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NEWSLETTER
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**ANOTHER EXCITING HISTORICAL
TOUR**

Two opportunities

WEST TERRACE CEMETERY

with

Brian L. Jones

Saturday, 27 May 2000, at 2 p.m.

or

Wednesday, 19 July 2000, at 2 p.m.

The Tour covers the graves of prominent Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Ministers and lay people who died between 1860 and 1920, and some account of their service to their church and society. For \$2 a copy of a comprehensive booklet, giving account of the Tour will be available.

19th Century Methodism in S.A.

By Arnold D. Hunt

We print here the text of a talk, given by Dr Hunt, as part of the Service of Celebration of the Centenary of Signing of the Methodist Deed of Union, held in Wesley Church Kent Town, on Sunday, 26 March 2000. Ed.

It seems unbelievable in this year 2000, that a hundred years ago, in 1900 there were seven Methodist churches in four country towns no more than 18 miles apart. Gladstone had a Wesleyan Church and a Bible Christian Methodist Church. A few miles to the north, Laura had a Wesleyan Church and a Primitive Methodist Church. A little further on in Stone Hut, which never had much more than a pub, a railway station and a school, there was a Primitive Methodist Church, and in the township of Wirrabara five miles north of Stone Hunt there was a Wesleyan Church and a Bible Christian Church.

After Union, it was the Bible Christian Church which survived in Wirrabara. The Wesleyan Church was sold: it was bought by my father who turned it into a residence and it was in that converted Methodist home that I was born some years later. So I have always been able to say to my friends that my addiction to Methodism began in infancy, because I absorbed Methodism as it were with my mother's milk.

Those seven churches were linked with others in the various circuits before Union. A few miles east of Wirrabara there is the township of Appila, and it was in Appila that our Moderator, Don Cafford, a generation later was also nurtured in Methodism.

What kept these churches going, to a very great extent, was the service Sunday by Sunday by local preachers. The local preacher was a distinctive Methodist institution and Methodism would never have been established as widely as it was in this State without the ministry of local preachers. Most of them were men and it was they who held services and often formed churches before a minister appeared on the scene.

In the Wirrabara area there was one special local preacher. If you look at the plans of the church there in the 1890s, for example, you see that this man sometimes preached in the morning in a Wesleyan Church and sometimes preached in the evening in a Bible Christian Church. Sometimes, one presumes, he also went of an afternoon to Stone Hut to preach in a Primitive Methodist Church. He was an orchardist living a few miles west of Wirrabara. If Keith and Marian Smith were here then Marian would know that I am talking about her grandfather, Joshua Lomman, who in the ecclesiastical jargon was a "pillar of the church" in the Wirrabara district.

As I have said, all throughout the Colony, it was these local preachers who kept the church going. In addition to local preachers there were also the "helpers". The helpers were also local preachers, but they didn't have quite the same standing, they weren't accredited so that they didn't preach so often, and they were probably on the whole not very eloquent.

My father was one of them. Whenever he had to preach, he got down his book of sermon illustrations. In Protestantism, the sermon illustration was a very important part of the proclamation Sunday by Sunday. A sermon illustration could be drawn from the Bible, it could be drawn from history, it could be drawn from life, it had to have a moral and religious message and no sermon was complete without two or three sermon illustrations.

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At least that was my father's belief and that is why he used this book. This book had a title which, as a boy, intrigued me - "Shot and shell for the preacher's gun". He gave it to me when I became a local preacher and when I rose to the elevated status of a theological student, I took it with me. Then one day I put it in the Wesley College incinerator. I didn't want my fellow students to know that I had a book like that on my shelves!

These local preachers were numerous - even in the Mt Barker Primitive Methodist Circuit, going by the 1894 Plan, there were 40 local preachers and helpers. They preached in Mt Barker, Nairne, Woodside, Kanmantoo, Callington, and down as far as Wellington. As I have said, without these local preachers, there would not have been the churches that existed when Union came in 1900.

There were these three churches in 1900. Over the years they had often been rivals and the most dramatic illustration of rivalry that I've ever come across was in the Bald Hills area south of Yankalilla. There with few settlers, the Wesleyans and the Bible Christians both began to build churches, but the churches were only about two hundred yards apart! The Bible Christians were so anxious that they opened their church before the ceiling had been put in and before the walls had been painted. They placed on the church a plaque - "The Bible Christian Chapel, the first church in these hills". That testimony to denominational rivalry still survives as a relic inside the porch of the Inman Valley Church in the Yankalilla parish.

One of the reasons why some churches did better than others was that they had more money. The Wesleyans for example had more members, they had better churches, such as this one here, and Norwood Wesley on The Parade, and further on Payneham, Magill and so on. Even in the country the Wesleyans had churches which have survived - Gawler, Kapunda, Clare, and Moonta.

The Wesleyans also had more people of financial substance and if you examine some of the tablets in this church, you will see what I mean. The Wesleyans always had themselves ahead of the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians. Those two churches were fairly poor, especially the Primitive Methodists.

When the first Primitive Methodist minister was sent to Mt Barker, he used some of his time to build a house. It couldn't have been much more than a timber shack but at the end of the year, when the Superintendent wanted to transfer him, he said "I have built my house" and he wanted a refund! The Superintendent wrote him a letter, which appears in "The History of Primitive Methodism" - "You have no time of your own. You belong body and soul to the Primitive Methodist Connexion." He learned the meaning of commitment long before that word became used as glibly as it is today.

One fairly important point about Union discussions, which really became serious towards the end of the 1880s, was that all three churches were growing. The population of South Australia was growing and it is no surprise to find that between 1881 and 1891 the Bible Christian population of South Australia grew by 50%. The reason for that was, I take it, because of Cornish migration, as the Bible Christian Church was particularly strong in Cornwall.

When discussions got going about uniting these three, as they were, branches of Methodism in the 1890s, there was no question that any union would be on Wesleyan terms. I suspect that in any church union negotiations, one church emerges as the dominant influence and places its stamp on the final product. That is certainly what happened with Methodism. The Methodism that came into being in 1900 was a Wesleyan Metho-

dism. The Primitive Methodists didn't have a chance. It is not surprising that one or two ministers went back to England. One of them had the name which must have caused much mirth among young people. He was Joseph Ladyman.

Union had to be on Wesleyan terms but the Wesleyans on the whole were not totally in favour. They were afraid that union would mean that they would have to carry some of the debts of the Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians. They believed that many of the ministers in the Primitive Methodist and Bible Christian churches were not of the same standard as the ministers in their own church.

When the first debate on union took place in 1891, the vote for union in the Wesleyan Conference was 49 to 47. Now that, of course, was an intolerable situation. You couldn't go on talking about union if you had half of the Wesleyans opposed. But in 1894, the Wesleyan General Conference met in Melbourne, and, believe it or not, they voted on union or at least debated union for ten solid hours! As a result of that debate, whether the opponents were exhausted or not no one knows, a large majority did vote for union.

In South Australia that was translated into a union vote in 1896. From then on, it was preparations for union. The Deed of Union was signed in August 1899 and on January 1st, 1900 the three Churches came together as The Methodist Church.

Now just two or three points in closing. What were some of the factors that helped the union cause. One was that the three churches, despite their differences, did all belong to a family - the Methodist family. They all sought the "warmed heart" experience of John Wesley for their hearers. They all sang a large number of Charles Wesley's hymns and they were all preaching churches. They all regarded the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as secondary to preaching, and probably there wasn't much to choose between the leading preachers in all three denominations.

The second reason which facilitated union was that over a period of about fifty years many Methodists had moved from church to church. If a farmer from Clarendon went up to Booleroo Centre, he had to be a Bible Christian. If he went to Mallala, he had to be a Primitive Methodist, or if he went to Saddleworth, he had to be a Primitive Methodist - he had no choice. It was this movement from church to church that facilitated a sentiment in favour of union.

The best illustration I have ever found, in the many obituaries I have read of this happening, was in the case of Henry Strange, the father of the Rev A.T. Strange, the founder of the Helping Hand Centre at North Adelaide. Henry Strange was born in Yorkshire into a Primitive Methodist home and he went to a Primitive Methodist Sunday School. When he was a young man, he was converted at a meeting conducted by the Wesleyan Reformers, one of the more obscure of the breakaway movements from Wesleyanism back in England in the 19th century. So Henry became a Wesleyan Reformer.

He migrated with his wife Charlotte to South Australia and lived at Crafers. There he became a Bible Christian, Sunday School superintendent and a Local Preacher and after some years he moved to Cherry Gardens where the only choice for him was to become a Wesleyan. So that man and his family moved through four Methodist churches in their lifetime, and there are many other illustrations of that kind in the various obituaries.

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The leaders of the union movement were briefly, on the Wesleyan side - Henry Burgess; on the Primitive Methodist side - John Gibbon Wright and Harold J. Pope; and on the Bible Christian side - William James and, above all, the leading layman in Methodism in this state, Samuel Way.

Samuel Way, Chief Justice, Lieutenant Governor, was an advocate of union, and as union came he talked about union as the "vision splendid". It would mean a new life for the Church, but also it would mean a new life for the new Commonwealth just emerging.

Probably that is the reason why, when Methodism began in 1900, it called its church paper "The Australian Christian Commonwealth" and Methodism would be one of the contributors to the making of a Christian Commonwealth. Samuel Way and others, probably everybody who joined in union, believed that "the best was yet to be".

In the next issue, we will print the text of the second talk given on the above-mentioned occasion – on Methodism in the 20th century, by Rev Don Catford, Moderator of the S.A. Synod.

ANNIVERSARIES

What a wonderful year of celebration for we have just had the celebration of the Signing of the Deed of Union between the branches of the Methodist Church. This event was well-advertised and introduced by Dr Arnold Hunt in a recent edition of 'The New Times'. This truly magnificent celebration which took place in Kent Town Church, was very well attended.

Following later and in danger of being overlooked is the celebration to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Formation of the Congregational Union in South Australia.

Let's look at some of these details as researched and recorded by Brian L. Jones.

The first meeting of the Congregational Union was held in Adelaide on 24 April 1850. Brief details of the members of the Executive Committee are set out below.

N.B. The reference to "Stow Church", concerns the church established by the late Rev T. Q. Stow in Adelaide in 1837. The church was located at North Terrace from 1837-1840, at Freeman Street (now Gawler Place) from 1840-1867, and at Flinders Street (known as Stow Memorial Church) from 1867-1977 and, since the inception of the UCA in 1977, as Pilgrim Church.

William Giles: Colonial Manager of the South Australian Company 1841-1861, was one of the first Deacons of Stow church from 1841 and Treasurer of the Congregational Union of South Australia 1850-1862.

the position of Secretary of the Congrega-
1850-1851. He was also the Minister of the
Kensington, from 1849-1851. (The actual
edar Prest) Mr Strongman later ministered

elg Congregational Church from 1849-1850;
and Aldinga from 1858-1863; Happy Valley,
a member and Deacon at Stow Church.

ter of Port Adelaide Congregational Church
ughter of Rev George Payne, Principal of
Hodge trained for the ministry.

ghton and Glenelg Congregational Churches
Kensington, from 1871-1874.

Gawler Congregational Church from 1849-

usly a Missionary with the London Missionary
as the minister of Hindmarsh Congregational
Valley, 1854-1858; Alberton, 1858-1862, and

d Grain Merchant at Weymouth Street. He
Stow Church. Mr Bowen sold his business to
ch and who later became a Baptist).

of Stow Church. Mr Giles was the son of Wil-
and Importer of tea and sugar at "Giles and

Church. Moved to Melbourne in 1853.

urch, Kensington Chapel and later a founda-
ulah Park in 1854. He lived at Maesbury

It was at Mr Roberts' suggestion that Clay-
n Clayton (junior), who, in England, had been
om 1805-1845 which later moved near to the
known as "The City Temple".

member at Stow Church, who moved to Mel-
ant, a Member of Parliament and a Minister of
Frederick Thomas Sargood, who built Rippon

stapler and Fellmonger of Grenfell Street East;
Ebenezer Chapel (off Rundle Street) that later
as instrumental in forming the Congregational
originally established in 1857. These funds

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now form portion of the UCA "Church Loan Fund". Mr Peacock lived at Palm House, Hackney, now located within the grounds of St Peter's College.

Rev Thomas Quinton Stow: Pioneer Congregational Minister in South Australia. He was the Minister of North Terrace and Freeman Street chapels, for nineteen years (1837-1856). Stow Memorial Church in Flinders was erected as a memorial to him in 1867.

The Congregational Union functioned from 1850 until uniting with the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches to form the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977.

Bibliography:

1. *Jubilee Record (1837-1887) of Congregationalism in S.A.* By Rev F.W. Cox.
2. *Three Quarters of a Century (1837-1912)* By Revs. F.W. Cox and Leonard Rob-johns.

**A letter from a Sunday School
teacher to her scholars (part 3)**

Here we continue an interesting historical letter (Part 1 appeared in Newsletter No. 70, March 1999, and Part 2 in No. 72, February 2000) which has been transcribed from a notebook from the estate of Mrs M B Purdie which has been in the possession of the Burnell family, who emigrated on the "Florentia", arriving 20/6/1849. The letter is from Sarah A Pullan, dated July 26, 1846, Harrogate. Ed.

To those of you, my dear girls, who have tasted (...illegible) the Lord is gracious, who love the Saviour who (...) your hearts to him and made a profession of your attachment to him, and his cause.

I would in the beautiful words of the Apostle say to you, I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith ye are called with all (...) and (...)with long suffering, forbearing one with another in love.

Avoid the appearance of evil. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice, and be ye kindly affectioned one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Have compassion on those who are out of the way. If any of you be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens and to fulfil the law of.....

Christ, remember you are to be lights in the world, and are compared to a city that is set on a hill which cannot be hid. O see to it that your light may so shine before men, that they may take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus, and thus be led to glorify your Father in heaven.

Let me beg of you daily to read the word of God. The Saviour said to his disciples "Teach the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life; they are they which testify of me."

Be very regular in your approaches at the throne of grace, for as it is impossible for the body to live without natural food, so it is impossible for the soul to be alive without spiritual food.

Hear the words of the Saviour, watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The Apostle also bids us to pray without ceasing and again continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Be ye then followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Saviour.

O may we ever walk in him
and nothing know beside,
nothing desire, nothing esteem
but Jesus crucified.

Closer and closer let us cleave,
To his beloved embrace
Expect his fulness to receive
And answer for his grace.

Partakers of the Saviour's grace
The same in mind and heart
nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place
nor life nor death can part.

But let me hasten to the day
which shall our flesh restore
When death shall all be done away
And Christians part no more.

And now I desire to commend you to God and to the word of his Grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified,

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"Now the God of all peace, that bought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep thro the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight."

Thro Jesus Christ

your very affectionate
Teacher

Shall I just say, that I hope you will all be very good girls and keep together and in a little time, if it shall please God, I hope to return to you invigourated in health and strength and again shall it be our pleasure and delight to sing and speak of Jesus and his dying love.

Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb
We love to hear of thee
No music like thy charming name
Sounds half so sweet to me.

Again, yours very affectionately.

Sarah A. Pullan