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Illawarra Methodism in the nineteenth century: a comparative study of Wesleyan and primitive Methodism in Wollongong, 1838-1902

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ILLAWARRA METHODISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WESLEYAN AND PRIMITIVE
METHODISM IN WOLLONGONG, 1838-1902.

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PHYLLIS TIBBS.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, a comparative study of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in the nineteenth century, is an exercise in religious and social history. Very little has been written on the religious and social history of the Illawarra region in the nineteenth century. Even Methodist historians have not explored the relationship between the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodists in New South Wales. This thesis attempts to analyse Illawarra Methodism in the contexts of the history of Methodism and of Australian social history.

The thesis draws heavily on official church documents of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism from the levels of the circuit (that is Wollongong), the District Meeting, the Conference or Assembly, and the General Conference as well as Connexional journals. There has been a higher survival rate for Wesleyan Methodist records than for Primitive Methodist ones, which has placed some limitations on the present study. Local newspapers have also proved valuable as a primary source. Diaries, an autobiography, preaching plans and written and oral recollections of past and present Methodists have given colour to the black and white of official church records and newspapers.

This thesis argues that colonial New South Wales inherited a divided Methodism, but not the reasons for the divisions, and, thus no further divisions occurred. The colonial environment
diminished the differences between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism particularly in the critical area of relations between clergy and laity, and thus opened up the possibility of re-union which occurred earlier and more easily than in Britain.

The structure of the thesis begins with a divided Methodism in nineteenth century Britain followed by its transposition into the New South Wales colonial environment, and the culmination of Methodist development in union in 1902 in Australia.

The history of, and the reasons for, the divisions within British Methodism are analysed in Chapter One. Chapter Two looks at Methodist (Wesleyan and Primitive) beginnings in New South Wales and then in Wollongong. The major part of this thesis is contained in Chapters Three and Four where an in-depth comparative study is made of several aspects of church and community life in the Wollongong Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist circuits. The final chapter examines a climax of Australian Methodist history: the movement towards union in 1902 together with some of its immediate results. Currie's model of ecumenicalism in an industrialised society is applied in a limited way to this example of church union.
INTRODUCTION
Just as increasing numbers of Australians are embarking on family history research looking for an identity based in ancestral roots, so there are some sections of today's church which are confused about their identity in modern secular society. Discovering the reasons for church origins and development is an important part of re-establishing an identity. The Uniting Church in Australia, which only 'began' in 1977, has a particular problem in that its roots extend back through the centuries in three directions, not just one; and the origins and development of the three are equally important in the contribution they make to the new church. An understanding of the three traditions enables one to understand the whole, and to begin to discover what the church's role in twentieth century society should be.

One of these roots is Methodism, and it is this tradition that I am most familiar with. To understand and interpret its history has been a developing interest for some years. But Methodism is too large an area to begin with. One needs to start with a small, manageable piece of Methodism. Thus I have turned to the local area of Illawarra, where both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism were established and maintained their separate identities until the Methodist Church of Australasia was founded in 1902. In this way two interests - religious history and local history - have combined to produce the present study.

Very little historical writing has been done on the local area. Nineteenth century church history and social history are wide open spaces inviting historical investigation. 'Illawarra Methodism in the Nineteenth Century', is a contribution to the religious and social history of the Illawarra region.
3.

The secret of religious history is social history. Yet religion at the same time casts its own unique light on society. (1)

This basic claim is one of the foundations of Obelkevich’s study of the English district of South Lindsey. It is also one of the foundations of the present study and is particularly useful in exploring the comparative aspects of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in Wollongong.

It appears that Methodist historians have not explored the relationship between the two largest branches of Methodism (Wesleyan and Primitive) in Australia; certainly nothing has been done on the New South Wales scene. Wollongong is an ideal area for a comparative study, because both forms of Methodism were strong especially in the latter decades of the twentieth century, and there were local factors operating which highlighted some of the distinctive features of each.

There is a tendency among some historians to discount or even dismiss religion as an historical force. This is a limitation of modern rationalistic and secular thought. Australian religion in the nineteenth century was of ‘moderate importance’ and therefore warrants serious historical study.


Mol comments that

There have been far too many writers about Australia, for whom religion was quite irrelevant and too few for whom it was of central importance. (3)

This present study is an exercise in religious and social history by one for whom religion is of central importance. This standpoint gives insights not available to all, but special care needs to be taken to preserve historical objectivity.

Available primary source material is sufficient rather than abundant. Official church documents comprise mainly minute books and account books of the Wollongong circuits, the District Meetings and the Annual Conference and Assembly, as well as the New South Wales Connexional Journals. Local newspapers report most religious events as well as other happenings of importance to Wollongong's population from 1856. Editorial comment is often significant. Because the Wesleyans saw the united Methodist Church of Australasia as a continuity with Wesleyan Methodism and a discontinuity with Primitive Methodism, sources for Primitive Methodism are much more limited. Their historical records were not so highly valued and little attempt was made to preserve them. Some minute books survived, a handful of copies of The New South Wales Primitive Methodist Messenger; and only some of the minute books of the District Meeting, and later the Annual Assembly, are available in New South Wales. Wesleyans were more conscious of the historical importance of their records; thus minutes of all Connexional meetings and Wollongong circuit meetings have been preserved. A complete series of the Connexional journal from 1856, but not the earlier

series, is also available.

To give flesh to the bones of the above source material, I have drawn on two diaries or journals of Illawarra Methodists (one a Minister, the other a layman), an autobiography, preaching plans, and several written recollections as well as some oral recollections from present day descendants of nineteenth century Methodists.

Secondary sources on nineteenth century Illawarra Methodism are very scarce, and are mostly of the chronicle variety. Secondary sources were useful in placing Wollongong Methodism in its wider context of colonial New South Wales Methodism and English Methodism.

Before actually comparing Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism one must understand the origins and development of Wesley's Methodism, and the inherent factors which caused it to divide and keep on dividing for half of the nineteenth century. Hence the first chapter surveys the divisions which occurred in Methodism and seeks to account for them. Chapter Two studies the origins of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in the colony of New South Wales, and then in the Illawarra region, where Primitive Methodism had two beginnings.

Chapters Three and Four form the major part of this thesis, and by building on the foundations laid in the first two chapters, a comparative study is made of the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist denominations in Wollongong. The areas for comparison include
(a) the organisational structures and the variety of church and other services,

(b) the membership concept and, that hallmark of Methodism, the class meeting,

(c) the social composition of members and adherents and the resultant social consequences,

(d) the role of the minister, as perceived by the clergy themselves, and the laity, and

(e) an examination of the different relationship between clergy and laity in Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in Wollongong.

Currie, et. al., has been helpful at the point of methodology for statistical analysis.

Chapter Five discusses how the colonial environment modified Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism causing a convergence of polity and practice. The most significant convergence was at the point of clergy versus lay roles, and this facilitated the movement towards union between the branches of Methodism in Australia in 1902. Currie's thesis of ecumenicalism is applied in a very limited way to the Methodist union. Lastly some immediate post-union developments are studied, especially the spectacular Tent Mission which was a remarkable demonstration of Christian unity.

This thesis argues that colonial New South Wales inherited a divided Methodism, but not the reasons for the divisions, and thus no further divisions occurred. The colonial environment

diminished the differences between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism particularly in the critical area of relations between clergy and laity, and thus opened up the possibility of re-union which occurred earlier and more easily than in Britain.

Although an exercise in local religious history, this thesis attempts to analyse Illawarra Methodism in the contexts of the history of Methodism and of Australian social history. To do so it draws on the insights of Obelkevich on the relationship between religious and social history; it is based heavily on statistical analysis inspired by the work of Currie, Gilbert and Horsley on British churches and that of Phillips on Australian churches; and it utilises Currie's model of ecumenicalism in an industrial society.
CHAPTER 1

METHODISM DIVIDED: IN NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND
British Methodism in the nineteenth century was no 'single, compact, organic historical force', as it had been in the eighteenth century. This description could no longer apply after 1797 when the first of several major divisions occurred. But despite these new and different types of Methodism it was still possible to see a family likeness, in matters of doctrine, mission and many aspects of organisation, deriving from John Wesley. This chapter attempts to trace and explain the two waves of division which took place in England after John Wesley's death, so that Methodist developments in isolated, colonial New South Wales, to be studied in subsequent chapters, can be placed in a wider Methodist context, and compared with the British experience.

At John Wesley's death in 1791, British Methodism was in an ambivalent position. Wesley had 'failed to come to terms with the problem of relationship with the Church of England'. Herein lies a root cause of the problems faced by Methodism after its founder's death and which plagued it for over half a century. Conflicting aims of Methodism's membership in the changing social and religious environment was the other major factor.

John Wesley claimed to have lived and died a Church of England clergyman. He never advocated separation from that church. He never conceded that his actions in 1784 of ordaining Methodist preachers, and his changing attitude towards the administration

of the sacrament to members of Methodist Societies outside the parish church were inconsistent with these claims. He was, in fact, rejected by many in the Church of England from early in his ministry; for example, for open-air preaching, and evangelising in parishes without permission. As Methodist Societies increased in numbers and organisation they were looked upon with increasing disapproval.

It was only John Wesley's great personal authority and control over the Methodist structure and its membership, and the members' respect for his wishes that prevented a separation during his lifetime. But with his death, and without either strong successor or Conference agreement to continue his policies, early separation was inevitable.

Bowmer believes that in 1791 Methodism had only two possible courses: the 'Old Plan' (for Methodism to continue as an appendage of the Church of England), and the 'Providential Way', (by which the church develops pragmatically, following the openings of Providence). Both courses claimed to be following Wesley's intentions. The Old Plan was influenced principally by Wesley's earlier thinking and practice. The Providential Way was more consistent with developments later in Wesley's ministry, and this was the direction Methodism took. Modifications of Methodism in New South Wales were indicative of the Providential Way approach.

Methodism was forced to resolve the Church of England relationship problem officially and it was a new and painful process,

left chiefly to the Legal Hundred. The resulting 1795 Plan of Pacification, a compromise, recognised separation, and attempted to accommodate the different viewpoints within Methodism. It certainly prevented a major split, between the 'Old Plan' advocates and the 'Providential Way' advocates.

The two main contenders in the power struggle after Wesley's death (Mather and Coke) lost out. 'A safe and trustworthy man, moderate in his opinions', William Thompson, was elected President of the 1791 Conference on the basis of the Halifax Circular. Unfortunately the reforms advocated were not very successful in that Coke was able to exert great influence on affairs through his position as Chairman of the London District Meeting. Very little power was decentralised, in fact, and this rankled with those who were looking for a less authoritarian structure and leader.

By 1814, when Coke died, it was evident that Conference had chosen to 'replace Wesley's autocracy with a hierarchical rule, if anything, more rigid and far reaching' than his. But there was no way that this hierarchy could hold together varying viewpoints as Wesley had succeeded in doing. It is questionable, though, whether Wesley could have done it for much longer.

4. Ibid., p.34-36 gives a good summary of the Plan of Pacification.
5. Ibid., p.34.
6. Currie, R., op. cit., p.27.
In the vacuum created by Wesley's death the first wave of divisions took place: 1797, the Methodist New Connexion; 1811 the Primitive Methodists; and 1815 the Bible Christians. Polity, not doctrine, was the cause of the divisions. Conflict over pastoral supremacy, a kingpin of Wesleyan polity, was the basic issue. Methodist lay leaders wanted more responsibility and more freedom at the local level. The Conference conservatives wanted to continue Wesley's pattern of centralised, authoritarian rule to ensure both the continuing success of the Wesleyan evangelistic organisation and mission, and the security of their own position.

The Methodist New Connexion arose from conflicts surrounding Alexander Kilham, a Wesleyan preacher, who advocated
1. complete separation from the Church of England,
2. that Methodists should have the right to receive the sacrament of communion from their own preachers, and
3. that the laity should take greater responsibility in church government and discipline.

When he was expelled by the 1796 Conference there was much support for his declared position. In 1797, with the Rev. William Thom, he formed the Methodist New Connexion with about 5,000 members (mostly ex-Wesleyans). This survived Kilham's early death in 1798 and grew

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8. It should be noted that the doctrine of the ministry was an exception to this statement.
9. The term, Wesleyan or Wesleyan Methodist is used to refer to the continuing Methodists, after others broke away. It was adopted later as a distinctive name for the Connexion.
10. Ordained in 1792.
11. This figure is quoted by R. Davies in Methodism, Revised Ed., Epworth Press, London, 1976, p.113. Currie, R. et. al., Churches and Churchgoers, p.139, gives Methodist New Connexion membership as 3,000 in 1797, and 6,000 in 1798. After this phenomenal growth numbers declined for 4 years, before taking a steady upward trend for the next few decades.
steadily. Its constitution was very similar to the original Connexion except that it gave greater powers to the laity.

Colwell claims that the Primitive Methodist church was 'not the fruit of strife, but rather of revival'. That is only the first part of the story. Hugh Bourne, a Methodist, had begun evangelistic meetings with considerable response. He then formed an unofficial society and built a chapel, after the Methodist pattern, but outside of official Methodism. He then introduced a novel method of evangelism, the Camp Meeting (1807), which because of its success caused great concern to the Conference, which forbade any further such meetings. Bourne continued camp meetings and when Conference expelled him he was joined by Clowes, and in 1811 the Primitive Methodist Society was formed. Bourne was expelled 'on the curious but convenient charge of absenting himself from the class meeting'. In line with the government's thinking of the day, the Conference was afraid of the potential for violence and emotionalism and political subversion in the camp meetings, over which it had no control. Bourne was also virtually outside its control, so it used a technical point, either to bring Bourne under Methodist control, or to separate his activities off from official Methodism, thereby hoping to quell the movement.

Primitive Methodism was the result, in part, of conflict in that Bourne and Clowes were not prepared to submit to Methodist order and discipline against their consciences. It was also the result of revival. Many joined forces with them on the issue of

lay versus clerical powers and centralised authority. It became a strong Methodist movement, doctrinally similar to Wesleyan Methodism, but with limited powers for clergy and wider powers for the laity, women as well as men. It was also the second strongest branch of Methodism in New South Wales.

The beginning of the Bible Christian Society (1815) was more like that of the Primitive Methodists than the Methodist New Connexion. A zealous Methodist local preacher, William O'Bryan, engaged in evangelistic activities in his area without official Methodist approval. He, too, was expelled because he would not submit to Methodist authority in the matter. Then together with a James Thorne (a similarly dissatisfied Anglican) they formed the Bible Christian Society at Shebbear in 1815, and organised it along Methodist lines but under their own control. Shortly afterwards O'Bryan left this society because his personal authority was being limited and went to America! Under Thorne, the new society consolidated and grew. It mostly operated outside existing Methodist areas and in rural areas. In fact, in its early years it was not in opposition to Methodism, but complementary to it. After one year the society had 567 members\(^14\) and after 15 years when it was officially constituted it had 6,650 members\(^15\).

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The second wave of divisions was directed against the authoritarianism of the Conference as it was embodied in Reverend Jabez Bunting. His oft quoted assertion: 'Methodism knows nothing of democracy; Methodism hates democracy as it hates sin'\(^\text{16}\) indicated attitudes and practises which led to further internal conflict situations in the Connexion. Currie in a lengthy section on Bunting and Buntingism concludes that his 'rule and doctrine established a Wesleyan priesthood in conflict with the Wesleyan people'\(^\text{17}\).

Davies speaks of a period of 'persistent agitation' from 1830 to 1870 and of the 'painful and reluctant democratisation of the Methodist constitution'\(^\text{18}\). By contrast these years were ones of growth and consolidation in colonial New South Wales. The three major secessions, Protestant Methodists (1829), Wesleyan Methodist Association (1835) and the Methodist Reformers (1849), of this time amply demonstrate this. The first was a local solution to a local problem which then spread through England. The others, by contrast, were not generated by local issues, and had a widespread impact.

The Protestant Methodists were formed in 1829 as the result of a long standing discontent with the Methodist Conference over its handling of the Leeds Organ Case in which the Conference forced its judgement upon an unwilling local congregation. A trivial issue perhaps, but one which, in the local area highlighted both sides of the more general conflict and showed how far apart the laity and

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16. Spoken in 1835.
17. Currie, R., Methodism Divided, p.43.
18. Davies, R., \textit{op.cit.}, p.121.
Buntingites had moved. Even the name Protestant Methodists showed the strength and depth of discontent which was not evident in the earlier wave of divisions.

The issue which led to the formation of the Wesley Methodist Association in 1835 was the founding of a Methodist Theological College without consulting the membership (a constitutional requirement). The fact that Bunting was likely to have been appointed as its President is not irrelevant. Bunting was seen to be either operating outside of Conference or using Conference illegally and numbers of lay members reacted strongly against it. This association was joined by the Protestant Methodists in 1836 and by some other small secessionist groups.

The secession known as the Methodist Reformers (1849) was the result of a more bitter conflict with far reaching consequences. James Everett, the central figure, was an outspoken critic of the centralised authority of Methodism and of Bunting personally. He had been writing pamphlets and speaking publicly for many years. His accusations included favouritism, tyranny, and misuse of Connexional finances. His anonymous Fly Sheets (which were venomous and neurotic) roused feelings deep and wide, because people believed them to contain some truth at least. Widespread agitation for reform within Wesleyan Methodism failed to gain any reforms and so when Everett and two other ministers were expelled over the Fly Sheets, the only alternative left was to form a new and democratic Methodist society.

As a result of this bitter conflict the following half decade
saw a massive drop in Wesleyan membership: from 334,000 in 1850 to 239,000 in 1855\textsuperscript{19}, before they began to increase again. These events appear to have had no direct impact on New South Wales Methodism.

Thus it can be seen that in these years (1830-1870) of social and political conflict, the notion of pastoral supremacy 'failed to stand up to the social tensions of the age'\textsuperscript{20}. As people became literate and gained voting rights they became socially more aware and active. Many became involved in the emerging Trade Union movement, which drew many of its leaders from the Methodist lay leadership. They tended to be not so accepting of the imposed central authority of the conservative Methodist hierarchy. These years were also ones of political upheaval. Some of the same factors causing war and revolution in Europe were also felt in England. Rupp describes it as a 'European-wide tension met inside Methodism'\textsuperscript{21}.

What was Wesleyan Methodism's response to all this? In the short term constitutional reform was delayed. There was no way that a figures-conscious Conference could ignore popular opinion expressed in declining numbers, and eventually important changes were made, and even 'Bunting himself opposed it no further'\textsuperscript{22}. These changes gave more power to the Quarterly Meetings of each circuit, the right of direct access to Conference, and allowed lay

\textsuperscript{19} Currie, R., et.al., Churches and Churchgoers, p.141, and accompanying footnotes on p.146.
\textsuperscript{20} Bowmer, J., op.cit., p.253.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.155, uses this quote from Rupp.
\textsuperscript{22} Davies, R., op.cit., p.124.
18.

Membership of important Conference committees. It was as late as 1877 that lay representatives were first elected to Conference, a most significant reform in the democratisation of Wesleyan Methodism. By 1877 the Wesleyan notion of pastoral supremacy as practised by Bunting was a thing of the past. Even though Conference decisions (made jointly by laity and clergy) had to be ratified by the ministerial sessions, Davies states that there 'was no recorded instance of conflict between the two assemblies'.

Methodism had the potential for division, but it also had the potential for reunification, which started as early as 1836 when a small splinter group, the Arminian Methodists, joined the Wesleyan Methodist Association. A second, more significant union took place in 1856 between the three seceding groups: Protestant Methodists, Wesleyan Methodist Association and the Methodist Reformers, all part of the second wave of divisions. The resulting United Methodist Free Churches agreed upon a constitution that was the 'least Connexional and the most Congregational of all the Methodist bodies'. Later unions occurred outside the period of study; in 1907 when the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians and the United Methodist Free Churches formed the United Methodist Church, and finally the union in 1932 between the United Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

After Methodism had come to terms with its relationship

to the Church of England, the critical area of potential conflict still remaining, and which spawned divisions was that of clerical-lay relations. Wesley's pastoral supremacy concept, as expressed by various Conference actions and as embodied in Reverend Jabez Bunting proved very divisive, and all the seceding groups formed Connexions which were far more democratic.

Having traced and accounted for the divisions in British Methodism in the nineteenth century, we now turn to the Australian colonial scene, specifically New South Wales, to discover how and why Methodism took root there. It will be shown that the colony of New South Wales inherited a divided Methodism, but not the reasons for the division, and that no further divisions occurred.
CHAPTER 2

METHODIST BEGINNINGS:
- IN THE COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.
- IN WOLLONGONG.
Missions were begun in the colony of New South Wales by the Wesleyans in 1815 and the Primitive Methodists in 1845, and their patterns of development were similar: small beginnings initiated by lay people, continuing 'lay activism', and some reverses followed by steady growth. As institutionalisation set in, colonial Methodism grew to be similar (but not identical) to that of its parent bodies. Evangelism, immigration and the 1836 Church Act were responsible for much of Methodism's expansion from the 1830s, and for its becoming clearly identified as a church rather than a sect. The colonial society (a very different environment from England) had a levelling effect which was evidenced within the church. The differences which existed between the Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists, tended to be diminished by the Colonial experience.

First we examine Methodist beginnings in New South Wales, and relate this to nineteenth century British Methodism. The beginnings of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in Wollongong will then be analysed and compared. By the end of this chapter we will have set the stage for a major comparative study of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in Wollongong from 1838 to 1902 in Chapters Three and Four.

2.1 Methodist Beginnings in the Colony of New South Wales.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church in England at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century was involved in the rapidly growing

1. The United Methodist Free Churches date their beginning in New South Wales from 1878 but because this is a comparative study of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism, their history will not be discussed.
missionary movement, under Thomas Coke who had a vision (to which resources were not always equal) of spreading Christianity worldwide, especially among the primitive heathen. Semmel claims that this was an attempt to 'divert evangelical Enthusiasm' from the paths of political activity².

The Wesleyan Missionary Committee responded to the request from three Methodist class leaders in Sydney and sent the Reverend Samuel Leigh in 1815, Reverend William Lawry in 1818, and three more men in 1820. One of these was sent to establish a mission to the aboriginals (a recommendation from Leigh) but this failed³. The Committee was more concerned to evangelise the convicts and aboriginals than to meet the spiritual needs of the settlers and emancipists⁴ and they had been assured of great opportunities available. Neither they nor the Australian Methodists realised how un-receptive to Christian preaching they would prove to be.

The initiative, then, came from the lay people in Australia, and the Committee in London was responsive to the need. Several years later the New South Wales mission ran into problems and reported to London a lack of funds, some measure of indiscipline, no measurable growth, and was generally despairing of progress.

The London committee was itself experiencing financial problems and it was not sympathetic to requests from New South Wales for help. Later still, in 1836, London was prepared to send missionaries, but not funds at a time when Australia was experiencing an immigrant population boom and Australian Methodism had access to Australian government funding.

The first Methodist preacher arrived in the Australian colony of New South Wales just 24 years after John Wesley's death. Classes had been meeting for three years prior to that. By this time the first wave of major divisions had already occurred in English Methodism. Leigh was a Wesleyan, and the Wesleyan cause was the only Methodist cause for 25 years, and it was well established and widespread in all the colonies by the time the other branches of Methodism began organising. Primitive Methodists arrived in South Australia in 1844 and in New South Wales in 1845; Bible Christians arrived in South Australia in 1850, but never organised in New South Wales, and the United Methodist Free Churches arrived in Victoria in 1867 and in New South Wales in 1878. It seems that there were no major divisions or separations in Wesleyan Methodism in Australia either before or after the other Methodist groups arrived. Why was it that Methodism did not split apart in New South Wales?

Before attempting to answer this question we should look at the nature of the Methodist groups which established in New South Wales prior to 1877.

5. Bollen, J.D., 'A Time of Small Things', p.237. There were certainly no secessions in Illawarra Methodism, nor am I aware of divisions in other parts of New South Wales.
Reverend Samuel Leigh, a Wesleyan Methodist, was instructed to 'form societies upon the same plan as we do in England'. Was this an impossible task? If this instruction meant to produce a replica of English Wesleyan Methodism then it was an impossible task. The raw materials in the Australian situation were very different. There was a more widespread and deep-rooted hostility to religious matters. The largely convict colonial society was a new one engaged in a struggle to survive. It was not a traditional, long established one. The few clergy were young, with little or no experience. The powerful, centralised leadership of the English church did not dominate Australian affairs, primarily because it was so remote. (How could they dominate when it could take twelve months to get a reply to a communication!) Methodism was so small (in 1812 there was a class membership of around twenty) in New South Wales, where it was large and well established in England. Lay people therefore played a far more important part than their counterparts did in England, especially in the early years of colonial Methodism.

But the Wesleyan message was the same, and the Wesleyan organisation happened to be well suited to Australian conditions, although the London Committee had no reason to expect this to be so. Australian Wesleyan Methodism was not a replica, but it was similar from its very beginnings. Like the child who, as it grows, becomes more like one of its parents, so this infant church grew more like its parent as it grew larger and acquired more of the

institutional structure and practices. This happened not so much by deliberate design as by a pragmatic response to circumstances as Bollen suggests⁷. The first Sydney District Meeting was held in 1826 and the first New South Wales Conference in 1855. This Conference was divided into four Conferences in 1874: New South Wales - Queensland, Victoria - Tasmania, South Australia and New Zealand. The first General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church was held in 1875⁸. Structure was bound to be acquired by growing Australian Methodism, but it is very interesting that it was so similar to the British structure, given the differences in environment. This structure was modified in time, notably by the introduction of lay representation in 1875. The change showed a most significant convergence of the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist views on lay-clerical roles.

The early years of Methodism in New South Wales, up to about 1830, were characterised by its lay and personal nature, not by its clerical and institutional nature⁹. Lay people were active in looking for like-minded people, forming groups, then requesting a preacher, and when he arrived, in supporting his ministry; for example by local preaching, by Sunday school teaching, and by nurturing the growing membership. This was the pattern of development in Sydney and Wollongong as well as numerous other places.

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⁷ Bollen, J.D., op.cit., p.234.
⁹ Bollen, J.D., Religion in Australia, Leigh College, Sydney, 1973, p.18. Bollen states that this was the pattern of all the churches, except the Anglicans.
It was a time of 'lay-activism', which was very different from the 'process of democratisation' which was occurring in England.

Pioneer laymen such as Thomas Bowden, John Hosking, Edgar Eagar, in Sydney, and John Graham and John Vidler in Wollongong were active for many years, some even for decades, and won great respect from laity and clergy alike. This lay activism of the early years set a pattern for Australia which resulted in a diluting of the pastoral supremacy concept, and which therefore forestalled some of the bitter conflicts which British Methodism experienced.

The first few years of Methodism in Sydney showed a rapid growth at three centres: Sydney, Parramatta and Windsor. But by the 1820s very little growth was taking place. Bollen attributes this to a 'lack of lay support which seems to have determined the mission's scope in these early years'. Bollen is referring to lay leadership: people who were accredited local preachers and who were available to take preaching appointments, people who were experienced class and prayer leaders, and people who had settled in one place and were able to provide continuity and stability.

11. Davies, R., op.cit., p.121.
12. Bollen, J.D., 'A Time of Small Things', p.234. There were 178 members in 1822 in Sydney-Hobart, and membership remained at or below that number for 10 years, and did not rise above 400 till 1836.
13. Ibid., p.234.
14. Ibid., p.32, footnote 23: 'On the average, the missionary had five appointments a week; local preachers, two; exhorters and prayer leaders at least one'.
The years 1830-1870 were a period of growth and consolidation, for Methodism, for other churches, and for the colony itself. The nature of the colony changed and stabilised as many free settlers arrived. Immigration boosted Methodist numbers in two ways: some immigrants were transferring Methodist members, and others were receptive to evangelistic Methodist preaching. Methodism sought revivals, and taught their spiritual necessity. Walker refers to Methodist revivals in Sydney in 1835 and Windsor-Castlereagh in 1840-1, and others later on. Membership of the Sydney circuit grew from 55 in 1832 to 487 in 1843. Total New South Wales membership jumped from 707 in 1841 to 2209 in 1851. Walker also claims that 'proselytisation was a main reason for growth,' but states no evidence to support the claim.

A most significant Church Act was passed in 1836 which gave state aid to churches for chapels and parsonages and minister's stipends. This act established legally the principle of religious equality in Australia, and in turn gave official recognition of the status of Methodism as a denomination, not a sect. The Church of England in New South Wales had hitherto been regarded as an

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p.333.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid. See also Cable, K.J., 'Protestant Problems in New South Wales in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', Journal of Religious History, Vol.3, No.2, December 1964, p.126, p.135, footnote 14, who appears to offer some evidence in support of this view, in that Methodism served other denominations. See also the scramble for membership after 1836.
established church by some non-conformists but was now placed on the same footing in relationship to the state as the Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, and they all had access to government money. The Methodists were particularly quick to make the most of the new opportunity. There was something of a scramble for membership to qualify for as much state aid as possible. The resulting denominational rivalry was sometimes hurtful. The resulting increase in church membership and church/chapel and parsonage building was dramatic.

1855 saw the first Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Conference formed: a milestone on the road to autonomy. The Wesleyan Missionary Society did not rank Australia very high in its concerns. The British Conference drew up plans for this independent Australasian Conference 'before the question was agitated locally'. The first President of the Australasian Conference in his address to the Methodist Societies assured them that

> our separation from the British Conference has not lessened our attachment to the distinctive doctrines and discipline of Wesleyan Methodism. We pledge ourselves to preach the evangelical truths and to administer substantially [that is, not necessarily fully] the system of church polity.

of English Methodism. Here is another and later indication of the similarity of Australian and English Wesleyan Methodism. Thus by

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22. Minutes of the First Australasian Wesleyan Conference, New South Wales, p.35.
1855 Wesleyan Methodism in Colonial New South Wales was forty years old and well established with a large measure of independence from the British Conference. By contrast, Primitive Methodism in New South Wales was only ten years old.

The beginnings of Primitive Methodism in New South Wales followed a similar pattern to that of the Wesleyans. A small number of Primitive Methodists wrote in 1845 to the recently established South Australian mission asking for a preacher. They sent a preacher over almost immediately. In 1846 the General Missionary Committee in England sent a preacher to assist the new mission. Why did the Sydney Primitive Methodists make their request to the new South Australian Mission and not direct to London? Was it evidence of a frustrating sense of remoteness experienced in colonial Sydney? Or does it reveal the impatient resourcefulness of the Sydney group?

Early rapid growth was reported: in 1846 there were sixty eight members, three local preachers and five class leaders in the Sydney and Hunter River areas. Then a decline was reported; a very serious decline which nearly wrecked the mission, associated with the questionable behaviour of some of the leaders. A separation followed and then there was a struggle for survival (only 17 members in 1850 in the Sydney-Morpeth station). But

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p.530.
by 1855 (when the first Wesleyan Conference was held) membership of the Primitive Methodist Church was 162, and in 1859, Sydney gained a District Meeting.

Although Primitive Methodism was never as widespread in New South Wales as Wesleyan Methodism, it was strong in the rural areas of Goulburn, Crookwell, Mudgee, Kempsey and Camden, and the mining areas of Newcastle, Lithgow, Wollongong and Broken Hill, reflecting an English pattern of membership. In the Wollongong area, the Primitive Methodist strongholds were Mount Keira in the 1860s, Bulli and Mount Kembla in the 1880s and 1890s (all coal mining settlements), while the Wesleyans were stronger in the rural and town sections of the community.

Little is known of the overall New South Wales patterns of the development of Primitive Methodism and of the relative importance of the laity and the clergy in the period. Because it was inherently a more democratic organisation than the Wesleyans', and because of the Sydney and Wollongong experience it can be assumed that lay activism was of critical importance in its development and in maintaining its democratic polity.

26. See Chapter 4.
Having surveyed the development of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in the colony of New South Wales let us now return to the question: why was it that Methodism did not split apart in New South Wales?

In Chapter one it is claimed that the two basic causes of nineteenth century divisions in Methodism were: John Wesley's failure to come to terms with the problem of relationship with the Church of England before his death, and the conflicting aims of Methodist membership in a changing social and religious environment\(^{27}\).

At least some of these problems had been resolved before Methodism migrated to New South Wales. When Methodism arrived in 1815 the Plan of Pacification was already twenty years old, and separation from the Church of England already well established. So that cause of division never existed in the colony. But there was still some tentativeness in relations between the two churches in New South Wales; for example, Reverend Leigh won Governor Macquarie's and Reverend Samuel Marsden's respect and approval by his diplomatic approach. He refrained from preaching at Anglican church times, he even preached in Marsden's pulpit; but few Methodists ever worshipped with the Anglicans. This tentativeness was also related to Methodism's progress from sect status to church status in a colonial environment. It seems that the laity accepted Methodism as a church quite separate from the Church of England, and quite self-contained. Leigh was not quite so clear cut, but then he was acting under instructions from London which forbade his rocking the boat.

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\(^{27}\) See page 9.
Concerning the second cause of Methodist division, there were differences between the Wesleyan and Primitive membership, but the most contentious issue in the English scene, pastoral supremacy, was never a cause of major conflict in New South Wales. Australian Methodism began as a lay activity (not clerical) and even when clergy arrived they were inexperienced and young and were dependent on the experience, wisdom and practical help of the laity. The early decades in New South Wales were marked by 'lay activism', while in England many were struggling for the democratisation of Methodism. Ministers assumed more responsibilities as the years passed but the laity did not relinquish all of theirs.

Colonial society tended to have a levelling effect on much of the social structure, and this was evidenced in the church where the functions of clergy and laity came much closer together in Wesleyanism; and in so doing came closer to the Primitive Methodist position. The idea of the ruler and the ruled had less substance than in England. In New South Wales polity differences between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism were less than in England because of local adaptations. This is why Methodist union in Australia preceded that in Britain by thirty years: the lesser differences were seen to be surmountable as the possibility of union was discussed later in the nineteenth century.

Brookes, in writing of the history of Methodism in New Zealand concludes that 'the colonial experience diminished differences':

the branches of Methodism. From both the New Zealand and New South Wales experience it would appear that the colonial experience modified the lay-clergy conflict of Methodism far more quickly than was possible for British Wesleyans.

2.2 Methodist Beginnings in Wollongong.

Present day residents of the large industrial city of Wollongong would not find it easy to imagine that the area was often referred to as the 'garden of New South Wales' last century. The first settlers arrived in 1815, and the first five land grants were made the following year. The next forty years saw Wollongong develop as a prosperous rural community. In 1856 19.5% of the population of 4,518 of the Wollongong police district lived in the township of one hundred and fifty houses, and the remaining 80.5% were rural residents. Wollongong was a rural community serviced by a central township up until the 1850s.

The nature of Wollongong began to change in the mid 1850s with the opening up of coal mines along the escarpment of the Illawarra range, first at Mount Keira, then at Bellambi and Bulli. By the end of the century the Wollongong district consisted of a southern rural area with a central township and a series of mining villages stretching from Mount Kembla to Helensburgh in the north.

29. Illawarra Mercury, 13.4.1857.
THE ILLAWARRA DISTRICT

Showing places mentioned in the text and Methodist Circuit Boundaries

Illawarra escarpment

Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Circuit 1849-1859.

Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Circuit 1859-1902.

Wollongong Primitive Methodist Circuit 1863-1902.
We now look briefly at the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches in the Wollongong area: their origins, their nature, and some of their early members. The Wesleyans continued to grow from the start with strong lay leadership. By contrast the Primitive Methodists had two beginnings: the first from the mid 1850s which petered out in the mid 1870s. It was sometimes a thriving cause, but more often a struggling one. The second beginning in the 1880s was a much more successful and dynamic one with strong and active lay leaders.

2.2.1 Wesleyan Methodism in Wollongong: 1838-1859.

Wollongong provides an excellent example of the importance of lay activism in beginning and firmly establishing a church. John Vidler, an English local preacher, led the first known Methodist service in Wollongong just before Christmas, 1838, in his rough hut with a congregation of two: his wife and his brother. He soon discovered other Wesleyans in the district including two who had been waiting and praying for seven years for a preacher. Vidler's son recalls when he was a young boy in Illawarra in 1839,

'how the Sabbath was desecrated, in fact there was no Sabbath at all observed; very few knew which was the seventh day. My dear father used to go out and talk to those poor men, telling them the awful consequences of attending such a life. ... He began preaching ... (32)

In 1839 a revival broke out in the Dapto area 'when thirty persons were converted and formed into a society which Mr Vidler met'. Vidler wrote to Sydney several times requesting a 'minister to

30. Vidler, J., 'Recollections of Methodism in Illawarra', recorded by Rev. G. Lane, 1886, p.3.
32. Christian Advocate, 3.10.1876.
33. Colwell, J., op.cit., p.357.
visit us'. He was officially appointed a class leader later that year by a visiting Sydney clergymen.

Vidler was not able to renew his farm lease because of pressure from some Anglicans. 'He was doing a great deal of harm by taking away' the Anglican congregation. He then spent several years in the Campbelltown area before returning to the Jamberoo area for the rest of his life.

Vidler's departure did not mean a Wesleyan collapse. There were already several other laymen active as leaders in Kiama and Wollongong, as well as Dapto, who continued the work he had begun. In 1840 four Somerville brothers and their families, together with the Black family (relatives) arrived in Wollongong together: a party of 10 adults, 9 of whom were Wesleyan members, and 3 of whom were Class leaders. Together with a Mr Cox and a Mr Robinson they were very active in establishing the Wesleyan cause. The first church was built in 1842 in Wollongong - four years before a minister was appointed to Wollongong, and a second, larger one in 1854 on the present Crown Street site.

The Reverend Innes of Camden reports in 1846 that

on the Wollongong side of the circuit we have made but little progress, having been able to devote no more than one week in six thereto.

34. Vidler, J., op.cit., p.3.
35. Colwell, J., op.cit., p.358. Mr Gerrard, under pressure from the Anglican Minister, would not accept double rent from Vidler for the farm. Vidler did not feel able to accept an offer from Henry Osborne of another farm, rent free.
There were six good congregations and the members 'earnestly crave an appointment of a missionary and could support a single man'. They are a people 'thirsting for the Word of the Lord'\textsuperscript{37}.

Ministers in large circuits found it hard to service the scattered societies, and almost impossible to engage in further expansion. Laymen were keen to re-establish Wesleyan patterns of worship and fellowship in the new environment and looked to leaders from among themselves to facilitate this until a minister could be sent. Reverend J. Thrum was the first minister appointed in 1846 or 1847\textsuperscript{38}.

Wollongong became an independent circuit in 1849 (with 107 members) and covered the area from Bulli to the Shoalhaven River. The Wesleyan church expanded rapidly, and a second minister was appointed in 1857; then in 1859 the very large circuit (with 272 members) was subdivided into three: Shoalhaven, Kiama, and Wollongong circuits. The term, Wollongong circuit, refers to the whole area from Shoalhaven to Bulli up until 1859. After that year Wollongong circuit only refers to that area from Dapto to Helensburgh.

\textsuperscript{37} Australian District Meeting Minutes, 1846, p.28.

\textsuperscript{38} The Australian District Minutes (Wesleyan) are not clear at this point. Mrs G. Somerville, 'Recollections', refers to a probationer named 'Glass who visited the district for about a year' in 1844. This is not confirmed by other sources, but may be accurate, because her memory is generally very accurate.
2.2.2 Primitive Methodism in Wollongong: First Phase: 1857-1877.

The beginnings of Primitive Methodism in Wollongong are even more obscure than those of the Wesleyans. By 1857 six members of the Camden-Greenvale station lived in Wollongong and Jamberoo and the minister made occasional visits to the area. One year later a Jamberoo branch was formed with forty one members mostly at Jamberoo and Foxground. In 1859 the Jamberoo branch had 76 members, and they opened a small chapel at Foxground.

The Primitive Methodist Camp Meeting was introduced early to Wollongong. The first recorded Camp Meeting held on 24th November 1859 in Mr Robson's paddock, at Mount Keira and was 'more numerously attended than expected, by members of all the dissenting denominations'. It followed the English pattern of a series of services, with sermons delivered by the minister, and some of the lay leaders, interspersed with singing and praying. The meeting began at 10 a.m. and concluded with a Lovefeast at 9 p.m.

39. There are three reasons for this: (i) The first attempt to form a Primitive Methodist Church failed in the late 1870s, and the only record to survive from that period were the Camden Primitive Methodist Circuit Account book and the Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Book 1863-1893. (ii) Some of the important minute books from the 1880-1902 period have survived for the Wollongong area under the custodianship of the last circuit steward, John Waters, but little else. (iii) The United Methodist Church, 1902, did not place the same value on Primitive Methodist records as they did on Wesleyan records, and very little survived of Connexional records and journals.

41. Illawarra Mercury, 18.9.1859. Most accounts date Wollongong Primitive Methodism from 1863 or 1864. This is inaccurate.
42. Illawarra Mercury, 1.12.1859.
Somewhere between 1860 and 1863 a new station was formed in Wollongong with the Reverend Thomas Mell as the first minister. During these three years there was a dramatic decrease in membership, from the high of 76 in 1859 to only 25 members in 1863. The location of members also showed a dramatic change. In 1859, 69 of the 76 members were located in the southern rural area at Foxground, Jamberoo and Stockyard Mountain, and 7 were in Wollongong. But in 1863, there were only 8 members in this same southern area, and the other 17 were at Mount Keira, a new coal mining settlement. A chapel was opened in Market Street, Wollongong, in December, 1869 even though there was little growth in membership. The 1870s saw further decline, and by the late 1870s the cause was abandoned and the building disposed of.

The two major reasons for Primitive Methodism's problems in this period were a lack of lay leaders and a highly mobile population (apparently more mobile than the Wesleyans). Apart from Mr Robson at Mount Keira who was a local preacher, there were very few other lay leaders among the Primitive Methodists at this time. Not only were the ordinary members highly mobile, so were

43. Camden Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Book, 10.9.1860, 31.3.1861, no Jamberoo branch is noted, nor figures given as had occurred 1857-9. Cousens and Bayley both state that the Wollongong station was formed in 1864. The Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Book begins with a meeting held on 30.3.1863, presided over by Reverend T. Mell.

44. Ibid., 30.3.1863.

45. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Book. Membership slowly increased to 36 in June 1867, then fell again to 18 in June 1869.

46. Ibid., March 1877 - the last entry before 1883, when 29 members were noted and Reverend J. Geary was minister.

47. Bayley, W., 'Illawarra Methodism', South Coast Times, 10.10.1958.

48. See Chapter 4, section 4.3.
some of the local preachers and the minister to a lesser degree. So with little continuity in membership and lay leadership, the Primitive Methodists were not able to establish a viable and growing church in this period. Not even a full time minister was able to counteract these effects.

2.2.3 Primitive Methodism in Wollongong. Second Phase: 1880s.

The second attempt to establish a Primitive Methodist church in the Illawarra met with more success. The Reverend J. Spalding, Wollongong's newly appointed minister, writing in the Connexional journal, describes the Wollongong Primitive Methodists as a godly group, although scattered, who 'enjoyed the true Primitive fire', thus

showing their religion is of that caste which is neither quenched by the Pacific nor evaporated by the heat of this sunny land, their hearts still being aglow with Jesus' name. Nor did they hide their light under a bushel, but on our coming we found they had regular services in the houses. They were breaking up fallow ground. (50)

Three of this 'godly group' were local preachers who committed themselves to a phenomenal preaching load of one or two services every Sunday plus one weeknight meeting every week during April-June, 1880, to help establish the church. By 1883 (and maybe earlier) they were not nearly so busy; there were others to share the task. Nevertheless this combination of committed local preachers together with a minister resulted in a firmly established and growing church. Two of the three local preachers were long term residents and were therefore able to provide a

49. The normal term in a station at this time was two or three years.
continuity of leadership. Although the population was still mobile it appears to be more stable than in the 1850s and 1860s.

In the next nineteen years their membership almost tripled, the result of evangelism and immigration. The coal mining communities along the coast contained many Primitive Methodists; and at Bulli, Coalcliff, Mount Pleasant and Mount Kembla there were active congregations. The town of Wollongong was the site of the first of 5 church buildings erected in these years, before union with the Wesleyans.

Thus it can be seen that the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist patterns of development in Wollongong paralleled those in New South Wales. Lay activism was important in the early years in establishing circuits. Without it they foundered. It was lay activism that modified the Wesleyan concept of pastoral supremacy in New South Wales.

51. 43 full members, 6 trial members in 1883, and 123 full members in 1902.
CHAPTER 3

WESLEYAN METHODISM IN WOLLONGONG.
This chapter describes and analyses Wesleyan Methodism in Wollongong at the circuit level under the following sections: organisation and services, membership and the class meeting, social composition, and the role of the minister. A comparative study with Primitive Methodism will then be made in the next chapter.

3.1 WESLEYAN ORGANISATION AND SERVICES.

The Wesleyan Connexional structure is outlined below, and although this pattern was followed by New South Wales Wesleyans there were some modifications in the area of clerical-lay relationships. Five types of Wesleyan services which were used in Wollongong for the purpose of evangelism are studied, and it is shown how some changed during the period. The reasons for such changes, and the effects thereof are reviewed.

The society was the basic unit of Methodism, and comprised the members of a local congregation which usually met in a church. These societies were grouped into circuits. Several circuits were grouped together for an annual District Meeting which reported to the Annual Conference, the central controlling body of the Methodist Connexion. These annual Conferences of the colonies (later, states) were responsible to the triennial General Conference of the autonomous Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church from 1875. Between 1855 and 1875 the Australian Conference was responsible to the British Conference.

1. Wollongong was part of a Sydney district until 1898 when the first Illawarra Synod met.
The most notable change occurred in 1875 when lay representatives from each circuit were elected to the Annual Conference, thus modifying the pastoral supremacy concept. Wesleyan ministers did not find it easy to surrender some of their privileges and powers, and thus it maintained some purely ministerial sessions to deal with pastoral matters. This change resulted from the colonial Methodist experience of 'lay activism', and indicated a closing of the gap between Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists on the clerical-lay conflict which caused nineteenth century Methodist divisions in England.

The most significant level of Methodist operation was the circuit. During the years 1838-1902 an increasing centralising tendency in circuit activity was observed. The Wollongong circuit developed quite early a central town orientation, despite the fact that the majority of members lived in rural areas.

The centre of the circuit was the largest town in the area where the minister always resided, travelling to the surrounding villages by horse or foot. A survey of church buildings (size and construction) demonstrated that the first, and later the largest and most impressive, was inevitably located in the town centre.

Wollongong was always at the head of the Quarterly Preaching plan and Wollongong mostly had the greatest proportion of ministerial

2. British Methodism also admitted lay representatives to Conference, but two years later than the Australian church did. Its route to reform was a different one: a struggle for democratisation against the centralised authority of men like Bunting who abhorred democracy.
3. Christian Advocate, 5.2.1877.
4. See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1.
preaching at Sunday services. Quarterly meetings\textsuperscript{5} were always held in Wollongong until the 1890s, and then occasionally at Bulli, and once or twice at Dapto.

Wollongong Wesleyans always had some commercial leaders, and sometimes municipal leaders (two mayors in the 1890s) active in church affairs in such positions as local preachers, society stewards, representatives to Annual Conference (after 1875). These men brought a positive urban and business flavour to Quarterly meetings, and by 1880s they dominated them. Their long term residence and commitment in both town and church tended to reinforce this urban and business orientation.

Turning to the various Wesleyan services we look at their purpose, the participants, and the changes which occurred in the period.

The Sunday preaching service was always the focal point of Wesleyanism; it was a time for worship, preaching and fellowship and attracted large numbers of hearers other than members\textsuperscript{6}. Clergy and lay preachers took the services, and an evangelistic emphasis was common as evidenced by Reverend Watkin's sermon texts\textsuperscript{7}.

\textsuperscript{5} The circuit business meeting which met four times a year and whose membership consisted of ministers and lay leaders and congregation representatives.

\textsuperscript{6} See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.

\textsuperscript{7} See Chapter 3, Section 3.4.
The weeknight preaching service was designed as an evangelistic service, but this emphasis changed as the service declined in importance, and attendances. Some attempts were made to make it more attractive and helpful in the 1870s and 1880s. An 1875 Quarterly Meeting voted to try scriptural exposition, chapter by chapter, hoping to 'interest and instruct our young people'. No notable success was subsequently reported. By 1902 very few weeknight preaching meetings were on the Preaching Plan.

As the weeknight service declined, Wesleyans, always resourceful and pragmatic, found other more effective ways of evangelism, which had entertainment value: the camp meeting, the Anniversary and Missionary services, and special evangelistic services.

A most unusual development occurred in Wesleyan Methodism in New South Wales: the camp meeting became an accepted Wesleyan practice. It was the camp meeting movement in England, led by Bourne and Clowes, which the Wesleyans rejected thus leading to the formation of the break-away Primitive Methodist church in 1811. The British Conference judgement on the 'highly improper' camp meetings was that 'we disclaim all connection with them'. And yet they surfaced in the Windsor district in the 1840s, Wollongong and Bolwarra in the 1860s, and became an established and successful practice in certain areas to the end of the nineteenth century.

8. Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting minutes, March 1875.
10. Minutes of 1807 British Conference, quoted in Pierce, W., Ecclesiastical Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists, 3rd Edition, Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1873. This resolution appears not to have been altered by 1873.
reports survived of the Wollongong camp meetings held between 1860 and 1862. Who introduced camp meetings to Wesleyan Methodism in New South Wales and Wollongong? Was it a pragmatic response looking for new evangelistic opportunities and methods in a pioneering environment? Was it the result of the influence of individual Primitive Methodists who had joined with the Wesleyans in the absence of their own church? The camp meeting practice adopted by the Wesleyans indicates another point of convergence between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism, and another indication that differences between the two were diminished by the colonial environment.

The Church and Sunday School Anniversary services (with associated tea meetings) and the Wesleyan Missionary Society deputation meeting were three important events in Wollongong's social calendar often drawing lengthy reports in the local press. There were many such meetings because each society in the circuit celebrated its own anniversaries, and generally had its own missionary meeting. These services rated very well as entertainment but they were more than just social events. They provided opportunities for evangelism and for celebrating local religious achievements. They were also an important ecumenical event, for invited guests included clergy and members from other denominations and they were important in deparochialising the Wesleyan society member.

The special services were evangelistic events: an attempt to plan or facilitate revival in the local circuit. They became

11. See Chapter 3, Section 3.
an important part of Wesleyan practice in Wollongong from 1876, when
the Bulli society requested the minister to hold special services
at Bulli, and these were planned for April, 1877. They were so
successful in terms of conversion and renewed spiritual life that
other societies followed suit, also with success\textsuperscript{13}. The Quarterly
Meeting's response was to express 'its devout thankfulness to
Almighty God for thus bestowing revival blessings upon us'\textsuperscript{14}. The
following year they expectantly hoped that they might 'enjoy a yet
larger manifestation of divine favour'\textsuperscript{15}, and they did. In the
three years, 1876-9, circuit membership tripled\textsuperscript{16}.

Other important motivating factors for these services were
first, a Wesleyan preoccupation with Revival (interest in revival
occurrences worldwide, and a desire for revival in the local area)
as evidenced by myriads of articles and reports in the Connexional
Journal. Second, Conference made annual recommendations to circuits
to plan for such services in the ensuing year\textsuperscript{17}.

Revival was thought of as a work of God; 'a very gracious
manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence and the power of Jesus
to save'\textsuperscript{18}. And God involved people in his work. Revival was seen
to be a joint clerical-lay activity. Sometimes the laity initiated
moves, as happened in 1876 above. Laity and clergy were involved

\textsuperscript{13} Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 4.7.1877, Reports in
Christian Advocate, 21.7.1877.
\textsuperscript{14} Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 4.7.1877.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 3.1.1878.
\textsuperscript{16} See Appendix I.
\textsuperscript{17} For example, the 1877 Annual Wesleyan Conference.
\textsuperscript{18} Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 4.7.1877.
in the planning, and in the actual meetings. Local preachers and other church leaders as well as clergy addressed the meetings. Clergy and laity shared the responsibility for 'following up' new converts. There were variations on this theme depending upon the people involved; but this pattern, begun in 1876 in Wollongong was followed almost annually through the rest of the period culminating in the 1902 Tent Mission revival\(^{19}\). Revivals had previously been regarded as an unpredictable act of God. But now a revival could be 'organised'.

Wesleyan services in Wollongong all demonstrated a primary concern of clergy and lay leaders for evangelism. Where there appeared to be failure, new methods were sought, and Wesleyan practice further modified.

3.2 MEMBERSHIP AND THE CLASS MEETING.

To be a member of the Wesleyan church meant a high level of commitment to religious practice. Many who called themselves Wesleyans were not prepared for such a level of commitment and did not become members. This section deals with the concept of Wesleyan membership and its categories. The implications of changes occurring during the period are discussed. The decline of the class meeting and its function as a test of membership are discussed.

Membership was an important concept of Wesleyan Methodism from the very beginning as evidenced by Wesley's pronouncements

\(^{19}\) See Chapter 5, Section 5.3.
on membership and by directions to keep accurate records concerning
members and attendances\textsuperscript{20}, an emphasis which was not common practice
in the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century, in other
denominations.

The original basis of membership was contained in John
and Charles Wesley's 'Rules of the Society', 1743, which stated
that, for all, there was only one condition of membership: 'desire
to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins'\textsuperscript{21}. The
Wesleys then proceeded to qualify this statement by saying that
they expected
certain evidence of a desire for salvation;
first by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind ...
second by doing good, ... and by being merciful, ...
third, by attending upon all the Ordinances of God. (22)

This statement continued to be more or less basic to the
concept of Wesleyan membership for nearly two centuries, even though
there were changes which tended to make membership easier to obtain.
Active and regular participation in the class meeting became the
test of membership of Methodist societies; and the class leader
had considerable responsibility for nurturing trial members and full
members, for disciplining erring members, for recommending admission
and expulsion of members. In the Pastoral address to the 1863
Australasian Wesleyan Conference the President said:

You perhaps think it is a privilege to be accounted
a Wesleyan Methodist. Bear in mind that none are
members with us, who do not meet in class. (23)

\textsuperscript{20} For example in the Liverpool Minutes, 1820; Resolutions on
Pastoral Work, Sections V and VI. Quoted in Rigg, C.W., A Digest
of the Laws and Regulations of the Australasian Wesleyan Connexion,

\textsuperscript{21} These rules are fully quoted in Rigg, C.W., op.cit., p.4.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. Each of these three categories is enlarged upon in great detail.

\textsuperscript{23} Quoted in Rigg, C.W., op.cit., p.7.
By the 1860s the class meeting as a test of membership was being debated in New South Wales and England in Conference and in Connexional Journals. This hallmark of Methodism was in decline and Conference pronouncements weakened it further. The 1875 Australasian General Conference reaffirmed that we 'adhere to (regular class meeting attendance) as a test of membership'. Wesley's concept was all but dismantled by resolutions of the 1890 Conference.

It is difficult to trace the decline or otherwise of the class meeting in Wollongong as no class records have survived. Classes are scheduled on some preaching plans; on others just a weeknight meeting is shown and it is not clear whether this is a class meeting or a preaching service. Quarterly Meeting minutes have frequent references to class meeting matters but not to their usefulness or decline.

Many Wollongong ministers took sole responsibility for class meetings. This placed a definite limitation on the number and frequency of class meetings. Wesley's pattern was a weekly class meeting, in which he made extensive use of lay leaders; but in Wollongong in 1856 one minister led one weekly meeting, three monthly and four quarterly meetings. In 1902, four ministers led a total of four weekly classes, four monthly and three quarterly classes. Wesley's pattern had been changed substantially. These figures suggest something of a decline, although not a dramatic one.

24. For example, Christian Advocate, 15.7.1865.
26. A summary of these resolutions is found on the cover of the 1896 Wollongong Wesleyan Members Roll Book. See also Phillips, W., Defending a Christian Country, p.9-10.
27. Wollongong Wesleyan preaching plan, 1856.
We cannot say how and why class leadership in Wollongong changed from the laity in 1839 to the clergy by 1859. It cannot have been for want of suitable leaders, unless men such as Vidler, Black, Graham, the Somervilles (and others) were unavailable. Occasionally, as in 1872, 1876 and 1886, lay class leaders were used again. Perhaps the answer lies primarily with each minister's view of the pastoral supremacy concept. Ministerial leadership of classes could have been seen as necessary for pastoral oversight of members by some and not by others, and this colonial situation allowed for such flexibility.

It appears that, as well as the monthly fellowship meeting advocated by the 1890 Conference, the christian endeavour meeting (an organisation begun in New England in 1881) came to be used by many Wesleyan Churches with Conference approval. In Wollongong it was well established in the early 1890s. This meeting performed some of the same functions as the class meeting and was seen as a substitute by some. However it only partially replaced the class. In 1902, ten christian endeavour meetings, and ten class meetings were scheduled on different nights in the Wollongong circuit. Christian endeavour, originally a youth movement, had more appeal to young people, and perhaps the older members preferred the traditional class meeting. Leadership of the christian endeavour meetings, like the classes, was a ministerial task.

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28. Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 1872, 1876, 1886.
29. Methodists were cautious about Christian Endeavour at first, but by 1898 they saw it as a 'great spiritual force' particularly amongst young people. The Methodist, 17.9.1898.
30. All Christian Endeavour meetings were taken by the ministers in the 1902 Preaching Plan.
There are four factors which account for the decline of the class meeting in Wollongong. First, Wesleyan Methodism was classifiable as a denomination; and the class meeting, Wesley-style, was not a typical feature of denominational religion. One editor of *The Methodist*, in speaking of church difficulties claims that Wesleyanism has 'lost the vitality of the sect; it is now a comfortable denomination'. And much earlier, in Wollongong, Reverend Turner describes another aspect of respectable denomination-alism: 'Some people don't like revivals. They like to be converted in a gentlemanly and proper manner'. Some of the features of the class were therefore gradually discarded, and the class meeting lost some of its usefulness, which in turn led to further decline.

Second, secular demands on members were having an impact within the church. As Gilbert analyses, the tendency for participation in denominational affairs became more 'passive and less frequent', and social involvement outside the church increased. *The Methodist* published articles in the 1890s showing that at least some leaders were aware of the secularisation process within the church and were trying to counteract its effects. Whether the ordinary circuit member was aware of this is another question.

Third, ministerial control, dictated by the pastoral supremacy concept, limited the number and frequency of class meetings. Fourth, perhaps there was a lack of suitable leaders as is suggested by

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31. 10.2.1894.
32. Lecture on Methodism given in the Jamberoo church and reported in the Illawarra Mercury, 4.6.1861.
Reverend Watkin's comment that he 'was not full of admiration for some of' the lay leaders\textsuperscript{35}. As this is the only reference to the problem, too much importance must not be placed on this one piece of evidence.

Therefore the class meeting suffered decline, but it did not disappear for many years. Easier membership did not cause any great increase in the number of Wesleyan members as must have been hoped. High levels of commitment to religious practice is always associated with rigorous membership qualifications. The converse is also true.

Wesleyan church membership had three categories. Full membership was only attained after a satisfactory period of trial membership, most often one or two quarters. The member was expected to be regular at Wesleyan services and the class meeting and to adhere to 'our doctrine' and 'submit to our discipline'. He or she was also expected to make a weekly monetary contribution to church funds. The trial member was required to prove himself as worthy within the class meeting. The minister had ultimate responsibility for accepting or rejecting members, although this came to be shared (following the 1890 Australian Conference) by the minister and the Leaders' Meeting\textsuperscript{36}.

\textsuperscript{35} Watkin, J., Journal, 9.7.1858.
\textsuperscript{36} Minutes of the 1890 Australasian Conference, p.40-41.
The third category, 'catechumens', is defined as all those young people who (not being of our society) receive instruction in the Scriptures apart from Sunday School, in classes taught by the circuit ministers or their appointees. (37)

There are periodic references to catechumens in Wollongong, most often following special evangelistic efforts. It is not easy to discover what happened to catechumens in the long term. Numbers in a batch tended to decline with the months and years; probably due to two factors: natural wastage, and catechumens becoming eligible for trial membership. In 1897, the name 'Junior members' was substituted for Catechumens.

Wesleyan membership was renewed quarterly. It was also easily portable from one circuit to another. A written communication from the minister was all that was needed, plus Quarterly Meeting approval in the receiving circuit. This ease of transfer was invaluable in a colony where the population was very mobile. A piece of paper gave a Wesleyan member entry into any society immediately: that is entry into a familiar environment and access to the various Wesleyan links in the general community.

In Wollongong there are several examples of membership being transferred from the Primitive to the Wesleyan church and vice versa. J. Metclafe, a Primitive Methodist member in England before emigrating joined the Wesleyans in Australia because there was no Primitive Methodist church in his locality. When he came

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37. Minutes of the 1865 Australasian General Conference, p.42. 38. Ministers' practise in listing catechumens was inconsistent. The Wollongong circuit lists 45 catechumens following special services in July-August, 1893. There were 30 in late 1894, 15 in late 1895, then no entries for six months.
to Wollongong he wished to rejoin the Primitive Methodist church and was able to do so easily. Henry Collings and William Wynn changed membership between the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodists several times in the 1880s and 1890s for unknown reasons. Collings was a choir master and prayer leader and Wynn a local preacher. This acceptability of each other's membership is a further indication of the convergence in New South Wales of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism.

We turn now to all those non-members who regularly attended Methodist services. Annual circuit returns to Conference reveal a large difference between the number of full members and the number of total attendants at public worship (variously styled as hearers or adherents). From 1846 to 1857, total numbers attending worship in the Wollongong Wesleyan circuit varied from a low of 230 to a high of 1,050, whereas only 75 and 267 respectively were members; that is of those attending church regularly, only 24% were members and 76% were adherents. For every member there were 3 adherents. A significantly different pattern emerges after 1858 (and continues to 1902) of an even greater ratio of adherents to members. Total attendants at church varied from 500 to 1,300, whereas only 60 and 155 respectively were members: that is of those

39. Minutes of Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting, 24.11.1883
40. Minutes of Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting, August 1891
Minutes of Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Quarterly Meeting, 3.10.1894, and Wollongong Wesleyan Membership Roll 1896-1904.
41. Wynn, W., Diary, 1.12.1883, 15.12.1883. No comment is made on the change in membership. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 6.6.1885, 3.9.1887.
42. See Appendix I.
attending worship regularly only 12% were members and 88% were adherents. For every member there were eight adherents. These two sets of figures have a turning point in the year 1858 which correlates with two factors. First the original and extensive circuit was divided into three, separating the more rural southern areas of Kiama and Shoalhaven and leaving Wollongong with not such a heavy rural component. Second, and more important, there was a change in the economic activity and social structure of Wollongong associated with the development of coal mining.

Obelkevich makes a similar analysis in the rural district of South Lindsey in 1851 and the late 1860s and discovered that 'in the average congregation there were four non-members for every three members'. In both areas a majority of the Sunday congregation consisted of non-members. By contrast the Wollongong ratio of members to total congregation is far, far lower. The chief reason for this lies in the difference between traditional English rural social patterns (which were only just starting to change) and a very different Australian colonial social environment. Possibly Australians were more reluctant to commit themselves to membership in a society where church attendance was only a minority practice, and where the church did not demand full membership. For many the maximum religious commitment they were prepared to give was regular Sunday church attendance.

43. Figures compiled from New South Wales Annual Wesleyan Methodist Conference returns for the Wollongong circuit.
The two chief developments in this period were the decline (but not disappearance) of the Class Meeting and easier membership requirements: the latter being largely a response to the former. One can see the early influences of secularism at work in these developments. The pastoral supremacy concept of Wesleyanism as interpreted in the aspect of pastoral care of the membership, came increasingly to be seen as meaning sole responsibility for class meeting leadership. This depended primarily upon the individual minister's interpretation as demonstrated by variations in leadership between 1838 and 1902.

3.3 SOCIAL COMPOSITION.

There are major problems in attempting an analysis of the social composition of the Wesleyan church in Wollongong in the nineteenth century. Because very few records survive it is not possible to make a comprehensive study; but enough information can be culled from the sources to show some interesting relationships between religion and occupational groupings and different geographical areas within the circuit. Resources are adequate for studying the years 1896-1902. Prior to that some probabilities may be stated on the basis of limited evidence. Some of the social consequences of this analysis are discussed.

Wollongong began as a farming community, with 50-60% of its working population engaged in agricultural pursuits in 1856. Wesleyan Methodism had its beginnings within this rural community.

45. 1856 Census - quoted in Illawarra Mercury, 13.4.1857.
It is known that early members such as John Graham and Thomas Boxsell; as well as John Vidler and at least three of his four brothers were all engaged in farming. The Jamberoo area acquired the nick name of Vidlerville! Reuben Parsons was an ironmonger, but the occupations of several other Wesleyans named before 1850 are not known. This suggests that the early Wesleyan church had a major part of its membership engaged in farming.

In the 1856 Census, Wesleyans formed 9% of the total population in Wollongong, 16% in Kiama and 5% in Shoalhaven, a total of 1,191 persons. In the 1856 Wesleyan Annual Conference Statistical returns for the Wollongong circuit (an area similar to the three areas above) the total number of attendants at public worship was 1,020. In other words 86% of persons designating themselves as Wesleyans attended public worship regularly. This seems an exceptionally high figure, but correlates with Coghlan's figures of Methodist attendances in New South Wales as a percentage of the total Wesleyan members and adherents:

1850 - 74.3%
1860 - 99.6%

There is a problem with the above mentioned category of 'total number of attendants at worship' occurring in Wesleyan Annual Conference returns. One cannot determine how this figure

46. As reported in the Illawarra Mercury, 13.4.1857.
47. Includes other branches of Methodism, not just Wesleyan.
was arrived at, nor whether the same manner of counting was consistently used. Phillips discusses these problems and concludes that despite 'some imprecision and occasional variation in the manner of counting ... generally some thought and care went into the compilation of these statistics, particularly later in the century. (50)

and that they are useful in that they provide a rough estimate of average church attendances, and changing patterns in religious observance.

Phillips also demonstrates that while church attendances as a percentage of the adult population of New South Wales was 36.5% in 1850 and 41.1% in 1860, the Wesleyans had by far the highest percentage of church attendants. Wesleyans were more committed to religious observance than any other major denomination in New South Wales in this period. However the commitment to full membership was a different matter.

By the 1880s a definite geographical pattern of economic activity was evident. There was a southern, rural area and a northern, mining area, with the centrally located township of Wollongong developing further to meet the needs of both rural and mining communities. This pattern was reflected in church membership, as shown in the following table. The Wollongong Society was by far the largest and had the largest ratio of businessmen and skilled tradesmen to total members of any of

50. Ibid., p.387.
51. See Chapter 3, Section 3.2
the societies. Aggregating the members of the northern mining societies gives a group figure numerically much greater than the town membership; and whose occupations are mostly mining and skilled trades.

Table 1. Distribution by Society and Occupation of Male Members of Wollongong Wesleyan Circuit, 1896-1902.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of Members</th>
<th>Wollongong</th>
<th>Bulli</th>
<th>Thirroul</th>
<th>Woonona</th>
<th>Bellambi</th>
<th>Sherbrooke</th>
<th>Helensburgh</th>
<th>Mount Keira</th>
<th>Dapto</th>
<th>Marshall Mount</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Trades and Profession</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: Males</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Females</td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>163</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Membership of Societies</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although membership in the southern rural churches was small, the congregations were not so small. If the circuit pattern prevailed of eight adherents attending worship for every one member, assuming that such members attended regularly, then

52. Sherbrooke is excluded because it is a farming area.
53. The Dapto and Marshall Mount figures pose a problem of inaccuracy because no adjustments were made between 1896 and 1902, and at least one Quarterly Meeting member is not entered on the roll.
congregations would have been substantial. However it is more likely that the pattern that existed before 1857 in the rural areas, of three adherents attending for every member, would have prevailed.\footnote{See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.}

A comparison of Table 1 with Table 2 below illustrates the dominant position of the Wollongong society and its leaders\footnote{The names of these thirty one leaders have been taken from Quarterly Meeting Minutes, and the 1902 Preaching Plan, and may not include everyone.} in circuit affairs. The dominance is only partly related to larger numbers.

Table 2. \emph{Comparison by Occupation of Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Male Members and Leaders, 1896-1902.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total Members</th>
<th>Church Leaders</th>
<th>Ordinary Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trade/profession</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The northern mining communities were grossly under-represented amongst church leaders: only two miners held official positions. The north had other representatives, but they were storekeepers, a hospital superintendent, and skilled tradesmen, who probably had more in common with the town church leaders than with the miners. The southern rural community was grossly over-represented. All
the known farmers were leaders. The Wollongong society was not over-represented; they just had a larger percentage of businessmen and skilled labourers amongst their membership, and this was reflected amongst their leaders. In turn these leaders, because of their skills and experience in public affairs (business, and municipal) tended to dominate the Quarterly Meeting affairs in the 1880s and 1890s.

Table 2 also reveals a high correlation between social status and church leadership. It could be said that, to be a farmer or a businessman greatly increased one's chances of being a Wesleyan church official: 52% of church officials belonged to these categories compared with only 9% of ordinary church members. Miners, by contrast, had only a very small chance of becoming church officials. Miners made up 21% of ordinary members but only 6% of church leaders. This imbalance did not occur in the Primitive Methodist church.

A significant problem which affected the life of the Wesleyan church was the high mobility of church members: that is, a large number of members did not have a long period of residence in the circuit. An analysis of the Wollongong Society Members Roll 1896-1902 reveals that by 1902, of ninety seven members whose names were entered on the roll at one time or another, 29% had transferred to other circuits, 6% had ceased to meet or resigned, 6% had died. That is, 41% of names were taken off the rolls in this six year period for one of the above reasons. Transfer to other circuits
was the largest cause of loss of members from the Wollongong rolls. One would expect that members transferring into the circuit from elsewhere would more or less off-set this loss; but that did not happen even though the general population was increasing. Only 16% of the ninety seven members referred to above had transferred in from other circuits. This may suggest that in such a mobile population there was a tendency to drop away from church membership before permanent settlement in a locality occurred.

It was not only the ordinary member who was mobile. Local preachers were also on the move. Many exercised short term ministries, some of only a few months, some a few years. Just four of the twenty three named local preachers had long term ministries: John Vidler, about fifty years, John Graham about forty years, Robert Somerville at least twenty nine years, and William Robson at least fourteen years. These men gave great stability and continuity to church life, which in turn tended to counteract some of the effect of mobility of local preachers and an itinerant minister whose maximum term was three years in any one circuit.\footnote{56}

High mobility limited the possibility of training potential local preachers from within the membership. Many who commenced as local preachers on trial moved on before they became accredited. Of twenty three local preachers listed from 1856 to 1875, thirteen were already accredited when they arrived in Wollongong, and six gained it in Wollongong.\footnote{57}

\footnote{56} This was increased to four years in 1894.
\footnote{57} From Wesleyan Preaching Plans, and Wollongong Wesleyan Local Preachers Minutes.
There is a definite pattern for people of a higher social status such as businessmen and farmers to be more settled once they arrived in Wollongong. By contrast it was the members of the lower social class that tended to be more mobile. This was another factor reinforcing the dominant position of the church leaders from the Wollongong society, and is discussed further in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

Some further social consequences of the above analysis for Wesleyans in Wollongong will now be reviewed.

The Methodist Connexion had an important deparochialising effect, in that it provided opportunities of social intercourse with other Wesleyans from elsewhere in the circuit (and from differing backgrounds of rural, town, and mining village environments) and members of other denominations. Visitors from outside the circuit, and especially missionary clergy from other countries increased people's awareness of a world beyond their own parochial concerns, and invited their participation.

There is evidence of a modernising influence within Wollongong Wesleyanism. It changed from being a group of traditional, rural societies to one having strong town and mining components. The increasing industrial development of mining and the increasing dominance of the town were felt in Wesleyan societies.

58. British and Foreign Bible Society deputation meetings were also generously supported by Wesleyan clergy and laity.
In the South Lindsey district of England, Obelkevich observed that 'the village societies had become too dependent upon the town societies',\textsuperscript{59} in religious, social and economic affairs. Perhaps that was starting to happen in Wollongong, but the Wollongong situation could be described more accurately as one of interdependence of rural, mining and town societies. A tendency which increased in the latter years was for the town to dominate circuit affairs. The logical progression of this process is for the villages (mining and rural) to become dependent on the town; but this had not happened in Wollongong to 1902.

There is also an increasing involvement of Wesleyan clergy and laity in activities not specifically religious during the period such as Mutual Improvement Societies, and temperence organisations. Many Wesleyans were leaders in the temperance movement but their commitment was not so strong as the Primitive Methodists'. One Primitive Methodist minister urged Wesleyans to more seriously consider total abstinence (a Primitive Methodist requirement) and increasing involvement in the temperance movement\textsuperscript{60}. One Wesleyan local preacher resigned because he 'disapproved of Wesley's rule in regard to the use of spirituous liquors'.\textsuperscript{61}

Politics was another sphere of involvement for Wesleyan laymen. Clergy maintained a public non-involvement policy in such matters reflecting Wesley's 'no politics' rule, but some laymen

\textsuperscript{59} Obelkevich, J., op.cit., p.205.
\textsuperscript{60} The Methodist, 27.10.1894. Reverend Davies was not in Wollongong in 1894, but he had had one term there, and commenced another in 1898.
\textsuperscript{61} Wollongong Wesleyan Local Preachers Meeting Minutes, October, 1884. Although ambiguous it could mean Wesley's rule was not strict enough - because he then joined the Primitive Methodists.
stood as candidates for local and state government, and others were actively involved in supporting pre-election campaigns. Because the Wesleyans were not so strong in the mining communities they were not so involved in industrial politics and Unionism. Where there was involvement it was more often at the level of management; but Primitive Methodists were very active in this sphere in Wollongong.62.

Thus Wesleyan Methodism was strongest in the town and rural sectors of the community, and there was a high correlation between lay leadership and higher status occupational groups, and the lay leaders from the town tended to dominate circuit affairs.

3.4 ROLE OF THE MINISTER.

Even though Wesleyan Methodism owed its beginnings and early years to strong lay leadership in the Wollongong area, the ordained minister in the circuit exercised a far more important and powerful role than did his counterpart in the Primitive Church. The minister was central to the operation of the circuit. He always chaired the Quarterly meetings, and often wrote up the minutes, therefore presumably acting as secretary for the meeting.63 The Wesleyan minister was responsible for carrying through many of the meeting's decisions. Sometimes the lay members shared in this; for example, in the organisation of special evangelistic services, but in 1898

62. See Chapter 4, Section 4.3.
63. For example, Reverend J. Watkin, 1859-60, Reverend W. Kelvynack, 1864-65 and Reverend W. Fidler, 1869-72.
the meeting voted that 'the arrangement of special services be left to ministers in future',\textsuperscript{64}.

The Wesleyan minister was expected to carry through Conference recommendations at the circuit level, for example, 'seasons of prayer', seeking an 'outpouring of the Holy Spirit', evangelistic meetings, financial directions concerning circuit affairs or connexional funds. He was the Conference's agent in the local area and represented the authority of that body.

The Wesleyan minister dominated the Quarterly Preaching plan. However he was very dependent on local preachers to help him fill Sunday preaching appointments. Never could a Wollongong minister alone, meet all the demands for Sunday services in such a scattered circuit.

The minister's role as class leader was an important one. Apart from the early years, only occasionally did a local preacher lead a class, and then only so that the minister could take a monthly meeting in the outlying areas. Quite a different position prevailed in the Primitive church where classes were held more frequently and were led by lay leaders with occasional oversight by the minister.\textsuperscript{65}

Wesley's expectations of the minister as a pastoral visitor were very high. The 1820 Liverpool Minutes reaffirmed Wesley's expectations and stated that

\textsuperscript{64} Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 2.7.1898.
\textsuperscript{65} See Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Preaching Plans, and Chapter 4, Section 4.4.
we recognise the absolute obligation which is laid upon us -- to secure, ... a general, stated and efficient visitation of our people at their own dwellings as is involved in the Scriptural command to 'feed the Church of God' and in the example of St. Paul, who taught the people publicly, and from house to house. (66)

Such visitation it was claimed would have benefits to the people, and to the unity and edification of the societies.

Such high expectations were modified in the Wollongong situation because of the minister's heavy formal workload of meetings, and the scattered nature of the Wesleyan societies. The minister's leadership of class meetings helped him to keep in touch with members in a way more economical of time. When preaching in country areas, the minister often used that opportunity to visit members in that area. The minister gave special attention to visitation of sick and dying members or adherents. Henry Osborne of Marshall Mount (a supporter but not a member) greatly appreciated the Reverend Watkin's frequent ministry in his last weeks.

Watkin also saw visitation in the early part of his ministry as an important means of getting to know people and he appears to relate this activity to his work as an evangelist; the first being, for Watkin, a pre-requisite for the second.

The Wesleyan minister's formal workload was a formidable one and did not vary significantly between 1849 and 1902. Whether there was one or more ministers in the circuit, the workload for

66. Liverpool Minutes, 1820 Section VII.
68. Ibid., 5.4.1858.
69. Ibid.
each was similar\textsuperscript{70}. The minister normally took three (occasionally two) Sunday services, and two or three weeknight meetings (for classes, prayer or preaching) every week, plus the occasional meeting such as Quarterly meetings, Local Preachers Meetings, and Trust Meetings. In the week beginning 14 September 1856, the Reverend Wilkinson left his Wollongong home for an 11 a.m. service at Dapto, followed by a 6.30 p.m. service at Wollongong. On Monday night he was at Shoalhaven, Wednesday night back at Wollongong for a class meeting, and on Friday night at Jerara. All this without motorised transport\textsuperscript{71}!

The Reverend James Watkin (aged fifty four years) declared that 'I have not altogether a stay at home life of it'. He had just counted up all the miles he had travelled in 1858: 2,678, and the number of sermons he had preached in the year: 223\textsuperscript{72}. On 17 January 1859 he writes in his diary:

Yesterday at Dapto in a.m., Marshall Mt in afternoon, at Wollongong at night ... It is not very easy work to ride thirty miles and preach three times. (73)

Why did the Wesleyan minister have such a heavy workload? John Wesley's example of an almost constant round of preaching and meetings could not be ignored. Second, many, if not all, had an over-riding conviction that their chief aim was to preach the gospel in order to win conversions. Nurturing the newly converted through trial membership to full membership and maintaining spiritual growth towards 'christian perfection' was also part of the total

\textsuperscript{70} See Appendix VI.
\textsuperscript{71} Wesleyan Preaching Plan, 1858, Wollongong.
\textsuperscript{72} Watkin, J., Journal, 3.1.1859.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 17.1.1859.
process of evangelism. Reverend Watkin wrote in 1858 'May I be helped to do the work of an evangelist', 74.

The Reverend Walkden Brown 75 and Reverend Austin 76 voiced similar ideals in their writings, and the ministries of the three men showed the prominence of this aim. As a result many members were added to the church in those years.

Third, practical limitations such as a large circuit area, scattered societies and poor roads, in effect, made his workload greater. Fourth and most importantly, the Wesleyan minister did not share as much of his task with lay leaders as did the Primitive Methodist minister. He was compelled to use local preachers for Sunday services because of the demand, but so far as pastoral responsibility for the 'oversight of the Societies' Spiritual affairs' was concerned, he was 'directly responsible to the great Head of the Church', 77. This direct responsibility to God was generally interpreted by Wesleyan ministers as meaning sole responsibility.

Having discussed the role of the Wesleyan minister, in general terms, we shall now look at a case study of one particular Wesleyan

75. The Weekly Advocate, 21.7.1877.
76. Austin, J.S., Missionary Enterprise and Home Service: A Story of Mission Life in Samoa and Circuit Work In New South Wales, Sydney, (no date) especially Chapter XX.
77. Liverpool Minutes, 1820, section XIX.
minister, Reverend James Watkin, who ministered in the Wollongong circuit between 1858-1861. In many aspects (his background, experience of conversion, training, missionary work, the books he read, and his family life) he was typical of the Wesleyan minister of his era. He was, however, not just an average minister but one who attained leadership in the New South Wales Conference. His 'Missionary Journal' written over fifty years, is an exciting document and reveals much of himself and of Wesleyan history.

Watkin received a religious upbringing from a godly mother who was a devout Methodist. As a youth he had a conversion experience which was followed by active involvement in the local society as a Sunday School teacher and local preacher. He showed such potential that an admirer offered to pay for his training as an Anglican clergyman. He rejected the offer and chose 'not to leave the church of his mother'.

Methodist ministers who came to Australia prior to 1855 came as missionaries with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Watkin spent seven years in Tonga first, and while there witnessed a revival - 'one of the most remarkable outpourings of the Holy Spirit' in Methodist history. In his Wollongong ministry he also looked for revival, but was disappointed and partly blamed his lack of 'usefulness'. His Journal often conveys a sense of depression and disappointment at his seeming lack of usefulness and he attributes this to spiritual failure within himself. There were times of revival during his ministry, however. His colleagues

78. The Methodist, 5.6.1886.
recognised in him a tendency to under-rate himself, but they viewed him as a man of outstanding spirituality, and, in his later years, he was lovingly called 'Father Watkin' by many who knew him.

Watkin's other appointments included pioneering work in New Zealand, and many New South Wales appointments. He was elected President of the Australasian Conference in 1862. On his Presidency he commented: 'I did not wish it, do not consider myself fit'.

Watkin has obliged the historian by recording the books he read in 1830 and 1834 (a requirement in the first four years of ministry) on the fly leaf of his Journal. Unfortunately he rarely comments on his reading and study. Of the fifty six volumes he read in 1830 at least thirty four were Methodist or missionary works, eleven were other religious works and eleven were of a general nature. He also read 'miscellaneous magazines, encyclopaedias and poetry'. Watkin typically read Methodist authors in a far greater proportion to other religious writers, thus preserving a strong Methodist emphasis in his thinking.

Watkin's family life demonstrates typical patterns also. His wife, Hannah came from 'good old Methodist stock of the family of Entwhistle ... she was a partner in service and tribulation throughout his ministerial life'. The Watkins had nine children, three of whom followed their father's footsteps and became clergymen.

81. See Appendix VII.
82. A leading figure in the British Wesleyan Conference.
83. The Methodist, 24.2.1900.
Methodist names were used unsparingly - one son was named Jabez Bunting and another John Wesley Watkin!

Watkin systematically listed the text of every sermon he preached in Wollongong. In analysing these texts it can be shown that his preaching was typically Methodist in its evangelistic emphasis. One third of his sermons in 1858 and 1860 have a plainly evangelistic emphasis. It is possible that he gave other texts an evangelistic emphasis too. Another third of his texts may be categorised as teaching Wesley's concept of Christian perfection, and other doctrinal matters. Watkin never used the same text twice on any Sunday, even if preaching in three different places. He did re-use texts though on other Sundays, and there were some favourites, one of which he used eight times in 1858. He drew on the whole range of the books of the Bible for his texts, but most come from the New Testament Epistles, next come texts from the Old Testament, and then texts from the Gospels.

Thus in these aspects of his life and ministry Watkin maintains a distinctly Wesleyan approach. It was by agents such as Watkin that Wesleyan Methodism was firmly transplanted in the colony.
CHAPTER 4

PRIMITIVE METHODISM IN WOLLONGONG.
The differences which split Methodism in the nineteenth Century left it strongly divided for a century. These divisions were carried to Australia, and in Wollongong the Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists, once they were established, jealously maintained their separate identities. But the differences of English Methodism were diminished by the Australian colonial environment. This chapter, a companion to Chapter 3, demonstrates how and to what extent these differences were diminished in Wollongong, leading to an easier passage to Australian Methodist union and an earlier one than in England. Under the sections: organisation and services, Membership and the class meeting, social composition, role of the minister, the distinctive aspects of Primitive Methodism in the Wollongong station are described and analysed and a comparative study made with Wesleyan Methodism.

4.1 ORGANISATION AND SERVICES.

The basic structures of Primitive Methodism were identical to those of Wesleyan Methodism, with some slight name variations: 'station' for 'circuit' and 'assembly' for 'conference'. Participation within the structures was different in some aspects because the Primitive Methodist minister did not have such an elevated role as his Wesleyan counterpart, imbued with the Wesleyan notion of pastoral supremacy. Clergy and laity worked closer together and shared much more responsibility at the different levels of church government. This was demonstrated at the circuit

1. This came to be used interchangeably with circuit.
level, where it was the practice of Primitive Methodists to elect a chairman and secretary for each Quarterly Meeting: a layman or the minister could fill either position. At the majority of meetings the minister was elected either President or Secretary but there were occasions when both positions were filled by laymen, and the minister was part of the general membership of the meeting.

Responsibility was also shared at the level of the District Meeting and the Annual Assembly to which each station sent two lay representatives. All the executive positions were open to laity and clergy. It was the practice with the position of President (a one year term of office) for a layman to alternate with a clergyman. Wollongong's John Waters was elected a Vice-President of the New South Wales Assembly in 1897. By contrast, the Wesleyan Conference President could only be a clergyman.

The minister in the station was not the sole agent of the Annual Assembly. One or two lay representatives shared this with him. So he lacked that base of authority which the Wesleyan minister had before 1875. Conversely, lay members in the Wollongong Primitive station always had direct access to the Assembly through its own elected lay representatives, a power which distinguished it from the Wesleyans who until 1875 only had access to Conference through its ministers. The Wesleyan position moved closer to the Primitive Methodist position after 1875 when lay

2. First Australian Annual Assembly 1884, and before that the District Meeting was responsible to the British Conference.
representatives were appointed, but they were still excluded from ministerial sessions.

So far as property was concerned, at the time of union in 1902 the Primitive Methodist station had five churches, none of which was as large nor as imposing as the Wesleyan churches at Wollongong or Bulli. The original cost of these churches was £1,675, and the 1901 debt was £543\(^3\). This also reflects the lower social and economic status of the Primitive Methodists. The Wesleyans had seven churches, whose original total cost was £8,100, with a 1901 debt of £750\(^4\).

Thus Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist organisational structures were very similar, but participation of laity and clergy within these structures was significantly different at each level. Primitive Methodism was much more democratic and showed very little change through the period. Wesleyan Methodism was more centralised, except for its very early years, and less democratic, because of clerical pastoral supremacy. But there was a significant convergence of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist polity in this critical area which facilitated moves to union.

The Primitive Methodists had a very similar pattern of services to the Wesleyans: Sunday services, weeknight meetings,

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4. Ibid.
anniversaries, Camp Meetings and special evangelistic services, whose chief purpose was evangelism. The similarities and differences between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism in practice will be discussed, and it will be shown that the Primitive Methodists were more flexible and responsive to church and community needs than the Wesleyans, and that there was some convergence of practice between the two.

What happened in the Sunday morning preaching service cannot be ascertained. It had a central place in the church's life as a time for worship, fellowship and evangelistic preaching. In the 1864 Preaching Plan there were 48 Sunday services. In 1880 there were 97 Sunday Services and by 1900 there were 130 showing an expansion of services - but not so much into new areas as in providing a second service in existing centres.

Weeknight services were also conducted by the Primitive Methodists. In the 1860s some of these services were specifically evangelistic 'mission' services. At other times, occasional and even weekly open air preaching services were held at Bulli. Thus at least some of the weeknight services were evangelistic.

The distinctive Primitive Methodist Camp Meeting was a frequent occurrence once or twice a quarter, planned by the Quarterly Meeting. From 1890 onwards a Camp Meeting was held in Bulli on or about 23rd March to 'commemorate the Bulli Mine Disaster'. A sad and emotional time was used as an evangelistic

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5. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 5.3.1898. This was probably an annual occurrence, although minutes do not refer to one every year.
opportunity. A camp meeting sometimes culminated in a lovefeast. During the 1890s the camp meeting became just one of many special events in the church's calendar, although there was no decline in frequency. Thus a distinctive Primitive Methodist meeting tended to be crowded about by other meetings less typically Primitive Methodist. The Wesleyans used the camp meeting for a time in Wollongong indicating a willingness to use other methods of evangelism, but abandoned the attempt in the early 1860s. Australian Methodists did not necessarily see the camp meeting as being exclusively Primitive Methodist.

It was not until the 1890s that the 'trio of Anniversaries' proliferated in the Primitive Methodist circuit, and although they were used as evangelistic opportunities, they also had social acceptance and were a respectable form of entertainment. Perhaps this proliferation of such services indicates the infiltration of secular notions into church practice, as well as pointing to another convergence of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist practice.

The so called 'special services' appear to have been introduced in 1891 when a week's special services followed on from a Camp Meeting at Cramsville (later Balgownie) and were used just occasionally after that. There was never the same need, as the Wesleyans had, to adopt this practice as the frequent camp meetings were apparently still a successful evangelistic instrument.

One wishes evidence had survived of how these meetings

6. A phrase from Obelkevich, J., op.cit., p.229, referring to the church anniversary, the Sunday school anniversary and the annual missionary meeting.
were conducted, and whether the levels of emotional and rational response to evangelism differed significantly between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists in Wollongong as it did in nineteenth century England.

The Primitive Methodists were more flexible in their approach and responded to special community needs, for example the commemoration of the Bulli Mine Disaster in the Camp Meeting, and the open-air preaching services. Times of meetings were changed to suit seasonal variations and local convenience. They were also more decentralised in their approach in that the full range of services was held in the various centres.

Both churches remained firm in their commitment to evangelism in the various services, but an increasing incidence of Anniversary type services, and special services occurred. This is an indication of secular influences becoming active within the church. Such influences were active earlier in the Wollongong Wesleyan circuit, while it was only in the 1890s that the trend is observed in Primitive Methodism.

4.2 MEMBERSHIP AND THE CLASS MEETING.

Because no class meeting records or roll books have survived, nor a complete set of New South Wales District Meeting or Australian Annual Assembly Minutes, it is not possible to discover if there were changes in the membership concept, or numbers of members, or whether the class meetings thrived or fulfilled the same functions in Primitive Methodism as in Wesleyan Methodism.
But it is possible to make significant observations on class meeting leadership.

In the 1860s, class meetings do not occur on the Primitive Methodist preaching plans, although prayer meetings do. Prayer leaders were probably the equivalent of class leaders and they took some of the weeknight meetings listed, as well as some of the prayer meetings. In this period, such leadership was exercised mostly by the minister. This is an atypical Primitive Methodist pattern and occurred because of scarcity of lay leadership in a church struggling to survive.

Of the four class meetings on the 1880 preaching plan one was led by the minister and three by lay leaders. Wollongong Primitive Methodists saw their local preachers as having a very important part to play in pastoral oversight of members through permanent leadership of classes. By contrast, the Wollongong Wesleyan Minister alone was responsible for class leadership with just occasional assistance from local preachers.

The class meeting was one of the secrets of early Methodism's success. This idea of cell groups within a circuit was particularly suitable to the colonial environment in that it more easily catered for the spiritual and social needs of small groups of faithful Methodists scattered around the countryside.
Turning to church membership, a glance at the figures in Appendix II quickly dispels the commonly held belief that the Primitive Methodists were a minority group in Wollongong prior to Union. The dominance of the Wesleyans over the Primitive Methodists following union had nothing to do with total circuit membership. The Wollongong Wesleyan society was larger than the Primitive Methodist society, and this was the central and dominant one. The Primitive Methodists were stronger than the Wesleyans in the northern societies, but they did not counterbalance the central dominant society.

It can also be seen from this table that the Primitive Methodists had an almost unbroken pattern of growth from 1880 to 1902. The period is too short to observe growth cycles. From the longer Wesleyan series it can be seen that the Wesleyans experienced cycles of growth of approximately ten years duration. The low years were 1863, 1876, 1887 and 1893, and the peaks of revival occurred from 3 to 5 years after the low point. It is not always easy to pin-point the factors which activated revival. In 1876 it is clearly associated with the arrival of a new Wesleyan minister, Reverend John Walkden-Brown and the request of his Quarterly Meeting to conduct special evangelistic services. The 1896 to 1898 high growth rate is probably also related to the arrival of Reverend John Austin and special services that were conducted. The Methodist Union of 1902 was also another activating factor as indicated by the great response to the 1902 Tent Missions in the Illawarra District.

7. See Chapter 3, Section 3.3.
9. See Chapter 5, Section 5.3.
If a church's declared aim is an evangelistic one then it is very important to look at growth rates in order to discover how successful it was in achieving those aims. The following table shows that the Primitive Methodists average annual growth rate was higher than the Wesleyans.

Table 3. **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP GROWTH RATES IN WOLLONGONG, 1859-1902.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average annual growth rate</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average annual growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WESLEYAN</td>
<td></td>
<td>PRIMITIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODISTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>METHODISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-1877</td>
<td>- 1.6%</td>
<td>1863-1877</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-1902</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1883-1902</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859-1902</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1863-1902</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Appendix II.

While the total population of the Wollongong area increased at the annual average rate of 2.2% from 1861 to 1901\(^{10}\), Wesleyan membership increased at the average annual rate of 1.5% from 1861 to 1901, and the Primitives at 8.7% from 1863 to 1901. There are several reasons for this difference in growth rates. The general population growth rate was largely associated with the development of coal mining and the Primitive Methodists were generally more successful in the mining community than the Wesleyans. The township of Wollongong had a high average annual growth rate of 8.6% between 1881 and 1891\(^ {11}\), but there was not a corresponding growth rate in the Wesleyan church as one would expect given its special composition. There was only an average annual growth rate of 0.1%. This appears to support the argument that churches grow in times of recession and decline in boom years.

The Wesleyans had a greater average annual growth rate pattern for its adherents that for members of 15% from 1861 to 1901, compared with the membership growth rate for the same period of 1.5%, and the general population of 2.2%. This points to a secular trend of more passive participation rather than full membership with its demands and responsibilities\textsuperscript{12}.

Turning now to the New South Wales situation, the percentage of all varieties of Methodists (members and adherents) in the general population increased from 6.2% in 1861 to 10.2% in 1901\textsuperscript{13}, the highest percentage increase of all the major denominations. In Wollongong in 1856 10% of the general population were Methodists (all designated Wesleyan Methodists) and in 1901 the Wesleyans (8%) and the Primitive Methodists (2%) together formed 10% of the population. Wollongong thus began as a relatively strong Methodist area, but by 1902 its relative strength had declined and its proportion was now consistent with state averages.

Clancy, observing that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the growth rate of Methodists was significantly greater than that of the other major denominations in New South Wales attributes this to two factors: the evangelistic activity of the lay leaders and aggressive pioneer ministers\textsuperscript{14}. This analysis can be supported by the Wollongong situation in both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism. In the Wesleyan circuit there were numbers of zealous, active and

\textsuperscript{12} Gilbert, A.D., op.cit., p.181.
mature lay leaders in local preaching, and Sunday school work. One
Kiama Sunday school teacher saw seven of his scholars become
clergymen. Wollongong's early ministers (Innes, Thrum, Bowes,
and Pickering) were aggressive, pioneering types, and growth was
reported as a result of their evangelistic ministries.

The Primitive Methodist pattern confirms Clancy's analysis
in two ways. In its first phase of development growth was erratic.
The years, 1857 to 1859 were ones of rapid growth, but in the years
1863 to 1877 no real growth occurred. The converse of Clancy's
analysis (that lack of evangelistic lay leaders and ministers
inhibits growth) seems to apply here so far as lay leaders are
concerned. In 1864 there was only one active local preacher
and three prayer leaders and auxiliaries who were not used very
much, and in 1865, three local preachers and one exhorter. There
are no recollections of outstanding lay leaders with a zeal for
evangelism such as the Wesleyans had, nor of the aggressiveness of
early ministers. The other important factor operating was that the
Primitive Methodist local preachers were even more mobile than the
Wesleyans.

The Primitive Methodist pattern of growth in its second
phase of development is similar to the Wesleyan pattern. The
significant difference is that the growth rate for the Primitive
Methodists is much greater than that of the Wesleyans. The chief
reason for this is the tremendous amount of work done by three

16. Chapter 4, Section 4.3.
mature local preachers in 1880 at a time of rapid population growth. In the preaching plan of 1880 they averaged 1.5 Sunday services every Sunday and one weeknight meeting every week. The early 1880s were almost a pioneering situation for the Primitive Methodists and the ministers and local preachers were very active and aggressive in evangelism.

There is not sufficient data from Primitive Methodist sources to analyse growth rate patterns of adherents with which to compare the Wesleyan figures. Nor can the assumption be made that the ratio of one member for every five adherents in a normal congregation in 1902 necessarily applies to the whole period.

From membership tables it can be seen that the Primitive Methodists were generally more successful in gaining new members through evangelism than the Wesleyans. Evangelistic lay leaders and clergy were essential to early church growth.

4.3 SOCIAL COMPOSITION.

Both the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodists had their origins in the southern rural area of the Illawarra region and were at first serviced as an extension of the Camden area. The Wesleyans continued to have a strong rural base, although the Wesleyan society in Wollongong township came to be dominant in the circuit. The Primitive Methodists, although they had a

17. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Preaching Plan 1880. See also Appendix VI.
18. 1902 Annual Methodist Conference Returns.
strong rural beginning, shifted rapidly from this rural base in 1859 to being a church based in the Mount Keira mining village by 1863, and thereafter its strength was in the mining villages along the coast.

It will be shown in this section that the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists by the 1880s had developed different geographical boundaries closely related to social and economic categories, and that this, in turn, had significant social consequences for the two churches and the communities they served.

Even less can be said about the occupational groupings of the Primitive Methodists than about the Wesleyans. In the first phase of Primitive Methodism it can only be assumed that the majority of members prior to 1860 were engaged in rural occupations, many probably as agricultural labourers.

With the change of the main congregation from the south to Mount Keira it can only be assumed that the majority of this congregation was employed in the Mount Keira mines. Mr W. Robson, a Wesleyan local preacher, was manager of the Mount Keira mine for twenty years. Perhaps he had a preference for employing Methodist men, although this cannot be demonstrated.

Although there are no membership rolls for the Primitive Methodist church, most of the names of church officials which appear in the Quarterly Meeting Minutes can be identified on the electoral
roll, and they can be therefore grouped occupationally. A comparison is made with the Wesleyans in the following table.

Table 4. Wollongong Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Church. Comparison by Occupation of Lay Leaders, 1900-1902.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wesleyan</th>
<th>Primitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades/Professions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Quarterly Meeting Minutes of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches. 1902-3 Preaching plan, Wollongong Methodist circuit.

The predominance of miners and the absence of farmers in the leadership of the Primitive Methodists is very clear. 37% of Primitive Methodists are in skilled trades, professions, or commerce, compared with 45% of Wesleyans. There is not such a significant difference here but most of the Primitive Methodist business men were storekeepers in the northern mining villages, rather than in the township. Thus their social level even in this category was generally lower than that of the Wesleyans. As with the Wesleyans there were no labourers in leadership positions in the church in these years.

19. But not William Waters who was a produce merchant at Unanderra.
Of the twenty 'late Primitive Methodist Church' members whose names were entered into the former Wesleyan members roll of the Wollongong society after Union, thirteen were females and seven were males. Of these seven, two were labourers, two were tradesmen, and one a grocer (with two unknown).

Thus there is clearly a pattern for Primitive Methodist lay leaders to have lower status occupations compared with the Wesleyans, which is consistent with English patterns. The dominance of the Wollongong ex-Wesleyans over the ex-Primitive Methodist lay leaders after union in 1902 correlates with social class as expressed in occupations and with the centralising tendency of the ex-Wesleyan lay leaders.

We turn now to review some of the social consequences of the foregoing analysis. It can be seen that a working class ethos was very strong in Primitive Methodism in Wollongong associated with its membership in the northern mining villages. By contrast the Wesleyans had more of a middle class ethos related to different occupational status and a different geographical distribution. The two were not mutually exclusive, for example, the Wesleyans were active at Bulli, with their church in the Old Bulli village, and the Primitive Methodists had their church about a mile away in South Bulli. Both had churches in the township of Wollongong, the Wesleyans in the main street of the town, and the Primitives in another street to the northwest.
As with the Wesleyans a deparochialising process was in operation by means of the circuit and the wider Connexion, as well as by interchange between the two Methodist denominations. The colonial experience was also an important part of this process in that the Methodist immigrant had been uprooted from his English home environment and had probably had experience of Sydney society and one or more other areas before coming to Wollongong. This deparochialising process aided the convergence of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist polity and practice and facilitated union in 1902.

The role of women in the two churches may be stated fairly simply. Women, including minister's wives, were expected to fill a traditional, supportive role, such as catering for functions, hospitality for visiting preachers, missionary fund collectors, communion stewards, sunday school teachers, and organist. Membership was open equally to men and women, but rarely did women rise to any position of leadership. However there appeared to be more opportunity for this in the Primitive Methodist Church in Wollongong, as also happened in the English Primitive Methodist Church. In Wollongong at least three women were listed on preaching plans. One, a Miss Chapman, proceeded from an exhorter to a preacher on trial to a fully accredited local preacher between 1895 and 1899. The other two are only briefly referred to when their names were taken 'off the plan' and unfortunately little else is known about them. There are no records of women in similar

21. Ibid., 28.11.1896.
positions in the Wollongong Wesleyan circuit. Wesleyans had a more exalted view of the clergy, and women as local preachers would not so easily have fitted into the Wesleyans' concept.

The church was one of the few structures in nineteenth century society where women had equal status in membership with men, and where their role, although subordinate, was socially significant. Not surprisingly, membership rolls often have a higher ratio of women to men in both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism. This highlights an ambiguity present in both forms of Methodism. On the one hand male and female members had equal status in membership which was a reflection of the biblical principle of 'equality in Christ', but on the other hand the social principle of masculine domination of society was also operating, and was the more powerful principle.

Both forms of Methodism had rigorous codes of moral and social behaviour. It can be shown that in nineteenth century Wollongong these codes were applied to church leaders, especially the local preachers, and presumably to class members (although this function of classes was probably declining). How the adherent (non-member) faired in disciplinary matters is not known, but probably because they had no formal membership commitment to the church, the church had no significant hold on them.

The Primitive Methodists were quite rigorous in this regard in their Local Preachers' Meeting. They were a dynamic group and exercised a constant, collective self-discipline. Fourteen out of fifty-two local preachers whose names are listed between 1883 and 1902 experienced some measure of disciplinary
action. The most common misdemeanours were lateness and failure to take an appointed service. Sometimes a local preacher was a persistent problem in which case a committee of two laymen and the minister was appointed to interview the offender in the hope of encouraging him to mend his ways. Sometimes when resignations were tendered they were accepted, sometimes not. At least two local preachers were reinstated, with District Meeting approval, after they had been previously removed from the preaching plan. There was a flexibility at the local level in Primitive Methodist discipline not evident in Wesleyan Methodism. For example, one local preacher's resignation was accepted because of insolvency, and persistent minor problems, and another's was not. The meeting sympathised with one local preacher, a storekeeper, in his insolvency which was linked with the lengthy miner's strike of 1836, and the matter was reported to the District Meeting.

A further local preacher was dismissed over a doctrinal issue; and another two were in dispute, and a committee was appointed to seek a reconciliation between them.

By contrast, the minutes of the Wesleyan Local Preachers' Meeting make rather dull reading! The Wesleyans were either a much more conscientious group of local preachers or they did not exercise discipline so rigorously. Perhaps this was a weakening of discipline indicative of secular influences at work within this

24. Ibid., 5.3.1883. See below, page 100.
25. Ibid., 28.11.1896.
church meeting. There are some records of discipline for neglected appointments, and dismissal for insolvency. Robert Somerville, who had been preaching in Wollongong for twenty seven years was reinstated on the preaching plan after twelve months off it. Wesleyan regulations required this penalty for insolvency and there was no flexibility permitted in Somerville's case, as happened in the Primitive Methodist church.

The Primitive Methodists also suffered from the problem of membership mobility. This is particularly evident for the local preachers. Eleven out of fifty-two named, transferred out of the circuit between 1883 and 1902. The number may have been higher, as there were instances of preachers being 'taken off the plan' but the precise meaning of this phrase is unclear. There was much mobility between mining towns. At least eight local preachers came from or went to places such as Silverton, Newcastle, Lithgow, Greta. Twenty-three out of fifty-two local preachers gained their accreditation outside of Wollongong, while fifteen gained it in Wollongong. The Primitive Methodists tended to be more mobile than the Wesleyans, thus lacking the stability and continuity that the Wesleyans had. The first phase of Primitive Methodism in Wollongong suffered greatly from this problem, which was a major reason for the church's failure in that period. It is likely that the same reason caused the decline in the Foxground-Stockyard Mountain area between 1859 and 1864. Some members moved to other areas, some joined the gold rush as indicated by a returned

27. Sources are the preaching plans.
28. It is not known where the other fourteen gained accreditation.
29. It is known that from 1864 there were numbers of removals to and from other stations, so it was probably happening in the 1850s.
gold miner at Foxground \(^{30}\), some probably ceased to meet and some may have been lost to the Wesleyans when their chapel was opened in 1861. The second phase coped with the problem more easily because they had a few lay leaders who were long term residents and who were able to provide continuity.

Another social consequence of Primitive Methodist social composition needs consideration: that of political involvement. Both churches adhered to the 'no politics' rule of Wesley, but individual members were actively involved in the political scene at local and state government levels. In the 1894 parliamentary elections Thomas Bissell and William Wiseman, Wesleyans, were candidates although Wiseman withdrew. George Henderson (Primitive Methodist) stood as a labour party candidate in 1896, but withdrew in favour of the incumbent. Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists were active in supporting selected candidates in political campaigns.

In industrial affairs, Primitive Methodists were much more involved as union members, and as union leaders. Just a few Wesleyans were involved, often at the level of management.

Ebenezer Vickery, a leading Sydney Wesleyan layman and owner of four Illawarra Collieries and manager of one of them, was a generous benefactor to the church. He demonstrates a hardening of attitude of the masters against the men in the 1886-1887 industrial turmoil. He refused to yield to striking men's demands.

\(^{30}\) Illawarra Mercury, 5.10.1860.
and preferred to close the mines instead. This was a different situation from the 1850s and 1860s where master-men relationships were easier, and disputes between them more easily resolved. Vickery and others demonstrate the primacy of capitalist motivation, tempered by Christian ideals. In their efforts to increase profitability, they did take thought for the miners, sometimes improving working conditions, and at other times encouraging ecumenical activities such as the Mount Kembla Picnic and church functions such as the 1902 Tent Mission hoping to reduce sectarian divisions among the workers.

Many Primitive Methodist members were union members, and several took a leading role in union affairs. Union and church affairs were seen as quite compatible by the Primitive Methodists. George Henderson was a Wesleyan local preacher whose church experience fitted him well for a public role in union affairs. However, as a union leader he came into conflict with his church. Henderson resigned following criticism of his part in a Sunday union meeting.

He should not have so forgotten his position as a local preacher as to take part in a union meeting on the Sabbath, ... it was a desecration of the Lord's Day. (34)

The issue which Henderson was so concerned about was the injustice of handsome 1893 profits for the mine owners, while wages remained low, supposedly because of the depression. The owners had tried to create a false impression from the balance sheet. Henderson

32. Illawarra Mercury, 27.1.1898.
33. Vickery donated the tents for these missions.
34. Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Local Preachers' Minutes, March 1894.
even preached a sermon in a local church likening the situation to the poor Lazarus having to accept crumbs from under the rich man's table. The Primitive Methodists immediately accepted him as a local preacher, and although they regretted his Sunday action, they were much more in sympathy with his union activities than the Wesleyans.

The court case over a moonlight intimidation incident at Mount Kembla and Mount Pleasant in August 1886 involved many Methodists in different roles. Two Justices of the Peace, before whom the case was heard, were prominent Wesleyans. One of the defendants was a Primitive Methodist local preacher, and two other Primitive Methodist local preachers gave good character references concerning four of the defendants. This case crystallises the typical positions that Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists took concerning industrial relations. A survey of sources suggests that the area of church-industrial relations in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Illawarra could be a very fruitful study.

4.4 ROLE OF THE MINISTER.

As has already been stated, the role of the minister was seen differently by Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists. The pastoral supremacy concept of the Wesleyans led to an exalted position for the minister with respect to the laity. His direct responsibility

35. Illawarra Mercury, 18.1.1894 and 23.1.1894.
36. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 24.2.1894.
to God for the pastoral care of members was often interpreted as meaning sole responsibility, whereas the Primitive Methodist minister was seen as part of a team.

Because Primitive Methodist laity shared in the minister's task, one minister could manage the circuit; the Primitive Methodists only ever had one minister in the Wollongong circuit, whereas the Wesleyans sometimes had two to four. This did not mean the Primitive minister's workload was lighter; his formal workload was comparable with that of the Wesleyan minister, generally taking three Sunday services (occasionally only two) and two to three weeknight meetings every week. The Primitive Methodist minister did not have such a wide area to travel once the Foxground and West Dapto rural congregation ceased, but even so, covering the twenty miles of coastline was no mean task. Perhaps the reason for the Helensburgh mining area becoming a Wesleyan stronghold was that Primitive Methodists did not have manpower, or resources available to expand that far north.

The minister was a central figure in the Primitive Methodist circuit's operation, but not a dominating one. The minister was never chairman and secretary of the Quarterly Meeting; often he was elected to one of the positions, and sometimes to neither. At the wider Connexional level he was only one representative of three from the circuit at District Meeting and Colonial (later State) Assemblies. The tendency for the minister to take most of the services in the central church did not occur to nearly the same

38. See Appendix VI.
extent in the Primitive Methodist circuit. All churches received a share of ministerial preaching and lay preaching in a more democratic arrangement. The minister was active in class leadership, taking some classes permanently.

At the station level, besides sharing responsibility for administration, the clergy and laity also shared the work of preaching, class leadership, and discipline - the laity participating to a much greater extent than with the Wesleyans. The minister's salary was always lower, which was an indication of the lower social status of the membership and their corresponding lower ability to pay, as well as the differing expectations of the minister's role. In 1901, the Wesleyan ministers' annual salary was £220 and the Primitive Methodist's £160. In 1860 the Wesleyan ministers' salary was £172. In the early years of Primitive Methodism the minister's salary fluctuated according to the quarterly income, so that in June 1864 the minister's salary for the quarter was a mere £8/15/4. It was not that they undervalued their minister; rather that they did not see his role as an elevated one requiring greater monetary reward. His economic position was more consistent with that of the miner and the labourer. In an economic sense as well as in a spiritual sense, Primitive Methodist laity and clergy were co-labourers together for Christ.

40. New South Wales Statistical Register, 1861.
41. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Book.
No written evidence remains of how the Primitive Methodist minister saw his role as an evangelist. One can only deduce that evangelism was of primary importance to him through decisions taken at Quarterly Meetings, through circuit activities such as mission meetings, camp meetings, open-air services, and even Sunday school anniversaries, and through an occasional sermon which is reported.

Obelkevich has observed that in South Lindsey 'revivalism ... survived longer in the country than in the towns'\(^{42}\). This seems to be supported by the Wollongong experience. In the circuits of both Methodist denominations, attitudes and practices of revivalism were evident right through the nineteenth century, even though spontaneous revivals tended to be replaced by organised revival. There are numbers of times, for example in 1876\(^{43}\) and 1902\(^{44}\), when the response to special evangelistic efforts was noticeably greater in the mining and rural villages than in the township. Secular influences were felt earlier in the towns than in the villages, and this left people less open to spiritual influences.

Besides an evangelistic role, the minister also had some responsibilities in safeguarding 'our doctrines'. No theological issues surfaced in the Wollongong Wesleyan Local Preachers' Meeting or Quarterly Meeting. In the Primitive Methodist church in 1885, the doctrines of the Devil and of Hell were called into question by a local preacher, publicly, but not in the pulpit. After a series of questions were put to the preacher, the Quarterly Meeting

\(^{43}\) Christian Advocate, 21.7.1877. Recounts apparent failure at Wollongong but later success at Bulli Wesleyan church.
\(^{44}\) The mining villages of Bulli, Mount Keira and Mount Kembla were most responsive.
resolved that they could 'not any longer allow him to occupy our pulpit as a lay preacher,' because his beliefs were contrary to Primitive Methodist doctrine. This preacher was subsequently reinstated after his beliefs were brought into conformity with the church.

It is obvious that, even though there has been some modification of Wesleyan practice towards a more democratic organisation, the Primitive Methodist minister shares much more of the responsibility of the church's work with his lay leaders, whom he obviously sees as co-labourers. The role of the laity within the Primitive Methodist church is of much greater importance.

In bringing these two chapters to a close it can be seen that the colonial environment diminished the differences between Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism bringing about a gradual convergence in polity at the critical point of clerical-lay roles. This convergence together with a convergence in practice facilitated moves towards Methodist Union late in the nineteenth century.

45. Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting, 5.3.1885.
46. Ibid., 4.12.1886. This preacher was killed in the Bulli mine disaster just three months later.
CHAPTER 5

METHODISTS UNITED: IN NEW SOUTH WALES 1902.
1902 was a climax in Australian Methodist history, when the branches of Methodism which had split off from Wesleyanism in nineteenth century England united to form the Methodist Church of Australasia. The chief reasons for this development were: first, there was no ideological conflict to resolve, in that doctrines inherited from John Wesley\(^1\) were similar; second, the colonial experience diminished the differences in polity that did exist between the Methodist divisions; and third, there was a pragmatism within Methodism which led people to a belief that a united Methodism could more effectively do God's work on earth.

This chapter surveys the movement towards union in New South Wales Methodism, seeking to explain the motivation behind union, and how it was effected. A limited attempt is made to apply Currie's thesis of ecumenicalism\(^2\) to the New South Wales and Wollongong situation, and it is shown that his thesis is found wanting in some aspects. Lastly, an examination is made of immediate post-union developments at the local level. Developments on a wider front and over a longer period lie outside the scope of this present study.

5.1 TOWARDS METHODIST UNION IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

The successful union of the Methodist Churches in Canada stirred some Australian Methodists to consider the possibility of union for Australia, and gave them a model to work from. One of the earliest references to union in the New South Wales Wesleyan

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1. With the exception of the doctrine of the ministry, which had its practical outworking in polity.
2. In Currie, R., Methodism Divided.
Connexional Journal in 1877 recognises the substantial unity in 'discipline and doctrine and spiritual life' of the different Methodist Connexions and the author believes that because of this unity 'one Methodist Church would be ... a much greater power than half-a-dozen churches'. This belief in the potential of a more effective mission was also a dominant motivating factor for union in the following years, and is expressed over and over again by clergy, laity, Quarterly Meetings and the Conference. Little happened during the 1880s in New South Wales, but the Australasian General Conference manifested a readiness to consider the matter.

The Triennial Wesleyan General Conference passed its first resolution on union in 1881:

That in the interest of Christian Charity and Union, and in the hope of economising the energies of the various Methodist churches, this Conference declares its readiness to consider any well-advised scheme that may come before it for effecting a union of those churches. (6)

We have here another important motivating factor; one felt most strongly at Conference and General Conference levels. At the circuit level this argument of ecclesiastical economy and efficiency was rarely convincing, because people tended to look only at their own local church and were afraid that change might be detrimental to them.

The next significant move came from the Wesleyan General

4. Ibid.
Conference in 1884, when it stated that union was desirable, and commended the matter to the colonial conferences, directing them to

open communication with other branches of the Methodist family ... and to report to the next General Conference. (7)

New South Wales Wesleyan Methodism was not ready for Methodist union, as evidenced by its passive not active response to this 1884 directive. In 1885, the Wesleyan New South Wales Conference resolved

to receive any overtures from any of the other Methodist bodies upon the subject of Methodist union, and to correspond with ... representatives of any such Methodist body. (8)

Because it did not take the initiative, it concluded in 1888 that in the absence of any manifested general desire for union on the part of the other Methodist churches of this colony, no definite action is called for. (9)

This resolution really says more about the absence of any manifested general desire for union within the Wesleyan Conference.

During the 1880s a few protagonists of union continued to put their case before members, and by the early 1890s there was a strong positive response, as evidenced by the series of joint meetings of the three Methodist churches, held in Sydney in 1892. It was agreed by all parties that Methodist union was desirable, and that a satisfactory basis for union should be sought. Some

8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p.1363.
Wesleyans expressed strong opposition, and the Primitives had some reservations about the relative roles of laity and clergy in Conference, within the proposed church, but generally the Primitive Methodists and the United Methodist Free Churches gave stronger support to union proposals.

In all such union movements, the smaller partners to union are always keener for union to proceed than the larger, dominant church. They perceived that they have much to gain and little to lose by being in a larger, more significant and more effective organisation, with added social status. The larger church perceived more losses than gains: the Wesleyans tended to look at the Primitive Methodists as inferior in religious organisation and experience, in social status and economic viability. The Wesleyans in Wollongong became bogged down by the practicalities of union (such matters as a suspected heavy financial liability which did not eventuate, and how to afford a third married minister if they could not get a single one), while the Primitive Methodists urged the Wesleyans to look at union from a wider spiritual standpoint. Believing as we do that this movement is of God and that it will stand for the advancement of Christ's kingdom upon the earth ... we believe that all personal and financial matters will soon right themselves. (10)

Union was first voted upon in the mid 1890s. The Primitive Methodists always voted more strongly in favour of union

10. Resolution 1 of the Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting on 4.1.1902 sent to the Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting.
11. United Methodist Free Churches Statistics are not available.
than the Wesleyans -- at Quarterly Meetings and Conference levels as well as amongst general members. The 1892 Conference voted unanimously for union and the Quarterly Meetings voted largely in favour of it. In the 1900 vote, 3,474 members, or 90% voted in favour of union and 385, or 10% against it. Twenty six out of twenty seven circuits, or 96%, voted for union (five circuits voted unanimously) and one circuit, or 4% voted against it. In other words a very high majority of Primitive Methodists were in favour of union. And this occurred at a much earlier stage in the development towards union.

Wesleyans never at any level voted like this, and they took four years longer to be favourably disposed towards union. From the first vote to the last, and at each level, there is a gradual change in the Wesleyan position, (with some ups and downs), becoming more favourable to union, showing that as debate and negotiations proceeded, and as problems were resolved, they became more amenable to the prospect. The real change of heart occurred as late as 1900. The following table demonstrates this.

Table 5. How New South Wales Wesleyan Methodist Conference Members Voted on Union, 1894-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number voting for Union</th>
<th>% of total Vote</th>
<th>Number voting against Union</th>
<th>% of total Vote</th>
<th>Total Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


12. As reported in Clancy, op.cit., p.1366. The figures in this section are taken from Clancy and other sources, the analysis is done by the present author.
13. Ibid., p.1374.
14. Not every motion was identical, but each motion included here was roughly comparable.
For several years the Conference was evenly divided, and no progress was apparent. This caused the Reverend Crozier to write:

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick ... The heart of the Primitive Methodists is sick of the shuffling policy adopted by the Wesleyan Conference on the subject of organic union. The attitude of our Church was declared two years ago by the large affirmative vote. (15)

The Primitive Methodists even talked of withdrawing from union negotiations.

The following table shows that for the Wesleyans there were significant differences of opinion at the various levels of the church structure.

Table 6. The Vote on Union at the Different Levels of New South Wales Wesleyan Methodism, 1896.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In favour</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Equally Divided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members, adherents</td>
<td>10,614</td>
<td>3,385</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuits</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly Meetings</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Meetings</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synod Members</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Members</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Clancy, E.G., 'The Struggle for Union', The Methodist, 6.2.1897.

These figures show a clear pattern of a large majority of ordinary lay members favouring union when voting individually and

15. Written for The Primitive Methodist Messenger and republished in The Methodist, 15.4.1899.
16. Clancy, E.G., op.cit., p.1370. Clancy observes that 23,183 voting papers were issued, but only 13,999 returned. So this vote does not give a true picture of the opinions of all the Wesleyan members and adherents.
when these votes are grouped in circuits. The exception is the Trust Meeting, but trustees are notoriously conservative in such matters because of their specific concern for property and its financial aspects. Where ministers and lay leaders are involved, there is more division of opinion. Wesleyan ministers and lay leaders did not see union as a clear-cut issue with only one obvious solution; but they were not fixed in their opinions, because by 1901 the number of opponents had diminished.

Comment needs to be made on the significant proportion of eligible voters who did not vote at the 1896 poll. Only 46% of the 23,183 voting papers were returned. There is no way of determining why eligible voters did not vote; nor how they would have voted. Thus the 76% who voted in favour of union represents only 35% of total eligible voters. One can only speculate about the 54% who did not record a vote.

The influence of the ministers' opinion on the membership in a circuit cannot be determined, but it is likely that it had some direct influence. In the Wollongong Wesleyan Circuit, the 1896 Quarterly Meeting vote on union, 50% voted for union, and 50% voted against it\textsuperscript{17}. In 1897 36% voted for union and 55% voted against (one member did not vote)\textsuperscript{18}. Even though there were some members at only one meeting of the two, the fact that the incumbent, Reverend Austin, who came to the circuit in 1896, was outspokenly opposed to union, may have influenced a greater percentage of

\textsuperscript{17} Wollongong Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 30.9.1896. 
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 13.10.1897.
members to vote against union. Reverend Austin did not believe that union was for God's glory because it was not solving a conflict situation, just substituting the conflict between Methodist denominations for conflict within a questionably so-called United Methodism. He did not agree that union would make the Church more powerful spiritually (an important pro-union argument). He believed that manpower and money problems would work against successful union. Wollongong's long resident supernumerary minister, Reverend J. Dowson, was also opposed to union and wrote to The Methodist in 1896 saying he believed the union issue 'would divert members from spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land'.

The 1900 Wesleyan Conference debate on union did not reflect any significant change from the previous Conferences and so the two-thirds majority vote in favour of union was something of a surprise; and was greeted with joy, particularly after two of the foremost opponents to union declared that in the face of this two-thirds majority they would now work 'loyally for union'.

The months prior to union were a time of preparation and anticipation. Early 1902 saw many enthusiastic celebrations of union. The Newcastle demonstration was perhaps the most enthusiastic. Little evidence of the demonstration in Wollongong is available.

5.2 CURRIE'S THESIS APPLIED TO THE 1902 METHODIST UNION IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

In this section an attempt is made to open up a broad and complex field of study: it is a limited and preliminary investigation and suggests a very profitable area for religious and sociological history in Australian Methodism. Specifically, the attempt is made to discover what application Currie's thesis has to the union of New South Wales Methodism in 1902.

Currie's thesis may be summarised as follows: Divisions in religious organisations such as occurred in nineteenth century Methodism are primarily a lay activity; but by contrast, union movements are the result of clerical activity, with an implied lay-clerical conflict. Such union movements occur in response to religious decline. Currie further claims that the process of secularisation facilitates union in two ways, first, by hastening numerical decline, in that members drift away as religion appears to lose its social significance, and second, by infiltration of secular ideas and practices into the denomination. This secularisation process within denominations tends to lead those denominations to respond in a similar way to the problems facing them, thus facilitating union.

Currie believes his thesis and his case study of the Methodist experience has 'considerable general relevance, although it does not inevitably apply everywhere else'. Brookes has

attempted to test Currie's thesis in the New Zealand situation, studying the Methodist unions of 1896, 1913, and especially the 1972 vote on union of the major church denominations. With respect to the 1913 union, which is a parallel situation to the 1902 union in Australia, Brookes concludes that although the union movement was very much a clerical activity, it was not exclusively so; and there was no evidence of a major lay versus ministerial conflict on union. Further, Brookes can find no evidence prior to 1913 that this union was a function of religious decline in New Zealand, as it was in England. He barely looks at the secularisation aspect because he lacks evidence, and has nothing like the sociological data of 1972 to work with.

Perhaps the chief reason for such significant variation on major conclusions lies in the fact that Brookes minimises the differences between the British and New Zealand environments. Currie's thesis applies to an 'advanced industrial society'. Was New Zealand, prior to 1913, really an advanced industrial society? Brookes' analysis of the 1972 union vote is much more useful, and supports much of Currie's thesis and qualifies other parts.

How does Currie's thesis fit the New South Wales situation prior to the 1902 New South Wales Methodist union? It has already been shown that Methodism did not divide further once it reached

23. Brookes, N., 'Methodists and Church Union: An Historical and Sociological Survey', M.A. Thesis, Canterbury University, 1976. His study is particularly concerned with the 1972 union vote and a comprehensive sociological survey of the membership which was conducted.
24. Ibid., pp.52-54.
25. Ibid., p.36-38.
New South Wales. It can now be shown that union was basically a clerical activity as Currie claims, but not exclusively so. There appears to have been no major underlying conflict between lay and clerical interests in this matter. Differences (in polity) that existed were resolved in theory (The Basis of Union) and in practice.

It seems that the ecumenical movement did have clerical origins. Colwell claims that the Reverend Dr Edwin Watkin\textsuperscript{27} of Victoria 'was the first to advocate organic union' in the Wesleyan church, 'but at that period union was not generally considered desirable.'\textsuperscript{28} Some ministers were active in the 1870s and 1880s promoting the idea. They quoted the Canadian example of successful Methodist union as an ideal to be emulated. In the 1890s ministers were the chief public spokesmen for and against union on the floor of Conference and in the connexional journals. The Federal Methodist Council and other committees were composed mostly of ministers. It should be remembered that most laymen would not have been available for such activities, nor would they have seen it as a layman's role. This ministerial dominance in union activities also occurs because the perspective of the clergy is 'that of the denomination rather than the chapel.'\textsuperscript{29}

Ministerial dominance however does not mean an overwhelming vote of ministers in favour of union. There is no way of knowing the lay versus clergy components of the voting on union at

\textsuperscript{27} A son of Wollongong's Reverend James Watkin.
\textsuperscript{28} Colwell, \textit{op.cit}, p.609.
\textsuperscript{29} Currie, R., \textit{op.cit.}, p.314.
Conference or Synod levels, but generally where the clergy were involved, and in any level of voting, the vote (prior to 1900) for union was lower than that from a purely lay constituency. But by 1901 this had changed and 91% of Conference members supported union. So it is most likely that the ministers were divided among themselves on union, and that the cause of this division was not a fundamental lay versus clerical conflict. The Primitive Methodists expressed reservations on the proposed role of clergy and laity in the United Church, a potentially serious area of conflict, but they were apparently satisfied with the proposed Basis of Union. By 1901, the vast majority of ministers, members and adherents of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism were in favour of the union. Thus the New South Wales union movement was largely a clerical activity, but not exclusively so. There was no major lay versus clergy conflict evident in the process of union.

The second aspect of Currie's thesis is that ecumenicalism is a function of the decline of religion. He demonstrates this conclusively in the English situation. Can this be true for New South Wales? Before answering this question, we must give some thought to whether the approaches to union of Methodism in New South Wales up to 1902 can be compared to that of Methodism in England up to 1932. A comparison of British and New South Wales Methodism for the nineteenth century is valid because they are of the same nature. However, the British and Australian environments were very different, and even though there was some industrialisation in colonial Australia in 1902, it was not in an advanced state of industrialisation as Currie claims for England in 1932. Thus the combined factors of industrialisation and secularisation which
were operating in English society prior to 1932, and which were related causally to the decline of religion, were not yet affecting the Australian society substantially. This major difference limits the validity of comparison, particularly as Currie specifically states that his general thesis has one

very important qualification: ecumenicalism in an advanced industrialised society is a function of the decline of religion. (30)

However, let us examine the New South Wales figures to see if decline or growth was occurring. Up to 1891, all three Methodist denominations in New South Wales were experiencing growth. Appendix III shows that after 1891 the Wesleyans continued to grow, but the Primitive Methodists and the United Free Methodist Churches suffered significant numerical decline in the ensuing eleven years. It is not known whether there was any membership leakage from the smaller churches across to the larger one. In Wollongong the Wesleyans showed a steady, if not spectacular growth for most of the 1890s. So did the Primitive Methodists. Therefore there is no evidence from the Wollongong circuit to suggest that the majority vote in favour of union was a response to religious decline. In the wider New South Wales situation, it may be that numerical decline in the two smaller Methodist denominations was an operative factor in their strong vote for union. The fact that Wesleyan Methodism (a growing church) at first was reluctant to consider union, may also support Currie's general thesis; but then they changed and gave union their full support. Herein lies an area for further analysis of Currie's thesis.

The scope of the present study does not allow a full exploration of the third aspect of Currie's thesis, which states that the process of secularisation facilitates union. It may simply be noted that some evidence of secularism has been observed. Some church leaders recognised the problem and were suggesting solutions. Aspects of the dominant commercial group of lay leaders in the Wollongong Wesleyan circuit may suggest an infiltration of secular ideas and practices. Although both membership and total church attendances were increasing, there is a significant decline in commitment to religious practice. Perhaps this could be shown to be the forerunner of numerical decline. It remains to be seen how secularism affected the 1902 union movement.

It appears that Currie's thesis is far from irrelevant to the 1902 New South Wales union. This superficial survey at first suggests it has limited usefulness; but there is enough evidence to indicate the need for a comprehensive study which may dispel the first impression that Currie's thesis has only limited relevance to the Australian union of the Methodist denominations in 1902.

5.3 SOME IMMEDIATE RESULTS OF UNION IN WOLLONGONG.

The newly united Methodists planned a demonstration to celebrate union on 22nd January 1902. But the papers did not report it because of other more pressing news issues. Another.

31. A larger proportion of church congregations were just hearers and not members. Decline of the class meeting is further evidence.
32. Nothing like the spectacle of the Newcastle demonstration.
event was about to begin (after much planning) which was a really spectacular display of Methodist union: the Simultaneous Tent Missions. This was not just an exercise in Methodist unity; the Presbyterian and the Congregational churches were also actively involved. For several weeks, evangelistic meetings were held in two large tents with two missioners in different locations throughout the circuit. There was an excitement and expectation not often seen amongst Wesleyans. Wollongong experienced religious revival as a result of this, and its impact was felt in all the Christian churches and in the community generally.  

1500 souls have definitely professed either their complete surrender to Christ or their anxiety to do so. And the end [of the mission] is not yet. (34)  

The mission appeared to be most successful in the mining centres. A report tells how these missions changed the lives of many in Mount Kembla where  

131 in the community professed conversion ... In a mining community profession of religion is not glibly made, the reality of change experienced by these converts is evidenced in altered tone of life and conversation in the mine and township. Profanity and licence gave place to purity of speech and sobriety of demeanor, and ribald songs to hymns of gladness and praise. A Christian Endeavour Society was started. Churches were well attended. (36)  

Here we have a newly united church not just growing laterally, but making great advances in frontal growth and  

33. Illawarra Mercury, 2.4.1902.  
34. Ibid. This figure seems very high, but it is consistent with a progress report four weeks earlier (Illawarra Mercury, 5.3.1902) detailing which denominations the converts belonged to, and how many belonged to each locality.  
36. Ibid.  
37. Many converts belonged to other churches.
fulfilling in a spectacular way prophecies of greater spiritual effectiveness in mission, made possible by a united church. The Wollongong Circuit gained two hundred and nine full members from this mission, as well as eight one trial members, and an additional four hundred regular church attenders. How the churches coped with this great increase and what happened subsequently lies outside the scope of the present study, but the net gain to Methodism in 1902 was substantial.

How was Methodist Union expressed in practicalities such as Sunday preaching places and services, and in lay leadership, where previously Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist practice had differed?

The two Wollongong congregations decided to amalgamate immediately and use the large stone church building of the Wesleyans in Crown Street. The Primitive Methodists' Campbell Street property was sold, and one of its buildings rebuilt on the Crown Street site as a school hall. Strangely the committee appointed to dispose of the Primitive Methodist property consisted of five ex-Wesleyans. The other churches continued much as they were, there being no other significant duplication of buildings. There was a slight increase in the number of Sunday preaching services.

The Wesleyan pattern of ministerial domination of the Preaching Plan was quickly re-established, ministers taking about half of the Sunday services. This was aided by the appointment

38. There was a net decrease of 290 to 282, but by amalgamation Wollongong lost 26 services, and so there were an extra 18 services per quarter. See Appendix VI.
of three new ministers to the Wollongong Circuit, all of them ex-Wesleyans. Reverend Willard (ex-Wesleyan) continued his ministry. The ex-Primitive Minister received a new appointment. The Primitive Methodists were accustomed to a much greater share of local preachers taking services.\(^{39}\)

The Wesleyan pattern of ministers taking about 90% of the weeknight meetings was also quickly imposed. Leadership of class meetings was almost totally given to the clergy, whereas the Primitive Methodists had been accustomed to a high degree of lay leadership of classes.

At the Quarterly Meeting an attempt at compromise was made where the Primitive Methodist practice of electing chairman and secretary for each meeting was adopted, but ministers were always elected and no laymen. Soon the practice of quarterly election dropped away and the Wesleyan pattern of the chairman being the Superintendent Minister and the Secretary another minister was followed. Primitive Methodist minute books were closed; but not the Wesleyan's books. Minutes of the new Methodist Church continued on the next page of the former Wesleyan book; and very soon the distinctive qualities and attitudes of Primitive Methodism that were evident, even in minute books, were submerged by Wesleyan qualities and attitudes.

It has been shown that after Union, many Wesleyan patterns were re-established. It is possible to account for this primarily

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39. Appendix VI.
by the social dominance of the town-dwelling Wesleyans in Wollongong and the centralised approach they took to circuit affairs. To them the united Methodist Church was a continuity of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and a discontinuity with the Primitive Methodist Church. It is possible there were areas of tension between former Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists which generated conflict in the years following Union. One present day resident of Wollongong whose mother and grandfather (a highly respected local preacher) were actively involved in the Primitive Methodist church, remembers her mother saying that 'the Prims always felt outsiders after Union'.

Union was a significant event in Methodist history and a new experience for Australian Methodism which had always been divided. Amalgamation of the two circuits in Wollongong was negotiated successfully and the process was crowned by an outstanding experience of Christian unity in the Tent Missions of 1902.

40. See Chapter 4, Section 4.3.
CONCLUSION
When Methodism began to take root in Australia in the nineteenth century the colonial environment was very different from the British environment. The largely convict colonial society of New South Wales was a new one engaged in a struggle to survive, not a traditional established society. There was a widespread and deep-rooted hostility to religion. The few clergy were young, with little or no experience, and the powerful, centralised leadership of the British church did not dominate colonial affairs because it was so remote. Methodism was very small in 1820 whereas it was large and well established in Britain. Laity played a far more important part in circuit affairs than did their counterparts in Britain.

An in-depth study of Methodism in the Wollongong area 1838-1902 has demonstrated that the lay activism of the early years set a pattern which resulted in a diluting of the Wesleyan pastoral supremacy concept, which therefore forestalled the bitter conflicts that British Methodism experienced.

This comparative study of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism has shown that the colonial environment diminished differences, and that there was a convergence of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist polity and practice at the critical point of clerical-lay relationships. In 1875 lay representatives were first admitted to the Wesleyan Conference. Clergy and laity shared a preoccupation with revival and together were involved in evangelism in the circuit. The practice of camp meetings by the Wesleyans and the increasing use of the trio of anniversaries by the
Primitive Methodists was another point of convergence of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist practice, as was the ease of membership transferral between the two.

This convergence of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist polity and practice reached a climax in 1902 with the founding of the united Methodist Church of Australasia, and the tent mission revival in Wollongong.
Appendix I

WOLLONGONG WESLEYAN METHODIST CIRCUIT
MEMBERS AND CHURCH ATTENDANTS, 1847-1903.

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Source: New South Wales Wesleyan Methodist Annual Conference Returns.

1. Figures for Wollongong branch of Camden circuit.
2. Figures for Wollongong circuit.
3. After Kiama and Shoalhaven circuits separated from Wollongong.
4. Figures for united Methodist church. Also includes membership gain from 1902 Tent Mission.
Appendix II

WOLLONGONG WESLEYAN AND PRIMITIVE METHODIST MEMBERS, AND GENERAL POPULATION.

1857-1902

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</table>

Continued next page
## Appendix II (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primitive Methodist Full Members</th>
<th>Wesleyan Full Members</th>
<th>Census Illawarra Electorates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>12735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>- NA</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>- NA</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>- NA</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>11399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:**
- Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Books.
- Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minute Books.
- Wesleyan Methodist Annual Conference Returns.
- Census.

1. Figures for 1857, 1858 include Kiama and Shoalhaven members.
## COMPARISON OF WESLEYAN AND PRIMITIVE METHODIST

**STATISTICAL RETURNS FOR 1891 AND 1902, NEW SOUTH WALES.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wesleyan Methodist</th>
<th>Primitive Methodist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Preachers</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Leaders</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Members</td>
<td>7978</td>
<td>11759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherents</td>
<td></td>
<td>90687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendants</td>
<td>68835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** The Methodist, 11.6.1892.
Minutes of New South Wales Methodist Annual Conference.

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Appendix III
Appendix IV

WOLLONGONG WESLEYAN METHODIST CIRCUIT

PREACHING PLAN, 1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREACHERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Watkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sutherland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Macc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wilkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. S. Watson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cropper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. D. Watson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Howey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXHIBITIONS

1. Tracts and Tracts for Children  |
2. Communion  |
3. Sacrament of Holy Communion  |
4. Sacrament of Baptism  |
5. Will of God  |
6. Communion of the Lord and Other Exhibitions  |
7. Preaching to the Poor  |
8. Preaching to the Rich  |
9. Preaching to the Sick  |
10. Preaching to the Dying  |
11. Preaching to the Dead  |
12. Preaching to the Living  |
13. Preaching to the Unconverted  |
14. Preaching to the Converted  |
15. Preaching to the Converted and Unconverted  |
16. Preaching to the Converted and Unconverted  |
17. Preaching to the Converted and Unconverted  |
18. Preaching to the Converted and Unconverted  |
19. Preaching to the Converted and Unconverted  |
20. Preaching to the Converted and Unconverted  |

REFERENCES

1. Sums  |
2. Quarterly Collections  |
3. Collection for Chapel  |
4. Book  |
5. Book  |
6. Book  |
7. Book  |
8. Book  |
9. Book  |
10. Book  |
11. Book  |
12. Book  |
13. Book  |
14. Book  |
15. Book  |
16. Book  |
17. Book  |
18. Book  |
20. Book  |

---

**APPENDIX V**

**WOLLONGONG PRIMITIVE METHODIST CIRCUIT**

**PREACHING PLAN 1880.**

### WOLLONGONG STATION.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACES</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>APRIL 1880</th>
<th>MAY 1880</th>
<th>JUNE 1880</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollong</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Keira</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, Pr. &amp; Cl.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulli</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Pleasant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6c</td>
<td>6c</td>
<td>6c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Cliff</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6c</td>
<td>6c</td>
<td>6c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Dapto</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>1c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preachers' Names.**

- 1 J. Spalding
- 2 M. N. Thompson
- 3 M. Gay
- 4 G. Buttle
- 5 W. S. Ramsey
- 6 G. Parry
- 7 Supply

**On Trial.**

- J. Spalding
- M. N. Thompson
- M. Gay
- G. Buttle
- W. S. Ramsey
- G. Parry
- Supply

**NOTICES.**

Each Preacher is expected to take his own appointments, or himself provide an accredited substitute.

Station Steward—G. Buttle.

Society Stewards—Woollongong, G. Buttle; Mount Keira, T. Morten; Mount Pleasant, T. Findley; Coal Cliff, M. Jobling.

The Society Steward is expected to make the collections, and supply the Preacher with all notices to be read in the services.

Station Committee—All accredited Preachers and Stewards.

Committee to meet in the Protestant Hall on 8th May, at 4 p.m., to arrange preparatory to the Quarterly Meeting.

For Marriages, Baptisms, and Hooks, apply to Rev. J. Spalding.

Next Quarterly Meeting in the Protestant Hall, Woollongong, on Saturday, 5th June, at 2 p.m. Full Board at 3 p.m.

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### APPENDIX VI

**COMPARISON OF WOLLONGONG METHODIST PREACHING PLANS, 1856 - 1902.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wesleyan Methodist</th>
<th>Primitive Methodist</th>
<th>United Methodist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINISTERS IN CIRCUIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY SERVICES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number taken by clergy</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number taken by laity</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage taken by clergy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage taken by laity</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEKNIGHT MEETINGS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number taken by clergy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number taken by laity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage taken by clergy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage taken by laity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix VII

BOOKS READ BY REVEREND JAMES WATKIN

I. IN THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS ITINERACY - 1830.

The Bible of course in course
Mr Wesley's notes
Polynesian Researches. 2 Vols
Pollock's Course of Time
Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History
Watson's Conversations, etc.
Fletcher's Works Vol 1
Miscellaneous reading of magazines, encyclopaedias, poetry, etc.
Lewis' History of Translation of English Bible
Millar's Continuation of Hume and Smollet
Wesley's Works, Vol 1-9, 12, 13
Hoole's Personal Narrative, Parts 1 & 2
McAllum's Remains
3 thick volumes of Hume and Smollet
Clarke's Commentary Vol. 1,2,3,6
Watson's Institutes, Vol 1,2,3
The Methodist Class Leader
Watson's Apology for the Bible
Wesley's Works Vol 10, 11, 14, 15, 16
Edmonson's Ministry
H. Prideaux Connexion Vol 1,2,3
Homer's Iliad and Odyssey 4 Vols
Thomson's Seasons
Myle's History of Methodism
Life of Langden
Personal Narrative of Four Years Residence in Tonga
Horne's Introduction Vol 1.

II. BOOKS READ IN 1834

Oberlin, Village Blacksmith
Family Monitor
Methodist Memorial, Buchan
Neale's Puritans. 2 Vols thick
Tyerman and Bennett's 2 Vols thick
Robertson's History Scotland
Robertson's History Charles V
Robertson's History America
Blunt, Veracity of the Evangelist
Blunt, Veracity of the Penteteuch
Grinfield's Connection of National and Revd (sic) Theology
Life Henry Martyn
Watson's observations on Southey
Watson's Life of Wesley, Sermons, etc.
White's Bampton Lectures

Continued over page
Chalmer's sermon on Modern Astr. (sic) [Astronomical Discourses]
Dick's Christian Philosophers and Philosophy
5 Vols Annual Collyer's Lectures
Coke's West Indies. 3 Vols
Sir Isaac Newton
Sanders Travels 2 Vols
Lives of Seamen -- Smith's Life
Dr. Clarke 1 Vol. (1)

I. Unpublished Primary Sources

i) Church and Archives Holdings
   a) Wollongong Uniting Church
      Wollongong Methodist Circuit Membership Roll. 1896-1920.
   b) Uniting Church in Australia - New South Wales Synod, Archives.
      Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 1891-1915.
   c) Mitchell Library, Sydney.
      Camden Wesleyan Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 1852-1863.
      Somerville, Mrs George and Miss Black, 'Recollections of Methodism in the Illawarra District', written by Reverend George Lane, approximately 1886.
      Vidler, John, 'Recollections of Methodism in Illawarra', Taken from his own lips on 30.7.1886 by Reverend G. Lane.
      Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarter Day Account Book, 1863-1902.
      Wollongong Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 1883-1902.
      Wollongong Primitive Methodist Trustee Meeting Minute Book, 1891-1900.
      Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Local Preachers Meeting Minutes, 1859-1894.
      Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 1859-1891.
      Watkin, James, Reverend. Journal.
      Wynn, William. Diary, 1883-1889.

ii) Privately owned primary material.
   a) Mrs Grace Evans, Sydney.
      Wollongong Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Preaching Plan, 1856-1857.
   b) Mrs Enid Tripp, Wollongong.
      Illustrated Address of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, New South Wales District, Australia, (Wollongong Circuit) to Mr John Waters. 22.4.1901.
      Wollongong Methodist Circuit Linen Preaching Plan, 1902-1903.
iii) Recollections - written and oral.
   a) Mrs Grace Evans, Sydney.
   b) Mrs Enid Tripp, Wollongong.
   Interview, 20.5.1980.

II. Published Primary Sources

   i) Methodist Official Papers
      a) Wesleyan Methodist Connexion
      Australian District Meeting Minutes, 1839-1854.
      Australasian Annual Conference Minutes, 1855-1874.
      New South Wales and Queensland Annual Conference Minutes, 1874-1889.
      New South Wales Annual Conference Minutes, 1890-1902.
      Laws and Regulations of the Australasian Wesleyan Connexion by
      Laws and Regulations of Australasian Methodist Church. Revised
      Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, Published by Wesleyan Methodist
      Book Depot, Sydney, 1859-1877.
      The Weekly Advocate, Published by Samuel Lees, Sydney.
      1877-1891.
      The Methodist, Published at Wesleyan Book Depot, Sydney, 1892-1901.

      b) Primitive Methodist Connexion
      Primitive Methodist New South Wales Annual Assembly Minutes, 1894-1902.
      New South Wales Primitive Methodist Messenger.
c) Methodist Church of Australasia

Methodist Church of Australasia Annual Conference Minutes, 1902.


ii) Government Papers

Census, 1851-1901.

New South Wales Electoral Roll, 1900-1901.

New South Wales Statistical Register, 1860-1902.

iii) Newspapers

Illawarra Mercury, 1856-1902.

III. Unpublished Secondary Sources

i) Theses


ii) Other


Methodist Church of Australasia, 73rd Annual Synod of the South Coast District Since Methodist Union, 1902. Held at Bulli, 1975. Souvenir Booklet.


IV. Published Secondary Sources

(i) Monographs


(ii) Articles

Bayley, W.A., 'Illawarra Methodism, Story of the Wollongong Church', South Coast Times, 10.10.1958.


Green, James, 'Pen Pictures of Primitive Methodist Church Preachers in New South Wales', *Journal of Australasian Methodist Historical Society*, No.42, October 1944.


