-9, 1999 (Archives).

⁸⁶ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 0:35:05.

requisite accreditation. Wilson maintained that this introduced a different type of student to the campus:

Students [were] coming because it was a bit easier to get into Kingsley College if you'd been refused from Melbourne University and La Trobe University and some other places, then you could go to Kingsley. A bit of a different feel developed over those years.⁸⁷

The ethos on campus had shifted and numbers declined. Meanwhile the provision of American missionaries as free teaching staff was also being reduced.⁸⁸ The hope of financial sustainability in the college centred on increasing student enrolments, but that was not occurring because the denomination was not growing.⁸⁹ In 2001 National Superintendent Stan Baker reported that the college was in critical financial need.⁹⁰

David Wilson resigned as College Principal at the end of 2002. Wilson had become increasingly convinced that "cocooning" students on a residential campus did not provide the best venue for ministerial training so that in 1999 he moved his own family off-campus to inner-city Melbourne to model urban mission. In 2002, after eighteen years as College Principal, Wilson resigned as Principal and withdrew from church ministry. In 2007 he surrendered his credentials and resigned as a minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church altogether.

In November 2003 Stan Baker advised the National Board that, "Kingsley College is in somewhat of a crisis," and "unless we make some crucial decisions our future is bleak indeed."⁹¹ In that atmosphere of urgent concern, Rev. Lionel Rose was appointed as Acting Principal and a Task Force was appointed to consider the future of Kingsley College. In 2004, at the National Conference, Rev. Peter Dobson was elected as the College Principal. Dobson had been serving as Assistant National Superintendent since November 2001 and had been a member of the Task Force that was considering the future of the college.⁹² At the first College Board meeting after Dobson's election the decision was made to sell the college property. The May

⁸⁷ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 0:36:05.

⁸⁸ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 0:32:10.

⁸⁹ "College Board's Report," National Board Minutes, May 14-15, 1999 (Archives).

⁹⁰ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2001 (Archives).

⁹¹ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2003 (Archives).

⁹² National Board Minutes, November 13-14, 2001 (Archives).

meeting of the National Board approved this action and a press release was distributed.⁹³

A flash point in January 2004. Leadership changes and the Kingsley College crisis converged to create a perfect storm in the priorities of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. As has been described, the role of the National Superintendent had been stripped of much of its authority and reduced to a coaching role. Meanwhile the role of the District Superintendents had been elevated to dominate many of the national church boards so that checks and balances between the boards that dealt with ministerial training had been compromised. Some of this was through structural changes and some of it was simply because the conferences were inclined to elect the same few people to all of the boards. The third factor to come to bear in 2004 was the crisis at Kingsley College. Radical decisions were required to draw the college back from bankruptcy and a small cohort of leaders now had control of all of the boards that would decide the college's future.

The extent to which checks and balances between the three boards dealing with education had been compromised by this time is illustrated as figure 11.8. From the 2004 National Conference seven ordained ministers (all men at this time) sat on all three of the national boards that addressed educational matters, and five of those seven met separately as the Superintendents and chaired all of the District Conferences. In effect a majority of the same members sat on most national boards, accountability was diminished and lay members were greatly disadvantaged being in the minority of every board.

⁹³ National Board Minutes, May 3-4, 2004 (Archives).

Figure 11.8 *Overlap between national boards and committees 2004 elections*

In this chart persons are given initials only. The identities are public knowledge and easily ascertained, but this format has been followed in an attempt to reinforce the concept that it was the denominational structure that was failing, not particular persons.

		COMMITTEE OF SUPER'S	KINGSLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGERS	NATIONAL BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION (NBA)	NATIONAL BOARD OF MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT (NBMD)
ORDAINED	S.B. National Super	Ex-officio	Ex-officio	Elected	Ex-officio
	R.R. (Asst NS & a DS)	Ex-officio	Ex-officio	Elected	Ex-officio
	L.A. (a District Super)	Ex-officio	Invited	Ex-officio	Ex-officio
	G.W. (a District Super)	Ex-officio	Elected	Ex-officio	Elected
	K.R. (a District Super)	Ex-officio	Invited	Ex-officio	Ex-officio
	P.D. (Principal)		Ex-officio	Ex-officio	Elected
	L.R.		Elected (Chair)	Elected	Elected (Chair)
	L.H.				Elected
LAY	D.R. (Nat Sec)			Elected	
	D.L. (Nat Treas)		Elected	Elected	
	D.R.			Elected	
	R.T.			Elected	
	J.A.		Elected		Elected
	C.L.		Elected		
	J.M.		Elected		Elected
	V.C.				Elected
		5 members, all on College Board, NBA & NBMD	11 members, of whom: 8 on NBA 9 on NBMD	11 members, of whom: 8 on College Board 7 on NBMD	11 members, of whom: 7 on NBA 9 on NBMD

When sale of the college was announced in 2004 there was an immediate outcry from members of the denomination. This decision had been made at the first board meeting after the 2004 National Conference, based upon discussions that had been occurring in the year prior to the National Conference. It raised the spectre that this intention to sell was deliberately withheld from the delegates of the National

Conference in January 2004. In September 2004 the Southern District Conference approved a memorial criticising the behaviour of the College Board and National Board and seeking to have this decision held over to the next National Conference. The National Board was also the National Action Committee, so it was able to disregard the Southern District memorial as "not recommended". In the National Board's minutes a motion was put "that the National Superintendent convey to the Faculty and Staff of Kingsley College regret for the speed of process, the delivery and for those hurt in the process," but this motion was defeated by the majority of the National Board's own members.⁹⁴ In May 2005 written complaints were received by the National Board from David and Trish Little, Noel and Merran Whincop, James and Melva Ridgway and Beryl and Wal Baker but the National Board confirmed that, "[The] NBA agrees to place Kingsley College Property on the market."⁹⁵ James Ridgway's employment as a lecturer and Merran Whincop's employment as an administrator at Kingsley College were soon after discontinued. By this time American missionaries, Ron and Marilyn Freeman had been brought to the college to advise the process of restructuring and some criticised them for their influence in these events.⁹⁶

Within the four-year window between the 2004 and 2008 National Conferences, decisions were made to discontinue the accredited bachelor's and master's degrees and reposition the college under the umbrella of the Sydney College of Divinity where it could continue to offer theological and counselling courses. However, the Sydney College of Divinity soon after indicated that it may also discontinue counselling studies, so in 2007 the College Board formulated a more radical plan to cease offering classroom teaching at all, but to support Wesleyan students as they studied through other colleges. Kingsley College became Kingsley Australia as it ceased providing classroom education itself. This strategy was taken to the National Board at a special meeting in September 2007, just four months before the 2008 National Conference.⁹⁷ At that National Board meeting it was agreed to adopt the Kingsley plan as a "working document" and the members of the National Board and the Kingsley Board were instructed to keep these discussions confidential until after

⁹⁴ National Board Minutes, November 7-8, 2004 (Archives).

⁹⁵ National Board Minutes, May 2-3, 2004 (Archives).

⁹⁶ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 2-3, 2004 (Archives).

⁹⁷ National Board Minutes, September 26, 2007 (Archives).

the District Conferences, which were meeting in September and October. One of the key elements of the new arrangement was that Tabor Victoria would be the primary provider of ministerial training - Tabor Victoria was of Pentecostal heritage and it was understood that this would be a hotly contested by many Wesleyans.

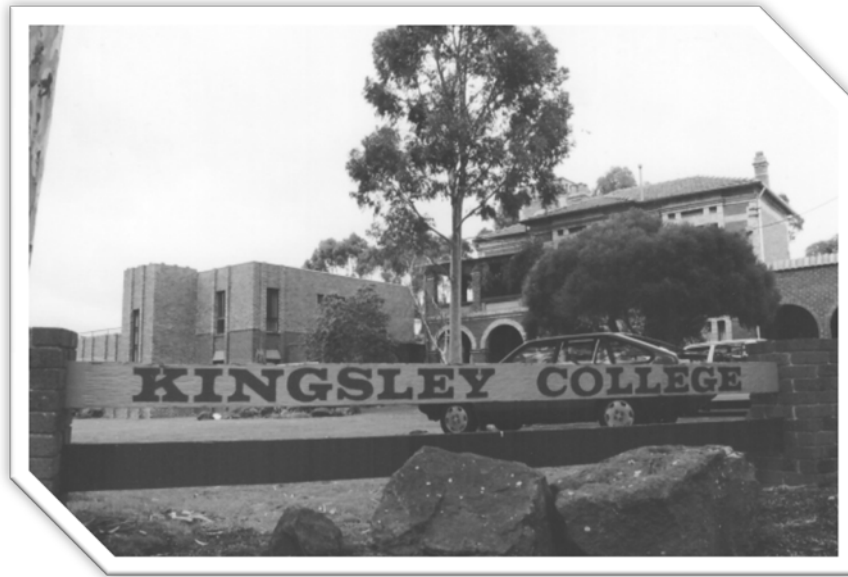
The plan was then announced to the denomination in October 2011, immediately after the last of the District Conferences had concluded. Keeping the plan from debate at the District Conferences allowed time for the key aspects of the strategy to be implemented without contest before the next National Conference. The new direction was brought as a *fait-accompli* to the National Conference and any real chance to oppose the proposal was averted. Staff employment and furnishings were transferred to Tabor before the National Conference met. Objections and memorials that came to the National Board in those intervening months were referred to Conference discussion. It is noteworthy that when the National Board met in November, between the joint Kingsley/NBA meeting and the National Conference, there were some motions acknowledging how inappropriate the process had been. "Concerns were expressed at the process followed with seeking the partnership with Tabor College."⁹⁸ Furthermore, there were signs that the lay members of the National Board were beginning to recognise how disadvantaged they had been under the board arrangements; two motions seeking to limit the duplication of National Board members, and District Superintendents in particular, on multiple national boards were approved, "in order to effectively maintain separation of boards."⁹⁹

The National Conference was predictably divided and volatile but largely it was too late to reverse the decisions. After much debate the Conference endorsed the decision to sell the college and the decision to form a partnership with Tabor Victoria. Lindsay Cameron was then elected as National Superintendent to lead the fractured denomination into the next quadrennium.

⁹⁸ National Board Minutes, November 5-6, 2007 (Archives).

⁹⁹ National Board Minutes, November 5-6, 2007 (Archives).

Figure 11.9 *Kingsley College in Glenroy 2011*¹⁰⁰



LINDSAY CAMERON AS NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

Lindsay Cameron was elected at the 2008 conference, which was fraught with tension. The membership and ENC struggles had left the delegates feeling unfairly treated by the American leaders and, because of the delay in finalising the new membership arrangements, local churches had been left uncertain for four years and had virtually ceased receiving new members. The chairman, General Superintendent Dr Tom Armiger, explained the General Board's perspective and steered the Leadership Covenant through the Conference. Furthermore, major changes had been made to ministerial training and to Kingsley College that had greatly divided the delegates. The divisions of the Conference continued into the four years of Cameron's leadership.

¹⁰⁰ Photo courtesy of Lindsay Cameron.

Figure 11.10 *Lindsay Cameron 2006*¹⁰¹



As a first priority Cameron had the task of leading the Australian delegation to the International Conference in June 2008 where the Australian application for ENC status was presented. However, while the Australian church had been preparing their ENC application the requirements for ENCs had been increased.¹⁰² The additional requirements were not achievable and Australia's ENC application was rejected in June 2008. This was very discouraging to the Australian delegates since it represented another wall of bureaucratic delay. The National Board surrendered and undertook nothing more on the matter for eighteen months until the North American Director of World Missions came to meet with the National Board in November 2009. At that time Dr H.C. Wilson recommended that the ENC application be expanded to include all of the Wesleyan Methodist Conferences of the South Pacific as an Established Regional Conference (ERC). The National Board agreed and Cameron undertook negotiations with the New Zealand Conference, as well as the Solomon Islands and Bougainville Conferences that would be listed as mission fields of Australia and New Zealand. This time the application comfortably satisfied the numeric requirements of the International Charter. The four South Pacific conferences approved the ERC proposal and the International Conference gave its approval in January 2012. With the American General Conference's belated approval in June 2012, the inauguration of the South Pacific Regional Conference was held in Brisbane at Everton Hills Church on August 24-26, 2012.

¹⁰¹ Photo courtesy of Lindsay Cameron.

¹⁰² "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 6-7, 2006 (Archives).

Relocation of the college. The decision to partner Kingsley College with Tabor Victoria in January 2008 had been divisive and as the year progressed it became clear that very few students were choosing to accept the offer of study at Tabor Victoria. By November 2008 it was reported that no Wesleyan students were studying on-campus at all.¹⁰³ By early 2009 Memorandums of Understanding had been signed with Booth College in Sydney (Salvation Army) and with the Nazarene College in Brisbane and a small number of Wesleyan students were attending each of these.

Despite the direction of the National Conference¹⁰⁴ the best of the Kingsley College library holdings were transferred to the Tabor library in 2008, re-catalogued, re-covered and placed on the Tabor shelves. In 2009, amid continuing criticism over the loss of Kingsley College, Peter Dobson resigned as Principal and in January 2010 the National Superintendent was assigned supervision of Kingsley College until a new Principal could be appointed. Lindsay Cameron, Kevin Brown, and Glen O'Brien then had the task of going to the Tabor campus and reclaiming Kingsley books off the library shelves.¹⁰⁵

Rev. Kevin Brown had been managing the Kingsley Community program at the college for some years at this stage. Kingsley Community was a vocational training program designed for study in the local churches. In some ways it was filling the space left by the departure of TEE in 2000. Kingsley College's higher education subjects had ceased with the loss of accreditation but Kevin was gradually building a new focus for Kingsley College in vocational educational. Kevin was elected Principal of Kingsley College in November 2010.

Meanwhile a contract had finally been secured for the sale of the original campus and settlement was achieved early in 2011. The Kingsley Board had proposed that the proceeds from the sale of the campus would be under the College Board's management for reinvestment and for student sponsorships. However, investigation showed that the property was never owned by the college; it was simply made

¹⁰³ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 3-4, 2008 (Archives).

¹⁰⁴ The following action of the College Board was eventually approved by the National Conference, "Adopted a policy for development of future partnerships and recommended the transfer of 'intellectual property, the use of Kingsley College reputation and unwanted library, equipment and furniture resources (valued at \$250,000)' to Tabor in exchange for their employment of Kingsley College staff." "Minutes," 46th National Conference, January 14, 2008 (Archives).

¹⁰⁵ "Interim Principal's Report," National Board Minutes, May 6-8, 2010 (Archives).

available for the use of the college by the denomination in the same way that it had been made available for a national headquarters, a camp ground and a local church. The National Board asserted its ownership and acted upon the 2004 resolution that a continuing site be acquired in Melbourne. They purchased land in a prominent location on Camp Road, Broadmeadows and built three warehouses on one section of the land. The first of the warehouses was then ready for the relocation of Kingsley College when the new owners needed possession of the original campus. The income from rental of the other two warehouses provided funding for the college and national church operations. The new Kingsley Australia premises are pictured as figure 11.11.

Figure 11.11 *Kingsley College's new location in Broadmeadows 2013*¹⁰⁶



Several members of the College Board resigned during the course of Cameron's four years as National Superintendent as management was systematically brought back under National Board control. During his term of leadership Cameron discontinued the Superintendents' Committee and prepared conference resolutions to replace the various national boards with national directors as a first step toward reducing the potential for overlaps between the boards. These changes were largely adopted by the delegates to the 2012 Conference.

¹⁰⁶ Photo courtesy of Lindsay Cameron.

Through the course of the quadrennium a number of new publications were released. The Handbook was published in 2008; the first widespread distribution of the Handbook since 1994.¹⁰⁷ A Pastor's Manual was released in 2008 containing rituals for pastoral ministry; a discipleship book, *A New Creation* (2009), a membership guide (2010) and a compilation of history works, *Pioneer with a Passion* (2011) were published.

In May 2009 Cameron brought a vision statement of "National Priorities" to the National Board, as shown as figure 11.12. These Priorities provided focus to the denomination as new growth began to occur. Numerous local churches contacted the national office to report the novel experience of systematic prayer and fasting.¹⁰⁸

Figure 11.12 *The National Priorities of 2009-2011*¹⁰⁹



REX RIGBY AS NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

The 2012 National Conference was held in the northern suburbs of Brisbane from January 15-19, 2012. At that Conference Cameron was replaced by Rev. Rex Rigby as National Superintendent. In 2015 Rigby was returned as National Superintendent and appointed as Regional President.

¹⁰⁷ The Handbook/Discipline had been released in digital form and in a ring-binder in 2005, but with the many changes to membership and denominational structures a widely distributed hardcopy was seen to be necessary.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Lindsay Cameron, February 8, 2016, 1:14:55.

¹⁰⁹ "Undivided Heart materials," 2009, L. Cameron records (Archives).

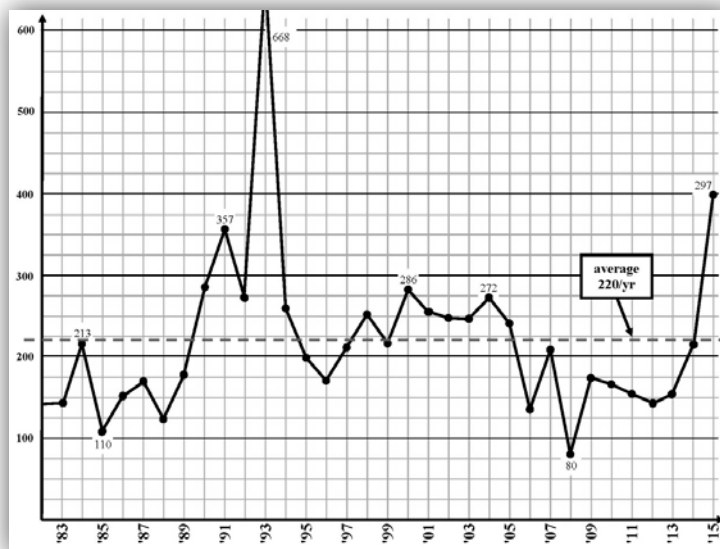
Figure 11.13 *Rex Rigby 2015*¹¹⁰



CONVERSION STATISTICS

During the period from 1983 to 2015 a number of devastating losses of local churches are recorded and some frail human attempts at leadership are exposed.¹¹¹ An overview is provided in appendices F-H. However, despite the losses and failures, a total of 7,249 persons are reported to have made a decision to accept Christ through the ministries of Wesleyan Methodist Churches in Australia during the thirty-three years.¹¹² Figure 11.14 reveals an average conversion rate 220 converts each year from 1983-2015.

Figure 11.14 *"Persons saved" 1983 to 2015*



¹¹⁰ Photo courtesy of National Office, used by permission.

¹¹¹ See chapter 12: 376.

¹¹² This calculation is based upon the statistical reports in the District Conference Journals. From time to time statistical reports were liable to revision, so variations of these figures might be found.

Among the striking results of the chart are the irregularities of 1993 and 2008. However, both of these reports seem to be accurate. In 1993 the pioneer fellowship at Terry Hills in New South Wales held twenty-two evangelistic rallies because of a visiting team from America, a visiting "Aussie Muppet Puppet Ministry" team, and a local outreach team. "Approximately 6000 people attended these rallies ranging from children in schools to the elderly in retirement villages."¹¹³ The Terry Hills congregation reported 312 decisions for Christ that year, resulting in double the usual annual result. The 2008 statistic seems unusually low, and indeed it is, but it seems to be accurate because the low rates are spread across all four districts that year. Furthermore, these statistical reports were not revised at any later date, as sometimes happens, which indicates this was not perceived to be a reporting failure in 2008. The unusual jump in numbers between 2014 and 2015 reflects excellent results in the South Queensland District, especially sixty-eight converts in Grace Community Church at Maryborough and forty-five at Axis congregation in the northern suburbs of Brisbane.

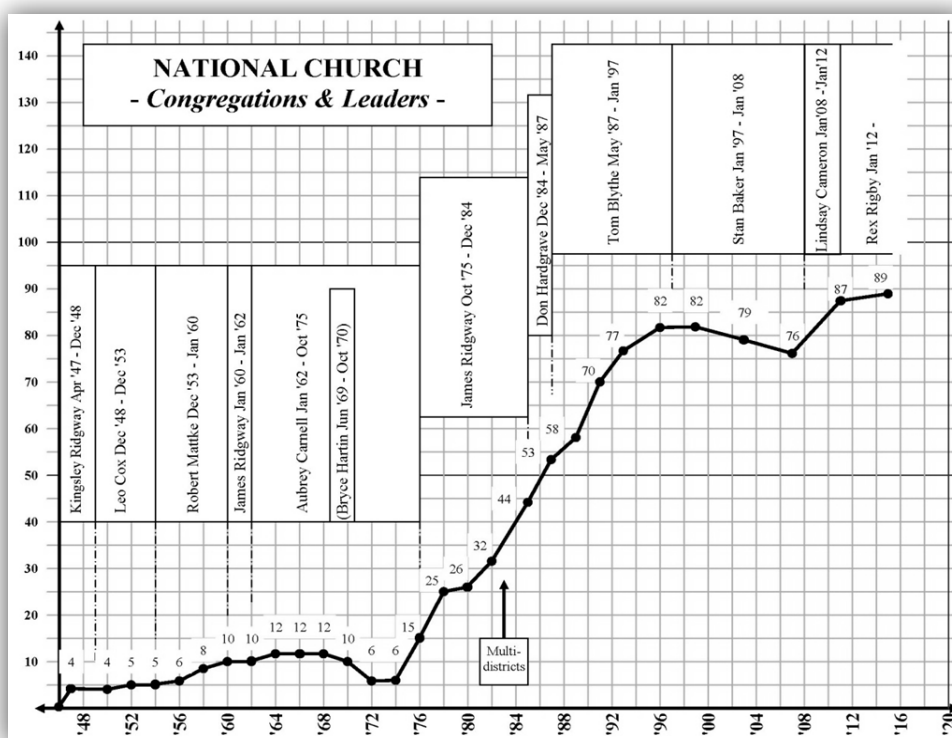
A 2010 publication by the Christian Research Association gives some context for this conversion result in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Researcher, Phillip Hughes, has calculated that an average conversion rate of one person/church/year is normal in Australia.¹¹⁴ The Wesleyan statistical report demonstrates that the Wesleyan Methodist Church was defying contemporary trends by consistently averaging 220 converts each year for thirty-three years from a group that only peaked at the end of that period with eighty-nine congregations - producing a result that ranges from three to seven times the national average.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church had been showing signs of slowing growth in the early 1990s, dipped into decline for almost two decades, and has returned to a growth pattern since 2008. Figure 11.15 illustrates the growth pattern of the denominations from 1947 to 2015, with corresponding national leadership.

¹¹³ "Terry Hills Pastors Report," 8th NSW District Conference Journal, October 5-6, 1993, 82 (Archives).

¹¹⁴ Phillip Hughes with Stephen Reid and Claire Pickering, *Shaping Australia's Spirituality: A Review of Christian Ministry in the Australian Context* (Preston, VIC: Mosaic, 2010), 48.

Figure 11.15 *Number of churches and national leaders 1946-2015*



WESLEY'S PRIORITIES DURING THIS PERIOD

One of the observations made by the former Principal of Kingsley College, Dr David Wilson, was that the strength of the Wesleyan Church was its capacity to hold the biblical gospel and holiness together with activism. However he explained that, "because of that it also became one of the frustrations that I had over my many years in the leadership of the Wesleyan Church, because I didn't see the reality of that in the church." David Wilson had come to the Wesleyan Methodist Church expecting to find Wesley's doctrine and discipline of social action, but instead Wilson had found a denomination too focused on purity of doctrine and not aware that "spreading scriptural holiness" included doing good in the community.¹¹⁵ Wilson attributed his eventual departure from the denomination to this disappointment. He saw that the Wesleyan Methodist Church was failing to fulfil Wesley's priority of community engagement.

¹¹⁵ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 1:19:20.

Despite this assessment, some local congregations have developed a greater ministry of community care in recent decades, such as the Street Ministry of Rev. Beryl Baker at the Banyule / Boronia Churches, the Sowers Ministry of the Pine Rivers Church in Brisbane, the Food Bank ministry of the Maryborough Church (QLD) and the refugee care showed by the Sunshine and Box Forest Churches in Melbourne. Nonetheless, these few remain exceptions in a denomination that has largely neglected a significant component of its Methodist heritage.¹¹⁶

Relinquishing the theological credentials of Kingsley College also demonstrates some drift away from Wesley's priorities in the 2000s. In 1951 Leo Cox had written:

We cannot train good Wesleyans in non-Wesleyan schools; nor can we train good holiness preachers in non-holiness colleges.... The real reason for this Bible College in Australia is not that there are many who at present want it, but that there are many who **need** it.[emphasis his]¹¹⁷

Despite this, from 2004 to 2008 the College Board and National Board members approved the closure of Kingsley College's accredited programs and adopted a strategy of placing Wesleyan ministerial students in non-Wesleyan institutions. The sale of the college property was not at the heart of this departure from past priorities; suggestions of relocating the college had abounded since the early 1970s, but to opt to send Wesleyan ministerial students to study at non-Wesleyan institutions was a radical reversal of previous sentiments. David Wilson stated that the greatest misjudgement by the leadership that succeeded himself was the relinquishing of the unique Wesleyan emphases.¹¹⁸ In a similar trend, the National Board has since chosen to discontinue the long-standing requirement for local churches to report the "number sanctified" in statistical records.¹¹⁹ These two actions, discontinuing the college and the reporting feature, suggest that Wesleyan Methodist leadership have surrendered some part of the historic commitment to Wesley's priority of the holiness doctrine.

¹¹⁶ This topic and some of these examples are covered in Lindsay Cameron, "A Word from the National Superintendent: Finding a Balance in Community Engagement," in *The Australian Wesleyan*, Issue 1, 2012 (Brisbane: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2012), 4-5.

¹¹⁷ K. Ridgway records, draft article by Cox, 1951 (Archives).

¹¹⁸ Interview, David Wilson, June 5, 2015, 1:10:35.

¹¹⁹ "Statistician's Report," 24th National Conference, September 2015, 75 (Archives).

The membership changes adopted by the denomination in 2004 were undergirded by the rhetoric that membership should be discipleship-based rather than rules-based.¹²⁰ The rules were accordingly removed, but since then almost nothing has been done to increase the discipleship base of the denomination. A booklet of twelve discipleship studies was published in 2009¹²¹ but since then very little has been produced or systematically promoted. John Wesley based church membership upon class meeting attendance and a testimony of conversion. Class meetings were the primary building block of small congregations that became large churches. Wesley's was the archetype accountability model. It could be argued that Kingsley Ridgway's vision for holiness teaching, Don Hardgrave's vision for church-planting, Tom Blythe's vision of evangelism, and the recent vision for discipleship-based membership are all fulfilled in the accountability model of Wesley's original class meetings.

During the period from 1983 to 2015 there are signs of significant decline in the commitment of Wesleyan Methodists to John Wesley's priorities of doctrine, spirit and discipline. The sacrificial spirit of earlier years has been softened by more comfortable church appointments, church-planting has slowed significantly and a sense of having arrived at a destination can be seen to have replaced the enormous sacrifice and urgency of earlier efforts to reach the community and grow the church. One local preacher in the South Queensland District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Neil Stocks stated that he saw that a change come over the denomination in the 1990s:

[In the beginning in Queensland, 1978] we were dependent. We didn't have a lot of finance to play with. We were dependent on God and we relied on the Holy Spirit. You just knew [the Holy Spirit] was there [in the conferences]. You just felt it. You just got carried away by God's presence and power..."¹²²

We were keen, we were up and ministering to the community, but I think after a while we got self-satisfied. We sort of sat back on our knees and a number of things happened... About ten years after we started... the emphasis had changed from starting churches to establishing churches. In that *establishment* we took our eyes off the goal."¹²³

¹²⁰ The WMC of Australia, *The Handbook 2012*, paragraph 130.

¹²¹ Lindsay Cameron, *A New Creation: 12 Studies for New Believers* (Brisbane: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2009).

¹²² Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:48:00.

¹²³ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:39:40.

Sometimes I think that we look at the cost and the manpower situation before we looked at the [need] and the call of God.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:43:25.

Section 4

WMC - 3RD CONVERGENT EVENT:

OUT OF OCEANIA

1979-2015

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 4

Chapters 12 to 14 include the development of islander congregations within the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia and they describe the expansion of Wesleyan Methodism to Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and New Zealand. This has resulted in the most extensive convergent event for British and American Methodism in the South Pacific. Conclusions from this section include:

1. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia is, for the first time, being drawn away from its American heritage and challenged to incorporate some influence of British Methodism.
2. The islander Methodists have retained some of Wesley's disciplines that the Australian Church had largely lost, including continued use of class meetings and circuit ministry. However, the Australian Church, with its American-holiness heritage has better retained John Wesley's doctrine of holiness, albeit with those particular emphases associated with American reforms.¹
3. The formation of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church provides a critical opportunity in which the Wesleyan Methodists might choose to reassert Wesley's priorities, if there is sufficient desire to return to John Wesley's Methodism, or they might continue to develop as a mainline denomination without the strong distinctives of the past.

¹ The changes to the holiness doctrine introduced through American camp meetings and social reform include a greater potential legalism, the emphasis on the altar call and the clergy-centred ministry. This subject provides scope for a thesis on its own.

Chapter 12

PACIFIC INFLUENCE 1979-2015

Two events occurred in the 1980s and 1990s that impacted the regional development of the church. The most significant was the commencement of Tongan, Fijian and Samoan congregations within the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church. These new leaders and their congregations introduced new energy and changed the ethnic makeup of the denomination irreversibly. The second event was the introduction of Area Directors into the structure of the North American Missions Department. This brought successive missionary leaders, Barry Ross, Wayne MacBeth, Jeff Fussner and John Connor to Australia to provide additional support and to facilitate the Australian missionary efforts.

ISLANDER CONGREGATIONS

Rev. Sione Faletau was a Tongan who migrated to Australia and was ordained in the Methodist Church. However, Faletau was uncomfortable with the transition to the Uniting Church, as were many of his Tongan friends. The President of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga at that time, Rev. Dr Mo'ungaloa, is reported to have "bitterly disagreed" with church union, but had no choice because arrangements had been approved by the previous leadership.² Mo'ungaloa advised Faletau to find an evangelical church rather than joining the Uniting Church because the Uniting Church theology was "a mixture of Arminian and Calvinistic theology and their baptism, 'water regeneration', Catholic."³

Over the Easter weekend in 1979 Faletau and his family were visiting a relative at Coffs Harbour in New South Wales. While there Faletau saw a mini bus parked at a house with the name Wesleyan Methodist Church painted on the side, so he visited

² Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:04:10

³ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, notes provided by Faletau with the interview.

the house and talked to the layman who drove the bus. Faletau then found the address of the Hills District Wesleyan Methodist Church in Sydney and visited there, meeting Rev. Roger Rounds. There was a pastors' meeting in progress in the church at the time of Faletau's visit, so Faletau was introduced and invited to share his reason for seeking the Wesleyans.⁴ Faletau's interest was welcomed by the Wesleyan leaders.

Relieved to find a denomination that was continuing Methodist, Faletau immediately began to start Tongan congregations. Initially he gathered his new congregations under the name of the United Tongan Church until they were formally received as Wesleyan Methodist Churches in 1983-1984.⁵ A part of his strategy to commence churches was translating bible study materials into Tongan language, which proved to be a great attraction to new members. First he commenced a congregation in his own neighbourhood at Fairfield in western Sydney by visiting homes and public bars until he had gathered a group of Tongans. The church was opened in August 1979.⁶ Early in 1980 Faletau started a second congregation in Fitzroy, Victoria when visiting family members in Melbourne. He left the congregation under the care of a cousin when he returned to Sydney and he returned every three months.

In 1981, while driving from Melbourne to Sydney, Faletau decided to detour via the rural town of Griffith in New South Wales to enquire what Tongans lived there. He met some Tongans at the shopping centre on Friday afternoon and was told that there were about twenty families with no church worshipping in the Tongan language. Faletau started meetings that same Sunday in a Baptist building with over forty Tongans attending. Within two weeks he had the Griffith congregation organised and had appointed lay preachers and office bearers. From Sydney he then visited Griffith once each month until he was satisfied that things were running smoothly.⁷

In 1982 Faletau started a congregation at Dee Why, in the northern suburbs of Sydney. This congregation soon became the largest of the Tongan congregations,

⁴ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:07:55.

⁵ National Executive Minutes, February 3-4, 1983 (Archives).

⁶ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:08:35.

⁷ Interview Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, handwritten notes accompanying the interview.

reaching a peak of approximately 150 people. An internal dispute led to the closure of the Dee Why Church in the late 1990s and the loss of many of the congregation to the denomination. In 1982 Faletau started his fifth congregation at Sunshine in Victoria, placing the congregation under the care of Mr Kelepi Lanivia. Faletau was the pastor to all five of these congregations at the same time; a circuit stretching 900 kilometres from Sydney to Melbourne and west to Griffith.⁸

The Tongan congregations were not listed in the denominational statistics until 1983 in New South Wales and 1989 in the Southern District as they became incorporated into the denominational structures. This period of transition is highlighted in May 1984 by Sione (John) Faletau's report to the National Board, at which time his ministerial credentials were accepted by the Wesleyan Methodist Church, he was appointed as the co-ordinator of Tongan ministries and he was authorised to represent the denomination to the Free Wesleyan Church in Tonga.⁹ In 1985 Faletau was assigned to pastor the Busby English-speaking congregation as well as his Tongan circuit,¹⁰ leading to the merger of the Liverpool Tongan and Busby congregations in 1989.¹¹

The structure of the Tongan work was ambiguous for more than a decade. Faletau's role amongst the Tongans was expanded to Co-ordinator of Ethnic Ministries in 1986,¹² although Faletau has admitted that he never had the time to extend his services to any other ethnic groups beyond the Tongan congregations.¹³ By 1990 the discussion had moved toward establishing a separate Tongan district and first steps toward that goal were taken by the establishment of a Tongan Advisory Council relating directly to the National Superintendent.¹⁴ Faletau suffered health problems in the early 1990s that hindered the further development of the Tongan ministry but by 1992 he had resumed his role and the Tongan Council was functioning well. From this time there is no further reference to Faletau having duties to ethnic congregations apart from the Tongans.¹⁵ By November 1992 the Tongans

⁸ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:11:10.

⁹ National Board Minutes, October 4-6, 1984 (Archives).

¹⁰ National Board Minutes, April 25-27, 1985 (Archives).

¹¹ National Board Minutes, November 15-17, 1989 (Archives).

¹² National Board Minutes, April 16-18, 1986 (Archives).

¹³ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:40:30.

¹⁴ National Board Minutes, November 15-16, 1989 and April 18-20, 1990 (Archives).

¹⁵ National Board Minutes, May 13-15, 1992 (Archives).

were recognising that the concept of a separate Tongan District was not advantageous, and that, "there could be some merit in bringing Tongan ministries into relationship with their respective districts similar to other ethnic works."¹⁶

The first student that Faletau directed to study at Kingsley College was Heamoni Iongi. As a young man Iongi had been dangerously ill from a spinal growth and eventually he had been sent to Australia for surgery at Manly Hospital with the prognosis that he would never walk again.¹⁷ However, despite the doctor's warnings, Iongi did regain his ability to walk after the surgery. He started studies at Kingsley College in 1985, pastored at Fitzroy during his training and then returned to Sydney to assist Faletau as his first trained assistant. After some time Iongi returned to serve in the Melbourne suburbs. Iongi was married and his wife, Ana, was ordained at the 2002 Southern District Conference. Heamoni and Ana are pictured as figure 12.1. Iongi died after a prolonged illness in August 2004. Ana continued as an integral part of the Wesleyan Methodist Church for almost a decade until transferring to a Free Wesleyan congregation in Melbourne to be closer to family.

Figure 12.1 *Revs. Ana and Heamoni Iongi 1996*¹⁸



Sione Faletau lived in Sydney, so the Victorian congregations in the 1980s were very far from his care. New energy came to the Victorian churches when Rev.

¹⁶ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 11-12, 1992 (Archives).

¹⁷ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:28:45

¹⁸ Kingsley College records (Archives).

Siosifa (Sifa) Lokotui migrated to Melbourne. Lokotui had trained and been ordained in the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, including post-graduate studies in Fiji, in Papua New Guinea¹⁹ and finally at BCV²⁰ in Victoria. While a student at BCV from 1989, Lokotui was attending the Uniting Church in Kew when he learned of the presence of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Sunshine. He went to hear Bill Foster preach in 1990 and "felt right at home" so decided to join the Wesleyans.²¹ Lokotui began the process of transferring his ministerial credentials to the Southern District immediately²² and at the 1991 District Conference he reported on the three congregations of Sunshine, Northcote (Fitzroy) and a new church at Dandenong.²³ That year Lokotui had been instrumental in commencing the Dandenong Tongan congregation with layman, Inoke Moala, amid opposition from the Uniting Church minister.²⁴ Inoke Moala entered into ministerial studies at Kingsley College and served as the pastor of the Dandenong congregation until 2015. Lokotui later commenced congregations at Altona, Robinvale, Redcliffe and Mildura, managing the congregations in circuit. In 1997 the Lokotui family moved from Dandenong to Mildura in Sunraysia, leaving the Dandenong congregation under Inoke's care and losing the Altona congregation.

Lokotui's connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria in the early 1990s caused some confusion for the national leadership, since they were used to relating to Faletau as the leader of the Tongan Council. The Southern District recognised Lokotui as the leader of the Melbourne Tongan churches while Faletau was recognised by the national leaders. In 1992 the National Superintendent reaffirmed the role of the Tongan Council and Faletau's leadership but soon after the Tongans themselves suggested moving away from the centralised Tongan model. By November 1992 Tom Blythe was negotiating a new model with both Faletau and Lokotui.²⁵

¹⁹ Christian Leaders Training College in the Western Highland Province of PNG.

²⁰ Bible College of Victoria.

²¹ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, June 6, 2015, 0:17:50.

²² "Tongan Churches Pastor's Report," 8th Southern District Conference, September 1990, 110 and 69 (Archives).

²³ These were the Sunshine and Fitzroy congregations commenced by Sione Faletau and the new congregation in Dandenong.

²⁴ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, June 6, 2015, 0:19:50.

²⁵ National Board Minutes, November 11-12, 1992 (Archives).

Late in 1993 Sione Faletau returned to Tonga for health reasons²⁶ and also because he wanted to trial his Tongan-language discipleship materials in Tonga.²⁷ At that time the National Tongan Council was disbanded, although the Southern and the New South Wales Districts continued similar structures within their districts. Faletau returned to Sydney in 2004 but the New South Wales district did not welcome him initially. It was not until the new District Superintendent, Richard Jackson, found records of Faletau's early ministry that he took the initiative of phoning Faletau and ensuring his welcome back into the Wesleyan ministry. Since then Faletau supported Rev. Lamatau Vaomotou in the Busby congregation while also exercising a wider influence across the Tongan community in the Sydney region. Rev. Sione Faletau finally succumbed to renal failure, dying in Sydney on August 15, 2016.

Sifa and Hulita Lokotui and their children moved to Auckland, New Zealand in 2002 to teach at Laidlaw College and to work amongst the Tongan churches under secondment from the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia.²⁸ Lokotui soon graduated with a doctorate of ministries degree from the Pacific College of Graduate Studies. However, in the first year of his New Zealand appointment Lokotui experienced conflict with some of the other Tongan leaders over the use of kava - Lokotui was a consistent opponent of the use of kava.²⁹ The New Zealand Tongan leadership refused to allow Lokotui to preach in any of their Tongan churches and withdrew students from his Laidlaw college classes.³⁰ Lokotui started his own congregations and soon rose to serve as Tongan leader when the previous Tongan leader left the New Zealand work.³¹ After eight years and a family tragedy the Lokotuis relocated to Brisbane, Australia in 2009 where they resumed local church and teaching ministry with regular visits to their Victorian connections.

²⁶ "Tongan Zone Report," 9th New South Wales District Conference, October 1994, 60 (Archives).

²⁷ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:47:30.

²⁸ The establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand is described later in this chapter, page 442.

²⁹ Kava is made from the root of a plant found in the Pacific. It is not alcoholic but has anaesthetic properties. Its use has strong cultural connections for the Pacific Islanders, but its dangers are strongly debated. The consumption of kava in all-night binges can be problematic to family and church life. The Wesleyan Methodist Church statement on kava can be found in: Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *Belonging: Membership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church* (Brisbane: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2010), 64.

³⁰ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 12-13, 2002 (Archives).

³¹ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, June 6, 2015, 0:36:20.

Since the 1980s the number of Tongan congregations has continued to increase in Victoria and New South Wales, and later in Queensland and Canberra, so they numbered eighteen in 2015. A smaller number of Samoan and Fijian congregations have also joined the denomination. The first Fijian congregation was part of the Rockhampton Church in Central Queensland from the early 1980s. Another Fijian congregation was formed in Coburg, Melbourne in 1999, with a third predominantly Fijian congregation formed as part of Faith Community Church in Caroline Springs a decade later. In 2001 a delegation from Fiji made contact with Stan Baker seeking an international partnership. The National Board approved a partnership with the Uniting Reformed Methodist Mission of Fiji, directing the Australian Missions Department to create a project to support the Fijian group and welcoming eight members from Fiji at the 2002 Pastors' Conference.³² Very little developed out of this good start though, so in 2004 a letter was directed to the main Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma through Rev. Tepola Raicebe's³³ connections seeking a fraternal relationship.³⁴ In 2006³⁵ and 2007³⁶ further efforts were made to connect with the Methodist Church in Fiji but to date no real progress has been made.

Several Samoan congregations have been formed in the Brisbane region since 1999 and in the Sydney region in 2015. As with Fiji, a meaningful connection with the Methodist Church of Samoa continues to elude the Australian or Regional Conferences. In 2015 a total of twenty-seven islander congregations existed in the Australian denomination. This constitutes thirty percent of Australian Wesleyan Methodist congregations. Of the 4,330 average number of persons attending Sunday morning worship for the whole denomination in 2015, 928 are from islander congregations, which is slightly higher than twenty-one percent of the national total. A chart illustrating the number of Pacific islander congregations in the Australian church is shown as figure 12.2.

A result of the increase of islander congregations in the Australian church is that it has masked the decline of effective ministry amongst the traditional Australian

³² National Board Minutes and "National Superintendent's Report," May 7-8, 2002 (Archives).

³³ Rev. Tepola Raicebe was minister of the Coburg Fijian congregation before reassignment to pastoral oversight of the Faith Community congregation. She and her husband, Iferemi, have continuing influence in Fiji because of Iferemi's chiefly status.

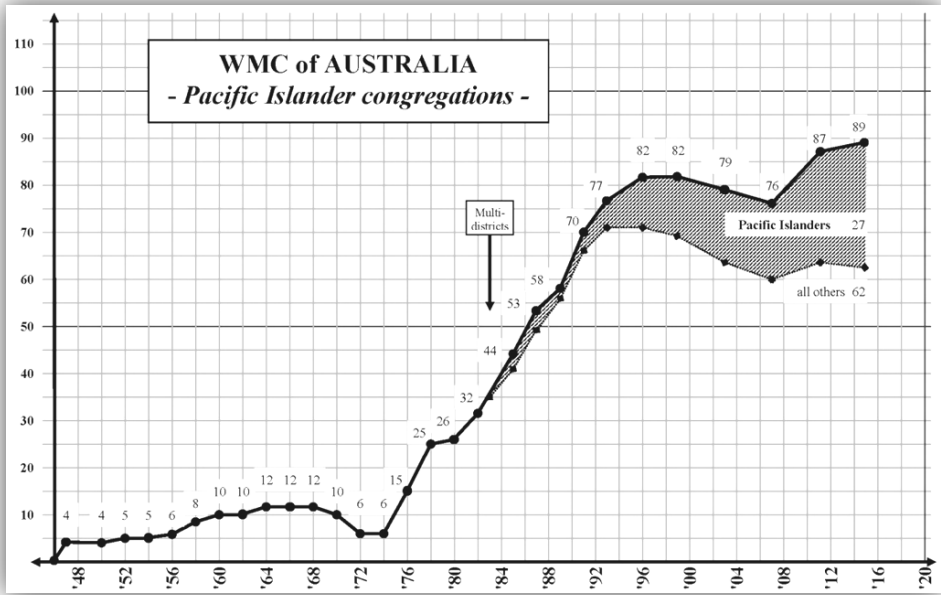
³⁴ National Board Minutes, May 3-4, 2004 (Archives).

³⁵ National Board Minutes, November 6-7, 2006 (Archives).

³⁶ National Board Minutes, May 7-8, 2007 (Archives).

community, as can be seen in the chart. A second observation that can be drawn from this chart is the possibility that the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia may continue along the current trend until it is comprised of a majority of islander congregations. In 2015 there were still very few Islanders participating on the district or national boards.

Figure 12.2 *Islander congregations in the WMC of Australia 1983-2015*³⁷



AREA DIRECTORS

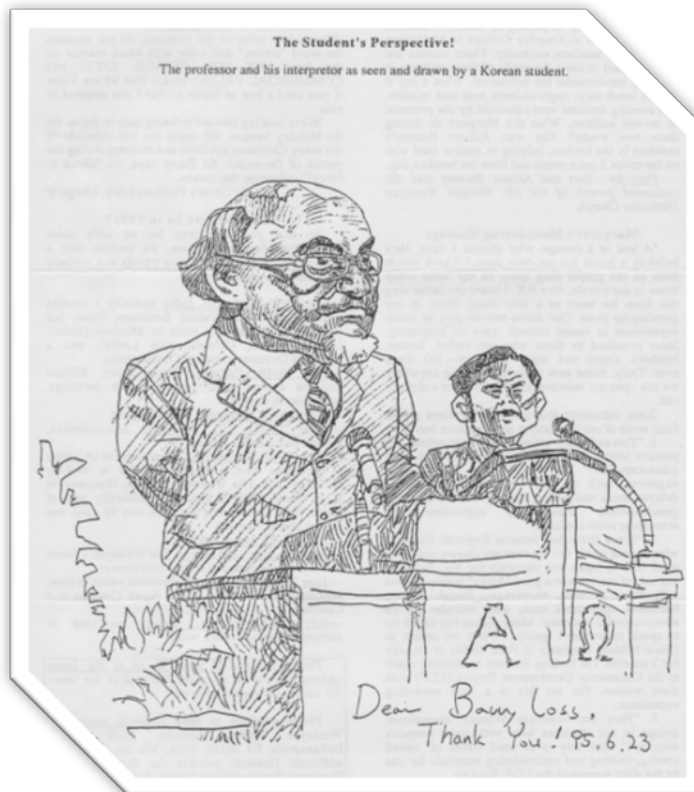
In 1992 Rev. Dr Donald Bray was elected as the General Director of Wesleyan World Missions in the American church. Since the Wesleyan Methodist of Australia was a mission field of the American church, this election gave Bray direct supervision of the Australian work. Bray had been a friend of the Australian church since the commencement of his missionary service in Papua New Guinea in 1968 and news of his election was warmly received in Australia. Bray's progressive leadership in Wesleyan World Missions, now rebranded as Global Partners, impacted several aspects of Australian ministry until his retirement in 2007.

One important change came about when Bray divided up his global responsibilities under a new structure of Area Directors. These six or seven international leaders each cared for a region of the world and met biannually with

³⁷ Data from "National Statistical Reports," National Conference Journals 1947-2015 (Archives).

Bray in Indianapolis. Australia's first encounter with this new structure was in the appointment of Rev. Dr Barry Ross to the Asia/Pacific Area. Barry and Margaret were career missionaries with many years of service in India and more recently in Japan. Ross's wisdom and teaching was greatly appreciated in the Australian church. He was especially influential in assisting Lindsay and Rosalea Cameron's secondment to the American church for missionary service in Africa and in negotiating the arrangements for the Bougainville mission field as it was drawn under the supervision of the American church. A caricature of Ross by one of his students is shown as figure 12.3.

Figure 12.3 Caricature of Barry Ross as sketched by one of his Korean students³⁸



After the conclusion of Ross's appointment, Barry and Margaret returned to Indiana in the United States from where they continued to provide educational and practical assistance to various mission fields through annual expeditions. Barry maintained a career as a college professor but Margaret died on August 1, 2015.

When Ross completed his service as Area Director his responsibilities for Asia and the Pacific were separated to create two portfolios. Wayne MacBeth was

³⁸ "Area Directors," 1996, T. Blythe records (Archives).

appointed as Area Director for the Pacific and came to reside at Kingsley College in Melbourne in 1997. Wayne and Bonnie had served at Kingsley College earlier in the 1990s and had then returned to America to serve with Wesleyan World Missions. In 1997 they crossed paths with Lindsay and Rosalea as the Camerons travelled via Indianapolis to Africa and the MacBETHs travelled via Indianapolis to their new assignment in Australia. MacBeth was heavily involved in the development of Kingsley College, in guiding the Australian church during its expanding role in the South Pacific and in international promotion and fund-raising for several high-profile church-planting projects in Australia. In 2000 Lindsay Cameron was appointed as Africa Area Director and joined MacBeth at Area Director's Consultations (ADC) in Indianapolis, after which MacBeth completed his service as Area Director and took up a ministry at the Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church in Western New York, and later with Houghton College and World Hope International. The MacBETHs left many good friends in Australia when they returned to America and the sense of loss was increased when news came that Bonnie was terminally ill. Bonnie was taken from her young family on February 6, 2012.

Jeff Fussner succeeded Wayne MacBeth as Pacific Area Director. Jeff and Beth located in Auckland, assisting the New Zealand church as the new group there joined into Wesleyan Church life. Jeff worked with the Australian Church in negotiating the membership changes and facilitated the mission efforts in the Solomon Islands (under Australia) and in Bougainville (under America). When Jeff and Beth returned to America for pastoral ministries in 2009, John Connor was assigned the role of Pacific Area Director and assisted in the final stages of the Regional Conference application.

OBSERVATIONS FROM REGIONAL GROWTH

Two considerations are included here relating to church-planting and the increased presence of South Pacific Islanders since 1980.

Church-planting models. Several models of church-planting were used in the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. The first was particularly evident in earlier years when individuals with little or no denominational funding would establish a congregation in a new locality through persistence, slowly building

toward numeric viability and economic sustainability. Methods of reaching into the community included tent evangelism, advertising flyers, preaching campaigns and children's ministry. This model rendered the pioneer pastoral families isolated, exhausted and often disillusioned.

From the mid-1970s another model became prominent, that of an individual who started multiple churches, usually in rapid succession. This model worked because of the fallout from the formation of the Uniting Church. Scattered groups who were already trained in Methodism were willing to form a small congregation quite rapidly and then continue under various modes of pastoral oversight. For the purposes of this thesis, this model is labelled the "start-small" model. Don Hardgrave and James Ridgway followed this model and then usually sourced pastoral supply from outside of the local community. The imported pastors were shuffled around from church to church, town to town, in an attempt to cover the growing number of congregations. Often those pastors experienced exhaustion after years of service that parallel the church-planters of the earlier decades. Many of these pastors left the denomination after years of sacrificial service.

The ministries of Sione Faletau and Sifa Lokotui illustrate a slight variation on the start-small model. The Tongans, Fijians, Samoans and other Islanders appealed to the Islanders in a community, drawing upon their cultural commitment to public worship and their desire for worship in their own language. They too were tapping into an existing group of ex-Methodists. However, unlike the Australians, the Islanders showed less dependence upon the presence of a resident minister. At least initially, an islander congregation could be maintained by lay leadership with sporadic visits from the minister. In time ministers were trained and the islander congregations expected their own pastor as much as the Australian congregations did. However, in the early stages the Islanders followed Wesley's early model by use of lay leadership and class meetings as the key to church-planting and economic sustainability.

In the 1990s a new "start-big" model of church-planting was introduced. It involved American money, a ministry team and an attempt to burst onto the scene with an impressive initial congregation. Examples cited include Riverside (Brisbane), Crossroads (Sydney), Village (Adelaide) and Lifegate (south of Cairns). The Cairns

church-plant was a hybrid, commencing as a start-small congregation and then boosted by American funding. After twenty years only one of the start-big churches still exists: Riverside (Axis). In 2015 the Axis Church is flourishing and the largest Wesleyan Methodist congregation in Australia.

An examination of the survival of churches planted on ex-Methodists (start-small and islander model) reveals a remarkably better survival rate than the start-big church-plants. Don Hardgrave was personally involved in the planting of twenty-seven congregations between 1974 and 1996. Of those, nineteen were still operating after twenty years, a survival rate of 70%. A key difference between the two models is that the start-big model was primarily seeking to reach unchurched people while the ex-Methodist model was drawing upon an existing loyalty, at least initially. Nonetheless, the extraordinary success rate of the start-small model is evident. It can be noted, when comparing these models to John Wesley's model, that Wesley's field preaching did result in an element of the start-big model; that is in substantial initial congregations. However, the management of those early congregations was almost always managed through the activation of lay leaders and itinerant clergy.

Islander ministry. Clearly the islander immigrant community is attracted to Methodism but there has been some resistance to joining the Wesleyan Methodist Church because it is not seen as the continuation of the original British Methodism known in the islands. Speaking on behalf of the Tongan believers, Sifa Lokotui asserted that the Islanders know that Methodism "has died out"³⁹ in Australia because of the 1977 church union. The Wesleyan Methodist Church is perceived to be a new, American form of Methodism, not the old British form that Tongans have known:

We as Islanders think the Methodism at the moment in Australia has an American root. But the Methodism in the islands and also in New Zealand has a British root. There's a difference there [that is] the way they worship and the way they communicate the gospel. For example, there are no class meetings in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, but going back to our root there was. Class meetings are still kept in the islands and also in New Zealand. Why doesn't Wesleyan Methodism have class meetings, if they call themselves Methodist?⁴⁰

³⁹ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, June 6, 2015, 0:54:05.

⁴⁰ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, June 6, 2015, 0:54:45.

Both Sione Faletau and Sifa Lokotui made extensive use of class meetings and circuits in their own church-planting, while Australian congregations throughout the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church have relied upon residential pastoral supply. In contrast to Lokotui's statements however, Sione Faletau states that the Wesleyan Methodist Church is closer to Tongan Methodism than either of the Uniting Church or the New Zealand Methodist Church. His reason is because the Wesleyan Methodists and the Tongans "hold the same theological views," while both differ from the Uniting Church and the New Zealand Methodists in the "holiness doctrine".⁴¹ Therefore, while Lokotui perceives that the Wesleyan Methodist Church has drifted away from traditional Wesleyan methodology, Faletau concludes that the Wesleyan Methodists have retained traditional Wesleyan doctrines. Both of these conclusions are consistent with the evaluations presented in earlier chapters in this thesis: the Wesleyan Methodists have retained John Wesley's doctrine and spirit, but have lost much of his discipline.⁴²

From 1995 the Wesleyan network in the South Pacific entered a new phase of mission expansion. Groups of former Methodists sought out the Wesleyan Methodist Church to form partnerships in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and New Zealand. The timing of these separate groups initiating contact with the Australian church almost simultaneously is rather extraordinary. The role that Rev. Dr Allen Hall played in facilitating these introductions stands out as one of the key factors in the commencement of a Wesleyan Methodist network in the South Pacific.

⁴¹ Interview Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, handwritten notes accompanying the interview.

⁴² See "Wesley's Priorities," 242, 279, 311, 352, 400.

Chapter 13

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1995-2015

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

In 1947 Rev. Allen Hall (1918-2004) was appointed by the New Zealand Methodist Church as Vice Principal and later as Principal of the Methodist College at Munda on New Georgia Island. In subsequent years Hall and his family returned to New Zealand and then relocated to Australia for further studies, gaining his M.A. and Ph.D. in Brisbane.¹ He was still living at St Lucia in Brisbane when some of his former Solomon Islands and Bougainville students sought him out in search of a traditional Methodist church.

From the 1950s the three Methodist Districts of the Solomon Islands (including Bougainville), Milne Bay and the New Guinea Islands began cooperating in the mission to the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.² In 1966 they were then authorised to restructure themselves separate from Australia and New Zealand as the Methodist Church of Melanesia. However, this merger was delayed in favour of the larger merger with the Papua Ekalesia to form the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands in 1968.³ (The Papua Ekalesia was itself the product of the merger of the former LMS churches, a Presbyterian mission and some smaller groups in 1962.) The United Church merger was largely accepted in Papua New Guinea but it was not welcomed by many in the Solomon Islands because there were no Ekalesia/Congregationalists to merge with there, so the loss of their Methodist name seemed without any real purpose. In the isolation of the Western Solomon Islands many simply ignored the merger and continued to worship as Methodists. Richard

¹ Correspondence from Hall to Edgar Hornblow, August 15, 1991, T. Blythe records (Archives).

² See chapter 5: 169.

³ Ronald G. Williams, *The United Church in Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands* (Rabaul, PNG: Trinity, 1972), 8.

Murray, one of those who would eventually participate in founding the Wesleyan Methodist Church, was one who continued as a Methodist in his home for twenty years, disregarding the United Church rebranding.⁴

Meanwhile other Islanders mounted a campaign to have the name "Methodist" reinstated in the Solomon Islands. Lawry Wickham, great-grandson of Frank Wickham was working for the Methodist Church in Munda at the time of the United Church merger. Prior to 1968 he unsuccessfully appealed to Rev. George Carter, the Chairman of Solomon Islands Methodist District, to ask that the merger not proceed. Following the merger, he presented a paper to the Solomon Islands Conference of the United Church appealing for a return to Methodism. When this achieved nothing he submitted his paper directly to Rev. Lesley Boseto, the United Church Bishop of the Solomon Islands Region. Boseto campaigned for the separation of the Solomon Islands United Church from the Papua New Guinean United Church, which was effected in 1996, but they did not return to the use of the name Methodist.⁵

While Lawry was pursuing this avenue of appeal, a United Church minister, Rev. Robertson Bato,⁶ began meeting with several other influential ex-Methodists in Munda to organise a new Methodist Church separate from the United Church. The leaders of Bato's group included Faletau Levi, Hena Zio, Donald Maipio and Rose Williams.⁷ In 1994 one of the members, Hine Woods (sister to Hena Zio) was attending the Hervey Bay Wesleyan Methodist Church in Queensland when she had opportunity to speak to Dr Barry Ross about affiliation with the international church.⁸ Later that same year Allen Hall wrote to the break-away group and other friends still in the United Church to ask about the new group.⁹

Early in 1996 the group wrote back to Allen Hall to appeal for assistance in finding a continuing Methodist church.¹⁰ Allen advised them of the existence of the

⁴ Interview, R. Solomon Soto, October 5, 2015, 0:34:30.

⁵ Interview, Lawry Wickham, October 5, 2015, 0:02:00.

⁶ Robertson Bato died in 2015. He was a half-brother of Lawry Wickham.

⁷ Interview, Lawry Wickham, October 5, 2015, 0:10:10.

⁸ Report to the National Superintendent on the Solomon Islands, August 1996, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

⁹ Correspondence from Hall to Blythe, November 6, 1994, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

¹⁰ Two reasons were given for why they chose to contact Allen Hall rather than some other ex-Methodist: because he was teaching at Queensland University where Solomon Islands students had maintained contact, and because he spoke Roviana so they were confident to speak to him.

Wesleyan Methodist Church and visited Munda himself to encourage the new group. Frank Midavaine, the Australian Mission Director of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, visited the Solomon Islands in August 1996, participating at meetings on Kiaba Island near Munda and visiting other interested parties at the town of Gizo on Ghizo Island.¹¹

Other ex-Methodists in the neighbouring islands heard of this reformation of Methodism at Munda and began to take interest. Richard Murray paddled his dugout canoe eighty kilometres from Ranongga Island to enquire about the church and several in Gizo also expressed interest.¹² However, despite broad interest, by 1997 the Munda group had not established any work beyond their own community. Therefore Lawry Wickham and Lamech Qae called together a revised group in Gizo to establish broader representation. Lawry registered a new Board of Trustees for the Wesleyan Methodist Church of the Solomon Islands, consisting of Robertson Bato for New Georgia, Lamech Qae for Choiseul, Thornley Hite for Ranongga and Nusa Simbo, Casper Piraka for Vella Lavella, and John Mariasi for Shortland and Mono Islands.¹³

In 1997 Frank Midavaine concluded his service as Mission Director in the Australian church and transitioned to his appointment as missionary to Bougainville with direction to assist the Solomon Islands where possible. In this revised capacity Midavaine visited the Solomon Islands in September 1997, finding a considerably broader emphasis through the renewed Board of Trustees. He ventured beyond Munda, travelling extensively through the islands of Ghizo and Vella Lavella. At Maravari, a prominent village on Vella Lavella, a large number of members withdrew from the United Church to join the Wesleyan Methodists, including the Paramount Chief, Remu.¹⁴ The outcome of this influx on Vella Lavella was that the island became the largest concentration of Wesleyan Methodist membership and was the site of the first National Conference in 1998. Midavaine reported favourably on the structural changes and the increased interest in the Solomon Islands, so the new Mission Director in Australia, Rev. Dallas Thomas, sought National Board approval

¹¹ Report to the National Board on the Solomon Islands, September 1996, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

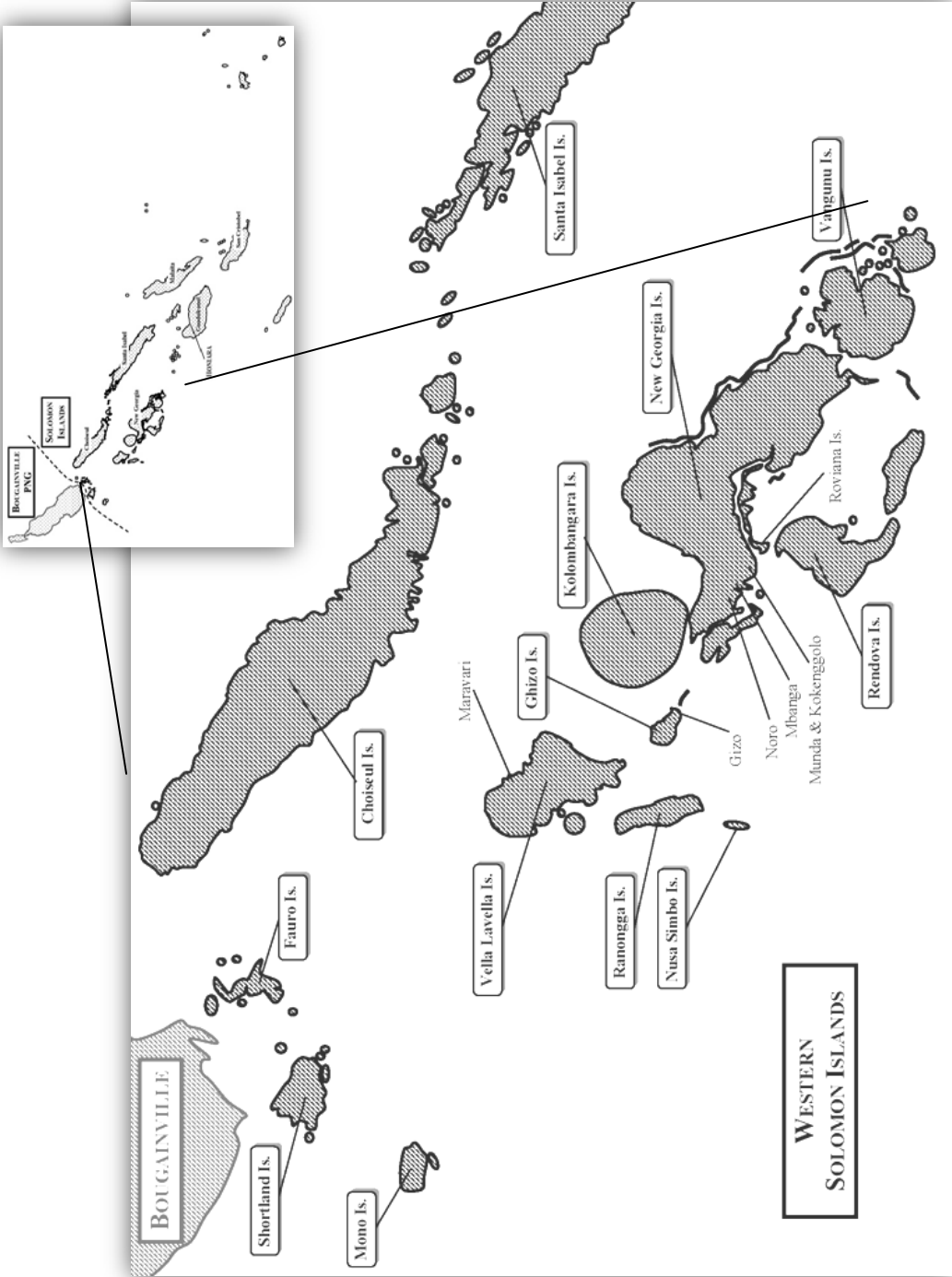
¹² Interview, Hall Malasa, October 2, 2015, 0:31:10.

¹³ Interview, Lawry Wickham, October 5, 2015, 0:12:20.

¹⁴ Interview, Lawry Wickham, October 5, 2015, 17:00 - 19:45.

for the Solomon Islands to be formally approved as an Australian mission field. This approval was granted at the November 1997 National Board meeting.¹⁵ See figure 13.1 for significant locations.

Figure 13.1 Map of Western Solomon Islands with Wesleyan Methodist sites



¹⁵ National Board Minutes, November 12, 1997, item 12.3.6&7 (Archives).

In 1998 Stan and Coral Baker,¹⁶ Frank and Ruth Midavaine and Kevin and Judy Ballin visited the new work in the Solomon Islands, with Baker chairing the first National Conference at Maravari on October 12-13. The first National Board, elected at the 1998 conference, included Robertson Bato (Superintendent), Lawry Wickham, Lamech Qae, Richard Murray, Donald Maipio, Grenville Sariki and John Soruevo.¹⁷

Figure 13.2 *Hall Malasa 2010*¹⁸



Robertson Bato, whose ordination credentials were transferred in from the United Church, was the only ordained minister and therefore the only person properly eligible for election to National Superintendent in 1998. At the 2002 Conference, which was the centenary of the arrival of Methodism in the Solomon Islands, Hena Zio was the first minister to be ordained within the Wesleyan Methodist Church of the Solomon Islands. This provided a second nomination to the role of National Superintendent and at the 2003 Conference Zio replaced Bato as National Superintendent. Zio served one two-year term, with Hall Malasa succeeding him as National Superintendent in 2005. Rev. Malasa is pictured as figure 13.2. Malasa had been away studying at the new Bible College in Bougainville and was not present for the superintendency vote. Furthermore, since Malasa was not yet ordained, special permission had to be granted to the Conference for this election.

¹⁶ Rev. Stan Baker was the new Australian National Superintendent, elected in January 1997.

¹⁷ Interview, Moses Kororo, October 2, 2015, 0:49:40.

¹⁸ Photograph appeared in *The Australian Wesleyan* magazine: *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia*, *The Australian Wesleyan*, issue 1, 2012, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Brisbane: The Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2012), 19.

Hall Malasa arrived late to the Conference and remembers his shock when, "They sent Stan Baker to come to the beach and say 'Good morning National Superintendent.'"¹⁹ Malasa served four terms until 2013, at which time he was succeeded by Rev. George Velopide.

Figure 13.3 *George Velopide 2015*²⁰



Revs. Ray and Gwen Akers served the Solomon Islands from 1998 providing support to the national leadership and an extensive program of ministerial training in villages across the islands. Furthermore, in this initial work, several of the early church leaders came to their first real experience of saving faith under Ray and Gwen's ministry of preaching and evangelism.²¹ In 2008 the Akers retired from the ministry to the Solomon Islands and were succeeded by Rev. Kay Fulcher. Fulcher, like the Akers, travelled from her base in Queensland to the Solomon Islands for extensive circuits of pastoral training, teaching large groups of villagers and ministerial students through Pidgin English. Fulcher retired in 2013, to be succeeded by Rev. David Collins.

¹⁹ Interview, Hall Malasa, October 2, 2015, 57:30 - 58:45.

²⁰ Photograph courtesy of David Collins, used by permission.

²¹ Personal communication from Rev. Hall Malasa and Pastor Watson given at the Vancouver Church, Ghizo Island, October 4, 2015, used by permission.

Figure 13.4 *Kay Fulcher taking discipleship booklets to the Solomon Islands 2009*²²



By 2015 land had been purchased and title secured for a Bible College at Noro, on New Georgia Island, and the construction of the first few buildings had been undertaken. With the death of Rev. Robertson Bato in 2015, there remained eight ordained ministers,²³ three commissioned ministers and twenty-three licensed ministers, with another twenty-seven ministerial students serving forty-three local churches and more than 2,000 members.²⁴

BOUGAINVILLE & BUKA

The region commonly identified as Bougainville includes the islands of Bougainville and Buka, and is politically part of the nation of Papua New Guinea. However, although the Solomon Islands and Bougainville are separated by a political boundary, they are close to each other geographically and historically. Bougainville and the Solomon Islands were grouped together in early Methodism and were

²² Photograph courtesy of Lindsay Cameron. Six Hundred copies of *A New Creation* were donated by Brisbane churches to the work in the Solomon Islands. See Lindsay Cameron *A New Creation: 12 Studies for New Believers* (Brisbane: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2009).

²³ Interview, Hall Malasa, Solomon Soto and Moses Kororo, October 2, 2015, 1:00:50.

²⁴ Correspondence from David Collins, October 11, 2015, L. Cameron records (Archives).

incorporated into the United Church together. Rev. Frank Midavaine made three visits to the Solomon Islands to facilitate their union with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. He subsequently served as a missionary to Bougainville for ten years, further cementing the neighbourhood bond under the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Midavaine was consistently informed that local people were concerned by the loss of Methodism. Midavaine stated, "The Bougainvilleans and Solomon Islanders were very confused as to why they were now being named as the United Church with no Methodism in it... The name 'Methodist' was very important to them."²⁵

Unlike the Solomon Islanders though, the cause of the break from the United Church in Bougainville was the early introduction of "charismatic" practices. Nashon Nosuri (see figure 13.7) has stated that the members who still remembered Methodism knew that they were "losing something that our early missionaries taught us, so we don't like to join the United Church any longer."²⁶

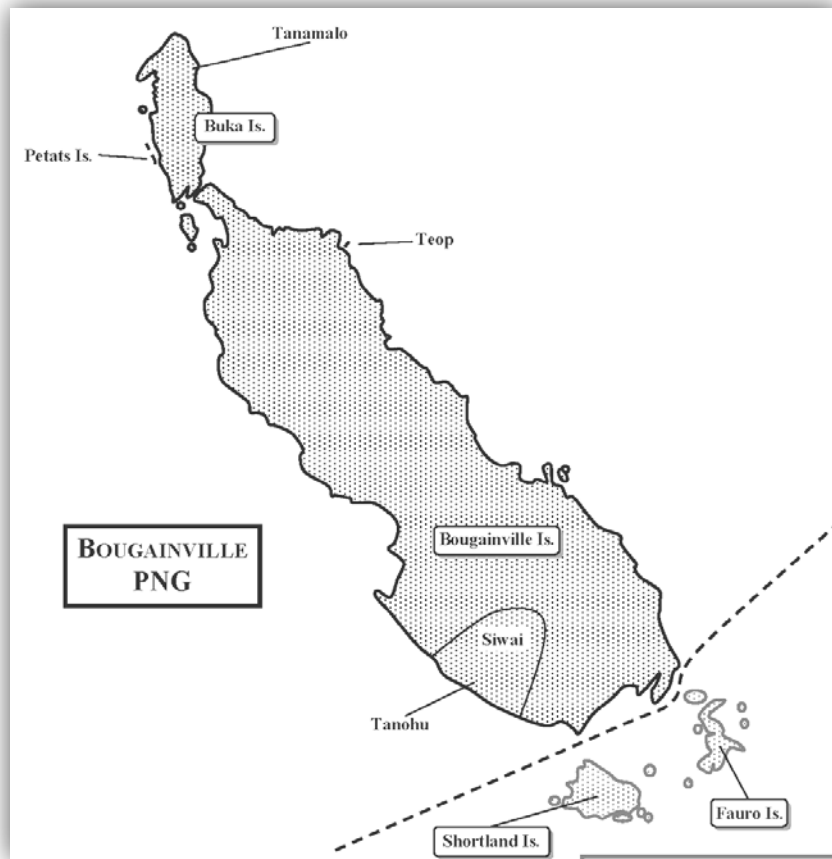
The first group to return to Methodism was in southern Bougainville, in the region of Siwai. In 1984 a number of lay preachers separated themselves for the purpose of forming the "old Methodist Church", establishing their base at Tanohu. Nashon Nosuri was an unordained pastor of the United Church and a former Methodist who played a leading part in founding the new group. The first few years of this break-away were relatively undisturbed, with even the United Church Bishop sympathetic to their cause and "encouraged them to be strong."²⁷ A map of Bougainville and Buka is included as figure 13.5.

²⁵ Interview, Frank Midavaine, February 21, 2015, 0:25:30.

²⁶ Interview, Nashon Nosuri, November 9, 2013, 0:09:45.

²⁷ Interview, Nashon Nosuri, November 9, 2013, 0:10:50.

Figure 13.5 Map of Bougainville and Buka Islands with Wesleyan Methodist sites



The second group, on Buka Island in the north, had broken away from the United Church in 1985 because the United Church "went charismatic". Isaac Karoan, the Bougainvillean National Secretary in 2015, was one of the lay preachers in Buka who took a leading role in the northern group. Unlike the southern leaders, Isaac had not previously been a Methodist himself. Nonetheless, there were older people who remembered the Methodist missionaries and regretted the loss of "holiness".²⁸ Both the Siwai group and the Buka group identified the error of the United Church as "charismatic" behaviour,²⁹ although the behaviour described by them is not what is typically meant by the term in Australia today.³⁰ Isaac Karoan described meetings where "indecent worshipping" happened; that is, while the congregation was in

²⁸ Interview, Isaac Karoan, November 9, 2013, 0:17:30.

²⁹ Report from Walter Hotchkin of meeting with Lempo, November 21, 1994, 3, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

³⁰ Charismatic would normally refer to Christians in an established non-Pentecostal denomination who have individual Pentecostal worship experiences. The Charismatic Movement is often styled as a renewal movement in an older denominations.

prayer, the lights would be turned off and there followed a "testing of faith" in which the women would touch the men in the darkness and the response of the men would show how strong their faith was. The second example given by Isaac was when a preacher would pass his spiritual gift to the congregation through a handkerchief thrown into the crowd, at which time everyone would fall down in the dust.³¹ Isaac Karoan spoke of other examples of the loss of holiness including teenage girls becoming pregnant at church camps, open immorality proliferating among adults, and in general that "things go out of order... so we were confused how we can worship our holy God."³² A number of congregations broke away in Buka and simply began to worship as independent churches. Ironically, it was the United Church people who noted their disciplined behaviour and labelled them as "Methodists". By 1986 they numbered around four hundred members.³³

Another former United Church pastor who was active in the Siwai group was Joel Lempo Toworai. Joel had served and trained with the United Church, including five years in New Britain from 1980. In 1986 he travelled to Buka Island where he alerted the Buka group to the existence of the Siwai group, although it is reported that Joel himself only joined the Methodists in Siwai in 1987.³⁴

The process of reconstituting Methodism was brutally interrupted by the outbreak of civil war in Bougainville from 1988. Nashon Nosuri from Siwai was imprisoned for two years by the rebels until his release in 1993.³⁵ Upon his release Nashon was quickly recruited back into the ministry. That year the Siwai and Buka groups together agreed to send Joel Towarai to Australia to seek a Methodist church with whom they could affiliate. Joel's entry point into Australia in 1993 was the far-northern city of Cairns in which Lindsay and Rosalea Cameron had just arrived as church-planters. Joel met with the Camerons and was directed to denominational leaders in the south. However, Joel did not move quickly to connect with the Wesleyan Methodist leaders since he had a second, undisclosed priority for his

³¹ Interview, Isaac Karoan, November 9, 2013, 0:29:20.

³² Interview, Nashon Nosuri, November 9, 2013, 0:32:35.

³³ Interview, Isaac Karoan, November 9, 2013, 0:20:05.

³⁴ Report from Walter Hotchkin of meeting with Towarai, November 21, 1994, 2, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

³⁵ Interview, Nashon Nosuri, November 9, 2013, 0:11:30.

Australian trip - he planned to study at the Bible College of Queensland.³⁶ He began classes in Brisbane but fell sick with tuberculosis (contracted in Port Moresby during his travel to Australia) and so it was not until 1994 that he encountered Dr Allen Hall. Joel had been a child at Goldie College in the Solomon Islands with his parents during Allen and Jo's time of missionary service.³⁷ Through this friendship with the Halls, Joel was introduced to the National Superintendent, Tom Blythe, and began attending the Western Suburbs Wesleyan Methodist Church under Pastor Alan Brown. In February 1995 Tom Blythe called a meeting with Joel Towarai and Frank Midavaine³⁸ to discuss a way forward. At that meeting plans were made to attend the conference of the combined Bougainville Methodists in June.³⁹

Frank and Ruth Midavaine, accompanied by Alan Brown of the Australian church and Rev. James Keilholtz of the Wesleyan Mission in Papua New Guinea, visited Bougainville from June 23 to July 6, 1995. They stopped in Buka and then, flying over the war-torn central regions of Bougainville, visited Siwai in the south. After discussion and reviewing the Wesleyan Methodist Church's constitution, the Bougainvilleans accepted that the Wesleyans provided the affiliation that they needed.⁴⁰ At that time, in 1995, the two groups reported 900 members in six congregations in the Siwai circuit and 531 members in three congregations in the West Buka circuit.⁴¹

Frank and Ruth Midavaine began regular visits to Bougainville from 1995. They taught the pastors and planned for a Bible College with the assistance of numerous visitors, including Dr Barry Ross (Asia/Pacific Area Director), American missionaries Jonathan Case, Randy Freeman and Steve Eccles, Australians Glen O'Brien, Rob Simpson, Ray and Gwen Akers, Brian and Bev Brown, Kevin Brown and others. On their second visit in 1996 they were introduced to another group

³⁶ Interview, Isaac Karoan, November 9, 2013, 0:25:10.

³⁷ Report from Allen Hall, November 11, 1994, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

³⁸ Frank Midavaine was the Australian Director of World Missions at that time, and not yet assigned as a missionary to Bougainville.

³⁹ Correspondence from Blythe to Towarai, March 6, 1995, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

⁴⁰ Interview, Nashon Nosuri, November 9, 2013, 0:26:55.

⁴¹ Report from Dudley Matuan, Bougainville/Buka Secretary, July 6, 1995, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

seeking traditional Methodism at Teop, on the eastern coast of Bougainville, immediately south of Cape L'Averdy.⁴²

On October 10, 1997 the Burnham Truce was signed, bringing an immediate cessation of hostilities and disarmament in Bougainville. The document copied below was the last Movement Order issued by the Papua New Guinean Defence Force in Bougainville before the Treaty was signed. The cessation of hostilities was fortunate for Frank and Ruth Midavaine, Ray and Gwen Akers, Dudley Matuan, Luke Pauru, Janice Karoan and Levi Petau who were travelling by boat to Petats under this government order (see figure 13.6). On their return boat trip they ran out of fuel and were stranded on an isolated beach, infested by sandflies and crocodiles, which had been controlled by armed rebels just two weeks earlier.⁴³

Figure 13.6 PNG Movement Order issued to Wesleyan Methodist team 1997⁴⁴

LAST MOVEMENT ORDER ISSUED UNDER BURNHAM TRUCE - OCT 1997

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE
LT 17
Revised 1977

MOVEMENT REQUISITION FOR MEMBER'S ON DUTY/LEAVE OR INDULGENCE TRAVEL

NOTES: Three copies to be submitted to the appropriate authority to be processed prior to earliest request dates of travel with all authorization completed.

REV FRANK MIDAVAINÉ - PETATS IS

Rev Agency Use on Charge Code

FAMILY/PARTY DETAILS

Relationship	Age	Name	Relation	Age
REV RUTH MIDAVAINÉ		JANICE KAROAN		
REV RAY ACKERS		LEVI PETAU	MOTOR DRIVER	
REV GWEN ACKERS				
PASTOR DUDLEY MATUAN				
PASTOR LUKE PAURU				

DETAILS OF TRAVEL

From	Earliest Date/Time available for Dep.	Destination Point (to)	Type of Transport Required
BEKUA	O/D	SINAI	OUTBOARD MOTOR
BEKUA	O/D	BUNKA	OUTBOARD MOTOR
BEKUA			
BEKUA			

Reason for movement - (to include School/Courses/Leave/Indulgence etc.)

TRAVELLING TO SINAI BEACH ON ISLAND REHABILITATION

FROM 08 OCT TO 18 OCT 97 PETATS FROM 18 TO 23 OCT 97

Authority for movement (to include pending Instns/TRA or TRGP Sig Instruction)

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR THE MEMBERS TO TRAVEL 33E

07 OCT 97

(Date)

(Sig of LCC/Offr Head) (Print Name) (Rank)

Approved/Not Approved

Chief of Staff

PTC T. FANAIKI LT COL

DATE OF TRAVEL APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

⁴² Interview, Frank Midavaine, February 21, 2015, 0:32:30.

⁴³ Interview, Frank Midavaine, subsequent email, February 27, 2015.

⁴⁴ Frank Midavaine records (Archives).

From Midavaine's early contact with the Bougainvilleans there had been three obvious options for church affiliation with the Wesleyans. The first was that they become a district of the Papua New Guinean Wesleyan Church, the second was that they become a mission field of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church and the third was that they become a mission field of the American Wesleyan Church. Both the Papua New Guinean and the Australian leadership expressed concern that they could not sustain such an ambitious new project, so the Bougainvillean Wesleyan Methodist Church came to be affiliated as a mission field of the American church⁴⁵ with Australian missionaries Frank and Ruth Midavaine seconded to that work.

Official approval for Bougainville as a mission field of the American church was faxed to Australia on November 22, 1996.⁴⁶ In February 1998⁴⁷ the American General Superintendent, Dr Thomas Armiger, visited Bougainville to conduct the National Conference and Affiliation Ceremony, accompanied by Wayne MacBeth, the new Pacific Area Director.⁴⁸ Frank and Ruth raised their missionary support in Australia and North America and took up permanent residence on Petats Island, off the west coast of Buka Island, from November 7, 1998.⁴⁹

Joel Toworai was the first National Superintendent, with Dudley Matuan as Secretary and Luke Pauru as Treasurer. Joel resigned in 2003 because of concerns about his leadership raised by the National Board. The denomination had been effectively insolvent for some time and Joel had not been paid. He compensated for this by holding onto some church property, including a vehicle donated by the mission. This resulted in an unpleasant conflict that was never resolved, except that Joel left the denomination. He was succeeded by Dudley Matuan as National Superintendent even though Dudley was not yet ordained.⁵⁰ Dudley was succeeded by Nashon Nosuri as National Superintendent in 2011.

⁴⁵ Correspondence to Barry Ross, August 14, 1996, T. Blythe records (Archives).

⁴⁶ Fax from Don Bray, November 22, 1996, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

⁴⁷ Fax to Dudley Matuan, December 5, 1997, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

⁴⁸ Barry Ross's role as Asia/Pacific Director had been divided into two separate Areas when Barry retired. Wayne MacBeth was appointed as Pacific Area Director in 1997.

⁴⁹ Fax to Dudley Matuan, September 18, 1998, F. Midavaine records (Archives).

⁵⁰ Interview, Isaac Karoan and Nashon Nosuri, November 9, 2013, 0:46:30 - 0:50:30.

Figure 13.7 *Nashon Nosuri 2011*⁵¹



Theological training was initially undertaken by extension courses from Petats with the desire for a college to be established in Siwai. However, while the group was still being organised, a paramount chief from northeast Buka offered land for the college. The Bible College and the mission house were therefore built in the region of Tanamalo,⁵² with the opening for residential studies achieved in mid-2004.⁵³

Frank and Ruth Midavaine retired from the mission field in 2005, exhausted. The isolated tropical conditions, bouts of sickness and concerns for their extended family in Australia were overshadowed by conflict in the Tanamalo community. The conflict was centred on the ownership of the Tanamalo property and a matter of local custom. When the old Paramount Chief died the new chief revised the conditions of the land upon which the college had been built. This matter created difficulties for the Midavaines, and continues to be unresolved today. The matter of local custom involved the Midavaines' attempt to protect a young girl from a polygamist marriage to an older man. Their intervention generated community opposition to the missionary presence. The National church leaders supported Midavaine's Christian values and Nashon Nosuri sought to provide reconciliation, but this was not achieved before the Midavaines departed. The young woman is now married and has children according to local custom.

⁵¹ Photograph appeared in *The Australian Wesleyan* magazine: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *The Australian Wesleyan*, issue 1, 2012, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Brisbane: The Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2012), 23.

⁵² Interview, Isaac Karoan, November 9, 2013, 0:39:05.

⁵³ Interview, Frank Midavaine, February 21, 2015, 0:41:30.

In the subsequent transition to a South Pacific Regional structure, supervision of Bougainville was placed under the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. Rev. Samuel Tupuru serves as the Principal of the college. New Zealand missionary, Rev. Kathy Clifford, makes regular visits to Tanamalo and coordinates additional New Zealand visitors to supplement the Bougainvillean teaching staff. Medical work and youth resourcing is also undertaken by the New Zealand church. At the 2015 South Pacific Conference the National Superintendent reported five districts in Bougainville with twenty-five congregations. The church has six ordained ministers, five licensed ministers and forty-three lay preachers.⁵⁴

NEW ZEALAND

Methodism in New Zealand began to embrace Higher Criticism and liberal theology while still part of the Methodist Church of Australasia. In New Zealand, as in other countries where Europeans have dominated the Methodist presence, the introduction of liberal theology came through the universities. The conflict between liberal and conservative Methodism in New Zealand is described on the website Practical Dreamers: "The majority of ordinary congregational members, insofar as they think on such matters, are somewhat conservative. On the other hand the training of ministers in this country has been predominantly in the hands of teachers of a liberal bent."⁵⁵ Rev. Edgar Hornblow, who was ordained in the Methodist Church at Howick in 1961 and served as an influential leader of the evangelical faction of New Zealand Methodism, has described the growing tension between liberal and evangelical theologies:

The liberal leadership of the church in the theological college tended to see Scripture as an historical document rather than a book which contained the Word of God for today. So it was a constant irritant to the evangelicals to struggle with the fact that the Scripture was no longer the infallible Word of God - it was just a guideline for moral and Christian teaching, even to the point of questioning... the resurrection of Jesus.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Nashon Nosuri, Report to the South Pacific Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Sydney, September 29, 2015 (Archives).

⁵⁵ "Practical Dreamers Drop-In Centre," The Methodist Church of NZ, Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa, accessed November 11, 2015, <http://www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz/archive/meth/mcnz.htm>.

⁵⁶ Interview, Edgar and Judy Hornblow, November 7, 2013, 0:06:45.

In other significant ways New Zealand Methodism has travelled a different pathway to Australian Methodism, including the New Zealand "Bicultural Journey",⁵⁷ its formal establishment of an evangelical faction, the failure of plans for church union in New Zealand,⁵⁸ and its decision to ordain practising homosexuals. These four factors influenced the separation of evangelical and liberal factions in the Methodist Church of New Zealand and the emergence of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand in the year 2000.

In 1983 the Methodists decided to honour the spirit of the Waitangi Treaty by moving toward biculturalism with decision-making shared between the Pākehā (Europeans) and the Māori, despite the fact that Māori numbers were around six percent of the denomination.⁵⁹ This move was connected to the rise of liberal theology that had steered New Zealand Methodism into a succession of social and political issues. The Methodists were on the forefront of campaigning for the rights of women in ministry and the decriminalisation of homosexuality while vocally opposing the Vietnam War, the South African Springbok tour and other emerging social issues. To some it was "contextual theology gone mad."⁶⁰ However, promoting the liberationist causes of the Māori contingent in Methodism was not only a progressive move, it also shored up the ranks of the liberal faction. Māori members were generally, "not only liberal, but radically liberal."⁶¹ The Māori vote is useful to the liberal Pākehā, especially since other Pacific Islanders are generally more conservative, as Peter Lineham has noted: "There are high levels of Evangelical commitment within the Pasifika wings of mainstream Protestant churches [that produce] a significant impact on the host denominations."⁶²

⁵⁷ For comments on the failures of the Bicultural Journey, see interview: Edgar and Judy Hornblow, November 7, 2013, 0:09:00.

⁵⁸ Efforts to form a union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Anglican and Associated Church of Christ denominations were active from the 1940s but failed to gain sufficient support, especially from the Anglicans, in the 1970s. "Interdenominational Christianity," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed May 21, 2017, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/interdenominational-christianity/page-4>.

⁵⁹ Reimon Bachika, ed., *Traditional Religion and Culture in a New Era* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 47.

⁶⁰ Interview, Richard Waugh, November 10, 2013, 0:22:05.

⁶¹ Interview, Richard Waugh, November 10, 2013, 0:31:25.

⁶² Peter Lineham, "Evangelicals in Polynesia," in *Evangelicals Around the World: A Global Handbook for the 21st Century*, ed. Brian Stiller (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 414.

As the liberal faction became more aggressive in New Zealand Methodism, the evangelicals sought a suitable way to strengthen their own position. The Methodist Revival Fellowship, which began in England from 1952, was established in Christchurch in October 1961 and was soon receiving members from across the New Zealand church.⁶³ This group provided a place to belong and a profile for evangelicals, though with limited success. In 1965 the Methodist Church of New Zealand declined to allow the Methodist Revival Fellowship to become a branch of the Methodist Church so they remained a sub-branch of the British organisation for twenty-four years.⁶⁴

From the 1960s the charismatic movement impacted much of the New Zealand church with the result that many left the Methodist Church for Pentecostal Churches, while those charismatics who remained in the Methodist Church affiliated with the Methodist Revival Fellowship.⁶⁵ This resulted in a closer affinity between charismatics and evangelicals in New Zealand than had occurred in Australia. In 1984 the Revival Fellowship, representing both charismatic and evangelical members, began to consider a change of name as part of reapplying for official recognition in the Methodist Church.⁶⁶ They adopted the name of the Aldersgate Fellowship and in November 1985 they were finally accepted as "an official body" of the Methodist Church.⁶⁷ Rev. Edgar Hornblow was the founding president of the Aldersgate Fellowship, serving from 1985-1992. The Aldersgate Fellowship later changed its name to Methodist Affirm to align itself with similar Affirm movements in the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches. Edgar had contact with the Wesleyan Methodists in Australia from 1991, although at that time he was of the view that his task was to stay in the Methodist Church of New Zealand.⁶⁸

⁶³ W.J. (Bill) Clifford and George Bryant, "The Evangelical/Charismatic Aspect of Methodism in New Zealand," in *Journal of the Wesleyan Historical Society (New Zealand)*, No. 65 (Auckland: Wesleyan Historical Society, August 1997), 9.

⁶⁴ Clifford and Bryant, "The Evangelical/Charismatic Aspect," 15-16.

⁶⁵ Interview, Edgar and Judy Hornblow, November 7, 2013, 0:10:40. Peter Bentley, National Secretary of the ACC in the Uniting Church in Australia, has noted that far fewer charismatic members remained in Methodism in the Australian experience, preferring instead to join Pentecostal churches. Interview, Peter Bentley, September 12, 2014, 0:02:30.

⁶⁶ Interview, Edgar and Judy Hornblow, November 7, 2013, 0:06:20.

⁶⁷ Clifford and Bryant, "The Evangelical/Charismatic Aspect," 17-18.

⁶⁸ Correspondence Hornblow to Allen Hall, August 7, 1991, T. Blythe records (Archives).

Figure 13.8 *Edgar Hornblow 2011*⁶⁹



As has been previously described, Allen Hall's role in the start of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Brisbane, then in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands was foundational. Allen was also one of the first connections with the leaders of what would become the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. Allen was born in New Zealand and had served for many years with the Methodist Church so he had many friendships among the evangelicals, including a long acquaintance with Edgar Hornblow. In 1991 Hornblow corresponded with Hall and with the Australian Superintendent Tom Blythe.⁷⁰ Hornblow appears to have been primarily interested in promoting the work of the Aldersgate Fellowship at that time,⁷¹ however, his friendship with the Wesleyan Methodists was later to be helpful as the place of evangelicals in the Methodist Church of New Zealand became progressively less sustainable.

The divisive issue of ordaining homosexuals was debated every year in the New Zealand Conference from 1991 until 1999. Meanwhile the Uniting Church in Australia avoided a direct confrontation on this topic by referring the decision to the individual presbyteries, although by doing so they gave tacit permission for such ordinations to proceed. However, the national leadership of the New Zealand Methodist Church did not avoid the confrontation. An insight into the growing call

⁶⁹ Photo courtesy of Lindsay Cameron.

⁷⁰ Correspondence Hall to Hornblow, August 15, 1991, T. Blythe records (Archives).

⁷¹ Correspondence Blythe to Hornblow, August 22, 1991, T. Blythe records (Archives).

for change is provided by Rev. Allan Oliver, an evangelical minister in the Methodist Church of New Zealand. While pastoring in Taupo, from 1992 to 1995, Allan joined about twenty Methodist ministers at a camp near Hamilton. At that camp the group was asked the question, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" and less than one third responded affirmatively. That was when Allan realised that he was in the minority.⁷²

He summed the issues up, saying:

I don't want to put the whole blame on the homosexual thing. It was a much bigger question than the homosexual question, but on the other hand, that focused it up and it brought things to a head.... It was a much deeper issue. It could go right back to the resurrection. It was a biblical issue, biblical interpretation... biblical authority.⁷³

In 1996 a Tongan/Fijian man, Lupeti Fihaki was drawn into the internal struggle of New Zealand Methodism. Fihaki was a lay preacher from the Methodist Church in Fiji who relocated to Auckland and was quickly elevated to the role of Convenor of the Fijian ministry in the Methodist Church. His first Methodist conference in New Zealand was in 1996, where he was shocked to find members of the conference pressing for the ordination of homosexual ministers. Fihaki explained his shock:

I thought to myself - Wow! Is this the same Methodist Church that those people from New Zealand and Australia, they came to Fiji with it? Is that the same gospel? It cannot be the same! It cannot be the same! My wife and I were having a tough time!... I was hearing "sin is becoming okay."⁷⁴

As the Fijian Convenor, Fihaki was on the Council of the National Conference, where he quickly found that the Council was strongly inclined toward the liberal view because of presence of ten liberal Māori representatives on the twenty person council.⁷⁵ At the Council meeting in 1997 Allan found himself to be the only Council member who was prepared to vote against homosexual ordination. Under intense pressure he told the Council, "My people [the Fijians] disagree with this issue. If I am going to say 'yes' to you, my whole generation will be ruined. I will have to give an account of my whole generation [to God], and for that I am going to say 'no'.⁷⁶

⁷² Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:28:55.

⁷³ Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:31:00.

⁷⁴ Interview, Lupeti Fihaki, November 7, 2013, 0:12:20; 0:15:30.

⁷⁵ Interview, Lupeti Fihaki, November 7, 2013, 0:22:40.

⁷⁶ Interview, Lupeti Fihaki, November 7, 2013, 0:23:30.

Lupeti voted against the rest of the Council and then walked out of the Conference, leading a group of like-minded delegates.

Meanwhile similar difficulties were developing for other New Zealand clergy. In 1995 Rev. Richard Waugh was serving at the influential Trinity Methodist Church at Pakuranga in Auckland. Waugh had been supportive of the evangelical cause but had remained on the fringe of the debate until this time. However, as the debate heated up through the 1990s Trinity Church began to play a central part in organising the evangelical cause and Waugh was gradually drawn into a leadership role. The test case became the "Reception into Full Connexion"⁷⁷ of an openly gay ordained minister from the Baptist Church, Rev. David Bromell. In 1997 Bromell's application was brought to the Methodist Conference, and in violation of normal process, it was approved. Richard Waugh remembered the conference action:

In 1997 at the Conference David Bromell was put forward, no explanation, but everybody knows - wink, wink, nod, nod - that he's a practising homosexual. So the church really was [expressing] a lack of integrity, in saying this is the issue. And [they avoided saying], "folks what we need to discuss and debate here is what's our theological response to an active homosexual person in the [ministry of the] church." They never said that. It was all political intrigue and you evangelicals were nasty in not liking David Bromell, who's such a nice guy.⁷⁸

For some, the offense was as much the process that was used to achieve this liberal victory as it was the difference of theological views. The Methodist Church had ceased using a process of *majority-vote* for their decision making in the 1980s as part of the bicultural journey, instead honouring a *consensus* process more familiar to non-European cultures. Since that time decisions at the Methodist Conference were, and still are, made by discussion until general consensus is achieved. However, unexpectedly in the case of David Bromell's reception, a vote was taken that revealed that one-third had voted against his reception and, in violation of many years of consensus decision-making, the President of the Conference ruled it was a decision in the affirmative:

Consensus decision-making was pushed to one side. David Bromell was in!... [For me and many others] that was as bad as the difference in understanding of

⁷⁷ In affect that is to be received as ordained by transfer from another denomination.

⁷⁸ Interview, Richard Waugh, November 10, 2013, 0:33:20. This quote includes some amendments that Richard later asked to have inserted for clarity.

homosexuality, that the church was now doing political things for political purposes.⁷⁹

Dr Laurie Guy, a lecturer with Carey Graduate School in Auckland, published on these events in 2002, concluding:

The Methodist denomination was bitterly divided over the issue of homosexual ordination in the early 1990s and failed for some years to come to a decision... Despite the fact that the Methodist Church had agreed to take its decisions on a consensus basis, and notwithstanding conservative opposition, Bromell was ordained and appointed to the senior position of Superintendent of the Christchurch Mission in 1977... Clearly other issues such as the place of scripture and the nature of Christianity itself were at play; but the standing of homosexuality was the catalyst for cleavage in this deeper struggle.⁸⁰

A majority of the evangelicals then formed themselves into the "Wesleyan Methodist Movement" in late 1997, with Richard Waugh as the leader. In 1998 a proposal was presented to the Methodist Conference that the evangelicals form an evangelical synod so they could continue according to their own consciences and with appropriate safeguards. This was approved in principle, but at the 1999 Conference a small gay and transgender lobby ("about ten gay-friendly people"⁸¹) spoke against the proposal and this time, in keeping with the principle of consensus decision making, the President ruled that the idea of an evangelical synod was not acceptable. At that point the evangelicals realised that their presence in the Methodist Church was not sustainable and they began to look for other alternatives.⁸² A Samoan group broke away to form the Evangelical Samoan Wesleyan Methodist Church and several other congregations left to form a loose confederation called Grace Fellowships of New Zealand. Meanwhile Lupeti Fihaki had also joined with the Wesleyan Methodist group. The President of the Fijian Methodist Church, who was in New Zealand for the 1997 Methodist Conference, advised Fihaki to stay with the evangelical Wesleyans.⁸³

⁷⁹ Interview, Richard Waugh, November 10, 2013, 0:34:55. This quote includes some amendments that Richard later asked to have inserted for clarity. See also Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:36:30.

⁸⁰ Laurie Guy, *Worlds in Collision: The Gay Debate in New Zealand, 1960-1986* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2002), 224.

⁸¹ Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:38:25.

⁸² Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:38:50.

⁸³ Interview, Lupeti Fihaki, November 7, 2013, 0:27:50.

In 1998 James and Melva Ridgway had visited Auckland and met with Edgar Hornblow, Rev. George Bryant and Rev. Tavake Tupou, at which time he passed on some Australian literature, including the *1994 Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia*.⁸⁴ In 1999, after the Methodist Conference veto of an evangelical synod, the evangelicals met at Trinity Church and decided to approach the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. Richard Waugh made contact with the National Superintendent, Stan Baker, and in January 2000 the group sent Lupeti Fihaki and Allan Oliver to the Australian National Conference in Toowoomba. Their experience with the Australian church was that, "It was like coming home!"⁸⁵ The New Zealand delegates brought back a positive report and two months later a delegation from Australia came to visit the New Zealand leaders. The visitors included James Ridgway, Sifa Lokotui, Tepola Raicebe, Dale Richardson and Frank Carroll. Edgar Hornblow, now retired from fulltime ministry, was appointed as the founding superintendent of the new denomination and in July 2000 the church was registered and formalised. David Wilson, from Kingsley College, spoke at the inaugural celebration held in a Catholic Church in Manurewa, Auckland.

Richard Waugh was still the Methodist minister of the Trinity Church while his congregation processed this new option. In July the Trinity congregation expressed their interest, by a seventy-two percent vote, in joining the Wesleyan Methodist cause.⁸⁶ On August 20, 2000 Stan Baker and Wayne MacBeth were visiting and on Sunday morning at the Trinity Church, Richard Waugh publicly announced that many in the congregation felt compelled by theological conscience to break from the Methodist Church and join the new Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. The following week Waugh was relieved of his ministerial duties by the President of the Methodist Church, as were his whole leadership team. On September 3 the congregation held their final undivided service at Trinity under lay leadership and the following week, on September 10, around 200 ex-Methodists met in a school hall as the East City Wesleyan Methodist Church. Rev. Dr Richard Waugh is pictured as figure 13.9.

⁸⁴ Report on the NZ visit, December 7, 1998, J. Ridgway records 8 (Archives).

⁸⁵ Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:48:30.

⁸⁶ Interview, Richard Waugh, November 10, 2013, 0:47:05.

In November 2000 the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand met for their first Annual Conference and formally adopted the designation of a mission field of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. At that time there were around five small congregations. Among those were Edgar Hornblow's group at Papakura, Allan Oliver's group at Manukau, Lupeti Fihaki's Fijian fellowship and East City Church as the largest. In 2001 the New Zealand church was received into the Wesleyan World Fellowship, a global structure under which Wesleyans from around the world could meet.⁸⁷ "That belonging, the identification with Australia, and particularly the belonging to the Wesleyan World Fellowship, meant a great deal to us.... This is a legitimate Methodist Church. In other words, we're as legitimate as the liberal Methodists."⁸⁸

Figure 13.9 *Richard Waugh 2008*⁸⁹



In November 2002 Edgar Hornblow indicated his desire for release from the role of National Superintendent and Richard Waugh was elected to succeed him. During the first four years discussions were ongoing with the Evangelical Samoan Wesleyan Methodists to join into the global Wesleyan Church and for that purpose, the Samoans came to the Australian and American Conferences in 2004 with the request that they be received as a separate Samoan Conference. The idea of multiple separate

⁸⁷ The Wesleyan World Fellowship was the global fellowship of Wesleyans that preceded the formation of the International Conference.

⁸⁸ Interview, Richard Waugh, November 10, 2013, 0:59:30

⁸⁹ Photo courtesy of Richard Waugh, used by permission.

Conferences in one country was not seen as a healthy arrangement though, so the discussions with the Samoan group fell away.

The multicultural Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand continues to grow. In 2007 the church was received as a full member of the World Methodist Council, and in 2015 reported twenty-four congregations across both North and South Islands, with forty-six ministers and an average attendance of 1,156.⁹⁰ National Superintendent, Richard Waugh with the Assistant National Superintendents, Lupeti Fihaki and Brett Jones are pictured as figure 13.10.

Figure 13.10 *New Zealand leadership installed by Dr Jerry Pence 2010*⁹¹



CONVERGENCE MATTERS

Since 2012 regular interaction and conferencing has become a feature of the relationship between the Australian, New Zealand, Solomon Island and

⁹⁰ Statistical Report to the 2015 New Zealand National Conference, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁹¹ Photograph courtesy of Lindsay Cameron. L-R: Richard Waugh, Lupeti Fihaki and Brett Jones being installed by General Superintendent Dr Jerry Pence.

Bougainvillean Wesleyan Methodist Churches. Furthermore, both the New Zealand and the Australian churches are now members of the World Methodist Council,⁹² which provides another venue for discussions with the Tongan, Samoan and Fijian Methodist groups are possible. Wesleyan members at the 2011 World Methodist Conference in South Africa are pictured as figure 13.11.

Figure 13.11 *Wesleyan leaders at the World Methodist Council in Durban 2011*⁹³



The convergence experience between the Australian and New Zealand leadership bears much in common with the Tongan/Australian experience - the theological emphases of American holiness-Methodism are widely accepted by the more British Methodists of New Zealand but some differences of practice are present. Allan Oliver explained the theological unity that the New Zealand leaders discovered in the Wesleyan Methodist Church: "It's helped us to reclaim our heritage. But it's done more than that, it's really introduced us to lots of things that we'd never heard about in the area of holiness."⁹⁴

⁹² The Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church was received as a member of the World Methodist Council in 2009, following the example of the New Zealand Church from two years earlier.

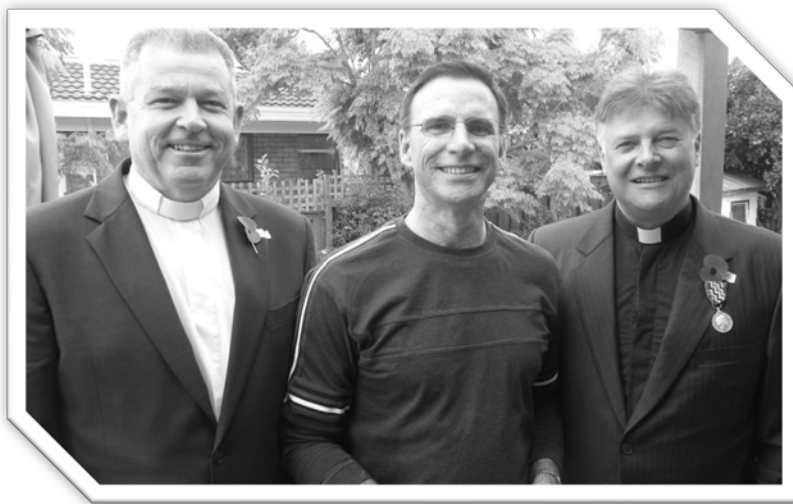
⁹³ Photograph courtesy of Lindsay Cameron. L-R: Dr H.C. Wilson (Global Partners Dir.), Dr JoAnne Lyon (General Superintendent, USA), Dr Bridgett Aitchison (Director of Wesley Institute, Sydney), Dr David Wright (President of Indiana Wesleyan University), Rev. Lindsay Cameron (National Superintendent, Australia), Dr Richard Waugh (National Superintendent, New Zealand).

⁹⁴ Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:51:50.

One theological issue was thought to be a potential cause of division initially in 1998; the fact that many of the New Zealand personnel had charismatic experiences. When James Ridgway was asked about this, he gave the simple guidance that if anyone spoke in tongues in a church service it must be interpreted. That response settled the question, as Allan Oliver has noted, "That was a good biblical answer for me."⁹⁵

Differences between the Australian and New Zealand Wesleyan Methodists have been found to lie in methodology rather than doctrine.⁹⁶ The New Zealand Wesleyan Methodists use the less-structured Westminster system for business meetings, with an element of consensus decision-making inherited from New Zealand Methodism. Australian business meetings operate according to *Roberts Rules of Order*,⁹⁷ a distinctly American and quite prescriptive model of parliamentary procedure. The New Zealand Pākehā congregations follow a modern worship style, similar to Australian Wesleyan Methodists, although the Lord's Supper is practised differently⁹⁸ and some of the New Zealand leaders wear a clerical collar. However, none of these differences have caused any significant concerns.

Figure 13.12 Lindsay Cameron, Jeff Fussner, Richard Waugh, Anzac Day 2009⁹⁹



⁹⁵ Interview, Allan Oliver, November 8, 2013, 0:51:35.

⁹⁶ See 424.

⁹⁷ Henry M. Robert III, Daniel H. Honemann and Thomas and Thomas J. Baulch, *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 11th edition (Sarasota, Florida: Da Capo Press, 2011).

⁹⁸ New Zealand Wesleyan Methodists are inclined to practise the Lords Supper via intinction and a personal word for each person from the minister, while Australian Wesleyan Methodists more commonly serve the communion elements in individual cup and often to the congregation while seated.

⁹⁹ Photograph courtesy of Lindsay Cameron. The only time Lindsay has worn a clerical collar - to accompany Richard for the Anzac Day March in Auckland.

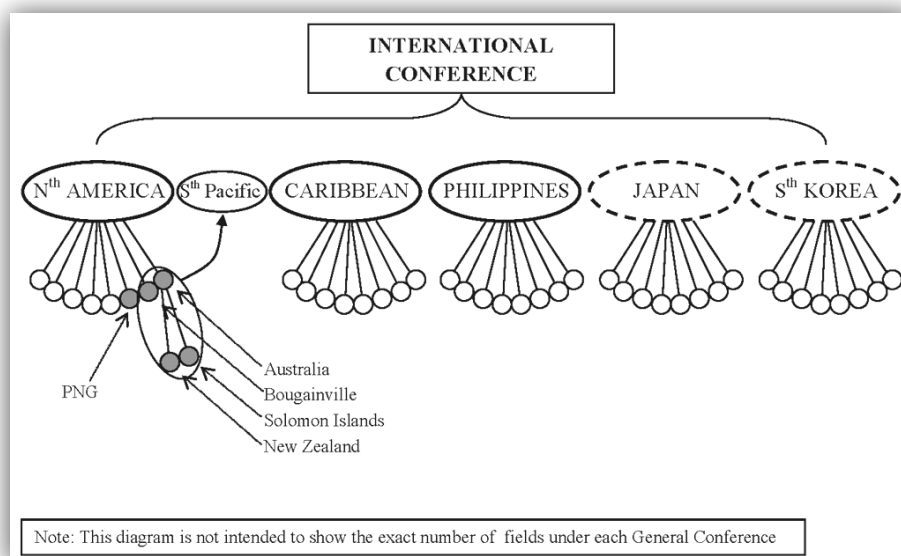
THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2012 International Conference of the Wesleyan Church was an historic event because this meeting formally approved the establishment of the South Pacific Regional Conference, which was the first Regional Conference to be approved under a new international structure. Prior to 2004 the Wesleyan Church was structured as three General Conferences, each with their own mission fields. These were the American, Philippines and Caribbean General Conferences, with the Immanuel General Mission of Japan as an Associate Conference. One disadvantage of the structure at that time was that it served to isolate the General Conferences from each other. Until the year 2000 the mission fields would participate in their parent body's General Conferences, but as the number of mission fields increased under the American conference, which is by far the largest conference, the number of international delegates began to outnumber the American delegates. This created problems for the American conference when its delegates wanted to discuss matters that were domestic in nature. At the 2000 North American General Conference the international delegates were excluded from some sessions for North American discussions, which generated resentment among some internationals. The leadership recognised that change was needed.

In 2004 the several General Conferences agreed to a new International Conference under which they would all be accountable for doctrinal adherence. This major restructuring included a new category of semi-autonomous regional conferences that were too large to continue as mission fields but too small to be general conferences. Forming these mid-sized conferences into semi-autonomous regional conferences enabled less congestion at the general conferences.

In October 2015 a new group, the Korean Evangelical Holiness Church, joined the global Wesleyan Church with the expectation that they will take full membership at the 2019 International Conference. The international structure is illustrated as figure 13.13.

Figure 13.13 *Structure of International Conference of The Wesleyan Church 2015*



The new South Pacific Regional Conference was formed out of the Wesleyan Methodist Churches of Australia, the Solomon Islands, New Zealand and Bougainville. The Wesleyan Church of Papua New Guinea has delayed joining until some of its own internal dynamics are addressed. The Regional Conference meets approximately once every four years in conjunction with one of its member national conferences. It is designed as a venue where relationships are maintained, where regional unity can be presented to other Methodist bodies in the Pacific and where cooperative efforts in missions and ministerial education can be negotiated.

The inaugural meeting of the South Pacific Regional Conference was held at Hills Church in Brisbane on August 24-25, 2012. Richard Waugh was elected as Conference President. The second Conference was held at East City Wesleyan Church in Auckland on November 7-9, 2013, with Waugh returned as Regional President. The third Conference was held at the Merroo Conference Centre, west of Sydney on September 29-30, 2015, and at that meeting Rex Rigby was appointed Regional President (figure 11.13, 333).

Chapter 14

APPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

POSITIONING THIS STUDY

Researching this project has required interaction with a range of authors and schools of academic thought. Those interactions help position this study as contributing to Methodist Church history, the liberal/evangelical debate, the effect of secularism on religion, and the interface between Methodism and Pentecostalism.

John Wesley and Evangelicalism. This study was greatly assisted by the availability of four exceptional studies in the origins of the evangelical movement and the spread of Methodism. These were the works of Ward,¹ Bebbington,² Hempton³ and Piggin.⁴ These works informed much of what appears in this thesis. An understanding the origins of Methodism was fundamental to understanding the priorities of Methodism. Ward and Bebbington especially address the British and American roots of Methodism, while Hempton and Piggin speak to the development of Methodism in the South Pacific. Both Hempton and Piggin address the rise of liberal theology. Hempton provokes a discussion about Pentecostalism with the claim that it, "can best be explained as a much-modified continuation of the Methodist holiness tradition,"⁵ while Piggin's schema of "Spirit, Word and world," addresses the priorities of Evangelicalism. Piggin explains that "the 'key markers' of evangelicalism are a personal relationship with Jesus, obedience to the Bible, and intense social engagement with a needy world. This sounds like Spirit, Word and

¹ W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992).

² David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2002).

³ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (London: Yale: University, Kindle edition, 2005).

⁴ Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn, Kindle edition, 2012).

⁵ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, Introduction, loc. 66.

world to me."⁶ However, Piggin's schema is not entirely consistent with John Wesley's priorities of "doctrine, spirit and discipline,"⁷ and this difference is revealing. Wesley's Arminianism led him to teach Christian perfection in which the believer was not only cleansed but required to practise self-discipline and use all means of grace to remain free from sin's dominion. Wesley's view was consistent with Piggin's evangelical values of a Spirit empowered life, faithfulness to the Bible, and a deep obligation to minister to the community, but a summary of Wesley's priorities would not be complete without the express statement of discipline. Discipline was an essential ingredient of personal faith and of the organisational success of Methodism. This thesis seeks to draw students of John Wesley back to an understanding of how essential personal rigorous discipline was to Wesley's whole doctrine and denominational structure.

Methodism in Australia. In the research for this thesis, O'Brien and Carey's work, *Methodism in Australia*,⁸ was eagerly awaited. When that book became available in 2015 it proved most helpful in drafting an overview of Methodism in the second half of the nineteenth century. The authors of chapters 1-8, almost without exception, described the process of rapid growth that gradually slowed, accompanied by rising affluence, government funding, loss of Methodist spirit, loss of class meetings, rise of university training and social gospel. There were only minor comments about the impact of liberal theology, which was to be expected since the full effect of liberal theology only really impacted the church once the universities were established. It was disappointing, however, to find an almost complete absence of reference to the liberal/evangelical conflict in chapters 9-10, which addressed Methodism in the twentieth century. Although the editors were under pressure to reduce the size of their manuscript, it was disturbing that such an important topic was not given more consideration. The exception was Glen O'Brien's chapter in the thematic section, but even there the suggestion seemed to be that the impact of liberal theology was not as significant in Australia as it was in North America.⁹ This thesis seeks to bring to the forefront the deep division that liberal theology introduced into

⁶ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, Preface to the revised edition, loc. 345.

⁷ John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), vol. 13: 258.

⁸ Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey, eds., *Methodism in Australia*, (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015).

⁹ Glen O'Brien, "Conclusion," in *Methodism in Australia*, 276,

Methodism in the South Pacific and to encourage more recognition that decline was closely associated with this major shift of doctrine.

Secularisation. The reality of, and the debate about, secularisation is the backdrop to much of church history in the twentieth century. David Hilliard's chapter in *Secularisation in the Christian World*¹⁰ was particularly helpful to discern the impact of secularisation upon Methodism in the Australian context, although the topic recurs in most of the works referenced in the thesis that deal with Australian Methodism or global church history. Berger's early work on secularisation¹¹ was referenced in the introduction of this thesis, together with the fact that Berger later recanted his conclusion that secularisation would render religion obsolete, and instead acknowledged that, secularisation was under threat from religion¹² and that his theory of secularisation is "empirically untenable."¹³ This retraction does not leave Berger with a "zero total" however. He established, via a convoluted pathway, that secularisation does not destroy "dynamic" religion.¹⁴ That is an important conclusion. The question becomes what is dynamic religion and what is not - this creates a focus that shifts attention away from the external threat of secularism to the internal threat of listless religion. Kelley's work *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* then carries the discussion forward by assessing what internal factors influence dynamism or listlessness. Kelley concluded that liberal religion promotes decline and high-demand conservative religion promotes growth.¹⁵ This is confirmed by other authors, including Stuart Piggin.¹⁶ The impact of this reversal of secularisation theory is that church historians should be equally or more concerned about the internal health of a denomination than the external social factors at the time. If the church is internally dynamic, it can survive and increase. This theory results in a conclusion that the decline of the Methodist

¹⁰ David Hilliard, "Australia: Toward Secularisation and One Step Back," in *Secularisation in the Christian World*, Callum Brown and Michael Snape, eds. (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 82.

¹¹ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Open Road, 1966).

¹² Peter L. Berger, "Secularization Falsified" in *First Things* online journal, 2008, accessed August 26, 2014, <http://www.firstthings.com/>

¹³ Peter L. Berger, "Further Thoughts on Religion and Modernity" in Springer Science+Business Media online, 2012, accessed August 26, 2014, <http://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors>.

¹⁴ Berger, "Secularization Falsified".

¹⁵ Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion*, Rose edition (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University and Rose, 1995), 25-35.

¹⁶ Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, Preface to the revised edition, loc. 325.

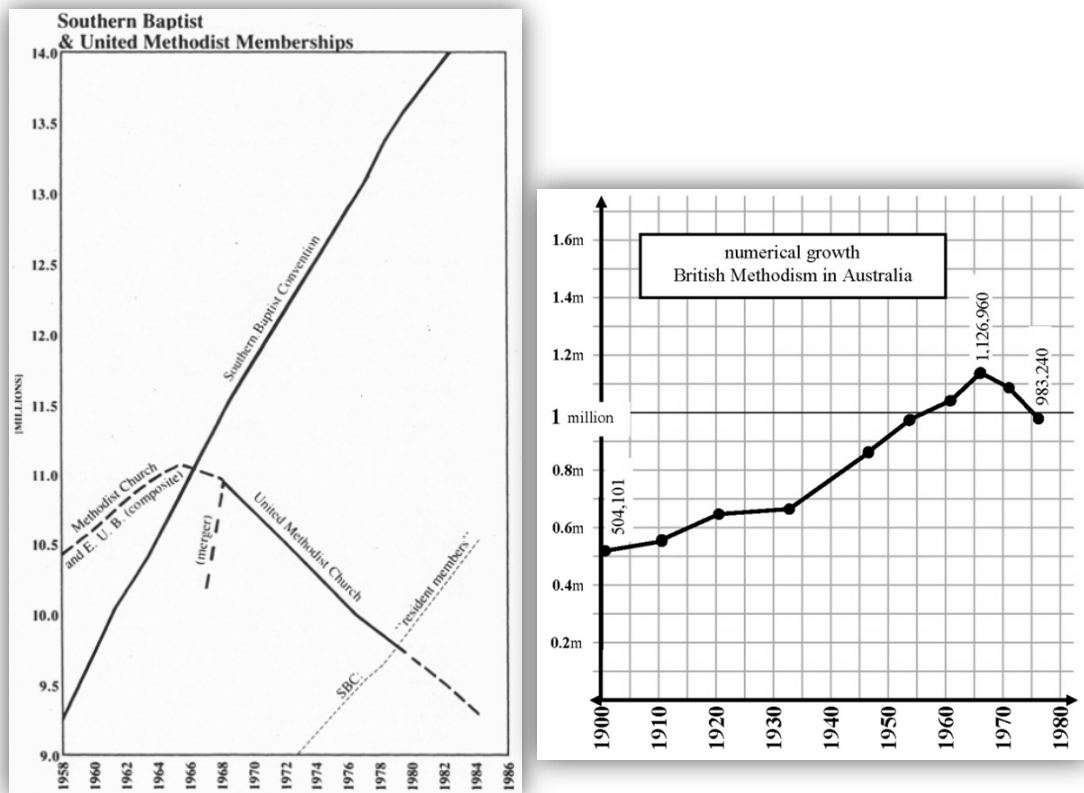
Church in Australia was first because of internal weakness and then because of external social factors (secularisation). The pre-condition of internal weakness made sustained decline possible. The pre-condition of weakness is demonstrated by the percentage of population decline from 1901 that preceded a real decline in numbers in the 1960s. Those denominations that had adopted liberal theology showed far greater susceptibility to the external social factors than the conservative internally-demanding denominations.

Several graphs have been presented that illustrate the decline of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Anglican Churches during the century - first as a percentage of population and later in attendance statistics. It has been observed that the graphs generated for this thesis bear a similarity to Dean Kelly's graphs of North American denominational trends in the twentieth century,¹⁷ even though some of the conditions that preceded decline in Australian denominations from the beginning of the twentieth century were being felt fifty years earlier in America.¹⁸ The statistical analysis that Kelly provided from North America covered a wider range of denominations, while the work done here has been primarily focused on the Methodist experience. Nonetheless, Kelley's numerical graph of mainline Methodism in North America and this thesis's graph for mainline Methodism in Australia show a similar trajectory (although the chart for Australian Methodism is truncated due to the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977). See figure 14.1.

¹⁷ See chapter 1: 37.

¹⁸ See chapter 2: 77.

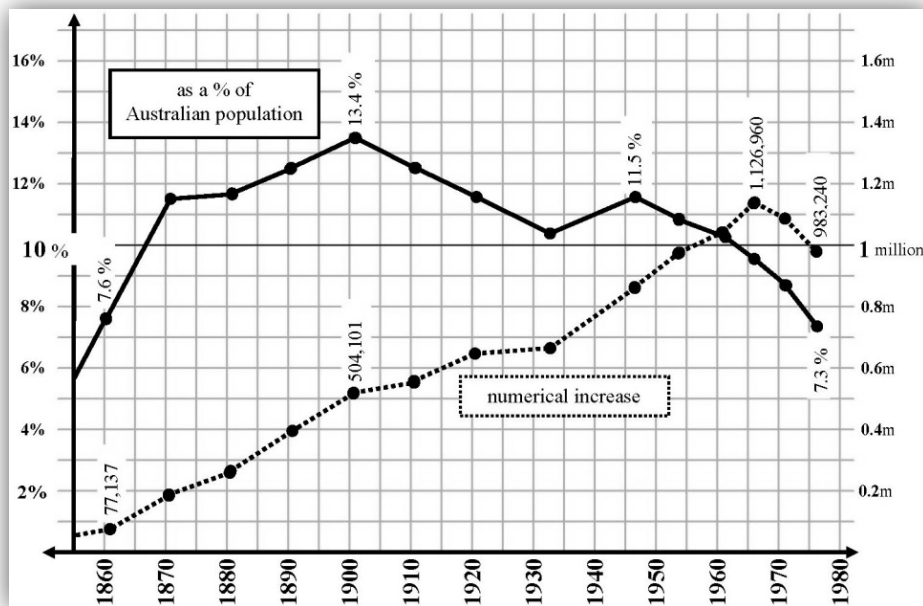
Figure 14.1 Kelley's (L)¹⁹ and Cameron's (R) charts, both showing decline in 1960s



This thesis adds to Kelley's work by charting the percentage of population for Methodism (and some other denominations). This additional information reveals that the Methodists were falling behind population growth in Australia sixty years before numerical decline became obvious, but the percentage-decline was masked by Methodist immigration until the 1960s. These observations provide a meaningful contribution to the church history/sociology of religion discussion that has been underway since the 1960s.

¹⁹ Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*, xii.

Figure 14.2 *Methodism in Australia with % decline preceding numerical decline*



Methodism/Pentecostalism. A number of authors have previously described the connection between Methodism and Pentecostalism, including those referenced in this thesis: Hempton,²⁰ Hutchinson and Wolffe,²¹ Dayton²² and Synan.²³ Vinson Synan's work was especially helpful because he so closely pursues Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection and connects it to the rise of Pentecostalism. This thesis intentionally included space for a description of conversion manifestations in early Methodism, but noted that they did not include the practice of glossolalia and it was noted that class meeting was Wesley's solution to the emotionalism encountered in his public rallies. The question is asked whether speaking in tongues in Pentecostalism to some extent satisfied a similar purpose to that of class meetings in Methodism. Both the class meeting and the personal practice of tongues-speaking can serve to reinforce the personal responsibility of the individual believer for their own spiritual life, so that church attendance is no longer the sole focus of weekly worship. These observations and questions about the interface between Methodism

²⁰ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*.

²¹ Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: University Press, 2012).

²² Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987).

²³ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, Kindle edition, 1997).

and Pentecostalism contribute to a theological and historical discussion about the future of both movements.

The Uniting Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1961 A. Harold Wood, a prominent Methodist missionary and denominational leader, wrote of the planned merger of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, which was "to bring a renewal of the life of the Church, through the formulation of our theological convictions."²⁴ In Wood's opinion, church union was expected to return the three denominations to growth and unity after forty years of unnecessary decline.²⁵ Conservative evangelicals who opposed union were disregarded as the new denomination was "assured that our doctrinal statement has been framed in harmony with progressive theological thinking within our denominations in Europe and America."²⁶ In 2003 for the twenty-fifth anniversary of union, William and Susan Emilsen published an edited volume with a more sombre tone, stating that "declining numbers and resources is an ever-present reality."²⁷ From 1991 to 2011 the Uniting Church lost 220,000 members,²⁸ falling from 8.2% to 5% of the Australian population.²⁹ In 2013 Keith Suter wrote his Ph.D. thesis on "scenario planning" for the Uniting Church, suggesting that the Uniting Church could disappear altogether within one decade, "The implication is that the Uniting Church will be largely gone by 2025. This prediction can be reinforced by seeing the age of the members: it is an aging church."³⁰ Suter's comments suggest a new discussion is developing within the Uniting Church. The information relating to the decline of Methodism contained in this current thesis provides a necessary balance to the optimistic expectation of church union in 1977 and could provide a meaningful contribution to Uniting Church planning toward 2025.

²⁴ A. Harold Wood, *The Uniting Church in Australia: (Presbyterian-Congregationalist-Methodist)* (Melbourne: Methodist Publishing, 1961), 8.

²⁵ Wood, *The Uniting Church in Australia*, 12-13.

²⁶ Wood, *The Uniting Church in Australia*, 8.

²⁷ Emilsen, William and Susan, eds., *The Uniting Church in Australia: The First 25 Years* (Armada, Victoria: Circa, 2003), 5.

²⁸ ABS census data lists 1,387,646 under the UCA listing, in 2011 that number had fallen to 1,065,794. 1901-2011 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, (<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>),.

²⁹ A century earlier, in 1901, the combined Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Church were drawing 26.7% of the Australian population.

³⁰ Keith D. Suter, "The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia: The Application of Scenario Planning to the Creation of Four 'Futures' for the Uniting Church in Australia" (Sydney: Ph.D. Thesis for the University of Sydney, 2013), 250.

Until this thesis, no comprehensive history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia has been written and very little has been recorded about the beginnings of its ministry in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands or New Zealand. Some misunderstandings have crept into the oral history as a result. Examples of these historic errors include small mistakes regarding the 1946 and 1947 beginning in Melbourne because of James Ridgway's early term paper, which was written from memory,³¹ and an entry in James Jupp's *Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia* (an otherwise valuable resource for this research) that claims that the denomination began in Queensland through "a large United States military contingent."³² This thesis provides the first researched history dedicated to the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church from 1945 to 2015. As such it fills a gap in Australia's church history, it serves as a resource to Wesleyan Methodists and it provides lessons on life and ministry in the twentieth century for all Australians.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS STUDY

In exploring the context that led to the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, this thesis has sought to show that John Wesley's Methodist doctrine shared commonalities with other evangelicals but also included some additional teachings and practices centred around his understanding of Christian perfection. Teachings common to the early evangelicals included a commitment to a supernatural spiritual conversion (including salvation by faith, rebirth and assurance of salvation), the centrality of Christ's death on the cross, the complete inspiration of the Bible and a priority upon activism.³³ Wesley's Arminianism set him apart from the other early evangelicals though, and made possible his emphasis upon Christian perfection (purity of heart and victory over sin). Victory over sin was a process that leaned upon peer-accountability in class meetings. Class meetings that empowered lay workers, in turn freed clergy up to supervise multiple societies with occasional visits and enabled Wesley's Methodism to spread rapidly with the migration of laity.

³¹ See chapter 1, 29.

³² James Jupp, "Wesleyan Methodists," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge, 2009), 592.

³³ See chapter 1: 11.

By the second half of the nineteenth century Methodism in Australia was seen to have lost some of its early intensity (spirit), largely because of increased prosperity. This loss of spirit preceded other crucial changes: Methodism relinquished its early emotional fervour and tolerance of manifestations to the rising Pentecostal movement and it distanced itself from social action because of its disdain for the liberal promotion of the social gospel. In the 1890s Methodism in the South Pacific formally softened its requirement of class meeting attendance and embarked on the thirty-year process of re-educating its clergy to reject the inspiration of the entire Bible and to adopt liberal theology. By the 1920s Methodism in Australia and New Zealand had drifted a considerable way from John Wesley's spirit, discipline and doctrine (in that order).

From the readings and the interviews in this project, some brief observations can be offered about the British Methodist ministries commenced in Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, the New Guinea Islands, the Papuan Islands, the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, Buka and the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Some elements of Methodism remain in the islands that are representative of the more-evangelical past, through which a glimpse of the priorities of earlier Methodist missions can be seen. The inhabitants of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji have especially known the powerful spiritual conversions, life-changing holiness teaching, class meeting discipline, and sacrificial service of authentic Methodism (as defined in this thesis). Dr Sifa Lokotui, who has studied and taught across the Pacific Islands as well as in Australia and New Zealand, claims that in recent years the educated leaders in Tonga have been influenced by the liberal teaching of Anglo-American Methodism through international study opportunities.³⁴ Today those three nations, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, are showing signs of losing Wesley's priorities as Australian and New Zealand Methodists did in the last century. It could be that connecting with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the Regional Conference would help to reinforce Wesley's traditional priorities in the islands.

Meanwhile the Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Methodists have struggled to self-propagate because they were not grounded in Wesley's priorities as thoroughly from the outset and consequently the work was not indigenised well. Evidence suggests that they were unprepared, and in some instances unwilling, for

³⁴ Interview, Sifa Lokotui, 0:04:10.

the transition into the United Church in 1968. For many of those former Methodists, the new United Church identity served no meaningful purpose and it separated them from their Methodist support network in Australia and New Zealand. Some have since pursued different teachings, such as Etoism in the Solomon Islands or the "charismatic" developments in Bougainville. Others have broken with the United Church and come to Australia seeking an evangelical Methodist body with which they can reconnect.

The role of leadership has been a recurring theme throughout this study. John Wesley is noted as having held his organisation together by the force of his personality.³⁵ Wesley had definite priorities that were clearly stated and he had the authority to enforce his priorities across the Methodist organisation. Lack of authority or abuse of authority are matters that recur repeatedly in this thesis. The early Australian Methodist missionaries were in conflict with remote leadership.³⁶ Complaints about the missions in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville generally come back to John Goldie's leadership and his priorities.³⁷ Kingsley Ridgway and James Ridgway both suffered accusation in their leadership, and their extended absences are highlighted. Conflict between the district superintendents and the national superintendent comes under scrutiny.³⁸ Wesley's priorities included discipline of laity and clergy, indeed of the whole organisation. In those periods when leadership was lacking or misguided, the growth of Methodism appears to have suffered.

WESLEY'S PRIORITIES IN SOUTH PACIFIC METHODISM

The question that has guided this study is: "To what extent has Methodism in the South Pacific remained true to John Wesley's priorities for original Methodism?" Through these chapters it can be seen that British Methodism and American Methodism have both wandered from Wesley's doctrine, spirit and discipline.

³⁵ See chapter 1: 33.

³⁶ See chapters 3: 104; 4: 147 and 4:151.

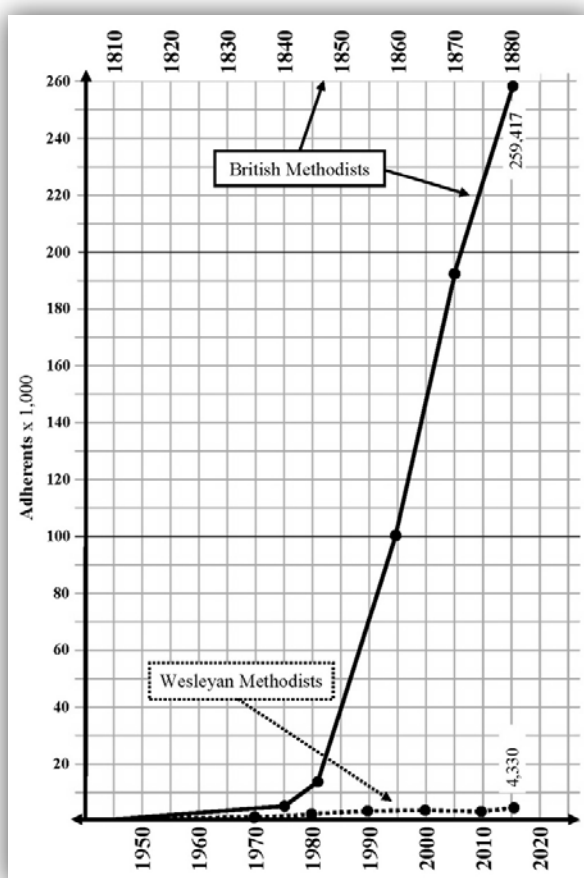
³⁷ See chapters 5: 184; 7: 249, and 9: 314, 332.

³⁸ See all of chapter 12: 399.

The drift of British Methodism. The several British Methodist churches in Australia and New Zealand began a marked drift away from John Wesley's priorities in the late 1800s, losing the dedication of the early Methodist spirit, then the discipline of the weekly class meetings, and then abandoning Wesley's doctrine through a shift to liberal theology in the universities. By the 1920s Methodist educational institutions were openly contradicting Wesley's evangelical teachings, although a remnant of evangelicals continued within Methodism until the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977. The process was gradual, so that assigning a point in time at which the Methodist Church surrendered John Wesley's priorities is problematic. However, Methodism's rejection of John Wesley's doctrine was completed in 1977 when the Uniting Church *Basis of Union* was adopted, thereby formalising the concept that the Bible is not entirely the Word of God. Therefore, it is the conclusion in this thesis that Australian Methodism moved progressively further away from John Wesley's doctrine, spirit and discipline from 1890 until the Methodist Church ceased to exist in Australia in 1977.

The drift of Wesleyan Methodism. There is an enormous disproportion in speaking of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia alongside the earlier British Wesleyan and Methodist groups. The Methodist Church in Australia peaked numerically in 1966 with 1,126,960 adherents (9.7% of the Australian population). The percentage of population had peaked earlier however, in 1901, with 504,155 adherents (13.4% of the Australian population). The American Wesleyan Methodist Church peaked in 2015 with 4,330 in public worship (0.0182% of the Australian population). The Wesleyan Methodist Church has been in Australia for seventy years in 2016 (1946-2016). After the same period of seventy years (1811-1881), with a much smaller population base, the British Methodists recorded 259,417 adherents (12.2% of Australian population). The British Methodists were effective to a degree that the modern Wesleyan Methodists have not experienced. Figure 14.3 illustrates the difference between the two groups in their first seventy years in Australia respectively.

Figure 14.3 *The first 70 years of the British and American Methodists in Australia*³⁹



The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia began in 1946 with a strong commitment to John Wesley's doctrine and spirit but demonstrated a lack of understanding of his disciplines, especially class meetings. The Wesleyans continued to exemplify Wesley's doctrines and spirit until the 1990s, but never effectively engaged with his disciplines. Throughout its seventy years in Australia the Wesleyan Methodist Church has lost many clergy to exhaustion; an outcome that might have been alleviated through the use of Wesley's model of class meetings and itinerant clergy. The influx of islander congregations in Australia since 1979 and the South Pacific expansion since 1995 provide an opportunity for Australian Wesleyan Methodists to review their understanding of Wesley's discipline.

³⁹ Methodist Church statistics 1861-1891 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics microfiche, *La Trobe Australiana Collections*, State Library of Victoria; 1901-2011 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, (<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>),.

Furthermore, the question is raised whether the Australian Wesleyan Methodists have begun to drift from Wesley's spirit and his doctrine of holiness since the 1990s. The loss of church planting urgency and actions of the College Board and the National Board when relinquishing the Kingsley College higher-education training program in the mid 2000s with the resulting decision that future students should study at non-Wesleyan colleges supports this perception of drift. The proposition that the Wesleyan Methodist Church has lost some of the holiness emphasis is further supported by the action of the National Board in removing statistical reporting of those who experienced holiness for the 2015 National Conference. There are indications that modern Wesleyan Methodists are not as confident in Wesley's doctrine of holiness as early Australian leaders were.

Connected to the loss of the holiness emphasis is the Wesleyan Methodists' rejection of two signature marks of Wesley's ministry. The Wesleyan Methodists in Australia (along with many other evangelicals) have largely rejected community engagement in over-reaction against the social gospel of liberal teaching and they have rejected emotional manifestations in their worship services in over-reaction against Pentecostal practices. In both of these matters, the Wesleyan Methodists have lost their Methodist heritage and limited their own religious experience. Early Methodism showed that community engagement and emotional experiences can be a vital part of the Methodist experience without adopting the social gospel or the practice of speaking in tongues. Rather than resist crowd manifestations in his public ministry, Wesley accepted them and quickly refocused his followers toward holiness through the discipline and personal accountability of the class meeting. The connection between Wesley's doctrine of a radical instantaneous conversion, the emotional results, his disciplines of class meetings and his insistence on community engagement are inextricably interwoven. To reject parts of his priorities renders his whole strategy ineffective, as many Methodists have discovered.

A number of the early leaders of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia testified to manifestations when filled with the Spirit, including Kingsley Ridgway,⁴⁰ Walter⁴¹ and Dorothy Hotchkin and Graeme Carnell.⁴² One evening, while a student

⁴⁰ See chapter 6: 193.

⁴¹ See APPENDIX C: 503.

at Bible College, Dorothy Hotchkin was taken “to the 7th heaven”,⁴³ becoming so loud in her prayers that other students came knocking to ask what was happening, and to ask if they could join in.⁴⁴ These experiences, or at least the reporting of these experiences, appears to have become less common after the 1950s. It might be that the denomination became so concerned about Pentecostal excesses that they stifled these Wesleyan experiences in their own meetings. Further research into the discipline brought to bear on Phil McCallum at Everton Hills Church⁴⁵ might suggest an over-reaction against Pentecostalism at a time when the Toronto Blessing was dividing Australian churches.

The changes to church membership introduced in the 2000s sought to reintroduce a foundational Wesleyan requirement of discipleship and accountability in place of the rules-based membership that had become so common in Methodism over past centuries. However, it seems that, apart from stating the goal of discipleship-based membership, nothing further of substance has been introduced. An early attempt to reintroduce class meetings by Kingsley Ridgway has been highlighted in this thesis, but his own understanding of class meetings was already non-Wesleyan and the efforts failed as a result. With the exception of the small-group accountability model implemented by Don Hardgrave at South Gate from 1991-2000,⁴⁶ no other serious attempt to address this matter has been found through this study.

The commitment of the Wesleyans to start new churches has declined since 1990, and it is proposed that this is a symptom of declining passion and an unwillingness to make the sacrifice of working with small groups in scattered locations.⁴⁷

The South Pacific Regional Conference. Tongans and Solomon Islander interviewees for this research all clearly identified class meetings as an ongoing practice in their Methodist experience. This suggests that addressing the absence of

⁴² See APPENDIX G: 644.

⁴³ See APPENDIX C: 530.

⁴⁴ Correspondence Dorothy to Cheri Floyd, January 30, 2007, Hotchkin records (Archives).

⁴⁵ See APPENDIX G: 625.

⁴⁶ Correspondence, Don Hardgrave to Lindsay Cameron, March 9, 2016, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁴⁷ See chapter 1: 34.

class meetings might not only be beneficial to the Australian church but it may be an important factor in the future unity of the Regional Conference.

It would be helpful to enquire further into the motivations and expectations of the islander delegates to the South Pacific Regional Conference. The current Constitution of the Regional Conference was driven primarily by the European leaders of the Australian and New Zealand Conferences. The priority for those leaders was the autonomy of each National Conference within a meaningful regional fellowship. After just a few interviews for this thesis it has become apparent that the islander members might have rather different priorities. The previous British Methodist General Conference for the South Pacific was dominated by Europeans and centred in Sydney so that even the New Zealand Europeans were marginalised. Indigenisation in the British Empire made it unavoidable that the General Conference would be broken up. Indigenisation continues to be a value today, but the desire for corporate strength is also being evidenced by those who have sought out the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. The modern Wesleyan Methodists should be carefully structured to provide a balance between indigenisation and corporate strength.

FURTHER RESEARCH REQUIRED

The discussion that Dean Kelley initiated in 1972⁴⁸ with his thesis that conservative churches grow because of their strictness has been pursued by other sociologists since then. Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead introduced a variation on Kelley's theory in 2005⁴⁹ with the thesis that a subjective spiritual experience is the mark of growing churches, although it is noted that this subjective experience often coexists with Kelley's strictness. John Wesley's priorities acknowledge both concepts with remarkable consistency. Wesley's teaching began with a supernatural conversion experience and the experience was attained and maintained through various disciplines. Further study into the cause and effect between Wesley's

⁴⁸ Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion*, Rose edition (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University and Rose, 1995).

⁴⁹ Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, et al., *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Carlton, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, Kindle edition, 2005).

expectation of a spiritual conversion and Christian perfection and his insistence on spiritual disciplines would be useful.

In the history of Methodism in Australia and the South Pacific, it would be useful to have more research into the 1890's class meeting debate. There is an abundance of newspaper reports and archival material available, but it would be helpful to know who the major characters were in the debate and what was happening in the New Zealand, South Australian and other conferences that made the debate so polarised. It would also be helpful to parallel the Australasian process of removing the class-meeting-test with the process in other Methodist centres, especially Britain and North America.

It is shown in the interviews that one of the Tongan men in Australia was encouraged by the Tongan President to join an evangelical fellowship rather than join the Uniting Church,⁵⁰ and that one of the Fijian men in New Zealand was encouraged by the Fijian President to join an evangelical fellowship rather than remain in New Zealand Methodism.⁵¹ It appears that further research might uncover some difference between the official policy of loyalty to the Uniting Church/Methodist Church of New Zealand in the Pacific denominations and the personal concerns of some of the leaders.

More research into the development of each district of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia would be useful. The limitations of space have necessitated a superficial overview of each district after 1983 in this thesis, with focus upon the early beginnings and outstanding losses of later years. The inner workings of the districts, including a review of the leadership, the local churches and the role of the lay people would be a meaningful and deserving project.

Much more work is needed on the mission fields of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church, particularly on the mission to Papua New Guinea. It is noted that Cheri Floyd, current Wesleyan missionary in Papua New Guinea has been working toward a history of that mission for some years and that Solomon Soto is doing some research in the Solomon Islands. In the same way that the deaths of Aubrey Carnell

⁵⁰ See chapter 13: 412.

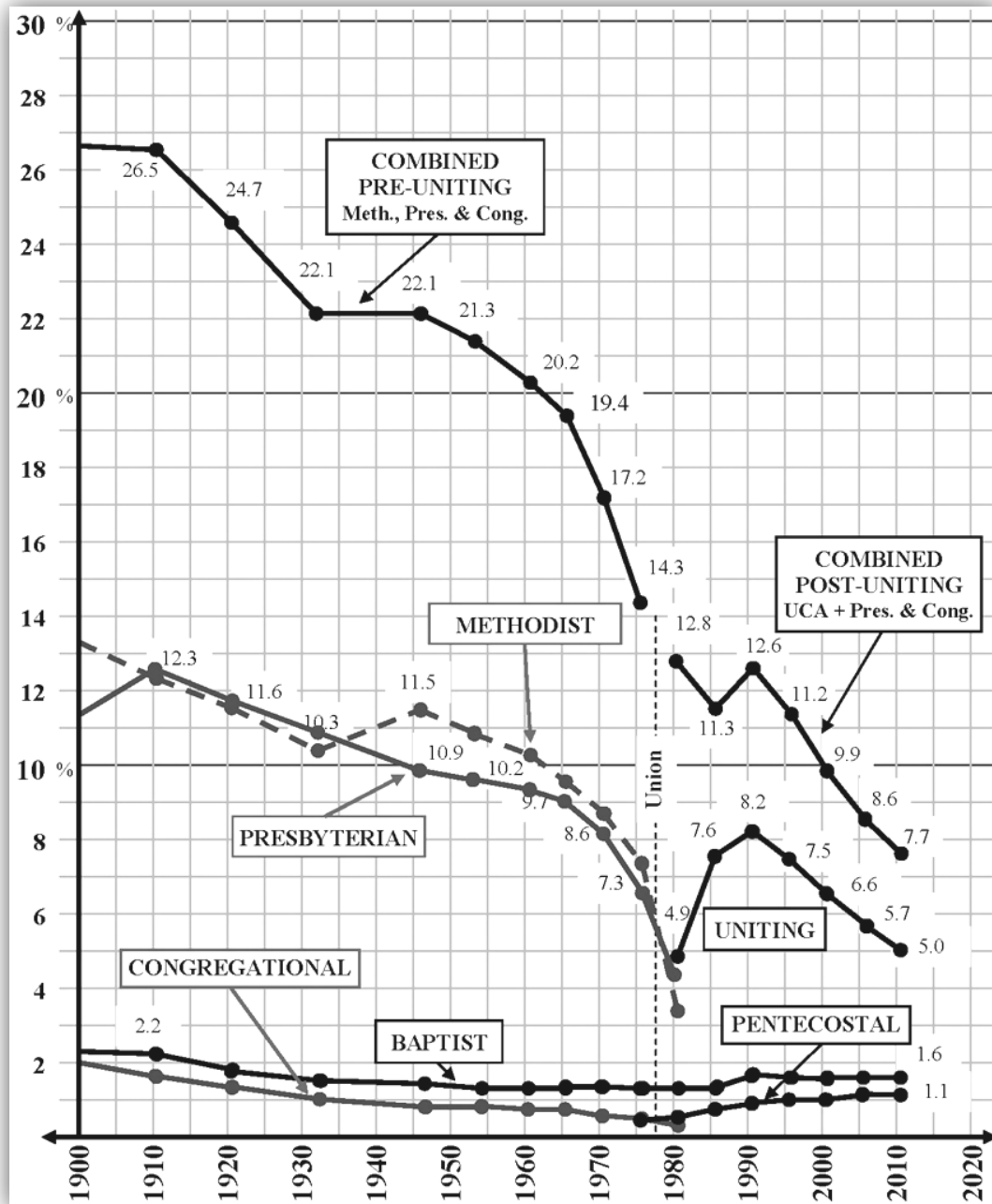
⁵¹ See chapter 13: 453.

and James Ridgway provided impetus for this thesis, the passing of the early generation of Wesleyan missionaries to Papua New Guinea creates some urgency for a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church's PNG mission.

APPENDIX A

Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational & pre-Uniting as % of the population

Figure A.1 Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational & Uniting as % of population¹



¹ 1861-1891 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics microfiche, *La Trobe Australiana Collections*, State Library of Victoria; 1901-2011 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/home?opendocument>.

APPENDIX B

THE FIRST CHURCHES 1946-1947

The first four churches were Moonee Ponds (May 1946), Bendigo (October 1946), Yarraville (January 1947) and Cohuna (March 1947). Figure B.1 shows the name changes and duration of these early congregations and the headquarters.

Figure B.1 Churches at a glance 1945 to 1948

	HQ	PLACES OF WORSHIP						#
1945	Flinders Lane	Essendon Ascot Vale						
1946	Elizabeth Street	Moonee Ponds	Bendigo	Footscray	Yarraville			
1947	Russell Street						2	
1948	Flaming Tower						4	
1949		West Coburg	Sunshine	Cohuna			4	
1950					Dalton's Br College	Batwyn	5	
1951							6	
1952							6	
1953						Highbett	6	
1954							6	

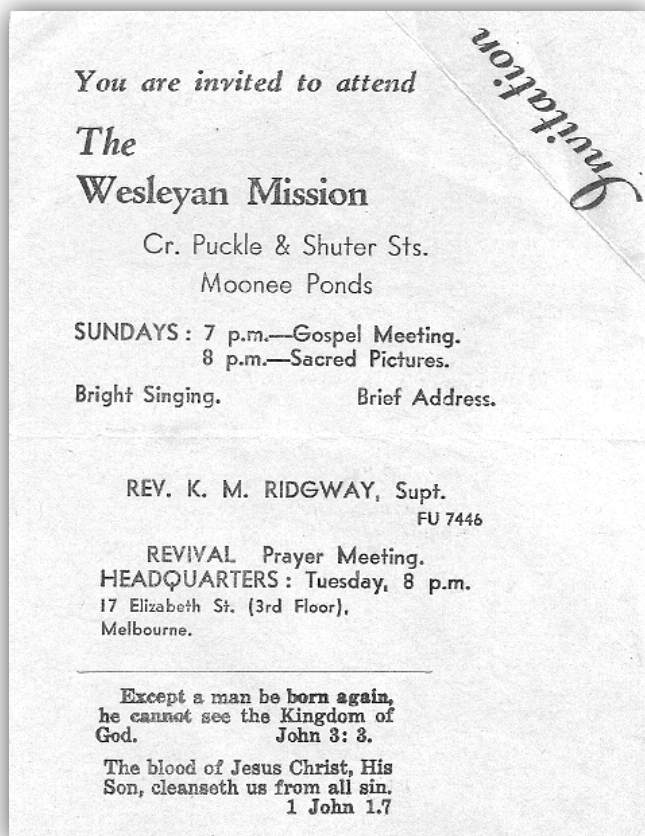
Moonee Ponds – Carlton. In May 1946, after five months of tent meetings in Essendon and Ascot Vale an upper floor room was rented in Puckle Street, Moonee Ponds for regular services¹ with Kingsley Ridgway as the pastor. The new Moonee Ponds church engaged in vigorous street evangelism as well as Sunday worship and soon attracted the attentions of the "notorious 'Moonee Mob,'"² The Moonee Mob was a group of boys who had grown up while their fathers were away at war and were said to be quite delinquent. They were known to drink, gamble and steal from

¹ Glen O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway: Wesleyan-Holiness Pioneer," in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Australia: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 61.

² "Conference President's Report," *1st District Conference*, November 1947 (Melbourne: Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia).

people in the streets below the Puckle Street meetings.³ Ridgway led his congregation in street evangelism with the support of several students from the Melbourne Bible Institute.⁴ This street ministry attracted the attentions of these young men who then made sport of marching loudly upstairs to try to disrupt the worship meetings. However, they eventually stopped harassing the congregation, especially when two of their members were converted and joined the congregation.

Figure B.2 An advertising flyer for the Moonee Ponds Church 1946⁵



From November 1946 the Moonee Ponds premises were no longer available so the congregation rented a former Church of Christ building at 567 Rathdowne Street, Carlton and held the official opening on November 23-24, 1946. See figure B.3. Seventeen young adults ("around the twenty-year-old mark") were at the altar seeking Christ at the opening service and another eight young people the following

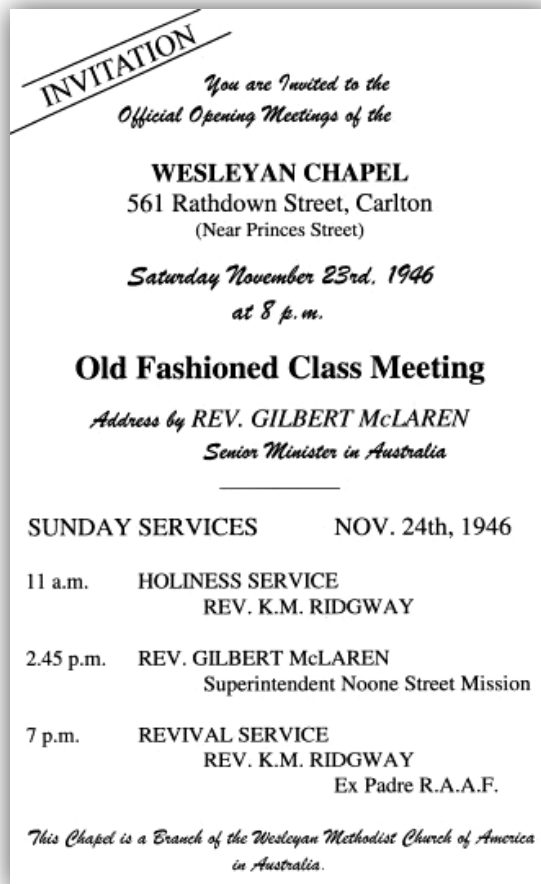
³ Alberta Metz, *God Found Kingsley Ridgway* (Marion, Indiana: Wesley Press, 1985), 45.

⁴ James Ridgway, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia: Interesting Facts for Interested Friends* (Melbourne: Wesley Press, 1965), 5.

⁵ K. Ridgway records (Archives).

week.⁶ With the transition to Carlton, Ridgway passed the local church ministry over to Charles Lee, who served the church for a brief period until he was reassigned to the Bendigo Church in February 1947. Ridgway then resumed the role of pastor of the Carlton Church, although Aubrey Carnell filled the pulpit for him in June and July while Ridgway was in North America.

Figure B.3 An advertising flyer for the Carlton Church 1946⁷



Bendigo. The commencement of work in Bendigo provides an insight into the urgency of the early work and the impetuous decision making of the leaders. In July 1946 Kingsley Ridgway and Charles Lee went to Bendigo to visit some positive contacts and to start a congregation in a rented hall.⁸ On July 30 their plans had changed to the extent that the District Board was advised, "that it was our intention to

⁶ Correspondence to Swauger, December 6, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷ K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁸ Correspondence from Swauger, June 20, 1946, in postscript précis of K. Ridgway's response sent on July 15, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

purchase a church property at the corner of Forest and McKenzie Streets, Bendigo."⁹ This former Congregational Church building now lay unused and was available for a very good price of £2,650.¹⁰ In August Charles Lee was granted a local preacher's licence¹¹ with special commission to visit rural Victoria. In this commission can be seen some of the functioning of the early small group of leaders, where decisions were made and acted upon and then, at a later time, recorded in the minutes: Lee was, "accepted as a conference Preacher, and assigned to visiting Victorian rural areas. He reported favourably on Bendigo and Cohuna, and after much prayer we decided to purchase the [Bendigo] property."¹²

In September the American Church gave its approval¹³ and notwithstanding some expressions of concern as to the haste of the action,¹⁴ the purchase went ahead and the property taken possession of in October 1946, three months after the first visit to Bendigo. In Ridgway's request for permission from the North American Church he stipulated that the Australian Church would pay for this building. This commitment proved unstainable though, and eventually led to the loss of the Bendigo work and contributed to the departure of Charles Lee from the ministry. However, the action was not as rash as it might appear, for a Bendigo man had promised to gift the equivalent of US\$800 and to loan a further US\$1600 for the purchase, but he proved to be unreliable in the matter.¹⁵ When the congregation did not grow as quickly as anticipated, the Australian Church could not afford the repayments and the American leaders could not readily raise funds to assist. J.R. Swauger wrote apologetically:

I am somewhat in a quandary concerning the matter of finance, and I will tell you frankly why. When your cablegram arrived, I was at Miltonvale, Kansas. I got in touch with Bro. Eddy and he instructed me to put our approval on the proposed purchase, provided it would be financed there in Australia. Your cablegram had already stated that provision...

Now, if I ask the Board permission to send money for this building, I am afraid there will not be a favourable reaction. I believe that you can understand my

⁹ District Board Minutes, July 30, 1946 (Archives).

¹⁰ Correspondence from Leonard L. Dungey, January 8, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹¹ District Board Minutes, August 20, 1946 (Archives).

¹² "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

¹³ Correspondence from Swauger, September 5, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

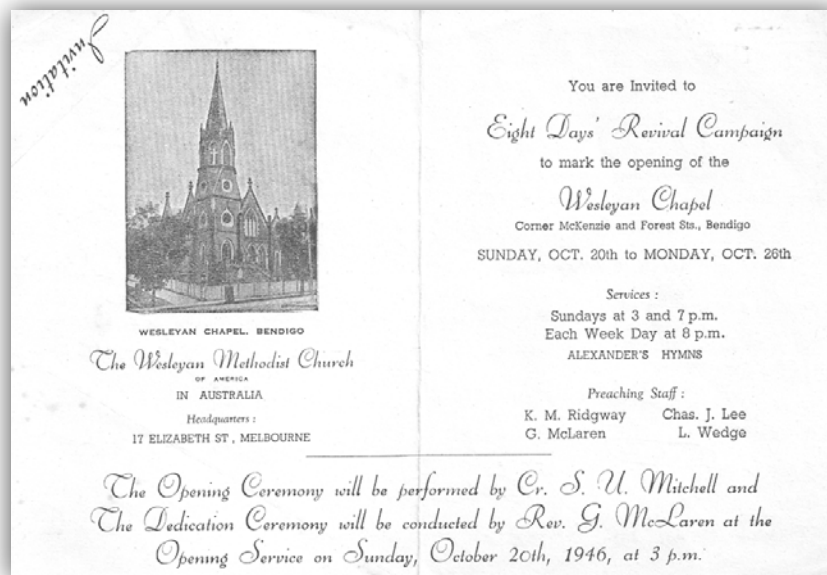
¹⁴ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 62-63.

¹⁵ Correspondence to Swauger, November 16, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives). This dollar figure was most likely calculated from Australian pounds for Swauger's sake.

position. This is what I propose to do: I shall prepare an article for The Wesleyan Methodist and tell about the building... and in my article I shall mention the need for finance and suggest that if anyone wants to help in the purchase of this building, that we shall be grateful. I trust that this will be satisfactory to you. I am sure that you will be able to see the position in which I find myself.¹⁶

Some funds did eventually come, but not as much as would have been gained through an authorised appeal, and not sufficient to prevent the closure of the church in Bendigo.

Figure B.4 An advertising flyer for the Bendigo Church opening 1946¹⁷



The Bendigo building was a grand old stone church in a prominent location. Wesleyans from across the state came to help clean out the building and prepare it for the public opening on October 20, 1946. Mr Leslie Archbold was granted a local preacher's licence on October 8 and appointed as pastor in Bendigo. A radio broadcast produced by the American church was sponsored on the local radio station for three months and proved quite effective. However, despite the exciting beginnings, the work in Bendigo never really flourished. Ridgway reported:

Bendigo is not doing as well as we had hoped. It is a stronghold of freemasonry, and practically every minister there is a mason. As we are the only church in Australia taking a stand against secret societies, they are active in opposition.

¹⁶ Correspondence from Swauger, September 5, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹⁷ K. Ridgway records (Archives).

But the need certainly is there, and "prayer and pains can accomplish anything." Bendigo is the center of the Northern part of the State, and our radio message is teaching the whole area; so we hope to reap in many a Northern town the seed we are sowing in these days.¹⁸

Concerns about the Bendigo purchase proved well founded. The debt of the Bendigo property was too much for the local congregation or for the young Australian denomination. By October 1947 just over £910 had been spent on the Bendigo property and its furnishings, using up almost one third of all general and designated funds received from North America in the two years of the denomination's existence.¹⁹ With conference approval, Les Archbold resigned as pastor of the Bendigo congregation in February 1947 and took employment in Geelong where he completed his matriculation subjects and applied to a Wesleyan College in the U.S.A for ministerial studies.²⁰ Archbold was replaced by Charles Lee, who only stayed two months before also resigning. Mr William Bromley was appointed as lay pastor to the Bendigo congregation in April 1947 and subsequently appointed as a conference preacher at the inaugural District Conference in November 1947. Bromley continued at that post until the church closed in 1949.

During 1947, in an attempt to alleviate the financial strain, attempts were underway to sell a section of land along one side of the Bendigo property. Unfortunately, this sale took almost two years to complete and the pressure of debt was mounting. In January 1948 the new Board of Trustees agreed to continue paying the monthly repayment of £17.6.8 and to urge the real estate agents to move quickly to sell the subdivided section of the property. By January 1949 the section had been sold to Mr Chisolm, a Bendigo chemist, and negotiations were underway to sell the remaining church property to the Presbyterian Church. On March 31, 1949 William Bromley resigned as a conference preacher, still holding the hope that the congregation could continue without the church building,²¹ but the Bendigo Church became the first of many losses for the new denomination. To date no Wesleyan Methodist Church has been re-established in Bendigo. This former Congregational

¹⁸ Correspondence to Swauger, December 6, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹⁹ A total of £3085.8.7 being received in the two years from November 1, 1945 to October 31, 1947. "Treasurer's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

²⁰ Correspondence to Swauger, February 8, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

²¹ Correspondence Bromley to Cox, March 10, 1949, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

and Wesleyan Methodist Church building is today St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bendigo.

Bromley's story. William Ewart Bromley (1905 – 1969) was born in Worcester, England, the second of four children to Frederick and Helen Bromley. The family migrated to Australia, arriving in Melbourne on January 21, 1921 and settled in Mildura. William was a serious young man who sought to serve God from a young age. In 1925 he enrolled at the Methodist Missionaries Training College in Kew, Melbourne and afterwards served the Methodist Church for seven years in Victoria, including pastorates near Bendigo and in Ballarat.²² In 1932 he moved to South Australia and applied for ministry at Wirrulla.²³ From there he served as a Methodist missionary to the towns of Kalangadoo and Mount Burr, South Australia²⁴ and then at Robinvale, Victoria.²⁵ In 1938 Bromley made a radical break, leaving Victoria and South Australia to begin unsponsored ministry in the Torres Strait as an evangelist to Japanese pearl divers.²⁶ This ministry was cut short when war with Japan was declared, so Bromley stayed to serve as an Army Chaplain in Cooktown. After the war he transferred from Cooktown²⁷ to Yeppoon²⁸ with the Methodist Church, but by this time he was quite disillusioned by the modernistic trends in the Methodist Church.

In December 1946, after reading an article in the *New Life* paper about the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Bromley wrote to Kingsley Ridgway to enquire about the Church's doctrines.²⁹ In one of the many subsequent letters he wrote:

Perhaps you do not realise how delighted I am that your Church has commenced work in Australia. Sad to relate our Australian Methodist Church has lost its soul

²² Agnes E. van den Berg, *Arrows of the Almighty: The Story of William Bromley, Pioneer Missionary to Papua New Guinea* (Kansas City: Nazarene, 1972), 11-14.

²³ *Port Lincoln Times* newspaper, October 7, 1932, 3.

²⁴ *The Advertiser, Adelaide* newspaper, March 31, 1936, 6.

²⁵ *The Argus* newspaper, March 30, 1939, 2.

²⁶ Correspondence from Bromley, January 16, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives). Also, Berg, *Arrows of the Almighty*, 15. A suggestion from Bromley's family is that he lost a sweetheart, leading to the change of life. This may be reflected in the "Funeral Notices," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 17, 1938, 9, in which W.E. Bromley of Chatswood mourned the death of his wife Mabel. This is consistent with other indicators that the Bromleys had a family home in Sydney.

²⁷ *Cairns Post* newspaper, April 10, 1943, 3.

²⁸ *Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton* newspaper, April 20, 1946, 9.

²⁹ Correspondence from Bromley, December 5, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

and only a few of our preachers have passion for saving souls and real Methodist doctrine is not proclaimed.³⁰

When the Methodist Church arranged to transfer him from his fruitful ministry at Yeppoon to the more remote Dawson Valley circuit, he chose to resign and join the Wesleyan Methodists instead. Initially he called meetings with friends and contacts to consider starting a work in Rockhampton, writing in March 1947, "I need hardly say that I am now a Wesleyan Methodist by sound conviction and am already preaching the doctrines, and only pray that the Lord will do the rest that is helpful."³¹ When nothing could be done in Queensland at that time, Bromley was sent to be interviewed by Theron Colegrove³² in Brisbane. Bromley met with Colegrove and Colegrove sent a positive report about him to Ridgway.³³ Bromley decided that his place was with the Wesleyan Methodists and in response to the pastoral need at Bendigo he moved to Victoria in June 1947 and took up ministry immediately. When the Bendigo building was sold in 1949 Bromley returned to Sydney.

In Melbourne, Bromley had attended a missionary service to hear Gerald T. Bustin speak of the East and West Indies Bible Mission work at Pabrbruk in the New Guinea highlands. Ridgway and Bustin had known each other in Egypt prior to World War II and Ridgway was quite interested in Bustin's new venture into the Highlands of New Guinea in 1948. That interest was adopted by Bromley. Bromley flew to New Guinea early in 1950 and settled into the Pabrbruk ministry thirty kilometres east of Mount Hagen. In November 1955 Bromley returned to Australia to pastor an indigenous congregation at Tweed Heads until he was ordained with the Nazarene Church. He then returned to New Guinea with the Nazarenes in August 1958, stationed at Kudjip, which is also near Mt Hagen. In 1963 he married missionary nurse, Margaret Robson and together they had one son, John. During these years, William Bromley renewed his acquaintance with Kingsley Ridgway and the Wesleyan Mission, which had been established to the South of Mount Hagen in the 1960s. During this time Ridgway also renewed his relationship with the East and West Indies Bible Mission, taking over the Tagaru and Alia missions from them.

³⁰ Correspondence from Bromley, January 16, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³¹ Correspondence from Bromley, March 21, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

³² Theron Colegrove is the American serviceman who influenced Ridgway during WWII. See chapter 6: 200.

³³ Correspondence from Colegrove, March 12, 1947, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

William Bromley died in March 1969 and was buried at the mission station in the Jimi Valley.³⁴

Yarraville – Sunshine. In the 1940s, following his resignation from the Salvation Army, J.T. Carnell, together with his wife, Elsie, and two adult children, Aubrey and Gwen were living in Footscray, Melbourne. J.T. Carnell and Gilbert McLaren were good friends,³⁵ so it was no surprise that Carnell became aware of and interested in Kingsley Ridgway's work. Elsie and Gwen attended the first class meeting held at Elizabeth Street and took associate membership.³⁶ By this time they had received Carnell's good report about Ridgway's ministry and almost certainly attended other meetings, since they were ready for membership when they attended the Elizabeth Street meeting. J.T. Carnell attended the following week and took associate membership.³⁷ The meeting when Carnell took membership was, coincidentally, the same meeting at which James Ridgway took membership, probably home on mid-year holidays from Longerenong College. All three of the Carnell's committed to full membership at the next meeting in August 1946.³⁸

With the Carnells now active in the church, it was not long before ministry in Footscray/Yarraville was opened. In January 1947 tent meetings were held at Somerville Road, Yarraville,³⁹ and in February meetings commenced at the Labor Hall, on Severn Street. J.T. Carnell had been granted a local preacher's licence⁴⁰ and he was now appointed as the pastor of Yarraville.⁴¹ Aubrey Carnell took full membership in April 1947, opening the way for him to receive a local preacher's licence.⁴² There is no record of him having held associate membership prior to this date, though his own testimony suggests that he was an associate member much earlier.⁴³ It is noted that Carnell took on preaching responsibilities at the Carlton

³⁴ William Bromley's New Guinea story is told in Berg, *Arrows of the Almighty*.

³⁵ O'Brien, "Kingsley Ridgway," 79.

³⁶ District Board Minutes, July 30, 1946 (Archives).

³⁷ District Board Minutes, August 13, 1946 (Archives).

³⁸ District Board Minutes, August 20, 1946 (Archives).

³⁹ Yarraville work occasionally named after the adjoining suburb of Footscray; District Board Minutes, January 22, 1947; June 12, 1947 (Archives).

⁴⁰ District Board Minutes, January 15, 1947 (Archives).

⁴¹ "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

⁴² District Board Minutes, April 2, 1947 (Archives).

⁴³ Aubrey Carnell, "The Life Story of Rev. Dr. Aubrey Carnell" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, 2000), 22.

Church while Ridgway was in America from April to July in 1947,⁴⁴ and this is certainly the catalyst for the updating of his membership status in 1947.

The first District Conference was held at the hall used by the Yarraville congregation at the end of 1947, bringing a boost to the work of the local church. In July 1948 J.T. Carnell started outreach into a new housing area of East Sunshine and subsequently Yarraville was incorporated into the Sunshine work.⁴⁵

Cohuna and Dalton's Bridge. Charles Lee was assigned to the rural areas of Victoria in August 1946, which was a natural fit for him since he had previously served as President of the Local Preachers Association for the Methodist Church in Victoria and he undoubtedly had many valuable contacts. With Lee's recommendation, several visits were made to Cohuna and tent meetings were held from March 15, 1947 to gather community support. As a result of the meetings, nine members were received into the Cohuna Wesleyan Methodist Church on March 24.

Two of the strong local families that supported the Wesleyan Methodist Church were the Randalls in Cohuna and the Gouldings at Dalton's Bridge. Mr Edgar Randall was appointed as a local preacher following the tent meetings and in 1948 he was appointed as Supply Pastor.⁴⁶ Edgar Randall also had a significant district presence and served on the District Board from 1948 to 1950. Keith Goulding married Marjorie Ridgway (Kingsley and Dorcas's daughter) in January 1952 at the West Coburg Wesleyan Methodist Church.⁴⁷ Keith and Marj Goulding served faithfully at Dalton's Bridge until relocating to Papua New Guinea to assist the Wesleyan mission. Kingsley Ridgway visited Cohuna regularly in the late 1940s to help develop the new congregation, and when Ridgway was absent Grace Wood visited.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ District Board Minutes, June 12, September 18, 1947 and "Conference President's Report," 1st District Conference, November 1947 (Archives).

⁴⁵ "Conference President's Report," 2nd District Conference, December 1948 (Archives).

⁴⁶ Carnell, *Life Story*, 23.

⁴⁷ *Riverine Herald* (Echuca) newspaper, January 12, 1952, 4.

⁴⁸ District Board Minutes, June 12, September 18, December 18, 1947 (Archives).

APPENDIX C

LOCAL CHURCHES 1948-1961

West Coburg. In June 1948 the Carlton congregation relocated to the Peace Hall at 42 Walhalla Street, West Coburg and Philip Favaloro was appointed as the pastor. The church grew well in West Coburg, quickly surpassing the work that had been in Carlton¹ and continued its heritage as the home church for the denomination until the college property in South Street Glenroy became the hub of the growing work.² The West Coburg church was sufficiently established in 1953 that the district purchased two blocks of land on Rainer Street, Coonans Hill (Pascoe Vale South). However, this land was not developed and in 1956 the district sold the land for £1600,³ providing the district a good profit.

In the later years of this decade the West Coburg church was a stable fellowship with a strong community presence. West Coburg's statistical reporting peaked from the years of 1951 and 1955, with seventeen church members with two hundred and two children in the Sunday School in 1954.⁴ However, by 1961 the church was in slow decline with less than ten members.⁵

Being located close to the Bible College the West Coburg Church was a training ground for a number of the new ministers. Philip Favaloro, Max Richardson and Walter Hotchkin were each given their first pastoral assignment at West Coburg.

Philip Favaloro is reported to have come to the West Coburg Church initially from a Brethren background⁶ with more recently influence from the Pentecostal Richmond Temple. The Richmond Temple left Favaloro's loyalty divided between

¹ "Conference President's Report," 2nd District Conference, December 1948 (Melbourne: Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia).

² James Ridgway, *The Beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in Australia* (Marion, Indiana: Wesleyan Methodist Church, c. 1960), 4.

³ District Board Minutes, July 16, 1956 (Archives).

⁴ "Statistical Report," 8th District Conference, December 1954 (Archives).

⁵ "Statistical Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

⁶ Draft article by Cox, "Definite Progress in Australia," March 1950, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

them and the Wesleyans so that he came and went several times over the next few years. In June 1948 he was recommended by his local church to study for the ministry and was appointed to serve as the pastor of the West Coburg Church. However, in June 1949 Favaloro resigned from the West Coburg Church and as a conference preacher.⁷ In February 1950 Favaloro requested re-entry into the denomination, which was granted, and he was assigned as a conference evangelist. One month later, at the district conference, Favaloro was ordained.⁸ In June 1950 Favaloro was appointed as Assistant Pastor at Sunshine Church, but resigned from that appointment in September. He subsequently resigned from the denomination as well in October.⁹ In 1954 Favaloro returned to the Wesleyan Methodist Church, his credentials were received, and he was appointed to serve as assistant to Rev. Arch Hughes at the Balwyn Church. Shortly afterwards Hughes resigned and Favaloro was appointed as the pastor of Balwyn church. In 1955 Favaloro led in constructing the new church building, but in July 1956 he resigned from Balwyn,¹⁰ and his resignation from the denomination was accepted on September 1 the same year.¹¹ A glimpse into Philip Favaloro's unsettled behaviour is provided in his 1954 resignation from Balwyn, at which time Favaloro is reported to say, "He did not consider that the gifts of the Spirit as he understood them would be allowed to operate in the Wesleyan Methodist denomination."¹²

Max Richardson came from the farming community of Mole Creek, about seventy-five kilometres west of Launceston, Tasmania. He attended a Methodist Church under the pastoral care of Cyril Ratcliff. Richardson was converted at an Ambassadors for Christ camp where Kingsley Ridgway was speaking.¹³ Sensing a call to ministry, he visited the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in January 1952 and returned in February to begin studying at the Bible College. In his third year at college, in Robert Mattke's first year as Principal, Richardson began to sense a call to service in the Wesleyan Methodist church. In December 1954, as Richardson concluded his studies, he was received as a ministerial student. Richardson was slow

⁷ Letter of resignation, June 9, 1949, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁸ "Conference President's Report," 3rd District Conference, March 1950 (Archives).

⁹ "Conference President's Report," 4th District Conference, December 1950 (Archives).

¹⁰ District Board Minutes, July 16, 1956 (Archives).

¹¹ "Conference President's Report," 10th District Conference, December 1956 (Archives).

¹² Correspondence Hughes to Mattke, September 19, 1954, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹³ Draft article by Mattke, 1958, K. Ridgway records 3 (Archives).

to accept denominational affiliation because, in his own words, he "always sought to reserve the right to do [his] own thinking."¹⁴ To serve with the Wesleyans he first had to become a church member, and to become a church member he first had to be baptised. Richardson took his time over big decisions. On Sunday December 26, 1954 Richardson was baptised by Kingsley Ridgway at Williamstown Beach.¹⁵

Richardson was immediately assigned to pastor the West Coburg Church beside Kingsley Ridgway until Ridgway went to start the church in Launceston. In June 1959 Richardson was reassigned to the Launceston Church.

Walter Hotchkin (1932-2005) also trained at the West Coburg Church. Hotchkin was the oldest of ten children to Bert and Rose Hotchkin, from the potato growing and dairy farming community of Childers, Victoria. At twenty-one years old Hotchkin responded to the Gospel at the 1954 Easter Youth Camp at Lake Tyres. Some weeks after the camp eight of the youth similarly responded to the gospel under the preaching of Methodist minister of the Trafalgar circuit, Rev. Ken Smith.¹⁶ Two of those who responded at that meeting were Hotchkin's girlfriend and future wife, Dorothy Akers¹⁷ and her brother Ray Akers. Walter and Dorothy were married on October 22, 1955¹⁸ and their first son, Phillip was born on September 28, 1956. Hotchkin began learning how to witness and preach in the local church and he attempted the Home Missioners correspondence course through the Methodist Church. He found the correspondence course unsatisfying, so in November 1957 he and Dorothy visited the Wesleyan Methodist Bible College to consider taking residential studies. They returned to the College to begin fulltime studies in February 1958. During their first few months in Melbourne, Walter and Dorothy with Phillip were living upstairs at the Bible College as they awaited the completion of the first block of units. It was here that Dorothy experienced the fullness of the Spirit. Dorothy was campus cook and found the students less than helpful at times. One

¹⁴ Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough, Pioneer Church Work in Australia: 1955 to 1995* (Lilydale, Victoria: Self published, 1995), 41, 39.

¹⁵ Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 61.

¹⁶ Ken Smith was the father of John Smith, leader of the God's Squad motor bike club.

¹⁷ This was a recommitment for Dorothy, who states that she was converted at the 1953 East Camp. Dorothy Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins and the Wesleyan Church and Mission in PNG" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, c. 1998), 1.

¹⁸ Material for this paragraph from Walter Hotchkin, "This is My Story" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

evening while praying through some of these grievances with Walter she found release in prayer, which she described as "being taken to the 7th heaven". Dorothy also noted that she was loud enough to draw the attention of other students, who came and interrupted the prayer session because of the noise.¹⁹ Hotchkin was also seeking the holiness experience as he became aware of his own faults, and on July 19, 1959 while leading the service at the West Coburg Church with Graeme Carnell playing the piano, Hotchkin felt himself pressed to the ground by God's presence. In his own words, "The Lord Himself put his hand on my forehead and pressed me to the floor. Down on my knees I prayed in the Spirit."²⁰ Soon after they moved into the new block of units constructed behind the main college building and on November 25, 1959 their second son, Gregory, was born.

As a student Hotchkin helped fill the pulpit in Cohuna and Highett Churches on occasions and in January 1960 Hotchkin was appointed as assistant pastor to Robert Mattke at West Coburg Church.²¹ In January 1961, with Mattkes returning to America, Hotchkin was accepted as a ministerial candidate at the District Conference and assigned as sole pastor the West Coburg Church.²² In March of the same year he was reassigned as assistant pastor to the Highett Church, while Robert Bell was assigned to West Coburg.²³ By this time discussions were well underway for Hotchkin to accompany Kingsley Ridgway to Papua New Guinea later that same year, and the move to assist at Highett was so that he could be released at a moment's notice.

Sunshine. In July 1948 the Yarraville congregation began an outreach into the developing suburb of Sunshine, and soon after closed the Yarraville work and combined with the Sunshine ministry. They rented the Progress Association hall in Dobson Crescent,²⁴ East Sunshine. While in this hall, from 1948 to 1953, the Sunday School regularly ministered to one hundred and forty-five children.²⁵ From 1949 the

¹⁹ Correspondence to Cheri Floyd, January 30, 2007, Hotchkin records (Archives).

²⁰ W. Hotchkin, "This is My Story," 6-7.

²¹ "Official Acts of the President," District Board Minutes, February 18, 1960 (Archives).

²² "Reports of the Committee on Itinerary and Orders and the Ministerial Relations Committee," 14th District Conference, January 1961 (Archives).

²³ District Board Minutes, March 4, 1961 (Archives).

²⁴ The Progress Association Hall was alternatively listed as Ravenhall Street or Dobson Crescent, the two streets being connected.

²⁵ *Sunshine Advocate* newspaper, June 20, 1952, 1.

congregation began to seek land upon which to build²⁶ and when suitable land was found two years later, the district provided a gift of £366 toward the purchase.²⁷ It is noted that, at the same time the church was also applying to the council for a gift of land on Darnley Street, but this was formally declined by the council in November 1951.²⁸

That same year construction of a worship building commenced on the property and the local church undertook repayments of £5/week to the district.²⁹ The new church at 139 Devonshire Road, Sunshine was officially opened in December 1952 during the Sunday School anniversary, with Dr. Reisdorph from America as guest speaker.³⁰ Cyril Ratcliff was assisted in completing the construction project in 1952 by Clarence Eldred and in 1953 by James Ridgway. The Sunshine building was usable in 1953, but not properly completed until 1954. In 1953 the church sublet part of the building to the education department for use as a classroom, which subsidised the local church's repayments on the building by £3/week.³¹ In October 1953 the church voted to request demotion to a mission church (following the example of Cohuna), which brought it under more direct supervision of the district but also enabled the district to assume payment of the £2/week that the local church had been paying, thus freeing the church to provide a little more financial support for their pastor.³² Clearly finances were very difficult for the young church.

Amidst conflict between the former pastor, J.T. Carnell and the Conference President Leo Cox, the chapel was dedicated a second time on December 6, 1953. See figure C.1. This was one of Leo Cox's last actions as Superintendent before returning to the United States later the same month.

²⁶ District Board Minutes, December 3, 1949 (Archives).

²⁷ District Board Minutes, September 20, 1951 (Archives).

²⁸ *Sunshine Advocate* newspaper, November 30, 1951, 2.

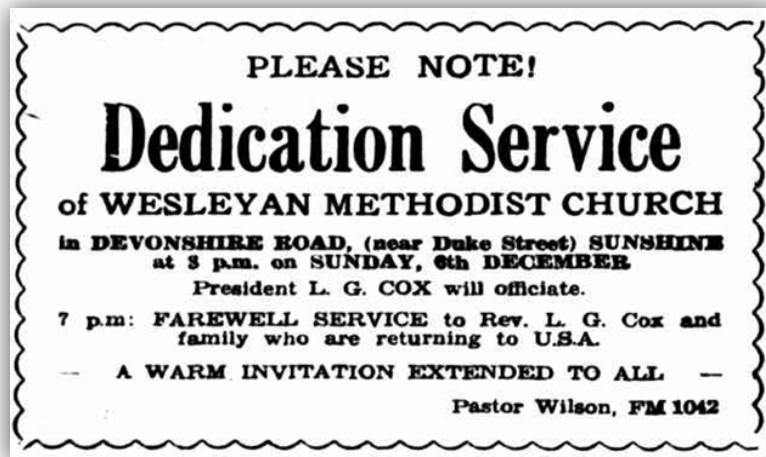
²⁹ District Board Minutes, August 12, 1952 (Archives).

³⁰ *Sunshine Advocate* newspaper, December 12, 1952, 1.

³¹ District Board Minutes, June 18, 1953; October 1, 1953 (Archives).

³² District Board Minutes, October 1, 1953 (Archives).

Figure C.1 Church Notice, dedication of Sunshine chapel 1953³³



A fire damaged part of the Sunshine building on March 23, 1954. Fortunately the repairs costing £635 were covered by insurance and the chapel was finally completed.³⁴ The construction of a parsonage was first mooted in 1956³⁵ when William Morris was appointed to that pastorate but when the Morrises purchased their own home in Sunshine the parsonage project fell off the agenda.

The unusual "double-dedication" and the wording of the 1953 church notice, which listed Charles Wilson as the pastor and Leo Cox as officiating gives a hint of the conflict that had been developing between Cox and J.T. Carnell.³⁶ These immediate problems began when Mr Cyril Ratcliff, formerly a home missionary with the Methodist Church in Tasmania,³⁷ desired to transfer to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria. J.T. Carnell was now sixty-eight years old and in March he "consented to retire as pastor in order that Mr Ratcliff might come in as pastor for the remainder of the year."³⁸ There is more to this resignation though, because Carnell was known to be upset over district management of building funds at Sunshine at the time,³⁹ and resigning may have been his statement of frustration. In any case, Carnell

³³ *Sunshine Advocate* newspaper, December 4, 1953, 4.

³⁴ "Conference President's Report," 8th District Conference, December 1954 (Archives).

³⁵ District Board Minutes, November 5, 1956 (Archives).

³⁶ In November 1951 J.T. resigned from the District Board over some unspoken matter and Cox replied by rebuking for J.T. Correspondence Cox and J.T., November 14, 21, 1951, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

³⁷ See Max Richardson's story page 487, where he came under Ratcliff's ministry in Tasmania.

³⁸ Correspondence from Cox, February 6, 1953, A. Carnell records (Archives).

³⁹ James M. Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia 1946-1956" (Wilmore, Kentucky: Term Paper for Asbury Theological Seminary, 1957), 20.

resigned as pastor of the Sunshine Church on March 13, 1952 and Cyril Ratcliff took his place in May. Carnell served out the year on the District Board and as assistant pastor in the local church, which proved an unwise arrangement. Cyril Ratcliff could not work with J.T. Carnell and their relationship deteriorated.

In December 1952 the District Conference formally approved Cyril Ratcliff as the Sunshine pastor and also elected him to the District Board. Following the conference, when J.T. Carnell went to reconcile with him, Ratcliff responded harshly. Carnell therefore decided to start a different congregation, The Sunshine East Gospel Church, and notified Leo Cox of his intention. Unfortunately he and his daughter Gwen, started the new work in the rented hall in Dobson Crescent; the same hall in which the Sunshine congregation had met for the previous five years. The Carnells were very effective with children's ministry and before long a good number of the Sunshine congregation had rejoined Carnell in his new work. The advertisements for the two services in the *Sunshine Advocate*, coincidentally, ran one after the other throughout 1953. See figure C.2.

Figure C.2 Church Notice advertising J.T. Carnell's new meetings 1953⁴⁰



⁴⁰ *Sunshine Advocate* newspaper, May 8, 1953, 4.

Denominational charges were brought against J.T. Carnell at the December 1952 Conference for what was perceived to be un-ministerial conduct, but it is reported that Carnell failed to present himself for any of the disciplinary sessions.⁴¹ Therefore, on the January 31, 1953 Leo Cox wrote to Carnell to formally advise him that his ministerial credentials were revoked because he had started an independent church and therefore had forfeited membership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. As a non-member he could not be an ordained minister, and to press his point, Cox reminded Carnell that he would no longer be eligible to solemnise marriages.⁴² When Leo Cox began to receive questions from the community he took the further exceptional step of hand-delivering an open letter to residents in the Sunshine community explaining his version of events and painting Carnell in a poor light. This had the effect of further dividing the community, and it gave J.T. and Gwen Carnell cause to write to J.R. Swauger at the North American Headquarters to complain about Leo Cox's behaviour. Carnell wrote, "This trouble has upset the whole district, for seven members who left the Church with us are not keeping the matter secret."⁴³ Swauger replied to gently chide Carnell for unwisely launching his new group so close to the Sunshine Church but appears to have taken no other action. Cyril Ratcliff stayed with the Sunshine Church a little more than a year, resigning in October 1953. He was replaced by Charles Wilson, with whom Carnell had a much more amicable relationship and the following year the two congregations reunited.

Consequently, it was Charles Wilson and Leo Cox who, in December 1953, rededicated the church that Carnell had laboured to establish. Carnell wrote to Leo Cox to question this action:

I understand you are having another fresh opening of the Sunshine Church on Sunday afternoon next. It appears to me Brother Cox like a repetition of what has already been done... [Furthermore] After all there is only one who could really say at the opening of the church, just what happened, and how it all came about, that caused the anticipation to become a realization, & placed on its present sacred spot, "but denied it"⁴⁴

Two weeks later the District Conference met and Leo Cox reported to the conference on his actions regarding J.T. Carnell, "that his withdrawal from the

⁴¹ J. Ridgway, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia*, 21.

⁴² Correspondence Cox to J.T., January 31, 1953, A. Carnell records (Archives).

⁴³ Correspondence J.T. to Swauger, March 6, 1953, A. Carnell records (Archives).

⁴⁴ Correspondence J.T. to Cox, December 3, 1953, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

Sunshine Church removed him as an Elder in our Conference."⁴⁵ (The denomination still used the term "Elder" for an Ordained Minister at that time.) On the day after the President's report, Carnell made application to the District Conference to "re-enter the conference." This request was referred to the Itineracy and Orders Committee,⁴⁶ which then referred the question back to the President and his board.⁴⁷ There is no further record of the discussion, and of course, Leo Cox was no longer the President of the conference, having now returned to America. At the 1954 District Conference, J.T. Carnell's name reappears as an Elder of the church. Late in 1954 Carnell served on the District Board again for several meetings, and in 1955 he was appointed as Assistant Sunday School Superintendent at the Sunshine Church.⁴⁸ In 1956 J.T. Carnell attended the College Church and lent support to Aubrey Carnell, who was busy with church leadership and college management.⁴⁹ On November 11, 1960 J.T. Carnell wrote to the Conference President, James Ridgway, to tender his resignation from the Wesleyan Methodist Church for the purposes of returning to Salvation Army.⁵⁰ This resignation was accepted with reluctance by the President and Carnell was received by the Salvation Army as an Envoy at Footscray. By this time he was seventy-six years of age and clearly still quite vigorous. J.T. Carnell died at age ninety-five years and was buried by his son, Aubrey.

Sunshine Church's statistical reporting shows the church at its peak during the years of J.T. Carnell and Charles Wilson's leadership, noting that Carnell was still engaged in the Sunday School. There was a drastic drop in numbers during the year when Carnell ran the Sunshine East Gospel Church in competition with Cyril Ratcliff at the Wesleyan Methodist Church.⁵¹

1950: 6 members, 138 children	}	J.T. Carnell
1951: 9 members, 152 children		
1953: ? members, 40 children	}	Cyril Ratcliff (J.T. Carnell in opposition)

⁴⁵ "Conference President's Report: Official Acts," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁴⁶ "Minutes," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁴⁷ "Itineracy and Orders Committee Report," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁴⁸ District Board Minutes, February 1, 1955 (Archives).

⁴⁹ "Conference President Report," 10th District Conference, December 1956 (Archives).

⁵⁰ Letter of resignation, November 11, 1960, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

⁵¹ "Statistical Reports," District Conferences, 1950-1956 (Archives).

1954: 8 members, 178 children	}	Charles Wilson (J.T. Carnell assisting)
1955: ? members, 116 children		
1956: ? members, 118 children		

The number of adult members is not recorded once the local church became a Mission Church in 1953 and ceased to hold its own membership records.⁵² However by 1961, when the membership records resume, the numbers of adults and children has halved from the early 1950s.

Cohuna. On January 26, 1948 when a special session of the conference was called to ratify denominational property matters, it was agreed to hold the meeting at Cohuna. This meeting approved the mortgaging of the newly acquired Huntingtower property in Melbourne to the extent of £1,500 to underwrite further property purchases;⁵³ a discussion that motivated the Cohuna congregation to consider their own property needs. The Cohuna members had been pressing Aubrey Carnell to accept appointment as their pastor since the district conference two month's previously. Carnell described his initial unwillingness to accept this offer:

One of the things that transpired at that Conference was that the committee asked me to consider the question of being pastor at Cohuna. Cohuna of course is about 150 miles from Melbourne. I went home and I talked to Hazel about that. I said, "I don't think we can go." She would have gone I think. I submitted some reasons why I didn't think I could go. We had a new home. I had a good job. I had security. We had a young family. We were needed in Melbourne. So I went back to the conference, and I remember telling them "No. I cannot accept that." Grace Wood, who was visiting Australia at that time, said, "I'll give you four pounds a week out of my salary if you'll go," and that was a lot of money in those days. But my answer was a very firm "No". The result of that was that the next couple of years I began to lose interest in my job, became discontented and felt that I had actually said "No" to the Lord when all of these people at this conference felt that I was the person that should go there.⁵⁴

Carnell was asked to go to Cohuna again at the end of 1949. This time he accepted the call, turning down a promotion to State Director at his secular

⁵² District Board Minutes, October 1, 1953 (Archives).

⁵³ "Minutes," Special Session District Conference, January 26, 1948 (Archives).

⁵⁴ Carnell, "Life Story," 23.

employment and resigning in favour of his first pastoral appointment.⁵⁵ He and Hazel went to Cohuna unsalaried, and because of his earlier hesitation, without the benefit of Grace Wood's generous support. In 1948 a preaching point was opened by the Cohuna Church at Dalton's Bridge, seven kilometres from the township of Cohuna. See figure C.3. Land was donated by a Dalton's Bridge farmer and a small timber hall was constructed free of debt in 1948.

Figure C.3 Dalton's Bridge chapel with congregation c. 1949⁵⁶



During 1948 the Cohuna congregation made application for the purchase of land in Kirby Street, Cohuna. In January 1949 approval was given on the condition that the congregation pay one half of the land cost. However, the conference reports show that the district eventually paid the full £105 purchase price.⁵⁷ In March 1949 approval was given to begin construction of a parsonage on the land and again it was required that this be done at the local church's expense.⁵⁸ This expense was beyond the capacity of the local church though and by July the difficult decision was made to complete the building at the district's expense and then sell the building to recover the cost.⁵⁹ This decision by the Melbourne leadership brought a quick objection from

⁵⁵ Carnell, "Life Story," 24.

⁵⁶ J. Ridgway records (Archives). Pastor Aubrey Carnell, back row, second from left

⁵⁷ "Financial Report," 2nd District Conference, December 1948 (Archives).

⁵⁸ District Board Minutes, January 10, March 29, 1949 (Archives).

⁵⁹ District Board Minutes, July 28, 1949 (Archives).

Edgar Randall and the decision was amended to allow the Cohuna congregation to finance the building through a bank loan.⁶⁰ This reconsideration was impacted by Aubrey Carnell's willingness to accept the Cohuna congregation's invitation to serve as their pastor, which made the need for a parsonage more urgent and offered the hope of greater growth in congregational numbers. However, despite these agreements, by January 1951 the loan repayments had defaulted to the district treasurer again.⁶¹

The Carnells arrived in Cohuna on February 8, 1950 with their two sons, Graeme, aged eight, and Dennis, aged four.⁶² No provision had been made for salary for the Carnells so they survived on rabbits and gifts left at their back door until Carnell could find employment. At first Carnell worked delivering groceries for the local store and later as the store cleaner. Carnell wrote of the humiliating situation in which he found himself as a pastor and a cleaner in a small town:

We had to do it by our hands and polishing the floors and here the people who would come to hear me on a Sunday, looking through the door. There's the pastor and his wife doing their daily dozen. I tell you what, if I could have come home the next day, I think I would have. I found that very very difficult to take. But you see what I needed was the spirit of humility.⁶³

These were difficult times but the Carnells gave themselves enthusiastically to this new work. Carnell continued his ministerial studies by distance while supporting his family and pastoring two small congregations. He and Hazel developed a solid children's ministry in Cohuna and a youth ministry at Dalton's Bridge as well as regular Sunday worship in both locations. Carnell wrote of a particular highlight of ministry beside Hazel in Cohuna,

On a Saturday night, we would have open air meetings outside the picture theatre. Hazel would have her accordion, I would have the trombone. We had a nice group of people there that were witnessing to people who were outside the picture theatre. They hadn't gone in. They were watching and listening to us. In fact, they didn't go inside the picture theatre until we had finished our open air meeting. I often wondered what would have happened if we had continued on for another hour.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ District Board Minutes, August 16, December 23, 1949 (Archives).

⁶¹ District Board Minutes, January 10, 1951 (Archives).

⁶² Carnell, "Life Story," 24.

⁶³ Carnell, "Life Story," 26.

⁶⁴ Carnell, "Life Story," 28.

In May 1951 the district youth camp was held at Cohuna, bringing young people from Melbourne to celebrate and learn alongside their country church family. Membership grew slowly to eleven adults in 1952, with fifty-two children in Sunday School. Carnell felt that a breakthrough with the adults of the community was near, but it was not to be. Carnell was asked to return to Melbourne to take over responsibilities at the college from Leo Cox, given his imminent departure. Carnell agreed on the condition that a pastor be appointed to take his place. The Carnells left Cohuna on January 31, 1953 as Clarence Eldred moved to Cohuna to serve as Supply Pastor. Unfortunately, Eldred left Cohuna after only two months, moving to Sydney on March 30 to marry the widow Mrs Stirling,⁶⁵ whom he had met at the Wesleyan Bible College. This was a loss from which the circuit never recovered. Edgar Randall was appointed as Supply Pastor on March 31, but he resigned from that position in June the same year. Meanwhile the Cohuna congregation could not maintain its payments on the parsonage so the house was listed for sale by the District Board.⁶⁶ The Cohuna members voted to disband immediately, with the church discontinued on June 16, 1953.⁶⁷ Dalton's Bridge continued as a Mission Church under lay leaders Keith and Marjorie Goulding and irregular pastoral supply.⁶⁸ For many years Marj conducted Sunday School every Sunday and a preaching service was held every two weeks. Marj led the local Women's Society, visited in the community and led every second preaching service.⁶⁹

College Church. The College Church, later to be known as the Box Forest Church, was commenced in 1949 once the Cox family were living on campus. Leo and Esther Cox, together with Grace Wood and George and Hilda Randall,⁷⁰ began holding regular services in the college chapel for the community.⁷¹ As was the strategy across the district, the College Church reported eighty-five children on the Sunday School roll for 1949 before they took in any adult members. The church was formally organised on September 3, 1950 with six full members and one associate

⁶⁵ Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 35.

⁶⁶ District Board Minutes, May 11 and June 18, 1953 (Archives).

⁶⁷ "Conference President's Report," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁶⁸ "Conference President's Report," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁶⁹ Draft article by Mattke, c. 1960, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷⁰ Hilda Randall was Hilda Exell in the 1946 membership roll as entry number 6 (Archives).

⁷¹ James Ridgway, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia*, 12.

member.⁷² The young college student, James Ridgway was appointed the pastor under the supervision of Leo Cox.

In 1952 the College Church, with the District Board's assistance, established a building fund with the goal of constructing a separate chapel. By May 1953 the Church had sufficient funds to purchase two blocks of land from the Bible College on the corner of East and South Street.⁷³ It was a full decade later before a chapel was constructed, and then it was on a different site.

The College Church showed a trend of moderate, steady growth throughout the period covered in this chapter. By 1961 there were twenty-three members and two hundred and thirteen children in the Sunday School.⁷⁴ By 1961 Aubrey Carnell had already been pastor at College Church for nine years with many more still to come. The Carnells' stability at the College Church was to become one of the pillars of the Wesleyan Methodist Church for three decades.

In March 1950, at the same conference when Hughes and Favaloro were ordained, the first two second-generation pastors were received "to study and travel under Conference direction."⁷⁵ James Ridgway was pastoring the new College Church and studied at the Bible College while Aubrey Carnell studied the District Course of Study by distance from his pastorate at Cohuna, supplementing some previous Salvation Army studies.⁷⁶ Carnell and Ridgway were ordained together on Sunday afternoon, December 21, 1952.

Aubrey Carnell (1914-2010) pastored churches at Cohuna and Dalton's Bridge, College and West Coburg. At various times he served the Bible College as Dean, Acting Principal, Registrar, Business Manager, lecturer and board member⁷⁷ while Hazel served as College Matron and as a lecturer. In January 1962 Carnell was elected as Australian Superintendent and he held that position until October 1975 except for sixteen months in 1969-1970 while he was Acting College Principal.

⁷² "Conference President's Report," 4th District Conference, December 1950 (Archives).

⁷³ District Board Minutes, May 11, 1953 (Archives).

⁷⁴ "Statistical Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

⁷⁵ "Report of the Committee on Itineracy and Orders - (No. 7)," 3rd District Conference, March 1950 (Archives). This comparable to ministering as a Ministerial Student in the Wesleyan Methodist Church today.

⁷⁶ "Pastoral Relations, Report No. 8," 4th District Conference, December 1950 (Archives).

⁷⁷ Carnell, "Life Story," 57.

Carnell remains the longest serving Superintendent in the history of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church. During his tenure he visited the work in Papua New Guinea in 1967 and the North American General Conference in Fairmont, Indiana in 1963 and in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina in 1972.⁷⁸ Carnell was elected National Superintendent Emeritus by the National Board in December 1987⁷⁹ and this honour was confirmed by the 39th National Conference (1988). In 1989 Carnell was awarded a Doctorate of Divinity by Pacific College of Graduate Studies for his years of service. Hazel Carnell died on February 10, 2009, with Carnell dying on November 15, 2010 at ninety-six years of age.

Balwyn. The church in the suburb of Balwyn commenced through a friendship between Leo Cox and Mr Archibald Hughes. Cox introduced Hughes as a lecturer at the Bible College in 1949 and consulted with Hughes on the Australian culture as he led the denomination.⁸⁰ Hughes began drawing a group together in Balwyn late in 1949 and in February 1950 the new church was officially organised with nine members and with Arch Hughes as their pastor.⁸¹ From the earliest meetings Hughes' Brethren heritage was obvious in the local arrangements. An example is found in the early minutes where it is noted that, prior to the sermon, "time was to be given for any of the saints to speak for the Lord, pray, or give out a hymn."⁸² Nonetheless, Arch Hughes was proving to be a valuable addition to the team, and was received as an ordained minister by transfer from the Brethren Assembly at the March 1950 District Conference together with Philip Favaloro.

Hughes had two decades of preaching experience in South-East Queensland and then in Victoria, having moved south in 1946-1947.⁸³ The reception of Hughes and Favaloro to serve alongside Kingsley Ridgway, J.T. Carnell and Leo Cox increased the number of ordained ministers to five. Hughes's previous ministry experience gave him some seniority over Favaloro and he was pressed into roles of district leadership quickly. The influence of Hughes's Brethren background was immediately obvious, when as Chairman of the Committee on Moral Reform several new standards were

⁷⁸ Tribute to Aubrey Carnell, November 23, 2010, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁷⁹ National Board Minutes, December 9-10, 1987 (Archives).

⁸⁰ James Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 13.

⁸¹ "Conference President's Report," 3rd District Conference, March 1950 (Archives).

⁸² "Minutes of the Balwyn Wesleyan Methodist Church," February 21, 1950, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

⁸³ *The Argus* newspaper, February 1, 1947, 34.

introduced, including, "We recommend that all women in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia conform to the custom of having their heads covered in all church services."⁸⁴

This standard was not consistent with the Wesleyan Methodist openness to women in ministry, so it is surprising that the Committee's report was adopted by the conference. The response of the conference was rather more subtle though - it simply elected two of their own leading women to chair the Morals Committee at the subsequent two conferences. In the fourth conference Joyce Wilson (wife of Charles) was elected as chairperson, and when that did not result in sufficient change, Hazel Carnell (wife of Aubrey) was elected in the sixth conference. Hazel was godly and faithful servant of the church for more than five decades and she was a woman of action. In her first meeting as chairperson the growing list of Morals Committee regulations from the previous conference was replaced by a brief values-based statement. The regulation about women covering their heads was not seen again. It is worth noting though that Hazel was also a person of her times. The new report named *communism* as one of the great moral evils of the day, "We are living in days when waves of ungodliness, communism, crime and juvenile [sic] delinquency are on the increase...."⁸⁵

In March 1952 the District decided to loan £700 interest-free to the Balwyn Church to buy two building blocks on Gordon Street. They also sought approval from the American headquarters to borrow against the Bible College property to erect a chapel for Balwyn. This was to be repaid at £5 per week.⁸⁶ The construction did not proceed however, and in November 1953 it was decided to sell the two blocks and reinvest in land better situated at 184 Balwyn Road.⁸⁷

During 1952 Arch Hughes became increasingly concerned about the District distribution of international funds, feeling that more assistance should be directed to the Balwyn Church. When it is recognised that Highett and Balwyn each dedicated their chapels in 1955, but Highett had their building entirely paid for by American

⁸⁴ "Report of the Committee on Moral Reform No. 4," 3rd District Conference, March 1950 (Archives).

⁸⁵ "Moral Reform, Report No. 5," 5th District Conference, December 1951 (Archives).

⁸⁶ District Board Minutes, March 7, April 15 and August 12, 1952 (Archives).

⁸⁷ District Board Minutes, November 25, 1953 (Archives).

funds⁸⁸ while Balwyn was funded locally, it is not difficult to understand why Hughes was disturbed. Nonetheless, Leo Cox felt that the Balwyn Church was being encouraged to adopt an uncooperative spirit and, as Balwyn Church became less engaged in the District it was becoming more Brethren in its organisation. These matters came to a head in a special mediation called at the rise of the 1952 District Conference. This mediation was chaired by visiting American dignitary, Dr. Rufus Reisdorph. Reisdorph upheld Leo Cox's viewpoint and Hughes left the meeting unhappy.⁸⁹

In February 1953, not surprisingly, Arch Hughes resigned from all of his district duties beyond his local church. These duties included sitting on the Vacancies Committee, the District Advisory Board and the College Board and as Editor of the *Wesleyan Witness*.⁹⁰ Hughes had started the *Wesleyan Witness* magazine in 1950 for the denomination, and it was circulated with good effect until its closure in 1954. In 1951, upon Leo Cox's return from deputation in the United States, he reported American subscriptions totalling over one thousand dollars.⁹¹

The Favaloro family were part of the Balwyn congregation during this period of Hughes' pastoral ministry. In 1954 tension arose between Philip Favaloro and some members of the congregation and around September Favaloro resigned from his local church positions and from membership because he disagreed with one of Hughes's sermons. Soon after, however he had a change of heart and sought to have the local church disregard his resignation. Seven of the eight voting members refused to disregard his resignation. Nonetheless, Favaloro remained at the church, possibly through some intervention of Robert Mattke⁹² so that on September 19, 1954, at a special congregational meeting, Arch Hughes and the seven members of the congregation resigned. Following these resignations Mattke took on supervision of Balwyn Church and appointed Favaloro as Sunday School Superintendent.

⁸⁸ See the Highett Church section below, page 509.

⁸⁹ James Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia," 22.

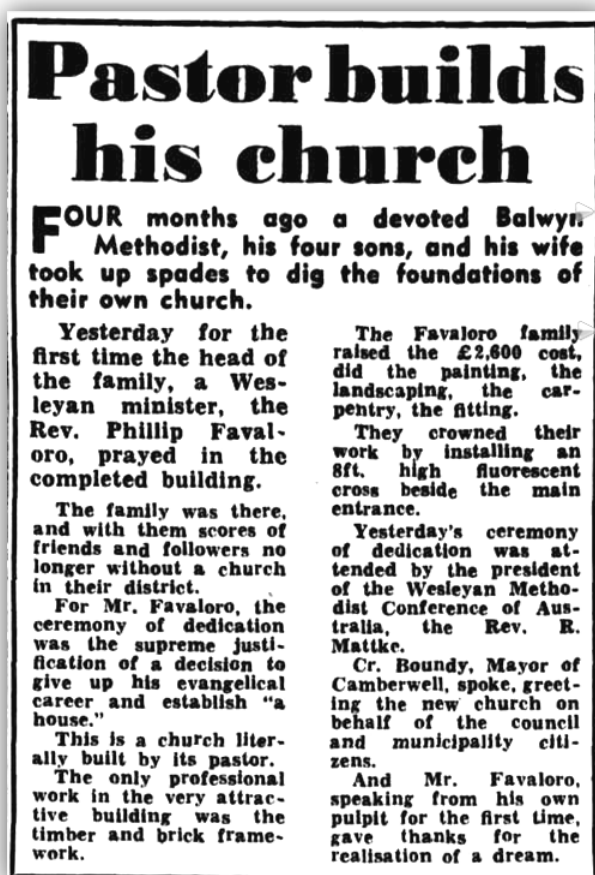
⁹⁰ "Vacancies Committee Report," 7th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

⁹¹ District Board Minutes, September 20, 1951 (Archives).

⁹² In Mr Barlow's letter of resignation he refers to his offense at some comments by the Conference President. See Balwyn correspondence to Mattke, September 19, 1954, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

At the District Conference in December 1954 Favaloro's credentials as a minister were reinstated and he was assigned to pastor the Balwyn Church. In 1955 the chapel was completed, primarily through the work of the Favaloro family, with the dedication on October 9, 1955.⁹³ However, the newspaper article that appeared in *The Argus* in October might have overstated the sole contribution of the Favaloros. Among other things the District had loaned the Balwyn Church £2,000 for the construction.⁹⁴ See figure C.4.

Figure C.4 *Dedication of the Balwyn chapel 1955*⁹⁵



In July 1956 Philip Favaloro resigned from the local church and the denomination.⁹⁶ Robert Mattke supervised the Balwyn Church until Charles Wilson could be reassigned from Sunshine. Charles and Joyce Wilson took up ministry at Balwyn from November 11 that year. Charles Wilson's ministry brought a new

⁹³ "Conference President's Report," 9th District Conference, December 1955 (Archives).

⁹⁴ District Board Minutes, May 11, 1954 (Archives).

⁹⁵ *The Argus* Newspaper, October 10, 1955, 8.

⁹⁶ District Board Minutes, July 16, 1956 (Archives).

stability to the Balwyn Church. He remained as pastor at Balwyn from 1956 until 1968.

Arch Hughes took up pastoral ministry in the Balwyn Baptist Church after leaving the Wesleyan Methodists in 1954, and in 1959 the General Secretary of the Baptists Union wrote to Robert Mattke to seek a reference for Hughes as he sought ordination in the Baptist Church.⁹⁷ The difficulties at Balwyn Wesleyan Church had been such that Mattke declined to provide a written reference.⁹⁸

Arch Hughes and Philip Favaloro are representative of a number of church members and pastors who came and went during the early decades. For some, the Wesleyan Methodist ethos and theology was not a comfortable experience. Nonetheless, they served the church for in a season when the Wesleyan Methodist Church could not provide their own trained personnel and their efforts have been gratefully received.

The Balwyn Church had its strongest membership for this period in 1953 (twenty voting members) and its largest Sunday School in 1955 (ninety-eight children). This fits with what we understand of the resignation of at least seven members when Hughes resigned in 1954 and then the opening of the new chapel by Favaloro, providing better facilities for a Sunday School from 1955. Once Charles Wilson arrived the congregation continued to run a small, stable group of adults with a Sunday School of around fifty children.

Charles Wilson was a lay member of the College Church who was received as a ministerial student in December 1952. He was given pastoral care for the Sunshine Church when Cyril Ratcliff resigned in October 1953.⁹⁹ Wilson completed his studies and was ordained on December 27, 1954 with Bill Morris. Wilson was transferred to the Balwyn Church in October 1956 after the resignation of Philip Favaloro and continued in that assignment until the mid-1970s when he was transferred to College Church.

⁹⁷ Correspondence Thompson to Mattke, September 29, 1959, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

⁹⁸ Correspondence Mattke to Thompson, October 2, 1959, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

⁹⁹ "Conference President's Report," 6th District Conference, December 1953 (Archives).

Highett. The Highett Church began in the partially constructed home of John Allison. Allison was the Australian General Secretary of the Oriental Missionary Society (OMS) and was building a home in Highett when Leo Cox arrived in Australia late in 1948. In 1949 the Wesleyans had some contacts in Highett, probably from the fellowship meeting in Joyce Osborn's home in Ormond, and so Cox asked Allison if he would superintend a new work for the Wesleyans.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, Allison could not commence this work until September 1950 when he was due to relocate from Queensland into his new home and by that time the Ormond group had disbanded. This created a lasting root of contention because Allison felt that he had been misled by Leo Cox and the Wesleyans.¹⁰¹

Allison began the work anyway, commencing a Sunday School in his home and evening worship services at the R.S.L Hall. Cox appointed Allison on October 1, 1950,¹⁰² and in September 1951 he appointed Herbert William (Bill) Morris as Allison's assistant.¹⁰³ Allison sought district help to run an evangelistic crusade at Highett and when the District did not respond to his request he had the Open Air Campaigners (OAC) come and run a mission for the church. Leo Cox expressed his disapproval for the use of the AOC, and his relationship with Allison was soured even further. In 1952 John Allison withdrew from the Highett work and the church was placed in the hands of Bill Morris.

The Wesleyans have a long history of mutual cooperation with OMS beginning with the training of OMS founders, Charles and Lettie Cowman, at God's Bible School (the first Pilgrim Holiness college) in Cincinnati, Ohio a century earlier.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, it was a surprise to Robert Mattke to find that OMS was refusing the same cooperation in the Melbourne church scene and was directing their students to attend an interdenominational college rather than the Wesleyan Methodist College.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ This detail from Allison's letter (in the following footnote) corrects the statement by James Ridgway that the Highett Church was started by Allison who then sought out the Wesleyans. See James Ridgway, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia*, 14.

¹⁰¹ Correspondence Allison to Mattke, August 5, 1954, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁰² "Conference President's Report," 4th District Conference, December 1950 (Archives).

¹⁰³ "Conference President's Report," 5th District Conference, December 1951 (Archives).

¹⁰⁴ Paul Westphal Thomas and Paul William Thomas, *The Days of Our Pilgrimage: History of the Pilgrim Holiness Church* (Marion IN: Wesley Press, 1976), 36-37.

¹⁰⁵ Correspondence Mattke to Sheets (American Headquarters), December 15, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

Mattke believed this to be because Allison was good friends with Arch Hughes; perhaps Mattke was unaware of some of Allison's early disappointments at Highett.

In 1953 it was decided to purchase land in Highett for a chapel on the corner of Spring Road and Hazel Avenue. Therefore, in March 1954 the American Women's Missionary Society (WMS) raised funds for the Highett chapel. In the process of planning it was discovered that the block of land they had purchased was too small for the chapel and so an additional block was purchased.¹⁰⁶ Initially it was thought that the chapel could be built for £2,000, but by the time the design had changed, with terracotta tiles, a bricked-in porch and a Sunday School classroom had been added, the quote was £2,979. Fortunately the American WMS had raised £3,050!¹⁰⁷ The dedication of the new building was celebrated on April 17, 1955¹⁰⁸ free of debt.

Bill Morris was ordained by the conference on Monday afternoon, December 27, 1954, and in November 1956 he was reassigned to the Sunshine Church. Andrew William (Bill) Thorpe was given charge of Highett in Morris's place. Thorpe was still completing his ministerial studies and had been travelling as a licensed minister since December 1954. In June 1955 Thorpe had supplied the pulpit at Highett for two weeks,¹⁰⁹ in February 1956 he had been assigned to work in the Highett Sunday School¹¹⁰ and in July 1956 he was appointed Assistant Pastor under Morris.¹¹¹ It was an easy transition, therefore, for him to take over the pastoral role at the end of 1956.

A number of college students and future pastors worked at Highett. In July 1956 it is noted that Len Rowe, a Bible College student and Bill Henderson, future key figure in the Vermont fellowship were both working in the church under Morris and Thorpe.¹¹²

With the commencement of the mission to the Highlands of Papua New Guinea in 1961, pastoral appointments were complex since two of the pastors were going to be leaving the Australian work midway through the conference year. Three of the

¹⁰⁶ District Board Minutes, March 23, 1954 (Archives).

¹⁰⁷ District Board Minutes, May 11, August 10, October 14, 1954 and March 17, 1955 (Archives).

¹⁰⁸ "Conference President's Report," 9th District Conference, December 1955 (Archives).

¹⁰⁹ District Board Minutes, July 23, 1955 (Archives).

¹¹⁰ District Board Minutes, February 29, 1956 (Archives).

¹¹¹ District Board Minutes, July 24, 1956 (Archives).

¹¹² District Board Minutes, July 16, 1956 (Archives).

church appointments were left in the hands of the District Board by the Conference: Cohuna, Highett and Sunshine.¹¹³ Pastoral supply for West Coburg was also drawn into the final arrangements, since that was where Walter Hotchkin was assigned. The result for Highett was that Bill Thorpe was given responsibility for both Highett and Cohuna, which everyone realised was too much for one man. Therefore, Walter Hotchkin was assigned to assist Thorpe at Highett.¹¹⁴ The outcome, however, was that Hotchkin moved on to Papua New Guinea and Thorpe relocated to Cohuna, so Robert Bell was assigned to Highett from January 1962.

Highett had significant advantages in the 1950s. There were a number of pastors and college students participating in the ministry and they had the very rare privilege of having their chapel paid for in full by American money. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, the church never truly flourished. It remained a mission church for most of the decade and was driven by its Sunday School. Church membership never exceeded six adults during the decade and the Sunday School consistently held a roll of between one hundred and one hundred and fifty children from 1952 to 1961.

Bill Thorpe's studies took much longer than expected and over the coming years the Committee on Itineracy and Orders repeatedly referenced Thorpe's impending completion. In September 1962 he was released from Highett to focus on the Dalton's Bridge ministry. In June 1965, with Thorpe's studies still not complete, the Committee on Itineracy and Orders "referred [Thorpe] to the Standing Committee."¹¹⁵ Around this time Thorpe's marriage was failing and he felt unable to continue in ministry¹¹⁶ although he did stay connected to the Wesleyans and his name appears in the records into the 1970s.

Glenroy. The Glenroy Church (or Hilton Street) was commenced by a dynamic church-planter named Roy Fletcher. Fletcher had studied at Melbourne Bible Institute from 1941¹¹⁷ and was taken on staff by Walter Betts at the Fitzroy Methodist Mission from January 1945.¹¹⁸ See figure C.5. Being part of the Fitzroy

¹¹³ "Pastoral Relations Committee, No. 8," 14th District Conference, June 1966 (Archives).

¹¹⁴ District Board Minutes, March 4, 1961 (Archives).

¹¹⁵ "Sessional Report Itineracy & Orders Committee," 18th District Conference, June 1965 (Archives).

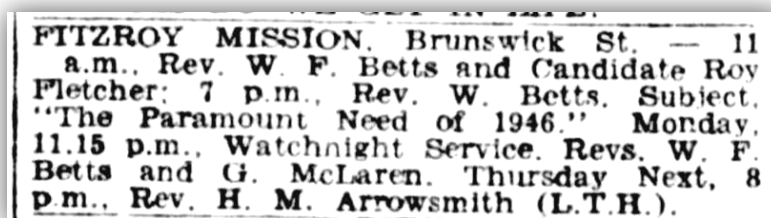
¹¹⁶ Correspondence from Dennis Carnell, June 18, 2015, L. Cameron records (Archives).

¹¹⁷ *The Argus* newspaper, December 13, 1941, 11.

¹¹⁸ *The Argus* newspaper, January 6, 1945, 21.

Mission, he was also acquainted with Gilbert McLaren who preached at the Mission occasionally. Through these connections he was aware of Kingsley Ridgway and the commencement of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Figure C.5 *Walter Betts, Gilbert McLaren & Roy Fletcher together 1945*¹¹⁹



Fletcher approached the District Board for approval to plant a church in the name of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Preston in 1952.¹²⁰ Approval was granted, but no financial assistance could be promised and no further mention is made of a work in Preston. Fletcher came back to the Board to seek permission to plant a Wesleyan Methodist Church in Geelong in 1956, but the minutes indicate that the board desired further discussion with Fletcher before agreeing.¹²¹ With further discussion it was agreed to appointed Fletcher to commence a work in Glenroy instead of Geelong.¹²² It seems very likely that Fletcher's Geelong request was perceived as a gift from God, since in December 1956 Robert Mattke had set a conference goal to start new churches in Glenroy, Geelong and Dandenong.¹²³ The discussions with Fletcher were therefore likely centred around which Victorian site would be the highest priority, and given that property had already been purchased at 129 Hilton Street, Glenroy¹²⁴ in 1954,¹²⁵ that site became Fletcher's new destination. In March 1957, with a church-planter secured, the District Board gave approval to commence building on the Hilton Street land.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ *The Argus* newspaper, January 6, 1945, 21.

¹²⁰ District Board Minutes, April 15, 1952 (Archives).

¹²¹ District Board Minutes, September 24, 1956 (Archives).

¹²² District Board Minutes, April 29, 1957 (Archives).

¹²³ "Conference President's Report," 10th District Conference, December 1956 (Archives).

¹²⁴ The suburb of Glenroy had also included the Huntingtower region in the previous decade, but as the region established the college property was redesignated as Merlynston or Pascoe Vale South, and eventual Hadfield. The new church under discussion here has often been referred to as the Hilton Street Church to avoid confusion, but in keeping with the minutes we shall use the name Glenroy Church.

¹²⁵ District Board Minutes, October 14, 1954 (Archives).

¹²⁶ District Board Minutes, March 24, 1957 (Archives).

With the Glenroy and the Elizabeth (South Australia) church-plants both moving ahead quickly, President Mattke took the unusual liberty in June 1957 of pre-empting the conference by approving Roy Fletcher and John Buckley as ministerial students.¹²⁷ At the December Conference Mattke's actions were upheld and the Conference ruled that Fletcher need only complete one more subject for ordination.¹²⁸

The Glenroy building was dedicated at the church's first meeting on July 21, 1957. As was the strategy of the era, the core group of adults in the new church immediately focused their efforts on children's ministry. After two months the church Sunday School reported one hundred and fourteen children on the roll.¹²⁹

Unfortunately, after less than a year Fletcher took leave of absence in May 1958 because of family health issues.¹³⁰ The local church was left under the supervision of Kingsley Ridgway with pastoral support from J.T. Carnell, who, in Ridgway's words, had "really come into a blessing - a better experience than I have known him to have for many years - and he is doing the bulk of the preaching at Glenroy."¹³¹ Cyril Stokes, a layman from the Glenroy Church and future ministerial candidate, took a lead in running the Sunday School.¹³²

In March 1959, upon his return from study in America, James Ridgway was appointed to pastor the Glenroy Church and the congregation grew steadily under his care. In 1960 Ridgway noted that the church had to start running Sunday School in two sessions, morning and afternoon, because the attendance of one hundred and forty children was too many for the small building to accommodate.¹³³ By 1961 the church recorded fourteen adult members and an average of two hundred and twenty-eight children in the Sunday School.

James Ridgway (1930-2012) pastored at College Church and Glenroy (Hilton Street) Churches, but Glenroy was to be his longest term of local church ministry.

¹²⁷ "Conference President's Report," 11th District Conference, December 1957 (Archives).

¹²⁸ "Report of Itineracy & Orders," 11th District Conference, December 1957 (Archives).

¹²⁹ Glenroy Mission Church Minutes, September 19, 1957 (Archives).

¹³⁰ District Board Minutes, May 22, 1958 (Archives).

¹³¹ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, July 7, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹³² Glenroy Mission Church Minutes, June 3, July 22 and December 2, 1958 (Archives).

¹³³ "Jottings From Down-Under," April, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

Ridgway served at Glenroy from 1959 until 1966, although during that time his assignment was constantly drawn away to the Bible College and denominational leadership.

James Ridgway was a lecturer at the Bible College for several decades and Principal from 1963-1966 and 1972-1984. His wife, Melva, also lectured at the college for many years. In the midst of multiple assignments, Ridgway took extended study leave in the United States. He studied at Houghton College, New York, Wheaton Seminary, Illinois and Asbury Seminary, Kentucky from 1953-1958 for undergraduate and postgraduate studies, and while there he met and married Melva LeRoy, a Canadian Wesleyan. The Ridgways returned to America a second time from 1966-1971 to undertake Ridgway's doctoral studies.¹³⁴ Ridgway graduated with his Ph.D. in psychology from Drew University while pastoring the Jersey City Wesleyan Church in New Jersey. He was then offered the position of President of Bartlesville Wesleyan College but chose instead to return to Australia to reopen the Melbourne Bible College. Ridgway served as Australian Superintendent from 1960-1962 and again from 1972-1984. In the 1970s and 1980s Ridgway led the church into a period of rapid growth and he supervised the division of the Australian work into multiple districts. James Ridgway died on September 19, 2012 at eighty-two years of age.

Launceston. The connection between the Wesleyan Methodist Church and Launceston, Tasmania began very early in the history of the church. An invitation to begin work there was received in July 1946,¹³⁵ but was not pursued at that time. Ridgway and J.R. Swauger visited contacts in Tasmania in 1947, and in January 1952 Leo Cox travelled to Tasmania for an exploratory trip and again later to speak at an Easter Youth Camp.¹³⁶ The move of Max Richardson and Cyril Ratcliff from Tasmania in 1952 speaks of a continuing relationship. In February 1955 the District Board decided to send Kingsley Ridgway to Launceston to explore the possibilities of starting a work in that city.¹³⁷ Seven days later, with a positive report from

¹³⁴ From July 1953 - December 1958 he completed his B.A. at Houghton College, M.A. at Wheaton College and M.Div. at Asbury Seminary. From July 1966-January 1972 he completed his Ph.D. at Drew University.

¹³⁵ Correspondence from Mr MK, Launceston, TAS, July 6, 1946, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹³⁶ "Conference President's Report," 6th District Conference, December 1952 (Archives).

¹³⁷ District Board Minutes, February 1, 1955 (Archives).

Ridgway, the Board decided to appoint Ridgway to start the work in Tasmania, to pay for his removal costs to Launceston and to rent a hall in that city.¹³⁸ Kingsley and Dorcas, with their youngest son, Robert, moved to Launceston. Kingsley and Dorcas began to hold weekly services in the centre of the city and established three Sunday Schools in outer suburbs.¹³⁹ In October 1955 ten days of tent meetings were provided by other Victorian workers to assist the growth of the Launceston group.

In December 1955 the Conference celebrated the listing of the Launceston Church as a Mission Church; their first interstate congregation. One week after this joyful occasion, Dorcas Ridgway, died suddenly on Christmas Day 1955 of an aortic aneurism while visiting Keith and Marjorie Goulding at Cohuna (Leitchville), Victoria.¹⁴⁰ The funeral service was conducted by Robert Mattke on December 28 at the West Coburg Church followed by a burial service at the Fawkner cemetery. Letters of condolence flowed to Ridgway from around the globe.¹⁴¹

Ridgway returned to the work in Launceston with Val and Gwen Baragwanath who relocated to assist Ridgway in the Launceston work and to provide house-keeping for the Ridgway home.¹⁴² Baragwanaths had moved to Cohuna late in 1955 to serve the church,¹⁴³ so it was a significant sacrifice for them to relocate again so soon to Launceston.

In February 1956 Ridgway and Mattke reported to the Board that they had purchased land in Launceston on Hobart Road¹⁴⁴ near the corner of Machen Street.¹⁴⁵ This action appears to have been taken without any consultation with the Board. The Board commended this action but by July it was decided that the Hobart Road block should be sold and a more appropriate block purchased.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile the congregation was growing. Fourteen charter members were received on June 3, 1956. An existing hall at 261 Charles Street was purchased and renovated in the

¹³⁸ District Board Minutes, February 8, 1955 (Archives).

¹³⁹ Draft article by Mattke, 1956, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹⁴⁰ Eulogy by Mattke, December 1955, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹⁴¹ Letters on file in the Archives from Robert Lytle, Director of Wesleyan World Mission, Wingrove Taylor, General Superintendent of the Caribbean Wesleyan Holiness Church, from Walter Hotchkin, Wesleyan Mission of Papua New Guinea, and many others.

¹⁴² Draft article by Mattke, 1956, K. Ridgway records (Archives).

¹⁴³ "Conference President's Report," 9th District Conference, December 1955 (Archives).

¹⁴⁴ District Board Minutes, February 20, 1956 (Archives).

¹⁴⁵ Correspondence Launceston city to WMC, February 29, 1956, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

¹⁴⁶ District Board Minutes, July 16 and 24, 1956 (Archives).

second half of 1956,¹⁴⁷ although by mid-1957 the church was still seeking council approval to use the building for religious purposes. The council initially insisted that the old hall be demolished and a brick building be erected.¹⁴⁸ The local church persisted however and finally gained approval for the hall to be used as a place of worship with nine relatively minor improvements. Provisional approval was gained in September¹⁴⁹ and the dedication of the hall was finally achieved on December 9, 1957.

Ridgway took eight weeks leave of absence from Launceston Church¹⁵⁰ and from his other district responsibilities from June 30, 1957. John Buckley, having only been licensed himself in June, filled the pulpit at Launceston for those weeks while he waited for the opportunity to move to Elizabeth, South Australia. In October, with the news that Ridgway would not be returning, Val Baragwanath made the decision to begin training for the ministry and he succeeded Buckley as Supply Pastor to Launceston.¹⁵¹

In June 1958 Baragwanath resigned from pastoral duties at Launceston, although he continued as an Assistant Pastor until February 1949.¹⁵² By this time, in the absence of Ridgway's mature leadership, the Launceston congregation was splintering. Two men in particular were outspoken in their criticism of the holiness doctrine. One of those men resigned and the second began a People's Church in opposition to the Wesleyans. Meanwhile, others left in protest against the two men's actions.¹⁵³ Max Richardson was reassigned from West Coburg to Launceston on June 5, 1958, bringing renewed stability to the Tasmanian church. Richardson stayed until the end of 1965, drawing back several of those who had left. Richardson described the situation into which he was placed:

Upon arrival in Launceston I found that the situation was not good. The Church seemed to be set on a course of self destruction. Already more than half the congregation had left and steps were needed to be put in place to prevent further

¹⁴⁷ "Conference President's Report," 10th District Conference, December 1956 (Archives).

¹⁴⁸ Correspondence Launceston city to WMC, December 21, 1956, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

¹⁴⁹ Correspondence Launceston city to WMC, September 30, 1956, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

¹⁵⁰ Correspondence Barbara Fishburn to Matke, July 5, 1957, J. Ridgway records 6 (Archives).

¹⁵¹ "Conference President's Report and Pastoral Relations Committee Report," 11th District Conference, December 1957 (Archives).

¹⁵² "Vice President's Report, No. 3," 12th District Conference, March 1959 (Archives).

¹⁵³ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Matke, May 27 and June 25, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

deterioration. Christian testimony was at stake, the Wesleyan Church had a large profession of holiness, but not much of it was evident.¹⁵⁴

Richardson was ordained in March 1959, at the same time announcing his engagement to Miss Elizabeth (Beth) Slatter. Max and Beth were married on September 5, 1959 by Robert Mattke at Balwyn Wesleyan Methodist Church. Richardson's story, recorded in *Hand to the Plough*, tells of the new growth that occurred at the Launceston Church over the following years. During Richardson's appointment the Launceston Church achieved its highest attendances on record.

Dandenong. During the middle and late 1950s a new emphasis on church-planting grew within the Wesleyan Methodist Church, fed by the arrival of Robert Mattke to serve as Conference President. Three new ministers came into the denomination and their service was associated with new efforts in Melbourne and into Tasmania and South Australia. Much of the story of the three new churches belongs to a subsequent chapter, but the initiative to plant these churches belongs firmly in the Mattke period, with the support of James and Kingsley Ridgway.

In 1958 Roy Fletcher took leave from the Glenroy church-plant. Initially this was for two months only, but Fletcher sought permission to extend his leave so that he could sort out some personal business matters.¹⁵⁵ Throughout 1959 Fletcher was active in the district, including serving on the District Board, and by 1960 he was looking to plant another church. In February 1960 he and Ian Wilson were given approval to begin exploring options for a church in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. The District Board even gave provisional approval to purchase land when the right location was found.¹⁵⁶ The strategy adopted by Fletcher in Dandenong appears to be substantially different to the Glenroy work in that little early priority is given to a Sunday School.¹⁵⁷ Fletcher's focus was toward adult evangelism and he was commended for this effort in the district conference, for "his concerted [sic] and consistent labour in soul-winning during the year."¹⁵⁸ By August 1960 a group was

¹⁵⁴ Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 70.

¹⁵⁵ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, June 25, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁵⁶ District Board Minutes, February 18, 1960 (Archives).

¹⁵⁷ Although there is a Sunday School of forty children recorded by 1961.

¹⁵⁸ "Conference President's Report," 14th District Conference, January 1961 (Archives).

meeting in Fletcher's home in Dandenong¹⁵⁹ and by 1961 the property question was being addressed. The prospects for Dandenong were good in 1961 with twenty-five adult members and a Sunday School roll of seventy-eight at the end of the year.¹⁶⁰

Elizabeth. John Buckley started the first Wesleyan Methodist Church in South Australia. Buckley had been part of the life of the denomination as a college student and a builder for several years before he sought a license to serve as a pastor. He had graduated from the college in 1954, but it was 1957 before he was recommended to the conference by the College Church. Both he and Roy Fletcher were granted a license to preach before conference due to the urgency of the church-planting schedule in place. In June 1957 Kingsley Ridgway requested eight weeks leave from his pastoral duties in Launceston and John Buckley was sent to supply the pulpit in Ridgway's absence.¹⁶¹ While in Launceston Buckley met Miss Marion Hill and they were married in the next year. Buckley was a multi-talented man, he played the piano and accordion and he was a good singer, so he had some advantage in worship leading.¹⁶² A good report on Buckley's ministry came back to the Board from Launceston¹⁶³ and in March 1958 Buckley was appointed to commence the Wesleyans' first church in Elizabeth, South Australia, a new housing development north of Adelaide.¹⁶⁴

In fact, planning had already been underway for two years at this time. Mattke wrote to the South Australia Housing Trust to request provision of land for a church in June 1956. The Housing Trust replied that it was too early yet, but that the Wesleyans should continue to stay in contact.¹⁶⁵ On May 6, 1957 Mattke visited Adelaide and the South Australia Housing Trust in person, and in September he wrote to them again.¹⁶⁶ A response had still not come by early 1958, so Mattke wrote again, this time to request housing for their church-planters, John and Marion Buckley. A house for the Buckleys was then made available,¹⁶⁷ the District Board

¹⁵⁹ District Board Minutes, August 18, 1960 (Archives).

¹⁶⁰ "Statistical Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

¹⁶¹ "Conference President's Report," 11th District Conference, December 1957 (Archives).

¹⁶² Draft article by Mattke, 1958, K. Ridgway records 3 (Archives).

¹⁶³ District Board Minutes, August 27, 1957 (Archives).

¹⁶⁴ District Board Minutes, March 27, 1958 (Archives).

¹⁶⁵ Correspondence from Mattke, June 27 and July 5, 1956, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁶⁶ Correspondence from Mattke, September 24, 1957, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁶⁷ Correspondence Mattke to SAHT, February 11 and 14, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

appointed John Buckley in March, and land for the church was finally available to the church in April 1959.¹⁶⁸ The block was 0.63 acres, at 222 Woodford Road, Elizabeth North, for the cost of £424.

Church services were started on August 16, 1959 at the Broadmeadows State Primary School,¹⁶⁹ while Mattke gained approval to commence building a church hall in November 1959 before the church land sale was fully settled.¹⁷⁰ With John Buckley as the builder and the purchase price of the land coming from America, the Board sought a loan of £1,500 for construction of the hall. By August 1960 the plans for the hall had been enlarged and plans for a parsonage added, so that an additional loan of £3,000 was sought,¹⁷¹ but this appears to have been denied because the construction does not proceed according to that plan. By this time the church was ministering to fifty-six children in its Sunday School and Buckley was working to support himself as well as being the church builder and the pastor.

The hall was built in stages, with the first stage completed and the first service on December 25, 1960. Newly elected Conference President, James Ridgway travelled to Elizabeth for the official dedication of the building on January 29, 1961.¹⁷² However, the second stage of the hall and the parsonage were still not complete in 1963. The Elizabeth Church concluded 1961 with a report of three adult members and one hundred and fifty-three children on the Sunday School roll.

¹⁶⁸ Correspondence Mattke to SAHT, April 13 and 30, 1959, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁶⁹ District Board Minutes, September 24, 1959 (Archives).

¹⁷⁰ District Board Minutes, November 11, 1959 (Archives).

¹⁷¹ Correspondence from Buckley, August 24, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁷² Correspondence from Buckley, n.d., J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

APPENDIX D

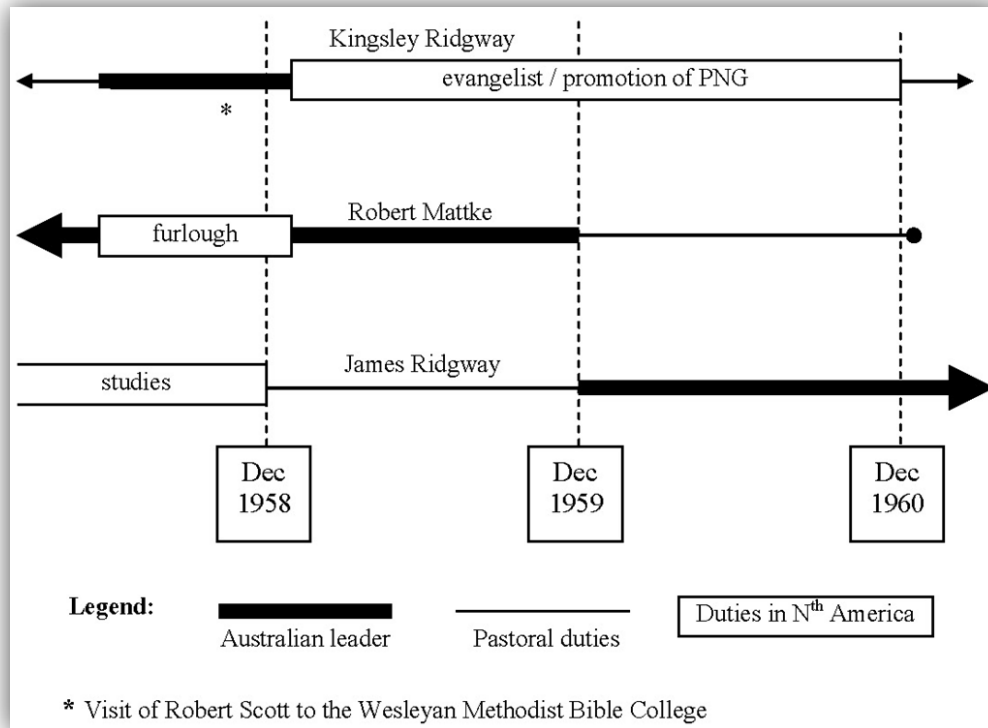
PAPUA NEW GUINEA MISSION 1961-1976

From 1958 to 1961 several of the Australian church leaders spent time in America, producing a confusion of travel and leadership. James Ridgway was in America for his Bachelor and Masters degrees from 1953 to 1958. In 1958 Robert Mattke was also in America for furlough, arriving back in Melbourne in February 1959. Kingsley Ridgway led the Australian work while James Ridgway and Mattke were away and upon Mattke's return he went to America himself, staying twenty-one months until December 1960. Mattke handed leadership over to James Ridgway in December 1959 while Kingsley Ridgway was in America and stayed through 1960 as College Principal and a local church pastor. It was a period of confused itineraries and responsibilities, but one positive result is that during the period from 1958 to 1961 all three men who served as Conference President were out of the country at one time or another and consequently many of the issues that might normally have been resolved in personal communication were instead discussed in written correspondence. That correspondence remains as a detailed record of leadership negotiations in those years of planning the Papua New Guinea mission. Figure D.1 seeks to illustrate the leadership changes during the years from 1957-1960.

Kingsley Ridgway had a lifetime of interest in missionary outreach to Papua New Guinea. After his year as an occupational missionary in New Britain in 1927 he sought to raise support for missionary work to the Pacific Islands through the Standard Church in Canada. Instead he was sent as a missionary to Egypt in 1937, but with the understanding that he might go to the Pacific in a subsequent appointment. Unfortunately the second World War interrupted those plans and he launched the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia after wartime service. The passion had not died though and in 1958, at age fifty-six, the call to New Guinea was reignited. The records show that this renewal of interest in New Guinea was not Ridgway's own initiative but the result of an unplanned meeting with another

missionary. However, it is equally clear that once the possibility was presented, Ridgway pursued the new project doggedly.

Figure D.1 *Leadership changes 1958-1960*



Ridgway had concluded his pastoral ministry in Launceston at the end of June, 1957. Initially this was leave of absence but two factors mitigated against a return to Launceston. One factor was that Robert Mattke was due to take furlough in America in 1958 and, as Vice President of the Conference, Kingsley Ridgway would be expected to fill the role of President in Mattke's absence. The second factor was the budding romance between Kingsley and Jean Scott that would soon result in their marriage.

Robert Mattke departed in April 1958 and Kingsley Ridgway began to supervise the district from Melbourne. Kingsley and Jean were married on July 12, 1958. By this time Ridgway had already made arrangements to travel to America upon Mattke's return, with Mattke enlisted to help Ridgway build a preaching itinerary for his 1959 travel in America.¹ The purpose for this visit to America was so that

¹ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, July 7, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Melbourne: Archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia).

Kingsley Ridgway could do more study to develop himself for the role of Bible College lecturer, although Mattke suggested that he would be better utilised giving his time to preaching while in America.² As it happened, in November 1958 the Wesleyan Bible College in Melbourne hosted a visit of Robert Scott, a missionary with the East and West Indies Bible Mission. This appears to be the point in time at which Kingsley Ridgway's vision for Papua New Guinea was reignited.

RIDGWAY PROMOTES HIS VISION 1959-1960

The East and West Indies Bible Mission was founded by Gerald Bustin. William Bromley had joined Bustin's work in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea after pastoring the Bendigo Wesleyan Methodist Church from 1947-1949. Bromley had since moved to the Nazarene Mission but another Wesleyan College graduate, Jim Thorpe,³ had joined the East and West Indies Bible Mission and now worked with Robert Scott. The Papua New Guinean ministry of this Mission had recently been divided, placing some of the Highland stations under the American leadership of Gerald Bustin and other stations under the Australian leadership of Alf Broughton. Robert Scott, Jim Thorpe and Thorpe's wife were a part of Broughton's team. Scott spoke to Ridgway of the possibility of the Wesleyans taking over the work in which they served to help alleviate a funding crisis. Furthermore, if that was not possible, he told Ridgway of the impending opening of new territory in the Highlands that the Wesleyans might enter into. Ridgway was greatly excited by this and wrote immediately to Dr. Birch, the Secretary of Wesleyan Methodist Missions in North America, to ask for international support for a new venture to Papua New Guinea. His excitement is evident in his enthusiastic letter:

If your Department would be interested in having a work in New Guinea, two courses are open; negotiate the taking over of that existing work, or else launch a pioneer work in the new territory due to be opened for mission work in about eighteen months.⁴

² Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, September 1 and October 28, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

³ Brother of Rev. Bill Thorpe.

⁴ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Birch, November 14, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

Kingsley Ridgway travelled to Sydney the following month in time for James Ridgway and his family to dock upon their return from their first study trip to America. While in Sydney, Kingsley Ridgway stayed at the home of Alf Broughton, but not surprisingly found him less than enthusiastic about the idea of the Wesleyans taking over his mission field. However, Broughton suggested that Gerald Bustin could be open to some form of partnership with his American branch of the East and West Indies Mission.⁵ These conversations continued for several years and did finally result in the acquisition of the Tagaru and Alia stations from the East and West Indies Bible Mission. In the meantime though, Ridgway pursued the second option and led the Australian Wesleyans to establish their own missionary work in one of the new areas that Scott had mentioned.

When Mattke returned in April 1959, Kingsley and Jean, now pregnant with John, and Robert (youngest son of Dorcas, now a teenager) sailed to America. John was born in Vancouver, Canada on August 1, 1959 because Jean Ridgway was not yet permitted entry into the United States. (She had been a member of the Communist Party for a period, and the Americans were still very cautious about Communist sympathisers.) Meanwhile Ridgway, with no such restriction, was travelling in the United States and promoting the Australian work and the concept of a mission to Papua New Guinea. He served as the Australian ministerial delegate to the American General Conference in June 1959⁶ and was able to present the new Papua New Guinea project and gain conference approval to proceed.⁷ The General Board subsequently endorsed this decision and an initial goal of US\$5,000 was set for Ridgway's fund-raising efforts.

It must be noted that at this point the Australian Church had not yet considered the concept of a mission to Papua New Guinea. It would be October 1960 before the first mention of this mission appears in the District Board minutes. This highlights a long-standing flaw in the management of the Australian work. When Kingsley Ridgway launched the Australian mission in November 1945 he was appointed as Field Representative for the parent American Church. After more than a year the Australian members voted him as the Conference President. The outcome was that

⁵ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, December 18, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

⁶ Walt Ridgway was Australia's lay delegate.

⁷ Correspondence Virgil Mitchell to Mattke, July 8, 1959, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

most decisions went via the Conference President except the distribution of American funds that was under the control of the Field Representative. Since funding impacted most of the major decisions, the American Representative had a lot of control. This was less of a problem when the President and the Representative were the same person, but certainly became more of a problem as leadership was localised and distributed. When Leo Cox arrived, followed by Robert Mattke, they both served the dual roles of President and Representative; it would be the 1960s before the structural flaw would become evident.

Even so there were some early problems caused by the distribution of American funding. Charles Lee's accusations against Kingsley Ridgway in 1947 centred upon the question of how Ridgway was choosing to disburse the American funds. Similarly, Arch Hughes expressed concerns in 1952 when he noticed American funds assigned to the Highett and Elizabeth Churches while Balwyn was given no assistance. James Ridgway noted that the dispute over distribution of American funds led to the loss of several prominent workers.⁸ Other symptoms of the tension between the leadership roles of Conference President and Field Representative can be seen in individual leaders making major financial commitments without District Board approval, such as the purchase of the Bendigo building in 1946 and the purchase of land for the Launceston Church in 1956. However, it was in 1959 when Mattke stepped down that the relationship between these two roles became more disruptive.

When Kingsley Ridgway first began to lobby for a new mission to Papua New Guinea he was Acting Conference President and Field Representative. He discussed the proposal quite openly with Robert Mattke, who was in America at that time, but apparently he did not raise the topic with the Australian Board. When Mattke returned, Kingsley Ridgway departed and pursued the new proposal at the highest governing body of the Wesleyan Methodist Church: the American General Conference. Events were moving quickly, and yet, the Australian District Board had still not been consulted. That presented difficulties because the Australian Church had priorities that differed from Kingsley Ridgway and the American Church. The

⁸ James Ridgway, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia 1946 – 1956" (A term paper submitted Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, 1957), 17.

Australian Church was concerned about their domestic needs, the leadership of the College in particular, while Ridgway and the American leaders were looking toward an exciting new mission field.

Robert Mattke began to work through the proper channels in the Australian Church when Ridgway received General Conference approval. The urgent issue to be settled by the College Board was the appointment of the College Principal after Mattke's departure. The secondary issue was the approval of a new mission in Papua New Guinea to be settled by the District Board, which was now led by James Ridgway. Mattke and the College Board clearly wanted Kingsley Ridgway to serve as the next college principal. While awaiting a firm decision from the College Board, Kingsley Ridgway wrote:

I cannot say that I have had any change of feeling about heading up the Bible College there; as I said before, neither my training nor my inclinations would head me that way.... I think all should be careful lest we overlook someone whom God [provides as] fitting for a successor to yourself.⁹

This letter from Ridgway crossed with Mattke's letter in the mail. The College Board had met on February 15, 1960, and, "It was their unanimous decision that you [Kingsley Ridgway] be called to be the Principal of the College for a four year term beginning 1st. January 1961."¹⁰

Kingsley Ridgway was aware that this was the likely conclusion and he wrote a number of letters during 1959 and 1960 to suggest alternatives. He argued that James Ridgway could do the work of President and Principal if he was relieved of local church ministry in Glenroy;¹¹ several times he asked Mattke to consider staying one or two years longer to lead the College;¹² he suggested that Dr. Floyd Banker,¹³ a former missionary to India would be an admirable candidate;¹³ and as a last resort, he suggested that the college could be closed, rather than "all that laborious lecturing for the benefit of two or three students."¹⁴ When the College Board decision was received, Ridgway responded with reluctant submission, "Jean and I had hoped to go

⁹ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, February 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁰ Correspondence Mattke to K. Ridgway, February 17, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹¹ Correspondence K. Ridgway, Mattke and J. Ridgway, December 6 and 23, 1959; June 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹² Correspondence from K. Ridgway, September 7, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹³ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, February 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁴ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, June 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

[to PNG], but if the college is the place of God's appointment, it cannot be New Guinea also."¹⁵

During these discussions, Kingsley and Jean continued to promote the Australian work and the Papua New Guinea mission project in America through an intense schedule of meetings. Both were preaching at local churches, camp meetings and district conferences from Canada to Florida and across to California. On two occasions Jean Ridgway travelled separately to Kingsley for several weeks so that they could satisfy the growing number of requests that were coming to them, but even so some meetings had to be declined.¹⁶

In mid 1960 Dr. Liddick, the current American Missions Secretary, approached Kingsley Ridgway to ask who would be the missionary appointment to Papua New Guinea, since "no one for Australia had offered for the field." Caught up in the moment, Kingsley and Jean offered themselves and this was accepted by the General Board. Kingsley Ridgway wrote to Mattke to advise him of this new development. He explained:

We had put out some fleeces for guidance, neither of us having any leadings towards the Bible College, but willing to go if the Lord made it plain it was where He wanted us.... [Furthermore] I had no leadings to come back to do pastoral work.¹⁷

Mattke responded to Ridgway with firm words and acknowledged that the General Conference news had not been taken well by some:

You presented the plan to the Gen. Conference before it was presented and approved by the Australian Annual Conference. I have mentioned this technicality to our people and so that is why they think this is another idea fostered by you personally. I feel I've done my best to help them feel that this is a Conf. project and protect you in so much as possible.¹⁸

Nonetheless, while Mattke wrote to Kingsley Ridgway, James Ridgway wrote to the General Board giving the endorsement of the Australian Church to the appointment of Kingsley Ridgway "as supervisor of the proposed New Guinea

¹⁵ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, May 14, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁶ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, December 6, 1959, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹⁷ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, June 20, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives). "Putting out fleeces" is a reference to Gideon seeking further guidance from God in Judges 6 (Bible).

¹⁸ Correspondence Mattke to K. Ridgway, July 7, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

Mission."¹⁹ This wording was carefully chosen by James Ridgway because the Australian Church was determined that his father would lead the College regardless of a hands-off supervisory role over the Papua New Guinea mission.

Into the second part of 1960 the correspondence with Kingsley Ridgway shifted from Mattke to James Ridgway as he stepped up to the new role of Conference President. In September James Ridgway wrote to his brother Walt, who was also briefly suggested as a possible College President. Walt Ridgway was in America, serving as one of the pastors at the Marion College Church. James Ridgway wrote:

Our main concern at the present focusses [sic] on the financial need and on Dad's vacillations with respect to New Guinea and College Presidency etc. No doubt you have had good opportunity to talk these things over together and understand things better than I at that end. However, though it may be difficult for Dad to face coming back as College Pres. all here feel clear that he is the man for the job, and that it should take precedence over New Guinea or anything else in that case.²⁰

James Ridgway also wrote to Dr Reisdorph, now one of the three American General Superintendents on the same day he wrote to his brother and in that letter he again mentioned Kingsley Ridgway's "indecision".²¹ To the contrary however, a careful reading of his letters does not indicate any indecision, but rather a very determined desire to go to Papua New Guinea and a grudging willingness to relent and return to Australia if he absolutely must. Kingsley Ridgway wrote:

It is obvious that I cannot open the work in New Guinea and at the same time be college president there; and since there is no one else ready for New Guinea and opening it within the next year is a "must", you will have to abandon any thought of my being president. If Brother Mattke is adamant that he will not stay, then the Marion College FMF support [Foreign Mission Fund] will be lost to Australia; and it will be that harder to finance the college when we have to pay the president's salary out of general funds... I do not see there would be any just criticism if because of the fall in giving for Australia you decided to close the college for a year and had your students work on the liberal arts side of their training.²²

James Ridgway was not willing to close the college and Kingsley Ridgway was not willing to relinquish the mission to Papua New Guinea. Some settlement finally

¹⁹ "Conference President's Report," 14th District Conference, January 1961 (Archives).

²⁰ Correspondence to Walt Ridgway, September 9, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²¹ Correspondence to Reisdorph, September 9, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²² Correspondence from K. Ridgway, September 23, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

began to develop from October 1960. The Australian leadership seized upon the concept that Kingsley Ridgway was only going to Papua New Guinea to survey the needs and to facilitate the commencement of the mission there. This possibility was cemented by the appointment of Walter Hotchkin as fellow-missionary with the goal that Hotchkin would be the long-term missionary. Kingsley Ridgway would be able to maintain a meaningful role at the College while supervising the mission because he would not need to reside on the mission field. James Ridgway wrote:

Brother Liddick wrote confirming your appointment as College President and Superintendent of the New Guinea work, and seems to think that it is our pidgeon to work out the reconciliation of these two areas of service. That seems an impossibility if we think of you having to be in two places at once, but not so if you have help for the New Guinea work. In this respect you will be relieved to learn of two new developments.

Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin have offered for service in N.G. immediately the door opens. Robert Gladwin, a State School teacher, and one of my Superintendents [Sunday School] at Glenroy, has applied to the Dept. for a teaching appointment to New Guinea, under the Department, and is ready to resign from that appointment to serve in our mission whenever it gets started.²³

Walter Hotchkin had a different recollection of how he and Dorothy came to be appointed. He remembered the Board calling them in and giving them overnight to consider going as missionaries to Papua New Guinea. They explained that Kingsley Ridgway would start the work but may not be involved for long because of his age. The following day they agreed to the appointment. When Ridgway returned, he explained to Hotchkin that the Board wanted him to lead the college instead of spending a long time in Papua New Guinea. In Walter Hotchkin's words, "Well that didn't stop Kingsley. He continued to make his plans to start the work in PNG."²⁴

Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin and Bob Gladwin did indeed prove to be gifted and faithful workers in the new mission. However, the idea that Kingsley Ridgway could manage the new mission from Melbourne, or that he could manage the College from a remote station in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea proved as unrealistic as it sounds. Perhaps this was simply an honourable way for the Australian leadership to capitulate to Kingsley Ridgway's determination. In any case, it marked the end of

²³ Correspondence to K. Ridgway, October 25, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²⁴ Walter Hotchkin, "This is My Story" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 13.

the struggle of wills and the beginning of planning in earnest for an exploratory trip to the Highlands.

PNG MISSION COMMENCES 1961

Kingsley Ridgway had already commenced discussions with Gerald Bustin about taking over the ministry amongst the Wiru tribe around Ialibu. Bustin was ready to retire and quite enthusiastic about handing his work over to the Wesleyans for a nominal sum to cover some of the investments in buildings and furniture. Bustin wrote to an address in Honolulu to connect with Ridgway's family as they sailed toward Australia. He proposed selling all of the East and West Indies Bible Mission's Wiru work to the Wesleyans for a figure close to US\$5,000, but he pressed the fact that it must happen quickly.²⁵ Bustin was ready to depart and requested Ridgway to come in mid-January 1961. This was very short notice, but in reality it could fit in well with the Australian Church's priorities. If the Wesleyans could take over an existing work with a good relationship already established amongst the tribal people, then Ridgway's presence on the field could be quite brief indeed.

Meanwhile, Ridgway had already sought government permission in Papua New Guinea to enter the Wiru Valley on behalf of the Wesleyans. Ridgway wrote to his son James from Honolulu to advise him of these developments, to ask him to bring the Australian District Board up to date, and to advise that Ridgway and his family would arrive in Melbourne by train from Sydney on December 31, 1960 in time for the last day or two of the Annual Camp.²⁶

The Annual Conference followed after the Annual Camp, meeting from January 3-5, 1961. The Conference appointed a New Guinea Missions Committee and adopted eight recommendations from that Committee, including:

5. That Mr. and Mrs. W. Hotchkin proceed to N.G. for training, and,

²⁵ Correspondence Bustin to K. Ridgway, November 24 and December 5, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²⁶ Correspondence from K. Ridgway, December 16, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

7. That Rev. and Mrs. K.M. Ridgway proceed to the field as, and when duties as College President permit, and when it is advisable for them to assist the Missionary Candidates in occupying the area selected.²⁷

The Conference was holding Ridgway to the requirement that the Mission would be made to fit around the work of the Bible College. Therefore, despite Ridgway's proposal to go to the Wiru Valley in mid-January to meet with Bustin, he stayed in Melbourne until May to start the college year. During this time the strategy became increasingly focused upon establishing a new station in an unreached area.

On May 5, 1961 Kingsley Ridgway and Walter Hotchkin flew to Port Moresby, via Sydney and Brisbane, arriving at six the next morning. After three days of ministry and meeting government officials in Port Moresby, they flew to Goroka on May 9, then on to Banz and finally to Pabrabruk, visiting Gerald Bustin's mission fields.²⁸ By this time the discussion had moved beyond buying Bustin's mission; presumably Bustin had made other arrangements because he stayed in the Highlands for another year. Instead Ridgway sought permission from the government authorities to commence work in the unreached southern parts of the Wiru region but was firmly refused by the officials because this region would not be opened for another year.²⁹ Therefore Ridgway and Hotchkin travelled eighty kilometres further west to the government headquarters of the Southern Highlands at Mendi. While there they had meetings with the government officers and with the Methodist Church mission leaders. Initially it was proposed that they start a mission at Margarima, near the Tari Gap, but they were later advised by the Director of the Methodist work that they were moving in that direction themselves.³⁰ Ridgway and Hotchkin were finding the changes of direction confusing but were advised to wait until they had flown over the area before deciding.³¹ On Friday, May 12, they flew one hundred and thirty kilometres further west with the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) to Tari, flying over the Margarima area en route. In Tari they were given another

²⁷ "New Guinea Missions Report," 14th District Conference, January 1961 (Archives).

²⁸ Walter Hotchkin, "Diary May 1961" (Archives: unpublished Diary, 1961), May 5-9.

²⁹ Most details here are taken from W. Hotchkin, "This is My Story," 14. Kingsley Ridgway provides a condensed version of this episode in Kingsley M. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains: A History of the First Five Years of the Wesleyan Missionary Work in Papua New Guinea, (1976)" republished in *Pioneer with a Passion*, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Cameron (Melbourne: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2011), 250-251.

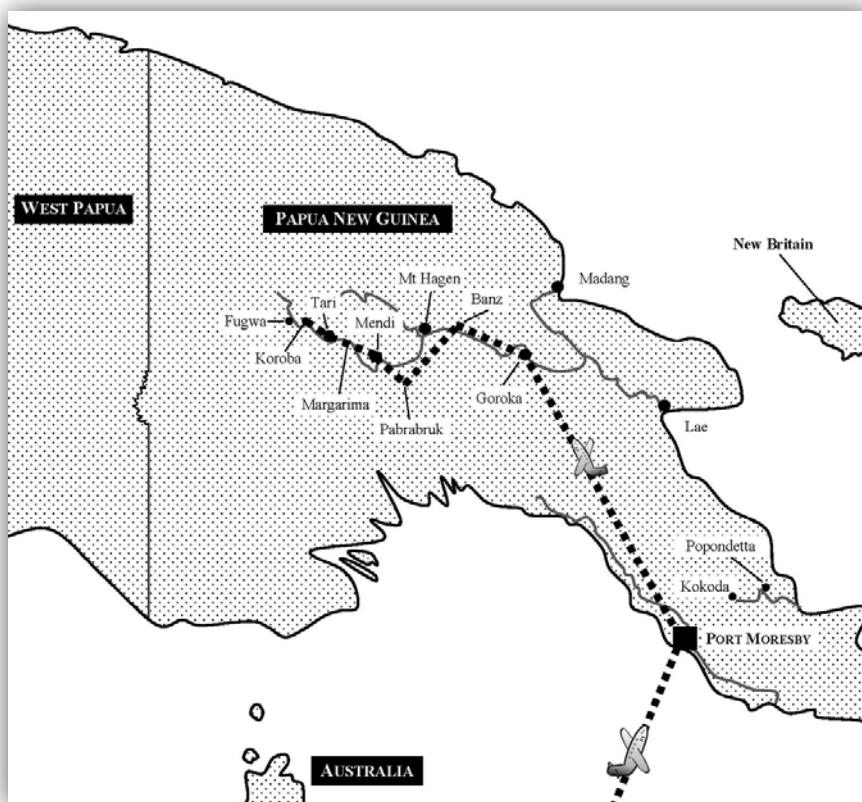
³⁰ W. Hotchkin, "Diary May 1961," May 15.

³¹ W. Hotchkin, "Diary May 1961," May 11.

option, being advised that the Methodists were having difficulty staffing the work further west at Koroba and were negotiating passing the station over to the Brethren Mission.³² On Monday 15 they flew forty kilometres to Koroba with MAF, circling over the region of Fugwa where they would finally settle. A map of the route taken by Kingsley Ridgway and Walter Hotchkin as figure D.2.

In Koroba they met with the Methodist and Brethren leaders and the government official, Neil Desailly. It was there agreed that the former work of the Methodists at Koroba would be divided between the Wesleyan and the Brethren missions. The Brethren Mission would take the main station from Koroba (i.e. Guala) and the Wesleyans would take the Mogoro Fugwa Valley with the village of Betege. The area granted to the Wesleyans included many villages scattered around the edge of an ancient swamp (*fugwa* in Huli language is swamp) that had now started to dry up and was able to be crossed on foot. Betege was one of the prominent villages at the end of the former swamp. The area today is simply called Fugwa.³³

Figure D.2 *Ridgway and Hotchkin's exploratory visit to Koroba, PNG May 1961*



³² That was, the Christian Mission of Many Lands. See W. Hotchkin, "This is My Story," 16

³³ By the time they arrived in Fugwa in September the offer of Betege had been withdrawn, but within a couple of months it was again offered to the Wesleyans.

This was as much as could be achieved on this trip because the Fugwa-Betege area was not yet open to visit, but Desailly assured them he would negotiate access with the tribal people and he would secure land for a mission station. The next morning Hotchkin read in his daily devotions, "Now the Lord has made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land."³⁴ Hotchkin and Ridgway departed Koroba on Tuesday May 16, 1961, having achieved their purpose and found the future home of the Wesleyan Mission in Papua New Guinea. They returned to Melbourne and began preparations for their return later that year.

Meanwhile, Bob Gladwin had gained employment with the Education Department at Popondetta, northeast of Port Moresby. He was informed of the developments while at Popondetta and wrote to confirm that he was awaiting a call to join the mission team.³⁵

By mid-year word was received from Desailly that he had secured permission from the tribe for the mission to enter the Fugwa Valley and he had purchased thirty-four acres of land for a mission station and an airstrip.³⁶ The only thing that remained was the issuing of the official government permit to enter this restricted area, so in faith Ridgway and Hotchkin went ahead and shipped their equipment and supplies to the port of Madang trusting that the way would open up for the mission to commence at Fugwa. The permit to enter the Fugwa Valley was granted on August 11, and with this permit in hand Ridgway and Hotchkin flew from Melbourne to Madang in the first week of September in time to collect their goods. From Madang they shipped their goods, which included a tractor and trailer and a portable sawmill, via DC-3 aeroplanes from Madang to Tari.³⁷

Ridgway went ahead to Koroba to commence work on the Fugwa mission buildings, walking about four kilometres each day to and from Fugwa to the government rest-house at Hetawi, about half way to Koroba. His arrival at Fugwa is dated September 6, 1961.³⁸ Hotchkin went to Tari to receive the shipment when the

³⁴ Genesis 26:22 (Bible).

³⁵ Correspondence from Gladwin, July 24, 1961, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

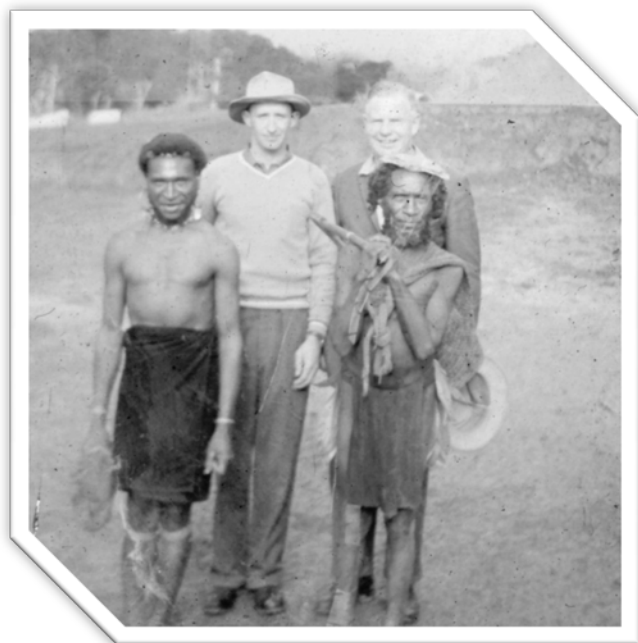
³⁶ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 251.

³⁷ The story of this shipment getting through above all odds is described in K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 252-253.

³⁸ Dorothy Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins and the Wesleyan Church and Mission in PNG" (Archives: unpublished notes, c. 1998), 2.

planes could land at the Tari airport. He then carried the goods forty kilometres to Koroba with the tractor and trailer. There was no road at all for the last eight kilometres from Koroba, so New Guineans were hired as porters to carry the lighter goods by hand through the jungle for this last section.³⁹ An early picture of Ridgway and Hotchkin with two unnamed highlanders is included as figure D.3.

Figure D.3 *Walter Hotchkin and Kingsley Ridgway with two unnamed Huli men*⁴⁰



The first church service was held at the mission station on Sunday, September 10, 1961. Ridgway and Hotchkin led eighty-three highlanders in worship, with men and boys sitting separately from the women and girls. The service was conducted in Pidgin with some of the songs and Bible readings translated into the Huli language.⁴¹

More assistance was soon on hand when Ray Akers arriving on September 21 to help establish the new mission.⁴² Ray was Dorothy's brother, a very capable builder and preacher. Akers came as a Gospel Corp worker, meaning that he came, initially at least, for a short term and at his own expense. The Mission was moving at a rapid pace. By October the missionaries were living onsite in tents, and by the end of October the Hotchkins' bush-house was completed. In November the road from

³⁹ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 262.

⁴⁰ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁴¹ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 265.

⁴² D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 2.

Koroba to Fugwa was opened and the tractor was finally able to bring the last of the heavy equipment to the station.⁴³ This included the portable sawmill that was powered by the tractor and enabled construction to proceed at an increased pace.

Events were not moving smoothly in Melbourne though. Jean Ridgway was now pregnant with her second child and to complicate matters she was found to have a ruptured appendix. The doctors refused to allow her to travel to Fugwa until she recovered from the appendectomy and from child-birth. Her daughter, Lael, was born on April 21, 1962.

The situation for Dorothy Hotchkin was even more difficult. Walter and Dorothy's second child, Gregory, was thought to have bronchitis but in September 1961 he was diagnosed with tuberculosis instead. The doctors would not allow Greg to travel to Papua New Guinea. This presented Dorothy with a very difficult decision, especially since she was alone in Melbourne now that Walter was in Papua New Guinea. Dorothy's assistance in Fugwa was needed and she was in good health herself, so she could go. The painful decision was made that Dorothy and Phil should proceed to Fugwa, leaving Greg at the Austin Hospital in the care of Charles and Joyce Wilson who were pastoring the Balwyn Church. Greg would remain in Australia for eleven months without his parents. Dorothy and Phil arrived at the Fugwa station on foot on October 26, 1961, having walked from the government station. Dorothy recorded the following notes:

26th Oct. Phillip and Dorothy Hotchkin arrived - walking from Hetawi, altho' road was being formed & parts done up from Yogena River. Yogena was in flood, so we crossed by "feel". (Dorothy had "kittens" when she saw the "bridge".) Our first house was woven pit-pit walls [thin bamboo stems that have been split and flattened], windowlite about half way around at window height, grass roof, no real floor, just rough planks cut by chain saw and then woven bamboo over that. -Very cold. The cook house was several yards away from living quarters. Fridge and stove already installed.⁴⁴

On December 6, 1961, Kingsley Ridgway and Ray Akers flew back to Melbourne. Akers went home to be married to Gwen Wells and Ridgway went to take up duties at the College and to be present for the birth of his daughter. Ridgway

⁴³ W. Hotchkin, "This is My Story," 21.

⁴⁴ Dorothy Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission in Papua New Guinea" (Archives: unpublished notes, c. 1976), 1.

brought an inspiring report of the new work to the Annual Conference, held from January 3-5, 1962. After less than four months in the Fugwa Valley, they reported attendances of two hundred and eighty at two preaching places, Fugwa and Betege.⁴⁵ In fact, Dorothy Hotchkin, who was still in Fugwa at this time, names four preaching places at the end of 1961: Fugwa, Eriba, Yetemali and Betege.⁴⁶ In mid-December Bob Gladwin arrived at Fugwa, fulfilling his commitment to leave his teaching role at Popondetta and transfer to Fugwa with the new mission. The Hotchkins and Gladwin saw their first Christmas in Papua New Guinea together at Fugwa.

PNG MISSION EXPANDS 1962-1965

In 1962 Dorothy Hotchkin continued a morning school program at Fugwa while Bob Gladwin began the English speaking school at Betege. In March encouragement came through the visit of an American General Superintendent, Rev. Gordon Wolfe. He returned to America to raise funding for the Fugwa airstrip.⁴⁷

Kingsley, Jean and John arrived back at Fugwa with baby Lael in June. Immediately Ridgway and Hotchkin agreed that the time had come to seek out new locations⁴⁸ into which the mission could expand.⁴⁹ Ridgway first sought permission to enter the Duna tribal region around Lake Kopiago but was sternly advised that this area was not yet open to missionaries.⁵⁰ At the same time, in June 1962, the East and West Indies Bible Mission, now renamed the Evangelical Bible Mission (E.B.M.), was finally given permission to move into the Southern Wiru region.⁵¹ They had been preparing for this for some years, but now that the opportunity opened up they were struggling for lack of missionary personnel. Bustin was finally retiring and departing, and the E.B.M. missionaries could not maintain the new work to the South of the Polu River without him. Late in the year Bustin again offered Ridgway part of

⁴⁵ "New Guinea Missions Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

⁴⁶ D. Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission," 2.

⁴⁷ D. Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission," 3.

⁴⁸ W. Hotchkin, "This is My Story," 23.

⁴⁹ It was arguably at this point that Ridgway truly departed from the Australian Church's commission for him to "supervise" the PNG mission. He and Walter agreed that two ordained men on the field meant two separate stations, which was not the Australian expectation. However, things were moving ahead rapidly.

⁵⁰ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 318.

⁵¹ D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 3.

the new E.B.M. work in the Southern Wiru tribal area. Ridgway and Hotchkin visited the Tagaru⁵² mission station and the South Polu work with Bustin⁵³ and agreed to buy E.B.M. out for \$2,300. This was quickly agreed to and the first Wesleyan service was held at Tagaru station on January 20, 1963.

Meanwhile, the first permanent timber mission house had been completed at Fugwa in August 1962, using the new sawmill. A "permanent-style house" was one of the conditions for baby Greg's approval to come to Papua New Guinea, so the Hotchkin house was a high priority for the sawmill. That same month the Hotchkins flew to Port Moresby to collect Greg and to bring him "home" to Fugwa.

The Hotchkins were then reassigned to the new Tagaru station in February 1963, taking responsibility for the five preaching places from E.B.M. and commencing construction of a permanent house on the station. Ridgway suffered a coronary occlusion in June 1963 but was cleared to return to his work at Fugwa.⁵⁴ In September the Ridgways and the Hotchkins exchanged mission stations again: Ridgways to Tagaru and Hotchkins back to Fugwa. There were a number of reasons for this exchange, but one benefit was that Hotchkins were back in Fugwa in time for the birth of their third child. Ruth was born at Madang on October 27, 1963. Dorothy and Ruth's arrival back at Fugwa was aboard the first aeroplane to land at the new Fugwa airstrip.⁵⁵

During 1963 a wave of revivals broke out in Tagaru and Fugwa. Families were burning their spirit houses and removing their charms as they turned to the Christian faith.⁵⁶ Ridgway described manifestations reminiscent of early Methodist revivals:

From places as far away as twenty miles, the people gathered to the services, which were held three times a day. Such singing! And such praying!... Under conviction some trembled and cried aloud, confessing their sins and beating their breasts, even smiting their mouths as they were convicted of lying or cursing. Then as they grasped in simple faith the promise that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness", there came a light of joy upon their dark faces, and they arose from their knees to give joyous testimony that God had pardoned and delivered

⁵² Often spelled *Taguru* in early documents.

⁵³ W. Hotchkin, "This is My Story," 23.

⁵⁴ D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 4.

⁵⁵ D. Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission," 2.

⁵⁶ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 327.

them from their sins. They literally leapt for joy; and as one and another found peace in believing, they joined those already on their feet, jumping for joy.⁵⁷

Not all of the manifestations were perceived to be genuine however. Ridgway described some as self-serving "fleshly manifestations" and some sought to impose their own experience upon others, so that some felt they were not converted yet until they had "quivered". These excesses notwithstanding, large numbers were reported as deeply converted to the Christian faith.

By the end of 1963 the Hotchkins finally took furlough to Australia, taking baby Ruth home to family for the first time. John Ottway, an old acquaintance of Hotchkin's from the Gippsland and previously in Papua New Guinea with E.B.M., came to manage the Fugwa station in the Hotchkins' absence. Ray and Gwen Akers were also back at Fugwa during this time. During these three months Akers worked on the construction of Bob Gladwin's house at Betege and started a new church at Dogomu. With the return of the Hotchkins, Ottway departed for ministry with the Churches of Christ in Christian Union and the Akers departed for ministry with the Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM).⁵⁸

E.B.M. was again having difficulty in 1964 and they offered the Wesleyans a second mission station at Alia in the Southern Wiru tribal region⁵⁹ while, on May 14, 1964, the first local congregation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Papua New Guinea was fully organised at Tagaru.⁶⁰ With the Alia mission station came several additional missionaries; Theo and Florence Meckes, Gene and Marge Graves and Victor and Claudine Chamberlin. Later that year, in October 1964, an Australian nurse, Frances Leak, arrived to serve the Fugwa station while Jean Ridgway provided medical care at Tagaru. Fran Leak had been raised in Melbourne and trained as a nurse and mid-wife. She was introduced to the Wesleyan Methodists by Max and Beth Richardson while working in Launceston.⁶¹ Leak remained at the Fugwa field for the next nineteen years, providing medical care through clinics spaced around the Fugwa valley.

⁵⁷ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 331-333.

⁵⁸ D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 5.

⁵⁹ D. Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission," 3.

⁶⁰ "New Guinea Missions Report," 17th District Conference, June 1964 (Archives).

⁶¹ Interview, Frances (Leak) Taylor, August 3, 2015, tape A, 0:07:05.

In September 1964 the Mission Field Council met and appointed Ridgway and Gladwin to Alia, Meckes to Tagaru and Hotchkins and Fran Leak to Fugwa. Ridgway's health was again a concern however, with minor surgery required in October at Port Moresby.⁶² By the end of 1964, with three mission stations now operating, the Wesleyans recorded a total of twenty preaching places and around three thousand attendees, of which several hundred were baptised.⁶³

At the end of each year Bob Gladwin would take the December-January school break as furlough in Australia. In January 1965 he returned from Australia accompanied by another teacher, Delwynne Hughes. Leak and Hughes, as single women, were stationed together at the Betege house, while Gladwin was relocated to Alia. The Hotchkins were now alone at the Fugwa station and in February, while Walter was visiting Alia and their oldest son Phil was at school in Tari, Dorothy had a near-fatal miscarriage.⁶⁴ Fortunately she was discovered by one of the workers and given medical help.

The first baptisms were celebrated at Fugwa and Tagaru in 1965, while a house was built and an airstrip started at Alia. The work was increasing rapidly. In August 1965 the Field Council formally requested the American Wesleyan Methodist Church to supply missionary staff for the growing mission,⁶⁵ but the request was refused at that time. Figure D.4 shows converts being baptised at Tagaru.

⁶² D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 5.

⁶³ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 356.

⁶⁴ D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 6.

⁶⁵ D. Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission," 3.

Figure D.4 *Kingsley Ridgway baptising converts at Tagaru 1965*⁶⁶



The staffing need was about to become much more pressing. In November 1965 Kingsley Ridgway had a heart attack while working on the Alia airstrip. Jean radioed the doctor and was advised to get Kingsley to a doctor as soon as possible. However, the closest route was via twenty-six kilometres of rough bush track; an eight-hour hike. An unexpected solution came when, "By some mysterious chance, a government official somewhere heard my wife's conversation with the distant doctor, and put machinery in motion to send a helicopter to whisk me away to hospital."⁶⁷ Ridgway was flown to the doctor the next morning and the Ridgways returned to

⁶⁶ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁶⁷ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 360.

Australia in December, concluding Kingsley and Jean's missionary careers. In December 1965 the American leadership relented and agreed to recruit Americans for the Papua New Guinea Mission.⁶⁸

PNG MISSION TRANSITIONS 1966-1975

Due to Ridgway's heart attack, Marj Goulding visited the mission field briefly at the end of 1965. This led to her and Keith arriving as fulltime missionaries in February 1967 to serve at Fugwa. Walter and Dorothy's fourth child, Rosalea, was born at Wewak on January 17, 1966. When Dorothy and Rosalea returned home, the family again relocated to Tagaru where Hotchkin assumed leadership of Tagaru and Alia. Meanwhile, Bob Gladwin returned to Fugwa where Leak and Hughes were stationed. More houses were built and the airstrip was completed at Alia in the final months of 1966.

The missionary staff continued to be shuffled around as needed. More personnel arrived in 1968 including Dawn Hood and the first American missionaries, Don and Joy Bray. In December 1969 Kingsley Ridgway visited the field and a large "tabernacle" was opened at Tagaru. In January 1969 Jan Ipsen arrived to serve as a teacher at Fugwa and another American couple, Chuck and Linda Kent, arrived.⁶⁹ That year Phil Hotchkin was sent to Australia for school, living with his maternal grandparents.

In 1970 Ray and Gwen Akers were again stationed at Fugwa, Jan was located at Betege, Robert Lade came as a Gospel Corp worker, and nurse, Margaret Randall, was assigned to serve at Tagaru.⁷⁰ That year Ray Akers presented himself to study toward ordination in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and was approved for study at the Australian Conference in October. From August 1972 Lindsay Longmuir served as a Gospel Corp worker, starting a cattle project at Fugwa and in 1973 Marj Westbury also served as a Gospel Corp worker. In April 1972 Hotchkin officiated at

⁶⁸ D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 7.

⁶⁹ D. Hotchkin, "Timeline for Hotchkins," 9.

⁷⁰ Margaret was one of the Cohuna Randalls who had relocated to Melbourne. Margaret was a cousin to Keith Goulding. Interview, Frances (Leak) Taylor, August 3, 2015, tape B, 0:10:30.

the marriage of Bob Gladwin and Jan Ipsen at the Fugwa station, with Ruth and Rosalea Hotchkin and Wendy Akers as flower girls.

During 1972 abiding tensions at Alia began to generate division between the Wesleyan mission and the local people who resented the take-over from E.B.M. Dissatisfaction with the take-over by the Wesleyans had been evident since the 1964 purchase,⁷¹ but more recently, Pentecostal teaching had been dividing the churches in the region, facilitated by the absence of a resident missionary at Alia. By mid-1973 this resulted in a schism of the Alia work into Wesleyan and Full Gospel ministries.

Early in 1971 a mission house was built and a pastor's house was purchased in the Highlands centre of Mt. Hagen, with the Gouldings stationed there. A church was then built, being completed in December 1973.⁷² The Field Council made the decision that their children should be housed and educated in Mt. Hagen, so in December 1973 Ray and Gwen Akers were assigned as House Parents at the Wesleyan Children's Hostel. The first children located at the Hostel in 1974 were Ruth and Rosalea Hotchkin, Wendy, Lex and Darren Akers, Charles (Buddy) Kent, and Greg and Doug Rose (from E.B.M.).

In April 1973 Graeme and Gwen Kershaw arrived for their first term at Mt. Hagen and the Gouldings departed the field. In August that year Yawijah Tuguyah, a Huli convert from Fugwa, led a team on the long hike into the enemy Polaba tribal region of Wopasali⁷³ to commence a new mission station. This hike has been widely reported amongst the Australian and American Wesleyan Methodist communities; it was on this hike that the team was stopped by a flooded river. The team was ready to turn back but Yawijah insist that they pray and wait. "Suddenly the water divided, as if cut in the middle! One half flowed downstream and the other half stopped and receded. The way through was clear!"⁷⁴ The group crossed and the new mission was established. Yawijah went on to become the first National Superintendent of the

⁷¹ "New Guinea Missions Report," 18th District Conference, January 1965 (Archives).

⁷² D. Hotchkin, "A History of the Wesleyan Mission," 7-8.

⁷³ Spelled *Wopasale* in many of the early mission documents.

⁷⁴ Yawijah Tuguyah, "Yahwija and the Divided River," trans. unknown (Archives: unpublished transcript, n.d.), 2.

Wesleyan Church of Papua New Guinea. Yawi's story is told in "Feet Upon the Mountains".⁷⁵

Figure D.5 *Walter Hotchkin and Yawijah Tuguyah at 30th anniversary 1991*⁷⁶



A regular flow of denominational leaders, both American and Australian, visited the flourishing work in Papua New Guinea during these early years. Australian leaders included Aubrey Carnell (1967), Arthur Calhoun (1968), James Ridgway (1973), Bryce Hartin (1974), and a second visit from Kingsley Ridgway (1974). Furthermore, from 1969 an increasing flow of American missionaries arrived on the field, although there has been no attempt to name them here.

Papua New Guinea gained its independence from Australia in September 1975. In the same year the Wesleyan Church of Papua New Guinea was organised as a National Church. By then the Church consisted of almost one thousand baptised members, although "most of them in their first decade of faith".⁷⁷ Independence resulted in major changes for the Christian mission agencies because it entailed preparing national workers to take over education and medical duties after 1975. This

⁷⁵ K. Ridgway, "Feet Upon the Mountains," 342-343.

⁷⁶ J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁷⁷ "Correspondence: greeting from Wesleyan Church of PNG," 29th Annual Conference, October 1975 (Archives).

brought an end to government funding for Australian personnel that had been so essential in staffing the remote mission stations. For the Wesleyans this meant a substantial loss in manpower and cherished relationships. The medical personnel generally remained longer than the educational personnel because of the extra training required for qualified medical workers. Bob and Jan Gladwin departed in December 1974 after thirteen years' service, Delwynne Hughes departed in December 1975 after eleven years' service and Fran Leak departed in February 1983 after eighteen years' service. These losses coincided with the final departure of Ray and Gwen Akers in December 1974 after thirteen years' service.

While the mission had been growing, the home church had been in decline. By the 1970s there were very few Wesleyan Methodist Churches in Australia, with the result that ex-missionaries who did not settle near one of the few churches soon lost connection. The Gladwin family, Fran Leak, Delwynne Hughes and after them, the Kershaw family sought other employment and in many cases were lost to the Australian fellowship. This was not the case for ministerial workers however. The Akers, and later the Hotchkins, returned to pastoral duties and became a part of the ongoing story of the Australian Church. As the Australian Church began a period of dynamic growth after 1975 it further distanced the former missionaries, because the incoming church members did not know them from the past years of sacrificial service.

APPENDIX E

LOCAL CHURCHES 1961-1974

From 1971 the statistical reports from the local churches was expanded to include the average attendance of Sunday worship in addition to the long-standing practice of reporting the number of members and Sunday School attendance. In the previous chapter the proportionally large numbers of Sunday School children was highlighted, but in this chapter the worship service attendances provides a different tool for assessing the health of the local churches. When the membership is almost the same as the average attendance it provides an indicator that, while there is stability in the congregation, there is not a lot of growth potential. In effect, there are few visitors. The other extreme is when the number in attendance for worship exceeds membership by several hundred percent. This can indicate a lack of emphasis on discipleship and incorporation of attendees into the life and leadership of the congregation. Exceptional events, such as an influx from the Billy Graham Crusade, can greatly distort these indicators but when they continue for an extended period it is a useful marker for assessing the health of congregations.

West Coburg / Pascoe Vale South. In 1964 the West Coburg Church changed its name to Pascoe Vale South Church in line with community realignments. A good relationship was built with the owner of Peace Hall, Mr Strange, during those years. He ran a printing press on the same property as the church and had a keen interest in the church's development. He went so far as to grant ownership of the hall to the church in his will, but unfortunately he did not have the will properly signed and upon his death the hall was sold by his family. With the loss of Peace Hall the Pascoe Vale South congregation was merged into the College Church, which was less than five kilometres away. The church held its last service on September 10, 1972,¹ with many of the members joining the College Wesleyan Methodist Church. This change

¹ "District Superintendent's Report," 26th District Conference, September, 1972 (Archives).

was facilitated by Aubrey Carnell's presence as pastor at Pascoe Vale South for the previous seven years and as Conference President.

During the decade of 1962 to 1972, the Pascoe Vale South congregation had remained stable with between five and nine adult members and showed no signs of growing or declining from this steady platform. At the time of the forced closure membership was at nine and average attendance was ten.

Sunshine. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the Sunshine Church very slowly increased its membership. During the four years of Bill Morris's pastoral ministry (1962-1965) adult membership remained at two, but during Charles (Charlie) Gault's ministry (1965-1968)² it increased to seven and then remained at six during the ministries of Ron Smith (1969-1972) and Aubrey Carnell (1973). Attendance by 1972 was more encouraging, averaging twenty-four in 1972.

In 1952 a chapel had been constructed and plans for a parsonage were briefly considered and then set aside when Pastor Bill Morris bought his own home. With the change of pastor in 1965 planning for a parsonage was again on the agenda. Construction was proposed in 1966³ and the building was completed early in 1968 after some difficulty gaining bank finance.⁴ Aubrey Carnell dedicated the new parsonage on January 21, 1968.

Ron Smith replaced Charles Gault from 1969, but his term was marked by some concerns. At the 1972 Conference, Aubrey Carnell was appointed as the pastor and Ron was demoted to Assistant Pastor. This was an unusual action, although the cause is not stated in the 1972 Journal. The 1973 Conference reports provide more insight. In that year Ron's license was not renewed "because of deficiencies" in his Annual Service Report⁵ and the Sunshine Church was left in the hands of the Conference President for the following three months until a new pastor arrived for the commencement of 1974. This 1973 report still does not explain specific reasons for Ron Smith's departure. A careful reading of the reports to the 1974 Conference appears to shed more light. In 1974 a resolution was brought to the Conference by

² For Gault's resignation see District Board Minutes, October 10, 1968 (Archives).

³ District Board Minutes, October 6, 1966 (Archives).

⁴ District Board Minutes, December 1, 1966 (Archives).

⁵ "Ministerial Standing Committee Report," 27th District Conference, September, 1973 (Archives).

four voting members seeking to have the denomination's regulations against Pentecostal practices removed, in particular the requirement that Wesleyans do not speak in tongues in public worship and ministers are forbidden to promote speaking in tongues. Ron Smith was one of the signatories to this resolution.⁶ This is certainly an issue that the Annual Service Reporting might have raised. Ron may have considered this limitation to be a contributing factor in the lack of growth of the Sunshine Church. Despite these events, Ron continued as a Ministerial Student for some years.

In 1974, American pastor William (Bill) Foster was assigned to the Sunshine Church. Bill had been recruited by James Ridgway and came as an Associate Missionary, meaning he was supported by the Australian Church rather than by the American Department of World Missions. Bill's ministry at Sunshine was to become one of the highlights of the Victorian District over the next two decades, during which time the congregation achieved its best growth on record.

Dalton's Bridge (Cohuna). After the closure of the Cohuna Church, Dalton's Bridge continued another twenty-two years with a small but vibrant ministry focused toward children and youth. From 1960 to 1966 the Dalton's Bridge Church consistently recorded around fifty children in its Sunday School, peaking at seventy-nine in 1961.⁷ However, when Keith and Marjorie Goulding resigned to go to Papua New Guinea to assist the Wesleyan Mission in 1967, the Dalton's Bridge ministry was impacted by the loss of leadership. Attendances dwindled until the Sunday School was taken over as an independent ministry in 1975 by Mr Noel Taylor.⁸ In 1983 the use of the building was discontinued.⁹

Pastoral supply to this small and isolated ministry was a perpetual struggle. James Ridgway and Aubrey Carnell provided supervision from Melbourne with visiting preachers rostered to travel to Dalton's Bridge fortnightly when no resident pastor was living in the area. This continued from Aubrey Carnell's departure in 1953 until 1961. Walter Hotchkin was ready to move to Dalton's Bridge in 1961,¹⁰ but he

⁶ "Action Committee Report," 28th District Conference, September, 1974 (Archives).

⁷ "Statistical Report," 15th District Conference, January 1962 (Archives).

⁸ "District Superintendent's Report," 29th District Conference, October 1975 (Archives).

⁹ Correspondence J. Ridgway to Taylor, April 29, 1983, J. Ridgway records 4 (Archives).

¹⁰ Correspondence with Gouldings, May 16, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

was reassigned to Papua New Guinea.¹¹ By early 1961 Marj Goulding was suffering health problems and could not continue to manage the Dalton's Bridge work. She wrote to the District Board, pleading for a resident pastor and chiding the District for continuing to start new churches while not supplying existing congregations:

After all the years of pioneering and sacrifice on the part of those who have had anything to do with this work, I feel that the enemy would be achieving his objectives should this work close down.

Much effort and finance has been spent in opening up new works, and it seems far from proper to let an established work, such as this, close down for want of a pastor.¹²

Bill Thorpe was therefore assigned to the Dalton's Bridge Church from 1961 until he withdrew from ministry in 1965. Bill's ministry at Dalton's Bridge is reported to have been well received.¹³ Ron Smith was assigned to the congregation from 1965 to 1968, after which the work was left in the hands of the Conference President (now called the District Superintendent). Stalwarts, Marj and Keith Goulding left for Papua New Guinea at the beginning of 1967 and the work declined from then. Attendance records show ten at evening worship in 1971, eight in 1972, six in 1973 and no record in 1974. In a strange reporting anomaly, the Dalton's Bridge "Church" continues to be reported to have two members from 1973 until 1977,¹⁴ but without any worship services offered.¹⁵ A Sunday School is not reported either, but it does appear to have continued in some form since it was taken over by Mr Noel Taylor as an independent ministry in 1975.¹⁶ The likely explanation for the membership of two was that Keith and Marj Goulding were kept on the records while serving in Papua New Guinea and until they began the new church at Deception Bay in Queensland. This irregularity can give the impression that the Dalton's Bridge work continued longer than it actually did however.

¹¹ See some of this discussion in District Board Minutes, March 4, 1961 (Archives).

¹² Correspondence from Marj Goulding, March 2, 1961, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

¹³ District Board Minutes, October 19, 1961 (Archives).

¹⁴ It is likely that this was a remaining record of membership for Keith and Marj Goulding, since they were on the mission field and the home church would not want to remove their names from the record while they were engaged in such an important ministry.

¹⁵ It was not until 1975 that Aubrey Carnell finally reported in his District Superintendent's report that no work remained at Dalton's Bridge. However, the "congregation" had clearly discontinued by 1973, and in fact, Carnell himself states in his autobiographical writings that the work was finished after 1965. See Aubrey Carnell, "Church History Notes" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, c. 1985), 32.

¹⁶ "District Superintendent Report," 29th District Conference, October 1975 (Archives).

College Church. During the 1960s and 1970s College Church was consistently the largest of the Wesleyan Methodist Churches. This was aided by stationing some of the most experienced ministers at this prominent location. Aubrey Carnell and Bryce Hartin both led the College Church at different times from 1962 to 1970 as they shared other responsibilities at the Bible College and in District leadership. During their time the church averaged around thirty adult members.

Kingsley Ridgway pastored College Church from October 1970 to September 1973, during which time the congregation peaked at forty-three adult members and an average attendance at morning worship of sixty people.¹⁷ The good average attendances might be skewed by the fact that College Church and Glenroy Church operated as a circuit from 1971 to 1975, with morning worship not offered at Glenroy every week. However, the increased membership numbers more likely speaks to the charm and skill of the elderly Kingsley Ridgway. Though the circuit continued for two years beyond Ridgway ministry at College Church, the statistical reports immediately declined once Ridgway retired.¹⁸

College Church had purchased two blocks of land from the denomination in 1953. These were on the northern side of South Street, across from the college. However, in 1958 the Church was quoted £1,000 for the construction of the roadway around their corner blocks. They were reluctant to spend that much money, so the church leaders approached the district about building on the college property, using the proceeds from the sale of their own land for construction costs. J.T. Carnell and Earnest (Mick) Kelsall were both vocal supporters of this new plan.¹⁹ The College Church was granted the location designated as 23 South Street, which was the block that Kelsall had specifically requested, despite Mattke's preference that they remain across the road. In 1963 the local church used the District title-deed to the property in borrowing a further £1,500 to complete the construction.²⁰ In the early 1970s the College Church sought additional land from the College to build an educational block. Agreement was reached with the provision that the local church and college properties be consolidated onto one title so that construction would not be hindered

¹⁷ "Statistical Report," 27th District Conference, September 1973 (Archives).

¹⁸ Average attendances: 1973 - 65; 1974 - 45; 1975 - 40; 1976 - 35.

¹⁹ Correspondence K. Ridgway to Mattke, October 2 and 28, 1958, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²⁰ District Board Minutes, April 4, 1963 (Archives).

by boundaries. The blocks were consolidated, but when construction was never undertaken the agreement lapsed. Around 1980 the consolidation prompted the College and the College Church to formalise their arrangement for the church property. An agreement was signed that guaranteed the College Church their own lot and sufficient room for parking should the two entities ever separate.²¹

Unfortunately, these details were lost in the decades that followed. In 2008 when the College property was sold, ill-feeling was generated because of the uncertainty about who owned the land upon which the College Church was built.²² The National Board concluded:

While ownership of the land under discussion could not be decided upon with certainty, it was clear that the Box Forest Church [College Church] and Kingsley College had a long established practice of partnering and sharing resources for the good and development of both institutions. In that same spirit, the NBA concluded that the church could not reasonably be asked to pay for the land needed to continue their operations. It should, however, be asked to pay for any subdivision costs incurred in the separation of the Box Forest land from the remainder of the Kingsley property.²³

Balwyn. Charles Wilson served as pastor of the Balwyn Church for much of the time covered in this chapter. During those years the adult membership showed a slight increase, from seven in 1962 to ten in 1968. In 1965 and 1966 the Vermont Church was placed in circuit with the Balwyn Church with Wilson as pastor. During those two years the Balwyn membership peaked at twelve.

When James Midgley succeeded Wilson from 1969 an increase of membership was gradually attained, up to nineteen in 1974. However, this increase was not accompanied by healthy growth. As average attendance records became available it was revealed that attendance was not increasing at all. Remarkably, average attendance from 1971 to 1974 remained at seventeen people, even while membership increased from fifteen to nineteen. These were symptoms of stagnation rather than stability.

²¹ Agreement signed by College Principal, District Administrator and local church Secretary, c. 1980, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

²² The discussion was further confused by the discovery of documents dated in 1973 when the Church was seeking additional land for an educational building. In these documents titles and boundaries are discussed, but that discussion is not actually related to the 1963 arrangements.

²³ Correspondence to Box Forest Church, May 8, 2008, L. Cameron records (Archives).

Highett. In 1961 the Highett Church applied to the District Board for permission to build a parsonage. Permission was granted with finance to be secured through the bank.²⁴ Discussions about a parsonage continued into 1962 and 1963, with options of building a parsonage beside the chapel considered and then the possibility of purchasing a Housing Commission house. However, with insufficient funding and low attendances, plans for a parsonage lapsed.

In April 1966 the new pastor, Graeme Winterton, led the congregation in hosting an evangelistic crusade with Rev. Bryce Hartin. Results were very modest, with twenty unchurched people attending and one of those responding to the gospel call.²⁵ By October that year Winterton reported to the District Board that the congregation was only averaging five in worship and thirty in Sunday School²⁶ and in December he requested release from his appointment to study full time. The District Board did not grant his request, but asked him to remain until the next Conference.²⁷ Winterton appears to have resolved his study needs because he eventually stayed at Highett Church until the end of 1969.

With some increased attendances the Highett Church again sought to build a parsonage in 1967, with approval granted and construction undertaken in 1968 on the corner of the existing church property at 45 Spring Road.²⁸ Graeme Winterton was ordained at the 1968 Conference, having completed his studies and the Highett Church appeared to have entered into a new era of effectiveness. However, the size of the congregation was not able to maintain the cost of the borrowings for construction and by 1969 the church was in difficulty again. Winterton's resignation from the Highett Church and from the denomination was accepted by the District Board in August 1970.²⁹

Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin and family were due back in Melbourne for furlough in 1971 and needed a home for their stay. Hotchkin was therefore assigned to the Highett Church and placed in the parsonage, though the congregation was

²⁴ District Board Minutes, October 19, 1961 (Archives).

²⁵ District Board Minutes, February 26 and April 28, 1966 (Archives).

²⁶ District Board Minutes, October 6, 1966 (Archives).

²⁷ District Board Minutes, December 1, 1966 (Archives).

²⁸ District Board Minutes, May 2, 1968 and "Conference President's Report," 21st District Conference, June 1968 (Archives).

²⁹ District Board Minutes, August 27, 1970 (Archives).

down to an average attendance of ten people. At the end of 1971, with Hotchkins due to return to Papua New Guinea, the Highett Church was officially closed on the last day of November 1971.³⁰ The Church property was leased and then sold to the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Glenroy. During James Ridgway's appointment to the Glenroy Church, from 1959 to 1966, the Church peaked at twenty-five adult members and a very active Sunday School. However, when Ridgway left to pursue further studies in America the congregation suffered inconsistent pastoral supply and attendance plummeted. By 1971 there was an average attendance in Sunday morning worship of ten adults, including only three adult members. In May 1971, the District Board recorded that "The work at present is in a state of uncertainty."³¹ During this difficult time Glenroy Church was given a brief period of stability through the appointment of Rev. E. Acton. Acton came to Australia from Morocco in February 1966 and went on to America in July 1968.³² Aubrey Carnell spoke of the loss to the Australian Church when a pastor of "such high calibre" departed.

In July 1971 the Glenroy Church was placed in circuit with College Church. The circuit pastors included Kingsley Ridgway, Charles Wilson and Graeme Carnell, with Carnell given special responsibilities at Glenroy Church. The Church responded well to the extra pastoral supply, increasing in three years from an attendance of ten to twenty-five and from membership of three to twenty-two in 1974.

Launceston. The Launceston Church was growing under Max Richardson's ministry. A new outreach to Ulverstone³³ was initiated in December 1963,³⁴ membership reached nineteen members at Launceston in 1964, a women's ministry was functioning and additional land was being sought for expansion.

³⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 26th District Conference, September 1972 (Archives).

³¹ District Board Minutes, May 13, 1971 (Archives).

³² "Conference President's Report," 19th District Conference, June 1966 and 21st District Conference, June 1968 (Archives).

³³ One hundred and ten kilometres west of Launceston

³⁴ District Board Minutes, December 5, 1963 (Archives).

However, this good growth was to come to an abrupt halt, when in August 1964 the District leaders made the decision³⁵ that Max Richardson and John Buckley would exchange pastorates, Richardson to Elizabeth, South Australia, and Buckley to Launceston, Tasmania. On the face of things this was justifiable, if not well timed. John Buckley was exhausted and seeking a break from his role in Elizabeth. Richardson had proved himself to be an excellent pastor, gifted at bringing healing to difficult situations. Buckley also had some brief history in Launceston, having filled the pulpit for two months before starting at Elizabeth. The exchange began to unravel just before Max and Beth left Launceston with their young sons, Dale and Phillip. John Buckley advised that he would not be accepting the Launceston appointment, but would step aside in Elizabeth to allow Richardson to take on that pastorate. The Richardsons arrived in Elizabeth in October to find themselves less than welcomed by the congregation,³⁶ and meanwhile no pastoral supply was available for Launceston.

Robert Bell was reassigned from the Highett Church to Launceston, taking up residence on the church property. Bell's ministry appears to have been well received by the Launceston congregation, which was a relief for the District leadership. Membership remained stable through 1965 and in October the congregation voted to request his continued pastoral service.³⁷ However, the Conference had decided that James Midgley would be assigned to Launceston from January 1966, and the District Board upheld this request. James and Miriam Midgley arrived as scheduled, replacing Bell in the church accommodation.

James Midgley served at Launceston from 1966 to 1969. The church closed at the conclusion of his service. Membership declined each year, from twenty-two in 1966 to fifteen in 1967 to eleven in 1968. In retrospect Midgley contended that his lack of pastoral experience was a factor in the church's closure³⁸ but that may be too

³⁵ Max Richardson ascribes this decision to the Annual Conference, but the Conference records do not quite reflect this, although the designation of supply pastor for both Max Richardson and John Buckley suggests a temporary arrangement and a discussion underway. In his 1965 report, the Conference President records that the final decision was made subsequent to the Conference. "Conference President's Report," 18th District Conference, June 1965 (Archives).

³⁶ Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough, Pioneer Church Work in Australia: 1955 to 1995* (Lilydale, Victoria: Self published, 1995), 85-86.

³⁷ District Board Minutes, October 28, 1965 (Archives).

³⁸ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:39:55.

simplistic. Midgley inherited a situation where the District had removed two respected pastors in the previous twelve months without the congregation's consent, and he started his service under the cloud of being an imposition upon the congregation.

A good number of young adults had joined the congregation from the Elphin Road Baptist Church during Richardson's pastoral appointment. Many of them returned to the Baptist Church in 1965 following Richardson's departure and the remainder left early in Midgley's time.³⁹ It is significant that, after serving in Elizabeth and Vermont Churches, Max Richardson was called to pastor the Elphin Road Baptist Church in Launceston from 1974 to 1979.

In October 1969 Midgley's were reassigned to the Balwyn Church and steps were taken to close the Launceston Church.⁴⁰ The church property was listed for sale, finally settling in 1972. Meanwhile \$5,000 from the proceeds of the sale was designated to the Vermont property needs.⁴¹ However, by the time the Launceston property had sold the situation at Vermont had changed and the entire proceeds of \$5,800 was redirected to assist in the property purchase in Green Valley, Sydney.⁴² In an interview with James Midgley in 2013, Midgley reflected that perhaps they were too hasty in closing the Launceston church.⁴³

Dandenong. The church started in Dandenong in 1960 made a good start under Roy Fletcher's aggressive evangelistic leadership. Meeting initially in Fletcher's home, the congregation soon approached the District Board about buying property. The board offered the use of an ex-army hut in 1961, similar to what had been used at Glenroy Church,⁴⁴ but the Dandenong congregation was apparently unwilling to consider this offer. The following year a property with a "sort of double garage"⁴⁵ was located at 1200 Heatherton Road, Noble Park⁴⁶ and approval was given to

³⁹ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:41:20.

⁴⁰ District Board Minutes, October 9, 1969 (Archives).

⁴¹ District Board Minutes, February 19, 1970 (Archives).

⁴² District Board Minutes, February 8, 1973 (Archives).

⁴³ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:41:35.

⁴⁴ District Board Minutes, August 17, 1961 (Archives).

⁴⁵ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:43:00.

⁴⁶ The 1964 Conference Journal places this building at 300 Heatherton Road while the 1965 Journal places it at 1200 Heatherton Road.

purchase for £1,675.⁴⁷ The property was purchased and the small structure renovated, with the opening of the new chapel on May 26, 1973.⁴⁸ The property was in the suburb of Noble Park, and so the congregation gradually came to be known as the Noble Park Church rather than the Dandenong Church.

Adult membership continued to increase, reaching twenty-one in 1965, to the extent that the congregation was too large for the small chapel and started holding Sunday worship at the Noble Park Scout Hall. At this point Noble Park was the fourth largest church in the denomination. However in 1965 Roy Fletcher held an improper pastoral vote and then dismissed those who disagreed with his action. Consequently Roy was brought under discipline and resigned, as described in another chapter. The result was catastrophic. Roy took some of the church members and recommenced under a different banner.⁴⁹ By August 1965 it was reported that the Noble Park Church was being closed,⁵⁰ with only a few remaining members meeting privately in Doveton from September. However, the remnant were not ready to give up.

In 1966 Noble Park reported four remaining members so the Conference President moved to discontinue the Noble Park worship services on July 15 and began the process of selling the property to repay the debts.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the small group continued meeting in the home of Tom and Eleanor Blythe⁵² and worship services were held at the Guides Hall in Ross Reserve, Noble Park. Garry Pitcher was licensed as their Local Preacher and appointed to the role of "Caretaker /Secretary".⁵³ Pitcher had been converted in the 1959 Billy Graham crusade and was brought to the Wesleyan Methodist Church through Max Richardson's ministry in Launceston.⁵⁴ He later served in the Elizabeth Church in South Australia.

⁴⁷ District Board Minutes, October 4, 1962 (Archives).

⁴⁸ District Board Minutes, April 4, 1963 (Archives).

⁴⁹ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:46:35.

⁵⁰ District Board Minutes, August 12, 1965 (Archives).

⁵¹ "Conference President's Report," 19th District Conference, June 1966 (Archives).

⁵² Update from the Conference President, October 3, 1966, Hotchkin records (Archives).

⁵³ District Board Minutes, October 28, 1965 (Archives).

⁵⁴ Correspondence M. Richardson to K. Ridgway, January 17, 1960, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

In 1967 Kingsley Ridgway was given oversight of the continuing Noble Park group⁵⁵ until he resigned from that appointment in October.⁵⁶ Mr Les Young was granted a Local Preacher's license in Ridgway's place and went on to serve the denomination in other places, but the Noble Park Church was officially and finally disbanded on February 29, 1968, with some of the fellowship moving across to the Highett Church.

Thomas J. Blythe was an Irish immigrant, formally a member of the Methodist Church of Northern Ireland. Tom and his wife, Eleanor arrived in Australia in 1961, but could not accept the liberal teachings of the Methodist Church in Australia. Blythe discovered the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Dandenong through his friendship with Collin Lock. He explains that Roy Fletcher's group was "much closer in our hearts to the Methodism we knew."⁵⁷ He soon became very involved in the local ministry. After his time at Noble Park, Blythe attended Highett Church before being transferred to Geelong for work and attending the Salvation Army for three years. Around November 1972 Blythe felt called to ministry and left his sales work to relocate and study at the Wesleyan Bible College. Blythe completed his four years' study in 1976 and accepted a call to pastor the Coffs Harbour Church in New South Wales. He was elected Superintendent of New South Wales District in 1982 and while holding that position he was involved in commencement of churches at Maitland, Taree and Lismore, while he also accepting pastoral duties at Hills Church in 1984. In 1987 Blythe was elected National Superintendent, at which time he was in the process of starting the Bankstown Church. During his term as National Superintendent Blythe built a relationship with an independent group in Pittwater called the Kurugma Christian Fellowship, which he brought into the denomination and accepted the role of pastor at the renamed Pittwater Church. Blythe retired from the role of National Superintendent in January 1997 and subsequently served as C.E.O. of the Bethshan Retirement Village, Nursing Home and Camp Centre in Wyee. Suffering a nervous breakdown in 2000, he resigned from Bethshan and retired from ministry.⁵⁸ At that time Blythe's son, John Blythe, was starting the Crossroads Church in Sydney, so Tom and Eleanor attended that congregation until

⁵⁵ "Conference President's Report," 20th District Conference, June 1967 (Archives).

⁵⁶ District Board Minutes, October 2, 1967 (Archives).

⁵⁷ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:2:30.

⁵⁸ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 0:33:40.

Crossroads left the denomination. Undoubtedly the departure of Tom and Eleanor's son from the denomination made it awkward for them to re-engage in the New South Wales District, but it remains a disturbing truth that they have not been welcomed back into fellowship in the district since that time.

Elizabeth. With stage one of the chapel completed and dedicated in January 1961 and stage two continuing slowly, the congregation began planning for a parsonage. Plans for the parsonage were approved in August 1962 and at the end of the year, James Ridgway led an evangelistic team for ministry at Elizabeth. Ridgway reported back to the Board, "Many souls were helped, & in one case a couple from another church, became interested in the teaching of holiness. Much house to house visitation was done. The sum of £40 was paid to Mr. Otway for his help in this crusade."⁵⁹

Membership peaked at ten adults in 1964, with one hundred and sixteen on the Sunday School roll. John and Marion Buckley had exhausted themselves. In 1961 Buckley asked the Conference to station another pastor in Elizabeth so that he could continue as the church builder and in his own secular employment.⁶⁰ He wrote again in 1962 asking for the District to invest more personnel into the Elizabeth project and suggesting that further church-planting should be ceased until current churches are established:

My secular work is keeping me fully occupied... and it must needs be as expenses increase. The prosperity of the church work is dependant to a great extent on much being put into it. I feel all our churches need consolidating. Until we can do this let us hold steady. We will gain nothing by opening up in some other area, as you mentioned in a previous letter. Furthermore the more churches we have the more pastors we need and the more pastors we have the more reserves we need will fill the gap if any one of our pastors withdraw this next conference?

And what of our need for a parsonage in every area we operate? It is possible that our men are compelled in a sense to carry on where they are even if they don't desire to. The result is a half-hearted effort.⁶¹

These letters were written while the new outreach to Papua New Guinea was gaining momentum and drawing away several of the ministerial team. Walt and Joy

⁵⁹ District Board Minutes, February 14, 1963 (Archives).

⁶⁰ Correspondence Buckley to J. Ridgway, October 2, 1961, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

⁶¹ Correspondence Buckley to J. Ridgway, March 20, c.1962, J. Ridgway records 5 (Archives).

Ridgway returned to Australia after many years in America in August 1963 and located in Adelaide to assist the Elizabeth work.⁶² Walt and Joy stayed until August 1966,⁶³ but for the Buckleys it was too late. The solution from the district was to move John and Marion to Launceston for a change of ministry, but the appeal of staying in Elizabeth while someone else carried the pastoral responsibilities was more attractive. Buckleys stayed, Richardsons arrived, and congregational loyalty was divided.

Membership decreased to two members in just three years. Max Richardson described the losses from a congregation divided along lines of nationality in a migrant city:

The first family to leave was Australian, they went to the Charismatic Church... The second part of the deterioration came when Walter and Joy Ridgway returned to the U.S.A. [for further studies]... After eighteen months the former Pastor moved to Victoria, and following his departure the English and Scottish sections of the Church left also....⁶⁴

In describing this situation, Richardson makes the note that, "The former pastor with his wife and family were always positive and I cannot recollect any negative or destructive attitudes coming from them." The Buckleys did not take another pastorate and John died in 1980. The Wesleyan Church Conference recorded its condolences, "expressing appreciation of years of ministry and longer years of fellowship" with a true pioneer.⁶⁵

Richardson was reassigned to the Vermont Church at the end of 1967 and Garry Pitcher was sent to Elizabeth. The work did not recover however. Pitcher had plans to resume control of the Kindergarten being run from the church buildings and the District Board considered borrowing money for extensions to the buildings, but the number of adherents did not improve. Dennis Hartin reflected upon one year when, as a teenager, he heard Garry Pitcher bring his report on the work at Elizabeth:

He was so far away from everybody, all on his own, and he was to give his report and he just broke down. He just cried.... He just told of the isolation that he felt and the difficulty. So then I started to get a feel of it, how hard it was, not

⁶² "Conference President's Report," 16th District Conference, June 1964 (Archives).

⁶³ "Conference President's Report," 20th District Conference, June 1967 (Archives).

⁶⁴ Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 86-87.

⁶⁵ "Minutes," 34th National Conference, August 1980, 23 (Archives).

being in a well known denomination. None of them were supported by their churches. And they just faithfully carried on in that time.⁶⁶

Pitcher continued throughout 1970, but at the end of the year he and his wife resigned and returned to Tasmania for health reasons.⁶⁷ By 1971 no program was running in the Elizabeth Church buildings.⁶⁸ The Elizabeth property was rented out to the Elizabeth Downs Apostolic Church from November 1971 and sold to them the following year.

Vermont and Heathmont. In June 1963 James Ridgway met with a group of twenty people in Vermont to discuss their joining the Wesleyan Methodist Church. This group had been started by Jim and Gwynne Henderson as an independent fellowship and met in the Hendersons' home at 7 Caldwell Road, Vermont. The church had established a solid Sunday School in the Eastmont Primary School (that no longer exists) and eventually the worship services were also relocated from the Henderson home to the school.⁶⁹

On July 27, 1963 the Vermont congregation was formally recognised as a pioneer Wesleyan Methodist fellowship, with Jim Henderson as the Sunday School Superintendent.⁷⁰ In 1963 Henderson did some initial studies at the Wesleyan Bible College and in 1964-1965 he and Gwynne moved across from Vermont to study fulltime while living in the new units behind the College. Henderson's "ministry appointment" as a student was to the Vermont fellowship along with Graeme Watkins.⁷¹ James Ridgway and Graeme Watkins undertook house to house visitation early in 1964 to help establish the work. In 1966 the Hendersons moved back to their home in Vermont to participate in the congregation.⁷²

From February 1964 until 1967 Vermont was still a preaching point in circuit with the Balwyn Church, under the supervision of Charles Wilson. The circuit arrangement was terminated on Sunday February 25, 1968 when Max and Beth

⁶⁶ Interview, Dennis Hartin, May 6, 2014, 0:7:55.

⁶⁷ "District Superintendent's Report," 25th District Conference, October 1971 (Archives).

⁶⁸ District Board Minutes, May 13, 1971 (Archives).

⁶⁹ Interview, Mary Dight, July 16, 2016, 0:09:00.

⁷⁰ "Vice President's Report," 16th District Conference, June 1964 (Archives).

⁷¹ Interview, Delwynne Hughes (Gwynne's sister), June 3, 2015.

⁷² District Board Minutes, February 20, 1964 (Archives).

Richardson were assigned to pastoral duties at Vermont and the first five full members were received into the Vermont Wesleyan Methodist Church.⁷³ Richardsons remained as the pastoral team at Vermont from 1968 until 1972, resulting in a period of consolidation and intense community ministry. The emphasis on children's ministry can be seen in the June 1968 Conference Report, when the Vermont Church had increased to seven members and one hundred and twenty-nine children. In 1971 the Church reported twenty-six in morning worship but internal divisions were growing within the congregation.

Division centred around two issues: the expense of building a worship centre and the demands made upon college students. During Richardson's time at Vermont the congregation outgrew the Henderson's home, which led to discussions for several years about purchasing property and building. In February 1970 the District offered Vermont \$5,000 to assist in their property purchase, to be drawn from the proceeds of the sale of the Launceston Church.⁷⁴ In 1971 the church considered purchasing a house and later the option of removing a used hall to their own property. Both of these proposals were given provisional approval by the District Board but not by the local congregation.⁷⁵ Finally, in 1972 the congregation was offered two blocks of land by a developer for \$12,000, but they were still unwilling to take on the cost of building.⁷⁶ One irony of this decision was that the congregation did find the resources to purchase a property at Campbell's Creek, near Bendigo, for church camping.⁷⁷

This property debate divided the congregation and resulted in the withdrawal of the Church from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in August 1972,⁷⁸ with some members continuing as the Vermont Christian Fellowship and six adult members transferring to other Wesleyan Methodist Churches in 1973.⁷⁹

In 1969 a new fellowship had been launched at Heathmont, five kilometres from Vermont and the two congregations were in circuit under Richardson's pastoral

⁷³ Update from conference President, March 1968, Hotchkin records (Archives).

⁷⁴ District Board Minutes, February 19, 1970 (Archives).

⁷⁵ District Board Minutes, November 4 and December 2, 1971 (Archives).

⁷⁶ Max Richardson, *Hand to the Plough*, 100-101.

⁷⁷ Interview, Mary Dight, July 16, 2015, 0:18:05.

⁷⁸ District Board Minutes, August 10, 1972 (Archives).

⁷⁹ "Statistical Report," 27th District Conference, September 1973 (Archives).

oversight.⁸⁰ When Vermont withdrew in 1972, Heathmont was transferred to the supervision of James Midgley at the Balwyn Church. By 1973 the Heathmont Church ceased to be listed in the District records.

Entangled in the growing tension within the congregation was the use of college students in ministry. From late 1972 Max Richardson took secular employment while continuing to attend the Vermont Fellowship. The congregation opted to become an independent fellowship from 1973, but they remained in friendship with the Wesleyans as an affiliate congregation. In 1977 they reunited with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, but by that time the denomination was growing at an extraordinary rate and pastoral supply was difficult to find for Vermont. Students from the College were assigned to Vermont; initially Adrian and Sylvia Morley⁸¹ and Roger Delafontaine, and later Peter Keilar and Joe Cotton were assigned. However, the demands made upon students became a source of division for the congregation. Mary Dight recalled:

We seemed to be wanting our pound of flesh from students... One of the students from the past said they were expecting him to do a lot on the Sunday and then come back through the week. He had a lot of studies to do, and I started to get an impression in my own mind that students were being asked to do more than what they probably should have; or that that expectations were too high.⁸²

By the late 1970s the congregation was in decline and the Sunday School numbers were falling. The Wesleyan College decided not to send any more students to Vermont "for annihilation".⁸³ On March 29, 1982 the congregation at Vermont voted to discontinue the Vermont fellowship and to merge with the newly formed Wesleyan Methodist congregation at Boronia.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, some of those who had voted to discontinue chose rather to relocate to a nearby Baptist Church.

Green Valley / Busby. In January 1964, James Ridgway met with a former Nazarene pastor, Rev. W.D. (Doug) Pinch, to discuss starting a church in the Western suburbs of Sydney. Doug had served some years at the Nazarene Church's Aboriginal Mission at Tweed Heads, the same mission at which William Bromley

⁸⁰ District Board Minutes, August 21, 1969 (Archives).

⁸¹ The Morleys were OMS missionaries.

⁸² Interview, Mary Dight, July 16, 2015, 0:20:30.

⁸³ Interview, Mary Dight, July 16, 2015, 0:33:50.

⁸⁴ "National Superintendent Report - Official Acts," 36th National Conference, August 1982 (Archives).

had served in the early 1950s.⁸⁵ After a fruitful meeting, Pinch began services in the name of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Cabramatta in February 1964, reporting attendances of thirty adults and fifty children.⁸⁶ The District Board accepted this work as the first Wesleyan Methodist Church in New South Wales. With the work progressing well permission was sought in December to purchase three adjoining blocks of land on Orchard Road, Green Valley for £3,300. (This suburb was later rezoned into Busby.) The new property was purchased with a bank loan and was dedicated by Aubrey Carnell on May 30, 1965.⁸⁷ James Ridgway visited the church later in 1965 and in December plans for construction of a chapel and parsonage were presented to the District Board. The construction of the parsonage (with garage space suitable for church services) was also financed through a bank loan with construction completed by February 1967. Repayment of this loan, now \$13,000, became a burden for the local church and the District for several years. In May 1967 the District advanced \$2,660 to Green Valley Church to cover additional costs and in 1971 gave \$1,000 from the sale of the Healesville campsite.⁸⁸ By 1973, with regular payment from the local church and the District, the balance owing had been reduced to \$5,800. This amount was paid in full from the sale of the Launceston property.⁸⁹ Aubrey Carnell justified this use of District funds, explaining that, "A large portion of the purchase price was borne by the Busby Church through sacrificial giving, this inspired the District Board of Administration to give substantial assistance."⁹⁰

Doug Pinch's ordination credentials were transferred to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1964. He remained the pastor to Green Valley / Busby Church throughout the period covered in this chapter supporting himself through employment as a travelling salesman.⁹¹ Nonetheless, the Busby Church did not achieve significant attendances. By 1974 they reported eight adult members and an average attendance at worship services of just fifteen people. In light of these statistics, the achievement in paying off their debts is quite extraordinary.

⁸⁵ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:54:00.

⁸⁶ District Board Minutes, February 2, 1964 (Archives).

⁸⁷ "Conference President's Report," 18th District Conference, June 1965 (Archives).

⁸⁸ District Board Minutes, February 9 and May 4, 1967 and November 4, 1971 (Archives).

⁸⁹ District Board Minutes, February 8, 1973 (Archives).

⁹⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 27th District Conference, September 1973 (Archives).

⁹¹ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:56:10.

When Bryce Hartin had finished his time as College Church pastor and in District leadership, he returned to Sydney. From there he conducted two crusades on the Busby property in a large tent erected on the church property and continued to be available for evangelistic ministries to the Wesleyan Methodist Church as requested. Dennis Hartin, Bryce's son, has memories of "old Doug Pinch" from this time in Sydney. He recounts a story of when some local "kids" broke into the parsonage and ruined the organ by pouring paint into it. The police caught the youths responsible and Doug Pinch had the option to bring charges. Instead he required that the young people attend Sunday School, which greatly impressed the community.⁹²

The losses covered in this appendix are in contrast with the reports of consistent growth in the new mission to Papua New Guinea.⁹³ In Papua New Guinea a vibrant mission work was established and indigenised at a rapid pace, partially because of international direction and partially because of a vigorous strategy of expansion, training and empowerment. In Australia the work was also passed on from missionaries to Australian personnel, but subsequently it barely survived through times of isolation, lack of resources, loss of morale, internal conflict, incongruous decisions, absentee leadership, and sheer faithful determination. Too many men and women were used up and left behind.

At the beginning of 1961, membership was eighty-seven in ten congregations. By 1974, at the Annual Conference in September, there was a reported one hundred and two members in five churches. The district had peaked at one hundred and ninety-four members in twelve churches in 1966. During this era of decline the Australian Wesleyans made their largest contribution to the pioneering of the New Guinea work in both personnel and funds. Without doubt, the contribution of personnel weakened significantly the progress of the homeland work. Perhaps it was now the Australian Church's time for growth.⁹⁴

⁹² Interview, Dennis Hartin, May 6, 2014, 0:15:40.

⁹³ See APPENDIX D.

⁹⁴ "Copy of Wesleyan World Fellowship Report," 30th District Conference, October 1976 (Archives).

APPENDIX F

VICTORIAN/SOUTHERN DISTRICT 1983-2015

In 1987 the Victorian District was renamed the Southern District when a new attempt to begin work in South Australia was commenced. Wesleyan Methodist Churches had existed in South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia prior to 1983 but in each case the congregations had been closed. In 1987 a church in the suburbs of Adelaide was started through the ministry of Don Hardgrave (National Superintendent) and placed under the direction of Ray Akers (Southern District Superintendent), resulting in the district renamed the Southern District.¹

THE VICTORIAN CHURCH

American missionary, Rev. Mel Lockard was serving in Brisbane as pastor of the Mount Gravatt Church in 1982 until the resignation of Dallas Clarnette created a need for district leadership in Victoria. Mel and Donna relocated to Melbourne and took up the duties of State Superintendent from November 1982. In 1985 Mel and Donna returned to the United States of America and the District Conference elected Rev. Ray Akers to succeed Mel as Superintendent. Akers brought new energy to the work of church-planting, but in 1988 he announced that he would not continue as District Superintendent because of his desire to accept a pastoral role at College Church.²

Rev. David Brownless was elected to lead the district and relocated from the Joyful News pastorate in Brisbane to take up the position in Victoria. David and Sue Brownless were British immigrants with Western Australian connections.³ His first Wesleyan Methodist pastorate was in Yeppoon, Central Queensland from 1979. While at Yeppoon Brownless began the Rockhampton congregation in 1980 and in 1982 he travelled weekly by train to Mackay to help start the Mackay Church. At the

¹ Southern District Board Minutes, November 12, 1987 and National Board Minutes, December 9-10, 1987 (Archives).

² "District Superintendent's Report," 6th Southern District Conference, September 1988, 16 (Archives).

³ Brownless's entry into the Wesleyan Methodist Church is described in chapter 10: 323.

1982 National Conference Brownless was reassigned to the Joyful News Church in Brisbane where he was installed on December 19, 1982. From the Joyful News Church Brownless commenced the Western Suburbs (Oxley) Church in 1987 before being called to lead the Southern District in September 1988.

Brownless made church-planting his first priority in Victoria, continuing the growth pattern in Victoria for five years after the Queensland District had begun to slow. In his first report to the Southern District Conference Brownless wrote:

I wish to thank all the church who through their giving have made it possible for the District to have a full time D.S. This has enabled me to give a lot of time to investigation of church planting possibilities and the establishment of contacts with interested people throughout the two states [Victoria and South Australia].⁴

The fruit of Brownless's ministry can be seen in the district increase from fifteen congregations to thirty-four congregations in his nine years of leadership in the Southern District. Brownless was the second most successful church-planter in the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, with only Don Hardgrave exceeding his results. During those nine years full membership and average attendances doubled, from 279 to 557 full members and from 575 to 1,185 average attendance.⁵ See figure F.1. This was achieved despite the loss of many ministers to the Queensland ministry or to retirement,⁶ and surely is one of the most successful periods of leadership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church's history in Australia. Brownless's strategy was captured in his 1996 report:

The ability of our churches to grow beyond the struggling survival level is not a new problem and most of our churches remain at that level. The fact that we are seeing only small number of persons saved (especially adults) is a major factor. When it comes to evangelism, very few of our churches have any definite plan for evangelism. I believe that evangelism together with church-planting is a key to strong growth in our churches in the years to come.⁷

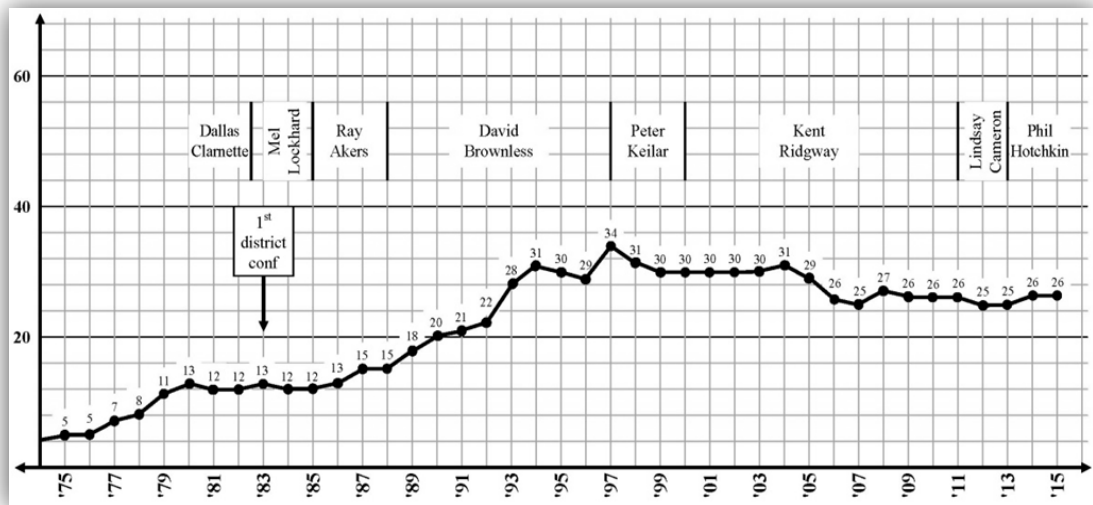
⁴ "District Superintendent's Report," 7th Southern District Conference, September 1989, 15 (Archives).

⁵ From 1995-1997 the District Statistician included many charts but very few real numbers, making it difficult to collect historical data.

⁶ For example, in 1994 Ray Akers, Phil Hotchkin, Alan Brown and Mark Durham transferred to Queensland, in 1995 Bill Foster transitioned to preparation for Adelaide, and in 1996 Max Richardson retired from pastoral ministry and James Ridgway retired from teaching.

⁷ "District Superintendent's Report," 14th Southern District Conference, September 1996, 32 (Archives).

Figure F.1 Number of congregations in Southern District with District leadership



At the conclusion of his term as Southern District Superintendent in 1997, Brownless received no invitations to pastor a local church in Australia or to lead another district. This remarkable neglect may have been influenced by Brownless's conclusion that the obligations of church membership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church were inappropriate. In November 1997 he resigned from the denomination and accepted a pastoral role with the Church of Christ in Melbourne.⁸

In the aftermath of Brownless's intense commitment to church-planting a number of quite small congregations were left that merged with each other or proved unsustainable over the following decade. Church-planting did continue but closures exceeded new works so that the number of congregations slowly declined to around twenty-six from 2005. If the number of congregations that have been started in Western Australia and South Australia since 2000 were deducted from the total, there would remain twenty-one congregations in Victoria in 2015. Figure F.2 illustrates the churches added each year from 1983-2015.

⁸ Correspondence with David and Sue, November 11, 1997, J. Ridgway records 8 (Archives).

Figure F.2a Churches started and closed in Southern District 1984-2015

	VIC	SA, WA & TAS	
1983 Brought Forward	College/Box Forest Sunshine Balwyn Glenroy (Hilton St) Silvan Belgrave Yarram Wangaratta Prahran (Spring St) ^a Thorpdale Werribee Boronia Ballarat		13
1984	Werribee		12
1985			12
1986	Benalla		13
1987	Dandenong Chinese	Strathalbyn SA	15
1988			15
1989	Melton Dandenong Tongan Northcote Tongan ^b Sunshine Tongan Benalla		18
1990	Berwick ^c Circle Church	Devonport TAS	21
1991			21
1992	Viewbank ^d		22
1993 (28)	Waverley Alexandra Hilton St Sri Lankan North Melbourne Vietnamese Robinvale Sunbury		28
1994	Altona Tongan Mildura Creswick Korean Alexandra		31
1995	Chadstone Tongan Creswick	Strathalbyn SA	30
1996	Dandenong Sri Lankan Hilton St Sri Lankan Yarram Melton	Village SA	29

^a Aka Wellspring
^b Previously the Fitzroy congregation, started by Faletau
^c Aka Narre Warren
^d Aka Banyule

Figure F.2b Churches started and closed in Southern District 1984-2015

	VIC	SA, WA & TAS	
1997	Red Cliffs Tongan Glenroy Tongan Healesville Meadow Heights Oakleigh Chinese		34
1998	North Melb Vietnamese Dandenong Chinese Meadow Heights		31
1999	Faith Community Melbourne Fijian Westgate Tongan Chadstone Tongan Northcote Tongan Sunshine Tongan Sunbury		30
2000	Oakleigh Chinese	John Wesley WA	30
2001	Dandenong Sri Lankan	Katanning WA	30
2002			30
2003	Belgrave	Crossroads ^c SA	30
2004	Sunbury ^f Waverley	Landsdale WA	31
2005	Tongan North West Westgate Tongan Glenroy Tongan Altona Tongan		29
2006	Mimos Network Circle Church Healesville Berwick	Village SA	26
2007	Westside Tongan Redcliffs Tongan	Devonport TAS	25
2008	Sunbury	Assyrian and Arabic WA Peace Lake ^g WA Carnarvon WA	27
2009		Carnarvon WA	26
2010			26
2011	Korean		25
2012	Cornerstone Life ^h Ballarat	Oasis SA Harrisdale WA Assyrian and Arabic WA	26
2013	Faith Community		25
2014	New Life Church of the Cross	Harrisdale WA	26
2015			26

^c Aka Mawson Lakes

^f Aka Goonawarra

^g Aka Jandakot

^h Aka Doreen

The size of congregations in the Southern District has generally been quite small, which has contributed to closures and mergers. This can be illustrated in decadal snapshots of Sunday worship attendance in Southern District churches:

- in 1985, 57% of congregations averaged less than 40 persons
- in 1995, 60% of congregations averaged less than 40 persons
- in 2005, 81% of congregations averaged less than 40 persons
- in 2015, 69% of congregations averaged less than 40 persons.

One factor in the number of smaller congregations in the Southern District is the high percentage of multi-cultural and ethnic ministries. The brief ministry of Mithrasena Horana to Sri Lankan immigrants in Australia resulted in congregations in Glenroy and Dandenong from 1996 to 2001. During that period new works were also established amongst Vietnamese by Thang Nguyen, Chinese by Nigel Lau and Tongan communities by a number of leaders, including Sifa Lokotui and Heamoni Iongi. The Chinese ministry consolidated to become a powerful presence in Balwyn and several of the scattered Tongan congregations consolidated over time. In response to this increasing dynamic, David Brownless wrote:

It is becoming obvious to me that pastors will need to be trained or further equipped to minister in a cross cultural situation. I would therefore like this conference to ask Kingsley College to further develop and impliment [sic] as a compulsory part of training for Australian pastors, a course, or courses, dealing with areas of cross cultural anthropology and cross cultural evangelism and multi-cultural church-planting in the Australian context.⁹

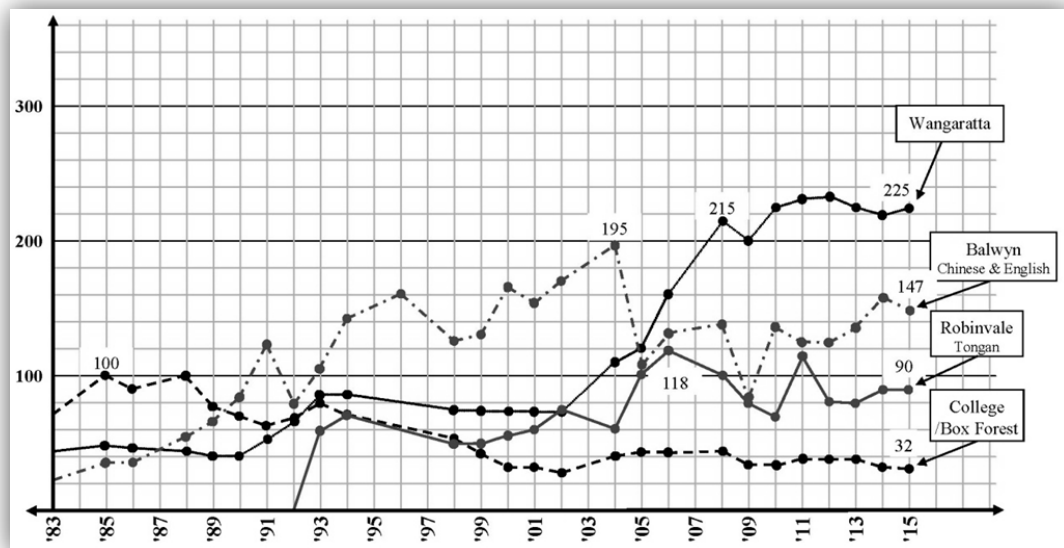
There were a handful of congregations that recorded an overall increase that has provided stability across the district. These include Wangaratta, Robinvale Tongan and Balwyn Chinese/English. The Balwyn congregation was originally an Australian congregation until it dwindled and was closed on July 10, 1983. The church was not closed long before Nigel Lau expressed interest in using the facilities and launched the Chinese/English congregations that are known today.¹⁰ Meanwhile, College Church was the first congregation in the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church to reach an annual average attendance of 100 persons, but it has slowly declined since then.

⁹ "District Superintendent's Report," 12th Southern District Conference, September 1994, 35 (Archives).

¹⁰ "National Superintendent's Report," 37th National Conference, September 1983, 30 (Archives).

In tracing the growth of four of the leading congregations in the Southern District, shown as figure F.3, it becomes apparent that they have not experienced the catastrophic losses that larger churches in other districts underwent. Balwyn and Robinvale do show some erratic movements, often aligned with pastoral changes, but remained viable congregations.

Figure F.3 Southern attendance milestones for four leading churches¹¹



The commitment to reach into the other southern states of Australia has been an abiding resolve in the Southern District. For this reason prominent personnel were directed toward Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. This can be kept in mind when considering the slow progress within Victoria. As the Victorian churches fed the mission work to Papua New Guinea from 1961, so they have directed resources toward the other states in these later decades.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN OUTREACH

A previous chapter described the first attempt to start a work in South Australia from 1958-1971 at Elizabeth to the north of Adelaide. In December 1986 a second attempt was initiated into Strathalbyn, to the south-west of Adelaide.

¹¹ Data from "District Statistical Reports," Southern District Conference Journals 1983-2015 (Archives).

Strathalbyn. The work at Strathalbyn started through an invitation from Keith and Lorna Lamshed who were seeking a restoration of Methodism in their community. Don Hardgrave, National Superintendent at the time, recruited Don Goldney for the work. Don Goldney's father, Rev. Victor Goldney, had been an influential Methodist minister in Adelaide throughout Don Goldney's early years, but by the early 1980s he had followed his own career to Brisbane. Don Goldney had a long friendship with Allen Hall, so in 1983 Don and Dawn with their children started to attend Joyful News Church with the Halls. The Goldneys became quite involved in the life of the church at Joyful News and then from 1985 at the Everton Hills Church. Don Goldney became acquainted with Don Hardgrave, helping with the historical research for the 1987 book, *For Such a Time*.¹² When the invitation to Strathalbyn came, the Goldneys were obvious candidates, although the National Board initially placed the restriction upon Goldney of serving for only two years before he must attend Kingsley College for training.¹³ The Goldneys moved to Adelaide in March 1987 and after some months purchased their own home at Mt. Barker, twenty kilometres north of Strathalbyn. The relocation costs and most of the family's living expenses during the following years came from Goldney's severance payout from his Brisbane employment. The location of the pastor outside of the Strathalbyn community was later seen as one of the hindrances to the Strathalbyn work,¹⁴ although factors such as lack of denominational support, community disputes and the expectations of some of the old Methodists were certainly very influential in the eventual demise of the Strathalbyn work.¹⁵

Worship services began in the RSL Hall in High Street, Strathalbyn, on Sunday April 5, 1987. In May a team of youth came from Bethany Bible College in Canada¹⁶ to assist the new congregation in outreach¹⁷ and by 1989 the congregation was averaging twenty-three in worship. The services were conducted in the afternoon for several years, but with the introduction of new families the group transitioned to morning worship services in May 1991. Unfortunately, progress was hindered when

¹² Strathalbyn WMC records, Goldney Family History, December 2015, 1 (Archives).

¹³ National Board Minutes, December 9-10, 1986 (Archives).

¹⁴ Southern District Board Minutes, December 14, 1990 (Archives).

¹⁵ Strathalbyn WMC records, Goldney Family History, December 2015, 4-5 (Archives).

¹⁶ Bethany Bible College, now known as Kingswood University, is in Sussex, New Brunswick, Canada. It is one of the five institutions of the Wesleyan Church of North America.

¹⁷ Donald Hardgrave, *For Such a Time* (Brisbane: Pleasant Surprise, 1988), 133.

Keith Lamshed had a stroke and then two families were transferred out of the district. In subsequent years a community dispute further splintered the congregation and attendances declined to unsustainable levels. In 1994 the decision was made by Don Goldney and the District Superintendent, David Brownless, to close the work. The last service was held on June 26, 1994. The District Board minutes show that the Board did not intend to close the Strathalbyn work entirely at that time,¹⁸ perhaps in the hope of retaining it until Bill Foster's impending arrival. However, the remaining few members transferred across to a group called the Bible Christian Church¹⁹ and the Wesleyan work is formally acknowledged as closed in 1995.²⁰

Don and Dawn stayed at Mt. Barker after the church closed and retained good friendships in the wider denomination. When Bill Foster came to start the Village Community outreach Goldney visited and was able to offer advice to the new church, but because of the distance between Mt. Barker and Golden Grove, the Goldneys did not settle into the new congregation. Figure F.4 illustrates the distances between the several church-plant around Adelaide.

Village Community, Golden Grove. Bill and Daphne Foster had served as distinguished members of the Southern District team since their arrival from America in 1974. During their years at Sunshine the Fosters were associate missionaries, meaning that they were international staff supported locally. After twenty years at Sunshine Church, Bill was briefly reassigned to serve as District Evangelist from 1994,²¹ which included an exploratory trip to Adelaide in December 1993.²² A plan for another church in Adelaide was developed and it was agreed by the American and Australian leaders that Bill and Daphne should raise funds in America to return as fully funded missionaries to Adelaide.²³ Fosters were therefore in North America during 1995, returning to Adelaide in 1996. They decided to commence in Golden Grove, to the northeast of Adelaide, by door-knocking and surveying the community. This generated a list of 150 contacts and an attendance of thirty-nine at their first

¹⁸ Southern District Board Minutes, June 17, 1994 (Archives).

¹⁹ This group is not from the previous Methodist group, but an amalgamation of the Bible Church and the Christian Church at Murray Bridge.

²⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 13th Southern District Conference, September 1995, 30 (Archives).

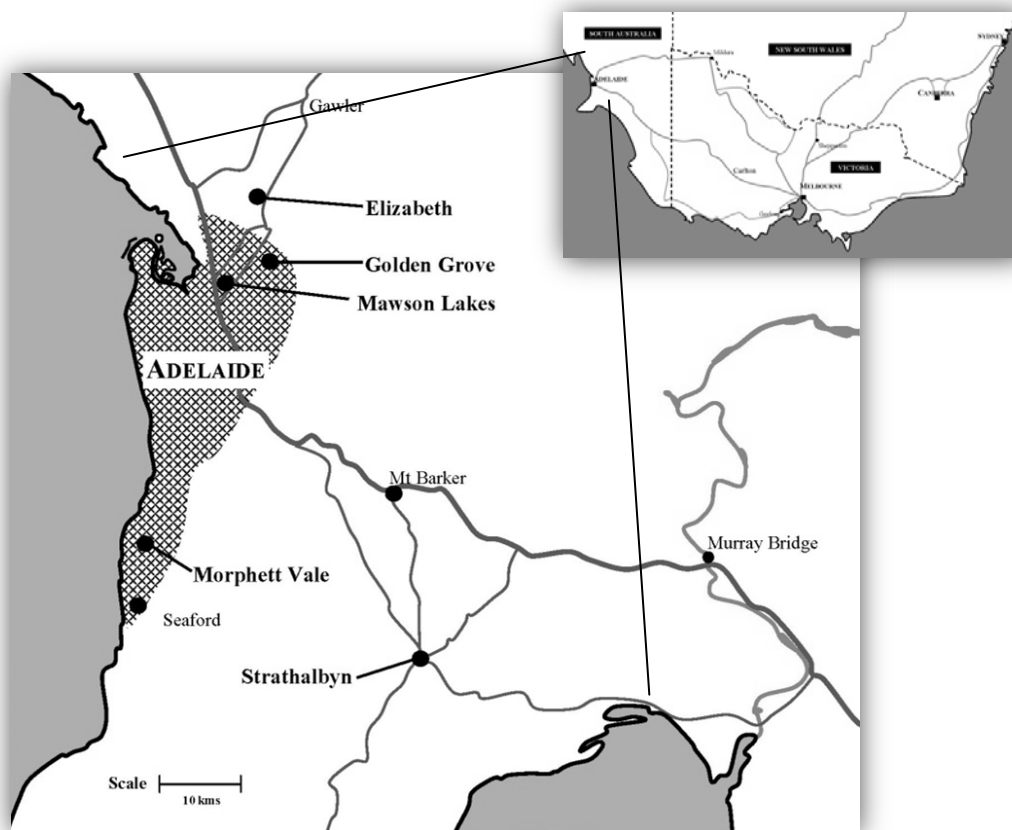
²¹ Southern District Board Minutes, June 18, 1993 (Archives).

²² Southern District Board Minutes, December 10, 1994 (Archives).

²³ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, May 10-11, 1994 (Archives).

worship service.²⁴ From 1998 Rob Simpson joined the team and reports of growth at Village Community Church were encouraging. In 1999, following Rob Simpson's ordination, Rob and Bill reversed roles so that Rob was now the senior pastor. That year the congregation was averaging fifty-four in worship and peaked in 2002 at sixty-five.²⁵ Rob was reassigned to Maryborough in Queensland in 2003, leaving Bill Foster once again as senior pastor at Village Community.

Figure F.4 *Adelaide churches*



Bill had recruited a number of American workers for the Village Church and also for a second church to be started at Mawson Lakes. The Americans included Jim and Lisa Archer, Mark and Sarah Howsepian and Gabriel Steinhauer (who married an Adelaide woman, Julie). He had also recruited Marco and Alicia D'Angelo from Kingsley College to pioneer the Mawson Lakes work. Marco came from a Pentecostal background before completing his studies at Kingsley College in June 2003 and moving to Adelaide to serve with the Wesleyan Methodists. At that time

²⁴ "District Superintendent's Report," 14th Southern District Conference, September 1996, 30 (Archives).

²⁵ "Statistician's Report," 20th Southern District Conference, September 2002, 47 (Archives).

Bill and Daphne were in the United States for several months, so Marco came to Village Church in Bill's absence. There he found that, in Bill's absence, Jim Archer and the church board had decided that they wanted Bill to conclude his ministry at Village Church and lead the Mawson Lakes church start. Marco and Alicia found themselves caught between two factions in the Village Church. When Bill returned soon afterwards he quietly took control again and the Archers returned to the United States. After three months attending Village Church, the D'Angelos began working at Mawson Lakes, taking Mark and Sarah Howsepian with them as had been the plan. However, in the recent divisions at Village, Gabriel Steinhauer had also been estranged, so he too joined the D'Angelos. By this time Village Community Church was struggling. Bill and Daphne concluded their Australian ministry on November 2, 2004, returning to America.²⁶ Ray and Gwen Akers filled the pulpit at Village from December 2004 until January 2005 while permanent pastoral supply was urgently sought.

Brett and Kathy Muhlhan, a new Australian couple, were warmly welcomed to Southern District in June 2005, with Brett assigned to pastor Village Church. By this time the attendances at Village had declined from forty-seven in 2004 to thirty-three in 2005. By the end of 2005 attendances had plummeted to fourteen persons weekly. In December 2005 the congregation moved from the Golden Grove High School to the Muhlhan's home and on June 30, 2006, Brett led the congregation out of the denomination to continue as an independent fellowship.²⁷ Within a short time the congregation ceased meeting at all.

Crossroads Mawson Lakes. The third attempt to establish a network of congregations in Adelaide during this period was at Mawson Lakes. Marco D'Angelo and his small team door-knocked and surveyed the homes in the suburb late in 2003 and early in 2004. The first worship service was held in February 2004. Marco was ordained in September 2005 and in December that year Mark and Sarah Howsepian returned to the United States, being replaced in January 2006 by Anthony Vilisoni Kunitau as assistant pastor. Anthony moved to Adelaide from the Melbourne Tongan community, bringing gifts in music and worship to the young Crossroads

²⁶ "District Superintendent's Report," 22nd Southern District Conference, September 2004, 28 (Archives).

²⁷ "District Superintendent's Report," 24th Southern District Conference, October 2006, 27 (Archives).

ministry. In 2006 Crossroads was averaging twenty-eight in Sunday worship. By 2010 Marco and Alicia were ready to move back to Victoria to be near their aging family, so they started to seek a location in the suburbs of Melbourne. They departed Adelaide in December 2010 and began to build community connections in the Laurimar Estate in Doreen, north of Melbourne from 2011. Their first services were held at Cornerstone Life Church on February 12, 2012.²⁸

Anthony Kunitau was ordained in September 2011 and continued as Senior Pastor at Crossroads Church. The congregation at Crossroads Mawson Lakes was averaging around thirty persons in 2015.

Oasis, Seaford/Morphett Vale. In 2010 the Southern District began discussions with a South African minister, Rev. Gerhard Kock, about commencing another church in Adelaide to maintain the strategy of a network in the city. Some funding was left over from the failed Village Church that would help with Gerhard's immigration costs and initial support.²⁹ Gerhard's experience in South Africa included study and ministry with the Evangelical Reformed Church and with the Church of the Nazarene, both of which were in sympathy with the Wesleyan Methodist holiness doctrine.

The District Board extended an invitation to Gerhard in August 2010³⁰ and applied to the Immigration Department to sponsor him. The immigration process took more than a year, resulting in Gerhard's arrival in Australia on February 14, 2012.³¹ His family joined him in Adelaide and they located in the community of Seaford, to the south of the city. Gerhard began building connections in the community and running a mid-week bible study under the name of Oasis Wesleyan Methodist Church. When average attendances reached eighteen they moved to Sunday afternoon meetings, but soon after they lost three families to interstate work transfers.³² The group began to rebuild and to hold services in the Seventh Day Adventist Church but the congregation struggled to regain momentum. In August

²⁸ "District Superintendent's Report," 30th Southern District Conference, September 2012 (Archives).

²⁹ "District Superintendent's Report," 30th Southern District Conference, September 2012, 19 (Archives).

³⁰ Southern District Board, correspondence to Kock, August 7, 2010 (Archives).

³¹ "Oasis Pastor's Report," 29th Southern District Conference, September 2011 (Archives).

³² "District Superintendent's Report," 30th Southern District Conference, September 2012, 19 (Archives).

2013 the District Board recommended the relocation of Oasis into the north-eastern suburbs, which would place his congregation closer to the Mawson Lakes congregation and provide for a fresh start. This move proved unsuccessful and the next work was closed. After five attempts in the suburbs around Adelaide only one remained in 2016; the Crossroads Mawson Lakes Church.

TASMANIAN OUTREACH (DEVONPORT)

In 1989 a group of disaffected ex-Methodists withdrew from the Devonport Uniting Church and formed a Wesleyan fellowship.³³ The pastor of the group, Graham Clarke, contacted the Wesleyan Methodist National Superintendent, Tom Blythe, in March 1990 and met with him while on holiday in Coffs Harbour in June. Blythe visited the congregation in Devonport in August, before Graham and Mavis Clarke attended the Southern District Conference in September. David Brownless, the District Superintendent then visited Devonport in October 1990³⁴ and the group was received as a pioneer church under the Southern District with six founding members.³⁵ Graham Clarke was appointed supply pastor.³⁶ Five years later, in 1995, Graham was licensed as a Commissioned Minister and continued to serve the Devonport congregation until he retired from ministry in September 2000. Initially the congregation met in the Country Women's Association Hall and from 1994 at the Seventh Day Adventist Church.³⁷

Graeme Beasley served as a supply pastor to the Devonport congregation in 2003 and 2004 during a period of Graham Clarke's ill health. A glimpse into the life of the Devonport congregation is given by Graham and Lauris Beasley in frustrations with the non-Wesleyan practices of a group of ex-Dutch Reformed members on the local church board.³⁸ Prominent Tasmanian layman, Wes Jones also supported Graham Clarke for the seventeen years of the Devonport congregation and Wes

³³ Correspondence from Clarke, December 11, 2015, L. Cameron records (Archives).

³⁴ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board Minutes, November 14-16, 1990 (Archives).

³⁵ "District Superintendent's Report," 9th Southern District Conference, September 1990, 23 (Archives).

³⁶ Southern District Board Minutes, October 26, 1990 (Archives).

³⁷ Seventh Day Adventist Church.

³⁸ Personal communications with Graham and Lauris Beasley, September 17, 2016. Referenced with permission.

bequeathed a substantial gift to the college as a fund for training ministerial students.³⁹

The Devonport ministry met a need in the local community, but as the years passed and the congregation aged, the need dissipated. Attendance at worship services peaked in 1994 at forty-eight persons and slowly declined from then until it was averaging twenty-five in 2006. It was reported in 2007 that, "Devonport was very fragile with a congregation average age of eighty-four and dwindling numbers of those who could take leadership responsibilities."⁴⁰ The Devonport congregation ceased worshipping together on March 4, 2007 and Graham Clarke was approved to transfer his credentials to Wesley Vale Community Church in Devonport.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN OUTREACH

Several events came together in the late 1980s in Western Australia between Perth and Esperance that had the promise of a successful relaunch of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1987 the Perth Korean Church applied to join the Wesleyan Methodist Church through their contact with David Wilson at Kingsley College. The group was accepted in December 1987 and Rev. Sang Un Lee was accepted as the pastor.⁴¹ However over the next two years none of the congregation became members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and reports of internal divisions were received. Meanwhile other events were developing.

Peter and Carol Keilar moved back to Perth to the suburb of Morley after ministry in Queensland. In response to a letter from Tom Blythe, Keilar indicated his willingness to serve as the Western Australian representative of the denomination in February 1988. In the same year agitation within the Uniting Church was threatening to result in a large exodus in the Perth region. In April 1988, 230 Uniting Church members met at the Mt. Pleasant Church to air their grievances about autocratic leadership, baptismal regeneration and other trends.⁴² This tension in the Uniting

³⁹ Correspondence from Clarke, January 7, 2016, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁴⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 25th Southern District Conference, September 2007, 24 (Archives).

⁴¹ National Board Minutes, December 9-10, 1987 (Archives).

⁴² Brian Hill, *Report of a Private Meeting of Some Concerned Members of the Uniting Church in Western Australia* (Perth: self-published, 1988).

Church went on for some years and resulted in substantial losses for the denomination. Bryan King, from the Karrinyup Church six years earlier, reached out to the Wesleyans to see if they would supply the needs of his friends who wanted to leave the Uniting Church. Bryan was no longer in Western Australia himself but was still in contact with many former Methodists.⁴³

David Brownless was the Southern District Superintendent and because of his own connections in Western Australia, most of the enquiries were coming from Bryan King to his office. Two things seem to have thwarted this initial opportunity. The first was that some of those who were ready to leave the Uniting Church had been hurt by the organisation and were not in a hurry to join another denomination. The second disruption was that Peter Keilar received an invitation to pastor the People's Church at Esperance in May 1988. Keilar accepted this invitation and moved to Esperance, 700 kilometres to the southeast of Perth, discontinuing his role as a denominational representative only three months after accepting the appointment.

With so much happening, Tom Blythe recruited David Brownless to make a visit to Western Australia to see if there was more that could be done. Western Australia was not a part of the Southern District at that time, so Tom Blythe was directly involved and reporting on events to the National Board. David and Sue Brownless undertook a nine day tour of Perth, Mt. Barker, Albany and the Manjimup-Pemberton region. In an exhausting schedule they visited ninety-three people from forty families. They were well received and Brownless reported:

The people I met were spread across the Perth metropolitan area but all would live within 20 minutes of the city. Only one family said they would definitely join us if we started but this is hardly surprising as we are not at this stage offering an alternative. All of them however received us very warmly and I have little doubt that given the right leadership a work could be commenced in a reasonably central location with a good core group to start.⁴⁴

Brownless forwarded a thorough report and a list of twenty-eight contacts for follow-up correspondence. One of those contacts was with the Perth Korean Church, in which disagreements had caused the congregation to disintegrate. Fortunately

⁴³ Correspondence from David Brownless, January 5, 1989, T. Blythe records (Archives).

⁴⁴ "Report on W.A. Trip," by David Brownless, April 20, 1989, T. Blythe records (Archives).

David Brownless had been on the scene and able to represent the denomination as a senior leader. Rev. Lee resigned from the church in April 1989 and returned to Korea amid the revelation that he was violating his student visa by serving as the pastor.⁴⁵

In May Brownless received a letter from a Mr Soon-Myong Hong of the Perth Korean Fellowship stating that the congregation wanted to invited Rev. Gin-Kyoon Na from Korea as their new pastor and requesting a letter of recommendation from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in support of his visa application.⁴⁶ Brownless forwarded the letter to Tom Blythe, who made further enquiries through Dr John Connor, the Global Partners missionary in Korea. The report from Connor was not favourable⁴⁷ and, at the same time, a report had come to Blythe that the founding members had left the church and that Mr Hong was acting unilaterally in calling Rev. Na.⁴⁸ It further became evident that Rev. Na was coming as a representative of the Korean Methodist Church and it was unlikely that he would be encouraging the congregation to become Wesleyan Methodists. In October 1989 Tom Blythe finally wrote to Mr Hong to sever all connection to the Perth Korean Church.

Subsequent to the loss of the Korean congregation the other contacts in Perth that David Brownless had visited were not pursued. The denomination continued to send copies of the *Australian Wesleyan* magazine to contacts in Western Australia but this did not lead to a new congregation. In the 1990s Peter Keilar moved back to Victoria in response to a call to pastor the Thorpdale Church but he did not engage in pastoral work in Western Australia again.

Peter Keilar's ministry at Thorpdale Church commenced in February 1995 but it was discontinued in September 1997 when he was elected to the role of District Superintendent to succeed David Brownless, a role that he held until September 2000. From 2001 Keilar served briefly as pastor of the Box Forest Church and as Assistant National Superintendent and then returned to Western Australia.

No Wesleyan presence was left in Western Australia from 1995 while Peter and Carol were serving in Victoria, until January 1999 when Rev. Phil and Karen

⁴⁵ National Board Minutes, May 17-19, 1989 (Archives).

⁴⁶ Correspondence Hong to Brownless, May 15, 1989, T. Blythe records (Archives).

⁴⁷ Correspondence Connor to Blythe, June 14, 1989, T. Blythe records (Archives).

⁴⁸ Correspondence Blythe to Hong, July 4, 1989, T. Blythe records (Archives).

Hotchkin with their three children relocated from Cairns to Perth to start a new Wesleyan ministry. Phil was the oldest son of Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin. He had spent much of his childhood in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea before completing his schooling in Victoria while lodging with his mother's family. After school he trained as an engineer, married Karen Ridgway (daughter of James Ridgway) and then enrolled at Kingsley College to prepare for ministry. Phil had an extensive ministry to the district youth before his first pastoral assignment to the pioneer work at Benalla followed by several years at Spring Street Church in Prahran. From 1994 to 1998 the Hotchkins served the new North Queensland district in the Cairns Church with Lindsay and Rosalea Cameron.⁴⁹ The Camerons undertook missionary service in Africa from mid-1996 and Phil moved to Perth eighteen months later to restart the denomination in that state.

John Wesley Church. Phil and Karen located in the suburb of Kingsley, to the north of Perth. They both took secular work and began visiting churches and building connections. In the suburb of West Perth Phil encountered an existing congregation called John Wesley Church.⁵⁰ This congregation had been started by an entrepreneurial Malaysian ex-Methodist, Ernest Devadason. Ernest heard of Phil's presence through his friendship with Peter Keilar. This congregation had been worshipping for several years without a pastor, so they asked Phil to serve as their preacher. From January 2000 Phil served the John Wesley fellowship part-time while holding a job as an Australia Post courier and seeking other church-planting options. The congregation at John Wesley soon agreed to join the Wesleyan Methodist denomination and has continued to be a stable presence in the city of Perth from which to build a broader network. The early liturgical style of worship was slowly changed to a modern style while the congregation continued to attract a high proportion of international people with Methodist heritage. In 2000 the congregation was averaging twenty people in Sunday worship. The group has gradually grown, relocated to a larger room in the John Wesley tower, and in 2010 averaged forty-three persons on Sunday morning. In 2013 Phil was elected the Southern District Superintendent, so he guided the congregation in calling a new pastor, Rev. Len Calhoun, from the United Methodist Church of America.

⁴⁹ Rosalea is Phil Hotchkin's youngest sister.

⁵⁰ Interview, Phil Hotchkin, September 15, 2015, 1:27:50.

Katanning. From John Wesley Church Phil connected with a group that had broken away from the Uniting Church in the farming community of Katanning, 290 kilometres south-east of Perth. Rev. John and Margaret Taylor had led the group out of the Uniting Church in 2000 after difficulties with the new pastor and with Uniting Church teachings.⁵¹ The Taylors and those who followed them began an independent evangelical fellowship and, again through Peter Keilar, they heard of Phil Hotchkin's presence in Perth. Taylors contacted Phil and the congregation officially joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church on August 6, 2000. In 2005 they purchased a hall in Carew Street and the average attendance increased from thirty-eight in 2001 to fifty-six in 2006. John Taylor retired from pastoral ministry in 2008 and Margaret Taylor was appointed supply pastor. In 2015 without a permanent pastor, the Katanning congregation maintains an effective ministry drawing upon a range of options for sermon delivery. The attendance in 2015 was twenty-five.

Landsdale. In 2004 Phil started a third congregation at Landsdale.⁵² The commencement of this congregation was connected to the struggles at Village Church in Adelaide in 2003. Village Church had two short-term ministry teams coming from America to Adelaide, and while Bill Foster was away, the Village leaders offered one of their groups to the Perth ministry. Chris and Melissa George were part of the team redirected to Perth. In May 2003 Phil Hotchkin took the George group door-knocking in the new Landsdale community and began a discussion with the Georges about returning as missionaries. Chris returned in May 2004 with a second team and Phil worked with them in offering a children's club. Afterwards Phil and some of the Perth members continued a weekly children's club at the Warradale Hall with monthly worship services. The Georges raised their financial support in America and returned as missionaries in November 2004.

With Chris and Melissa both trained for ministry and a Korean man, Young Min Yoo, assisting Phil, the four were able to manage Landsdale and John Wesley in a circuit. The official inauguration of the Landsdale congregation was March 22, 2005 and in time the circuit was separated with Chris and Melissa responsible for Landsdale while Phil led John Wesley Church and Young Min Yoo returned to South

⁵¹ The new pastor, Narline Pereira, had trained at Kingsley College before accepting the Katanning Uniting Church pastorate.

⁵² Interview, Phil Hotchkin, September 15, 2015, 1:35:30.

Korea for family reasons. Since then the Landsdale congregation has grown slowly. The 2015 average attendance of twenty-three does not adequately represent the influence that this congregation has in the heart of Landsdale. The congregation runs annual community events and a weekly children's club and is accepted as Landsdale's primary community church.

Peace Lake. Rev. Tony Tui was the pastor of the Tongan congregation in Mildura until he moved his family to Western Australia. He gathered four families for worship at Jandakot, south of Perth, and the Peace Lake Church was started. In January 2009 Rosalea Cameron led a team of young adults from the eastern states to assist the Peace Lake Church through door-knocking and a children's ministry. In 2009 attendances were averaging twenty-five and by 2015 they were averaging thirty.

Other attempts. In the 2000s three other groups were commenced in Perth but did not survive. In 2004 an Iraqi minister, Rev. Dr Emanuel Audisho, contacted Phil and began discussions about bringing his small fellowship, the Assyrian and Arabic Holiness Church,⁵³ into the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Emanuel attended the 2004 District Conference, and briefly it appeared that they would join.⁵⁴ However, Emanuel hesitated to bring his own credentials under the denomination so the congregation remained separate.⁵⁵ Two years later the congregation was reintroduced under the care of Emanuel's son, Auya Auya,⁵⁶ but in 2012 when Auya Auya relocated to Sydney the congregation was discontinued.⁵⁷

A congregation at Carnarvon, 900 kilometres north of Perth was established in 2008 by Rev. Tony Tui when he moved from Mildura, Victoria to Western Australia to follow the grape picking season. Tony regularly gathered six Tongan families together for worship at Carnarvon⁵⁸ before he moved south to Mandurah for work. From Perth he continued to provide oversight to the Carnarvon fellowship through

⁵³ Interview, Phil Hotchkin, September 15, 2015, 1:43:20.

⁵⁴ Southern District Board Minutes, August 14, 2004 and June 18, 2005 (Archives).

⁵⁵ Southern District Board Minutes, April 8, 2006 (Archives).

⁵⁶ Southern District Board Minutes, June 14, 2008 (Archives).

⁵⁷ "District Superintendent's Report," 30th Southern District Conference, September 2012, 18 (Archives).

⁵⁸ "District Superintendent's Report," 26th Southern District Conference, September 2008, 25 (Archives).

monthly visits while commencing the Peace Lake Church at Jandakot. This arrangement was not sustainable though and in 2009 the Carnarvon work was discontinued.

Another attempt at starting a church under Phil Hotchkin's leadership was at Harrisdale in Perth's southern suburbs. In 2012 Phil was joined by Rev. Shannon Sheridan at John Wesley Church, which allowed Phil time to begin developing the new work in Harrisdale. In 2013 Rev. Tibbs Naidoo was recruited from Brisbane and relocated to Perth to take up the new work. However, very little interest was shown by the local community and that church-plant was abandoned in 2014.

APPENDIX G

SOUTH QLD DISTRICT 1983-2015

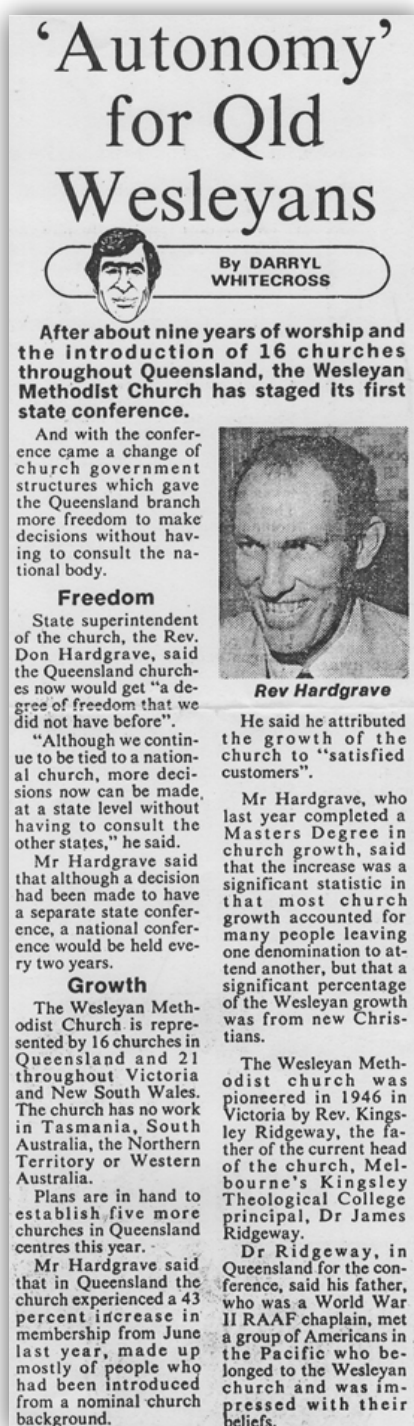


Figure G.1 Newspaper clipping from 1983¹

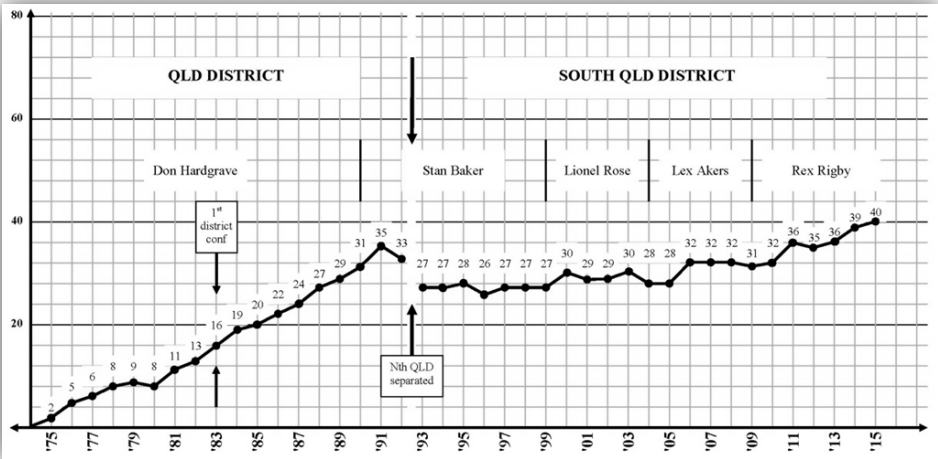
THE DON HARDGRAVE ERA

The growth of the Queensland District continued steadily from 1983 until 1991, with churches added every year, usually two or three. The first QLD state conference was reported on in Brisbane's largest newspaper in 1983 (see figure G.1). Don Hardgrave concluded his service as State Superintendent in 1990 and the expansion stopped the following year. Hardgrave's passion, vision and energy were without rival in that period, and arguably at any time in the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. In the fifteen months of the 1983-1984 Conference year Hardgrave travelled the 2,000 kilometre return journey from Brisbane to Mackay seven times by rail and car and from Mackay he went on to Townsville twice, an additional 800 kilometre return trip. In between these church-planting visits, he conducted annual meetings and preached in Wide Bay, Darling Downs and Brisbane, completing five extensive circuits in the southeast of Queensland. During the year Hardgrave was

¹ Courier Mail newspaper, n.d., J. Ridgway records 7 (Archives).

interstate in Victoria three times and New South Wales three times. He conducted and spoke at seven youth and young adult camps in New South Wales, South Queensland and North Queensland, he interviewed new pastors, taught seminars, ran zone meetings, and completed the publication of the revised hymnal. The summary of his official acts covers four pages in the 1984 District Journal.² It is difficult to comprehend the tone and the optimism of the Queensland church in those years without understanding the energy of Don Hardgrave or the sacrificial partnership of his wife, Delcie. Hardgrave's vision of a Wesleyan Methodist congregation within twenty minutes' drive of every person on the east coast of Australia was widely known and repeated.³ Figure G.2 illustrates the growth of the Queensland church from 1974-2015.

Figure G.2 Number of congregations in Sth QLD District with district leadership⁴



After Don and Delcie Hardgrave's ministry in Maryborough, they returned to Brisbane and relocated from the previous home in Annerley to a double story home at 19 Veivers Street, Macgregor. The underneath of their Macgregor home was refurbished and transformed into the District Office. Mrs Bev Hanbury and Mrs Elizabeth Logan took a leading role in managing a team of volunteers who worked in the District Office. This office projected a sense of identity and vision where visitors were greeted by the familiar faces of Delcie Hardgrave, Robyn Watson, Robyn Howe, Brenda Ferguson, Ellen Martin, Don and Glad Kirkland, and many others. In

² "State Superintendent's Report," 2nd Queensland Conference, September 1984, 29-32 (Archives).
³ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:31:35.
⁴ Data from "District Statistical Reports," Queensland and South Queensland District Conference Journals 1983-2015 (Archives).

1984 Bev Hanbury's profile in the district was elevated when she was elected as District Director of Christian Education.⁵ This ensured increased energy in the camping movement and the publication of materials for discipling young people.

The Queensland annual high-school and young adult camps were prominent features of Hardgrave's ministry and the life of the Queensland Wesleyan Methodists. With his background in school teaching, Hardgrave ran his camps with a strong disciplinarian style balanced by his heart-to-heart teaching to the youth. The new Wesleyan hymnal, *A New Song*, was used with great effect at these camps that trained another generation to love and respect the older hymns. Don Goldney paid tribute to the Queensland camping movement:

One big difference that we saw between Queensland and Victoria was the calibre of lay people. The Southern District really struggled in this area whereas by and large Queensland had excess. In the case of Everton Hills one group went out and another readily replaced them and the process went on. Also Don Hardgrave's emphasis on youth ministry really paid dividends in future pastors and lay leaders.⁶

The downside of Don Hardgrave's style was that some youth were simply not willing to submit to the regimentation that he imposed. This resulted in a minority who would not attend the camps and a cause for some families, including pastoral families, to distance themselves from Hardgrave's ministry.

As in so many other ministries, Rev. Peter Howe, brought a depth to the camping ministry through his brilliant mind, teaching and good humour. Howe often crafted the "Camp Log", which was a daily report of events couched in a humour that crystallised youthful memories. In 1983, at a camp of seventy youth, Howe wrote:

At Friday night's meeting, everybody was sitting down while the musicians strummed, plucked and blew their way through the camp songs. Some were easier to sing than others, but one song caused particular problems. Campers found that 'Standing on the Promises' could not possibly be sung while sitting on the premises, so they got off their premises and stood up. The subject of the study was guidance, but some, including Robert Ham, demonstrated that they already had a nodding acquaintance with the subject.⁷

⁵ "Minutes," 2nd Queensland Conference, September 1984, 17 (Archives).

⁶ Correspondence from Goldney, January 2, 2016, L. Cameron's records (Archives).

⁷ Camp Log - Easter 1983, n.d., J. Ridgway records 7 (Archives).

In 1981 four hectares of land was donated to the Queensland District at Toogoom, near Hervey Bay, through contacts of Ivan Nalder.⁸ The costs included a nominal \$100 price,⁹ surveying and subdivision, and the cost of development.¹⁰ This gift was embraced enthusiastically by the district leadership but as time went by it became increasingly clear that the cost of connecting to the highway and of developing the property was beyond the denomination's capacity. In 1987 plans to develop the Toogoom site were suspended¹¹ and in 2003 the South Queensland District Board agreed to sell the property.¹²

As the Queensland District extended into the north pastoral supply was increasingly difficult. The Townsville Church, which was started by Don Hardgrave through his visits in 1984, was particularly remote for the Brisbane administration. Rev. Harry (and Rita) Herlaar, who had been pastor of the Deception Bay Church from 1982 to 1984, was transferred north to the congregation of twenty-four in Townsville. Harry was installed as pastor on February 8, 1985.¹³ In 1986 the Herlaars were relocated to the Rockhampton Church, departing Townsville in June and installed at Rockhampton in August. Initially a missionary, Gary Churchill, was to be sent to Townsville, but when he was redirected to another country, a Canadian worker, Rev. Frances Dyer, was assigned. The delay in this reassignment necessitated some shuffling of Queensland personnel. Rev. Lionel (and Glen) Rose, the pastor at the Mount Gravatt Church, volunteered to go to Townsville for July and August 1986 while Hardgrave supervised the Mount Gravatt Church.¹⁴ In October, after District Conference, Don and Delcie moved to Townsville themselves and travelled across the state from there until July 1987. Frances Dyer arrived in Townsville in February 1987 and was installed as the pastor in July before the Hardgraves returned to Brisbane.¹⁵

In the same period other pastors were received from overseas Wesleyan ministries. Kevin Hudson arrived in September 1982, ministering in Childers,

⁸ Hardgrave, *For Such a Time*, 211.

⁹ "Toogoom Camp Report," 2nd Queensland Conference, September 1984, 60 (Archives).

¹⁰ National Board Minutes, August 27, 1981 (Archives).

¹¹ "Toogoom Camp Report," 5th Queensland Conference, September 1987, 79 (Archives).

¹² "District Board Actions," 21st Queensland Conference, September 2003, 118 (Archives).

¹³ "State Superintendent's Report," 3rd Queensland Conference, September 1985, 28 (Archives).

¹⁴ "State Superintendent's Report," 4th Queensland Conference, September 1986, 26, 33 (Archives).

¹⁵ "State Superintendent's Report," 5th Queensland Conference, September 1987, 27-29 (Archives).

Queensland from 1983. Kevin was a Canadian, raised as a missionary child in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where his family served many years in the Wesleyan Methodist Mission near Victoria Falls.¹⁶ In September 1986 Kevin's parents, Gene and Cheryl Hudson and his sister, Ruth, arrived to serve in Australia. Gene was installed as pastor of the Yeppoon congregation on September 26, after the rise of the District Conference.¹⁷

Figure G.3a Churches started and closed in QLD District 1984-1992

	Sth QLD	Nth QLD	
1983 Brought Forward	Mt Gravatt/South Gate ^a	Mackay NQ	19
	Deception Bay/New Life	Yeppoon NQ	
	Joyful News	Rockhampton NQ	
	Gayndah		
	Wynnum		
	Childers		
	Maryborough/LifeChurch		
	Nanango		
	Coochiemudlo Island		
	Bundaberg ^b		
	Everton Hills/Hills		
	Goombungee		
	Bracken Ridge/North Point/Pine Rivers		
Toowoomba			
West Moreton			
Indooroopilly			
1984	Indooroopilly	Sarina NQ	19
1985	Southport	Townsville NQ	21
1986	Mary Valley		22
1987	Nambour		27
	Caboolture		
	Crows Nest		
	Western Suburbs/Westside ^c		
	Kuraby/Logan ^d		
Tewantin			
Wynnum			
1988			27
1989	Hervey Bay		29
	Redlands		
1990	Gympie		31
	Warwick		
1991	Blackbutt	Dysart NQ	35
	Woodridge	Gladstone NQ	
1992	Blackbutt Joyful News	Dysart NQ	32

^a Aka Annerley, Threesixteen
^b Aka New Beginnings
^c Aka Oxley
^d Aka Logan South

¹⁶ This mission was started by the Reformed Baptist Church of Canada, which merged with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1966.

¹⁷ "State Superintendent's Report," 5th Queensland Conference, September 1987, 27 (Archives).

Figure G.3b Churches started and closed in Sth QLD District 1993-2015

1993	Glasshouse	27
1994		27
1995	Valley Tongan Narangba/LifeBuilders	29
1996	Redlands Coochiemudlo Island Southport	26
1997		26
1998	Woodridge ^e	25
1999	Riverside/Axis Samoan (Inala/South Gate) West Moreton Hervey Bay	25
2000	Sunnybank/Freedom Inala Tongan Kedron Tongan Grace (Maryborough) ^f	29
2001	Kedron Tongan	28
2002	Coochiemudlo Island	29
2003	Impact	30
2004	City	31
2005	Eight Mile Plains Tongan ^g Virginia Tongan Westside Tongan Crownest Tewantin	32
2006	Monto Sunnybank	32
2007		32
2008	Freedom Westside	32
2009	Goodna Tongan ^h Monto Pine Rivers	31
2010	Hodgsonvale Freedom	31
2011	Cooloola Forest Lake Samoan Divine Grace (Darwin)	34
2012		34
2013	Emmanuel Burmese Bracken Ridge Tongan Palm Lake New Life	36
2014	Bethany Tongan Waterford Samoan Sunnybank	39
2015	Peninsula Life Kilcoy Hodgsonvale	40

^e Amalgamated into Logan South

^f Initially at Tiaro, then relocated into Maryborough as Grace

^g Aka Unity in Christ

^h Aka House of Hope

Everton Hills Church was commenced by Don Hardgrave in 1983 on connections from his early ministry as a Methodist student pastor at Arana Hills. In the 1980s, when a liberal pastor was appointed to the Methodist Church, a number of strong families from the congregation had come over to Hardgrave and the Wesleyan Methodist Church.¹⁸ Another significant family who joined a little later were the Missendens. Rev. Bob Missenden, an influential Methodist evangelical in Brisbane who had been a significant mentor to Don Hardgrave in his Methodist ministry, transferred to the continuing Presbyterian Church rather than participate in church union. After his death in January 1992 his wife, Dorothy "Jean", and family joined the new Wesleyan Methodist congregation at Everton Hills.

Hardgrave was followed at Everton Hills by Rev. Dennis Hartin as pastor from 1981 and an American worker was appointed to the congregation from 1986 - one who was to have a substantial impact upon the Australian church. Rev. Phil McCallum came from a strong Wesleyan family in America and brought a depth of experience that far exceeded his youth. Phil had first come to Australia in 1982 and engaged in the Silvan Church from May to October.¹⁹ Phil returned to Australia in July 1986, now married to Leslie, and was installed as pastor of the Everton Hills Church.²⁰

When Phil McCallum arrived the congregation was averaging sixty-six on Sunday mornings; by 1995 it was averaging 316 and was the largest Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia. During that time the congregation leased land and built an impressive modern facility that became a rallying point for the district. However, in the early 1990s Phil's experience became increasingly Pentecostal,²¹ and this began to show in small groups and public ministry. In 1994 serious divisions were obvious amongst the pastoral staff, especially between Phil McCallum and David Millican²² and many local church leaders at Everton Hills brought their concerns about Pentecostalism, autocratic leadership and division to the attention of

¹⁸ Correspondence from Don Hardgrave, subsequent to interview, March 9, 2016, L. Cameron records (Archives).

¹⁹ "National Superintendent's Report," 36th National Conference, September 1982, 29 and 37th National Conference, September 1983, 29 (Archives).

²⁰ "State Superintendent's Report," 4th Queensland Conference, September 1986, 26, 33 (Archives).

²¹ Correspondence to Don Bray, October 5, 1995, T. Blythe records (Archives).

²² Correspondence to Phil, March 23, 1995, S. Baker records (Archives).

denominational leadership.²³ There followed numerous interviews with Phil and other members of the congregation in attempts to find a unified way forward. The conclusion, when it came, was done graciously and honourably, but at great cost to all concerned. Phil resigned on May 17, 1995²⁴ and departed from Everton Hills Church for ministry in a non-Wesleyan congregation in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. The district leadership brought in several of the older, well respected pastors to reassure the congregation, including Graeme Carnell, Don Hardgrave and James Ridgway. Graeme Carnell was supply pastor from June 1995 until January 1996,²⁵ after which Rev. Peter Breen, an experienced pastor at the Bundaberg Church, was reassigned to Everton Hills. In 1996 the average attendance at Everton Hills Church was holding steady at 248 persons in Sunday morning worship²⁶ but in later years reduced to an average of one hundred²⁷ and has not recovered to the attendances of 1995.

One month after Phil McCallum's resignation, Tom Blythe wrote a pastoral letter to the denomination (without naming Phil), in which he promoted the traditional Wesleyan teaching against speaking in tongues.²⁸ In 2015 the Wesleyan Methodist Church continues to hold to a policy that tongues shall not be used in public worship and cannot be promoted as "necessary or desirable for all believers."²⁹

GROWTH TRENDS

The Queensland District was divided in 1993 into the continuing district in South Queensland and a new district in North Queensland. The loss of six congregations to the North Queensland District accentuates the plateauing that occurred in South Queensland after Don Hardgrave relinquished his role in district leadership. It was two decades before the district recovered from the separation of six congregations to North Queensland in 1993.

²³ Ten signed and dated letters addressed to Stan Baker or copied to him are filed in Stan Baker's records (Archives).

²⁴ "State Superintendent's Report," 13th Queensland Conference, September 1995, 48 (Archives).

²⁵ Interview, Graeme Carnell, May 5, 2014, 0:04:15.

²⁶ "Statistical Report," 14th Queensland Conference, September 1996, 85 (Archives).

²⁷ "Statistical Report," 26th Queensland Conference, September 2008 (Archives).

²⁸ "Pastoral Letter," June 5, 1995, T. Blythe records (Archives).

²⁹ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *Belonging: Membership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church* (Brisbane: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2010), 65.

One reason for the slow recovery in the number of congregations was a strategic refocus toward building up the existing congregations rather than starting new ones. This was a valid strategy, though difficult for some to accept. The Secretary for Extension and Evangelism spoke of this redirection at the 1990 District Conference:

It has been made clear to me that the District considers that more church planting in the immediate future would add stress to an already overloaded District, and we should consolidate for a while. I can understand the sentiments expressed, but nevertheless, it places me in an awkward position... While my head understands, my heart has struggled....³⁰

Despite the new strategy of consolidation, the statistical reports show a negligible increase in average attendance over the next two decades. The thirty-five congregations in 1991 reported a total of 1,721 persons. Five of those congregations averaged twenty persons or fewer in their main worship service and two congregations averaged over one hundred in the main worship service; Maryborough (197) and Everton Hills (170).³¹ These were the largest two congregations in the Australian work at that time.³² Two decades later, in 2011, South Queensland reported 1,815 average attendance, an increase of a meagre ninety-four persons since 1991. That year there were still five congregations with twenty or fewer persons in the main worship service, although there were now five congregations averaging more than one hundred; Maryborough (192), Riverside (160), Gympie (154), Hills (140) and Narangba (101).³³ Meanwhile, the mantle of "largest Wesleyan Methodist congregation in Australia" has fallen to the Wangaratta Church in Victoria, with an average of 230.

During the twenty years until 2011 the Maryborough and Hills (Everton Hills) Churches did not show much growth, although a closer inspection of their history reveals that both congregations went through periods of decline and rebuilding in that time. It is noteworthy that the other growing congregations in 2011, Gympie, Riverside and Narangba Churches, mirror the Maryborough / Hills demographics of larger regional towns and outer northern suburbs of Brisbane. Overall, the rural congregations struggled to increase statistically over the period.

³⁰ "Secretary for Extension and Evangelism Report," 8th Queensland Conference, September 1990, 60 (Archives).

³¹ "Statistical Report," 11th Queensland Conference, September 1991, 47 (Archives).

³² "Statistical Report," 41st National Conference, January 1992, 105 (Archives).

³³ "Statistical Report," 29th South Queensland Conference, September 2011, 64-65 (Archives).

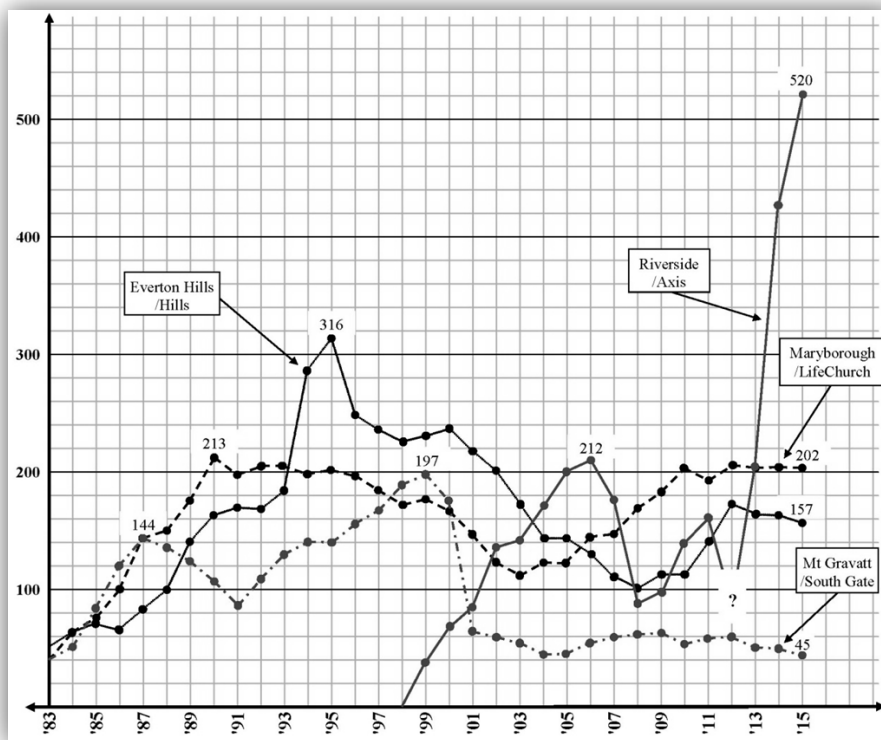
Since 2011 a general increase in attendances has been reported, with a parallel increase in the number of congregations. An increase of attendance from 1,815 to 2,540 in four years represents an increase of 9% p.a. Included in the 2015 statistics are five congregations with attendances averaging over one hundred persons, Axis - formerly Riverside (520), LifeChurch - formerly Maryborough (202), Gympie (166), Hills Church - formerly Everton Hills (157) and Peninsula Life, an outreach of Axis (130).

The ebb and flow in the larger congregations has been a pattern in South Queensland that has cost the district many opportunities to break through the 200-300 barrier.³⁴ The following chart includes four of the larger churches - the three that were far ahead of the other churches in the district in the 1980s and the one that has now eclipsed all previous records. Mount Gravatt was the first church in Queensland³⁵ to average more than 100 in attendance, Maryborough was the first to average more than 200 and Everton Hills was the first to average more than 300 persons per week. Axis is now the only Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia average more than 400 and then 500 persons.

³⁴ There were several other churches that might have been included in this chart, but it was already confusing with four churches plotted. Other congregations which broke over 100 average attendance included Gympie, Grace, Narangba, Mary Valley, Northpoint, Nambour and Toowoomba. All of these except Gympie have fallen below 100 again since that peak.

³⁵ Mount Gravatt was beaten by one year with College Church in Victoria averaging 100 in 1985. Nonetheless, Mount Gravatt was still growing whereas College had peaked at that level.

Figure G.4 South Queensland attendance milestones for four leading churches³⁶



From this chart it can be seen that all four churches have peaked and fallen away, and some have recovered after a period of decline. Everton Hills peaked in 1995 at 316, and has not fully recovered since. Maryborough peaked in 1990 at 213 and again since 2010 at 202. Mount Gravatt peaked in 1987 at 144 and in 1999 at 197 and has not recovered since. Riverside peaked in 2006 at 212, again in 2011 at 160, and an exceptional high of 520 in 2015. The figure of 160 for Riverside in 2011 is open to question and is followed by a low for which no statistics were provided.

The peak at Everton Hills/Hills immediately preceded the departure of Phil McCallum. The peaks at Mount Gravatt/South Gate preceded the departures of Lionel Rose in 1988 and Don Hardgrave in 2000. The peaks at Riverside/Axis preceded the departure of Troy Beer in 2007 and the return of Troy Beer in 2012. In these three churches there is a clear link between statistical reversals and the departure or return of a significant senior pastor. Further investigation is needed to reveal whether the pastors departed because of a crisis in the church, or rather, their departure precipitated a crisis and a decline.

³⁶ Data from "District Statistical Reports," Queensland and South Queensland District Conference Journals 1983-2015 (Archives).

An exception can be seen in charting the rise and fall of the congregation at Maryborough/Lifechurch. Maryborough experienced an extended peak from 1990 to 1995, with the senior pastor, Graeme Carnell, departing during that peak time, in 1994. The decline after Graeme's departure certainly came, but it was less dramatic. Maryborough has peaked again in the present time, hovering above 200 since 2010 and the senior pastor appears to be settled.

MOUNT GRAVATT/SOUTH GATE/THREESIXTEEN

The congregation that has been Mount Gravatt or South Gate for most of its history was the Annerley congregation that first met at Allen and Jo Hall's home and was nurtured in Don and Delcie Hardgrave's home from 1974. Because this congregation was closely connected to the Hardgraves, it was the early flagship of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Queensland. Throughout the 1980s Hardgrave was never far away from this anchor church, since it was close to his home and the progress of the Mount Gravatt Church was vitally important to the task of promoting the Wesleyan Methodist Church across Queensland and New South Wales.

Rev. Peter Howe pastored the Mount Gravatt Church from 1977-1983, establishing a strong discipleship ministry and steering them toward the purchase of property at Mt Petrie Road. In January 1984 Rev. Lionel Rose was installed as pastor of Mount Gravatt Church. Lionel and Glen and their children bought a house in nearby Macgregor and soon became important members of the Queensland team. The good partnership between Hardgrave and Rose is seen in the sharing of responsibility for the Townsville congregation in 1986. Under Lionel's leadership the Mount Gravatt congregation flourished and the report of attendances in excess of one hundred people in worship was celebrated across the denomination.³⁷ From Mount Gravatt the independent congregation at Kuraby was brought into the denomination, and from this congregation came pastors Barry Morison and Bert Bunney. Revs. David Millican, Kevin Hudson and Fred Maddison served on Lionel's pastoral team at Mount Gravatt at different times. In 1988 the congregation peaked at 135 attendees in Sunday worship.

³⁷ Interview, Lindsay Cameron, February 8, 2016, 0:17:35.

The relationship between Don Hardgrave and Lionel Rose was damaged in 1989 when Lionel was reassigned from the successful Mount Gravatt ministry to the pioneer church at Western Suburbs, a group that had grown out of contacts at Joyful News. Hardgrave took on the pastoral oversight of Mount Gravatt, bringing it into a circuit with a new church he had started on Redland Bay Road, Cleveland. The first service for the Redlands congregation was held on December 18, 1988. At the 1989 District Conference Mount Gravatt Church was placed under Hardgrave's supervision as State Superintendent and the following year Hardgrave was officially assigned to pastor the Mount Gravatt Church when he resigned from the role of State Superintendent.³⁸

Nine years later, in 1999, Lionel Rose was elected as the new District Superintendent, having served the past decade at Western Suburbs and Nambour Churches. In this time Lionel had led the Nambour Church from an average attendance of eighty-two persons in 1993 to an average of 140 persons in 1998. Meanwhile, Don Hardgrave had also seen growth at Mount Gravatt, peaking at 197 persons in 1999. In November 1992 Mount Gravatt Church had been approved to change its name to South Gate.³⁹ Lionel's election to District Superintendent in 1999 completed the reversal of roles between Don Hardgrave and Lionel Rose.

From 1995 some significant members of the leadership team left South Gate Church and some of them cited problems with Hardgrave's leadership. Nonetheless the church was growing and the District Board was supportive of Hardgrave.⁴⁰ By early 2000 there were claims that Hardgrave was becoming increasingly angry and controlling, and for several years there had been a murmur amongst the leadership that Hardgrave might be tempted to withdraw from the denomination.⁴¹ In August 1996, in correspondence with Don Bray, Tom Blythe gave an assurance that he did not believe that Don Hardgrave would take the church and secede.⁴² Perhaps as a result of this concern, in February 1999 the District Board assigned Frank Carroll the task of ensuring that the South Gate Church property title was transferred into the

³⁸ "District Superintendent's Report," 8th Queensland Conference, September 1990, 27 (Archives).

³⁹ "District Board Actions," 11th Queensland Conference, September 1993, 79 (Archives).

⁴⁰ "District Board Actions," 13th Queensland Conference, September 1995, 111 (Archives).

⁴¹ This appears to have been speculation arising from the time when Don resigned as National Superintendent.

⁴² Correspondence from Blythe to Bray, August 19, 1996, T. Blythe records (Archives).

denomination's name.⁴³ This action generated questions in the local church and the church secretary, Robert Chua, suggests this was at the root of the local church "power play" that was dividing the South Gate congregation.⁴⁴

In May 2000 the local board members heard that accusations against Hardgrave had been made to the District Board, bypassing discussion with the local church board. Three members of the local board, Bill Taylor, Robert Chua and Ken Irving sought an audience with the District Board to enquire about this. They met with members of the District Board in May and in August, 2000. At these meetings Robert Chua was "shocked" to hear one of the District Board members state that he had been hurt by Hardgrave twenty years earlier and now Hardgrave was still hurting people. The sentiment that Hardgrave had a long history of hurting people was confirmed by another member of the District Board in the August meeting.⁴⁵ The three South Gate leaders left "disgusted" that district leaders would be holding onto such grudges for twenty years. It seemed clear to the three local leaders that, "The District Board members had their own axes to grind with Don."⁴⁶

It is possible that the District Board did indeed see a pattern of behaviour that lent credence to the current accusations, and certainly the District Board had an obligation to investigate the accusations thoroughly. Some members of the local church were traumatised through their service under Hardgrave's leadership and some faithful workers never returned to the Wesleyan Methodist Church after this year. However, from the outset it was also clear that the local church board members and many of the congregation were united in their support of Don Hardgrave. The dual truths that intervention was required to assist Hardgrave to reverse a trend toward anger and control, and that some in the congregation were seizing the opportunity to exert their own agendas over the pastor are generally conceded in the documentation from both sides of the argument.⁴⁷ The real point of contention now became the presumption of Hardgrave's guilt brought into the investigation by some of the District Board members.

⁴³ "District Board Actions," 17th Queensland Conference, September 1999, 95 (Archives).

⁴⁴ Interview, Robert Chua, May 9, 2014, 0:23:00.

⁴⁵ Interview, Robert Chua, May 9, 2014, 0:27:05.

⁴⁶ Interview, Robert Chua, May 9, 2014, 0:37:00.

⁴⁷ "Report on Week-end Meetings at Southgate, August 26-28, 2000," J. Ridgway records (Archives).

The District Board formed an investigative committee that met with Hardgrave and his accusers separately and sought acknowledgement of failure from Hardgrave. When serious flaws were exposed in the investigative process,⁴⁸ a second committee was formed. The process of the second committee repeated many of the same practices of the first committee and used the evidence gained by the first flawed committee. Consequently, numerous complaints of bias and denial of natural justice still surround the process.⁴⁹ Concerns at the heart of the objections to the investigation process were that:

- At no time was Hardgrave permitted to see the written accusations or to hear the wording of the accusations against him. This is still true today. Hardgrave was provided with a general summary of the grievances, but without the dates, names and specifics of the accusations. He was expected to defend himself against these non-specific accusations.
- Individual members of the first committee interviewed the accusers privately and then interviewed Hardgrave separately. Hardgrave was not permitted to be present when he was being accused and he was not given an opportunity to cross-examine the accusers.
- The second committee allowed him to listen to some of the accusers without interrupting and without foreknowledge of what they were going to say, and then he could respond to their general accusations.

The conclusion of the second Committee was that there was sufficient cause for Hardgrave to stand trial. However, the District Board decided that a trial would be problematic, so they made the judgment that Hardgrave should resign from the South Gate Church and seek counselling. It was in this final decision that the District Board most grievously violated the clear principles of the *Discipline* and of natural justice.

⁴⁸ "Pivotal conditions which I believed were essential to ensuring the fairness and effectiveness of the enquiry were; 1) that the letters of complaint were not for submission to the accused, but an accurate listing of the of the complaints by each person be made available to him prior to any hearing; 2) that complainants be heard only in the presence of the accused, and that any prior contact by the investigative committee be only to ensure the itemized written complaints were in fact and accurate representation of their position; 3) that the committee make sure the conditions of Matt 18 had been fully complied with by complainants before proceeding with the formal investigation. When the investigative committee reported to the DBA it became apparent that provisions 2) and 3) had not been followed." "Report on Week-end Meetings at Southgate, August 26-28, 2000," 3, J. Ridgway records (Archives).

⁴⁹ Correspondence from Fiona Ball to District Board members, July 12, 2000, D. Hardgrave records (Archives).

An investigative committee may meet with the accusers and the accused separately because their task is not to prove guilt but only to ascertain whether there is any real issue to be pursued and to bring the two sides together to seek reconciliation if possible. This less formal process is allowed because the purpose is reconciliation and to gain a sense of the gravity of the accusations. The processes of a trial are much more rigorous because the purpose is to assign responsibility. In a trial the accused "shall have the right to meet his accuser(s) face to face and to cross examine any witnesses for the prosecution."⁵⁰ The Committee of Investigation and the Trial Judiciary cannot include the same members, so that information given to the committee without cross examination cannot contaminate the evidence given in a trial.⁵¹ In relation to the Don Hardgrave accusations, the District Board established an investigative committee and then accepted its recommendation as if it had been a trial judiciary, with some members sitting on both committees. The Board's subsequent disciplinary action was unjust and undertaken in defiance of *The Discipline 1994* requirements.⁵²

The South Gate local board members wrote letters to the District Board to object to the process and to contradict what details they were hearing. Ken Irving then wrote to the National Board to ask them to intervene in this flawed process. The District leadership met with Don Hardgrave to deliver their ruling on August 25, at which time he was verbally informed that he must resign.⁵³ The following day Stan Baker (National Superintendent) and James Ridgway (Assistant National Superintendent) came to South Gate with Gary McClintock (a District Board member) to mitigate the damage. During this meeting Baker and Ridgway acknowledged the flawed process that had been followed⁵⁴ but it was concluded that the National Executive did not have the authority to intervene to correct the

⁵⁰ Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia 1994* (Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1994), para. 1551:2, also para. 1606.

⁵¹ The WMC of Australia, *The Discipline 1994*, para. 1608:1.

⁵² *The Discipline* was renamed *The Handbook* in 2004.

⁵³ Notes taken at the meeting with District Board, August 25, 2000, item 1, D. Hardgrave records (Archives).

⁵⁴ Notes taken at the meeting with Stan Baker, James Ridgway and Gary McClintock, August 26, 2000, item 4, D. Hardgrave records (Archives).

process.⁵⁵ This was quite incorrect, although it is repeated numerous times in other correspondence.

Stan Baker returned the following Sunday, September 3, to read an apology to the congregation for even appearing to question the District Board's authority.⁵⁶ This was an astounding conclusion since the action of the National leaders was exactly what the *Discipline* prescribed in cases where a District Board is accused of acting inappropriately. The National Board was correct to investigate and should have then submitted the matter to the National Board of Review if an amicable resolution could not be found. *Discipline* paragraph 1592 reads:

The National Superintendent over the involved district(s), together with the National Board of Administration or its Executive Board shall make every effort to clear up such accusations or charges or to effect an amicable settlement before any District, through its officials or district board of administration, shall be brought to trial before the National Board of Review, unless a hearing is requested by the accused district.⁵⁷

Baker and Ridgway's failure was not that they investigated the matter at South Gate, but that they did not initiate formal charges against the District Board through the National Board of Review. No doubt the National Board's failure was influenced by the contradicting conclusions that Stan Baker and James Ridgway had reached. Baker concluded that the blame was Don Hardgrave's and he commended the actions of the District Board:

Don Hardgrave and the South Gate leadership sought to make much of failure to follow Discipline processes.... Personally I am deeply saddened that our brother Don has chosen to view those who would be his brothers and sisters seeking to help him, as instead, his enemies seeking to destroy him. I think this is the crux of the problem. It is my opinion that the D.B.A. and the Committee of Investigation which they set up, were seeking to be careful to follow due process.... I believe the D.B.A. was seeking to deal responsibly with what was an exceedingly difficult matter, and I commend them for "holding in".⁵⁸

James Ridgway reported to the same meeting of the National Board, condemning the District Board and some accusers and endorsing the claim of a denial of natural justice:

⁵⁵ Correspondence Stan Baker to Bill Taylor, August 30, 2000, D. Hardgrave records (Archives).

⁵⁶ November 2000 NBA, "Statement to All Parties," as written September 3, 2000, S. Baker records (Archives).

⁵⁷ The WMC of Australia, *The Discipline 1994*, 358, para. 1592.

⁵⁸ National Board Minutes, "National Superintendent's Report," November 10-15, 2000 (Archives).

The report of the DBA's committee resulted in the DBA's recommendations, which took the form of a judgment, given that a penalty was imposed. In this case the accused was given ground for complaining that there had been a de facto trial without the opportunity for witnesses being called in defence.... In the final analysis, a trial should have been offered.... the reaction of some accusers, who acted as if they were judge, jury and executioner, and the distortion of events in a vigorous crusade to expel Don, must be seen as improper contributors to the sad outcome, and lending weight to the accusation of a violation of natural justice by the church.⁵⁹

Feeling that he had no chance of a fair hearing and that further attempts would damage the denomination, Don Hardgrave resigned from the Wesleyan Methodist Church on September 8, 2000.⁶⁰ All of the local church board members resigned and despite Hardgrave urging the members to stay at South Gate,⁶¹ around 120 people sought Hardgrave out for ministry elsewhere.⁶²

James Ridgway resigned from the National Board in response to the mishandling of the Don Hardgrave case and the attacks against himself for attempting to intervene in the district process.⁶³ At the South Queensland Conference one year later the District Superintendent made reference to "financial chaos" that had left the South Gate Church "with a debt of \$34,000" and that "TEE and A Pleasant Surprise have a debt of some \$11,000 owing to the South Gate Church."⁶⁴ This was not an accurate portrayal of the facts; in fact the reverse was true, South Gate Church was shown to owe money to A Pleasant Surprise. The matter was settled in 2001 when the church paid \$15,400 to the bookshop to settle money borrowed from the bookshop,⁶⁵ but the statement remains in the Conference Journal as an unnecessary and inaccurate slight upon a former leader.

Eight years later, in 2008, Hardgrave requested a meeting with the District Board and the District Superintendent, Rev. Lex Akers. At the meeting Hardgrave was advised that there were no outstanding charges against him and that he was free

⁵⁹ "Assistant National Superintendent's Report," National Board of Administration, November 10-15, 2000, S. Baker records (Archives).

⁶⁰ Correspondence to Adrian McClintock, September 8, 2000, D. Hardgrave records (Archives).

⁶¹ Interview, Robert Chua, May 9, 2014, 0:32:47.

⁶² Correspondence Bill Taylor to Robyn Nalder, September 21, 2000, D. Hardgrave records (Archives).

⁶³ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board of Administration, November 10-15, 2000 (Archives).

⁶⁴ "District Superintendent's Report," 19th Queensland Conference, September 2001, 43 (Archives).

⁶⁵ National Board Minutes, November 13-13, 2001 (Archives).

to speak at Wesleyan Methodist Churches when so invited.⁶⁶ In 2010 Hardgrave wrote to the South Gate Church in an effort toward reconciliation and on Sunday January 10, 2015 Hardgrave preached again at the South Gate Church (now Threesixteen Church), receiving a warm reception. In 2013 Hardgrave was the keynote speaker at the North Queensland District Conference⁶⁷ and in 2014 he gave a devotional at the South Queensland Conference, which was followed by a standing ovation.⁶⁸ He continues to teach and speak as invited, while also serving with the Salvation Army and Baptist Church on occasions. In 2015 the South Gate Church has not recovered numerically from losses of 2000. Neil Stocks, a neutral party during these events and a lay preacher who had known Don Hardgrave during most of his ministry has concluded that Hardgrave was "overloaded", but that his loss to the denomination "was one of the disappointments of the church of that era and it had a lot of repercussions. It took the church quite a while to get over that."⁶⁹

RIVERSIDE/AXIS

Troy Beer was a young worship leader who had been recruited to the Everton Hills Church in the early 2000s. There he met and married Jenni Baker, Stan Baker's youngest daughter. Troy brought a proposal to the South Queensland District Board in 1996 to commence a church named "Riverside" with contemporary worship and biblical preaching at Mango Hill, in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. The beginnings of the new congregation would be assisted by a group from the Everton Hills Church transferring to the new venture.

Troy and Jenni went to Indiana, U.S.A for Troy's studies and to raise funds for the new church. They returned to Australia and on February 18, 1999 the Riverside Church was officially recognised by the District Board.⁷⁰ A core group of about twenty-five met together from January and the first public worship service was held on March 14, 1999.⁷¹ From the beginning Riverside was led by two young men in

⁶⁶ "District Board's Actions," 26th Sth QLD District Conference, September 2008 (Archives).

⁶⁷ September 30 to October 2, 2013.

⁶⁸ September 26, 2014.

⁶⁹ Interview, Neil Stocks, May 7, 2014, 0:36:00.

⁷⁰ "District Board's Actions," 17th Sth QLD District Conference, September 1999, 95 (Archives).

⁷¹ "District Superintendent's Report," 17th Sth QLD District Conference, September 1999, 34 (Archives).

their first pastorates: Troy Beer and Lex Akers. Lex was ordained at the 2000 District Conference and Troy was ordained in 2006. The Riverside congregation grew steadily from its commencement, recording an attendance of sixty-nine in 2000 and 138 in 2002. One of the outstanding features of the Riverside ministry was the high number of conversions and rededications. In their 2000 District Conference report, they recorded forty-three converts; which was one-third of the district total.

Early services for Riverside were held in the Kruger Hall in Ann Street, Kallangur, not in Mango Hill as originally envisioned. In 2001 the congregation relocated to larger facilities in a former shopping centre on Goodfellow's Road, Kallangur. By 2006 Riverside was averaging 212, but through a process of relocation and congregational disruptions numbers declined to 175 in 2007 and 87 in 2008. In 2006 the Kallangur property was sold and a warehouse was purchased at 690 Gympie Road, Lawnton where afternoon worship services replaced morning worship to avoid a clash with another group meeting nearby.⁷²

As Riverside had been growing it had drawn in a good number of people from non-Wesleyan backgrounds, many of whom came from Pentecostal churches. For a while there was some tension as the balance between contemporary and Pentecostal worship was negotiated and after that the issue became ownership of the church property. The struggle was triggered by Troy Beer's decision to resign from Riverside from January 2008. In the transition, some of the congregation who were unfamiliar with Wesleyan Methodist policies wanted to take the building and leave the denomination. Lex Akers, who by that time was District Superintendent, returned to Riverside to stabilise the situation and ensure that the Riverside ministry was retained in the denomination.⁷³

In 2008 the congregation called a minister from South Africa, Rev. Dr Hendrik Vorster. Hendrik came from a Pentecostal background with a wide range of ministry experience. Once Hendrik arrived several other events followed quickly. A second congregation was established in North Lakes (that includes the original Mango Hill

⁷² "North Brisbane Zone Supervisor's Report," 25th Sth QLD District Conference, September 2007 (Archives).

⁷³ "District Superintendent's Report," 26th Sth QLD District Conference, September 2008 (Archives).

suburb), a contract for land at North Lakes was signed and attendances began to increase. By 2010 the congregation was averaging 140.

In September 2008 the Pine Rivers Church was merged into the Riverside Church. The Pine Rivers Church (formerly North Point) had been averaging about forty people for some years, and it was threatened when the Riverside Church relocated one kilometre away in Lawnton in 2006. In September Pine Rivers was closed and incorporated into Riverside. This did not significantly impact the attendances at Riverside but it did boost their asset base with which they were better able to afford the property development in North Lakes.

In 2009 Hendrik met with the District Board of Ministerial Development (DBMD) to initiate the transfer of his credentials into the Wesleyan Methodist Church. That meeting became quite acrimonious as Hendrik explained his theology and made reference to being called as a consultant to the Wesleyan Methodist Church. After the interview the Board recorded a minute stating, "Having interviewed Hendrik Vorster and heard his teaching we find significant areas of his doctrine incompatible with the Wesleyan Methodist Church teaching and we do not, at this time, recommend him as a minister in the process of transfer."⁷⁴

When the District Superintendent heard of the DBMD decision he called them to a meeting with the District Board.⁷⁵ The DBMD members explained their actions, noting that "there is a significant difference in the Wesleyan Methodist teaching on the gift of tongues and that of Hendrik."⁷⁶ Nonetheless, despite the DBMD's concerns, under pressure from the District Board⁷⁷ Hendrik was listed as a Minister in the Process of Transfer.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Hendrik's transfer never proceeded because he did not complete his study requirements.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ "Minutes," Sth QLD DBMD, August 8, 2009 (Archives).

⁷⁵ Correspondence Lex to DBMD, August 12, 2009, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁷⁶ Correspondence Sth QLD DBMD to DBA, August 13, 2009, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁷⁷ The *Handbook* stipulates that the District Board of Ministerial Development to report to the District Conference, not to the DBA. Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, *The Handbook of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia 2008* (Wesleyan Methodist Church, 2008), para. 531, 537:5.

⁷⁸ "Minutes," 27th Sth QLD District Conference, September 2009, 38 (Archives).

⁷⁹ "Minutes," Sth QLD DBMD, August 6, 2010 (Archives).

In this same time concerns about Hendrik's leadership style began to be reported. In August 2010 the Riverside local church board confronted Hendrik about his alleged abusive style and deceit⁸⁰ and Hendrik agreed to amend his ways. At first just a few people were leaving Riverside Church, including former personnel from the Pine Rivers Church, but by 2011 the departures had increased substantially. As the problems at Riverside Church became more obvious the National Superintendent made enquiries with the churches in South Africa where Hendrik had previously worked. Cameron then sent his report and recommendations to the District Superintendent, Rex Rigby:

The more recent conflict at Riverside and loss of membership appears to centre on Hendrik's leadership style, rather than theology. From my conversations it appears clear that Hendrik functions out of an "apostolic" leadership style typical of a Pentecostal background. This style, together with the tendency toward hierarchical leadership of the South African culture and Hendrik's own personality, has resulted in conflict and significant loss to the denomination... It is my recommendation that the South Queensland District honours Hendrik as a minister from another Christian tradition who is currently serving as a supply pastor in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. To go further and receive him by transfer as an ordained minister would be unfair to him and to the district, and indeed the broader denomination in which he would then be eligible to serve and lead.⁸¹

Through 2011 the number of people leaving Riverside continued to increase and yet the District Board took no action. Among those who left were some of the former Everton Hills members who had gone with Troy Beer to start Riverside Church in 1999. Some of these members were returning to worship at Everton Hills carrying hurts from their experiences at Riverside. By this time Lex Akers had completed his time as District Superintendent and was the senior pastor at Everton Hills. His presence at Everton Hills was a comfort to those who were returning.

In October 2011 two former Riverside members asked the National Superintendent to intervene to stem the flow of damaged people emanating from Riverside.⁸² Lindsay Cameron therefore met with the District Superintendent, Rex Rigby and Hills pastor, Lex Akers on October 25, 2011 to discuss the situation. Rex Rigby explained that the district had not and could not intervene because no one had

⁸⁰ Interview, Lindsay Cameron, February 8, 2016, 1:19:25.

⁸¹ Correspondence to Rigby, February 11, 2011, L. Cameron records (Archives).

⁸² Interview, Lindsay Cameron, February 8, 2016, 1:20:05.

submitted a formal written accusation. It was therefore agreed by all three that Cameron would go and interview some of those who had left and were known to have grievances.⁸³ Within two weeks Cameron had visited and secured written accusations from eight people, including reports of verbal and emotional abuse, outright deceit and harsh eviction from the church when members had confronted Hendrik. One former office administrator had the names of several hundred people who had now left Riverside Church.⁸⁴ Cameron then met with the District Board on November 23 to report his findings and to encourage them to suspend Hendrik while a thorough investigation was undertaken. The District Board arranged for the interviewing of some of the accusers but decided that no further action was required. In March 2012, one of the accusers advised that she was considering launching legal action against the denomination for its failure to care for the members. Cameron encouraged her to take her concerns to the National Board instead of pursuing legal avenues. The National Board met in Brisbane from May 3-5, 2012 and at that meeting the South Queensland District Board was instructed to suspend Hendrik and undertake a thorough investigation.⁸⁵ Soon afterward the District Board dismissed Hendrik for failure to submit to District Board authority.

Later that year the Riverside Church was relaunched as Axis Church. Troy Beer returned to pastor the church and many of the former congregation returned. The congregation expanded rapidly, so much that they reported an average attendance of 520 persons in 2015. In the course of one quadrennium and out of the ashes, in 2015 Axis Church is double the size of any other Wesleyan Methodist congregation in Australia. Meanwhile the former New Life Church (Deception Bay) was closed and joined with Axis. Axis then launched a new church into the Redcliffe Peninsula where New Life Church had been, and that congregation recorded an average attendance of 130 persons in 2015.

⁸³ L. Cameron records, correspondence to Rigby, November 4, 2011 (Archives).

⁸⁴ L. Cameron records, correspondence to Rigby, November 14, 2011 (Archives).

⁸⁵ National Board Minutes, May 5, 2012 (Archives).

MARYBOROUGH/LIFECHURCH

The first service at Maryborough was held in July 1978 with eighty people attending, including Kingsley and Elvie Ridgway.⁸⁶ Don and Delcie Hardgrave relocated from Brisbane to Maryborough to stabilise the new work and in 1979 the work was transitioned to American missionaries, Rev. Dennis and Mary Ann Barnett. By 1983 when Graeme Carnell was assigned to pastor the Maryborough congregation the average attendance was fifty-one persons. Under Graeme's leadership the church grew to an average attendance over 200, becoming the first local church in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia to achieve that milestone.

Graeme Carnell (1942-) is the elder son of Aubrey Carnell and felt a call to ministry at a young age. In 1964 at an Easter youth camp at Port Sorell near Launceston with James Ridgway speaking, Graeme was filled with the Spirit.⁸⁷ It was also there that he met his future wife, Vicki Jackson. Graeme commenced his studies at Kingsley College under James Ridgway and continued under Arthur Calhoun when Ridgway went to America for doctoral studies.⁸⁸ When James Ridgway returned, reopened the college and established the four-year Bachelor of Theology, Graeme returned to complete his fourth year. After serving at the Glenroy church from 1972 to 1976, Graeme was then transferred to Gayndah in Queensland in January 1977. From there he was influential in the commencement of churches in Maryborough, Childers and Nanango.⁸⁹ During 1982 Graeme was appointed to lead the Urbana young adult group to America in December, so in preparation he contacted Rev. Dr. John Maxwell at the Skyline Wesleyan Church to enquire about an internship. His connection to Maxwell was facilitated by the presence of missionaries Dennis and Mary Anne Barnett at Maryborough, both being from Skyline church. In August John Maxwell was visiting the Australian church and interviewed Graeme in preparation for an internship arrangement. From December 15, 1982 Graeme and Vicki led the Urbana team of young adults to North America

⁸⁶ "Secretary for Extension and Evangelism's Report," 32nd National Conference, August 2001, 17 (Archives).

⁸⁷ Interview, Graeme Carnell, May 5, 2014, 0:56:40.

⁸⁸ Aubrey Carnell, "The Life Story of Rev. Dr. Aubrey Carnell" (Archives: unpublished manuscript, 2000), 47.

⁸⁹ Graeme Carnell, 1:36:10.

for a six week tour and late in January 1983 they stayed on in California at Skyline. After Skyline they ministered in other churches in New York, Indiana and Michigan, returning to Melbourne in May.⁹⁰

Full of energy and ideas, Graeme arrived at Maryborough in June 1983 and remained until December 1994. Graeme had strong people skills and a deep experience of God. He drew a team of gifted people around him, including educators, musicians and administrators that enabled the sustained growth of the Maryborough church. Brian Brown came on staff with Graeme, bringing gifts of administration to complement Graeme's charisma. Brian eventually undertook ministry studies and was ordained himself. In 1990 the Maryborough church recorded an average attendance of 213 and then settled at that level for the next six years. In the 1990s Graeme came under increasing conviction that he should move out of the relative comfort of his large church and engage in planting a new congregation. He resigned his pastorate from the end of 1994 and moved to Narangba, in the northern suburbs of Brisbane to plant a church from 1995.

After Graeme's departure attendance at the Maryborough church declined progressively until 2003 when it reached an average attendance of 103 persons. In that year the attendance at a second Wesleyan Methodist church in Maryborough, Grace Community church, peaked at 270 persons, which seems to indicate that at least some amount of transfer attendance was occurring between the two congregations. From July 2003 Rev. Rob Simpson was assigned to the Maryborough church and the decline was reversed.

Rob was raised in Toowoomba where his family played a leading role in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. He did his ministerial studies at Kingsley College before being assigned to work with Bill Foster at the Village Community Church-plant in Adelaide. Rob served as assistant pastor and then as senior pastor at Village for five years, from 1998 to 2002. In the first half of 2003 Rob and Karen spent time in North America, where Rob was on the team at Fountain City Wesleyan Church in Richmond, Indiana. Following in Graeme Carnell's footsteps, Rob returned to Australia to lead the Maryborough church where he gathered a team around him,

⁹⁰ Interview, Graeme Carnell, May 5, 2014, 0:07:00.

including at different times, Revs. Diana Allen, David Collins and Merryl Farmer. In 2010 the congregation again exceeded 200 persons in average attendance and, following the same pattern as Graeme Carnell's term, has hovered at that level for five years since then. In February 2014 the Maryborough church moved into their new auditorium and changed their name to LifeChurch. Rob Simpson continues to serve as Senior Pastor at LifeChurch in 2015.

APPENDIX H

NSW & NTH QLD DISTRICTS 1986-2015

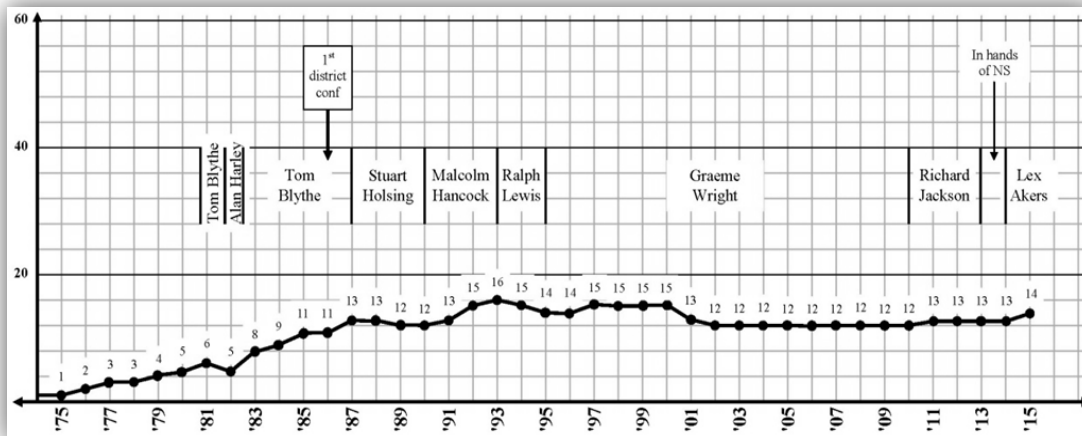
The two smaller districts were New South Wales and North Queensland. New South Wales was a Pioneer District until it was promoted to Provisional District status in 1992.¹ After some setbacks it was reclassified as a Pioneer District in 2012. North Queensland was established as a Pioneer District in 1992 by separating the northern-most six congregations from the Queensland District.

NEW SOUTH WALES DISTRICT

The New South Wales District started slowly with the one congregation at Busby until 1975. After that it grew steadily until 1993 when it peaked with sixteen congregations and an average weekly attendance of 480 persons district-wide. From 1993 the district settled at around fifteen churches until 2000, and then plateaued at twelve or thirteen congregations for thirteen years. The graph of churches as figure H.1G.1 presents a picture of a district that had moved into a mindset of survival. Stories of success and sacrifice abound in the New South Wales District, but accompanying them are several major losses that have impacted the otherwise healthy beginnings in the district. In the early 1980s Hills District Church was showing potential to be the leading congregation in the district and if such had resulted, then a strong dynamic church in the suburbs of Australia's largest city might have impacted the whole denomination. However, as already described, the departure of the pastoral staff from Hills District Church in 1982 reduced the work to a very small core group. Hills never truly recovered from that position despite the focused renewal provided through Metro-Move in 1983. After Metro-Move attendances gradually climbed until peaking at thirty-eight in 1989. However, since then the congregational numbers have declined steadily until in 2015 the Hills congregation (now Hope Wesleyan) averaged twelve persons.

¹ National Board Minutes, May 19, 1992 (Archives).

Figure H.1 *Number of congregations in NSW District with District leadership²*



Overall however, the district steadily recovered and began to reach more communities. From 1983 the connection with Rev. Sione Faletau introduced a number of Tongan congregations into the New South Wales ministry that boosted the number of churches and generated a lasting multicultural tone. The Dee Why Church was started by Sione Faletau in 1982³ and by 1986 was averaging seventy persons in worship services. At that time it was the largest congregation in the district, narrowly ahead of Coffs Harbour at sixty-eight.⁴ However a lawsuit between the new pastor's wife and the lay leader's wife⁵ divided and scattered the congregation and resulted in the closure of Dee Why Church.⁶

Meanwhile one extraordinary story comes from the Busby/Liverpool congregation in the late 1980s during revival tent meetings held on the Busby grounds. While Sione Faletau was preaching a wind came into the tent and lifted chairs off the ground and circled inside the tent. During the minute or so of this interruption Faletau was holding onto the portable pulpit but noticed that the communion elements and their covering cloth that had been arranged for the Lord's Supper were completely undisturbed. This generated a heightened sense of spiritual visitation. One of the laymen connected to the church through family members but not attending worship or living according to Christian values was Lamatau (Lama)

² Data from "Statistical Reports," National and New South Wales Conference Journals 1975-2015 (Archives).

³ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:08:50.

⁴ "Statistical Report," 38th National Conference, January 1986, 149 (Archives).

⁵ Interview, Sione Faletau, May 7, 2013, 0:21:20.

⁶ The larger story of the development of the Tongan work is discussed in chapter 13:410.

Vaomotou. Lama was converted through these meetings, took his family to Kingsley College to train for ministry, returned to pastor the Busby (now Liverpool) Church and was ordained in the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

GIRALANG, CANBERRA

At the end of 1982 Pastor Ray Gilmour resigned from the Taree pastorate in New South Wales and relocated to Canberra. The National Board was quite interested in commencing work in Canberra since it is the national capital of Australia but there was some hesitation whether Gilmour would be the right person for the task.⁷ It was decided that the National Superintendent should visit Canberra to talk with Gilmour before the Board would proceed. James and Melva Ridgway visited Ray and Joan early in 1984 and reported back that Gilmour is still committed to the Wesleyan work but that, "Prospects are not promising for a Wesleyan work."⁸ The development of a congregation was moving very slowly and Gilmour was expressing deep concerns about the future of the Giralang congregation until contact with a new family, the Fobisters, and the transfer into the suburb of former Wesleyan missionaries to Papua New Guinea, Bob and Jan Gladwin, brought new hope.⁹ In August 1984 it was decided to approve the Canberra work in the suburb of Giralang as a pioneer church under the supervision of the newly formed New South Wales District. At the same time the National Board asked for funding from America to assist in this new venture, noting the importance of having a ministry in Canberra.

Rev. Hervey and Shirley Taber arrived in Australia on May 17, 1986 to serve as affiliate missionaries with assignment to Canberra.¹⁰ By 1988 the Giralang congregation was beginning to gain momentum, meeting at the Giralang Primary School and reporting an average attendance of twenty-one. Unfortunately in 1989 the Tabers returned to America and, upon their return to Australia in June 1991, they were reassigned to Coffs Harbour Church. In Hervey's absence from 1989 Laurie Young served the congregation as lay leader and Bob Gladwin served as pastor with support from district visitors. In October 1990, Rev. Malcolm Hancock was elected

⁷ National Executive Minutes, February 3-4, 1983 (Archives).

⁸ "National Superintendent's Report," National Board of Administration, April 26, 1984 (Archives).

⁹ NSW records, correspondence Gilmour to Blythe, n.d. (Archives).

¹⁰ Supported in Australia not from America.

as the new District Superintendent of the New South Wales District, replacing missionary Stuart Holsing. Malcolm was also assigned the pastoral ministry in Canberra. Unfortunately within a few months the congregation was divided. Laurie Young was enjoying his ministry beside Bob Gladwin in the Canberra congregation and the coming of Malcolm Hancock appears to have been threatening to him and to some of the congregation who preferred to stay with the team of Gladwin and Young.¹¹ Some of the congregation wrote to the National Superintendent, Tom Blythe, to register their criticism of Malcolm Hancock's appointment but the National Board responded by endorsing the Malcolm's ministry.¹² Gladwin and Young separated from the Wesleyan Methodist Church with some of the congregation, establishing the Giralang-Gungahlin Christian Fellowship, although it is noted that continuing relations between the two congregations was quite cordial. Great offense came from the District Board in 1991 when they banned the women of the new group from attending a public meeting in which JoAn Drury was speaking.¹³ JoAn was a highly respected educator from the American Wesleyan Church. Gladwin and Young wrote to the District Board to register their dismay at such an unnecessary offense and absurd action in banning people from a public meeting. The National Superintendent was copied on the letter.¹⁴ This action is quoted by Ralph Lewis as the beginning of his disillusionment with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, leading to his resignation eleven years later (see page 545).¹⁵ Malcolm continued as pastor of the Canberra congregation until January 1995 but the attendances were steadily declining, reaching just twelve persons in that final year. Ralph Lewis, the New South Wales District Superintendent since 1994, gave oversight of the congregation in 1995 and had the duty of closing the Canberra Church in October.¹⁶ Churches from 1983-2015 are listed as figure H.2.

¹¹ NSW records, Blythe's notes from a phone conversation with Young, May 17, 1990 (Archives).

¹² NSW records, correspondence, Malcolm Hancock to congregation, March 20, 1991 and from Laurie Young to Ralph Lewis, April 2, 1991 (Archives).

¹³ NSW District Board Minutes, August 6, 1991 (Archives).

¹⁴ NSW records, correspondence from Gladwin and Young to the NSW DBA, August 2, 1991 (Archives).

¹⁵ Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 9, 2014, 0:31:50.

¹⁶ "District Superintendent's Report," 10th NSW District Conference, October 3-4, 1995, 28 (Archives).

Figure H.2a Churches started and closed in New South Wales District 1984-2000

	NSW	ACT
1983 Brought Forward	Busby Coffs Harbour Hills District ^a Maitland ^b Taree Dee Why Tongan Griffith Tongan Liverpool Tongan	8
1984	Tuggerah Lakes ^c	9
1985	Bankstown ^d	Canberra ACT 11
1986		11
1987	Campbelltown Lismore	13
1988	Newcastle Brunswick Heads Brunswick Heads Griffith Tongan	13
1989	Busby ^e	12
1990		12
1991	Blacktown Tongan ^f Fairlight Tongan Newcastle	13
1992	Pittwater Terry Hills	15
1993	Campbelltown Tongan	16
1994	Crossroads Manley Warringah Tongan ^g Dee Why Tongan Fairlight Tongan Terry hills	15

^a Aka Hope
^b Aka Living Light
^c Aka Central Coast
^d Aka Genesis
^e Busby merged with Liverpool Tongan and remained multicultural under Sione Faletau, but gradually became the Busby Tongan congregation after Sione's departure.
^f Aka Doonside
^g Formed by the merger of Fairlight and Dee Why in 1993

Figure H.2b Churches started and closed in New South Wales District 2001-2015

	NSW	ACT
1995		Canberra ACT 14
1996	Griffith Tongan Manly Warringah Tongan	14
1997	Dee Why Tongan	15
1998		15
1999		15
2000		15
2001	Living Bread (Mt Druitt) Dee Why Tuggerah Lakes ^h Crossroads	13
2002	Campbelltown	12
2003		12
2004		12
2005		12
2006		12
2007		12
2008		12
2009		12
2010		12
2011		Canberra Tongan ACT 13
2012		13
2013		13
2014		13
2015	Samoan Faith	14

^h Aka Central Coast

CROSSROADS

The idea of starting a new style of church in the Sydney suburbs grew in the heart of John Blythe from the late 1980s. John was Tom Blythe's third child and only son. He had been raised surrounded by pastoral cares in Coffs Harbour and then in Bankstown. John wanted to start a church that was radically modern to attract a new generation. During studies in America he shared his vision and began to gather support for his concept. The proposal was brought before the National Board

Executive in August 1993. Blythe advised that, [John's] "burden for Sydney and his target audience have motivated him and his vision has motivated and won the support of pastors and professors in America."¹⁷

The Crossroads Church began in 1995 with exciting results. In the early months of the year John had begun by meeting with a core team of around twenty people, including American worker, Steve Deur. The first public worship service was held on April 16 at the Loewenthal Auditorium at the Westmead Hospital with 122 people attending. Numbers settled down to around sixty-five each Sunday by the time of the annual District Conference. In June 1995 they leased a warehouse at 11 Rowood Road, Prospect and began the fit-out of the auditorium and teaching rooms.

One of the cautions felt early about the location of the Crossroads Church was that it was just eight kilometres from the Hills District Church and twenty-two kilometres from the Bankstown Church. This meant that from the outset the Crossroads Church was drawing many of the young people out of other nearby Wesleyan Churches. In the first few years that was seen as a benefit for the youth, but it became a source of hurt when Crossroads eventually withdrew from the denomination, taking many youth with them.

Ralph Lewis was the District Superintendent until 1995 and a strong supporter of the Crossroads initiative. The district budgeted \$7,800 to support the effort in the first year and endorsed a district-wide work day to help fit-out the new building. Apart from district support, Crossroads received substantial funding from America on a declining scale for three years from 1996. By 1998, with an average attendance of 136, the congregation was established as financially self-sufficient.¹⁸

A high priority of the Crossroads Church was evangelism. Through their modern worship and evangelistic appeals they reported nineteen converts in 1996, twenty-one in 1997, twenty-two in 1998, twenty in 1999 and twenty-one in 2000. Small-group meetings were also a priority, with annual updates to the District Conference on this important ministry. In 1996 John reported, "60% of all adults who attend on Sunday also going to a weekly small group.... This is where most of the real growth

¹⁷ National Executive Minutes, August 12, 1993 (Archives).

¹⁸ "Crossroads Pastor's Report," 13th NSW District Conference, October 2-5, 1998, 63 (Archives).

and deep change occurs in people's lives."¹⁹ Attendances increased accordingly, peaking at an average attendance of 160 persons in worship in 2000. That year Crossroads was more than twice the size of any other Wesleyan Church in the New South Wales District and the fastest growing congregation. That is the year Crossroads withdrew from the denomination.

Graeme Wright had been elected Superintendent of the New South Wales District in October 1995 and sought to keep John interested in district events despite John's tendency to neglect non-Crossroads activities. John was clear that his concerns were with the denominational structures however. He wrote, "My concerns are not with Graeme Wright personally, but in his role as NSW D.S. This is not about 'us' and 'him'. It is about us and our position before the denominational structures."²⁰

The board members of the Crossroads Church wrote to the New South Wales District Board to outline their grievances and to advise that they would be seeking a congregational vote to secede on August 28, 2000. Their grievances included: they did not believe in church membership as practised by the Wesleyans, they did not believe in the parliamentary system used by the Wesleyans²¹ and they did not believe in the need for denominational loyalties. They advised the District Board that they expected to formally secede on August 31, after the congregational vote.²² As the details of this secession surfaced it became apparent that planning had been underway throughout the year 2000. It was reported that the Crossroads Church had been legally incorporated separately from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in December 1999 and they were operating separate bank accounts under the incorporated body since May 2000.²³ John's Blythe's father, Tom, who was the former District and National Superintendent, was retired by 2000 and put in a difficult situation. Tom has identified some of the struggles for the local church. The Wesleyan Methodist requirement of abstinence from alcohol was seen as a handicap to the local church ministry. This perceived hindrance "and the continual interference

¹⁹ "Crossroads Pastor's Report," 11th NSW District Conference, October 5-8, 1996, 66 (Archives).

²⁰ November 2000 NBA, email Blythe to Baker, August 21, 2000, S. Baker records (Archives).

²¹ They believed that the church should be led by elected elders rather than the democratic system that brings all decisions back under the direction of the local church conference.

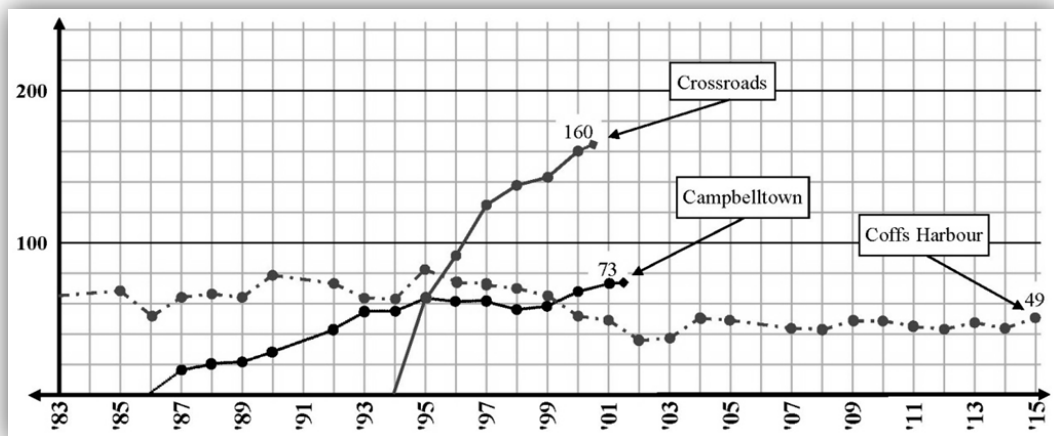
²² "Resolution of the LBA of Crossroads Community Wesleyan Church," National Board of Administration, written August 14, 2000, S. Baker records (Archives).

²³ Nov 2000 NBA, NSW District Superintendent's Report, S. Baker records (Archives).

and conflict with the district leadership" led to the Crossroads congregation leaving the denomination.²⁴

The loss of this congregation was understandably a serious setback for the district, the Australian denomination as a whole and for the American churches that had supported John's vision. A deeply hurtful component of the loss was that so many of the youth had moved to Crossroads and were now lost to the denomination. Graeme Wright spoke for the district when he reported, "I cannot put into words the sadness I feel at the loss of a large part of a whole generation of young people who have been raised, loved and nurtured in this district."²⁵ The loss of Crossroads Church was followed soon by the loss of Campbelltown Church. A comparison between three of the larger church is charted in figure H.3.

Figure H.3 *Crossroads & Campbelltown beside the stable Coffs Harbour Church*²⁶



CAMPBELLTOWN

The vision to plant a church in Campbelltown was born in Ralph Lewis's heart long before the Canberra incident or before he went to Melbourne for ministerial training. Lewis was raised in the Methodist Church, where his father served as a minister for eight years. As a young man Lewis undertook ministerial studies by

²⁴ Interview, Tom Blythe, May 8, 2013, 1:10:20.

²⁵ "District Superintendent's Report," 15th NSW District Conference, October 13-15, 2000, 19 (Archives).

²⁶ Data from "Statistical Reports," National and New South Wales Conference Journals 1983-2015 (Archives).

extension but these drove him away from the church for several years, as it had done his father. Lewis described the situation:

Well see, the Biblical base thing was what drew me out in the first place, cause I reached a stage where I denied all the miracles; I denied Jesus had risen from the dead. That was through the Higher Criticism which I was studying when I was about twenty-one. And so going through that I said "I don't want to go down that track. I need to establish my faith and I need to establish a purpose in life that is biblically based."... You have to understand, I felt a call to go into ministry and when I said I felt a call to go into ministry, my dad who had been a minister and not really that long out of it, said, "Ralph, if you go down this course I'll do everything in my power to make sure it doesn't happen."... Just coming back to the Liberalism or the Higher Criticism, I had bought into that way of looking at faith and so it just grew inside me and that's where I ended up. Once it turned around I knew where the firm ground was.²⁷

In 1982 Lewis found his way back to a church. The church he came to was the Busby Wesleyan Methodist Church under Alan Harley. Ralph and his wife Julie and their young family attended Busby Church, participated in Metro-Move and went to Kingsley College in 1984. By then Lewis was thirty-six years old and had five children. Because of Lewis's sense of urgency, brought about by his age and an abiding passion to start the church in Campbelltown, he only remained at college for three years of the four-year degree before returning to New South Wales.²⁸

Lewis had seen how "socially deprived" people were at Busby and he knew that the Busby Church could never be more than a mission church. Campbelltown was twenty kilometres from Busby in a prosperous new area. Going to Campbelltown was, therefore, related to Lewis's care for Busby:

When I went to Bible College, I was going to go to that growth area called Campbelltown. I was going to be used of God to build a church that would be a middle-class church that would reach back into Green Valley and into those kind of areas. That was my dream.... It was never to go back to Busby.²⁹

Lewis spent the first few months of 1987 promoting his vision amongst the other Wesleyan Methodist Churches in the greater Sydney region before holding the first worship service in Campbelltown on March 15, 1987. Lewis and his family ran youth and children's ministries while Lewis door-knocked the community through

²⁷ Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 5, 2014, 0:13:45.

²⁸ Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 5, 2014, 0:11:40.

²⁹ Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 9, 2014, 0:17:00.

the week. The church grew slowly at first, with very few adult locals. As momentum gained the first few locals attracted other locals until they were averaging over 100 in worship services.

Meanwhile Lewis was drawn into heavy loads of district and national service. He served as district treasurer from 1983,³⁰ national treasurer from 1988,³¹ and District Superintendent from 1993. It was Don Hardgrave who recruited Lewis to serve as National Treasurer, even though Hardgrave was soon to resign as National Superintendent himself. Lewis noted:

There were personality clashes with Don Martin and Don Hardgrave and they really didn't have a working relationship, I would have to say. And so, for Don, I think he felt that pressure as National Superintendent that he had to fight these battles whereas he may not have had to fight them if I'd been National Treasurer.³²

Eventually, in 1995 Lewis chose to surrender his national responsibilities to return to his local ministry. This coincided with the closure of the Canberra Church. Lewis was immediately recruited back onto the District Board and in that capacity he saw the closure of another significant church, the Crossroads Church, which further disturbed him. The denominational processes discouraged him. He phoned Stuart Holsing in America to share his concern about the way leadership functioned:

"Is there something that I don't know? Is there something that happens within the Wesleyans that nobody's told me about?"... Whether there is, whether there was, I really don't know today. I suppose there's not, but I was left with that kind of feeling. The ostracising of people was a concern. Some of that progressed over the years. I started to feel that John [Blythe of the Crossroads Church] had a point about affiliated churches....³³

The removal of Don Hardgrave from South Gate Church in 2000 disturbed Lewis greatly. He felt that the accusation that Hardgrave had behaved in a manner unbecoming a minister was not true to his own experiences of Hardgrave's ministry. By this time, Lewis "was really becoming disenchanted."³⁴ The final event, which in reality was not the major issue at all, was when the New South Wales District Superintendent heard that Lewis was taking a group of youth to the South Gate

³⁰ Beginning while still at Kingsley College.

³¹ National Board Minutes, October 24-25, 1988 (Archives).

³² Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 9, 2014, 0:25:25.

³³ Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 9, 2014, 0:32:55.

³⁴ Interview, Ralph Lewis, September 9, 2014, 0:42:55.

Church in Queensland and the Superintendent forbade them to go. Lewis submitted to the Superintendent's ruling at the time, but began the process of taking his own congregation out of the denomination. This was achieved in early in 2002.³⁵ Lewis has retained some friendships in the denomination but remains distant from organised events. One of Ralph and Julie's sons, Andrew, has now taken over the pastoral role at the congregation that continues independently as the New Heart Church.

James Midgley was in New South Wales during those years and has reflected upon the loss of Crossroads and Campbelltown churches:

In both cases the pastor had a bigger dream for the local church than he did for the denomination as a whole. And I think there would be cases where you could say the denomination was less than enthusiastic about having some bigger churches. I think the pastors wanted to go further and bigger than the denomination was able to dream.³⁶

In October 2010 Graeme Wright resigned as District Superintendent after fifteen years in the role. Rev. Richard Jackson was elected to succeed him but struggled to minister across the district while maintaining his congregation in Coffs Harbour. In May 2012 the National Board reclassified the New South Wales District as a Pioneer District³⁷ so that greater assistance could be brought to bear from outside of the district. In 2014 Rev. Dr Lex Akers was appointed to succeed Richard Jackson as District Superintendent.

NORTH QUEENSLAND DISTRICT

The growth and decline of the North Queensland District shows a similar trend to the South Queensland District, except that there is a time-lapse of seven years in the north. North Queensland peaked in 1998 with eleven congregations, dipped and plateaued, and is only now starting to evidence a slight recovery. In 1998 the eleven congregations included an average attendance of 311 persons. The largest of these, Rockhampton Church, was averaging sixty-three persons, while four congregations were averaging twenty or fewer. In 2015 the nine congregations included an average

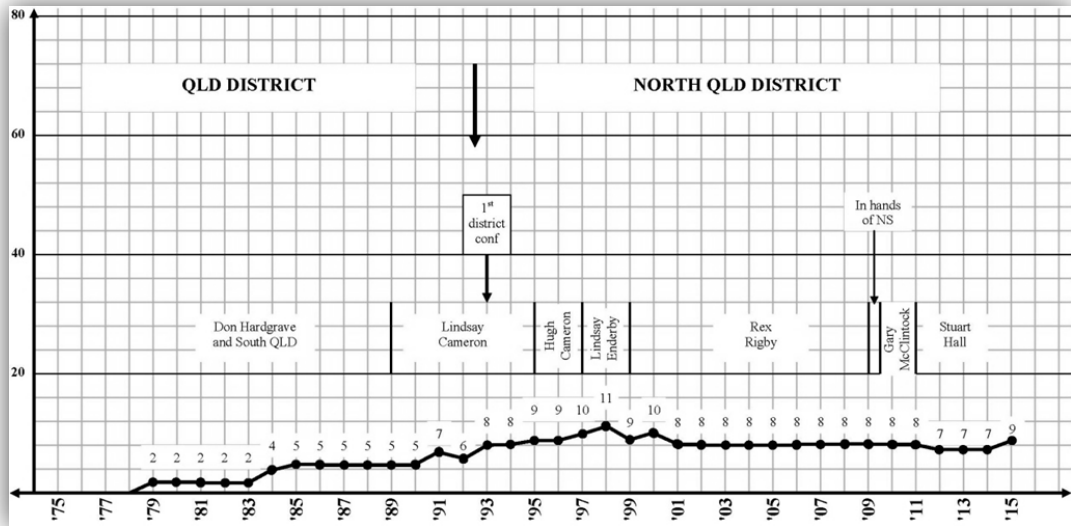
³⁵ NSW records, letter of resignation of Ralph Lewis, February 4, 2002 (Archives).

³⁶ Interview, James Midgley, May 8, 2013, 0:59:15.

³⁷ "Journal," 27th NSW District Conference, October 5, 2012, 3 (Archives).

weekly attendance of 393, with the largest church, Yeppoon, averaging 120 and three congregations averaging twenty or fewer. The number of churches and district leadership from 1978-2015 is charted as figure H.4.

Figure H.4 Number of congregations in Nth QLD District with district leadership³⁸



Toward the end of Don Hardgrave's ministry, in 1988, churches in Queensland had been started over a distance of 1,400 kilometres from Brisbane to Townsville with Hardgrave providing supervision from Brisbane. The Wesleyan Methodist Churches in the northern half of the state at that time were Rockhampton, Yeppoon, Sarina, Mackay and Townsville. Bert Bunney had been recruited from the Kuraby Church in Brisbane and was appointed to the Rockhampton Church. Bert and Alison would grow the Rockhampton congregation to average over 100 persons in weekly attendance. The second couple recruited in 1988 was Lindsay and Rosalea Cameron, coming directly from Kingsley College in Melbourne. Cameron's appointment in the north was that of Secretary for Extension and Evangelism.

At the 1988 Queensland District Conference held at Warwick in September, a large map of Queensland was painted with a railway line reaching into the north. Each sleeper of the railway track was used for delegates to indicate the support that their church would give to fund the new outreach. A total of \$19,520 was promised,

³⁸ Data from "Statistical Reports," National, Queensland and North Queensland Conference Journals 1979-2015 (Archives).

doubling the previous year's budget for church extension.³⁹ Early in 1989 the Camerons visited congregations in South Queensland as they travelled north from Melbourne and then settled in Mackay to provide some support to Pastor Col Nunn. Cameron's priority however was to visit contacts supplied to him from across the state and see where new churches could be started. In 1989 Cameron visited contacts Simon and Julie Gould in Mt. Isa, Harry and Judy Single in Dysart and many other promising contacts. After two visits to Mt. Isa early in the year, some of the core group moved out of the state so the Mt. Isa possibility was abandoned.

The work in the mining towns west of Mackay was more promising. Lindsay and Rosalea gathered a small but stable group that began meeting weekly for worship services at the Lutheran chapel in Dysart. Around the same time Allison Cliffe of the Sarina congregation had contact with teachers in Proserpine who were interested in a bible study, so a study and then worship services were started in Proserpine.

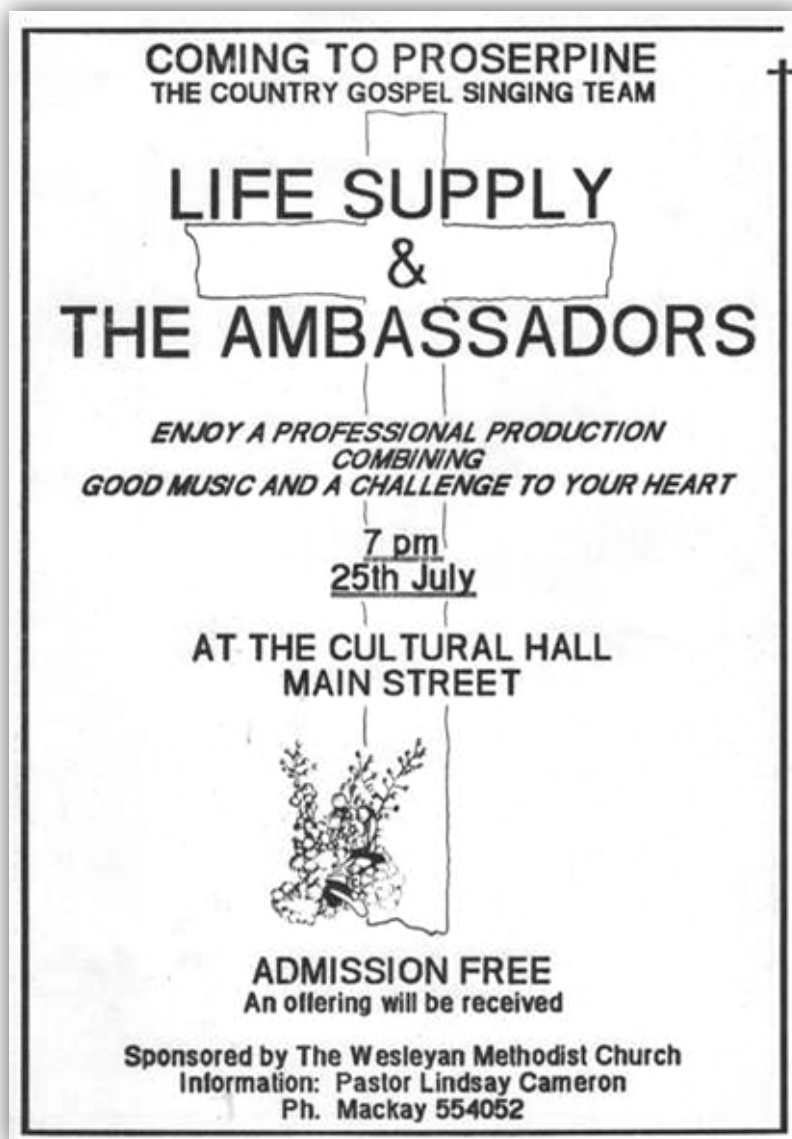
In July 1989 a ministry team came to the north to participate in rallies in Sarina, Collinsville, Proserpine and Bowen. The team included Life Supply from the Maryborough Church, the Ambassadors from Bundaberg and Ian Cameron from Bundaberg (see figure H.6). The extensive tour was conducted, with limited results. Ian stayed on in Proserpine for a year to build a congregation there and the music teams returned again at their own expense in subsequent years to assist the northern ministry.

³⁹ Correspondence to pastors October 3, 1988, L. Cameron records (Archives).

Figure H.5 Churches started and closed in Nth Queensland District 1984-2015

1983 Brought Forward	Mackay NQ Yeppoon NQ Rockhampton NQ	3
1984	Sarina NQ	4
1985	Townsville NQ	5
1986		5
1987		5
1988		5
1989		5
1990		5
1991	Dysart NQ Gladstone NQ	7
1992	Dysart NQ	6
1993	Cairns	7
1994	Emerald Mt Morgan	9
1995		9
1996		9
1997	Lagoon (Mackay) Capital (Townsville) Emerald	10
1998	Cloncurry Middlemount Lagoon	11
1999	Cloncurry Mt Morgan	9
2000		9
2001	Gladstone	8
2002	Lifegate (Edmonton) Middlemount	8
2003		8
2004		8
2005		8
2006		8
2007		8
2008		8
2009	Lifegate	7
2010	Townsville Tongan Mackay	7
2011	one mob	7
2012	Townsville Tongan	7
2013		7
2014		7
2015	Viti Fijian Rockhampton Africaan Christelike Mackay	9

Figure H.6 *Life Supply and Ambassadors tour of North QLD 1989*⁴⁰



In 1990 the Proserpine effort was closed down when almost all of the congregation were reassigned to work in other towns. Col Nunn moved to Melbourne for further ministerial studies that same year and Cameron was assigned to supervise the Mackay/Sarina circuit as well as the new congregation at Dysart and briefly the Townsville Church. Ian Cameron moved back to Mackay to assist and Christine Greenway, a short-term worker from Canada, was sent to the north to provide administrative support. Christine and Ian eventually married and moved to Bundaberg. A mature ministerial candidate from central Queensland, Keith

⁴⁰ L. Cameron records (Archives).

McLaughlin, was recruited for the Yeppoon Church to succeed the ministries of Gene and Cheryl Hudson⁴¹ and Bram Powell.⁴² Hugh and Joy Cameron and their children moved to Townsville, succeeding Frances Dyer, who had concluded her service in September 1990. Syd Gould and Graham Chellingworth helped Cameron to provide ministry in Townsville until Hugh and Joy arrived. When the Hugh Camerons arrived they made their home in the back of the church hall. With Cameron's increased pastoral roles, worship services in Dysart were discontinued at the end of 1991. When Col Nunn returned in 1992 he was assigned to the new congregation at Gladstone that Bert Bunney had planted from Rockhampton. This team of pastors was the strength of the northern zone for several years: Col Nunn, Bert Bunney, Keith McLaughlin, Lindsay Cameron and Hugh Cameron.

Don Hardgrave resigned as Queensland District Superintendent at the end of 1989 and Stan Baker was elected to that role. Under Baker's leadership, the District Board began a discussion whether there was a desire in the north to separate as a new district. Cameron took the question to the close-knit pastoral team in the north and a strong call for separation developed. In 1992 Rev. Kevin and Leanne Hudson joined the northern team as Kevin accepted pastoral responsibilities for Mackay. Lindsay and Rosalea had moved to Sarina by this time and that became their base while Cameron travelled the district as Zone Supervisor and then as 2nd Assistant District Superintendent (North). In 1992 Hugh and Joy Cameron moved into their own home in Townsville and reported good progress in this important church.

In April 1992, having received a favourable report from North Queensland, the Queensland District Board recommended the establishment of the North Queensland Pioneer District to the National Board. The organising session of the new district was held on Saturday September 26, 1982 at the close of the Queensland Conference. Lindsay Cameron was appointed as District Superintendent.

In an atypical arrangement the North Queensland District was placed under the authority of the South Queensland District rather than under the National Board. This provided South Queensland with motivation to financially sponsor the northern district for several years but it also became the source of problems that ultimately

⁴¹ Canadian missionaries formally in Rhodesia and parents of Kevin Hudson.

⁴² Father of Dave Powell.

impacted the northern district's growth and Cameron's willingness to remain in leadership. The first problem was that the National Board decided that all District Superintendents should be on the National Board except the North Queensland Superintendent because the north was only a Pioneer District.⁴³ They reasoned that North Queensland was represented by the South Queensland Superintendent anyway. This lack of voice for the north was accentuated by the fact that neither Tom Blythe or Stan Baker visited the far north of the new district in the first five years of its existence. It was further exacerbated by the National Board's refusal to provide a copy of the minutes of the National Board or even a summary of the actions of the Board to the northern leaders.⁴⁴ The second problem caused by placing North Queensland under South Queensland was that the South Queensland leaders felt that they understood the dynamics of the changing work in the north. Placing North Queensland under the South Queensland District leadership effectively reversed the purpose of the decentralised structure. This came to a head when the South Queensland leaders over-ruled the decision of the North Queensland leadership to commence a second church in the vicinity of the Gladstone Church some years later.

In April 1993 Lindsay and Rosalea Cameron moved to Cairns in the far-north to begin a new church while Revs. Lindsay and Joanne Enderby were assigned to the Sarina pastorate. Preaching services were commenced in Cairns in May with only the pastoral family and one other couple, Brian and Una Gesling, previously from the Hills District Church in Sydney. On August 10 the first members were listed in the Cairns congregation.⁴⁵ Cameron gained employment in housing construction to finance the new work and the number gradually increased. In August news came that the Hamburg Church in Western New York had agreed to fund the Cairns Church-plant and Cameron discontinued his construction employment. In December Phil and Karen Hotchkin arrived from Melbourne to co-pastor in the new ministry. With two pastors and funding from America to help with advertising, the congregation grew steadily. By 1996 Cairns Church was averaging fifty-three persons in worship services, the third largest congregation in the district.

⁴³ National Board Minutes, Sessional meeting, January 6-8, 1992 (Archives).

⁴⁴ Correspondence to Lindsay Cameron, June 3, 1995, T. Blythe records (Archives).

⁴⁵ "District Superintendent's Report," 1st North QLD District Conference, September 28 - October 2, 1993, 16 (Archives).

Bert Bunney began a new congregation in Emerald on October 10, 1993 with the assistance of Jim Maher. Rev. Ray and Gwen Akers accepted pastoral appointment at Emerald from 1994 and relocated to the north from Victoria. Rev. Norm Tong, formerly a Uniting Church minister, was assigned to the Mackay congregation in March 1994 when Kevin Hudson moved back to South Queensland. Bert Bunney began to hold services in Mount Morgan in a 14-bedroom former hotel in 1994,⁴⁶ and in 1995 Bert and Alison vacated the Rockhampton Church, moved to Mount Morgan and accepted ministry at two further preaching places of Bajool and Dululu. Revs. Walter and Dorothy Hotchkin arrived in Rockhampton in January 1995 where Hotchkin assumed pastoral duties. That year the Sarina Church began ministry to South Sea Islanders who were resident on the southern edge of Mackay and by 1997 this ministry had increased to become the Lagoon congregation.

Good progress was being made in the north, with increasing churches and membership. However a disruption in the Gladstone congregation brought district-wide setbacks. Some of the Gladstone congregation felt abused by other members of the local church and sought to open a new congregation at Tannum Sands, twenty-five kilometres south of Gladstone. The District leaders approved this arrangement, placing the Tannum Sands congregation under Bert Bunney's supervision. However, the Gladstone congregation was aggrieved by this decision and appealed to the South Queensland leadership to intervene. The South Queensland District Board exercised its prerogative and instructed the North Queensland Board that the Tannum Sands Church was not to proceed. Consequently the Tannum Sands family left the denomination and by the end of the year most of the remaining families in the Gladstone congregation had also withdrawn. In 1995 the Gladstone Church was reduced to a small number of people and it was placed in the hands of the District Superintendent. That year Cameron advised the South Queensland District Board of his intention to resign as district leader. Hugh Cameron was appointed as District Superintendent from October 1995 while concurrently planting the Capital Wesleyan

⁴⁶ A hotel in Australia is primarily a drinking establishment that may have accommodation as well.

congregation in Townsville. In June 1997 Hugh resigned from District Superintendency because of his heavy load.⁴⁷

Lindsay and Rosalea followed a decade-long calling to missionary service in Mozambique, departing the Cairns Church in July 1996 and flying out of Sydney in January 1997. Phil Hotchkin led the Cairns Church until December 1998 before moving to Perth to commence the network of churches in that state. Rev. Mark and Sandy Mueller, American short-term missionaries, arrived in Cairns on April 4, 1999 to lead the congregation.⁴⁸ Mark immediately restarted midweek studies and weekly prayer meetings, while commencing a preaching point at Palm Cove. Muellers had to return to the USA each year as part of their visa requirements and in June 2001 they were refused a visa to return. Brian Gesling accepted the duties of supply pastor in place of the Muellers, despite being well into his retirement years. Brian and Una and the core group continued to meet weekly, but attendances were declining.⁴⁹ The Geslings finally retired after twelve years caring for the small congregation and returned to the Hills district of northern Sydney in 2013. Their departure was made possible by the knowledge that the district had finally secured pastoral supply for the Cairns congregation. Barry and Loraine Curry moved to Cairns in September 2013.

From late 1997 into 1998 the district peaked at eleven congregations. Rev. Alan Buckingham had accepted pastoral leadership at the Townsville congregation when Hugh resigned to commence the Capital Church as Townsville's second congregation in 1996. Alan and Heather served until 2000, when Alan was forced to resign because of health issues. Gladstone had almost closed in 1995 but been revived by Bert Bunney's visits from Mount Morgan and then the assignment of James Fauls as pastor from 1997. The Gladstone Church was finally closed in 2001. A small gathering at Cloncurry had begun with the transfer of Ross Manderson there for work. The ministry that Ross and (Rev.) Vivienne Manderson began in Cloncurry was listed as a congregation in 1998 but proved unsustainable and delisted the following year.

⁴⁷ "District Superintendent's Report," 5th North QLD District Conference, September 30 - October 2, 1997, 20 (Archives).

⁴⁸ "Cairns Pastor's Report," 7th North QLD District Conference, September 28 - October 1, 1999, 26 (Archives).

⁴⁹ "Cairns Pastor's Report," 18th North QLD District Conference, September 28 - October 1, 2010, 61 (Archives).

Lindsay Enderby was appointed District Superintendent from July 1997, serving until August 1999, after which Rev. Rex Rigby was appointed District Superintendent. Rigby had come to pastor the Rockhampton Church in 1998 from ministry in the Southern District. In the years from 1997 to 2002 the district leadership closed a number of the smaller congregations. Rigby explained the closures with the words, "God says he cut off the branches that do not bear fruit. Sometimes we need to let something go and work on something else."⁵⁰ The losses were somewhat mitigated by the commencement of Middlemount Church in 1998 and Lifegate Church in 2002. Neither of these churches survived however, so the net loss left the district in a survival mindset.

MIDDLEMOUNT AND LIFEGATE

Contacts through the mining towns of the Bowen Basin west of Mackay were left unattended after the withdrawal from the Dysart ministry in 1991. These included contacts at Moranbah and Middlemount. Bert Bunney began to hold fortnightly services in Middlemount from his base at Mount Morgan in 1997, despite being in recovery from a heart attack that year.⁵¹ From January 1998 college graduates, Colin and Ruth Harrison were appointed to pastor the Middlemount Church.⁵² Colin was a son of an active Wesleyan family at the Mary Valley Church in South Queensland and Ruth was a daughter of Rev. John and Hazel Walker, a former Uniting Church minister who joined the Wesleyans and served very effective brief periods at several churches running children's ministries. Both Colin and Ruth were seen to be second generation Wesleyans and their return to North Queensland after completion of studies was an exciting symbol of progress. The year 2000 was difficult for the Middlemount congregation with several families moving away to follow work opportunities and a tragic road accident that rocked the community and impacted the congregation.⁵³ Colin and Ruth ministered through this period and

⁵⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 9th North QLD District Conference, October 2-5, 2001 (Archives).

⁵¹ "Mount Morgan Pastor's Report," 5th North QLD District Conference, September 30 - October 2, 1997, 59 (Archives).

⁵² "DBA Actions," 5th North QLD District Conference, September 30 - October 2, 1997, 49 (Archives).

⁵³ "Middlemount Pastor's Report," 8th North QLD District Conference, September 26-29, 2000, 27 (Archives).

departed at the end of the year. Greg and Rhonda Harrison led the church during 2001, supported for eight weeks by the ministry of James and Miriam Midgley. The church was closed in March 2002.⁵⁴

In May 2000 Colin and Ruth presented a proposal to the National Board to begin a new church at Edmonton to the south of Cairns in 2002.⁵⁵ This was approved and they travelled to the United States for ministry experience and to promote the new plan in 2001. The new church would be the Lifegate Church. Public worship was commenced at Lifegate on the Easter weekend in 2002. By September the group was averaging sixty-five persons in weekly worship. The team of eleven workers included Greg and Rhonda Harrison who relocated from Middlemount and Ken and Anna Bunney (Ken is the oldest son of Bert and Allison). Ruth was appointed senior pastor. Colin had opted out of the ministry track in 2001⁵⁶ and Ruth was ordained on October 3, 2002. A change in strategy was introduced to the Lifegate Church from 2004, when Ruth reported that the church was struggling. "Around November last year [2003] we began to lose people... I found myself leading with fear and disappointment and preaching with anxiety."⁵⁷ In 2005 the congregation embraced the FORGE model of a decentralised missional church.⁵⁸ Ruth explained, "Mission is our essence. We are aiming to understand that not to be missional is not to be the body of Christ."⁵⁹ At the end of the year Ruth and Colin moved to Melbourne to launch the Mimos Network, which followed Ruth's concept of decentralised community groups. After ten months, in November 2006, Ruth and Colin moved to Thailand to work in an orphanage.⁶⁰ The Lifegate congregation did not recruit a pastor again but opted for a non-clergy leadership team. Layman, Matt Evans provided leadership one day each week in 2006 and the other members of the leadership team took on more of the leadership from 2007. They reported, "We are

⁵⁴ "DBA Actions," 10th North QLD District Conference, October 1-4, 2002, 19 (Archives).

⁵⁵ National Board Minutes, May 8-9, 2000 (Archives).

⁵⁶ "DBMD Sessional Report," 9th North QLD District Conference, October 2-5, 2001, 17 (Archives).

⁵⁷ "Lifegate Pastor's Report," 12th North QLD District Conference, September 28 - October 1, 2004, 50 (Archives).

⁵⁸ The FORGE model rejects traditional church models in favour of moving out into the community to engage with people in their everyday lives. See Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006).

⁵⁹ "Lifegate Pastor's Report," 13th North QLD District Conference, September 20-23, 2005, 50 (Archives).

⁶⁰ "District Superintendent's Report," 24th STHN District Conference, October 13-15, 2006, 26-27 (Archives).

not actively seeking a pastor, as we are excited about this model of the local church and the potential we believe God can use us for."⁶¹ Numbers dwindled and the leadership team struggled to keep the congregational focus. In September 2009 it was reported that Lifegate Church had been discontinued.⁶²

In 2009 Rex Rigby accepted a call to serve the South Queensland District as Superintendent just days before the North Queensland District Conference. The North Queensland district was therefore placed in the hands of the National Superintendent for five months until Rev. Gary McClintock accepted the role of District Superintendent in February 2010 as part of his role as Assistant National Superintendent. Gary brought stability to the district from a distance while also serving his local church in Gympie. Rev. Stuart Hall was appointed District Superintendent from the 2011 District Conference and has gradually seen the district begin to increase again. He has secured pastoral supply for the Cairns congregation, re-established a congregation in Mackay and formalised the Fijian congregation in Rockhampton.

⁶¹ "Lifegate Report," 15th North QLD District Conference, October 2-5, 2007, 50 (Archives).

⁶² "Minutes," 15th North QLD District Conference, September 29 - October 2, 2009, 35 (Archives).

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4.	Buttermore, Sharon. February 25, 2014.	2
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15.	Hartin, Dennis. May 6, 2014.	4
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