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WHEN DID METHODISTS STOP ATTENDING THEIR PARISH CHURCHES? Some suggestions from mid-nineteenth century Yorkshire

The Wesley Historical Society Lecture 2008

Introduction

This article will attempt to move beyond the usual question, 'When did Methodism separate from the Church of England?', which is largely an institutional matter, to consider how those men and women who were called Methodists defined themselves, Sunday by Sunday, as they went to worship. A separate religious body of people called Methodists had come into being no later than the Plan of Pacification in 1795, if not at some earlier date during the lifetime of Wesley himself. This development was examined by Dr A. W. Harrison in his Wesley Historical Society lecture of 1945, and subsequently it received its most scholarly and extensive treatment in Frank Baker's *John Wesley and the Church of England* (1970). But I note Dr Harrison's caveat that "There was never any formal act of separation. Down to 1870 - and perhaps later - there were still some Methodist chapels where services were not held in church hours and where Sacraments were not administered."¹ It is the purpose of this article to explore this theme further.

The steps by which Methodism emerged as a separate connexion are well-known: preaching out of doors and without the permission of the parochial clergyman or his bishop (1739); the opening of chapels, as

¹ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (1970), p.323; A.W.Harrison, *The Separation of Methodism from the Church of England*. Wesley Historical Society Lectures No.11 (1945), pp.60-1.

For an excellent overview of the Church/Methodist relations in the nineteenth century, see Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.24-36.

opposed to meeting houses, (1743) and the subsequent licensing of chapels as places of public worship for Protestant Dissenters under the Toleration Act; the administration of the Lord's Supper by unordained preachers (1754); and the licensing of lay preachers under the Toleration Act (1757). These were significant steps which, taken with the calling of the first Conference in 1744 and the subsequent evolution of the connexional system up to the Deed of Declaration at the Leeds Conference in 1784, pointed towards separation - or so it would seem with the inevitability of hindsight. If these were the necessary causes of separation, the final and sufficient cause was ordination. After forty years of hesitating on the brink, Wesley ordained preachers for America (1784), for Scotland (1785) and finally for England (1788). As Lord Chief Justice Mansfield put it: 'ordination is separation'.² In this article I wish to move forward from this familiar territory to concentrate on those features of local Methodism that led to the development of separate worship in chapel, as opposed to parish church, especially in the towns of early nineteenth-century Yorkshire. I shall then take stock of the position at the time of the Census of Religious Worship in 1851 to see how far its findings suggest a continuing fluidity between attendance at chapel and church, especially in the countryside.³ Finally, I shall use the Clergy Visitation Returns for Yorkshire in the second half of the nineteenth century to suggest when, and possibly why, Methodists in Yorkshire stopped going to their parish churches.⁴

The development of separate worship in urban areas in the first half of the nineteenth century.

By the late eighteenth century Methodism was like a bramble, spreading everywhere and putting down independent roots whilst remaining also a branch of the mother plant. Wesley was adamant until his dying day that that was and would remain his position. Thereafter it was not to be,

² Baker, *John Wesley*, p.163.

³ Some of the Yorkshire returns have been published as *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship*, ed. J.R.Wolffe: *Volume 1: Introduction, City of York and East Riding; Volume 2: West Riding (North); Volume 3: West Riding (South)*. Borthwick Texts and Calendars 25, 31, 32 (York, 2000, 2005). Volume 4 on the North Riding is in preparation.

⁴ West Yorkshire Archive Service (Leeds), RD/CB3/1. Bishop's Primary Visitation Returns, Archdeaconry of Craven, 1858. An edition of these is in preparation, to be published by the Borthwick Institute, ed. Edward Royle [hereafter V/1858]. Borthwick Institute (University of York), V/1865, published as *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the diocese of York*, 1865, ed. Edward Royle and Ruth M. Larsen. Borthwick Texts and Studies 35 (York, 2006). The manuscripts of subsequent Returns for York are in the Borthwick Institute under V/1868/Ret, V/1871/Ret, V/1877/Ret, Bp.V/1884/Ret, and Bp.V/1894/Ret.

but the rate at which Methodist practices developed separately from the Church varied from place to place. For example, only in 1815 was the first Sacrament service held at New Street chapel in York, twenty years after the Plan of Pacification, and only in the following year, when a second major city centre chapel was opened in Albion Street to cope with the overflow from New Street, was morning service held at 10.30, so clashing with the normal time for the parochial service.⁵

This was perhaps a little late in comparison with places further west. The Dewsbury circuit plan for August 1807 to January 1808 shows five out of the seven places that had a morning service beginning at 10.00 am or later, though Dewsbury itself started at 9.15 am and so the service there might have been over just before the church service began. Similarly in the Barnsley circuit two years later, five of the six places with a morning service began at ten, with only Barnsley itself starting at 9.00, early enough to avoid the church hour. A decade later, in 1819, in the Huddersfield circuit, all twelve places with a morning service began at 10.30 am. So it seems clear that, except initially at some of the older central chapels, by the early nineteenth century the opportunity existed in the larger centres of the industrial West Riding for Methodists to attend morning worship in their own chapels at the church hour. But for these circuits as a whole, the evidence can be read differently. In Dewsbury circuit in 1807, half the chapels were not offering a morning service at all; in Barnsley in 1809 the same was true for eleven of the seventeen chapels; and in Huddersfield in 1819 ten of the twenty-two chapels held no morning service. The alternative was in the afternoon and, increasingly, in the evening. Nine of the ten Huddersfield chapels with no morning service held their single service of the day at 6.00 pm. These afternoon or evening chapels were usually in the smaller settlements.⁶ Whether such inhabitants stayed in bed on a Sunday morning, or tended their animals, or completed their piece of cloth on the loom while the daylight was good, or went to their parish churches, it is impossible to tell.

The figures for the larger settlements, though, suggest that by the second decade of the nineteenth century, Methodism was well-advanced on the road towards autonomous worshipping congregations. In places with increasing, and increasingly dense, populations, the decision not to attend the parish church could be partly one of convenience and partly one of necessity. The Established Church was not providing enough places of worship to meet the needs of all. This was true even after the

⁵ John Lyth, *Glimpses of Early Methodism in York and the surrounding district*. (York, 1885), pp.89-93, 123, 205, 227, 228-9.

⁶ The circuit plans are reproduced at the back of Joel Mallinson, *Methodism in Huddersfield, Holmfirth, and Denby Dale* (1898).

Church Building Commissioners had inaugurated a period of renewal which saw new churches and church accommodation added, parishes divided into separate districts, and more clergy appointed. The Methodists did not so much secede from their parish churches as resort to their own devices to supplement the inadequacies of the Church, and this gave them a taste for their own place, a sense of ownership, a chance to exercise in their religious lives the same powers and responsibilities as in their secular lives, and a style of preaching and worship which met their expectations and desires. No doubt different people reacted from different motives but overall by the early nineteenth century in the crowded, competitive and diverse communities which increasingly made up the larger towns, the parish church was no longer able to offer that unifying spiritual authority and oversight that it had when Wesley had first challenged its shortcomings a hundred years earlier. In the larger towns of the West Riding by the mid-nineteenth century there was more opportunity *not* to worship in the Church of England than there was to do so.

The position at the time of the Census of Religious Worship, 1851

The usual point at which historians take stock of the nineteenth-century church is the Census of Religious Worship, conducted by the registrar general on 30 March 1851. Much of the debate about this census has turned on how the subsequent Report interpreted the returns, which gave separate figures for the morning, afternoon and evening congregations on that day. By what arithmetic devices can we turn numbers of attendances into numbers of attenders? This question misses an even greater one to which scholars are belatedly turning their attention. How can we know whether people who may have attended more than one service did so within a single place of worship or single denomination? And even if they did worship twice in the same building on 30 March 1851, how can we know where they had worshipped on 23 March or where they were to worship on 6 April? Further, for present purposes, if we could identify those who put in some attendances at their parish church and some at their local chapel, should they be described as Church men and women who attended chapel; or Chapel people who attended church? ⁷

From the Census we can see, at least for one Sunday, how far the earlier practice of avoiding conflicting times of worship was still being maintained. If there were no Methodist service when there was a Church

⁷ See John Wolfe, *The Religious Census of 1851 in Yorkshire*. Borthwick Paper 108. (York, 2005); and John Wolfe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-century Yorkshire', *Northern History* 45:1 (March 2008), pp.71-86.

service, at least the possibility was there for a Methodist attender to go to the parish church; and *vice versa*.⁸ This possibility might become a probability if there is also evidence to suggest that the avoidance of conflicting service times was deliberate. Further, if in places where some service times conflicted, a larger number of Methodists were to be found attending chapel at a time when there was no church service than was attending chapel during the church service, either we must assume that such extra Methodists were the sort of people who attended only once on a Sunday, or that they had attended twice by worshipping elsewhere at a different time of day.

The timing of services confirms what we might expect in the larger and faster growing towns. There is no clear pattern of avoidance, whether intentional or otherwise. By 1851, there was no time of day, morning, afternoon, or evening, when there were no church services available in the larger towns; there were few gaps into which a chapel service might be inserted without appearing as a competitor. That does not mean, however, that individuals saw church or chapel in exclusive terms. Some people, possibly a majority, did not think of themselves as belonging to either 'Church' or 'Chapel' but showed no particular attachment to either. Many members of a chapel congregation were attenders but not members, - perhaps as many as three out of every four - and their level of commitment varied. The same was true of many who attended church. Some insight into this world of non-committed religion can be gained from the city of York where in 1837 twenty-three churches provided only thirty services; and most churches were closed for two-thirds of every Sunday.⁹ The rural dean wrote in 1845:

But when the Parish Church is only opened once on the Sunday it is with many the practice to seek out some other church, where they are probably considered as Intruders, which encourages the habit of wandering from Church to Church, and in very many instances to the Dissenting Chapels.¹⁰

Weak parochial loyalty created opportunities for Methodism but the possibility that attenders at public worship were in the habit of 'wandering' suggests that the 1851 Census figures could be misleading about institutional adherence. As the vicar of Long Preston discovered on

⁸ It is possible that even when both church and chapel had morning services, the chapel service was over before the church one began, but as there is no means of telling this from the census I have assumed that this was probably not the case.

⁹ For the 1837 data see Manchester Central Reference Library, MS f 310.6 M5 vol.4, Manchester Statistical Society, paper read by J.R.Wood, 19 December 1837, 'Statistics re churches and attendance in York' [only the statistical appendix to the paper survives].

¹⁰ Borthwick Institute, RD.AIN.1, 'Report upon the State of the Rural Deanery of the City and Ainsty of York', December 1845 [by W.H.Dixon, RD], p.167.

entering his living in 1858: 'my parishioners, with a few exceptions, belong equally to the Church & Meeting House: that they have no Church principles, not particularly hostile to it but they go to whichever suits them best.' ¹¹

This is not quite the same thing as individual Methodists asserting their dual heritage by deliberately attending both church and chapel on a Sunday. For this there is little direct evidence in the larger towns by 1851. All we can observe is that there were many opportunities for individual worshippers to attend services at both church and chapel, whether we label this behaviour no-loyalty or double-loyalty. But when we find services held at different times of day, the likelihood of the committed attending both church and chapel increases.

The timing of services

For a closer study of the distribution of services between the denominations and throughout Sunday, I have looked at the registration district of Huddersfield, which comprised the ancient parishes of Almondbury, Kirkburton, Kirkheaton, and Huddersfield; and the registration district of York, comprising the parishes of the city, its rural environs, and parishes to the east as far as the river Derwent. ¹²

In the Huddersfield district, with thirty-nine places of worship belonging to the Church of England, and sixty-four to the Methodists (of which thirty-six were Wesleyan), the likelihood was that a chapel - and especially a Methodist chapel, and particularly a Wesleyan chapel - would be more conveniently to hand than a church. The Church offered only seventy-one services on a Sunday, compared with seventy-nine from the Wesleyans alone. Further, while only eight of the Church services were normally held in the evening, twenty-four of the Wesleyan services were evening services. Add to these the twenty evening services provided by the other branches of Methodism and the expectation must be that anyone wishing to attend a service in the evening was more likely to find one in his or her local chapel than in a church. This might suggest the possibility of some people wandering from church to chapel and vice versa. But over all, only about twelve per cent of Wesleyans attending evening services could not also have been attending a service in the same chapel earlier in the day, and that is a small enough number to be accounted for by those who may have chosen to attend only once. The case for Methodists in most places in the Huddersfield district attending

¹¹ V/1858, Long Preston.

¹² TNA, HO 129/497 and HO 129/515.

also at Church is therefore neither proven nor disproven from the Census figures alone.¹³

When we perform the same exercise on the York Registration District, the picture is clearer, especially when we consider the country villages beyond the city of York. Here, of eighty-seven places of worship, thirty-eight belonged to the Church of England, forty-six to the Methodists (of which thirty-four were Wesleyan) and there were sixty-three Methodist services compared with fifty-two in the Church. More important was the distribution of these services across the day. Only one Church service was held in the evening compared with thirty-five in Methodist chapels, of which twenty-nine were Wesleyan. Two thirds of those worshipping in a Methodist chapel on the Sunday evening in the countryside around York cannot have been worshipping in the same chapel earlier in the day, either because total numbers were larger in the evening than at all other services combined or because the evening saw the only service of the day. Of forty-six villages around York, thirty had both a church and a chapel, and in twenty-one there was no conflict in times of service. This was largely due to the absence of church services from the villages in the evenings when most Methodist services were held, but there were four villages with parish churches in which the Wesleyans provided the only morning service, and four more villages with parish churches where the Wesleyans had the only afternoon service. In the main it would seem that the majority of Methodists were worshipping in their village chapels only at times when there was no church service.¹⁴

It might be, of course, that the sort of people who attended their chapels in the villages attended worship only in the evening when their day's farmwork was done. But this does not allow for the sentimental ties which drew people to their parish churches. Even in the urban areas of the West Riding people were drawn from their new Anglican district churches to their old parish churches for their Christenings, churchings and weddings.¹⁵ The ancient parish church was still at the heart of the secular community. This was even more so in the villages than in the towns. Almost everyone living in England was a parishioner of the Church of England, though the law permitted certain licensed groups to dissent. These were able to form their own separate communities within

¹³ Wolfe, *Yorkshire Returns*, vol.3, pp.5-30.

¹⁴ Wolfe, *Yorkshire Returns*, vol.1, pp.1-21.

¹⁵ At Buslingthorpe church in Leeds in 1858, it was reported that the district of 4,520 people had yielded only thirty baptisms in the previous year; and St James's, Leeds, had had only six. Meanwhile at the parish church the vicar and his team of curates had processed eleven hundred. Other complaints about the attraction of the ancient parish church came from Cleckheaton and Heckmondwike (formerly in Birstall), Buttershaw, Daisy Hill and Great Horton (formerly in Bradford) and Dewsbury Moor (formerly in Dewsbury). See V/1858.

the broader community of the Anglican parish: the Catholic Church with its own priest, or the 'gathered' church of Protestant dissenters with their own elected pastor. But the Methodists were not dissenters in this sense: they formed no gathered alternative church, only a society in connexion; and they for the most part in the villages had no settled ministers but were dependent on lay local preachers for their ordinary services and the circuit system to bring a minister occasionally from the local market town where the ministers were based to preach and to administer the sacraments. It is highly unlikely that such a minister would be available to administer the Lord's Supper on the Great Festivals (Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas) or as frequently as once a month. Though no doubt some Methodists travelled into the town on such occasions, others would have found it more natural and convenient to behave as parishioners and attend their parish church. The same was true of the rites of passage. After the Marriage Act of 1836, many chapels were still not registered for marriages. Though a Methodist could choose to travel to the circuit chapel in town to be wed, the custom was often to marry within the community in which the bride lived.¹⁶ The same was true of burials: the parish graveyard saw people laid to rest where they and their ancestors had lived and worked, and a Methodist might choose to be buried there even though the Church monopolised the conduct of the service until 1880. So, even when, by the mid-nineteenth century, Methodism had become an alternative to the Church in the towns, in the villages it was still often a supplement to it, for those who wanted a more local place of worship, an extra service, or a more rousing form of worship. A village Methodist was not someone who worshipped in chapel and shunned the parish church, but a parishioner who worshipped once in the parish church (usually in the morning) and also attended chapel.¹⁷

The location of chapels also underlines their supplementary nature in village parishes. Some chapels were located conveniently central to their villages but well away from the parish church, as at Wighill near Tadcaster, where the church stands outside the village and the chapel stood at its heart; in 1877 the clergyman reported: 'One small Methodist

¹⁶For reasons why some (Primitive) Methodists chose to marry in their parish churches, see Henry Woodcock, *Piety among the Peasantry: being Sketches of Primitive Methodism on the Yorkshire Wolds*. [1889], p.92. The nature and ties of the parish community have most recently been explored in K.D.M.Snell, *Parish and Belonging. Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2007).

¹⁷As one Nottingham Wesleyan put it at a local preachers' meeting, 'If I lived in a village, I should undoubtedly attend the Church as well as the Chapel' - quoted in Rowland C. Swift, *Lively People. Methodism in Nottingham 1740-1979* (Nottingham, 1979), p.139.

chapel - seldom ever open during church services, as all the Methodists are also church goers & communicants'.¹⁸ Another example is Moor Monkton which was, in the words of the rural dean in 1845, 'most inconveniently situated for the population of the parish', being in neither Moor Monkton village nor in Hessay which was also in the parish, but along the road between the two.¹⁹ The Wesleyans supplied the morning and afternoon services at Hessay and the evening service at Moor Monkton when it would have been too dark to hold a service in the parish church, half mile out of the village. But there were other chapels built close to their parish churches, even in the corner of the churchyard as at Warthill where, in 1865, the clergyman was able to report that the Wesleyans had discontinued their meetings during the hours of the Church service.²⁰ In places like this the Methodist service could have seemed little different from a third church service - for which the Prayer Book did not provide a liturgy - held in a hired room or informally in a cottage.

The Visitation Returns of the Clergy

The pattern of services and numbers in attendance in 1851 indicate what might have been happening; the clergy visitation returns help flesh this out with examples of how people were actually reported to be conducting their worshipping lives. The bishop was supposed to visit his diocese every three years, and in advance of his visitation tour he sent out a questionnaire for the parochial clergy to complete. These returns from the clergy give a detailed overview of aspects of their parochial life and work. Survival of these returns, though, is patchy but where we have them they are an invaluable source for the history of local religion. In 1836 the new Diocese of Ripon was created to serve the archdeaconries of Richmond and Craven, covering the upper Pennine Dales from the Tees to the Calder. The early returns to Bishop Longley were not retained, although he did make notes from them. ²¹ The only surviving full set of returns, and that only for the archdeaconry of Craven, dates from 1858, Bishop Bickersteth's primary visitation. This covered the area south of the river Nidd and so included the communities of Wharfedale, upper Ribblesdale and Airedale, and the valleys of the Calder and its tributaries: it included the major industrial towns of Bradford, Leeds,

¹⁸ V/1877, Wighill. In 1894, the distance from the village and lack of a footpath beside the lane were given as reasons for old people not attending church: V/1894, Wighill.

¹⁹ 'State of the Rural Deanery', p.57.

²⁰ V/1865, Warthill. In 1851 the Wesleyans had met in the afternoon, the church alternately in the morning or afternoon. They did not conflict on Census Sunday: Wolfe, *Yorkshire Returns*, vol.1, p.19.

²¹ University of Leeds, Brotherton Special Collections, Holden Library MS 2, Notebooks of Charles Thomas Longley, bishop of Ripon.

Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield in what is now the county of West Yorkshire. For the diocese of York, in which Craven was situated before 1836, there is no surviving set of returns between Archbishop Drummond's primary visitation of 1764 and Archbishop Thomson's primary visitation of 1865. What follows is based on these returns of 1858 and 1865, supplemented by the later York returns of 1868, 1877, 1884 and 1894.²²

Unfortunately, Bickersteth and Thomson did not ask exactly the same questions. In 1858 there was no explicit question from Bickersteth about dissent. It was so common as to need no further reporting and Bickersteth himself, as a leading Evangelical, was more concerned with the outreach of the Church to non-attenders than he was with inter-church rivalry. Fortunately that did not stop some of his clergy telling him about dissent, especially when they were excusing a poor performance. In 1865 (and in 1868 and 1877) Thomson did ask about dissent and so his returns give more information on the subject.²³ What the clergy said about their experiences was not, of course, unbiased. When they were not complaining about dissent they were often ignoring it, for to admit its existence was, for some, to admit failure. Some clergy were genuinely confused about whether Methodism should be regarded as dissent at all; and others feigned the belief that it was not because in many cases that eliminated Protestant dissent from their parishes entirely. Some clergy were openly hostile and we may assume the feeling was reciprocated. Others took a pride in the good relations they had with their Methodist parishioners. As the York country figures suggest, Wesleyanism was dominant but Primitive Methodism was making progress and establishing chapels, particularly in the East Riding, by mid-century and, although the case for the surviving strength of Church Methodism, or Methodist Churchism, is strongest with respect to the Wesleyans, there is some evidence that the Primitives should also be part of the story.

²² Hereafter all references to the returns are omitted where the date and place are made clear in the text. In manuscript the 1858 returns are bound, unnumbered, in an approximately alphabetical order; when published they will be arranged alphabetically by rural deanery, and indexed. The 1865 Returns are numbered in the manuscript in a roughly alphabetical order. This is followed in the published version which is also indexed. The later York returns are in manuscript, again bound in alphabetical, or archdeaconry and alphabetical, order. The 1871 Returns have not been used in this paper as their limited questions yielded no relevant information; the 1884 Returns asked only about impediments and so collected little positive information about Methodism; the 1894 returns were supplementary, issued after the visitation, and asked about the number of chapels and impediments to parochial work but not about the number of dissenters as such.

²³ The differences between the questions in 1858 and 1865 probably exaggerate the contrast between the Ripon and York dioceses, though the reports from Sheffield in York diocese are not dissimilar from those from Leeds or Bradford in Ripon diocese.

In the urban areas of West Yorkshire the habit of uncommitted 'wandering' from church to chapel and chapel to church probably accounts for a good deal of the dual attendance and rivalry in church/chapel relations, but a few asides in the Craven responses give hints of a more positive relationship. At Woodkirk (West Ardsley), near Wakefield, for example, in 1851 there were only the Church and the Wesleyans, both holding morning and afternoon services but neither an evening service. This looks like straight competition. Yet in explaining why he did not baptise in the public service the clergyman gave this as his reason: 'The mass of the population being Dissenters, who complain of the length of the Church services'. This suggests either that some Dissenters were familiar enough with their local church services to complain about them when the baptisms of other people's children made them too long, or that they wanted their own children to be baptised by the clergyman but did not want to sit through a long church service. And in Leathley, a small rural parish near Otley in Wharfedale with only the parish church and the Wesleyans, the church had the larger morning congregation in 1851, but the chapel had the larger afternoon congregation as well as the sole evening congregation. The clergyman here wrote in reply to a question about numbers of communicants: 'I cannot give a correct average, as many of the Communicants are Dissenters & do not come regularly'. With communion only six times a year that may not have amounted to much, but it is interesting to note that they came at all, even if that was possibly only at Easter.

The evidence concerning Church/Methodist relations is clearer and more plentiful in the 1865 and later returns for the diocese of York. This covered a wide and diverse area, from the Tees southwards, including the Vale of York, the North York Moors, the Yorkshire Wolds, the coastal region and the southernmost part of the West Riding: its largest towns were Sheffield, Hull and York. The majority of parishes, though, were rural. It was here that the old ways persisted longest, in both church and chapel.²⁴ Out of 593 urban and rural returns, ninety-two (15.5 per cent) indicate some degree of persistent dual attendance or Church Methodism. Though this was a minority of parishes, the number far exceeds those where hostility was reported. Most returns were silent, though some of those with no comment in 1865 were positive about relations with the Methodists in subsequent returns so one in six parishes is a significant minority and probably an underestimate.²⁵

²⁴ It may be significant that the sect of 'Church Methodists', formed in 1823, was led by Mark Robinson of Beverley in the East Riding. See W.J. Townsend, H.B. Workman and G. Eayrs, eds, *A New History of Methodism*, 2 vols. (1909), I, p.426.

²⁵ For example, dissent appears as an impediment at Londesborough in 1865 but in 1868, when the Wesleyan service was in the evening and the church services in the morning and afternoon, 'They attend Church' and this positive note was repeated in 1877 and 1894.

The way the 1851 information can be interpreted through the visitation returns is illustrated by Kirby Underdale, between York and Driffield. There was in this East Riding parish, in addition to the parish church, a Wesleyan chapel, restored by the non-resident landowner, the Churchman and Whig politician, Sir Charles Wood, later first Lord Halifax. In 1851 at the sole morning service the general congregation at the parish church was fifty people. In the evening, at the sole Wesleyan service there were from forty to fifty people. But in the afternoon when there were both church and chapel services, twenty attended church and forty to fifty attended chapel. This suggests a core of forty to fifty Wesleyans unconnected to the twenty who went to afternoon church, but the visitation return in 1865 suggests a more complicated picture. There was, apparently, an afternoon service at the chapel only fortnightly and this had the effect of reducing attendance at church, indicating that when the chapel was not open on an afternoon some of the attenders went to church instead. Furthermore, we are told explicitly that this was the case in the morning: 'Every householder in the parish (48) attends the dissenting chapel, though they cultivate a most friendly feeling towards the Church and are regular in the morning attendance at Church. The *farmers families have all intermarried and support each other in keeping up the dissenting place of worship.*'²⁶

Whether first allegiance was to church or chapel varies from report to report. At Brompton near Scarborough in 1868 there were about 600 dissenters, 'many of these attend Church'; in 1877 in the same parish, 'the majority of those who come to Church also go to some chapel'. The former is probably the more common way of expressing the relationship. In some cases the suggestion is that those who attended both Church and chapel were those who took their religion most seriously. At Slingsby in the North Riding, where there was a 'rather large Wesleyan chapel': 'I think the majority of those who make any pretension to religious character are Methodists, tho' they are good church-goers when the services do not clash.' At Newton upon Ouse, near York, the Wesleyans were 'all good Church goers, and regular Communicants, class leaders included'. At Brodsworth, near Doncaster, 'their leaders are

²⁶The italics represent underlining in the original. But Kirby Underdale was not such a godly village as this might imply. The incumbent went on: 'There are about 60 farm servants in the parish. The difficulty of instilling any good into their minds is very great and the first obstacle is the late hours they are kept at work and the indifference manifested by their employers for their well being.' Though this comment refers more to the failure of his weekday evening school than Sunday worship, it is a reminder that many farm workers were beyond the effective reach of both church and chapel.

Communicants in Church'. At Owston, not far from Epworth, 'many of the best Churchgoers attend the Chapel as well'. (John Wesley would have been proud of them but would have expected no less.) At Speeton, between Filey and Bridlington, as late as 1894, when asked how many confirmation candidates went on to become communicants, the incumbent replied '7 or 8 - Wesleyans. The few church people sadly careless'. There are even some urban examples of dual attendance. At Filey in 1865: 'I am almost incapable of affording a direct answer [about numbers] as very many of the Methodists (the only dissenters in the place) divide their attendance between the Church and their own Chapel.' At St Martin's, Scarborough, in 1868, in a reversal of the usual pattern, 'a large proportion of Dissenters in my parish - but many of them attend my Church on Sunday nights'. At Pontefract in 1865, where the Methodists in All Saints parish were Primitives, the clergyman was unable to estimate numbers of dissenters because 'so many frequent both church and chapel'. Here dual allegiance shades into non-allegiance, as at Bradfield near Sheffield in 1894, where the clergyman experienced 'The very widely prevailing idea that provided "we all want to get to the same place" it is perfectly immaterial whether we follow the guidance of the Church or any one of the sects.' Nevertheless, the tone of many rural reports does suggest something more positive than this, and examples could be multiplied for both villages and smaller towns across the diocese, from Askern, near Doncaster ('Perhaps one third are nominal Wesleyans, but many of these attend church once on Sundays') to Warter on the Wolds ('One [chapel] belonging to Wesleyan Methodists. The Primitives worship in a private house. Both of the above frequently attend Church').

The Primitive Methodists of Warter and Pontefract raise the question of how far their practices differed from those of the Wesleyans. It is true that in Warter at this time the Primitives did not have a chapel of their own, but these were not the only places where we find them attending church. At Dalby in the North Riding, there were a 'Dozen or Twenty' at the Primitive meeting house 'who generally attend church and who always seem attentive'; and at Armthorpe near Doncaster, the Primitive Chapel was not open during Divine Service 'and some of the principal supporters of, and also attendants at, the Chapel are in the constant habit of attending the Morning, and, less frequently, the Afternoon Service at the Parish Church'. Even where Primitive Methodism was strong, towards Hull, dual allegiance seems to have persisted. At Lockington, near Beverley, where the three hundred Primitives outnumbered the

Wesleyans by six to one, 'many of each attend Church'. However, at Brafferton near Boroughbridge, and at Holme on Spalding Moor, the incumbents did make a distinction between the conduct of the Wesleyans, who attended Church, and the Primitives, who by implication did not. The evidence overall, though, is clear: Methodists in general and Wesleyans in particular, were still attending their parish churches in many of the villages of rural Yorkshire in the mid-1860s and indeed later. In this respect Methodists were different from dissenters. As the vicar of Osbaldwick near York explained, Catholics, Quakers and Independents did not attend church but 'The Wesleyans generally attend church once on a Sunday'.

Sometimes relationships could break down. At Haddlesey, south of Selby, 'One Churchwarden has no idea of his duty, he attends Chapel of the Wesleyans and on Trinity Sunday last he removed the forms from the Church to increase the accommodation at the Meeting House'. But hostility could stem from the very practice of dual attendance. At Thorpe Hesley, near Rotherham, the incumbent was faced in his parish with two Wesleyan chapels and one each for the Wesleyan Reformers and the Primitive Methodists: 'It would be difficult to find a dozen real Church people in the place', he grumbled, but then added, as if this made matters worse: 'Those who attend Church also go to Chapel.' This was not, in his eyes, Church Methodism but Methodists poaching for part of the Sunday the few remaining Churchmen. The same problem was perceived in the Archbishop's own back-yard at Bishopthorpe in 1894: 'The Methodists, though they attend Church, and are friendly & well meaning, are a source of anxiety in as much as they constantly try to attach members of the Church to their Society'. The rector of Badsworth near Pontefract expressed himself most forcibly, describing how 'The awful system of attending both the Chapel and the Church, which I found prevalent here impedes usefulness: and makes double dealers of half the people in Yorkshire.'²⁷

²⁷ This aspect of church/chapel attendance was captured in fiction by Thomas Hardy in *The Distracted Preacher* (in *Wessex Tales*, 1888, but writing of the 1830s) where he referred to 'the hundred-and-forty Methodists of pure blood who, at this time, lived in Nether-Moynton, and ... the mixed race which went to church in the morning and chapel in the evening, or when there was a tea - as many as a hundred and-ten people more, all told, and including the parish-clerk in the winter-time, when it was too dark for the vicar to observe who passed up the street at seven o'clock ... It was owing to this overlapping of creeds that the celebrated population-puzzle arose among the denser gentry of the district around Nether-Moynton; how could it be that a parish containing fifteen score of strong, full-grown Episcopalians, and nearly thirteen score of well-matured Dissenters, numbered barely two-and-twenty score adults in all?' I have the editor to thank for this reference.

How typical was this?

These quotations, which are typical of the ninety or so Visitation Returns in 1865 that provide evidence of the continuing presence of Methodists at their parish services, help throw some light on how the Census of Religious Worship of 1851 needs to be interpreted. Though doubtless in many places, especially the more urbanised and industrialised ones, positive dual allegiance (or 'double dealing') was less common than uncommitted 'wandering' between different places of worship, the visitation returns do paint a more positive picture of the place of many Methodists in the worshipping lives of their communities across rural Yorkshire, where Methodists were to be found in their parish churches, especially on a Sunday morning. But was this picture true also across rural England? That question can be answered only by local historians alert to the peculiarities of each region and parish. One such historian, James Obelkevich, who has studied South Lindsey between 1825 and 1875, has found for an area not dissimilar to the East Riding a not dissimilar outcome. He notes how 'many Wesleyans worshipped regularly in their parish church' and cites, as one example from among many, the parish of Spridlington, between Lincoln and Market Rasen, where, in 1871, the local newspaper reported

the Wesleyans leaving their place of worship sufficiently early to go straight to morning service at the parish church. ... After afternoon service in the church a united family of Church and Dissent meet in the Wesleyan chapel, where they worship in a less formal but no less hearty manner.²⁸

If this picture has some validity, not only in rural Yorkshire and Lincolnshire but also in other places in the later nineteenth century, then this has implications both for the history of Methodism and for its study a century earlier. As Gareth Lloyd has recently argued in his reappraisal of the life of Charles Wesley, Charles's resolute defence of Church Methodism makes more sense once one has appreciated the continuing attachment of many Methodists to the Church.²⁹ Although Charles had long ceased to itinerate he may well have had a more secure sense of what Methodism meant to many of its followers than those among that febrile group of connexion builders and their heirs and historians who too often have dominated the story. History, as that leading Methodist historian, Herbert Butterfield, observed, is not about tracing back an

²⁸ *Lincoln Gazette*, 27 May 1871, quoted in James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875*. (Oxford, 1976), p.214.

²⁹ Gareth Lloyd, *Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity* (Oxford, 2007, pp.238-9.

inevitable story informed by hindsight, but an exploration of the past on its own terms as it unfolded, unpredictable, varied and rich.³⁰ Once we do this, we are open to some surprising conclusions.

So when did the Methodists stop going to their parish churches?

The answer will be different for each locality. Clearly some had stopped going even within John Wesley's lifetime. But many others were equally clearly still going in the 1860s and beyond. The evidence from the later Returns suggests that, although the practice of dual attendance at worship was declining in the later nineteenth century, much depended on local circumstances and even as late as 1894 the practice was still not unknown. A few examples taken from the later returns show what was involved. Church-going habits at Owston remained unchanged: in 1877, 'The dissenters are also church people'; at Scrayingham, on the Derwent south of Malton, 'The dissenters nearly all attend church'; at Settrington, east of Malton, 'There is no definite line drawn between Churchmen and Dissenters. Most of the Dissenters come to church & many of the Church people attend the Dissenters meetings'. A new note was struck at Boynton in 1884, with the report that 'some who are members of the Salvation Army are among the best attenders at church'. As late as 1894 the same refrain can also be found, though less frequently. At Levisham, north of Pickering, 'all the Nonconformists desire to be known as Church as well as Chapel people'; at Thormanby, south of Thirsk, there was one Methodist chapel 'but *all* are also regular attenders at Church'. Methodism continued its old role of supplementing the church at Whitwell, between York and Malton, where the Wesleyans held a cottage meeting every other Sunday evening, 'but many who attend this meeting are regular communicants'. Methodism also continued in its complementary role at Scawton with Cold Kirby, in the Hambleton hills near Rivaulx, holding farmhouse meetings in each village alternately every Sunday at the time when the clergyman was in his other village conducting a church service, so that, for the most part, the Wesleyans 'attend both the Church Services and their own meetings'.

But by 1894 references to co-operation between Church and chapel become fewer than those indicating rivalry and even hostility. If some Methodists were still going to church at the end of the nineteenth century, the practice does appear to have been dying out. Why was this? There are a few clues in the later visitation returns which concur with the suggestions offered by Obelkevich from his study of mid-Lincolnshire, and they point not only to changes in Methodism but also to changes in

³⁰ Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931).

the Church of England.³¹ Official policy in the Church, as expressed by bishops in their visitation charges and elsewhere, was to make it more visible and more active in the parishes: more buildings, more - and more resident - clergymen, and two full services on a Sunday, each with a sermon.³² The social spaces occupied by Methodism were being squeezed. The unreformed Church had been relaxed enough to work with the grain of the community and as such it could be the Church for the community, above the sectarianism of dissent: a truly broad and comprehensive Church. But the reformed Church began to define itself more strictly and more narrowly; it was becoming a denomination in denominational competition with its rivals. Where once the Methodists had filled a gap, the Church now wished to re-occupy that territory and evict the interloper. This process was observed by the Revd Henry Woodcock, a Primitive Methodist travelling preacher in the Wolds, writing in the 1880s:

The old easy-going parsons have nearly all passed away, and now there are a praying, preaching, pastoring clergy, working hard to satisfy the religious wants of the people, and anxious to discredit our ministry. ³³

One such 'old, easy-going parson' was Joshua Smyth of Keyingham, near Hull. Inducted in 1821 he remained there until 1873. In 1877 his successor produced a long list of reasons why dissent had such a strong position in the parish, including the fact that 'for some time he [Smyth] was in the habit of attending Evening Services at the Wesleyan chapel', as also did the tenants at the Rectory Farm, 'constant attenders at the Morning Services' at church yet also 'the strongest supporters of the Wesleyans'. Seventeen years later this infamous vicar was still being recalled in the Visitation Return. His successor was clearly of a different mind, and in this he was increasingly typical. As the clergyman at Weaverham wrote in 1884, 'no compromise of Church principles appears the only way to meet these difficulties' caused by Methodism.

The change in mood can be detected even in the 1860s. Relations between the parish church and the Methodists in the village of Huntington, near York, had always been good. In 1823 the evangelical

³¹ Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*, pp.214-17.

³² See Robert Bickersteth, *A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Ripon at his primary visitation in September and October, 1858* (1858); and William Thomson, *Work and Prospects. A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of York, delivered at his Primary Visitation, in October, 1865* (1865).

³³ Woodcock, *Piety among the Peasantry*, p.257. For the revival of the Church of England in the East Riding, see G. Moses, *Rural Moral Reform in Nineteenth-Century England. The crusade against adolescent farm servants and hiring fairs.* (Lampeter, 2007), pp. 133-71.

vicar, James Richardson, had administered Communion to twenty-one Methodists after the great revival which led to the building of their first chapel; and in 1833 parish services were conducted in the chapel for eight Sundays while the church was being repaired. The Sunday school, formed in 1837, used to meet in the chapel in the morning for a brief service before processing to the parish church for Morning Prayer; and in the afternoon the parish school reciprocated for a service in the Methodist chapel.³⁴ In 1865 the vicar was still able to record with reference to dissent: 'only a few families who are strictly Methodist but a large number attending both church and chapel'. In both 1851 and 1865 there was only one service in the parish church, alternately morning and afternoon, because the vicar also did duty at the Minster as a member of the Vicars Choral. Yet only three years later, the same vicar, now no longer an active Vicar Choral and holding two services every Sunday, had changed his mind and so could write: 'fully one half of the parish are Wesleyans - and many being old Wesleyan families keep quite aloof from the church'. Despite this, as late as 1894 it was still reported that 'Nonconformists are among those prepared & confirmed'. We can see this same process of ambiguous separation at work in the next village of Haxby. Despite the incumbent reporting in 1865 that 'the great majority of the people here see no difference between Church and Chapel', he added in the same return, 'I think an evening Service instead of an afternoon might possibly prevent many of our young people from lapsing into Wesleyanism.' The fight was on, though in 1894 it was reported that 'occasionally some of the dissenters attend the service'.

Much depended on the personality of the vicar. Some of the old school survived the century. At Osbaldwick, near York, Frederick Umpleby was curate from 1877 and vicar from 1882 to 1903. The recollection of a contemporary Methodist historian and local preacher was that 'He was a courteous and sympathetic man with broad ideas - friendly with Methodist preachers both lay and ministerial'; and that he once went to a class meeting on ticket night and 'gave an experience' and also attended a love feast at the circuit Wesleyan chapel in York.³⁵ So the pace of change varied, but in general the new aggression of the reformed Church found little sympathy for, or from, the Methodists.

Some clergy appreciated what was happening. The incumbent at

³⁴York Minster Library, Archives. NC/WM/7. 'History and incidents in connection with The Introduction of Methodism into the Villages and Hamlets surrounding the City and now included in The Three York Circuits. By Mr W.Camidge. Gathered from authentic sources chiefly old members who have spent their lives in the villages and been for very many years loyal members of the Methodist Societies', vol.2, Huntington.

³⁵York Minster Library, Archives. NC/WM/8., William Camidge, 'Village Methodism', vol.3, Osbaldwick.

Walkington, near Beverley, had both Wesleyan and Primitive chapels; among the impediments to his ministry he correctly diagnosed 'The rivalry of the Dissenting communities who naturally desire to maintain the advantage they have gained in a praiseworthy endeavour to meet the past neglect and mistakes of the Church.' The chapels were there before the church, observed the incumbent of Hensall with Heck and High Eggborough, south of Selby, and so 'had acquired interests usually given to Parish Church'. But most clergy had decided the time had come to claim those interests back and so found themselves in conflict with the Methodists. At Walton, near Wetherby, where in 1877 the people were 'generally well affected towards the church', the Wesleyans had a small chapel, built in the 1860s. In 1894 it was reported to be open in the evening when there was a church service, and, though one might agree with the vicar that 'it is a pity to have one in our small village of 150 people for it cannot but draw away a few from the Church', he did fail to mention that, back in 1865 before the chapel was built, there was no evening service at Walton parish church. At Yeddingham in the vale of Pickering in 1894, the vicar found no church Sunday school, but the Wesleyans had monopolised the parish with theirs for the past twenty five years. So the vicar, having no prospect of success with a Sunday school of his own, started a monthly afternoon service for the children and their parents, the service beginning just after the Sunday school ended so the children could troop over from the Wesleyan school to the church. He was indignant when the Wesleyans retorted by issuing extra tickets (for Sunday school prizes) to pupils who stayed behind with them when there was a chapel service after school. 'Dissent tries to undo some of the Church work,' wrote the clergyman at Holmpton near Withernsea, 'but I fear it is not special to this Parish'. For increasing numbers of the clergy, Dissent - and they now used this term to include Methodists - was the enemy. The incumbent at Millington, near Pockington, with both Wesleyan and Primitive chapels in the village, found no hindrances 'but what is common to most Parishes similarly situated on the Worlds, e.g. the presence of Dissent'. But so far as many people were concerned, especially those given to 'wandering', we might still recognise to-day what was reported of the Wesleyans at Bilbrough, near Tadcaster, in 1865, whose 'number [was] fluctuating depending on temporary umbrage taken with the clergyman or church service'.

That umbrage could become permanent when new styles of churchmanship began to make an impact. Both Bishop Bickersteth and Archbishop Thomson were Evangelicals and did their best to slow the

advance of Oxford-influenced churchmen with Catholic tastes, transforming worship in their parish churches. The officiating curate at Gilling, near Helmsley in the North Riding, in 1865 favoured 'the earnest carrying out of the Church system of Daily Services, frequent celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, and special observation of Holy Seasons'. At Middleton on the Wolds in 1865 'irregularities and innovations' disturbed even the rural dean, whose parish adjoined Middleton, and so we can imagine how the three hundred Wesleyans and Primitives in the parish reacted.³⁶ Crosses, candles and cassocks began to change the appearance of parish churches and their services, making them less comfortable places in which Protestants might worship. At Baldesby, between Thirsk and Ripon, the church was new in the mid-1850s, a Gothic Revival vision designed by William Butterfield and lavishly decorated at the expense of Viscount Downe of Baldesby Park. The people had formerly been Wesleyans and the old folk remained such, not impressed by daily morning and evening prayer or Communion every Sunday morning as well as early celebrations monthly. This may have appealed to the sacramental side of John Wesley himself, but not to his followers in the villages of Baldesby and Rainton. In 1884 the incumbent felt hindered by 'ignorance as to the spiritual character of the church & the sinfulness of schism' and in 1894 the Wesleyans were accused of 'clinging to the non-sacramental system'. By the 1890s increasing numbers of other churches had also gone over from monthly to weekly or more frequent communions, adopting a form of morning worship with little appeal for Methodists. As the return from Sledmere in 1877 noted, 'long standing prejudice and extreme Ritualism of the past have done much harm', and this was before the lavish rebuilding of the parish church in the early 1890s when, it was recorded, 'Every farmer, but one, in the parish is a Methodist.'³⁷

If the Methodists did not like the theology of some sections of the Church, the feeling was reciprocated. At Haddlesey, south of Selby, the old charge was raised that Methodism 'fostered an unscriptural emotional system barren alike of faith & good works'. Styles of Methodist worship were also proving offensive to some clergymen, with a reference in 1884 to 'the frequent introduction of female preachers and other

³⁶The informant (who had legibly crossed out the name of the offending parish) was George Thomas Clare, Rector of Bainton.

³⁷The Nottingham and Derby Wesleyan District Meeting in 1892 viewed 'with much grief and alarm the ultra Sacramentalism and Sacerdotal intolerance of a large and increasing section of the English clergy, especially in the rural districts'- quoted in Swift, *Lively People*, p.151.

exciting means' hindering the progress and success of the church at Bubwith, near Howden in the East Riding. It was not only the Church that had changed. Methodism was also becoming different: it was assimilating many of the attitudes of Dissent and the phrase 'political dissent' enters the language of the returns. Beginning in the 1840s in the towns, the education issue was aligning Methodism with Nonconformity against the Church, and after 1870, when with state aid the Church of England was able to maintain and exploit its monopoly over education in the countryside, it was becoming a divisive issue here too. Also from the 1870s increasing militancy among farm workers, followed by agricultural depression, were putting social relationships under increased strain as those communities in which the church had once been accepted as a unifying force now began to fragment. Primitive Methodism in the Wolds, especially, became more certainly the voice of protest for the agricultural labourer, and the church symbolised part of what they were protesting against. In 1884 at Bramley, near Rotherham, with reference to the agricultural depression, the incumbent noted how 'The bitter spirit of dissent is ever ready to blame the Church for everything.' As the clergyman at Keyingham put it in 1894, 'Local preachers & agitators poison the minds of the labouring classes by false statements, & exciting their hopes in a share of the spoil, should the Church be disestablished and disendowed'. At Bilbrough, where relations had been so good in 1877, the Wesleyan chapel in 1894 was 'practically used for any work of opposition secular or religious so-called'. 'The *modern* spirit of Dissent', reported the clergyman at Thorpe Salvin in the deepest south of Yorkshire with an assumption of superiority which must have grated on many Methodists, 'was not, as formerly, *kindly*, but aggressive, insisting on equality - "their orders as good as ours" &c. &c.' 'The Dissenters', it was reported from South Kirby near Pontefract, 'are not the old fashioned God fearing kind, but the chapel is "run" by young men who like to hear themselves talk'. Back in the old days, in 1865, the tone had been very different. Then it had been a case of 'some of my best attendants at Church and regular communicants not infrequently attend these [Dissenting] places of worship'.

While several reports from the North and West Ridings suggest that, where the church was fighting back, it was the Primitives rather than the Wesleyans whose congregations suffered, this was not the picture in the East Riding. At Patrington in Holderness, while the Wesleyan chapel was 'very thinly attended' the Primitives were 'very strong with labouring classes'. At Humbleton with Elsternwick in Holderness, there was 'a strengthening of Primitive Methodism among the Labourers'. But were

the Primitives necessarily the more antagonistic towards the Church? In 1894 at Watton with Beswick, south of Driffield, with its two Primitive chapels, the clergyman wrote, 'The prevalence of Dissent in the whole of the East Riding is of course the *greatest* hindrance to church work; altho' in Watton & Beswick the people have not (as in many places) forsaken the church for the chapels but go to *both*, which is of course *by no means* satisfactory'. At Cottingham, north of Hull, one set of Methodists were described as 'Militant and pseudo Triumphant - very noisy - closely organised and ably led - *very strong*'; by contrast another set were 'rather kindly inclined to us - chiefly Market Gardeners - who have fallen away through neglect on our part - very nice'. The latter were, of course, the Primitives and the former the Wesleyans. Local history is full of little surprises that challenge the stereotype.

Conclusion

There is no easy explanation for the decline in Church Methodism, Methodist Churchism or 'double dealing', depending on one's point of view, and different factors were influential in different places as well as at different times. But somewhere in the midst of all this lies the answer to my question. At some point in the later decades of the nineteenth century, and in increasing numbers, places where Church and Chapel had previously coexisted in harmony with some shared attendances now began to find themselves in competition as the Church sought to fill the gaps that Methodists were already filling, as clergy began to offer a style of worship alien to local custom and chapel expectations, and as social and political tensions reinforced the shift towards separate denominationalism. At that point, the Methodists stopped attending their parish churches.

And yet the question is still not quite answered. The last word must be given to Isaac Taylor of Settrington in the East Riding, where relationships had long been good. In 1894, over a hundred years after John Wesley's death, he could still write: 'the Wesleyans do not consider themselves nonconformists & frequently conform, & according to Wesley's rule, communicate at the Great Festivals.'³⁸

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³⁸ The clergyman was perhaps a little eccentric, and even an admirer of Wesleyanism, for he added that an impediment to his work was 'The greater suitability of the Wesleyans social system to the temperament of a people of Anglo-Danish origin'.

JOHN WESLEY IN GEORGIA: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?*

The vexed question of the 'success' or 'failure' of John Wesley's Georgia mission (October 1735 to December 1737) has drawn the attention of nearly all of his biographers. This issue has divided them into five interpretative camps, each represented by several writers. Some have not hesitated to call the Georgia mission a failure;¹ others have declined to declare it either a failure or success;² while a third option has been to conclude that it was not a failure although these interpreters have generally also declined to call it an unmitigated success;³ an alternative approach has been to see Georgia as a 'preface to victory' and emphasize what Wesley learned by the experience that prepared him for his 'conversion' at Aldersgate and the revival;⁴ a nuanced version of the first

* I would like to thank Dr Peter Forsaith for his comments on a draft of this article.

¹ Richard Watson, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (New York, 1831), 35; Julia Wedgewood, *John Wesley and the Evangelical Reaction of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1870), 104, 113, 114; Matthew Lelièvre, *John Wesley: His Life and Work* (London, n.d. [1871]), 25; William Cannon, 'John Wesley's Years in Georgia', *Methodist History* 1 (1963), 2-4; V. H. H. Green, *John Wesley* (London, 1964), 44; A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist* (London, 1967), 53; the Calvinist C. H. Spurgeon, *The Two Wesleys: A Lecture Delivered in the Metropolitan Tabernacle Lecture Hall, on December 6th 1861* (London, 1894); and the historians of colonial Georgia, E. Merton Coulter ('When John Wesley Preached in Georgia', *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 9 (1925), 344), David T. Morgan ('John Wesley's Sojourn in Georgia Revisited', *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 64 (1980), 253-62), and in a more guarded sense Harold E. Davis (*The Fledgling Province: Social and Cultural Life in Colonial Georgia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1976), 193, 214-16).

² John Hampson, *Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (Sunderland, 1791), 186; Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, vol. 1 (London, 1870), 170; Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* (Nashville, 1936), 77; Frank Baker, *From Wesley to Asbury* (Durham, NC, 1976), 21-23; Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, 3rd edn. (London, 2002), 135 and the early historians of colonial Georgia William Bacon Stevens (*A History of Georgia* (New York, 1847)) and Charles C. Jones (*The History of Georgia* (Boston, 1883)).

³ John Telford, *The Life of John Wesley*, rev. edn. (London, 1924 [1886]), 87; John Overton, *John Wesley* (London, 1891), 51; John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies* (London, 1921), 145-46; Richard Green, *The Conversion of John Wesley* (London, 1937), 24; Warren Thomas Smith, 'The Wesleys in Georgia: An Evaluation', *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 7 (1979), 1-11; Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, 1995), 69 and 'Wesley in America', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 54 (2003), 89.

⁴ John Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* (London, 1796), 2:31; Thomas Coke and Francis Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (London, 1792), 94; Haygood S. Bowden, *History of Savannah Methodism from John Wesley to Silas Johnson* (Macon, GA, 1929), 25; Leslie F. Church, *Oglethorpe: A Study in Philanthropy in England and Georgia* (London, 1932), 191, 211, 218; Lee, 73; Frederick E. Maser, 'Preface to Victory: An Analysis of John Wesley's Mission to Georgia', *Religion in Life* 25 (1956), 280-93; Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London, 2000), 51-52 and *From Wesley to Asbury*, 13.

and fourth interpretations has been to label the venture a failure that involved positive developments in Wesley's life.⁵ Determining whether Wesley's mission was a success or failure has been influenced by the religious commitments of his biographers. The last two interpretations in particular (and in some cases the first interpretation) require an anachronistic approach that evaluates Wesley in the light of later developments. The question of Wesley's success or failure should be evaluated by examining his ministry in its historical context and in comparison to the experience of other missionary clergy in Georgia.

Wesley embarked as an Anglican missionary to Georgia determined to restore the doctrine, discipline, and practice of the primitive church in the pristine Georgia wilderness. He approached the Georgia mission as a laboratory to implement his vision of primitive Christianity. As an Anglican High Churchman influenced by the Nonjurors, Wesley's clerical practice in the colony was marked by his endeavour to restore primitive Christianity through renewing the precise liturgical practice of the early Christians.⁶ However, as Henry Rack has noted, Wesley's early biographers found it difficult 'to understand the significance and possible value of Wesley's early high church phase'.⁷ Negative assessments of Wesley's High Churchmanship have led some Methodist writers to question if Wesley was a 'true Christian' during the Georgia period. Biographers who have taken this position have generally focused on his comment that he went to Georgia to save his soul,⁸ his supposed spiritual depression in Georgia, and his failure to convert the Indians.⁹

⁵ Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley* (Oxford, 1964), 11-14; Luke L. Keefer, Jr. 'John Wesley: Disciple of Early Christianity', Ph.D. diss. (Temple University, 1982), 81-86.

⁶ See Geordan Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity: John Wesley and Georgia, 1735-1737', Ph.D. thesis (The University of Manchester, 2008). Wesley's conception of his mission was shared by his fellow missionaries (Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte); however, the Georgia Trustees and James Oglethorpe, while acknowledging the missionaries' original goal was to convert the Indians, stressed the need for a full-time parish priest in Savannah (for example, see John Wesley, *Journal and Diaries*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville, 1988), (30 June 1736), 163).

⁷ Rack, 'Wesley Portrayed: Character and Criticism in Some Early Biographies', *Methodist History* 43 (2005), 111.

⁸ See Wesley to John Burton (10 Oct. 1735), *Letters I*, ed. Frank Baker, vol. 25 of The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Oxford, 1980), 439 and the discussion of this comment in Hammond, 57-58.

⁹ On the centrality of the Indians to Wesley's conception of restoring primitive Christianity in Georgia see Geordan Hammond, 'John Wesley's Mindset at the Commencement of his Georgia Sojourn: Suffering and the Introduction of Primitive Christianity to the Indians', *Methodist History* 47 (forthcoming, 2008).

This strand of interpretation can be found from Thomas Coke and Henry Moore (1792) to A. Skevington Wood (1967), although recent biographers have shied away from this stark conclusion.¹⁰ The reason Wesley was said to have not been a true Christian is simple: he was, according to these writers, not then acquainted with the fullness of the gospel and he was seeking salvation by works in a state of emotional and spiritual confusion.

In particular, scholars writing from within the tradition of evangelical Methodism have tended to view Wesley's mission to Georgia as a glaring failure. Although there were few signs of an impending crisis, these scholars have tended to note that during his voyage back to England he felt he lacked inner certainty of salvation.¹¹ A number of additional 'failures' drawn from Wesley's journals and letters are often cited: Wesley failed to find assurance of salvation through imitating the spiritual discipline and liturgical practices of the primitive church.¹² He had become disillusioned with mystical quietism and rejected it as a possible means of assurance.¹³ His spiritual struggles were compounded by the stress he endured from the legal action taken against him.¹⁴ Perhaps worst of all, he failed in his primary goal of converting Indians to Christianity.¹⁵

Scholars who interpret Wesley's experience in Georgia with hindsight are generally drawn to view it in negative terms in comparison to his later evangelical successes. However, an alternative evaluation is possible when his ministry is viewed in the context of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel's (SPG) expectations for its missionaries.¹⁶ In addition to being advised generally to be a model of piety, missionaries

¹⁰ Coke and Moore, 97; Whitehead, 2:1; Henry Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (London, 1824), 1:233, 1:257; Tyerman, 166; Lelièvre, 20, 21; Maser, 280, 285, 288, 292; V. H. H. Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley* (London, 1961), 278 and *John Wesley*, 46; Cannon, 2-4; Wood, 53.

¹¹ Wesley, *Journal*, (22 Dec. 1737-1 Feb. 1738), 206-16.

¹² Wesley, *Journal*, (25 Jan. 1738), 212-13.

¹³ Moore, 1:245, 377; [Reginald Heber] 'The Life of Wesley; and the Rise and Progress of Methodism', *The Quarterly Review* 24 (Oct. & Jan. 1821), 14; John Wesley to Samuel Wesley, jun. (23 Nov. 1736), *Letters*, 487-89; cf. Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity', 222-26.

¹⁴ See the Grand Jury's 'Grievances' and indictments (Wesley, *Manuscript Journal*, (22 Aug. and 1 Sept. 1737), 555-56, 559-62).

¹⁵ See Wesley's angry polemic against the Indians (Wesley, *Journal*, (2 Dec. 1737), 201-04).

¹⁶ Although the SPG paid Wesley's salary, Wesley was not a typical SPG missionary under the authority of the Bishop of London and the Society. He was licensed by the Georgia Trustees and served as a volunteer missionary (see 'Wesley's Acceptance of the Georgia Mission', appendix 5 in Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity', 318-26 at 324-26).

were urged to hold daily morning and evening prayers and preach and catechize on Sundays. Generally they were requested to 'Instruct, Exhort, Admonish, and Reprove, as they have Occasion and Opportunity'.¹⁷ In all of these particulars, Wesley was an exemplar of a faithful SPG missionary. Likewise, when his ministry is analyzed in the context of the 'Georgia experiment', a more balanced view emerges. For example, it is possible to argue that he both adapted and failed to adapt his ministry to the new colony. On the one hand, his statement 'that there is a possible case wherein a part of his [the clergyman's] time ought to be employed in what less directly conduces to the glory of God' shows his willingness to adapt to the realities of colonial Georgia.¹⁸ At the same time, in his zeal for implementing what he deemed to be the practices of the primitive Christians, it might be argued that he failed to heed the advice of his friend John Burton, a fellow of Corpus Christi, Oxford, and a member of the Georgia Trustees, to 'distinguish between what is essential and what is merely circumstantial to Christianity, between what is indispensable and what is variable, between what is of divine and what is of human authority.'¹⁹ Wesley can perhaps be charged with failing to abide by his own conviction 'that prudence, as well as zeal, is of the utmost importance in the Christian life.'²⁰ Nonetheless, not all parishioners remembered him as a legalistic High Churchman: some criticized him for narrow minded austerity, while others praised him for consistent efforts to care for their physical and spiritual needs.²¹

Although Wesley was evidently in a state of spiritual anxiety during his voyage to England, his ministry should not be judged to have been fruitless for this reason. One of his greatest accomplishments was his publication of *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (1737), the first hymnbook

¹⁷ *A Collection of Papers Printed by Order of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London, 1715), 19. In Georgia Wesley read David Humphreys's *An Historical Account* (1730) of the SPG which contains a summary of the 'instructions' for SPG missionaries (Wesley, *Diary*, (12 July 1737), 527).

¹⁸ Wesley to Archibald Hutcheson (23 July 1736), *Letters*, 467.

¹⁹ Burton to Wesley (28 Oct. 1735), *Letters*, 436.

²⁰ Wesley to William Wogan (28 Mar. 1737), *Letters*, 500.

²¹ On criticisms of Wesley, see, for example, his *Journal* and *Diary*, 22 June 1736 and his *Manuscript Journal*, 21 Aug. 1736, pp. 161-62, 396, 411-12; on praise of Wesley see the *Diary of Viscount Percival Afterwards First Earl of Egmont*, vol. 2, Historical Manuscripts Commission (London, 1923), (16 Mar. 1737), 370; [Elizabeth Fallowfield] to Wesley [27 Dec. 1737] *Letters*, 523-24. Unlike the focus of Wesley's biographers on his inner spiritual shortcomings, colonists opposed to his ministry variously accused him of being an enthusiast, Roman Catholic, divisive clergyman, exploiter of women, and an incendiary against the magistrates of Savannah (see Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity', chapter 5).

designed for the use of an Anglican congregation and perhaps the first hymnbook printed in America.²² His sincerity and commitment to his parishioners was unquestionable as illustrated by his almost daily habit of visiting them from house to house.²³ His wide-ranging activities led him to gain a deep understanding of German religious language. He read prayers to French settlers and learned enough Italian to read prayers to colonists from that country.²⁴ He even went so far as to begin to learn Spanish in order to converse with some Spanish speaking Jews in his parish.²⁵ Wesley showed a strong concern for the children of Savannah and taught them the catechism on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.²⁶ His diary contains evidence that his pastoral work bore fruit through rising attendance at Savannah parish church. In 1737 average attendance at daily Morning and Evening Prayer increased by an average of ten worshippers compared to 1736. Likewise, 1737 saw an average increase of over seventeen parishioners at the three Sunday services with an increase in attendance of nearly twenty-four at the second Morning Prayer accompanied by a sermon and communion office.²⁷

Wesley's occasional but steady praise of his parishioners indicates that his ministry should not be readily characterized as a failure consisting of a series of conflicts with the colonists. He believed there were some noteworthy signs of spiritual vitality in Savannah as when he arrived in the colony and found that 'Many seem to be awakened' and more chose to attend prayers than a public ball scheduled at the same time. To the Earl of Egmont, a Trustee of the Georgia colony, Wesley stated his opinion that in Savannah 'there are more who desire and endeavour to be Christians than I ever found in any town of the same size in England.' He even went so far as to declare to James Hutton that 'There is a strange motus animorum ['moving of spirits'], as it seems, continually increasing...Not only young men and maidens praise the name of the Lord, but children too (in years, though in seriousness and

²² (Charles-Town, 1737). There are two known copies of the original edition of this hymn book; one can be found in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre at John Rylands Library, Manchester and the other is housed in the New York City Public Library.

²³ See Wesley, *Manuscript Journal*, (7 Mar. 1736), 365; *Journal*, (10 May 1736), 158; *Manuscript Journal*, (10 Sept. 1736), 420; Wesley to George Whitefield and the Oxford Methodists [10 Sept. 1736], *Letters*, 472 and *Manuscript Journal*, (30 July 1737), 530.

²⁴ Wesley, *Journal*, (29-30 Oct. 1737), 194.

²⁵ Wesley, *Diary*, (28 June 1736), 398; *Manuscript Journal*, (4 Apr. 1737), 495; John C. English, 'John Wesley and His "Jewish Parishioners": Jewish-Christian Relationships in Savannah, Georgia, 1736-1737', *Methodist History* 36 (1998), 220-27.

²⁶ Wesley to Dr Bray's Associates (26 Feb. 1737), *Letters*, 494-95.

²⁷ See 'An Overview and Analysis of Wesley's Parish Ministry in Savannah', appendix 11, in Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity', 351-58.

understanding, men) are not terrified from bearing the reproach of Christ.²⁸ Wesley was in no doubt that the Spirit of God was at work amongst some of his parishioners.

A number of innovative clerical practices that became characteristic of the Evangelical Revival can readily be observed in examining the Georgia mission.²⁹ Benjamin Ingham reported that on the Simmonds 'Wesley began to preach without notes, expounding a portion of Scripture extempore, according to the ancient usage.'³⁰ Charles Wesley's statement to the Trustees that his brother 'preaches by heart' indicates John continued this practice in Georgia.³¹ At the request of the Anglican clergyman, Thomas Thompson, Wesley prayed extemporaneously on account of the large number of Dissenters in the congregation when he conducted divine service at Ponpon Chapel, South Carolina.³² In Georgia, he began a rough itinerant ministry making occasional rounds to the smaller settlements outside Savannah where he read prayers either in private homes or in the open air.³³ Wesley's extensive use of lay leaders was perhaps his most innovative practice. Ingham, a deacon, supplied Wesley's place in Savannah on occasion.³⁴ Charles Delamotte was employed as a teacher and catechist. In Wesley's absence he took over the pastoral work of his parish and possibly led the religious societies in Savannah.³⁵ Robert Hows played a crucial role in initiating the Savannah society before Wesley's arrival in the colony and Wesley

²⁸ John Wesley to Charles Wesley (22 Mar. 1736), *Letters*, 452; John Wesley to Susanna Wesley (18 Mar. 1736), *Letters*, 451; Wesley to the Earl of Egmont [12 Nov. 1736], *Letters*, 486; Wesley to James Hutton [16 June 1737], *Letters*, 509-10; cf. Wesley, *Manuscript Journal*, (30 Apr. 1737), 504. His generalized negative statements such as Americans are indolent and lazy should not be ignored (*Manuscript Journal*, (15 Apr. 1737), 499).

²⁹ Frank Baker has shown that in Georgia Wesley instituted a number of practices which later became standard Methodist practices (*John Wesley*, 51-54).

³⁰ Benjamin Ingham's Journal in Luke Tyerman, *The Oxford Methodists* (London, 1873), 19 Oct. 1735, 68; cf. Wesley, *Journal*, (17 Oct. 1735), 137 and *Manuscript Journal and Diary*, (19 Oct. 1735), 313.

³¹ Egmont, *Diary*, (8 Dec. 1736), 2:313-14.

³² Wesley, *Manuscript Journal*, (24 Apr. 1737), 502.

³³ Wesley gave evidence that he was thinking in terms of an itinerant ministry in his letter 'To George Whitefield and the Oxford Methodists' in his reference to the work to be done in the 'smaller settlements' (10 Sept. 1736), *Letters*, 472; cf. Wesley to [Richard Morgan, jun. [16 Feb. 1737], *Letters*, 491. Nehemiah Curnock (1:274) saw Savannah, Frederica, Thunderbolt, Skidaway, Irene, and Yamacraw or (Cowpen) as on his list along with the German parts of Savannah, New Ebenezer, and Darien (*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. 1 (London, 1938), 274.

This type of roving ministry was encouraged by the SPG (*A Collection of Papers*, 25). Wesley, *Journal*, (12 Oct. 1736), 172.

³⁵ Wesley, *Journal and Manuscript Journal*, (30 Apr. 1737), 181-82, 504; cf. Delamotte to Wesley (23 Feb. 1738), *Letters*, 529-31.

encouraged Hows in his work as a leader of a Saturday evening communion preparation class and other devotional gatherings.³⁶ After Charles Wesley left Frederica, John Wesley relied on lay leaders to read prayers and lead religious societies there.³⁷ Perhaps the most radical aspect of his Georgia experiments was his extensive use of women in lay leadership within his religious societies.³⁸ There is no doubt that Wesley's religious societies, which met weekly on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday and fairly regularly on other weekdays, were thriving from the autumn of 1736 until at least a year later when the Sophia Williamson controversy broke out and Wesley stopped keeping a daily diary record of his activities.³⁹

Wesley was by no means the only clergyman who struggled in colonial Georgia; in fact, all Anglican missionaries with the notable exception of the Swiss clergyman Bartholomew Zouberbuhler (served 1746-66) experienced similar difficulties and had short tenures in the colony.⁴⁰ In his study of religion in colonial Georgia, Harold Davis has concluded that 'The overpowering testimony from [contemporary] lay people and ministers alike' was that colonial Georgians were an irreligious people.⁴¹

³⁶ Hows to Thomas Coram, (16 May 1735), *Original Papers of the Trustees and Oglethorpe, 1735-37*, vol. 21 of the *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, ed. Allen D. Chandler and Lucian L. Knight (New York, 1970), 164-65. Hows is mentioned on twenty-four occasions in Wesley's Diary in association with the Saturday evening religious society between 4 Dec. 1736 and 27 Aug. 1737.

³⁷ Wesley, Manuscript Journal, no date, 418; cf. Elisha Dobree to the Georgia Trustees (*Colonial Records of Georgia*, 21:286).

³⁸ Margaret Bovey, Margaret Gilbert, and Sophia Hopkey were three of the most active members of Wesley's religious societies. See also the discussion of Wesley's interest in restoring the apostolic office of deaconess in Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity'.

³⁹ Hammond, 'Restoring Primitive Christianity', 198-209.

⁴⁰ George Whitefield had some success in Georgia through his popular preaching and orphanage, but he was not in the colony consistently enough to allow a judgement of his success as a parish minister.

Although Wesley's ministry was by no means smooth sailing, the available evidence shows that serious opposition to his work in Savannah did not arise until disputes erupted following his denial of communion to Sophia Williamson.⁴² Even after this event attendance at divine service and communion increased although over time the weight of opposition and unlikelihood of it being resolved made his position untenable.⁴³ During the whole of the Georgia mission there were few signs of the spiritual doubts that plagued him on his voyage back to England. It seems that for the most part Wesley was happy in Georgia although conditions there were never ideal and certain elements of frustration were always present (e.g. his inability to be a missionary to the Indians and his unstable relationship with Oglethorpe). His self flagellating autobiography of 24 May 1738 in which he stated that in Georgia 'I sought to establish my own righteousness' should be read alongside other positive recollections made later in life.⁴⁴

The efficacy of Wesley's ministry in Georgia will no doubt continue to

⁴¹ Davis, 197; cf. Phinzy Spalding 'Life in Georgia under the Trustees', in Kenneth Coleman (ed.), *A History of Georgia* (Athens, GA, 1977), 39 and H. P. Thompson *Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1950* (London, 1951), 55. In the larger context of southern history, John B. Boles has argued that unlike in the north, there was no 'great awakening' in the south until the nineteenth century, while Thomas J. Little has contended that southern evangelicalism originated in early eighteenth-century South Carolina revivalism. The salient point in the context of this essay is that Little does not associate Georgia with early-eighteenth century evangelicalism (Boles, 'Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South: From Religious Dissent to Cultural Dominance', in Charles Regan Wilson (ed.), *Religion in the South* (Jackson, MS, 1985), 13-34; Little, 'The Origins of Southern Evangelicalism: Revivalism in South Carolina, 1700-1740', *Church History* 75 (2006), 768-808). Regarding religion the Georgia Charter read: 'there shall be a liberty of conscience allowed in the worship of God, to all persons inhabiting, or which shall inhabit or be resident within our said province, and that all such persons, except papists, shall have a free exercise of religion; so they be contented with the quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, not giving offense or scandal to the government' (*Georgia Charter, Laws, and Minutes of Trustees, 1732-52*, vol. 1 of the *Colonial Records of Georgia*, ed. Allen D. Chandler and Lucian L. Knight (New York, 1970), 21). Most of the original Georgia Trustees were pious Anglicans who conceived of establishing the colony as an act of Christian charity (for example, see Oglethorpe's *A New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South-Carolina and Georgia* (1732), in Rodney M. Baine, (ed.), *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe* (Athens, GA, 1994), 208). In 1758, the Church of England became the legally established church in Georgia.

⁴² This is affirmed by William Stephens (Stephens to Trustees (27 May 1738), *Original Papers of the Trustees and Oglethorpe, 1737-39*, vol. 22, part 1 of the *Colonial Records of Georgia*, 167).

⁴³ Wesley, *Journal*, (14 Aug. 1737), 189.

⁴⁴ For example, his *Journal* entry for 24 May 1738 might be compared to his sermon 'The Late Work of God in North America', (1778) in which he claimed he witnessed 'an awakening among the English, both at Savannah and Frederica' (Wesley, *Sermons III*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 3 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville, 1986), 598-99).

be a subject of debate amongst scholars. However, the available evidence is sufficient to call into question the simplistic interpretation of his experience in Georgia as a failure. A careful analysis of Wesley's ministry in Georgia lends support to the reluctance of some biographers from John Hampson (1796) to Henry Rack (1989) to pronounce Wesley's Georgia sojourn as either a success or failure. Elements of both 'success' and 'failure' can easily be discerned, therefore absolute judgements of Wesley's Georgia mission shed little light on his experience in the New World and probably reveal more about the religious commitments of the biographer than Wesley himself. Recently, a substantial number of Wesley scholars have argued that polarities propagated by Methodist biographers between the pre and post Aldersgate Wesley have been overstated, contributing to caricatures of Wesley that stress the discontinuity between a supposed pre and post evangelical Wesley to the detriment of recognizing areas of continuity in his life.⁴⁵ One life-long concern that was central to Wesley's ministry in Georgia was his passion to restore the doctrine, discipline, and practice of the primitive church. Near the end of his life, Wesley reflected that he 'went to America, strongly attached to the Bible, the primitive Church, and the Church of England' and returned from the New World in the same 'spirit'.⁴⁶ For Wesley, his ministry in Georgia was not remembered as a clear-cut failure.⁴⁷

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⁴⁵ See Randy L. Maddox, ed. *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville, 1990). It is evident that although several leading scholars who helped pioneer the Wesley works project (still in progress as The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley) believed that a complete critical edition of Wesley's works would serve to widen scholarly interest in Wesley beyond the sometimes narrow confines of Methodist semi-hagiography, there remains a need for contextual and critical interpretations of Wesley. For a succinct summary of this vision, see Kenneth E. Rowe, 'Editor's Introduction: The Search for the Historical Wesley', in id. (ed.), *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition* (Metuchen, NJ, 1976), 1-10.

⁴⁶ Wesley, 'Farther Thoughts on Separation from the Church' (1789), in *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert E. Davies, vol. 9 of The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville, 1989), 538.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Wesley, *Journal*, (3 Feb. 1738), 221-23; *Journals and Diaries*, ed. Ward and Heitzenrater, vol. 23 of , (4 Apr. 1784), 301

WESLEY STATUES AND SCULPTURES

PART 1

The Manning Marble Statue of John Wesley

On 13 June 1849 *The Watchman and Wesleyan Advertiser* announced that 'tomorrow [14 June] a train would leave Waterloo Station [London] at 10.30am for Richmond'. The announcement issued an open invitation to subscribers to the Theological Institution at Richmond and other friends to attend the religious service at the Theological Institution at 2 30 pm in the large Lecture room. The occasion was the service to receive and 'inaugurate' the life size full-length marble statue of John Wesley. The placing of the statue in the entrance hall ¹ of the Theological Institution was the conclusion of a 20-year project which John Manning the elder (1753-1845) son of the late Rev Charles and Elizabeth Manning of Hayes, Middlesex and a godson of Rev John Wesley, ^{2 3} had promoted. John Manning joined the Methodist Society at the age of 12 and on his deathbed he said he 'had known and loved Methodism for 80 year' ⁴ He was a trustee of Great Queen Street Chapel, London and was in business for many years' as an' extensive linen-draper in Bow Street and Broad Street, Bloomsbury, at the east end of High Holborn'. ⁵

John Manning had three sons: Charles, Samuel and John who were all sculptors.⁶ Charles (1777-1812) had a work place and studios at Little Charlotte Street, London until 1806 when he moved to 91 Charlotte Street, St Pancras, London. He exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1801 and 1812, several busts in marble including one of John Bacon and a model of the national monument to honour the late Capt George Nicholas Hardinge R.N., which he carved in marble and was erected in St Paul' s Cathedral. London. ⁷ The monument was underwritten by a unanimous vote of the House of Commons. He also exhibited in 1806 a bas-relief of the Chaining of Prometheus and in 1807 a sculpture 'Captivity' a juvenile study from nature.⁸ On 24 June 1808 Charles Manning became a partner of the sculptor John Bacon the

1. *Proceedings*, 21 p58

2. St Mary the Virgin, Hayes Middlesex. Parish Register

3. Copy of the Death Certificate

4. *The Watchman* 12 March 1845 p132

5. *City Road and its Associations* George John Stevenson (1872) p460

6. *Burlington Magazine* 1959 p236ff

7. *The Royal Academy of Arts - A complete Dictionary of Contributors and the work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904* Algernon Graves (1906) p177

8. *British Institution 1806-1867* Algernon Graves (1908) p336

younger (1777-1856) and worked from the studios started by John Bacon the elder (1740-1799) at 17 Newman Street, London. John Bacon the elder was the most influential designer of his age being commissioned by important industrialists such as Daniel Pincot of Spitalfields, London, the artificial stone sculptor, Josiah Wedgwood of Burslem, the potter, William Chambers of the Chelsea-Derby Porcelain Works, London, Matthew Boulton of Soho Works, Birmingham, the manufacturer of artistic objects in metal and others.⁹ John Manning the elder for some time acted as clerk [possibly the business manager] to the Bacon Studio and probably became the business partner after Charles Manning's death.¹⁰ It was John Manning the elder who around 1820 first suggested that a statue of John Wesley should be sculpted. John Manning the elder 'was a friend of Mr Wesley: he was a godson, very intimate with him, and loved him dearly'¹¹ In the last days of his life Charles Manning in 1812 recommended his youngest brother Samuel to John Bacon the younger, to join the studio but it is unlikely that he became a partner immediately if at all.¹² Henry Sibson, the sculptor, in his manuscript autobiographical note books says that 'The Father of the Mannings [John Manning the elder] took the office of his son Mr C Manning'.¹³

John Manning the elder wanted to promote his son Samuel Manning, the elder, (1786-1842) as a sculptor and thought that he would do this best by carving a statue of John Wesley.¹⁴ John Manning the elder approached Mr Joseph Butterworth (1770-1826) Member of Parliament for Coventry (1812-1818) and later for Dover (1820-1826) and encouraged him to underwrite the project. Joseph Butterworth commissioned Samuel Manning the elder to carve a marble statue of John Wesley for 1000 guineas.¹⁵ Joseph Butterworth was the third son of John Butterworth (1727c1803) who heard John Wesley preach at Newchurch, Rossendale, Lancashire and attended Methodist meetings in 1747¹⁶ though he turned away from Arminianism to Calvinism. John Butterworth became the minister of the Jordan Well Baptist Church. When the congregation outgrew the premises, the Cow Lane Particular Baptist Church was built in Butterworth's garden in Coventry. Joseph Butterworth was educated

⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)

¹⁰ Henry Sibson Manuscript autobiographical diary, Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain Art Gallery, London

¹¹ *The Watchman* 20 June 1849

¹² *The Methodist Magazine* 1814 p933

¹³ Henry Sibson Manuscript autobiographical diary, Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain Art Gallery, London

¹⁴ *The Watchman* 20 June 1849 p198

¹⁵ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849 p436

¹⁶ *The Life and Times of John Wesley* MA Luke Tyerman (1876) p545

by his father until he attended the Coventry Free School. After leaving school he ran a successful law booksellers and publishers at 43 Fleet Street, London. His son predeceased him and the business was eventually taken over by his nephew Henry who had worked in Joseph's business before starting up on his own. Joseph Butterworth's wife Ann [nee Cooke] was the sister in law of the Rev Dr Adam Clarke.¹⁸ Under Adam Clarke's influence he became a Methodist and published Clarke's *Biblical Commentary*. He was a Class Leader, a founding member of the Wesleyan Connexional Committee of Privileges [designed to defend Methodist rights at law] and was the treasurer of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society from 1819 until his death. The first meeting of the Bible Society was held in his house^{19 20} and he was a champion of the anti-slave movement. William Wilberforce often referred to him as 'honest Butterworth'.²¹ Joseph Butterworth was a generous supporter of Methodism and many other charitable causes.

We see this illustrated in 1799 by his donation £15 to the Preachers' Friend Society (A fund 'for relief of Itinerant Methodist Preachers of Mr Wesley's Connexion and their families, when in sickness or otherwise distressed').²²

A 'Model of a statue of the late Rev. John Wesley; to be executed in marble' was exhibited at the Royal Academy, in 1825²³ The model was highly praised by Henry Howard R.A. (1769-1847)²⁴ the celebrated first silver medallist of the Royal Academy Schools, who also received their gold medal for his historic painting *Caractacus Recognising the Dead Body of his Son*. Henry Howard had studied sculpture in Rome with John Flaxman (1755-1826) the Neo-classical sculptor. Henry Howard was appointed the Secretary of the Royal Academy, in 1811. In 1833 he became the professor of painting.²⁵ Henry Howard said of Samuel Manning the elder's model of John Wesley that its merit as a work of art had gained it a central position amongst the sculpture exhibited that year. The marble was purchased but when Joseph Butterworth died on 30 June 1826, the project came to a halt. The only known image of Joseph Butterworth is a carved profile on his memorial in Wesley's Chapel, City Road.

¹⁷ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)

¹⁸ *Proceedings* 4 p57, 29 p156

¹⁹ *Proceedings* 39 p131 Note 7

²⁰ *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* Ed John Vickers (2000) p51

²¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 2004

²² *City Road and its Associations* George John Stevenson (1872) p163

²³ *The Royal Academy of Arts - A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904* Algernon Graves (1906) p177

²⁴ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849 p436

²⁵ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)

The marble was used by Samuel Manning the elder and John Bacon the younger to carve the monument in 1823 to Charles Grant (1746-1823), which was placed in St George's Parish Church, Bloomsbury.²⁶ Charles Grant was a director of the East India Company. In 1773 he married 17 year old Jane [nee Fraser] and was appointed as the secretary of the board of trade in India. When in 1776 his two infant daughters, Elizabeth aged 2 and Margaret aged 1 died of smallpox he saw it as a warning and a punishment from God for his gambling and wild life style. Following the death of his daughters he became an evangelical and started a Christian Mission at Malda, India. His generosity made it possible to have built St John's Church, [old cathedral] in Calcutta. On his return to England with the support of 'Pitt, Cornwallis and Dindas he was elected unopposed in 1794 as a director of the East India Company'.²⁷

In June 1829 Samuel Manning the elder drew up a proposal to complete the marble statue of John Wesley on favourable terms so that it could be erected in the Committee room of the Wesleyan Mission House, 77 Hatton Garden, London. George Morley (1772-1843) [Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society 1824-1830] put this to the committee but no decision seems to have been made. Around the same time Samuel Manning the elder offered the proposed marble statue to the Connexion 'on very liberal terms'.²⁸ There is no reference in the Conference Minutes or Journal although the Rev Dr Adam Clarke is clear that the offer was made and accepted.²⁹ A hearsay reference suggests that the proposed statue was offered to Westminster Abbey in 1830 but the Dean, the Very Rev Dr John Ireland (Dean 1816-1842) refused it on account of what he called the 'factious character of Mr Wesley'.³⁰

Although Henry Howard had praised Samuel Manning the elder's model of John Wesley, the Wesleyan leaders of the time were disappointed with the facial features. In Samuel Manning the elder's letter to Adam Clarke dated 29 September it says that the President [Rev George Morley (1772-1843) and the Rev Henry Moore (1751-1844)] had visited him again and he was anxious to avail himself of the recommendation that Adam Clarke had made. Previously Adam Clarke had told Samuel Manning the elder about the bust Enoch Wood had made when John Wesley sat for him in 1781.³¹ In a letter written by Clarke dated 30 September 1830 he gives a resume of the lengths that Samuel Manning the elder had gone to in order to get an accurate resemblance of Wesley.

²⁶ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849 p436

²⁷ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)

²⁸ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849 p436

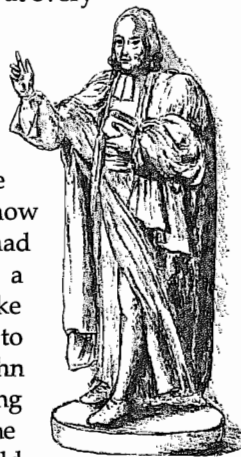
²⁹ *The Wood Family of Burslem* Frank Faulkner (Wakefield 1972) p47

³⁰ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849 p436

³¹ *Life of Adam Clarke* Ed J.B.B. Clarke (1833) p250

He had seen the clothes Wesley had worn. He had examined a copy of the *O mirificam* edition of the Greek New Testament printed by Stevens, in Paris, 1546, which Wesley had used and he had spoken to several contemporaries of Wesley.³² Manning had looked at every portrait and etching of Wesley he could find and had 'scientifically arranged them'.³³

Adam Clarke in his letter to Enoch Wood written from Pinner, Middlesex on October 2 1830 gives an interesting summary of Samuel Manning the elder's progress in the making of the model for the Wesley statue. He explains how Manning in his clay model for the statue had attained an 'incongruous whole, having a resemblance without much likeness'. Adam Clarke goes on to say how Manning put his objections to the likeness of Wesley in the clay model to John Bacon the younger. Bacon wrote to Clarke asking him to encourage Manning in the execution of the project. Following this letter Adam Clarke told Manning of the bust of John Wesley fashioned by



Enoch Wood in 1781, which he considered to be the only likeness 'that could fairly pretend to be compared with the original'. Adam Clarke had been given a copy of the 1781 bust of John Wesley when he visited Enoch Wood in Burslem some years previously.³⁴ This bust Clarke had copied and cast in brass by Mr John Forshaw of Liverpool (fl 1820-1830) under the supervision of John Jackson R.A. (1778-1831). Adam Clarke lent this bust to Manning.³⁵ In a letter written 30 September 1830 Adam Clarke says how he had been closely associated with John Wesley for many years and that had caught the 'perfect likeness' of John Wesley's proportions, drapery and commanding attitude and that he had transferred the 'noble appearance' of Wesley's face from the Enoch Wood bust to the clay and then to the selenite [a type of gypsum] models. In his letter of October 1830 Adam Clarke asked Enoch Wood for 'any correction or information' regarding the date and circumstances of his

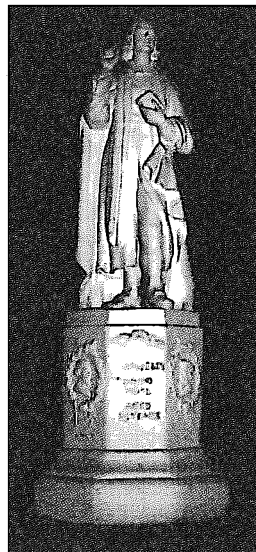
³² Ibid p252

³³ *The Wood Family of Burslem* Frank Faulkner (Wakefield 1972) p47

³⁴ Ibid p47

³⁵ The brass bust was seen by Donald H Ryan in 1981 at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, USA along with the original letter from Enoch Wood to Adam Clarke dated Burslem 6 Oct 1830. He was also shown a letter dated November 1881 and certified by Geo John Stevenson, stating that the bust had been cast in bronze at the cost of Dr Adam Clarke and that it had become the property of Geo John Stevenson M.A. of London, author of *Memorials of the Wesley Family* as Executor of Dr Adam Clarke's daughter, and from whom the Hon O H Horton of Chicago obtained the bust.

bust. In his reply of 6 October 1830 from Burslem, Enoch Wood says he is 'happy to learn that a whole length marble statue of Mr Wesley is now in progress'. Enoch Wood goes on to say that Manning 'may with confidence rely upon every line, wrinkle or vein marked upon your bust being a true and correct copy of nature'. He goes on to thank Adam Clarke for introducing his name to Manning 'it is very grateful to my feelings to be the means of preserving a lasting memorial of so super-eminent man'. On 13 October 1830 Adam Clarke thanks Enoch Wood for the detailed particulars of the bust and says that he will pass them on to Manning. He also promises that 'the public shall know to whom they owe the proper likeness of that illustrious man whose likeness has suffered so much by the caricature of his friends'. In January 1831 Wood again writes to Adam Clarke saying he has sent with the Rev Mr. Marsden another bust of John Wesley, to which he has added the missing cassock neck buttons and also improved the fullness of the gown and suggests that it be shown to the 'statuary'. On 18 January 1831 Adam Clarke replies thanking him for the new bust that he has received from him. In addition to the earthenware medallion on the back of the bust Enoch Wood had, before the firing, written on the back of the socle 'Presented / to / The Reverend / Adam Clarke L L D &c &c / by / Enoch Wood) Sculsit / Burslem / 1831'.



He also had inscribed on the back of the shoulder 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning'. This was a quotation from John Wesley who asked that the bust be put on a pedestal and that a medallion with his name and age should be added. At the same time he told Enoch Wood of how he was rescued from the Rectory fire and quoted "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire." [Zechariah 3:2].³⁶ This bust eventually came into the possession of Rev George A E Cornforth (1907-1980) who offered it to the Methodist Archives at Epworth House, City Road. The offer was refused and George Cornforth then gave it to Donald H Ryan who donated it to the Museum of Methodism when it opened in the crypt of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London in 1984. The bust along with a plaster cast of John Wesley's head and shoulders made from the Manning statue may be seen in the Museum of Methodism along with the selenite model of 1830.

³⁶ *The Wood Family of Burslem* Frank Faulkner p47

With the death of Adam Clarke in 1832, the death of Joseph Butterworth some years earlier, and no sponsor to underwrite the project along with the early death of Samuel Manning the elder in 1842, the marble statue was not carved.

Around 1842, John Manning the elder, who was nearing 90 years of age, offered his grandson Samuel Manning the younger, the son and successor of Samuel Manning the elder and John Bacon the younger 500 guineas to proceed with the sculpture of John Wesley in marble with the hope that some other donor could be found to join in the venture.³⁷ Although the marble was purchased before the work was started the death of John Manning the elder on 28 February 1845 again brought the project to a halt.³⁸ ³⁹ Samuel Manning the younger contacted Thomas Farmer to ask if he would underwrite the project. After some correspondence Thomas Farmer agreed to donate the money for the statue.

Having secured the money Samuel Manning the younger immediately started to carve the five foot one inch [152cm] life size statue of John Wesley. It depicts him in an attitude of preaching. Wesley is wearing a shirt with bishop sleeves, an ankle length cassock with open cuffs, a cummerbund, preaching bands and a Master of Arts type gown. The cassock is flared open from the waist showing Wesley's left leg wearing knee breeches fastened on the outer side with 4 buttons and stockings. He is wearing buckled straight shoes, which have been 'walked in' to the shape of his foot.⁴⁰ Wesley's right hand is raised to shoulder height with his index finger pointing towards the sky. His left hand is holding a bible, which is resting on his chest. The gown reaches the base of the socle on the right hand side and the opposite side is draped over his left arm. The statue is reminiscent of the Nathaniel Hone 1765 portrait of John Wesley with the facial features influenced by the Enoch Wood bust.

At the inaugural ceremony Thomas Farmer said that Samuel Manning the younger had approached him and after only three or four letters they were able to agree terms on which a statue based on Samuel Manning the elder's model could be carved in marble. One condition made by Farmer was that the statue had to be erected within 12 miles of London. Farmer spoke warmly of the business transaction with Samuel Manning the younger as being one, which had given him 'more satisfaction, or less trouble than most'.⁴¹

³⁷ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849

³⁸ *The Watchman* 12 March 1845 p132

³⁹ *The Times Newspaper Supplement* 5 March 1845 page 9

⁴⁰ *Proceedings* 54 p118

⁴¹ *The Watchman* 20 June 1849 p198

Thomas Farmer (1790-1861) was an industrialist and the son of a chemical manufacturer. After his conversion in 1809 he attended Wesley's Chapel, City Road, where he was the Sunday School Superintendent. He was also the treasurer of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1836-60) and offered £1000 towards the extension of the work in Hong Kong. He was also the treasurer of the Theological Institution and was influential in the choice of Richmond as the site for the college. In 1828 he bought the Gunnersbury Small Mansion where he lived until his death. His family continued to live there until 1899. When his family left, the next-door neighbour, Leopold de Rothschild bought the house for extra accommodation to entertain his illustrious guests such as King Edward VII. Thomas Farmer was a generous benefactor to and Vice President of the Bible Society. He was closely associated with the Strangers' Friendly Society as well as the Evangelical Alliance.⁴² In 1846 a Wesleyan Day School was opened in Gunnersbury Lane. Thomas Farmer rented the property and managed it in connection with the Wesleyan Normal Training Institute, Westminster.⁴³

At the inaugural ceremony Samuel Manning the younger said that he faithfully copied the model his father Samuel Manning the elder had made. He wished that the statue could have been made in bronze, cast from his father's model but he conceded that the marble was the better medium for the statue. It was Samuel Manning the younger who had suggested to the committee that the statue be placed at the Theological Institution at Richmond.⁴⁴

The statue was placed on a plinth of Peterhead granite. The combined weight of the statue and the plinth was estimated to be between three and four tons.⁴⁵ During the removal of the statue in 1976 the Peterhead granite plinth was lost.

President of the Wesleyan Conference, the Rev Dr Robert Newton, chaired the inaugural service at the Theological Institution. With the Secretary of the Wesleyan Conference (the Rev Joseph Fowler) taking part. Also on the platform were Mr Samuel Manning the younger, the Rev Joseph Sutcliffe, the Rev Dr Jabez Bunting, Mr Thomas Farmer and the Rev Richard Reece. The President invited Mr James Heald (1796-1873) M.P. for Stockport to speak. He spoke warmly of the munificence of the gift of the statue by Thomas Farmer. He also reminded those present of the important work the Connexion was doing in Education and that it

⁴² *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* Ed John Vickers (2000) p116

⁴³ *History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 7: Acton, Chiswick, Ealing and Brentford, West Twyford, Willesden* (1982) pp42-49

⁴⁴ *The Watchman* 20 June 1849 p198

⁴⁵ *The Illustrated London News* June 30 1849

had been recognised by the Government who was going to financially support it. The President then introduced and invited the Rev Richard Reece (1765-1850), who was a friend of John Wesley and a former President of the Wesleyan Conference to address the meeting. Mr Reece related how he first heard John Wesley in 1783 and then in 1785 and that he was introduced to him by the Rev Duncan Wright (1736-1791), his Superintendent Minister and recalled that he had received a blessing from Wesley. Mr Reece said that John Wesley two years later called him out to travel as a preacher under his authority and guidance. He commented that there was no better representation of John Wesley on earth than the statue.

The Rev Joseph Sutcliffe (1762-1856) was then invited by the President to address the assembly and he told how when he was a boy in Yorkshire that he heard the Methodist preachers and that he had heard John Wesley preach in the open air and how his heart had leaped for joy. He said that he had heard Wesley preach some 38 or 40 times. He remembered John Wesley giving an account of the rise of Methodism in Oxford among the young men who were called 'Holy Club'. Joseph Sutcliffe said he little thought that he would write an account of Wesley's life and labours [a three volume unpublished work now in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre at John Rylands University Library of Manchester].

The Rev Thomas Jackson (1783-1873), former President of the Wesleyan and at the time of the inauguration of the statue, the President Designate and the Institution's Theological tutor, then spoke. He said of the statue that he 'greatly admired the specimen of art presented that day to the Institution and expected great spiritual benefit from it'. He went on to say that he should delight, in future, to gaze on that statue, while he remained in that place; and he believed the sight of it would not fail to awaken remembrances of Mr Wesley which would be of benefit to him and would stir him up to increase diligence and zeal in the discharge of his duties.⁴⁶ Thomas Jackson said that he especially admired the statue showing Wesley preaching. Many, he said, had written concerning the life of John Wesley, had praised him as a man possessed of extraordinary powers of government, but they did not, at the same time do justice to him as a preacher. His impression was that John Wesley was one of the most efficient and most successful preachers that God in his providence had raised up for many centuries. He spoke of the character of Mr Wesley's ministry and said that his preaching was thoroughly scriptural.

The Rev Dr Jabez Bunting then addressed the meeting saying that the statue caught the preaching attitude and resemblance of John Wesley as

⁴⁶ *The Watchman* 20 June 1849 p198

he remembered him. He concluded by saying that the Institution ought to have its own chapel. The chapel in Richmond was so full of the local people that there was only standing room for the students.

When Dr Bunting had finished speaking Thomas Farmer got up and said that now the statue was in place the matter of the chapel should be considered. He said that he had been involved with a scheme for a chapel for the Institution from the beginning and thought they should resolve the matter now. He announced that £5000 voted by the Centenary Fund Committee should be appropriated to the chapel and that £5000 might be calculated on being raised by the friends of the Institution. He suggested that £1000 might be borrowed from the Endowment Fund, paying an interest, which might reasonably be expected to arise out of the pew rents. He closed by saying if the meeting agreed he, for one, would see that it would be done. Mr Heald thanked Mr Farmer, on behalf of the laity, for the munificent gift that he had presented them and went on to say that they thanked him for the beautiful statue of John Wesley. The President ended the meeting saying that he had' great pleasure in tendering him [Thomas Farmer] the sincere and cordial thanks of the meeting for the munificent present he had presented not only to the Institution, but to Methodism at large ⁴⁷

In the Minutes of the 1848 Wesleyan Conference it is recorded' 3, *Statue of the late Rev John Wesley, A.M* Resolved unanimously, That the Conference has learned with high satisfaction, that a statue of the late *Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, pronounced by competent judges to be a beautiful piece of sculpture, and a faithful representation of the original, has recently been executed in white marble by Samuel Manning Esq., of London. And having further the gratification of being informed, that Thomas Farmer, Esq., of Gunnersbury-House, after securing the completion and purchase of the statue at his private cost, now presents it to the Conference, for the purpose of its being placed in the Theological Institution-House Richmond. The Conference hereby tenders its most respectful and affectionate thanks to Thomas Farmer, Esq., for the zeal with which he has exerted himself to obtain so desirable a Memorial of our venerated Founder, and for the spontaneous and generous munificence with which he has presented it to the Connexion' .

In 1851 Samuel Manning [the younger] exhibited at the Royal Academy a marble bust of John Wesley and a marble bust of Thomas Farmer. In the catalogue of the Great Exhibition of 1851 Samuel Manning exhibited two items one being a '*model of the statue of John Wesley MA*

⁴⁷ Ibid p198

*executed in marble by Mr Manning and presented to the Wesleyan Theological Institute, Richmond, Surrey in 1849 by Thomas Farmer.*⁴⁸ In the 1852 Royal Academy list no.1399 records 'A cabinet statue of John Wesley from the life-sized marble statue in the Wesleyan Theological Institution at Richmond, Surrey' which was exhibited by Samuel Manning [the younger].⁴⁹ This cabinet marble statue is now in the entrance Hall of Epworth Old Rectory . The Officers of the Close (Methodist Church, Radcliffe, gave it to Epworth Old Rectory in April 2000. The statue is carved in white marble 16¹/₂ inches 415mm high and / 7¹/₄ inches 185 mm across the shoulders. It is on an integral octagonal socle, which is ³/₄ inch 18 mm high and 7¹/₂ inches 190 mm wide. The statue stands on an attached grey veined white marble octagonal straight-sided plinth, which is stepped at the base with a cavetto carved moulding. The plinth is 10¹/₈ inches 25mm high, 8 inches 205 mm wide and is 10 inches 255 mm wide at the base.

On the front of the integral octagonal socle is carved
JOHN WESLEY

On the back of the integral octagonal base is carved
S MANNING SCULP LONDON. SEPT. 1850.

On the front of the separate octagonal plinth is carved

PRESENTED TO
MRS MARY BEALEY OF MANCHESTER
BY THE MINISTERS. STEWARDS. AND OTHER OFFICERS
OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST SOCIETY
IN THE BURY CIRCUIT A.D. 1850

The Manning cabinet statue of John Wesley was presented to Mrs Mary Bealey in recognition of her generosity and that she had 'gratuitously presented the Church to Conference' [The Close Wesleyan Church Radcliffe].⁵⁰

The Manning life-sized statue remained at the Theological Institution until it closed in 1972. It was then transferred to Methodist Central Hall,

⁴⁸ Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, Sherfield Building, Imperial College London, Archives. *Catalogue of the Great Exhibition 1851*

⁴⁹ *The Royal Academy of Arts - A complete Dictionary of Contributors and the work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904* (1906) p177

⁵⁰ *A Century of Service* Radcliffe Close Methodist Church Centenary Souvenir Handbook (1939) p16

Westminster and was erected between the entrances of the Great Hall. On Sunday 27 June 1976 after the evening service, the Speaker of the House of Commons, George T Thomas M.P. (1909-1997) [Vice President of the Methodist Conference 1960 and who on retirement from the Speaker's Chair, became Viscount Tonypany] unveiled the statue. The Rev Dr Marcus Ward (1906-1979) represented Richmond Theological College and the Rev Dr John C Bowmer (1911-2000) represented the Methodist Archives Committee and the Wesley Historical Society. The Minister of the Westminster Methodist Central Hall, the Rev Dr Maurice Barnett (1917-1980) presided.⁵¹

In 2004 as part of the 7 million pound refurbishment programme the statue was moved to the ground floor of Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, and now stands in the main entrance of the building. On Monday 6 June 2005 The Royal Gala Concert of Reconciliation commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of World War 2 was held in the Great Hall of the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh attended the gala along with the ambassadors of France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Japan and the United States of America. Following the Gala Concert the Queen unveiled the re-sited Manning statue of John Wesley.⁵²

In 1988 Methodism worldwide celebrated the 250th Anniversary of John and Charles Wesley's Conversion experience. Charles on 21 May 1738 and John on 24 May 1738.

John Wesley's Aldersgate Street Conversion experience was celebrated by the casting in bronze by the Morris Singer Art Founders of Braintree Essex ⁵³ for the Aldersgate Trustees, a life size copy of the Manning statue of John Wesley.

The £30,000 bronze statue was placed close to the Chapter House in St Paul's Cathedral churchyard, in the City of London. The date chosen for the service and unveiling was Saturday 17 September 1988 which celebrated the 250th Anniversary of John Wesley's return to England from his North European tour [13 June -16 September 1738]. On this tour he visited the Moravian Settlement at Herrnhut on the borders of Bohemia. In his Journal Wesley says he rejoiced at preaching again in England on 17 September in the Minories, ⁵⁴ which is the road going from Aldgate to the Tower of London.

⁵¹ *Proceedings* 40 p184

⁵² *Methodist Central Hall Westminster* (Norwich 2005)

⁵³ Email to Donald H Ryan from Chis Boverhoff, Morris Singer Art Founders 10 May 2006 confirmed that Morris Singer Art Founders cast the statue

⁵⁴ *The Works of John Wesley* (1990) p12

The life size bronze statue is set on a marble plinth 60 millimetres high and stands on a circle of paving stones from the City of London churchyards of St Bride's - Fleet Street, St Mary le Bow off Cheapside, All Hallows-on-the-wall - London Wall, St Anne and St Agnes - Gresham Street and St Botolphs without-Aldersgate - Aldersgate Street. The stones were chosen to remind visitors of the Anglican foundations of John Wesley's ministry. The inscription reads 'By Grace ye are saved through faith: John Wesley, Father of Methodism, 1703-1791. Priest, Poet, Teacher of the Faith'. On the back is a plaque which reads PROPERTY OF ALDERSGATE TRUSTEES OF THE / METHODIST CHURCH - 17 SEPTEMBER 1988. On the back of the statue's integral socle is impressed Morris / Singer, FOUNDERS / LONDON.

For the unveiling the statue was draped in the 250th Anniversary flag, which had been flown on the Westminster Abbey mast earlier in the year to celebrate Wesley's Anniversary. The preacher at Evensong was Rev Canon Peter Ball, the Cathedral Canon Residentiary, who contrasted John Wesley's ministry, which suffered rejection with later acceptance and celebration with that of Jeremiah. As the congregation processed from the Cathedral to the churchyard the Charles Wesley Choir sang hymns around the statue. Four young people who had recently returned from a pilgrimage to the Moravian Settlement at Herrnhut, David Hopkins, Rachel Lampard, Hilary Jones and Sue Farran unveiled the statue. The President of the Methodist Conference Rev Dr Richard G Jones in prayer dedicated 'this statue to thy service, that those who work in the City , those who come here as visitors, tourists or pilgrims, all seeing the representation of this small man, may pause, wonder, give thanks and ask of thee that salvation which by thy grace through faith may come to all mankind.' The Dean of St Paul's the Very Rev Eric Evans reminded the assembly of Wesley's links with the Cathedral.⁵⁵

In 1993 a head and shoulder cast of the Manning statue was made in plaster and painted bronze. The Morris Singer Art Founders for the Aldersgate Trustees of the Methodist Church made this copy. The head and shoulders bust was presented on 23 May 1993 to Rev Fred Linyard of the Moravian Church in the British Province who received it on behalf of the Moravian Church. On September 11 1993 at the end of the 14th Consultative Conference of the European Methodist Churches at Herrnhut the bust was presented to the Moravian Headquarters at

⁵⁵ *Methodist Recorder* September 22 1988 p1 and 3

Herrnhut ⁵⁶ to commemorate the visit of John Wesley in 225 years earlier 1738. On the back of the bust is inscribed UNITATI FRATRUM / ECCL. METH BRIT. / HANC IMAGINEM / UNICAM / JOHANNIS WESLEY / EX AMORE DONAVIT / MCMXCXXX / S. MANNING / SCULPSIT / M. SINGER / FECIT. [The British Methodist Church gave this unique copy of John Wesley to the Moravian Church, out of love. 1993. S Manning sculpted it. M Singer made it.] The bust has been on display at the Moravian Headquarters since 2000. There is also a white plaster head and shoulders cast of the statue on display at the Museum of Methodism, Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London.

DONALD H RYAN

(The Rev Donald Ryan is Registrar Wesley Historical Society and Former Chairman of North Wales Methodist District)

⁵⁶ *Europäische Methodisten-Konferenz in Herrnhut* Herrnhuter Bote, I/1994, page 21-22

W.H.S. AND ITS BRANCHES

Our Society was formally constituted 115 years ago, followed in 1926 by a branch in Ireland. The mainland had to wait until 1958 for its first local branch which was in East Anglia, and we congratulate them on their 50th birthday this year. In the intervening years a significant number of branches have been formed, some with substantial memberships and ambitious programmes of lectures and visits. Sadly some have «ceased to meet!! and all face the difficulties that flow from an ageing membership and the substantial cost of travelling. However the list still includes no less than 15 separate "branches " although in fact they are autonomous societies which voluntarily relate to WHS.

Regular journals or bulletins have been produced by all branches and with modestly priced technology available the quality of production (as well as content) now reaches a very high standard. Resulting from the initiative of Jeffery Spittal, the Librarian of the New Room in Bristol, it now has a complete set of all the Branch journals. An index of contents has been published up to 1995 and an index for the following decade is about to be published. Meetings and visits are invaluable and greatly appreciated opportunities to learn and look and to share in fellowship and the calendar has given us a number of Methodist events to commemorate. As an example, in 2007 the East Anglia branch celebrated the first Primitive camp meeting (and sang ranter hymns) and the birth of Charles Wesley (in Norwich Cathedral). In 2008 they held their 100th meeting when Leslie Griffiths talked about "The fight for his life" - which could only be about early biographies of John Wesley .

To encourage WHS members to take a local interest, here is a list of current branches with a contact for each.

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Mr David Elvidge, 13, Kings Road, Hunstanton, Norfolk PE36 6ET

BRISTOL BRANCH

Rev. A. Ward Jones, 9 Styles Park, Frome BA11 5AL

CORNISH METHODIST 'HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Dr. John Lander, The Old Farmhouse, Chychoose, Devoran, Truro. TR3 6NU

CUMBRIA BRANCH

Mr E. A. Leteve, 6, Beech Grove, Houghton, Carlisle. CA3 0NU

IRISH BRANCH

Miss E.M Weir, 5, Aberdelghy Gardens, Lambeg, Lisburn, Co. Antrim. BT27 4QQ Ireland

NORTH LANCASHIRE DISTRICT BRANCH

Miss Kathleen O. Makepeace, 66, Smithy Lane, Lytham St. Annes. FY8 3PG

LINCOLNSHIRE METHODIST HISTORY SOCIETY

Mr James Stevenson, 10, Severn Street, Lincoln LNJ 1SJ

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST BRANCH

The future of this Branch will be decided at AGM on 25th October. Until then contact Mr Nigel McMurray, 6, Thorntree Drive, Denton Burn, Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE15 7AQ

MANX METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Christopher D. Lyon, East Lodge, Maitland Terrace, Union Mills Braddon, I of M, IM4 4AH

EAST MIDLANDS BRANCH

Prof Michael Collins, 38, Trueway Drive, Shepshed. LE12 9DU

WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH

Dr. E. Dorothy Graham, 34, Spiceland Rd., Northfield, Birmingham. B31 1NJ

NORTH EAST BRANCH

Mrs Audrey Bland, 41, Paddock Wood, Prudhoe, Northumberland. NE42 5BJ

SCOTTISH BRANCH

Dr. Margaret Batty, 23 Southfield Road West, Edinburgh. EH15 1RJ

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Mrs Helen Salmon 123, Underdale Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. SY2 5EG

YORKSHIRE BRANCH

Mr D. C. Dews 1 , Dragon Drive, LEEDS, LS12 4AS

ROGER THORNE
Local Branches Secretary

BOOK REVIEWS

Protestant Nonconformist Texts, Volume 4: The Twentieth Century. Edited by David M Thompson, with J H Y Briggs and John Munsey Turner. (Ashgate, 2007 pp.432, £75, ISBN 978-0-7546-4013-4)

The fourth and last volume of *Protestant Nonconformist Texts* supplements those Methodist documents of the twentieth-century (up to 1932) already available in Volume 4 of *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* Epworth Press 1988. With the exception of documents relating to Rattenbury's opposition to Methodist Union and the Deed of Union 1932, all the rest are documents which might not readily be available outside the specialist denominational libraries of London, Oxford and Manchester. So this collection, setting Methodism in the wider spectrum of non-Anglican or Free Church Protestant denominations and religious groups in England and Wales, is most welcome.

It is good to detect the distinctive footprint of Methodism's contributing editor to the series, John Munsey Turner and, not surprisingly therefore, documents representing Methodism in Cambridge, the Midlands and Yorkshire feature prominently, with particularly apt choices of descriptions of the development of Methodism from Norman Nicholson (Millom WM) and Edward Rogers (various PM and ex-PM circuits) up to the 1950s. The towering figures of Methodism selected represent its influence beyond the denomination into national church and society. They include in church leadership John Scott Lidgett, Victor Murray, Donald Soper and John Vincent, and in academe Vincent Taylor, Herbert Butterfield and Frances Young. Some Methodist readers will, of course, be disappointed that their particular heroes (Samuel Keeble, William Sangster, Leslie Weatherhead, Donald English, Newton Flew, Gordon Rupp, and Rupert Davies) barely get a mention. But that is of the nature of a limited selection which is more thematic and comparative than exhaustingly comprehensive.

The overall introduction to the volume captures well the challenge of wars and the decline of mainstream Protestant denominational life in the twentieth century. The introductions to the different sections (Church Life, Ecclesiology, Worship, Theology, Nonconformity and Politics, Peace and War, Social Issues and Church Unity) are a helpful reminder of how the divisions in Methodism and varieties of opinion within its life were mirrored elsewhere as battles over education, church unity and social and moral issues were fought. The evocative remark of Victor Murray in his 1945 article on 'The Future of the Free Churches' is a reminder of the ultimate failure of the

churches in this so-called Ecumenical Age: 'It would be well to suspend all our competitive efforts to win the world for Christ'. In that respect it is surprising that the more positive efforts in mission and evangelism are under-represented in a volume seemingly dominated by the quest for church unity/union and for relevance in a changing society in which religion has been increasingly marginalised.

Errors are few and far between. But note those in the article on UTU (p 60) and the ~ apparently short history of Mount Tabor (p 141)! This is a very readable volume to dip into for those interested in the wider context of the development of twentieth-century Methodism. Whilst its price (£75 for each volume) is beyond the means of most WHS readers, it should be recommended for college and local libraries to acquire as a valuable source book for religious historians.

TIM MACQUIBAN

Charles Wesley: a biography by Gary Best (Epworth Press, Peterborough, 2006, pp.338. £19.99. ISBN 0716206153).

Gary Best will be known to many readers as headmaster of Kingswood School, an institution in which Charles Wesley took great interest, although interestingly he chose not to subject his own children to its regime. That personal link is evident throughout this book in Gary's close identification with, and evidently warm affection for, its subject. This is a biography, not a study in Charles' theology or poetry, and it tells his story within a chronological framework: from its beginnings in Epworth, through Westminster, Oxford, Georgia and his relatively short career as an itinerant preacher, to the long and settled life he enjoyed as a family man of independent means. It is written in a very easy style and illustrated with twelve pages of portraits and pictures, many of which come from Kingswood School's own collection. The Charles we meet here is a man of considerable natural talents, blessed with a gift for friendship and rather steadier judgement than his older brother; a man who played a crucial role in early Methodism but who was happy to let others take the credit; a man whose importance was subsequently deliberately obscured by nineteenth-century Methodists embarrassed at his unshaken loyalty to the Church of England.

This final point poses an interesting question and one that might perhaps prompt a fascinating article in some future edition of these *Proceedings*: what is the history of how Charles has been perceived? We know that, despite his

being 'made for friendship' he was deeply disliked by many of his contemporaries. John Pawson's infamous judgement that 'he left no good testimony behind him that I could hear of, may have reflected his own bitter experience, but it does not appear to have been baseless. Does this explain why is there such a complete absence of the kind of commemorative ware that turned his brother, and later, others such as Adam Clarke and John Fletcher, into the *lares* of countless eighteenth and early nineteenth century homes? Why was he rehabilitated in the late nineteenth century as the Watson to John's Holmes? And in what ways is the current wave of renewed interest in him shaped by contemporary ecclesiastical concerns?

Any biography of Charles is hampered by the fact that source material is patchy and until recently has been hard to access. Kenneth Newport's tireless efforts made available Charles' few surviving sermons in 2001, and this year, for the first time, the full text of his journal. He is now working on a critical edition of Charles' letters but clearly neither that nor the unexpurgated journal were available when this biography was written. We must wait with interest to see whether these publications lead us to a radically different understanding of the character and influence of Charles Wesley. In the meantime, we have in Gary Best's book a loving and accessible account of Charles' life which challenges us to reassess the part which he played in the shaping of the early Methodist movement and to recalibrate our still often exaggerated assessment of the contribution made by his brother John.

JONATHAN M. RODELL

Snapshots. Episodes in a Life, by Colin Morris (Inspire, 2007, pp. vii, 127. £6.99. ISBN 978 1 905958 02 3).

Few Methodist ministers have enjoyed such a high national and international public profile as Colin Morris and few have possessed his incisive wit and brilliant gifts as a communicator in both the spoken and written word. Here in a series of illuminating, sharply focused pen portraits, as if captured for posterity on the printed page by the lens of a camera, he pays tribute to a variety of individuals who have influenced him at significant points in his Christian journey. Arranged in broadly chronological sequence the recounted episodes encompass the period 1929-2003 linking the early twentieth-century world of the knocker up and the long-drop tippler toilet of his maternal grandfather, Jed Weaver, with the early twenty-first century world of modern telecommunications, represented by several associates from the BBC and astrophysics, represented by his neighbour in retirement, William McCrea.

Vivid thumb nail sketches explore his Lancashire roots, which combined

Vivid thumb nail sketches explore his Lancashire roots, which combined Salvationist and Wesleyan religious influences with political impulses ranging from the rampant socialism of his grandfather, Jed Weaver, to the more restrained conservatism of his devoted elder sister, Irene Morris. They also chart a series of encounters with key figures whose influence helped shape his eventful ministry, beginning with Herbert Brooke, the Free Church chaplain attached to the Royal Marines, whose guarded counsel nurtured and facilitated his sense of vocation for the ordained ministry during military service in 1947. Self-confessedly drifting 'almost by default into the crucial decision to become a Methodist minister' he had developed an appetite for Christian apologetics in the barrack room at Deal (ironically later destroyed as a consequence of the Troubles which provided the context for the final phase of his ministry as BBC Controller in Northern Ireland). In between, accounts of his emergence as a determined opponent of racial discrimination and as a champion of the cause of Zambian independence are enlivened by a diverse collection of portraits of Ken Johnson, Merfyn Temple, Sikota Wina, Cirupula Stephenson, Kenneth Kaunda, Sir Francis Ibiam, Alice Lenshina, Sir Stewart Gore-Browne, Pauline Webb and Peggy Hiscock, a Methodist deaconess who went out to Northern Rhodesia as a missionary, whose controversial ordination by the United Church of Zambia occurred some four years before women in Britain were admitted into the Methodist ministry. In an array of other telling portraits, ecclesiastical luminaries like Raymond George, Kenneth Greet, Bill Gowland, Harry Morton, Donald Soper and Leslie Weatherhead rub shoulders with shining examples of dedicated chapel keepers, circuit stewards, local preachers and Sunday school teachers such as Ron Kemp, Gladys Holsey, Jack Longworth and Irene Morris, whose conventional commitment represent 'the backbone of the church's faith for centuries'. He particularly emphasizes the respective roles of Ron Kemp and Gladys Holsey in facilitating the development of Wesley's Chapel and House as important centres of Methodist heritage. Finally there are moving accounts of the world-heavyweight champion Michael Watson's recovery of faith during rehabilitation after suffering a brain injury in the ring and Brian Duckworth's inspiring struggle with cancer. Indeed, there is so much here which not only inspires but will also inform future histories of the impact of twentieth-century Methodism in both Britain and overseas and it is to be hoped that Colin Morris's writing will continue to provide further insights into his extraordinary ministry.

JOHN A. HARGREAVES

'Spinster, of No Occupation'?, *Mary Ellen Shaw: 1859-1926*, by Rowena Edlin- White, (Smallprint, 2007, 60pp, PB £6, ISBN 9781-900074-21-6).

On her death certificate Mary Ellen Shaw was described as a 'spinster of no occupation'. However, as this slim biographical account reveals she was hardly that! In this booklet, No.2 in the 'Women of spirit series' we read of the life of one of those eminent Victorian and Edwardian ladies who epitomized the philanthropic ethos of the Nonconformist Conscience. Driven by a love for God, and a genuine concern for humanity in general, Miss Shaw spent her life trying to alleviate the poverty and disease in the city of Nottingham. Her voluntary work included the running of Girls' Evening Homes, Mother & Baby Guilds and Sunday School Classes for ragged pupils. She visited prisons, hospitals and workhouse wards all on top of her ordinary work as a teacher. Her most notable activity was the organizing of Miss Shaw's Bible Class which, with the backing of the Duchess of Portland, offered support to hundreds of working men in the Nottingham area. Written in a popular style, and with an index and footnotes, this booklet is an informative read for those interested in learning about the unsung heroes, and heroines, of modern church history.

SIMON ROSS VALENTINE

Religion and Place in Leeds by John Minnis, Trevor Mitchell (English Heritage, Swindon, 2007: pp.viii(1)80. £7.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-905624-48-5)

In response to a rapidly growing Leeds population in the nineteenth-century, vast resources went into building churches and chapels, and later synagogues; immigration especially in the latter part of the twentieth century has further enriched and diversified the city's religious cultural heritage to include mosques and gurdwaras. In the same period there has been general decline in the traditional Christian communities, especially Methodist. With an emphasis on the twentieth-century, the text, supported by superb photography, captures the architectural expression of this dynamic process, including changes in Christian worship and liturgy, as well as the re-use of buildings, including the former Harehills Avenue Primitive Methodist, 1903, now Greek Orthodox, and the former Sacred Heart Roman Catholic, 1965, being altered to become the Grand Mosque. The need to retain these buildings is recognised and consideration is given to how this may be achieved.

D COLIN DEWS

ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE 2008

For the first time this year the Wesley Historical Society Annual Meeting included a full supporting morning programme of lectures chaired by the Revd Dr Timothy Macquiban, a member of the Yorkshire branch of the WHS, who welcomed a large gathering of members and friends to Mount Zion Methodist Church, Halifax, where he had formerly been a minister. Miss Irene Cunliffe, the church's heritage secretary described the emergence of Mount Zion as a centre of Methodist heritage; Dr John A. Hargreaves, General Secretary of the WHS, surveyed its extraordinary history and the Revd Donald Ryan explained how the centre became the custodian of the remarkable Hird collection of Methodist ceramics.

At the Annual Meeting of, which followed, attended by, 67 members and friends, the President of the Society, the Revd Dr John A. Newton, reflected on the ecumenical dimensions of the Charles Wesley tercentenary . The Minutes of the 2007 Meeting were signed as a correct record and the Executive Committee was appointed, including the new appointments of Mr Keith Rothery as Treasurer, Mrs Sheila J. Himsforth as Marketing Officer and the Revd David J. Hart as Conferences Secretary. The President thanked Nicholas Page, who also accompanied the worship during the Annual Meeting on Mount Zion's rare Belgian organ, for his services to the Society as treasurer. Tribute was also paid to members who had died during the year, including Joyce Banks, a former librarian of the Society. The Registrar reported that although there had been an increase in new members on the previous three years, the total number of members had fallen slightly to 572 and the General Secretary encouraged those present to advocate the benefits of membership within the Methodist community and beyond. Reports were also provided from the large number of branches of the Society represented at the meeting. The publication of the on-line dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland, accessible via the Society's web site was welcomed and its editor, John Vickers, was thanked. The Librarian explained the effects on the W. H. S. library of restructuring at Oxford Brookes University, notably the creation of the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, which he viewed positively. The residential conference at Salisbury had been a great success and the papers from the previous conference at York had been edited by Norma Virgoe and published under the title *Angels and Impudent Women*.

The Annual Lecture, chaired by the Revd Dr Timothy Macquiban, was delivered by Edward Royle, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of York. He focused upon an exploration of the question: 'When did Methodists stop attending their parish churches? Some suggestions from mid-nineteenth century Yorkshire'. An expanded version of the lecture is published in this issue.

Next year's Annual Meeting will be held at the Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, on Saturday 27 June 2009, when the Annual Lecture will be given by the Revd Dr Martin Wellings, superintendent minister designate of the Oxford Circuit, on the subject of 'The Methodist Revival Fellowship, 1952-1987'. The supplementary programme will include optional visits to the WHS Library on Friday 26 June and Saturday 27 June and a guided tour of Wesley sites in Oxford. For further details and information about membership see the society's website: www.wesleyhistorical society .org.uk.

John A. Hargreaves

The Late Joyce Banks

Joyce Banks, who died last year, came from Lancashire and had a Methodist background.

She was a qualified librarian, and had worked as a school librarian. When the WHS Library left City Road for Southlands College it was still uncatalogued and Joyce was appointed under the Job Creation Scheme to head a small team to remedy this defect. The skill and devotion to meticulous detail that she brought to the task is clearly demonstrated in the card catalogue, still in use at the library's Oxford location. Not only books and pamphlets, but a variety of miscellaneous material, including cuttings and circuit plans, were covered, using a version of the Dewey classification modified by Joyce herself to meet the requirements of a specialist collection. The subsequent computerization of the catalogue leaned heavily on the work she had done, and her card index continues to be updated as a back-up of the electronic cataloguing.

Joyce succeeded Kenneth Garlick as the Society's Librarian in 1993 and continued this responsibility for several years after the move to Westminster College, Oxford, despite the geographical and administrative difficulties involved. She also worked for a time at Dr. Williams's Library in London. She represented our Society on the Association of Denominational, Historical Societies and Cognate Libraries, on the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries and on the Religious Archives Group and was actively involved in the Sussex Archaeological Society. She was a dedicated professional who gave herself unstintingly to any task she undertook.

JAV

**WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2007**

The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2007 were presented to the 2008 Annual Meeting. The following is a summary of the audited accounts. A copy of the full Report and Accounts (which also includes the 'WHS Publications', Conference Fund and Library Appeal accounts), together with the Auditor's certificate, is available on request from the Treasurer, Mr Keith Rothery .

General Income & Expenditure Account: Year to 31 December 2007

INCOME	2007	2006
Subscriptions	6,518.32	5,656
Sales of Publications*	242.26	43
Advertisements	348.16	56
Bank and Deposit Interest	763.21	583
Annual Lecture Collection	86.12	112
Other Income	301.61	650
	<u>£8,259.68</u>	<u>£7,100</u>
 EXPENDITURE		
<i>Proceedings</i> and Distribution	4,297.95	3,664
Other Printing	945.42	517
Library	682.00	1,372
Administration	1,383.84	971
Website	65.67	59
Bank charges (foreign cheques, etc)	195.00	139
Other Expenditure	<u>148.50</u>	<u>148</u>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>£7,718.38</u>	<u>£6,870</u>
	<u>£541.30</u>	<u>£230</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2007

ASSETS EMPLOYED	2007	2006
Investments	225.00	225
CURRENT ASSETS		
Sundry Debtors		
Bank & Deposit Accounts	18,974.65	<u>17,835</u>
	<u>18,974.65</u>	<u>17,835</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Sundry Creditors		25
Subscriptions received in advance	7,350.46	<u>6,800</u>
	<u>7,350.46</u>	<u>6,825</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>£11,849.19</u>	<u>£11,235</u>
 REPRESENTED BY		
General Fund (unrestricted)	9,457.08	8,916
WHS Publications Account	913.64	505
Conference Fund	529.78	522
Library Appeal Fund	948.69	1,292
	<u>£11,849</u>	<u>£11,235</u>

*Total Sales of Publications amounted to £891.68 (as opposed to £449.12 in the previous year), £649.42 of which was transacted through the 'WHS Publications' Account.

NICHOLAS PAGE

On line version of a *Dictionary of Methodism*

A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland was published by the Epworth Press in 2000 as a volume of over 400 pages. Soon after it appeared I began discussing with the Methodist Publishing House the possibility of an online version, and in due course was given permission to go ahead with this, using the printed volume as the starting point. Copyright of the original text remains the property of the Methodist Publishing House.

Eight years later the new version has been launched. It is being hosted by the Wesley Historical Society and can be freely accessed at: <http://dmbi.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk/>.

This online version, with over 3,000 entries, is almost twice the length of what was possible with its predecessor. A number of significant changes to the content and format of the printed volume have been made.

- Any errors detected have been corrected. Some of the original entries have been augmented or rewritten.
- Particular attention has been given to certain groups such as lay Methodists, women and non-Wesleyans, though more remains to be done in these fields.
- The sources of further information have been considerably augmented; they are now attached to individual entries, instead of being listed in a general bibliography.
- Many more cross-references have been created, with immediate access from one entry to the other. It is also possible to search the text for key words, and there are indexes both to occupations and to contributors and their entries.

One advantage of the online format is that the *Dictionary* can continue to be revised and augmented, and this will happen on a regular basis. Plans for the immediate future include adding portraits and other illustrations. There is also scope for many more outline histories of Methodism in particular places, as the necessary material becomes available. I hope that readers of the *Proceedings* will be able to help in this respect.

Incorporated into the website is a 'Feedback' facility, making it easy for the reader to notify any errors found and to offer a draft of any entry not at present found in the *Dictionary*. Many people have contributed to both the original *Dictionary* and its successor and it is hoped that in its new form it will stimulate discussion and dialogue between those interested in our denominational history.

JOHN A. VICKERS