WEAVING THE UNFINISHED MATS: Wesley’s Legacy – Conflict, Confusion and Challenge in the South Pacific

Edited by Dr Peter Lineham

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The views expressed in this publication do not reflect any official position on the part of the Wesley Historical Society (NZ).
Preface

The South Pacific Conference, held during Auckland's Anniversary weekend in January 2005, marked an important occasion in the life of the Wesley Historical Society (NZ). Members and special guests gathered to share a continuing interest in the missionary heritage of the South Pacific - its past history and future promise - and also to celebrate and honour the 75th year of the Society's founding.

The vision of a further South Pacific Conference, following the successful one held in 1987, challenged the Society through more than a decade. In 2001 a small group met to consider the possibility of another such gathering. As planning for the Conference began to take shape, the Pacific tradition of weaving mats emerged as the theme, with the sub-title *Wesley's Legacy of Conflict, Confusion and Challenge in the South Pacific* chosen after careful reflection. At the Society's Annual General Meeting in 2002, the proposal to hold the Conference in 2005 was unanimously agreed upon. As well as the significance of the year for the Society, January 2005 also marked the 150th anniversary of the first Australasian Wesleyan Conference held in Sydney in 1855.

As these proceedings of the Conference are published, I would wish to thank all those who by their presence and involvement helped to make the South Pacific Conference such a stimulating, thought-provoking and rewarding occasion. The Society's warmest appreciation goes to key-note speaker Professor Andrew Walls, who travelled from Scotland, as well as to all the presenters from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and New Zealand. Our sincere thanks to all those who participated representing Te Taha Maori, and the various Pacific communities in this country. It was a significant and memorable opportunity to share knowledge and understandings, and for challenging issues to be brought to our attention.

It is with sorrow, that the untimely death of Rev. Dr Tevita Baleiwaqa in Fiji on 5 August 2006 is recorded. His contribution to the Conference was noteworthy, and the loss of his insight and wisdom in Fiji's unsettled times, is acknowledged with great sadness. We thank Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere for his tribute written for this publication and express the Society's condolences to Tevita's family.

To those who hosted overseas and local guests, to Mrs Audrey Matthews who arranged the historic bus tour, to the Society's treasurer Rev. Phil Taylor, and to all who worked to make the Conference successful, we express our gratitude. We acknowledge the helpful financial assistance of the Gordon Trust, and the contribution of Mission and Ecumenical in assisting with arrangements for visitors from the Pacific. Special thanks go to the members of Crossroads Church, Papakura and the Papakura Trust, for their generous hospitality and their ongoing help throughout the weekend; also thanks to our caterers, and , to Mrs Marion Whaley and Rev. Graham Whaley for organizing refreshments during the day sessions.
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My warm appreciation to fellow members of the planning committee - Mrs Margaret Gordon, Rev. Dr Allan Davidson, Dr Maika Kinahoi-Veikune, Eric Laurenson, Rev. Rua Rakena, Rev. John Roberts, and Secretary Rev. Barry Neal - for their contribution made through several years. Without their vision, enthusiasm, commitment and hard work the Conference could not have taken place.

Two papers from the Conference, those of President and Vice-Presidents elect 2006/2007 of the Methodist Church of NZ, Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa, Rev. Brian Turner and Dr Barbara Peddie, have already been published in Journal 2005, Proceeding No. 81.¹ The heartfelt thanks of the Wesley Historical Society (NZ) goes to Dr Peter Lineham who kindly agreed to edit the papers which appear in this publication, Proceeding No. 83 and 84. It was not an easy task because of the informal nature of many of the presentations, as envisaged and requested by the planning group. His academic skill, wisdom, insight and patience have been invaluable, and the Society is deeply grateful for his work and for the perceptive analysis presented in the Introduction.

Finally, to all who have made this publication possible, including Derek Olphert, the designer - kia ora, malo 'aupito, fa'afetai lava, leana hola, noa'ai, tenkyu tru, vinaka vaka levu, thank you very much.

Helen Laurenson, President.

¹ Barbara Peddie, John and Susan Orchard, pp.44-49. Brian Turner, A Pot-pourri of Catholicity, pp.50-51.
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Introduction

The motif of weaving mats features strongly in this collection. In the Polynesian parts of the Pacific these symbolic gifts express an exchange of respect, appreciation and community. The image is appropriate to express the sense that there is a reciprocity in the evangelisation of the Pacific, which needs to be seen as it so often has been, not as a one-way transaction but as a process in which the islanders were active agents and willing contributors. The image, stretching so fundamentally into Pacific values thus enables us to re-evaluate mission and to reassess its cultural impact, and to reassess the notion of Pacific agency.

Yet there is an inherent problem in this attempted reconceptualisation, and it is reflected in the cautions which several of the authors in this collection express about the imagery. For one, the symbolic exchange is not uniform throughout the Pacific. While it is a strong feature in the central islands of Polynesia, Samoa and Tonga, it is less apparent in other places. In Aotearoa-New Zealand, the Maori may have sometimes used feather cloaks in the same way, but the customs do not seem exactly analogous. Furthermore applying it in the central Pacific raises its own issues. Its meaningfulness in these contexts seems in part made possible by a long-term outlook on the emergence of independent Pacific churches. At the time one may well ask if this was ever within the intentions and potential of the mission. Very often the indigenous believers had to wrest control of the Christian package from the missionaries who brought it. So in what sense did a cultural exchange take place?

As some of the contributors to this collection have suggested, the early Wesleyan missionaries to the Pacific arrived bringing a western version of the faith. Their gifts were not mats; instead they were objects and ideas of little value to the islanders to whom they were offered. Dr Maika Kinahoi Veikune, in the provocative paper he presented on Tongan Methodism calls them rugs and sheepskins rather than mats, and insists that their indigenisation has not yet been fully completed. Certainly the Pasifica peoples had to be persuaded to value Methodism, and to be persuaded to part with their own mats, for in a real sense they were to discover that having surrendered their mats, they could not easily reclaim them. The process of making Christianity their own; of fitting it within their own culture and transmuting their culture so that the new and the old could co-exist, was a slow and painful process.

The most exemplary case of the exchange of mats was when Pasifica converts to Methodist Christianity themselves took up the task of evangelising other Pacific peoples. Raebum Lange’s recent study of Pacific missionaries is a backdrop to much that is in this book. In some respects this process still goes on, and as papers by Sylvia Tongotongo and Alisa Lasi indicate, have developed additional energy and passion when re-voiced by those who have migrated from their home islands to Australia and New Zealand and there encounter a Methodism which has a colonial but not a missionary origin. The acceptance of Christianity and adapting it so that it is fully part
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of the Pacific way, has been long and painful, and can still in some respects seem like a cultural and religious overlay. The tradition of gift exchange and building of relationships was sometimes challenged and rejected by the new believers, yet it persisted until it had to be incorporated into the new faith. In the upshot the Pacific communities changed. There was anger and tension in the process of transformation. Rethinking the process of Christianisation today is in fact part of that incomplete process. It is noticeable in this collection of essays that there is an inequality in the voices. The indigenous contributors are in some respects writing a different kind of history, without the formal academic apparatus and speaking in a more popular voice to their own peoples. This kind of historical reflection needs a reflexivity of its own, where the voices and the papers are seen today as mats, as symbolic offerings in which there can be learning across cultural barriers.

The conference held in January 2005 in Papakura was planned by the Wesley Historical Society's Pacific branches to enable the exchange to take place in a fruitful way. In the printed format much is lost of the character of that process. The sessions that took place mixed various styles of historical analysis in attempting to weave together the symbolic offerings. In sessions about the key Pacific communities, the living communities of the Pacific church communities interpreted and expressed their own history, not just in words but also in songs, in precious artefacts and in symbolic representation of their stories. Some of this proved impossible to convey on the printed page. The Maori session has not resulted in any printed papers. The contributions from Samoa and Tonga most readily convey the exploration of ways to grapple with and express the story and its meaning. There is vigour and colour in these papers, reflecting the complex structure of the Methodism which planted itself in the Pacific.

The conference was particularly privileged to have among its contributors Dr Andrew Walls, a great church historian who has done much to encourage many indigenous Christian peoples to find ways to express their own story. His paper does much to set the scene and the issues forward, even though his paper did not focus on the notions of mats and of weaving. His paper has been placed at the beginning of this publication, since he so clearly sets the scene for what follows, and a number of other broader papers that explored general theological and historical issues have been placed directly after it. This is a logical western order, and yet it seems in some respects to negate the point of the collection, that when the mats have been exchanged and the weaving takes place, then the variety of the contributions should not be ranked as they have been here in some kind of ranked order. Surely the essence of the story lies in the story of each Pacific Methodist community as it explores and expresses its own story. Thus it is important the early papers are seen as leading deeper into the story, challenging and refocusing its meaning. Readers need to be challenged to take up the ambiguities and allow their questions and answers to surface, even if they simply raise issues for further research. A range of personal testimonies, like the story of Alisa Last about bringing her faith to the new setting of Aotearoa-New Zealand express personal
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aspects of the story, while contributions like those of Vaiao Alailima-Eteuati take us into the intense issues that Methodism poses still for its current Pacific leaders. Some stories like those of Alisa East and Sylvia 'Akau'ola Tongotonga bring the story to a further transition as different island peoples learn to live in new settings. Yet this has always been part of the texture of the story, as Tongan Methodists took the faith out to other parts of the story. In the story of indigenous missionaries the transactional nature of Methodist mission, and the weaving of politics, community relationships and faith exchanges was very evident.

One should remember that this book is about Methodists in the Pacific. The Methodism that they brought was itself a new formulation of Christianity, one that presupposed a reconstruction of eighteen hundred years of Christian history. Its combination of fervent Christian experience, carefully controlled planning and discipline was not and still is not a very stable combination. It was and is a volatile experimental Christianity, and the experiment has produced some quite varied results. John Wesley himself, as John Roberts indicates in his piece, made an original contribution to mission theory which requires careful evaluation. Missionaries - and there are a number of fine studies of missionaries in this collection - struggled over the shape that was being woven. Caught up in the politics of the new lands, Methodism produced some odd products, as Jim Stuart indicates in his very reflective analysis of the Methodism of the New Zealand colonists.

The reader is invited to take each contribution at its own value. In their various ways they offer threads to enable readers to begin to weave their own interpretation of a complex and important story. History always involves this kind of weaving; to set it in the context of cultural exchange makes it more complex for we need to unravel strands in a delicate way, lest we break the threads.

It was a pleasure and a challenge to edit these papers to render them available to a wider audience. Regrettably it was not possible in every case to gain the authors' consent for the editing, but I am grateful for others who offered their advice and assistance.

*Peter Lineham*
THEOLOGY AND BROADER REFLECTIONS

Methodists, Missions and Pacific Christianity:
a New Chapter in Christian History

Andrew F. Walls

It is a high honour to be invited to address this conference, and a great delight to participate in it. The programme of the conference, and the composition of its membership, already indicates something of the high quality and rich colouring of the mats from different parts of the Pacific region. As one who is not a specialist historian of the Pacific, I look forward to learning much, and perhaps (for this is a frequent and salutary by-product of good conferences) unlearning some things that I have mistakenly thought that I know. And I bring greetings from your colleagues in the Wesley Historical Society in Britain, and particularly those of its Scottish branch; greetings, too, from the Methodist Missionary Society History Project, which I serve as General Editor.¹ We are fellow-labourers with you, fellow mat-makers, and all our mats are for the same household of faith.

The Serial Nature of Christian History

It strikes a Western historian that Pacific peoples have contributed a profound insight to historical study in the recognition that the future is behind us. It is hidden, behind our backs. It is the past that is in front of us; the recent past at our feet, the more remote stretching further and further back to the horizon of our vision, when we lose sight of it altogether. If we take this hint, and consider Christian history, reviewing the two millennia that stretch back from before our feet, certain currents appear that enable us to make some generalizations about that history.

The first is that Christian advance has been serial rather than progressive. The history of Christ’s church militant here on earth has not been of steady progress, but of advance and recession, of growth and decline. Like Islam, the Christian faith has spread over vast areas, and gained the allegiance of peoples of different races and cultures. It has been less successful than Islam, however, in retaining that allegiance. Generally speaking - there are some exceptions - lands that have become Islamic have so far, at least, remained Islamic; those that have become Christian have not always done so. We can hardly think of Arabia today without thinking of Islam; yet the Yemen was once a Christian state. The great centres of the early Church are no longer the places where the Christian pulse beats most strongly. Jerusalem, the mother church

¹ The project, which is under the aegis of the History and Archives Committee of the Methodist Church Great Britain relates to the history of the overseas missionary activity of British and Irish Methodists. The Project Officer is Dr Kirsty Murray, Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, University of Edinburgh, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH12LX.
of us all, the church of the apostles, the model of what a church should be - that church did not last fifty years. Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia - these were all once home to the churches that gave us classical theology, shaped Christian devotion, produced the martyrs whose blood was as seed. The greater part of the population of the land we now call Iraq once professed the Christian faith, and its church led perhaps the most remarkable missionary movement of all, lasting over centuries and spreading across much of Asia. Western Europe was once the engine of another missionary movement worldwide, and Europe for centuries called itself Christendom, the Christian territory. The present status of the Christian faith there may be deduced from the fact that in the recent attempt to produce a draft constitution for the European Union, all reference to Christianity, once Europe's defining characteristic, was deliberately omitted. The historic association of Europe with Christianity has now become either unimportant or embarrassing.

All the places mentioned were once leading centres of Christian witness, the representative churches of their time. All ceased to hold that place; yet in no case did the decline of any of these Christian centres lead to the extinction of the faith, but rather to its extension to new areas. It is a feature of Christian history that the Church often withers in its centres of apparent strength, and grows anew at or beyond its periphery. The faith has no permanent geographical centre, no equivalent of Mecca. There is no area, country or form of civilization that can be viewed as normatively or permanently Christian. It has no permanent source of leadership; the areas and the peoples that produce the leadership of the Church and the direction of its mission change from time to time. After a period in which leadership of the Church was Western, rooted among the peoples of Europe and their descendants, and reflecting the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of the West, it is now passing to Christians of the southern continents, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific.

Christian history, then, does not reveal the steady, irresistible progress of the Gospel as a single story of success. Rather, it shows a series of initiatives arising in different centres, and expressed in different cultures, in different parts of the world. And it would seem that we are at the beginning of a new development in the series, and one in which the Pacific region has heightened significance.

Cross-cultural Transmission in Christian History

A second current we may detect as the Christian centuries stretch away before us is that Christianity has hitherto lived, indeed survived, by cross-cultural transmission.

Though the Lord told his disciples to go into all the world and disciple all nations, there is little sign in the New Testament itself that they hastened to do so. They had plenty to do in their first place of witness, Jerusalem. The Messiah had come to

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ransom captive Israel, and the obvious mission field was Israel, the people who had received God's promise. The persecution that followed the killing of Stephen drove many of the Jerusalem Christians abroad, most of them were content to share the good news of the Messiah with their friends and neighbours in the Jewish Dispersion. When one group of them, those people from Cyprus and Cyrene mentioned in Acts 11:20, presented Jesus as Lord to Greek-speaking pagans in Antioch, it was a new, unplanned departure; so new that the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to make sure that all was in order. Jerusalem continued as the hub of the Church for that generation; Jerusalem, with its apostles and elders, decided such questions as whether Gentiles should or should not be circumcised. In the description of Paul's Jerusalem visit in Acts 21, it is clear that the Jerusalem believers, while praising God on hearing the stories of Gentile conversion, still saw themselves as at the centre of the Church, and Jerusalem at the centre of its mission. (As they put it, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed" - had Paul seen thousands of Gentile converts?). In the account of the Jerusalem apostles acknowledging Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles it may seem to us evident that this, the vast mass of "unreached peoples" was the mission field par excellence. But at the time, and to a Jewish believer, it must have appeared that the heart of mission lay in continuing the Lord's ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Gentile mission, while evidently God-ordained, might well look something of a sideline, a special ministry for specialist people, such as Paul.

Yet within a remarkably short time, the Jerusalem Church of the apostles and elders ceased to matter; as far as Jerusalem was concerned, it ceased to exist. When the Lord's prophecy was fulfilled, and the Temple, so dear to those early believers, made desolate, one factor only ensured the continuance of the faith of Jesus. It was that the Gentile mission had produced new churches over a vast area, churches of people who belonged ethnically and culturally to the Hellenistic Gentile world. Without the process of cross-cultural transmission in which Paul was the most notable figure, it is hard to see how the faith of Jesus would have long survived.

At a later time, when the norm-setting churches of Syria and Egypt passed under Muslim rule, and the Western Christian empire collapsed before those whom the Romans called barbarians, one might have expected the Christian faith, eclipsed in its leading provinces, to be condemned to decline or to marginalization. Instead, the faith crossed another cultural frontier, and gradually, tortuously, made its way among those "barbarian" peoples of the north and west. After being the faith of city dwellers, inextricably linked with the culture, language, and political and intellectual structures of the Roman Empire, the Christian faith passed to rural people, subsistence farmers, or mobile venturers and raiders, military peoples without developed technology, whose languages were not written. The conversion of the barbarians, and the new

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chapter in Christian history that it brought, enabled Christianity to survive as a major force, despite the loss of many of its leading churches of former times.

Something similar has happened in a more recent period. For century after century following the conversion of the northern peoples, the Christian faith interacted with the languages and cultures of Europe. By the nineteenth century many European Christians believed that the resultant symbiosis - "civilization", they called it - was the natural outcome of the spread of Christianity. The twentieth century saw perhaps the fastest recession in Christian history take place in Europe. Beginning the century as Christian, Europe ended it as post-Christian. Over the same century Africa quietly slipped into the place in the Christian family formerly occupied by Europe. In 1900 there were perhaps 10 million professing Christians in Africa. An educated guess at the figure now might be in the region of 350 million. Once again, as in former centuries, we see the Christian faith gaining a new population as it loses an old one, taking new shapes and drawing new vitality from crossing a cultural frontier.

Christianity is now a predominantly non-Western religion, and likely to become progressively more so. The majority of the world's professing Christians are now Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, or people from the Pacific region. And it was the Pacific region that gave the first clear signal of the new era in Christian history. It was the movement of some Polynesian nations towards the Christian faith in the middle third of the nineteenth century that marked the beginning of the massive shift in the cultural and demographic composition of the Christian Church. In Samoa, in Tonga, in Fiji, in New Zealand, a new Christian world was called into being to redress the balance of the old. The Pattern of Christian Conversion

A third current we may detect when looking backwards over Christian history is the fact that Christian conversion is variously expressed within different cultures. The nature of conversion may again perhaps best be explored by a comparison between Christian and Muslim forms. Incorporation into the Islamic community typically involves adopting elements from the practice of the first Muslims. Ideal Islamic practice involves taking on elements of the culture of seventh century Arabia.

When the Christian Gospel crossed its first cultural frontier virtually all believers in Jesus were observant Jews. That was the way that Jesus had lived, and he had insisted that he had not come to abolish the Law. His family and his disciples lived in the same way. The earliest believers did not change their religion when they came to believe in the Messiah Jesus; they practised converted Judaism, turning traditional Jewish life towards Jesus, living traditional Jewish life in the light of his Messiahship. When, in Antioch and beyond. Gentile former pagans came to believe in the Lord Jesus, some Jewish Old Believers took for granted that they would be treated as Gentiles who came to recognize the God of Israel had traditionally been treated. They were proselytes; they should now enter Israel by the gate of circumcision, and, like other Israelites, follow the Torah. When the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 concluded that neither Torah nor circumcision was required for Gentile believers in Jesus, it was clear that they were not to be treated as proselytes. But the action meant that there was no
precedent for the style of life that they were to follow. They had to find, under the
guidance of the Holy Spirit, a Hellenistic way of following Jesus, a way of being
Christian that did not take them out of Greek social and family life, but turned that life
towards Christ. They were not proselytes, but converts, whose business was to turn
every aspect of thought and life towards Christ. They would face situations no
Jerusalem believer had ever known, such as what to do at the dinner table of a pagan
friend where the meat might have come from a pagan sacrifice. They would raise
issues that no Jerusalem believer would have thought of, for instance the relation of
Christ to the Father in terms of being, as Greek habits of mind and methods of debate
were turned towards Christ. In the process they initiated classical Christian theology.
Successive transmissions of Christian faith across cultural boundaries since that time
have opened new issues of Christian conduct, and new areas for theology. We must
expect such developments to be a feature of contemporary Christianity, as Africans,
Asians, Latin Americans and Pacific peoples steadily assume their place as the world's
representative Christians, in succession to those of the West. New issues in Christian
ethical and social practice, new developments in Christian theology, are likely to
emerge as the Christian faith interacts with these ancient cultures. The process may be
as momentous for Christianity as was the corresponding process with Hellenistic
culture in the early Christian centuries.

Christian conversion is not about substitution, but about turning; not replacing
something old with something new, or adding something new to something old, but
turning towards Christ what is already there. The existing culture (and culture and
religion are usually inseparable) is not rejected or replaced by another from the
outside, but "converted", turned to face Christ. So each time a cultural frontier is
crossed, new situations arise, needing Christian decisions. The theological task begins
anew as questions are asked that have not been asked before, and require Christian
answers. New developments in theology take place as the mental and moral processes
of another culture are turned towards Christ.

Cross-generational, Intra-cultural, Cross-cultural

Taken together, the three generalizations about Christian history, each arising from the
currents that we have detected, require Christian mission to move in two directions.
One is intra-cultural and cross-generational. In this process Christian faith moves
within a culture, penetrating its mental processes, re-interpreting its traditional
symbols and values, relentlessly turning them to Christ. This is not ordinarily a
process complete in a generation; each Christian generation starts the process in a new
place, commences its own translation of the life of Christ into the materials of a
particular time and place. Christian faith is always embodied faith. There can therefore
be no culture-free form of Christianity, nor any culture that is specifically and

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in the early Church", International Bulletin of Missionary Research Vol. 28 No.1 Vol 2004,
pp. 2-8.
uniquely Christian. A faith rooted in the incarnation of Christ requires that its authentic expressions be acculturated.  

The other process of Christian mission is cross-cultural, conveying the faith across a cultural frontier in an embodied form developed within one culture with the expectation that it will develop in embodied form in a different culture. The processes are not necessarily in opposition, but they are different operations, and normally require different structures. Thus, as we have already noticed, at the first crossing of a cultural frontier the apostles, trained by Jesus for the mission to Israel, acknowledged that the Gentile mission was a special calling, requiring special gifts. They further recognized that Paul and Barnabas possessed that calling and those gifts.

Cross-cultural Transmission and Pacific Christianity

Pacific Christianity lies at the heart of our concern at this conference, and Pacific Christianity is one major branch of the new representative Christianity of the Southern continents that has emerged out of the last great Christian cultural frontier crossing. As the mats are woven in the various sessions, and the patterns of Pacific Christianity come under our view, we will doubtless see both the cross-generational and the cross-cultural processes in progress. We will also doubtless have cause to reflect on the nature of Christian conversion and the necessary critical involvement of an incarnational religion in issues of culture. My brief in opening is simpler; to set out some of the issues relating to the Methodist aspect of the transmission.

In order to do this it is necessary to consider some matters of context. The cross-cultural transmission that produced the transformation of the demographic and cultural composition of Christianity took place in the context of a great migration. Over a period of some four and a half centuries millions of people of European origin left home to settle in lands beyond Europe. This migration created the modern world, establishing new nations and drastically altering the world economic order. New maritime empires and new hegemonies emerged. The outstanding feature of the religious dimension of the migration was the transformation of Christianity from a European to a substantially non-Western religion. It is equally a feature of the present time that the great migration has now gone into reverse. Since the middle of the twentieth century, millions of people from the non-Western world have moved to the West, and there is every reason to expect that the process will continue. This reverse migration is likely to be one of the conditioning factors of twenty-first century Christianity.

Since the transmission came from the West, and originally from Europe, it is necessary now to think of the context of European Christianity. The tribes of Northern and Western Europe for the most part had accepted the Christian faith corporately,
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adopting it into their law and custom as the symbolic basis of society. This meant that the European experience of Christianity was territorial. Christendom consisted of contiguous realms accepting Christian law and worship, where all were baptized, all in principle members of the Church. The initial contact between Europe and the non-Western world that began in the last years of the fifteenth century saw some attempts to extend Christendom by force - in Mexico and Peru, in the Philippines, and, in the Pacific, the Marianas. In a few places, mostly in coastal Africa, states entered Christendom voluntarily. But as time went on, the economic and political interests of the Western powers increasingly stood in the way of their religious profession, and the extension of Christendom ceased to be actively pursued by governments. The active propagation of the Christian faith became a concern of radical Christians, not commonly numbered among the governors of Christendom. Nor were the structures of Christendom, designed for cross-generational and intra-cultural transmission of the faith, effective for its cross-cultural transmission. Furthermore, the Christendom structures when transplanted overseas were often ineffective even for Christians of European origin. It was the radical Christians - initially among Catholics, later among Protestants - who developed the missionary movements. These movements devised new structures where the models derived from the territorial church model of Christendom would not serve. Among Catholics, the religious order and societies were put to new use for Protestants the voluntary society emerged as an invaluable instrument.

Methodism has to be seen not only within the context of the Protestant missionary movement (where it exhibits some differences from other branches of the movement) but also within the context of Western Christianity as a whole. The Protestant Reformation was intended to bring the return of apostolic Christianity to those nations that adopted it. But reform of doctrine, liturgy, governance, even discipline, did not turn Protestant Christian nations into apostolic churches. In different parts of Protestant Europe radicalizing movements developed in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, seeking truer Christian discipleship than was reflected in the general life of Protestant nations or in the general run of their church life. Such movements were protests against the endemic failures of a Christendom that was not Christian enough. Typically they distinguished between "real Christianity", a matter of the heart, and the "nominal" or "formal" Christianity which constituted the Protestant norm. "Real" Christianity required personal and inner transactions, sometimes described as new birth or conversion to God. In Anglo-Saxon lands this development is generally called Evangelical; in Lutheran countries, Pietist. It was in these radicalizing sectors, first Pietist and then Evangelical, that the Protestant missionary movement found its richest vein of support and the great majority of its early practitioners. The desire for true discipleship, the call to radical commitment, put Pietists and Evangelicals in the front ranks of cross-cultural mission. But the

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fundamental experience of the movements, their understanding of salvation, conversion and the Christian life, were rooted in Christendom and the long years of cross-generational; transmission of the faith.

**Methodism and the Missionary Movement**

Methodism is one major manifestation of the Evangelical movement, but one profoundly influenced by Continental Pietism, and with special doctrinal, practical and organizational features. When we look at Methodist involvement in the Protestant missionary movement, certain distinctive features appear. One is a paradoxical relationship to Continental Pietism. John Wesley began his quest for holiness in the tradition of the Anglican High Church movement for the repairing of Christendom that produced the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. At a crucial point in his life - as a failed missionary of the SPG, in fact - he came into contact with the Moravian Brethren. The Brethren's essentially Pietist doctrine and practice of salvation by faith and conversion to God transformed his quest for holiness; the fusion of the two strands produced Methodism. But Wesley came into conflict with the Moravians of his day, and his breach with them became permanent. The recent work of J. C. S. Mason has shown how deeply those who led the missionary awakening in Britain drew on the Moravian example and experience of missions. Moravian influence clearly affects Carey and his Baptist circle; it is crucial for Thomas Haweis and other leaders of the non-denominational London Missionary Society that found its most fertile soil among Calvinistic non-Baptist Dissenters. It is marked in several of the figures central to the formation of the Church Missionary Society among Evangelical Anglicans. Even in Scotland, where the actual presence of Moravians was insignificant, it is striking that Thomas Chalmers retained the chair of the Scottish Auxiliary of Moravian Missions at a time when ill-health was forcing him to divest himself of commitments. As British Protestants turned their thoughts to missions, they looked for inspiration or advice to the Moravians, the acknowledged experts in this sphere. Yet though Methodism was so deeply indebted to the Moravians, and held so much in common with them with regard to the doctrine and experience of salvation, there is little to suggest any consultation between Moravians and Methodists over Methodist missions. The effects of the old quarrel in the 1740s continued in Methodist consciousness when others had forgotten the excesses and financial irregularities of that era and saw the Brethren as a respectable national church with accumulated experience of missions overseas. Nor do Methodist missions display the other continental influences so evident in other branches of the missionary movement. Anton Boehm first brought England into the missionary movement when, in 1710, he linked the Danish - Halle Mission in India

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with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Nearly a century later, another German pastor in London, Carl Steinkopf, secured a flow of candidates for the Church Missionary Society by linking it with the eager young Pietists of the Berlin Seminary.

Fruitful co-operation between the London Missionary Society and the Netherlands Missionary Society, leading to the opening of the South Africa mission, was negotiated through the Scots Kirk in Rotterdam. The ministers of the Scots churches in London were instrumental in obtaining for the London Missionary Society a disproportionately large Scottish involvement, despite the activity of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Missionary Societies. Timothy Stunt has recently described the productive interplay of major figures in Continental revival movements, and especially of the Swiss Reveil, with members of the more radical wing of English and Scottish Evangelicalism. He reveals a network of correspondence and visiting across Europe, inspiring various mission initiatives. There were other networks too. The American official envoy in Paris, who had a part in a plot to rescue Napoleon from St Helena, was at the hub of one such web, providing a safe house for the formation of the Paris Mission under the restored Bourbons. The transatlantic evangelical and missionary networks have been well documented, and Albert Raboteau and David Wills have shown how Africans of the Diaspora shared in them.

But how far did Methodists become part of these Evangelical networks? Some of the semi-detached figures of the Methodist penumbra, such as Melvill Home, who moved in and out of the Connexion, appear in them, but in general the Methodists seem to have found their own networks sufficient for their needs. There is little sign of any wind from the Continent (save for the, occasional purely Methodist zephyr), and certainly none of a regular supply of missionaries from thence. Methodist missions were more self-contained, more reflective of their own community, than those of any other body involved in the missionary awakening in Britain, save perhaps for the Church of Scotland. It seems that the missionary awakening functioned differently in Methodism from the way in which it operated in Britain, or at least in England,

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generally. In the Church of England and in the English Dissenting bodies, traditional structures, designed for cross-generational transmission within Christendom, proved insufficiently flexible to initiate cross-cultural mission. The missionary awakening in Britain was made effective by the adaptation of the voluntary society for the purpose. I have argued elsewhere that this development was ultimately subversive of all those traditional structures, and that it produced erosion - perhaps with happy effects - of the traditional church. In the case of Methodism, however, the missionary awakening had the opposite effect, facilitating and accelerating the development of Methodism - itself in its origins a mission - into a church. For Methodism, missions are a major aspect of connexional development.

Methodist Missionary Origins

If we trace the missionary wakening through the foundation of the societies that were specifically founded for missionary purposes, the crucial period is the 1790s. Carey's group founded the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen, the matrix of the Baptist Missionary Society, in 1792. The non-denominational organization originally called simply The Missionary Society, but soon denominated the London Missionary Society, a title which it eventually adopted, followed in 1795. Several Scottish societies on the same model soon followed. In 1799 Church of England Evangelicals founded the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. The British and Foreign Bible Society, often grouped with missionary societies and deeply influencing their work, appeared in 1804. In 1810 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions came into existence and over the same period a multitude of societies on the continent. In this company, Methodism appears to be a latecomer. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was not established until 1818, and even if we date the beginning of Methodist missions from the foundation of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for the Leeds District, it takes it back only to 1814. On this view Methodist missions did not begin until the period when the older mission societies were beginning to establish themselves after the disasters and frustrations of their first two decades.

But this is not, of course, a satisfactory way to approach the history of the missionary movement. For one thing, it is an approach centred on Britain, whereas the Protestant missionary awakening began in Germany and Central Europe, and was embodied in cross-cultural missions more than eighty years before Carey started. The establishment of the Danish - Halle mission in Tranquebar, and of Moravian missions in the Caribbean, Greenland and South Africa are its early markers. Further, the approach based on the formation of missionary societies obscures the fact that Methodist missions commenced long before there was any Methodist missionary society. Carey himself acknowledges Methodist missions as preceding his own. At the end of his "Short review of previous undertakings for the conversion of the heathen" he writes:

Walls, Missionary Movement, pp. 241-254.

16
The late Mr Wesley lately made an effort in the West-Indies, and some of their ministers are now labouring among the Caribbs and Negroes, and I have seen pleasing accounts of their success.\textsuperscript{17}

Similarly, the London Missionary Society Secretary George Burder, writing in 1811 a century by century account of the history of the spread of the Gospel, says under the heading "Eighteenth Century":

The Wesleyan Methodists have too much zeal for God to be inactive in the missionary field; they have cared for the souls of negro slaves in the West Indies and the labours of faithful men have been blessed for the calling and conversion of multitudes.\textsuperscript{18}

Burder mentions that this work is under the superintendence of "Dr Coke, who has personally laboured among them."\textsuperscript{19} For many years both before and after Wesley's death, Thomas Coke had personal charge of the Connexion's missionary operations. In 1786, six years before the publication of Carey's pamphlet, Coke published, with Wesley's approval, \textit{An Address to the Pious and Benevolent}. It proposed an annual subscription for the support of missions in "the Highlands and adjacent islands of Scotland, the Isles of Jersey, Guernsey and Newfoundland, the West Indies and the provinces of Quebec." Methodist missions made no conceptual distinction between missions in remote areas of the home country, British settlers overseas and populations with no Christian background. A year before Coke's \textit{Address to the Pious and Benevolent} Antigua, with an ethnically mixed Methodist society, had been added to the list of stations to which preachers were appointed. But that society's origins went back to 1759, when the planter Nathaniel Gilbert, converted through Wesley's preaching in London along with two of his slaves, returned to preach to the rest. Ten years later, in 1769, Wesley presided at the Conference that first appointed preachers as missionaries, when Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor were sent to New York. Thereafter the appointment of preachers for African populations in both Africa and America became an issue from time to time. In 1796 Coke arranged for a (spectacularly unsuccessful) mission to the Fula in West Africa that was intended to combine preaching and agriculture.

It is clear, then, that Methodist missions preceded not only specifically Methodist organization for missions, but all the mission societies that arose in the 1790s. When the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was eventually founded, it made no pretence of setting up Methodist missions; the purpose of the Society was to put existing missions on a more businesslike footing. The idea put forward by Bernard

\textsuperscript{17} William Carey, \textit{An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens} .... Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{18} George Burder, \textit{Missionary Anecdotes: exhibiting in Numerous Instances, the Efficacy of the Gospel in the Conversion of the Heathen}..., London: L. B. Seeley, 1811, p. 166
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}
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Semmel that the missionary society was established in order to channel Methodist enthusiasm overseas, and thus secure Methodism at home from Governmental fears of sedition, has been well answered by Stuart Piggin. As he indicates, those who were anxious to expand the work overseas were equally anxious to expand it at home. The story of early Methodist missions is an untidy one, full of ad hoc provisions designed to deal with unexpected outcomes. Commonly missions began as a natural extension of ongoing evangelistic work, and the finest of lines often divided missionary from "normal" Methodist activity. Gibraltar Methodism originated with Methodist garrison soldiers. Sierra Leone Methodism arose from demobilized Black soldiers who had served the British in the American Revolution, begun a new life in Nova Scotia, and took their Methodist societies from there to West Africa. Ghana Methodism arose from a circle for prayer and Bible study formed by African trading post clerks in Cape Coast, visited by an English sea captain who realized that it was in effect a Methodist class meeting. Nigerian Methodism began with Yoruba ex-slaves, settled in Sierra Leone, who traded along the African coast, found their way back to their homeland, and appealed for Christian worship and teaching. Sometimes, where missions were not initiated by informal Methodist activity, they were invigorated by it. Among the Native American peoples, for instance, Methodist missions made little impact until one John Stewart, part Native American, part African, was converted and started to preach among the Wyandot. Time and again in the Methodist story the church was present before the mission came; Methodist missions regularly began because Methodists who were not missionaries had been doing Methodist things - preaching, praying, singing, talking about Christ. It will be instructive to see how far this pattern appears on the Pacific mats displayed at this meeting.

The fact is that Methodism in its origins was itself a mission, with a style and structure that were essentially missionary. It was not a church, and long had to use the existing church structures for administration of the sacraments, for marriage, and for other churchly activities. Its effectiveness depended on the activity of lay people; on class leaders taking pastoral responsibility, on average members of the society bringing in family and workmates, on corporate discernment of gifts.

The Birth of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society

In the light of this, the late emergence of the missionary society in Methodism may be less surprising than its coming into being at all. In fact the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society is crucial to the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The principal architect of both was Jabez Bunting, the dominant figure in British Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century. His opportunity came from the vacuum that followed Coke's decision to take up missionary service in India, and death on the way to his assignment. No one else in the Connexion was so personally identified with missions as Coke had been, and the administrative arrangements made to cover his absence were somewhat perfunctory. At the time Bunting was still in his thirties, a rising preacher in the Leeds District. He was able to secure the establishment of a missionary society as an institution for the
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Leeds District that was a model for something wider. When he was transferred to
London, Bunting executed a coup, making the Missionary Society Connexion-wide.

The attraction of the Society to most Methodists was the capacity for greater visibility
for missions and better informed consciousness about them. Such things were already
associated with the big public meetings and publicity characteristic of the new
missionary societies. In urban areas Methodists were especially aware of the London
Missionary Society and its meetings and collections; and the LMS, sponsored by
Calvinistic Dissenters but officially non-denominational, could appeal to the liberality
of all Christians, rather as the Bible Society did. Bunting certainly wanted to secure
these assets for Methodist missions; but in the process he also ensured that the
Missionary Society would have substantial powers and responsibilities. The Society
recruited and appointed missionaries. It directed the work of missionaries by means of
regular correspondence with Secretaries - Bunting among them - appointed by
Conference. The Mission House was a headquarters, a central, permanent address
(something the peripatetic Coke rarely had). Ordination of missionaries was
introduced, though at the time there was still too much resistance to effect the
ordination of preachers for the home ministry.

The missionary society was in fact a vital part of Bunting's vision of Methodism as a
church. He oversaw the transition from a national mission, once, but no longer, held
together by Wesley's personal authority, to a church. It was to be a conservative
church, no friend to political dissent, no challenge (unlike much of old Calvinist
Dissent) to the (unreformed) Constitution. It was to be a church with a trained and
regularly ordained ministry, where ministerial prerogatives and leadership were safe,
but where reliable laymen, untroubled by the frequent moves demanded of ministers,
could oversee finance. These features were all established in the Wesleyan Methodist
Missionary Society before they were established in the Wesleyan Church as a whole.
The Missionary Society was designed as a working model of what the Church should
be.

Bunting did not always get his own way. He would have liked every person accepted
as a Methodist preacher to be available for service abroad, thus making every
Methodist minister a potential missionary at the direction of Conference, but here he
was frustrated. He did succeed in securing ordination by laying on of hands for
missionaries when the old preachers from Wesley's time still blocked it in the wider
church. Superficially, the Wesleyan Methodist Society resembled the voluntary
societies - the Baptist, the London, the Church Missionary Society - and did many of
the same things. But it was not a voluntary society; it was a department of the Church;
or rather, the expression of what the Church should be. It was not set up, like the other
societies, to begin missions, so much as to take control of the missions, formalize their
organization and increase the efficiency of their fund-raising. As regards this last
aspect. Bunting readily adopted the big meetings and the sustained collecting methods
of the voluntary societies. It was these matters of style and ethos that troubled many of
his senior colleagues, who clearly regarded them as alien to Methodist standards.
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Their grudging acceptance by older preachers of the necessity of a missionary society, is clear in the correspondence with Bunting.

Thus Joseph Entwisle, who had been Chairman of the Missionary Committee, and thus was personally committed to the cause, tells of a virtuoso performance he heard from an eminent pulpit orator at a Baptist missionary meeting, where the audience "could hardly forbear clapping." He continues: "I dislike publicity, bustle, and pomp in religious Matters; but I suppose we must submit to circumstances and usages, and take up our cross." He approved Bunting's plan, but remained concerned about the circus element that he saw affecting missionary meetings: "It will require much judgement and activity to manage them, and few have the talents or the liking for such matters."

For the Biblical commentator, Joseph Benson, what decided the matter was the fact that collections were being taken up among Methodists for the London Missionary Society. The only way to prevent money being diverted where "it is neither so much needed nor will do so much good" was to institutionalize the same methods among Methodists.

Another senior preacher, while believing a society overdue, was unhappy about Bunting "puffing so much at the outset." He added, "The Methodists have always acted in a more simple way." Yet another who favoured a missionary society in principle, did not want missionary meetings where people "used expressions more in favour with our Calvinist brethren."

The diehard opposition to the formation of a missionary society came from some of the old preachers who had worked with Wesley who feared that a society would put lay people in charge of the funds. This, as one openly said, would mean that that lay people, would take over the missions, and proceed to take over the rest of the work. Paradoxically, some leading laymen, such as Joseph Butterworth MP, were themselves among the doubters for the opposite reason. They recalled how in the committee to oversee mission finance set up on Coke's departure, the London preachers had seized control and frozen out the circuit stewards. Butterworth came round in time, and served as the Society's treasurer.

For differing reasons, most people came round; the clinching argument for the majority probably being the need for a more visible and audible advocacy of the cause.

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*Ibid.*. This was Samuel Bradbum.

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of missions than structures established for home mission could sustain. Bunting's son wrote later:

My father had the sagacity to see that the platform, as well as the pulpit and the press, must be put to the utmost use.

Some idea of what using the platform involved may be gathered from the fact that at the inaugural meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for the Leeds District, Bunting was number 31 on the list of speakers.\textsuperscript{25} There was a significant speech from a Congregational minister (doubtless a supporter of the London Missionary Society) stating that all the missionary societies were vessels in the same fleet. It brought an equally significant rejoinder from Bunting that each ship's company must be responsible for supplying its own vessel.\textsuperscript{26}

Methodism - Mission or Church?

And so the Methodist vessel joined the fleet of new missionary societies, though constructed in a different shipyard from most of the others. The difference in day to day church life that most Methodists probably noticed in the early days of the Society was the way they were drawn into fleet exercises: the public meetings, the greater publicity, the soliciting of regular prayer and giving. In these respects the Society borrowed styles and techniques from the London Missionary Society and other agencies, the very features that old hands such as Entwisle and Barber disliked. But the essential feature of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was the establishment of central control of activities that had come about piecemeal and then been the private domain of Dr Coke. The Society became a powerful engine within Methodism. It powered Jabez Bunting to the top of the connexional tree. By developing the Leeds District Society first, Bunting was able to by-pass the entrenched London preachers who had hitherto controlled mission funds, and, when the connexional missionary society was founded, his position at the Mission House gave him a London base to facilitate his domination of the Connexion. The presence in the Mission House of the like-minded Richard Watson, who did for Methodist theology what Bunting did for Methodist polity, helped to consolidate his position.\textsuperscript{27}

This association of mission organization with ecclesiastical power has few parallels among the other early missionary societies. The Baptist society was founded among Baptists of the Midland counties; only later did the well-heeled London Baptist churches participate. The Directors of the London Society included prominent

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 50. At the first general meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in City Road in 1818, the proceedings took six hours, and were then adjourned until the following evening. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 51
\end{itemize}
ministers among the Independents, but the Society was in no sense a denominational power base. The early Church Missionary Society committee consisted, with few exceptions, of clerical nobodies; when they needed to approach the Archbishop of Canterbury, they had to use a lay Vice-President, the Member of Parliament William Wilberforce, as their representative. Not until 1824, six years after the establishment of the WMMS, did the Church of Scotland seriously discuss missions; and though the outcome was to establish a mission responsible to the Church's General Assembly, the Foreign Mission Committee was normally left to the enthusiasts for missions. The centrality of the Mission House in this part of the Methodist story appears to be unique in British missions.

David Hempton has recently demonstrated that something very similar happened in America, where Nathan Bangs was able to build up a centralized mission machine that helped to define the shape of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In both countries, it seems, Methodism began as a mission and ended as a church.

Methodist missions overseas developed in a series of natural outgrowths from the Methodist domestic mission. The overseas missions developed a formidable organization of their own, effective in fund-raising, increasingly tending to produce institutions. Bunting's concern that Methodism should have a regular ministry made it necessary to have a theological institution to train it. Richmond College was born, and designated as the place where prospective missionaries would study. The ecclesiological development of a centralized structure had its own logic; it could be seen as the corporate exercise of the authority once exercised by Wesley himself. But in the nature of things, the missionary task often needed flexible response, readiness to change patterns that had been established for different conditions, and an entrepreneurial flair for grasping opportunities. These were features which traditional Methodist polity, with its dependence on local lay leadership, tended to foster. Potential problems lay in the nature of revival, from which Methodism sprang. Revival is by nature radical, untameable, anarchic. Methodist ecclesiology has thus always been in tension, and sometimes at war, with Methodist mission instincts, which are flexible, opportunistic, pragmatic. It is also at war with the revivalism that lies at the heart of historic Methodism. By nature Methodism is radical Christianity, rooted in John Wesley's rational demonstration of the staggering implications of taking the Christian message as true, and shot through with the sublime extremism of Charles Wesley's language. It is not an accident that Methodism produced the Holiness movement and the Holiness movement produced Pentecostalism. Pentecostals are what Methodists were. Methodist history is a continuing dialogue between the mission that it was and the church that it became, and earnest people on both sides of that divide can equally claim a Methodist ancestry.

When, in 1792, Black Methodist soldiers, with their Baptist and Huntingdonian brethren, set up the colony of Sierra Leone, the hymn that expressed their thoughts was "Awake, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb." In 1811, the first Methodist missionary arrived, at their invitation, delighted to find an organized Methodist society, with its class leaders and preachers in place. In a matter of months he was dead. The society welcomed a second missionary four years later, and he foresaw "a prospect of good times in this place." A year later he was writing back to London that the leaders of the Freetown society had refused him the pulpit. "And truly," he added,

I have found them a proud, stiffnecked generation. I understand they are going to accuse me of lording it over them, of being too proud for a Methodist preacher and of paying too much attention to Government.

The Government officials of the colony disliked the noisy, American revivalistic style of the Methodists, and still more their unco-operative political stance. The missionary disliked what he called their "American republikk spirit". As a loyal subject of his King, he said, he wanted to do his part in support of that government. Both missionary and society were accurately reflecting the historic Methodism that they knew. It will be interesting to see how far the story of Pacific Methodism reveals stories of this tension at the roots of Methodism, a tension with the potential to be complicated by ethnic, political, colonial or linguistic factors.

**Methodist Theology and the Missionary Movement**

Methodists had a developed paradigm of what they considered to be the normal Christian experience. The classical presentation of it is seen in the arrangement of Wesley's *Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*, his "little handbook of experimental and practical divinity", where the hymns are arranged "according to the experience of real Christians." Once again the word real differentiates between the radical Christians and the "formal" Christianity of Christendom as a whole. But the paradigm of Christian experience reflected in the hymnbook had developed under the conditions of a nominally Christian society. In the Evangelical Revival people regularly came to joyful assurance of the forgiveness of their sins after a bleak period in which they mourned their sinfulness and, typically, entered on a period of intensified piety. This was the experience that Methodist missionaries had known themselves; it was a central constituent of what they understood by conversion, and they expected to see it follow the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. But, in most

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31 The distinction is made explicit in Part II of the Hymnbook, with its sections called "Describing formal religion" and "Describing inward religion".
cases, certainly in Africa and the Pacific, they were not addressing a nominally Christian society; and hence no inbuilt sense of failure to meet the professed norms of society. As a result, events sometimes took place for which the best descriptive term appeared to be "conversion," but which did not follow the accepted paradigm of what conversion involved in "real Christians". Missionaries in the Pacific saw whole communities rejecting their traditional worship in such a way as to justify use of the Scriptural phrase about "turning from idols to serve the living and true God". They embraced Christian worship and teaching with eagerness, enthusiastically sought knowledge of the Scriptures. But where was the "mourning" of those "convinced of sin", as the hymnbook put it? We need more studies of conversion movements in the Pacific region; and since both Methodist and more Calvinistically orientated missions saw such movements around the same period, some comparative studies would be useful. In this connection, the phenomenon of "revival" in Pacific Christianity also deserves attention. There are indications of conversion movements with no marked conviction of sin, in settings where, some years later, missionaries write of "revival" in the church. Perhaps the old China missionary was right who said "Converts do not weep over their sins - Christians do that." And since the Methodist paradigm included the quest for holiness and Christian perfection, (and some missionaries - John Hunt, for instance, in Fiji - stressed it) studies of sanctification are also needed.

The Place of the Pacific in Christian History

In conclusion, it remains to say a word about the place of the Pacific region in Christian history as a whole.

First, we may note the critical importance of the region to the missionary movement from the West in raising consciousness in the West about the world beyond Europe and its accessibility. The fact that Pacific exploration was a recurrent eighteenth century news item, a regular topic of coffee house conversation, should not be underestimated. It is surprising how issues relating to the Pacific occur, for instance, in Boswell's Life of Johnson. (Dr Johnson, like John Wesley, tended to be sceptical about the stories, the one of the excellence of humanity in the islands, the other of the extent of its depravity). The philosophically inclined, the commercially motivated, the Christian visionary all found a focus of interest in the Pacific and its peoples. The three groups interpreted the matter very differently, but they all read Cook and they all read the newspapers. We may take one of the Christian visionaries as an example. William Carey writes An Enquiry into the obligation of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens from the resources available to him in an English Midland town in 1792. It is often thought of as one of the key works of the missionary awakening in England. Carey spent his long missionary career in India; but a reading of the Enquiry suggests that it is the Pacific that forms the background of his vision of missions. The Pacific explorations bulk large in his view of a providential preparation

32 I Thessalonians 1:9.
for the wider spread of the Gospel. The Pacific (and especially what he has read of its people in the writings of "the late eminent navigator Cooke"\textsuperscript{33}) seems to provide his illustrations of the peoples to be reached with the Gospel. He has read the literature on the Pacific carefully enough to conclude that most attacks on Europeans by allegedly "fierce" peoples are probably made in reaction to actual or assumed aggression on the part of Europeans.\textsuperscript{34} His assumptions about how missionaries would be able to live would also fit a Pacific (certainly not an Indian) location, backed by his knowledge of how Moravian missions had in fact worked in Greenland and Labrador. Some years before Carey, a more senior Evangelical figure, Thomas Haweis, was reading Cook's account of Tahiti and, like Carey, reflecting on God's providence:

\begin{quote}
I could not but feel deep regret that so beautiful a part of creation, and the inhabitants of these innumerable islands of the Southern Seas should be regions of the shadow of death .... I could not but hope that the providential discovery of a before unknown world might lead to the communicating of Divine truth to these benighted lands.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

His proposal for a mission to Tahiti in 1789 eventually came to nothing; but Haweis was a leading figure in the early days of the London Missionary Society, and the first field of their endeavours was, of course, the South Pacific. The call of the Pacific launched the first Protestant missions to India and Africa.

The Pacific region also produced the first successes of the Protestant missionary movement. Until the conversion movements of the early and mid nineteenth century the missionary awakening could record several disasters, many tragedies, and some modest success, but few triumphs. For a long while, the only evidence that Protestant Christians had that Jesus would reign wherever the sun ran its journeys was the conversion of a few hundreds of Native Americans - and many of those were wiped out by representatives of Christian Europe. The encouraging growth of the churches in the Caribbean islands was offset by the controversies over slavery and its aftermath. In the Cape of Good Hope Christian settlements might give dignity and relief to the broken, demoralized Khoi, but were of little interest to the much more numerous Xhosa. Wonderful things had happened in Sierra Leone, but these were often forgotten in the light of the huge loss of missionary life and health in the White Man's Grave. In India vast effort had so far shown little fruit. China and Japan were closed until mid-century. By contrast, by mid-century in the South Pacific, Tonga, Samoa, Rarotonga, Fiji and the North Island of New Zealand could be called Christian states. Furthermore, here more than anywhere else, the conversion process had followed a pattern which resembled the conversion experience of Europe. In Africa (outside Sierra Leone) and Asia, converts had formed new Christian communities outside the

\textsuperscript{33} Carey, \emph{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{34} \emph{Ibid.}, p. 71
communities of their birth. In the South Pacific (though the presence of a growing Pakeha population made New Zealand a special case) independent states had become Christian, their monarchies were seeking to maintain Christian systems of law, and proclaiming the Lotu through what were in effect established churches. It was the nearest approach anywhere to the situation that Europeans knew as Christendom.

But if Pacific Christianity displayed something like Christendom, it soon began to display elements that disturbed that pattern. The French preference for Catholic missions in Tahiti, the British importation of a Hindu population into Fiji, internal tensions in Tonga, the Western migration to New Zealand, introduced early religious plurality. New versions of Christianity - Adventist, Mormon, Russellite - complicated the situation further.

It hardly needs to be said, since it will be illustrated so abundantly during the conference, that one of the outstanding features of Pacific Christian history has been the degree to which evangelization has been the work of indigenous people, often anonymous in the record. The uncovering of this process, the provision not just of names but of flesh and blood and spirit, will be a prime task for historians for a long time to come.

There is a still more absorbing task. We have entered a new period of Christian history. Its outstanding external conditioning feature is that reversal of the process of migration with which we began. The great European Migration, that established Western hegemony over the world and conditioned the last chapter of Christian history, is over. Not only are new superpowers emerging in Asia; the inexorable pressures of migration are now flowing the other way, taking the non-Western world to the West. And the outstanding internal conditioning feature of the new Christian chapter is that Christianity is now principally a non-Western religion, centred in the non-Western world. This gives special significance to the ongoing dialogue between Christian faith and tradition with its Biblical sources on the one hand, and Pacific cultures on the other. Let us recall that Christian faith is always embodied faith, localized faith, and that Christian conversion is less about substitution than direction. Conversion means turning towards Christ what is already there, including all the mental and moral and religious processes. It is a cross-generational process; since the mental and moral processes have taken generations to form. It is a vernacular process, and goes on at its deepest level in the mother tongue.

This conversion process of appropriation and transformation, taking place simultaneously in different cultures, that is, different segments of social reality, leads towards what the Epistle to the Ephesians calls the full stature of Christ. Neither

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36 In this connection we must all welcome the recent study by Raebum Lange, Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity, Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies and Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005.
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Jewish believers nor Greek believers, the apostle indicates, can reach that on their own. Full humanity is found in Christ alone; our own versions at the best, their most fully converted, are only partial. We all come together to the full stature of Christ.  

37 And Pacific Christianity has its own part to play in our joint attainment of that stature. Pacific Christian history may advance the study of Western Christian history; and Western theology needs the impact of Pacific theology. Western theology is a product of the European Enlightenment, which reduced the size of the universe by putting substantial sections of it out of bounds. Western theology is Enlightenment theology, designed for the small-scale universe of the Enlightenment. It is not big enough for the larger, more populous universe in which many Pacific people, like African people, live.  

38 It has no resources to deal with devastating experiences of daily life, such as witchcraft or sorcery. It is often embarrassed by the Old Testament, and finds large sections of the Bible, such as apocalyptic, hard to cope with - even when it experiences apocalyptic events. Pacific Christianity has known what it is to deal with the elements of apocalypse in the Second World War and the subsequent atomic age. Perhaps Pacific Christianity can bring us new and purposeful readings of the Old Testament, of the Gospels, and from apocalypse enunciate what God's salvation is.

Theology is a by-product of cultural conversion. With the demographic transformation of the Church great issues for theology will continually arise from the interaction of Biblical thinking with the cultures of Africa, Asia - and the Pacific. We are at the threshold of an age potentially as creative and enriching in theology as any since the serious inter-action with Greek thought began in the second century.

Early in the third century Origen raised the question how the Israelites had been able to construct the Tabernacle, with the gold cherubim and the rich curtains, while still in the wilderness. The answer, he says, is that they had spoiled the Egyptians. It was Egyptian gold that was used to make the cherubim that symbolized God's presence, and Egyptian cloth that marked the sacred place. He goes on to say that it is Christian business to take materials that are misused in the heathen world, and to fashion from them things for the worship and service of God.

The serial nature of Christian expansion has once again been revealed in our own day. The Christian heartlands have left the West, and moved to the South. The translation of the faith in new contexts will require the cross-generational conversion of mental and moral processes, and will no doubt raise hosts of new issues for theology, that is, for Christian decision. The process of answering them can - if we will allow it - expand and enrich our understanding of Christ and the salvation he brings. And

38 This point is argued more fully in Andrew F. Walls, "Christian Scholarship and the Demographic Transformation of the Church", in Rodney L. Petersen with Nancy M. Rourke (eds) Theological Literacy in the Twenty-first Century, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002, pp.166-183.
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Christians everywhere, not least those who live in the Mammon-worshipping culture of the post-Christian West, the last great non-Christian culture to arise, are called into the same process of conversion, the same turning to him of all that is there, the same renewing of our mind. In so doing, and in the fellowship of Christ, we may note that the Tabernacle is adorned with Pacific gold, and that its curtains include mats of Pacific weave.

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Telling the Methodist Story in the South Pacific: 
History and Identity

Allan K. Davidson

On the 17 December 1773 John Wesley recorded in his Journal:

Meeting with a celebrated book, a volume of Captain Cook's Voyages, I sat down to read it with huge expectation. But how was I disappointed!

I observed 1. Things absolutely incredible: a nation without any curiosity; and, what is stranger still, (I fear related with no good design,) "without any sense of shame! Men and women coupling together in the face of the sun, and in the sight of scores of people! ...." Hume or Voltaire might believe this; but I cannot.

John Wesley had great difficulty accepting Cook's descriptions of Tahiti and the Pacific, dismissing them as nothing more than the creation of voyagers' imaginations, and the Enlightenment philosophers who had already put forward the idea of the "noble savage". Wesley went further:

I observe, 2. Things absolutely impossible. To instance in one, for a specimen. A native of Otaheite is said to understand the language of an island eleven hundred degrees [query miles] distant from it in latitude, besides I know not how many hundred in longitude! So that I cannot but rank this narrative with that of Robinson Crusoe; and account Tupia to be, in several respects, akin to his man Friday. ¹

The idea that people could speak to and understand each other, although separated by thousands of kilometres, to Wesley was a work of fiction. Tupia, who accompanied Cook from Tahiti to New Zealand and who was able to converse and be understood by Maori, was in fact testimony to the strong links of migration and ancestry, which bound people across vast distances of the Pacific Ocean. Tupia was no man Friday, as Wesley imagined, but a living expression of the dispersion of Polynesian people. This dispersion was one of the significant factors in the spread of Methodism and Christianity throughout the Eastern Pacific.

While John Wesley had an inadequate understanding of the peoples and languages of the Pacific, he helped shape the evangelical dynamic that gave rise to the British missionary movement. The emphasis on the need for personal conversion, preaching in order to affect change in people's lives, itineration as a means of spreading the good news, and living as people whose lives had been transformed by the gospel, were

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among the central emphases in Wesley's ministry. Six years after Wesley's death, the London Missionary Society attempted in Tahiti, Tonga and the Marquesas to convert the people Cook had written about. Within thirty years of Wesley's death, Methodist missionaries were contributing directly to the missionary movement which transformed Pacific peoples and their societies. Charles Forman, writing about Pacific Methodism noted, "The fact that one heart strangely warmed in a London chapel in 1738 could ignite a fire that spread rapidly around the entire world and still continues to bum, would seem like a fantasy if it had not actually happened."

The impact of Methodism on the Pacific, and the impact of the Pacific on Methodism, is contestable territory in Pacific history. The reasons for conversion, the nature of the transformation that took place, and the legacy of missionary work are problems that have both historical and continuing significance.

A Century of Methodist History in the Pacific
When Methodists marked the centenary of the arrival of Samuel Leigh as the first Methodist minister in Australia and the Pacific they published an impressive history, *A Century in the Pacific* 1815-1915, edited by James Colwell. The book is 781 pages, with twenty-six essays ranging from geography to ethnology, from missionary history to accounts of settler Christianity in Australia and New Zealand. It is a celebrative, triumphalistic and paternalistic account of Methodism's accomplishments set against wider British achievements. The book reflects an uncritical confidence in the British Empire, the exercise of colonial power, and supreme self-assurance in the appropriateness of the missionary work Methodists had undertaken and in which they were still engaged.

A strong social Darwinist tone influenced some of the essays conveying the idea of the hierarchy of ethnic groups and the likely extinction of some indigenous societies. Western Polynesians, when they were compared to Melanesians, for example, were described as not only superior in physique, "but also in mental power". Maori and Hawaiians were "at the head of the Polynesian nations .... on the ground of natural selection and the survival of the fittest". The "hardships and dangers of the voyage from Hawaiki to far away New Zealand" and the harsher conditions under which they lived, we are told, "would have a tendency to stiffen and improve the breed".

William Slade, secretary of the New Zealand Methodist Foreign Mission, writing about "The Maori of New Zealand", saw the "nefarious land purchases" as lying at

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"the root of Maori rebellion"\(^5\) and the land wars in the middle of the nineteenth century. He concluded though that Maori "will become assimilated and absorbed in the general population"\(^6\) and that in a few generations intermarriage would "obliterate distinctive Maori characteristics". Slade concluded, with little regard for continuing Maori identity and culture, "In that happy way will be solved the native question of New Zealand".\(^7\) Social Darwinism and racial assimilation were seen as absolving the historical problems caused by European colonisation.

The main purpose of the centenary book was "to describe the contributions which, during a single century, missionary work in general, and the missionary enterprise of the Methodist Church in particular, has made in its waters of civilization, and to that Christianity on which the only civilization can endure is built". The book claimed, "the missionary has done more to lift up the island races of the Pacific to high levels of civilization and morality than the statesman, or the explorer, or the trader."\(^8\) The emphasis was on "the power of the gospel". J. Egan Moulton writing about Tonga concluded that the gospel "has transformed the character of a heathen and cruel people, it has revolutionized their environment, it has brought enlightenment to their minds, love to their hearts, prosperity to their country, and, best of all, assured hope of the life beyond."\(^9\) William Bennett tells of how in Fiji "The sites of heathen temples are overgrown, and the orgies of savagery forgotten. The foundations of the Church of God in Fiji have been well and truly laid by the wise and good who have gone."\(^10\) In the more recently begun mission areas in New Britain (1875), New Guinea (1891), and Solomon Islands (1902), the emphasis was on achievements, the support needed, and the challenges still lying ahead. John Goldie expressed confidence in missionary work: "We look forward ... to that time when the Solomons shall, from one end to the other, have the light of the gospel given to them."\(^11\)

The Colwell approach to history put the European male missionary in the forefront of the story. The twenty-six contributors were all men. It was a history of heroic missionary achievement and success, with an optimistic belief that current challenges would result in future victories. The language was often militaristic and militant. The Protestant missionary cause was in the ascendancy, with the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910, only four years prior to the publication of Colwell's volume celebrating what had been attained and looking forward to the "evangelization of the world in this generation". C. Brundson Fletcher, associate editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Samuel Marsden's grandson and a member of a

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\(^7\) *Ibid.*, p.149.  
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famous missionary family, wrote of the way in which "missionary achievement in this part of the world is so real a thing that its literature must some day be written in letters of golden fire which shall constrain the unthinking to give heed." Ninety years on from the Colwell publication we would not use that language to describe the historical task before us.

Missionary History in Critical Perspective

Since the Colwell volume Methodists have written a considerable amount about aspects of their history in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Findlay and Holdsworth devoted a volume in their *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* to Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji and Samoa, including what they described as Methodism's "romantic service to civilization" and Christianity in Tonga and Fiji. Valuable insider writings on regional aspects of Methodist missionary work have been written by: A. H. Wood on Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and Rotuma, and with Margaret Reeson on the Southern Highlands; C. T. J. Luxton on the Solomon Islands; Neville Threlfall on Methodists in East New Britain and the New Guinea Islands; George Carter's volume about New Zealand Methodists in the Pacific; Ron Williams' history of the United Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. In John Garrett's three-volume history the Methodist story in the Pacific is interwoven with that of other churches. This list is by no means complete and does not take account of the publications about Methodism in Australia and New Zealand, biographical and autobiographical writing. The titles given above are largely written in a narrative mode. The telling of the story about the when, the who, and the where tends to be more significant than the why and the how.

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Historical writing about the impact and legacy of the missionary movement has increasingly been open to critical inquiry. Whereas once the mission enterprise was at the forefront of the church's life, today it is often marginalised. Missionaries, who were once accorded great respect, have become subjects for the sharp scalpel of historical investigation. The heroic language which exalted the nineteenth century missionaries and their achievements is now often dismissed as propaganda, published to raise funds to support the missionary cause. Imperial language associating Christianity with civilisation, colonisation, and commerce is seen by critics as aligning the missionary movement with rapacious European exploitation, expansion, and domination of indigenous peoples.

Some historians identified missionary activity as part of the fatal impact of European colonisation on Pacific peoples, their societies and cultures. This approach to history, exemplified in Alan Moorehead's *The Fatal Impact: The Invasion of the South Pacific 1767-1840* 20 treated indigenous people as passive, inferior and unable to respond to the European impact. In the first half of the twentieth century great debates went on over the causes of depopulation among indigenous people, which threatened the very existence of Pacific communities. Questions were raised as to how far the introduction of European diseases, weapons, Christianity, and the destruction of Pacific beliefs and cultures caused the declining population. 21 John Burton, as a young missionary, in his *Fiji of To-day* conveys something of the horror and alarm he felt in 1910: the Fijian is dying .... at the rate of fifteen hundred per annum does this mortal decrease continue .... In 1875 the measles carried off a quarter of the population! ... The naked truth, therefore, faces us that, unless we find some method of arresting this decrease, in a few score years the Fijian Church, of which Christendom has been so proud, will be blotted out. 22

This alarmist rhetoric proved false, as better medical assistance, which missionaries helped to provide, and growing natural resistance led to the reversal of depopulation. While not denying the reality of the suffering and tragedy experienced by Pacific peoples, the talk about their extinction proved premature.

Kerry Howe in response to the fatal impact approach argued in 1984 that "island societies proved adaptable, resourceful and resilient" and "When faced with Western contact they took a remarkable range of social, economic, political, and intellectual initiatives designed to exploit new opportunities and cope with new challenges". 23 That is seen in both the Pacific peoples' acceptance and adaptation of Christianity.

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In recent years, post-colonial and feminist scholarship have raised critical questions about the impact of missionaries on indigenous societies. The roles of women and gender in the missionary enterprise have been critically examined using the approaches of feminist historiography. Particular attention has been given to the missionary wives, who although not usually given the status of being missionaries in their own right, often played a significant part in missionary work. Their contributions and those of missionary women have largely been missing from the missionary narratives. Margaret Reeson's writing on Mary Lawry in Tonga and the wives of the Methodist missionaries from the New Britain District whose husbands lost their lives in the sinking of the Montevideo Maru in 1942 gives moving insights into hitherto largely unrecognised dimensions of missionary service. Margaret Reeson, Currency Lass, Sutherland: Albatross, 1985; A Very Long War: The Families who Waited, Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2000.

Some missionary wives, such as Mrs Lily Bromilow, gained considerable status through her husband who was the chairman of New Guinean Mission. She became the lady superintendent of the Methodist sisters who commenced work in Papua in 1892. The sisters, according to Diane Langmore, "found that Mrs. Bromilow, with all the authority of a married woman over single, supervised them like recalcitrant school girls. A dominating woman, immensely aware of her own status ... she would tolerate no opposition to her wishes." The single missionary women, nurses and teachers were often treated as second-class missionaries. That was reflected in their pay structure, housing, and their exclusion from involvement in the decision-making processes of the mission. It is somewhat ironical that there was a strong maternalistic dimension to the missionary movement through the activities and support of the Methodist Women's Missionary Union, and Ladies' Auxiliary, and yet the control of the Mission was almost exclusively in the hands of men. That is a story that remains largely untold.

The fatal impact approach has to be countered with the "and yet" in which recognition is given to the ways in which the lives of people have been transformed, humanised and enhanced by missionaries. Missionaries have always been agents of change and that change has had both positive and negative dimensions. The historical approach


we bring to the past recognises that we cannot change what has happened but it is important for us to understand the complexity of the past.

**Indigenous Agency**

An exciting dimension of recent missionary history has been the growing appreciation of the indigenous agents and their contribution to the evangelisation in the Pacific. Lotu Tahiti was brought to Vava'u by Borabora, Taute and Zorababelia in 1822, the same year that Walter and Mary Lawry began work on Tongatapu. Historians have not always acknowledged how the people among whom the missionaries worked themselves became part of the change process.

The list of indigenous Methodist missionaries is a notable one. Peter Vi went from Tongatapu to Vava'u and became instrumental in the conversion of Taufa'ahau. Lotu Tonga was taken by Sava'ai in 1828/29 to two villages on Savai'i in Samoa. In New Zealand Wiremu Nera Ngatai of Ngati Ruanui in 1837 prepared the way for Methodist missionaries in south Taranaki. Joseph Mateninaniu, a Fijian converted in Tonga, helped with the conversion of Tongans living on Lakeba. Joeli Bulu and Semisi Havea were among the important pioneering missionaries from Tonga to Fiji in 1837.

The writings of Alan Tippett, Charles Forman, Sione Latukefu, my own work on Semisi Nau, and the volume of essays edited by Andrew Thornley and Doug Munro have highlighted the work of the Polynesians who left their own homes to go as missionaries to other countries. In the chapel at Pacific Theological College in Suva, the names are listed of fifty-one Methodist Samoans, 236 Fijians, and eighty-two Tongans who went to New Britain, Papuan Islands, Solomon Islands, and the Highlands. Neville Threlfall, in his history of the Methodist Church in New Britain,

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32 Since this paper was written, Raebum Lange's comprehensive study, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity*, Christchurch / Canberra: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies / Pandanus Books, 2005, has appeared.
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recorded that "more than one hundred men, women and children ... over the years" died "and were buried far from their homelands. Their simple graves - a mound of earth, a block of coral-lime, occasionally a carved headstone - are the mile-stones along the frontiers of missionary outreach." We should not simplistically idealise these missionaries, for they had their weaknesses and failings. But in telling the history of the coming of Methodism to the Pacific, particularly to Melanesia, their work needs to be told. An important part of that story, which is almost invisible in the historical record, is the role played by the wives of the Polynesian missionaries.

Note also needs to be taken of the contribution of local teachers and missionaries. Autobiographical accounts by Hosea Linge, a Methodist from New Ireland, or biographies like A. H. Voyce’s story of David Pausu, George Carter’s work on David Voeta and Belshazzar Gina, and Margaret Reeson’s story of Wasun and Sond are rare. The brief biographies of Solomon Islanders in George Carter’s *Ti.è Varanè* and the centennial gift from the Wesley Historical Society to the United Church in Solomon Islands, *Ever Widening Circles*, are small beginnings. Milton Talasasa’s Master of Theology thesis highlights the contributions of Pacific Islanders and Solomon Islanders to the Methodist Mission in Solomons. He raises questions as to why they are seldom identified or named in the historical record and the way in which much mission history has been written from the perspective of the sending agencies and their staff.

Methodist Ecclesiology and the Pacific

Sione Latukefu noted the way in which Polynesian Methodism "became an integral part of the culture", concluding that in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, "The involvement of

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33 Threlfall, *One Hundred Years in the Islands*, p.52.
the people in the life of the Church made it their church and their religion, and not something alien." This raises important questions as to how far Methodism itself was converted in the process of attempting to change Pacific Islanders.

Methodist ecclesiology was still being formed when the first missionaries came to the Pacific. Originally organised as a society to bring about renewal within the Church of England, Methodists by the time of Wesley's death in 1791 were beginning to act more like an independent denomination or church. Tensions within English Methodism resulted in the emergence in the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century of a number of Methodist groupings.

Wesleyanism, according to Stephen Koss, "acutely conscious of its origins within the Anglican fold ... was less hostile than other Free Churches to the principle of establishment". In Tonga and Fiji, Methodists quickly became the quasi-established church. In part, Methodist Pacific ecclesiology was influenced by the English establishment tradition in which church and state were complementary. The precedent set by the London Missionary Society in drawing up law codes to regularise the behaviour of the Polynesian communities after their conversion also contributed to Methodist involvement in shaping the social and political structure in Tonga and Fiji. In Tonga, the Code of Vava'u in 1839, the Code of Laws in 1850, and the 1875 Constitution all bore the marks of missionary influence. Sione Latukefu concluded, "Although the missionaries cannot be held fully responsible for the gradual constitutional development, they played a significant role in it."

There was a blending of Tongan notions of chieftainship and the role of the traditional dynasties, with English notions of government and constitutional monarchy, mixed in with missionary understanding of equality. Yet in Tonga the seeds of schism were present giving rise to the division of Methodism in 1885. The monarchical loyalties of Shirley Baker, who was the Methodist chairman and confidant of the King when the 1875 constitution was devised, and then premier of Tonga, conflicted with the more democratic tendencies of James Moulton, the principal of Tupou College, who put loyalty to the Australasian Conference above loyalty to the King of Tonga. These loyalties were complicated by bitter personal rivalries and the desire of the King to gain independence for the church from control of the Australasian Conference. Elizabeth Wood-Ellem in her superb biography of Queen Salote has shown how the

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Queen contributed to the reunification of the Methodist Church in 1924. The continuation of the remnant Free Church and subsequent Methodist divisions in 1929, 1979 and 1987 raises questions about how far Methodist ecclesiology or Tongan culture and sociology caused these divisions. There are also questions as to the way in which continued links between the Australia and New Zealand Conferences with the churches in Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands into the 1960s and 1970s perpetuated patterns of dependence and control.

A new direction in New Zealand Methodist ecclesiology was taken from the early 1980s as the bicultural movement resulted in a reshaping of Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. The assimilation of Maori by Pakeha prophesied by Slade in Colwell’s book proved false. The commitment of the Methodist Conference in 1983 "to work towards the formation of a bicultural Methodist Church in Aotearoa" and the acceptance in 1988 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a foundation document in the nature of a covenant underpinned the structural changes in the church. The acknowledgment of the voices of Maori and Tauiwi in the church gave recognition to the two different constituencies that emerged from Methodist Christianity in New Zealand in its missionary and settler forms. Migration, primarily from the Pacific and Asia, has brought other expressions of Methodism into Australia and New Zealand with their own identities. These have not always found it easy to adapt to the structures that have a very different history to their own experience of the church. The setting up of Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian synods in the New Zealand Methodist Church in part gave recognition to the need for structures to accommodate this difference.

Brian Beck has noted, "There are in fact many Method! sms." The Methodisms brought to New Zealand in the nineteenth century included Wesleyan, Primitive, United Free, and Bible Christian varieties. These Methodisms were by no means static, but over time underwent changes as the decline and ending of class meetings and the rise and growth of Sunday Schools and the Bible Class, for example, indicates. The process of reunion in 1896 and 1913 resulted in a united Methodist Church before a similar union was achieved in England. The multiple divisions of Methodism in Tonga, the breakaway of the Christian Fellowship Church in the Solomon Islands in the early 1960s, the formation of the breakaway Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand in 2000, and the continued identity and connection

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of migrant Methodist churches in New Zealand with their places of origin, point to
diverse and complex Methodist ecclesiologies in the Pacific today. These differences
reinforce the subtitle of this conference, "conflict, confusion, and challenge". There
are many Methodist mats woven out of both imported and local materials, which have
taken on their own particular shape and design.

The "many Methodisms" are part of a dynamic process of growth and redefinition.
Clive Pearson, a Uniting Church theologian, referring to Koreans living in Australia
has written about the "hyphenated identity of second generation and migrant
churches".49 Ecclesiology is now defined by multiple hyphens in the Pacific Islander
diaspora found in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States: "Tongan-Uniting-
Church-Australians", "Fijian-Methodist-New Zealanders", and "Samoaan-Methodist-
Americans". The migrant or diaspora church has taken on a new identity as it has
struggled with the issues of singing the songs of Zion or its homeland in a strange
land. This is particularly the case as the children and grandchildren of Methodist
migrants from Pacific Island families struggle with finding a place for themselves in
the church of their first generation migrant parents or grandparents. Migrants often
find in their church a place of belonging in an alien world where they can stand tall
and use their mother tongue and sing the Lord's song in the same way that they sang it
at home. For the New Zealand bom, as Jemaima Tiatia has put it, "caught between
cultures", there are the struggles of language and identity and how far the church is
responsive to their own youth culture.50

John de Gruchy reminds us "the theology which shaped the missionaries and which
they took with them to the farthest corners of the globe was not primarily that of the
textbooks, but of the Bible, the prayer book, and the hymnbook."51 For Methodists the
hymnbook with the influences of both John and Charles Wesley had a profound
influence on shaping the theology and ecclesiology of Methodism. To hear Methodist
hymns being sung in Kuanua on the Gazelle Peninsula on the island of East New
Britain is to encounter Methodism enculturated into Tolai society. At George Brown
Day on the 15 August each year thousands of people from village choirs compete with
each other, a reminder of how Methodism was born in song not only in England but
also in parts of the Pacific. The "singing magic" brought in 1875 by Fijians and
Samoans is now part of Tolai culture. The singing of those who are part of the

49 Clive Pearson, "Hyphenated Identity of Second Generation and Migrant Churches" in
also, Clive Pearson, ed., Faith in a Hyphen: Cross-Cultural Theologies Down Under,
50 Jemaima Tiatia, Caught Between Cultures: A New Zealand-Born Perspective, Auckland:
51 John W. De Gruchy, "'Who Did They Think They Were?' Some Reflections from a
Theologian on Grand Narratives and Identity in the History of Missions", in The Imperial
Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1800-1914, Andrew Porter, ed.. Grand Rapids:
Methodist diaspora could also provide helpful insights into understanding the hyphenated identity of migrant Methodists. A major attraction of Pentecostal churches for some is through the music they sing and the sense of belonging they create. This is a challenge facing all traditional churches today.

Conclusion

This paper has only given glimpses into aspects of the history and identity of Pacific Methodism. The Methodist story is a very rich and complex one. The lives of thousands of individuals, their cultures and beliefs and their countries have been changed in diverse ways by the impact which the gospel, mediated by Methodists, has brought. Aminaki Havea, a great and humble Tongan Methodist leader once said, "God understands me best when I pray in Tongan". This expresses the way in which the universal gospel was enculturated in the life and language of individuals with its profound implications for family, society and nation. While there is good reason to be critical of Christianity's negative impact on Pacific societies and peoples, we also have to recognise the ways in which it has been life-giving, bringing transformation and change which has given hope, brought peace and new possibilities in human relationships.

The historian Ian Campbell notes that the fatal impact on Pacific society today comes from "The effects of nuclear contamination, the proliferation of the AIDS epidemic, bad diet and consumerism, global warming and the threat of rising sea levels". In these challenges there is almost an eschatological or apocalyptic dimension facing the people of the Pacific. Good history should help us understand the present by giving us insights into who we are as individuals and societies, where we have come from and why we are like we are. Historical knowledge is therefore self-knowledge that helps us live in the face of the challenges that confront us. The challenge facing churches and Christians in the Pacific is what life-giving message do they have, and what saving actions can they take in the face of these great threats?

There are now many Methodisms in the Pacific. John Wesley has many children. Despite his inability to appreciate why a Tahitian like Tupia could converse and be understood by people who lived thousands of kilometres from Tahiti, Wesley communicated over huge distances in space, time and culture through those who took the name Methodist and shared their understanding of being Christian with others. In the writing of the history of Methodism in the Pacific we need to encourage the different voices to be heard. That is a task that needs the partnership and commitment of people from across the region.

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John Wesley's Legacy:
Weaving a Theology of Mission into the Unfinished Mats

John Roberts

I propose in this sermon to explore John Wesley's contribution to a theology of mission. I want to weave a theology of mission into the mats, a theology that draws significantly from the life, work and words of John Wesley. (Luke 4:16-21)

Some Wesley scholars hold that the most decisive event for Wesley in terms of mission was his decision made on 2 April 1739 in the city of Bristol to engage in outdoor preaching. On that day Wesley wrote in his journal, "I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in the ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people". Wesley took as his text for his first outdoor sermon, the words from the prophet Isaiah that Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth at the outset of his ministry.

It has been said that this venture into outdoor preaching was a real turn around for Wesley who had till this time been more concerned about the state of his own soul than the needs and concerns of other people. Albert Outler says that Wesley had now moved "from highly self-conscious words to truly unself-conscious action. His passion for truth had been transformed into compassion for persons." John Vincent calls this a "change from self-concern to mission." However we should not overlook John Wesley's earlier concern for the poor and marginalized, but from this point on Wesley engaged in a much wider range of social action in response to the needs and concerns he saw in the world around him.

In 1748 Wesley wrote and published his Plain Account of the People Called Methodists. Here he laid out in brief form what he considered it meant to be a Methodist. Almost a quarter of that booklet was taken up with the responsibility of Methodists for the wellbeing of those in need. Wesley had a great concern for the sick. He appointed visitors whose role was:

To see every sick person within his district three times a week. To inquire into the state of their souls and to advise them as occasion may require. To inquire into their disorders, and procure advice for them. To relieve them if they are in want. To do anything for them which they can.

Wesley also provided for the support of the sick and the poor, and here we should note his attitude to money. He not only regarded the money received by the Methodist societies as sacred to God, it was also sacred to the poor. His concern for the health of the poor led Wesley to study anatomy and medicine in his leisure hours for over twenty years. This encouraged him to engage the services of a pharmacist and a
surgeon to treat those he could, referring them on where necessary. He treated about a
hundred people a month in this way, whether or not they were a member of a
Methodist society.

Wesley was concerned that there were many who were on the breadline and for whom
no-one cared. Many of these were widows, some with children. After consulting with
his stewards, Wesley took out a lease on two houses, made them warm and clean, and
provided a home for as many widows as there was room for. He would dine with them
from time to time, sitting around the table with them and eating their food. Wesley
was concerned that many children were going without an education because their
parents could not afford it. So he established a school where they could learn to read
and write. Those who could pay did so; voluntary contributions covered the rest.
Stewards were appointed to look after the affairs of the school.

Wesley observed that many were in distress because they couldn't carry on their
businesses without some additional finance that wasn't readily available to them. So
he established a fund administered by two stewards who met once a week to lend
money to those who required small amounts, the loans to be repaid within three
months. Two hundred and fifty people were assisted in this way within the space of a
year. Wesley was to refer to this as a mission or ministry of compassion.

Bill Loader in his book *Jesus and the Fundamentalism of his Day* writes of the God of
Jesus being the God of compassion. He says:

> What kind of God is the God of Jesus? The God of Jesus is the God of
> compassion. This theology underlies most of what he says .... It shapes his
> hope for the future: wholeness and healing. ... It controls his ethic: love of one's
> enemy. ... It explains his priorities: meeting human need has a higher priority
> than fulfilling cultic prescriptions.

Marcus Borg, a contemporary Jesus scholar, in his book *Meeting Jesus Again for the
First Time* sees compassion as rooted in the person of Jesus. Firstly he sees Jesus'
teaching about, and exercise of compassion, as the source of an alternative wisdom, an
alternative to the image of God as law-giver and judge, For Jesus spoke and lived out
of a gracious and compassionate understanding of God. Secondly, Borg writes of
Jesus' politics of compassion, which he contrasts with the politics of adhering to the
purity code. We know that Jesus broke the purity code by associating with all manner
of people who were deemed unclean - the sick, the maimed, sinners, the poor, women.
He took the words, "Be holy as God is holy", removed the word "holy" and replaced it
with the word "compassionate" so that it became, "Be compassionate as God is
compassionate."

John Wesley saw what was happening in his world through the eyes of compassion.
Referring to the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful", Wesley says the word 'mercy' as
used by Jesus implied compassion and having a tender heart, and was far from an
attitude of despising those in need. Commenting on the beatitude, "Blessed are the
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peacemakers". Wesley says a peace-maker is one who does good to all by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, taking in the stranger, visiting the sick and the prisoners and providing as much help as they need. He reflected this attitude of compassion in his own ministry. In February 1753, having spent some time visiting and experiencing first-hand the plight of the poor in London, he wrote in his journal, "So wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection: 'They are poor only because they are idle'."

In his sermon On visiting the sick Wesley wondered why the exercise of compassion was so little understood or had such little influence amongst the people of God. He was emphatic that it was necessary to visit the sick and the poor in person, that it was important to be present with them. He said: "This is a duty to which we are called, rich and poor, young and old, male and female, .... a duty which cannot be performed by proxy." In another of his sermons he said: "True Christianity cannot exist without the inward experience and outward practice of justice, compassion and truth."

In his tract, Thoughts on the Scarcity of Provisions Wesley challenged the market economy of his day. It is an exercise in what today we would call structural analysis. It is an expression of Wesley's commitment to social justice. Wesley proposed a series of radical measures which included a reduction in the price of food, introducing selected taxes; controlling land rents, and lowering the general tax by discharging half the national debt and abolishing pensions to the idle wealthy. All these moves, Wesley considered, would reduce inflation, increase employment, and alleviate the plight of the poor. Such policies would have required government intervention in the economy, something Wesley was not confident would happen. So he declared that mission to the poor, based on compassion, was an essential part of what it meant to be a Methodist.

This emphasis on compassion is a key component of Wesley's theology of mission, and an essential part of his legacy, not just to us Methodists, but for the whole people of God, for Wesley was surely catholic or ecumenical in his approach to theology. The challenge facing us is how to weave that theological strand into our mats today in ways that will help us engage with issues of economic globalisation, increasing levels of poverty, violence in all its forms, ecological crisis, and other major issues confronting us. Our task is to take up the legacy and seek to weave it afresh for our time and our world.

Bibliography


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Photo: R. and M. Reeson
Changing Designs in the Weave:
Developments in Wesleyan Mission Policy in the Pacific 1855-1905

Margaret Reeson

The weaving of mats is not the only form of weaving in the Pacific region.

In many parts of Papua New Guinea, people have great skill in weaving string bags. These bags are intricate, tough, complex, flexible, built to carry loads. Some are made with one continuous thread, new fibre being added as it is needed to extend the string. Some are made with elaborate designs. Over the past forty years, the string bags of the Highlands of PNG have changed. The original natural fibre is more often now a trade store acrylic with new colours and patterns. The development of Wesleyan Methodist Mission policy is a little like a string bag; everything linked with everything else, with changing patterns in changing times.

We are considering mission policy and the way it changes. Definitions of policy include "a definite course of action adopted as expedient". Policy questions are worked through over time as circumstances change. Then and now we ask: what is happening here? What is God calling us to do? What is our vision? How are we going to do this? Who will be our partners and how will we work together? Who needs to take the lead? Are there limits? Are there risks? Are we agreed on this course of action?

Those of us who participate in church committees and counsels know that policy is not always formed in ideal conditions with the best possible motives, entirely under the rule of Christ. We can be hasty, ignorant, self-serving, excluding the people most affected by decisions. Poor policy can become a rope that binds, stopping us from creative new actions. This has all been true at some point in the story of Wesleyan Methodist mission in the Pacific.

I will be referring to examples of policy change from the experience of George Brown. It is helpful to have a summary of some of the key aspects of his life and work. Brown crowded a great deal into his 82 years, living and working in the UK, New Zealand, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and Australia, then travelling often to Fiji, Tonga and the Solomon Islands. He participated in the work of mission in the Pacific as a missionary, a pioneer of new places, and as General Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for Australasia. He took very seriously his participation in the decision-making of Conference and many committees. He was outspoken on church matters, science and politics.

At the time of his death in 1917 he was President-General of the Methodist Church in Australia.
In this paper, I will examine four areas of developing policy that were important to the Christian churches in the Pacific in the period 1855-1905.

1. When new ministry is begun in a "mission field" far beyond the sending church, who controls the work and takes responsibility?

2. How might a missionary organisation act when a similar missionary body is working in the same region with the same population?

3. What are the factors that may encourage a missionary organization to initiate new work?

4. How do new churches move toward full maturity and independence?

There are of course many other mission policies we could consider, including the role and ministry of women. Another time ...

First issue: When new ministry is begun in a "mission field" far beyond the sending church, who controls the work and takes responsibility?

As Methodists, the organisation was formed around the Connection/Connexion, the network of congregations and communities linked and under the authority of the shared leadership and wisdom of the Conference. Exactly 150 years ago this month a
very important policy decision was enacted. The British Conference of Wesleyan Methodism released their people in the antipodes to form their own Conference, to be called the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Connexion - to include the Australian colonies, Van Dieman's Land, New Zealand, the Friendly Islands and Fiji Islands. The first Conference was held in Sydney in January 1855, with representatives from all those regions.\(^1\) The plan had been developing for several years and after a deputation from London visited the Australian colonies and New Zealand in 1852-3 it was admitted by the British Conference that:

the field could not longer be well worked from London as the official centre. Its exigencies had more than once baffled the wisdom of the Committee.\(^2\)

In New Zealand, a missionary rebuked the London Board for suggesting a carriage for the new Superintendent. At the time, the North Island had no roads so even a horse would need to be able to "ascend mountains like a goat."\(^3\)

So it was true that the church fathers in London (and they were all men) had little or no idea of conditions in the colonies in the southern hemisphere or the islands of the Pacific. However, they learned that it was not much easier to direct the work in the islands from Sydney, even though the central Committee was made up of wise, experienced, respected men, many of whom had worked in Tonga or Fiji in the past. They were now remote from the action and communication was difficult.

A few months after the first Australasian Conference, the young George Brown arrived in New Zealand. At the time he was an unlikely candidate for the ministry, but the influence of several fine ministers in the Auckland of the 1850s made an impression that changed his life. By the time he was prepared to be appointed to a missionary post, a policy decision had been made at a distance that would impact profoundly on his work.

It was decided in London in 1837 that the Wesleyan Missionary should vacate their mission in Samoa in favour of the London Missionary Society. Both groups had begun work there in the 1830s and this withdrawal caused great distress to the Tongan Wesleyans who had initiated it. Whether or not it was the right decision to withdraw, twenty years later the first decision was overturned by the new Australasian Mission Board, acting independently from the British Society. Again, the decision was made at a distance from the scene in Samoa. Rev. Martin Dyson was appointed there in 1857 and George Brown with his bride Lydia Wallis was appointed there in 1860. Dyson was dubious about it from the start and wrote in 1860 "I still believe that improper


\(^2\) Quoted in Colwell, p.383 from 'The Pioneer Missionary' p.289.

\(^3\) Rev. James Wallis Snr, Letter 23 Jan 1846.
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means were used to re-establish our Church in Samoa ... [however] in deference to the judgement of my elders I ought not to be perpetually looking backward .."^4

The debate over the presence of both LMS and WMS in Samoa would rage on for many years. The issue here is that significant decisions were being made by boards and committees who were remote from the situations they governed. After a series of increasingly difficult confrontations with a missionary colleague over the matter, George Brown wrote:

You are a Methodist preacher and promised honestly and solemnly to obey the Australasian Conference and to labour where ever they choose to appoint you; ...with your own consent they have appointed you here. Perhaps they are wrong, you at all events think they are but that doesn't at all affect the matter, so long as they rule, you as a Christian man pledged to them are bound to obey, the responsibility they have told us over and over again is with them not with us ... [My emphasis]^5

To make things more difficult for people working in the various Pacific mission settings, communication with the responsible Missions Committee in Sydney was erratic and unreliable. There could be months between visits of the mission ship the John Wesley with mail, leaving those waiting for a formal decision of Conference or Missions Committee in an agony of frustration. One of the lowest points of George Brown's missionary experience was over several years in the 1870s. Because of division of opinion among the mission staff in Samoa, letters critical of Brown were written to the Australasian leadership. He wrote to defend himself but knew that he must wait until the Conference in Australia for the matter to be considered. That year, 1872, he wrote that "we have never had fewer letters from Sydney than this year". At one point he wrote angrily:

We do feel so bitterly disappointed and hindered in every way ... Tis no use my pretending to write you a letter tonight. I cannot do it. I am too vexed for one thing and so upset at getting no news again that I cannot settle down to anything at all. I hope that when we do get news it will be good news. ["when" is underlined four times, the rest twice!]^6

Months passed, the time of Conference in January 1873 came and went and as Brown anxiously waited for mail, he seriously considered resigning from ministry. When finally in the middle of the year letters came from those who had attended the Conference, Brown was in despair. Each correspondent wrote about every other topic and added something like, "Of course so-and-so will have told you all about the

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^4 Martin Dyson Journal, 26 March 1860, quoted in A. Harold Wood, Tonga and Samoa, p.295
^6 George Brown, letter to Austin, 3 June 1872. Letterbook.
Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #82/83 Page 53
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debate on your business ..." When at last he learned that his name had been cleared he had endured over a year of waiting for an answer.  

Perhaps that experience influenced George Brown to take matters into his own hands in a later situation. When, sent by the Missions Committee to initiate a new mission in the islands of New Guinea in 1875, he chose to disregard the instructions of the central Committee. They had sent him with the mission ship to gather teachers and ministers from Fiji and Samoa, to establish them as pioneer missionaries in a new and potentially dangerous place, and to leave them there. He was expected to make annual visits. When he arrived and saw the reality of the situation, he believed that he could not obey their order. He wrote later that he:

must remain behind with the teachers ... I could not endure the thought of leaving them alone in this strange land ... I fully and fairly considered all that could be urged against this step [family at home, health, risks] and it still seemed clearly to be my duty to remain behind.  

No doubt he was criticized for this choice by those who had decided on the original plan, but he evidently believed that the judgement of the person in the field outweighed the instructions from distant Committee. Certainly he was criticized for another example of independent decision-making. In April 1878, in New Britain, he was faced with the very situation everyone had warned him about. One of the Fijian ministers and three island teachers had been attacked, killed and eaten by a cannibal community and the survivors were under threat. Indeed, the cannibal chief sent a mocking message to Brown saying that he had saved some yams as a side dish to accompany a meal of Brown himself. The Missionary Committee was a very long way away at that moment. Brown decided to join a party of other whites and islander residents in a punitive expedition. As he agonised over what to do, he reflected that he "knew in this instance that I should be held principally accountable for the action we were about to take ... I had no precedent to guide me and [knew] that many good people, whose opinion I respected ... would probably condemn our action...." Many distant observers in Australia and England were indeed scandalised.

In later years, when George Brown was appointed to the role of General Secretary for Wesleyan Missions in Australasia in 1886, his appointment coincided with the era of serious conflict in the church in Tonga which led to the secession of the Free Church of Tonga from the Wesleyan Church. Again, the groups with responsibility - the Conference and the Wesleyan Missions Committee - were far from the situation in Tonga, and struggled with various unsatisfactory options to try to solve the problem. Among other things were questions about future relationships with the Free Church, and the matter of caring for those Tongans who had remained in the Wesleyan

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7 Sequence of letters from Brown to friends and to Committee in 1872-73. Letterbook
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Church. Brown was appointed to attempt a reconciliation. Although he had serious - and justifiable - doubts about the chances of success, he said that he was not "going to begin at this time of life to place himself in opposition to the vote of Conference"\(^9\) and spent a lot of time in Tonga over a three year period.

Perhaps it was influenced by his own bitter experience of feeling isolated and forgotten by those who saw themselves as the responsible authority. It was true, however, that while in most circumstances he had a strong loyalty to the process of corporate decision-making by Conference and Committee, and did his best to participate fully in that process. Brown made it his policy to communicate face to face with those affected by those decisions, and to be fully informed about the situation in the island groups. This meant constant travel and continued until he was an old man. In 1890, for example, he noted that he had spent a total of 16 days at home; the rest of the year he was visiting staff, dealing with issues at the source, counselling, debating, meeting with the key figures in conflict and building trust with staff and people. Some have suggested that he was just a very restless man, not a "desk man", or that he loved sea travel, and that is true. But it also seems true that he believed that the decisions and policies of a central body, such as Conference, must be communicated well with those in the field, ideally through a personal visit, and that those decisions must be informed by those with first-hand experience.

Second Issue: How might a missionary organisation act when a similar missionary body is working in the same region with the same population?

In the period of the 19th century, the Wesleyan Methodist missions had many opportunities to work out whether they were to work in cooperation with, or in opposition to, other very similar evangelical missionary bodies. In New Zealand they were neighbours to the Church Missionary Society. In Samoa it was London Missionary Society. In New Guinea islands they were neighbours to Melanesian Mission, and in Papuan Islands their work bordered that of both London Missionary Society and the Anglican Australian Board of Mission. Relationships with the Catholics were simpler; they were the opposition.

Viewed from today, we could question the imperialistic process that led various missionary organizations to feel that they had the right to deal with entire populations in the Pacific islands as if they had no rights of their own, dividing up areas into "ours" and "theirs", drawing invisible lines of a kind of ownership on the human map. Large villages were deemed to be LMS, or CMS or WMS as if the local people had no right to choose or change.

King George of Tonga wrote a strong letter to the Wesleyan Committee in London in 1843. During the debate over whether the Wesleyans should return to Samoa, he wrote: "The friends in England are not able to change the minds of the people of

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Samoa or Tonga, as to what religion they shall be of.\textsuperscript{10} They, and we of later generations, had been warned!

Of course the original motivation of these mission societies was a genuine desire to offer the gospel of Christ into island communities. Those who first took on this task did so with a strong sense of call, at personal risk and lived in societies that were fraught with violence, sorcery and fear. Unfortunately, perhaps, they felt called, independently, to the same areas. In the case of Samoa, it was a comparatively limited area.

As people identified with a particular Society, it was possible for accusations of "sheep-stealing" to be made. Depending on the mood of the local chief, groups might change denomination. Ordinary church functions such as annual fund-raising were corrupted into unedifying competitions to outdo the other Society. Well-meant action, or inaction, on the part of one Society could cause great offence to a neighbouring Society. Despite local efforts at working in peace and cooperation, the hazards were considerable with much frustration, confusion and stress.

In writing a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Samoa in 1875, Martin Dyson wrote: "I believe that God never designed Methodism to be his only agency in the conversion of the modern world. All Evangelical Missionary Societies have wide fields of labour, and Samoa is now honourably and legitimately, but at present perhaps unwisey, shared by two of them."\textsuperscript{11} In a vivid turn of phrase, Dyson described the presence of both LMS and WMS in Samoa as being "like lamp posts on a moonlight night" - not evil, but quite unnecessary. His colleague George Brown took the position that he was the loyal servant of the Conference that had appointed him to Samoa, even if there were times when he wondered whether the mission there, in such proximity to LMS, was "expedient".

In 1866, the WMS Missions Committee discussed a letter from a senior LMS missionary in Samoa, A.W. Murray "on the subject of the intrusion of the Wesleyan Missionaries upon the sphere of that Mission". The LMS writer insisted that "The greatest hindrance to our work" was not heathenism, tribal wars nor work of Catholic priests "but Wesleyan intrusion". The Wesleyans were very angry about this, denying unequivocally the charge of "invasion" and in an intemperate Minute announced that they would never leave Samoa willingly.\textsuperscript{12} Policy decided on in rage may not always be the best policy! In the field, LMS and WMS staff carried on a strange double life of offering and receiving kind hospitality from each other and at the same time writing rude and hurtful letters about the offences of the other Society. Sadly, although there

\textsuperscript{10} Letter of King George Tupou of Tonga to Wesleyan Committee, 6 January 1843, quoted in A.Harold Wood, \textit{Tonga and Samoa}, p.285.

\textsuperscript{11} Martin Dyson, \textit{My Story of Samoan Methodism}, Melbourne: Ferguson & Moore, 1875.

\textsuperscript{12} Letter from Rev. A.W. Murray quoted in Minutes of Executive Sub-Committee 22 Oct 1866.
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were many examples of fruitful cooperation between the two Societies, other opportunities were lost because of their rivalry.

These tensions went on for years, and divided WMS from LMS friends as well as dividing WMS fellow-workers from each other, according to their position on the matter. It is interesting to notice that in George Brown's autobiography, the controversy between LMS and WMS rates a single paragraph. It is only when one reads the sequence of painful letters written in the early 1870s that one realises the depth of discouragement, anger and depression of that period. The matter consumed years of energy and emotional health as well as gallons of ink; as Brown put it in a letter:

letter upon letter has been written, protest, resolutions etc have been showered upon them [the WMS Committee] and still they profess their decided opinion that they are pledged to Samoa and mean to remain.

Brown wrote to a friend: "our LMS Brethren and we ourselves are and have been reaping what was sown in past years".

In 1871, the year LMS was beginning in Papua, Brown was developing his own ideas while struggling on in Samoa. He believed that LMS and WMS could both work in the unexplored islands of Papua and New Guinea but with a condition: "each having separate coasts or Districts marked out". 13

His experience in Samoa influenced his negotiations with the Melanesian Mission when first considering entering New Guinea Islands. In 1875, with the mission party on the way to begin in New Guinea Islands, the Wesleyan Record noted:

In prosecuting the work of the mission, there is happily no prospect of coming into collision with kindred Societies. Mr Brown says: "The members of the Melanesian Mission have rendered us every assistance in our new enterprise, and we start with their best wishes for our ultimate success". 14

In later years when he was General Secretary George Brown worked very intentionally to find ways to cooperate with other missionary organisations as they planned new work. Agreements over location and potential borders were very important. This included careful work in 1890 between Brown, LMS, the Anglicans and the Governor of Papua, which resulted in an agreement about discreet spheres of influence in Papua. 15 Similarly, he negotiated with the Melanesian Mission when planning work in the Solomon Islands. Remembering his past experience, it explains

14 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record. 3 May 1875.
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Brown's determination to try to avoid the conflicts of Samoa through well-planned cooperation.

**Third Issue: What are the factors that may encourage a missionary organization to initiate new work?**

How does a mission Society catch a vision for new work? It seems rare for it to come from Committee meetings but usually from individuals who inspire a Committee. It is unlikely that it would have occurred to the Wesleyan Missions Committee to initiate any entirely new work in the mid-1870s. Funds were short, there was little interest in overseas work among Australian (and perhaps New Zealand) congregations and they were considering selling the mission ship the *John Wesley* as an economy measure.

George Brown, however, had been dreaming of new challenges for many years. The earliest reference that I have found is in Brown's journal in 1861, It was clear that his colleague Martin Dyson was unsettled about staying on in Samoa because of the issues with LMS. Brown records that:

> Bro D[yson] makes a very chivalrous offer to lead a Mission to Papua, many thanks for the offer but I tell him that Manono [in Samoa] is his place and there he will remain ....

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The "Papua" to which he refers was almost unknown at the time, apart from visits of trading vessels that traversed the Pacific. The area is now known as Papua New Guinea.

By 1868 he was more than ready to leave himself. He was thoroughly sick of the conflicts between colonial powers, Samoan tribal groups and between LMS and the Wesleyans. In his journal he expresses his frustration.

> I do indeed wish that the way were made plain for us to leave Samoa. It seems a great waste of men and money to keep us here. I wish I could go to Fiji or New Guinea anywhere out of this.

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A few months later he wrote to his general secretary in Australia: "Don't forget that whenever our people wake up to a sense of their duty and resolve to send the Gospel to New Guinea & the densely populated Islands on the Line that I claim to have a share in it."

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He continued to be disturbed that some regions were overcrowded with missionaries while others were ignored. He wrote in 1871:

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16 *George Brown Journal, 24 August 1861.*
17 *George Brown Journal, 20 May 1868.*
18 *Letter to General Secretary, August 1868 quoted in John Garrett, To Live Among the Stars, p. 220.*
I believe the Home Committee have no right to direct money [to France, Italy and Spain] so long as India, China, New Guinea, New Caledonia and hundreds of other places have not the Gospel ... let it appear to be His will for us to go, to give up our Mission here, and I am ready at once to do so.\(^{19}\)

Would the gospel have reached the islands of New Guinea in the 1870s through the work of the Methodists if Brown had been appointed to Fiji, for example, in 1860, and he had had a satisfying ministry there? Perhaps the factors that influence the beginnings of most new enterprises, including Christian ministries, are rarely entirely pure. For George Brown, was the seed of the vision simply a compassion for distant people of an unknown land? Was he listening intently to God's call to go further, to risk everything for the gospel? Or was he frustrated, feeling redundant and misunderstood, restless, looking for escape from the narrow confines of his situation? Perhaps God uses restlessness and unease for his purposes. If Brown had been too comfortable, would he have brooded over the possibilities of other, wider work for years, and pressed the idea on others?

By late 1871, George Brown was mentioning New Guinea and his ideas of a new mission in almost every letter he wrote. He was very interested in the initiatives of the LMS men who were making a beginning on the southern coast of Papua. To friends, relatives and Committee he wrote of his plans:

No single Society can hope to take up that immense Island, FAR larger than Great Britain. Let us have a District marked out and let us begin with Native Teachers. Let also the Wesley do the LMS work at the same time... there would be no clashing in future ... We could get Teachers from Fiji, Tonga and Samoa and one Missionary could go every year with one of the LMS...\(^{20}\)

A formal letter to Rabone, the general secretary, setting out his plans in detail was written on 14 November 1871.

Although he did not let anyone forget his scheme, another three years would elapse before George Brown was finally free to put his case to the Committee in Sydney. At last, on 9 September 1874, George Brown met the Committee. After years of inaction, when Brown presented his case in person, they listened. In his journal that day he wrote:

I introduced my plan for a New Mission and advocated it to the best of my ability. It was most favourably received and I have full permission to [agitate?] the affair. May God help us all.

The Committee was impressed. In their Minutes they recorded that changing circumstances made new plans possible:

\(^{19}\) George Brown to James Wallis Jnr, Saleaula, 10 May 1871.

\(^{20}\) George Brown letters to James Wallis Jnr, 7 Nov 1871, Austin, 7 November 1871, Frank Firth 10 November 1871.
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The Executive Committee of Missions has been directed to New Britain, New Ireland, and other islands off the coast of New Guinea ... The Committee, after careful consideration, has approved of the proposal, that the John Wesley do on her mission voyage pay a visit of inquiry to the Islands of New Britain and New Ireland.

Brown would travel there, with "a number of Native Ministers from Fiji, Samoa, and perhaps Tonga" and would settle them in suitable locations. They added that "the details are yet to be carefully considered and settled". 21

So George Brown was sent off to raise funds to support his vision, which he did in Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand. In 1875 he gathered a team of island teachers and ministers with dire warnings about probable isolation, deprivation and death from disease, violence and cannibalism. All these dire predictions came true. Was it worth it? People in Papua New Guinea still celebrate George Brown Day.

Brown had not only had a broad vision of future possibilities but the gifts to plan workable strategies and put them into practice. When he moved into his new role as General Secretary for the Wesleyan Mission Society, he planned and established other new missionary initiatives. He took the lead in 1891 in gathering an astonishingly large team of 70 people, both Europeans and Islanders, to establish a pioneer work in the Papuan Islands, off the south-eastern coast of Papua New Guinea. The Missionary Review of June 1891 noted: "Such a large party has never before, to our knowledge, gone forth at one time to initiate an enterprise like this, and we pray that their success may be in proportion to their numbers." 22

Ten years later, in June 1901, the Mission Board resolved to send George Brown to the Solomon Islands to explore another new initiative. The Solomon Islands was a very different context, extremely beautiful and very violent. George Brown commented that the "spiritual destitution is dreadful". On Brown's advice, the Board resolved to establish a new mission there, and in 1902, Brown returned to the western Solomon Islands with a team of European and Islander pioneers, a more modest group this time of eighteen.

Why did the islands of Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands in particular capture Brown's imagination? Was it that they were the only heavily populated regions not already marked out by the colonial and missionary aspiration of other mission societies? Was Brown as amateur anthropologist, linguist and explorer attracted to peoples whose languages, customs and manner of life had never been explored?

21 Meeting of Executive Committee of the Board of Missions. 9 Sept 1874. [President of NSW Conference in Chair, plus Revs James Watkin, George Hurst, Benjamin Chapman (Secretary of Society 1873-1881), Joseph Oram, Walter J. Davis, Francis Tait, James A. Nolan. See B.Danks, "A Brief History of the New Britain Mission", pp. 6-7.]
22 Missionary Review, June, August, October issues, 1891.
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Why not other people groups? Despite repeated requests for help to minister to the thousands of Indian labourers arriving in Fiji, the Wesleyan Missions Board, with Brown, did nothing for fifteen years, then sent a solitary woman worker in 1897.\(^{23}\) The same Board was criticized for ignoring the needs of Australian Aboriginal people for at least seventy years.\(^{24}\) This was at least in part because of the influence of Brown. His own focus was in the Pacific, with Polynesians and Melanesians, and it seems that he could be selective in the projects that claimed his interest and energy.

Fourth Issue: How do new churches move toward full maturity and independence?

As younger churches grow and mature, there should be spiritual development as well as a transfer of authority in leadership, ownership and responsibility from the pioneers to the people of the place. Over a long lifetime, George Brown saw, and in some cases only dreamed of, the transition of a number of newly-birthed churches into mature and independent Christian communities of faith.

Brown's experience placed him in company with some outstanding Islander Christians so he did not question their gifts of leadership. One of George Brown's earliest missionary colleagues was the highly respected Tongan minister, Barnabas 'Ahongalu, who Brown considered to be one of the greatest missionaries in the Pacific. Together they trained Samoan teachers and ministers for local service.

By the time he was dreaming of new work in New Guinea, he saw a plan that was built on the gifts of island missionaries. In the enthusiastic sequence of letters he wrote to a missionary in Fiji:

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\text{nor do I think we ought to keep up the old plan of crowding expensive Missionaries into a field. We must work more with Native Agents than we have done. You are doing the right thing in Fiji I am certain. I wish we could plant ten or twelve of your Fiji Institution men under the charge of some good Native Minister on Papua they would soon make themselves felt.}^{25}\]

Soon after Brown had shared his vision of new work with the Committee of the Missionary Society in 1874, the Committee reported:

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\text{God has raised up in our South Seas Missions a Native Agency, which is second to none in the Christian world... The employment of those Teachers who are willing to go will create a Missionary spirit in the Native Churches.}^{26}\]


\(^{26}\) *The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record* report of the Executive Committee of the Australasian Wesleyan Missionary Society, 1 Oct 1874.
By the time George Brown arrived in Fiji to recruit Fijian staff for the new mission, the local decision was in the hands of the Wesleyan leadership. The signatories to the decision of the Wesleyan District Committee that made the decision on 1 June 1875 are significant:

That in our opinion Mr Waterhouse will be justified in placing at the Rev. G. Brown's disposal such students, married or otherwise, whose superintendents may have given their consent, and whom he considers to be suitable. [Signed:] D.S. Wylie, Lorimer Fison, Arthur J. Webb, Wm Weir Lindsay, Joeli Bulu, Eroni Fotofili, Jemesa Havea, Tevita Nauhaamea, Meli Fifi, Joeli Nau, Joseph Waterhouse.  

Brown described the men who accompanied him in the pioneer missionary work as "above the ordinary rank and file of the teachers... the women also were equally brave and self-sacrificing". Few of them lived to return to their island homes.

Brown delighted in making friends and wherever he went he did his best to establish a connection with the people, to learn some of their language and to discover something of their culture. These were genuine friendships and included offering hospitality in his home in Sydney to island guests.

George Brown was strongly in favour of granting the same rights of representation in church decision-making to members of the new churches in the islands as were enjoyed by other Wesleyan societies around the world. The Wesleyan Church in Tonga had had the right to include Tongan laymen in the representation of their District since 1875. So, when thirty years later there was an acrimonious debate about whether or not Fijian laymen might participate in church decision-making, Brown was very distressed about it. The white missionaries in Fiji were strongly opposed to that part of the new Constitution for the Wesleyan Church in Fiji, wanting to exclude Fijian lay representatives from even minimal participation. By the time the debate had gone on from 1900 until 1905, white missionaries in Fiji were demanding of the Board:

that they each and all be recalled to home work, as they cannot conscientiously carry out the clause in the Fiji Constitution, which provides for the admission of laymen to the Financial District Synod.

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28 In 1881 Brown took new convert Peni Leiei and his family from the Duke of York Islands to Sydney to work with him on the translation of Mark's Gospel into the Duke of York language. He described Peni as very intelligent and a 'fine colleague'.

29 The intention was for laymen to make decisions about the local use of locally raised funds.
Brown argued that lay representation had worked well in Tonga, and Fijian ministers had had voting rights in District Synod since 1878. A report brought to the 1901 Conference from a panel including Brown stated "That it is desirable that the self-governing powers of the mission districts should be increased". They were not asking for full independence but for a transparent process, communication, participation and the right to vote on matters in their own church. Brown challenged the suggestion that with over three thousand Fijian lay preachers and over a thousand catechists there was not ONE reputable layman. Brown urged that Fijians be trained in the principles of self-government as an act of justice so that:

as soon as is practicable, they should be competent to assume the entire support of the work of God in their own land, and also its government under the laws and regulations of our Church.

He feared that the discontent over this could lead to a church secession similar to that experienced in Tonga. In his opinion the best policy to pursue in Fiji:

is that we should make our Church in Fiji the Church of the people of Fiji, that the people should feel that they do not belong to the church of the missionaries or of the people of Sydney or Australia, but that they and their Church in Fiji form part of the great universal Church of Christ, and that they are responsible to God for its continued success.30

This hope, offered one hundred years ago, has come true for all the churches that grew from the Wesleyan missionary enterprise.

And so the questions are woven together. Who is responsible? With whom do we co-operate? When and how do we take risky new steps? Who is included, not only in doing the work but also deciding how we will do the work.

We can give thanks for those who went before us, doing their best to follow God's leading. Some of their inspired imaginings and leaps of faith have shaped who we are today.

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METHODIST MISSIONARIES AND PACIFIC CONTEXTS
What was Stowed in the Cabin Trunk? Motives and Assumptions of Wesleyan Missionaries 1825-1835

Donald Phillipps

Introduction

This paper arose out of the writer's interest in the life of James Watkin, missionary in Tonga (1831-1837), and New Zealand (1840-1855). No special significance is claimed for him, but he was a sensible and more than usually sensitive observer. A long-time colleague considered he was about the "best informed man" he ever met with.¹ I believe Watkin's observations are helpful in the matter under discussion.

¹ Samuel Ironside, "Memoirs", New Zealand Methodist, 28.2.1891.
haphazard in the extreme. Watkin was lucky to have the best part of six months in London, living at the Mission House, where he was tutored by the Missionary Secretaries. The missionary's book-list is the best indication of his preparation. As with all his colleagues, Watkin's general reading included the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, a journal whose editors were at the heart of the Connexion and whose articles and reviews represented Methodist orthodoxy. Above all missionaries read the bible.

**Racial assumptions**

In those pre-Darwinian times the bible was understood to assume that all humanity was descended from the one original couple, formed by God as the final act of Creation. Implicit in this view were other assumptions: the unity of humankind, the recency of their appearance on earth, the degeneration of non-Christian savage peoples, and the sharp distinction between human and other animal forms.

Degeneration, conceived in both physical and cultural terms, explained human diversity, and "aggressive ethnocentrism and Christian humanitarianism coexisted in the general cultural attitude toward non-Western peoples". Such speculations do not often surface in missionary writing. Watkin, for example, never described the physical appearance of the Tongan. On only one occasion, when comparing Tongan and Fijian culture, did he venture into theories of racial origins, suggesting that Tongans were more likely to have originated in America. The emerging study of race had provoked debate between two theories - monogenesis and polygenesis. The most influential voice for the evangelicals was J. F. Blumenbach, sometimes regarded as the founder of anthropology. A review of John Mason Good's *The Book of Nature* in the *Methodist Magazine* probably introduced Methodist readers to Blumenbach's classification of racial types. The causes of racial differentiation were:

(a) climate (affecting height and skin colour - humans are whiter who live nearer the poles);
(b) food (affecting hair and stature);
(c) customs (affecting attitudes to freedom or servility); and
(d) "the peculiar shape of the head and face in most nations".

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3 James Watkin to WMC, Lifuka, 31 May1834. The possibility of an American origin of the Polynesian peoples was raised by William Elllis in his *Polynesian Researches*, which Watkin read.
4 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), Professor of medicine at Gottingen from 1776.
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The reviewer, almost certainly Richard Watson, endorsed this position and asserted the superiority of the Caucasian, and especially of the Briton. In a book designed for children, Watson explained the physical variety of humanity in the same way. All humans, despite differences of "physiognomy and colour derived from the one pair. After giving examples he went on to say: Yet the most eminent naturalists have demonstrated that all these are but varieties in the same race, produced by the effects of climate, different kinds of food peculiar manners and customs, and morbid and hereditary affections. He called Blumenbach "the celebrated naturalist". 6

The monogenists were often evangelical humanitarians, protectors of aborigines and abolitionists. They were designated collectively by their opponents as "Exeter Hall". 7 "Coloured" people had to be brought back to the only form of civilization which they, the monogenists, were prepared to recognise through the light of the "only Truth". 8 For the Wesleyan missionary in the field however, the somewhat arbitrary distinction made by these writers was probably irrelevant in practice. In any case Richard Watson himself was skeptical of the more extreme expression of their point-of-view. He represented Wesleyan orthodoxy, when it exerted a strong influence.

The Noble Savage

Europeans have nurtured an image of human perfectibility [sic] which has sometimes been associated with the distant past, and at other times has been thought of as contemporary, but geographically remote. By the second half of the eighteenth century, many people had been successively associated with the idea, so it was probably inevitable that the most remote people of all, the antipodean islanders, should have their turn. Perhaps that extreme remoteness accounts for some vestige of the idea lingering in people's perceptions of the Pacific ... 9

Watkin, when describing some of the "barbarous inflictions" of the Tongan people prior to Western contact, referred to them as "those unadulterated children of nature." For evangelical missionaries no exception could be made - all had sinned, and all must repent in order to receive the promise of salvation. Watkin adopted Wesley's skepticism about the innocence of humanity in a state of nature. Wesley had rebutted

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7 Exeter Hall, on the Strand, was the venue, from 1831, for the Annual Meetings of the various Missionary Societies.
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such a claim made by George Keate in his *An Account of the Pelew Islands*,\(^\text{10}\) and had criticised Hawkesworth's account of Cook's voyages. Evangelicals rejected the idea of sinless perfection among primitive peoples as being totally at odds with their understanding of universal sin.

The early missionaries did not expect to find noble savages, but rather, people who could be brought close to the "Evangelical ideal of piety, puritan morality, hard labour and sombre pleasures". In this sense the missionary view of the Polynesian was optimistic. They believed the Polynesian needed salvation because of their depravity and wretchedness. Cannibalism, nakedness and sexual freedom were not God's handiwork but the work of the Devil.\(^\text{11}\)

The myth nevertheless contributed to the development of the missionary enterprise.\(^\text{12}\) Descriptions of Polynesian beliefs and customs were accompanied by reflections upon the abject spiritual state of the natives and the moral duties of Christians. Illustrations in missionary publications depicted both noble savages and their simple natural life and the ignoble living in the spiritual darkness of paganism.\(^\text{13}\) As time passed, primitive innocence was often contrasted with the example of the "licentious sailor and the unprincipled trader"\(^\text{14}\) who perverted the Pacific Islander. And there were others who were just as critical of Western missionary, for undermining traditional native culture.\(^\text{15}\)

**Eurocentrism and 'Politics'**

Both sides of the "racial" debate adopted views disparaging of "coloured" peoples, whether their intention was to protect them or exploit them. For the monogenist, "coloured" people were degenerate Caucasians who had to be brought back to true Civilisation through the light of the only Truth. For the polygenists, "coloured" people were innately inferior, and intended by God, like the beasts of the field, to serve their

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\(^\text{10}\) George Keate (1729-97), *An Account of the Pelew Islands* ... "But if there ever was such an unblamable, or is now, such a nation in the world, the Scriptures are a falsity; and the inspired writers, so called, talked at random, and were utterly ignorant of human nature." Wesley's critique was later included in Complete Works of John Wesley, London: Conference Office, 1829-1831.

\(^\text{11}\) Campbell, op cit, p.57.

\(^\text{12}\) Campbell, op cit, p.47. New popular editions of Cook's Voyages published after 1820 were frequently edited with the thought of the missionary enterprise in mind.


\(^\text{14}\) James Watkin to *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, Lifuka, 30 September 1833.

\(^\text{15}\) e.g. Otto von Kotzebue (1878-1846) made two voyages of exploration in the Pacific, described in *A New Voyage Round the World in the Years 1823, 24, 25, and 26* translated and published in London in 1830 in two volumes. He described the religion taught by the missionaries in Tahiti as 'not true Christianity,' and 'established by force.'
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betters. They could not be brought to the same level of civilisation as "white" men, since they were incapable of absorbing it.\(^\text{16}\)

The *Instructions to Missionaries* were clear that the missionary was to be loyal to the throne of Great Britain and respectful to those in authority. Watkin may have been somewhat cynical of patriotism, having been brought up in Manchester, the developing centre of British radicalism. The English society he left was one in which class distinction played an essential role, well illustrated by Methodism's relationship with the established Church. Watkin was not the only missionary imbued with some of the democratic spirit that burst into life with Chartism.

In the view of missionaries, the hierarchical social system of the South Pacific demanded considerable adjustment. Watkin likened it to the caste system in India,\(^\text{17}\) involving religious as well as social class. In the South Pacific generally the missionary quickly became aware of the traditions that hedged chieftainship with divinity. Traditional religion mirrored the socio-political system. It explained why "some people had power and others did not, and religious doctrine told people why they should obey the chiefs. Chiefs were to be obeyed because they represented the gods; and the more high-ranking the chief was, the more like a god he was."\(^{\text{18}}\)

Perhaps we have not fully faced the extent to which all subsequent Western Christianity was shaped by the circumstances under which the people of northern Europe came into the Christian faith- coming not as individuals, families, or groups but as whole societies complete with their functioning political and social systems integrated around their ruler. Individual choice could hardly exist, even in concept ... The tension between the principle of Christendom and its realization in practice is the history of Western Christianity.\(^\text{19}\)

Watkin's support for the emerging king of Tonga, Taufa'ahau, was in line with Wesleyan thinking:

> We obey, because we believe the power [of the ruler/state/king] to be of God; because we have civilly consented to be ruled by him; because we deem a reasonable prudence requires us to obey; and because the Holy Scriptures command our obedience.\(^{\text{20}}\)

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\(^{\text{16}}\) Ballara, op cit, pp. 171-2.

\(^{\text{17}}\) James Watkin's Journal, 19 July 1834.

\(^{\text{18}}\) Campbell, op cit, p.52.


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When Watkin moved to New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi had just been signed, ceding a measure of authority to the English Queen. Watkin and his fellow Wesleyan missionaries, however, would not, in those early years, have been themselves as being part of the structures maintaining British authority.

In Wellington Watkin and his colleague Samuel Ironside found themselves under attack in the newspaper reports on the Wairau Affray. From its published reports the editor was well aware of the basic hostility of the Missionary Committee in London to colonisation in general. To him this smacked of treason, and by association placed the missionaries over against the settlers. Despite such provocative language neither Watkin nor Ironside sought to defend their superiors in such a sensitive and, for them, "political debate". In July 1844 a hui was held near Porirua. Watkin was clear that it was "truly religious in its intention", bringing together Maori of different iwi and an opportunity for peace-making. When the newspaper got wind of the hui, it assumed that the Maori were engaged in planning the occupation of the Hutt Valley.21 Watkin and Ironside sought to defend their involvement, emphasising the religious character of the hui,22 and claiming it had nothing to do with "political subjects". They assured the readers they had no reason to be suspicious of their Maori neighbours, whose friendly disposition yielded to none in "British feeling." 23

Nationalism and Culture

Nevertheless Wesleyan Methodists were often quite unashamedly patriotic. Richard Watson was in no doubt that the British had:

become the first people of the world, - the most renowned for arts and ; for arms, - for the best virtues of the heart, and the best faculties of the understanding? Not a difference in the colour of the skin; but first, the peculiar favour of the Almighty; next, a political constitution, which was sighed for, and in some degree prefigured, by Plato and Tully; but regarded as a masterpiece, beyond the power of human accomplishment; and, lastly, a fond and fostering cultivation of science, in every ramification and department.24

Bosch goes further by claiming that:

... under the sway of the Enlightenment, culture really had become the dominant entity and religion just one of its expressions. There was no distinguishing between religious and cultural supremacy, and missionaries were the propagandists of this culture "in a rather guileless manner".25

21 New Zealand Spectator, 12 July 1845.
22 James Watkin's Journal, 16 July 1845.
23 New Zealand Spectator, 19 July 1845.
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God, in his providence, had chosen the Western nations, because of their unique qualities, to be the standard-bearers of his cause to the uttermost ends of the world. It was the "manifest destiny" of the Anglo-Saxon to be the chosen standard-bearer of civilization, and to bring enlightenment, so that the heathen might be made into civilized Western Christians of the British sort. As Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, later said:

It was not much in the habit of the British people ... to raise magnificent structures as emblems of their power and greatness. It was rather their vocation - and he thought it a higher one - to leave as the impress of their intercourse with inferior nations, marks of moral teaching and religious training, to have made a nation of children see what it was to be men - to have trained mankind in the habits of truth, morality, and justice, instead of leaving them in the imbecility of falsehood and perpetual childhood ..  

Science and Superstition

One quite physical piece of luggage that missionaries brought with them was the medicine chest. It uniquely symbolised the vast distance that separated the emerging scientific west from the rest of the world. The missionary assumed that illness and disease were the result of a breakdown in bodily functions rather than the result of malign spiritual influences. It was the missionary's task to overcome deep-rooted superstition through the use of medicinal preparations prepared scientifically for the most part, in dispensaries, and of a nature totally foreign to the experience of the people to whom he was sent. Initially the missionary rejected traditional medicine, and it took time to recognise the value of the treatments used by indigenous peoples. The medicine chest was, in many ways, a quite peremptory challenge to native societies in the South Pacific, particularly when the dispensing of medicine was limited to those willing to entertain the missionary's teaching.

On his departure from Tonga, (at the same time that Watkin arrived), Nathaniel Turner surveyed his time there for the Committee in London. Among other things he remarked that:

Our success in this respect [administering medicine] has been the means of bringing many over to our cause from different parts of the island [Tongatapu]. When a cure has been wrought, the individual has gone home to his friends, and they all beholding what has been done for him, the whole family, and, in some instances, families have come over to live at Nuku'alofa, and attend to religious instruction.  

26 Bosch, op cit, p.300.
28 N.Turner to Committee, Nuku'alofa, 6 May 1831.
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It seems extraordinary, therefore, that missionaries were rarely given any training in the diagnosis and treatment of illness or the preparation and dispensing of medicine. Peter Turner, recorded: "This has often made us wish we had received a few lessons in the art of healing before we left home, as we should have been more successful among the heathen".²⁹ It is clear from the way Watkin described his medical work that he was quick to learn from experience, but also from his vade mecum, Buchan.³⁰ The reports on the success of their ministrations were, however, offset by the admission of failure, as untrained amateurs, in diagnosis. And always it was the lack of drugs that was the greatest drawback.³¹ One list of requests Watkin sent on behalf of each of the missionaries at Tonga ran to three closely written pages, giving the impression that they had quickly acquired some knowledge of and familiarity with the drugs and their uses.³²

Missionary Morality

Every Wesleyan missionary brought with him Wesleyan moral attitudes, and the greatest changes in the lives of the Polynesian were the result of the conduct demanded by the missionary's religion. "Respectability" is the key word - Edward Bulwer Lytton observed it had become the favourite description of the leading virtue of the age.³³ Evangelicals, of all varieties, were its chief promoters. New standards of honesty in both word and conduct, forbearance in the face of aggression, and mildness in the punishment of offences were required. "Members were kept to these standards by the disciplinary procedures of the church, which would suspend the membership of anyone wilfully violating its code without repentance."³⁴

The observance of the Sabbath was a priority. On the other hand, the Protestant virtue of hard work, and the insistence that indolence was a sin, was less appealing in what might be termed a hunter-gatherer culture. A day of rest did not mean six days of work. Coming from a culture that carefully recorded the passage of time, Watkin had to come to terms with a different culture in which no day was more important than

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²⁹ Peter Turner, Journal [p.36].
³⁰ William Buchan, Domestic Medicine: or, A Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines, with Observations on Sea-Bathing and the Use of Mineral Waters; to which is Annexed a Dispensatory for the Use of Private Practitioners, 22nd ed. London: W. Lewis, 1826.
³¹ 'All missionaries appear to have been provided with a medicine chest and supplies of medicine were sent out, somewhat irregularly', in J. M. R. Owens, "Missionary Medicine and Maori Health: The Record of the Wesleyan Mission in New Zealand before 1840", Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 81, No.4, December 1972, p.421.
³² James Watkin to WMC, Nuku'alofa 8 August 1831.
³⁴ Campbell, op cit, p. 115.
It was recognised that the European calendar gave an advantage in planning for the future through the prediction of seasonal changes for example.36

**Evangelical Imperative and Unstated Assumptions**

The *Methodist Magazine*, during the later 1820's, confidently set out what heathenism meant. The "pagan" was one who "with no other instruction, generally speaking, than the glimmerings of natural reason, and the refracted rays of distant tradition, [is] covered with the vail [sic] of Deplorable Ignorance." They were subject to "baleful passions, horrible excesses" and had no moral distinction. The whole earth must be filled with knowledge of Jehovah, in order to "extirpate prejudice", "enlighten the stupid idolaters", and "soften the ferocious savage."37

Asked by the House of Commons Committee to comment on the results of the first communication of religious truth upon the heathen mind, the Wesleyan Missionary Society Secretary, John Beecham replied:

> The force of these truths seems to unchain his mind and touch the springs of action in his soul, and he at once appears capable of efforts worthy of a rational and immortal being, and may then be successfully directed to such pursuits as are conducive to his welfare.38

William Carey, the founding father of Baptist missions had similarly asked:

> Can we hear that they are without the gospel, without government, without laws, and without arts and sciences; and not exert ourselves to introduce amongst them the sentiments of men, and of Christians? Would not the spread of the gospel be the most effectual means of their civilization? Would not that make them useful members of society?39

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36 James Watkin’s Journal, 15 April 1834.
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There were other factors as well. It might be said of Wesleyan missions that they were indirectly atoning for the wrongs perpetrated by the Christian nations in their colonial and mercantile policy, particularly the slave-trade. It is significant that growth of the Wesleyan missionary movement coincided with the emergence of the problems of industrial England. And there was a sense of destiny, Wesleyan missionary apologists believing that the means now existed for the first time to save, the whole world.  

Put in a more secular way, the unstated assumptions were, firstly, that successful colonial expansion based on superior technological and military skill, would lead to the Gospel effecting similar radical change in both the convert and the culture. Secondly, the missionary had the duty to bring enlightenment, and the heathen made into civilized Western Christians. However, the missionary was often dissatisfied with the secularization of society at home and wished to create a truly Christian civilization. Thirdly, the missions were inevitably colonizing agencies. The Wesleyan missionary, by keeping the WMMS rule about not getting involved in things "political" aided and abetted the colonizing process.

A Wesleyan Polity

In one sense it was as true of the missionary as of the Circuit minister that his only business was "to save souls", but there was more to it than that. A year after he arrived in Tonga Watkin wrote to Bunting reassuring him that "as Wesleyan Methodists we endeavoured to bring the whole of our admirable economy into operation as far as applicable in the circumstances of this people." The establishment, or imposition, of that "admirable economy" continued to be the objective of the Wesleyan missionary in the South Pacific well into the second half of the 19th century.

As well as that there was the principle that was basic to all missionary endeavour - to christianise or to civilize. The question was - which had the priority? This was the crux of the matter for the House of Commons Committee in its deliberations in 1835 - is civilization the "natural companion and consequence" of the introduction of Christianity? Beecham presented a statement summarizing the policy of the Wesleyan Missionary Society so that the Committee would understand that "you first seek to evangelize the world, and in so doing you will be sure at the same time to civilize it."

No sooner does the gospel begin to operate in the mind of the heathen than it leads to the first step in civilization, which was for the people to feel, under the

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42 Coates et al., op cit, pp.122-23.
teaching of the missionaries, that a more decent exterior is necessary; and thus
the first step is taken in civilization, and clothing is introduced.

Beecham's statement did not give expression to a theology of mission but, rather, to a
largely pragmatic view of its consequences. The gospel "induces" a settled course of
life, promotes industry and regular religious observance. Education "seems naturally
to follow" since the use of a printed book, the Bible, creates a desire for school
instruction. The gospel originates moral virtues and establishing the bonds of civilized
life, particularly of monogamy, and of the humanities. Finally, the gospel enjoins
mercy and forgiveness, and this puts an end to violence. "It is by such an investigation
I reach the conclusion, that wherever the gospel exerts its full and legitimate influence,
true civilization must follow as a natural and necessary consequence." 43

In that phrase of James Watkin, the "admirable economy" of Wesleyanism, lies the
largely unspoken motive and assumption for Wesleyan missionary endeavour. As the
Methodist movement in the 18th century had succeeded in creating a new type of
social order within the traditional class structures of English society, so did the
Wesleyan missionary in the first half of the 19th century seek to create a new sense of
community within the existing social order in the South Pacific.

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43 Coates et al., op cit, pp. 167-170.
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William Cross: A Reflection on Mission Theory and Practice related to Cross's years as a Missionary in Tonga and Fiji, 1827 - 1842

Andrew Thornley

Mission Theory: A Soteriological Wesleyan Paradigm

The evangelical principle of repentance and salvation was a reaction against the Age of Reason and the secularizing tendencies of the Enlightenment. Changes in society would not come along with, but only as a result of, soul-saving. Among Christians touched to the heart by the evangelical revival, there was an urgent desire to share this blessing with others abroad. This was the dynamic, commented Niel Gunson that took "plain folk to the ends of the earth".

John Wesley's great interest was soteriology. In addition, his academic background gave a distinctive twist to his interpretation of soteriology. The Wesleyan experience of salvation included as a testimony both the important subjective and personal experience as well as the objective component, a faith grounded in scripture. This aspect helps to explain why William Cross spent a considerable amount of his missionary time translating Scripture into the local dialect. Untrained as he was for linguistic work, he nevertheless felt compelled to enable his hearers to benefit from the scriptural revelation of God.

In its reach Wesleyan Soteriology is Universal and Inclusive

The life of a Wesleyan missionary was one of sacrificial love to God and neighbour.... The biblical motif was the well known John 3:16. The evangelical enthusiasm stemming from Wesley's great phrase "The world is my Parish" was also assisted by enlightenment knowledge of the farthest reaches of the globe. Christians read avidly the accounts of the Pacific contained in the journals of explorers such as James Cook.

Adding an extra impulse to Wesleyan missionary work was the doctrine of "prevenient grace" - that is the grace which precedes salvation. John Wesley favoured this doctrine because it provided a means for his "school" of Methodists to escape the quietistic implications of predestination that the Whitfield "Calvinist"-minded followers accepted. Prevenient Grace suggested that no living person is entirely destitute of human conscience and therefore of God's love. As a result, a Wesleyan Methodist can be much more tolerant of and positive towards his or her Christian brethren. The door always remained open: Methodists celebrate with joyfulness the immensity of the grace of God.
Through its Life, Wesleyan Soteriology is Sanctifying

Andrew Wall's evangelical paradigm of conversion begins with personal knowledge of sin, moves to personal trust in the atonement of Christ and comes to rest in the godly personal life; this latter - holiness and sanctification - was dear to the heart of Wesley. Sanctification is the organic growth of the Christian - the coming to maturity whereby grace, hope and optimism lead to action through a godly personal life.

Gordon Dicker notes that in Wesleyan Christianity, "there is no limit that one may be filled and governed by the love of God", while a failure does not throw oneself into a state of non-maturity! The celebrated Fiji missionary, John Hunt - mentored in his early mission days by William Cross - went on to write a standard text on Entire Sanctification which was used for half a century in the English Methodist Training Colleges. Hunt wrote: "We may not limit the power of God and the grace of Christ by our infirmities, or even depravity. [God] is able to save us from sin and can enable us to love Him with all our heart in a world of temptation and with a body and mind full of infirmities".

APPLICATION OF THE PARADIGM IN TONGA AND FIJI, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO WILLIAM CROSS

Cross's Soteriology

This approach is evident in Cross's preaching. The scripture passages used in his sermons focussed on the greatness, love, mercy and forgiveness of God; the call of Jesus for repentance; the parables of Jesus; the atonement and the missionary work of the apostles. His first sermon, delivered on Viwa on 1 September 1839, took as its theme "the love of God in the gift of His Son and the necessity of faith in order to our salvation".

A constant theme of Cross's mission work was the seeking of confessions of repentance through acknowledgement of Jehovah as the only God. In 1840 at Nakorotubu, on the coast of eastern Vitilevu, Cross reported that "about ten of the principal persons" had "professed themselves worshippers of the true God". Again, Cross's first convert at Rewa was a woman and in his very straight-forward description he made allowances for cross-cultural differences in the understanding of conversion: "She has", wrote Cross, "adequately passed the various signs of a genuine conversion - a sincere belief in God and a trust in salvation. [She] was not as deeply convinced of sin as [I] would have liked, nor her views on repentance so clear."

To every new mission station that Cross went, he sought to acquire the language and the local dialect so that he could translate scriptures and write hymns. Faith was to be set in scripture. For example, within two years of beginning his first appointment to Nuku'alofa in 1829, Cross had translated into Tongan chapters from Matthew, Mark and Acts. Through the use of scripture to develop literacy programmes. Cross opened schools, which drew many hundreds of people - adults and children - to the classroom.
Finally individual salvation was encouraged through lovefeasts, which were times of personal testimony by new converts

**Universalism and Inclusiveness in Cross's Soteriology**

Cross opened more new mission stations than any other first generation missionary in Tonga and Fiji. He was the pioneer European Christian missionary to Nuku'alofa, Vava'u, Niuafo'ou, Lakeba, Rewa, Viwa and Bau, seven places in the space of fifteen years. His stress was on the establishment of community worship. At all of his mission stations, he stimulated the building of chapels and the development of community worship. He opened Sunday Schools, started choir singing, and held medical clinics to which all were invited; they were an effective means of conversion. Although the weekday schools were basically about the teaching of the new Christian faith through the extension of literacy, education was also seen as a way to wider knowledge to help undo some of the more problematic aspects of culture such as widow-strangling.

Cross sought to work cooperatively with the chiefs, the acknowledged leaders in their communities. Very few of them were among the first converts, since they owed more to the structures of traditional society. Cross was not afraid to speak out against aspects of Tongan and Fijian culture or religion and at times his abrupt language offended sensibilities. But in every place he went to, his desire to spread the faith inculcated an atmosphere that spread the idea of inclusiveness beyond the perimeters of the mission station. When the first chapel was constructed on Viwa in Fiji, the Christian chief, Namosimalua, was visited by his pagan nephew, Varani, who quizzed him on why Christians were being exclusively used in the erection of the chapel. Did the chief not desire all people to assist, asked Varani? Namosimalua relented and that evening a call went out to all the men of the island to help lay the foundations. If they did not attend, they would "be trampled upon until they were dead"!

**Cross's Emphasis on Holiness and Sanctification**

The primary agent here was the establishment of classes to instruct people in "holy" living and prepare them for baptism. The first Tongans - seven men - were baptised on 4 January 1829; five women were baptised on 29 March that same year. Class membership involved strict adherence to Wesleyan rules in the building up of members. Cross also held prayer meetings to strengthen Christian life and regular meetings with the teachers to train them in the principles of holy living and ensure a consistent and faithful community of believers.

**Adaptation of the Paradigm to the Tonga and Fiji Context.**

"Recipient civilizations selectively borrow items from other civilizations and adapt, transform and assimilate them so as to strengthen and insure [sic] the survival of the core values of their culture. " Huntingdon, 76]
The key question to be faced here is: In what missionary activities was the paradigm - as introduced and applied above - adapted, stretched or pushed to encompass the local context?

Firstly, the centrality of community worship meant that the class meeting was eased aside. Whereas in England, Wesleyanism took the people "out" of their everyday activities to further instruct them, this was difficult in the communal societies of the Pacific. Collectivism displaced individualism as the cornerstone of spiritual life.

Secondly, critical to the survival of the Wesleyan mission was the constant interplay of conversation, discussion and debate between missionary and chief, the acknowledged and revered head and representative of the native community. Not in Pacific society was there a principle of separation of the spiritual and temporal authority. The latter determined the fortunes of the former in the reality of Cross's world. Furthermore rule of law was frequently subservient to rule by the club. Overall, however, the chiefs of Tonga and Fiji were welcoming to the missionaries, obviously aware of their trade potential and curious also about the new religious ideas. The general attitude of chiefs was well summed up by Cokanauto - Rewa chief - in 1840:

We have no objection to the residence of the missionaries and would feed them and would not molest anyone voluntarily embracing their religion. But we dislike their spying into houses. Bye and bye, when [we] see more of them and understand them, the people may come around.

Thirdly, Cross and his fellow missionaries were confronted with a much greater challenge than they had anticipated from traditional religious influences. These were as expected centred in the priests and chiefs, many of the latter regarded as totems of the gods. To counter them, Cross translated into Tongan the biblical story of the struggle between Elijah and the priests of Baal. He also translated the books of Samuel which were, in part, concerned with a lifestyle of a people in rebellion against Jehovah. In the classic typology of Richard Niebuhr, Cross's world was often one of Christ against Culture.

Fourthly, the Christian Sabbath was even more strictly applied in Tonga and Fiji than in the countries from which the missionaries came. This is as much the case today as it was when Cross first introduced the concept.

The question of war and peace warrants more study in order to assess Wesleyan impact in Tonga and Fiji. Evangelism was simply not possible in the climate of tension, sporadic conflict and tribal war that characterized Fijian society. In 1841 Cross endorsed a war by Bau and Viwa against the Namena people but he was cruelly deceived by the chiefs and the subsequent "just" war proved to be simply a subterfuge by which one chief could secure advantage over another. Tongan mercenaries operating in Fiji was another complicating dynamic in the Christian context.

Finally, the emphasis on individual enterprise and the work ethic in British Methodism, though lauded by the missionaries as a worthy aim for their converts, was
very difficult to achieve in the local cultures. Instead the Tongans and Fijians adapted their natural generosity to the Christian context. Feasting and related festivities became the hallmark of communal church gatherings, such as quarterly meetings and annual conferences. The extent of a community's generosity rather than personal achievement and advancement was seen as a sign of God's pleasure and goodwill.

The Legacy of William Cross: Forgotten Yet Foundational

Cross remained as faithful as he was able to the Wesleyan principles which had transformed his own life. Although the key Christian concepts were introduced carefully at each mission station, inevitably they were changed and adapted by the local culture to suit its particular social focus and community desire. As for Cross himself, his influence has been overshadowed down the years by other worthy Fiji missionaries: David Cargill for his linguistic work, John Hunt for his translations and Thomas Williams for his ethnographic achievements. However, all of these men and other great names like Richard Lyth and James Calvert would readily acknowledge Cross's reputation as the most determined and loyal of early missionaries, a founder of exceptional integrity and energy.

Bibliography


Manuscript Material, Mitchell Library

Methodist Overseas Material [MOM] This includes Cross's only extant diary (1837 - 42) and the personal papers of John and Sarah Thomas.
William Cross: Biographical Chronology

DATE (where known) EVENT

1797 22 July Cross born in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Brought up in Church of England


1820 William joins Methodist Class Meeting; "heart-warming" experience in July

1825 William offers himself to Wesleyan Missionary Society

1827 27 Mar. Appointed to New Zealand

10 Apr. Departs England

3 Aug. Arrives Port Jackson (Sydney); welcomed by Samuel Leigh. Nathaniel Turner in Sydney after NZ events; Cross appointed to Tonga under Turner's superintendence

8 Oct. Industry sails for Tonga via NZ

2 Nov William and Elizabeth reach Tonga; settle at Nuku'alofa with Turner under the protection of Aleamotu'a Tupou.

1828 August Cross reports that the people of Nuku'alofa had mainly "left off their former practices".

October 8 canoes from Vava'u and Ha'apai visit Nuku'alofa. Taufa'ahau and Finau anxious "for persons to teach them the knowledge of the true God".

1829 4 Jan. 7 Tonga men baptized at Nuku'alofa (incl. Pita Vi)

29 Mar 5 Tonga Women baptized (incl. Tupou's wife-Mary)

May 3 Couples marry in Christian ceremony

7 June First Communion Service

October Pita Vi sent to Ha'apai

December 72 full members in Nuku'alofa Church; 478 school students

1830 Early in yr. John and Sarah Thomas transfer from Hihifo to Ha'apai. Baptism of Aleamotu'a along with 3 sons and 2 daughters

June-July Visit from John Williams and Charles Barff(LMS). Comity agreement re Fiji and Samoa. William and Eliz. spend a month in Ha'apai. They meet with Finau from Vava'u.

1831 27 April Nat. Turner leaves (ill-health). William Woon and James Watkin join Cross.

End of yr. Cross appointed to Vava'u. Elizabeth Cross writes to her parents in what will be her last letter: "The prevailing desire of many Tongans is that they may please God on earth and find their way to heaven. They frequently began to pray before daylight in the morning and often sing themselves to sleep at night."

Weaving the Unfinished Mats

Mitchell Library Manuscript Collections [ML] this includes the diaries and correspondence of Richard Lyth, Thomas Williams and other early missionaries in Tonga and Fiji.

Microfilm Copying Project, in collaboration with British Libraries. [FM] This material comprises Minutes of District Annual Meetings, Reports of the various Districts, Personal Papers of missionaries such as John Hunt and James Calvert; and the correspondence from all missionaries to the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.
1832 8 Jan. Elizabeth Cross drowned in storm/canoe wreck while en route from Tongatapu to Vava'u.

20 Feb. Cross lands at Vava'u. First sermon Ezekiel 33:11. "Joy beamed in many of their countenances while I endeavoured to unfold the great love of God to a sinful world."

10 May Cross + Finau sail to Nuiatoputapu; first sermon Luke 5:31-2

5 August Finau and 8 of his children baptized

17 Sept. Chapel opened at Vava'u. 3000 attended morning service

December Cross awaits a boat in Tongatapu to take him to NSW and find a bride; Thomas doubts Cross's ability to continue as a missionary.


26 May Cross reaches Port Jackson. Links up with Parramatta Anglican and Wesleyan communities

30 July Marriage of William Cross to Augusta Margaret Smith (aged 25), at St John's Anglican Church [Marsden the celebrant]

7 Dec. William and Augusta return to Tonga in company with David and Margaret Cargill (recently arrived from Great Britain)

1834 24 Jan. Arrival at Tongatapu; Cross posted to Nuku'alofa with Thomas

19 April Birth of first child (son); Augusta subsequently has two further sons and two daughters

July Religious tension on Tongatapu; "Revival" on Vava'u and Ha'apai

End of Yr. William appointed to Ha'apai

1835 January Special District Meeting to discuss Fiji and Samoa. William volunteers to go to Fiji and Cargill also nominated (in his absence!). Peter Turner volunteers alone for Samoa

Feb. - Oct. While waiting for transport at Vava'u, Cross (the Superintendent of Fiji Circuit) and Cargill study the language and prepare a primer and catechism in Fijian. Introduction of “c” for the sound of “th” in Fijian orthography. Note that this was a decision independently taken by printer Hobbs on Tongatapu. Cargill tried to have the decision changed.

8 October Cross and Cargill depart Fiji in the Blackbird.

12 October (Monday) Cross and Cargill land at Lakeba. Their spokesperson is Josua Matenaniu (Vulaga). Influential Tongan converts carry letters of introduction from Taufa'ahau. Tui Nayau offers protection.

18 October First service at Lakeba; Cross preaches from Genesis: 1

October Tongans from the Lau Group and beyond come to pay their respects to missionaries. Mateinaniu leaves Lakeba with Naufahu for a journey to the western islands.

2 Nov. 4 people meet in first class. Men and women in separate classes and almost exclusively Tongan. Schools for males and females begin.

22 Dec. First chapel opened. Cross gives the builders 100 books as a present.

1836 3 Jan. Six Tongan couples married in Christian ceremony

February Cross visits Tahitian missionaries on Oneata

20 March 31 adults (19 men and 12 women) baptized. "We sincerely hope that a few at least have believed with a heart unto righteousness." Catechism chanting and hymn singing introduced at services.

Mid-year 138 adults and 53 children baptized. One Fijian said to Cross: "Whether the religion is true or not, we know it is good because its effects are good."
June  
Cross tells Tui Nayau he is going to leave Lakeba and reside with chiefs of some other island.

20 July  
Mateinaniu returns from his western missionary journey, reporting that the chiefs of Rewa and Bau want missionaries.

December  
Lakeba Society and School Report: "We are not aware of any reason to despair of final triumph over the powers of darkness. Although the people are entrenched within one of the most gloomy and formidable looking strongholds that Satan ever reared, - and although many of the people have drunk deeply into the spirit and are assimilated to the nature of Satan himself, yet blessed be God, the weapons of warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds."

1837 January  
Tui Cakau and his 2 sons visit Lakeba; request missionaries for Somosomo. Cross begins Sunday Schools at Lakeba.

February  
Cross estimates 150 Fijians professing Christianity (attending public worship)

August  
90 students at 4 Fijian schools; 163 Wesleyan members (majority Tongans); Cross studies Rewa dialect, preparing for his expected shift.

30 Dec.  
Cross and family depart for Vitilevu on Jess, captained by Peter Dillon (125 pounds contract)

1838  
3 Jan  
*Jess* weighs anchor off the S.E. Vitilevu Coast [nr.Kiuva]

4 Jan.  
Roko Tui Dreketi [Kania] and Seru Cakobau (deputizing for his father Tanoa) come on board the Jess to meet with Cross. William decides to accompany Cakobau to Bau.

5 Jan  
Cross inspects Bau and decides not to settle there

6 Jan  
Cross visits Kania and the high chief of Rewa offers protection to the Wesleyan Mission

7-8 Jan.  
Stores transferred from Jess to Rewa

14 Jan.  
Cross preaches in the Lakeba dialect but few understand him

21 Jan.  
Cross preaches in the Rewa dialect

Feb. - Mar.  
Cross dangerously ill: cholera, typhus fever. Assisted in his recovery by David Whippy, trader based at the settlement of Levuka on the island of Ovalau.

April  
Cross recovers; begins intensive period of translation: the book of Psalms; preaches from Psalms.

12 Aug  
Text for Sunday's preaching - John 3:16. Title of Sermon: "Love of God in the gift of his Son". Congregation 200+

Sept/Oct.  
Period of opposition to Christianity. Discussions among the great chiefs.

10 Oct.  
Kania attends his first church service; "Christianity has taken hold of the land" [Kania]. Wesleyan class numbers increasing. Kania allows his eldest daughter to attend school. Kania then asks for books. He is anxious to read so that he can know the meaning of the Christian religion, "its good and its evil".

Early Dec.  
Two Fijians from the island of Viwa visit Cross. Namosimalua (chief of Viwa) wishes to accept Christianity.

12 Dec.  
Teacher sent to Viwa. Class established immediately. Tanoa (High Chief of Bau) says to Namosimalua, "It is no longer lawful for you to do evil; if you do evil you will be ruined".
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

1839
7 Jan.  John and Hannah Hunt arrive at Rewa; news that Cargill has been appointed first Chairman of the newly constituted Fiji District. Cross still anxious to move to Bau as soon as opportunity arises.

31 Jan. First Baptism at Rewa - a woman failing in health. Cross notes that she was not as deeply convinced of sin as he would have liked, "nor her views of repentance so clear". Cross's pattern of work at Rewa: Preaching; translation of scripture (esp. lesson readings); school duties; dispensing medicine; reading religious literature; maintaining property and garden. By mid-1839, more than 100 professing Christians at Rewa.

21 April First chapel opened at Viwa; Cross spends two days there; 48 professing Christians on Viwa. May David Cargill and James Calvert visit Rewa. Special District Meeting: Printing Press to be shifted from Lakeba to Rewa; Hunt appointed to Somosomo; Cargill appointed to Rewa; Cross remains appointed for Bau

20 May 4th child born to Augusta. June Cross and Hunt have intense debates with traditional priests

July/Aug. The Bau chiefs close the door to Cross. "Perhaps there is not another place in Feejee so difficult as what Bau is likely to be."

22 July Hunt and Lyth depart for Somosomo.

28 Aug. Cross and family remove to Viwa. At Rewa, 33 Wesleyan members and a regular Sunday attendance of 60.

1 Sept. "Preached at Vewa [sic] on the love of God in the gift of his son and the necessity of repentance and faith in order to [gain] our salvation."

18 Oct. First assault on Verata by Bau warriors; Namosimalua refuses to engage in this campaign. Varani [nephew to N.] leads a contingent of Viwa warriors in support of Bau. Cakobau, as Vunivalu, is the executor of Bau's war policy.

22 Nov. First visit of Cakobau to Cross at Viwa. Cross absent but meets him some days later. Lengthy conversations. During these months, frequent contact between the Bau chiefs (incl. Bau chiefly women) and the Christian community on Viwa.

24 Dec. Tanoa and Cakobau demand that Tui Veikoso (Tanoa's brother and resident on Viwa - a professing Christian) return from Viwa to live on Bau. A teacher is sent with Veikoso but commanded to leave Bau a few days later.

1840
18 March Shifts home to healthier site on Viwa

April 8 Tongan canoes arrive at Bau, most of the warriors are nominally Christian. Cross holds services in Tonga on Bau. The warriors stay for most of the year, make considerable demands on the local food supply and frustrate Cross by their involvement in Cakobau's wars.

19 May Requests from "Nande" and Bua for teachers

2 June Death of Margaret Cargill after she gives birth; Cross goes to Rewa and conducts the funeral service the next day. June Cargill and Hunt visit Viwa; unhappy time between Cross and Cargill as they discuss differences over mission policy

August Cargill and four daughters leave Fiji with John Waterhouse, General Superintendent of South Seas Missions. Cross opens missionary dialogue with Verata; Cakobau tries to prevent any communication between Viwa and Verata. Cakobau has been trying to subdue Verata since the Bau civil rebellion was resolved in 1837.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

Sept. Namosimalua goes on "war" expedition to Macuata, against Cross's advice. The Viwa chief lends succour to the enemy.

Dec. The year ends with Cross in good spirits.

1841 January Cross begins translation of the Psalms into the Bau dialect; He also makes "700 pils" for the sick from his store of medicine. Bau, Rewa, Somosomo and Verata all caught up in conflict, the principal instigators being the Cakaudrove and Bau chiefs

May The treachery of Cakobau and Varani; Namena warriors massacred on Viwa

16 June Second visit from John Waterhouse

September End of hostilities between the major chiefdoms; 2nd daughter (Lucy-Annie) born.

November Cross begins translation of book of Acts into Bau dialect

End of Nov. Cross has lengthy conversation with Cakobau; there is little of friendship between them because of Cakobau's opposition to Christianity and his failure to enter into meaningful trade that is of assistance to the missionary family. It will require a new missionary, if Cakobau is to be convinced of the value of Christianity.

December Cross translating and attending to the mission school. His health is of constant concern and he wonders if he can survive another year in the tropics.

1842 28 Feb. Cross completes the translation of Psalms into the Bau dialect.

10 April 3 people profess Christianity at Lovoni on Ovalau

17 April Namosimalua engaging in further war campaign; his overall conduct in Christian eyes appears to be deteriorating.

14 Aug Cross's parting sermon on Viwa. "May the Lord be gracious to the inhabitants [of Viwa] and make them all his people."

August District Meeting; Cross the provisional Chairman. Decided that Cross should shift to Somosomo to be with the medically-qualified Lyth. Hunt would move to Viwa.

10 Sept. The Cross family leave for Somosomo.


1843 Augusta Cross and her five children (3 sons and two daughters) return to Sydney. Also on the mission vessel is the second wife of David Cargill; Cargill returned to Tonga and died there. In Sydney, Augusta helps the young David Hazlewood with lessons in the Fijian language before he leaves for Fiji. Augusta passes away in Sydney in 1847. There are many descendants of William Cross. For example, Lucy Annie Cross marries a Wesleyan minister - John Clifton - and they have 8 children.
SAMOA

The Coming of the Methodist Church to Samoa

Vaiao Alailima-Eteuati

Methodism came to Samoa via Tonga late in the 1820s. The first missionaries were Tongans and Samoans who were converted to Christianity in Tonga. Thus the new religion was named "Lotu Toga".

It is believed that in 1827, the first group of Samoan-Tongan Wesleyan converts made landfall in the village of Vaega, of the district Satupa'itea in Savai'i. Another group of converts arrived at Tafua, a sub-village of Salelologa, also in Savai'i, in 1828. Saiva'aia Fa'asisina of Tafua was the prominent figure of this second group. He did not establish the lotu in his village at the outset, but joined Satupa'itea. By this time, the Lotu Toga was gaining the support of Sa Asiata and Sa Moeleoi, the ruling chiefs of Satupa'itea. According to the Alataua orators (the keepers of Satupa'itea's tradition), there was a mass acceptance of/conversion to the lotu. Saiva'aia has been recorded as the first Samoan to have brought the Wesleyan lotu to Samoa.

The names of the 1827 leaders have been the cause of some controversies, not only among historians but also the Satupa'itea traditionalists, because of conflicting oral records. This is understandable, as different ali'i (chiefs) lay claim to descent from the first Lotu Toga missionaries. This controversy aside, the two names that have particularly been mentioned are Maifea and 'Afa. Some have claimed that they came originally from Neiafu, via Vava'u.

Satupa'itea was the first worship centre of the Lotu Toga in Samoa. Accompanying Saiva'aia and his fellow converts, was another alia (a large double-decked canoe) of Samoan-Tongan Wesleyans who landed at Salani, in the Falealili district in Upolu. Salani has been called "o le nu'u o Toga", the village of Tongans. The lotu was set up under the auspices of senior orator Tofua'iaaeofioa, but very tentatively.

About a year prior to the visit of the first L.M.S. palagi missionary, Rev. John Williams and his entourage in 1830, another alia of Samoan-Tongan converts tried to make a landing at Saleiataua, Manono, but were turned away and again headed to Satupa'itea, which they found to be a safe lotu haven.

From these humble lotu centres at Satupa'itea, Tafua and Salelologa in Savai'i and Salani in Upolu, the Lotu Toga grew geographically and the number of adherents increased, together with critics and scoffers.

It is an undeniable fact, that the first Samoan-Tongan missionaries had limited understanding of the Bible and liturgy, but that did not hold them back from spreading the Lotu, and some added their own embellishments.
Motivation of the first missionaries

Using the spectacles of that era, we may identify a number of interacting factors that existed at the time, which motivated the first Samoan-Tongan missionaries:

Firstly they were motivated by the novelty and excitement of the new religion and the need to share the new experience. Secondly they sought a new means to consolidate the traditional/historical relationship of the two island groups. Thirdly the missionaries identified a medium to acquire the new material wealth as portrayed by the papalagi missionaries in Tonga, to their families/relations in Samoa. Fourthly they desired to identify with the papalagi and to reach out beyond the Vasa Laolao/Moana Sausau, the horizon of the Great Ocean. Fifthly some of these islander missionaries wanted to manipulate the new religion for a competitive edge and higher status of the individual converts and their aiga, and to learn how to sustain power; and sixthly many had the motivation to promote and compare the religious expectations of the Samoans from their traditional gods/deities. Finally the missionaries desired to activate an inherent or insidious vision/dream through the new lotu, the emergence of a new political alliance either with a Tongan or Tonumaipe'a-Lilomaiaiva predominance.

Methodism brought to Samoa many things. These included a sense of identity with the new religion from abroad; it was Lotu Toga, but it was a palagi package. At the same time they emphasized the strength of bond and unity among the extended family members and the yearning for the opportunity to learn to read and write. The belief in One True God usurped and displaced the belief in many gods of traditional society; the gradual but constructive impact of peace and participation in the peace-making processes replaced the use of violence and wars. The new religion also affirmed the entrenched belief and practice of fa'a-Samoa such as hospitality and respect for visitors (missionaries). They modified many aspects of the Samoan system of communalism. At the same time the new religion led to inter-familial and inter-village feuds and conflicts over allegiance to different denominations. Thus war broke out between Satupa'itea and Palauli in the late 1900s; both are Sa Lilomaiaiva districts and Palauli switched to the L.M.S. after the departure of the two Lotu Toga papalagi missionaries in 1839. Rev. Henry Taliai, a Tongan missionary, wrote our hymn number 18, penning his moving experience of the saving power of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the most popular hymns among all Samoans, regardless of religious affiliation. So the early missionaries were ordinary people, and in particular, Rev. Peter Turner was an outstanding model, an honourable and committed Wesleyan.

The Impact of Methodism

Methodism had a powerful influence in Samoa. The converts regarded themselves as the family of God through Class meetings and worship services. These worship services and meetings enhanced the development of the spirit of unity in the villages. Yet some if not most of the Lotu regulations were not popular, because they were contrary to established principles and practices of Samoan communalism.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

Limatagoese - helping oneself with any property that was available; although frowned upon, became an accepted act on the part of the untitled men and women. It is called: matapoto, being resourceful. It is part and parcel of sharing and distribution of wealth.

Some aspects of the culture were not allowed for the Lotu members. Some banned activities included Po Ula, the all night free-for-all naked dances; public de-flowering of brides; Avavaga, or elopement; Autunonofo having more than one wife; Taua or wars, and beheading and scalping war opponents.

Yet Lotu Toga allowed its members to have the Tatau or Pe'a! Wearing a traditional tattoo was the essence of adornment and beauty to Samoan eyes. It extended from the waist to the knees for men and from the knees to the upper thighs for women. Having a Tatau was popular.

The decision by Rev. Peter Turner and the Tongan teachers to allow the Tatau, revealed cultural finesse, and an open-minded interpretation of the Bible.

One may conclude that this was one of the attractions and influences to joining the Lotu Toga. It is well documented that Rev. John Williams and the L.M.S. missionaries (indigenous and papalagi), came down heavily on tattooing in the Society archipelago and the Cook Islands.

Interestingly enough, the Lotu Toga's regulations and form of worship, (standing when singing, kneeling on all fours when praying and vocal responses of the congregation to the prayers), pulled its members more tightly as a society/ fellowship and they were proud of their identity as tagata lotu toga.

How Methodism was accepted

From 1827 - 1840, Lotu Toga was widely accepted and firmly established in villages/districts in the south, southwest and northwest of Savai'i. These areas were traditional-political constituencies of Sa Tonumaipe'a-Sa Lilomaiava polity. Sa Tonumaipe'a was one of the ancient paramountcies of Savai'i. The tulafale, genealogical custodians, maintained that most if not all the Samoan royal lineages had a Tonumaipe'a progenitor or a linkage.

On the other hand, Sa Lilomaiaava was founded originally in Upolu, and of a lesser status. However, through marital alliances it gained high chiefly recognition and one of its branches became Savai'i-based.

Satupa'itea, which became the capital of the Lotu Toga, was and is one of the most important traditional-political centres of Sa Tonumaipa'a and Sa Lilomaiaava, through Sa Asiata and Sa Moeleoi. It was a natural development that the Tonumaipe'a-Lilomaiaava villages or districts became the most important strongholds of Lotu Toga from its beginning to the present.

Both Sa Tonumaipea and Sa Lilomaiaava had very strong connections with the ruling dynasties in Tonga.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

The arrival of Rev. John Williams in 1830 at Sapapali'i, Savai'i, the traditional residence of Tafa'ifia Malietoa Vainuupo Tavita, in a way, resuscitated the old rivalry for supremacy in Savai'i, between the ruling paramountcies. Moreover, it greatly affected the geographical demarcation of the lotu in Savai'i and later Upolu. When Tafa' ifa Malietoa declined the request by Lilomaiava of Palauli-Satupa'itea to give him a palagi missionary, Lilomaiava felt slighted. Consequently, he travelled to Tonga with a delegation mainly from Savai'i West, for the same purpose. This led to the appointment of the Rev. Peter Turner.

In Manono from 1830-1835 the L.M.S. was accepted only in the villages of Salua and Apai. There was no lotu at Saleiataua. Its chiefs refused the approaches by Malietoa but had continued to send war parties to A'ana, Upolu, to revenge the savage killing of their warrior-leader Leiataualesa Tonumaipe'a Tamafaiga. There was a consensus that Tamafaiga had defeated the whole of Western Samoa, and had inherited the titles of all the royal lineages as spoils of war. In addition, he was declared the first Tupu o Salafai - king of Salafai. (Salafai is an endearment name of Savai'i, acknowledging Lafai, its progenitor.)

The Tongans who were living in Samoa played a significant part. For their patriotic desire to identify with Lotu Toga, they became instrumental in setting up classes/congregations in a number of villages. Similarly, aiga/family ties were also an effective contributing factor, comparable to the umbrella clannish connections, to the spreading of Lotu Toga. However, both these positive forces were subject/dependent to the will of the village fono. There have been numerous cases where the individuals or aiga suffered the consequences of their choice of a new religion, if the fono had decided for the whole village to join a different one.

More often, aiga, villages and districts were divided because of their different choices of the palagi religions. In some cases, the choice of religion became a deliberate pretext to carry out an (old) hidden agenda like settling differences within an aiga; power struggle within a village/district or even revenge.

When in 1835 Rev. Peter Turner landed at Faleu, Manono, the Sa Leiataualesa ruling elite, led by the indomitable Leiataualesa Filimaloata Putetele was in no mood at all to compromise the pursuit and annihilation of all those A'ana people, who took part or conspired to kill his kinsman Tamafaiga. Talo, one of the leading warrior-orators, went out near the reef to investigate the visiting alia with the order to either kill the palagi missionary and his team if the circumstances warranted, or sent them away. However, Talo not only directed the alia closer to shore to the place called Sa-i-vai at Faleu, (opposite the present Methodist church), but also risked his life, in that he appeared to have ignored/refused to obey the directive, insisting that the missionary and his voyagers and their lotu be welcomed by the chiefs on to Faleu. The same historical malae in a previous generation was called: Ulua'ipou o Malo (the foundation/first post of the kingdom/polity), by Nafanua the war goddess. This event had very important religious-political symbolic implications for the Lotu Toga.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

To mark this historical meeting, and to demonstrate his goodwill, and that of the Lotu, Rev. Peter Turner presented Leiataualesa Filimaloata Putetele with a shilling coin. In return, the chiefs honoured the missionary with an exquisite Ie Sina (fine mat) - its name was: So 'ototo. So 'otino: Joined in blood and in flesh!

In memory of Turner's arrival at Faleu, Leiataualesa Filimaloata Putetele, changed his first name Putetele to Seleni (it is Samoan for shilling).

On the part of Talo, he entrusted half of his residential land at Faleu to the Lotu Toga. This has been the site of Faleu's church, since it was endowed. Because of the increasing number of converts in Savai'i, Turner made Satupa'itea his main base, with regular visits to Manono where he left three Tongan teachers, and other parts of Upolu. One could imagine the great joy that permeated right through the Lotu Toga, when Turner arrived. Against Rev. Turner and a few Tongan teachers, the L.M.S. had a dominating presence, with just less than ten papalagi missionaries and a sizable number of Tahitian/Rarotongan teachers.

In spite of the numerical handicap that Rev. Turner and Rev. Matthew Wilson might have had, by depending largely on Tongan teachers and Samoan converts, the Lotu Toga was growing in Upolu and Tutuila. From all accounts, the papalagi-Tongan missionaries, Tongan teachers and some Samoan converts who were ably literate, worked extremely hard to organize worship services, but more importantly, to train/educate the members/adherents in the Classes in different villages and homes, about God, the simple teachings of the Bible and the basic beliefs and liturgies of the Lotu.

When Turner left Samoa in May 1839, there were 3000 members, 80 chapels, 97 pastor schools, 487 teachers and 6354 students. We can conclude that the Wesleyan Lotu Toga (Methodism) had a certain appeal to the Samoans. Rev. Turner's departure after only four years, leaving the Samoan Wesleyan members to fend for themselves, with Tongan assistance, was a shattering blow. The long-term psychological impact/effects of this event determined the responses, attitude, policies, administration, and relational views of the Samoan Methodists.

From 1840 - 1856, the Samoan Methodists had developed a siege mentality out of necessity for survival. This period was the turning point for Samoan Methodism.

Many congregations/individual members pledged an allegiance, that they would not betray their faith and their Lotu Toga. The principal and staunchest supporters in Savai’i were: the strongholds in the Tonumaip'e-Lilomaiaava districts - Satupa'itea, Gataivai, Gaga'emalae, Salega, Alataua-I-Sisifo and Asau; Saleloga and Salelavalu in Falesaleleaga and Saleaula in the north, Saleiataua (Faleu) in Manono and Faleolo/Satupuala, Fasito'outa and Salani in Upolu.

In many areas particularly in Tutuila, Lotu Toga members/adherents were subjected to violent physical/verbal treatment and scoffs. Some falelotu - worship tale - were
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torched, and plantations destroyed. Others were banished from their villages. Those who could not persevere left the Lotu Toga. Many aiga/individuals did.

Impressed with the show of material wealth, better education and leadership that the papalagi missionaries appeared to have offered for the attainment of the new system of power, a number of villages and districts changed religious affiliation en masse.

The staunch Methodist remnants became distrustful of papalagi, and had developed a cocooned/inward-centred consciousness and defensive course of action. Particularly in the strongholds in Savai’i, in order to survive, the village/district Fono took over control of the lotu. From Salelologa in the east to Asau in the north-west (with only a few exceptions in between), the Fono had placed a tapu, an indigenous religious-political sanction on the people neither to join nor establish any other form of religion within the village and district boundaries.

In retaliation, Malietoa-LMS villages/districts both in Savai’i and Upolu, imposed similar tapu.

For the Lotu Toga to survive, it became indigenised, relying on the resilience and resourcefulness of its members. It became a village/district proud identity - o Ie nu'u lotu toga. For whatever little understanding of Christian teaching and discipline the people had gained under Rev. Turner's leadership, they felt it was very important to maintain. They re-adjusted their way of life to exhibit what they believed was a Lotu Toga identity. Whether it was only on the exterior to the Samoan Methodists, it was profound.

They were committed to attending worship services and Classes on Sunday Monday and Wednesday. Pastor "schools" were vigilantly maintained with very limited/little resources to teach both adults and children to read and write in Samoan.

The faife'au/a'oa'o (ministers/teachers) also had to re-adjust their system organization and teaching/preaching. Central to their revised approach was survival and identity of the Lotu Toga. Prayer meetings and choirs were some of the methods used for inner spiritual strength and identity awareness.

For outside help, Samoan Methodist remnants depended entirely on the generosity of the King of Tonga and the availability and commitment of Tongan ministers/teachers.

It is important to note that although the village/district Fono was deeply involved with the survival of the lotu, the essence of the lotu was left to the ministers/teachers. There were cases where confusion or sometime conflicts arose as a result of different views, but on the whole, in spite of the difficult climate a definite demarcation was maintained. However, Samoan traditional hierarchical system was woven into Methodism and has became an established part of the Lotu Toga ever since.

Attempts to denigrate and to scoff at the Lotu Toga were common. In the absence of papalagi missionaries, it was ridiculed as "o le lotu valea e le loa fenanui" (a stupid and ignorant lotu, they could not speak English)' This stigma lasted for close to 140
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years. This was never a shame. It was a period of humble pride and consolidation of the ethos of Samoan Methodism The only opportunities for overseas education were available at Tupou College Toloa in Fonga. Even after the re-establishment of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1857. Many Samoan and Samoan-Tongan a'oa'o were educated at Toloa That will never be forgotten! In 1857 Rev. Martin Dyson landed at Manono re-opening the Methodist Mission in Samoa. By then, Samoan Methodism was truly a nationalistic lotu. From 1920 - 1960 only seven Samoan Methodists were sponsored by the church to be sent to New Zealand, Australia and the States for education. Today, most Samoan Methodist faife'au and their wives are fluent English makers - if that is a sign of being educated! Most of the directorial and minor posts in Government ministries are occupied by a new breed of Samoan Methodists.

Lotu Toga became a Conference in 1964 and the cocooned/siege mentality as beginning to lift, but its Samoan inner perspectives and external features were well entrenched. Is it any wonder that when Samoan Methodists migrate to other parts of the world, they retain their Lotu Toga identity and contribute financially to the mother church, especially those from the original strongholds! Non-Samoan historians and scholars and other non-Pacific churches may find our style and interpretations of Methodism incompatible, but we firmly believe that Lotu Toga Ekalesia Metotisi Samoa is a gift from God to Samoa. It was born from the womb of the rocks and earth of Samoa.

With the dispersion of many Samoans to the four corners of the world, the Church believes that it is its pastoral and evangelical responsibility to provide them with the lotu that is part of their spiritual umbilical cord.

To counter the growth of para-religious groups and the Pentecostal movement in Samoa and overseas, this mission is spearheaded by the departments of Continuing Theological Education for Lay Leaders, Christian Education for Youth and Sunday Schools and the Women's Fellowship (Au Uso Fealofani). It is important to work in partnership with Methodist churches in other Pacific countries, in spite of our theological differences.
Samoan Mat

*Asofiafia Tauamiti Samoa Saleupolu*

Samoan migration to New Zealand began approximately in the late 1940s. In a short span of time, many Samoans came in large numbers to join their families and friends in New Zealand. Employment opportunities were the primary motivation. People came to work and to send back money to help their families and to fund their village church buildings or community developments. Yet others came for higher education and family reunification.

Like other Pacific Islanders, Samoan migrants to New Zealand had brought with them two of their most valuable inherent treasures - their culture and their religions. Many of them were Methodists.

The first Samoan migrants settled around Auckland, including the South and Ponsonby areas and in the Wellington suburbs. Soon the Samoan migrants began to attend the Methodist Church parishes like Otahuhu, Pitt Street and Wesley Wellington. In the late 1950s, Samoan migrants began to make an impact in the life of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

In June 1956, the first Samoan language Service was established at Wesley Wellington Parish; and a second one in October at Pitt Street Church in Auckland. To identify these groups in the life of the Church, they were called "Samoan fellowships". The fellowships attracted large numbers of both Methodist and non-Methodist Samoan migrants. Pitt Street Church, Otahuhu and Wellington Parishes became Samoans' meeting places not only for worship but for cultural activities and for catching up with friends and families during the weekends. Over the next few years, some of the fellowships, especially the one at Pitt Street, began to break into small groups and establish themselves into congregations under the P.I.C., others under the Congregational Church of Samoa, and still others under the Methodist Church of Samoa. By 1970 the number of Samoan Fellowships grew from three to ten, and not including Samoan families who decided to worship in English speaking services.

How did the Methodist Church of New Zealand weave into its life the Samoan migrants?

One can answer this question by pondering on what had happened at that time. For a start, the Samoan groups were given a foreign name, 'fellowship', for an identity in the life of the Methodist Church. The fellowships were initially allowed to hold their Samoan language Worship services once a month, and later on this was extended to two services a month.

There was restriction in the use of Church buildings, there was the unfamiliarity of the pledging (envelope) system, and there was lack of a formal structure for decision making and accountability. Above all there was a critical emerging need for leadership.
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and for pastoral care for the Samoan members. One could conclude that it was for some or all of these reasons that many of the original groups did not stay long with the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

In the late 1960s to early 1970s, the Methodist Church began to consider seriously questions like, 'How can Samoans in the life of the Church be best served?' This led to two important decisions by the Church. First came the establishment of the Samoan Policy Committee, which had its first meeting in Tokoroa in 17-18 June 1972. Its role was to advise Conference of ways to meet the needs of the growing Samoan membership. Secondly, a request was made through the then-President, Rev. Selwyn Dawson, to the Samoan Conference for a Samoan presbyter to work in New Zealand. In October 1973, Rev. Siauala Tevita Amituana'i arrived from Samoa and worked in the Development Division as a resource person, ministering to the Samoan Methodists in New Zealand - a pastor at large by definition. Meantime, the Samoan membership grew and more language services were established.

In spite of all the good intentions of the Methodist Church to accommodate the needs of its new members, there was a growing feeling amongst the Samoan leaders that they were being assimilated into the pakeha church. The Methodist Church was compelled to grapple with some hard questions of how to integrate Samoans into the life of the Church while keeping their own spiritual and cultural heritage. How could they be reconciled with English speaking members and Te Taha Maori? Some of these issues are still with us today.

In 1986, the Samoan Policy Committee became the Samoan Advisory Committee. This name change was in recognition of the fact that only Conference can make policies. As a spin-off from the Church's Bicultural Journey, the responsibility for the life of Samoan congregations shifted from the Development Division to the Samoan Advisory Committee. This included the utilization of funds designated for the Samoan Ministry.

In 1991, the Rev. Aso T. Samoa Saleupolu, the then Convener of the Samoan Advisory Committee, prepared a Paper, suggesting that the time was ripe for the Samoan membership to have control of its own church life, and to work out its own destiny within the total life of the Methodist Church. The paper featured three main areas of needs for the Samoans: the need to adjust to New Zealand life and to foster what it means to be Samoans living in New Zealand; the need to participate fully in the life, decision-making, and mission of the Methodist of New Zealand; and the need for space and an appropriate structure in the life of the Church for its long-term Samoan members. The paper became the focus of much discussion, debate and consultation amongst the Samoan congregations, the Samoan Advisory Committee and the Development Division. In 1994, the Samoan Advisory Committee finally agreed to a recommendation (approved by Conference that year) to establish the Samoan Synod (Sinoti Samoa) of Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa NZ.
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The inauguration of Sinoti Samoa and the establishment of the Mafutaga Aoao Tama'ita'i Samoa (National Samoan Women's Fellowship) on 27 January 1996, marked the beginning of a new phase in the corporate life of the Samoan members. Samoan leaders were now fully accountable and responsible to Conference for the development and direction of the Samoan Ministry. Through Sinoti Samoa, Samoan people were now able to fully participate in the life and the mission of the Church, and to continue to work through issues relating to their life and future in their adopted country.

Today, there are twenty Samoan parishes and congregations in the Methodist Church of New Zealand. There are also many Samoan families who have chosen to worship in English speaking Parishes. The major emphasis of the work of Sinoti Samoa is the resourcing, education and pastoral care for the Samoan Parishes and Congregations.

Sinoti Samoa is divided into Itumalo (regions): Wellington, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Gisborne, Manukau and Auckland. Each Itumalo has a Ta'ita'i (leader) appointed by the Sinoti Superintendent, and a Youth Worker appointed by the Itumalo. The Fono Itumalo (regional meeting) deals with matters relating to the life and mission of that Itumalo, as well as Connexional issues. Sinoti Samoa Executive is made up of two representatives from each Itumalo, two from the Mafutaga Aoao Tama'ita'i Samoa and two Youth representatives. The Executive Committee meets up to four times a year to collate and make final responses on Connexional issues, to receive reports and recommendations from Komiti A'oa'oga Kerisiano (KAK), (Christian Education and Resourcing Committee), Mafutaga a Ie Aufaigaluega (Presbyters & Spouses Fellowship) and other working committees; and to keep a general oversight over the ministry of Sinoti Samoa.

The KAK is made up of two lay persons and five presbyters. The multi-task function of this super-team includes the creation of educational and Bible Study materials for Sunday schools and youth study, organising Sunday school and youth annual examinations, producing Samoan language studies and exams, organising youth programmes and co-ordinating the youth work of Itumalo, and oversight of the publishing of the 'Leo o Ie Malamalama', a Samoan language quarterly newspaper. The Mafutaga a Ie Aufaigaluega that meets annually adjacent to the School of Theology, organises persons to prepare the lectionary and daily bible reading for each year, reviews lay preachers' studies, and provides inspiration for the Sinoti Samoa ministry.

The Mafutaga Aoao Tama'ita'i Samoa works on the same structure as the Sinoti. Each congregation has its own Mafutaga Tama'ita'i, (local fellowship). All the Mafutaga in a region work together under the leadership of the Peresitene Itumalo, (regional president), appointed by the Itumalo. The National Samoan Women's Fellowship has an executive that meets twice a year and all Mafutaga Tamaitai in the country come together in their annual convention in April led by the National Samoan Women's Fellowship Office.
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Weaving the Samoan thread into the already complicated mat of the Methodist Church of New Zealand has brought many challenges, learnings, and has not been without many obstacles.

For the Samoans, coming to New Zealand was a move from a more homogeneous and closed context to a wider and a more diverse one. Theological diversity, ecumenism, pluralism, and the implications of the Methodist Church's Bicultural Journey are amongst those issues barely experienced by many Samoan migrants before they arrived. The language barrier, styles of worship, and liturgies, are a few examples of the difficulties of incorporating Samoans into the English-speaking parish life.

However, for the Samoan thread to be woven into the Methodist Church's colourful mat, it was obvious from the start that it would require a shift in theological thinking, and a fostering of what it means to be Samoans living in New Zealand.

For the Methodist Church leaders, this weaving calls for patient, understanding and appreciation of the Samoan culture, its values and gifts contributing to the ministry and mission of the church. It also calls for courage and trust to share power and resources.

I am of a mind that had the Methodist Church of New Zealand in 1950 contemplated that their local parishes would soon be infiltrated by Samoan migrants, and had it prepared well to weave a Pacific Island thread (to use the theme of this Conference) into its ethos, I believe that by now the largest and fastest growing group in its life would be undoubtedly the Samoans.
Methodism and Me

Alisa Lasi

Methodism has always been very much a part of my life and gradually, the Samoan culture has also become part of my life. I look back and reflect on what Methodism is as I have encountered it on my various journeys. Even with a contrast between the two cultures, Samoan and European, we are still able to maintain a common heritage as Methodists.

Both my parents came from Savai’i, Samoa, but as a first generation New Zealander I was born in Gisborne and christened at Pitt St Methodist Church, Auckland. I was brought up in the Gisborne Wesley Methodist Palagi congregation until my parents started the Samoan Service in the early 1970s, my dad later becoming an ordained presbyter and my mother an ordained deacon.

While at University, I attended the Samoan Methodist Church, where I was made welcome and I felt comfortable. Some members there knew my Methodist mother. In 1983 I became a born-again Christian in a Samoan Brethren Church, which I attended with my Aunty and Uncle with whom I stayed.

I went back to Gisborne in 1986, and toured New Zealand with the Youth For Christ Y-One group in 1987. In 1992 I married a Samoan who attended the Wesley Samoan Fellowship in Gisborne. My husband and I were both Lay Preachers in the Samoan Fellowship and I preached in English.

In 2002 I moved to St Johns Trinity Theological College with our four children because of my husband's call to train as a presbyter under the Sinoti Samoa. In 2005 he was appointed as Presbyter to the Paeroa Cooperating Parish and there was another addition to the family.

This is who I am now, and what has shaped the person that I am today.

While I must admit that my Samoan language is not good, my knowledge of the culture and language or the Fa’a Samoa began in the church. I still recall when I was quite young, looking up the Samoan Bible and comparing it to the English Bible so that I could get the full meaning of the scripture that was being used. Apart from the regular church fixtures that we had with Tokoroa, my Dad's funeral was an introduction to the depth of the Samoan fa'alavelave. My marriage to a Samoan migrant further enhanced that knowledge, as did ministry training in Auckland.

The Methodism I know today is very much Samoan but in a New Zealand context. I am part of the New Zealand Conference and I feel comfortable where I am.

I would like to touch on some points that represent Methodism to me and then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Methodism I know. Because the majority of my life has been in the Samoan Methodist Church most of my experiences come from the
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Samoan context unless otherwise stated. Long prayers, hats, music, commitment, hard work, Prayer Week, Lotu Talosaga, family and lay ministry are part of the Methodism I have come to know.

I think my lay preaching experience amongst other things has made me very aware of the order of any worship service. In a Samoan service there is one long prayer which includes thanksgiving, forgiveness and prayer for others; this is broken up in the Palagi order of service. The wearing of hats to church, usually white, is also very characteristic of the Samoan Methodist way to me. In Samoa, wearing them to shield one from the sun seems understandable; also the early missionaries brought with them the Victorian era and the biblical perspective of covering the head when taking the Lord's Supper.

Music is also a very significant part of worship in any Methodist service - singing, with zest and from the heart, words that are significant to the occasion, the situation and the setting here in Aotearoa. The emphasis placed on the four parts in choir settings also emphasises the significance of song in worship. Our music acknowledges that our God is the one and only living God and is worthy to be praised.

To me the prayer week at the beginning of the New Year is the best way to start the year. At this time we come together with other members of the fellowship to acknowledge once again God's goodness and the need for His guidance at the beginning of the New Year. Some other Pacific Islands practice this. Is this Methodist or is it from somewhere else?

Commitment and hard work is, I feel, a general Methodist trait which is necessary for anything to continue. It is especially noticeable when new things start, for example when a Pacific Island language service starts up. It is hard work beginning something new and it is just as hard keeping it going.

While we are on the topic of commitment and hard work, I need to mention the Samoan Women's Fellowship, Mafutaga o Tama'ita'i. I can truly say that women are still the backbone of the Methodist tradition in our Samoan setting. I am sure that the Palagi equivalent is just as efficient, forceful and dominant. I see in the Mafutaga Tama'ita'i, and in the work they do locally as well as nationally, a huge commitment to the church first, then to the community in which they reside and sometimes nationally and internationally. During the annual conferences of the Mafutaga Tamat'ita'i there is much business and discussion but things are always completed or resolved. In their own language, the women discuss business, worship, pray, and laugh and cry together, yet are very open to non-Samoan speakers like myself. If there is a Methodist Church there is likely to be a Women's Fellowship.

Today there are many Samoan female Lay Preachers; this is a very positive move and it is encouraging that in the Sinoti Samoa there are also young female preachers. At present we have one female ordained minister Rev. Suiva'aia Te'o and this is definitely an accomplishment for Sinoti Samoa and especially for Samoan women. Samoa to
date is one of only three Pacific Islands that do not ordain women of any
denomination in the church.

Young Samoan women are taking on roles of responsibility within the church. The
Tau Iwi Youth Coordinator for the past five years has been a lovely New Zealand-
born Samoan woman, Fuialelagi Samoa Saleupolu. Both Sui and Fuialelagi's
appointments represent a change from the Methodism practised in Samoa. To me it is
part of adapting to the Church in Aotearoa. Times are changing and the Methodist
Church moves with the times. Both these appointments and that of Rev. Aso Samoa
Saleupolu as President in 2000 signal an accommodating and receiving by the host
church. In 1983 the Rev.Vaiao Alailima-Eteuati stated that the most difficult barrier
that Pacific Islanders have encountered in migrating to New Zealand is the mono-
cultural attitude of the host society 20 years down the track. How has the Methodist
Connexion responded to this? I am sure that there will be more female Samoan
presbyters in the Methodist Church in the future. It is a new concept and it will take
time for both the Samoan people in the church and fellow presbyters to adjust to the
change, but Sui has set the pace and others will definitely follow.

Family is another strong concept within the Methodist Church, both literally and
figuratively. I recall thoroughly enjoying the first Conference that I attended in 2000
as the Gisborne Wesley Parish representative. I told the Parish Council that I felt it
was like a long-lost family. Many Conference attendees knew of me through the
contact they had had with my parents in the Samoan Advisory or in the Diaconate.
There were also ministers that had come to Gisborne with their families. Then there
were the new people you met and felt that you had known them for a while. My
Samoan people were there, the Palagi Methodists, and there were more, the Tongans,
the Fijians, wow, what a family! All different people serving God, and claiming to be
Methodists. George C. Carter in his book *A Family Affair* says: "One of Methodism's
strengths in the South Pacific had been its deep fellowship and its strong sense of
belonging. ... there had been and still is, a vital sense of kinship."¹ This was written in
1973 but to me it is still very relevant today.

Lay Preachers and lay ministry is also very prevalent in the Samoan context; this can
act as a stepping-stone towards ministry or the diaconate, or it can be a way of
learning and interpreting the Bible and then preaching it through your work in the
community.

I would also like to talk about the Word of God and the way it is preached from the
pulpit. For me, when we look at the order of service, everything revolves around the
sermon. Songs, Holy Communion and prayers are also significant and they act as the

¹ George S. Carter, *A Family Affair: A Brief Survey of New Zealand Methodism s
Involvement in Mission Overseas 1822-1972*, Auckland: Wesley Historical Society of New
Zealand, 1973, p.5.
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icing on the sermon or on the cake, but without the Word of God both in the Old and New Testaments, Methodism is nothing.

I have spoken from my own New Zealand born Samoan perspective; today I would feel isolated if the Methodist church was just Palagi, Taha Maori, or Samoan. The Methodist church today is all of these and more; I need to be at ease with at least two of these if I want to be up to date with the way the church is moving. What do I mean by at ease? I mean to be able to love like our Lord loves. The Iron Rule being to love your neighbour, the Golden Rule to love God then the Jesus Rule overpowers the former and says to love your enemy.

The strengths then that I see within Methodism today could be summarised by acceptance of all with a warm heart.

Weaknesses of Methodism here in New Zealand I feel would come from the strength of acceptance. Despite the fact that Methodists are accepting and accommodating, this strength also serves as a weakness. In 1982 The New Zealand Methodist Conference agreed to biculturalism towards multiculturalism. The church is at a stage now where Pacific Island churches are growing and Palagi congregations are stagnating. The past four years at St Johns Trinity Theological College have seen a small number of individuals continuing after assessment and half or more of these students are Pacific Island. That means that the number of new presbyters entering the ministry are Pacific Island and this is in response to the growing population in Pacific Island churches.

The Pacific Island parts of the Methodist Church in Aotearoa are waiting to be completely accepted into the Connexion. We, as Samoans, are waiting; this is our church; we are at home here in Aotearoa. The church needs to become multicultural at the top where the decisions are being made. There needs to be more equity in the power sharing.

George Carter noted in *A Family Affair* that during the next half-century. New Zealanders, Maori and Pakeha would need to learn from each other and then to learn from the rest of the Pacific. He continued:

> those whom we have sought to serve will become our teachers, and we will learn from them ... because they are Polynesian or Melanesian. Out of this learning together, surely we can build a new relationship, a new dimension in our understanding of Christ and His Salvation, and emphasise once again that the people called Methodist are part of the one family and that witness and service is very much a Family Affair.²

Another weakness I have found in the Samoan Churches is the use of the Samoan Language. To me the main purpose of attending church is to have fellowship with other believers and to worship together. The New Zealand-born are sometimes forced to listen to the Word in the Samoan language which they do not understand. Gone are

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the days when most Samoan Ministers had limited English. Training at Trinity Theological College ensures that ministers are fluent in at least two languages. Acceptance of one’s first language whether it be Samoan or English needs to be taken into account so that the individual themselves will feel accepted.

Jemaima Tiatia in her *Caught Between Two Cultures*, gives examples of New Zealand-born youth seen as irrelevant and feeling like outcasts due to lack of understanding in their Island churches. I can understand how this happened especially when ministers spoke little English. When the Samoan language services were just starting up, the elders were keen to use Samoan rather than their children speaking English. Today if the Minister or members of the congregation have both languages, acceptance should be a priority. The Samoan language should never be lost, especially in cities like Auckland where there is a large enough community to nurture and pass on the language. The Word of God must go out preferably in an understandable language, for it not to return void.

Yes, Methodism is and will continue to be a significant part of my life despite the weaknesses of the church and the trials that we will all go through. My God knows that I am pleased to be where I am placed today, knowing that God will use me if I am willing to bring the gospel with my husband to others who may or may not be Methodists. I also wish to acknowledge the hard work of all those who have gone before me and who have brought Methodism to where it is today, some of you are here; the majority have gone, but are not forgotten.

**Bibliography**


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The Rug

Methodism discovered the natives of Tonga had their own form of religion - (mat), and were worshipping more than one god. Attention to religious ceremonies formed an important feature in their character, and they considered that any neglect in this respect would amount to a crime, which the Gods would punish with the most severe temporal inflictions. The punishment to which they considered themselves liable for disrespect to the gods and neglect of religious rites, were chiefly conspiracies, wars as public calamities, and sickness and premature death as punishment for the offences of individuals. These evils, whenever they happened, were supposed to proceed immediately from the gods, as visitations for their crime. There were no public religious rights at all, and scarcely any in private, at which the ceremony of drinking kava did not form a usual and often most important part.

Some of the religious ceremonies, taking them nearly in the order in which, they are considered of most importance, or most sacred by the people were as follows.
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**'Inasi** - A once-a-year ceremony in which a portion of the fruits of the earth, and other eatable, is offered to the gods in the person of the divine Chief Tu'i Tonga, their representative in Tonga.

The object of the offering is to ensure the protection of the gods, that their favour may be extended to the welfare of the nation generally, and in particular to the productions of the earth of which the yams are the most important. This religious ceremony demonstrated Tongan qualities which have survived the years, these include passion, commitment, love, sacrifices, and adoration for God. These are qualities that we today can put into good use.

**Kava Faka'eiki** - This consists of a Kava party, where an inspired priest sits at the head of the Kava ceremony instead of the presiding Chief.

**No'o Kia** - This is the ceremony of strangling children, as sacrifices to the gods, for the recovery of a superior sick relation.

**Tutu'u Nima** - Cutting off a portion of the little finger, as a sacrifice to the gods, for the recovery of a superior sick relation.

**Putu** - These are funeral ceremonies.

**Lotu** - Prayers were offered up in the fields to all the gods, but special prayers to a particular god, for example, to the god ’ALO ALO, petitioning for a good harvest.

**Origin of the Second Mat**

In brief, for the purpose of this presentation, this is the first ("Original") Tongan mat. "Weaving the unfinished mats", the theme for this conference, is not only most appropriate, but in my humble opinion, it can be used for many more future Conferences wherever the new Tongan mat is to be presented for discussion. At the same time, I struggle with the use of the word mat in the context of this conference to denote the siasi uesiliaina tau'ataina 'o Tonga, or Methodism. Firstly, the rug (Methodism) which we have been using for almost two centuries in Tonga, does not in any way look like a mat at all, not even half of an over-used mat. The English rug - Methodism - still has that elegant, over-powering look, perhaps with a few strips of Tongan pandanus stuck haphazardly into its fabric. This is remarkable because it is generally assumed that the original Tongan mat, the pre-Methodist religion of the Tongans with all their religious practices over the centuries, has been destroyed, thrown away, and replaced with the English rug. But the question remains - Has it been a thorough job? Are there any remnants that are continuing to affect the way we use the English rug to this very day?"

Anyway, the so-called Tongan mat, the second one, that is, - Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga - originated in England and was introduced into Tonga via Australia, in the form of an English rug (Methodism), over a period of almost thirty years (1897-1926). One may say that the native Tongans first set sight on this rug in 1897 with the arrival of the 10 missionaries from the London Missionary Society on
the Duff. It is reported that one of the Kings at the time thought that the missionaries were living in Tonga because they preferred the Tongan weather to that in their home country. What was left of this original rug was removed from Tonga three years later. It was not until 22 years later that the rug was re-introduced to Tonga in 1882 by Walter and Mary Lawry. John Thomas and John Hutchinson followed in 1826, and as history tells us, this time the rug was in Tonga to stay.

Political Situation and the Acceptance of the Rug

At the beginning of the 19th century records show that there was extensive internal turmoil among chiefly factions in Tonga. Although there was apparently no open rebellion against the office of the Tu'i Tonga, the complete transference of authority and political responsibility to important chiefs and demonstrated leadership within their own kin groups marked a rapid decline in the Tu'i Tonga's effective political influence.

Among regional chiefs, this decline was accompanied by a gradual disillusionment with the efficiency of sacred power, as embodied by the Tu'i Tonga kinship, in the conduct of Tongan politics. Under the ideology of serving the sacred Tu'i Tonga, these chiefs intrigued among themselves, either to secure the main office of secular authority, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, or to assert and establish authority separate from it. Into this unstable situation came the missionaries with their Rug. Beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing through the eighteenth, Tongans were visited briefly by succession of explorers, most notably Captain James Cook.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a small band of artisan missionary of the London Missionary Society attempted to establish themselves in Tonga. Their efforts ended in disaster when they were caught between two warring factions among whom they were working. In 1826 a much better organized and funded missionary endeavour was established in Tonga by the Australian Wesleyans. The Wesleyans shrewdly backed the incumbents of the Tu'i Kanokupolu kinship, in their efforts to establish effective hegemony over competing chiefly functions. The Tu'i Kanokupolu in turn aided the spread of Christianity/the rug and the establishment of local church organizations.

Conversions were from the top down. Indigenous missionaries became the agents of the European missionaries stationed at various places throughout the islands. The spread of Christianity/Methodism was consequently contingent upon the missionary's alliance with the politically most powerful chiefs. Taufa'ahau, an early convert (1831) to Christianity had by 1845 become the Tu'i Kanokupolu after a long-standing symbiotic relationship with the well established Wesleyan organization. In 1875 Taufa'ahau, now King George Tupou I, proclaimed a constitution which inaugurated a parliamentary monarchy, climaxing a half-century of power consolidation with the traditional polity and of partnership with the Wesleyan Mission.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats
Tupou I, acting dramatically in 1875, made an open declaration of a new era for Tonga in the face of both internal and external challenges to his rule from Western influence. Tupou's dramatic reform of the old order demonstrated to European powers Tonga's level of "civilization". Moreover, Tupou I had become wary of the control of overseas Wesleyans in the internal affairs of Tonga.

In retrospect the Tongan institutional transformation to a society organized by Church and state appears to have been rapid and the results of Tupou 1 's work alone; in fact there was at least a half-century of intensive contacts with foreign institutions before Tupou's watershed proclamation of a new regime in 1875. During that time, a well-organized church establishment, protected and supported by the most powerful indigenous political interests, had reached great numbers of Tongans throughout the islands. The chiefs who supported Tupou's rise did not rebel against him when he instituted new political arrangement that would eventually strip them of their power. The acceptance of these changes was perhaps for a number of reasons.

- Firstly, the change took a long time to work into the fabric of Tongan life and the chiefs held a good deal of traditional de facto power into the 20th century.
- Secondly, Tupou in fact held the internal balance of power and armed forces when the new government began, and could have successfully crushed opposition to his rule.
- Thirdly, he was backed at least nominally by a number of European powers with which he had made treaties and which looked upon him as the legitimate ruler of Tonga.
- Fourthly, the society was blanketed by a Wesleyan church organization which was replacing the chiefly hierarchy as the most important mobilizing and organizing force among population.

The Wesleyan organization was allied with, and to some extent dependant upon, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, Tu'i I. Except for some stubborn but subdued pockets of resistance, the chiefs in all areas found the allegiance of their kin and followers shifting firmly towards church activities and doctrines.

In addition to this very brief description of how the rug, Methodism was accepted by the Tongans, weaving the third mat for the Tongans in New Zealand would require the use of three different types of material: the Tongan mat (first mat); the English rug (second mat); and the New Zealand sheepskin (Methodist Church of New Zealand, Vahefonua Tonga, Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga and God). To me, the product of this weaving exercise would be the "unfinished" Tongan mats referred to in the programme for our conference.

Conclusion
Having said what I had to say, I would like to conclude by putting forward to you and the panel some often-asked questions.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats
How far has Methodism become indigenous? What was the impact of Methodism on the former religious beliefs and practice (Tongan mat) and vice versa? Why is "splitting" confined to Methodism in beautiful island kingdom of Tonga? Is there really a modern day Tongan "mat" or is it just the original English rug clothed in tapa with a few strips of Tongan pandanus stuck into its fabric for reasons which we are not clear? Because aside from the use of the Tongan language and the inclusion of the Kava ceremony in church functions, what else is there to justify calling the Rug (Methodism) a Tongan "Mat"? Perhaps this is one of the causes of the confusion among the Tongan Wesleyans, both in Tonga and in Aotearoa.
Weaving Together in Tonga: 
A Story of Co-Operation

Elizabeth Wood-Ellem

The story of early Wesleyan missionary endeavour in Tonga is one of repeated failure (1797-99 and 1822-23) and sudden success. Papālangi (people of European descent) had visited the Tongan group of islands since the seventeenth century, and some had settled in Tonga during the more than 40 years before the third mission to the islands successfully established itself. The first baptisms were in 1829, and the conversion and baptism of a powerful chief in 1831, Taufa'ahau (later ruler of the kingdom of Tonga as Tupou I) meant hundred of conversions followed, with a remarkable "revival" experience sweeping through Tonga in 1834. In 1835 Tonga sent out its first of many missionaries, initially to Samoa and Fiji and then to other islands in the south-west Pacific. The first Tongan to be ordained was the Rev. Penisimani Lātūselu, in 1847.

Missions meant schools, the first being set up in 1828. Soon adults and children alike were learning to read and write, very often taught by wives of missionaries. Tongans were very keen to learn. Tāufa'ahau preached on the text, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). The Wesleyan Mission in Tonga had its own printing press from 1831. Adults and children queued up for the books that came off the mission press. Soon books became precious possessions, especially as the Bible was gradually translated for the Tongans. Wesleyan hymns were translated into Tongan and were memorised by the people. Soon teachers, catechists, and class-leaders were appointed from among these students. Training schools were set up in Vava'u (where Tāufa'ahau was the ruler) in 1841, and a little later another Training School in Tongatapu. After Tāufa'ahau became the "king" in 1845, he encouraged the building of churches and schools throughout the kingdom, and in 1862 declared that primary schooling would be compulsory.

Thus, from the very earliest of days one might say that the missionaries and their converts wove mats together. In weaving, half of the strands are up while the remainder are down; then the downward strands are pulled up while the others go down. Thus it was in Tonga, for although the missionaries brought Christianity to Tonga, they could not have made progress without the assistance of their converts (especially the chiefs) who helped them with translations, housing, food, travel, and encouragement for their people to convert.

1 Previous visitors had written vocabularies, which helped the missionaries. The missionaries established a phonetic system of spelling, little changed today.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

The Wesleyan rules were generally followed. With converts there was a probationary period between conversion and baptism. Also if a couple were living together, they should be married before baptism (this did not happen in the case of Tāufa'āhau who was baptised in 1831 and married Lupepau'u also baptised, in 1834). Furthermore, Tongan converts had their own ways of teaching the Gospel. While white missionaries thought kava-drinking was a waste of time, the Tongans continued to meet in kava circles to talk about their everyday concerns as well as explaining the Gospel to each other.

Under the influence of the missionaries Tāufa'āhau set out his first code of laws in 1839, known as the Vava'u Code. This code began with the words:

I George [Tāufa'āhau] make known this my mind to the chiefs of the different parts of Haafuluha [Vava'u], also to all my people. May you be happy. It is of the God of heaven and earth that I have been appointed to speak to you, he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth, he lifteth up one and putteth down another, he is righteous in all his works ...

There were some prohibitions in the Code: on murder, theft, adultery, fornication, abortion, and "the retailing of Ardent spirits". Among the exhortations: chiefs should love their people, everyone should have land for their own use and the land should be brought into cultivation and planted, and everyone should "live in great peace". The Sabbath day should be kept holy.

The responsibility for the Tongan Wesleyan Mission was transferred from Britain to Australia in 1855, but most of the missionaries who came from Australia in the nineteenth century were born in England. In the twentieth century most of the missionary families came from Australia, and the single women teachers either from New Zealand or Australia.

After Tāufa'āhau was appointed Tu'i Kanokupolu, the "king" of all Tonga in 1845, he proclaimed the Code of Laws of 1850, the Emancipation Edict of 1862 (which was intended to free commoners of forced labour for their chiefs, who no longer owned them), and the Constitution of 1875, which guaranteed a number of freedoms: or religion, of speech, of the press.

In 1866 the Training School in Tongatapu became a secondary school for boys and (a few years later) for girls. This school was named Tupou College, under the headship of Rev. James Egan Moulton. In 1941 the girls' school separated from Tupou College and became known as Queen Salote College. Education provided an alternative means of acquiring status other than through the traditional ranking systems and - in due course - of earning a living. Although Tongan ministers never achieved the authority of their Samoan counterparts, and were hampered a great deal by the Wesleyan practice of being moved from parish to parish at frequent intervals, they were influential.
The weaving together by the missionaries and teachers with their Tongan converts, who increasingly took great responsibility for preaching and teaching, was due in part to missionary commitment, but also to the fact that the white missionaries were isolated from each other, and their friends became the Tongans who worked with them.

Missionaries acted as protectors of their flocks from exploitation by whalers, for example; and the British Royal Navy relied on missionaries to be intermediaries between them and the local people. Some missionaries recorded the history and customs of Tonga (for example, John Thomas, James Egan Moulton, and E. E. V. Collocott), thus helping in their preservation. The laws introduced by Tāufa'āhau Tupou I were informed by his Christian beliefs. Certain virtues preached by the church were compatible with Tongan custom; for example, loyalty to one's own extended family, generosity, care for children, respect for parents and older persons.

Unfortunately, Tāufa'āhau Tupou I forgot his own conversion and his own laws when he decided to found an independent church of which he would be the head. Many troubles followed, which I do not have time to discuss, except to say that freedom of religion (guaranteed in the Constitution of 1875) was swept away when it clashed with the authority of the king.

After the death of Tāufa'āhau Tupou I, his successor did not challenge the leaders of the church (and he wrote hymns and anthems). His successor, Queen Salote Tupou III was a convinced and practical Christian. Not only did she welcome missionaries to Tonga, but she was herself a class-leader, wrote Bible studies, introduced Christian Endeavour and Crusaders and not only knew everything that was happening in the Church of her day but influenced others by example. Church and State belonged together, she said, like two olive trees. She was a wise and intelligent woman. If she had thought of it, I believe she would have approved the metaphor of church members weaving together for the future of Church and the kingdom she ruled over with such devotion and principle.
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

Tongan Methodists in Aotearoa New Zealand

_Sylvia 'Akau 'ola Tongotongo_

In the 60s, 70s and 80s, Tongan people came to the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand in boatloads and planeloads. They were brought as cheap labour to fill the factories doing the jobs that New Zealanders did not want to do or were too lowly paid for New Zealanders. Of course some Tongans came to New Zealand well before that time, during that time and even much later and to date are still arriving in New Zealand for reasons like lifestyle choices, personal development or educational advancement for themselves and their children.

![Image of Vaine Mo'onia Tongan Methodist Church Ponsonby-Grey Lynn](source: E. Laurenson 1994)

When Tongans arrived in New Zealand, they were worshipping on Sundays in the church that was closest to where they lived. Denomination was neither a question nor was it an issue. Whether the nearest church was Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Church of Christ, Methodist or Presbyterian, Sunday was not a working day for Tongans so they would enter the nearest church and worship together with that parish in the language used which was English. With time, there were a few more Tongan families worshipping together in the same church. They then decided to form a Wesley Class style of gathering for Tongans only and started praying, sharing and studying the scriptures in the Tongan language. Denomination was still not an issue; it was the language that mattered then. For people to make the spiritual connection with God, it was important for them to speak in their own language. As the groups grew bigger, they started to form fellowships as part of the parishes they worshipped with and later formed parishes of their own. And Tongans did everything right according to Wesley. And they did everything that was Tongan, or should I say Victorian, or was it English? I refer to the confusion between the rugs and the mats - what one person claimed to be
Tongan happened to be something very Victorian, and not necessarily Christian either. For example, in the way they dressed. Tongans were led to believe that to be Christian was to be dressed Victorian, even when the weather in Tonga was hot. That was also brought to New Zealand and is still part of the New Zealand Methodism for many Tongans.

Church for New Zealand born Tongans in New Zealand is a huge challenge. The fact is, Tongans have the biggest church buildings in the wider Auckland region and they are filled to capacity because they also have the largest numbers attending Methodist services. However, many young people are raising a warning flag to say "Help! We are encountering some challenges!" These are quotations from what some of the young people are saying:

Church is psychologically confusing, culturally pathetic, structurally discriminating, and spiritually poisonous.

That is a loaded statement. But that statement is surrounded with emotions, feelings, perspectives which differ greatly from the perspective of the majority of the migrant generations, their parents' generation. The generational and cultural differences are so big to the extent that the church is actually a challenge for young people born and raised in New Zealand.

The strongest argument about the effectiveness and relevance of church for New Zealand-born Tongans, which may be true for Tongans born and raised in other overseas countries, is "the incongruity of what is preached as the principle foundation of church ethos, and what is perceived by the young people to be done." That is the most significant challenge. The conflicting messages between what is said and what is done is creating mental, physical, emotional and spiritual instability and damage for young generations of Pacific descent here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

When young people are asked what they expect of church, they sing their hearts out and say:

We want a church that provides us with emotional and spiritual support, in terms of reducing our sense of guilt or tension. We want a church that helps us increase our sense of security; provides us with a sense of belonging and gives us a positive philosophy of life.

That very essence of church is not there for a lot of young people. This is not the case for all young people, but for a good number of them. When asked why? These are some of the responses:

Oh the preacher man speaks in a language that only angels can understand. [I did not know that angels can only speak in Tongan! - and there was emphasis on the preacher man.] The minister stopped us from playing our musical instruments in church. It was gospel music and it had the kind of beat and rhythm that makes us tick and makes us connect spiritually with God, and we
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could dance to it to celebrate God's love, and we were stopped doing it in church.'

and

'My sister was being ridiculed and made embarrassed in church because she took her son to be baptized. She was ridiculed because she happened to be a solo mother.'

The part of the story that was not publicly shared except within the immediate family was that the baby was the result of sexual abuse, at home, by a relative.

To the mind of the 16 year old boy, he asked the questions:

What is this world coming to? What is the church coming to? So much for a welcoming church! It says that on the notice board outside the church in big enough writing that even drivers on the motorway would not miss. They are also written on top of every church bulletin on Sunday. It's a welcoming church! It is the same church that ridicules, embarrasses and excludes those who seek support and refuge in the church.

and

There's always money sent to family in Tonga for their church misinale and we couldn't afford to attend the Youth Conference recently held at Waikato University. How come the family in Tonga and their church is more important than us here and the church youth activities we'd like to be part of?

and

Mum and dad are always at church every single day to attend church programmes. We never see them and no one helps us to do our homework.

and

Church is structured in such a way that Palangi share the power with Maori. Where do we fit in as New Zealand born Pacific Islanders in a bicultural church?' Some older people respond to the above comment and say, "as Tongans, if we were in Tonga, we would not want Maoris to come and tell us how to be and how to live in Tonga. So what right have you got to tell the tangata whenua what to do and how to be in New Zealand." The young people, however, are not wanting to tell people how to live their lives, and they are not looking for any power; they are simply asking for a place to be able to feel that they belong. So how do we as church deal with issues like that as we look into the future?

Another major issue for young people is expressed in the following comment:

The church is structured in such a way that lead us to believe that we are given the opportunity to have a voice, expressing what we would do and what
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projects would help us develop as young Christians. That's fine theoretically! The youth meeting makes a decision and yet still has three or four layers of hierarchy to go through. And if it happens to be at the second level that we are given the red light, - sorry, no project.

To many young people the Tongan church is an adult culture, so the young feel they neither belong, nor are they welcomed in the church. If as a consequence, they reject the adult culture, they reject Jesus Christ at the same time. The very place where people are led to believe that they are empowered to begin a personal relationship with Christ, is the place that drives them away. The warning signs are raised by many New Zealand Tongans who strongly believe that ministers and Christians ought to practice what they preach. It is not too late to do something now and even if it is, it is still better late than never.

This is part of the reality for young people in New Zealand. From the issues they raise and the flags they wave, I ask the question: Is it only about generational differences and cultural differences, or is it more to do with the paradigm shift, from grace to morality?

I am saying to the Wesley Historical Society, the Methodist Church of New Zealand, the Uniting Churches of Australia and the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, that the mats are still unfinished. We have new strands of pandanus, flax, wool, rope, thread and other weaving materials which we need to work together in weaving. Let us weave them as we synchronize our paddles in order that we move forward in the ship we are all in, the church.
FIJI
Weaving the Unfinished Mat: Wesley's Legacy - Conflict, Confusion and Challenge in the South Pacific

Tevita Baleiwaqa

This paper mainly discusses the problems and challenges faced by the Methodist Church in Fiji. It also attempts to capture the current state and nature of Fijian Methodism. Fiji is probably the best background for studying Wesley's Pacific legacy because one can easily find Wesley's legacy in a situation of conflict, confusion and challenge in Fiji. The Methodist Church in Fiji is the largest of the 1,214 religious bodies in Fiji\(^1\) and is involved in all levels of public life. From the village and district levels, Fijian Methodists take on active civic roles, and the Republic's top post, the President of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, is now held by a former Vice President of the Methodist Church. The *lotu Wesele e Viti* is Wesley's legacy in Fiji, which literally means Wesley Church in Fiji, and members are known as *Wesele* or Wesleyans. And these Fiji Wesleyans are, at present, going through a period of conflict, confusion and dramatic challenges.

To address the problems and challenges that the Methodist Church in Fiji is now facing, a brief background description of Fiji's history is necessary. This description can be summarised by listing the twelve documents that marked significant moments of Fiji's tumultuous experience in political, religious and social conflicts. The Methodist Church is not free from these problems and challenges since the majority of its members are prominent Fijian political leaders. These documents are,

- first, the Fijian version of the 1874 Deed of Cession,
- second, the 1875 Charter for the Erection of the Colony of Fiji,
- third, the legal establishment of the Great Council of Chiefs in the 1878 Native Regulation,
- fourth, the 1965 Constitutional Conference Report,
- fifth, the 1966 Fiji Constitution,
- sixth, the 1967 Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Ordinance,
- seventh, the 1970 Charter of Independence, Dominion and Constitution,
- eighth, the 1987 Republic Declaration,
- ninth, the 1990 Constitution,
- tenth, the 1997 Republican Constitutions,

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\(^1\) This figure was obtained from the Registrar of Titles Office, Suvavou House, Suva.
eleventh, the 2000 Proroguing of Parliament and the appointment of a Caretaker Prime Minister,

twelfth, the 2000 Abrogation of the 1997 Republican Constitution by Commodore Frank Bainimarama.

The modern nation of Fiji was shaped by Ratu Sir Kamisese Kapaiwai Mara, especially during the critical years from 1962-1969. Mara's career during those seven years shaped the future of Fiji's politics up to the end of the century.

The last century, as, we all know, ended and the new one began with conflict, confusion and challenges.

Fiji's experience in international politics began earlier, with the cession of Fiji to Queen Victoria in 1874. The Deed of Cession had two official versions, English and Fijian. The man who led the community between the two versions, David Wilkinson, was a former Methodist preacher from Victoria. The fact that the land was central issue in the Deed, the Methodist Church, then Wesleyan Mission in Fiji, was dragged into the scope of the discussion. This was not only to ensure the security of mission property, but to the Fijian race as well. The debate went until 1911, when the House of Lords favoured the Fijians in terms of land ownership as outlined in the Deed.

The Deed has a preamble and seven clauses.

In the second recital of the Preamble, Cakobau and other high chiefs, or Turaga lelevu, were desirous of "securing the promotion of civilization and Christianity, or in Fijian, "... qara me yaco rawa vakavinaka na vaka Sivilaisesoni, kei na Lotu, ka me tubu cake deivaki na tiko vinaka..."

Further, Preamble Recitals 3 and 4 set out the essence of governance that is for the establishment of good government and for the Queen to "undertake the governance of the said islands henceforth". In Fijian, the Turaga Lelevu of Fiji requested, or taroga ka kerea, Her Majesty to taura na lewa vaka-Matanitu. This, I think, is an area of confusion in the Treaty of Waitangi.

Preamble Recital 5 highlighted the cession of Fijian sovereignty, where it said:

... the said Tui Viti and other High Chiefs, for themselves and their respective tribes, have agreed to cede the possession of, and the dominion and sovereignty over the whole of the said islands, and over the inhabitants thereof, and have requested Her Majesty to accept such Cession, which Cession the said Tui Viti and other High Chiefs, relying upon the justice and generosity of Her said Majesty, have determined to cede unconditionally,... and by the formal surrender of the said territory to Her said Majesty...

The Fijian wording affirms the fact that:

... e ra sa solia no na Tui Viti vata kei ira na kena Turaga Lelevu, ni ra sa loma vata kina me ra sa solia, e ra sa roqota ka musuka oqo vakai ira ga, ia e na
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Clause One of the Deed talks about perpetuity and territory of the Cession. It simply said that between 15 and 22 degrees Latitudes South, and 177 degrees Longitude West and 175 degrees Longitude East:

... are hereby ceded to, and accepted on behalf of. Her said Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, her Heirs and Successors, to the intent that from this time forth, the said islands, ... may be annexed to, and be a Possession and Dependency of the British Crown.

However in the Fiji language, this phrase said:

... sa yalataki ka solia sara oqo, ka sa vakadonuya tale ga, me taura tiko ko na Marama na Tui ni Peritania Levu kei Airaladi, kei ira sa na tarava e na nonai tutu vaka Tui, me vaka oqo e ya e na gauna oqo ka yacova na veigauna mat muri ka tawa mudu, me sa vanua vaka-Peritania na veiyanuyanu oqo ko Viti,..... me sa nona vakai Taukei dina sara, ka me vakarorogo ki na lewa vaka Tui ni Peritania.

Land to be divided amongst the Fijian tribes was identified in Clause four of the Deed. This Clause was the focus of the now famous Native Land Commission. The other Land Commission, the Land Claim Commission was established in 1878 to inquire into and confirm European claims to land. That Commission is now closed and only the Native Land Commission established in 1892 is still functioning in Fiji. Clause four says:

that the absolute proprietorship of all lands, not shown to be now alienated, so as to become bona fide the property of Europeans, or not now in actual use or occupation of some Chief or tribe, or not actually required for the future support and maintenance of some Chief or tribe, shall be and is hereby declared to be vested in Her said Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors.

The Fijian version of Clause four emphatically states:

E na vuku ni vanua e Viti ko ya sa volitaki oti vei ira na kai Papalagi e so, ni ra na tukuna ni sa nodra, ka sa macala mai na kena veitarotarogi ni sa dina sara, ni nodra vakadodonu se ko koya e ra taura tiko ko ira na turaga e so, se mataqali, se lewe ni vanua taukei, e ya ni sa vakayagataka tiko oqo, se ni na qai vota vei ira na Turaga, se mataqali, se lewe ni vanua me rauti ira vinaka na tamata yadua, e na gauna oqo, ka me rauti ira vinaka e na veigauna mai muri. la na vanua sa vo ni sa votai oti vaka, sa yalataki ka solia sara oqo ki vua na
Weaving the Unfinished Mats

Marama, me nona dina sara vakaitaukei, vakaturaga, vata kei ira sa tarava e na nona i tutu vakatui.

Race and rights in Fiji are controversial issues at the moment. The Methodist Church is caught in the middle when members are from both sides of the race divide. The Fijians base their claim as based on the Deed of Cession where Clause 7(1) specified how these rights were to be protected. The Clause says:

That the rights and interests of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs, the Ceding parties hereto, shall be recognized so far as is consistent with British sovereignty, and colonial form of government.

In Fijian, the Deed said:

E na vukudra na Tui Viti kei ira na kena Turaga lelevu e ra sa cakava, ka solia oqo, sa na vakabau tiko, ka vakadinadinataka na nodra, i tutu vakaturaga, ka maroroya na nodra ka yadua, ia me vaka e rawa ka kilikili kei na lewa vakatui ni Peritania vakaMatanitu sa dau vakatura e na kena veivanua ki sau, e ya vaka sa na qai vakaturi i Viti mai na gauna oqo.

Setting the issue of land aside, another issue is governance. Fiji is now going through its third form of government. First it was colonial, then dominion and then republic. Most of Fiji's governance problems are rooted in the first form of government. How the second and the third hastily settled in without addressing the fundamental spirit and understanding of the first form of government, I think, is the root of Fiji's governance problem. Sir Arthur Gordon arrived in Fiji on 23 June 1875, bringing with him the Charter passed Under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom/or Erecting the Fiji Islands into a Separate Colony, to be called the Colony of Fiji, and for Providing for the Government thereof. The 1875 Charter had fifteen clauses, all of which refer to how the Colony was to be governed. The authority of her Majesty the Queen was always clear in the government of the Crown Colony of Fiji. Section II expresses the authority of the Queen through the Governor. It says:

And we do declare and appoint that the government of Our said Colony shall be administered by a Governor duly commissioned by Us in that behalf.

Even the Legislative Council was established by Her Majesty's authority:

And we do hereby declare and appoint that there shall be,... a Legislative Council. Such Council was to be empowered and authorized, under Section IV, "to make and enact all such laws and ordinances ... as may be required for the peace, order and good government of Our said Colony ...". Further, Section V constitutes the establishment of an Executive Council to advise the Governor and Section VII authorizes and empowers the Governor to deal with the issue of land.

Apart from the Executive Council, Gordon instituted the Native Regulation Ordinance of 1878. This led to the concept of "indirect rule" and provision for that was found in
Section IV of the Charter to Erect the Colony of Fiji. The Native Regulation Ordinance then further established the Native Council, which was later called the Great Council of Chiefs. From the Lawa 1, 1877, Wase 1, the Law says:

2. la sai ira oqo na Bose Vakaturaga. Ko Cakobau na Tui Viti. Ko ira na Roko Tui, ko ira na Turaga ni Lewa saumi i Taukei, kei na Bull e lewe rua mai na veiyasanayadua, kei ira na Bull mai Colo e Navitilevu sa lewa na Kovana me lako mai kina, kei ira na Vunivola ni Veiyasana, kei koya na Talai ni Kovana sa lesia ko koya me liutaka na Bose. Se ke dua tale natata e vaka na Kovana me curu mai kina. Se ke sa vakananuma na Roko Tui ni dua na tamata e yaga ka kilikili kaya me bau mai kina, ia m tukuni koya vua na Kovana. 3. Sa vu mai vua na Kovana na Bose. Sai koya duadua ga e vakatekivuna ia ko ya tale ga sa tinia.

This was body of Fijian chiefs that met at Bau in March 1873 to offer Fiji to Queen Victoria and ceded Fiji in October 1874. Gordon formalized the body through law and ruled Fiji through it in the concept of indirect rule.

The Fijian understanding of cession was that the Queen of England was to be Fiji's Queen as well and this arrangement was to be perpetual. It was on this basis that Queen Victoria gave the land back to the Great Council of Chiefs while Gordon was still in Fiji. This remained until Ratu Kamisese Kapaiwai Mara became the Chief Minister of Fiji in the early 1960s.

By 1965, the concept of indirect rule was challenged, not from without but from within the chiefly ranks. Mara, the son of Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba the grandson of Adi Moce, the daughter of Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, who happens to be Ratu Cakobau's eldest son, was on the threshold of becoming Fiji's Colonial Chief Minister. On the traditional Great Council of Chief’s side, his father Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba was still alive. The father was bowing to the son and the indirect rule concept now a nightmare for Fiji.

The Report began by highlighting a Despatch dated 15 August 1963, from the Rt. Honorable Anthony Greenwood, M.P, Secretary of State to the Governor of Fiji, stating that the:

British Government accept that the time is approaching when the future relationship between Fiji and Britain should be clarified and codified, and will be glad, in consultation with the representatives of the people of Fiji, to work out a Constitutional framework which will preserve a continuing link with

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2 This was Despatch No. 388, 15 August, 1963.
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Britain and within which further progress can be made in the direction of internal self government.³

Mrs. Eirene White, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the colonies, took over the discussions with representatives of all communities in Fiji. These representatives were Ratu K. K. T. Mara, Ratu P. K Ganilau Ratu --. T. T. Cakobau, Ratu G. K. Cakobau, Semesa K. Sikivou, Josua Rabukawaqa, A. D. Patel, A. I. N. Deoki, Saddiq M. Koya, James Madhavan, C. A Shah'; P. Singh, John N. Falvey, Rick G. Kermode, C. D. Aidney, J A Moore R.A. Karseley and F. G. Archibald. Greenwood outlined the objectives of the conference as follows:

... element in the Legislative... it is possible... to move towards a greater degree of internal self government than at present exists in Fiji... I suggest that the Conference will need, ..., to consider the development of the membership system; a strengthening and broadening of the elected element in the Legislative Council; and matters affecting the franchise. The Conference ... wish to consider the adoption of provisions designed to safeguard human rights, the public service and the judiciary.

In concluding the Foreword, it was clearly spelt out that "independence was not an issue to be discussed".⁴ It was resolved that "all minority groups not at present enfranchised should be brought onto the electoral rolls".⁵ This meant the Rotumans, Chinese and other Pacific Islanders. It was further resolved that the Chinese were to be included in the same roll as Europeans while those of Pacific origins were classed in the same category. Here may I ask who determines race, the people or the Electoral Commission?

The 1965 Constitution had 21 Chapters and 46 Sections. All these Sections reflected the major objectives of the Conference, that is to "clarify and codify" Fiji's relation with Britain. Section 2 of the Constitution highlights the desire to:

preserve a continuing link with Britain and within which further progress could be made in the direction of internal self-government.⁶

The 1965 Constitution overlooked two important institutions of Fijian governance, namely the Great Council of Chiefs and land. The G.C.C. should have been clearly identified as the critical essence of governance in Fiji. In both meaning of governance to the Fijians, the traditional Fijian or the Westminster system, the G.C.C. plays a pivotal role in the function it played during the 1874 cession of Fiji to Queen Victoria.

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⁴ Point 6, Foreword, Report.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Section 2, Report, p. 7. For this reason, the Union Jack remains on the Fiji flag.
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There are references to the Crown and the Governor in the Section 8 and 9, but the Constitution did not address the Constitutional position of the 1874 ceding party in the 1965 internal self government Conference. It overlooked Clause 7 (a) of the 1874 Deed of Cession. The ancient relationship between land and traditional Fijian politics, upon which the G.C.C. is rooted, became an inbuilt "time-bomb" for Fiji's Westminster political system. This raises the question whether Anthony Greenwood and Eireen White understood the spirit and concept of 1874 Deed of Cession during the 1965 Constitutional Conference?

Twenty-two years after the first Constitutional Conference, Her Majesty's Government in Fiji was overthrown by a military coup d'état. To make the coup successful, Fiji was declared a republic overnight. A Republican Constitution was drawn up in 1990, of which our Indian brothers symbolically burnt a copy. To address the conflict, the 1990 Constitution was reviewed. The document tried to offer a reconciliatory approach to Fiji's multiracial society. However, three years later in 2000, civil unrest, based on the Constitution, threw the country into turmoil. The Commander of the Fiji Military Forces intervened and abrogated the 1997 Constitution. To add confusion to the conflict, the judiciary stepped in and reinstated the 1997 Constitution. Late last year, the government of the day successfully introduced a bill in Parliament to review the 1997 Constitution and we are waiting to see the developments this year.

The Methodist Church in Fiji is a powerful political factor in Fiji and this is both a challenge and a problem. Any Fijian Prime Minister must gain the support of the President of the Methodist Church of Fiji. Mara won it, and so did Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka and the Honorable Laisenia Qarase. A superficial reading of New Zealand politics shows how the Ratana vote is critical for Labour's success. It is now evident that Fijian political power needs the Methodist Church in Fiji for moral support. This is a responsibility that presents both problem and challenge for the Church.

Amidst these conflicts and confusion, the Methodist Church in Fiji is also being challenged with issues regarding its nature, identity and civic responsibilities. The Constitution, law and order are Methodist issues as much as they are national issues in Fiji. This claim can be certified by the move to declare Fiji a Christian state. When looking closely at the Republic Declaration Decree of 1987, Fiji was declared a Christian state. It was discussed as part of the 1997 Constitutional review and the Methodist Church officially advised against the Christian state concept. That was a wise advice, for the responsibility behind that form of government would have dragged the ordained ministry of the Methodist Church into unnecessary and unwarranted politics. However, after saying this, the Methodist Church has to be involved in Fiji's public life because it is a vital component of Fiji's public life. It has to puts its house in order first to fulfil the national and international expectation focused on it.
Against the background of the 1965 London Constitutional talks, the Methodist Church in Fiji celebrated the establishment of its Annual Conference on Saturday 11 July 1964. The President of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia, Rev. W. F. Hambly, launched the new Methodist Conference and inducted the new President, the Rev. Setareki Akeai Tuilovoni. The Rev. John B. H. Robson was appointed Connexional Secretary and Peter K. Davis as Secretary to Conference. Mara, head of the Fiji delegation to London and later Fiji's first Prime Minister was Tuilovoni's colleague at the Lau Provincial School in Vatuloa, Lakeba. Tuilovoni was now the President of the Methodist Church in Fiji and deeply involved in Pacific church unity. Mara was just beginning in that direction. Here in Fiji, two powerful imperial factors, colonialism and religion, met in a Pacific frontier. To make matters worse, Tuilvoni was trained partly in New Zealand and mainly at Drew University in the United States, while Mara was trained also partly in New Zealand and mostly in England.

Tuilovoni focused on the renewal of Methodism in Fiji. He inherited this focus from his predecessor, the Rev. Wesley S. Pidgeon, an Australian. Their work saw the introduction of fellowships within the Methodist Church in Fiji. The fellowship began simply in the Young People's Department and by now, it has assaulted the very nature of Fijian Methodists as known in its history.

There is a marked shift in Methodist mission praxis when compared to the original nineteenth century philosophy. It is now time for a new philosophy to be shaped for island Methodists, especially in Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, are being led and determined by the islanders themselves. The current mission praxis is now evolving around race and its related institutions rather than on humanity and its needs. This cannot be evaded because in many cases, the faifekau, talatala and faife 'au, are the custodians of traditions themselves. For a native minister to maintain the demands and conditions of both the gospel and culture, is a challenge that has to be faced everyday in a minister's life.

The Pacific Island Methodist Churches had never thought about their "missionary commission" since 1977, when the Methodist Church in Australia ceased to exist through the Repealing of the Methodist Church Act by the Australian Parliament. From the Minutes of the Special General Conference held at Sydney from the 21-22 June 1977, the Methodist Church in Fiji was parted with a four paragraph message. There was no consideration of the fact that Section 44 of the 1964 Constitution of the

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There are classical examples such as the current President of the Methodist Church in Fiji, the Rev. Laisiasa Ratabacaca, who is an heir to the title of Tui Cicia. Another is the Principal of Sia'atoutai Theological College, the Rev. Dr. Ahio, who is a high-ranking noble in the Kingdom of Tonga. The same can be for some of our Faife'au in the Methodist Church in Samoa. Visoni Tomasi, a third year student from the island of Rotuma in the Davuilevu Theological College renounced the title of Gagaj Maraf Tui Rotuma to become a Methodist minister.
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Methodist Church in Fiji Annual Conference emphatically states that the power of jurisdiction over the Methodist Church in Fiji remains with the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia. The capability to govern is not the point, for Fiji has been a Conference since 1964, but the loss of Methodist fellowship across the Pacific is what really matters in this issue. Why do not they (Australians) just go into Uniting and leave the General Conference to us in New Zealand, Samoa Tonga and Fiji? By 1977, all these four Methodist Churches in the Pacific have their own annual conference.

It took two years for Fiji to realize and in 1979 draft its Trust Deed. In Section 3 of that Deed, the power of jurisdiction was retained. It contradicted Section 44 of the 1974 Constitution, which still maintained the supremacy of the defunct General Council. As late as 1984, Rev. Paula Niukula, as President of the Conference, reviewed the 1974 Constitution. It marked the beginning of Fiji’s political chaos, and the Methodist Church was also rattled with its problem. During a time where counsel was badly needed by the nation, the Methodist Church in Fiji was undergoing a soul searching period in its history. There was a marked shift in Methodist polity in the new Constitution. The 1964 and 1974 connexional system was replaced by the secretarial system. Provisions were made to introduce new secretariats under the General Secretary, and the power of the President and the General Secretary, both fulltime posts, were spelt out in the review. Niukula’s 1984 Review remained a draft until confirmation in 1992.

In 1987, the Rev. Josateki Koroi and Manasa Lasaro came to take over the leadership of the Church. Differences of opinion regarding the 1987 coup d’etat upon a Constitution that was still a draft, placed the powers of the President and the General Secretary in a suspense position. In 1989, the Methodist Church broke up into two Conferences, the legal one, according to legal advice was convened at Butt Street Church and the other, having the numbers, met at Centenary Church. Methodist sense prevailed over differences and members converged at the Centenary for a fiery reunion.

How the Methodist Church in Fiji performed during 2000 can best be read through Ratu Josefa Iloilo’s experience. He is the only survivor from that crisis and he survived because he is a Methodist, as he said.

Problems and challenges will persist but the Methodist Church in Fiji must maintain its identity as a church. It must be sure and zealous in its mission to achieve this, it must be at peace with its history, or it will haunt it as in the Fiji Government’s political experience. The Church has to clearly understand five key areas, namely authority, spirituality, education and Methodist unity.

Authority became a critical issue when the Methodist Church in Great Britain Annual Conference decided to set up a Conference in the Pacific in 1855 Methodist authority has three fundamental characters, namely the scriptural the spiritual and the constitutional. All these natures have their historical framework. The scriptural
authority was developed through the transfer of authority from London to Sydney in 1855. John Wesley’s Notes on the New Testament8 became an important document in shaping the nature of this Methodist authority. The spiritual nature of authority grew out of the connexional network peculiar to Methodism and is closely related to the constitutional nature of authority. The question is whether we need to reinterpret Wesley’s Notes on the New Testament in order to restructure Pacific Methodism for modern mission or not. Our Pacific Methodist New Testament scholars should be assigned to review the Notes as the basis of our scriptural authority. Their findings have to be tabled in Conference so it can be part of our Constitutions.

The two other natures, the spiritual and the constitutional, are related through the connexional system of government. Fiji, with respect to these two natures, is going through a period of serious constitutional review by the recent reactivation of the Conference Structure Committee. The case has more to it than meets the eye. The Methodist Church in Fiji, through its 1984 constitutional review, adopted a secretarial system of government over the traditional Methodist connexional system. For Fiji to relinquish the connexional system for a secretarial system calls for lots of serious discussions. After twenty years in the secretarial system, the Methodist Church in Fiji is now counting the costs of the secretarial system. A return to the connexional system will surely ease the financial woes tormenting the Church.

Methodist constitutional authority was originally based on the connexional system of government in Fiji. Under this system, church administration was centralized with the Synod or Division. Leading the Division, or Synod, is the Divisional Superintendent, or Talatala Qase. Whatever the leadership office may be, the Methodist connexional system of government must be sustained. Fiji is finding the 1984 constitutional experiment costly. In addition, the scriptural and spiritual nature of authority does not corroborate with the scriptural foundation of authority as outlined in the Notes.

Divinity and worship are critical areas in terms of mission challenges in Fiji. It is obvious from the worship practices in Fijian Methodism that there is distinct separation in worship interest between the older and the younger generation. The conversion of the younger generation has always been the priority of Pacific Methodism since the end of World War II. Those who were once young then are now old and leading the church.

The older generation’s culture and tradition are very different from those of the younger generation. To be precise, the younger generation is those in their teens and

8 John Wesley’s Explanatory Notes on the New Testament is available on line. Billy Lawson updated the Notes in 23 July 1997 and they are housed on the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries server, and transcribed by Sulu Kelley and Bill Brown.
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twenties and not like those who represented the young people in the last Annual Conference.  

The theme of options on traditional system works perfectly in this particular area of mission. Here also the challenges persist, for culture and tradition are developed by the younger generation themselves. Many of the influencing factors are from outside our Pacific island societies. Moreover, the migration of our kin and kindred to Australia, United States and Europe ease the flow of culture and tradition from the continents to the islands.

The training of the ordained ministry is a critical area for reform in the Methodist Church in Fiji. We have addressed this issue with Tonga and Samoa by establishing a Theological Partnership between Sia'atoutai, Piula and Davuilevu Theological Colleges. This year, a staff and a student from each College will go to another in a faith sharing experience within the Methodist Churches in the Pacific. It is hoped that Trinity will join, so the Methodist family in the Pacific can learn and train their ordained ministry on a common Methodist foundation.

Continental culture is a major challenge to island divinity. This has to be said because at present the Pacific Islands still cherish their Methodist identity.

Pacific Methodism has its own distinct traditions. Methodist hymnological traditions bind their spirit. We are now so detached and isolated from one another. The function of the Board of Mission, once based in Sydney to look after the Methodist mission in the Pacific, was a central institution for Methodist unity in the region and I think the idea of a central Pacific Methodist authority has to be taken seriously by New Zealand. There needs to be a united Pacific Islands Methodist authority to ensure the unity of Pacific Methodism The establishment of the Uniting Church in Australia leaves little choice for the four other Methodists Conferences in the Pacific, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, but to reconsider reforming the Pacific Methodist identity Methodist authority in the Pacific, manifest through ecclesiastical leadership and structure requires a strong scriptural foundation. This is then combined with fundamental Christian doctrines, including the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the sacraments, to provide solid scriptural and apostolic foundations for modern authority.

The significance of the theme "The Unfinished Mat' lies in the concept of reforming the Pacific Methodist identity. We must accept the fact that we really are on our own after the dissolution of the Triennial General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australia and the Pacific in 1977. Pacific Methodism has been a distinctive identity for the last twenty eight years.

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*Ibe Duadua* or Mat on its Own, is a multi-purpose mat that the women of Vulaga in the Lau Group of Islands in Fiji are expected to present in all traditional functions in Lau. It is often referred to as the *yaba ni Vulaga* This mat stands out, like the *kuta* in Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata. I could not bring one through Customs, however, I managed to squeeze a little mat, called the *i kedre*, past the Wellington Airport Customs Officers. This is to remind us of our origins, when Methodism lay in its *i kedre* here in Sydney, Whangaroa Kolovai, Manono and Lakeba. This *i kedre* is a symbol to the call of renewal and regeneration within our churches. The *i kedr*, is an unfinished mat by itself because the child has to grow. We are to continue weaving the mat and as argued in this paper, to join it up with the mats from New Zealand Papua the Solomons, Tonga and Samoa. A complete review of the original and traditional Methodist mission philosophy in the Pacific is badly needed at this stage. A modern manual, similar to the 1825 *Instructions to Wesley an Methodist Missionaries*, needs to be formulated as measures of ensuring standard and clarity in mission strategy.

Tevita Baleiwaqa (centre) presents the Fijian Mat to Ron Malpass (right) President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand 2004-5, with Robinson Moses, Aso Samoa Saleupolu, Gina Tekulu, Epeli Taungapeau, Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere.  

*Photo: R. and M. Reeson*
MELANESIA
Methodist Missionaries and Development in Papua New Guinea

Robinson Moses

Introduction
Methodism and its distinctive doctrines entered the nation of Papua New Guinea at a time when we never thought of ourselves as a nation. Yet it was to be a great force in the development of this nation. This paper will explore some of the contributions made by the Methodist missionaries in the development of Papua New Guinea. In so doing I will first provide an overview of the mission and work of the Methodist missionaries in Melanesia, especially in Papua New Guinea. Then the paper will focus on the work in New Ireland. Finally some conclusions will be made.

An Overview
Rev. Dr George Brown is the main driving force behind the Methodist mission in Papua New Guinea. After serving his apprenticeship in Samoa he left the island in 1874. He had been keenly reading and watching the activities not only of the traders, but also the LMS missionaries in the southern part of the New Guinea Island; what is known today as Papua. So while he was on leave in Australia he organised a mission to New Britain and the surrounding islands, especially the Duke of York Islands and New Ireland.

In August, 15th 1875 he arrived with his pioneer missionary party in Molot, Duke of York Island. In the following weeks and months he moved quickly to establish an understanding with the leaders of the people. Basically his strategy was to consult the local chief and get him to agree to receive a missionary into his village.

In the next six months he made many trips to the mainland of East New Britain; especially to Nordup and Matalau and the west coast of Namatanai. By December of that year he had placed missionaries in both East New Britain and the west coast of Namatanai. The Fijian missionary, Pauliasi Bunoa was stationed at Kalil village by George Brown on 5 December, 1875.

In January 1881, Rev. George Brown left this mission field. He was subsequently appointed as the General Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Overseas Mission Board in 1886; a position that he held for 21 years. He was to use this position to organise more pioneer mission parties to the other parts of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.
In 1891 he organised a mission to the Papuan Islands at the request of the Governor of the then, British New Guinea, Sir William MacGregor. Rev. Bromilow was placed in charge of the mission team. On the 19 June, 1891 he led his team of missionaries to these islands. They included: Revs S. B. Fellows, J. T. Field, J. T. Watson and Mr G. Bardsley who was the carpenter. Then there were 22 South Sea Island missionaries from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. All of them were married and came with their wives. Unfortunately the names of these South Sea Island missionaries were not recorded.

The mission chose to begin on the island of Dobu and with that the development of these people began. Orphanages were built, schools were started and health services were provided in response to the many diseases that were prevalent at the time. Women's work was begun by the wives of the missionaries.

The mission to Mendi and Tari in the Southern Highlands of PNG was a later addition, which began after the Pacific War. The mission began on 21 November, 1950. The pioneer missionaries were Revs Gordon Young and Ern. Clarke. The former was an experienced missionary who had served in New Ireland and the latter was another veteran missionary who had served in the Papuan Islands. They were accompanied by Kaminiel Ladi and Thomas Tomar, both from New Ireland. From the Papuan Islands came Stephen Moyalaka and David Bula.

The interesting feature about this mission field was that the pioneer missionaries were transferred from New Ireland and the Papuan Islands. This was significant because it continued the trend being taken by the Christians of the Pacific that they became evangelists to their own peoples. This was the beginning of a self-propagating Church.

Later missionaries came from Fiji, Tonga and many from New Zealand. This was one particular mission field in which New Zealand played a very significant role. This is very recent history and a number of missionaries are still alive to tell the story in their own words. For instance Marcia Baker has told the story of the Baker family at Yaken in the book You go where.

The Methodist Mission in New Ireland

New Ireland was evangelised in four main waves. The first began in 1875 and has already been mentioned in this paper. This was to the west coast and the east coast of Namatanai area. The second wave occurred in September of 1902. This was to the central area of New Ireland, populated by the Mandak and Kuot people. The Chairman, Rev. Fellmann, Rev. Jack Crump, William Taufa and others had accidently landed on the village of Kono, because their boat was blown by strong winds and ran aground. While they waited for a boat to rescue them, they took the opportunity to talk about the Gospel and mission work. The chief, Simi requested a missionary; so Kulinias Ria was sent to Kono as the first pastor the following year, in 1903. From there the church spread to other parts of west coast, crossed the mountain range and went to the east coast. The third wave began in March of 1905 and this was to the Kavieng District. Ernest Sprott, a lay missionary from Australia led a party of five in
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this mission. Among them was a Fijian called, Emosi Verebesanga. They walked down the road for about 100 km. In the years following, mission stations were established in a number of villages. The fourth and final wave happened in about 1919, and this was to the Tigak and New Hanover Islands. Thus the evangelisation of New Ireland had begun. Today New Ireland is 95% Christian, 48% is United Church which had its roots in Methodism.

The United Church in PNG

The United Church was born on 19 January, 1968. It was a bold experiment in church unity, uniting together the Presbyterian Church in Port Moresby, the Papua Ekalesia, which emerged from LMS work in Papua and the Methodist Church of Melanesia. It was the words of Jesus in John 17 that gave the theological basis for the search for unity. Today all denomination names in the union are almost forgotten. This is a new strand in the mat. The fourth Moderator of the United Church, Rev. Edea Kidu, once said that the United Church is a colourful church because other huge diversity. At the time of the union she was national as well as international; coastal as well as highland; Papuan as well as New Guinean. This is unity in diversity.

Some Challenges faced Today

In November, 1996 the United Church of PNG & SI separated to become the UCPNG and the UCSI. The challenge since then has been that new structures must be defined and made. Regions must be redefined, circuits must be redefined and so on. Two Moderators need to be installed and two Assembly secretaries appointed. These are only some of the initial challenges in the separation. Then there is the question of the "unitedness" of the church in traditional Methodist areas and likewise in LMS areas.

There has been an apparent slowing down in the zeal for evangelism. It seems that the UC has forgotten that she was born out of missionary work. Other denominations are taking over this fundamental aspect of mission.

The challenge of Pentecostalism and new church and para-church groups is great. New social trends among our young people; e.g. STDs and STIs, like HIV-AIDS; drug abuse, like marijuana and home brew, law and order problems and the like provoke a negative attitude towards the church.

The voice of the church needs to be heard in the face of political corruption and the concept of wantokism or nepotism.

The bigger economic issues are of forestry, fishing and the royalty payments to the landowners on whose land mining is taking place. One of the main causes of the Bougainville Crisis was the economic disparity that was existed.

These are only some of the challenges that the UCPNG is facing. The church must wake up to her social gospel and the responsibility in addressing these issues of injustice and corruption. She cannot continue to pretend that everything is just fine.
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and the people are happy and contented. The UCPNG must stand up to her prophetic role as well as redemptive role. For me these are some new strands in this mat.

Conclusion

The UCPNG is the result of the joint missionary venture of Australians, New Zealanders, Fijians, Tongans, Samoans, Tahitians, Cook Islanders and other, South Pacific Island missionaries. That mat was woven by all these people weaving together. This is the missionary context and mat.

Then after World War II, the indigenous people began to take part in the weaving of the mat; and it was done with a new pattern. In some instances the old pattern was followed, but in other instances it was hard to follow the old pattern. Where old patterns could not be followed, new patterns were made and applied. This is the indigenous context and mat.

The net result of this is that the mat that was woven by the Methodist missionaries has changed quite a lot. A new mat is being woven, one that must accommodate the needs and aspirations of the people. She must do this in the indigenous and yet diverse context of PNG, while at the same time maintain her links with her missionary roots in order to be a dynamic member of the Church universal and in the world of ecumenism.

Bibliography


The Changing Patterns on the Woven Mats: Some Aspects of Methodism (United Church) in the Solomon Islands

Gina Tekulu

The Solomon Islands form part of the Melanesian Archipelago, located between latitudes 5° S and 12° S and between longitudes 154° E and 165° E with about 990 islands scattered over a sea area of 1.5 million sq km. Only about 30,000 sq km constitute the land area. This means that 98 of the total land area is beneath the Pacific Ocean. The Solomon Islands, with its current population of approximately 450,000, is the third largest country in the South Pacific region.

Introduction

It was on the afternoon of 23 May 1902, that the first Methodist Missionaries came ashore on a tiny island of Nusa Zonga, New Georgia, Western Solomons. It was from that day, that the "pattern on the woven mats", (the whole well-being of the eventual Methodist adherents), changed and have continued to change with the subsequent events, up to this very day.

This Methodist pioneer missionary group, which was led by the Rev. J. F. Goldie from Australia, included three other Australians; the Rev. Stephen Rooney, Mr. J. Martin and Dr George Brown; a Solomon Islander, Samuel Aqarau; one New Hebredian (ni-Vanuatu) Hosea Ulu; four Fijians, William Gavidi, Jony Laqere, Aporosa Takuita and Rusiata Sawatabu; and three Samoans, Muna, Seru and Saiasi.

The Beginning of the Changing Pattern on the Mats

In the following years, missionary work spread to other islands of the Western Solomons like Simbo, Vella La Vella, Choiseul and Ranongga. As the years went by, more and more missionary workers arrived from abroad.

What exactly motivated the Rev. John Goldie and the rest of the missionaries to leave their loved ones and the comforts of their homes to come to Solomon Islands? Furthermore, did it occur to them that their mission to the Western Solomon would lead to changing the patterns on the woven mats from simple to more complicated and intricate ones? Probably they were aware of the changes they would cause; nevertheless, they came, firstly because of the "repeated requests from Solomon Islanders who had gone to Fiji and had been most impressed and attracted by the
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changes that had come to the people there, through the Methodist Church there, and secondly, they did as our Lord Jesus commanded in Matthew 28: 19-20:

Go to all the people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

The Australian Methodist Mission also realised and accepted that the time had come to reach out to their brothers and sisters in the far off Solomon Islands. And so, in Sydney on 2 May 1902 a large crowd gathered at Circular Quay to bid farewell to the pioneer mission party.

What did these Methodist missionaries bring with them? First and foremost, they brought the Gospel of peace and love to be shared with the tribal communities of New Georgia, who were renowned for their many successful headhunting raids in the neighbouring islands of Choiseul and Isabel. Even Ingava, the principal chief and "King of the Western Solomons," while showing no friendship, "was willing to sell the missionaries, the land on Munda point ...". Goldie's house was built, on a hill, overlooking the Lagoon. This is still the site of the Moderator's residence.

Methodism not only brought the Gospel of peace to these isles. As John Goldie was a believer and firm advocate of holistic development of people, the Methodists, who came in the following decades included missionary teachers, missionary doctors and nurses, missionary carpenters and mechanics. Mr. Martin, one of the members of Goldie's original missionary party, for example, was a builder. As part of the mission program, schools were set up to train locals to become missionary teachers to their people. Also in later years, health-care centres were set up where sick children and women in particular, could be brought for treatment and be cared for. Mrs Helena Goldie who soon after her arrival frequently visited the sick in their villages, emphasised such health-care needs. She even used her home to keep and nurse those needing further attention, whether they were orphans, slaves or children of chiefs. The present Helena Goldie Hospital is a living testimony to Mrs. Goldie's health-care service to the locals.

But probably, one of the greatest revelations, which the Methodists brought, occurred one Easter evening, when "Mr. Goldie was awakened at midnight by 50 boys from the school. They wanted to know whether it was true what they had been told, that Jesus had died and risen from the dead." These boys were later baptised, much to, the anger

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3 Williams, United Church, pp. 238-39.
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of their relatives who were unhappy for abandoning "the faith of their fathers". What the boys learned from the Easter story was that, (the Son of God) Jesus whom the Methodist revealed to them through the Bible, died but rose again and is alive. The gods of our forefathers do not die, they were already dead, dead wooden gods and dead stone gods.

The Impact of Methodism on the People, Culture and Society

The arrival and the consequent activities of the Methodist missionaries in these islands were not without sacrifice and loss of lives, on both sides. The cost has been high. A number of teachers and their wives and children died from fever. Among them was the Goldie's young son. A Tongan, Ofa, lost his wife and children on the island of Ranongga. Whilst serving on Simbo Island, a Samoan missionary lost his wife and child but continued to work alone. Sometime later, Casa, a Samoan missionary, also died after losing his wife and two children. Seeing these missionaries dying in the process of serving God had a great impact on people, their culture and society. It reaffirmed the locals' Christian belief that serving the Almighty God must be worth dying for.

There were other consequent impacts that Methodist had on the culture of this particular society. There was for example, a change of living, from a community/tribal type of living, to a mission station-centred co-existence. This led to a breakdown of culture, because now those in the chiefly line were forced to live, eat, train, learn and pray and worship together with the orphans and the slaves, a definite change of the patterns on the woven mats!

The sending of a Samoan teacher, Muna, to Lauru (Choiseul Island), was an example where Methodist missionaries created confusion amongst the island communities. It was a well-known local fact, that Lauru and Roviana had been bitter enemies. To send a missionary teacher from Roviana to Lauru (accompanied by one of the Roviana Chiefs who recently led the raiding party, where 200 heads were brought back to Roviana), was not only a grave mistake by the Methodist missionaries, but also very confusing to the Lauru locals. Not surprisingly, "Some weeks later he [Muna] returned to Munda, [Roviana] in an exhausted state. He had been tied up by his 'parishioners' and cast adrift on a raft from which he was luckily picked up by friendly people".

If Methodists want to claim some positive impact on Solomons' converts, it would be what came out in one of the testimonies by one of the young men in one class meeting, who said:

if I build a house, it must be a better house than before I became a Christian; my garden must be kept in a better order than those of the heathen; my canoe

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must be faithfully built, and this is not a vain desire to excel, but for two reasons: first because I owe to Christ that I should do all as unto him, and also because I daily ask like David, "lead me in the plain path because of those who observe me", I want my life to praise God and preach Christ.\(^7\)

At what stage can one confidently say that the people of the Western Solomons finally accepted Methodism?

"Although there were 500 coming to worship after two years, and 4000 coming to worship after five years (after the arrival at Nusa Zonga),"\(^8\) the rapid "advancement of the gospel among the natives still left the missionaries having to grapple with the ancient beliefs and customs against the new Christian ways."\(^9\) In order to satisfactorily respond to this question we need to look at the frontline Methodist missionary, John Goldie and his policy and goals. He was a man of courage and determination, who believed that the natives should be engaged in industrial mission, "to enable the church to be self-supporting". Plantation land was obtained, and then put to economic use.\(^10\) The fruit of his labour was about to be realised when World War II broke out in the Solomons, where some of the bloodiest battles were fought and untold destruction of properties and the environment occurred. Most plantation properties were completely destroyed. This was a great set back to the advancement of Methodism in the Western Solomons.

Then in the early 1960s Methodism experienced another setback. A group of Methodists under the leadership of Silas Eto broke away and called themselves the Christian Fellowship Church (CFC). Eto became their spiritual leader and claimed the title "Holy Mama". This would be the first evidence of the indigenisation of Methodism in the Solomons. Then in 1968 another notable change occurred. Now it was the people's wish that the existing Methodist districts should come together to form one United Church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. They remained united until 1996 when Solomon Islands decided to form themselves into the United Church in Solomon Islands. The changing patterns on the woven mats continue to be sustained by these occurrences.

Memories of the centenary celebration of Methodism (UC) in 2002 are still very much fresh in the minds of many adherents. It was indeed the celebration of the new millennium. It was also an opportune time to make a close analysis of its weaknesses and strengths.

\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 250-51.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 240.
\(^9\) A. Tahu, A Century Cake: The Story of 100 Years of Methodism (United Church) in Solomon Islands, 2002. p.3.
\(^10\) Ibid., p. 250.
Weaknesses and Strengths of Methodism

Without searching deeper or further, it would seem certain that the basic Christian virtues of love, peace, justice and concern for each other, which Methodism planted in the lives of the locals, had not firmly and deeply rooted in their lives. There may be a lot of learning but there were very few changes occurring. We may not be mature enough in our faith, not really recognising who our neighbours are. The recent ethnic tension between two ethnic groups clearly demonstrated this. Past and present Methodist adherents have not really captured what Goldie and other early missionaries wanted us to do, to be self-reliant and to live in peaceful co-existence with all persons. We continue to be a dependent/independent church; the cargo-cult mentality continues to exist in the minds and plans of our members from the Assembly Office level right down to the congregation level.

It is most unfortunate that this cargo-cult mentality is being perpetuated by our own misconception of assistance from our overseas partner churches in the form of "Christian outreach assistance", whether it be in the form of money, materials or human resources. In order to alleviate such mentality from our local community, a lot of teaching and Christian education awareness programmes need to be carried out, so that receiving assistance from our overseas partner Churches can be viewed or taken as a bonus to their planned activities and not as handouts from a "master".

What about the strength of Methodism (UC) in the Solomons today? We still believe we are in the land of plenty, richly blessed with our God-given talents and needing to strive harder to convert our natural resources into tangible uses.

If this belief, coupled with determination could only be enhanced to our advantage, the Methodists (UC) in Solomon Islands today could lift their heads high amongst other fellow Christians in the world, carrying with them the gospel of peace and the cross of Jesus Christ.

But the challenges facing Solomon Islands Methodist (UC) today are many and varied. We are no longer an island group on our own. One hundred and two years ago, Goldie and others found us. Now we find ourselves in the midstream of economic globalisation, freedom of religion and freedom of expression, struggling to find our feet among the different Christian churches in the world. Confusions and challenges are just around the corner. In our everyday situation Methodist (UC) members are leaving the church and have joined smaller, charismatic, Pentecostal Churches. Questions are being asked, why are these people leaving the main line Christian churches? Is Methodism (United Church) not doing enough to retain its adherents, or is there an over emphasis on our freedom of religion practices in this country where we can just pick and choose any denomination that appeals to us?

Another immediate challenge that is confronting us after the recent ethnic tension is finding ways and means to eliminate hatred amongst our fellowmen, especially the victims and victimisers. When the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
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(RAMSI) took away guns from the rival militants, law and order returned to normal. However, there is a new conflict; the animosity, which the victims have been harbouring, is emerging and there is hatred towards the oppressors. It is only natural for the victim to take "revenge". The challenge facing Methodist (UC) leaders today is to convince victims and/or relatives of the victims to let go of the past; that to repay injustice with injustice only sets the cycle of hatred in motion which will only lead to further injustice.

Another emerging challenge that the Methodist Church (UC) is facing now is teenage pregnancy and the threat of AIDS/HIV, which is associated with normal practices. The Church needs to work extremely hard to instil in our young generation self-respect and the knowledge of doing what is right before God.

Conclusion

The pioneering Methodist missionaries, who landed on our shores over one hundred and two years ago, had a vision of fulfilling God's plan of taking the Gospels to the four comers of the world. Their mission was by no means easy. They sacrificed their lives and the lives of their family members. The changing patterns on the woven mats may never end as long as the weaving of the unfinished mats continues into the future. For when the Methodist missionaries first arrived in Solomon Islands there was no light, but when they left, and were gone, there was no darkness. God Bless Solomon Islands.

On the Saturday morning of the conference there was a presentation of the Maori mats session with karakia by Te Taha Maori to open the day. Bella Ngaha then gave an account other visit to Hawaii and traced the many parallels between the experience of indigenous Hawaiians and the tangata whenua in Aotearoa.

Lana Lazarus followed with a participatory session where the conference was asked to share their knowledge of the main events in the history of Maori and Pakeha relationships. Tumuaki Rev. Diana Tana led us on through the chequered history of the Treaty of Waitangi and the way in which the Methodist Church had played a key part in its establishment at the heart of New Zealand nationhood.

Bella then returned to set out the main points of our life together over the years. She flourished a cheap plastic tablemat, purchased at a $2 shop to demonstrate the hurt that Maori feel at the manner in which their culture has so often been expropriated by Tauiwi. The mats carried images of traditional Maori deities and Bella allowed the offence to speak for itself.

The image of weaving the unfinished mats was enhanced by Keita Hotere speaking from the point of view of the young people, the rangitahi, and the many challenges they face as the mats continue to be woven.

Enduring Tensions in New Zealand Methodism

W. Jim Stuart

Pakeha Methodism arrived on the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand as a missionary enterprise. As such it brought with it a whole range of dangerous theological and cultural assumptions which had more to do with uncritical notions about the superiority of Christian European civilisation than with the realities of Maori culture and the challenges of a new religious, moral and physical landscape. The first Pakeha missionaries genuinely believed they were coming to 'a strange and alien land' inhabited by 'heathens' who had no idea whatsoever of the God revealed in the Christian scriptures.

Sketch of buildings on Mangungu Mission Station by Mrs Emma Kirk (nee Hobbs) – Morley p99

The advantage of a journey back into the history of our origins is that it gives us a useful perspective from which to evaluate Pakeha Methodism in the present and to understand the challenges that face the Pakeha Church today. It is my opinion that if Pakeha Methodists can understand and appreciate how these forces have shaped our theology and polity we will have a better sense of what changes we may need to make to live justly in Aotearoa.
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Methodism and the Treaty

The first challenge is historical and has to do with Methodism and the Treaty. The Methodist missionaries played an important role in the creation of the Treaty of Waitangi. When John and Jane Hobbs returned from Tonga in 1838 to take up the work at Mangungu in the Hokianga, Hobbs noticed a significant decrease in the Maori population, observing in his journal, "All my pain is that I don't see many natives about". He also noticed that increasing numbers of Maori were dying from 'European-induced' diseases, white settlers were buying up the best land virtually for nothing and there was a growing shortage of food in the Maori villages. As William Morley observed in his *History of Methodism in New Zealand* last century, the missionaries heartily wished that colonisation "could have been deferred for a few years, until the Maoris were established in the faith and better prepared for the conflict and clashing of opinions, prejudices, and interests, which the coming together of two races rendered inevitable". Among some Wesleyan missionaries such as Hobbs and Nathaniel Turner, the first concern was the welfare of Maori. Whether misguided or not, Christian decency required such a concern. As Tola Williment argues, the missionaries earnestly believed they were labouring for the benefit of the Maori and they hoped to implant their religions before influences could intrude.

Consequently the Wesleyan missionaries along with their Anglican colleagues appealed to the British Government to provide some means of protection for Maori. This was not simply an expression of concern but reflected the missionaries' understanding of the Christian gospel. Colonisation may have been good for the settlers, but for Maori it posed a direct threat to Maori resources and their ways of life. While the CMS missionaries, in particular Henry Williams, conferred with Maori in the Bay of Islands, the Wesleyan missionaries, in particular, John Hobbs, consulted with Maori at Hokianga. As Williment has shown the CMS considered the Treaty 'perhaps the best, if not the only course left to protect Maori whose welfare was their whole concern.'

Thus for Pakeha Methodism the Treaty remains a continuing covenant with Maori.

Methodism and Functional Polity

Another challenge is a concern over Pakeha Methodist polity. Since its earliest beginnings English Methodism challenged the dominant polity of the Church of England. The Anglican Episcopal polity was too restrictive for Wesley and the early itinerant Methodist preachers. Whitefield's invitation to Wesley to join him in "this strange way of preaching in the fields" set the future direction of Methodist polity.

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2 Ibid., p.143.
3 Ibid., p. 145.
Polity was functional not determinative, it served the Gospel. As Wesley observed, "having been all my life so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, I thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in the church".

As the Pakeha Methodist Church in New Zealand underwent the transformation from being a missionary church to becoming a settler church the Gospel became more and more subservient to institutional agendas. Evangelism became increasingly suspect, especially when it threatened to disturb the order of the church. As Pakeha material resources such as property and the financial assets of trusts increased they began to determine the missional priorities of the Church. The settler Church became cautious and prudent; interested more in preserving its place within the religious establishment.

This has brought the Pakeha community of the Church to a crossroads where it faces declining Pakeha adherents who continue to control most of the theological, material, and managerial resources of the church. I acknowledge efforts have been made to begin the process of sharing them more equitably. It will be interesting to see how this tension plays itself out in the next decade. Can the Pakeha church recover a functional polity which allows the gospel to determine mission priorities or will the polity of the Church determine its gospel message?

Methodism and Equitable Power-Sharing

Closely related to the issue of polity is the challenge of just power sharing. There is an inherent tendency within the European-Pakeha community to concentrate power into the hands of small groups or factions. During the missionary period there were constant battles for control based primarily on personality differences and personal agendas. For example, relations between William White and John Hobbs at Mangungu became so strained that Hobbs felt forced to request the WMS for a transfer to Tonga. On the other hand their wives, Eliza White and Jane Hobbs, forged a friendship based on common concerns that lasted a lifetime. Men such as Walter Lawry, William Morley T G. Brooke, C. H. Laws, A. J. Seamer, E. T. Olds, G. I. Laurenson, and others were inspiring leaders but they also could become 'petty tyrants', to borrow a phrase from Eric Hames, under certain circumstances.

I suspect because Methodism as a movement formed around one man of unusual charisma and vision, John Wesley, Pakeha Methodist polity has always struggled with how to exercise power justly throughout the connexion. Hames, in his excellent overview of the Methodist Church from 1840 - 1972 refers frequently to what he calls the 'Young Turks' who engage in takeovers from time to time, shift the balance of power, until the next group of young Turks comes along. This can become very disempowering for those at the grassroots level in parishes.

This is a problem inherent in most Protestant churches where usually the conflict of power centres around doctrinal questions, however, particularly in European Pakeha
Methodism the conflict often hinges on personal and personality agendas. Hames alludes to this when he observes that Methodism has no marked theological eccentricity round which to rally. "We have", Hames adds, "a soft theology and a rather easy-going mental attitude". One of the on-going challenges to Pakeha Methodism is how to create polity structures which diffuse power and encourage more local mission initiatives while retaining the Methodist ethos.

Methodism and Pakeha Cultural Arrogance

Another challenge shaping the life of Pakeha Methodism in Te Hahi Wetenana is the cultural arrogance which continues to operate covertly within the life of the Pakeha Church. The early missionaries and settlers alike brought with them certain assumptions about the superiority of European culture. For example, European culture was 'civilised' while Maori culture was 'barbaric' or European culture was 'progressive' while Maori culture was 'backward'. Europeans were 'Christian' while Maori were 'heathens'.

This Pakeha cultural arrogance still persists in the church today however it is more subtle and less overt. The growing pressure on the Church for a shift from being a bicultural church to becoming a multicultural Church could perpetuate this cultural arrogance if the shift is made once again at the expense of Maori and the constraints of the Treaty are ignored. It seems to me, however, that if the Pakeha church can deal honestly and openly with its own historical and cultural inadequacies, that in itself is a foundation for building a multicultural and inclusive church with biculturalism at its core. This, of course, would be linked to more equitable power-sharing and a redistribution of the material resources within the church.

Methodism and Pakeha Identity

One final challenge relates to the question of identity. New Zealand society is deeply divided at the moment over questions of identity. What does it mean to be from the land of Aotearoa New Zealand? For Pakeha this question reveals our insecurity. As Michael King asks, "Do Pakeha belong in New Zealand, or are they destined to be forever tauiwi or strangers in the country of their birth?" Like the tangata whenua, all of us are immigrants to this land. When does our identity and commitment as Pakeha Methodists shift to this country alongside Maori and away from our countries of origin?

Embedded within this question of identity and commitment are other deeper questions with far reaching implications for the life of the whole church. What makes me a Methodist and not an Anglican or Presbyterian or a Roman Catholic? My ancestors

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come from all of these traditions. Again, how inclusive and diverse do we want the church to become? Maybe there is comfort in conformity and homogeneity but such a church does not represent contemporary New Zealand. A church where everyone looks alike, thinks alike and acts alike seems to be totally contrary to Wesley's vision of the 'catholic spirit' where all are regarded, respected and loved not because they are all alike but because they are loved by God in their diversity.

I believe the Pakeha Methodist Church is slowly and painfully coming to realise that there is an extraordinary richness in diversity. In a sense, now more than ever, Pakeha Methodism needs to welcome diversity and value those of differing traditions and cultures that make up the Connexion - that which makes us who we are and in which we together must find our future.

At the core of these challenges is the question of who God is. If I have understood the overall developing direction of Wesleyan theology I believe Wesley's departures from the traditional Protestant paradigm were moving us towards a much more inclusive understanding of God as expansive Being. Methodism's emphasis on the perceptibility of grace, the primacy of love, the restoration of the image of God in humanity, universal redemption, the divine-human synergy, the catholic spirit, the possibility of sanctification - all these and more were leading in a direction away from the particular and partisan gods of the past and towards the God who embraces every human being and all of creation irrespective of confession, creed or culture.

In one way these enduring tensions for the Pakeha Methodist church are important theological issues but in another way they are profoundly human concerns. The God of unconditional free grace whom Wesley so faithfully proclaimed is infused in the lives and dreams of those many men and women, Pakeha and Maori, Pacific Islander, African and Asian who make up the all-embracing cloak of Te Hahi Weteriana. The Gospel of God's grace is indeed free in all and free for all. Whether we carry a mat or wear a cloak, as the Apostle Paul reminds us, "There is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all or you are one in Christ Jesus". (Galatians 3:28)

The full version of Rev. Dr Jim Stuart's paper will be published in a subsequent Journal.
Education in the South Pacific

*Ian Faulkner*

My focus is on Wesley College in the context of Wesleyan education today, how it was placed at the beginnings of the Wesleyan journey in New Zealand and the South Pacific, and how it might be placed in the future.

Wesley College today is a state integrated secondary school with a special character. In essence what that means is that Wesley College is like any other state school in New Zealand - it follows the national curriculum and is managed like any other state school - but it has a recognised special character. That special character is enshrined in the 1976 integration agreement and framed in the language and thinking of New Zealand in the 1970's.

This special character speaks of Wesley College as a Christian, multicultural boarding school with special provisions for the children of Maori, Pacific Island people, orphans and those with social needs. It also speaks of industrial training (which includes agriculture) and religious observances. Additionally the charge is there to provide a place where those from various ethnic groups can receive an education and learn to live together in harmony. The student body today is 57 Maori, 35 of Pacific Islands origin, 5 European, 2 Fijian, with the other 1 being from countries like the Solomon Islands, Botswana and Bolivia. While there have been a few from Asia in past years, none are enrolled this year.

In the early 1840s those working within the Wesleyan Missionary Society in New Zealand focused on at least two matters in relation to education. The first was a concern for their own children. Mission personnel were aware that the level of education they could provide for their children was limited by their own levels of education, and by the overwhelming nature of the demands that were being placed on them by their work. For some, no more than a fairly basic primary school education was possible. Some missionaries were so concerned that there were even suggestions that unless some form of secondary education was provided for their children they would leave New Zealand and return home.

Out of this concern the decision was made at the district meeting held in Fiji in 1847 to establish a proprietary college in Auckland. The proprietors were to be the missionaries themselves who would be shareholders in the institution. The list of those shareholders is an indication of how important this venture was, for it includes the names of those who are regarded as founders of the Wesleyan cause in New Zealand and throughout the South Pacific.

The Wesley College and Seminary was opened in Queen Street on 1 January 1850 with about 40 pupils, both boys and girls, who came from nearly all the mission stations in New Zealand, from Fiji, and Australia. The principal was Rev. Joseph
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Homer an English Methodist, whose training for teaching was his own experience at Kingswood School - the English Wesleyan school. Rev. Homer had been sent to Kingswood from St Vincent in the West Indies where his parents were missionaries. The curriculum at Wesley College included English and Roman history, English grammar, geography, higher rules of arithmetic, the rudiments of algebra and Latin, reading and writing. This formed what one missionary described as a good Wesleyan education.

Alongside the move to establish a school to provide a good English education for missionary children another strand also existed in the concern by the Wesleyan missionaries about what was happening to Maori. They were aware of the impact of an invasive culture and sought a means to equip Maori to survive in the new world that was rapidly surrounding them. Rev. Walter Lawry approached Governor Fitzroy for help and a land grant was made on 7 October 1844 to provide for a Wesleyan native institution.

The current Wesley College regards this as its date of foundation and from it, lays claim to being the oldest surviving school in the country. It may be that Richmond Road Primary School in Auckland actually holds this distinction. If this is true, the claim may need to be modified to a claim to be the oldest surviving secondary school.

It has been said that this school was founded out of a direct social concern that was so much part of John Wesley's emphasis. The school opened under the leadership of Rev. Thomas Buddle, with some 10 students from as far afield as the Hokianga and Kawhia. These were men, rather than boys - some were married - selected because they had shown promise as leaders. Rev. Buddle taught the Bible and theology and his assistant. Rev. H.H. Lawry, taught English, writing and arithmetic. The students had lessons in the mornings and evenings, and each afternoon they worked in the garden.

In succeeding years the Grafton site became too small. Additional grants were made of land at Three Kings and the school moved there. The fortunes of the school at Three Kings waxed and waned. Towards the middle of the 1850s when tensions were high within New Zealand as a result of land disputes, the roll fell dramatically. In an effort to keep numbers up some orphans and destitute children were enrolled at the expense of the Provincial government. There was also a grant of further land to assist with their maintenance. So another aspect was added to the school's character to form the beginnings of what we now know as the special character.

The Wesley College mat is one that is incomplete. The future holds much excitement as well as tension. A significant question is how to interpret the intention of the weavers of that special character as we move into the 21st century? Another is how is industrial education to be applied in the 21st century? What does it mean? Does it really mean life skills in the context of this time, or should it be more narrowly interpreted as horticulture and crop growing?
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A helpful statement about how we might place ourselves was made by former Chaplain Rev. Bill Chessum at our 160th celebration chapel service in 2005.

The life of Wesley now entering our 17th decade, needs to continue identifying those young people who can benefit from being welcomed into the strong bonds of the college. In an age which talks of a level playing field and of equal opportunity we still believe in a God who is a person, who can and will show bias, a bias towards the disadvantaged and the dispossessed, those who need support even to get on the level playing field.

Rev. Sylvia 'Akau'ola Tongotongo has spoken about how some young people in the Tongan context see their church in New Zealand. Those matters Sylvia mentioned have a sharp focus at Wesley regardless of the ethnic group with which each individual might identify. The issues of culture, identity and relationships form the heart of a 21st century special character. My view would be that the special character, while holding to its base, must continue to be interpreted for the situation in which the college finds itself.

Another, more recently established integrated school with a distinctive Christian focus, has its special character written so that it will be expressed in exactly the same way in 100 years. That was the intention of the proprietors. I am sure that was not the wish of those who framed the ideals that are now reflected at Wesley College.

To conclude with some further words from Bill Chessum:

So, the ongoing life of Wesley must continue to reflect these principles:

Strong historic faith;

Directed motivation to be inclusive, open to all with special needs;

Firm grounding in the life of the common people.

In these ways we will remain true to our founders, true to that original Wesley whose name we bear, and true to the spirit of our Eord Jesus Christ, who in himself expressed the very essence of God the creator, active in the world He created, living, dying and rising, that it might be saved and restored.

To that sentiment and challenge I can only echo Bill Chessum's final word:

Amen.
Missions and Theological Education: The Grafton Institution

Susan Thompson

In his paper, Professor Walls noted the role of Jabez Bunting and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMS) in helping to transform Methodism from a mission to a church. As an example, he mentioned that the need to train missionaries was one reason for the founding of the Methodist theological institution at Richmond in England. I wish to reflect on the link between Methodist theological education and missions in New Zealand, because New Zealand Methodism's first theological college also grew out of a missionary imperative. Opened in Auckland in 1845, the Wesleyan Native Institution - as it was called - sought to prepare Maori students for work as teachers and ministers among their own people.

The decision to offer training to Maori converts was based on recognition of the value of Maori missionary work to the Wesleyan cause. In New Zealand, as in the wider Pacific, the most effective evangelism was often carried out by indigenous people. Writing to London in 1844, the missionary Thomas Buddle (1812-1883) stated that "too much importance [could not] be attached to native agency". He believed there was an urgent demand for a supply of "well-instructed and pious natives" to help in circuits that were too large for European workers to cover on their own. In the same year a public meeting held in Auckland affirmed the proposal for the establishment of a college to "instruct a selected number" of Maori in the English language, with a view "to their becoming more efficient teachers of their [people] in matters of religion and civilisation".

That college was opened in Grafton in Auckland in 1845. Unfortunately, no photographs have been found of its early buildings, but they were likely to have been simple and rather bare. In the early 1840s Auckland was a very basic settlement, being described by one visitor as "a beggarly collection of poverty stricken huts and wooden houses". The theological institution had a school room and living quarters and its one extravagance was said to be 'a Gothic front'. The college opened with just ten students, but an annual grant from the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society soon made possible a yearly intake of up to twenty trainees.

4 Hames, Wesley College, pp.5-6
The college's first principal and theological tutor was Thomas Buddle, a man with a limited academic background who yet combined a deep spirituality and passion for evangelism with wide educational interests. Like many Methodists before and since, he was a pragmatist, someone who was "able, instructive, practical and eminently useful." Under Buddle's leadership the ministry training offered at the Grafton institution strongly reflected the evangelistic focus of the missionaries. Students engaged in a course of learning that included reading, writing, arithmetic and the English language, and in 1846 Buddle described their progress as "highly creditable". However, it was on a very different kind of progress - their "progress in piety" - that he placed his greatest hope. Seeking to further the work of evangelism, Buddle was primarily concerned to deepen the religious experience of his Maori trainees. He laid great stress on students being "truly converted to God". "If we can tram and send out a few converted young men", he wrote in 1846, "I have no doubt [that] they would be instrumental in spreading the Word of God among their countrymen."
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As evangelists in training, students at the Wesleyan Institution were given opportunities to share their faith in public. Like many later Methodist ministry trainees, the Grafton men preached on Sundays, and could also occasionally be seen "in the Auckland Market place preaching to their countrymen in the open air, the Gospel of Christ." However, Buddle's college reports made no mention of offering the students instruction on how to preach or lead worship or do any of the other practical tasks of ministry. As was often the case with theological education, the students tended to learn by being thrown in at the deep end on the presumption that they would either sink or swim.

In his letters from the college in the 1840s, Buddle expressed a lot of confidence that it was producing spiritual results. He related with great excitement the experiences of students who, through prayer and preaching, had come to an awareness of their sins and recognition of God's grace. A handful of his trainees went on to be ordained. The early Maori clergy, Hoani Waiti, Wiremu Patene (1810-1884) and Hamiora Ngaropi all went to Grafton and became stalwarts of the Wesleyan Maori Mission in the difficult years following the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s. Hamiora Ngaropi, for example, was based in Taranaki in 1869 at the time of the Wesleyan missionary John Whiteley's death at the hands of a Maori war party from the Waikato. He had the lonely job of trying to hold Maori work together in the midst of a "disheartened and embittered" community. The service he gave was both faithful and costly.

Despite such successes, the Wesleyan Institution failed significantly in one respect. Influenced by their own sense of cultural and spiritual superiority, the missionaries saw no need to encourage the development of a strong indigenous Maori ministry. As the historian James Belich noted, while few "tribal peoples were seen as brighter or whiter than the Maori", most nineteenth-century Europeans assumed that Maori values and traditions were inferior to their own and without lasting value. Missionaries shared the expectation that Maori culture would and should succumb to European beliefs and practices, either through conquest by violence, conversion through the agencies of commerce, civilisation or Christianity, or by simply dying out as a result of its contact with new European diseases.

Eike other evangelicals of the time, Wesleyan missionaries expressed a desire to assimilate or transform Maori into what they perceived as being a Christian European norm. To use Andrew Walls' terminology, they saw conversion as involving the substitution of one set of cultural practices for another. In the field of ministry training

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11 See "Experiences of New Zealanders Spoken at a Lovefeast held at the Native Institution at this Place Oct. 5 1846", 6 October 1846, Buddle, Letter Books 1846-1852, TC, Met 008/1/2.
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this was reflected in the belief that education was best carried out at college away from what the Wesleyan William Morley called "the demoralising influence of the native kaingas". Writing in 1971, the Methodist Maori minister, Ruawai Rakena, suggested that the removal of students from their cultural context contributed to the formation of Maori teachers and catechists whose expression of the gospel "was in every respect except language identical with that of the missionaries." He argued that training classes associated with local mission stations - ranging in activity from a women's sewing group to the more "soul-directed" class meeting - would have offered more opportunity for the development of "a truly indigenous Maori leadership or ministry".

The Maori students at Grafton were certainly not trained for a ministry where they were equal to their European counterparts. As Belich observed, in "principle, Europeanisation and subordination were not the same thing; in practice, there was a strong tendency to blur them." In commending the Wesleyan Institution, for example, the 1845 report of the New Zealand District Meeting declared that suitably trained native teachers would be "an invaluable help" as "subordinate Agents in the great work." Maori were not to be regarded as ministers in their own right, but as assistants to European clergy. Instead of being received into a full relationship with the Wesleyan Conference upon ordination, Maori ministers - called "native ministers" - were given limited rights of involvement in the Church's decision-making processes. Throughout the nineteenth century they were not admitted as members of either their district synod or the annual Conference.

In 1849 the Wesleyan Institution was moved from Grafton to a block of land at Three Kings in Auckland. The change brought to an end the college's initial focus on training Maori students for missionary work among their people. With Government support, the Wesleyans started a boarding school at Three Kings offering Maori boys and girls instruction in "religion, industry and the English language". Over one hundred students were added to the institution's roll in the first year, and a trained teacher, Alexander Reid (1821-1891), was appointed as principal. It was this school that eventually became Wesley College.

Open for only four years, the Grafton institution was New Zealand Methodism's first theological college. Established with some enthusiasm, the college reflected the

14 Morley, History of Methodism, p.47.
16 Belich, Making Peoples, p. 125.
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evangelistic goals of its missionary founders, providing early training for a group of
Maori clergy who took the message of the gospel to their people and gave faithful
service to Methodism. However, the major challenge for Methodist educators in the
1840s and in the years to come was to allow Maori ministry to be Maori; to develop
an ethos of training that did not demand assimilation but saw value in a truly
indigenous Maori ministry which both reflected and, in the light of the gospel,
transformed Maori values and traditions. Unfortunately this was a challenge they
would not always be up to meeting.

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Introducing the Contributors

Rev. Dr Tevita Baleiwaqa

The late Rev. Dr Tevita Baleiwaqa, affectionately known as Te Baleiwaqa, was born on 5 March 1959 in his village of Naividamu, Vulaga Island in Lau, on the eastern side of Fiji. He began his formal education through primary school on his home island, before he came to Vitilevu, the main island, to study at the Queen Victoria School (QVS), Matavatuco from 1972 to 1975. He left QVS after completing sixth form, which qualified him to enter university. He did not follow this course for a future career in government for example but made up his mind to join the church. He returned to his province of Lau and entered Gaunavou, a local bible school on the island of Lakeba to study the lotu (Christianity). The first English missionaries, William Cross and David Cargill, arrived on Lakeba Island on 12 October 1835. Josua Mateinaniu who was a high chief of Vulaga accompanied the missionaries from Tonga on their way to Fiji. It is well documented that Mateinaniu played a key role in introducing these first missionaries to the Fijians and their way of life. Tevita Baleiwaqa had an intimate knowledge about the life and work of this unique Fijian missionary-chief during this early period.

Te Baleiwaqa candidated for the Methodist ministry in 1980 and began his three year theological training in the Davuilevu Theological College from 1981 to 1983. He spent 1984 on his home island of Vulaga as a minister on probation. Then from 1985 to 1987 he studied for his Bachelor of Divinity degree at the Pacific Theological College in Veituto, Suva. In 1988 he taught in a local bible school on the island of Koro. From 1989 to 1991 he taught religious studies in two high schools on two separate islands in Lomaiviti, the centre of the Fiji group. He was again appointed to another local bible school on another island in the mid 1990s before going back to the Pacific Theological College to do his Masters degree in church history from 1996 to 1997. After graduation, Baleiwaqa was awarded a scholarship by the Australian government to undertake his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the Australian National University in Canberra, majoring in church history. At the time of his
Te Baleiwaqa was only forty seven years old when he passed away on 5 August 2006. The Methodist church in Fiji, Rotuma and Rabe has lost not only a young, talented and faithful talatala (minister/pastor) but also a promising theological educator at a time when his scholarship is very much needed in the present socio-political climate in Fiji. The gap now created in the church through his passing on to the next life will be difficult to fill.

He is survived by his wife Aqela Matata and three children, Jonati Havea, Sera Probert Latu Havea and Ebenita Baleiwaqa Havea.

**Vaiao Alailima-Eteuati**

Vaiao Alailima-Eteuati has a Bachelor and Master of Arts and a Diploma of Teaching, and a Certificate in Management. At the time of the conference he was Chairman of the Northern Synod New Zealand.

**Allan Davidson**

Allan Davidson lives in Auckland and teaches church history at St John's College and in the School of Theology, University of Auckland. Born in Hokitika, he studied history and theology at the University (Otago while training for the Presbyterian ministry. He gained his PhD at the University of Aberdeen and taught at Rarongo Theological College in Papua New Guinea, 1977-81. His research and writing focuses on the history of Christianity in New Zealand and the Pacific.

**Ian Faulkner**
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Ian Faulkner was a pupil at Wesley College 1963 - 1967 and has been Principal since February 2003. He holds a M.A.(Hons) degree in History from the University of Auckland. In 1982, an adaptation of his M.A. Research Essay was published by the Wesley Historical Society under the title 'The Decisive Decade - some aspects of the development and character of the Methodist Central Mission, Auckland, 1927-1937'. Ian is the Secretary of the Manukau District Synod.

Alisa Lasi

Alisa Lasi is a New Zealand-born Samoan, raised in the Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. She was raised in Gisborne, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Diploma of Teaching. Her husband serves as Presbyter of the Paeroa Cooperating Church and they have five children.

Robinson Moses

Robinson Moses is a former Principal of Rarongo Theological College of the United Church in Papua New Guinea, where he lectured in church history. At the time of the conference he was Circuit Superintendent Minister in Kavieng, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea.
Donald Phillipps was born in Wellington and educated at Kilbirnie School, Wellington College, and Victoria University. Part of an extended family with Cornish Methodist roots which made its entrance to New Zealand at the Mission Station at Hokianga, he has always been fascinated by history and when appointed as Otago University Chaplain in 1970 began a still continuing study of the life of James Watkin, the first missionary in the South Island.

Margaret Reeson has been a writer of biography and history of mission in the Pacific since the time (1961-1978) when she served in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea as mission teacher and Christian education worker. She holds an MA and has had eight books published and is working on another. Since 1979 she has lived in Canberra, Australia. She has served on many church councils with the Uniting Church of Australia; in her local congregation, for the NSW Synod of UCA and with the UCA National Assembly through the Historical Reference Committee, Uniting International Mission and Uniting Church Overseas Aid. Margaret served as Moderator of NSW Synod for the term 2000-2002.
John Roberts

John Roberts is Mission and Ecumenical Secretary of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. He holds a B.A., an L.Th. and a Diploma in Criminology from the University of Auckland. He formerly served as a member of the Enabling Ministry Team of Te Taha Maori of the Methodist Church, as Superintendent of the Christchurch Methodist Mission, and as Superintendent Minister of the Devonport Methodist Circuit. He has an interest in Wesleyan theology and practice and has written a number of works on Methodist history and theology.

Asofiafia Tauamiti Samoa Saleupolu

Asofiafia Tauamiti Samoa Saleupolu is Superintendent of Sinoti Samoa (Samoan Synod) and Superintendent Presbyter of the Panmure Parish of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. He was the first Pacific Island person to undergo theological and ministerial training, and ordination in the Methodist Church of New Zealand, and was President of the Church in 2002. Aso is married to Kakasia Vaotane Unasa Samoa Saleupolu. They have seven children.

James Stuart
Weaving the Unfinished Mats
James Stuart was born in New York City and received his BA in history from Franklin and Marshall in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He pursued theological studies in the United States, England, Germany and Switzerland. He holds a doctorate in systematic theology and social ethics from the University of Zurich. He has served churches in Pennsylvania, Illinois and New Zealand and was lecturer in Systematic Theology at St John's Trinity College in Auckland. He taught at universities in Illinois and Oregon, and served as chaplain at the University of Canterbury. He is the author of numerous articles on religion, theology, ethics and issues of peace and justice. He is a member of the United Methodist Church of the USA and is currently the minister at Wainoni Methodist Church, Christchurch.

Gina Tekulu

Gina Tekulu was previously the General Secretary of the United Church of the Solomon Islands. In 1957, he went to Honiara where he was raised by Rev. Belshazzar Gina and family; educated at King George VI School, Honiara, then Te Aute College Hawkes Bay, New Zealand. A teacher by profession, he was trained at Ardmore Teachers College Papakura, New Zealand - 1969 - 1971, and Degree Studies at UPNG 1979-1981; including a period as Principal from 1983 - 1989.

He served in three Government Ministries as Under Secretary and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Training; Ministry of Police and Justice, Ministry of Immigration and Labour, then was Registrar of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) 1991 -2001). He then served in the United Church in the Solomon Islands as General Secretary.

Andrew Thornley
Andrew Thornley: is a New Zealander by birth, now resident in Sydney and teaching at Pymble Ladies College. He has a doctorate in Pacific History from the Australian National University. Since a visit to Fiji with his wife Carolyn in 1971, Andrew has developed a life-long interest in Fiji Methodist history. He has published a bi-lingual trilogy on early Methodist Mission work in Fiji, from 1835-74: *The Inheritance of Hope* (2000), *Exodus of the I Taukei* (2002) and *A Shaking of the Land* (2005). The three books are all published by the Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Fiji.

**Susan Thompson**

Susan Thompson has Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist ancestors. She has a Master of Arts with Honours from the University of Canterbury and a Bachelor of Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity. Her doctoral thesis from the University of Auckland won an award and will form the basis of a publication by the Wesley Historical Society later in 2007 on the history of New Zealand Methodist theological education. She is currently Superintendent Presbyter in the Hamilton Methodist Parish.

**Sylvia 'Akau'ola Tongotongo**

Sylvia 'Akau'ola Tongotongo has a Master of Theology and is an ordained Presbyter of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. She held parish appointments for Auckland Central, Mount Eden, Epsom and Onehunga Co-operating parishes. She is currently Chaplain at Wesley College, Paerata, Auckland. Her writing and presentation reflects on her work researching the relationship of New Zealand born Pasifica youth to the Church.

**Setaita Tokilupe (Taumoepeau) Kinahoi Veikune**

Setaita Tokilupe (Taumoepeau) Kinahoi Veikune is a presbyter in the Methodist Church of New Zealand. She has been a member of the Methodist Church of New Zealand since the mid 1980s and is now Superintendent Presbyter of the Mangere/Otahuhu Parish. She has also been an Accredited Lay Preacher of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga since 1995.
Maika Kinahoi Veikune

Maika Kinahoi Veikune is a medical doctor, a Public Health Medicine Specialist and Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators. He currently serves as Clinical Advisor and Pacific Cultural Advisor for the Counties Manukau District Health Board. He has been an Accredited Lay Preacher of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga since 1992.

Andrew Walls

Andrew Walls is Professor Emeritus of the University of Edinburgh and has had a long and distinguished career in the universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh as well as extensive experience teaching theology in West Africa. He is highly regarded for his work in encouraging indigenous history and is an international authority on the study of the interaction of missionary Christianity with different cultures and contexts. Professor Walls is a lay Methodist and is the General Editor for the Methodist Missionary Society History Project.

Elizabeth Wood-Ellem

Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, PhD (University of Melbourne) is a Senior Honorary Fellow in the School of Historical Studies at that University. She was born in Tonga to Methodist missionary parents. Rev. DrA. H. and Dr Olive Wood. A. H. Wood was the author of The History and Geography of Tonga (1932 and still in print). Dr Wood-Ellem is the author of Queen Salote of Tonga: the Story of an Era 1900-1965 (1999) and editor of and contributor to Songs and Poems of Queen Salote (2004) and Vice-President of the Tonga Research Association 1995-2007.