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KEEPING THE FAITH: IRELAND'S PRIMITIVE METHODISM

The Wesley Historical Society Lecture for 2010

John Wesley, in these islands, bequeathed an ideal of Methodism as a Society which would remain within the Established Church while exercising all the freedom of an independent evangelistic agency. With Wesley's death the tensions inherent in such a complex design could no longer be maintained and Wesleyan Methodism moved inexorably towards independence. There was, however, one branch of Methodism, unique to Ireland, which perpetuated Wesley's model for over a century after the struggle was lost elsewhere. It is a story which led in time to the first formal Anglican-Methodist 'conversations' of 1870-72 as the Church of Ireland faced Disestablishment. The eventual failure of these negotiations was followed eight years later by Methodist reunion in Ireland in 1878. This lecture revisits that story in an attempt to understand its background, its initial growth and ultimate failure.

Wesley left his successors with a model of Methodism which had within it inherent tensions that, even in his own lifetime, he found difficult to contain. In some ways the persistence in Ireland of John (and Charles) Wesley's ideal Methodism after it was abandoned elsewhere is counter-intuitive. The concept of Methodism as a reform movement within the structures of the Established Church was formulated in, and might have made sense in England, even if that was not how it worked out in practice. It was, however, hopelessly inadequate in the very different religious situation into which it was imported in Ireland. Wesley's lifelong battle to prevent his movement from falling into dissent was sharper there than anywhere else. Pressure came from several quarters. There was the Anglican Edward Smyth who, following his expulsion from the Church for his Methodist practices, pressed hard for Methodism to break completely from the

Church.[1] Among those who pressed most strongly for the introduction of the sacraments was the former Irish Catholic, Tommy Walsh, who had already administered the sacrament by 1754 and who joined with the Peronnet brothers in pushing for its wider introduction.[2] Then there were those who had come to Methodism from dissent, particularly in the north of Ireland, who saw no reason why they should look to the Established Church of Ireland for their sacraments.[3] But by the time of Wesley's death, Walsh was dead, Smyth had returned to his Anglican roots and Ireland was faced with political events which conspired to shore up Protestant solidarity.

Fears generated by the French Revolution and the Irish insurrection of 1798, delayed for another twenty years the Irish Conference's attempt to address demands for the introduction of the sacraments.[4] As a result, when the British Conference introduced its Plan of Pacification in 1795, it marked not only the point of no return in the English Conference's move towards independency, it also, almost unnoticed, constituted the first serious break in polity between the British and, until then, subsidiary Irish Conference.[5] In any case it was evident by this stage that the two Connexions had been moving towards organisational maturity at different paces. Irish Methodism was still characterised by fluidity, with outbreaks of revival characteristic of earlier years. The American evangelist, Lorenzo Dow, who for all his eccentricities, was a shrew observer remarked on this difference. 'In Ireland,' he wrote, 'the separation from the church has not taken place; there is more of the ancient Methodist simplicity discoverable among them.'[6]

By failing to follow the senior English Conference's Plan of Pacification the Irish Connexion had not solved the problem, merely postponed the day of reckoning. On three separate occasions in 1792, 1795 and 1798 the Conference rejected petitions from Lisburn (then the largest Irish circuit), and elsewhere, to allow the administration of the sacraments. When Lisburn in its 1798 petition sought, in addition to sacramental freedom, the right of lay representation the Conference replied by charging Lisburn of

[1] For Smyth see Henry D. Rack, 'The providential moment: church building, Methodism, and evangelical entryism in Manchester, 1788-1825', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. 14, (1992), 248-50; Robin P. Roddie, 'The "alarming" Edward Smyth', *Down Survey,* (2000), 38-45.

[2] Walsh agreed to refrain after the Conference decision of 1755. So John Wesley wrote to his brother, Charles: 'Do you not understand that they all promised by Thomas Walsh not to administer even among themselves? I think this is a huge point given up — perhaps more than they could give up with a clear conscience', (London, June 20, 1755). John Telford (ed.), *The Letters of John Wesley,* vol. 3, (London: Epworth, 1931), p. 129.

[3] John Rylands University Library of Manchester, DDPr 2/9, Catalogue of the early preachers' collection, Thomas Carlil[l] to Charles Wesley, Bishop's Court, Ireland, 8 November 1780.

[4] 'The bursting forth of the Irish rebellion ... laid prostrate all the schemes of visionary theorists.' *The Centenary of Methodism,* (Dublin: Primitive Methodist Bookroom, 1838), pp. 276-77.

[5] So Samuel Wood argued in his circular that the 'rejection of such wholesome & constitutional Laws by a Delegate Conference is a declaration of avowed separation from the Members & Interests of this Union'. *A Few plain reasons for the adoption of the Articles of General Pacification, & the Regulations of the Leeds Conference in 1797 into this Kingdom. Addressed to the Methodist Preachers of Ireland by Samuel Wood in a letter*, (Belfast, 1799) (Wesley Historical Society in Ireland (WHSI), GB 0116/17/1).

[6] Lorenzo Dow, *History of Cosmopolite: or the writings of Lorenzo Dow* &c. (Cincinnati: Martin & Robinson, 1849), p. 301.

Jacobinism ('which we abhor') and the expulsion of 32 of their leaders. The result was not just the loss of leaders but 200 members and the establishment of a branch of the Methodist New Connexion in Ireland.[7]

The Acts of Union of 1800 helped for a time to bring stability to Ireland and with it the luxury of renewed religious debate. Still it was not until 1811 that a new battle for the introduction of the sacraments in Ireland began in Belfast.[8] This time the demand was more urgent. By 1814 it was clear that Conference could not avoid addressing the issue. In the event the matter was fudged. The Conference initially voted by a slim majority to allow, in carefully circumscribed conditions, the administration of the sacraments. However, those opposing the measure succeeded in persuading Conference to put the plan on hold and it was not until 1816 that an Irish 'Plan of Pacification' was finally passed. In the meantime a four year pamphlet war was under way during which positions on both sides hardened.[9] The result was that by the time the Plan was finally enacted in 1816, procedures were in hand to establish an alternative version of Methodism in Ireland. The majority 'Conference' Methodists followed and strengthened their ties with English Methodism, while the newly formed Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society emphasised its loyalty to the Established Church.

The first steps in the formation of the new movement took place immediately following the 1816 Conference. A meeting of circuit representatives from around Ireland was summoned to Aughnacloy in County Tyrone on 13 August 1816 – a meeting which drew up the principles of the movement.[10] A second Committee was held on 11 September in Newtownstewart,[11] also in Tyrone, and by the time the Committee met on 2 October at Clones, County Monaghan, everything was in place for the launch of the rival Society. In the space of three months, 20 circuits had applied for preachers and 19 were received on trial from among the ranks of local preachers.[12] Despite the Committee having canvassed all travelling preachers who had voted against the introduction of the sacraments only one former Wesleyan preacher, Samuel Moorhead, joined them and he, in any case, had previously desisted from travelling to set up in business.[13] Moorhead

[7] 'Memoir of Mr William Black of Lisburn, Ireland', *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, (1840), 45; 'The Methodist New Connexion in Ireland', in John A. Vickers (ed.), *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000), p. 233.

[8] 'By a letter from Belfast, we are extremely concerned to find that the peace and good order of our Societies are again about to be interrupted by the introduction of questions respecting sacraments and ordinances.' *Copy of a Remonstrance from the Leaders, Stewards and Trustees of the Methodist Society of Cork, to the Irish Conference assembled in Dublin, July 1811, voluntarily written by Mr Samuel Wood.* Appendix to: *A Letter addressed to the Methodist preachers of Ireland, signed and recommended by all the preachers stationed in Dublin*, (Dublin: J Jones, 1818), pp. 13-14.

[9] 'A list of pamphlets relating to the "division" of Irish Methodism (1815-1818)', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, vol. 7, (1910), 155-58; *PWHS*, vol. 8, (1911), 49-51.

[10] Twenty-three circuits sent either representatives or letters to Aughnacloy. The chair was taken by John Harding and the Secretary was Andrew Swanzy.

[11] At which 19 circuits were represented. The chair was taken by William Boyce and the Secretary was Andrew Swanzy.

[12] *Minutes of several conversations, between the members of the committee convened in Clones, on the 2nd day of October 1816.*

was appointed President. Their Secretary was once again Andrew Swanzy from Clontibret in County Monahan, from a family noted for its substantial land ownership, several generations of attorneys, and strong commitment to the Church of Ireland, including numerous clerics.[14]

The following year, 1817, there were 28 circuits represented, 29 preachers and almost a third of the membership of Irish Methodism.[15] The curious thing is that at this stage, when the formation of the Primitives was already under way, principles enunciated and an almost fully formed connexion in place neither the Rev. Adam Averell nor the Dublin society were involved. Both Averell and the Dublin leaders would later assume key roles but for the first two years the leadership came from country circuits, in the formation of what came to be known as the Clones Committee; so much so, that for many years afterwards among the Wesleyans the new Society was known as the 'Clonites'.[16]

There were many in Dublin, as at Clones and elsewhere, who vehemently opposed any break from the Established Church but they held fire in the vain hope that the Conference might still be persuaded to rescind their decision. By that stage a substantial number of Dublin members, impatient with the vacillation of their leaders, had already petitioned the Clones Committee for a preacher. These included the influential laymen Bennett Dugdale, Dr Isaac D'Olier, Benjamin Kearney, William Hall and James Keene. They set up a cause in the city in a schoolroom at the Coombe, numerous classes were formed and they had overflowing congregations and hundreds in society. They had, in addition, a preacher supplied by the Clones Committee, George Montgomery West, whose name crops up again in this story.[17]

This and the realisation that the Conference would not change its mind led the remaining pro-Church Dublin leaders to join forces with the Clones Committee.[18] As a first step they persuaded Adam Averell to join them.[19] For the previous two years, during which the Irish Connexion was rent asunder, he had retreated to his residence at Tentower, County Laois, living the life of a virtual recluse.[20] Now he emerged at the age of 64, reinvigorated, to lead the new movement as their perpetual president until he died

[13] [Wesleyan] *Minutes of the Irish Conferences*, (1811), p. 257.

[14] 'The Swanzys of Clontibret', *Clogher Record*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1997), 171.

[15] *Minutes of several conversations between the preachers and committee of the Wesleyan Methodists in Ireland in a conference begun in Clones on eight of August, 1817.* [It was not until 1818 that the nomenclature 'Primitive Wesleyan Methodist' was adopted.]

[16] So, for example, the Wesleyan, John Waugh, writing in 1819 from Carlow to Samuel Wood in Dublin: 'The Clonites have done us all the injury they possibly could on our circuit and after all their lies and exertions they have only taken seven members from us.' John Rylands University Library of Manchester: PLP.111.9.6.

[17] Alexander Stewart & George Revington, *Memoir of the Rev Adam Averell*, (Dublin: Methodist Book-room, 1847), p.363. PWM *Minutes*, (1817), p. 1.

[18] For an analysis of the composition of the Dublin leaders see D. L. Cooney, 'The met in South Great George's Street', *Bulletin of the Wesley Historical Society in Ireland*, vol. 7, (2001) 34-48.

[19] Stewart and Revington, *Memoir of the Rev Adam Averell*, p. 364.

[20] 'How he employed himself, in general, while the sacramental question was pending, is also unknown to us ... but we are inclined to think he spent much of his time at home.' Stewart & Revington, *Memoir of the Rev Adam Averell*, p. 362.

29 years later. William Killen, the Presbyterian historian, before entering the ministry had come to know Averell in County Cavan. 'He was', said Killen, 'a devout man, and bent on doing good, though not distinguished for great ability or theological acquirements. He regarded the Church of England as the perfection of Christianity.'[21] Now as leader of the Primitives he had found a new calling and a new purpose.[22]

There are a number of important aspects to be noted. First, the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists were essentially a lay movement. They built into their revised Methodism safe-guards against potential elitist tendencies among their preachers.[23] Furthermore they so circumscribed the trust deeds of their chapels that they would loose them should sacraments ever be celebrated. The Primitives, like the Wesleyans produced noted preachers but for the most part it was lay leaders who gave continuity and ensured loyalty to the Established Church. They included men like Francis Fitzgerald of Clones,[24] the Handy brothers of New Ross and Tullamore, David Hosford of Kinsale and Zachariah Myles of Limerick. David Goodlatte, the lay representative from Moy, was so highly regarded that Adam Averell, when looking for a successor as leader of the Primitives, tried to persuade him to become its figurehead.[25]

The second important feature is the predominance of Anglican sentiment among its leaders. This is a particularly cautionary word to those who have had their Irish Methodist history filtered through the lens of Wesleyan writers. For almost a century the chief source on Irish Methodism was H. Crookshank's three volume history.[26] Written following Methodist reunion, Crookshank is scrupulously even-handed in his treatment of both traditions in his eirenical work but the effect is to deceive. He weaves into a seamless whole two movements that can only be understood when viewed separately. And to understand the Primitives it is necessary to look at their Anglican roots. There were, of course, Presbyterians among their number, some Catholics and those from other denominational backgrounds and from none. However the vast majority were members of the Church of Ireland. An official history of the Primitive Society written on the occasion of the centenary of Methodism in 1839 claimed, probably accurately, that 'nine-tenths of the society belong to the Established Church, believe her doctrines, [and] adhere to her communion'.[27]

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[21] William Dool Killen, *Reminiscences of a long life*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1901), p. 21

[22] 'Clouds of darkness had for a time obscured his path, and he was at a loss as to the course he ought to pursue; but the guiding star that had long directed his steps having re-appeared, went before him, and he again rejoiced in its light.' Stewart & Rivington, *Memoir of the Rev. Adam Averell*, p. 366.

[23] *General Principles of the Methodist Constitution, agreed upon in Dublin, at a meeting of representatives, held on the 5th and 6th January* 1818, (Dublin: Keene, 1818), p. 5.

[24] Francis Fitzgerald (1806-83) represented Clones at the PWM Conference for 39 years and was a loyal Churchman and Methodist. John Ker, *A Memorial Sketch of the Late Francis Fitzgerald, &c, Belfast*, (Belfast: University Printing House, 1884).

[25] 'When Mr Averell, through age and infirmity, became unable to visit the societies through the kingdom, he was anxious to find a person of piety, wisdom, zeal and standing, who would take his place ... he fixed his mind upon Mr Goodlatte, as one well qualified for the work.' PWM *Magazine*, (1868), 213.

[26] C. H. Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland*, (3 vols., Belfast: R. S. Allen, 1885-88). Reprinted under the title *Days of Revival* (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, [1994]).

It was also the strength in depth of Anglican lay support which allowed the Society to emerge fully developed so quickly after the division. A Congregationalist critic would later claim the Primitives came into existence under the fostering care of a wealthy establishment. The dissentients, he wrote, 'gained the favour of the established clergy ... who attended their meetings, and recommended the new Society to their people, so that soon the Primitive Wesleyan Society ... had chapels throughout the length and breadth of the land'. 'In fact', he said, 'it is a Society that sprung into existence and maturity at once'.[28] It is in many ways remarkable that, having lost the legal argument over the retention of the existing chapels, the Primitive Wesleyans had within five years a fully matured organisation.[29] New preaching houses were in place, they had a full compliment of preachers, new headquarters in Dublin, a book room and magazine[30] and a growing membership that threatened to match that of the Wesleyans.

The division, nevertheless, came at considerable cost. The Wesleyans had lost some of their leading laymen. Across the island, societies were split in two, families divided and long-standing friendships broken. However, after the initial turmoil, both branches of Methodism conducted their affairs with apparent indifference towards each other though the Primitives urged their people to 'cultivate a spirit of charity and forbearance towards others'.[31] It was at a local level that that rivalry continued, often taking personal form. When the Wesleyan, Robert Hamilton, was appointed to the Tandragee Circuit in 1836 he was told that there were in the town Jeremites and Rowleyites – a reference he discovered to the two leading supporters of the Wesleyans (Jeremiah Mains) and the Primitives (James Rowley).[32] When James Coalter became a Methodist school-master in Ballinamallard in the 1890s he often heard stories of the former rivalry between the Primitives and Wesleyans. On the Coa road on a Sunday morning, the following conversation would take place: '"Where are you for this morning, John?" John, with ecclesiastical pride, would reply to his neighbour William, I am off to Divine Service." John was a Primitive and still looked to the Parish Church for his sacramental needs, whereas William had completely "come out from among them."'[33]

For almost twenty years the Primitive Wesleyan membership grew rapidly threatening to overtake that of the Wesleyans. The *Irish Congregational Record*

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27 *Centenary of Methodism* [Dublin: Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Bookroom, 1839] p. 316.

28 William Campbell, Congregational layman, writing from Londonderry, 10 August, 1855 to the editor of the *United Presbyterian Magazine*, (1855), p. 412.

29 See Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland*, vol. ii, pp. 417-18; 435-37.

30 The *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* was launched in 1823 under the editorship of John James McGregor and it continued to be published until Methodist reunion in 1878. It is a primary source of information on the Primitive Methodists especially in light of the loss of so many of their historical records. The Dublin edition of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* had ceased publication the previous year due to continual loss-making. For J. J. McGregor, see F. C. Williams (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

31 PWM *Minutes*, (1820), p. 14.

32 *The Irish Evangelist*, (1875), p. 57. Cited in Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland*, vol. iii, p. 237.

33 George J. Coalter, *Memories (1890-1950)*, (Enniskillen: Trimble, [1950]), p. 22.

published a survey estimating the relative strength of the Protestant communities at work in Ireland in 1833. They had no reason to inflate Methodist figures which they gave as:

Wesleyan Methodists: Travelling Preachers, 90; Missions, 24; Members, 25,000; Community altogether, say 55,000.

Primitive Wesleyan Methodists: Circuit Preachers, 40; Missions, 19, Members, 16,000; Community altogether, say 40,000.[34]

ii. Robinson and the Church Methodists

The success of the Primitive Wesleyans was attracting attention outside Ireland so that in 1825 the Conference reported that, in response to repeated requests from British North America, they had appointed one of their preachers as a missionary to St John's, New Brunswick. In addition they had sent two preachers to England to supply the Beverley and Hull circuits where Church Methodism had been established and where two chapels were in the course of erection.[35]

The request to assist at Beverley and Hull had come from Mark Robinson. He was a linen draper at Beverley who was also a local preacher and a class leader. He had been disturbed at the proposed separation of Beverley from the Hull circuit not only by its happening but the arbitrary manner of its execution. His concern led to his examining the polity of Wesleyan Methodism and in particular the powers of Conference. One of his complaints was that the preachers had led the people away from the church.[36] Robinson issued a pamphlet calling for a restoration of original Wesleyanism, and the introduction of lay delegates into the Conference. As a result he was expelled and eventually 'about forty members in Beverley, and a number of other places, withdrew from the Conference and formed themselves into a body of Church Methodists'.[37]

The developments in Beverley and Robinson's search for a primitive Methodism, loyal to the Church, led to an unexpected alliance between the draper of Beverley and

[34] *Irish Congregational Record* (May, 1834), pp. 168-69. For a comprehensive discussion of Wesleyan and Primitive Wesleyan membership see Nicola Morris, 'Predicting a "bright and prosperous future": Irish Methodist Membership (1855-1914)', *Wesleyan and Methodist Studies*, vol. 2 (2010), 911-14. The Primitives were proportionately stronger in west Ulster; in Cavan, Fermanagh and Monaghan, what David Hempton called the 'Lough Erne rectangle' as distinct from the more Presbyterian orientated 'linen triangle of Ulster'. David Hempton, 'Methodism in Irish Society', in David Hempton: *The Religion of the People: Methodism and popular religion* c. 1750-1900, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 37. See also, J. Henry Cooke, 'Church Methodists in Ireland: statistical evidence', *PWHS,* vol. 34 (1964), 135-40. The difficulties in establishing firm Methodist figures are seen, for example, in when the Commissioners were designing the 1834 Irish Census. They agreed that all Wesleyans and indeed Methodists of whatever description would be regarded as members of the Established Church since, the Commissioners held, they had not formally withdrawn from the Church. See Malcolm McCourt, *Counting the People of God? The Census of Population and the Church of Ireland*, (Dublin: Church of Ireland Publishing, 2008), p. 47.

[35] PWM *Minutes*, (1825), p. 13.

[36] Oliver A Beckerlegge, 'The Church Methodists', *PWHS*, vol. 34 (1963), 64-65.

[37] *The Christian Remembrancer, or the Churchman's Biblical, Ecclesiastical, & Literary Miscellany*, vol. 8, (1826), 16

the poet and essayist, Robert Southey. Southey in the conclusion to his biography of John Wesley had expressed a hope that Methodism might in time once more conform to and be drawn towards the Established Church.[38] Robinson wrote to Southey in 1824, attaching his proposals for a form of Methodism which he hoped were in tune with Southey's own thinking. He proposed that Methodism should be a sort of minor order within the Church of England, recognized by the episcopate and locally subject to the parish clergyman.[39] Unknown to Robinson, Southey forwarded the letter to the high-churchman, Dr Richard Howley, then Bishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury. Howley read more into Robinson's letter than was intended and as a result dismissed the suggestion as impractical at home, although it was his opinion that discreet alliances might be formed 'in parts of the colonies'.[40] Despite the bishop's lukewarm response, Southey and Robinson continued their correspondence. Southey maintained an interest in the matter and developed his own thinking on the subject in his *Colloquies with Sir T Moore* and in correspondence with the Rev. J. J. Hornby rector of Winwick, and Sir Oswald Mosley.

Robinson meanwhile visited the Primitive Wesleyan Conference in Dublin and there and in correspondence with Averell and the Dublin leaders agreed on key areas of doctrine and organisation and an exchange of preachers. Beverley and Hull sent one of their number to serve in Ireland and the Primitives, in turn, sent two Irish preachers to Yorkshire, where they were to be subject to Irish discipline but work to establish a form of English Church Methodism.[41]

Robinson, a kind, unworldly man, was not to know that in this exchange he would have the misfortune to become entangled with two of the most difficult men ever to enter any branch of Methodism. The first, Daniel MacAfee,[42] spent his life fighting, against enemies real and imagined. If it was not the Calvinists it was Daniel O'Connell but his first battles were fought in Beverley and Hull to the detriment of the work there. If MacAfee was difficult, the second, George Montgomery West, was impossible. He was among the original influx of local preachers to volunteer for service with the Primitives in 1816. But by 1823 he had launched into a career during which he criss-crossed the Atlantic many times – on each occasion reinventing himself and laying a trail of

[38] Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 335.

[39] Robert Southey, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey edited by his son, the Rev Charles Cuthbert Southey, MA, curate of Plumbland, Cumberland*, vol. 5 (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1855), p.161.

[40] ibid. p.166.

[41] Mark Robinson, *A Letter on Church Methodism addressed to John Curry, Esq, Dublin*, (London: Seely & Son, 1827), p.4.

[42] Vickers (ed.) *Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, p. 216. He had originally been declined as a candidate by the Wesleyans and as a result offered himself to the Primitives. After five years he reapplied to the Wesleyans and was accepted with reservations. His critics such as Charles Mayne objected. 'He was rejected, is he now better? Has his marked opposition for five years qualified him? (You can't be admitted; you are not qualified, said a late governess of the Magdalene asylum to a virtuous young girl who wished for admission in about 9 months she returned saying "Madam dear, I am now qualified")', Charles Mayne to Samuel Wood, 27 October 1826 (WHSI, GB 0116/18/87).

destruction wherever he went. Even before arriving in Beverley, without the permission of the Irish Primitives he sailed to Quebec in Canada and then St John's, Newfoundland, where he attempted to set up a form of Primitive Methodism.[43] Within two years he was back in Ireland in a failed attempt to gain readmission among the Primitives. From Cork he headed to Hull and ingratiated himself among the Church Methodists. By the time they were able to extricate themselves from his malign influence he had destroyed any chance of Church Methodism surviving, leaving behind a Society in financial and organisational disarray. For his part West headed back across the Atlantic, obtained episcopal ordination, and returned to the British Isles where he spent three years as an agent of Bishop Chase of Ohio, collecting for his Kenyon College project.[44] He returned to Ohio and laid charges against Bishop Chase and subsequently reappeared in Liverpool as self-appointed bishop of the Primitive Episcopal Church.[45] When Liverpool tired of him he returned to America via Edinburgh and, first in Philadelphia and then New York, commanded Presbyterian pulpits in both cases becoming embroiled in litigation with the Church authorities.

iii. Missionary Society

If the overseas missions of the Primitives came to nothing they were far more successful in establishing a home mission division. Indeed so successful was it that for many outside their own Society it was for their Home Mission endeavours they became best known and gained most admiration, attracting substantial income in England, Scotland and America.

Their comparative success was all the more remarkable in that, by the time they launched their missionary society, Ireland had become a very competitive arena of evangelistic endeavour. Following the Acts of Union in 1800 there was a growing perception in the rest of the United Kingdom of the political dangers posed by an unregenerate Catholic majority in Ireland.[46] The result was the arrival of a plethora of missionary agencies, some interdenominational and others Anglican, Presbyterian or Baptist, all throwing their energies into what became known as the Second Reformation in Ireland. Even the English Methodist New Connexion decided to make Ireland their first mission field in 1824.[47]

[43] The Primitive Conference attempted to make good the ill-conceived work of West by appointing a missionary to St John's, New Brunswick in 1825. PWM *Minutes*, (1825), p.6.

[44] West's exploits on behalf of Bishop Chase are critically examined in *The Christian Examiner and Church of Ireland Magazine*, vol 11, (Dublin, 1831), 945-66.

[45] For his Liverpool sojourn see *Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Proceedings and Papers*, Session 3, (1850-51), pp. 170-78.

[46] A good treatment of the 'passion for evangelism' through a vast array of agencies is to be found in 'Evangelical expansion: cooperation and conflict' in David Hempton and Myrtle Hill's *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, 1740-1890, (London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 47-61.

[47] 'The [MNC] Conference, sincerely deploring the ignorance, superstition, and misery prevalent in Ireland, and believing that a field there presents itself, on which the Methodists of the New Connexion ... may exert themselves.' MNC *Minutes*, (1825), p. 28.

The Primitives, of course, had the advantage of a template for their movement. Just as they replicated the Wesleyans in a parallel and almost identical Connexion they now set about creating an equivalent of the Wesleyan Irish Home Mission work. The difference was that the Wesleyan's Irish Mission was directed from London and underwritten by the English Methodist Missionary Society through their Superintendent of Missions and Schools.[48] The Primitives had to start from scratch, find their own source of funding and take full responsibility for their own work.

Key to the Primitive's success was the setting up in 1824 of a rapidly expanding network of local support associations, first in Ireland and later in Scotland and England. Through these branches they advanced the claims of their work through missionary meetings, sermons and collections. The model for these gatherings was the Annual Conference Missionary meeting in Dublin. On the occasion of their third anniversary in 1827 no less than nine clergymen of the Established Church appeared alongside the Rev. Adam Averell on the Conference platform.[49] What happened in Dublin was replicated at the branch associations. A local dignitary was usually asked to chair the anniversary meeting with local clergy as part of the platform party. These anniversaries were important not only as a source of funds but as a demonstration of wider Church and community approval for the Primitives.

An analysis of the Primitives published reports gives an indication of how effective these gatherings were. Between 1835 and 1841 in Ireland alone not less than 166 Anglican clergymen in town and country parishes lent their support by chairing the anniversary gatherings or by passing resolutions supporting the work of the Primitive Missionary Society. One such was the rector of Athlone, James Moffatt, who frequently chaired the annual Primitive gathering in his parish. In 1838 he told the meeting that one of his sons, a young lad, had planted a missionary ridge of potatoes and then divided the profits between the Church Missionary Society and the Primitive Wesleyan Missionary Society.[50] Many of these rectors were notably evangelical in disposition. In Londonderry the Rev Charles Seymour, then curate of Templemore, presided, he would later become Dean of the Cathedral and it was said of him, 'he was of the Evangelical Party, not very learned, but very pious and much respected.'[51]

As financial support increased so also the Primitives expanded their Home Mission work by appointing additional school-masters and scripture readers in the Irish language. By 1838 the Society was employing, in addition to their travelling preachers, 29 missionaries, 15 scripture readers and had established several mission schools. The men who pushed out the boundaries of the Primitive work often laboured under severe

[48] Thomas Coke, who is better known as the 'father of overseas missions' was also responsible for the launch of the Irish Home Mission in 1799. When the Irish Conference baulked at the cost, Coke took personal responsibility for any deficiencies. *Minutes of the* [Wesleyan] *Irish Conferences*, vol. 1 (1864), p. 130. This work was subsequently run under the auspices of the English Methodist Missionary Society.

[49] *Centenary of Methodism*, (Dublin: Primitive Wesleyan Bookroom, 1839), p. 315.

[50] *PWM Magazine*, (1838), p. 470.

[51] Quoting *The Times* obituary of 21 July 1882 in James B. Leslie, *Derry clergy and parishes*, (Enniskillen: the author, 1937), p. 42.

privations and for little reward.[52] Men such as Samuel Laramie of whom it was said, 'if Wesleyan Methodism produced its Gideon Ouseley to preach in the Irish language, Primitive Methodism sent forth its not less devoted man, Samuel Laramie.'[53] The regular reports from the mission stations and the work of their missionaries was given extensive coverage in the annual reports and came to be widely admired far beyond Primitive Methodism itself.

It is not generally recognised just how successful the Primitives were in establishing their network of support branches in Scotland and England. Of particular importance was their achievement in gaining the official support of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The Rev. John MacFarlane their influential minister at Nicholson Street Church, Glasgow had been persuaded that the Primitive Wesleyans, despite their links with the Established Church were sufficiently independent to commend them to the United Church as their chosen agency for missionary activity in Ireland. Having carefully examined the strengths and weakness of the various agencies working among the Catholics of Ireland he concluded the Primitives were the most efficient of all active societies, had native workers in every county in Ireland and represented the best value for money.[54]

In the seven years from 1846 to 1853 the giving from the Scottish (mostly United Church) branches rose from £93 to over £1,000 per year with smaller but still substantial support from other church bodies in the English branches. So important had this funding become that the Primitives authorised their travelling secretary, Dawson Dean Heather, to devote six months of the year to Scotland and England.[55] The English Associations were based in ten centres, including London, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Birmingham. In all there were 107 branches in Ireland, Scotland and England.[56]

Such a lucrative source of income did not go unnoticed. Both the Congregationalists and the Irish Methodist New Connexion made attempts to divert this Scottish largesse to their own agencies by suggesting that their forms of Churchmanship were much closer in ethos to the Scottish United Presbyterians than that of the Primitives. The Congregationalist attack came from three quarters: Cambell a layman in Derry; his minister, Robert Sewell, a former Primitive preacher with inside knowledge of the movement and finally Dr James Massie, the highly respected missionary and abolitionist who was the London based secretary of the Congregationalists' Home Missionary Society. Massie's letters to the *United Presbyterian Magazine* were informed by personal knowledge. Born in Ireland and also having ministered in Dublin, he was well briefed in his attacks on the Primitives. All three in various ways accused the Primitives of being

[52] On occasion suffering assault, as in the case of the Scripture Reader, Richard Williams at Whitegate, County Cork, where the mob, urged on by the Catholic priest, Rev W. Daly, injured him to such an extend that he subsequently died. *Report of the trial of the Rev W Daly, of Aghada and others for riot and assault*, (Dublin: Chapman, 1854); PWM *Magazine*, (1855), pp. 122-24.

[53] *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, (1863), p. 123.

[54] *United Presbyterian Magazine*, (1855), p. 175.

[55] PWM *Minutes*, (1852), p. 14.

[56] *Thirtieth report of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, (Dublin: The Society, 1854).

duplicitous, presenting themselves at home to their Church of Ireland constituency as loyal churchmen while in Scotland emphasising their freedom from all denominations. These arguments together with the appearance in Scotland of the Irish Methodist New Connexion agent, William Sorsby, had come, according to Dr McFarlane, as 'a shell thrown into the midst of the United Presbyterian interest' in the Primitives work.[57] For two years the *United Presbyterian Magazine* covered the controversy but in the end, again to quote McFarlane, 'the shell did not explode'.

The Primitives success was equally galling to the Irish Wesleyans. The Rev. James B. Gillman, in his maiden speech as an Irish delegate at the Newcastle Conference in 1840, bitterly referred to the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists as 'the deadliest foes of Methodism'. He alleged that the Primitives in their fund-raising falsely claimed credit for Wesleyan missionary activity in their promotional work. Gillman had not anticipated that his speech would be reported back in Ireland in the pages of the *Watchman*.[58] It caused a storm among the Primitives, in the first place, because they denied the charges but chiefly because they, who regarded themselves the true successors of Wesley, were now accused of being the deadliest foes of Methodism.[59]

iv. Relationships with the Church of Ireland

Fundamental to all discussion of Primitive Wesleyan Methodism is the question; was the relationship between the society and the established church really what the Primitives claimed it to be? At the heart of the Primitives identity was their relationship with the Established Church. For their part, at public gatherings, in their Minutes of Conference and in their Magazine the Primitives constantly emphasised their affection for the church and suggest that this feeling is reciprocated. It was symbolised year upon year at their Conference, preachers and representatives walked, as Wesley had once done, en block from their George Street headquarters to receive the sacrament from the hands of the Anglican clergy at St Patrick's Cathedral. Even those who entered the itinerancy from dissenting backgrounds came, in time, to value the liturgy. 'From my Presbyterian training', wrote Thomas McFann, 'I can recollect the time when my own prejudices were violently shocked by the forms adopted in the Episcopal Church. But I have lived "to put away childish things," and, although I still have my preferences, I can now with comfort and satisfaction, sit down or "kneel down" with any, who in truth, partake "of the bread and wine in remembrance that Christ died for them."'[60]

As we have seen, in their formative years there is evidence that at local level many Anglican clergy lent their support to the Primitives. So in their 'Address' to the members of Societies in 1827 the Primitive Conference was able to speak of 'our connexion

[57] *United Presbyterian Magazine*, (1855), p. 172.
[58] *Watchman*, 12 August 1840.
[59] For an account of controversy see *PWM Magazine*, (1840), pp. 450-55.
[60] *United Presbyterian Magazine*, 1(855), p.509.

gradually acquiring the support and approbation of the Clergy ... especially those of the Established Church, who now begin to see, that we do not aim at independency, but will be content with the humbler sphere, of auxiliaries to the long existing religious establishments of the country.'[61] This support extended in some instances to Diocesan approval, as in Waterford, where the bishop 'called together the clergy of his diocese, and sent for one of the itinerant preachers, who so fully satisfied his lordship and the clergy that they all, without one dissenting voice, promised to give the Church Methodists countenance and support. ... The bishop and many of his clergy have contributed to the erection of the Waterford Chapel, and not only numbers of the Church people attend the chapel on Sunday evenings, but also the clergy themselves.'[62]

However, no matter how unchanging their support for the Established Church might be, the Primitives were faced with an Ireland whose political and religious configuration was being shaped by external events at home and across the Irish Sea. Most of all the Established Church itself was in the process of change.

Methodist historians traditionally emphasised the extent to which the eighteenth century Irish Church was moribund, with many of their bishops and clergy deficient in spiritual and pastoral energies, coping with pluralism and absenteeism. Recent studies have modified the picture but it is a judgment largely shared by Church of Ireland commentators.[63] However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century there were signs of renewal. In Kilkenny in 1801 the Ossory Clerical Association was born, the first of a growing number of many such gatherings that would, in time, transform the face of ministry in Ireland. Led by the Rev. Peter Roe the Ossory meetings became a template for other Diocesan associations. Through them the clergy themselves were evangelised and given a sense of common purpose.[64] By 1840 the Church of Ireland *Christian Examiner* claimed that half of the 2,000 Irish clergy were Evangelicals and some had been appointed to the episcopal bench.[65]

On the face of it, such developments should have produced a climate more favourable to Methodism. However two factors operated to harden official Church of Ireland attitudes. A series of high profile Anglican successions such as the Trinity-based John Walker who founded the Walkerites,[66] the hymnwriter Thomas Kelly who led the Kellyites and John Nelson Darby, founder of the (Plymouth) Brethren, led to charges that evangelicals were providing breeding grounds for dissent. As a result there was a gradual withdrawal by Anglican evangelicals from pan-Protestant societies and a

[61] PWM *Minutes*, (1827) p.16.

[62] Letter from Mark Robinson to Robert Southey in Southey, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey in six volumes*, vol. 5, p.162.

[63] See Alan Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, 1691-1996, (Blackrock: Columba, 1997), especially chapter 3.

[64] Robert B. MacCarthy, *Ancient and Modern: A Short History of the Church of Ireland*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), p. 46.

[65] Acheson, *Church of Ireland*, p. 156.

[66] Walker also wrote *An Expostulatory address to the members of the Methodist Society in Ireland* (1802). Hempton, *The Religion of the People*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 29-30.

distancing from all forms of non-Church associations. Peter Roe's own changing views signal that change as well as any. He had been influenced by Methodists in Dublin and was described in his early days as 'a low Arminian, with Methodistic tendencies'.[67] The Primitive Methodists went so far as to print his 'Annual address to the parishioners of St Mary's, Kilkenny' in their *Magazine* until his death in 1842 and thereby contrived to suggest that he was one of theirs. When he died the *Magazine* carried extracts from his *Memoir* but, tellingly, omitted those parts which referred to his changing attitudes to Methodism.[68] At first, as in 1802, Roe, like Alexander Knox, was defensive of Wesleyan Arminianism and reacted to Walker's attack on Methodism by hoping that his polemic would 'sink into oblivion'.[69] However as evangelical loyalty to the Church assumed greater importance he published a volume bearing the title, *The Evil of Separation from the Church of England* (1815). This consisted of a number of letters written by evangelical clergy in Ireland and England against new forms of dissent. By 1839 he had come full circle and to the conclusion that Walker's arguments against Methodism were 'unanswerable and invaluable'.[70]

If Roe's moderate Arminianism found it difficult to accommodate Methodism, the largely Calvinist theology of the Church of Ireland represented a stronger tide running against them.[71] The *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, which rarely allowed overt criticism of the Church in 1840, for once, gave vent to Primitive frustration at growing anti-Methodist sentiment at gatherings of evangelical clergy. These largely Anglican conferences, held each year at the Rotunda in Dublin, were for the express purpose of promoting revival. The problem, complained the Primitive article, was that 'the gentlemen composing them are generally strenuous adherents of Calvinistic doctrines.' Men like the Rev Frederick Fitzwilliam Trench, the evangelical curate of Cloughjordan, who in order to demonstrate his orthodoxy assured the gathering that he had nothing to do with Methodist revivals 'where soundness of doctrine and sobriety of proceedings were not found'. He declared 'that not one of his converts had disgraced their Christian profession, or had joined the Methodist connexion'.[72]

While the early period of the Primitives' existence is characterised by a large degree of unofficial support by individual Church of Ireland clergy, the later years are marked by a growing perception of indifference, if not outright hostility. Two anonymous 'letters' in a pamphlet published in 1865 highlight the changing attitudes.[73] The writer

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67 Samuel Madden, *Memoir of the life of the late Rev Peter Roe*, (Dublin: Curry, 1842), p.96.

68 *PWM Magazine*, (1847), pp. 111, 81-93, 161-69.

69 Quoted in Madden, *Memoir*, p. 116.

70 Ibid.

71 Alan Ford, '"Never far enough from their fear": the Calvinist legacy in the Church of Ireland', *Search*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2009), 83-91.

72 'Clerical Meetings; Revivals of Religion', in *PWM Magazine*, (1840), p. 238.

73 *Two Letters addressed to the ministers, members and friends of the Methodist Societies in Ireland*, (Dublin: Robert Marchbank), 1865. (Letter I. 'To the ministers, members and friends of the Methodist Societies in Ireland', by J F, Dublin, 1 June, 1865; Letter II. 'To the members and friends of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society throughout Ireland,' by A lover of Methodism, Cork, 30 March, 1865).

of the second letter maintains that there was once a time when their Society enjoyed 'a large amount of sympathy from both the clergy and laity of the Established Church' ... but there has been for many years a steadily increasing hostility on the part of its clergy, and such of the laity as were under their influence."[74] The author of the first letter is Dublin-based but writes in similar vein. 'It is an undeniable fact that Primitive Wesleyans are more thoroughly despised by the clergy of the Established church than any other section of Protestantism in this country.'[75]

The difficulty for the Primitive Methodists was compounded in that, just at the time when the Established Church was proving a more hostile environment in which to pledge loyalty, they were experiencing internal threats. After the initial growth in membership and even before the Irish famine and emigration hit all of Irish society they were losing members. Various explanations have been given to account for these losses. The Primitives themselves on several occasions referred to large declensions through emigration.[76] There have been suggestions that they suffered disproportionately in the famine years because they had among their membership some from the poorer sections of society, but this argument cannot be entirely sustained. In the first place, there is much to suggest that for the most part Primitive membership was drawn from relatively well off communities[77] and secondly the decline had set in before the famine years.[78] The most likely explanation is that given by a Cork writer who, reflecting on Primitive Methodism in his own city, maintained that their decline in membership was due to their failure to retain second and third generation descendants for whom dual membership of the Established Church and Methodism made little sense.[79] Despite a fillip in numbers as a result of the 1859 revival the post-famine years are marked by an inexorable decline in membership against which the Primitives seemed powerless, except to pray for revival.

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74 Ibid. Letter II. p. 13.

75 Ibid. Letter I. pp. 56.

76 See for example, PWM *Minutes* (1837), p. 20; (1842), p. 19; (1847), p. 22; (1848), p. 15.

77 So June R. Binns argues the constant exhortations by the Primitive Wesleyans to their people to refrain from unnecessary travelling, indiscriminate reading of light literature and the neglect of the house of God for the works of nature in the fields and at the seaside, are the life-styles of the fairly well-to-do middle class families who would have had time to read novels or money to spare for Sundays by the sea. June R. Binns, 'History of Methodism in Ireland from Wesley's death in 1791, to the re-union of Primitives and Wesleyans in 1878' (unpublished MA thesis: Queen's University Belfast, 1960), p. 136.

78 'But the famine and exodus will not account for the ... diminution of our numbers. That part of our population most affected by these disastrous years were the Roman Catholic peasants and labouring classes of the south and west of Ireland; and among them we have no such decrease to record in proportion to their gross numbers.' Written by the anonymous author of *To the ministers, members and friends of the Methodist Societies in Ireland*, Letter II, 12. However, this has to be set against the footnote in the PWM *Minutes* of 1847 recording a loss of 2,312 during the previous year, 'With regard to the diminution of our numbers, when we consider the losses sustained by death and emigration, and how many of our poorer members were obliged to take refuge in the workhouses, together with those who are prevented from attending the means of grace for want of clothing, we feel cause of great thankfulness that our Society has been preserved in such a state of prosperity.' PWM *Minutes*, (1847), p. 10, cited in D. L. Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland*, (Blackrock: Columba Press, 2001), p. 72.

79 'Sixty years personal reminiscences of Primitive Wesleyan Methodism in Cork, Part 2', *Irish Christian Advocate*, (15 March 1901).

Allied to this decline in membership was the loss of some of their best young preachers to other traditions. James Wilson, who entered the itinerancy in 1846, counted over 60 colleagues who departed the work during his time. Of those who left in his early years the losses were almost entirely to Congregationalism – not just because of the lack of sacramental freedom but a growing crisis of conscience at being tied so closely to a minority Established Church, propped up by the iniquitous system of tithes levied on Catholics and Protestant dissenters.[80] The Primitive Conference, however, allowed no latitude for conscience and dealt harshly with any who broke the 'no sacrament' principles of their constitution. At the first conference Wilson attended [1848] one of those preachers about to join the Congregationalists handed in his resignation to the secretary.[81] He then offered his hand to the President, and a few others, and walked down the aisle taking his departure. Just then the venerable Wm. J. Pattyson and others started to their feet and sang —

We're soldiers fighting for our King,
Let trembling cowards fly;
We'll stand unshaken firm and fixed,
For Christ to live and die."[82]

v. Church of Ireland negotiations and beyond

Despite the upheavals of the post-Averell years with the loss of many of their best young preachers and inexorable decline in membership the Primitive Methodists never seriously questioned their unofficial relationship to the Established Church. When change came it was as the result of events outside their control. That change came in the form of disestablishment. The Irish census of 1861 had demonstrated the unsustainable situation of an established Church of Ireland which could claim the allegiance of only one eighth of the population of the whole island.[83] Demands from the Irish Catholic Church and the Fenian insurrection of 1867, combined with his own changing views of the nature of the Church, convinced Gladstone of the necessity of disestablishment.[84] Once Gladstone had made up his mind events moved swiftly. By early 1868 the first of the crucial steps had been taken in the House of Commons. The approach of disestablishment raised issues for all the churches in Ireland, most of all for the Church of Ireland itself but scarcely less so for the Primitives whose identity was so closely linked with theirs. Many of the Primitives fought vociferously alongside their Anglican

80 See for example, Charles Graham, *Memoir of John Graham,* (London: John F. Shaw, 1880), p. 82.
81 This was almost certainly Charles Graham.
82 James Wilson, 'Reminiscences of Primitive Wesleyan Methodism', *The Christian Advocate,* (26 May, 1905) 242.
83 McCourt, *Counting the people of God,* p.44.
84 For Gladstone and disestablishment, see Donald H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution, 1800-1885,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 232-43.

counterparts against any change to the status quo.[85] Nevertheless when it became clear that Gladstone would not change direction, like the Anglicans, the Primitives were forced to reassess their future.

Their address to the members of Society in 1868 is filled with foreboding. Since their last Conference 'the spirit of revolution has made rapid strides in the House of Commons ... notions which even a few months ago would have been inconceivable are now made the subject of open debate.'[86] Against that backdrop the Primitives engaged in a far-reaching audit of their work – of their circuits and missionary stations, statistics of membership and area of influence. They were taking stock as they looked at their options and possibly bargaining power. Although their membership had dropped below 9,500 these figures represented, they calculated, only a fraction of their constituency. In their connexion they had 1,057 leaders and local preachers, 5,000 children enrolled in their Sunday schools, over 1,500 farmer's houses in which they held services and 60,000 attending their ministry each week.[87]

Whether they liked it or not, the Primitives were being forced to reassess the nature of their identity and to contemplate a change in their alignments. There had been previous approaches from the wider Methodist family to the Primitives but all had been either sidelined or courteously declined.[88] However, in 1869 when overtures were made to the Primitives by the Wesleyans, they were not entirely dismissed. The situation was complicated in that the Primitives now had the attention of two suitors. The *Minutes* of the Primitive Conference of 1870 refer to two overtures towards union; one from 'several gentlemen connected with the Irish Church', the other from the Wesleyan Connexion. Confronted with such a choice the *Primitive Wesleyan Magazine* left its readers in no

[85] 'The Rev Mr Verscholyle said he knew a great number of the Methodist body, and he knew how they had stood by the Church in her times of difficulty and trial, especially in her last great trial.' Church Convention: sixth day. *The Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, (Oct. 25, 1870), p. 3.

[86] PWM *Minutes*, (1868), pp. 22-23.

[87] PWM *Minutes*, (1868), p. 11

[88] As early as 1820, Joseph Butterworth, MP, Adam Clarke's publisher-friend and treasurer of MMMS visited Adam Averell in an effort to persuade him to join forces in a failed attempt to reunite the two branches of Irish Methodism. Averell *Memoir* pp. 378-80; In 1849, the English-born, William Lupton, who had originally come to Ireland as an (English) Primitive before transferring to the Irish Wesleyans, on his own initiative issued: *A plea for union between the Wesleyan and Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Societies in Ireland*, (Sligo: n.p., 1849), which evoked no Primitive Wesleyan response; In 1866 the Primitive Conference appointed a committee to consider both a communication from an American Committee on the subject of a union between the Wesleyans and themselves and another letter from the President of the Methodist New Connexion on 'the importance of union between all Methodist bodies'. PWM *Private Minutes*, (1866) – Resolution 2. (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. CR6/3D/1/5). The Primitives responded the following year that, while willing to consider in Christian love any plan for Methodist usefulness, they regarded their own body as 'well adapted to meet the spiritual condition of Ireland'. [PWM *Minutes*, (1867), p. 16]. While William Arthur was briefly seconded to Belfast as Principal of the new Methodist College he wrote a pamphlet which reflected a growing feeling among many Wesleyans: *Ought not the two Methodist bodies in Ireland to become one?* Dublin: John Robertson, (1869). Nevertheless, it is an indication of how deep lay the chasm between the Primitive Wesleyans and the Wesleyans that every initiative seeking Methodist union had come from outside the two connexions or, in the case of Lupton, from one born in England while that of Arthur one who had spent most of his ministry outside Ireland.

doubt. Although the preachers and members were divided in their opinions 'the great bulk of our people were decidedly in favour of a closer union with the Irish Church'.[89]

Informal contacts between the Primitives and the Church of Ireland encouraged the Primitives in July 1870 to appoint a committee of twelve to confer in reference to a union. The Church of Ireland for its part appointed a fifteen strong Committee including the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, and the bishop of Derry.[90] Initial negotiations were promising and later that year the Convention of the Church of Ireland received an interim report from their committee which gave as its motive the object of retaining the members of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist body in connection with the Church of Ireland, and to incorporate, as far as possible, the system of Primitive Methodism within the Church.[91]

By the end of 1870 substantial agreement was reached. The system of itinerancy would be retained; the preachers would be admitted to holy orders and Bishops would be requested to license Primitive chapels. The Primitives stationing committee would submit drafts of stations to diocesan bishops before ratifying appointments. The main point of disagreement was where the ultimate authority for the appointment of the preachers lay; with the Primitive Conference or the bench of Bishops?

In the light of these promising negotiations the *Minutes* of the Primitive Wesleyans of July 1871, only six months later, make astonishing reading. 'We are persuaded ... should satisfactory arrangements not be arrived at, by the Committee of the Irish Church, and our Committee, who are to meet in October next, our preachers shall be permitted from that time to give the ordinances of religion to our people.'[92] Such a resolution signalled they were prepared to overturn the very principle which led to their formation. At the very least it appeared an act of bad faith. So it was subsequently described by the Church of Ireland negotiators and so understood by several historians.[93] However, the key to understanding the dramatic change of attitude is to be found in the Primitive's private, unpublished minutes and it is a source which, curiously, has been neglected. Between their regular Conference of 1870 and that of 1871 the Primitives met twice in extraordinary session. The first, in November 1870, was previously planned and was to respond to any decisions of the Church of Ireland Convention. The mood of that Conference was positive; the resolutions were in the form of enabling legislation in anticipation of the contemplated union. On the second day they warmly received a deputation from the Church of Ireland Committee and heard in detail the proposals by which this union might be realised. As they closed their gathering the only indication of potential difficulties was in just one of the seventeen resolutions. It read: 'That the

[89] PWM *Magazine*, (1870), p. 237.

[90] *Journal of the General Convention of the Church of Ireland*, (1870), 34.

[91] A tabular view of the areas of agreement and suggested modifications is contained in the *Report to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland*, (1872), pp. 219-21.

[92] PWM *Minutes*, (1871), Resolution 23.

[93] For example, June Binns comments: 'The Primitive Conference can hardly have supposed that their intention to permit preachers to administer the sacraments if negotiations broke down would likely hasten the Anglicans towards agreement.' Binns, 'History of Methodism', p. 159.

Secretary of Conference be directed to write to the Bishops respectfully requesting that they ordain no preachers of our Body during these negotiations, without the consent of the Conference.'[94] But within eight weeks, on 4 January 1871, the Primitives had reassembled in emergency session. This time it was not to discuss the niceties of church order but to shore up their structure which was in disarray following the ordination of eight of their senior preachers at the hands of the bishops. Among those who had departed was their President, George Robinson. Their going had left circuits without Superintendents and Districts without chairmen. But their departure had also shifted the balance of sentiment among the preachers.

More than anything else these ordinations reflect the different needs and concerns of the two parties to the negotiations. For the Church of Ireland, as they approached disestablishment, the Primitive Methodist issue was peripheral among a raft of business coming before it in quick succession, including the weighty task of the revision of the *Prayer Book*. For the Primitives the negotiations went to the very heart of their future identity and existence. From the Church of Ireland point of view the precipitous ordination of some Primitive preachers helped to address an immediate need. In the years of uncertainty leading to disestablishment local rectors had often been hesitant to hire curates. The best estimate is that the church was probably about 200 curates below its normal complement. It led to what has been called 'the great curates scramble' – with reports in some cases of curacies being offered to divinity students.[95] The cut off date to secure guaranteed annuities under the provisions of The Church Act was 1 January 1871. It was a generous provision which in time would contribute the sum of almost £7.6 million to the new Representative Church body.[96] In such circumstances even Primitive Methodist preachers had their attractions. During the first 50 years of the Primitives existence only five of their preachers had obtained Church of Ireland ordination. By contrast in the five years leading to and immediately after disestablishment twenty four Primitive preachers were offered and accepted ordination, with inducements to many more who declined.

Although conversations with the Church of Ireland Committee continued, the heart had gone out of the Primitives negotiations. The balance among the preachers was now with those who emphasised their Methodism more than their Churchmanship. The Conference of 1872 dissolved its negotiating Committee and in 1873, following overtures from the Wesleyan conference, conversations with the Wesleyans were initiated. Any legal difficulties were provided for, in anticipation, by 'The Primitive Wesleyan, Methodist Society of Ireland Act, 1871.' Five years later, in 1878 after the Wesleyans had made provision for the introduction of lay representatives, and in the midst of much celebration, Ireland had a united Methodism. Almost, but not quite.

[94] Minutes of Special Conference, (14 November 1870), Resolution 8.

[95] Akenson: *The Church of Ireland: ecclesiastical reform and revolution, 1800-85*, pp. 375-76, *n* .98.

[96] ibid., p. 320.

vi. Church Methodism at last

If, after the spate of ordinations, the balance of opinion among the Primitive preachers favoured union with the Wesleyans, the same was not the case among the majority of lay representatives.[97] So that when the Primitives stood down their negotiating committee with the Church of Ireland in 1872, a group of leading Primitive laymen, including James Hayes and Forbes Morrow, met at the home of the Dublin leader, John Sibthorpe.[98] There were present nineteen in all, including a member of the Representative Church Body and a member of the General Synod. There, they put in place a plan which would ensure the continuance of Church Methodism.[99] Later that year many of the Primitive laymen who were not prepared to separate from the Church, just as their predecessors had done in 1816, formed a Society of 'Church Methodists'; this time firmly under Anglican patronage. Its first President was Archdeacon Darley of Longford and it had the sanction of the Bishop of Kilmore. Darley had been associated with Primitive Methodism from at least 1838 and had been the driving force behind the failed Church of Ireland union talks. Among the leading laymen associated with the new Society was Thomas Hayes of Mohill, County Leitrim, as a result of which, in some areas, Church Methodists became known as 'Hayesites'.[100]

At the General Synod of the Church of Ireland in 1873 it was proposed that what was, in effect, a pilot scheme in Kilmore be extended to other dioceses.[101] The Archbishop of Dublin headed up a committee to further these aims and reported back to the General Synod of 1875. It was admitted that this action was in part to retain what various speakers calculated to be between 8,000 and 9,000 Primitive members who they did not want to loose to a united Methodism.[102] There were others who valued for the Church the organisational gifts of Methodism which the Primitives brought such as class meetings, love feasts, cottage meetings and evangelistic agents who reached parts of society the Church did not touch. By 1879 the Primitive Church Methodist Society had established headquarters and a Mission House at Ballyshannon in County Donegal. They were able to report that thirty new stations had been opened by their missionaries. District meetings were established in Portadown, Fermanagh and Donegal and five new candidates for mission work had offered themselves.[103]

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[97] 'When the Committee brought in their report, [at the 1874 Primitive Conference] the storm gathered with strength: the laymen, mostly all of them opposed to Wesleyan Union, appeared in full force.' Robert Orr, *Extracts from the Diaries of Robert Orr*, (Omagh: Strule Press, 1965), p. 34

[98] *The Primitive Wesleyan Conference and the Church: A short account of the Proceedings of the Committee of Union of the PWM. Conference and the General synod of the Church of Ireland with some notice of the present position of affairs.* (Belfast, 1874).

[99] A good account of this development is given in Binns, 'History of Methodism', p. 167.

[100] For a brief summary of the history of the Church Methodists see David B. Bradshaw, 'Some Irish Quarterly Tickets', *PWHS*, vol. 21 (1937), 23.

[101] *Journal of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland*, (1873), 62.

[102] So argued the Rev Mr [Robert] Hannay of Belfast. (better known under his pseudonym, George A Birmingham). *Irish Times*, (22 April, 1875).

[103] *The Irish Church Advocate*, (1879), 164.

In 1884 their annual Conference met in Enniskillen. Their President was the Dean of Clonmacnoise, the Rt Rev. Charles Reichel, DD,[104] later to become bishop of Meath. On the table in front of him, full of symbolism, sat the Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and Wesley's *Hymns* and *Rules of Society*. According to reports in the local press his opening address, 'for wealth of thought, probably has never been equalled in any Methodist Conference'. It was shortly to be published in pamphlet form. 'Every Methodist in Europe,' it said, 'should procure a copy as an authoritative utterance on ...the scriptural and simple usages of Class Meeting and the Agape, as adopted by Wesley.'[105]

At approximately its maximum period of development, the Primitive Church Methodist Society was comprised of circuits at Mohill, Maguiresbridge, Irvinestown, Portadown, Ballyshannon, Newtownbutler, Garvary and Tempo, Altrincham (Cheshire), and Kildonan, Winnipeg, Canada. Their *Minutes* record also its affiliation with work, apparently locally maintained and directed, in Liverpool, Manchester and other centres in Lancashire. Indeed, it made claim to be 'the only branch of the Methodist family now in Europe which strictly adheres to the design of the great founder of Methodism.'[106] The irony is that by this stage, at the end of the nineteenth century, there was a body of Methodists incorporated within the Anglican Church, retaining its own Conference and the system of itinerancy and had achieved much of what the Primitives had sought in the run-up to disestablishment. But it was too little and too late to secure the bulk of the Primitives. The Primitive Church Methodists continued in existence into the twentieth century before finally succumbing to new pressures.[107]

The legacy of John Wesley and his complex relationship with the Anglican Church affected Irish Methodism more than any other branch of the, by now, world-wide family. The history of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society is a reminder of that part of the Wesleyan heritage which in these islands has never entirely disappeared. Above all it is salutary to reflect on the failure of the first of many missed opportunities for Anglicans and Methodists to forge creative and generous models of the Church, capable of harnessing movements for renewal so that both would emerge enriched.

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[104] English-born Reichel, was formerly Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Trinity College, Dublin and the son of a Moravian minister. *Clergy of the Diocese of Meath and Kildare*, compiled by Canon J. B. Leslie and revised, edited and updated by W. J. R. Wallace, (Blackrock; Columba Press, 2009), pp. 727-28

[105] *The Church Advocate*, (1 September, 1884), p. 1257.

[106] *The Church Advocate*, (1 August, 1886), p. 147.

[107] See, for example, the modest claim in a circular 'Special Appeal' posted to David Bradshaw, son of a former Primitive Wesleyan Preacher, dated 25 October, 1900. It was sent on behalf of the Primitive Church Methodist Society. 'We beg to ask for your sympathy and support for this humble organisation, which we believe is doing a quiet but real and important work for our Lord and His Church in this country.' Its patrons included the Archbishop of Dublin and four other Church of Ireland bishops. (WHSI, Bradshaw collection).

LAITY IN DENOMINATIONAL LEADERSHIP: Vice-Presidents of the Primitive Methodist Church, 1872-1932[1]

I. Introduction

Henry Hodge, a seventy-three-year-old miller from Hull, following his election as Vice-President of the Primitive Methodist (hereafter PM) Conference in 1886, told the delegates gathered at Derby that 'he did not apprehend when he left home that morning, that he would have been appointed to that position, or he would have taken a later train. He was not much accustomed to speak, but he was a loyal Primitive Methodist. His family were also associated with this church, and he trusted to serve its interests to the best of his ability as long as his life was spared.'[2] Remarkably, in view of the huge amount of historical research devoted to the Methodist Church and its antecedents, almost no attention has been paid to the collective body of Vice-Presidents (VPs).[3]

Methodism has been renowned for utilising the resources of lay people in the churches. This is well known. In pulpit, Sunday School, class meeting and prayer meeting, stewards' meeting and trustees' meeting, sales of work and bazaars, harvest suppers and Wesley Guild socials, church-linked Boys' and Girls' Brigades and Scouts

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[1] I am grateful to a number of people and institutions for assistance with the research for this article: Professor Geoffrey Tweedale, who provided a number of dates of death and Census entries, as well as Sheffield references; the staff at the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, especially those in charge of the Methodist Archive; the Manchester Public Library and Local Archive; Greater Manchester Record Office; the National Archives of Scotland; and Professor Stanley D. Chapman who, several years ago, gave me the opportunity to air an early version of this paper. Peter Farrant has provided computer help.

[2] *Primitive Methodist Weekly Journal* (17 June 1886), p.378. In fact Hodge was being modest in the extreme. In the Hull District he was to the PMs what Joseph Rank became to the Wesleyans: a very generous patron of church extension. Henry Hodge was only fourth holder of the office but the attributes of successors for half a century might be traced in his profile. He was the son of William Hodge of Kilnsea near Spurn Point in Holderness who was converted through one of the preaching tours of William Clowes, the PM founder. Henry's faith credentials were impeccable. In time he and his three brothers likewise became PM stalwarts. In 1867 he was a shareholder in the PM Insurance Co. Ltd. In the 1870s Henry Hodge was Treasurer of the General Missionary Fund and of Elmfield School, a PM boys' school in York. His special local church concern was Williamson Street PM Chapel in Hull, third circuit. For its building he gave £3,000 (*PM Conference Minutes* (1867); (1872), p. 37; (1873), p. 86; (1874), p. 85; (1875), p. 84). A decade later he gave £1,000 for scholarships at Manchester College, the denomination's theological college (*PM Conference Minutes* (1886), p. 115). He was unable to attend the 1887 Conference as a delegate because of illness (*PM Conference Minutes* (1887), p. 119). Like many successors in the PM Vice-Presidency, Henry Hodge was in business, as a miller specialising in crushing seed oil (Census, 1881). Presumably he made his considerable fortune (he left over £62,000 when he died in 1889) from this source.

[3] John H. Lenton's article on 'Vice-Presidency' in John A. Vickers (ed), *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (Peterborough, 2000) notes two earlier pieces: A. Victor Murray, 'The Office of Vice-President', *Methodist Recorder* [hereafter *MR*] 8 July 1948, p. 4; David Lindsay, 'Changing Role of the Vice-President', *MR*, 22 June 1989, p. 12.

and Guides, and on all manner of informal church occasions, lay men and women have played critical roles in the life of the local church or chapel. Preaching and teaching skills, counselling and negotiating talent, property and finance know-how, handicraft and cooking abilities, or simply tea-making: all were mobilised to the glory of God. And what happened at the local level was replicated at circuit and district levels. While keenly appreciated on all sides, this multitude of endeavours was belatedly recognised at the PM connexional (national) level. Since only one person held the office of VP for a year at a time, the VPs topic represents the merest tip of the iceberg of lay activity in Methodism.

Before Methodist Union in 1932 the picture was a mixed one. The laity was excluded from the Wesleyan Conference until 1878 and lay persons never served as presidents or vice-presidents of their conference. The PMs (the third largest Nonconformist denomination, behind the Wesleyans and the Congregationalists) and the United Methodist Free Churches [UMFC], however, admitted laymen to the office of President of Conference. In both denominations it was a rare accolade, attained by no more than a handful of individuals in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[4]

Breaking new ground, the PMs created the office of VP of Conference in 1872, primarily to take the chair when the President was elsewhere at the annually-held gathering of the denomination. Initially, it was open both to ministers and laymen. In the first eight years only one layman was chosen. From 1884 onwards lay persons were elected each year to the office of VP of the PM Conference, apart from 1909 when Sir William Hartley was exceptionally honoured to be elected president and the Rev. John Welford served as vice-president (see Appendix for a list of names and dates, occupations and locations, and biographical sources). The practice of electing lay persons as vice-presidents of Conference was continued by the Methodist Church after 1932.

II. Who were the Vice-Presidents of Conference?

'There are many roads leading to the Vice-Presidential chair' declared the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* in 1921.[5] Was this really true? The PMs, before they were absorbed into the Methodist Church in 1932, elected 49 lay persons as VP in the course of 50 years. To analyse the 49 individuals I have used the methodology of collective biography, that is treating a set of individuals with at least one shared historical characteristic as a valid cohort for group analysis of other characteristics.[6] At the same time I have grouped them in two sub-periods, dividing at 1914. The 1872-1913 VPs (31 years but 30 individuals), for convenience, are named Victorians; the 1914-32 VPs (19 years and 19 individuals) are called the Twenties set. The chronological division aims to capture the effects of very differing contexts, one of growth, the other of decline: economic expansion, Liberal party ascendancy, imperial greatness, social optimism, and

[4] Among the PMs: Thomas Bateman in 1857 and 1867; Sir William Pickles Hartley in 1909. Among the UMFC: Henry T Mawson and James Duckworth, both of Rochdale, in 1883 and 1894, respectively. Kenneth B. Garlick, *Garlick's Methodist Registry, 1983* (London, 1983), App., pp. xiii-xiv, xx.

[5] *Aldersgate Primitive Methodist Magazine* [hereafter *PMM*] (1921), p. 47.

[6] Lawrence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus*, 100 (1971), pp. 46-79.

the heyday of English Nonconformity before 1914; in contrast, war and unemployment, the disintegration of the Liberal party, shattered Victorian dreams, and the increasing erosion of faith and churchgoing after 1914. Some of these differences emerge in the collective characteristics of the two sets.

i. Gender and social origins

Apart from the fact that all the PM VPs were men, Table 1 shows that little is known about fathers' occupations or birth family. Many remembered parents as being good but this conveyed nothing of the economic circumstances in which they spent their childhoods. In a few cases this was so deprived and unpromising that it was indelibly

Table 1

Gender distribution and social origins among Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1872-1932

Gender	**1872-1913 (30 V-PS)**		**1914-1932 (19 VPs)**	
Males	**30**		**19**	
Females	**0**		**0**	
Social Origins				
Good parents	**18**	60%	**14**	74%
deprived	**4**	13%	**3**	16%
Education,				
secondary	4	13%	**3**	16%
TOTAL	**30**	100%	**19**	100%

scored across their memories and years later, when social distinction came, they readily reported the adverse conditions from which they sprang. Among the Victorians, George Green, the son of a Stockport power loom weaver, started work in the mill at eight years of age; James Bell began work down a coal mine at the age of 9½, Henry Adams similarly, before the age of 12. Adam Adams recalled that his father had been a workhouse apprentice and implied his own upbringing had been unprivileged. In the Twenties set, James Black had begun work as a pit boy, as did Charles Wass; J. W. Arnold, one of the 14 children of a shoemaker, started work scaring crows at the age of six, received no schooling, never went to a place of worship because his clothes were shockingly poor, and was always hungry.

As many had modestly privileged educational opportunities as those who were poor. Among the Victorians, Linfield and Brown attended schools confusingly called Milton House, Linfield's on the south coast presumably, Brown's certainly in Sunderland. The Fletcher brothers were sent to Elmfield College, York, a PM secondary school established in 1863, of which Henry Adams was a trustee.[7] In the Twenties set Sir Thomas Robinson went to Humberstone Grammar School, William Ewart Morse, to Swindon High School, and Victor Murray, to Morpeth Grammar School.

ii. Age

Between the years 1872 and 1932 the age of VPs did not greatly alter, as Table 2 indicates.

The average age of Victorians was 57 and of the Twenties set 54½. Standard deviation provides some idea of spread around the average. The Twenties group bunched more closely to the average than the slightly older Victorians. Conversely, the median age (the middle value when all values are ranked by size), edged upwards: from 55 for the Victorians to 57 after 1914. Youngest holders of the office were of much the same age

Table 2

Age Structure of Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1872-1932

Age structure measures	**1876-1913 (30 Vps)**	**1914-1932 (19 Vps)**
Average Age	57	54.5
Standard Deviation	10.7	8.87
Median	**55**	**57**
Youngest	**41 (Frederick Caesar Linfield)**	**40 (James Gray)**
Oldest	**84 (Thomas Bateman)**	**68 (Sir Thomas Robinson)**
Number of Cases	**30**	**19**

in both cohorts. Frederick Caesar Linfield at 41 in 1902, the youngest of the Victorians, was overtaken in the Twenties set by 40 year old James Gray in 1917. Oldest among

[7] See *PM Conference Minutes*, (1906), pp. 177-80; at this time it had only 58 boys, was unprofitable, and was likely to close; it continued until 1932 when it merged with Ashville College, Harrogate. See E. Dorothy Graham, 'Elmfield College' in Vickers.

Victorian VPs was Thomas Bateman from Cheshire, aged 84 when he took office in 1884; whereas the oldest in the Twenties set was Sir Thomas Robinson, aged 68 in 1923.

iii. Geographical location

In their geographical distribution (Table 3) the VPs partly followed the general distribution of the PM population in England in 1851 with some concentration across the west and east Midlands and in the North.[8] Few came from London and the South East.

The big change between the distribution of the Victorian VPs and those of the Twenties was the percentage growth of representation from Yorkshire and the North West at the expense of representation from the North. The influence of the North-West was presumably enhanced by the presence of the denomination's ministerial training college in Manchester and the influence of the leading PM layman and proud Lancastrian William Hartley.

Table 3

Geographical distribution of Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1872-1932

Region	1872-1913 (30 VPs)		1914-1932 (19VPs)	
London	1	3%		
Other South-East	1	3%	1	5%
East Anglia	1	3%		
South West	1	3%	1	5%
West Midlands	1	3%	3	16%
East Midlands	3	10%	3	16%
North West	6	23%	4	21%
Yorkshire	6	20%	4	21%
North	8	27%	2	11%
Wales				
Scotland	2	7%	1	5%
TOTAL	**30**	**100%**	**19**	**100%**

[8] John D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* (London, 1971) p. 305.

iv. Occupations

In their occupational backgrounds (Table 4) the PM VPs exhibited a distinctive concentration. Both sets, Victorians and Twenties, overwhelmingly were men of business.

A closer look reveals particular emphases. One third of the Victorians were in manufacturing, nearly two thirds were in services. After 1914 representation of primary industries grew at the expense of that of services, though in absolute figures the numbers are small. Over the whole period services dominated and in this sector the distributive trades had primacy. There were drapers (William McNeill of Crewe, Levi Lapper Morse and his son William Ewart Morse of Swindon, and Ernest Brown of Sunderland); a butcher (George Charlton of Gateshead, in 1876 the first PM VP); a glass merchant (John Caton of Tunstall); and a string of coal merchants (John Jones of Chester, Tom

Table 4

Occupational composition of Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1872-1932

Occupations	**1872-1913**		**1914-1932**	
	(30 VPs)		**(19 VPs)**	
In Business				
Primary industries	1	3%	3	16%
Manufacturing	10	33%	6	32%
Services				
Transport & communications				
Distributive trades	12	40%	4	21%
Financial services	2	7%	3	16%
Legal services	1	3%		
Accountancy services			2	11%
Other business services	1	3%		
Miscellaneous services	3	10%		
Total in business/ex-business	30	**100%**	18	**95%**
Non-business backgrounds				
Education				
Academia			1	5%
Medicine				
Church				
Government				
Social Work				
Miscellaneous				
Total	**30**	**100%**	**19**	**100%**

Fletcher of Keighley, Frederick Linfield of Worthing, and Charles Wass of Birkenhead). At any rate, for PM leaders, unlike their Church of England counterparts, there was no dishonour in trade.

v. Political activities

The businessmen elected as PM lay leaders were not only successful in industry and commerce. They usually held high office in the community and this meant involvement with a political party. Inevitably, given the great gulf between the Tory party-landed interest-Church of England alliance on one hand and the Liberal party-urban-industrial-Nonconformity convergence on the other, this produced many Liberals among the PM VPs. In fact 15 of the 30 Victorian VPs announced their Liberal party loyalty and another, George Charlton of Gateshead, was known as a Radical (Table 5). That proportion slightly diminished after 1914 when eight of the 19 VPs publicised their Liberal affiliation. Argument from silence is always risky but it cannot be presumed that the rest of the VPs were necessarily Liberal.

Table 5

Political loyalties and local office-holding of Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1872-1932

Politics	**1872-1913 (30 VPs)**		**1914-1932 (19 VPs)**	
Party Loyalty				
Liberals	15	50%	8	42%
Radicals	1	3%		
MP	2	7%	1	5%
Local Govt office				
councillors	19	63%	9	47%
mayors	7	23%	2	11%
sheriff	1	3%		
JP	12	40%	11	58%
Penumbra organisations				
Membership				
temperance	8	27%	2	11%
freemason	1	3%	3	16%
Recognition				
knighthoods	2	7%	1	5%

Political activism was reflected in their memberships of Parliament, the magistracy, and city, county, urban district, and parish councils. Until the 1930s the *Methodist Recorder* printed lists of 'Methodist Lord Mayors and Mayors for the Coming Year'.[9] Of the Victorian VPs over 60 per cent were councillors and 23 per cent at one time or another were elected mayors of their council, proportions that slipped in the Twenties set. Proportions of the VPs who became JPs, on the contrary, appreciably increased. Only three of the VPs were or became MPs: Levi Lapper Morse of Swindon, Liberal, for South Wilts, 1906-10; his son William Ewart Morse, Liberal, for the Bridgwater Division of Somerset, 1923-24; and Frederick Linfield, Liberal, for mid-Bedfordshire, 1923-24.

Allied to political activities were involvements in a number of organisations like the temperance movement or freemasonry, the former one of the great Victorian moral crusades, the latter offering opportunities to temper the harsh winds of market competition. After 1914 fewer VPs announced their temperance credentials and, proportionately, adherents of freemasonry increased, though absolute numbers were tiny, perhaps because the secretive practices of freemasonry concealed affiliations.

Public recognition for these PM VPs came from political and public service. Sir William Hartley was knighted in 1908 for his benefactions 'to hospitals in the North, to Liverpool University, and to Primitive Methodist schools and chapels.'[10] Sir George Green, knighted in 1911, was honoured as 'a well-known figure in the insurance world, Convenor of the Lanarkshire County Council, and chairman of the General Council of the Scottish Liberal Association.'[11] Sir Thomas Robinson became one of the first 42 men appointed KBE in the new Order of the British Empire in 1917 for his wartime work as 'Adviser to the Board of Agriculture, Fish Food Committee etc.'[12]

vi. Religious experience

At root, what these 49 holders of the office of PM VP shared most profoundly was their Christian experience and convictions. Evidence of this, where quantifiable, is seen in Table 6.

Over half could look back and publicly recall being brought up by Christian parents. Approximately a third of both the Victorians and the Twenties set had parents who belonged to a local PM church. Among the Victorians four VPs were second-generation PMs and five third-generation PMs. In the Twenties set five were second-generation PMs, one third-generation, and one fourth-generation.

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[9] For example, *MR* (8 November 1934).
[10] This was the information given in notes about new knights by *The Times*, (26 June 1908), p. 14.
[11] *The Times*, (2 January 1911), p. 10.
[12] *The Times*, (25 August 1917), p. 7.

Table 6				
Personal religious experience of Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1872-1932				
	1872-1913		**1914-1932**	
	(30 VPs)		(19VPs)	
Parentage				
Christian Parents	16	53%	12	63%
PM parents	11	37%	6	32%
Personal experience				
Conversion	15	50%	7	37%
of which before 21	9	30%	6	32%
of which instant	9	30%	5	26%
Local preacher	17	57%	11	58%
Church office-holding				
Circuit & district office	5	17%	6	32%
Connexional office	7	23%	4	21%
Wife				
married	21	70%	16	84%
Wife's active religious				
involvement	7	23%	10	53%

Flesh and blood were not enough. The experience of faith in Christ had to be possessed individually in each new generation. A conversion experience, instant or gradual, was the vital portal. Although denominational profiles and obituaries recorded a higher proportion of known conversion experiences among the Victorians than among the Twenties set, it is likely that this was a reflection of reticence, rather than the absence of an individual's Christian faith experience.

Over half of the VPs in both sets were local (lay) preachers, taking services in chapels when the professional 'travelling preacher' (the minister) was elsewhere. It is worth recalling that the PMs in 1914 had over 204,000 members worshipping in more than 4,500 chapels and over 450,000 children in their Sunday schools; services (at least two per Sunday) were conducted by under 1,100 ministers and 15,700 local preachers.[13] However, lay preaching was by no means an obligatory qualification for VP. Hartley never preached because he had been brought up to play the organ: a skill as indispensable

[13] Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert and Lee Horsley (eds), *Churches and Churchgoing: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 142-3, 204-6; *PM Conference Minutes,* (1914), p. 82.

as preaching. Nor did Sir Thomas Robinson preach. To qualify as a Conference delegate, representing one of the Districts, men had to serve either as local preacher, or class leader, or circuit steward.[14]

Leadership qualities nevertheless had to be demonstrated and there were plenty of opportunities for this in the custody of property or finances, or the instruction of the young. William McNeill of Crewe was profiled as an outstanding workhorse: 'How he has worked! How he has stuck!! How he has given!!! Trustee, Local Preacher, Society [church] Steward, Circuit Steward, Sunday School Teacher and Superintendent—everything he has been and everything with all his heart.'[15] Elijah Jennings of Leicester was superintendent of a Sunday School with 1,400 scholars. Albert Shaw of Cradley Heath, Staffordshire, was hailed as 'a modern Nehemiah' who when mining operations demolished chapel and school, scattered the society and panicked the trustees, 'gave a magnificent lead and on the site of the old ruin a beautiful church now stands.'[16] Successful office-holding in the local church led to similar responsibilities in the circuit and then, higher still, in the district (into which circuits were grouped). Finally, outstanding men were elected from each district to the national annual Connexional Conference and to service on its various standing committees. A 'Connexional man' was a good candidate for VP.

The evidence indicates that at least two thirds of the Victorian PM VPs, and over 80 per cent of the Twenties set were married. Only two, Sir Thomas Robinson in 1923 and Charles Wass in 1930, are known to have been widowers when they were elected. Behind the VPs therefore were wives whose roles as loyal church workers were sometimes remarked. The doubling of the frequency of mention of a wife's role in her husband's career, between the Victorians and the Twenties set, may partly reflect the impact of the First World War in changing the social position of women.

vii. Behaviour as capitalist employers

The vast majority of these 49 VPs were in business and a majority in both sets of VPs owned their own businesses. Their scope for exercising power over others was therefore much greater than that of managers responsible to directors and to shareholders. The fleeting remarks in profiles and obituaries, biased by considerations of religious sympathy, libel law, or respect for the dead, suggest the pursuit of good labour relations when the topic was mentioned.

One evidence of good intentions as an employer was the introduction of a profit sharing scheme. As Table 7 clarifies, only two out of 36 employers seem to have had this: Sir William Hartley (introduced in 1889) and William Ewart Morse. Hartley had well over a thousand seasonal fruit pickers plus 600 permanent employees in his jam works at Aintree and London. Morse employed 200 in his drapery shop chain based on

14 *PM Conference Minutes* (1870), p. 2.
15 *PMM* (1912), p. 20.
16 *PM Leader* (22 June 1916).

Swindon. In addition, Charles Lewis, a Northampton boot and shoe manufacturer, provided welfare schemes for his 1,400 employees during the First World War.

Good labour relations were suggested by support for trade unions. John Coward, a Durham import and export merchant, was treasurer of the Durham Miners' Federation. James Bell, also in Durham but as northern representative (and thus a manager rather than a proprietor) of the Leeds clothing firm of Joseph Hepworth (a United Methodist) was a trustee of the Durham Miners' Association (which merged with the Federation in

Table 7

Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents as capitalist employers, 1872-1932

	1872-1913 (30 VPs)		**1914-1932 (19 VPs)**	
Firm Owners	24	80%	12	63%
Labour				
Labour relations,				
Reportedly good	8	27%	3	16%
Profit sharing scheme	1	3%	1	5%
Capital				
Wealth accumulation				
(estate at death)				
Under £1,000	2	7%		
£1,000 to £2,000	1	3%	1	5%
£2,001 to £10,000	9	30%	3	16%
£10,001 to £100,000	12	40%	9	47%
£100,001 to £1,000,000	3	10%	3	16%
Over £1 million				
(but Hartley x 2)	1	3%		
Unknown	2		3	
Systematic and				
proportionate giving	2	7%	1	5%
Other				
Foreign visits	5	17%	2	11%

1897). At Crewe where an alliance of the London & North Western Railway Co, the Conservative Party, and the Established Church tyrannised the LNWR's 6,000

employees, William McNeill (a travelling draper), Liberal leader, participated in defeating the company's policy of political intimidation between 1885 and 1890.[17]

The VPs were men of substantial capital when it is recalled that only four out of 49 are known to have left an estate of less than £2,000, during decades when ordinary farm labourers earned about £1 a week and skilled industrial workers £2 a week (Table 7). Of Victorians over three-quarters left more than £2,000 and 53 per cent, more than £10,000. Three, Levi Lapper Morse, the Swindon draper, Stephen Hilton, the Leicester shoe dealer,and Richard Fletcher, the Silsden, Keighley, textile manufacturer, each left over £100,000. One, Sir William Hartley, died a millionaire (and, as elsewhere, he has not been counted twice, although he was twice VP or equivalent). In the Twenties set over 60 per cent left more than £10,000, and three of these, more than £100,000: Charles Lewis, the Northampton boot and shoe manufacturer, Sir Thomas Robinson, a Cleethorpes trawler owner and fish merchant; and William Ewart Morse, Swindon's retail magnate and son of L. L. Morse, and also brother-in-law of two eminent railwaymen, Sir James Milne, General Manager of the Great Western Railway, and Sir William Stanier, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London Midland & Scottish Railway.

As Victorians of growing wealth and a Christian conscience prospered they struggled with the problem of wealth dispersal. A tiny number of Victorian VPs practised systematic and proportionate giving, that is they regularly set aside a proportion of their income for charity and as their income increased so they increased the proportion. William Hartley with his wife, early in his career, started this as a spiritual discipline in 1877 when he gave away a tenth of his weekly salary of £5 and a tenth of his share of the year's profits of £380. Eventually he was giving away a third of his gross income. This was estimated at £300,000 given away, of which £230,000 went to charities serving the whole community. At his death, Hartley paid £300,000 in death duties. Levi Lapper Morse also practised systematic and proportionate giving. Other VPs are recorded as giving away much lesser sums. Unknown amounts were disbursed as 'quiet gifts' or 'delicate charities.'

Last, it may be noted that a handful of the VPs travelled abroad, either for pleasure (as in the case of Sir George Green of the Prudential) or business (like Tom Fletcher, Silsden coal factor, who visited North America), or on church affairs (like Albert Shaw who visited some of the PM African mission stations on behalf of the Connexion; or Edmund Rawlings the London solicitor and author of the standard text on Nonconformists legal rights[18] and (Sir) Thomas Robinson, and L. L. Morse, all delegates to the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in Toronto in October 1911).

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[17] Diane K. Drummond, *Crewe: Railway Town, Company and People, 1840-1914* (Aldershot,1995), pp. 133-85.

[18] Edmund C. Rawlings, *The Free Churchman's Legal Handbook* (London, 1902).

viii. Summary

This collective biography suggests that the PM VPs shared several common features. All were men, mostly middle-aged and coming primarily from the Midlands and the north of England. Overwhelmingly they were successful men in business, some having risen from painfully deprived backgrounds. Politically they were engaged in their local communities, identifying themselves with the Liberal party. Their religious experience was personal and vital. For many it was nurtured by Christian parents and for a few it tapped into second, third, or fourth generation PM allegiance. Yet it was firsthand, by instant or gradual conversion to faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord of their lives, as they themselves testified when interviewed as VP, or were recalled in obituaries. Their involvement in local church and denominational organisation shaped their non-working lives. Most were firm owners, and sometimes there is positive evidence that they were considerate or good employers, providing a measure of welfare. How then did these men and their resources meet the needs of the denomination and shape the office of VP?

III. Shaping the office of Vice-President

The *Primitive Methodist Consolidated Rules* of 1902, the standing orders of the PM Conference, simply ordered that Conference should elect its President, VP, Secretary and Assistant Secretary. Other than requiring 'devotional exercises' to be conducted by the President or the VP, they imposed no specific duty on the latter.

However, the role of the VP has to be set in the wider context of the PM denomination. In the last decades of the nineteenth century it was still in an expansionary phase, needing support for chapel building and maintenance, financial assistance for the training of the ministry, funding for a central bureaucracy, and the acquisition of a London headquarters. After the First World War a second wind was demanded, even if it was not forthcoming. These demands dedicated Christian businessmen could supply. Their own employers, they could contribute time. In command of their own capital they could trickle some of it across the denomination's chapels. Wise in commercial affairs, they could steer the denomination through legal and accounting minefields. Because the VP was a figurehead representing the denomination, he needed to be a man with a worthy record in public life and meriting the honour conferred by the office of VP. Thus, of William Patterson, it was reported that 'his election to the vice-presidency of last Conference was the well-earned reward of a devoted life.'[19]

Clearly, one competence was the ability to run large meetings.[20] For this it was obviously valuable to have had experience of meetings further down the PM's pyramidal structure. The office demanded familiarity with the rules and order that emerged from the controversies of the PM's early formative and sectarian decades. Under these, the

[19] Comment on William M. Patterson; *PMM* (1914), p. 43.

[20] In 1870 Conference consisted of two travelling preachers (ministers) and four laymen from each of the 11 Districts; Deed Poll members of whom there were then 12; and Conference officers, then numbering four (*PM Conference Minutes*, (1870), pp. 26, 56-7.) In 1906 the 25 Districts sent 68 ministers and 135 lay persons to Conference: over 200 voices to be kept in order (*PM Conference Minutes*, (1906), p. 123).

President and the VP worked out the timetable of the Conference session and then, alternating mornings and afternoons, took their turn in chairing the meetings.[21] In 1903, when Alderman Linfield of Worthing was VP, the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* observed his 'natural gift for ruling a public assembly.... his remarkable executive ability. Hence his readiness and resource, his thorough knowledge of the rules of debate, his quick, alert business-like manner, his unfailing geniality, his firmness, and the delightful way in which he resolutely 'put down' even prominent members of the Conference when they were out of order, won the admiration of delegates and visitors alike.'[22] On the other hand, a quiet personality could occupy the office: Charles Samuel Parkin, son of a well-known Primitive Methodist minister, was remembered as 'a great soul, silent and effective.'[23]

Expectations of the VP were not limited to Conference. 'A Vice-President however, might be very effective in the chair, and almost a total failure in the discharge of those varied duties which he is expected to perform during the year.'[24] Those duties could be time-consuming. Indeed, in the 1880s and 1890s an increasingly necessary qualification for the office was the willingness to visit the churches in the connexion, to preach and exhort, to counsel and advise, in effect to bring that sense of national solidarity which enabled a splintered but expanding sect to grow into a national denomination. Henry Adams, director of the Refuge Assurance Co., travelled 6,000 miles on behalf of the PM Connexion and delivered hundreds of sermons and addresses during his year of office, 1888.[25] Of Levi Lapper Morse, draper and distinguished citizen of Swindon, it was reported in 1897; 'During the year he has given forty-five Sundays to the Connexion, besides laying a memorial stone at Bourne College, presiding at the great Missionary Meeting at Clowes Chapel, Hull, and the Annual Missionary Meeting in Spurgeon's Tabernacle, attending circuit gatherings, laying memorial stones of new chapels &c.'[26]

Invitations to preach came from all parts of the Connexion. In 1902 the year of office of Alderman Frederick Linfield, coal and corn merchant, was characterised as a remarkable success. 'He does not pretend to be a great preacher, nor has he the gift of making speeches of marked intellectual and literary ability', but 'his quiet addresses and sermons have been marked by a beautiful simplicity, and a directness of aim which have made them far more telling than more elaborate deliverances would have been the case of many other men. Hence he has had the joy of seeing conversions often Sunday after Sunday.'[27]

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21 Murray, 'Office of Vice-President'.
22 *PMM* (1903), pp. 688-89.
23 *PMM* (1919), p. 264.
24 *PMM* (1903), p. 689.
25 S. O. Addy and W. T Pike, *Sheffield at the Opening of the 20th Century: Contemporary Biographies* (Brighton, 1900), p. 194.
26 *PMM* (1897), p. 563.
27 *PMM* (1903), p. 689.

In the 1920s James Arnold, shoe manufacturer; Moses Bourne, colliery manager; and Thomas Gerrard, builder, were all noted for their effective preaching engagements. Arnold spent six months visiting chapels. Bourne was especially impressive as a preacher. 'As we write, the Vice-President is being welcomed with remarkable éclat in all parts of the kingdom, as week by week he ministers to crowded churches, and we who know how rich are his argosies, heartily congratulate those who are fortunate enough to accord him a hearing.'[28] During the first decades of the century, of course, pulpit princes could still attract and stir large congregations.

By the 1920s the VP was expected to be a proven member of the lower level District Synod. 'In the huge Tyneside District, which sends eleven or twelve lay delegates [to Conference] each year, it is possible to recognise outstanding ability without doing injustice to that large class of worthy officials who "see Conference and die"'[29] Distinctive qualities became apparent 'on the floor of Conference, on various committees, and on the public platform' where both 'eloquence and wisdom' made a mark. No longer was the inarticulation of a generous benefactor like Henry Hodge sufficient to secure election.

In the early twentieth century the merits of potential VPs were assessed in terms of 'clear vision and sound judgment,' of 'wisdom and eloquence.'[30] Joseph Longstaff, the Newcastle accountant presented a 'masterly survey of the world situation' in his address to Conference in 1921.[31] Nor was their ability and reputation expected to be confined to church circles. 'Alike therefore by his high character, his devotion to his Church and his fine record of public service, Mr Skinner has proved his fitness for the Vice-Presidency' it was noted in 1925.[32]

One extremely important qualification for a VP was generosity in funding Primitive Methodist causes, as noted for Henry Hodge. During his year of office the VP's generosity was spread around the denomination. The academic Victor Murray recalled that they were 'expected to subscribe to the funds of the churches which they visited, and often indeed were invited to subscribe *without* a visit. One holder of the office spent £800 in this way, and another must have spent at least £1,000.'[33]

Most PM benefactions went unrecorded but a few, where public, were noted. Henry Adams gave thousands; William Glass, £1,000 to his church at Wingate, County Durham, and other sums for delicate charities; James Sivil contributed £400 to Connexional funds; William Ewart Morse guaranteed £1,000 for the Banbury church. Towering above them all were the magnificent and often public gifts of William Hartley: £1,000 to the PM Missionary Society, 1884; £5,000 to the PM Jubilee Fund, 1897; £15,000 for the PM Centenary Celebrations, 1907-10; £17,500 towards the purchase

[28] *PMM* (1927), p. 41.
[29] *PMM* (1921), p. 47.
[30] *PMM* (1916), p. 43; (1921), p. 47.
[31] *PMM* (1921), p. 48.
[32] *PMM* (1925), p. 42.
[33] Murray, 'Office of Vice-President'.

and enlargement of the Holborn Town Hall as denominational headquarters and printing house. Critically, he made large gifts to the PM ministerial College at Manchester to which he recruited a distinguished Oxford scholar, Arthur Samuel Peake, who brought the college and denomination international repute.[34] With such a model, Hartley's contemporaries could hardly duck their corresponding VP responsibilities.

The practice of VP beneficence persisted until 1931 when Murray, after being nominated at the Conference in Derby, publicly declared that he would be unable to contribute any money. Nevertheless he was elected VP, the last among the PMs as it so happened.[35] The problem with the practice, of course, was that it excluded those who were not well off, yet who might have had remarkable Christian leadership talents. But there was more to the office. For the PMs it had theological significance. At their annual Conference there was only one session, attended by both ministers and laity. The presence of the VP at the single session therefore reminded them of their cherished Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. In consequence the VP symbolised the theological belief on which the organisation of the PM rested: that 'the lay ministry was equal in validity to the professional ministry.' [36] Former VPs continued to serve their denomination. They sat on the General Committee that oversaw the affairs of the sect between conferences. Thus in 1907, when (had they all lived to that date) 26 VPs might be expected to sit on the General Committee; in fact 16 (including the current VP) are listed among its members.[37]

IV. Conclusion

This article touches several historical debates. One relates to the social composition of Nonconformists' support. Clearly, by the 1880s, the lay leadership of the PMs (those most successful in reaching the lower classes), was provided by a very prosperous middle-class elite, mostly entrepreneurs. The extent to which they were self-made men is not clear and would require a thorough search of birth certificates. With respect to interactions between Protestantism and capitalism, this piece confirms a convergence view. The mechanisms by which capitalists emerged, though well known, are again exemplified. One route was to transfer from capital intensive manufacturing industries to service industries where resources were more extensively used. Noticeably two of the Victorian set rocketed up the social scale by this means. Sir George Green, exiting from the cotton industry, and Henry Adams, escaping coalmining, joined firms catering for the spreading habit of insurance: Green in the Prudential Assurance Co. and Adams in the Refuge Assurance Co.

[34] This list is in Arthur Samuel Peake, *The Life of Sir William Hartley* (London, 1926), pp. 13-14, but it is by no means exhaustive.
[35] Murray, 'Office of Vice-President'.
[36] Murray, 'Office of Vice-President'. For useful comment on the role of laity in Methodism see Margaret Batty, 'Laity', in Vickers (ed), *Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland.*
[37] *PM Conference Minutes*, (1907), p. 734

On the role of prominent men in the leadership of voluntary organisations, the article shows again that, as in Hartley's case, they were surrounded by numbers of lesser but nonetheless significant figures. What propelled Hartley ahead of dozens of others in denominational leadership? They were just as devout and dedicated as he was. They assumed as many, or more, civic and political responsibilities as he did. Several characteristics gave Hartley pre-eminence. First, he was the most successful self-made entrepreneur in the denomination, backed by a very shrewd wife. Second, he had strategic vision. For example, both in business and in religion, he realised that a powerful competitive advantage was gained by a base in London, the country's hub for population, capital, political influence, and international networks. Hence he opened a jam factory in Southwark in 1901 and for the PMs facilitated the purchase of Holborn Town Hall, enlarged and renovated, in 1908. Third, he was magnificently generous. As mentioned earlier, through the discipline of systematic and proportionate giving, he created large funds for distributions to charitable causes. Fourth, he offered down-to-earth leadership to the denomination, beginning in 1885 when he suggested to Conference that the PMs establish a company, to act like a bank, in order to relieve chapel debt. Eventually in 1890 the PM Chapel Aid Association Ltd was launched. Knowing the hazards of dependence on rich men, Hartley invariably required his gifts to be matched by others, usually a multitude of smaller donors.

This study leaves many research questions unanswered. Several are obvious. What roles did church and family networks play in the upward social mobility of these PM VPs? How did their espousal of Christian ethical standards translate into their behaviour as employers or as community leaders? How did these lay leaders respond, nationally and locally, to signs of church decline after 1914? For the most part answers will have to be provided by local historians. Meantime this essay supplies a sketch of the Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents' church universe: a glimpse of national lay leadership in a democratic ecclesiastical polity.

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Appendix 1 - Lay holders of the offices of President and Vice-President of the Primitive Methodist Church, 1876-1913

	Date	Primitive Methodists													
			bus			*Age at*									
		Vice-President	pos'n		*DoB*	*at V-P*	*DoD*				*Industry*		*Occupation*	*Location*	
1	1876	Charlton, George	p	***bus***	1810	66	1885	Sept	15		23		butcher and gentleman	Gateshead	ne
2	1884	Bateman, Thomas*	p	***bus***	1800	84	1897	Feb	2		1		farmer and land surveyor , retired	Cheshire	nw
3	1885	Lawrence, Thomas	p	***bus***	1843	42	1911	July	11		23		boot manufacturers' agent	Leicester	em
4	1886	Hodge, Henry	p	***bus***	1813	73	1889	July	14		3		miller & oil seed crusher	Hull	yh
5	1887	Coward, John	p	***bus***	1842	44	1917	Apr	22		23		import & export merchant	Durham	ne
6	1888	Adams, Henry	m	***bus***	1836	52	1906	Dec	12		24		insurance co director: Refuge Assurance Co Ltd	Sheffield	yh
7	1889	Caton, John	p	***bus***	1839	50					23		glass & china merchant	Tunstall	wm
8	1890	Jennings, Elijah	p	***bus***	1842	48	1914	Feb	12		15		shoe manufacturer	Leicester	em
9	1891	Clapham, Robert	p	***bus***	1820	71	1901	Dec	16		13		rope maker, retired	Yarm, Yorkshire	yh
10	1892	Hartley, William Pickles	p	***bus***	1846	46	1922	Oct	25		3		jam manufacturer	Merseyside	nw
11	1893	Jones, John	p	***bus***	1845	48	1912	March	30		23		coal & lime merchant	Chester	nw
12	1894	Robinson, Thomas	m	***bus***	1840	54	1928	Feb	17		5		chemical works manager	Hurlet, Paisley, Scotland	s
13	1895	Parker, William E	p	***bus***	1832	63	1907	Jan	4		26		restaurant owner	Manchester	nw
14	1896	Morse, Levi Lapper	p	***bus***	1853	43	1913	Sept	10		23		draper	Swindon	sw

15	1897	McNeill, William	p	***bus***	1832	65	1917	Dec	22		23		travelling draper	Crewe	nw
16	1898	Glass, William	p	***bus***	1840	58	1912	May	4		16		brick & tile mfr	Durham, Wingate	ne
17	1899	Windsor. William	m	***bus***	1852	47	1922	May	27		25		clerk of the works (Mcr Town Hall; hq Pru, Ref &c) & bus of own as Bldrs' surveyor	Manchester	nw
18	1900	Adams, Adam	p	***bus***	1841	59					23		grocer & merchant	Lowestoft	ea
19	1901	Foster, Robert	p	***bus***	1829	72	1911	Sept	28		26		temperance hotel proprietor	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	ne
20	1902	Linfield, Frederick Caesar	p	***bus***	1861	41	1939	June	2		23		coal and corn merchant; glass house pioneer	Worthing	se
21	1903	Bell, James	m	***bus***	1851	52	1907	Jany	4		15		northern rep of clothing firm (Hepworth)	Durham	ne
22	1904	Green, Sir George	m	***bus***	1843	61	1916	Apr	8		24		Inspector for Scotland, Prudential Assurance Co	Glasgow	s
23	1905	Rawlings, Edmund Charles	pro f	***bus***	1854	51	1917	Dec	17		25		solicitor, Sr ptnr E C Rawlings & Butt	London	se
24	1906	Hilton, Stephen	p	***bus***	1845	61	1914	March	16		15		boot manufacturer	Leicester	em
25	1907	Fletcher, Richard	p	***bus***	1852	55	1949	Jany	25		13		textile manufacturer	Silsden, Keighley	yh
26	1908	Harrison, Mark	p	***bus***	1846	62	1927	Aug	16		23		grocer	Hartlepool	ne

27	1909	Hartley, Sir William Pickles	p	***bus***	1846	63	1922	Oct	25		3		jam manufacturer	Merseyside	nw
28	1910	Sivil, James	p	***bus***	1864	46	1928	Aug	18		20		builder & contractor	Sheffield	yh
29	1911	Fletcher, Tom	p	***bus***	1854	57	1920	May	17		23		coal factor & exporter	Silsden, Keighley	yh
30	1912	Brown, Edward Hazard	p	***bus***	1863	49	1937	Nov	28		23		draper and mercer	Sunderland	ne
31	1913	Patterson, William Moscrop	pr of	x	1843	70	1918	Feb	18		26		journalist and evangelist	Newcastle	ne
					AV	57									
					STD	10.7									
	* Bateman was earlier elected President of the PM Conference (in 1857 and 1867).														
Key															
bus	business														
m	manager of business														
p	proprietor of business														
Sector numbers: industry goups according to Standard Industrial Classifications, 1968															
Regional divisions: based on those published in HMSO, *Britain, 1971: An Official Handbook* (London, 1971).															

Appendix 2 - Lay holders of the offices of President and Vice-President of the Primitive Methodist Church, 1914-1932

	Date	Primitive Methodists													
			bus			*Age at*									
		Vice-President	pos'n		*DoB*	*at V-P*	*DoD*				*Industry*		*Occupation*	*Location*	
1	1914	Speed, Henry	m	*bus*	1852	62	1940	Dec	6		24		assurance co dir (London & Mcr Ass Co)	Birkenhead	nw
2	1915	Parkin, Charles Samuel	prof	*bus*	1862	42	1919	May	3		25		accountant	Chorlton-c-Hardy, Manchester	nw
3	1916	Shaw, Albert	p	*bus*	1867	49	1924	May	2		5		mineral water manufacturer	Quarry Bank, Cradley Heath, Staffs	wm
4	1917	Gray, James	p	*bus*	1876	40	1948	April	29		20		contractor	Renfrewshire	s
5	1918	Lewis, Charles	p	*bus*	1855	63	1922	Oct	16		15		boot and shoe manufacturer	Northampton	em
6	1919	Robinson, Harvey	p	*bus*	1869	50					23		rag merchant	Ossett, Yorkshire	yh
7	1920	Longstaff, Joseph	prof	*bus*	1862	50	1936	Mar	15		25		accountant	Newcastle-on-Tyne, Shildon	ne
8	1921	Watkinson, Charles Kynman	p	*bus*	1858	63	1934	Jan	5		23		fish merchant	Grimsby	yh
9	1922	Gerrard, Thomas Lee	p	*bus*	1858	64	1936	Aug	9		20		building contractor	Swinton, Manchester	nw
10	1923	Robinson, Sir Thomas	p	*bus*	1855	68	1927	Feb	8		1		steam trawler owner	Cleethorpes	yh
11	1924	Skinner, James	m	*bus*	1864	60					24		insurance official	Leigh-on-Sea	se
12	1925	Morse, William Ewart	p	*bus*	1878	47	1952	Dec	18		23		drapery stores owner	Swindon	sw
13	1926	Bourne, Moses	m	*bus*	1867	59	1941	May	5		2		colliery company secretary	Moira, south Derbyshire	em
14	1927	Arnold, James William	p	*bus*	1860	67	1945	Aug	2		15		shoe manufacturer,	Northampton	em

15	1928	Clegg, William Ernest	m	***bus***	1871	57	1951	Sep	18		24		insurance mgr & director	Leeds	yh
16	1929	Hawthorne, William Henry	p	***bus***	1877	52	1932	Feb	17		16		tile manufacturer	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs	ne
17	1930	Wass, Charles	p	***bus***	1874	54	1951	Apr	22		23		coal contractor	Birkenhead	nw
18	1931	Black, James	prof	***bus***	1885	46					2		colliery engineer	Stafford	wm
19	1932	Murray, Albert Victor	acad	x	1890	42	1967	June	10		25		academic	Birmingham	wm
				AV		54.5									
				STD		8.87									

* Bateman was earlier elected President of the PM Conference (in 1857 and 1867).

Key	
acad	academic
bus	business
m	manager of business
p	proprietor of business
prof	professional

Industry numbers: industry goups according to Standard Industrial Classifications, 1968

Regional divisions: based on those published in HMSO, *Britain, 1971: An Official Handbook* (London, 1971).

SOURCES

Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1876-1913

	Date	Vice-President	Sources
1	1900	Adams, Adam	PM Leader 14, 21 June 1900; MWW 1910.
2	1882	Adams, Henry	S. O. Addy and W. T Pike, *Sheffield at the Opening of the 20th Century: Contemporary Biographies* (Brighton: Pike, 1900), 194; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 1906; PrC.
3	1884	Bateman, Thomas	1881 Census; PMWJ 12, 17 June 1884; Kendall I, 511-13, 551, 557; II, 284-5; D. Colin Dews, 'Thomas Bateman' in Vickers; PrC.
4	1903	Bell, James	PMM 1907, 905-6; PrC
5	1912	Brown, Edward Hazard	DCel; PMM 1913, 43-44; WWM 1933; PrC.
6	1889	Caton, John	PMWJ 20 June 1889.
7	1876	Charlton, George	1881 Census; Kendall II, 193; Gateshead Central Library, Local Studies, informatiion; PrC.
8	1891	Clapham, Robert	1881 Census; DCel; Geoffrey E. Milburn, 'Clapham Family' in Vickers; PrC.
9	1887	Coward, John	1871, 1881, 1891 Censuses; PMM 1889, 321-22; 1917, 616-17; Jeremy, 325-6; PrC.
10	1907	Fletcher, Richard	PM Leader 20 June 1907; MWW 1910.; WWM 1933; William Leary, 'Fletcher Family' in Vickers: MR 3 Feb 1949: PrC.
11	1911	Fletcher, Tom	PM Leader 13 Aug 1908; MWW 1910; PMM 1912, 43-44; 1920,630-31; William Leary, 'Fletcher Family' in Vickers; PrC.
12	1901	Foster, Robert	Newcastle-on-Tyne City Library, Local Studies, information; PrC.
13	1898	Glass, William	PMM 1899, 483; 1912, 727; PrC.
14	1904	Green, George	MWW 1910; PMM 1913, 113-18; 1916, 712-13; PrC.
15	1908	Harrison, Mark	1881 Census; PM Leader 24 June 1907, 25 June 1908; *South Cleveland & Durham Mercury* 25 Oct 1901; *Northern Daily Mail* 15 Oct 1900, 19 Oct 1901; Hartlepool Public Library, Reference Department, information; PrC.

	Date	Vice-President	Sources
16	1892	Hartley, William Pickles	DBB; ODNB; Arthur S. Peake, *The Life of Sir William Hartley* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1926); Jeremy, 323-34; PrC.
17	1906	Hilton, Stephen	1881 Census; PMM 1914, 414-16; Jeremy, 326; PrC.
18	1886	Hodge, Henry	1881 Census; PMWJ 17 June 1886; PM Minutes of Conference 1872-88 passim; Kendall I, 381-3; PrC.
19	1890	Jennings, Elijah	1881 Census; PMM 1914, 831; PrC.
20	1893	Jones, John	MWW 1910; PMM 1912, 391-392; PrC.
21	1885	Lawrence, Thomas	1881 Census; PMWJ 12, 26 June, 11 Sept 1884, 18 June, 19 July 1885; MWW 1910; Jeremy, 325-6; PrC
22	1902	Linfield, Frederick Caesar	*Worthing Intelligencer* 23 Dec 1893; PMM 1903, 688-93; *Worthing Observer* 16 Nov 1907; WWM 1933; MLPWW; *Worthing Herald* 9 June 1939; WWMPs; Jeremy, 326; Malcolm Linfield, 'Worthing Typhoid Epidemic of 1893' *Longshot* 4 (1995); Worthing Reference Library, information; PrC.
23	1897	McNeill, William	1881 Census; PMM 1912: 19-22; Jeremy, 325-6, 334; PrC.
24	1896	Morse, Levi Lapper	1881 Census; PMM 1897, 563; 1912, 133-137; 1914, 151-152; WW 1907; MWW 1910; Jeremy, 326, 334; PrC.
25	1895	Parker, William E	1881 Census; PM Minutes of Conference 1867-95 passim; PrC.
26	1913	Patterson, William M	1881 Census; DCeI; PMM 1914, 43-44; PrC.
27	1905	Rawlings, Edmund Charles	PMM 1903, 507-8; 1908, 454; 1912, 182-87; 1918, 94-95; Jeremy 326, 332; PrC.
28	1894	Robinson, Thomas	1881, 1891 Censuses; PM Minutes of Conference 1906-11 passim; Paisley Central Library, Local Studies, information; PrC.
29	1910	Sivil, James	1881 Census; DCeI; PM Leader 23 June 1910; PMM 1911, 43; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 20 Aug 1928; PrC.
30	1899	Windsor, William	PMM 1923: 471-72; PrC.

Primitive Methodist Vice-Presidents, 1914-1932

	Date	Vice-President	Sources
1	1927	Arnold, James W	PMM 1928, 4, 33-34; PrC.
2	1931	Black, James	PMM 1932, 39; WWM 1933.
3	1926	Bourne, Moses	PMM 1912, 551-54, 1927, 41-2; MLPWW; MR 8 May 1941; *Leicester Evening Mail* 5 Sept 1941; J. H. Lenton. 'Moses Bourne' in Vickers; PrC.
4	1928	Clegg, William Ernest	PMM 1929, 33-34; WWM 1933; MLPWW; D. Colin Dews, "William Errnest Clegg' in Vickers; PrC.
5	1922	Gerrard, Thomas Lee	PMM 1923, 43-44; WWM 1933; MLPWW; PrC
6	1917	Gray, James	PMM 1916, 672; 1917, 47-48; WWM 1933; MLPWW; PrC.
7	1929	Hawthorne, William Henry	1881 Census; PMM 1930, 4-5, 33-34; (Stoke-on-Trent) *Sentinel* 22 Feb 1932; *Pottery Gazette and Glass Trade Review* 1 April 1932; Hanley Library, Local Studies information; PrC.
8	1918	Lewis, Charles	1881 Census; PMM 1919, 47-48; *Northampton Mercury* 20, 27 Oct, 10 Nov 1922; Northampton Central Library, information; PrC.
9	1920	Longstaff, Joseph	1871, 1881, 1891 Censuses; PMM 1921, 47-48; WWM 1933; PrC.
10	1925	Morse, William Ewart	PMM 1926, 43-45; WW 1935; MLPWW; WWMPs; WWW; PrC.
11	1932	Murray, Albert Victor	WWM 1933; Albert Victor Murray, *Northumberland Methodist Childhood: Autobiographical Account of Family, Community and Chapel Life, ed Geoffrey E. Milburn* (Northumberland County Library, 1992)
12	1915	Parkin, Charles Samuel	1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 Censuses; PMM 1915, 392; 1916, 43-44; PM Leader 24 June 1915, 8, 15 May 1919; PrC.
13	1919	Robinson, Harvey	WWM 1933.
14	1923	Robinson, Sir Thomas	PMM, 1914, 632-36; 1924, 40-43, WWW; Jeremy, 325-26; William Leary, 'Sir Thomas Robinson' in Vickers; PrC.

	Date	Vice-President	Sources
15	1916	Shaw, Albert	MWW 1910; PM Leader 15, 22 June 1916; PMM 1917: 45-46; PrC.
16	1924	Skinner, James	PMM 1925, 41-42; WWM 1933.
17	1914	Speed, Henry	PMM 1915, 43-44; WWM 1933; MLPWW 1934; PrC.
18	1930	Wass, Charles	PMM 1931, 33-34; MLPWW 1934; *Birkenhead News* 25, 28 April 1951; *Birkenhead Advertiser* 25 April 1951; Birkenhead Central Library, information; PrC.
19	1921	Watkinson, Charles Kynman	DCeI; PMM 1922, 45-49; WWM 1933; William Leary, 'Charles K. Watkinson' in Vickers; PrC.
		Abreviations	
		DBB	David J. Jeremy and Christine Shaw (eds), *Dictionary of Business Biography* (6 vols., Butterworths, 1984-1986).
		DCeI	Registrar General, Indexes to Death Certificates
		Jeremy	David J. Jeremy, *Capitalists and Christians: Business Leaders and the Churches in Britain, 1900-1960* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
		Kendall	Holliday Bickerstaffe Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (2 vols, Edwin Dalton, 1906).
		MLPWW	*The Methodist Local Preachers Who's Who* (Shaw Publishing Co-Ltd, 1934)
		MR	*Methodist Recorder*
		MWW	*The Methodist Who's Who* (Robert Culley, 1910).
		ODNB	Brian Harrison et al (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (61 vols., Oxford University Press, 2004).
		PM Leader	*Primitive Methodist Leader*
		PMM	*Aldersgate Primitive Methodist Magazine*
		PMWJ	*Primitive Methodist Weekly Journal*

		PrC	*Probate Calendars (or Calendar of Confirmations in Scotland)*
		Vickers	John A. Vickers (ed), *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (Epworth Press, 2000).
		WW	*Who's Who*
		WWM	*Who's Who in Methodism* (The Methodist Times and Leader, 1933).
		WWMPs	Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament. A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons* (4 vols., Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1976-1981).
		WWW	*Who Was Who*

Wesley Historical Society Conference 3 – 5 May 2011

The Venue

The Conference will take place at the Launde Abbey Retreat Centre, East Norton, Leicestershire, LE7 9XB. Standing in 450 acres of parkland, the Abbey is the conference and retreat centre of the Anglican dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough. All rooms are en-suite and are provided with hospitality facilities. There are rooms for those who are disabled and there is full mobility access throughout the centre.

Launde is 30 minutes drive from Leicester and about 15 minutes by taxi from Oakham station. A mini-bus shuttle from Leicester railway station will be available and will meet nominated trains.

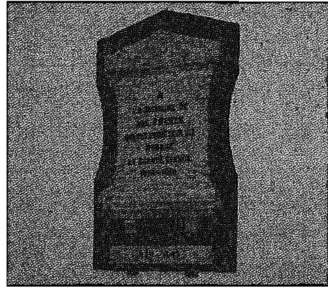
The cost of the conference, with full board will be approximately £150, which includes food and accommodation – the exact price will be announced in November 2010.

Memorializing and Remembering: Life stories in Methodism

About the theme......

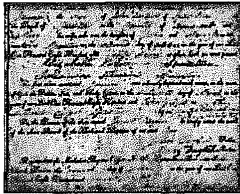
Life stories and biography have always been important in Methodism. From the earliest volumes of John Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*, the lives and deaths of preachers, class leaders, members and their families have been recorded, often as exemplars of holy living and holy dying, as well as memorials to the more materialistic contributions they made to Methodism.

As well as exploring some of the earliest Methodist life-stories, the Conference will examine the ways in which life stories have been used to edify, record and illustrate the history of Methodism. Memorials come in all shapes and forms: obituaries, plaques, grave stones and even complete



buildings. Memorials also exist as myth, folk-lore and tradition within the Methodist community.

At our 2011 conference we hope to explore a range of these different kinds of memorial and the life-stories they represent; as well as inviting a small number of specialist speakers, we hope that members of the society will contribute to the conference by sharing experiences and discoveries about the lives of Methodists. Perhaps you have undertaken some family history research, or you've been busy writing a history of your church or circuit, you may have some fascinating stories to tell of Methodists of past generations or know of an unusual memorial or have explored local oral history. Why not share your work by making a short presentation about the life story you have discovered? Contributions are also most welcome from students engaged in academic research. Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes – and projection and other equipment can be made available. For more information about making a presentation at the conference, contact the Conference Secretary by using the registration form.



During the Conference, we will also have contributions about the early records of Methodists, as well as presentations about using Methodist archives to learn more about the life stories of the past.

How to register

If you would like to register an interest in sharing in the conference as a contributor or obtain more information about attending the conference, then please complete the registration form, which can be downloaded from the website, http://www.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk/ and access the Events tab. The form should be sent it to the WHS Conference Secretary. Rev David J Hart M.Th, BA Bed, The Methodist Church, 4 North View, Westbury Park, Bristol BS6 7QB

BOOK REVIEWS

The Last Wesleyan: a Life of Donald Soper, by Mark Peel (Scotforth Books, 2008, pp. 308, £17.99, ISBN 978-1-904244-48-6).

I finished reading Mark Peel's new biography of Donald Soper at the height of the General Election campaign earlier this year as it so happened. It struck me quite forcefully at the time that despite the innovation of much hyped television debates between the party leaders, devotees of the Labour Party of old, like Soper and his many contemporaries, would surely have been dismayed at the lack of principled debate in the 2010 campaign!

Soper, of course, championed a Christian socialism that had its roots in the early twentieth century Labour movement. He remained committed to it throughout his life, and it informed much of his seventy year open air preaching career at Tower Hill and Hyde Park in London. The wonderfully evocative picture on the cover of Peel's biography reflects that lifelong commitment. For the majority of his working life Soper served as Superintendent of the West London Mission, the outreach agency that had been originally established by the eminent London-Welsh Wesleyan minister, and champion of the social gospel, Hugh Price Hughes. A lifelong advocate of Christian Socialism, Pacifism and a very liberal interpretation of the Christian message indeed, Soper remained a controversial and polarising figure throughout the course of his life. Peel has written a terrific biography, possibly eclipsing Brian Frost's hitherto definitive *Goodwill on Fire: Donald Soper's Life and Mission* (1996). Peel's study, which takes full advantage of the large Soper archive in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, sets Soper in his context very effectively, but it also has the real virtue of giving a decent amount of space to his intellectual, theological and political development, alongside some of the more better known and public aspects of his life and career.

As an evangelical Christian reading this study though, I couldn't help but be saddened at Soper's belligerently liberal and minimalist theological stance. In the opening pages his theology is summarised in three basic points: belief in the Fatherhood of God, an humanitarian Jesus, and nothing more, and a moral influence doctrine of the atonement (p. 27). Rooted in early twentieth century liberal theology, Soper never seems to have engaged with some of the other, more obviously orthodox, currents that coursed through British nonconformity in the second half of the same century. He himself disagreed sharply and very publically with conservative evangelicals throughout his life; the American evangelist Billy Graham aroused his ire during Graham's crusades in 1950s London and some of his clashes with the Ulster fundamentalist, Ian Paisley are the stuff of legend.

Yet, if Soper's theological liberalism appears unsatisfying, this reviewer found his lifelong commitment to the poor and dispossessed a timely reminder that Christian's have a responsibility for social justice that transcends political affiliation. Some

Christians are far too content to make-do with a false pietism that so stresses the atoning nature of the Gospel, that they overlook its incarnational aspects. Soper might have over emphasised the later, but his stance is worthy of serious reflection nonetheless. Again Soper's lifelong commitment to the peace movement, especially the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, is a necessary corrective to many contemporary Christians, particularly on the other side of the Atlantic perhaps, who seem to be far to ready to use crusading military force to solve international disputes.

Soper was a man who sharply divided opinion during his long and illustrious life, and this biography will also no doubt arouse a wide range of opinions, both within Methodism and in the wider Christian church. Mark Peel has done an admirable job in presenting a full and rounded picture of Soper, and his biography is highly recommended, not only for fellow Methodists, but for all those interested in the history of Christianity in Britain during the course of the long twentieth century, almost all of which Soper lived to see.

DAVID CERI JONES

The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley, edited by Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. xxi, 343. Paperback. £17.99. ISBN 9780521714037).

The 'Cambridge Companions to Religion' series is now well established and some of its other volumes are probably well known to some readers of this journal. This latest volume, a companion to John Wesley, is a worthy addition to the series, and a very valuable addition to Wesley and Methodist studies more generally. This is not the only such companion to appear in recent years either. *The Oxford Handbook to Methodist Studies* (2009), a much larger volume it has to be said, appeared last year and will be reviewed in a later edition of this current journal. Both volumes put a wealth of very up-to-date historical writing at the fingertips of their readers, and will be of benefit both to those who are new to Wesley studies or students of longer acquaintance with the subject.

This companion to John Wesley is divided into four sections, though of sharply varying size – the first section having only one chapter in it! This chapter, an examination of John Wesley's eighteenth century context was, for me, one of the standout contributions. Jeremy Gregory provides readers with a useful introduction to scholarly debates over the nature of the eighteenth century, and looks at some of the implications which the latest scholarship on the century might have for the study of Wesley and Methodism. Along similar lines and as part of the second section entitled 'Wesley's life', David Hempton summarises some of the key debates in which Methodist and Wesley

scholars have been involved. Among other things he discusses the relationship between Methodism and the Church of England, the Methodists and popular culture, and interestingly the Methodists and politics, with an incisive discussion of the Halévy thesis, that perennial favourite of Methodist historians.

The largest and most diverse section of the book, part three, looks at Wesley's life from ten different perspectives, historical, theological, literary and even scientific. It is beyond the scope of a short review like this to comment effectively on more than one or two of these chapters, so I'll just limit myself to those which I personally found most engaging. I found Charles I. Wallace's chapter on 'Wesley as revivalist/renewal leader' a little disappointing. While it discusses some of the more obvious features of Wesley's revival ministry, field preaching and enthusiasm, as well as some of the opposition Wesley and his preachers faced, I felt that the chapter lacked the sufficient engagement with some of the increasingly extensive historiography on the practice of revivalism. Isabel Rivers has been working on the print culture created by mid eighteenth century evangelicals for some time, and here she contributes an essay on Wesley as an editor and publisher. The chapter obviously engages quite extensively with the contents of Wesley's *Christian Library*, and while there is certainly some discussion of Wesley's re-writing of the works of others to suit his own theological predilections, I would have liked more detail, although Rivers has discussed some of these themes elsewhere. Many readers will be especially interested to read the chapters on Wesley's scientific views and his medical experiments. Randy Maddox discusses his engagement with the natural sciences, while Deborah Madden discusses Wesley on health and healing, both areas which give additional weight to Henry Rack's recent claims for Wesley being a man of the Enlightenment.

The final section deals with Wesley's legacy. The spread of Wesleyan Methodism is dealt with at understandably breakneck speed by Kenneth Cracknell. Less obviously familiar to many readers will be the influence of Wesley's theology beyond the confines of Wesleyan Methodism itself. Randall Stevens deals admirably with that influence within the holiness, Pentecostal and charismatic traditions, and agrees with David Martin's assessment that the success of Pentecostalism in the Global South in more recent times owes much to its replication of many of the features of early Methodism. In many respects though it's the last chapter that proves to be the most intriguing. Sarah Lancaster looks at current debates over Wesley's legacy within the contemporary Wesleyan movement, in all of its diversity. She discusses the mild embarrassment that many Wesleyans felt over Wesley abilities as a theologian in the nineteenth century, but shows how this was unnecessary and short-sighted. The chapter then examines some of the areas, particularly in reference to the theology of conversion, baptism, communion and Christian perfection, in which contemporary Wesleyan theologians are appreciating afresh the richness of John Wesley's theological insight.

For an historian of Methodism interested more in the other streams of the Methodist family, the reluctance of some of these essays to think beyond Wesley himself can sometimes be a little frustrating. For this reason some readers may find it useful to use this volume alongside the more extensive *Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, but

the editors of this Cambridge Companion are to be congratulated on producing a highly stimulating collection of essays that show on page after page that Wesley and Methodist studies are in robust health.

DAVID CERI JONES.

A HISTORY OF TRINITY CHURCH SUTTON 1907-2007, by Colin Howard. (Sutton: Trinity Church, 2009, pp. 136. Paperback. £10 or £11.50 including p&p from colin@achoward.demon.co.uk).

This book is a well researched and cogently written centenary history of the Trinity United Reformed/Methodist Church building in Sutton, Surrey. The book opens with an optimistic 'Foreword' by Martin Camroux who speaks about the full weekday programme and a growing multi-ethnic congregation drawn from 24 countries and 18 denominational traditions. The book begins by explaining that the present building was opened as a Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1907, but the name was changed to Trinity Methodist Church in 1932 to reflect Methodist Union. There is a thumbnail sketch of John Wesley and the origins of Methodism. The timeline shows the development of the Sutton Wesleyan Society, established in 1801, down until the establishment of the United Reformed/Methodist LEP in 1973. There is also an interesting brief history of the Sutton Congregational Church from 1799 to 1973. One of the values of this book is the ecumenical dimension. Sutton Methodist Church had a good relationship with St Nicholas Anglican Church. The Congregationalists were, with their style of worship, church administration and independence closer in ethos to the local Baptist Church. This section of the book tells of the pragmatic approach of the Methodists and the Congregationalists to see their future mission together and to learn from each other's traditions, even though there were several people who were apprehensive of the union. The Congregationalists had first to come to terms with giving up their independence and becoming a United Reformed Church with its 'connexional' system and then, within six months, to begin to negotiate a Local Ecumenical Project with the Methodists. The difficulties and opportunities of this United Church are honestly told. The book is well illustrated with good quality monochrome and coloured photographs of past and the present church buildings. Photographs of recent events and people also give an insight to the vitality of Trinity Church. There are useful and interesting appendices which list the ministers of both denominations and show how, since the inauguration of Trinity Church, the clergy have ministered cooperatively. This is a model example of how a local church history should be researched and published.

DONALD H RYAN

A Memoir of Samuel Barber – A black "ranter" from the Mother Town, foreword and introduction by Cedric Barber (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2007, pp. 26. Paperback. [no price])

Slaves Sinners and Saints, by Cedric Barber (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2008, pp. 252. £8.99. ISBN978-1-901670-87-5). [Both these books may be purchased together for £10.49 plus £1.50 p&p if ordered from www.christiansforservice.co.uk/book_sinner.html]

The key which unlocked Cedric Barber's pilgrimage search for his family's half remembered reference to a 'notorious dark-skinned ancestor' happened when he found a reference in *Johnsonian Gleanings Parts I-XI - Francis Barber; the Doctor's Negro Servant* by Aleyn Lyell Read. This helped him to track down the obituary of Samuel Barber in the 1842 *Primitive Methodist Magazine* in the library of Englesea Brook Primitive Methodist Chapel and Museum, Cheshire. The obituary was an appraisal of the life of Samuel Barber who died in 1828, aged 42. Samuel was the first black-skinned Primitive Methodist Local Preacher in Great Britain. This book contains the full text of the obituary approved by the Primitive Methodist Quarter Board and which was written by Samuel Barber's friend John Smith. The obituary opens by saying that Samuel, who lived in Tunstall, was the son of Francis Barber, the black skinned man-servant and amanuensis of Dr Samuel Johnson. Samuel, like his father, was brought up an Anglican and regarded Methodists as 'wolves in sheep's clothing' and as the 'false prophets' spoken of in Matthew vii: 15'. With William Clowes and others Francis was caught up in the 1805-6 Methodist Revival in Burslem and three years later he became a Local Preacher and an evangelist.

Slaves Sinners and Saints gives an interesting and personal view of the Barber Family starting with Francis Barber and the attitudes of people to slaves and slavery more generally. Whilst the book is in three parts they are interlinked by family connections and their Christian faith. In Part 1 the story starts with a thumbnail sketch of England and the political turmoil of the mid-eighteenth century. William Wilberforce's fight to ban the slave trade is referred to but not analysed in any detail. In Part 1 the birth and early life of Quashey (Francis Barber) in Jamaica is outlined. The circumstances which brought him to Britain and eventually caused him to become Dr Samuel Johnson's servant is told. It is shown how he was educated at Johnson's expense and became more a son than a man-servant. In Part 2 John Smith's obituary of Samuel Barber (who was named after Dr Johnson) and other contemporary references give us an interesting insight into the life and preaching ministry of Samuel Barber and Primitive Methodism's impact in and around the Potteries. Cedric Barber's research gives us a clearer and fuller picture of the life and faith of Samuel Barber. In the last part, Cedric Barber's autobiography and spiritual journey is outlined. Cedric Barber's warmth, honesty and evangelical zeal become clear as he tells of his journey through high moments and hard times. The impact

and significance of the anniversaries in 2007 of the abolition of the Slave Trade and the Mow Cop celebrations of the founding of Primitive Methodism are explained. Cedric Barber looks at the past 'as a bridge to the future'. These two books read in tandem are a valuable contribution to our understanding of an important part of Primitive Methodist history.

DONALD H. RYAN

NOTES AND QUERIES

1589 MRS ANNA ONSTOTT

In 1761 Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) presented to John Wesley a one gallon sized teapot which he made as a memento of their first meeting in 1760. In 1908 a quarter sized teapot was made by the Wedgwood factory which carries the inscription REPLICA OF THE / WESLEY-WEDGWOOD TEAPOT / THE ORIGINAL IN WESLEY'S HOUSE / CITY ROAD, LONDON, ENGLAND / MADE BY JOSIAH WEDGWOOD 1761 / REPRODUCED BY / JOSIAH WEDGWOOD & SONS LTD / ETRURIA, ENGLAND, 1908 / FOR / MRS ANNA ONSTOTT / PRINCETOWN, INDIANA, U.S.A.. Mrs Anna Onstott was born on 1869 to Frederick and Mary Horner Long in Wooster, Ohio and christened Anna Melissa. Anna was educated in the Mansfield, Ohio, schools and Wooster University. At the age of 12 she became a member of the Mansfield First Methodist Church. Whilst still at Wooster University she married Rev. Daniel Onstott on 27 June 1888. In 1891 Anna attended the Boston, Massachusetts, School of Theology. During this time she and her husband served a number of pastorates in New Hampshire. Whilst in Maine she served as the Maine Methodist Conference Women's Home Missionary Society Conference Secretary. Following this she and her husband worked for 10 years in Indiana and then returned to Ohio where Daniel ministered in Willard. He died suddenly on 21 September 1921.

For a number of years Anna lived with her eldest daughter Mrs Grace E Noble first at Princeton, Indiana and then at Brookhaven, Mississippi. She then went to the Ohio Wesleyan College, Delaware, to undertake research into Methodist history. This was followed by visits to England, Ireland and Canada to search for and purchase portraits and Methodist art objects which are now housed in the Drew University Library, Madison, New Jersey, USA and John Street United Methodist Church, New York. Anna spent 10 years at John Street UMC researching Methodist History. She was prominent in promoting the Bicentennial celebrations of the Mother of American Methodism, Barbara Heck's birth (1734-1804) which were held in the USA, Ireland and Canada. Anna M. Onstott died on Wesley day 24 May 1944

DONALD H. RYAN